

**A Synopsis of  
Recommendations from District Level Discourse**

**on**

**Why District Government is necessary in the  
Context of New Constitution and State  
Restructuring?**



Association of District Development Committees of Nepal  
(ADDCN)  
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## **Background**

The term of the two-year Constituent Assembly (CA), which was formed after the Popular Movement-2 (Janaandolan-2006), has been expired and subsequently extended up by one year by making eighth amendment to the Interim Constitution of Nepal-2007 on May 28, 2010. Presently, Nepal is on the run-up of framing new constitution to implement the prime approach of sustainable peace, inclusive democracy and participatory development by usurping into Federal Democratic Republic system with forward-looking restructuring ending egalitarian and centralized governance system. In this context, all the 11 thematic committees formed under the Constituent Assembly (CA) have already submitted their respective reports to the CA. At a time when these reports were not brought among people for deliberations, ADDCN took initiative and held interactions with district-level political parties leaders, ex-elected office-bearers of local bodies, civil society representatives, among others regarding coordination of local governments with tiers, central and provincial governments and proposed local autonomous in state restructuring. The findings and conclusions spelt out during the discussion on the issue are presented here.

The draft reports submitted by various thematic committees concerned have not enthusiastically furnished recommendations in favour of local government in the to-be-framed new constitution of Nepal. In the context that ADDCN has long been lobbying and advocating for local autonomy and decentralization, interaction programmes were organized in 27 districts in line with the decision of holding district-level discussion on 'Why district government is necessary in the backdrop of state restructuring?' prepared in keeping with the recommendations of the thematic committees and the concept of the ADDCN. It has been brought out in an attempt to make public the synopsis of the discussion programme among Nepali people.

The district-level discussion programme was facilitated by the office-bearers of ADDCN (Chairperson, Spokesperson and executive committee members) while ADDCN secretariat coordinated the programme at district level. Local Development Officers (LDOs) at District Development Committees (DDCs) had assisted in course of coordination at district level. Similarly,

Programme Officers at concerned DDCs had also extended their support during discussion programme.

In some districts, the programmes were conducted in the presence of Constituent Assembly (CA) members and district court judges showing up as chief guests while in most of the programmes Chief District Officers were the Chief Guests. Likewise, chiefs and representatives of most of the political parties in district, ex-elected office-bearers of local bodies (DDCs, municipalities and VDCs), representatives of District Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), district chapters and intellegentia of civil society took part in the programmes. Almost all district-level programmes were presided over by Local Development Officers.

At the discussion programme, most of the participating speakers stressed the need of a tier of structure between provinces and villages/towns to play coordinating role while restructuring the state. Therefore the issue should categorically be enshrined in the new constitution, they underlined. However, a least number of participants raised an issue that there is no need of tier between provinces and villages/towns in case villages/towns were given the authority equivalent to DDC and the provinces will carry out the coordinating role itself. The district level discourses were conducted from February to April 2010.

## **Major Theoretical Recommendations**

The major conclusion of the district-level discussion programme is that the ignorance of the concept of district government will invite disintegration rather than unity in the society and local governments will be included in the provincial government, consequently services and facilities that people are receiving will have to be received from the distant government. The discussions also claimed that it will further disrupt the process of self-rule and decentralization in the country.

1. The prevailing situation is that people are revolving around the government instead of government moving around people as per the principle of subsidiarity. Therefore, the local government is necessary to work in close relations with people.
2. It seems the district government is a must to provide people with prompt and efficient services from the

nearest distance possible, make them to receive the services and to carry out coordinating role between provinces and village/municipality.

3. It may take around 5-10 years for the country like Nepal to develop physical infrastructure and set up administrative units as per the concept of province and VDC/municipality. Therefore, it seems necessary to give continuity to existing district level administrative structure since absence of the structure will create a confusing environment for people to receive services and facilities.
4. There will be more chance that general public may be deprived of the facilities and services provided by the province when it remains far from people at a time when geographical remoteness prevails and development and expansion of communication and other infrastructure are still far away.
5. Preparation of State Restructuring on the basis of ethnic/linguistic majority, pre-emptive rights, right to self-determination, and others should not be allowed to disintegrate nation. Instead, the State should ensure more rights and authorities to province and local level.
6. The rights of local government should be clearly stated in the constitution as arrangement of local government based on the laws of province will make the local government weak and incompetent.
7. Local governments are perpetually committed and accountable towards people. Besides decentralizing the centralized governance system, devolution of rights should also be guaranteed.

## Opinion of Participants

Of the total 1312 participants of 26 programme-implemented districts, 30 participants had rendered their views in favor of strong municipal and village government while other 1282 participants powerfully argued in favor of autonomous local government including district government. The opinions of participants are as follows.

| <b>Recommendations in favor of autonomous Local Government including District Government</b>   | <b>Recommendations in favor of strong Municipal and Village Government</b>   |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme that helps uplift backward caste, group and region should be delivered. The recommendations given by various committees of the Constituent Assembly (CA) regarding state restructuring does not seem practical. Therefore, attention should be emphatically paid on the issue and the concept of district government should be incorporated.</li> <li>• Prevalence of district level government is a must since it will be difficult to coordinate, monitor and build-up capacity of lower level and people will face more problems if district level structures are underestimated while restructuring the state,</li> <li>• The existing structures of the district which have been so far providing facilities and services to people should not be dismantled.</li> <li>• District government should be kept intact to continue having direct concerns on people at local level</li> <li>• District level structures are compulsory to deliver service at local level and coordinate village level government.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It should be limited into coordinating role. But it should not continue as it was in the past. District Development Committees (DDCs) should be there with limited rights.</li> <li>• No district structure should exist. There should be court as well as a body to coordinate at district level.</li> <li>• Province should be empowered with authority and province should formulate laws and determine works at lower level.</li> <li>• Number of VDCs should be reduced. Number of municipalities should be increased.</li> <li>• District level structure is not essential in the context when draft has been prepared to maintain central, provincial and local tiers while restructuring the state. It will merely increase administrative expenses.</li> <li>• Local authority accessible</li> </ul> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All sides should work together for development. All should be responsible. The existing district, municipality and village should not be demolished. Rather discussion should be made on another model.</li> <li>• The existing District Development Committee (DDC) should be converted into the structure of district government as politically and economically viable and strong district government is a must to coordinate and cooperate local and provincial government.</li> <li>• It may be unscientific for the province merely to carry out all works as the mountainous country like Nepal has no easy transport facilities and other services. The Constitutional Committee, Constituent Assembly and Nepali people should be serious in this matters.</li> <li>• We will be lagging behind 20 years in the absence of district government. The Country will not take a momentum by only slashing expenses</li> <li>• A proposal of special zone has created confusions and uncertainties among people resulting in further complexities. Conflict escalates in the society when ethnic division widens. Therefore, wide consultation should be made with stakeholders before reaching any conclusions. It is not good to subvert all old structures in the name of renovation.</li> <li>• District government could not be efficient without services and facilities. Therefore, there is a</li> </ul> | <p>to threshold should not let go outside. Efforts should be made to bring rights to local level i.e village and town. District government is no more a need for physical structure and employees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If district government is necessary just for devolving the authority to local government, it is no longer a need. Rights and authorities should be devolved at local level.</li> </ul> |
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| <p>strong need of district government to render people with prompt and effective services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District tier seems essential even though three tiers are there for running state affairs.</li> <li>• I do not know more. But district government is necessary.</li> </ul> |  |
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*In the deliberation, most of the participants were found silent about special, conserved and autonomous regions while some participants were found considering rural and urban only as local government*

## **Decisions of District Council and details of the participants of District-Level Discourse.**

### **1. Chitwan**

A district level interaction programme was held under the chairpersonship of ADDCN member Jagannath Thapaliya amidst the participation of 33 individuals comprising representatives of various political parties, civil society and ex-elected representatives of local bodies on February 11, 2010. On the occasion, various participants had furnished their recommendations on the issues they wish.

### **2. Achham**

An interaction programme entitled 'Constitutional Arrangement of Local Government (district, village and municipality)' held under the chairpersonship of LDO, Achham, Hari Dutta Kandel on the attendance of 47 participants in February 25, 2010. Govinda Bahadur Shah was the chief guest of the programme.

### **3. Doti**

At a programme held on February 26, 2010 with honorable parliamentarian Kalpana Soba showing up as chief guest on the attendance of 58 participants comprising representatives of various political parties, civil society and ex-elected representatives of local bodies participated and had rendered their views and opinions.

### **4. Dhankuta**

Recommendations and inputs were received on various issues of the

discussion at a programme presided over by LDO Ramadhin Yadav amid the participation of 45 individuals, including representatives of various political parties, former DDC chairpersons, present and former central members of ADDCN, members of NAVIN, journalists, human rights defenders, civil society representatives, chiefs of district line agencies, intellectuals and other stakeholders on March 8, 2010.

## **5. Terhathum**

Various participants at a discussion programme organized amid 35 individuals, including representatives of various political parties, former DDC chairpersons, present and former central members of ADDCN, members of NAVIN, journalists, human rights defenders, civil society representatives, chiefs of district line agencies, intellectuals and stakeholders had provided several inputs on the issues discussed on the occasion on March 12, 2010.

## **6. Kanchanpur**

A district level discussion programme was held with chief guest-Chief District Officer Buddhi Bahadur Khadka-under the premiership of Local Development Officer (LDO) Shaym Raj Adhikari on the attendance of 45 participants on March 9, 2010. The district level programme again took place under the chairpersonship of Acting LDO Som Raj Subedi on March 13, 2010.

## **7. Kailali**

At a district level discussion programme was organized on March 14, 2010, following people out of total 48 participants had expressed their opinions.

Speaking on the occasion were Naryan Dutta Bhatta, representative, Nepali Congress (NC), Ratna Shahi, representative, Nepal Peasants Workers Party, Lal Bahadur Shahi, representative of Rastriya Prajatantra Party, Bhuwaneswor Shrestha, Building Construction Office, Khem Raj Pandey, former mayor, Bhupendra Thapa, District Livestock Office, Narayan Lamsal, Kailali Chamber of Commerce and Industry, HariPriya Bam, Women Development Office, Durga Khanal, Chairperson of Rights Protection Society for VDC Secretary, Nanda Raj Bhatta, Rastriya Janamorcha, Narayan Prasad, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Narayan Dutta Mishra, former chairperson, Bhuwan Chand Shrestha, Drinking Water Divisional Office and Khem Raj Pandey, former mayor.

## **8. Bhojpur**

Recommendations and inputs were collected from various participants at a programme presided over by LDO Lok Nath Poudel on March 15,

2010. The programme was attended by 30 participants that included representatives of various political parties, former DDC chairpersons, present and former central members of ADDCN, members of NAVIN, journalists, human rights defenders, civil society representatives, chiefs of district line agencies, intellectuals and other stakeholders.

## **9. Palpa**

The programme held under the chairperson of LDO of DDC Krishna Chandra Ghimire with chief guest honorable CA member Kul Prasad Nepal on March 15, 2010 was facilitated by former Chairperson of Kapilvastu DDC Ramesh Sharma while former chairperson of DDC, Palpa Jhapendra GC had presented a working paper. Some 54 participants took part on the occasion. Following participants had taken part in the deliberation. Prem Nath Nepal, former DDC chairperson, Jhapendra GC, former DDC chairperson, Dev Raj Dhakal, NC, Hari Prasad Nepal, NC, Yadav Bahadur Rayamajhi, UML, Rajan Prasad Panta, NC, Nabin Thapa, CPN-Unified, Dul Bahadur Kunwar, Rastriya Prajatantra Party, Som Kumar Karki, Rastriya Janamorcha, Narayan Acharya, UML, Basanta Sharma (Kushal), UCPN (Maoist), honourable Narayani Sharma, CA member, honorable Kul Prasad Nepal, CA member, Madhav Nepal, Chairperson, Users Forum, Palpa, Bishnu Poudel, Officer, Tansen municipality, Bishnu Acharya, representative, District Forest Office, Prakash Khanal, journalist, Meghraj Sharma, senior journalist, Prakash Nepal, journalist and Jagadish Bhattarai, journalist.

## **10. Nawalparasi**

Various individuals expressed their views and expressions at a discussion programme chaired by LDO, held amidst 80 participants comprising representatives of various political parties, civil society and ex-elected representatives of local bodies on March 16, 2010.

## **11. Dadedhura**

Various participants made their remarks at a programme attended by 22 individuals, including representatives of various political parties and Chief District Officer (CDO), Rajendra Prasad Ghimire, among others, on March 19, 2010. Local Development Officer (LDO) of DDC, Ananda Keshari Pokharel presided over the programme while honourable District Judge Ram Krishna Bhatta was the chief guest of the programme.

## **12. Tanahun**

Altogether 39 individuals comprising representatives of various political parties, civil society and ex-elected representatives of local bodies participated at the programme held under the chairpersonship of

Tanahun DDC LDO Hari Prasad Dahal on March 19, 2010. Various participants had rendered their opinions citing some issues very significantly.

### **13. Jhapa**

A discussion programme on new constitution and rational of the district government in the context of state restructuring that held in District Development Committee (DDC), Jhapa on April 4, 2010 was presided over by Local Development Officer (LDO) Jeevan Prakash Sitaula. At the programme, representatives of various political parties, including independent personalities, women, industrialists, businesspersons, contractors, legal practitioners and representatives of various organizations had presented their views. Following individuals had aired their views on the occasion.

Jag Prasad Chemjong, former DDC member, Bhim Prasad Adhikari, Surunga (Chairperson of District Chapter for National Association of Village Development Committees of Nepal) Laxmi Odhari, Rastriya Prajatantra Party, Rajendra Niraula, District Chairperson UCPN (Maoist), Terai-Madhes Loktantrik Party, Ranga Lal Rajbamshi, Madhes Janaadhikar Forum-Nepal, Man Bahadur Rai, Rastriya Janamukti Party, Radha Subba, Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN), Romani Bhattarai, former DDC member and Binod Khatiwada had made their remarks.

### **14. Rupandehi**

Various recommendations and inputs were collected by organizing a district level discussion programme chaired by LDO, amidst 60 participants comprising chiefs and representatives of district-based political parties, former vice-chairpersons and members of DDCs, former mayors and deputy mayors, chiefs of local organizations and DDC officials on April 5, 2010.

### **15. Morang**

At a programme participated in by 42 individuals, including representatives of various political parties, CDO, ex-elected representatives, civil society representatives and others on April 6, 2010, representatives of all party mechanism, had rendered their views in favour of strong local government including district government. Former elected president of Morang DDC Mr. Khadga Bahadur Basnet presided over the programme. The participants had univocally put their views that in order to strengthen local democracy and address the need and aspiration of people, the role of district government is very crucial. The participants also advised for further discussion with regard to the sphere and function of local government in detail.

## **16. Kapilvastu**

At a programme participated in by 85 individuals, including representatives of various political parties, CDO, ex-elected representatives, civil society representatives and others on April 6, 2010, honorable CA member, party representatives, CDOs had rendered their views in favour of local government. LDO Chiranjivi Bhandari presided over the programme while honourable CA member Deep Kumar Upadhyay was the chief guest. The participants had univocally put their views that democracy without district government cannot be imagined.

## **17. Banke**

The 19<sup>th</sup> district council of Banke that held on April 7, 2010 made decision to request the government and agencies concerned to provide assistance towards the implementation of following decisions.

Following elections to the Constituent Assembly (CA), Nepal has entered the federalism and it is ensured that the new constitution framed through the CA will make Nepal a republican federal state. In the context that all 11 thematic committees of the CA have submitted their reports to the CA, existing district structure has not been proposed anywhere in the report of State Restructuring and Sharing of State Power Committee. The district structure which has long been exercised for the past 60 years has been a significant medium of service delivery in the present context. District level has been rightly discharging the bridge role between central and local level in the works related to law and order, development, coordination and others. In this context, instead of dismantling the existing structure of the district until and unless institutional alternative to the prevailing structure, it is decided to ask the CA that a proposal be tabled for the formation of district government with strong and powerful structure.

## **18. Lamjung**

Altogether 40 participants comprising representatives of various political parties, civil society and ex-elected representatives of local bodies took part in the district level discussion programme which was presided by the Local Development Officer-LDO on April 8, 2010.

## **19. Bardiya**

At a district level discussion programme held on April 9, 2010 under the chairpersonship of LDO of DDC Bhuwan Hari Aryal on the attendance of 32 participants, various individuals had put forth their views.

## **20. Rautahat**

An interaction programme on the rationale of the district government that took place on April 9, 2010 under the premiership of Local Development Officer (LDO) Bishnu Raj Lamichhane on the attendance of 85 participants reached a conclusion that a politically and economically strong district government is inevitable to coordinate and cooperate local and provincial governments and the participants strongly demanded to turn the existing DDC to district government structure.

## **21. Gulmi**

Various people expressed their views at a programme held on April 10, 2010 under the chairpersonship of LDO Naresh Kumar Chapagain with honourable District Judge Khadananda Tiwari showing as chief guest on the participation of 53. Recommendations were received from following participants.

Expressing views on the occasion were Gunanidhi Sharma, Association of Professors, Krishna Prasad Bhandari, Chairperson, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Bom Bahadur Khadka, Chairperson, CPN-UML, Jivan Rana, Chairperson, Rastriya Janamorcha, Prem Nath Aryal, Chief, Resunga Multiple campus, Suresh Chandra Bhushal, President, NC, Shesh Kanta Gautam, Vice-Chairperson, District Cooperative Association, Muna Poudel, Women Democratic Network, Jivraj Aryal, Secretary, CPN-ML, Kishor Acharya, Chairperson, Janajagaran Abhiyan, Laxman Parajuli, former DDC member, Radha Panthi, Chairperson Swabalamban Savings and Credit Cooperative Organization Ltd and Parbata Pokharel.

## **22. Humla**

At a discussion programme attended by 102 individuals comprising LDO Krishna Kumar Niraula and CDO Ramu Prasad Upadhyay followed by representatives of various political parties former DDC chairpersons, present and former central members of ADDCN, human rights activists, journalists, civil society representatives, chiefs of thematic body, intellectuals and stakeholders had provided several recommendations. The program was conducted on April 22, 2010.

## **23. Syangja**

At a district level plenary discussion programme held amid the participation of 50 individuals on April 29, 2010, some participants had presented their views with responses to the issues raised during the debate on the occasion. CDO Jeevan Prasad Oli was the chief guest of the programme while LDO Dirgha Narayan Sharma presided over.

## **24. Kaski**

A discussion programme was held in the meeting hall of Kaski DDC on 'New constitution and need of district government in the context of state restructuring' on the attendance of 65 participants on April 30, 2010. Following participants had expressed their views on the occasion.

Iman Singh Gurung, CPN (United), Tilak Poudel, Executive Officer, Pokhara Sub-metropolis, Shree Nath Baral, former Vice-chairperson, Hom Nath Giri, CPN-ML, Bishnu Koirala, women representative, Hari Kiran Ojha, Executive Officer, Lekhnath municipality, Daya Sagar Lamichhane, VDC Secretary, Puranchaur, Shishir Khanal, Association of Visually Impaired, Sulochana Sharma, NGO representative, Chhabi Lal Sharma, representative of employees of Pokhara Sub-metropolis, Ananta Prasad Koirala, representative of employees of Pokhara sub-metropolis, Tek Nath Bhandari, CPN-ML, Liladhar Poudel, CPN-UML, Lakshya Kumar Gurung, Indigenous Nationalities, Bhaba Sarki, Dalit Group, Guru Prasad Subedi, LDO, Kaski, Narayan Adhikari, representative, Consumers Committee, Bhim Raj Bhandari, RPP, Secretary, Ramji Thapa, CPN (Unified), Punya Prasad Poudel, former DDC Chairperson, Yagya Bahadur Thapa, NC, President and Chitra Thapa, ADDCN central member took part in the discussion.

## **25. Parbat**

Some 40 participants consisting chiefs and representatives of nine political parties, chiefs and representatives of line agencies, representatives of various organizations, ex-elected representatives, journalists and others had provided various recommendations at a programme presided over by LDO Narahari Baral on April 27, 2010.

## **26. Baitadi**

Various recommendations were received from the discussion programme held amid 53 participants consisting of representative of various political parties, former DDC chairpersons, present and former central members of ADDCN, Member of NAVIN, human rights activists, representative of civil society, journalists, chiefs of district line agencies, intellegentia and stakeholders on May 16, 2010. Local Development Officer (LDO) Kumar Bahadur Khadka presided over the programme while Chief District Officer (CDO) Murari Prasad Sharma was the chief guest.

*Note: The report of the district level discourse programme held in Sankhuwasabha is yet to be received.*