

National Consultation
on
Local level Restructuring in Nepal: Reflecting the Voices of Grass-root Leaders

Proceeding Report

Introduction and Background

National Association of Village Development Committee in Nepal (NAVIN) is an umbrella organization to represent 3157 VDCs of Nepal. It was established in 1995 under National Directive Act – 1961 as the representative association of Nepal. Its main objective is to protect the rights and interest of VDCs to ensure the local self-governance. To fulfill the objectives, NAVIN has been strengthening its network among like-minded organizations and capacity building of village authorities to ensure effective public service delivery.

NAVIN has its central committee with 25 members which was elected from its general conventions which comprising of elected VDC chairmen and vice-chairmen from all over the country. In addition, there are central council and district committees in all 75 districts. For the operation of daily activities, national office has been established in Kamaladi, Kathmandu with small and smart secretariat.

Rationale of the Program

The contribution of Nepal-2072 has conceptualized 3 tiers of government in the country – Federal (national), provinces and local. Each tier of government is to be functioned democratically with following the principle of separation of power. Most significantly, the constitution has enshrined the provision of Gaupalika and Nagarpalika at the local level. Such local government structures are the front line units of governance, fully responsible for service delivery to the citizens. To meet the aspiration of newly promulgated constitution of Nepal, local government needs appropriate policies and regulatory frameworks, efficient organizational structures and redefining territory of local governments.

To accelerate the processes to implement constitution, government of Nepal has formulated a Local Level Restructuring Commission (LLRC) with the prescription of assignments and timelines. The assignments of the commission are to set-up numbers of local governments, boundary demarcation of the given local governments, recommend special and protected autonomous areas; propose administrative centers and recommend organizational and management structures of local governments.

Since the commission is making progress on the given assignments, NAVIN has had significant roles to accelerate processes and provide constructive inputs to achieve the efficient, effective and people-friendly local government structures. In this context, NAVIN is the appropriate

organization to hold a comprehensive consultation at national and local level with mobilizing its nation-wide organizational strength. The membership base of NAVIN are the formerly elected VDC chairmen and vice-chairmen who are supposed to undertake continuous and active involvement in social, political and humanitarian affairs along the country-side. The council members of NAVIN are also believed to have better ideas, knowledge and experiences in the issues of local government restructuring. More than that, they are firmly an honor and legacy of grass-root level people's voices.

Program Briefs

Considering the ongoing debate on Local level Restructuring in line with the constitution of Nepal – 2072, National Association of VDCs in Nepal (NAVIN) organized national consultation program on the topic of “Local Level Restructuring: Reflecting the Voices of Grass-root Leaders”. The consultation program was organized on 2nd September 2016, Friday at Trade Tower, Thapathali, Kathmandu.

Program Structure

The program was set of schedule for half day with three components: formal session, comprehensive discussion session and closing session. In the beginning, formal session was conducted with welcoming the chief guests and special guests. Second session was conducted with presentation of two issue papers (one written and one verbal). Later After the two presentations, Honorable Minister made his remarks on the issues raised by the papers followed by the feedback and comments from political party leaders and wide-range of participants. During the discussion, grass-root leaders / NAVIN EC members actively took part to make opinions on the issue papers. In response with the comments and queries, LLRC members made their response and tried to clarify the messages on processes and criteria of the local level restructuring. The program was concluded by a closing remarks from program Chair followed by small refreshment / high tea. For the detail information, it is referred to see the annex in program schedule.

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Participants

There were more than 80 participants representing the different sectors and agencies particularly from political party leaders, NAVIN working committee members, officers from MoFALD, local governance experts, LLRC members, journalists and donor community. Program chaired by Mr.



Ghanashyam Khatiwada (Chairman of NAVIN) and welcome remarks by Mr. Bhim Prasad Dhungana (secretary General of NAVIN). Chief guest of the program was Honorable Minister Hit Raj Pandey, Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development and special guests were Political party leaders, Members of Parliament and the members of Local Level

Restructuring Commission. In addition, there were 20 more central committee members of NAVIN. There were several representations from donor communities including USAID, SDC, World Bank, CECI, Asia Foundation etc. For the detail information, it is referred to see the annex.

Paper Presentations

The program was focused on the presentation of theme / issues through contextual two papers. First was the oral presentation with pointing the theme which was made by Mr. Dev Raj Dahal, Country Representative of FES – Nepal. Topic of the first presentation was “theoretical debates: Local Democracy and its Practices in Nepal”. Next presentation on written paper form which was presented by Mr. Narayan Koirala, Former Chairman of NAVIN. Topic of the second paper was “Structures and Numbers Debate in Local Level Restructuring in Nepal: issues of Grass-root Problems and Challenges”.

Opinion / Remarks

After the two presentations, discussion was initiated by a formal comment from Prof. Dr. hem Raj Subedi, Center of Peace and Conflict Studies, Tribhuvan University. Based on the issues raised in the papers, Honorable Minister Hit Raj Pandey made his valuable points and opinions from the government of Nepal on the current debates of local restructuring. Following the discussions, several personalities made their comments and opinions which took more than 2 hours. In response with the individual opinions, two political leaders Honorable Agni prasad Kharel (Polit Bureau Member of CPN – UML) and Honorable Rekha Sharma (Polit Bureau Member of CPN – Maoist Center) made their clarifications with reflecting the views of their parties. During the discussion session, local / grass-root leaders from different parts of the country raised the specific challenges of local restructuring and future implications in governance and development. Major speakers who put their opinions over the presentations have been stated as following:

Speakers	Opinion in Short
Prof. Dr. Hem Raj Subedi	Ongoing challenges of national politics; need and validity of constitutional amendment
Mr. Uddhab Regmi	Problems of restructuring in Terai Madhesh districts
Mr. Devendra Prakash Poudel	Short-comings and demerits of new constitutions in national integrity
Mr. Keshav Kumar Acharya	Starting of works with suspicion will not reach the success
Mr. Ramesh Dhamala	Complexities of local restructuring, more wards can provide better access of services to the grass-root people
Mr. Ram Jivan Singh	LLRC should be careful to keep the national integrity while restructuring works moving on
Mr. Lal Bahadur Khadka	LLRC influencing the people to be merged into larger units with development projects which is very bad for the future
Mr. Nawaraj Gelal	Viable units to be formed to exercise the constitutional rights
Mr. Ramesh Kumar Adhikari	MuAN and NAVIN should make joint practice for achievable results; Municipality should not be returned as village
Krishna Prasad Jaishi	Existing VDCs in hill and Mountain districts are difficult to merge, that will increase travel time; No logics behind the viability with larger units
Mr. Madhav Poudel	Basic functions will be far away if the local govt. units larger than today
Babukaji Karki	Current responsibility is to support LLRC to hold local election on time;

Closing Session

Closing session was addressed by two eminent guests: Honorable Lal Babu Yadav, Member of Parliament and member of LLRC Mr. Shyam Krishna Bhurtel.

Hon'ble Yadav made his remarks with the necessity of implementing the constitution of Nepal. There are several issues which are still under examination of politics and such are to be resolved through gradual improvement in the constitution. Likewise, his ideas were to shape the economy and political system through constitutional provisions.

Mr. Bhurtel made his response over the issues and comments rose targeting to the working process of LLRC and the criteria set to obtain the local level restructuring at the district level. He

confirmed that there are two ideological debates in favor of larger and smaller units of local governments and his claim on that new constitution of Nepal demanding the larger units to exercise exclusive rights and responsibilities in the local government level.

The program was concluded with the closing remarks from the chair of the program Mr. Ghanashyam Khatiwada.

Outcomes and Conclusions

The program provided a strong platform to interact with national stakeholders including the officials of the commission and carry-out comprehensive discussion on given themes. First of all, the program opened the debate discourse on local level restructuring among political parties and grass-root leaders. Two sides of logical presentations have been able to come out with the perspectives from local government leaders. It has also injected the realization among experts and local leaders to enter into the in-depth exercise at the district level and to hold more consultations with LLRC members and district level technical support committee. By the effort of this program, LLRC is trying to find a way-out to conclude the number and structure debate and coming closer toward the consultation with local leaders.

Funding and Support for the Program

To accomplish the program, NAVIN had made request with FES – Nepal for a substantial funding. In response with the request, there was support received in major expenditure headings and also support received in encouragement, coordination, participant' information and carry-out thematic presentations.

Annex – 1: Program Schedule

National Consultation on Local level restructuring in Nepal: Reflecting the Voices of Grass-root Leaders

Program Schedule

Date: 2nd September 2016, Friday
Venue: Trade Tower, Thapathali, Kathmandu
Time: 13:30 – 17:00 Hours

Program / Activity	Responsible
Master of Ceremony:	Mr. Bimal Pokharel, Executive Director – NAVIN
Program Chair:	Mr. Ghanashyam Khatiwada, Vice-chairman – NAVIN
Invitation to Guests:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development• Party Representatives – Major Political Parties• Chairman of Local level Restructuring Commission• Chairman of MuAN• Chairman of ADDCN•
Welcome Speech:	Mr. Bhim Prasad Dhungana, Secretary Gen. – NAVIN
Presentation of Theoretical Bases on Local Government Restructuring	Mr. Devraj Dahal, Country Representative, FES – Nepal
Issue Paper Presentation:	Mr. Narayan Pd. Koirala, EC Member – NAVIN
Key Note Speech	Prof. Dr. Hem Raj Subedi, Tribhuvan University
Sharing of District level Debates on Local Restructuring	EC members of NAVIN (Selected)
Plenary Discussion on Papers	Participants
Reflections and Opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chairman of LLRC• Representatives of Major Political Parties
Closing with Vote of Thanks	Chair of the Session
High Tea	NAVIN Team

Annex – 2: Participant List

S.No.	Name	Gender	Organization	Position
1.	Ghanshyam Khatiwoda	M	NAVIN	Chairperson
2.	Hit Raj Pandey	M	Ministry/MoFALD	Minister
3.	Agni Kharel	M	MP/CPN UML	Polit-Bureau
4.	Bhim Prasad Dhungana	M	NAVIN	General Secretary
5.	Narayan Pd. Koirala	M	NAVIN	CM
6.	Toyanath Chalise	M	NAVIN	CM
7.	Mahabir Saud	M	NAVIN	CM
8.	Babu Kaji Karki	M	NAVIN	CM
9.	Ramesh Pd. Dhamala	M	NAVIN	CM
10.	Padam Bd. Paudel	M	NAVIN	CM
11.	Mohan Kumar Shrestha	M	NAVIN	CM
12.	Lan Bd Khadka	M	NAVIN	CM
13.	Ratna Pd. Acharya	M	NAVIN	Treasurer
14.	Najir Miya	M	NAVIN	CM
15.	Nawaraj Gelal	M	NAVIN	CM
16.	Indra Subba	M	NAVIN	CM
17.	Raj Kumar Basnet	M	NAVIN	CM
18.	Ashrya bd. Pande	M	Asia Foundation	Program Officer
19.	Tirtha Raj bhattasai	M	MoFALD	Under Secretary
20.	Man Bd G.C.	M	NAVIN	CM
21.	Pashupati Pokhrel	M	Government of Nepal	Retired US

S.No.	Name	Gender	Organization	Position
22.	Thakur Pd. Tiwari	M	NAVIN	CM
23.	Basanta Rai	M	CECI-Nepal	
24.	Gyan Pd. Neupane	M	Republica Daily	
25.	Indra Bd. Tamang	M	Fedwasun	Vice Chairman
26.	Sher Bd. Duwadi	M		
27.	Dev Raj Dahal	M	Head, FES Nepal	
28.	Hans Limchhoff	M	FES Nepal	Volunteer
29.	Dr. Pratap Chhatkulli	M	Freelance	Consultant
30.	Rekha Sharma	F	CPN Maoist Center	Polit-Bureau
31.	Kapil Bhatta	M	Himal Khabar	
32.	Teeka Bhattarai	M	Freelancer	
33.	Pravesh Pd. Chapagain	M	NCDC - Ilam	Program Officer
34.	Chandra Dev Bhatta	M	FES Nepal	
35.	Keshav Kumar Acharya	M	LGCDP	CD Expert
36.	Bashu Basnet	M	NAVIN	District Chair
37.	Rabindra Marhatha	M	MoFALD	Officer
38.	Parshuram Upadhyay	M	LGCDP	Federal Expert
39.	Ambika Amatya	F	MuAN	Program Officer
40.	AnjaleeThakali	F	World Bank / PRAN	Program Coordinator
41.	Tirtha Neupane	M	SDSS	
42.	Chhowang Tenjing Tamang	M	Member of Parliament	
43.	Hem Raj Subedi	M	CPDS, TU	Professor

S.No.	Name	Gender	Organization	Position
44.	Ramesh Kumar Adhikari	M	Freelancer	
45.	Shyam Sundar Giri	M	Sthaniya Sarokar/NTV	
46.	Devendra Prakash Paudel	M	B.P.T.A.	
47.	Ganesh bd. Basnet	M	B.P.T.A.	
48.	Ram Jeevan Singh	M	B.P.T.A.	
49.	Lal Bahadur Yedi	M	MoFALD	Section Officer
50.	Rohit Raj Pokharel	M	Karya Binayak Municipality	
51.	Damodar Rijal	M	VDC Secretary H.H. Centre	Chairman
52.	Brisha Bd. Shahi	M	FECOFUN	Secretary
53.	Raja Korli	M	M.N.R.C.	
54.	Krishna Pd. Jaishi	M	ADDCN	Spokesperson
55.	Bidur Mainali	M	MuAN	Secretary Gen.
56.	Ram Pd. Adhikari	M	NAVIN	CM
57.	Bahadur Singh	M		
58.	Prakash Regmi	M	Swiss Embassy	Program Officer
59.	Madhav Adhikari	M	LLRC	Member
60.	Shyam Bhurtel	M	LLRC	Member
61.	Suraj Raj Kafle	M	B.P.T.A	
62.	Madhav Paudel	M	ADDCN	Past President
63.	Bimal Pokhrel		NAVIN	Executive Director
64.	Binod Kr Sah		NAVIN	Admin Fin. Officer

S.No.	Name	Gender	Organization	Position
65.	Rajindra Dhoj Thapa		NAVIN	Admin Fin Assistant
66.	Pawan Lohani		LBF Commission	Consultant
67.	Maniram Singh Mahat		TDF	ED
68.	Jinita Bishwakarma	F	LOGIN Asia	Country Facilitator
69.	Madam Krishna Shrestha	M	MuAN	EC Member
70.	Ganesh Datta Bhatta	M	T.U. Nepal	
71.	Gajendra Raj Sharma	M		
72.	D.M. Paudel	M		
73.	Kalanidhi Devkota	M	MuAN	Executive Secretary
74.	Ram B. Manandhar	M		
75.	Urmila Kafle	F	MoFALD	Planning Officer
76.	Lalbabu Yadav	M	Member of Parliament	
77.	Subash C. Shiwakoti	M	MoFALD	Under Secretary
78.	Ram Bahadur Rawal	M	Nepal Magazine	
79.	Ganesh Dhami	M	YAN	
80.	Nara Pd. Koirala	M	NAVIN	CM
81.	Ramesh Adhikari	M	USAID	Specialist
82.	Adv. Puspa Tiwari	F	J4A	
83.	Anisha Kayastha	F	NAVIN	Program Support