

Project Executive Board Meeting

June 29, 2012

SPCBN Office, Sanepa

Present:

Chair: Robert Piper, Resident Representative

Sr. Beneficiary: Netra Timsina, President, NGO Federation

Project Manager: Rohan Edrisinha, International Project Manager, SPCBN

Project Assurance: Kalpana Sarkar, Programme Officer, Governance Unit/UNDP

Others Present: Asbjorn Lovebraek, Counselor, Embassy of Norway
Bishnu Adhikari, Governance Advisor, ESP-DFID
Charlotte Duncan, Leader, Governance Team, DFID
Martin Stuerzinger, Sr. Advisor for Peace Building, Embassy of Switzerland
Jorn Sorensen, Deputy Country Director, UNDP
Krishna Khanal, Senior National Advisor to SPCBN-UNDP
Bandana Risal, Senior Programme Specialist, UNDP

Mr. Piper welcomed those present and reminded them of the cautious optimism of the previous special PEB meeting in early May. He noted that the failure of the Constituent Assembly to promulgate a Constitution before its dissolution was a disappointment but stated that the Project had made a significant contribution to facilitating dialogue and public participation in the constitution making process and provided important advice on constitutional matters to the international community. He observed that political leaders probably left too many of the complicated issues to the end and that the challenge for those supporting the process was to preserve what had been achieved so far and ensure that the constitution making process moves forward.

Professor Khanal then gave an update on the political situation and presented a risk analysis based on the new political context. He laid out the two possible scenarios for the next six months: a resumption of the constitution-making process, or a continuance of the present status-quo. The Board reflected on the opportunities presented by the current situation, including time for more engagement with political actors and the opportunity for the project to help clarify some of the contentious constitutional issues. Mr. Stuerzinger noted that the absence of violence on the expiration of the deadline was promising. Ms. Duncan stressed the importance of operating from a "do no harm" perspective and expressed concern that the international community would be perceived as promoting a particular agenda. Mr. Lovebraek observed that the only consensus that seemed to exist among political parties was that there

was a need for consensus. Mr. Piper concluded the discussion with the observation that the constitution-making process is still the most important political/development issue despite the setbacks in the country, and that the international community needed to assist in this important task.

Mr. Edrisinha then presented a summary of the SPCBN's activities from Jan-June 2012. These activities included the provision of technical assistance; a series of interactions with the task-force and the development of drafting options in April/May, and engagement with key stakeholders in June. He then laid out SPCBN's challenges and priorities for July-Dec 2012. He presented a revised work plan, which included the provision of technical advice on how to move the stalled constitution making process forward, preparation for future transition and implementation challenges (emphasising that change has been delayed, not abandoned), facilitating interactions between the drivers for constitutional change (political leaders) and the implementers (the bureaucracy). The revised work plan also included promoting a culture of constitutionalism, civic education to clarify, *inter alia*, the debate on federalism, challenging the assumptions of proponents and opponents of federalism, and engaging with the media to help in capacity building. He concluded by emphasizing the need to consolidate gains, keep the momentum, promote constitutionalism, and raise the level of the debate about important constitutional issues such as federalism.

After the presentation, a brief discussion ensued in which questions were raised about the work plan, the timing of implementation, clarification with respect to the audiences for the civic education programme and the risks associated with these activities, and about some details with respect to the budget. It was agreed that the civic education campaign should be handled with sensitivity both with respect to its contents and timing. It was decided to approve the work plan in principle subject to the conditions that the budget would be revisited and looked at realistically, a further risk-assessment of the work plan would be conducted, and the work plan with a revised timeline (without the pressure of a deadline of 31 December 2012) be prepared for the next meeting when the question of the future of the project in the new political context would also be discussed. A request was also made to circulate a breakdown of the programme support costs for the information of the board. Due to the pressure of time it was decided to revise the Asset Management memorandum to include a recommendation and approve via email.

Summary of Decisions:

- *The Work Plan was approved conditionally;*
- *A Risk Assessment of the revised work plan should be conducted;*
- *The work plan with a new time line should be prepared.*
- *The Asset Management memorandum to be approved via email.*

Robert Piper
Resident Representative

