

UNITED NATIONS



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Ban Ki-moon

Secretary-General

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(Statement)

Distinguished members of the media, *namaskar!*

I am delighted to be in here today, to congratulate the people of Nepal, in person, for the remarkable historic progress they have made in establishing peace.

I particularly want to commend the Nepalese people for the successful election of the Constituent Assembly in a largely peaceful process this past April that has earned the respect of the international community.

This trip is historic not only for me personally, but also because I have the privilege to be the first United Nations Secretary-General to visit the country since its Assembly was formed. And just prior to this press conference, I had the honour to be the first Secretary-General to address the Constituent Assembly and congratulate them again for the success.

As mentioned in my speech earlier at the Constituent Assembly, the most immediate challenge ahead is to integrate and rehabilitate Maoist combatants. In this regard, I welcome the recent establishment of the special committee to supervise, integrate and rehabilitate Maoist army combatants.

I encourage the parties represented on the committee to ensure that it begins its important work as soon as possible. I also call on the Government to move quickly on the formal discharge of minors and disqualified combatants.

The Assembly is proof of Nepal's remarkable progress and collective effort towards a new and better future. I, and the United Nations represented in Nepal by our political Mission UNMIN under the leadership of my Special Representative Mr. Ian Martin, are proud to be part of this historic change.

As your partners, we are taking many concrete steps. The UN Peacebuilding Fund, for example, has released ten million dollars to the UN Peace Fund for Nepal. This money will finance local peacebuilding programmes. It will also help to reintegrate former combatants, generate youth employment and put other measures in place.

I have been, and will continue to watch with great interest, the peace process and its achievements, and to pledge the UN's continued strong support.

The concerted actions of the political parties together with civil society and other stakeholders were vital in bringing about the uniquely Nepali-driven political and social transformation.

To that end, I encourage the parties to continue to work in a spirit of compromise and cooperation on drafting the new constitution, the future of the Maoist Army and other key peace-building initiatives.

I am also here to offer my sincere thanks to Nepal, an important Member State of the United Nations, which has contributed so much to the organization. For more than 50 years, Nepal has contributed over sixty-thousand Nepali troops and police to serve in UN peacekeeping operations around the world.

The United Nations greatly values Nepal's contribution to Peacekeeping operations as well as its continued and enhanced support.

I am proud that the UN has been a close partner in Nepal's development effort, in its struggle to end the 10-year conflict and to implement the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. I am fully committed to the work of the United Nations in support of the peace process.

Nepal has come a long way, but the journey continues, as there are still a number of challenges to overcome. The people of Nepal have taken a stand for democracy and it would be especially inspiring for the entire world to see Nepal, which already makes such a tremendous difference in peacekeeping for others, overcome its own conflict and achieve lasting peace at home.

Now, I'd be happy to take your questions.

Thank you very much!