

Joint Statement by Participants of a National Workshop Organized by the National Coalition Against Racial Discrimination (NCARD)

The political agreement between the ruling seven political parties and the rebel Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) on November 8, 2006 is a historic and welcome step towards the peaceful transformation of the violent rebellion that has been raging in the country for the last decade. Despite this the agreement is not oriented towards ending the currently existing centralized state and the monopoly of one caste, language, sex, region, religion and the autocratic feudal Nepalese state of the last 238 years and establishing a new Nepal that is inclusive, democratic and a federal republic. The agreement in particular has not been able to guarantee that all communities and peoples of all classes and regions be included in the Constituent Assembly and in other policy making levels for creating an inclusive state. The agreement has not attempted to include the issues of groups and communities that have been marginalized in the country for the last couple of centuries such as the women, indigenous nationalities, *dalit*, religious minorities, *Madhesi*, etc. The demands raised by these groups and communities are related to their rightful representation in the state, such as reservation and special rights, ethnic-regional autonomy and self-government with the right to self-determination, secularism, federal state and proportional representation. We strongly object to the non-representation in the agreement of these groups and communities and the issues and demands they have been raising. Also, for elections to the Constituent Assembly the adopting and giving continuity to the 205 electoral districts demarcated on a geographical basis by the centralized state of the past, despite past experiences that such a division has not been able to proportionally represent on an inclusive basis the peoples of all classes, communities, regions, languages, religions and cultures, means that elections to the Constituent Assembly will result once again in a state structure that is not inclusive of all peoples. Another issue that is of even greater concern to us is that although the above-mentioned agreement has mentioned the issue of state restructuring, the agreement is silent regarding the form and contents of such restructuring. This also has created further doubt and apprehension among us. In this context, we the participants of the national workshop organized by the National Coalition Against Racial Discrimination in Nagarkot on November 11, 2006, i.e. indigenous nationalities, *Madhesi*, *dalit*, women, minority religious communities, mother tongue speakers and representatives of political parties, jointly and strongly demand that, in the context of further elaborating upon and implementing the major issues not included in the agreement, all such issues be included while making a new constitution through a representative and inclusive process. We, indigenous nationalities, women, *dalit*, *Madhesi*, religious minorities, human rights activists and representatives of political parties, also demand that this present time and opportunity that is of crucial importance to the Nepalese state not be limited to political parties and their leadership, and, by incorporating in the constitution-making process the feelings of all sovereign and independent Nepalese peoples, the ownership of the peoples over the constitution be established, so that a situation is not created whereby following the laying down of arms by one group of people another group has to take up arms again in the name of the constitution.

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