

Section 4

Conclusion

The most significant milestone of the peace process has always been the adoption of a new constitution drafted by an elected Constituent Assembly (CA). The failure of the first CA sapped confidence that the political parties would be able to find consensus on the most critical constitutional issue – the form of federalism – since others served mainly as bargaining points on that question.

The configuration of the parties had changed by the time of the second CA, but this body remained similarly hobbled. For nearly a year and a half after it was elected there was no sign of any progress towards the constitution. That was the situation when the April 2015 earthquake struck Nepal. The national sense of urgency brought on by the earthquake propelled the parties to come up with a shared understanding on a new constitution, which became a reality in September 2015.

Austin Lord and Sneha Moktan review the **political impact of the 2015 earthquakes**. The national response to the disaster mapped onto familiar patterns of institutional incompetence and political patronage. Relief was

slow, and historically marginalised communities have again found themselves at the back of the queue for resources. Chronic failures of local governance have added another layer of dysfunction, epitomised in the informal revival of the discredited All-Party Mechanism to distribute relief. In Kathmandu, the National Reconstruction Authority became a new epicentre for squabbling among political elites. It took eight months to set up and has been largely ineffective. The most significant political repercussion of the earthquakes, the sudden acceleration of the stalled constitutional process, has also been criticised for failing to engage the wider society and for back-tracking on some key inclusive reforms.