



New Secretary in MoPR

Khum Raj Punjali, Acting Secretary at the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR), assumed office on 18 August. Prior to this he was with the Department of Revenue Investigation as Director General. Mr. Punjali served as Director of the NPTF November-December 2007 when the Ministry of Finance oversaw the Fund.

Mr. Punjali succeeded Dhana Bahadur Tamang, who has recently been transferred to the Ministry of

Women, Children and Social Welfare. The ministry had organized farewell meeting for Mr. Tamang on 15 August.

The road ahead for NPTF

NPTF has begun work towards finalising its strategy for operations leading to the period beyond January 2016, when its present mandate comes to an end. The work on the strategy builds on the guidelines provided by the 16th Board meeting held on 2 July 2014.



NPTF strategy being discussed at the 16th Board Meeting of the NPTF.

The board meeting was chaired by the Minister of Peace and Reconstruction Narahari Acharya and was attended by the co-chair, the Minister of Finance Ram Sharan Mahat and by Ambassador of the European Union Ms. Rensje Teerink who chairs the NPTF Donor Group. Deependra Nath Sharma, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR) and head of the task force working on the strategy, had presented the strategy discussion paper to the Board.

While presenting the strategy Mr. Sharma, explained that the Joint Financing Arrangement (JFA) for NPTF signed in November 2010 was due to come to an end at the end of the month (July) and that the JFA extension along with strategy was being prepared with the consent of both the Government of Nepal and the Donor Group supporting the Peace Fund Secretariat (PFS).

Mr. Sharma presented the option of extending the NPTF arrangement up to 2017, and continuation of all the three of its mandates: funding, coordinating and monitoring of the peace process. The arrangement would have NPTF responsible for financing, and the MoPR for coordination and monitoring, with the support of NPTF.

Mr. Sharma also outlined three potential focus areas for NPTF programs after 2017:

- Support to Conflict Affected People (Including transitional justice)
- Access to security (Including police), and
- Elections and other political processes (elections, local peace committees and support to consultations on constitution making)

He recommended that the programmatic strategy should avoid doing a number of small and scattered projects and focus on projects in a limited number of areas where there are comparative advantages, and the potential to bring about change.

The preparation of the strategy involved carrying out a perception survey of the NPTF stakeholders

to understand their views of the different projects supported by the Fund and to also solicit suggestions of the focus and priorities up to 2017.

The NPTF had also carried out a mapping of peace projects in the country to understand the gaps that could be filled, and had also assessed the organisational capacity and the capacity-support interventions needed at the PFS. The strategy formulation process was also informed by the regular external monitoring of the projects supported by NPTF since its inception and a number of workshops with Implementing Agencies(IAs).

The process of preparing a strategy began in January 2014. The plan is to finalise the drafts of the strategy, the JFA and Operational Guidelines by September to prepare documents for final approval later in the year.

Orientation on NPTF Financial & Physical Progress Reporting

The NPTF organized a daylong orientation programme on financial and physical progress reporting requirements for IAs on 28 July. The main objective of this orientation was to share financial and physical progress reporting formats as required by the JFA and orient staff from participating organisations on filling up the required forms with adequate and appropriate information. The IAs are now expected to be able to prepare and submit financial and physical progress reports in prescribed formats and time-frame stipulated in the JFA.

During the programme, the NPTF also introduced a software for financial reporting prepared by the Fund. The NPTF also provided the IAs an Excel based financial reporting format that could be used until they become fully conversant to use the newly developed reporting software.

Furthermore, to enhance the control systems, NPTF also introduced the IAs to the process for settling audit issues. An "Audit Follow up Action Plan" with issues for the last year (2069/70) inserted in the template was also discussed. The template was then

Participants at the NPTF Orientation on Financial & Physical Progress Reporting. (file photo)



provided to the IAs for finalization and submission to PFS on a four monthly basis.

The Director of NPTF Sadhuram Sapkota inaugurated the programme and stressed the importance of the quality and timely submission of progress reports in the prescribed formats. He thanked the participants for their continued efforts for improving reporting and said he expected to see further improvements in the days to come. There were 37 participants including project coordinators, programme officers and account officers from 13 central level IAs at the orientation programme. Officials from the NPTF and the EU TA facilitated the orientation.

USAID review mission at NPTF

A three-member team from Government Accountability Office (GAO), United States of America, visited NPTF on 29 July. Director of NPTF Sadhuram Sapkota briefed the visitors on the evolution of NPTF, the projects it has supported and the lessons learned from the process. He explained that the Fund was a unique mechanism and had made major contributions to the peace process underway in Nepal since 2006. The manager of the Technical Cooperation Pool Dipendra Purush Dhakal also made a presentation on the assistance

to capacity development of the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR) and the NPTF. Senior PFM Advisor Mr. Nanda Kishor Sharma briefed the team on Public Finance Management in the context of NPTF. Representatives of the Donor Group also attended the meeting.

The GAO is an agency of the United States Legislative Branch that audits, evaluates and investigates the executive branch to improve performance and ensure accountability. USAID/Nepal was chosen as one of the three missions worldwide for the GAO review of USAID's Government to Government (G2G) programming through fieldwork. Shirley Min, Todd Anderson and James Michels from the GAO visited Nepal from 23-30 July.

Training on "Conflict Transformation and Peace Building"

MoPR organised trainings on "Conflict transformation and peace building" for Peace Focal Persons (PFPs) and MoPR officials at the Centre for Economic Development and Administration (CEDA), Tribhuvan University in July and August. The first module of the trainings was delivered on 20-22 July for the first group and that for the second group was done on 23-26 July. There were 57 participants at the trainings



Dhana Bahadur Tamang, Secretary, MoPR, presenting certificates to the participants.

including 29 from the PFPs and 28 from the MoPR. The main purpose of the training was to inform PFPs and MoPR officials on conflict transformation and peace building processes to enable them to mainstream the peace sensitive development approach in government line ministries.

The training on the second module for the first group was held on 3-5 August and that for the second group on 6-8 August. Senior government officials, former secretaries, and former vice chairpersons of National Planning Commission led the sessions.

BRIEFS

Financial Management Improvement Plan

The NPTF has developed a Financial Management Improvement Plan (FMIP) that aims to strengthen the existing good practices, while also addressing issues that are vital for ensuring use of funds for the intended purposes. This plan seeks to strengthen the PFS's

existing practices on financial planning, accounting, internal control system, reporting, monitoring and auditing. The purpose is to strengthen the financial management and reporting by IAs on NPTF-supported projects. This plan has been discussed with the Donor Group and will be rolled out following approval by concerned stakeholders.

NDF project update

The National Disabled Fund (NDF) organised a workshop with partners in Pokhara on 21-23 July. The workshop was organised to brief its partners on changes that the NPTF Board had approved in the project "Physical Rehabilitation Services for Conflict Affected Disabled Persons in Nepal". The other purpose was to develop a new strategy and also make amendments in the activities for implementing the project (with changes) that was approved by the NPTF Board on 2 July. Ramchandra Dahal, the project coordinator, briefed the participants on the changes in the project document. NDF's partners at the workshop also shared their experiences and the problems faced during implementation and provided inputs to the project action plan. There were 18 participants at the workshop.

Promotion

The former director of the NPTF Deependra Nath Sharma has been promoted as Secretary of the Government of Nepal. The promotion took effect on 8 August. Mr Sharma, as joint secretary at the MoPR, was involved in leading the team that is working to prepare a new strategy for NPTF. The newsletter team and NPTF congratulate Mr. Sharma on his promotion.

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