



# Nepal

## ICAF Report

Fieldwork November 2011



United States Department of State  
Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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Cover photo of herder huts on Mount Langtang Lirung, courtesy of Bruce W. Hemmer

**Disclaimer:**

It should be noted that the ICAF process relies on impressions, observations and emotions shared by interviewees. It does not evaluate the accuracy of those perceptions. For those reasons, the views cited should not be considered as endorsements by either U.S. Embassy Kathmandu or the U.S. Department of State. These views do, however, offer excellent insight into the stresses and opportunities perceived by the people of Nepal.

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	1
Introduction.....	2
The Nepal 2011 ICAF Application .....	3
ICAF Definitions.....	3
Using this Report.....	6
Context.....	7
Discussion of ICAF Components .....	8
Core Grievances .....	8
Social/Institutional Resiliencies .....	11
Conflict Drivers.....	14
Mitigating Factors .....	15
Windows of Uncertainty .....	17
Findings and Implications.....	17
1. There are currently many grievances and few conflict drivers in Nepal. ....	18
2. Most conflict drivers and grievances are related to failures of governance.....	18
3. The signing of the Seven-Point Peace Agreement in November 2011 created renewed hope and optimism around the peace process, but also unrealistic expectations for the Constitution and federalism. ....	19
4. The Tarai still has the most active conflict drivers, though conditions are improving in some districts.....	21
5. The Hills have a strong sense of improvement in peace and governance.....	21
6. Community organizations/leaders are resolving conflict and providing services at the grassroots level.....	22
7. Gaps in local governance are being filled by a variety of actors, but people are eager to have <i>elected</i> local government officials fill those roles. ....	22
Conclusion .....	23
Appendix 1: Questionnaire .....	24
Appendix 2: Regional Identity Groups .....	26
Mid-Western Tarai .....	26
Mid-Western Hills / Western Tarai .....	26
Kathmandu Valley and Chitwan District .....	27
Central/Eastern Tarai.....	27
Eastern Hills and Border Area .....	28
Appendix 3: Cross-Cutting Grievances & Resiliencies.....	29

## NEPAL FIELD-BASED ICAF REPORT

Cross-Cutting Core Grievances.....	29
Cross-cutting Social and Institutional Resiliencies.....	29
Appendix 4: Regional Grievances and Resiliencies.....	31
Mid-Western Tarai.....	31
Mid-Western Hills / Western Tarai.....	31
Kathmandu Valley and Chitwan District.....	32
Central/Eastern Tarai.....	32
Eastern Hills and Border Area.....	33
Appendix 5: Regional Key Actors.....	34
Mid-Western Tarai.....	34
Mid-Western Hills / Western Tarai.....	35
Kathmandu Valley and Chitwan District.....	36
Central/Eastern Tarai.....	36
Eastern Hills and Border Area.....	37
Appendix 6: Conflict Drivers and Mitigating Factors.....	38
Conflict Drivers.....	38
Mitigating Factors.....	38
Appendix 7: Windows of Uncertainty.....	41

## Executive Summary

From November 6 to November 11, 2011, an interagency U.S. Government team conducted an in-country application of the Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework (ICAF) for Nepal at the request of U.S. Embassy Kathmandu. The ICAF analysis examines factors that either drive or mitigate destructive social conflict, with particular attention to the role of leaders in mobilizing people. It emphasizes local understandings of conflict dynamics, and gathers representative information from different localities and levels of society, not simply the elite or central viewpoints. It also integrates views from across the relevant USG agencies.

Using this analysis, the ICAF team made seven main findings:

- There are more *grievances* than *conflict drivers*<sup>1</sup> in Nepal.
- Most conflict drivers and grievances are related to failures of governance.
- The signing of the Seven-Point Peace Agreement in November 2011 created renewed hope and optimism around the peace process, but also unrealistic expectations for the Constitution and federalism.
- The Tarai still has the most active conflict drivers, though conditions are improving in some districts.
- The Hills have a strong sense of improvement in peace and governance.
- Community organizations/leaders are resolving conflict and providing services at the grassroots level.
- Gaps in local governance are being filled by a variety of actors, but people are eager to have elected local government officials fill those roles.

Nepal has experienced important, though slow and imperfect, progress towards consolidating peace. Building on Nepal's natural and civic resiliencies, a path forward can be discerned of improving governance, correcting the lower security and services in the Tarai, and promoting development that turns Nepal's natural wealth into prosperity for all its peoples. The data suggest that the key to this process is healing the dysfunctions in Nepal's politics of irresponsible, corrupt or inept politicians, parties, and its corrupt and ineffective bureaucracy. Logically underlying that is further development of the capacity of civil society, media and voters to hold these actors accountable. The development of federalism, while a key element of the peace process, has potentially dangerous complications and has created unreasonably high expectations that are likely to be dashed. These dangers could be reduced if the Constitution is carefully crafted for peace and effectiveness and if there is careful preparation for implementation of federalism. Given the rich supply of grievances, it is important to monitor for, anticipate and prevent the development of new active conflict drivers, and to watch for opportunities to help new mitigating factors emerge and expand existing ones.

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<sup>1</sup> The ICAF defines a *conflict driver* as involving a key actor mobilizing people for conflict around a grievance.

## Introduction

This report presents the analysis resulting from a field-based application of the Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework (ICAF) by U.S. Government agencies in Nepal in November 2011. The ICAF is a U.S. Government tool for systematically analyzing dynamics that currently, or potentially could, drive or mitigate destructive social conflict<sup>2</sup> in a country or region. It is designed to draw on expertise across the U.S. Government (and beyond) and to generate a shared understanding of conflict dynamics across the interagency. It is also designed to elicit and privilege local, rather than foreign, conceptualizations of conflict dynamics, and to do so at multiple levels throughout a society, rather than focusing solely at an elite or central level. The analysis attempts to set aside considerations of US interests and resources while seeking to understand the conflict on its own terms; US interests and resources can then be considered in subsequent steps of planning interventions, based on an unbiased understanding of the conflict.

The ICAF draws on conflict theory which says that contextual factors, societal patterns (such as poverty), institutional performance (such as discriminatory policies) or *grievances* that people consequently develop do not cause conflict by themselves. Rather, conflict requires mobilization of identity groups around their core grievances by *key actors* with the means and motivation to do so. This dynamic combination constitutes a *conflict driver* in ICAF language. The ICAF also draws on the theory that societies have social and institutional *resiliencies* to conflict (such as civic associations that satisfy basic needs and/or bridge conflict lines) that leaders can use to mobilize people away from or against conflict. This dynamic combination constitutes a *mitigating factor* in ICAF language. Building on an understanding of such indigenous strengths can make interventions more efficient, effective and sustainable. Finally, there are *windows of uncertainty* in time when key actors may see strategic opportunities to instigate or increase mobilization - moments of change or uncertainty such as elections. For an overview of the ICAF tool, including definitions of the terms used here and the theoretical connections between these concepts, see the ICAF Booklet available online at: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/161781.pdf>. There have been more than 24 ICAF applications worldwide since the tool was developed in 2007.

The ICAF process generally begins with a workshop held in Washington, DC, that convenes relevant representatives of the interagency to talk through the framework and gather what is known and unknown in Washington about conflict dynamics in the country or region being studied. A brief readout from this workshop is shared with the Embassy and participants from the interagency. The next step is in an in-country process, which ideally<sup>3</sup> involves sending interagency teams, with members from both post and Washington, into the field to gather representative data of the regions and localities being studied through interviews and focus

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<sup>2</sup> It is important to start by clarifying what we mean by “conflict,” since conflict is not always bad. We use the word as shorthand for destructive conflict such as unjust violence and oppressive relationships, which is what we are concerned about; constructive conflict such as nonviolent civil rights protest can be something we want to support. We can also think of conflict as latent (building potential energy) or manifest (currently in the open with expressed disagreement, anger or violence).

<sup>3</sup> In some countries, directly collecting field data is not feasible due to constraints of security, political sensitivities, resources or time, and a workshop is held at the embassy based on existing knowledge or perhaps indirectly or remotely collected data.

## NEPAL FIELD-BASED ICAF REPORT

groups, as it did in this case. Participants usually find this direct contact with diverse insider voices invaluable, as well as interacting with their interagency colleagues in this joint experience. The questions asked are developed by the team jointly before deployment, and are designed to be simple, open-ended non-leading questions that will generate discussion likely to fill in the components of the framework as insiders understand them, rather than according to foreign preconceptions. The questions are tailored to the society being studied and may include questions designed to tap issues the Embassy feels may be of particular importance. After the fieldwork, a workshop is held at the embassy where the data are jointly analyzed by the assembled field teams according to the framework.

### ICAF Definitions

**Core Grievance:** The perception, by various groups in a society, that their needs for physical security, livelihood, interests or values are threatened by one or more other groups and/or social institutions.

**Social/Institutional Resilience:** The perception, by various groups in a society, that social relationships, structures or processes are in place and able to provide dispute resolution and meet basic needs through non-violent means.

**Key Actor:** People, organizations or groups who have the motivation and means to mobilize people for or against conflict, by shaping perceptions and actions or impacting underlying societal patterns and institutional performance. Alternatively, they might enable other key actors to mobilize people for or against conflict.

**Conflict Driver:** The dynamic situation resulting from key actors' mobilization of social groups around core grievances. Core grievances can be understood as the potential energy of conflict; key actors translate that potential energy into drivers of conflict which are the active energy moving conflict.

**Mitigating Factor:** The dynamic situation resulting from key actors' mobilization of social groups around social/institutional resilience. Mitigating factors can be understood as the kinetic energy produced when key actors mobilize the potential energy of social and institutional resilience.

**Window of Uncertainty:** Moments of change or uncertainty, such as elections, when key actors may see strategic opportunities to instigate or increase mobilization towards or away from conflict.

### The Nepal 2011 ICAF Application

At the invitation of U.S. Embassy Kathmandu, the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO)<sup>4</sup> co-led the Nepal ICAF effort with the USAID Office of Conflict Mitigation and Management (CMM). Discussions with Embassy Kathmandu regarding a Nepal ICAF began with a meeting with Ambassador DeLisi in January 2011. These established general parameters such as a focus on five particular regions of Nepal. An initial daylong ICAF workshop in Washington, DC occurred on August 11, 2011. Workshop participants included

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<sup>4</sup> Previously known as the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS), it reorganized as CSO in November 2011, as part of the new "J" family of bureaus under the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights.

## NEPAL FIELD-BASED ICAF REPORT

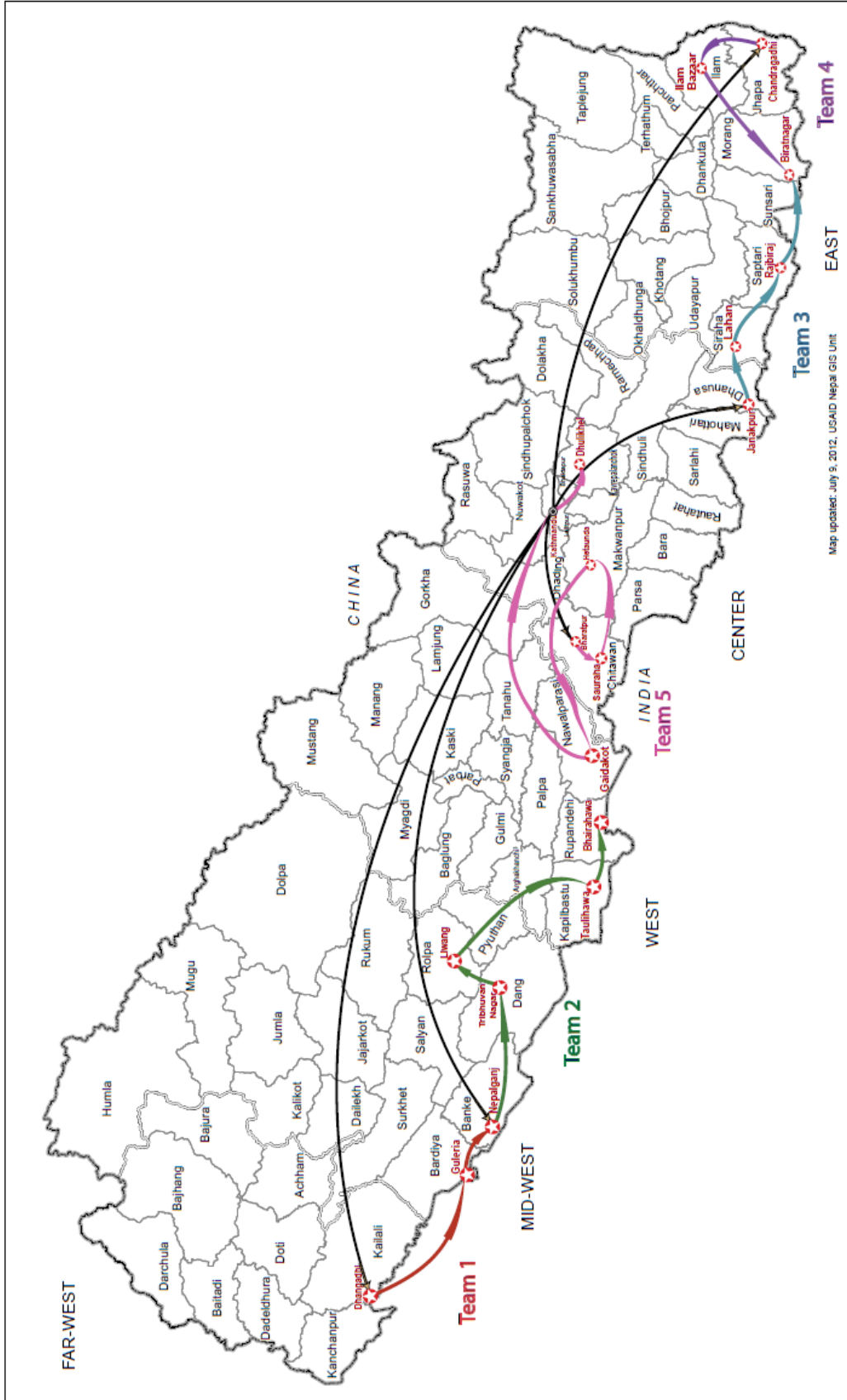
representatives from across the USG (including the Political Counselor from Embassy Kathmandu) as well as academics and experts from think tanks. A readout of ICAF components from this workshop was distributed to participants of the ICAF process at the Embassy, where it helped inform the construction of the field research questions and other aspects of field research design. In addition, the Washington DC-based ICAF team members prepared for field research with briefings from the U.S. Department of State Humanitarian Information Unit (HIU) geography specialists, the Carter Center, and intelligence analysts from the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

For the field-based portion of the ICAF, a 21-person overall team was assembled, including 12 members from U.S. Embassy Kathmandu (various agencies and sections including DOS, USAID, DOD, DOJ) and nine members on temporary duty from outside Nepal, including three from DOS/CSO, two from USAID [the Bureau of Economic Growth and Trade (EGAT) Office of Natural Resources Management (NRM) and the Regional Development Mission – Asia’s Regional Senior Conflict Advisor (RDMA/CMM)], and four from DOD [Special Operations Command, Pacific (SOCPAC) and U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC)]. These personnel collected field data between November 6 and November 11, 2011, operating in five interagency field teams focusing on regions prioritized by the Embassy and ICAF Team leaders: Western Tarai, Mid-Western Hills, Central Tarai, Eastern Hills, and Kathmandu Valley. Before deploying from the Embassy, the overall team jointly developed a questionnaire (see Appendix 1) as described above and an interview protocol. The five field teams gathered data as follows (also see map below):

<b>Team</b>	<b>Regions</b>	<b>Districts</b>	<b>Localities</b>
1	Mid-Western Tarai	Bardiya	Gularia
		Banke	Nepalgunj
2	Mid-Western Hills	Dang Deukhuri	Ghorahi (Tribhuvannagar)
		Rolpa	Liwang
	Western Tarai	Kapilvastu	Kapilvastu Nagarpalika (Taulhawa)
		Rupandehi	Siddharthanagar (Bhairahawa)
5	Central Tarai and Hills	Nawalparasi	Gaidakot
		Chitwan	Baratpur, Hetauda, Sauraha
		Kathmandu	Kathmandu
		Kavrepalanchok	Dhulikhel
3	Central Tarai	Mahottari	
		Dhanusa	Janakpur
	Eastern Tarai	Siraha	Lahan
		Saptari	Rajbiraj, Bhardaha
		Sunsari	Haripur
		Morang	Biratnagar
4	Eastern Hills and Tarai	Morang	Biratnagar, Tankisinuwari, Rani
		Jhapa	Damak, Bhadrapur, Chandragadhi, Birtamod
		Ilam	Ilam, Pashupatinagar, Chulachuli, Barbote



# NEPAL FIELD-BASED ICAF REPORT



## NEPAL FIELD-BASED ICAF REPORT

The field teams interviewed more than 1,000 people in focus groups or one-on-one interviews. The focus groups were pre-arranged by U.S. Embassy Kathmandu interlocutors, but interviews were also conducted randomly in villages and cities. Respondents came from rural and urban areas and represented diverse ethnic, caste and disadvantaged groups. They included government officials, academics, students and out-of-school youth, religious leaders, local NGO representatives, indigenous people, representatives of the Nepal Army (NA), Armed Police Force (APF), and Nepal Police, business leaders, farmers, border authorities, market vendors, women's groups and marginalized groups, among others.

Between November 14 and 16, the reassembled ICAF team jointly analyzed the data gathered in these interviews and focus groups according to the ICAF framework, producing the detailed findings in the appendices and arriving at the seven overarching findings presented in the main text below. They reported their analysis to Ambassador Scott DeLisi, to the Acting USAID Mission Director Sheila Lutjens and to other key embassy staff at U.S. Embassy Kathmandu on November 17 and to representatives from USPACOM, USARPAC, and SOCPAC in Honolulu on November 22. The Nepal ICAF findings were presented to CSO leadership Ambassador Loftis on December 5 and Ambassador Barton on December 14 in Washington, DC. An USG Interagency briefing was presented on January 17, 2012 at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP).

### **Using this Report**

The analysis presented here can be used in several ways. It can guide interagency and agency-specific strategic planning regarding Nepal so that all USG activities avoid exacerbating conflict and contribute in a coordinated manner towards Nepal's long-term stabilization. It can also help inform program design with the same intent, though some more detailed study may be needed. Furthermore, it provides a list of items to monitor for signs of worsening conflict so that it can be prevented through targeted intervention. It can also be used to identify areas for further, deeper study.

The main body of this report discusses the ICAF component data and their implications in narrative form, ending with seven overarching findings useful at a strategic level. The appendices present the data in list form by ICAF component, more useful at the programmatic level or for monitoring. Some of these are divided by the regions that the field teams visited, and some are cross-cutting findings that apply more generally across Nepal.

Each of these analytical categories contains items for monitoring and potential points of intervention. For example, not only can active conflict drivers be addressed, but grievances can be reduced or the motivations or means of key actors can be altered before they add up to conflict drivers. Similarly, in addition to working with active mitigating factors, resiliencies can be built or expanded and key actors can be motivated or enabled to mobilize people around them. New positive key actors can be helped to emerge and new negative key actors watched for and redirected, disabled or suppressed. Preludes to upcoming windows can be used as focal points for increased monitoring and activity to discourage conflict drivers and promote mitigating factors. A detailed guide to prioritizing the data for monitoring or intervention at the current time and

reconsidering priorities at important windows in the future is available from CSO, and users may request assistance from CSO in implementing this process.

## Context

Nepal is a mostly mountainous country tucked between the two giants of India beneath it and China over the Himalayan peaks. India exerts enormous economic and political influence, and gets much of its water supply from Nepal. China is increasingly engaged economically and focuses its political engagement principally on the issue of Tibetan refugees living in Nepal.

Nepal's score of .457 on the 2011 UNDP Human Development Index<sup>5</sup> is 157<sup>th</sup> of 187 countries, and is below the regional average, but climbing at the average rate for low-HDI countries. UNDP demographics for 2011 include: \$1,049 GDP per capita (PPP in 2005 international dollars); 59% literacy; 69 years life expectancy; and 19% urban. An estimated 55% fall below the international poverty line of \$1.25 per day,<sup>6</sup> and many Nepalis migrate to other countries, particularly the Middle East, in search of employment.

Nepal's peoples and cultures blend heritage from India, Tibet, China and Central Asia with those of many indigenous groups. Nepal is 81% Hindu and 11% Buddhist, with a tendency to harmoniously blend these religions, and 4% Muslim. 90% speak Nepali, though many speak it as a second or third language.

Most of the population lives in either the relatively flat and fertile southern *Tarai* region, or the "*Hills*" region between the Tarai and the truly gigantic mountains in the North. Hill people are called *Pahadi* (principally *Brahman* and *Chhettri* castes) and were advantaged in the Kingdom of Nepal, which had its origins there and later gained control of the Tarai region and indigenous peoples who lived there, such as the *Tharu*. Tarai people are called *Madhesi*, and those who are not from the indigenous groups emigrated to the Tarai from India more recently than those who had earlier joined other groups in forming the original Kingdom of Nepal in the hills. Madhesis had difficulty gaining citizenship and thus land ownership. Pahadis increasingly moved into the Tarai and claimed land, for which neither indigenous people nor Madhesis of Indian origin generally had registered papers of ownership.

Nepal is recovering from a ten-year Maoist insurgency which began in 1996, and involved human rights abuses by both sides. The Maoists took advantage of Madhesi and ethnic (or "janajati") grievances against the Kingdom's discrimination, especially in land claims. The insurgency led the King to eventually dissolve Parliament and rule directly. The King restored parliamentary rule in April 2006 in the face of massive civil demonstrations in favor of restoring democracy, supported by the major parties, including the Maoists. An immediate ceasefire led to the comprehensive peace agreement in November 2006, and Maoist combatants were placed in

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<sup>5</sup> United Nations Development Program, "Nepal Country Profile: Human Development Indicators," <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/NPL.html>, downloaded March 29, 2012.

<sup>6</sup> USAID Mission to Nepal, "Country Profile," <http://nepal.usaid.gov/about-us/overview/country-profile.html>, , downloaded March 29, 2012.

## NEPAL FIELD-BASED ICAF REPORT

cantonment camps, awaiting agreement on an integration plan to civilian life, the police or the army.

The Maoists (United Community Party of Nepal - Maoist), who are internally divided in three main groups,<sup>7</sup> are participating in democratic politics with two other main parties, Nepali Congress and Communist Party of Nepal - United Marxist-Leninist, as well as 22 smaller new parties representing mostly Madhesis and other disadvantaged identity groups. The leader of the most pragmatic wing of the Maoists, Baburam Bhattarai, is currently Prime Minister. The Parliament is also a Constituent Assembly that was elected after the peace agreement to create a new constitution, which is expected to introduce a federal structure. The deadline for production of a new constitution has been extended four times, most recently to May 2012. Just before the fieldwork for this analysis, the major parties came to a Seven-Point Agreement on November 1, 2011, on Maoist ex-combatant reintegration,<sup>8</sup> return of seized property, dismantling the paramilitary wing of the Youth Communist League (YCL) and expediting the drafting of the Constitution.

## Discussion of ICAF Components

This section presents a discussion of the themes found in each of the ICAF components produced during the analytical workshop at the Embassy. The items under each category can be found in list form in the appendices.

### Core Grievances

Most of the grievances in Nepal are related to poor governance. Fundamentally underlying the governance problem is the poor quality of political parties and politicians. Nepalis broadly believe politicians serve only themselves, not the people, and therefore distrust politicians, political parties and the government. Promises to provide development routinely fail to be kept. They regularly see politicians and officials engaged in bribery, nepotism, extortion and misappropriation of funds. Journalists in Kathmandu and at least one district in the Central Tarai complain of having to self-censor when it comes to criticism of politicians, due to threats by politicians and associated actors. Additionally, minorities commonly feel the government discriminates against them and marginalizes them. The parliamentarians (who also form the Constitutional Assembly) have had to delay the deadline for a new constitution four times, require unusually numerous votes to select a prime minister, and get little accomplished.

At the heart of governance problems in Nepal is the failure of the political leadership to complete the process started by the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Accords. The Maoists, UML and Nepali Congress parties have been locked in prolonged negotiations over the substance of the new Constitution, the form and implementation of federalism and the future of the former Maoist combatants for six years. While there has been some progress in the issue of Maoist ex-

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<sup>7</sup> At the time of this study. In June 2012, the radical faction led by Mohan Vaidya Kiran split off to form a new party, the Nepal Communist Party (Maoist).

<sup>8</sup> This did lead to progress on this issue, and by June 2012, only about 2,000 ex-combatants were still in cantonment.

## NEPAL FIELD-BASED ICAF REPORT

combatant reintegration in the months following the Seven-Point Agreement, the continued delays in producing a new constitution profoundly affect governance. This deadlock has caused increasing atrophy in Nepal's corrupt and fragile bureaucracy, decreasing both the effectiveness and the legitimacy of governance across the country. Nepal is running on an interim constitution, which makes all governance tentative. District and local government are headed by appointees of the central government rather than locally elected officials. These officials are rarely from the area they govern and are frequently rotated, limiting their familiarity with the area and people they govern, and contributing to the perception or reality of unresponsive rule by outsiders. Having had better local governance in the past with local elections, there is widespread desire to return to locally elected government, which is currently waiting for the resolution of the constitutional issues.

As a result of the problems with politicians, political parties and the constitutional delays, there is widespread dissatisfaction with the quality and amount of government services, especially education, health, infrastructure and agricultural support. Improved education is a particularly strong and widespread interest, as it is seen as a path to better employment. Some are especially concerned about better access to quality higher education, including students at one of Nepal's best universities – there is some reason to believe this is more true in areas closer to Kathmandu Valley. Increasingly, private institutions are available that offer higher quality education and healthcare than the public institutions, but this tends to create inequality in access for those who cannot afford to pay, and parents are more likely to pay for boys to attend private schools than girls.

In areas along rivers (especially noted in the Central and Eastern Tarai), flood-affected populations resent the failure of the government to effectively help them with land and support for agriculture sector goods like fertilizer. Floods are regularly experienced with seasonal monsoons, but have been made worse in Nepal by Indian flood control just across the border (although villagers we met in the field did not raise this aspect of the problem). This is a grievance that may worsen as climate change continues to melt glaciers and increases the impact of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs).

Security is an essential government service that remains unsatisfactory in most areas of the Tarai, which remain terrorized by criminal armed groups involved in kidnapping, extortion and robbery. The open border with India contributes to this problem, as armed groups, drugs and human trafficking can freely cross in many places, and the Tarai is more exposed to this. Madhesis in the Midwestern/Western Tarai complain of feeling threatened by Pahadi armed groups and individuals, as well as Pahadi dominance of the police and courts. However, our respondents perceive that security is improving in most other places in the Tarai, with arrests occurring and the size and number of armed groups diminishing (sometimes down to two or three groups per district, as reported to us by the senior government officials in each district, the Chief District Officers (CDOs), police officials or Army officers in several locations in the Central and Eastern Tarai). This has been partially achieved through talks between armed groups and political leaders. Some in the Western Tarai believe armed groups are connected to the Maoists. While some armed groups in the Eastern and Central Regions claim to be politically motivated, civilian and army officials there tend to dismiss this and characterize these as criminal gangs that opportunistically cloak themselves as political. They claim that the main source of

## NEPAL FIELD-BASED ICAF REPORT

armed groups is unemployment combined with the youth bulge. However, police, political parties and/or CDOs are widely perceived to be in corrupt relationships with criminal armed groups that provide them immunity, or even orchestrating their activity for personal profit. One CDO was described as increasing the crime level wherever he is assigned. Human rights groups and journalists accuse police of extrajudicial killing in scattered locations. In several places in the Central and Eastern Tarai, people near national parks or preserves complained of deaths and crop damage from the wild animals the government protects, such as elephants, rhinos and tigers.

In the Hills, interviews suggest the Eastern and Central Regions are generally experiencing much less of a security problem from armed groups. For instance, multiple respondents in the Eastern Hills reported the police to be responsive and effective – but the police were also accused of repressing protest by indigenous groups. In Kathmandu, political parties are accused by journalists and human rights groups of involvement in threats by associated thugs to protect their corrupt activities from exposure. In some Kathmandu neighborhoods, the Young Communist League, an explicitly Maoist organization, has been able to collect “donations” based on fear of its *reputation* for violence. Their leadership claims to be against threats and violence, however, and to be transforming the organization away from its paramilitary past.

Economic grievances are also rooted in the poor performance of the government and political parties. The lack of jobs is a chief grievance. The government gets explicitly blamed for failure of policies and programs to create jobs. While the consequent economic migration (mostly to the Middle East and India) is providing a lifeline of remittances worth over 20% of GDP,<sup>9</sup> it is also creating secondary problems of loss of productive populations, brain drain and damage to the social fabric. While the open border with India provides economic opportunities and community connections, poor governance prevents this from being wholly positive. The negative economic effects of the border are chiefly blamed on Indian government for treatment of Nepali farmers and businesses by Indian officials and industries that is perceived as unfair - such as lengthy or suspect agricultural inspections causing Nepali products to spoil or be sold below market value, rebranding Nepali tea as Indian, or not being able to legally import organic fertilizers from India at the subsidized price they sell for in India.<sup>10</sup> However, the Nepali government’s failure to effectively protect Nepali interests in negotiations with Indian authorities contributes to this problem. The lack of jobs and economic opportunities is partially blamed on Indian workers (and Bhutanese in the East) in Nepal competing for scarce jobs, but their presence (and the bias of Indian companies in Nepal towards hiring Indians) can also be traced to government policies or inaction.

Although incidences of violence between identity groups have decreased, underlying most of the grievances with the government are tensions between identity groups: Madhesi versus Pahadi, indigenous versus non-indigenous, political group versus political group and lowest castes versus higher castes. Many minority groups believe the government discriminates against them and provides unequal access to resources such as land, water, forests and energy, as well as services such as education and infrastructure development. In particular, the difficulty Madhesis continue

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<sup>9</sup> World Bank, “Migration and Remittance Fact Book 2011,” p. 14. Development and Prospect Group, World Bank 2009. <http://issuu.com/world.bank.publications/docs/9780821382189> .

<sup>10</sup> While this last Indian behavior may seem quite reasonable from the Indian point of view, what the Nepali farmer experiences is simply having to pay higher prices than people across the border.

## NEPAL FIELD-BASED ICAF REPORT

to experience getting citizenship<sup>11</sup> excludes many of them from voting, economic opportunities and government services, and contributes to the loss of land to Pahadis moving into the Tarai because they have difficulty proving ownership. They connect this situation to domination of the government by Pahadis. Many indigenous groups, in particular the Tharus in the Tarai, feel similarly discriminated against, including in the loss of land, forest access, and lower quality education, by a government they see as dominated by non-indigenous people. Bhutanese refugees in the East are resented by many Nepalis, who complain that they pollute the environment, kill animals, take jobs, and commit crimes. Dalits, the lowest caste, are increasingly politicized by the stigmas and discrimination they face, including exclusion from temples, inter-caste marriage, use of water sources used by higher castes and jobs involving food preparation for higher castes. So far, they are pursuing recourse through peaceful political means, with no signs of other intentions.

Regionally, land appears<sup>12</sup> to be a particularly strong aspect of tension between groups in the Midwest Tarai, where Pahadis displaced from the Hills by the conflict have decided to stay, attracted by the fertility of the land and taking advantage of their citizenship to more easily claim land. Meanwhile in the same area, the Kamaiya indigenous group has still not received land that was promised to them ten years ago by the government. Madhesis in the Midwestern, Western and Eastern Tarai also complain explicitly about Pahadis, but here they focused not on land but on feeling threatened by Pahadi dominance of government, lack of access to government services and lack of recognition of Madhesi rights and identity. In the Midwestern/Western Tarai, the Madhesis complain of Pahadi dominance being extended through unspecified armed groups and individuals as well as the police and courts.

Disputes between individuals (as opposed to identity groups) are also commonly over land, forests and water, according to NGOs involved in mediation. A journalist stated that personal land disputes, mostly over inheritance, are responsible for the largest number of murders in the country. Another widespread form of conflict between individuals and families is domestic abuse, which the judicial system inadequately addresses, resulting in women and children suffering continued abuse, and suicides. The dowry system contributes to this problem, with insufficient dowry leading to abuse and sometimes torture of women, and being a leading cause of suicide by women.

### **Social/Institutional Resiliencies**

As grievances are mostly about the government and political parties, the resiliencies found in Nepal are mostly about other actors or aspects of Nepal which compensate for the failures of government or offer hope for the future. These include communities, civil society, cultural values, cultural and natural resources, and international factors.

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<sup>11</sup> This is a gendered problem, as an Indian woman marrying a Nepali man easily gets citizenship, but an Indian man marrying a Nepali woman must wait 15 years.

<sup>12</sup> That this appears to be stronger in this region is potentially an artifact of having a land expert on the team in this area but not the other regions studied, which may have caused more probing on land as a grievance than for other teams, creating an appearance of it being a stronger grievance in this region. Land was not mentioned in the questionnaire guiding all teams. While the land expert was put on this team because it was expected that this region had particularly strong land issues, this may have produced a self-fulfilling prophesy effect.

## NEPAL FIELD-BASED ICAF REPORT

Communities, traditional organizations and modern civil society organizations are filling gaps in governance by providing services and resolving disputes. Robust family and community networks buffer against economic hardship. Civic groups teach and advocate for political and economic rights, and women respondents reported feeling increasingly empowered. In addition to the traditional mediation role of community leaders in communities such as Tharu or Muslim villages in the Midwestern and Western Regions, mediation programs have been developed by NGOs in many places. These have become a heavily used means of resolving personal disputes, including the widespread domestic abuse cases that are not effectively addressed by the formal judicial system. Non-profit community schools provide higher quality education than government schools at a lower cost than for profit schools. A caveat is that many civil society organizations have been co-opted by political parties, and much of the civil society mobilization (particularly unions) that does occur is on behest of or manipulated by a political party. Such co-optation by political parties endangers the ability of civil society organizations to act as independent political advocates, particularly when criticism of their own party is in order.

Despite some journalists having to self-censor on criticism of politicians, the media environment is free enough for a diverse set of print and broadcast media to flourish. One notable example is a community radio station in the Central Tarai that delivers educational programs, public affairs programs connecting citizens and local politicians in problem-solving dialogue, and programs in local indigenous population languages. Another community radio station is run by women of mixed caste and ethnicity, and includes programming against sexual and gender-based violence. Such outlets are educating people on their rights and how to exercise them, empowering disadvantaged groups to pursue justice, and building community. An army general described the media as “strong” and knowing about developments before the army does (but went on to call the media “out of control” with defamation, though he acknowledged whistle-blowing can be good).

The rising awareness of identity, rights and democratic processes that resulted from the conflict, largely due to Maoist agitation, but also free media, has resulted in a heightened propensity to mobilize for political action among the disadvantaged, including Madhesi, other minorities, low castes such as Dalits and Badis, women and youth. To the degree this results in constructive political action through democratic institutions and processes, this is a positive development that could help fix the problems with governance. For instance, a number of national Dalit organizations are advocating their causes to the central government in Kathmandu with some success. But with continued unresponsiveness of government, aggravated by political ineptitude, constitutional paralysis and unelected local and district officials, the heightened political awareness could instead facilitate mobilization for renewed violence or other destructive conflict.

The heightened political awareness is balanced by traditional values of tolerance, dialogue and patience, helping to keep democratic expression from spinning out of control. Many Nepalis (especially in the East) express pride in diversity with expressions such as “We are like potatoes – we can be mixed with any curry” or “We are like a garland, all flowers on one string.” Nepal also has a number of unifying symbols such as Mt. Everest and the birthplaces of Buddha and Sita that inspire collective pride and could replace the symbolic role the King used to play for some, thereby uniting the country on a more inclusive and equitable basis. Nepalis are also proud



## NEPAL FIELD-BASED ICAF REPORT

of the peace process and democracy. Despite some past association of the “Nepali” label with Pahadis, nearly everyone identifies with the term (including low castes and indigenous groups like the Tharu), and this identification is stronger for non-Pahadis after the war, though for some minority groups it is a secondary identity used mostly when addressing foreigners. The association with being Nepali, however, is linked to a democratic Nepal for many, and some Madhesis and indigenous people said separatism is likely if democracy fails – in particular, if it fails to produce federalism.

People are aware of the importance of protecting Nepal’s natural and cultural heritage to promote tourism as a source of economic growth. In communities bordering the Chitwan National Park, this is reinforced through councils that provide environmental education, coordinate controlled use of forest resources, and determine how to spend tourist revenue shared by the Park. Conservation is also promoted through Community Forest User’s Groups throughout Nepal. Nepal also has significant potential to further develop agriculture to provide jobs and food security.

Nepal plans to dramatically increase use of its tremendous potential for hydropower in coming decades. Hydropower development is a potential economic dynamo that would be a source of jobs in itself and also reduce electricity shortages that inhibit investment and economic growth, as well as potentially provide income and revenue by selling power to India. However, it is essential that hydropower development be guided by assessment of social and environmental impacts, natural disaster risk assessment, climate change considerations and consultation of affected populations, to minimize negative impacts, ensure local populations benefit equitably and avoid creating conflict. The high degree of silt in Himalayan rivers, high risk of landslides and earthquakes, and the danger of catastrophic Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF) all complicate dam design and management in Nepal. If well designed and managed, the dams could improve flood control, but there is concern that they would only make this problem worse through cascading failures. Furthermore, the Indian government has historically used its influence to distort water management in Nepal towards Indian rather than local interests. Plans to build large dams to sell electricity to India with largely private foreign funds could also skew priorities and end up benefiting outsiders much more than Nepalis. In short, hydropower development is a complicated issue with the potential to exacerbate conflict as well as mitigate it.<sup>13</sup>

Though the quality of public education is a widespread grievance, people feel access to basic education is slowly improving, especially for women and girls. This is empowering women somewhat to contribute to economic growth and democratization, though more progress is needed to achieve equality of educational, economic and political opportunities. In general, education is most helpful when it connects to domestic jobs which make use of that education. Nepal could build on its prevalence of English language skills in better-educated areas such as

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<sup>13</sup>International Rivers, “Mountains of Concrete: Dam Building in the Himalayas,” Dec. 2008, [http://www.internationalrivers.org/files/IR\\_Himalayas\\_rev.pdf](http://www.internationalrivers.org/files/IR_Himalayas_rev.pdf) .

Ramaswami Riyer, “Floods, Himalayan Rivers, Nepal: Some Heresies,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, Nov. 15, 2008, pp37-40, [http://www.amanpanchayat.org/documents/bihar\\_floods\\_08/articles/12865.pdf](http://www.amanpanchayat.org/documents/bihar_floods_08/articles/12865.pdf).

Ajaya Dixit et. al., *Constructive Dialogue on Dams and Development in Nepal*, The World Conservation Union Nepal and Nepal Water Conservation Foundation, July 2004, [http://www.unep.org/dams/Country%20Dialogues/Dam\\_English.pdf](http://www.unep.org/dams/Country%20Dialogues/Dam_English.pdf) .

## NEPAL FIELD-BASED ICAF REPORT

Kathmandu in connecting with global networks of knowledge and the global economy, by continuing to improve education at all levels and improving high-speed internet access. Respondents at a university suggested Nepal could also benefit from improving the domestic capacity to turn innovations of its researchers to marketable products, as patents, profits and ultimately its brightest innovators are currently lost to foreign labs and industries.

At the international level, several negative factors also have positive sides. While economic migration produces social problems, the remittances contribute to livelihoods and children's education. Economic migration also empowers women left behind by enabling them to assume traditionally male roles vacated by men who migrate. While the Bhutanese refugees in Nepal are resented in many ways, they are acknowledged by some Nepalis to provide good teachers and to help the local economy. Similarly, though the open border with India creates some security issues and economic grievances, it also provides economic opportunities and trans-border community connections. If the Government of Nepal becomes more responsive to the interests of its constituents in relations with India, the open border might be transformed to a more wholly positive dynamic.

A few resiliencies relate to government and politicians working well. The central government established Local Peace Councils with diverse membership that have been effective in several places at reducing tensions, including between Hindus and Muslims in Nepalgunj. Despite the general pattern of dysfunction at the national level, political leaders are able to work well together at the local level in many places. Furthermore, in the absence of elected local officials, the appointed CDOs and LDOs are in many places making good faith efforts to deliver services and resolve disputes, though both these officials and the public strongly tend to say it would be better to have elected local officials. Finally, the judiciary has sometimes shown some independence, allowing it to hold even members of the governing party accountable in a few instances, though failures to do so continue as well.

### **Conflict Drivers**

All of the grievances discussed above represent potential for conflict, but do not amount to conflict on their own. Destructive social conflict generally requires a key actor to mobilize people affected by a grievance to take violent, threatening or oppressive collective action – a combination the ICAF calls a *conflict driver*. Most of the grievances are not actively part of a conflict driver at this time. We identified the following active conflict drivers.

At the national level, the chief key actors driving conflict are the political parties and their affiliates, including youth wings and coopted unions and civil society organizations. In order to advance their political positions or personal agendas, they create instability by opportunistically mobilizing people around grievances that suit their purposes. This has been most prominently in the form of *bandhs* (a form of protest that seeks to shut down all economic activity and transportation in an area, often using threats or implicit threats of violence), but these are decreasing in frequency and effectiveness at the time of this study. This study occurred in November 2011, immediately after the Seven-Point Agreement signed by the major parties at the beginning of that month, and the parties are generally seeking not to disrupt the spirit of cooperation at this time. However, the Maoist faction led by Mohan Baidya is organizing people

## NEPAL FIELD-BASED ICAF REPORT

against this agreement and the return of seized property. Leaders of ethnic and regional identity groups also mobilize members to press for rights under the new constitution and federalism, by organizing rallies and strikes.

The perception in Nepal is that India worsens grievances and conflict in Nepal by controlling or influencing Nepali politicians and officials to sacrifice the interests of Nepal in favor of those of India. An example commonly cited in the literature and the media is India's influence on water policy in Nepal, as a series of treaties dealing with water have been viewed as unfair by many Nepalis.<sup>14</sup> Armed criminal groups exploit the open border with India to conduct crimes in Nepal such as kidnapping, extortion, robbery, and trafficking of drugs and women, knowing the lack of effective extradition mechanisms gives them refuge back on the Indian side of the border.

These trans-border armed groups mostly affect the Tarai, where in some areas they have driven local government officials out of the village, leaving a governance vacuum. Also in the Tarai, Madhesi political groups mobilize their constituencies for bandhs to advocate for Madhesi autonomy under federalism. In the Midwest of the Tarai, respondents felt that political parties were creating and manipulating tensions between Hindus and Muslims. This perception of manipulation further reinforced respondents' sense that politicians were working for their own power and wellbeing, rather than the interests of their constituents.

At the local level, organizations gather people to nonviolently protest misappropriation of local development funds by local officials and political parties. These non-violent protests can become drivers of conflict when they escalate into violence, either by accident or due to instigation by political or other actors. In the East, labor unions mobilize members to protest the use of Indian labor by factories in Nepal (many of which are owned by Indians).

### **Mitigating Factors**

The resiliencies discussed above will be best at preventing or mitigating conflict when a key actor is using it to mobilize people away from or against conflict. The ICAF calls this combination a *mitigating factor*. (Note that some of the resiliencies inherently involve mobilization of people by a key actor in a way that mitigates conflict, and hence automatically qualify as mitigators.) Nepal has many mitigating factors.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) play important mitigating roles. Most commonly, they mobilize communities and international resources to fill some of the gaps in government services. Some CSOs support dialogue between political parties to keep them solving problems and moving forward peacefully. CSOs and traditional community leaders provide local mediation to solve disputes between individuals or communities. Various groups advocate within the system at the national, district or local level to address needs of communities or identity groups. Youth groups are often active conducting public service campaigns such as an anti-tobacco campaign in the Eastern Hills, or in identifying and advocating unmet needs to the government, such as a need for better information technology at universities. Some CSOs mobilize people to oppose corruption in peaceful ways. Savings groups and cooperatives

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<sup>14</sup> Dipak Gyawali, "Nepal-India Water Resource Relations," in I. William Zartman and Jeffrey Z. Rubin, eds., *Power and Negotiation*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002, pp. 129-154.

## NEPAL FIELD-BASED ICAF REPORT

mobilize local resources to address local needs. In particular, women's savings and credit groups generate economic opportunities for women by providing them with capital.

The many media outlets in Nepal are keeping people informed, building on the heightened political awareness and potentiating peaceful political participation to make the political process more responsive. At a local level, community radio stations are bringing people together to discuss issues of importance to them, and linking constituents to politicians and officials in democratic exchanges to solve problems.

The political parties were mobilized to arrive at the November 2011 Seven Point Agreement by recognition of the mounting frustration of their constituents with their repeated delays. In particular, PM Bhattarai is pushing the peace process forward, building on the widespread desire for peace. At the local level, political parties are often working together well to solve problems, also building on the widespread desire for peace. At the same time, the efforts of Maoist, Madhesi and other political parties to now express concerns of marginalized groups within a peaceful political process is at least offering some hope that these concerns will be addressed, and thus placing destructive conflict on hold for now.

The judiciary has complemented the efforts of political parties by issuing verdicts against Maoists and other parties while in power, as well as corrupt officials and other political leaders. This accountability furthers Nepali pride in democracy and hope that behavior of politicians and officials will continue to improve, inspiring continued patience.

Officials have mobilized security forces to improve security with some success. The patrol presence of the National Police and the Armed Police Force has increased in many areas, and the number and activity of armed groups have decreased, though still a problem in the Tarai. The Army, building on its professional and generally apolitical image, mobilizes its resources to provide public services and aid development, which provides a sense of stability. (However, the army is seen as being dominated by Pahadis, and Madhesis desire more inclusion.)

While they are far from satisfying the public, political leaders and officials have made some improvements in other services as well. They have increased access to basic education and healthcare, with results in areas such as girls in school and reduction of leprosy. Mobile Citizenship Teams are simplifying the road to citizenship for marginalized communities in some districts. At the local level, some CDOs and LDOs are acting in good faith to help resolve disputes, address problems and provide services. Local Peace Councils established by the government are mobilizing civic capacity to help to reduce tensions.

Also, the international community mobilizes its resources to support Nepal's peace process, providing technical advice and exerting influence on politicians to keep it moving, including by supporting the development of domestic monitoring and advocacy by media and civil society. (However, there is also a growing perception of international interference in Nepali affairs.) International aid agencies and INGOs are working with local civil society to fill gaps in government services. The international community is also working to reduce tensions surrounding Bhutanese refugees by finding permanent settlement for them in third countries.

## **Windows of Uncertainty**

Windows of uncertainty are times when key actors may see a strategic opportunity to change the conflict dynamics by increasing mobilization either towards or away from conflict. The most important one that can be concretely placed in time in Nepal is the May deadline for a new constitution. There have been four extensions and the Supreme Court has declared there can be no more. If the political parties fail again, the hope generated by the Seven Point Agreement is likely to evaporate and frustration could manifest in violent action. The parties would likely blame each other, contributing to the potential for resumption of the conflict.

Other important windows expected in 2012 include completion of PLA integration, which initially would be a hopeful moment that would be ideal for reconciling moves. However, there may be hitches in implementing integration as it moves forward, which could be flashpoints for the former combatants now in close quarters. The publication of detailed census results could challenge peoples' expectations about which groups will dominate new states under federalism and ignite conflict over where borders should be drawn. Both this and publication of voter registration lists could produce recriminations about manipulation of the data or process by officials. Elections under the new constitution and federal structure to be defined in May might happen as early as late 2012, and will occasion the entry of new political actors and dynamics in many ways.

Relevant developments that could be expected in 2013 include hosting the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Summit, which has been a venue for protests in other countries. Adoption of a new police act or criminal procedure code could prove controversial.

Windows that are not possible to place in time can still have a potential for strong impact on conflict dynamics and may even be highly likely. For instance, Nepal is overdue for a major earthquake, which would easily overwhelm the government's ability to respond effectively, creating a lawless environment, people struggling to survive, and anger against authorities. Similar effects could result from a catastrophic flood from a bursting glacial lake, which is already happening to some degree and is increasingly likely as glaciers melt with climate change. Economic shocks, especially in food or fuel prices could result in angry mobilization. India closing the border for some reason would have strong economic effects, as it did in the late 1980s. If the Government of Nepal were to take actions that the Chinese perceived as support for pro-Tibet movements, the Chinese response would also have some economic impact, and perhaps develop tensions between Nepalis of Tibetan origin with others. Passage or failure of land reform legislation would aggravate constituencies that benefited or lost.

## **Findings and Implications**

Based on analysis of the data, the ICAF team identified seven overarching findings. The implications of these findings are discussed here.

## **1. There are currently many grievances and few conflict drivers in Nepal.**

Recall that a grievance does not cause destructive social conflict by itself, but is potential energy for a conflict. A key actor can turn this to the kinetic energy of an actual destructive social conflict by mobilizing people around the grievance, thereby creating a conflict driver.

It is typical to find more grievances than active conflict drivers, especially in a society recovering from conflict where the main political forces are engaged in an advanced peace process, as in Nepal. This ICAF process identified 34 grievances and nine conflict drivers in Nepal. This means that while there is a relatively low level of conflict currently, there is tremendous potential for key actors to mobilize conflict in the future around the ample supply of grievances.

This implies that preventing conflict in Nepal involves not only addressing the current conflict drivers, but significant effort focused on prioritized interventions to prevent the most dangerous of these other grievances from becoming additional conflict drivers. There are three main means of doing this:

1. Reducing prioritized grievances, including grievances on which current conflict drivers depend and those that are likely to be the subjects of future mobilization for destructive conflict.
2. Affecting prioritized key actors' motivations and means to mobilize, in order to redirect them to constructive forms of mobilization, or dissuade or impede them from mobilizing. This includes key actors involved in current conflict drivers and those deemed likely to mobilize in the future around one or more of the available grievances for destructive conflict, as well as potential new key actors. This may include removing or adjusting upcoming windows of uncertainty so they do not provide incentive structures favorable to mobilization for conflict by key actors of concern.
3. Supporting prioritized mitigating factors that are best able to countervail current conflict drivers or high priority potential conflict drivers. This includes existing mitigating factors and potential new mitigating factors that could be created by expanding or creating appropriate resiliencies, affecting means and motivations of relevant key actors, or helping relevant new key actors to emerge and empowering them

The appendices provide the full lists produced by this ICAF analysis under each conflict component. CSO can provide further guidance on how to prioritize, monitor and intervene.

## **2. Most conflict drivers and grievances are related to failures of governance.**

This suggests that poor governance is an underlying cause of conflict and potential conflict, implying that improving governance generally, rather than dealing with a slew of individual grievances and drivers, is a shortcut to mitigating conflict. There is certainly some truth to this, but there are considerable complications in improving governance in Nepal, as reflected in the grievances.

## NEPAL FIELD-BASED ICAF REPORT

In the first place, improving governance requires improving the behavior of political parties, politicians and officials. Getting them to work towards compromise and get decisions made in a more timely manner is perhaps the easiest part, and the Seven Point Agreement suggests they are moving in this direction. More troubling is tackling deep-seated problems of corruption, which is always difficult, especially when some politicians and officials have links to violent criminals who threaten and kill people attempting to expose corruption.

Repeated election cycles may help with all these problems if the worst politicians and parties reliably lose. But that requires an electorate that is informed about which parties and politicians are the worst in corruption. This is the job of media and civil society, which are making efforts in this regard, but need strengthening. The cooptation of many civil society organizations likely reduces their ability to be effective watchdogs on their affiliate party, which suggests that study of the extent and sources of this problem is in order. Study of the intimidation of journalists and activists also seems in order, both to shame and deter politicians involved and to determine means of stemming the problem, which may require tougher legislation or enforcement of existing laws, improved police investigatory units or increased support to investigatory and protective efforts of organizations like the Federation of Nepali Journalists.

In anticipation of federalism, the capacity of civil society and media to hold politicians and officials accountable at regional and local levels seems critically important. National level organizations are challenged enough dealing with Kathmandu, and probably will not be able to quickly adjust to covering a federal structure. While some organizations such as community radio stations have been advocating issue positions and fostering civic dialogues with appointed officials at the district or local level, they are not accustomed to the challenges and opportunities for influence that electoral politics at this level will bring, nor the greater number of political positions that new structures are likely to bring.

### **3. The signing of the Seven-Point Peace Agreement in November 2011 created renewed hope and optimism around the peace process, but also unrealistic expectations for the Constitution and federalism.**

The repeated delays by the political parties in coming to agreement on a new constitution have been absorbed with the patience for which Nepalis are known. However, this might have reached a breaking point if not for the Seven-Point Agreement of November 2011, which is seen as a sign of progress and hope for a rapid solution. This agreement among the three largest parties outlines some key points of agreement and partially schedules implementation on Maoist ex-combatant reintegration, return of seized property, dismantling the paramilitary wing of the Young Communist League (YCL) and expediting the drafting of the Constitution.

Nepalis broadly express hope that the new Constitution and the federalism it is to bring will solve the problems at the root of the conflict. They expect it will make government more responsive to regions and the identity groups living in each region. Some express utopian expectations, such as federalism will end corruption, or end economic migration. Some indigenous groups express a desire for “self-determination” within Nepal, meaning nearly complete autonomy.

## NEPAL FIELD-BASED ICAF REPORT

Federalism may also empower the new political parties representing Madhesi and other geographically concentrated identity groups, as they may be able to gain pluralities or majorities in the new federal units where they are concentrated. It may also promote development of new, more independent political leaders at the regional level, as well as the political monitoring and advocacy roles of civil society and media outside Kathmandu, though we did not hear such expectations expressed.

Federalism, however, is complicated, and once the reality comes, it may disappoint many of these hopes. As a Madhesi politician put it, “*If federalism is not carefully thought through, one mistake could end up serving as a source of conflict in the future.*” Identity groups hoping to control or have a strong influence on regional and local policy once federalism is established may be surprised to find otherwise. The number of federal units created and their boundaries will affect which groups gain majorities or pluralities in each unit, and this may not correspond to expectations. It is likely that some groups will find themselves in *less* influential positions than currently – perhaps even shifting from majority to minority status. Furthermore, controlling federal units is meaningful only to the degree that power is devolved to them, and the extent and types of power devolved may also defy expectations (for instance, expectations that customs revenues would remain with the states are likely to be dashed). The currently disadvantaged groups seem broadly to be expecting to be a winner in this process, but there will be losers. Some civic education and dialogue is occurring about federalism, organized by either civil society or by political parties, but there is no concerted governmental effort. The inflated expectations of many members of the public suggest an improved effort is required.

For example, one indigenous group, the Limbu in the Eastern Region, envisions a *Limbuwan*<sup>15</sup> federal unit comprising the nine districts in which their group lives, among other groups. This area would include Biratnagar, the diverse second largest city of Nepal. This area includes several million people (Morang District alone is 843,330) while the Limbu number approximately 360,000.<sup>16</sup> Some of the Limbu political leaders said they are prepared to *revolt* if this is not what the new Constitution provides. However, even if they receive this demand, they will be far from constituting a majority, and may find they have less influence on the government of this new unit than expected.

Dalits are perhaps least likely to benefit from federalism, as they are not strongly concentrated geographically, unlike ethnicities, and are thus unlikely to significantly increase voting power through creating federal states. Federalism may benefit some of them in that the greater diversity of governments may increase the likelihood of a more sympathetic government being elected in at least some areas of Nepal. But it will also complicate making progress by diffusing the focus of advocacy from one government to many, and some states may make little progress or even regress. Muslims are similarly unlikely to benefit, as their numbers are small and they are scattered in small pockets across the Tarai.

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<sup>15</sup> The name of an ancient set of ten kingdoms (even then multiethnic, but Limbu-dominated) incorporated with promises of autonomy in 1774 by the Gorkha Kingdom that became Nepal.

<sup>16</sup> 2001 Census data. Government of Nepal, National Planning Commission Secretariat, Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Yearbook of Nepal 2009*, Tables 1.1, 1.7, [http://www.cbs.gov.np/statis\\_2009\\_content.html](http://www.cbs.gov.np/statis_2009_content.html).



A conflict expert at an international organization we interviewed pointed out an additional difficulty with federalism in the need to staff the new political and bureaucratic positions it will create at the regional level. Without adequate precautions, a likely consequence is that Pahadis will take a disproportionate share of the bureaucratic positions because of historical advantages in education and job experience. This would aggravate a key Madhesi grievance in the Tarai, and of other disadvantaged groups generally, and cast doubt on the ability of the new federal institutions to address their concerns. This could lead to a renewal of violent conflict. If this is prevented through some form of reverse discrimination, however, it could result in poorly prepared bureaucrats and/or new Pahadi grievances about being passed up for jobs in favor of less qualified Madhesis, indigenous people, or low castes. For elected positions, Madhesis should have the advantage in the Tarai, but this may lead to many inexperienced new politicians being elected.<sup>17</sup> This analysis suggests that a conflict prevention puzzle facing Nepal is how to ensure adequate numbers of qualified politicians and potential civil servants from disadvantaged groups exist in time to staff the new federal structures to a degree that will avoid inflaming tensions.

The release of detailed census results (only preliminary results at the district level with no ethnic/caste breakdown have been released) may violate people's expectations about which group will dominate each federal state, and the validity of the results is likely to be challenged. This may be aggravated if they are released after state boundaries are drawn, as people will feel they did not have a chance to argue for changes in the boundaries based on this information.

While there is danger in delaying federalism too long, there is also danger in implementing it too fast. For instance, instead of it reducing corruption as some expect, corruption and abuse of power may actually worsen initially, because civil society and media capacities will not yet be adequately developed at the level of the new states to keep politicians and officials in check, as argued above.

#### **4. The Tarai still has the most active conflict drivers, though conditions are improving in some districts.**

The Tarai is where the disadvantaged Madhesis, as well as some indigenous groups such as the Tharu are located, and their grievances still haven't been adequately addressed. Additionally, the Tarai are more exposed to the open border with India and attendant problems of transborder crime. The progress in some areas is encouraging, and perhaps could be made contagious through public education and lesson-sharing. Local or district elections could also help, as parties successful in one locality might seek to translate that to gains in other localities. Federalism might help in the medium term, but the period of adjustment in the short term may exacerbate problems.

#### **5. The Hills have a strong sense of improvement in peace and governance.**

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<sup>17</sup> A Nepal Army officer who expressed several negative opinions of Madhesis offered a different view: "When given the chance to elect local officials, the Madhesis just elected a Pahadi anyway; they are ignorant farmers and they knew that they needed someone educated to lead them."

Our interviews suggest that the Hills tend to have fewer security problems and less severe deprivation of government services than the Tarai (with the notable exception of the poverty in the Chhetri areas of the Far-Western Hills). Madhesi and indigenous groups continue to perceive the Hills to be dominated by the high-caste Brahman/Chhettri, who were advantaged in receiving government services. In their view, once the Maoists laid down their arms, the situation in the Hills could return to a situation in which the Brahman/Chhettri benefit, but minorities may be oppressed. (An alternative view is that the Hills have benefited more after the end of the conflict in reaction to Maoist and Madhesi agitation that occurred there, and that minorities living there have received some of these benefits.) Indications are that the control by security forces has become strong in the Eastern Hills, but some indigenous groups there perceive it to be too strong in terms of discriminating against their rights to free speech and assembly. In the current environment of increased political awareness, this means that the improvements in the Eastern Hills might be hiding a potential for resurgent conflict, if inequities there are not addressed. There is also danger in the difference in peace and governance between Hills and Tarai, especially if this translates to an increasing wealth differential.

## **6. Community organizations/leaders are resolving conflict and providing services at the grassroots level.**

As described above, services by community leaders and organizations as well as NGOs are both mitigating factors and attempts to supplement or substitute for poor governance. This could be seen by politicians and officials as unwelcome competition to building the capacity of government, but instead it is a strength a transformed government could build on with partnerships, funding and regulation. However, if not done carefully, closer relationships with government could lead to further cooptation by political parties of civil society organizations seeking government funds.

This may be less of a danger for traditional community leaders and organizations. A potential weakness of these, however, is serving only one identity group, which works in a homogenous village, but works less well in growing communities that are diversifying. Heterogeneous modern organizations or government services may do a better job of ensuring all members of society are equally served and tying together a diverse society as people help each other across identity group lines. However, we found that dispute resolution services of traditional leaders and organizations were often finding ways of working across identity group lines.

Finally, it is difficult for NGOs or community organizations to provide some public goods such as security and infrastructure, and the government needs to not rely on civil society entirely. While Nepalis appreciate civic efforts, they still complain about the government and politicians not providing the extent and quality of services they expect.

## **7. Gaps in local governance are being filled by a variety of actors, but people are eager to have elected local government officials fill those roles.**

## NEPAL FIELD-BASED ICAF REPORT

Nepalis believe that restoring local elections would improve responsiveness of local government and the quality of government services, which would address most of their grievances. This belief is grounded on their positive experience with elected local government before the war. Even some of the appointed officials who might be displaced by such elections expressed a need to return to elected local government as soon as possible.

The lack of local elections is also relevant to the country's lack of preparation for federalism, in that lack of political experience at the local level may make it more difficult for functions at the level of the new states to be filled with experienced people from the localities within the state. The years without electoral competition mean that the pool of local politicians with experience running for office has atrophied. Local media and civil society are also relatively unpracticed at performing monitoring and advocacy roles during elections and with elected officials at the local level. Furthermore, the bureaucracy at the local level has not benefitted for many years from the proximate accountability pressures that local electoral politics would bring via the local elected officials that would be in charge. If these deficits of political development still exist when federalism is implemented, the new institutions will have relatively few politically experienced resources to draw on from the local level.

The holding of local elections is currently waiting for the new Constitution, which may be imminent. But if the Constitution is delayed, and local elections continue to wait for the new constitution, frustration around this unmet expectation and the associated unresponsiveness of government services will continue to mount. This would also be true if there is a long period between the arrival of the new Constitution and the actual administration of local elections.

## Conclusion

Nepal has experienced important, though slow and imperfect, progress towards consolidating peace. Building on Nepal's natural and civic resiliencies, a path forward can be discerned of improving governance, correcting the lower security and services in the Tarai, and promoting development that turns Nepal's natural wealth into prosperity for all its peoples. The data suggest that the key to this process is healing the dysfunctions in Nepal's politics of irresponsible, corrupt or inept politicians, parties, and its corrupt and ineffective bureaucracy. Logically underlying that is further development of the capacity of civil society, media and voters to hold these actors accountable. The development of federalism, while a key element of the peace process, has potentially dangerous complications and has created unreasonably high expectations that are likely to be dashed. These dangers could be reduced if the Constitution is carefully crafted for peace and effectiveness and if there is careful preparation for implementation of federalism, preferably beginning with satisfying the people's demand for local elections.

Given the rich supply of grievances, it is important to monitor for, anticipate and prevent the development of new active conflict drivers, and to watch for opportunities to help new mitigating factors emerge and expand existing ones. CSO has produced written guidance on a process for determining priorities for conflict prevention and analyzing how these may be changed by future events. Users may request further CSO assistance in implementing it.

## Appendix 1: Questionnaire

*The following is the questionnaire developed by the ICAF Team collectively before deploying to the field. This questionnaire was not strictly followed – rather, it was used as a guide for semi-structured interviews. Not all questions were necessarily asked. The questions chosen and the order in which they were asked depended on the nature of the respondent and the conversation, with an eye towards building rapport, maintaining a natural flow to the conversation, and focusing on areas where the respondent seemed most knowledgeable and responsive. The questions were used to start discussion, rather than as a limit to the discussion, and were often followed up with more specific probes.*

### **Data Collection Sheet – Nepal ICAF November 6 - 11, 2011**

**Statement:** The United States and Nepal have been good friends for many years, and we want to strengthen that partnership as Nepal continues its transformation to a peaceful, stable, and prosperous democracy. In order to best understand the most effective role the U.S. government can play in this relationship, a team from Washington is visiting Nepal and, together with some of their colleagues at the U.S. Embassy in Kathmandu, will meet with a wide range of Nepalis, including government officials, community leaders, and private citizens in all walks of life and in several regions of the country in an attempt to create a comprehensive picture of the country and its issues.

**Directions:** Please record the demographic data requested below from your interviews. Type your notes, and send them via email by the end of the day **Nov. 23**.

**Date:**

**Identity** (including all self-identified affiliations like ethnic group, job, religion, age, sex/gender):

**Number of people in this particular interview or group:**

**Location** (town, city, and if at a school, clinic, market, taxi stand, etc):

**Questions:**

1. Tell me about the community where you live.
2. What is the most important challenge/difficulty in your life and community? Ask for specific examples.

## NEPAL FIELD-BASED ICAF REPORT

3. When things are difficult how do you manage? What do you do? Is there a person or organization that you rely on to help you? Do you trust that person or organization? Ask for specific examples.
4. When people have disagreements, what are they about? How are disagreements in your community resolved? Ask for specific examples.
5. How do you hear or know what is happening in your community? How much do you trust the information you get? Ask for specific examples.
6. **For border areas:** What do you think about living near the border? Ask for specific examples.
7. Who are the leaders in your community? What do you think about leaders in your community? What is your opinion of political leaders? What do you think about service delivery? Ask for specific examples.
8. What is the most recent, significant change in your community? What is the most recent, significant change in Nepal? What changes in your community do you expect to see in the next 1-2 years? Ask for specific examples.
9. You live in Nepal, what does it mean [to you] to be Nepali? What are you proud of? Ask for specific examples.
10. What is working well in your community? What is working well in Nepal? Ask for specific examples.
11. How do you want to see your community in the future? How do you want to see Nepal in the future? How do you see your role in the new Nepal? How do you see your community's role in the new Nepal? Ask for specific examples.
12. Do you have any questions for us?

## **Appendix 2: Regional Identity Groups**

Identity groups were identified per region. Many of these are common across regions, but the workshop did not include time for separating out the cross-cutting identity groups.

### **Mid-Western Tarai**

Tharus  
Kamaiya  
Muslims  
Madhesi  
Pahadi  
Women  
Dalits  
Business leaders  
Maoists  
Human rights leaders  
Youth  
The landless  
Army  
PLA  
Administration  
Religious groups  
Elites and non-elites  
Landed (property owners)  
Political parties  
Journalists

### **Mid-Western Hills / Western Tarai**

Youth  
Madhesi  
Tharu  
Magar  
Muslims

## NEPAL FIELD-BASED ICAF REPORT

Dalits  
Women  
Badi  
Army  
Pt (????) Police  
Maoist  
Minority groups  
Political parties  
Political leaders  
CDOs  
FNCCI – business groups  
MJF – Madhesi Janadhkar Forum (or is Janakpur????)  
NGOs  
Tharu Political Group (Tharuhut)  
International Donors

### **Kathmandu Valley and Chitwan District**

Buffer zone committees and communities – National Park  
PLA/Maoists  
Poachers  
Dalit  
Chepang  
Tharu  
NGO/INGO  
Political parties/leaders  
Journalist  
Students (higher education)  
Nepal Army  
Unemployed  
“76th District” residents

### **Central/Eastern Tarai**

## NEPAL FIELD-BASED ICAF REPORT

Madhesi  
Pahadis  
Dalits  
Muslims  
Women  
Youth  
Political parties

### **Eastern Hills and Border Area**

Youth  
Students  
Bhutanese refugees  
Limbu  
Indians  
Women  
Children  
Labor unions  
Criminals  
Migrants  
Business/shop owners  
Tourist  
Madhesi  
Men  
Unemployed  
Farmers  
Former combatants



## **Appendix 3: Cross-Cutting Grievances & Resiliencies**

### **Cross-Cutting Core Grievances**

#### ***Governance and Politics***

Nepalis are disillusioned and distrust the government, political parties and political leaders; they believe that politicians are not serving the people or country -- only themselves.

Many Nepali identity groups blame the government for discrimination and marginalization

People feel bribery, nepotism, extortion, misappropriation of funds and political favors are persistent problems

People are frustrated with the lack of local elected leadership

#### ***Service Delivery***

Nepalis are dissatisfied with unresponsive government and with the quality and quantity of key government services (security, education, health, roads/infrastructure and agriculture)

Many Nepalis blame the government for discrimination and unequal access to resources, including land, water, forest and energy

Many Nepalis are dissatisfied with the quality and quantity of education - marginalized groups are disproportionately excluded

Madhesis blame the government and Pahadis for obstacles to citizenship that exclude them from voting, economic opportunities and government services

#### ***Economics***

Nepalis are frustrated and dissatisfied by a lack of jobs and economic opportunities and blame the government, political parties and in some cases, non-Nepali workers

Migration due to lack of economic opportunities is causing concern for Nepalis about the loss of their productive populations, brain drain and damage to the social fabric

### **Cross-cutting Social and Institutional Resiliencies**

#### ***Government***

Political leaders at the local level work well together in many places

CDOs, LDOs and other government entities are working to provide services and resolve disputes in the absence of local elected leaders

## NEPAL FIELD-BASED ICAF REPORT

### ***Community and Civil Society***

Using local methods to resolve disputes

Filling service delivery gaps left by government

Teaching people about their political and economic rights and advocating for them

Robust family and community networks buffer against economic hardship

Women are increasingly empowered

In many places, people feel access to basic education is slowly improving, especially for women and girls

Some CSOs are effective in delivering services or representing the needs of particular groups – however, many are affiliated with political parties, undermining their ability to hold parties accountable

### ***Cultural***

National culture values tolerance, dialogue and patience

Mt. Everest, Buddha's birthplace and Sita's birthplace are unifying symbols inspiring collective pride

Rising awareness of identity, rights, democratic process and resources

### ***Natural and Cultural Resources***

People are aware of the importance of protecting natural and cultural resources for tourism

Significant potential for developing hydropower to provide electricity, revenue, industrialization and jobs

Significant potential for expanded agriculture for food security and income

### ***International***

Remittances contribute to livelihoods and children's education

Migration empowers the women left behind

INGOs and donors provide a service delivery safety net and capacity building

Open border with India provides economic opportunity and community connections

## **Appendix 4: Regional Grievances and Resiliencies**

### **Mid-Western Tarai**

#### *Core Grievances*

Muslims blame the government and Pahadis for marginalization in rights and recognition

Madhesis and Tharus are angry that land has been granted to non-indigenous and Pahadi communities

Madhesis and Tharus are frustrated about their identity and rights as Nepalis, especially in regard to citizenship

Kamaiyas have not received land promised to them by the state 10 years ago

Armed groups create insecurity in the Midwestern Tarai through extortion of businesses, community leaders and some landowners

People feel hassled at the border control points when transporting goods and crossing

#### *Social and Institutional Resiliencies*

Tharus and Muslims rely on traditional leadership systems for dispute resolution and planning in their communities

### **Mid-Western Hills / Western Tarai**

#### *Core Grievances*

People have inadequate access to drinking and irrigation water, particularly marginalized communities and expect the government to provide sources

The Madhesi community feels threatened by Pahadi dominance, including the police, courts, unspecified armed groups and individuals

Business leaders in the Tarai feel excluded from economic development by the government's failure to provide industrial areas, trade support and a stable investment environment

Dalits and Badis are still suffering from strong social stigmas leading to more severe exclusion from services, jobs and harassment

#### *Social and Institutional Resiliencies*

Tharus and Muslims rely on traditional leadership systems for dispute resolution and planning in their communities

Magars, Dalits, Badis and Madhesis have developed grassroots leadership systems in the absence of local government

## NEPAL FIELD-BASED ICAF REPORT

Hill communities have a strong sense that their lives and government services are improving

People in the Mid-West have a strong sense of being Nepali and pride in their identity

### **Kathmandu Valley and Chitwan District**

#### *Core Grievances*

Army leadership concerned about integration of former Maoist combatants and frustrated with the incompetence of political leadership

Army leadership annoyed with rehabilitation packages being higher than Army pensions

Journalists feel they have to self-censor due to threats from political leaders and associated actors

In developed areas, people are particularly focused on inadequate quality and quantity of higher education and blame central government

Communities surrounding the Chitwan National Park resent loss of land and resources, as well as crop damage/deaths by wild animals

Youth expressed frustration with the lack of a youth influence on policy

#### *Social and Institutional Resiliencies*

Urbanization is breaking down caste and ethnic barriers

Non-profit community schools provide higher quality education than government schools at a lower cost than for profit schools

Community radio stations facilitate communication and problem solving between citizens and government

In Chitwan district, political parties cooperate on development, including a 30-year development plan

Natural resources attract tourism, providing income for surrounding communities through resource sharing mechanisms with the Chitwan National Park

### **Central/Eastern Tarai**

#### *Core Grievances*

Madhesis blame the Pahadis for the lack of recognition of Madhesi identity and rights

Sense of Pahadi dominance vs. Madhesi powerlessness in local decision-making and access to government services

While improving, security remains relatively poor, with a sense of insecurity at all levels due to armed/criminal group activity

## NEPAL FIELD-BASED ICAF REPORT

Restrictive customs control on Indian side blocks access to Indian market for personal and commercial purposes

People lament the lack of government support for agriculture sector goods like fertilizer and land after the floods

### *Social and Institutional Resiliencies*

Widespread support for Madhesi rights, political agendas and Madhesi identity across interviewed communities

## **Eastern Hills and Border Area**

### *Core Grievances*

Open border leads to loss of jobs to Indians and unfair treatment of Nepali business people by the Indian border authorities

Local laborers are displaced by Indian laborers due to various reasons including labor union disputes

Some Limbu political leaders fear not getting the nine Limbu districts in the east under federalism and are prepared to revolt

Bhutanese refugees are thought to be involved in crimes, taking jobs away and polluting the environment

### *Social and Institutional Resiliencies*

There is unity in diversity – a strong sense of pride in diversity – “All flowers on the garland”

Open border gives easy access to cross-border trade, health facilities, education and daily consumption goods at a cheaper price

Access to media has increased awareness and empowered communities to raise their voices

Bhutanese refugees are good teachers and help local economy

## Appendix 5: Regional Key Actors

Key actors were identified per region. Many of these are common across regions, but the workshop did not include time for separating out the cross-cutting key actors.

### Mid-Western Tarai

#### **Maoists**

Means: “fundraising and extortion, Diversion of government funds and donor funds, Expansion of base of support into professional ranks, Organizational capacity, Chain of command, PLA propaganda

Motivations: Ideology, Political survival of leadership, Continued role for PLA to leaders in the national structure, Distrust, Service, maintenance of base of support

#### **Army**

Means: government funding, donor funding, state sanctioned monopoly of force – weapons, organizational capacity, chain of command, discipline

Motivations: nationalism, sense of duty, maintenance of societal/political and economic status, caste and ethnic elitism (conscious and subconscious), distrust

#### **Political leaders *Non-Maoists: UML, NC, MJF, Madhesi parties, Tharu parties***

Means: Fundraising and extortion, Cadre, Propaganda

Motivations: Access to power, Political survival at the top, Nationalism/ethno-nationalism, Service to community/country

#### **CDOs/LDOs/VDC chair and secretary**

Means: Local development budget, Authority (government sanctioned), Local bureaucracy

Motivation: Service, Power, Corruption, Career aspirations

#### **Religious Leaders**

Means: Donations, Moral authority, Ideology believers/followers

Motivations: Power, Respect, Service to community/God, \$

#### **Illegal Underground (criminal) Groups**

Means: Extortion/crime, Force/violence, General thuggery, Fear, Political support/ties

Motivations: \$, Power, Respect, Political ambition

#### **Civil society leaders**

Means: Donor funds, Community donations, Organization/motivation, Political connections, Community support

## NEPAL FIELD-BASED ICAF REPORT

Motivations: Service, Political aspirations, Advocacy sense of moral authority (perceived or actual)

### **Tharu community leaders**

Means: Strong network and coordination through various NGOs, Agitation and strikes

Motivations: Protect community identity and cultural practices, Protect land rights and return of land, Greater voice in future politics, Kamaiya resettlement

## **Mid-Western Hills / Western Tarai**

### **MJF**

Means: 200,000 members, politically organized,

Motivation: representation, rights, jobs, discrimination

### **Army**

Means: official security force, ROL, Constitution

Motivation – security/sovereignty of nation

### **Police**

Means: represent government, empowered by law

Motivation: rule of law, security

### **NGOs**

Means: national and international funding

Motivation: equality, rights, political representation, identity recognition

### **Maoist**

Means: large numbers, YCL, PV weapons (???)

Motivation: political power, federalism, single party political system

### **Farm Coops and other community action groups**

Means: people, money, labor unions

Motivation: representation, equality land rights, fair access/treatment

### **Political parties**

Means: CA representation, parliament, money, numbers of people

Motivation: representation, power, political interests

### **Women**

Means: political inclusion (33% quotas), increasing organization community economic role (loans and labor)

Motivation: empowerment, rights, inclusion, equality, violence reduction

### **NGOs**

Means: resources, organizational ability, political access

Motivation: community development, women's/Dalits' rights

### **FNCCI**

Means: business clout, money, political connections

Motivation: good governance (ratified constitution), 1950 trade treaty amendments

## NEPAL FIELD-BASED ICAF REPORT

### **International donors**

Means: large external resources, high level of political power

Motivation: better Nepal, prosperity, stability, empower people, social development

### **Informal/ traditional community leaders**

Means: community access and support, Limited donor funding (really???? A lot of international money is specifically tied to community groups – was this said? )

Motivation: service to community, limited political aspirations

## **Kathmandu Valley and Chitwan District**

### **CA**

Means: legislation; budget

Motivation: political power – sharing, mandate

### **Local government (CDOs)**

Means: budget, security forces

Motivation: personal gain

### **INGOs/NGOs**

Means: budget/resources, programs

Motivation: altruism, personal gain

### **Student leaders**

Means: organizations, mobilizable people

Motivation: political influence, better education/paying jobs

### **YCL**

Same as above (student leaders)

### **Political Parties/leaders**

Means: promises, opportunity, patronage

Motivation: political power, personal gain

### **Media**

Means: broadcasts, print

Motivation: professionalism

### **Business investors**

Potential (???)

## **Central/Eastern Tarai**

**Armed gangs** – uneducated, unemployment, they're bored and it's fun

Means: ATMs. Taking advantage of popular discontent, intimidation, at risk youth, safe haven in India

Motivation: \$, issues (needs of people)

### **Indian border security**

Means: position, arms sovereignty, brute strength, intimidation

Motivation: \$, power



**Madhesi political leaders**

Means: political/government positions, connections to KTM (????), media, youth groups, armed groups? (? Included in text)

Motivations: ideology, issues of land and federalism, \$

**Local government (CDOs)**

**INGOs/NGOs**

**Eastern Hills and Border Area**

**Police (security)**

Means: guns, organization, resources

Motivator: duty, stabilization and corruption

**Politicians (central and local)**

Means: legislation, cadres, youth, taxation

Motivations: self interest, power, public interest, votes

**Limbuwan autonomous state council**

Means: public outreach and community connection, guns, diaspora

Motivations: self determination, power, autonomy

**India**

Means: “Nepal’s vulnerabilities” links to politics/State, money SSB (????)

Motivations: water, electricity, security, China, stability, economic, market, exploitation

**Traffickers**

Means: guns, money, political connections, corruption, porous border, external and internal demands, poverty

Motivations: money

**Human rights groups/organizations**

Means: publicizing, reputation, organizations, donor, international groups, DO

Motivations: improve HR, self promotion, money

**Administration (central and local) CDO, VDC**

Means: police, power, authority, resources

Motivations: stability development, corruption, ego, career

**Political groups (NC, UML, UCPN-M)**

Means: cadres, votes, public support, money, influence over administration and legislation

Motivations: power, money, votes, ideology, national interest

**Women’s groups**

**Labor Unions**

Means: Organization, workers, intimidation, strikes, political links

Motivations: money, power, employment, promote political parties, workers safety

## Appendix 6: Conflict Drivers and Mitigating Factors

Conflict drivers and mitigating factors were constructed for the country as a whole, not specific to each region.

### Conflict Drivers

#### *National*

Political parties & affiliates opportunistically mobilize people around various grievances to advance their agendas & political position, creating instability

Mohan Baidya faction of Maoists organizes people against the 7 Point Agreement, & the return of seized property

Ethnic & regional identity groups mobilize members around their rights under the new Constitution & federalism

Transnational & domestic criminal & armed political groups exploit open border & grievances to pursue illicit activities, undermining public security

India controls & influences Nepal's domestic politicians & power structures for its own national interest

#### *Local*

Labor unions mobilize members to protest factory owner use of Indian labor in the East

Local organizations gather people to non-violently protest misappropriation of local development funds; protests often escalate to violence

#### *Tarai*

Armed groups in Tarai drive local government officials out of the village, leaving governance vacuum

Political parties manipulate Muslim & Hindu tensions in parts of the Tarai

Madhesi political groups mobilize constituencies to advocate for Madhesi autonomy under federalism

### Mitigating Factors

#### *International*

International community is actively supporting peace process

International donors filling gaps in government services & development

International community is helping to resolve Bhutanese issues

## NEPAL FIELD-BASED ICAF REPORT

### ***National – Civil Society***

NGOs/CSOs peacefully mobilize people to oppose corruption

NGOs/CSOs provide services to fill some of the gaps in government services with donor funds

NGOs/iNGOs support dialogue between political parties

Media is keeping people informed

Women's savings & credit groups give women access to capital & generate economic opportunities

### ***National - Security***

Police/APF patrol presence has increased

Nepal Army plays an active role in society supporting development & stability - generally seen as professional & apolitical

### ***National - Political***

Three major parties came together around Seven Point Agreement because they recognized the Nepali people were frustrated & had aspirations for peace

PM Bhattarai is pushing the peace process forward

People are patient with the constitutional process & encouraged by recent progress

### ***National - Governance***

Increased access to education & other services (the more people have the more they want)

Judiciary has issued verdicts against Maoists, corrupt government officials & political leaders

Mobile Citizenship Teams are simplifying the road to citizenship for marginalized communities

### ***Local - Community***

Leaders/mediators/civil society forums manage local disputes

Savings groups & cooperatives mobilize local resources to address local needs & problems

Groups advocate politically within the system to address local needs

Youth groups are identifying & advocating for needs not met by government

Nonprofit community schools provide higher quality education at lower cost

Community radio & local FM bring people together to discuss issues

## NEPAL FIELD-BASED ICAF REPORT

### ***Local - Political***

Local political party reps working together to solve problems in Midwest, Western Tarai, Eastern Hills, Kathmandu & Chitwan

Maoist, Madhesi & other political parties are giving political expression to concerns of marginalized groups

### ***Local – Government***

Some CDOs/LDOs help resolve disputes, address problems & provide services in Western Tarai, Chitwan & Kathmandu

## **Appendix 7: Windows of Uncertainty**

### **2012**

Implementation of the Seven Point Peace Agreement  
May deadline for Constitution of Federal Republic of Nepal  
Dhungel is pardoned  
PLA integration  
Publication of voter registration lists (and process)

### **2013**

Host SAARC (international community venue for protests ex. Thailand)  
New police act adopted  
New criminal procedure code adopted

### ***Unspecified***

Implementation of federalism  
Elections  
Integration of Madhesis into Nepali Army  
Economic shocks  
Fuel price shock  
Food price shock  
Natural disaster  
Passage of land reform legislation  
Release of detailed census results  
India closes border  
Terrorist attack