

Capacity Development for Transition in Nepal: Building effective institutions of state and delivering services¹

Core Issue: *CD for Recovery and Transition Situation*

Allied Issues: *Institutional Development, Policy Coordination, Leadership, Human Resources, Multi-Stakeholder Engagement*

In a nutshell

In Asia, UNDP has provided capacity development (CD) support for Crisis Prevention and Recovery. This includes strengthening the capacities of national institutions engaged in peace process and recovery, such as the newly-established Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR) in Nepal, which provides a strengthened internal structure for enhancing coordination of peace efforts, and assist national recovery and development through conflict management, truth finding and reconciliation, and social reconstruction. UNDP Nepal's Peace Building and Recovery Unit (PBRU) is actively engaged in supporting the Nepal Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) and in enhancing MoPR's capacities to effectively contribute to the peace process. As a newly established ministry, MoPR faces teething policy and implementation challenges such as formulating effective strategic and operational plans to pursue its mandate; enhancing team work, individual productivity and institutional effectiveness; strengthening organizational leadership and management capacities; and demonstrating its competencies and added value. Capacity challenges faced by the Ministry includes strengthening inter-ministerial coordination in the planning, implementation and monitoring of peace and reconstruction efforts; strategic planning; information management; human resource management including performance management and incentive systems; and stakeholder engagement, among others.

The Story

On 21 November 2006, the decade long armed conflict in Nepal officially ended with the signing of a Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) between the seven-party alliance government of Nepal and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist). Providing the long-term policy framework for the peace process in the country, the CPA emphasizes commitment to protection of human rights; state reconstruction while addressing existing problems based on class, caste, region and sex; multiparty democratic system of governance; political, socioeconomic and social transformation; and conflict management while addressing present issues of arms and armies, and addressing needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs) estimates of which range from 100,000 to 250,000. It also mandated the creation of relevant mechanisms, e.g., Interim Constitution, Interim Council of Ministers, National Peace and Rehabilitation Commission, and Truth and Reconciliation Commission, among others to guide the peace process, and set forth an election of a Constituent Assembly which took place in April 2008.

As part of the government's efforts to move the peace process and national reconstruction forward, a Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR) was established in April 2007. The

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MoPR takes on the functions of the now dissolved Peace Secretariat, provides a strengthened internal structure for enhancing coordination of peace efforts, and assists national recovery and development through conflict management, truth finding and reconciliation, and social reconstruction. MoPR has received a rather broad, encompassing mandate which can throw up some implementation challenges particularly at its developmental stage. Typically, newly-established or newly-restructured organizations face challenges in the following areas: developing effective strategic and operational plans; enhancing team work, individual productivity and institutional effectiveness; strengthening organizational leadership and management capacities; and demonstrating its competencies and added value, and marketing its services. All these challenges are presently confronting MoPR. The promises of peace and development as brought forth by the CPA likewise creates high expectations for the newly-established Ministry.

A joint scoping mission conducted by the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) and CDG Asia Team based at the UNDP Regional Centre in Bangkok (RCB) identified a number of key challenges that confront MoPR. At the policy level, these include strengthening of inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms for peace and reconstruction, including defining and forging agreements on specific roles, responsibilities and accountabilities; and developing and strengthening monitoring frameworks for the peace process. At the organizational (MoPR) level, these include: clarifying roles and functions of MoPR divisions and staff positions; strategic planning and prioritization of needs particularly within context of Nepal Peace Trust Fund; identifying and enhancing required institutional competencies viz other ministries; developing a common institutional approach for multistakeholder engagement, conflict resolution and negotiation; and leadership development, among others. MoPR staff members also face functional challenges particularly in engaging IDPs and other stakeholders in consensus building and outreach, and coordinating with civil society organizations and political parties at the local level; and procurement. Following the findings of the scoping mission, the MoPR has requested UNDP Nepal to conduct a full capacity assessment of the organization.

Results and Critical Factors

The MoPR case is in its initial phase – The CD Group and BCPR will continue to support a series of CD response strategies aimed at the following broad challenge areas: here, it is useful to emphasize some critical factors that have contributed to a stronger recognition for an approach that will support and sustain the national peace process.

One, the recent elections provide an optimism within the government, the public and development partners that the country is indeed gaining from the CPA and the peace process. It also provided a realization that strengthening the governance capacities of the new government is crucial towards fully realizing the dividends of the peace process.

Second, the immensity of the peace and recovery challenges faced by the government after a decade-long conflict has become more apparent since the CPA was signed and the interim government took over the reigns of the government. While donors and development partners have been providing strong support to the peace process, the government's capacity to prioritize and respond to development challenges and deliver basic services, particularly in addressing the needs of IDPs and ex-combatants. The coordination of all activities being currently supported by the UN Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) once its term expires in July 2008 is also expected to be fully under the realm under the hands of the government.

And thirdly, the call for ensuring delivery of basic services at the local level has become more urgent. Severely constrained by the conflict, local administrations in many districts and villages remain virtually non-existent or ineffective. Implementing a well-coordinated approach to responding to such needs, from the national to local level government units, require integrated approaches, structures and mechanisms, that are yet to be instituted within the government.