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USAID Support to Elections

USAID is poised to support Nepal's elections with four programs implemented through five partners.

Monitoring Nepal's Peace Process and Constitution Drafting Project

The Carter Center | Budget: \$3.5 M | Life of Project: 9/2009-6/2014

In addition to other aspects of the peace process, The Carter Center monitors elections preparations across each region. To date, they have observed the citizenship registration and voter registration drive, documented local governance processes absent local elections, and surveyed perceptions of the elections process. Recommendations drawn from the observations are shared bi-monthly with local and international stakeholders. The project's twelve long-term observers are accredited by the Election Commission of Nepal as international observers and recently deployed on September 23, 2013 to each development region to begin their pre-elections monitoring.

Strengthening Political Parties, Electoral and Legislative Processes Project

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) | Budget: \$26.5 M | Life of Project: 8/2010-8/2015

While NDI works with political parties to ready them for the elections, IFES supports the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) through technical assistance and training of their District Elections Offices.

NDI provides training to political parties to inform them of ECN requirements for elections registration, the ECN code of conduct, constituent outreach, voter registration, as well as trainings for campaigning, poll watching, and agenda development, and candidate debates. NDI now fields a national public opinion research questionnaire to gauge citizens' perception and priority issues. NDI established Democracy and Elections Watch (DEW-Nepal), an NGO coalition which represents a cross-section of Nepal's society, including traditionally marginalized populations. DEW-Nepal will train and deploy 6,000 observers covering all 240 constituencies, as well as disseminate voter information in the Kathmandu Valley, targeting women, youth and other marginalize groups.

IFES provides technical assistance to the ECN for electoral law reform, media elections training, and District Election Officers training for voter registration, elections administration, and voter education. IFES works in 26 districts through local NGOs that target Dalit, women, freed Kamaya, youth, and people with disabilities for electoral education, polling, and voter registration. Additionally, IFES repaired four ballot printing presses donated by USAID and India for the 2008 elections, as well as trained related personnel, and purchased a fourth press to expedite ballot printing. Also IFES is assisting the ECN with ballot design and ballot monitoring. In September 2013 IFES trained all 240 constituencies' Returning Officers who supervise vote counting and announces the constituencies' results.

Nepal Peace Support Project

The Asia Foundation | Budget: \$4.1 M | Life of Project: 3/2009-8/2014

This five-year program includes the Nepal Transition to Peace (NTTP) Forum to work with political party leaders in order to build consensus around contentious issues, such as the criteria for elections and proportionate representation. Most recently the NTTP Forum brought dissenting parties into negotiations on elections. Since NTTP's inception in 2006, the Forum's facilitators have garnered the trust and confidence of party leaders and will continue to mediate disputes throughout the election period.

Nepal Peace Trust Fund (NPTF)

Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction | Budget: \$1.05 M | Life of Project: 12/2012-1/2016

USAID is one of eight donors that support and pool funds in the Government of Nepal-managed NPTF. NPTF is responsible for implementing the commitments under the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Accord, including Constituent Assembly elections for the promulgation of the constitution. The ECN's largest financial support comes through the NPTF for the November polls (\$94.1 M total, \$37 M for elections and the remaining for elections security and other costs). Apart from financing the ECN's operations, local staff training, and outreach, funding has gone to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) to conduct a citizenship registration drive in tandem with ECN's voter registration, as well as to stand up MOHA's 50,000 temporary police for elections security.