



ANFREL Releases Interim Report on 2013 Nepal CA Elections

For Immediate Release

Kathmandu, Nov 21: Today, the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) is releasing its Interim Report on the Constituent Assembly elections held on 19 November 2013. The report contains observations about the elections based on findings of ANFREL's 50 observers deployed in the five development regions of Nepal and makes recommendations designed to improve the electoral system for future elections.

Commenting on the report, ANFREL Chairman and Head of Mission Damaso G Magbual said, "The Election Commission of Nepal and the thousands of persons who worked at the polls should be congratulated for the professionalism which they demonstrated in meeting the many diverse challenges that had to be met to hold the elections on November 19. From the task of cleaning up the voter rolls and registering more than 12,000,000 people to vote, to actually conducting relatively smooth polling on Election Day, the Election Commission (EC) worked diligently to assure an Election Day experience that would allow the Nepali people to meet their aspirations to determine their future. Now, we are hopeful that the same competence and honesty will carry over as the Commission undertakes the task of counting the ballots."

In its Interim Report, ANFREL focuses on the administration of the election, from registration through voter education to actual polling. ANFREL's observers noted that there were few cases of voters being turned away at the polls because their names had been omitted from the voters list. Based on interviews, ANFREL learned that many people had not registered because they were either away from the country during the voter registration period or lacked the necessary proof of citizenship required to vote. One of ANFREL's recommendations is that voter registration be available continuously, not just held prior to an election, and that the EC consider additional steps for helping

people with proof of citizenship. In addition, ANFREL said that voter lists should be published in a place that is accessible and convenient to the voters well before an election and that persons who believe that their names have erroneously been omitted be provided a process for appealing the omission well before an election. As a matter of procedure, voters should be given adequate time to investigate and, if need be, remedy the problem before polling commences.

The report also addresses various issues related to the EC's Code of Conduct and makes suggestions for strengthening the code and its enforcement. ANFREL also believes that more faithful compliance with established procedures would enhance the integrity of the process and give further assurance to the public that the process was insulated from tampering.

Finally, the report examines the role of violence in this year's election season and how voters responded to threats and actual violence at various places around the country.

After ANFREL's observers in the field have submitted their final reports, ANFREL plans to issue a more comprehensive report and set of recommendations.

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ANFREL is a civil society organization dedicated to the promotion of free and fair elections throughout Asia. ANFREL observers have conducted more than 40 election observation missions since its founding in 1997, and in 2012 it sponsored the drafting and adoption of the Bangkok Declaration on Free and Fair Elections