

Feedback on *Workshop on Opportunities and Challenges for Nepali Political Parties, Washington, D.C.*

20-23 October 2005

I am writing this to thank the organizers of the Washington workshop for organizing the event and producing an outcome, which will strengthen the cause of democracy in Nepal.

The event brought together the various representatives of the Nepali diaspora from various corners of the USA face to face with the representatives of the political parties in Nepal. The subjects covered in the workshop were timely and valid, reflecting the current political debate in the country. From our side, we tried to clarify our position not only on various political issues, but also the misgivings and doubts about the record of our political past. We appreciate the concerns raised by the diaspora on the imperative of re-engineering and reinvigorating our respective institutions to face the new challenges both from the left and the right. The outcome declaration of the workshop gave full support to the ongoing democratic struggle by the seven parties in Nepal, and also declared that the people represented the sovereign power of the nation and who should also decide the future of monarchy. The workshop echoed the sentiment of the country's political parties when it said the Maoists should give up violence, lay down arms and reconcile themselves to peaceful multi-party politics and commit themselves to universally accepted human rights. I briefed our Party President and other senior leaders about the workshop and its outcome. They have expressed appreciation for the same.

For me personally, it was an opportunity to meet many old friends and renew contacts, meet new friends and know a number of concerned Nepalis who are active in the present fight against autocracy from that end. The Liberal Democracy Forum: Nepal deserves appreciation for this. All concerned spent a lot of time, energy and resources. My thanks to the National Democratic Institute for their support.

Like all such initial efforts, there could have unintended shortcomings and slips in this event also which are natural. They could be lessons for the future. I personally feel that an event like this would or should be even more broad-based, bringing more diaspora representatives. I know some of the constrains which could have stood in the way this time.

Sincerely Yours,

Ram S. Mahat
Co-General Secretary
Nepali Congress

I was greatly impressed with the concept as well as the execution of the Washington DC Forum sponsored by NDI and LDN. The outstanding arrangements and the outcome of the Forum should make the organizers proud that their hard work and their other contributions were really

worthwhile. Whatever their views, it was a real treat for Nepali Diaspora to get this opportunity to hear first hand in a public forum the views of some of Nepal's senior most political leaders, to interact with them and to get a feel of the current situation. Participation of so many expatriate Nepalese from far away places in the US, and senior UN officials, shows everybody's deep interest in looking for a solution to Nepal's current situation. I look forward to the published report of the Workshop. Congratulations and thank you again,

Jagadish Upadhyay,
World Bank
Washington D.C.

Excellent job and a lot accomplished. I am reading a lot of comments and getting a lot of phone calls; some of them wonderful, some of them complimentary and some of them not so complimentary. The fact that it is getting so much attention indicates that it was the correct thing to do. As Dalai Lama has said our critics are our best friends, they show us our areas of weaknesses and where improvements can be made. Let us take a positive attitude, take a respite, and get on with more vigor.

Warm regards,
Shyam Karki

Thank you, other LDN members and everyone involved for the summary of recommendations of the town hall meeting in DC. Congratulations for the successfully completed program.

However, the points outlined in the press release sound great but aren't those the points most of the folks in this forum have been debating, saying all along? Was in fact hoping to hear more about Leaders' perspective on those issues as how they were going to go about achieving at least some of the issues outlined. For example internal democracy within the parties, what is their opinion on this? What are they going to do about it so that people will trust them once again? This is just one example.

Is LDN going to publish more details later on?

Regards.
Kumud Acharya