

**People's SAARC-India congratulates the people of Nepal on adopting  
'Constitution of Nepal 2072'  
and condemns Modi Government's unofficial blockade of Nepal**

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Nepal promulgated its constitution on 20 September 2015. This historic event was the culmination of nine years of effort, including a failed first Constituent Assembly. The process of drafting the constitution has been frustratingly slow and complicated given divergent interests and views on issues of demarcation of federal provinces, citizenship provisions, secularism, inclusion and the form of governance.

In the aftermath of the earthquake that devastated Nepal in April 2015, the people of Nepal needed for the process of constitution writing to be completed at the earliest in order for the country to move towards economic and social revival and rehabilitation allowing for the state to improve the dire conditions in which the people of Nepal were surviving.

While recognizing that there continue to be some weaknesses in safeguarding the rights of marginalized groups including women, dalits, Tharus, Janjatis and Madhesis, People's SAARC-India welcomes the announcement of the Constituent Assembly that amendments can be adopted with relative ease over the remainder of its terms of two years and four months in order to address the Nepali people's demands for recognition of their rights, security and inclusion. People's SAARC-India supports the peaceful protests of the people of Nepal to highlight their felt exclusions, and it is aware of the unevenness of guaranteeing rights for some groups while overlooking demands by other groups.

The Government of India, as the biggest South Asian country in the neighbourhood with deep cultural, ethnic and linguistic ties with Nepal, has failed in its duty to support the democratic transition in Nepal. It has to be reiterated that a Constitution is rarely deemed to be a perfect document when first adopted. The Indian Constitution has been amended numerous times since it was adopted. Thus, by failing to welcome the historic culmination of a democratic process and intervening in the internal affairs of a sovereign country where the people are working towards sorting out their differences, the Indian Government is failing its own vision and promise to move South Asia towards a future of mutual trust and respect.

People's SAARC-India condemns the interventionism of the Government of India and its attempts to micromanage by sending a list of clauses to Government of Nepal specifying the amendments that it seeks. This blatant disregard for the autonomy of the people and the Government of Nepal to decide their future for themselves is highly objectionable.

Even more objectionable is the unofficial blockade of trade on the Indo-Nepal border which is the lifeline of the Nepali economy and which directly affects the lives of ordinary people of Nepal.

People's SAARC-India calls upon the Government of India to immediately ease all blockages at the Indo-Nepal border, give clear and formal instructions to Indian Oil Corporation and customs officials at the border to ensure that border trade resumes to normality at the absolute earliest. By not doing so the Modi Government is violating the recently inked Bhutan, Bangladesh, India and Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicle Agreement as well as the UN Convention on Transit Trade of Land-locked States.

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