

Prachanda Speech at Conference on "Democracy, Development and Peace"

*Prime Minister Prachanda delivered this speech to the conference 'Democracy, Development and Peace in Asia' on 10th November 2008 in Kathmandu.
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We Nepali people have made a great political change after a decade long People's War (PW) and a historic popular movement of 2006. This change has become possible after forging alliance among the three political forces of CPN (Maoist), the Seven Party Alliance and the Civil Society. We need to continue this alliance until a new constitution is drafted and New Nepal is built.

Basically, the issue of development, democracy and peace, that is, the theme of this conference, are intricately linked. In the absence of one, the other two cannot be realized. Without democracy, we cannot dream of development and peace. Democracy must include participation, representation, accountability, transparency, responsiveness and unity of the people. In fact, these are the pillars for democracy to institutionalize and sustain. Likewise, development ensures prosperity and people's progress, which eventually contribute to strengthening democracy as well as sustainable peace. We all know that a peaceful environment is a pre-requisite for democracy to flourish and development to occur.

Asia witnessed an unparalleled rise of democratic and nationalist governments through the 1940s to 60s. The European colonial regimes, which perpetuated systematic exploitation of human and natural resources in most of the countries in the region, were overthrown by the upsurge of national liberation movements across the region. The success of anti-colonial movements in the region generated high hopes among the working class and expectations for a rapid change in their social and economic lives. However, those newly established nationalist regimes failed to initiate development, consolidate democracy and provide socio-economic empowerment to their citizens which had eroded their popular support bases and credibility rapidly. As a consequence, many elected regimes in various countries of the Asia Pacific region were replaced by the authoritarian and military dictators. People in many Asian countries including Nepal are trapped in a vicious circle of injustice, underdevelopment and poverty. Due to the feudal system and an exploitative international financial and capitalist system, they could not achieve proper economic growth and productivity.

The ongoing market-led neo-liberal economic policies under the disguise of globalisation have further marginalized the poor and the helpless. The developed countries are now realising the drawbacks of complete deregulation of the financial sector and free market economy. Also the issues of financial, food, and energy crises and the natural devastation and catastrophe of global warming and climate changes are directly related to the market led capitalist globalisation system. The recent financial meltdown in the United States and the chain reactions causing market wreckage all over the world has had a tremendous negative effect on our countries in the south.

For the first time in decades the people of Nepal have reason to be hopeful about peace prevailing and rooting of a federal democratic system. The government, and political parties along with the UN's facilitation, peace process is striving towards a logical conclusion by completing the integration of the People's Liberation Army based on the prior accords and understandings amongst all the major stakeholders. Our next crucial task is to draft a new constitution with federal components, which represents the hopes of all the people. We are committed to accomplish this very important task within the stipulated time frame of two years. This will be the document that will guarantee all the fundamental

rights of the people as enshrined in the UN charter. We are confident that this will lay a foundation for a democratic and peaceful Nepal.

Realizing the heightened expectations and aspirations of the people, an economic recovery package including the relief efforts has been planned to focus on those affected by the conflict. We believe that other nations and international financial institutions and our immediate neighbours will support us in our noble endeavour of nation building. We also plan to utilize the internal and external resources effectively in our history. Our efforts, we believe, will pave the way for a new socio-economic transformation in the country.

The newly elected government of Nepal is fully committed to protect and promote the human rights of its people under all circumstances with constitutional and legal guarantees and implementation of the international human rights instruments to which Nepal is a signatory party. The government is committed to end the culture of impunity. We are committed to go ahead with forming a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

It is a well established fact that the lack of normative jurisprudence in any country makes the electoral based political governance a mockery and a sham in the name of democracy. A real and functioning democracy must have jurisprudence in place and implemented ruthlessly against any forces that try to thwart the gains in political and other arenas brought about by the sacrifices of the people. Therefore, the rule of law needs to be obeyed by the citizens without which democracy; development and peace become a distant dream. We are very much committed towards restoring law and order and maintaining peace. Hence, we have taken various initiatives in this direction.

A careful analysis of the genesis of our past struggles indicates that we, Nepali people have the ability to bring about change for the better. I strongly believe that the peace process exercised in Nepal has been a unique example and may be a reference model for the rest of the world. The UN, international community and other friendly countries have supported these home-grown processes, which we plan to base on multiparty democracy, inclusiveness, and equity based social system. It is thus, very imperative at this historical juncture that we must pause and ponder about our next move.

There are many threats and challenges against the realization of the opportunities and the potential created so far. The oligarchy, the remnants of the defeated feudalists, and the people who want to maintain status-quo will try to thwart the gains made possible by the heroic struggles of the people. The people have suffered a lot in the past and now they cannot afford to see the spoils of the achievements. Any deviation from fulfilling the reasonable aspirations of the people is sure to breed frustrations among the masses which will detriment democracy, development and peace in the country.

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