


**Support to Participatory Constitution Building in Nepal
Project Executive Project Board Meeting**


17 October, 2014

Present:

Chair: Sophie Kemkhadze, Deputy Country Director 


Beneficiaries: Krishna Hari Khadka, Joint Secretary,
Constituent Assembly/Parliamentary Secretariat

Sharmila Karki, President, NGO Federation 


Project Manager: Rohan Edrisinha, IPM, SPCBN 

Project Assurance: Kalpana Sarkar, Programme Analyst, Governance Unit, UNDP 

Others Present:


Urs Herren, Embassy of Switzerland 

Jan Moller Hansen, Embassy of Denmark

Hakon Arald Gulbrandsen, Embassy of Norway 

Vibeke Sorum, Embassy of Norway 

Yam Nath Sharma, UNDP 

Raj Bahadur Shrestha, SPCBN 

Budhi Karki, SPCBN

Agenda:

1. Approval of last PEB minutes
2. Update on constitution making process
3. Progress update of the project (July to September, 2014)
4. Fourth Quarter work plan and budget
5. Formation of the micro-capital grant committee
6. Future work plan 2015
7. AOB

Discussions:

Ms. Kemkhadze welcomed the board members and other participants to the PEB meeting. The minutes of the previous PEB meeting were approved.

She invited Mr. Edrisinha to provide a brief update on constitution making process.

Mr. Edrisinha presented three possible scenarios on constitution making:

- I. The Optimistic Scenario in which the new constitution may be adopted with an adequate consensus by mid- 2015.
- II. The Pessimistic Scenario in which conservative parties may unite to adopt the constitution with a 2/3 majority vote and the constitution becomes a disputed document.
- III. The Cynical Scenario where none of the political parties is interested in ensuring the adoption of a new constitution in 2015 for various reasons pertaining to self-interest and political expediency.

Mr. Edrisinha stated that SPCBN had no option other than assuming the first scenario and would continue to support the Constituent Assembly and political leaders to reach consensus on a new constitution that was compatible with the terms of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2006 as soon as possible and without compromising on the commitment to public consultation on the draft before it is adopted.

Mr. Edrisinha then presented the progress report from July to September and a proposed fourth quarter work plan and budget. He said that in keeping with the sentiments of the PEB at its previous meetings, SPCBN had focused on engagement with the senior political leaders and had engaged two persons, Professor Krishna Khanal and Ms. Sapana Malla to serve as facilitators. He highlighted the discreet work the project has done during the previous quarter with the key members of the Committee led by Dr. Baburam Bhattarai and their advisors. He cited the continuing engagement with the 'Dhulikhei Group' of constitutional advisors. He informed the PEB about the recently concluded conference the project organized on Federalism in Asia with two renowned international experts on the subject, Professors Baogang He and Brian Galligan and their meetings with political leaders including Mr. Madhav Kumar Nepal and Dr. Bhattarai. He then presented the proposed work plan and budget for the fourth quarter stressing that the project will continue the focus of the third quarter.

A discussion followed. Board members approved the priorities and the approach of the project in the past 3 months. Ambassador Herren highlighted the importance of ensuring that the major political forces reach a consensus on a new constitution. Mr. Gulbrandsen asked about the leaders' capacity to digest what is discussed in seminars and shared by the international experts. Mr. Hansen stressed the importance of the project's work of informing people on the key contentious issues and clarifying myths and misunderstandings surrounding them.

Mr. Edrisinha presented a tentative work plan and budget for the first half of 2015. Mr. Herren asked whether there was a funding gap and wanted to know about other partners contributions to the funding gap. Mr. Hansen said that the Embassy of Denmark had funds but that they would assess the situation before committing further funds. Ms. Kemkhadze said that since the constitution making process was important, UNDP would as in the past contribute funds next year.

Ms. Kemkhadze moved to the next agenda item to form the micro-capital grant committee to process the grant applications to the project. She briefly explained the change of the previous practice of a committee within the UNDP country office making the decision, with a grant committee nominated by the relevant project board. The committee would consist of representative(s) of the project management (*ex officio*), UNDP Country Office and the beneficiaries. A discussion followed. Ms. Kemkhadze assured the members that the change was for making the process easier not more complicated. The proposal to constitute the committee was approved.

Summary of the decisions:

The minutes of the 21 May 2014 board meeting were approved.

The project's fourth quarter work plan was approved.

The formation of the micro-grant committee consisting the representatives of the project, the UNDP CO and the project beneficiaries was approved.

The board agreed to discuss the scenarios for 2015 at the next board meeting

The next board meeting to be held in the first or second week of December 2014