

Unofficial Translation

Summary

"All parties need to narrow down the distance among them because they can not meet each other to draft the new constitution if they walk in parallel lines." Agni Kharel of CPN (UML)

The December 27, 2009 edition of Sajha Sawal featured a discussion on drafting and delay of the new constitution among three of the largest political party leaders. The political leaders participating in the program were members of the Constitutional Committee; Khimlal Devkota from UCPN (Maoist), Bimendra Nidhi of Nepali Congress and Agni Kharel of CPN (UML).

Narayan Shrestha, the host for the programme asked why the political parties were struggling with each other for power instead of stepping forward together to develop the new constitution. In response, Mr. Devkota blamed the Nepali Congress (NC) for the delay because they failed to provide their concept paper on State Restructuring on time and the NC representative did not have the backing of his party. He also said that non-communists were dragging their feet because they were afraid the constitution might not favour them.

Bimendra Nidhi said that they were ready to draft the new constitution for a Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal and said there was still sufficient time. He said that delays were caused because the Maoists were determined to make the constitution a totalitarian statute. He claimed that they had made mistakes which were complication the process, principally not giving the proper responsibility to somebody for managing the Maoist combatants living in the 28 camps around Nepal.

Agni Kharel requested that all parties narrow the distance between them because the constitution will not get drafted if they travel on parallel paths.

All of the participants blamed the questionnaires used during the first public opinion collection as hazy and difficult to understand and suggested that the questionnaires for the next consultation should be written in a simple way to get more authentic and adequate suggestions. All three men agreed that drafting the new constitution in very simple language was important so that everyone could understand it and feel it related to them.