

# IN THE KNOW

Issue 31  
July 2009

News of the month

## Centre for Constitutional Dialogue expands facilities

The Centre for Constitutional Dialogue (CCD) recently inaugurated the expansion of its facilities by unveiling a new floor.

The CCD, initiated by the UNDP **Support to Participatory Constitution Building in Nepal (SPCBN)** project and donors (Denmark, Norway, DFID, Switzerland, USAID/OTI) is now a two floor facility with the capability of providing simultaneous interpretation for programmes in up to six different Nepali languages, an expanded library and a larger seminar hall with recording facilities.



**Chairman of the Constituent Assembly, Rt. Honourable Subash Chandra Nembang at the CCD**

Mr. Robert Piper, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in his key note address said that the CCD was

established with the idea of developing a platform for exchange of information to facilitate the Constitution making process. "We wanted to create a space for dialogue and to assist this dialogue with knowledge, advice and techniques", said he.

Since the opening of the CCD in January 2009, the centre has hosted more than 9,000 visitors and has offered trainings and workshops on the most complex constitutional issues, from minority rights, civil-military relations to principles for the demarcation of boundaries to a broad range of actors. *(More information on CCD can be accessed From <http://www.ccd.org.np>)*



**A panel discussion on 'Building a Political Consensus for the New Nepal' was facilitated by the BBC World Service Trust during the inauguration**

## Support to peace building

## Strengthening capacity for negotiation and consensus-building

As part of its support to the Constituent Assembly (CA) in the process of drafting a new constitution, the UNDP/**Support to Participatory Constitution Building in Nepal (SPCBN)** project has launched a new initiative to strengthen the capacity of Constituent Assembly members to negotiate and build constructive consensus.

Although negotiation and consensus-building are not new concepts for the country, the training introduces a structured framework to enhance existing skills and competencies in a cooperative approach to negotiation as a key building block towards constructive consensus.

The CA Members have been targeted as a key constituency because their deliberations on the constitution will have a tremendous effect on the future of a country transitioning from a 10-year insurgency.

The first part of this new initiative has been a three-week workshop to build



**Training of trainers for nationals to train the CA members on 'Negotiating for Constructive Consensus'**

the capacity of trainers who will then provide training to many of the 601 members of the CA over the next few months. The initial workshop included pilot sessions where newly trained trainers applied their skills to 35 CA Members. Each pilot session also provided an opportunity for the members to apply their newly acquired skills to a scenario of complex negotiation in the CA.

The courses have been designed to

enable leaders from competing political affiliations to address four principle challenges to achieve durable peace: shifting from a zero-sum mindset to one that recognizes interdependence; rebuilding the trust between leaders, which had been shattered by conflict; strengthening communication and negotiation skills; and rebuilding a consensus on decision-making and organisation of power.

The training was conducted over three weeks in July at the Centre for Constitutional Dialogue.

The initial training certified 13 Nepali trainers (7 women, 6 men) who are now skilled to conduct courses in Negotiating for Constructive Consensus for CA Members. By certifying national Nepali trainers, the initiative is to strengthen sustainable national capacity for negotiation and consensus building. The newly certified trainers also form a pool of resource persons who will train other political, administrative and civil society leaders in future initiatives.



**Participants engaged in practical exercise of the training**

## Support to peace building

## Voices of the marginalized communities

A one-day interaction programme on the **'Role of Media on the Issues of Marginalized Communities'**, was organised by the *Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ)* at the Centre for Constitutional Dialogue (CCD) on 20 July, chaired by Mr. Dharmendra Jha, President of the FNJ.

The programme was inaugurated by the Chairman of the Constituent Assembly, Rt. Honourable Subash Chandra Nembang, participated by the CA members, civil society organizations, editors and representatives of the media.

On the occasion, Chairman Nembang released a new monthly magazine, *'Sambad' (Dialogue)*, published by the FNJ with the financial support of UNDP/**Support to Participatory Constitution Building in Nepal**



Rt. Honourable Subash Chandra Nembang, Chairman of the CA, launching the new monthly magazine 'Sambad' along with UNDP Country Director Anne-Isabelle Degryse-Blateau



(SPCBN). The magazine is being disseminated to all 601 members of the CA, as well as all the district chapters of the FNJ at the national level.

Speaking on the occasion, UNDP Country Director, Anne-Isabelle Degryse-Blateau expressed her hope that the new monthly magazine, *Sambad*, would effectively raise the voices of Dalits, indigenous groups and the marginalized communities to

reflect their aspirations in the new constitution. Ms. Degryse-Blateau stated that UNDP would always help campaigns that are focused on empowering people with their rights.

In the second session of the programme, representatives of the civil society organisations interacted with the editors of the electronic and print media, on the role of media to raise the issues of the marginalized community.

## Interaction on electoral agenda with CA members and opinion makers

A training on BRIDGE (Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Election) was organised by the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN), with financial and technical support from UNDP/**Electoral Support Project**, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) and International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES).

Altogether 64 participants (comprising 22 % women, 34% Janjatis, 9% Dalit, 23% Madhesis and others) received the training in three sessions. There were intensive discussions on the implications of electoral systems, election system



Members of the Constituent Assembly (CA) participating in the BRIDGE training

matrix, strategic designing of an electoral system, electoral systems and under-represented groups, quotas and systems. Former ministers,

senior leaders of political parties, CA members, media, judiciary and independent opinion makers participated in the training.

## News from the field

## Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) mobile camps in the far-west

Three Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) mobile camps were set up in July for 15 villages of Humla district by the *Himalaya Conservation and Development Association*, an NGO, with the support of the **UNDP HIV/AIDS Programme Management Unit**.

The programme called 'Comprehensive package for migrants and their families', is largely supported by the UK Government's *Department for International Development (DFID)*.

The objective of setting up these camps was to share about HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases



VCT mobile camp in Humla district

(STI), HIV antibody blood test, treatment of STI and other general diseases. The camp demonstrated and promoted the use of condoms as well.

The HCDA recently completed three mobile camps at Muchu, Yalbang and Hilsa, in the border areas of Nepal and China also.

### Lama takes the lead to promote VCT!

Success Story



VCT team active in Yalbang, Humla– it is located along the trekking route of Simikot to mount Kailash where a big Buddhist monastery is located. During the Buddhist festival time, a great number of Buddhists participate from the nearby villages such as Simikot, Bargaun, Thehe, Hepka, Khagalgaun, Muchu and Limi . All these people were able to benefit from the mobile camp.

In Humla, the Lama of Yalbang Monastery was approached by the VCT team to seek permission to set up the mobile camps and conduct awareness campaign on HIV/AIDS and STI.

To begin with, the team first briefed the Lama on HIV/AIDS and STI cases and high risk of HIV/AIDS transmission in the global and Nepal context. After the orientation, not only did the Lama give the permission but also briefed all these people who had come to attend the Buddhist festival. He advocated the purpose of these mobile camps.

As a result of him taking the lead to support the camp, a large number of people came in for VCT. There were 50 clients tested for HIV antibody, 54 clients treated for STI diseases, 51 clients counseled, and near about 850 people got information and education about HIV/AIDS, STI, condom demonstration and other general diseases. There were 400 pieces of condoms distributed in the camp.

## Ensuring seed sovereignty of local farmers

The country's first ever **Community Seed Bank (CSB)** was established in 2004 in Kachorwa village of Bara district with the support of the *Agricultural Development and Conservation Society (ADCS)* and the *Local Initiatives for Biodiversity Research and Development (LI BIRD)*. Managed and owned by the community, the seed bank was started with 54 locally endangered variety of seeds. In 2006, the UNDP Global Environment Facility (GEF)/ Small Grants Programme supported the construction of the 'seed bank building' which further helped the community to expand their business.

At present there are 80 varieties of seeds (rice, beans, lentil and barley) conserved and stored in the seed bank. Improved rice varieties have been developed with technical inputs from LI-BIRD. The seeds are stored under different earthen structures which are designed locally.

"Maintaining seeds in the seed bank is highly technical. Under traditional seed storage system, any seed cannot

be stored for more than one year so for higher yield, every year the seeds need to be regenerated," says Ramadhar Yadav, secretary of the ADCS. Since its establishment, the seed bank has sold 23 tonnes of seeds of 13 varieties and earned a net profit of over Rs 140,000. The demand of seeds from neighbouring districts and neighbouring Indian villages is ever increasing.

The community has established a trust fund, also known as 'diversity fund' to strengthen diversity conservation in the private farms as well. The condition set for the farmers is that each member taking loan has to grow seeds of any one of the rare or endangered traditional variety. Till date a total amount of Rs. 414,000 has been disbursed to 150 members including 128 women members to run micro-enterprises. The project has ensured that small scale and marginalized farmers relying on



Community seed bank of Kachorwa village in Bara district

traditional farming are given top priority while disbursing the loan without any collateral. However, after the harvest, the farmers are required to return 1.5 times of the seed volume they had originally borrowed from the seed bank. A participatory survey revealed that the return rate was 100% successful.

"The diversity fund has served dual purpose as it has provided livelihood to the local poor farmers and also helped to regenerate the local seed varieties, thus ensuring seed sovereignty of the local farmers", says Mr. Rup Narayan Prasad Yadav, President of the ADCS.

## AusAID, UNDP joint field visit

Following the recent cost sharing agreement of AUD4.5 million between AusAID and UNDP to continue to support the third phase of Micro-enterprise Development Programme (MEDEP) in Nepal, a joint visit was organised to observe the ongoing micro-enterprise development activities in the communities supported by MEDEP.

UNDP Country Director, Ms. Anne-Isabelle Degryse-Blateau accompanied Her Excellency Ms. Susan Grace, the Australian Ambassador to Nepal along with other AusAID and UNDP officials to observe saw-mill, cement block factory and health clinic started by the conflict affected youths of Bateshwor village in Dhanusha district.

The visiting team met with the women entrepreneurs and observed their products and also met with the district level officials to discuss on the scope of the enterprises and ways of taking it forward.

Published by,

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