



eBulletin

SEP-OCT 2023



Summary

This eBulletin highlights the comprehensive efforts and initiatives undertaken by DPNet Nepal from September to October 2023, focusing on disaster preparedness, response, and resilience-building activities across various provinces in Nepal. The bulletin starts with a detailed account of the formation of the DPNet Bagmati Province Committee, highlighting the significance of collaboration among member organizations for enhancing DRR efforts within the province. It further elaborates on a series of events aimed at bolstering disaster risk governance, inclusion, and accountability in Bagmati Province, with notable contributions from key stakeholders emphasizing the critical role of disaster risk assessment, community preparedness, and the implementation of early warning systems.

In the wake of the Bajhang earthquake, the bulletin covers into the mobilization of resources and expertise to address the immediate and long-term impacts of the seismic event. It describes a range of discussions and meetings organized by DPNet in collaboration with various governmental and non-governmental partners. These interactions focused on assessing the earthquake's aftermath, planning recovery strategies, and enhancing agricultural and livestock resilience. The narrative highlights the challenges faced in the distribution of aid due to governmental policies and highlights the collective efforts to ensure efficient and equitable assistance to the affected populations. The bulletin also reflects on the International Training Programme - Disaster Risk Management organized by DPNet, aimed at equipping DRRM professionals with the knowledge and skills necessary for effective disaster management. It shares insights from participants and the significance of applying international standards and frameworks in the Nepalese context for improved disaster resilience.

The celebration of the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction 2023 is another focal point of the bulletin, with a theme centered on supporting People with Disabilities (PWD) in disaster situations. The event emphasized the need for inclusive disaster management strategies that address the unique challenges faced by PWD during disasters. Through technical sessions and discussions, the importance of accurate data collection, the integration of PWD into disaster management plans, and the need for accessibility and inclusivity in early warning systems were highlighted.

The bulletin wraps up with a detailed account of the discussions on enhancing agriculture and livestock resilience post-Bajhang earthquake. These discussions, held in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), aimed at planning and coordinating impact assessments to understand the needs of affected households better. The emphasis was on immediate interventions to safeguard grain storage and livestock, illustrating the concerted efforts of various stakeholders to mitigate the earthquake's impact on the agricultural sector and ensure food security.

Formation of DPNet Bagmati Province Committee



On September 5, 2023, a DPNet Province Level Committee formation meeting was organized by DPNet Nepal at Hetauda, Makwanpur of Bagmati Province. The meeting was attended by DPNet members of Bagmati Province including Center for Community Development, Nepal (CCDN), National Disaster Risk Reduction Centre (NDRC), Woman and Child Development Forum Nepal (WCDF), Nepal Centre for Disaster Management (NCDM), National Disaster Management Network of Nepal (DiMaNN), Friends Service Council Nepal (FSCN), Kritipur Volunteer Society(KVS) along with

Dr. Raju Thapa, Acting Chair and Mr. Kedar Neupane, Advisor of DPNet Central Committee.

Dr. Raju Thapa explained the organizational structures along with the activities of DPNet to

all participants. He further explained the role of DPNet as the secretariat of the National Platform for DRR at the federal level. Dr. Thapa further underscored the importance of fostering collaboration and cooperation among Bagmati Province members to fortify disaster risk reduction and management within the province.

After a fruitful discussion and commitment of members to work together, the DPNet Bagmati Province Committee was formed with the ‘Women and Child Development Forum Nepal (WCDF)’ as coordinator.

Dr. Raju Thapa extended congratulations to the newly appointed coordinator and all participants, emphasizing their dedication to collaborating closely with the provincial committee to effectively enhance disaster risk reduction efforts across Bagmati province.

Provincial DRR Policy Implementation and Learning Program at Bagmati Province



Makwanpur, September 5, 2023 - DPNet-Nepal with financial and technical support from USAID's Tayar Nepal, organized an event aimed at enhancing Disaster Risk Governance, inclusion, and accountability in Bagmati Province, Nepal. The event was chaired by Mr. Dhruva Gaida, Secretary, MoIAL, Bagmati Province while Hon. Ganga Narayan Shrestha, Minister of Internal Affairs and Law, Bagmati Province as a Chief Guest and Mr. Ghanshyam Upadhyaye, Chief Secretary at Bagmati Province as Special Guest along with Mr. Netra Prasad Sharma, Deputy CDO of the Makwanpur District, Dr. Raju Thapa, Acting Chair of DPNet Nepal and representatives from the Nepal Army, Nepal Police, Armed Police Force, Nepal Red Cross Society and NGOs working in Bagmati Province.

Key insights were shared during the technical session.

Mr. Kedar Neupane, Former Secretary of the Government of Nepal, highlighted the vital role of Disaster Risk Assessment in effective disaster risk mitigation. Using examples from Bagmati Province, he emphasized the consequences of haphazard construction practices, stressing the need for engineering solutions. Given the province's susceptibility to various disasters, he advised the provincial government to lead in the implementation of existing disaster plan policies and strategic plan of action. Mr. Neupane also talked about the connection between poverty and disaster casualties, questioned current preparedness efforts, and discussed shortcomings in provincial disaster response. He offered insights into the status of firefighting resources

and concluded with a brief sharing of the expected outcomes of the discussion.

Dr. Raju Thapa, Acting Chair at DPNet Nepal commenced his presentation by analyzing Nepal's earthquake history, with a particular emphasis on the tragic Gorkha Earthquake of 2015. He highlighted the nation's vulnerability to disasters and pointed out that the earthquake had devastating consequences, including the destruction of over 19,000 school classrooms, severely affecting education across 31 districts. He underscored the multi-dimensional impacts of disasters on society, urging the necessity for stronger DRR policies and addressing vulnerability fault lines to enhance resilience and preparedness. Moreover, he discussed the complex geographical landscape of Nepal and its inappropriate infrastructure development efforts, which contribute to induced hazard risks with pictorial representations. He specifically addressed the risk scenario in Bagmati Province, disaster types, and intensities with detailed disaster data. He highlighted that Bagmati Province faces significant hazards, particularly related to landslides. He further spoke on preparedness initiatives and lessons learned from past experiences to mitigate disaster risks in the future emphasizing the crucial role of enhanced DRR policies. Dr. Thapa further shared with the floor that Early Warning Systems have mitigated the Disaster Risks, especially in case of Flood, and added the need to develop EWS regarding Landslide, Earthquake, and other major disasters. He focused on the challenges

we are currently facing, particularly those related to haphazard construction practices and the issue of cabinet boxes installed by the Nepal Electricity Authority, which have been covering footpaths in recent days. He also mentioned about comprehensive risk assessments, and future predictions, and stressed the importance of localized preparedness measures. He highlighted the essential roles of the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRR) in coordinating disaster response efforts and posed thought-provoking questions to engage participants throughout the session.

Dr. Thapa recommended that the security sector play a pivotal role in disaster preparedness by organizing community-level campaigns that encompass essential training in crafting life-saving jackets, providing swimming lessons, and harnessing social media platforms to disseminate awareness. He added that disasters can also be considered opportunities in many cases. Instead of cultivating crops and building human settlements in these areas, which can amplify the risks of animal-related hazards, he proposed promoting tourism as an alternative.

Mr. Deepak Prasad Neupane, Under Secretary at MoIAL, Bagmati Province, emphasized the importance of collaboration between the government and non-government sectors for effective disaster management. He provided a comprehensive overview of the province's disaster situation from 2012 to 2023,

which included incidents like floods, landslides, fires, and earthquakes. Mr. Neupane highlighted the significant impact of fire-related disasters across all districts, along with a growing occurrence of floods and landslides. Mr. Neupane further stressed Bagmati Province's efforts in disaster management, specifically focusing on the preparation and implementation of various plans and guidelines, such as the Bagmati Province Monsoon Preparedness and Response Action Plan 2023, the Bagmati Province Environment Protection Act 2020, the Contingency Plan for the Housing Sector 2022, Bagmati Province Disaster Management Act 2018, and the Province Disaster Management Policies and Strategic Action Plan 2019-2030, among others. He mentioned that the province is currently in the process of formulating the Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan for Bagmati Province. Mr. Neupane explained that, in line with the province's fund mobilization guidelines, one million units of currency are being provided to all districts and hazard-prone local levels to enhance disaster preparedness and management. He also discussed awareness campaigns, relief allocations for private housing reconstruction by the provincial government, and highlighted challenges such as proper data management, interagency and intergovernmental coordination, limited human and economic resources, and the integration of disaster management with development initiatives.

Mr. Furba Dorje Tamang, Ward Chair, Hetauda Sub-Metropolitan City Ward No. 10 highlighted ongoing DRR efforts of Hetauda Sub-Metropolitan City focusing on proper budget allocation and readiness of Sub-Metropolitan City for disaster with the formation of committees at Metro and ward level. He shared the fact that the budget under DRR is being frozen due to a lack of proper periodic planning. He focused on the fact that the planning should be done before the fiscal year and monsoon season focusing on preparedness rather than relief distribution. Giving an example of a recent fire incident in ward on 17, 18, and 19, he explains the inadequate relief fund and rescue mechanism and focused on enhancing this.

Ms. Ramila Sapkota, Chairman of the NGO Federation, Makwanpur stressed academia's role in disaster research, focusing on geography and housing issues. She advised policy implementation, guideline obedience, and non-governmental collaboration with the government for effective disaster management.

Ms. Kiran Rana, Deputy Inspector General of Police at the Bagmati Province Police Office, expressed her concerns regarding the rising number of human-made disasters, including issues like cabinet boxes and unmanaged wires on roads. She raised concerns about the need for immediate action by district-level authorities and security forces to reduce road accidents. Ms. Rana also noted a 6.22% reduction in accidents during the last fiscal year

in Bagmati Province, attributing it to preparedness efforts. However, she highlighted the lack of coordination among infrastructure development organizations. She suggested that the MoIAL should consider consulting organizations like DPNepal when developing plans related to DRR.

Mr. Laxman Bahadur Singh, APF highlighted coordination issues among stakeholders and shared his firsthand experience as a first responder during the Jure Landslide. He stressed the importance of timely information sharing, community inclusion in drills, and forming local entities for efficient relief distribution. He also discussed APF's efforts in training disaster response personnel and establishing disaster bases.

Mr. Ganesh Bhandari, Coordinator at INSEC stressed the importance of incorporating recharging centers in housing and settlement projects to replenish groundwater and ensure urban water sustainability. He emphasized the need for laws and policies, prioritizing animal-induced hazards, and considering people with disabilities in disaster-related policies.

Mr. Bhola Rupakheti, Chairman of NRCS, Bagmati Province stressed the need for reorganized development models, mobilization of community-level volunteers for information dissemination, and collaboration among various entities to address climate-related disasters and enhance disaster preparedness,

citing a recent flood in Mustang as a critical example.

Mr. Netra Prasad Sharma, Deputy CDO of Makwanpur District, provided insights into the need for effective coordination between federal-level government agencies and local authorities within Makwanpur District. He also emphasized the significant delays in the promulgation of the District Public Risk Reduction Plan, primarily attributed to the lack of active involvement from relevant organizations. Mr. Sharma urged agencies similar to DPNepal to assume responsibility for addressing DRR issues, not only at the provincial level but also at the national level. Additionally, he stressed the importance of having storage facilities at the local level.

Mr. Ghanshyam Upadhyaya, Chief Secretary of Bagmati Province, acknowledged that due to the higher population density and increased incidence of human-made disasters in Bagmati Province, it is crucial to maintain a high level of preparedness and vigilance. According to Mr. Upadhyaya, the presentation by Dr. Thapa provided valuable insights into the challenges we are currently facing particularly concerning haphazard construction practices, and the issue of cabinet boxes installed by Nepal Electricity Authority. Mr. Upadhyaya emphasized the importance of a collective effort in DRR and expressed his commitment to communicating with the CDO of Kathmandu to ensure swift action in addressing the concern related to cabinet boxes. Furthermore, he underscored the

significance of officials not neglecting their responsibilities, especially in light of the problems faced by our citizens.

Hon. Ganga Narayan Shrestha, Minister of Internal Affairs and Law, Bagmati Province

suggested that this program would have been more effective if it had been conducted two months before the start of the fiscal year. This timing would allow for a better understanding of Bagmati Province's actual orientation. He emphasized that Bagmati Province needs to identify strategic and short-term planning measures to build a resilient society within the province. This would involve volunteer mobilization and raising public awareness. Hon. Shrestha discussed Bagmati Province's approach to reducing road accidents by using CCTV cameras. Referring to Dr. Thapa's presentation, he highlighted that Bagmati Province faces significant hazards, particularly related to landslides. He noted that the province had previously been more centralized in addressing flood-related issues but would now also prioritize landslide prevention with the installation of an early warning system. He underscored that the provincial government would focus on rescue efforts, training, and the utilization of indigenous knowledge and techniques. Regarding the concurrent powers of the three tiers of government, he called for

the resolution of problems. Hon. Shrestha mentioned that Bagmati Province is attempting to establish a separate disaster authority for DRR but faces challenges due to limited budgetary resources. He requested assistance from DPNet, seeking their expertise in identifying gaps and shortcomings in the formulation and implementation of DRR policies within Bagmati Province.

Mr. Dhruva Gaida, Secretary, MoIAL, Bagmati Province

Program chair emphasized the need to concentrate on the preparedness and collaboration of different concerned stakeholders with mutual respect and coordination for each other's coexistence. He shared his experiences while working in Disaster Management and mentioned the process ongoing with an emphasis on the mitigation efforts with an approach for working together with security forces, including the local community for simulation and sensitization and gave a commitment to continue the ongoing efforts in the coming days too. He further emphasized the need for implementing a one-door policy to enhance better coordination among three tiers of government while working for DRR mitigation. Mr. Gaida announced the program conclusion with a brief summary of the event and a vote of thanks to the participants.

DPNet Team Meet with MoIAL Minister of Bagmati Province

Makwanpur - DPNet Team, under the leadership of Dr. Raju Thapa, Acting President of DPNet, recently had a productive meeting with Hon. Ganga Narayan Shrestha, the Minister of Internal Affairs and Law (MoIAL) of Bagmati Province. The discussion centered on critical DRR issues in the region, adopting a collaborative and forward-looking approach.



Dr. Raju Thapa, Acting Chair of DPNet, began the meeting by shedding light on the diverse and intricate geographical landscape of Nepal. He underlined the pressing issue of inappropriate infrastructure development that has unintentionally contributed to increasing the hazard risks. Dr. Thapa illustrates the risk scenario specifically within Bagmati Province. He explored the various disaster types and their intensities, substantiating his insights with particular disaster data analysis. He focused on the tough challenge posed by landslides in the province. Dr. Thapa also shared valuable insights into preparedness initiatives and drew

from his past experiences to emphasize the vital role of DRR policies.

Dr. Thapa also highlighted the effectiveness of Early Warning Systems in mitigating disaster risks, particularly in the case of floods. He stressed the present need to develop EWS for landslides and other major disasters. Additionally, he pointed out the demanding issues related to haphazard construction practices and the problematic cabinet boxes installed by the Nepal Electricity Authority. Dr. Thapa advocated for a localized approach to hazard management to address these challenges effectively.

Hon. Ganga Narayan Shrestha, Minister of MoIAL, Bagmati Province, responded with a strong commitment to building a resilient society within the province. He proposed strategic and short-term planning measures that would involve volunteer mobilization and an extensive public awareness campaign. Hon Shrestha shared insights into the province's efforts to reduce road accidents through the use of CCTV cameras and stressed the importance of conducting geological investigations in tandem with new construction projects.

Acknowledging Dr. Thapa's sharing, Hon Shrestha restated the significant hazard risks, particularly pertaining to landslides, faced by Bagmati Province. He disclosed a shift in focus from a more centralized approach to addressing flood-related issues towards prioritizing

landslide prevention which will include the installation of an early warning system and an emphasis on rescue efforts, training, and indigenous knowledge utilization.

Hon. Shrestha also touched upon the issue of concurrent powers held by the three tiers of government, calling for problem resolution in

this regard. He disclosed Bagmati Province's aspirations to establish a separate disaster authority for DRR but pointed to budgetary constraints as a major hurdle. In closing, he sought assistance from DPNet, appealing for their expertise in identifying gaps and shortcomings in DRR policy formulation and implementation within Bagmati Province.

Policy Dialogue to Engage Non-Governmental Stakeholders for Coordinated Disaster Risk Management



DPNet Nepal, in collaboration with USAID's Tayar Nepal, conducted a Policy Dialogue to Engage Non-Governmental Stakeholders for Coordinated Disaster Risk Management on September 7, 2023. The event aimed to enhance collaboration and engagement of the private sector, international NGOs, local communities, and other stakeholders for promoting a sustainable and resilient approach to disaster response and recovery and develop a recommendation paper for mobilizing stakeholders for coordinated disaster response. The event witnessed representatives from NDRRMA, INGO/NGOs, Academia, and the Private Sector.

Dr. Raju Thapa, Acting Chair of DPNet-Nepal and Program Chair emphasized the crucial role of engaging non-governmental stakeholders in Coordinated Disaster Risk Management. He highlighted 25 different roles and responsibilities of NDRRMA and stressed the need for government agencies to be more accountable. Dr. Thapa raised questions about the drafting of NGO mobilization guidelines, questioning their relevance without an NGO mobilization act. He also inquired about the cash support mechanism in the Monsoon Preparedness Plan, specifically whether it is limited to UN Agencies or open to other NGOs. He emphasized that involving non-

governmental stakeholders in Disaster Risk Management is essential for a comprehensive and effective approach to all stages of the Disaster Management Cycle.

Mr. Bamshi Kumar Acharya, DRRM Policy and Governance Expert, presented on the "Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in DRRM." He highlighted three perspectives on DRRM, the need for collaboration between government and non-governmental agencies, and the importance of coordination and engagement of non-governmental stakeholders for effective disaster management. Mr. Acharya explained the provisions for engaging the non-government sector in DRRM, starting from the National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management (NSDRM 2009) and other relevant policies and regulations at the federal, provincial, and local levels. He pointed out that Development Aid Mobilization standards have played a crucial role in coordinating NGOs and the government for better Disaster Risk Reduction practices. Mr. Acharya identified challenges and gaps in four major areas: provisional challenges due to limited policies, institutional challenges in representation, operational challenges in role delineation, and behavioral challenges in collaboration. He called for a clear policy framework to eliminate jurisdictional complexities and define the powers of different government tiers. He also stressed the need to partner with academia, media, community-based organizations, and volunteers for information dissemination and community engagement. Mr. Acharya

emphasized the importance of a robust system for situation tracking, monitoring, and feedback collection to enhance responsiveness and collaboration.

Mr. Prem Awasthi, Humanitarian Coordination Officer at UNRCO, discussed "Engaging International Organizations for Coordinated Disaster Management." He highlighted the importance of international and regional collaboration in disaster management and shared examples of global practices, including Nepal's role in disaster response efforts. Mr. Awasthi emphasized the need for global governance in disaster management, focusing on human and financial deployment and coordination.

Mr. Hemanta Dangal, AINTGDM, pointed out that non-governmental organizations focus more on consultation and recovery than decision-making, leading to gaps in field-level practices. He stressed the need to integrate non-governmental stakeholders and address law-related dilemmas in disaster risk reduction efforts.

Ms. Shanti Mahat, Section Officer at NDRRMA, mentioned that Organization Mobilization guidelines for DRR are in the drafting process. She shared guiding principles for partner organizations, including the one-door policy to prevent resource duplication, coordination of multi-stakeholders, and inclusion of disaster-vulnerable groups. Ms.

Mahat highlighted areas of work for partner organizations in DRR.

Ms. Sunita Kayastha, Emergency Specialist at UNICEF, emphasized the need for private sector engagement and policy dialogue between government sectors and non-governmental stakeholders.

Mr. Santosh Pandey, Project Manager at Mercy Corps, highlighted the importance of coordination among governmental stakeholders.

Ms. Sarita Thulung, Chairperson at NDWA-CSPD-N, stressed the need to prioritize people with disabilities in disaster risk reduction efforts.

Ms. Luna Khadka, DRR and H Specialist at World Vision International discussed the need for better coordination among stakeholders.

Mr. Rabin Dahal, Coordinator at Save the Children, emphasized the importance of need assessment and standardized legal documents.

Mr. Krishna Ghimire, Program Coordinator at NDRC, pointed out the need for business continuity plans, CSR mobilization guidelines, and improved information management.

Mr. Saroj Pokharel, Program Head at ActionAid Nepal, emphasized policy harmonization and addressing coordination gaps among stakeholders.

Ms. Rama Dhakal, General Secretary at FWDN, stressed the inclusion of organizations working with people with disabilities in discussions and clarifying roles of authorities.

Mr. Dharmaraj Joshi, Land and Advocacy Specialist at Habitat for Humanity, called for stakeholder mapping and clear role division among stakeholders.

Ms. Mangala Karanjeet, General Secretary at BPW Nepal, highlighted gaps in policy coordination.

Mr. Bhakta Hamal, Chairperson of Health and Disaster Sub-committee at FNCCI, discussed the private sector's role in disaster preparedness and the need for guidelines and monitoring.

Mr. Jit Ram Lama, Executive Director at ARSOW, suggested streamlining project approval related to DRR for efficiency.

Ms. Krishna Karki, USAID Tayar Nepal, discussed using policy dialogue feedback for policy revisions involving government stakeholders.

Dr. Raju Thapa, the Session Chair recommended a fundamental shift in policy to include cluster provisions and strengthened engagement with non-government stakeholders. He advocated for the establishment of a dedicated entity for monitoring and situation tracking to enhance disaster management. Dr. Thapa thanked all

participants and mentioned that the recommendations would be delivered to the government as policy feedback.

National Dialogue on Disaster Management Policies



On September 15, 2023, DPNet-Nepal, with financial and technical support from USAID's Tayar Nepal, organized the National Dialogue on Disaster Management Policies. The event was initiated by Mr. Kshitiz Paudel, Program coordinator of DPNet Nepal welcoming all participants. The event, chaired by Dr. Raju Thapa, Acting Chairperson of DPNet, was attended by representatives from government agencies including Mr. Tulsi Prasad Dahal, MoHA, Mr. Somnath Gautam, MoICS and other personalities from Nepal Police, Nepal Army, NBI, NRCS, NIA, FNCCI, Blue Diamond Society, Shikhar Insurance Co. Ltd., ADCCN, IGFF, ARSOW, FWDN, NCDM, and DiMaNN.

Dr. Raju Thapa highlighted the policy dialogues, such as those on Psychosocial Counselling, Private Sector Engagement, Market System Resilience, Risk Transfer/Financing, Multi-Level Governance, Non-Government Sector Mobilization, and their significance within the broader DRR cycle. He emphasized that the recommendations from these dialogues would be reviewed during the event and subsequently forwarded to various government tiers as policy feedback.

Ms. Chetana Loksum underscored the extensive impact of disasters, not only in terms of material losses but also the psychological toll on individuals. She pointed out Nepal's existing disaster management policies,

including the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2074 and the Disaster Risk Reduction National Strategic Plan of Action 2018 to 2030. However, Ms. Loksum expressed concerns about governance and policy implementation gaps, particularly in addressing Mental Health and Psychosocial Support during all phases of disasters. She stressed the importance of bridging these gaps, advocating for the inclusion of essential elements like Psychosocial Support Programs, Psychosocial First Aid, Stress Management, Life Skills, and Resilience Building in disaster management strategies. She also called for psychosocial education and the management of acute disaster reactions, emphasizing proactive psychosocial preparedness activities. Furthermore, Ms. Loksum highlighted the necessity of introducing psychosocial first aid and support for security forces engaged in rescue operations.

Mr. Nirmal Adhikari highlighted on the current state of the insurance industry in Nepal, emphasizing its shortcomings and challenges. He noted that approximately 44.5% of the total population is involved in insurance and stressed the need for Risk Sensitive Premium Fixation to expand insurance coverage to a larger population. Mr. Adhikari shared insights on disaster management and insurance, expressing concerns about the yet-to-be-prepared National Insurance Act. To enhance disaster resilience, he recommended active utilization of local, provincial, and district-level disaster funds in insurance efforts. Mr. Adhikari emphasized the

pivotal role of insurance in managing production, employment, and business stability during and after disasters. He introduced the concept of the Sovereign Liabilities First Loss Risk Layering Approach as a means to enhance disaster insurance effectiveness. Additionally, he highlighted the importance of incorporating insurance into pre-disaster preparations to bolster DRR and advocated for the inclusion of health insurance within the National Insurance Act, emphasizing the comprehensive nature of disaster risk reduction strategies.

Dr. Shiba Subedi underscored a significant policy gap, particularly regarding the allocation of responsibility for the Earthquake Early Warning System. Given Nepal's vulnerability to natural disasters, including floods and earthquakes, extending early warning capabilities to include landslides and earthquakes becomes crucial. Dr. Subedi stressed the importance of promptly alerting vulnerable areas based on the distinctive characteristics of primary and secondary waves, which is particularly vital in Nepal. Globally, some regions have issued earthquake warnings as early as 12 seconds in advance, offering valuable time for preventive measures such as halting railway operations. It is essential to differentiate between prediction and early warning, a distinction that is often misconstrued in several countries, Nepal included. Earthquakes can occur at varying depths, making monitoring more challenging compared to the relatively straightforward monitoring of floods and landslides. He further

explained that establishing an earthquake early-warning system in Nepal, focusing on the middle or lesser Himalaya region, holds significant potential and importance.

Mr. Dinanath Bhandari highlighted the significance of the Constitutional and Legal Framework in disaster management. He focused on two crucial aspects: Schedule-7, outlining the List of Concurrent Powers of the Federation and the State, and Schedule-8, detailing the List of Local-Level Powers. He pointed out that these schedules create ambiguity in disaster management, particularly in determining whether it falls under the power of local authorities or constitutes a concurrent power shared among all three tiers of government. Mr. Bhandari argued that it is imperative to grant local-level authorities the autonomy to exercise disaster management powers according to their capacity. He emphasized that the domain of health-related disaster management should be entrusted to health professionals and organizations due to their specialized expertise. Additionally, he stressed that water-induced disasters and forest fires should also be managed by organizations with specific proficiency in these areas.

Mr. Bamshi Kumar Acharya provided a comprehensive overview of the key issues discussed during various thematic policy dialogues. Concerning Psychosocial Counselling, he stressed the importance of elevating its status within the legal framework and recognizing it as a priority area, as

highlighted by INSARAG. Moving on to the Early Warning System, Mr. Acharya pointed out its high priority status within the legal framework of all three tiers of government, citing the Nepal Sarkar (Karya Bibhajan) Niyamawali, 2069, which assigns roles and responsibilities related to EWS to the Ministry of Energy, Water Resource, and Irrigation, leading to policy complexities.

Mr. Acharya delved into the involvement of the Private Sector in disaster management, mentioning the participation of FNCCI as a standing invitee in the National Disaster Response Framework (NDRF) 2071. However, he highlighted that the private sector's engagement still leans towards supporting rather than taking a proactive role. He emphasized the necessity of multilevel collaboration across the three tiers of government and the need to evaluate and amend existing provisions to align them with desired outcomes. Ensuring the integrity of critical infrastructures during and after disasters was another crucial point, despite the existing representation in the Disaster Management Coordination structure. Mr. Acharya noted the discrepancy between the clarity of laws and their implementation and touched upon the issue of market resilience, emphasizing the need to strike a balance between government control and provisioning to ensure market stability during and after disasters. In discussing risk transfer, he called for increased awareness and education regarding insurance and proposed

incorporating disaster risk financing and transfer perspectives into all phases of disaster management, drawing insights from the experience of insuring households in the Karnali province. Turning to non-governmental stakeholders, Mr. Acharya questioned the delay in implementing roles assigned to the non-government sector, citing examples such as NPDRR, and proposed the establishment of PPDRR at the provincial level and LPDRR at the local level to engage non-government stakeholders effectively in DRR. Summing up, he highlighted the key issues, including the lack of provisional differences, and outlined the way forward, emphasizing the need for policy formulation, clarifying roles and accountability, and fostering a culture of collaborative work.

During the open floor discussion, Mr. Bishnu Timilsena raised concerns about residential settlement safety in Bara, where recent incidents, including two students falling into a dung pit, raised alarm. He revealed that a survey conducted in Kathmandu's Sundhara region indicated that 62 out of 100 buildings were non-compliant with the National Building Code (NBC) and Municipal Norms. He emphasized the need for proper urban management, resilient infrastructure, and stricter enforcement of construction standards, noting the lack of advocacy and responsible institutions in ensuring quake-resistant housing.

Mr. Rupendra Basnet stressed the necessity of microfinance solutions to support individual housing, especially in disaster-prone areas.

Mr. Dinesh Gurung highlighted the lack of clear coordination among local, provincial, and federal governments within Nepal's federal structure. He stressed the importance of clear operational and policy-level actions and advocated for the utilization of traditional and cultural institutions such as guthi and other ethnic communities in DRR.

Ms. Rama Dhakal advocated for the active participation of people with disabilities (PWDs) and other vulnerable groups at all levels of government. She emphasized the need for early warning systems tailored to PWDs, risk transfer mechanisms for them, and the challenges faced by PWDs, including the loss and unavailability of assistive devices during disasters.

Mr. Vinod Kumar Barai emphasized that during the seven-step planning process in local government, the federal government should send directives to allocate 15-20% of the budget in DRR. He also raised concerns about the weak collaboration and coordination between DEOC and LEOC, despite their stronger relationship with NEOC.

Mr. Santosh Neupane discussed how migration, driven by fears of earthquakes and the COVID-19 pandemic, has affected communities. He emphasized the need for

better clarity and coordination among disaster response frameworks such as LDRP, DPRP, and Resilient Frameworks. He highlighted the importance of cash transfer mechanisms as a new approach in DRM and asked for enhancing the Rapid Accessing Market (RAM) tool by NRCS as a model to be considered by the private sector.

Mr. Bhakta Hamal emphasized the need for easier provisions for the private sector to allocate funds for DRR.

Mr. Krishna Chandra Neupane stressed the importance of sensitizing parliament members to DRM issues to ensure the passage of relevant legislation. He praised DPNet for the qualitative commitment paper and findings and suggested the preparation of checklists and their distribution to all levels of government for effective DRM implementation.

Ms. Krishna Karkee mentioned the focus on gender and intersexuality in each discussion but highlighted the need to prioritize positive discrimination as a separate matter for discussion. She emphasized that accountability of individuals, concerned stakeholders, and the government is the most critical current issue in DRM.

Mr. Tulsi Prasad Dahal, MoHA, underscored the significance of utilizing these recommendations as valuable policy feedback. He highlighted the need to align the powers of the federal, provincial, and local levels with

their respective responsibilities, particularly emphasizing the high level of responsibility at the local level, as they are often the first responders in disaster situations. Mr. Dahal stressed the importance of creating an enabling environment to empower local and district authorities and suggested addressing the critical issue of a lack of technical human-power. Regarding Psychosocial counseling, Mr. Dahal called for centralizing the discussion on their role in disaster risk management, emphasizing that while everyone recognizes its importance, it has not received the priority it deserves. He emphasized that people's understanding of mental health is very misleading. He also pointed out the long-standing effort spent, around 10-12 years, in formulating EWS, comparing it to the UN's vision of early warning for all, and highlighted the ongoing challenge of lacking a Multi-Hazard Early Warning System. Mr. Dahal acknowledged the importance of policy audits and systematic situation tracking, emphasizing their increasing significance in disaster management. He emphasized the need for sharing indigenous learning and knowledge on both national and international levels. Regarding the role of District Coordination Committees, Mr. Dahal advocated for a well-defined role, particularly in disaster-related matters. He pointed out the evolving perception of cash support as a form of anticipatory action but raised the question of how to focus on other aspects of anticipatory action. He stressed the importance of establishing a robust forecasting

mechanism, citing an example from the last local election when a cyclone was forecasted, but it changed its course and did not impact the election, illustrating the need for more accurate forecasting.

Dr. Raju Thapa provided a concise summary of the key aspects highlighted during the event, including the importance of strengthening psychosocial support and mental health services across all disaster phases. He emphasized improvements needed in the insurance industry and risk transfer mechanisms, as well as the need to bolster early warning systems for various natural disasters. Dr. Thapa also stressed the significance of

clarifying the legal framework and powers allocated to different government levels, actively involving the private sector, engaging non-governmental stakeholders, enforcing resilient infrastructure standards, promoting inclusivity for vulnerable groups, allocating a substantial budget for disaster risk reduction, conducting policy audits, enhancing forecasting mechanisms, and sharing indigenous disaster management knowledge. He concluded by assuring that the recommendations would be presented to the relevant authorities and expressed gratitude to all participants and stakeholders, bringing the program to a close.

Provincial Level Program at Sudurpaschim Province



On September 25, 2023, DPNet Nepal organized a program Provincial level program which was presided over by Mr. Sher Bahadur Basnet, DPNet Board, and the Chair of DPNet Provincial Committee, Sudurpaschim Province. Dr. Raju Thapa, the Acting Chair at

DPNet Nepal attended the event as a chief guest. The agenda for discussion comprised sharing the achievements and learning of Mercy Corps and NEEDS, a presentation of the efforts of FAYA Nepal in earthquake response. Further, the presentation regarding the roles of

Civil Society and DPNet Nepal was done along with the restructuring of the DPNet Provincial Committee of Sudurpaschim Province.

Mr. Nabin Bhandari, Program Coordinator of NEEDS, presented the efforts, achievements, initiatives, and learning of NEEDS and Mercy Corps in the field of disaster management that are to be shared at the DPNet Nepal's province-level discussion. Mr. Bhandari's presentation shed light on the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance (ZFRA) and its commitment to enhancing community resilience to flood risk through the Flood Resilience Measurement for Communities (FRMC) approach. The FRMC approach is research-based, focusing exclusively on studying the 5 Cs, 4 Rs, and 44 sources of resilience among community members. The overarching vision of the alliance is to ensure that floods have no negative impact on people and businesses, allowing them to thrive without hindrance. The goal is to increase social, political, and financial investment in community-based flood resilience building through collaborative efforts across public, private, and third-sector partnerships. The specified objectives include increasing funding for flood resilience, strengthening policies at various levels, and improving flood resilience practices.

The presentation also outlined specific interventions aimed at achieving these objectives. These interventions include the formation and strengthening of Community Disaster Management Committees (CDMCs),

training task forces within CDMCs, providing livelihood support, linking CDMCs with Local Disaster Management Committees (LDMCs), and conducting advocacy training. Additionally, the alliance plans to assist local governments in policy formulation within the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) sector, enhance the budget allocation for DRR activities and undertake physical interventions such as bioengineering along rivers, road strengthening, safe house construction, and the establishment of Local Emergency Operation Centers (LEOCs). Looking ahead, the way forward involves collaborative efforts and working together towards the shared goal of building flood resilience. The presentation emphasizes the importance of advocacy at local, provincial, and federal levels for Disaster Risk Management (DRM), budget tracking at the municipal level, and the formation of loose forums such as the Doda Watershed Forum dedicated to DRM. The comprehensive approach outlined by Mr. Bhandari underscores the multifaceted nature of flood resilience and the need for concerted efforts across various sectors and stakeholders to achieve lasting impact.

Dr. Raju Thapa, Acting Chair of DPNet, began his presentation with an overview of DPNet Nepal's history, which was established in 1996 A.D. He described DPNet as an umbrella organization comprising members from I/NGOs, and UN agencies, all working in the field of DRR. DPNet also serves as the secretariat office for the National Platform for

DRR. As a networking organization, DPNet organizes various International, National, and Regional Conferences in the field of DRR.

Dr. Thapa, in his presentation, highlighted DPNet's operational focus on policy advocacy, knowledge management, capacity building, and coordination. He discussed DPNet's publications and presented a graphical representation of disaster incidents from 2070 to 2079 B.S. He outlined major disasters in 2079 B.S. and listed key policy provisions for disaster management, including constitutional and legislative documents. Dr. Thapa emphasized defining provincial roles, collaborative training, government-private sector cooperation, and the historical context of NPDRR formation.

Dr. Thapa focused on defining provincial roles based on the type of disaster, collaborative training between security forces and citizens, cooperation between the government and private sectors in data management and resource utilization, and the mobilization of local resources and knowledge. He presented on the role of DPNet and civil society in the humanitarian sector. He emphasized the need to mobilize the NGOs for enhanced DRR practice and advocated for the need for the establishment of a Provincial Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (PPDRR) in the Sudurpaschim Province.

The provincial committee formed on the 23rd of September 2019 by DPNet in Sudurpashchim

underwent restructuring during the meeting. Through this restructuring, in each district represented by non-governmental organizations actively working in the disaster-prone region of Sudurpashchim, a committee of 21 member organizations was established. In this structure, one organization and its representative were selected for the position of Chairperson, while the remaining organizations continued as members. The selected organizations in the committee were requested by the Secretariat to submit necessary documents for official representation, and the committee decided to request an official list of representatives from the selected organizations for representation in the committee. The members of the restructured committee are;

Mr. Sher Bahadur Basnet, FAYA Nepal as the chair, and YAC Nepal, NEEDS Nepal, CSSD, NNSWA, NRCS Kailali, FAST Nepal, Prayas Nepal, DWRF Nepal, CCS, SEEWAC Nepal, MAN Nepal, CDRS Nepal, SADA, Peace Win Nepal, MPDS, EDC Nepal, Fulbari Elderly Committee, and SSD as the committee members.

Mr. Sachidananda Joshi, Capacity Enhancement Coordinator of FAYA Nepal, presented the organization's efforts and achievements in enhancing capacity for immediate response during disasters.

According to the regulations laid out in the constitution or as specified in the circulars issued by the secretariat, decisions were made

regarding the roles and responsibilities of the various positions within the above-mentioned organizations at the meeting. The decision was made to establish FAYA Nepal as the secretariat of the DPNet Sudurpashchim Province Committee.

The meeting extended heartfelt thanks to Dr. Thapa, Acting Chair of DPNet who graciously

accepted the role of Guest and provided valuable suggestions and guidance for the reorganization of the DPNet Sudurpashchim Province Committee from the Secretariat.

Mr. Sher Bahadur Basnet, Program Chair expressed his vote of thanks to all the presenters, and distinguished guests and concluded the program.

DPNet Discussion on the Sixteenth Plan: DRR/CCA Perspectives and Recommendations



On September 24, 2023, DPNet Nepal organized a virtual interaction session titled "DPNet Discussion on the Sixteenth Plan: DRR/CCA Perspectives and Recommendations" using an online platform. The purpose of this session was to deliberate on the "Approach Paper of the Sixteenth Plan (Fiscal Year 2024/25-2028/29)," which has been formulated under the theme of "good governance, social justice, and prosperity" by the National Planning Commission(NPC). Additionally, the session served as a platform for experts and stakeholders in the field of DRR to assess the relevance and value of the developed approach paper.

The program began with a warm welcome from Dr. Raju Thapa, the Acting Chair of DPNet Nepal, to all the participants. He acknowledged the presence of the delegates in the meeting and outlined the discussion's objectives. He described the modality of the Fifteenth plan and shared the concept design of the sixteenth plan to be discussed. He stressed the need to properly include DRR in the sixteenth plan as it will clarify the budget issues and proper implementation of the existing policies for enhanced disaster risk reduction and management. Dr. Thapa shared that the insights gathered from the discussion and the recommendations will be compiled, consolidated, and shared with the NPC.

Mr. Bamshi Kumar Acharya, DRRM Policy and Governance Expert delves into the structure of the fifteenth plan, using it as a point of reference for the development of the sixteenth plan. He initiated his presentation with a concise introduction to three significant

highlights. Firstly, he emphasized that the Fifteenth Plan encompasses a wide array of initiatives, ranging from ambitious endeavors to crucial matters, while some challenges remain unaddressed. Secondly, he highlighted the substantial alterations in policies and practices that have transpired since the Fifteenth National Plan. He discussed how these changes, in comparison to previous approaches and insights, pose relevant challenges for incorporation into the sixteenth plan. In the third point, he underscored the transformation in the framework between the Fifteenth and sixteenth plans. He underscored the objectives of the sixteenth plan in which the major theme is good governance, social justice, and reach to prosperity and all these themes are interrelated with DRRM. Three strategies are there to fulfill those objectives. The sixteenth plan stands out from its predecessor in a favorable manner, as it allocates sufficient room for the involvement of various entities such as private, government, non-governmental, federal, provincial, and local levels, each categorized and included explicitly. Another highly influential aspect was the integration of research and development into the plan. He emphasized that in the earlier fifteenth plan, DRR was included in clause no. 10.8 while the recent plan has provisioned in the 11th clause out of 12. The forthcoming work will be focused on addressing the content of point 11.

Mr. Acharya stressed that there were substantial changes in the DRRM scenario in

the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Plans as there were some policy interventions in between the Fifteenth and Sixteenth plans including disaster risk financing, early warning, fund mobilization, shock responsive, volunteer, etc. Mr. Acharya advocates 10 points basis for developing 16 plans, they are; constitutional provisions, existing policy and legal provisions, long-term vision 2100, mid-term evaluation of the Fifteenth plan, the election manifesto of political parties, experiences from implementing federal governance system, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), plan of promoting from LDC, various international commitments and change in a global context. He emphasized that it was crucial for the relevant stakeholders to collaborate effectively and provide recommendations for their actions. He asked, “What might have been the primary intervention and the specific quantitative target?” He stressed that it was high time to accumulate all the recommendations and submit them to NPC. He inquired about what could have been involved in transitional change. The context related to the budget, the scenario of local-level involvement on the frontline, and whether proper implementation was happening or not were some of the contexts.

Mr. Ram P. Bhandari Technical Advisor DPNet, shed light on the gaps and recommendations in the planning process. He emphasized that Chapter 2 of the Sixteenth Plan discusses the Fifteenth Plan, while Chapter 3 provides an overview of challenges.

However, a critical issue remains unaddressed in both chapters. He highlighted, despite addressing agriculture the lack of a connection between agriculture and climate change is missed. Additionally, Chapter 10 completely overlooks the crucial topic of fragile construction. While there is mention of inferior construction quality in discussions about physical infrastructure, the aspect of infrastructure-induced disasters is neglected. The absence of a clear objective in the 4th chapter hampers the effective achievement of goals. In the 11th point, the sectoral strategy needs to offer more extensive details on mitigating natural and human-induced disasters and reducing associated risks. He highlighted in previous content, that disaster management was encompassed, especially within the context of water-induced disasters. However, the Fifteenth Plan, adopted a broader perspective, whereas the Sixteenth Plan seems to have narrowed its focus. To enhance comprehensiveness, it should incorporate and enrich sustainable goals and embrace green governance principles.

Dr. Dharam Raj Uprety, Technical Advisor DPNet, acknowledged that the concept paper of the Sixteenth Plan was not satisfactory. He stressed the financial loss of thirty billion in 10 years, but the plan has not considered this issue. In the challenge section, it seems climate is neglected and not regarded, which can create a problem in funding and aid assistance from the international level so the need for recognition was felt. In the 11th point, the term “disaster

prevention” should be revised to “hazard/risk prevention and mitigation” since it's important to acknowledge that disasters cannot be entirely prevented. He stressed the need to address the significance of disaster insurance. Furthermore, it mentions fossil fuels but overlooks renewable resources. Private sector involvement and investment should receive more attention. He concluded by saying that the document lacks the incorporation of risk-informed development and climate-smart technology.

Dr. Dilip Gautam Freelancer Consultant, recommended some changes and modifications; in the context of the challenges, the 26th point needs to be added as high risk of climate and disaster risk. He further said that the additional word ‘sustainable’ needs to be added to the 3rd Goal “Enhancing the standard of living and the economy to emphasize sustainable prosperity” instead of just sustainability for resilience development. Moreover, the 11th point, “protection of nature and biodiversity, disaster preparedness, and sustainable development” needs to be modified to “protection of nature and biodiversity, climate and disaster risk management so that the importance of climate is incorporated. The promotion of sustainable and green economic growth with financial stability and economic advancement needs to be modified as "promotion of sustainable, green, and inclusive development” as it integrates the concept of sustainable development ahead of climate emergence. He further emphasized the need to address both natural and human-made disasters

along with the need to address the concerns regarding the conservation and protection of watersheds and climate along with the conservation of fertile land and forest.

Mr. Krishna Neupane Executive Director Association of District Coordination Committees of Nepal, emphasized to overview of the policy provision of DRRM in order to address the possible changes. He elaborated on the cross-cutting nature of disaster in all the sectors. He emphasized the importance of learning from past challenges in implementing the 11 points and identifying measures to address them. Ensuring resource allocation was a key concern, and he questioned how this could be guaranteed. He also raised the issue of resilience and how the Sixteenth Plan aims to ensure it. Furthermore, he highlighted the need for sustainable disaster response planning within a five-year reduction timeframe, which he will elaborate on in written form.

Mr. Kedar Neupane, Former Secretary of the Government of Nepal discussed the situation that this Sixteenth Plan in the New normal situation, was different from the previous one. He stressed the need for compulsory disaster

risk mapping at all levels, including municipalities and rural areas. He called for citizen awareness from policy to implementation, emphasized an early warning system, and urged the inclusion of international commitments, like the Sendai agreement, in our objectives. Mr. Neupane recommended its inclusion of diverse sectors and perspectives, including health, education, and infrastructure. He also called for awareness among all the ministry's DRRM units.

Dr. Raju Thapa concluded the discussion by stressing that, although the DRR-related context had been mentioned in all the existing acts, regulations, and action plans, none of the acts clarified the fund requirement. So, the necessity has evolved to incorporate DRR along with funding and budget planning. He urged to share possible recommendations and suggestions by 26 September, and the final would be shared with NPC on 27 September. He requested Mr. Bamshi Kumar Acharya to shape the framework, and the other team would be working based on that framework. He closed the session by thanking all the participants for their presence.

Preparatory Meeting for International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction 2023



On October 1, 2023, a preparatory meeting was held for International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction 2023 in Nepal, with a focus on People with Disabilities (PWD). The meeting took place at the NDRRMA Hall in Singhadurbar and was organized under the banner of the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRR), coordinated with DPNet.

Dr. Raju Thapa, Member Secretary of NPDRR and Acting Chair of DPNet, outlined Nepal's plans for International Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Day, scheduled for October 13, 2023, with a primary focus on addressing the challenges faced by PWD during disasters. He explains that the objectives include raising awareness, rectifying data discrepancies related to PWD, and integrating PWD into disaster management strategies. Proposed activities include an inaugural session with an emphasis on inclusion strategies and a technical session for PWD representatives. Dr. Thapa highlighted disparities in PWD population estimates and the importance of the planned data collection initiative, which aims to correct

these discrepancies and emphasize the significance of PWD in disaster management. The expected outcomes include a more inclusive approach to disaster management, evidence-based policymaking, and improved collaboration among stakeholders for PWD in disaster situations. He also mentioned the need for the utilization of data from various sources, including the National Statistics Office, Department of National ID and Civil Registration, and Poor Household Identification Survey, to include marginalized PWDs.

Ms. Nirmala Dhital, President of the Federation of Women with Disability, stressed the need for proper data collection initiatives across the country's seven provinces and emphasized the importance of PWD mobilization and training. She called for strong government attendance to ensure that the program's learnings are utilized as policy feedback. Mr. Nar Bahadur Limbu, Director of the Nepal Association of the Blind-NAB, advocated for expanding the pilot survey nationwide and encouraged the participation of PWD federations in the program to provide valuable input. Mr. KP Adhikari, President of the National Federation of Deaf Nepal, pointed out that while census data suggests only 2% of PWDs, the legal framework of Nepal recognizes ten types of disability, indicating that proper data collection is crucial for

including PWDs in the disaster management cycle and providing policy feedback for future plans. Mr. Bishnu Sharma, from the National Federation of the Disabled-Nepal, Karnali, emphasized considering geographical variation and vulnerability when addressing the needs of PWDs.

Mr. Dinesh Gurung, Coordinator of the NPDRR-INGO Thematic Group, mentioned that all federations and stakeholders related to PWDs will be included in the program, and efforts will be made to ensure that the venue and modality of the program are PWD-friendly.

Mr. Jay Narayan Acharya, Joint Secretary of NDRRMA, highlighted that enhanced data management can include PWDs in both pre and post-phases of disaster management. He emphasized prioritizing PWDs holding red cards, as they are more vulnerable to disasters. Proper data will be used to address infrastructure and critical facility issues. The program's pilot phase will be extended nationwide, leaving no one behind. He thanked all participants and assured them that feedback from concerned authorities would be considered.

DPNet Submits Recommendations to National Planning Commission for the 16th Plan



DPNet has formally presented its comprehensive recommendations to the National Planning Commission (NPC) for inclusion in Nepal's upcoming 16th periodic plan. Compiled after extensive consultations with over 3,000 stakeholders involved directly

and indirectly in disaster management, these suggestions emphasize Nepal's acute vulnerability to natural calamities and the urgency for proactive and forward-thinking strategies.

The handed-over document, which was received by the Vice-Chair of NPC via Joint Secretary, Mr. Mahesh Bhattarai, in the presence of Ms. Anita Poudel of NPC and representatives from DPNet including Dr. Raju Thapa Acting Chair, Mr. Kedar Neupane Advisor and Mr. Bamshi Acharya Technical Advisor, highlighted the concerns. Dr. Raju Thapa, the Acting Chair of DPNet, emphasized the fragile nature of Nepal's developmental efforts, pointing to past catastrophes. "It's imperative that our future plans and developmental projects are designed with a disaster-resilient mindset," Thapa stressed.

Prominently, the recommendations touch upon various areas that need immediate attention. From effective disaster risk mapping and resilient infrastructure development to ensuring sustainable natural resource utilization and deploying effective rescue and relief mechanisms, the scope is vast. The document also highlights the importance of synergistic relationships between various sectors, be it governmental, private, or non-governmental, advocating for cohesive and coordinated efforts, Mr. Neupane explained.

Furthermore, the recommendations also bring to the forefront issues like shock-responsive social protection and anticipatory action, areas that have been globally recognized as pivotal in contemporary disaster management paradigms. "Shock-responsive social protection ensures that affected communities can bounce back faster through flexibility in existing social security, while anticipatory action allows beneficiaries to act before a disaster strikes, minimizing damages," explained Dr. Thapa. Mr. Acharya explained that the 16th periodic plan should offer a pivotal opportunity for Nepal to build on its previous efforts, integrating these expert recommendations to ensure a more disaster-resilient and prepared nation.

With the suggestions now in the hands of the NPC, hoping that these insights will be woven perfectly into the 16th plan of Nepal's developmental journey. The submitted approach paper can be accessed at: [Approach Paper of The Sixteenth Plan for Transformed Disaster Risk Reduction and Management](#)

DPNet Discussion on the Bajhang Earthquake



On October 4, 2023, DPNet Nepal organized a virtual interaction session titled “Discussion on Bajhang Earthquake” using an online platform. The purpose of this session was to provide an updated overview of the situation, incorporating first-hand accounts from residents of the Bajhang district, and expert perspectives on the earthquakes and the probable efforts to make for the future based on the experiences from this happening. It aimed to shed light on recent seismic occurrences that have affected the far western region of Nepal, particularly Bajhang.

The program began with a warm welcome by Dr. Raju Thapa, the Acting Chair of DPNet Nepal, to all the participants in this emergency meeting. Dr. Thapa in his presentation stressed the emergence of the current situation where a series of earthquakes, including a significant one measuring 6.3 Richter scale recently occurred in the Bajhang District. He explains the scenario that in 2023 alone, out of the 43 earthquakes with a magnitude greater than 4, a majority, 33 to be precise, are situated west of Kathmandu, he shared. There hasn’t been any substantial rainfall at earthquake affected area,

which is little relief to the present situation. The impact of the earthquake has been felt as far as Arghakhachi, and due to numerous aftershocks, Bajhang Hospital has relocated lactating mothers outside the hospital building for safety reasons. He added that the Earthquake has triggered dry landslides, adding to the complexity of this situation. He emphasized the need for the concerned stakeholders to come together to address these challenges to support the affected lives and communities by the calamity and enhance preparedness for any disasters that might occur in the future. Dr. Thapa highlighted that there is a seismic gap of 500 years in western Nepal. This unpleasant situation highlights an immediate need for increased awareness and preparedness about Earthquake safety. Dr. Thapa further shared his conversation with the Chief Executive of NDRRMA, who emphasized the urgent need for at least 50 engineers to conduct rapid visual assessments. Furthermore, there is an immediate requirement to provide relief assistance of fifty thousand to each affected households.

Prof. Dr. Bishal Nath Upreti, President of NCDM, and former Chair of DPNet, gave an overview of the history of the Earthquake in Nepal during his presentation. He shared his insights on the long history of Earthquakes in Nepal from 2037 B.S. (1980 A.D) and moved forward to outline the recent earthquake with an epicenter in the Bajhang District in Sudur

Paschim Province that occurred on October 3, 2023, at 14:40. Strong aftershock at 15:13 with 6.3 RS USGS 6.7 Mw, depth 10 km occurred immediately after the main shock. The tremor was felt in surrounding districts Bajura, Achham, Dadeldhura, Baitadi, and Darchula as well as Kathmandu along with Delhi in Uttar Pradesh in India. The Modified Mercalli Intensity Scale (MMI) shows nine thousand people were directly exposed and affected during the incident. He shared his knowledge by recognizing that if an Earthquake with less intensity occurs initially, followed by a larger one then there is a lower chance of significant damage compared to the reverse scenario. This is because, when a smaller magnitude earthquake occurs first, it alerts people to move to safer locations. Moreover, the timing of the earthquake can significantly impact the extent of damage, particularly during daylight hours' damages occur less. However, it's observed that students and office personnel are more susceptible to injuries, as evident in the context of the Bajhang district. He emphasized the fact that, if an Earthquake with a magnitude exceeding 8 on the Richter scale had occurred, it would have resulted in substantial devastation. In addition to this, Prof. Dr. Upreti stressed the need to establish Earthquake Early Warning System and raise awareness among the people to minimize the risk.

According to Prof. Dr. Upreti, The way forward includes establishing an Earthquake Early Warning System, increasing public awareness, improving government preparedness,

providing advanced training to security forces, setting up an international standard National Disaster Training Centre, and strengthening disaster preparedness agencies like NDRRMA and MoHA. He emphasized that the western province government should show interest in these issues, given the high earthquake vulnerability on both sides of Nepal. He expressed that with a government allocation of 10 crore for NAST, the early warning system can be initiated which aims to alert people as soon as an earthquake starts, potentially warning Kathmandu within 35-40 seconds in the event of an earthquake in Ilam, with a 30-second warning transmission from Birgunj to Kathmandu.

Mr. Birendra Khadka, the FAYA Nepal representative from Bajhang, provided an update on the current situation on the ground. He explained that the government had convened a District Disaster Management Committee Meeting in Bajhang to establish a coordinated mechanism. This meeting involved the Chief District Officer and the Chief of the local government. Mr. Khadka also mentioned that the Initial Rapid Assessment would be finalized soon, which would facilitate smoother relief efforts. He reported that health centers had not sustained significant damage, but traditional school buildings were severely affected. Additionally, he noted that there were five instances of earthquake-triggered landslides in the region.

Mr. Hari Karki highlighted the potential need for relief support related to protection and psychosocial counseling for individuals in the affected area. Ms. Renu Sijapati emphasized the importance of collecting disaggregated data on pregnant women and ensuring GEDSI sensitivity during relief operations. Mr. LB Mahara mentioned that various organizations had participated in immediate response efforts, but there was still a lack of preparation for long-term disaster events. Mr. Rabin Chaulagain from NHSRP reported that data collection on affected households was ongoing, with a focus on maintaining proper tracking and relief mechanisms. Mr Suman Pradhan explained that based on the distribution buildings by Central Bureau of Statistics and, Intensity Distribution level, NSET estimate that approximately 15000 buildings have incurred some level of impact or damage.

Mr. Tej Kumar Karki emphasized the importance of raising community awareness at the individual level to ensure that individuals are well-informed about life-saving actions to take during house collapses and other disaster events. Mr. Santosh Gyawali requested an immediate assessment and emphasized the need to prioritize shelter as winter approaches, which may be an urgent concern. He also stressed the importance of involving all local government leaders. Dr. Suman Rawal expressed the need to concentrate on the current earthquake response but also expressed interest

in understanding how agencies can assist with Early Warning Systems.

Mr. Surya Bhadaur Thapa, DPNet Chair emphasized the importance of effectively mobilizing teams in the field and ensuring seamless coordination among relevant agencies while eliminating any duplication of efforts. He stressed the necessity of providing technical support and enhancing the capacity of local governments through civil society organizations and non-governmental sectors, rather than solely focusing on relief distribution. Mr. Thapa pointed out that such disasters should serve as preparation for potential mega-disasters and should be viewed as opportunities for learning and improvement. He further mentioned that DPNet is going to establish a dedicated coordination desk and offer assistance in data collection. DPNet is also ready to facilitate capacity building at the local level to support platforms such as drrportal and bipadportal, as well as contribute to preparedness and advocate for long-term disaster resilience, providing support to local authorities.

The meeting has decided to task DPNet with the preparation of situational reports and the coordination of efforts among all networks and stakeholders so that the knowledge and recommendations gained from this experience can be effectively utilized in the event of other further disaster.

Discussion on Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery



DPNet Nepal organized a virtual discussion session on "Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery" on October 4, 2023, via an online platform. Serving as the Focal Point for the Sphere Standard in Nepal, DPNet collaborated with the National Campaign for Education (NCE) and Save the Children to organize this virtual discussion program focusing on Minimum Standards for Education in Nepal.

Dr. Raju Thapa Acting Chairperson of DPNet initiated the program by welcoming everyone. Dr. Thapa talked about the 28-year-long history of DPNet Nepal being active in the DRR field. Additionally, he emphasized that DPNet Nepal has gained many International members along

with a focal point of Sphere for Nepal. The sphere is of the International standards in the Humanitarian sector during the time of disaster initiated in 2000 which was amended in 2004, 2011, 2018, and in another amendment process. The four technical areas of the Sphere Handbook include WASH, Food security and nutrition, Shelter and settlement, and Health. This standard provides minimum standards for the people in disaster-affected areas like providing 2100 K/Cal food per person, 4.5 square meters for shelter, 2.5-3 liter drinking water, and more than 7 liters of water for other purposes per person.

Dr. Thapa explained that this 500-600-page handbook may not cover all the aspects of

disaster management comprehensively. Therefore, it is enhanced by providing specific sections tailored to each sector's needs. For instance, organizations focusing on food can refer to the food standard section, and so on which ensures that minimum resources can meet the minimum requirements for individuals affected by disasters. However, it's essential to note that this handbook, on its own, is not a complete document but is complemented by eight companion standards. Education in emergency situations is one of the critical standards highlighted by Dr. Thapa. Its significance became evident following events like the 2015 earthquake and the COVID-19 pandemic. In Nepal, lightning strikes cause the annual death of approximately 100 people. To prevent such disasters in schools and protect children, schools and concerned agencies need to allocate funds ranging from 40,000 to 50,000 to enhance safety measures and save students' lives. Additionally, incorporating the Minimum Standard in Education in Emergencies (MSEE) into projects adds value and increases the likelihood of project success. According to Dr. Thapa, connecting education with disaster management and implementing these principles in our projects and learning processes is imperative. He explained that there is an opportunity to engage bilateral and multilateral partners by demonstrating how education can be integrated into the humanitarian and disaster sectors which foster collaboration and support for initiatives that

aim to improve disaster resilience and response through education.

Mr. Prajwal Khatiwoda from Save the Children, in his presentation, discussed the collaboration between Save the Children and UNICEF in Nepal to support education initiatives. Their efforts align with the government's priorities, which include ensuring the rights of children and promoting quality education as part of Sustainable Development Goal 4. Mr. Khatiwada explained that their focus extends to areas such as school safety, capacity building at various government levels, and playing a crucial role in leading the Nepal education cluster, which is involved in both regular development and humanitarian response activities.

Mr. Khatiwoda explained that the cluster system was introduced in Nepal in 2008 after the Koshi flood. Its primary goals are to ensure equitable and accessible resource distribution, reduce duplication of efforts, and enhance preparedness and response during emergencies. Currently, the education cluster comprises 45 organizations within the federal education group, with 13 actively involved in reporting. Their main objectives include addressing education during emergencies, advocating for the right to education, and collaborating with the government on policy development. The cluster operates across all seven provinces, 58 districts, and 362 municipalities, involving 3 UN agencies, 23 INGOs, 9 NGOs, 8 education networks, and government entities. Their

response capacity can reach up to 61,000 children. To support education during disasters, the Nepal government has allocated a contingency budget of 20 Million to each province, 10 million at the federal level, and a total of 332.2 million at 753 local levels. The cluster has developed various contingency plans tailored to different types of disasters. Additionally, Mr. Khatiwoda highlighted the Education Management Information System (EMIS), which serves as a central information system within the government. However, its utilization currently stands at just 5%. He emphasized the importance of raising awareness about this tool, as it has the potential to enable schools to instantly share critical information and requirements during times of disaster.

Mr. Sanjeeb Shakya from Save the Children, emphasizes the urgency of addressing the educational needs of children during disasters, highlighting that they cannot afford to wait. Ensuring the continuity of education is of utmost importance, especially considering the risk of child trafficking and the risk of engaging in other illegal activities and to ensure that education remains uninterrupted throughout the recovery process. Looking back at the post-earthquake context, Mr. Shakya elaborate that the response involved several phases. Initially, temporary learning centers were set up using bamboo and plastic structures as immediate interventions. After six months, transition centers were established, featuring CGI Sheet and bamboo, with additional winterization

measures for the cold season. Within a year, permanently cemented buildings were constructed. Furthermore, educational materials, teacher support, and recreational equipment were provided to the children.

Mr. Ram Bahadur Gurung, Advisor DPNet during his presentation, highlighted the need for education in emergencies and INEE's commitment to tackling the difficulties associated with preserving education and schools during emergencies to prevent student dropout. He emphasized the crucial requirement for psycho-social counseling, which should extend to students, teachers, and parents alike. Mr. Gurung pointed out that during emergencies, the government and humanitarian aid organizations tend to prioritize the provision of food, shelter, and essential supplies, often neglecting the critical need to ensure that children's education continues without interruption.

Open Floor Discussion:

Mr. Nitin Naren Singh from People in Need emphasized the need to work on crosscutting themes in Education mainstreaming emergencies including Climate Change Action and DRR along with health and nutrition programs, and psychosocial support. He further stressed the need to enhance safe learning prioritizing distance learning during emergencies.

Ms. Sumitra Sharma stressed that since children are vulnerable during disasters and

Rupandehi is a disaster-prone area, there is a need to educate school children regarding safety measures during disasters to minimize the risk of casualties.

Mr. Krishna Ghimire emphasized the need to disseminate and implement the SIP as it provides guidance regarding vulnerability, and capacity and aids in minimizing the risk. Furthermore, the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) is being revised under which the Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF) has been in action since 2016. While it consists of three pillars currently, the revised document will consist of 4 pillars mainstreaming the schools' responsibility in managing disaster risk. He further emphasized the need to capacitate and aware teachers and students regarding psychosocial aids.

Mr. Kedar Neupane, Former Secretary of the Government of Nepal highlighted that since the students have been victims and largely affected during disasters, saving them from casualties has been a major concern now. He emphasized the need to segregate the roles of all the tiers of government in mainstreaming the education sector in Disaster. Even the school buildings are not earthquake-resistant in Nepal which increases the probability of casualties, therefore there is a need to work on this issue along with building safe evacuation centers separately. In addition to this, Kit distribution, proper information dissemination, and capacitating the students and teachers have

been emergent along with mobilizing immediate responders in schools.

Mr. Dal Bahadur Bishwokarma emphasized the need to focus on immediate response and rescue of vulnerable children by prioritizing the areas with low HDI. He added the need to intervene, prepare, and respond viewing disaster through the lens of the societal construct of the vulnerable and affected areas.

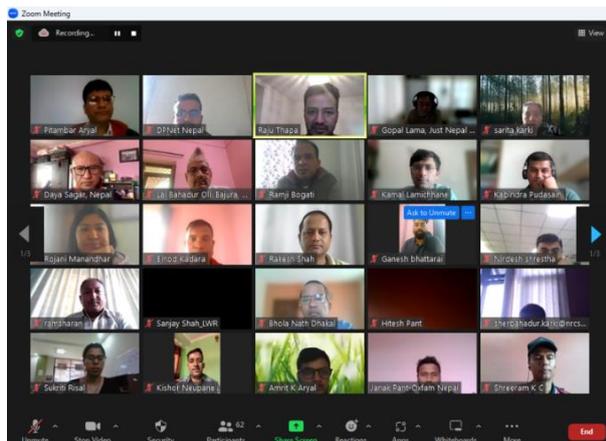
Ms. Rama Dhakal from FWDN highlighted the need to mainstream children with disabilities while talking about marginalized groups. Since children with disabilities fall under the most vulnerable population in the HDI, prioritization should be given to assess their needs on the basis of their differences. Emergency response and preparedness should be deliberated according to the needs of the children with disabilities to ensure their safety. She further added the need to educate people on this important issue.

Mr. Deo Narayan Yadav emphasized the importance of assessing the issues and needs from the grassroots level to address those effectively.

Mr. Rajendra Pahadi, Chair of NCE emphasized the need for coordinated efforts of the concerned bodies for mainstreaming education in the disaster scenario. He further added the prospect of providing scholarships for students belonging to lower-income families and marginalized communities. In

addition to this, he emphasized the need to reflect on the education scenario of Nepal and move forward in linking it with disaster.

DPNet Organizes Information Session on International Training Programme



On April 26, 2023, Disaster Preparedness Network- Nepal (DPNet) hosted an information session about the International Training Programme - Disaster Risk Management. The aim of the session was to disseminate information about the International Training Programme (ITP) - Disaster Risk Management, which will be organized by The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) from August 2023 to September 2024. The information session was attended by 71 participants, including various stakeholders and experts in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM).

Dr. Raju Thapa, Vice Chair of DPNet and Coordinator of ITP Nepal Alumni Disaster Risk Management, delivered an informative presentation to ensure the fruitful involvement of DRRM stakeholders in the International Training Programme. During his presentation,

Dr. Thapa explained that the International Training Programme (ITP) in Disaster Risk Management (DRM) is offered by The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to organizations in Bangladesh, Nepal, and the Philippines. Dr. Thapa provided an overview that the ITP DRM supports participating organizations in strengthening, adapting, and maintaining capacity over time. He explained that the program focuses on peer learning, sharing, and networking and follows an evidence-based adult learning methodology approach, with four training phases and runs from August 2023 to September 2024 and includes both online and in-person activities. He enlightened that training is open to technical experts and middle management representatives who hold a strategic position within their organization in relation to the tentative change initiative, have at least five years of relevant work experience, are proficient in English, must be nominated by their organization and apply with a change initiative, which can be either a new or ongoing initiative within the organization, and can have either an internal or external focus.

Mr. Suraj Gautam, Executive Committee Member of DPNet and an alumnus of ITP, shared his experience and the importance of

various provisions regarding ITP. Mr. Gautam highlighted the significance of thoroughly understanding the root causes of a specific problem related to Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRR) before applying for the training program. He emphasized the importance of having a clear and well-defined plan on how to create a tangible impact in the DRR domain after attending the program.

Ms. Suneeta Khatiwada and Mr. Nishan Aryal, current participants of ITP, shared their experiences during the application process and classes. They provided a detailed account of the application process, highlighting the key components of the application and the critical factors that the selection committee considers while evaluating the applicants. Additionally, they shared their experiences of the classes, outlining the challenges and opportunities they faced and how the program has helped them in enhancing their knowledge and skills in the field of Disaster Risk Management.

Dr. Raju Thapa addressed and resolved the queries raised by the participants regarding the topic and application procedures. As a subject matter expert in Disaster Risk Management, Dr. Thapa's explanations and insights were highly informative and enlightening, providing the participants with a clear understanding of

the program's expectations, requirements, and benefits. Dr. Thapa's patient and diligent approach towards addressing the participants' queries was highly appreciated and ensured that the participants received comprehensive responses to their concerns.

Mr. Surya Bahadur Thapa, Chair of DPNet, extended his best wishes to all the participants in their pursuit of participating in the International Training Programme - Disaster Risk Management. Drawing from his vast experience in the field of Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, Mr. Thapa shared his valuable insights on working with the ITP Alumni and how the program has significantly contributed to strengthening the capacity and skills of professionals in the DRR domain. Mr. Thapa's inspirational words and vast knowledge in the field of DRR were highly motivating for the participants, encouraging them to pursue excellence and make meaningful contributions in their respective organizations and communities. Mr. Thapa's vote of thanks was a fitting tribute to the collaborative and collective efforts that made the session an informative and enriching experience for everyone involved.

Please view full video on:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJjPDge2uDO>

International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction 2023 Celebrated



On October 13, 2023, the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRR) organized an International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction, focusing on supporting People with Disabilities (PwD) in disaster situations. The event centered around the theme 'Fighting inequality for a resilient future,' stressing the importance of involving PWD in disaster planning and response. The event was a hybrid of in-person and virtual attendance, with 107 individuals present physically and an additional 130 joining via Zoom, some participants also joined through live Facebook broadcast. The aim was to highlight the unique challenges PwD face during various disasters.

The opening session was chaired by Mr. Jay Narayan Acharya Joint Secretary of

NDRRMA, with the Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister, Hon. Narayan Kaji Shrestha, gracing the event as the Chief Guest, among other notable attendees. Hon. Shrestha acknowledged the critical importance of the event and emphasized that our society's preparedness level plays a crucial role in determining how severely disasters impact us. He highlighted the government's commitment to enhancing its predictive weather capabilities and shared the ongoing efforts to establish an earthquake early warning system in Western Nepal, reflecting on the recent Bajhang earthquake.

In the latter part of the program, a technical session was conducted where organizations that work for PwD were trained on how to

gather and input crucial data into the Bipad portal. This step is pivotal in ensuring collaboration with local governments, aiming to facilitate a system that ensures the needs and challenges faced by PWD are addressed efficiently during calamitous events. The underlying ambition of this initiative is to pave a path where every individual, especially those with disabilities, is safeguarded and supported during crises.

News in Details:

On October 13, 2023, NPDRR organized the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (IDDRR Day) with the theme 'Fighting inequality for a resilient future' in support of AIN, DPNet and DCA Nepal. The event was conducted in a hybrid format, with 107 individuals attending in person and 130 participating through the Zoom platform. Additionally, the program was streamed live on Facebook. The program was dedicated to recognizing the increased vulnerability of People with Disabilities during disasters. With the practice of IDDRR Day celebration since 1989, this year's event aims to address the specific challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in the context of disasters. The mission of the event was to advocate for a resilient future by addressing the inequalities faced by People with Disabilities, with the goal of bringing this often marginalized segment of our society into the spotlight and ensuring their comprehensive inclusion in relevant policies, plans, and structures.

The opening session was chaired by Mr. Jay Narayan Acharya, Joint Secretary of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA), with Hon. Narayan Kaji Shrestha, Deputy Prime Minister, and Home Minister as the Chief Guest. Notable attendees at the event included Dr. Raju Thapa, Member Secretary of the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRR) and Acting Chair of Disaster Preparedness Network (DPNet); Dr. Birendra Raj Pokharel, Advisor of the National Federation of the Disabled-Nepal (NFDN); and Ms. Samjana Bista, Country Director of DCA Nepal. The program was then followed by the National Anthem.

In his address, *Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs, Hon. Narayan Kaji Shrestha*, conveyed his appreciation for the organization of the program, which places persons with disabilities at the heart of our disaster-related efforts on the occasion of the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction. He praised the program for not only strengthening our society's preparedness for disasters but also for its potential to effectively raise awareness about disaster risks faced by the most vulnerable citizens. Hon. Minister highlighted the increasing challenge of disasters to our human and developmental progress, attributing their heightened frequency to inadequate preparedness, developmental unpreparedness, and shortcomings. He emphasized that it is our ability to respond and manage these events that determine whether

they become disasters, underscoring the importance of managing human activities that contribute to disaster likelihood. The government of Nepal, he stated, is dedicated to improving weather forecasting. Recalling the recent Bajhang earthquake he mentioned that efforts are underway to establish an earthquake early warning system in Western Nepal. While natural disasters cannot be prevented, he stressed the importance of our capability to effectively respond and mitigate them. Furthermore, Hon. Shrestha noted that disasters are not isolated incidents; they are intertwined with our activities and structures. The more our activities compete and resist one another, the greater the likelihood of disasters occurring. Hence, it is imperative to make preparations, work on response strategies, and render our social, economic, and human activities disaster-resilient. Hon. Shrestha emphasized the rights of persons with disabilities to access information, disaster risk forecasting systems, and information delivery systems tailored to their capacities. He shows the importance of Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction in Nepal. He called for the active involvement of all stakeholders, including the National Federation of the Disabled, in the technical session, expressing confidence in the collaborative effort to devise a practical system addressing barriers faced by persons with disabilities.

Mr. Jaya Narayan Acharya, Program Chair, began his remarks by highlighting the Bipad portal, its functions, and its significance.

He stressed that humanitarian concerns hold greater importance than physical materials, particularly when addressing profound disabilities where the need is more comprehensive. Mr. Acharya acknowledged the disparities among various vulnerable groups when it comes to accessing information. These disparities are dependent on the type of disability and the level of vulnerability. He discussed existing provisions aimed at ensuring that people with disabilities have access to the information they need. Various channels for information dissemination have been established to uphold the right to information for people with disabilities. Identifying and understanding the required materials is relatively straightforward, but reaching disabled individuals in crisis situations can be challenging. The Bipad portal has been developed as a valuable resource to distinguish between different types of disasters and their occurrences, addressing various aspects. Mr. Acharya highlighted their efforts to provide information through diverse channels, catering to the needs of individuals with disabilities of varying natures to ensure accessibility. Maintaining records of basic data, such as telephone details and addresses, is seen as crucial for facilitating access to their situations and conditions during emergencies. He stressed the importance of collaboration between the government and organizations of persons with disabilities as a network, working together to address the challenges faced by people with

disabilities and reduce their vulnerability during disasters.

Dr. Raju Thapa, Member Secretary of NPDRR and Acting Chair of DPNet, during the context setting of the program, explained that Nepal has been celebrating International Disaster Risk Reduction Day since 1989, celebrated every year on October 13th with a range of programs aimed at raising awareness about disaster-related issues and fostering a culture of disaster risk reduction. Dr. Thapa emphasized that from 2015 onwards, following the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR), this day was officially recognized and observed until 2022, focusing on the seven global targets outlined in the SFDRR. In 2023, there is a heightened awareness of the significant impact of disasters on marginalized and vulnerable individuals. Dr. Thapa emphasized that despite ongoing recovery efforts, this year is dedicated to centralizing the fight against inequality to enhance resilience. This day is now celebrated worldwide to promote awareness about disaster risk reduction. Each year, various programs are organized under the banner of the NPDRR. This platform plays an active role in the field of disaster risk reduction. Initially, it was led by the Home Secretary later by the Executive Chief of NDRRMA. In 2019, a guideline framework for the platform was formulated, with DPNet serving as the member secretariat. The NPDRR encompasses nine thematic areas. It follows an inclusive approach, coordinating Nepal's significant involvement in national,

regional, and international programs. As a result, this year's program focuses on activities in marginalized areas, regions, geography, and challenging situations. It's worth noting that individuals with disabilities are disproportionately affected by disasters and are often left behind. Hence, this year's emphasis is on persons with disability-centric activities. Drawing from the example of India, which formulated the Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction Policy in 2019, with the Prime Minister's special attention, Nepal aims to take similar steps to support individuals with disabilities. In previous years, the day was marked with various programs like awareness campaigns and rallies in Nepal. However, in 2023, the focus shifts towards providing essential information and extensive training to people with disabilities. It's essential to highlight that the program has been designed to be accessible to individuals with disabilities. The program's design is under the guidance of the Executive Chief of the NDRRMA, Joint Secretary Jay Narayan Acharya. Dr. Thapa expressed gratitude to all supporting agencies for their contributions that have made this program possible.

Ms. Samjhana Bista, Country Director of DCA Nepal, expressed her gratitude to all the participants at the event. She acknowledged the collaborative efforts of NDRRMA, NPDRR DPNet, and AIN, which were instrumental in making the IDDRR event possible. She also appreciated the presence of the Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister. Ms. Bista

recognized the significant achievements in disaster risk reduction, thanks to partnerships with various sectors, including governmental and non-governmental organizations. She highlighted the substantial progress made in reducing disaster risks over time. She emphasized that their ability to promote innovative thinking and concerted efforts remains unremitting. Ms. Bista assured that collaborative initiatives, including data collection on vulnerable households and persons with disabilities, would persist, despite the numerous disasters and pandemic challenges that Nepal has faced. She extended her best wishes for future collaborations, underscoring the critical importance of addressing the needs of the most vulnerable groups during disasters, including women, senior citizens, children, and persons with disabilities.

Dr. Birendra Raj Pokharel, Advisor of NFDN, focused on the primary objective of IDDRR Day, which is to reduce inequalities and promote a resilient future. He extended concern beyond disabilities, encompassing factors like the intersection of disabilities with poverty. Dr. Pokharel clarified various types and characteristics of disabilities. Dr. Pokharel emphasized the necessity of effective communication strategies for individuals with mental disabilities, particularly during the rescue and post-disaster phases. Dr. Pokharel acknowledged that the SFDRR emphasizes the importance of addressing persons with disabilities throughout the disaster cycle. He

also referred to Article 26 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which aims to enable individuals with disabilities to achieve maximum independence and full inclusion in all aspects of life. He noted relevant legislation such as the Natural Calamity (Relief) Act of 2039 B.S. and the DRRM Act of 2074, which address disability-related issues. However, he stressed that people with disabilities should hold leadership roles, and the government should prioritize efforts to address these issues. Furthermore, Dr. Pokharel emphasized that the risks faced by people with disabilities are not limited to natural disasters; they are also vulnerable to various significant threats in human-induced disasters, as exemplified by recent events in Israel. He highlighted the importance of achieving Sustainable Development Goal No. 10, which aims to reduce inequalities, and he pointed out that Nepal's successful transition to a developing country by 2026 hinges on achieving equality, thus facilitating inclusive development.

Mr. Santosh KC, General Secretary of the National Federation of the Deaf Nepal – NDFN, called for close collaboration with the government to address the multifaceted challenges that persons with disabilities encounter. He articulated several critical issues that deserve our collective attention, including problems related to segregation, the imperative need for secure accommodations during disasters, as well as access to medicine, treatment, and various essential services. Mr.

KC highlighted that the absence of timely information exacerbates these complications, causing persons with disabilities to fall behind in various aspects of life. He pointed out that even awareness programs, including those on television, lack disability-friendly technology and systems, which can hinder access to crucial information. In emergency situations, persons with disabilities often find themselves excluded from receiving pre-information and encounter difficulties during aid distribution. Therefore, it is vital that policy and regulatory frameworks comprehensively incorporate persons with disabilities concerns, with all three tiers of government ensuring that necessary facilities are provided. Furthermore, Mr. KC stressed the need for early warning systems to be made disability-friendly to guarantee inclusive safety for all.

Mr. Kiran Shilpakar, President of the National Association of the Physical Disabled-Nepal (NAPD Nepal), shared his personal experiences, particularly recalling the challenging times during the devastating earthquake of 2015. He reflected on the extensive efforts undertaken by his team, particularly in distribution and orientation, aimed at providing assistance and support to those in need. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, their work extended to include food and aid distribution, where they encountered unique challenges and opportunities. Mr. Shilpakar expressed gratitude to the Atullya Foundation for their support and collaboration in these endeavors. However, he pointed out

that despite food aid distribution efforts, there still exist substantial challenges in ensuring that persons with disabilities can access these vital resources. Furthermore, persons with disabilities often lack timely information about aid distribution, leaving them at a disadvantage. Mr. Shilpakar also emphasized the need for enhanced orientation, especially concerning the SFDRR, to better address the distinct challenges faced by persons with disabilities and ensure that they receive the support and resources they require.

Ms. Nirmala Dhital, Chairperson of the Federation of Women with Disability-Nepal (FWDN), shed light on the critical challenges faced by persons with disabilities during disasters. She emphasized that persons with disabilities, particularly women and pregnant women, are among the most severely affected by disasters and need special attention and support. Ms. Dhital noted that disaster management efforts often focus on humanitarian losses and incorporate various sectors, but they tend to overlook the specific and cross-cutting issues faced by disabled women. She stressed the importance of recognizing the diversity within the group of persons with disabilities and addressing their unique needs and concerns. Among the challenges highlighted by Ms. Dhital were issues related to both pre and post-disaster phases, the need for more effective early warning systems, technological barriers that hinder access and inclusion, discriminatory policies and regulations, the necessity of

trained personnel and research for aid, gender-based violence, reproductive health concerns, access to various social security schemes, capacity building, the instability of government structures, and the cumbersome procedures within governmental legislation, among others.

Mr. Rajendra Kandel, Under Secretary, Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives, and Poverty Alleviation recognized the commendable objective of IDDRR Day and highlighted the concern of safeguarding the most vulnerable groups. He emphasized that the IDDRR theme is closely related to the Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives, and Poverty Alleviation. While poverty data indicates a decreasing trend, inequality still remains a prevalent issue. Nepal's Gini coefficient, which stands at 0.31, serves as an indicator of the disparities between the rich and the poor within the country. Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives, and Poverty Alleviation along with government is actively engaged in combating poverty by ensuring the establishment of social security funds at both provincial and local levels. In 26 districts at the local level, "Poor Household Identification Surveys" have already been conducted and 391831 families have been identified. The process of distributing identity cards is going on. For the remaining 23 districts, data has already been collected, and after data entry is completed, evaluation certificates will be distributed. Mr. Kandel strongly emphasized the urgent need for solidarity in addressing these issues.

Mr. Dhruva Bahadur Khadka, Spokesperson and Under Secretary at NDRRMA, commenced the event with a warm welcome to distinguished guests and participants. He then cited a message from Mr. António Guterres, the UN Secretary-General, in observance of the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction that acknowledged the extraordinary challenges of 2023, marked by extreme weather events, record temperatures, and a rising number of global disasters, all exacerbated by poverty and inequality. He stressed that marginalized communities are particularly vulnerable to such disasters due to their susceptibility to flooding, drought, and limited resources for recovery. The day's theme, "Fighting inequality for a resilient future," underscored the importance of upholding global agreements like the Paris Agreement, pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals, and implementing the SFDRR to break the cycle of poverty and disaster. Mr. Khadka then emphasized the paramount importance of safety for all, emphasizing that true security cannot exist if even one person is not safe. He pointed out the significant population living below the poverty line and highlighted the prevalence of discrimination based on factors like caste, class, and gender, as well as individual and geographic disparities. He referred to the national demographic report, which revealed vulnerable groups, with a particular focus on senior citizens, and identified regions like Kalikot with high level of vulnerability.

Furthermore, Mr. Khadka discussed the Gender Equality, Disabilities, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) concept and elaborated on their ongoing efforts to develop an early warning system that caters to people with disabilities. He also mentioned specific initiatives like the BIPAD portal and the VMS system, while stressing their commitment to addressing resource inequalities across the country.

Mr. Nil Kantha Paudel, Central President at the National Disabled Research & Development Center, expressed gratitude for the relevant and necessary programs conducted on this occasion. However, he also pointed out that despite having acts and regulations in place, there is still a significant gap in their implementation. Mr. Paudel emphasized a crucial issue: when a disaster results in physical damage, security forces promptly respond. Yet, when people with disabilities reside in affected houses, there is often no one to assist them. He stressed the need for a specialized unit within the security sector that can immediately reach out to help persons with disabilities. Additionally, he called for the development of a mobile app and system that would enable swift response and alert notifications. He expressed that facilities focusing on persons with disabilities should not be limited to urban areas but should extend to remote regions as well. Mr. Paudel also advocated for the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities within disaster committees, highlighting the importance of their active involvement in decision-making

processes. He mentioned that when people with disabilities are involved in aid distribution, it can send a positive message both within government bodies and the community, fostering inclusivity and awareness.

Mr. Lakpa Sherpa, Society of Deafblind Parents Nepal expressed his gratitude to all the individuals, groups, organizations, and Civil Society Organizations that have been dedicated to working in the field of persons with disability. He also extended his appreciation to the government for acknowledging the importance of addressing the needs of persons with disabilities. He pointed out that persons with disabilities are vulnerable not only during disasters but also in regular circumstances. He discussed ten different types of disabilities. He stressed the importance of recognizing the specific requirements related to this type of disability and emphasized the need for the development of regulations and policies based on these requirements to address the needs of persons with disabilities but also encompass other intersecting issues, such as poverty and single-parent families, which are highly vulnerable. He underscored the vital role of security forces responsible for rescue operations during disasters. He emphasized the necessity of having trained professionals to handle persons with disabilities during disaster relief and rescue operations. He also advocates for the need for proper documentation about persons with disabilities at the ward level, enabling prompt outreach to their families.

Mr. Raju Basnet, Parents Federation of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities Nepal (PFPID), emphasized that issues concerning individuals with disabilities encompass a wide range of aspects, including disabilities in general, overall risks, intellectual disabilities, autism, and specific challenges faced by those with intellectual disabilities. Referring to a recent earthquake event in Bajhang, he highlighted the critical need for improved accessibility and approachability of information for all individuals with disabilities, as this is often lacking. He pointed out that guidelines, acts, and laws are often laden with jargon and lack simplicity, which can hinder effective communication. Mr. Basnet also mentioned that individuals with disabilities encounter practical challenges, such as difficulties using sanitizers or wearing masks, which can present unique obstacles. Additionally, he addressed the issue of shelter, noting that displacing individuals with disabilities from their familiar environments can be an extremely challenging experience for them.

Discussion Program on Bajhang Earthquake Agriculture Resilience

On October 19, 2023, DPNet Nepal hosted a virtual discussion focused on the Bajhang Earthquake Agriculture Resilience. Collaborating with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the event focused on the recent seismic events in Bajhang district: a 6.3 magnitude earthquake

Mr. Bal Krishna Gaire, National Association of the Physically Disabled Nepal highlighted the importance of disability mapping, emphasizing that without a clear understanding of where and under what circumstances individuals with disabilities are located, it is challenging to identify how to effectively respond and react to their needs in times of crisis. Mr. Gaire also addressed prioritizing individuals with disabilities during rescue operations. He stressed the need for a well-defined plan on how to give them the necessary attention and assistance during these critical moments. He mentioned the distribution of aid, health services, food provisions, training for rescue teams, and the role of the media in disseminating important information and raising awareness. Mr. Gaire concluded by emphasizing the journey from rescue to reconstruction and the need to build resilience within the disability community, ensuring they are not left behind in the process of recovery and rebuilding.

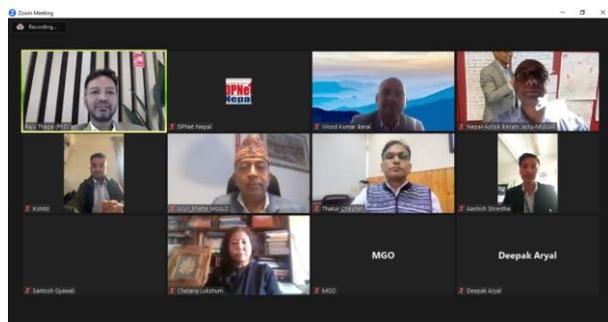
and a preceding 5.3 magnitude quake, which impacted grain storage and livestock housing.

Mr. Arun Prakash Bhatta of MoALD emphasized the importance of a prompt assessment post-Dashain and the need for inter-agency collaboration. Dr. Raju Thapa, Acting Chair of DPNet, outlined the earthquake timeline, relief efforts, and introduced the

LEGS initiative and SEADS approach for crisis management in agriculture. The discussion also highlighted the challenges posed by the government's one-door policy on relief distribution. Representatives from DCA, USAID, Mercy Corps, NNSWA, and FAO-Nepal discussed their respective roles, challenges, and strategies. Under Secretary, Mr. Rishi Raj Acharya from MoFAGA and Joint Secretary Ms. Sabnam Shivakoti from MoALD further stressed the importance of coordinated assessments and the role of development partners and local government in agricultural resilience efforts.

For the discussion video, please click the link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpOsWjIQmsg>



News in details

DPNet Nepal organized a virtual discussion session on "Discussion Program on Bajhang Earthquake Agriculture Resilience" on October 19, 2023, using an online platform. This event was a collaborative effort between DPNet, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD), and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The primary focus of this meeting was the recent seismic activity in Bajhang district, including a 6.3

magnitude earthquake and a preceding 5.3 magnitude quake. These events led to substantial damage to grain storage and livestock housing. It's important to note that many individuals tend to underestimate the overall impact of such disasters when they only consider human casualties. Bajhang district faces challenges due to its low human development index and high poverty rates, making it crucial to provide both immediate relief and long-term resilience efforts. The emphasis is on addressing livelihood challenges, particularly through improving agriculture and conducting damage assessments.

Mr. Arun Prakash Bhatta, Under Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, initiated the discussion by emphasizing the urgent need for an assessment immediately after Dashain to evaluate the situation. He also emphasized omitting duplication of work between agencies and called for collaboration with development partners in the recovery process.

Dr. Raju Thapa, Acting Chair of DPNet, provided a detailed update on the Bajhang earthquake. He highlighted that a 5.3 magnitude foreshock was followed by a 6.3 magnitude main shock, the fore-shock's early warning allowed people 26 minutes to prepare before the main shock, resulting in fewer casualties. However, the series of earthquakes disrupted daily life activities and had far-reaching impacts on social, economic,

psychosocial, mental health, and infrastructure. Relief efforts commenced on October 4, with coordinated distribution through a one-door system. Subsequent aftershocks, including a 4.5 magnitude event on October 5, a National Council meeting and a visit from the Prime Minister to assess the situation. However, heavy rains on October 7 worsened the situation, prompting a coordination meeting on October 8 involving local government officials, CDOs, and humanitarian agencies. On October 9, the District Disaster Management Committee decided to revise the one-door policy for relief distribution, involving NGOs, INGOs, and the Red Cross at local levels, with the exception of cash distribution. By October 10, the local government had completed the initial damage assessment, and the seismometer network was expanded to improve earthquake monitoring. Relief distribution accelerated under the revised one-door policy. Dr. Thapa also noted the significant impact on health infrastructure, with 45 health service buildings affected, including seven completely damaged and 38 partially damaged. He expressed concerns about farmers in the region who were in the process of harvesting paddy crops but lost their storage facilities due to damage. With no proper storage options for the harvest season, the affected farmers faced further losses due to recent rain and hailstorms. Dr. Thapa introduced the LEGS initiative, which aims to support the livelihoods of livestock-keeping communities in crisis situations. LEGS provides a framework for international

standards, enabling humanitarian organizations to swiftly safeguard and rebuild livestock assets, covering areas like destocking, veterinary support, feed supplies, water provision, livestock shelter, and livestock distribution. This approach is designed to protect and rebuild vital livestock-related resources in emergencies, prioritizing the welfare and sustainability of livestock assets. Additionally, Dr. Thapa introduced SEADS, an innovative agricultural crisis response approach. This tool assists users in assessing the suitability, necessity, and feasibility of crop-related responses, aligning interventions with the specific context. SEADS facilitates the prioritization of crop-related response strategies to effectively achieve livelihood objectives and provides a mechanism to track project adherence to established standards and measure the impact of crop-related crisis response initiatives. Ultimately, SEADS aims to make agricultural crisis management more efficient and outcome-oriented, benefiting affected communities and their agricultural resources. Dr. Thapa emphasized that applying these standards in the current emergency situation in Bajhang opens the door for their implementation in larger events, creating both a need and an opportunity for collaboration.

Mr. Dinesh Gurung from DCA emphasized that this is the phase of immediate response. We are currently prioritizing life-saving efforts and collaborating with DPNet on immediate assessment and recovery. As part of our emergency response, multipurpose cash is a

priority. However, it has not been implemented due to the government's one-door policy. We are coordinating to provide support in the form of a standard minimum expenditure basket of Rs 15,000 to 400 families. Mr. Santosh Gyawali, USAID emphasized the need for a government request to involve USAID in the area. Mr. Gyawali emphasized that, as of now, USAID is solely providing support to partner organizations and continuing to execute existing programs in earthquake-affected districts, citing the absence of communication from the government.

Mr. Deepak Aryal from Mercy Corps highlighted their involvement in the implementation of a home-grown school feeding program, collaborating with school students and farmers in Bajhang and Bajura. He mentioned their intention to expand their work in that region, with immediate plans to do so following the festive season. Mr. Ashok Bikram Jairu, Executive Director, NNSWA highlighted that their organization was ready to provide cash assistance but faced challenges in doing so, possibly due to a government-imposed one-door policy, which caused significant delays. He also mentioned that they have distributed blankets to 115 families in Masta Rural Municipality, Bajhang, specifically targeting lactating and pregnant women and the vulnerable group. Their focus also extends to Bajura district. He explained that they provided 100 non-food items through Provincial Emergency Operation Center (PEOC) immediately after the earthquake, but

these contributions have not been recognized or where these materials distributed is unknown.

Mr. Thakur Chauhan, Project Coordinator at FAO-Nepal, stressed that the occurrence of events such as rainfall, landslides, and hailstorms after the earthquake during the crop harvest season has led to losses and damages. Within the food security cluster, a series of decisions has been made. Recognizing the low HDI and high poverty levels in the area, the plan is to provide hermetic bags to 2,400-2,500 households. To carry out this initiative effectively, collaboration is essential. Various teams, including government representatives and DPNet Nepal, need to work together to assess the situation. This assessment involves the preparation of checklists and questionnaires, utilizing SEADS and LEGS standards immediately after Dashain. According to Mr. Chauhan the results of this assessment will guide long-term efforts for agricultural and livestock recovery.

Mr. Rishi Raj Acharya, Under Secretary at the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA), highlighted that their ministry is actively engaged with the early recovery cluster following a meeting after the earthquakes in Bajhang. Mr. Acharya emphasized that both rural and urban municipalities are proactively addressing early recovery issues, with a specific focus on agriculture and livestock. He pointed out that they have experienced losses and damage to storage facilities, impacting the food and

livestock sectors. Furthermore, Mr. Acharya explained that the Nepal Red Cross Society has requested approval from their ministry to provide cash assistance of Rs. 15,000 to over 600 households. He stressed that the ministry's team is collaborating with local government authorities to facilitate the restriction on cash support in the name of one door policy. To streamline and improve the process, MoFAGA is serving as a catalyst, recognizing the significance of rehabilitating various area including agriculture, livestock, and food storage to prevent future food insecurity. Mr. Acharya emphasized the need to place rural and urban municipalities at the center of these efforts, as they can provide critical information and play a vital role in enhancing the overall mechanism. He further noted that the ministry is fully prepared to support the assessment process.

Ms. Sabnam Shivakoti, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, shared insights following the recent incidents in Bajhang and Bajura. She mentioned that meetings have been convened

to address the situation, with a key focus on minimizing redundancy and maximizing support from various sectors. The primary objective is to assess immediate losses, determine necessary emergency responses, and plan for future actions. Ms. Shivakoti stressed the importance of conducting evaluations that encompass losses and damages related to seeds and livestock. These evaluations will serve as a roadmap for future assistance efforts. Additionally, she highlighted the critical need for coordination among different sectors. Ms. Shivakoti also mentioned that, based on the assessment's findings, a decision could be made regarding the provision of further recovery plans. Given the approaching paddy harvesting season, there is a heightened emphasis on immediate interventions related to this such as providing hermetic bags. Lastly, she underlined the significance of acknowledging the assistance provided by various organizations.

YouTube Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpOsWjIQmsg>

Discussion on Enhancing Agriculture and Livestock Resilience Post Bajhang Earthquake



On October 30, 2023, DPNet Nepal organized a Discussion on Enhancing Agriculture and Livestock Resilience post-Bajhang Earthquake in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The event aimed to plan and coordinate agriculture and livestock impact assessments, focusing on the needs of affected households. Key figures present at the discussion included Mr. Dhruba Bahadur Khadka, Under Secretary/Spokesperson/Information Officer of National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA), Dr. Arun Prakash Bhatta, Under Secretary at MoALD, Dr. Raju Thapa, Acting Chair of DPNet Nepal, Mr.

Nawaraj Basnet, Chairperson of National Farmers Group Federation Nepal (NFGF), and Mr. Thakur P. Chauhan, Project Coordinator of FAO, among others from MoALD, DPNet, and FAO.

Dr. Raju Thapa emphasized the impact of the Bajhang Earthquake, highlighting the damage to agriculture caused by post-monsoon rain and hailstorms following the earthquake. He advocates for the necessity of proper grain and food storage to withstand upcoming rains and the winter season. Dr. Thapa explained the significant damage to the attic floor, including traditional grain storage methods like "Bhakari," based on DPNet's observations in the earthquake-affected area. He also elaborated on DPNet's communication with the

Chief District Officer(CDO) of Bajhang, emphasizing the need for alternative grain storage solutions, such as hermetic bags. Dr. Thapa stressed the urgent need to deploy a team to assess the impact on agriculture and livestock before the Tihar festive time to achieve timely recovery.

Mr. Thakur P. Chauhan stated that the FAO has currently prepared 40,000 hermetic bags for transportation to assist those affected by the Bajhang earthquake. He outlined that these bags would be transported to the Bajhang headquarter and handed over to the District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC). The process of dispatch and distribution will occur after the bags are delivered to the DDMC, which will further distribute them to the municipalities. Expressing the need for support and coordination from the DPNet Team, Mr. Chauhan explained that the available 40,000 bags are intended for distribution, with 10 bags allocated among 4,000 families. He emphasized the necessity for damage and needs assessment, proposing that 5% of these 4,000 households undergo on-site verification. Additionally, he assured that FAO would cover the transportation and lodging expenses for the assessment team.

Mr. Dhruva Bahadur Khadka highlighted the importance of assessing the needs before distributing the bags to ensure they reach those who are genuinely in need, rather than distributing them in equal numbers. He emphasized the necessity for coordination and

collaboration with local-level government authorities to achieve this goal. Additionally, he underlined that these airtight hermetic bags have multiple purposes for storing grains and crops. Mr. Khadka stressed the importance of educating farmers on the correct usage methods for long-term effectiveness. To illustrate the strategy, he suggested that providing 6-8 bags to farmers with fully damaged houses and 2 bags each to those with partially damaged houses could be an effective approach. Moreover, Mr. Khadka mentioned that NDRRMA is conducting building damage assessments in earthquake-affected areas and is ready to support the preparation of questionnaires and other aspects of the damage assessment.

Mr. Nawaraj Basnet highlighted a critical gap in the initial damage assessment, noting that it primarily focused on residential buildings, overlooking the damage to cattle sheds and storage houses. He emphasized the urgent need for improving grain storage and strengthening storage systems, particularly crucial during the current harvesting season. Mr. Basnet stressed the importance of protecting and preserving seeds for future agricultural use, essential for the affected areas. Moreover, he emphasized the need to focus on agricultural efforts to enhance the livelihoods of families in these affected regions. Mr. Basnet also highlighted the necessity of distributing shelter kits as part of the relief efforts to meet the specific needs of affected families. Additionally, he underscored the importance of engaging Civil Society

Organizations for a comprehensive and accurate needs assessment, ensuring that materials and aid reach the families in genuine need. He praised DPNet for providing daily situational reports on the Bajhang Earthquake and expressed the readiness of NFGF to support the assessment and subsequent recovery process.

Dr. Arun Prakash Bhatta shared that MoALD has officially proposed to FAO to collaborate on the distribution of hermetic bags. He highlighted the Ministry's readiness to support assessments aimed at minimizing further damage to food and crops, reinforcing storage systems, and enhancing the livelihoods of

families through recovery plans. He proposed distributing 8-10 hermetic bags to fully damaged households and 2-4 bags to partially damaged households. Emphasizing the importance of prioritizing agriculture and livestock in the field-level assessment, Dr. Bhatta outlined the data collection methods using focal group discussions and household surveys. He stressed the need for relevant questionnaires and suggested employing the KoBo Toolbox for this purpose. According to Dr. Bhatta, MoALD seeks support from DPNet to coordinate these efforts and requested their assistance in translating the questionnaires into Nepali, aiming to enhance the assessment's relevance and alignment with local needs.