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YEARS

Empowered lives. Resilient nations.

A DECADE *of* PEACE

A UNDP REFLECTION ON THE JOURNEY SO FAR

It has been 10 years since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that ended the decade-long insurgency and paved the way for a peaceful settlement of Nepal's political conflict that had strong socio-economic underpinnings in the form of centralized administrative structure, inequality, exclusion and identity conflict. The CPA provided the framework for the resolution of these multi-faceted conflicts through several milestones it outlined. 10 years later many of the goals have been either partially or completely met. There was successful management of arms and armies after the conflict; then the rebels became an integral of mainstream political system; and a constitution was finally promulgated last year, albeit five years later than imagined. But still there are many outstanding issues, including providing closure to families of the victims of the conflict through a credible truth and reconciliation process, and implementation of the constitution itself.

UN AND UNDP

The United Nations and its many agencies played a critical role in supporting the implementation of the CPA and preserving peace, as both sides to the conflict sought the UN's presence. The Security Council, through a resolution, created the UN Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) to monitor and assist in the implementation of the CPA. UNDP and other UN agencies supported

and complemented, and in most instances built on to the work carried out by the mission whose mandate ran out in 2011. UNDP as the custodian of UN Resident Coordinator system in the country, played an instrumental role in convening UN support, while also taking up important aspects of the CPA in its own programmes. Amid all this, UNDP has not lost sight of the bigger goals and how preserving peace helps to attain the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and now the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While the interventions that are highlighted in the following sections have been aiming directly at peace building and conflict resolution, there are a number of other UNDP supported initiatives that have been contributing to peace in a more indirect way, for example through improving social cohesion. Vulnerability, exclusion and economic deprivation are factors that can fuel social and political tensions, and indeed, those were among the root causes of Nepal's armed conflict. By creating opportunities for marginalised communities to improve their livelihoods, UNDP contributed to both, better understanding of the underlying causes of their marginalisation and addressing those issues for a more peaceful society.

UNDP has been providing assistance in the following key areas during the last 10 years since the signing of the CPA.

MANAGEMENT OF ARMS AND ARMIES



Contributed to verification of **19,602** Maoist army combatants



Out of the **32,250** registered in seven main and 21 satellite cantonments, only **23,610** participated in the verification process.



Supported the rehabilitation of **2,234** verified minors and late recruits



Actively supported monitoring of the Maoist cantonments



UN/UNDP supported and co-led with Government of Nepal, a Steering Committee which had technical representation of the Maoists, to discuss the discharge and rehabilitation of former combatants



The discharge process was a landmark achievement and one of the very few commitments in the peace process in Nepal that was actually completed.

A key component of the peace process was the successful management of arms and armies of the two sides of the conflict. This was governed by a separate agreement, the Agreement on Monitoring of the Management of Arms and Armies (AMMAA). The United Nations Mission

in Nepal (UNMIN), with support from UNDP and other UN agencies, then led the verification of combatants in 28 cantonment sites and identified 19,602 of them as members of the Maoist army, 2,973 as minors on the date of the signing of the ceasefire on 25 May 2006, and 1,035



as late recruits. A total of 4,008 Verified Minors and Late Recruits (VMLRs) were to be discharged under the AMAA.

Upon completion of the discharge of the Verified Minors and Late Recruits (VMLRs), the Government of Nepal requested the UN to facilitate their rehabilitation into civilian life. From 2010, UNDP led an interagency programme with the participation of UNICEF, UNFPA and ILO, the UN Interagency Rehabilitation Programme (UNIRP) to rehabilitate these VMLRs. It formally concluded in 2013 after providing support to 2,234 VMLRs out of the total 4,008. The UNDP-led programme provided both psychosocial counselling and career counselling, before enrolling them in vocational skills trainings and formal education. Thirty percent of these VMLRs were female and 74 percent were below the age of 18. Many had suffered psychological trauma from their wartime experiences. At the end of the programme, 71 percent of those who had received

support and vocational training had secured employment. The remaining had either dropped out or did not wish to come in contact with UNDP's programme for rehabilitation.

The transition was difficult for the VMLRs because they maintained links with the Maoist party and considered themselves fighters on the one hand and on the other they carried the unfortunate and unintentional stigma of being classified as 'disqualified' during the verification process. Nevertheless, the discharge process was a landmark achievement and one of the very few commitments in the peace process in Nepal that was actually completed.

Transition to and maintaining peace is critical to meeting the SDGs. Preserving peace opens up space for a development process that contributes to ending poverty, hunger and improving the lives of people through better educational opportunities and well-being.

UNIQUE INVOLVEMENT ABDUL HAMEED OMAR, FORMER MANAGER UNIRP

UNDP was best suited to support the peace process, especially the management of ex combatants because it had the technical expertise and readily available trained human resources for deployment at a very short notice.

UNDP provided technical and logistical support and established the database to record the data on the Maoist army personnel and their weapons. UNDP served as the custodian of that database on behalf of the UN in Nepal.

Compared to other peace processes, UNDP's involvement in Nepal's peace process was unique, its support encompassed technical and logistical support to the Joint Monitoring Coordination Committee for the monitoring and management of arms and armies, provision of technical assistance to the electoral process, and support to the monitoring of the broader peace process.

Last but not least, the UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative played a very important role in moving the key agenda on the peace process forward in a difficult and complex political environment in Nepal.

ELECTIONS

- Successful conclusion of two Constituent Assembly elections
- 13.3 million biometric voter registrations
- Significant reduction in proxy voting
- Significant reduction in number of invalid votes
- Higher voter turnouts
- Deployment of GIS technology to map over 10,000 polling centres
- A positive trend in female and socially excluded groups' voter registration
- A state of the art Joint Operation Centre and
- Voters Education Centre

Elections for the Constituent Assembly to write a new constitution, that would create the basis for state restructuring and reforms, were at the heart of the CPA. The election originally scheduled for June 2007 suffered two successive deferments due to recurring political impasses and only took place on 10 April 2008. UNMIN supported the Election Commission in the Constituent Assembly elections in 2008, with assistance from UNDP and other UN agencies. In 2009, in order to build on to the work carried out by UNMIN, to complete electoral reforms and to strengthen the Election Commission's institutional capacity, UNDP put together a three-year technical assistance (2009-2011) initiative as Electoral Support Project. UNDP's electoral cycle approach

focused on the notion that the provision of event-driven support is no longer sustainable and effective in terms of cost-benefit and achieving enduring results.

The project was subsequently extended for another four years to use the inter-election period to address the long-term challenges of holding free, fair and credible elections in a nascent democracy like Nepal. While there was no provision for second Constituent Assembly elections, the repeated extension of the tenure of the first CA and its failure to draft a constitution triggered a decision to hold fresh elections for a new CA.

The cumulative result of UNDP's technical and policy support led to: a significant reduction in proxy and multiple voting, thanks to a biometric voters registration process that registered 12.1 million voters for the 2013 elections; a high about 80 percent voters turn out in 2013; significantly reduced invalid votes; increased voters registration of female and marginalised groups—with women comprising of 51 percent of registered voters—resembling the share of women population in the country; increased capacity of Election Commission to organise elections and to coordinate with different government agencies and parties—through the Joint Emergency Operation Centre and deployment of GIS technology for mapping polling centres.

The credibility of the election processes played a key role in preserving the peace and implementing the CPA. As Nepal gears for more periodic elections under

the new constitution, the institutional strengthening of the Election Commission to manage credible elections since 2008 has significantly contributed to the peaceful transition from one administration to another. Building institutions and preserving them is a vital part of the SDGs - particularly Goal 16, but equally has a domino effect on other goals related to poverty, hunger, health, education and employment.

CRUCIAL SUPPORT



NEIL KANTHA UPRETY,
Former Chief Election Commissioner

UNDP provided crucial support to the Election Commission of Nepal in a very difficult period. UNDP's role in the ECN-led reforms and other logistics assistance was critical for making the election of the second Constituent Assembly a success. Particularly the support provided for the voter list reform and the printing of temporary voter identification cards helped to make the election process credible. UNDP also helped with voter education, training of staff as well as infrastructure support such as the Voters Education Centre. I would call UNDP's support historic given that the second Constituent Assembly election was crucial for the continuation of the peace process in the aftermath of the dissolution of the first CA. I would describe the kind of assistance UNDP has offered to the ECN as among the best and successful models of support.

CONSTITUTION MAKING PROCESS

- Public outreach and awareness campaigns, including public consultations on the draft constitution, reached over 2 million people in more than 10,000 events at the local level
- Centre for Constitutional Dialogue provided a “safe” and neutral space for dialogue, research and learning
- A wide variety of knowledge products as basis for informed debate,
- Enabled participation of CA members and people from marginalised backgrounds

With the signing of the CPA between the Government of Nepal and the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist both sides agreed to restructure the state and establish a new political system. The drafting of a constitution by an elected constituent assembly (CA) based on inclusion, democratic principles and human rights through a participatory process was one of the key elements of the CPA.

These promising changes opened an opportunity to establish sustainable peace and a basis for equitable development in Nepal. Recognising this, in the initial phase until CA elections, UNDP stood by the CPA parties providing technical advice, disseminating knowledge on critical themes and building awareness among excluded groups on issues of their concern that needed to be taken into consideration in the constitution making process.

With the election of the (first) CA in April 2008, UNDP’s support to the constitution making process expanded along the lines of two main objectives: 1) facilitate consensus of major parties on the contentious issues; and 2) ensure the meaningful participation of civil society, particularly excluded groups in the process (From 2008-2015 the “Support to Participatory Constitution Building in Nepal” SPCBN programme was the main vehicle for UNDP’s interventions, funded by Austria, Denmark, DFID and the British Embassy, Japan, Norway, Switzerland and UNDP).



Ensuring a truly participatory process through a broad based engagement not only of CA members but also of ordinary citizens, civil society, the media and political parties is a costly and sensitive task. Particularly during the tenure of the first CA, UNDP's outreach and public awareness campaigns greatly facilitated information sharing and collection, and feeding local level opinion back up to the CA. Through dialogues at the Village and District Development Committee level on a variety of constitutional issues, local communities, civil society and local level political leaders were engaged in over 10,000 local events, reaching over 600,000 people. The training of journalists and engagement with mass media to produce and broadcast programmes on constitutional issues complemented the civic education and public awareness initiatives.

From 2009-2012, the Centre for Constitutional Dialogue (CCD) established by UNDP served as an important resource centre, platform for dialogue and meeting space widely used by CA members but also by civil society, political leaders and anyone interested. In addition, a number of trainings including on public speaking, lobbying, advocacy and basic educational classes were offered to CA members. Although not uncontested, this was critical and enabled particularly CA members from marginalised groups some of whom were illiterate or of very low education to meaningfully participate in the discussions and represent their interest groups – one of the key objectives of the participatory process as envisaged in the CPA, which UNDP was committed to support.

At the same time, the legal community, media and bureaucracy – part of the “conventional forces” – was engaged to ensure their buy-in which was necessary to reach a consensus between the people demanding social and political transformation and those reticent to the same.

The wide variety of UNDP supported knowledge products like publications, technical and option papers, comparative studies, etc. on different themes including transition management provided the basis for an informed debate on substantive constitutional issues throughout the constitution making process.

In the challenging period following the dissolution of the first CA (2012-2013), UNDP's assistance focused on consolidating the achievements of the CA so far and continuing public outreach to clarify misconceptions related to state restructuring and the contentious issues, and to continue the circular feedback system.

With the formation of the second elected CA (2014), the attention shifted to resolving the contentious issues while taking ownership of the first CA's achievements, a process UNDP continued to support strategically and technically to help reach consensus.

A draft constitution was finally tabled in July 2015. An innovative and cost-effective method facilitated by UNDP helped the CA to solicit feedback from the public on the draft through online media and public

consultation workshops in different parts of Nepal. In less than two weeks over 2 million people were reached and more than 15,500 comments on the draft constitution received.

Participatory constitution making has increasingly become best practice over the last years, an important shift that the case of Nepal has been helping to make. The lessons from the participatory process in Nepal provide a wealth of experience that can inform constitution-making processes in other countries, which UNDP is well positioned to support. Ensuring a constitution based on inclusion, democratic principles and human rights will help countries to lay the foundations for achieving the SDGs.



INFRASTRUCTURES FOR PEACE

- Conflict sensitivity and do-no-harm principles integrated in MoPR's policies and NASC and LDTA training curricula
- Capacity of LPCs and other local actors on early warning and early response mechanisms strengthened
- Team of Senior Facilitators and Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue Forums proven an effective mechanism for solving conflict situations through dialogue and facilitation

The CPA provided the broad framework for the resolution of the conflict between the Maoist insurgents and the state. In order to help consolidate that still volatile situation and prevent future conflict, UNDP has been supporting a range of interventions designed to create the environment that allows for a peaceful resolution of conflict, while addressing unintended consequences of development work or lack thereof.

The concept of "Infrastructures for Peace" assumes that strengthening capacities to deal with conflict in a peaceful manner can help to reconcile tensions and foster peace.

At the central level, the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR) that was established in 2007 carries key functions in implementing provisions of the CPA. With UNDP's support the MoPR integrated conflict sensitivity and do-no-harm principles in its institutional policy, capacity development plan and 5-year strategy paper and allocated MoPR resources



thereto. Assistance has also been provided to build up MoPR's role to strengthen the Local Peace Committees (LPCs), some of which have been relatively defunct. That has been complemented by local level activities focusing on LPCs and other key local actors to enhance their capacity to detect and analyse potential conflict situations and plan early responses to resolve tensions.

Support to include conflict sensitivity approaches and response mechanisms in their training modules was also extended to the Nepal Administrative Staff College (NASC) that trains civil servants. The same was done for the Local Development Training Academy (LDTA) tasked to train local level officials.. In a very well received exchange visit between Nepal and Timor-Leste in 2013 five senior trainers of the NASC, LDTA and the National Centre for Educational Development (NCED) have been able to prove their acquired capabilities on integrating conflict-sensitivity and do-no-harm issues by

training 28 officials of Timor-Leste's Ministry of Social Solidarity.

The formation of an experienced team of Senior Facilitators (SFs) has proven successful in defusing political tensions by reaching out to top-tier and second rung political leaders to facilitate structured dialogue. This mechanism helped to de-escalate the tensed situation in the run-up to the second Constituent Assembly election (2013) for instance, and to create a common understanding on contentious political issues. The SFs hail from different social backgrounds and are largely seen as neutral and acceptable to all the political parties as well as civil society. A similar practice has been established with the Inter-Religious Council whereby the religious leaders from different faiths were trained on basic dialogue and facilitation tools to prepare them for easing religious and communal tensions. In working together with local religious leaders, this approach has been seen to prevent violence – in late 2014, Hindu-Muslim

tensions in Banke district were averted by the inter-faith group before it turned into open confrontation, for instance. Recognising the crucial role of the media as a potential influencer, UNDP has brought together the senior editors of Nepal's daily newspapers and created a space for constructive dialogue to promote common understanding. At a later stage, also second tier political leaders have been invited to that forum. Further, do-no-harm trainings extended to journalists have proven valuable for more conflict and gender sensitive media reporting.

To serve as a participatory platform for constructive dialogue has also been the intention behind creating the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue Forums (MSDFs) at district level. UNDP has been providing technical and logistical support to the MSDFs to enable them to hold regular meetings to detect and analyse local conflict dynamics and to respond.

While the above mentioned interventions aim directly at peace building and conflict resolution, there are a number of other UNDP supported initiatives that have been contributing to peace and infrastructures for peace in a wider sense and a more indirect way, for example through strengthening social cohesion. All of these interventions, in one way or another, constitute important pieces in Nepal's efforts to achieve the SDGs. Please contact UNDP... for more details on relevant programmes on UNDP's programs.

NEPAL CANNOT BE COMPLACENT PETER BARWICK, FORMER MANAGER CONFLICT PREVENTION PROGRAMME

While Nepal has been successful in sidestepping any potential post-conflict political upheaval, it is important to note that many of the deep-rooted socio-economic issues that helped spark the civil war, including sharp disparities in wealth, and marginalisation of caste and ethnic groups, have not been well-addressed over the past decade. Similarly, the nation's political parties must find ways to better respond to the needs and views of the population. If people no longer believe that the democratic process will bring positive change to their lives, it can unleash forces that drive nations towards social unrest and criminal activity. Experience has shown that once these genies are out of the bottle, it is very difficult to put them back in again. The challenge facing Nepal going forward is to ensure that development and democracy guide the country to stability and prosperity – and a shared sense of national identity and common future. UNDP, together with the support of the international community, is ready to support Nepal's efforts to make sure that it succeeds, and the scourge of war is forever kept at bay.



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