

ADN welcomes the adoption of the new constitution and concerns over the political and humanitarian crisis in Nepal

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The Asia Democracy Network (ADN) welcomes the promulgation of the constitution by the Constituent Assembly of Nepal on September 20, 2015. We congratulate the people of Nepal in collaborating through a democratic process to develop and adopt a constitution that will strengthen the foundations of democracy in the country. Given the history of armed conflict and inter-community polarizations, we recognize the importance of the democratic and representative process through which the Constitution was promulgated.

We recognize that more work needs to be done to ensure inclusion of marginalized communities through amendments to the Constitution. We note that a constitution in the process of implementation of the new constitution. A constitution is a living document that requires constant improvements to respond to democratic values based on inclusion and participation, values which the ADN upholds. We are confident that in the coming days the political parties of Nepal will work towards consensus-building and consultation with communities which have felt marginalized throughout history. This process will, we hope, address the dissatisfactions that have been expressed over the constitutional draft.

As a network of civil society organizations promoting democracy in Asia, ADN hopes that the Government of Nepal will take sincere steps towards ensuring equal rights to its citizens, through open dialogue with differing voices. At the same time, we recognize that the amendments of the Constitution of Nepal should be the result of a representative, democratic process within Nepal without interference of any kind of outside forces.

The ADN expresses its deepest concerns at blockade of supplies that land-locked Nepal is being made to face, as a country largely dependent on the border trade with India. The blockade of essential goods including medicine, essential supplies, cooking gas and fuel has severely worsened the humanitarian situations of a region hit by the devastating earthquake of April 2015.

Considering that India and Nepal have shared their long term friendship, we call on the civil society of two countries to work together to address the geopolitical and humanitarian challenges that have hit Nepal. India as a large and experienced democracy and Nepal as an emerging democratized country must give top priority to the people and their needs. The rest of the international community must collaborate to ease the current crisis in Nepal.

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