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BASIC INFORMATION

Population:	27.1 million inhabitants (2005)
GDP:	7,346 million dollars (2005)
GNI per capita:	270 dollars (2005)
HDI:	0.527 (138 th) (2004)

BACKGROUND TO THE CONFLICT

At the end of April 2006, King Gyanendra decreed the reopening of the Nepalese Parliament after several weeks of intense social protests that had cost the lives of a score of people. The Parliament had been closed since the King suspended all its activities in February 2005 by means of a coup in which he assumed all powers. The protests which brought down Gyanendra had been organised by a coalition that brought together the seven main democratic opposition parties and the armed opposition group CPN(M) (*Communist Party of Nepal [Maoist]*), which had been involved in an armed uprising against the Kathmandu government since 1996.

The *de facto* end of the monarchy on the one hand, and the declaration of a ceasefire by the CPN(M) on the other, have opened the doors to a peace negotiation process that may put an end to the armed conflict begun in 1996, and which over these ten years has caused some 13,000 deaths and more than 100,000 displaced people. In fact, the negotiations between the Maoists and the Government have been continuing over these last months in a process not without difficulties. In addition, representatives of UNICEF have warned of the danger that the existence of anti-personnel mines and explosives presents for the free movement of people throughout the country.

PEACE AGREEMENTS / PROCESS

The Government and the armed opposition group CPN(M) signed a **peace accord** in November 2006 and formally declared an end to the armed conflict that has affected the country over the last ten years. The accord envisages that the Maoist combatants will be quartered in seven main camps and 21 satellite camps under the supervision of the United Nations, before the elections take place in 2007. No military training will be allowed in these camps and the CPN(M)'s weapons will be kept in 70 metal containers supervised by the United Nations. At the outset, the CPN(M) criticised the declarations by the Prime Minister, G. P. Koirala, in which he stated that the Maoists would not be able to become integrated into the Government until all their weapons were under UN supervision. The CPN warned of the risk to the peace process if the new administration were not set up as quickly as possible. Finally, in January 2007, the Parliament approved the **Interim Constitution**, a step that opened the doors for the political participation of the Maoists. The main leaders of the coalition of seven parties in the Government and Maoist leaders have reached an agreement that will allow it to be approved. The Maoists will have 73 seats in the new Parliament out of a total number of 330.

For their part, United Nations signalled that was impossible to accomplish the planned periods on the agreement, due to the lack of time to deploy the arms supervisors.

INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE

The Security Council approved a resolution for the creating of a United Nations political mission in the country, **UNMIN**, which would be composed of unarmed military inspectors, electoral experts and police and civil administration teams, in order to supervise the recent peace agreement between the Government and the Maoists, given the size of this challenge. This mission would be established for a period of 12 months, a period which would extend beyond the June 2007 electoral date, when elections to the Constituent Assembly will be held.

DDR STRUCTURE

Background to the DDR process:

The Prime Minister, G. Prasad, has given assurances that as an essential aspect in the conversations with the Maoist guerrillas would be the administration of weapons. For his part, the leader of the CPN(M) group, Prachanda, indicated that he would not confine members of the armed group in holding centres nor disarm them until an agreement was reached with the Government regarding key political questions. The Nepalese organisation *Friendship for Peace* and Britain's *International Alert* organised a national seminar about the disarmament process in the country.

Type of DDR:

Emphasis on disarmament, on a political transformation process.

Basic principles:

Arms and combatants cantonment with external supervision from UN.

Enforcing bodies:

The Joint Coordinating Committee for Control and Monitoring composed of United Nations representatives, the Nepalese Armed Forces and the Maoist armed opposition group. The Afghan ANBP (UNDP) collaborated by sending a group of 10 experts to Nepal in support for the Weapons and Armies Management Programme, for training in arms registering over a period of approximately two weeks.

Groups to be demobilised:

The CPN(M) has indicated that its troops are comprised of between 30 and 35,000 combatants, yet this figure has still not been verified by the United Nations, although independent sources estimate the total number as some 12,000.

Vulnerable groups:

It has been calculated that a high percentage of the combatants to be demobilised are under 18 years of age, while the *Nepalese Human Rights Group* continues to denounce the recruiting of minors among the Maoists.

The situation regarding women combatants has provoked the criticism of local and international organisations who denounce the exclusion and marginalisation of the women combatants from the DDR process and warn of the non-sustainability of a process that presents these deficiencies.

Budget:

The Government indicated that it would assign 1.5 million dollars to the administration of the holding camps for the Maoist combatants. Following the protests that had taken place in previous weeks, the Government announced that it would assign an additional quantity (1.6 million dollars) towards supporting the Maoists in their demobilisation process, and to improve the infrastructure in the holding camps.

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Germany announced that it would treble its aid to the country for the 2006-2007 period in support of the peace process. The total amount of this aid comes to 16.9 million dollars. The German government has indicated that this will be earmarked for offering food aid to the Maoist ex-combatants during the period while the DDR is running, to the rehabilitation of internally displaced people, and finally, to the electoral process aimed at forming a new constituent assembly. Up to now, 280 million rupees (some five million euros) have been assigned to this process, and some 50 million additional rupees (890,000 euros) for the infrastructure of the holding centres.

Timetable:

Start in January 2007, but still discussing the timetable for arms delivery.

Other issues:

- **Justice:** Maoist groups will have political representation in the Parliament.

DDR STAGES

Disarmament and demobilisation:

The accord envisages that the Maoist combatants will be quartered in seven main camps and 21 satellite camps under the supervision of the United Nations, before the elections take place next year. In this process, the weapons will be registered and deposited in containers, locked with a key which will be kept by the Maoists, as stipulated in the peace accord, while the Nepalese army will deposit in storage the same quantity of weapons as those handed in by the Maoists. No military training will be allowed in these camps and the CPN(W)'s weapons will be kept in 70 metal containers supervised by the United Nations.

A team of 35 United Nations observers have since January 2007 been carrying out the first disarmament and demilitarisation operation in Nepal. With the aim of accelerating this verification process, and until a full United Nations team arrives in Nepal and can take over the work, the guarding and supervision will be guaranteed by a Provisional Detachment composed of 111 Nepalese Gurkhas, soldiers retired from the British and Indian armed forces. The precise timetable for handing over weapons is being negotiated in Kathmandu by the Government, the CPN(M) and leaders of the majority political parties.

EVOLUTION OF THE DDR PROCESS

The campaign for registering and storing the Maoists' weapons began under the supervision of the United Nations. According to the Office of the Special Representative of the UN General Secretary, collection began in two of the seven designated centres throughout the country: Chitwán and Nawalparasi. For their part, the other five began their activities a week later. Up until now, some 750 Maoist troops have been registered.

The sanitary and hygiene conditions in the demobilisation camps for Maoist combatants lead to hundreds of them falling ill. The Maoist leaders have complained that the lack of resources, as well as of sanitary infrastructure, has brought about this situation. The situation regarding women combatants has provoked the criticism of local and international organisations, which denounce the exclusion and marginalisation of the women combatants from the DDR process and warn of the non-sustainability of a process that presents these deficiencies.

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ASPECTS TO BE EXAMINED

Planificació:

- Delay on the start of the process.

Implementació:

- Poor health and safety conditions in cantonment points.
- Neglect of female combatants' needs.

Otros aspectos:

- Massive presence of anti-personnel landmines and explosive devices.

SOURCES

International:

- UN News, at <<http://www.un.org/News>>.
- Reliefweb, at <<http://www.reliefweb.int>>.
- International Alert, at <<http://www.international-alert.org>>.
- IRIN News, at <<http://www.irin.org>>.

Non-governmental:

- Nepal News, at <<http://www.nepalnews.com>>.
- Friendship for Peace, at <<http://www.friendsforpeace.org.np>>.

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