

IN THE KNOW

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News of the month

Flagship Programme Package on Disaster Risk Reduction handed over

A new Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) initiative for Nepal was handed over to the Ministry of Home Affairs by Ms. Margareta Wahlstrom, the Assistant Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Implementation of the **Hyogo Framework for Action**, during the symposium organised by the UN System in Nepal on 14 October to mark the **International Day for Disaster Reduction**.

This new DRR initiative is organised around 5 flagship areas. The first initiative includes vulnerability assessment and the retrofit and seismic strengthening of school and hospital buildings in the Kathmandu valley. The second component seeks to increase the emergency preparedness and response capacity of the government. The third part focuses on improving flood management in the Koshi River Basin, one of the largest river basins in South Asia.



Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister Madhav K. Nepal was the chief guest to mark the Int'l Disaster Day

The fourth flagship initiative proposes to scale up local level risk assessment methodologies at the community level. The fifth and the final component focuses on further building institutional capacity of the Government and setting up of financial mechanisms.

This flagship programme is supported by the World Bank, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Society, the UNDP, Asian Development Bank, the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) and the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction in Kathmandu.

National Strategy Approved

The first **National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management in Nepal (NSDRMN)** was approved by the cabinet in October 2009. The document serves as a milestone towards achieving the goal of a 'Disaster Resilient Nepal'. Under the leadership of the Ministry of Home Affairs, this document was prepared with financial support of the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Department (DG ECHO), UNDP and technical support of National Society for Earthquake Technology (NSET).

Support to the peace process

Discharge and Rehabilitation of Maoist Army Personnel — Minors and Late Recruits

The discharge and rehabilitation of the 4,008 Maoist army personnel verified as late recruits or minors as of 25 May 2006 is a critical step in the peace process closely linked to the implementation of the peace

Chemjong, with representation from UCPN-M and senior UN officials has been established to provide policy guidance and oversee the process. A Technical Committee has also been established with a similar membership to plan and oversee the technical implementation of the process.

UN Country Team officials from UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA.

The Technical Committee also initiated the first of six phases in the discharge and rehabilitation process on the same day by informing the minors and late recruits among the Maoist army personnel about the Government's plan and providing information about a proposed timeline for its completion. They were also briefed on possible rehabilitation opportunities such as access to income generating skill training and education.

The second phase of the process is designed around the completion of a profiling survey in order to receive detailed input from the minors and late recruits regarding their aspirations for the future.



Hon'ble Minister Rakam Chemjong addressing the gathering in the main cantonment in Sindhuli

agreements.

The Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR) has the responsibility to lead, manage and implement the discharge and rehabilitation process working in close collaboration with the Unified Communist Party of Nepal – Maoist (UCPN-M) leadership.

UNDP - in collaboration with UNICEF and UNFPA, and under the overall leadership of UNMIN- is providing operational and technical support to the MoPR.

The Government of Nepal and the UCPN-M reached an agreement recently to resume the discharge and rehabilitation process which has been stalled in recent months. In this regard, a Steering Committee chaired by the Minister of Peace and Reconstruction, Mr. Rakam

accompanied by senior UCPN-M leaders, the Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Nepal, and senior



Honourable Minister of MoPR, Mr. Rakam Chemjong with Ms. Karen Landgren, the Representative of the UN Secretary General in Nepal and other UN officials in the main cantonment in Sindhuli

Stand Up and Take Action to Fight Poverty !

On the occasion of the *International Day for the Eradication of Poverty— 16 October*, over four hundred people including Ministers, Constituent Assembly members, the diplomatic corps, UN Agency heads, the media and civil society participated in the **Stand UP and Take Action** event at Shital Niwas — the office of the President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal.

The Rt. Hon'ble President, Dr. Ram Baran Yadav read the Stand UP pledge against poverty, "We are standing up today to express solidarity with people all over the world to fight against poverty and inequality. We want an end to poverty and inequality."

Speaking on behalf of the Government of Nepal, Dr. Yubaraj Khatiwada, Vice Chairman of the



STAND UP AND TAKE ACTION: President of Nepal, Dr. Ram Baran Yadav with Dr. Yubaraj Khatiwada, Vice Chairman of the National Planning Commission and Mr. Robert Piper, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Nepal

National Planning Commission reiterated the government's commitment to end poverty in the country.

On the same occasion, the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator of the UN System in Nepal, Mr. Robert Piper,

As part of the Millennium Campaign, a little over 2 million people stood up in Nepal for the Stand UP and Take Action to fight poverty. Government officials, CA members, civil society, local bodies and the general public participated in this joint effort.



CA member, Gagan Thapa along with other civil society members taking part in the Stand Up Campaign to fight poverty

addressed the gathering and highlighted the continuous efforts of the United Nations System in adding value to the Government of Nepal's efforts in meeting the MDGs.

In another event in Tundikhel—the open theatre, the eight Constituent Assembly members representing all parties, read the Stand UP pledge and urged the leaders to keep the promise of achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Around 5000 people gathered for the Stand UP, enjoyed a musical programme organised in collaboration with 'The Art of Living,' a local NGO.

Major events of the month

Human Development Report 2009 launched

The Global Human Development Report 2009 — 'Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development' was officially launched on 5 October 2009 in Nepal by the Vice Chairman of the National Planning Commission, Dr Yubaraj Khatiwada.

This report breaks new ground in applying a human development approach to the study of migration. It discusses who migrants are, where they come from and go to, and why they move. It looks at the multiple impacts of migration for all who are affected by it—not just those who move, but also those who stay as well.

The contents of the report was presented by Mr. Ganesh Gurung, Director of the National Institute of Development Studies. On the occasion, a short documentary was screened, prepared by UNIFEM about the plight of Nepalese women migrants. Also, participants were taken on a guided tour to the International Office of Migration.



Dr. Yubaraj Khatiwada, NPC Vice Chairman giving remarks during the launch of the global HDR

64th United Nations Day

The 64th United Nations Day (24 October) was celebrated at the UN House in the presence of a large number of dignitaries from the Government, donors, civil society and the media.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sujata Koirala, the chief guest of the occasion lauded the role of the United Nations globally to support the poor and the developing countries.

Representative of the UN Secretary General to the UN Mission in Nepal, Ms. Karen Landgren said, "we will continue to support Nepal on its unique path in order that the people may achieve lasting peace and justice, of which they dream."

UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr. Robert Piper stressed on the continuous UN support to the Government of Nepal in the days to come.

On the occasion, long service awards were also given to national UN staff who have served for 25, 30 and 35 years.

A live band played music of upper mountains, upper hills, the valley and the terai, portraying unity in diversity.



Abhinav Khanal on UN Day, talking about 'global warming and the role of youth'

On the UN Day, Abhinav Khanal spoke on 'Global Warming and the Role of Youth'. Abhinav stood first in the debate competition on 'Global Warming and the Role of Youth', organised by UNDP on the occasion of the **International Day for the Eradication of Poverty** together with Pragma Foundation, a local NGO.

Understanding the peace process ...

The Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR) in collaboration with the Local Development Training Academy (LDTA) conducted an 8 days training cum workshop on *Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution* for over 20 Under-Secretaries from the MoPR, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the National Planning Commission (NPC).

The objective of the workshop was to strengthen the technical capacity of the government officials in effectively discharging their roles and responsibilities towards achieving peace. An important aspect of the workshop was that senior officials of the MoPR including the Secretary and Joint Secretaries facilitated the key sessions and served as resource persons.

A field trip was also organised during the course, to observe rehabilitation and reconstruction activities carried out in Chautara, Sindhupalchowk district.

"Conducting such a training with in-house expertise and local facilities contributes towards effective capacity development initiatives which allows timely and affordable replication of the much needed peace related knowledge and expertise among the civil servants", said Durga Nidhi Sharma, Joint Secretary of the MoPR and one of the resource persons.

The workshop covered a number of topics such as: *Do no harm; Conflict—definition, causes and impact; Analyzing Conflict—Experiences of Nepalese Conflict settlement;*



Mr. Punya Prasad Neupane, Secretary of the MoPR giving away certificates to the participants

Transitional Justice, Humanitarian Law Practices and Experiences; Protection of Human Rights—Longitudinal Analysis; Post Conflict Reconstruction; Rehabilitation, Reconciliation with cases from International Perspective; Intra and inter linkages of Government Mechanisms Towards Peace; and The Overall Peace Process in Nepal including Sharing Experiences of Ireland and UK.

At the request of the organisers, UNDP Technical Advisor to MoPR, Mr. Sayed Sahibzada facilitated a session on the concept of Rehabilitation, Reconciliation with experiences and examples from Afghanistan, Iraq and Sudan and their relevance to the context of Nepal.

The workshop was designed to address some of the capacity needs and gaps identified during the capacity assessment in August 2008 by MoPR with support from UNDP

Nepal and the Regional Center in Bangkok. The assessment paved the way to formulate a prioritized capacity development strategy.

The resource persons for the training were Mr. Daman Nath Dhungana (former speaker and mediator during the Nepal Peace Process), Mr. Padma Ratna Tuladhar (former minister and member of the mediation team). Dr. Purna Kant Adhikari, Gauri Pradhan and Subodh Pyakurel— the eminent human rights activists were among other resource persons.

At the end of the training, the Government officials appreciated the resource persons for sharing their knowledge.

As way forward and as envisaged in the capacity development strategy, a *Leadership Training* was identified as essential training for further enhancing their capacity.

Pull down exercise to test vulnerability of buildings to earthquakes

Most of the fatalities in past earthquakes have occurred due to the collapse of buildings constructed using brick masonry that are considered as “Non-Engineered Construction”.

Knowing the seismic risk of such widely available masonry buildings in the region and to identify possible structural mitigation measures, the **UNDP Regional Earthquake Risk Reduction Programme (ERRP)** supported by the Asian Disaster Reduction Center, Japan, conducted a full scale pull-down test of an existing non-reinforced masonry building in Nepal as part of its technical assistance and knowledge sharing initiatives.

The purpose of the test is to investigate and compare seismic resilience of retrofitted and non retrofitted buildings. The test provides further opportunity to review and analyze retrofitting methods for masonry building which are the most common types of buildings in Nepal. It is expected that the test will enhance the knowledge and technical capacity of the ERRP project teams and national stakeholders on ‘retrofitting techniques’ with a view of nationwide dissemination and application.

The technical experts are working on the results. The detail analysis of this test will be presented in the ERRP regional workshop to be held in Bangladesh in December 2009.

UNDP has been implementing ERRP Regional programme in five South Asian Countries (*Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan*) with funding support from the Government of Japan.

Nepal is ranked 11th in the world in terms of vulnerability to earthquakes and 30th with respect to floods, according to a 2004 study undertaken by **UNDP/Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery**.



Pull down test: A non-retrofitted building collapsing



A retrofitted building ready for the pull down test

Seminar for District Election Officers

The Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) with technical and financial support from the UNDP/ Electoral Support Project (ESP) organised a national seminar for District Election Officers.

The 72 DEOs across Nepal attended the seminar to learn about the initiatives such as the Strategic Plan of the Election Commission of Nepal, Voter Registration System with Photo and the Use of Electronic Voting Machines to have a better, efficient and transparent voting mechanism.

The programme brought together all senior, middle and junior level staff members of the central and district offices together making the workshop highly interactive.



District Election Commissioners in the seminar

Blacksmiths benefit from new technology

Krishna Bahadur Bishwokarma makes iron agriculture tools. He inherited this business from his forefathers — a source of living for 'Bishwokarmas' — the traditional blacksmiths! Bishwokarmas fall in the category of 'Dalits', who have been discriminated by the society as 'untouchables.'

Today Krishna is making a large profit out of his iron works as he uses efficient tools, quality charcoal and above all, the readily available loan. All this was possible with the intervention of the **Community Development and Environment Conservation Forum (CDECF)** with the financial support from the **UNDP/GEF Small Grants Programme**.

Till date 77 blacksmiths in Sipapokhari VDC of Sindhupalchok district have benefitted from the project— '**Improving Economic Condition of**

Blacksmiths and Environment Conservation'. The project has provided a comprehensive package for these underprivileged iron workers. The blacksmiths were supplied with efficient tools, were trained to produce quality charcoal and they were also provided some credit funds to expand their enterprise.

"The project taught us to prepare charcoal in closed chamber through pit kiln method and now we are producing more charcoal of higher quality", says Krishna. He further adds, "I also received some sophisticated, new and efficient materials such as a hammer, a blower and a hand smother."

Mr. Chintamani Sharma, the team leader of the project says, "the pit kiln method has reduced the chances of accidental forest fire, which the blacksmiths are often blamed for. The project has also provided a welding machine to each group, which has not only improved their efficiency but also contributed to save forest. Most importantly, earlier they required 50 kgs of firewood to produce 4 kgs of charcoal. Now with the welding machine and the new technology, they are able to get 60% more charcoal from the same amount of firewood."

A traditional iron worker, Krishna was earlier paid in grains once or twice a year- a local barter system, known as *Bhaga Bali*. The system still prevails in a lot of places. Now with the modern technology and available loan from the project, Krishna has been able to increase his product line. He produces sickle, hoe, spade, axes and Khukuri (traditional Nepali knife). He has paid his debts and is earning a net income of Rs. 15000 per month. These products are sold in shops and not from his house only. People are also paying in cash!

For him, this is a big change in life. He can give comfortable life to his family. Now his services are recognized in the village!



Krishna making charcoal through pit kiln method

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