

**Report Launch:  
Journalism in Transition:  
Media, Information Flows and Conflict in Nepal**

**Hotel Everest, Kathmandu, Nepal**

**Monday April 30<sup>th</sup> 2012**

**Summary Report**

## **Background**

The **Initiative for Peacebuilding – Early Warning Analysis to Action** (IfP-EW) is a project led by a consortium of 10 NGOs funded by the European Union's Instrument for Stability. Organized in four clusters, it aims to develop and harness international knowledge and expertise in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. In particular its objective is to ensure that all stakeholders, including EU institutions, can access strong, independent, locally-derived analysis in order to facilitate better informed and more evidence-based policy and programming decisions.

The objective of the **Media, Information Flows and Conflict Cluster of the IfP-EW** is to analyse the ways formal and informal media operate within conflict-affected and divided societies in order to understand how information provision can be better supported by the EU and other international partners. It aims to achieve this by conducting research and capacity-building training with representatives of the media sector in a number of conflict-affected contexts: Kosovo/Serbia, Liberia, Nepal, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste.

In **Nepal**, International Alert began research from Kathmandu on the inter-relationship between media, information flows and conflict in 2010, with field research in Bara and Rolpa districts conducted in 2011. A four-day workshop on peace journalism for 19 media professionals was organised in association with cluster partner Search for Common Ground at Nagarkot in April 2011. The briefing paper *Journalism in Transition: Media, Information Flows and Conflict in Nepal* was produced in November 2011 and summarises findings and presents

recommendations to the EU and other donors and presented at the launch. Alert simultaneously conducted an exchange of journalists between Liberia and Nepal to share experiences and challenges of post-conflict journalism.

## Objectives

1. To share the findings and recommendations from International Alert's research on media, information flows and conflict in Nepal through the launching of the IfP-EW report *Journalism in Transition*;
2. To compare experiences and challenges and opportunities for conflict-sensitive media practice between Liberian and Nepali experts and practitioners;
3. To inform the IfP-EW Media Cluster synthesis paper on working with media to prevent conflict.

## Participants

There were 90 participants (including International Alert staff and 2 visiting Liberian journalists) representing the following organisations:

### **Government of Nepal**

- Ministry of Information and Communications

### **Media associations**

- Federation of Nepal Journalists (FNJ)

### **Broadcast media**

- Popular FM99.5
- Radio Kerghema – Liberia

### **Print media**

- Kantipur Publications
- Daily Observer – Liberia

### **Civil society and education**

- Equal Access
- International Alert

## Report Launch

**Presentation: International Alert Programme Officer Rabindra Gurung** presented the findings and recommendations of his report *Journalism in Transition: Media, Information Flows and Conflict in Nepal*.

The report focused on three questions:

1. How Nepalis access information about their communities and nation?
2. How does the type of information they are able to access contribute to or undermine peace in Nepal.

3. What are the challenges to Nepali media in providing reliable information within the present context?

Four recommendations were presented:

## Responses to Report findings and recommendations

The program was well attended by media stakeholders and working journalists. Addressing the event, **President of FNJ Shiva Gaule** highlighted that poor oversight and regulations of media sector, lack of professionalism in media have resulted in increased security challenges and threats to the media. He stressed the need for professional, empowered and free media to promote a positive role in consolidating peace, democracy and human rights.

**General Secretary of FNJ Om Sharma** said that various issues including how to protect the physical security and enhance the capacity of journalists stand before the press as challenges and there is need to address that challenge by enhancing capacity of the journalist.

**Former FNJ president Dharmendra Jha** stressed the need to ensure press freedom for guaranteeing people's rights as more than 1,000 cases of violation of press rights were reported in 2011 alone. He also highlighted the need for a strong watchdog role by civil society and other concerned sectors to ensure good media practices.

**Former FNJ president Tara Nath Dahal** also stressed the importance of media freedom, good media practices and the necessity of skills and knowledge for good media practices.

**Ambassador of EU Delegation to Nepal Dr. Alexander Spachis** praised Nepal's effort to institutionalise and promote press freedom and reiterated the EU's commitment to support media freedom and democracy in Nepal.

**Minister of State for Information and Communications Surita Kumari Saha** also agreed on the need of reviewing the existing media acts for the promotion of professional journalism. Praising the role played by media in promoting democracy and peace, the minister reaffirmed the government's support to review and implement media policies, including the Working Journalist Act. She also pointed out the need to promote increased media capacity and ability. She further highlighted the need for collective discussion and an approach to modernise and reform the media sector. Such a collective approach would help in increasing professional security.