

Press Release

CONSTITUTIONAL DEADLOCK & PURSUIT FOR A FRESH POLL IN NEPAL

In the rapidly changed political situation in the country, which is marred with uncertainties, confusions and dilemmas, holding the election for the new Constituent Assembly (CA) during the month of April-May this year, obviously looks indefinite. As we all know, the obstacles behind the uncertainties are further distancing relationship among the key political parties due to emerging differences on power equation; non-approval of the majority of the ordinances (including that of the election to the new CA) by the president on the ground of the absence of constitutionally mandated political consensus on the ordinances; and the growing rift/tension on the question of transitional justice. The prevailing contention on whether a new CA election should be held or the dissolved CA be revived has further created a non-conducive environment for holding a timely, free, fair and credible election.

Realizing the need for bringing the stakeholders on single platform to publicly engage them with the concerned civil society groups (mainly election education/ observation related ones) and the media, NEOC organized an interactive dialogues session on “Constitutional Deadlock & Pursuit for a Fresh Poll” on 3 February 2013.

The chairperson of NEOC Mr. Surya Prasad Shrestha stated that Nepal, unlike the past eight elections is now being face with a chaotic political transition. It is immensely essential to determine the dynamics of the factors that led to surfacing of such unforeseen circumstances, hence, paving a path for meaningful political solutions.

The former Constitutional Committee Chairman of the dissolved Constituent Assembly Mr. Nilambar Acharya presented a paper on “**Political and Constitutional Deadlock: Exploring Solutions**” which among other various issues also talked about the jeopardizing of the Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007 which is in urgent need of amendment and should be brought back into its track. Election in Nepal is next to impossible until and unless a proper and conducive environment to conduct the same is created. Adding to this, he also opined that free, fair, credible, democratic, fearless, logical and timely election is the only way out of this political instability. Mr. Bhoj Raj Pokhrel, the former Chief Election Commissioner, had similar views.

Election in Nepal can get a way only if the key political party leaders build a strong will to do so was the view of the former acting Chief Election Commissioner Mr. Nil Kantha Uprety.

Prof. Kapil Shrestha, Co-Chairperson of NEOC, said that there is no other better alternative to a political stagnancy but a democratic election with international benchmarks.

The present political crisis desperately requires top priority to explore the various possible and suitable solutions and to rescue the nation from this swamp. To bring into reality this envision, Dr. Gopal Krishna Slwakoti, Secretary General of NEOC, stated that it is essential for the key actors and people in power to come down to a mutual consensus without damaging the fabric of a democratic constitutionalism. Adding to this, the former Election Commissioner, Mr. Ayodhi Prasad Yadav believed that the Election Commission of Nepal is still very much capable to conduct election at any reasonable time if the political parties agree upon mutual grounds and declare the date of election.

Also participating in the programme, former Nepali ambassadors Dr. Durgesh Man Singh (India) and Mr. Tanka Karki (China) highlighted on the growing diplomatic distrust of the neighbors towards Nepal in the absence of a political consensus in the country. Similarly, Prof. Dr. Surendra K.C., central committee member of the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum Dr. Shiva Prasad Yadav, Dr. Ramdayal Rakesh, Electoral Expert Mr. Ram Kumar Shrestha, Senior Journalist Mr. Harihar Birahi, Mr. Yuvaraj Ghimire, Ms. Babita Basnet, Ms. Nirmala Sharma, Chairperson of Human Rights Organization of Nepal Mr. Sudip Pathak, NEOC executive member Mr. Shantalal Mulmi, Chairperson of National Alliance for Human Rights and Social Justice Mr. Ganesh B. K., Ms. Kumari Laxmi Joshi and many others presented their views and ideas on the topic.

Various electoral experts, lawyers, human right advocates, civil society representatives and journalists had also participated in the programme.

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