



Media Consultancy Nepal

Disaster Watch - Nepal

A daily newsletter on disaster updates

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Experts call for advanced ICT to fight disasters

Are we well prepared to deal with natural disasters ? Do we have the technology required ? These were questions raised at an interaction programme organized by Computer Association of Nepal (CAN) on Emergency Communication Systems, Tuesday.

Suresh Ojha CAN-USA representative and RF/Microwave R&D engineer sated that California and Kathmandu shared the same seismic history, adding it was high time caution was taken to prevent extensive casualties after an earthquake.

Even though Nepal Army does have units to deal with natural disasters in all 75 districts, the technology we use is not advanced enough to mitigate the impact substantially? stated Col. Kumar Dangol, Head at Research and Development Directorate, Army Headquarters.

CAN president Biplav Man Singh stated that active emergency communication systems in Nepal were present in dams where once the water level exceeded the acceptable level. As siren goes off, that alerts villagers and people of potential disaster like dam breakage.

We do have the technology to produce and manufacture communication systems that can be used in emergencies, said engineering students Prawish Maharjan, Basanta Joshi, Deepak Chapagain and Niraj Tamrakar who have developed a complex RF module Printed Circuit Board that is used in TVs, radios and CC-TVs.

"Information and communication technology is the most critical part of any nation's development and all political parties must treat ICT as a nervous system of any country, said Ojha.

To do this he suggested that Nepal government should develop a rational ICT policy and learn from China and India's failures; simplify visa processing for foreign ICT experts wishing to come to Nepal and make broadband internet facility universally available and cost effective. We should also improve communication systems all over the country and the general public should be informed about what to do and where to go in case of an emergency, he said.

(Posted on 10th October)

Two swept away in Sindhuli

Ganesh Bahadur Bal and Dhan Bahadur Singh were swept to death by the flashfloods of Thunawa Khola at Dandigurans VDC of Sindhuli district, Monday. Both of them were heading towards district headquarters Sindhulimadi.

Bal was a resident of Nag VDC of Sharlahi district while Singh's whereabouts is still unknown. School going children had found dead bodies lying on the bank of river.

(Posted on 10th October)

Loss of lives this monsoon

Baglung	29
Banke	28
Gulmi	19
Rautahat	12
Bajura	11
Bardia	10
Sindhuli	10
Darchula	9
Ramechhap	9
Sindhuli	10
Baitadi	8
Dang	8
Pyuthan	7
Salyan	7
Mahottari	7
Siraha	7
Kailali	6
Kaski	6
Makwanpur	6
Udayapur	5
Jajarkot	5
Kalikot	5
Arghakhachi	5
Saptari	5
Jumla	4
Surkhet	4
Jhapa	4
Chitwan	4
Morang	4
Sunsari	4
Nawalparasi	3
Rukum	3
Dhanusha	3
Khotang	2
Bhojpur	2
Panchthar	2
Sarlahi	2
Parsa	2
Palpa	2
Bara	2
Dhading	2
Rupendehi	2
Bajhang	1

Tanahun	1
Sindhupalchowk	1
Lalitpur	1
Dadeldhura	1
Kavre	1
Mustang	1
Myagdi	1

(As of 10th October, 2007)

Major Displacements

Saptari	10000 family
Siraha	6000 family
Mahottari	3700 family
Bardiya	2500 family
Dhanusha	2050 family
Parsa	2000 family
Rupendehi	2000 family
Sunsari	1000 family
Banke	750 family

Total displacement: 48000 family

Total affected population:

Around 4 lakh 72 thousand (as of 10th October, 2007)

Sources : NRCS, Media reports/MCN

Disaster Related Reports

[Situation Report NRCS, 10th Sep](#)

[NRCS Bulletin 21st Aug, 2007](#)

[WHO SITREP \(5-19th Aug, 2007\)](#)

[OCHA Situation Report, 13th Aug](#)

[WHO SITREP \(4-12 Aug, 2007\)](#)

[Sink or Swim \(Oxfam Int\)](#)

[DM Report \(MCN\) 2006](#)

[NRCS Bulletin 29th July, 2007](#)

[Baglung Landslides Report, 2007](#)

[Flood scenario of Saptari, 2007](#)

[Report on relief, Mahottari, 2007](#)

Snapshots



Children affected by flooding in remote Western Nepal. (File Photo: Save the Children)

Kids Need Education To Minimize Disaster Risks

Press Release: United Nations

On the eve of the International Day for Disaster Reduction, a top United Nations official today stressed the necessity of improving children's disaster preparedness and bolstering their safety in the classroom.

"Too many children are dying because they are not educated to live with disasters or because they are attending classes in unsafe buildings. Making schools safer must be the priority of every government in a disaster-prone country," said Sálvano Briceño, Director of the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR).

"Disaster risk reduction has no cost compared to the loss of a school full of children buried alive in a mudslide or crushed by a falling building." Speaking to reporters in New York, UN Emergency Relief Coordinator John Holmes said that the Day is especially timely since "more people are threatened by these natural hazards and disasters and extreme weather events than at any time in history."

In the past three decades, the number of disasters triggered by natural hazards - increasingly a result of climate change - has tripled, he said. "The number of people affected has roughly been doubling every ten years, and that's a trend which is now accelerating, and this means in effect that five times more people are likely to be affected in any one year than a generation ago."

The ISDR today issued a new publication - entitled "Towards a Culture of Prevention: Disaster Risk Reduction Begins at School" - which gives 35 practical examples of how to improve school safety.

Good examples of projects to prepare children for natural hazards can be found in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Mozambique, Costa Rica, France Madagascar, the Philippines, Iran, Tanzania and Peru, while India, Japan and Nepal's safety initiatives can be replicated globally. "Teaching our children today is empowering the next generation to address disaster risk more effectively tomorrow," Mr. Briceño said.

To introduce children to basic concepts in disaster risk reduction, the French, Spanish, Chinese and Russian language versions of "Stop Disaster," an online game, were launched today. In the game, which was released in English last year, players are presented with disaster scenarios and must reduce its risk with a given budget.

ISDR's efforts to educate children are part of its larger "Disaster Risk Education Begins at School" campaign focusing on improving the safety of school buildings and integrating disaster risk reduction into school curricula.

The campaign kicked off last year with the support of UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the non-governmental organization (NGO) ActionAid International and other partners.

To commemorate the Day, ISDR is convening a roundtable discussion in Geneva to identify how to build on the campaign's results.

(Posted on 10th October)

India wants to build multipurpose dams in Nepal

Our Words

The monsoon rage is not over yet. Incidents of flood and landslides are still taking lives, dislodging people and rendering thousands into terrible ordeal. Despite of several appeals by national and international humanitarian organizations, relief supply activities are being obstructed. Intermittent protests and strikes by dissident groups throughout the country and political, ethnic interest induced unrest in Terai, are continually appeared to be the main stumbling blocks for the relief activities.

Thus, the disaster response of Nepal sound serious as the victims are deprived of basic requirements and delay in rescue operations. For instance, five hundred displaced flood victims of Kailali district are downcast with governmental and non governmental agencies as they are being deprived of water (Disaster Watch- 30th August report). Emergency relief materials are inadequate comparing with multitude of disaster victims in several districts, as media reports. The UN World Health Organization (WHO) has also stressed on increasing risk of diarrhoeal and vector borne diseases after flood situation.

The discrepancy between flood and landslides victims in terms of response and recovery can be easily noticed. Apparently, landslides areas are geographical far and remote. Moreover, the institutional strength of related organizations such as NRCS in those districts are not well enough to furnish adequate support. Thus, the landslides victims are being overlooked there. The scourge of disaster is not less for them, instead its tougher due to the irrecoverable property demolition. The magnitude of the affected population from landslide may not be as that of flood but victimized are utterly ravaged.

Nepal is on the eve of festive season. Dashain and Tihar has already knocked the door. On one

Chief Minister of Bihar state (India) has pointed out that in order to lessen the effects of flood every year in the state, there is a need for interlinking of rivers "For avoiding the silting of the river-beds, there is a need for cooperation with the Nepal government", he said while meeting with Deputy Chariman of Planning Commission, Montek Singh Ahluwalia yesterday.

He said if multi-purpose dams are constructed in Nepal, flood could be tamed and hydro-electric power could also be co-generated, which could in turn tremendously improve the per capita income of the Nepalese people, The Bihar Times stated in today's edition.

Nitish handed over a copy of 'Special Assistance Plan for Bihar flood' prepared by the state government to Ahluwalia.

(Posted on 7th October)

ADRA to build shelters for flood affected Kamaiyas

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency Nepal (ADRA Nepal), which is currently involved in rehabilitation of the flood-affected kamaiya population in western Nepal, has decided to build 500 shelters for the displaced people on the land given by the government.

The effort is being funded by Swiss Solidarity, ADRA International and ADRA New Zealand. "We started with basic re-ief efforts, but ended up undertaking the task of building shelters for the displaced freed kamaiyas with the support of the donor agencies," said Ashok Shrestha, emergency response coordinator, ADRA Nepal. ADRA Nepal, which is providing relief to the flood affected people since early August in eastern and far-western regions, is working in coordination with the District Disaster Relief Committee and other agencies with the fund coming from the ADRA network.

(Posted on 7th October)

BMS World Mission in Nepal

Christian Today

BMS World Mission and its local partners in Nepal are providing much needed humanitarian assistance in response to terrible monsoon flooding. BMS World Mission is working with local partners and amongst affected communities in responding to the worst monsoon flooding in Nepal for ten years. The north-western district of Rukum has been particularly badly affected by landslides, which swept away land, crops and livestock as well as destroying more than 100 houses.

BMS partners in Nepal are working together with other local groups to help 100 of the households affected by providing blankets, tarpaulins, clothing and utensils. They will also provide training in first aid and disaster management to 18 communities in the districts of Kholagauwn and Aarma.

Emergency kits consisting of stretchers, life jackets, torches, shovels and first aid kits, as well as galvanised netting for retaining walls, will be provided for six of these communities. About 30 percent of the cost of this relief work will be met by other local groups and the affected communities, with a BMS grant of £6,700 covering the balance.

BMS Manager for Mission Partnerships, David McLellan, called the forward-planning aspect of the relief work "encouraging", continuing: "The fact that the

hand, disaster victims are starving for two square meal but on other hand rest are making merry on festivals. Disaster victims will be not in festive mood this year, but at least they should be ensured on having basic requirements: appropriate food, safe drinking water and shelter before they will be transferred into resilience mode.

Highlights

Flood hit five thousand family of Mahottari district will soon get food aid worth NRs 20 million from World Food Program. Food aid will be provided for severely ravaged 5758 family which will carry them for one month. (23rd Sep)

Transport service in Jhaukhel VDC-3 of the Changunarayan road section in Sallaghari of Bhaktapur has been closed since 15 days after landslide swept away the road. Following the halt in transport service locals of Changunarayan, Pikhel, Jhaukhel, Duwakot are forced to walk. (22nd Sep)

Advertising Association of Nepal (AAN) and Nepal Telecom (NTC) has extended the time for SMS donation for flood victims to October 17. NTC customers have to SMS 1410 to donate Rs 10 and 1450 to donate Rs 50. In the past one month 37,145 SMS were sent for Rs 10 and 10,262 SMS for Rs 50. (18th Sep)

In a bid to support disaster victims of Nepal, students of Budanilkantha School have organized an art exhibition at Nafa Gallery Kathmandu. Two hundred pictures are being exhibited with the price range NRs 200 to NRS 5000. (16th Sep)

A policeman at the Kirne Post, Surke Majhi, has gone missing in the Tamakoshi river of Sindhupalchowk district. Majhi had gone to the river to take bath at 1:30 pm on Tuesday, but never returned, DSP Surendra Mainali said. (12th Sep)

people affected by the flooding are participating in the relief work and taking ownership of plans for future crises makes this grant an important step in creating sustainable local responses to a recurring problem."

(Posted on 7th October)

Red Cross forms quick rescue squads

The Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS)-Kathmandu has formed four emergency first aid teams to bring down the number of casualties during disasters. These teams will arrive at the spots, where human casualties are likely, to provide first aid treatment within 15 minutes of the occurrence of disasters. "Security situation of the entire nation is deteriorating. The capital has also been a target recently alongside the ups and downs on Constituent Assembly (CA) polls," said Sangha Ratna Shakya, secretary of the NRCS.

Recent blasts in the capital have questioned public security arrangements. Given a burgeoning population in the capital, the number of victims is likely to be very high if disasters occur here, Shakya said. He said that the emergency teams are well-trained and they will provide medications needed to the people during disasters or emergency situations.

The four teams are named as Alpha, Delta, Bravo and Charlie. Each team comprises seven members and two commanders. This is the first time in the country that teams have been formed to rescue disaster victims. Given the unstable situation, the formation of such teams in other parts of the country is in the offing.

(Posted on 6th October)

Rehabilitation of flood victims nears complete

Official attempts to rehabilitate the flood victims of Holiya in Banke district have reached its final step. The local administration has started 'plotting' lands in Hajarat community forest for reinstating over 200 displaced locals of Holiya VDC.

(Posted on 6th October)

Rains damage infrastructures worth 90M

Department of Water Supply and Sewerage has stated that the recent monsoon rain has caused extensive damage to the physical infrastructures of water supply and sewerage. The Department informed that it had a preliminary estimation that the damage caused by the monsoon rain amounted to eighty to ninety million rupees.

The Department has urged the consumers to help in its task of maintenance stating that it has been carrying out the job giving top priority. The Department has also sought help from donor communities.

Director General of the Department, Hari Prasad Sharma said UNICEF had assured to provide assistance about Rs. 25 million. The Department had aimed at providing addition 350 thousand people with water supply services by accomplishing 118 water supply projects in 75 districts.

The projects includes environmental sanitation, national information management and monitoring, maintenance, deep tube-well and metering, manpower development, enhancing drinking water quality, small town water supply and

Tribhuvan Highway, one of the major roads linking capital with other parts of the country had damaged at the Naubise-Simbhanjyang stretch due to the landslide since Thursday. (7th Sep)

The Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers has received Rs. 500,000 from Employees' Provident Fund, for the victims of disaster. (6th Sep)

Landslides occurred at Laghuwa of Tansen-Tamghas road section has disrupted vehicular movement since Tuesday. Passengers bound for Gulmi are left stranded. (5th Sep)

74-year-old Bhim Bahadur Pakhrin of Padampokhari VDC drowned in the flooded Rapti river, Monday. The elderly man was swept away by the current while trying to cross the river. (4th Sep)

In Banke district 2,500 flood-hit locals of Holiya VDC have started coming down with many diseases as they have not been provided any relief material as yet. Locals complained that the foodstuff provided by the Red Cross Society was also inadequate. (4th Sep)

As a post flood consequence, fever patients are crammed in district hospital of Syangja. At least 60 patients of fever used to come for the checkup daily. (3rd Sep)

A landslide triggered by three days of heavy rainfall has blocked the Kusma-Baglung section of Pokhara. (1st Sep)

The cases of encephalitis and meningitis viral fever are rapid in Nepalgunj aftermath of flood and inundation. Till now four persons were died of encephalitis and more than 30 were affected. (30th Aug)

As a consequence of flood triggered circumstances, at least 60 persons are affected from viral influenza in Narayan Khola VDC-3 of Sarlahi district. (30th Aug)

sanitation, drainage channel construction, quality enhancement in water supply and improvement in sanitation in emerging towns.

Deputy Chief of Small Town Water Supply and Sanitation Project, Triyesh Prasad Khatri; Chief of Community Water Supply and Sanitation Project, Kishor Shakya and Spokesperson of Ministry of Physical Planning and Works, Ishwori Poudel also spoke in the programme.

(Posted on 5th October)

Normal life still affected in Nawalparasi

Normal life of remote mountainous area of Nawalparasi district has still been affected due to the incessant rain that took place on last August. VDCs Rakuwa, Ruchad, Dedhgaun, Mithukaram, Naram, Bharatipur, Jauwari and Arkhali have been hit hard by the downpour while Kotdurbar, Bulingtar and Dandajheri are also affected from the incessant rain.

The landslide triggered by the rain has damaged the fertile land and also caused difficulty people's movement from one place to another, said Resham Thapa, former Chairman of Ruchang VDC.

The flood that occur in stream including Budadi, Nirandi, Fulmadi, Deurali has caused damages in all paddy field in the right and left side of the stream. The river swept away the paddy field and landslide took away rest of the land, It is hard time to rear the kids now, complained flood and landslide victims of the area.

Vehicular movement from Daldale to mountainous belt has been completely halted while some of the households are going to be displaced due to the heavy rain. There has been no distribution of relief to the victims in the area even after several days of this natural disaster, complained the victims.

Victims urged government and non-government organizations to pay attention for providing them the necessary relief.

(Posted on 5th October)

Landslides block road since June

Shortage of consumer items in Bajhang

The closure of the Khodape-Bajhang road has caused a shortage of consumer items, including food items, in Bajhang district at a time when Dashain is round the corner. Vehicular movement on the road came to a halt after a landslide occurred at Dharan on the Sunkunda-Tamel road along the Jayaprithvi Highway in June.

People have been ferrying the essentials on their own, but the supply of goods is far from smooth. It takes three days of walk to arrive in Chainpur, the Bajhang district headquarters, from Dharan.. People of Bajhang lamented that the Anarkholi road division has not shown concern for repairing the road. Sometime ago, locals had gheraoed the road division office after their complaints went unheard. The office had then promised to repair the road.

President of the Bajhang Chamber of Commerce and Industries Harka Pujara said the road closure has led to a shortage of essentials like rice, oil, sugar, soaps in several places, including in Chainpur. Meanwhile, president of the NGOs Federation Bal Bahadur Rokaya said that the road division at Anarkholi has sent a

Seven thousand residents of Kusma, district headquarter of Parwat, are suffering from water scarcity as the pipe line of main supply center was swept away by the landslide. (25th Aug)

The Thai government has extended an assistance of Rs 3.9 million for flood victims on Friday. (25th Aug)

The Women Foundation (WF) on Thursday provided shelter boxes worth Rs 10 million to 129 flood victim families of Balaha Sabhara VDC at Dahanusha. (24th Aug)

Marwadi Service Trust, Birgunj handed over relief materials worth NRs. Five lakh Rupees to NRCS Parsa chapter. (23rd Aug)

NRCS Makwanpur distributed relief materials to 16 flood displaced family of Dhiynal VDC. (23rd Aug)

All Banks and financial institutions of Chitwan together ventured to solace disaster victims and collected NRs Sixty Thousand Five Hundred. Money was handedover to NRCS Chitwan. (23rd Aug)

Five thousand houses were damaged in Bardia due to the flood of Babai and Karnali river. Out of them 144 houses were fully damaged. (22nd Aug)

Janapriya Campus of Pokhara announced free education in all faculties to the flood and landslides victims of Gualichaur and Jaljala of Baglung district. (21st Aug)

Eighty percent of the farms in Dhanusha and Mahottari districts havebeen washed off by flood. (20th Aug)

Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN) has provided Rs.225,525 to flood victims through Kantipur Flood victim Relief Fund. (18th Aug)

Road links between rural areas and district headquarters Gaur, Birgunj have been respectively severed in Rautahat and Parsa district. (18th Aug)

700 people are displaced from Rajapur Tapu in Bardia, fearing of flood. (17th Aug)

dozer for clearing landslide debris on the road. He added that the traffic will resume only from mid-October. The people in the areas, including BP town, have been affected as the road linking Sahajpur of Kailali with BP town of Doti has remained closed.

(Posted on 5th October)

Survivors must not be forgotten

Warning that the humanitarian crisis in South Asia could worsen, the United Nations and leading relief agencies are calling for increased resources and attention to the plight of the millions in need of assistance after this summer's devastating floods.

"Overall, the floods which have struck with devastating effect in India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan have now killed more than 4,000 people, and disrupted the lives of more than 66 million - a number larger than the population of France," according to a joint statement issued in Geneva by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and international organizations CARE, World Vision, Save the Children, Oxfam and Mercy Corps.

A new wave of floods in the past few weeks has submerged vast areas that were just beginning to recover from earlier flooding, stranding another 100,000 people in Bangladesh and leaving millions homeless in India.

In addition to the loss of life, the severe weather that occurred during this year's monsoon season has led to the death of livestock and the destruction of agricultural lands and livelihoods. Stagnant flood water, food shortages and the lack of drinking water are contributing to the outbreak of disease.

While the organizations have been carrying out relief efforts over the past several months, they stressed the need for greater resources in order to provide the assistance planned. "A more forceful international response is necessary to prevent an even greater catastrophe that will have debilitating social consequences for the affected population."

UN Emergency Relief Coordinator John Holmes emphasized that the international aid community has been a "steadfast partner" in the efforts of the affected Governments to assist their people.

"We need to reinforce those efforts, and to look to the protracted process of recovery for those affected this year and above all to improve disaster risk reduction and preparedness for those who will be affected in the years to come," he said.

(Posted on 4th October)

Communities still struggling with monsoon aftermath

Three months after one of the worst monsoon seasons in memory, millions of people across South Asia continue to struggle with the aftermath of flooding and landslides. The United Nation's children's fund UNICEF says humanitarian and aid agencies are still assisting with health needs in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan. Recently, Gillian Mellsop, UNICEF's country representative in Nepal talked with Sen Lam, presenter of Radio Australia about disaster related issues of Nepal. Here are the excerpts :

MELLSOP: Because the geology is very fragile, these torrential monsoon rains have caused landslides in the hilly parts of the country, and then severe flooding

Flood of Susta river, Nawalparasi forced to displace one hundred family. (17th Aug)

Flood victims in Bardiya demonstrated in front of the Red Cross Society Thursday alleging that it was biased in distributing relief materials. (16th Aug)

Thirty thousand villagers of six villages in Rautahat are at risk due to the swollen water of Bagmati, LalBakiya and Jhanj river. (17th Aug)

Flood victims in Bardiya demonstrated in front of the Red Cross Society Thursday alleging that it was biased in distributing relief materials. (16th Aug)

Landslides induced by the continuous rainfall for two days obstructed Baitadi-Darchula stretch of Dashrath Chandra highway (15th Aug)

An engine steamer of Geruwa river of Bardia fell into the flooded water Monday. A conductor of steamer, Rajesh, went missing whereas 10 passengers were rescued. (15th Aug)

For the demand of relief materials, flood victims of Mahottari are regularly demonstrating in district head quarter Jaleshwar.

32 districts of Nepal, out of 75, are affected by flood and inundation, according to the Home Ministry.

The lawmakers of Banke and Bardia, worst flood hit districts, asked the government to think about the impact of dams and barrages constructed by India along the border.

Staffers and the management of Spice Nepal Private Ltd, provider of Mero Mobile, have dispatched relief materials worth NRs. 426000 for flood victims.

Rainfall and flood destroyed seventy five percent of vegetable crops in Rupandehi.

in Mahottari, Madhesi Maitri Kendra, a civil society in the district working for the welfare of flood victims, postponed providing free-of-cost meals to victims, citing fatigues of their volunteers and lack of funds.

in the southern plains which border onto India. So you get the mix of the landslides, which unfortunately have killed many people and caused a lot of damage to infrastructure and roads and then the flooding in the south, which has destroyed many, many homes and schools and livelihoods, because of the sand casting and the mud that's left behind in the fields and a lot of paddies will not be able to be harvested. So we've got real poverty issues as a result of these drastic floods in Nepal this year.

LAM: One of the challenges after the flooding is getting children to return to school. What are some of the problems there?

MELLSOP: Well, what happens, particularly in Nepal, is that many of the houses and the schools are just built of mud and thatch and so they either get carried away with the strong floodwaters or once the waters are stagnant and remaining, basically the mud just collapses. We have a lot of early childhood development centres and schools that need to be rebuilt and so for those children, they're actually having to share classrooms with others, or have makeshift classrooms outside under trees. So what UNICEF has been able to assist with is school kits, so that a classroom can be set up again with blackboards and textbooks and chalk, so the teacher can actually start teaching. And then along with Save the Children Fund and Plan, we've been able to give children kits to go back to school. Because a lot of the children where their houses have been destroyed, they have lost their uniforms, they've lost their stationery, their pens, we need to assist them in getting back to a routine and hopefully helping them get over the trauma of having lost their homes and having to flee often in the middle of the night as the floodwaters came through.

LAM: And, tell us more about the child protection teams. Who are they and what do they do?

MELLSOP: We mainly have focused on getting children back to school, but in terms of child protection, another issue that we're dealing with currently is that we are regrettably seeing ongoing violence between ethnic communities in the south of Nepal, where we have a lot of displaced families. We think about 5,000 people are displaced. And we are currently providing psycho-social support for some of those children that have experienced really severe trauma, witnessing violence within their communities and also having to flee. A lot of houses have been burnt and destroyed. So what we do is we work very closely with an NGO that is particularly well versed in providing psycho-social support for children and they are currently doing an assessment with children in the displaced camps and finding those children that have been particularly traumatised and working with them with some emergency counselling.

LAM: And of course during periods of upheaval, children and women are vulnerable. Do you find that local communities are also helping themselves?

MELLSOP: Yes, I think what we've found in Nepal during both this very bad flooding season and also this recent spate of violence is that surrounding communities have been very, very helpful, taking families in. There have been a lot of families that were affected by the recent violence who have actually moved in with neighbours, moved in with extended families. Some of them have gone down to India, but they are now returning. And in terms of the flooding, again I was out in the west and there was one community which had been very badly affected, because they live right on the edge of the river, where they're very poor. They had been affected by the floods last year and this year, but they had been welcomed into a community back from the river and we had distributed tarpaulins, cooking utensils, water purification and buckets, and hygiene kits to them. And they were able to share the water supply and establish a displaced encampment near a village. And they had been assisted by those villages. So I think the communities have been very supportive of the flood-affected people.

Armed Police Force (APF), Nepal handover NRs 2.5 million for disaster victims on 2nd August.

55 VDCs of Mahottari is affected from flood. Properties and infrastructures worth NRs 70 million has been lost.

Dharampur VDC of Jhapa suffered a loss of NRS 30 million.

Home minister advised the local administration to form an all sided team to carryout relief and rescue operations.

Danda dam and embankment unilaterally made by the Indian government inundated 6 VDCs of Rupandehi district.

Rainfall is significantly higher this year than 2006, according to Meteorological Forecasting Division.

Lawmakers blamed Indian dams for floods in the contiguous areas of Nepal.

Asia Watch

Forest loss 'leads to longer, more severe floods'

SciDev.Net

Deforestation increases the frequency and severity of flooding in developing countries, according to a recent study. While a link between deforestation and flooding has been suspected for many years, the study, published online in Global Change Biology last week (25 September), is the first to support the hypothesis with global-scale evidence.

"There's been a lack of consensus about whether forests can have a positive effect [on flooding]," says William Laurance, a researcher from the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama. "But I think this research will have a big impact."

The research team, led by Corey Bradshaw of Australia's Charles Darwin University, studied associations between native forest cover and flooding during the 1990s in 56 developing countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America.

(Posted on 3rd October)

ICIMOD workshop on rainfall forecasting underway

With the objective to improve the estimation of rainfall in this region for purposes of improved forecasting of floods and monitoring of droughts using advanced remote sensing tools, the technical experts of national hydrological and meteorological services in Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Nepal, and Pakistan have begun a five-day workshop on the 'Application of Satellite Rainfall Estimation in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan (HKH) region'.

The workshop that began in the capital on Monday will run for five days. According to the organizer, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), technical experts from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and US Geological Survey (USGS) are being brought in as key resource persons for the workshop.

The workshop is a part of a project on Application of Satellite Rainfall Estimation in the HKH region, which aims to develop a satellite rainfall estimate (SRE) model specifically for the Himalayan region by refining a system developed by NOAA Climate Prediction Centre, and to test a stream-flow model developed by USGS to stem the effects of chronic flooding in the Greater Himalayan region.

The five-day workshop aims to review and discuss work on SRE, particularly the validation of rainfall estimates, testing of the USGS stream-flow model in pilot catchments, further strengthen the SRE capability of member countries and transfer the NOAA/USGS technology to the partners.

This workshop will also review the work done so far, provide inputs for finalising the SRE country reports, and plan for the Phase II of the Project. The organizers expressed hope that improved rainfall estimates will further enable reliable and timely flood forecasts and warning and contribute to minimising loss of life and property in the region.

(Posted on 3rd October)

Incessant rain claims four lives

Four persons have died in Banke, Bardia and Nawalparasi districts due to the continuous rainfall. People are starting to suffer again from flooding and landslides as incessant rainfall once more lashed several parts of the country.

Body of 40-year-old Kailash Chaudhari of Sanoshree-5 in Bardiya, who was swept away by the flood was found Saturday. In Banke, flood in Rapti River swept away Bararu Tharu, 62 of Phattepur at 7 pm on Friday. Tharu's body was found at Sindhiyaghat. A body Parsuram Karki, 56, of Manikapur VDC-8 was also found in a stream at Ranjha of Manikapur on Friday, DSP at Banke District Police Office Krishna Hari Sharma said. People of Holiya VDC who were displaced due to the flood in Rapti River were taking shelter by setting up camps.

In Nawalparasi, Maya Mahato, 24, of Kolhuwa VDC-7 drowned in the flooded Ulti River, Saturday. According to police, Mahato was returning from a nearby forest after collecting fodder when she was swept away by the river. She died shortly after some fishermen rescued her from the river.

(Posted on 30th September)

2500 households at risk in Dhading

Models showed that removing a tenth of existing forest cover would increase the frequency of floods by 4–28 per cent and lengthen their duration by up to eight percent. Forests may reduce the severity of floods in a number of ways. Firstly, rainwater is taken up by tree roots and released through their leaves. Roots also make the soil more porous, increasing the amount of water it can absorb.

The process of deforestation itself reduces soil's absorbency, Bradshaw told SciDev.Net. Removing forests compacts the soil, so there are fewer gaps underground and less capacity for absorbing water, affecting the run off, he explained.

Over the ten-year study period 100,000 people in the developing world were killed, and another 320 million displaced by floods, with economic damage exceeding US\$1 trillion.

Bradshaw hopes that by demonstrating the benefits of ecosystem conservation, his team's research will encourage developing countries to protect their forests.

"It's a very economic way of looking at the value of forests, and I think governments will hopefully take notice of this," says Bradshaw. Whilst discouraging people from living in floodplains would perhaps be the best way of preventing damage, this is not always a viable option, says Laurance. "The reality is that in developing countries people are building on floodplains, and anything that they can do to reduce flood intensity is a good thing."

Nations such as Bangladesh, China, India and Nepal, which have already been subjected to severe flooding, have already invested in forest protection or reforestation projects.

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Around 2,500 households in Mahadevsthan VDC here are under threat of being swept away by the Khani river. The river flows through Wards 2 and 3 of the VDC. A landslide on the river banks in Hattigoda has led to the formation of a lake in the VDC. Incessant rainfall in the area has made matters worse.

Heavy rains triggered a landslide Friday at Tencherangdando, altering the course of the river and creating a vast lake around the VDC, locals said. The police administration has alerted locals of the danger and urged them to shift to safer places. A local, Ravindra Chepang, said that if the lake bursts its banks, Wards 2, 4, 5 and 7 of Mahadevsthan VDC, Wards 1, 2 and 5 of Benighat VDC and Wards 2, 4 and 8 of Gajuri VDC would be affected.

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Rainfall affects several districts

Torrential rainfall over last three days has inundated and affected various parts of the country. More than 500 houses of Rampurkhadaina and Bhujahawa VDCs of Nawalparasi district are affected by inundation caused by incessant rain from Friday night. Former Chairman of Rampurkhadaina VDC, Suvan Ali said the inundation was caused by flood in Jharahi and Dhanewa rivers. He added that families affected by the flood took shelters in neighboring villages. He said this is the fourth time this year that these villages have been swamped.

Similarly, Rupalaiya, Pratapur, Guthi Suryapura and Somani VDCs have turned into islands as flood waters from the Narayani encircled them. Locals in Khadauna, Nawadihawa and Madhawaliya areas of Rampur Khadauna VDC are already looking for temporary refuge. According to locals in Bhujwaha VDC, villages were completely swamped with flood water from the Little Gandak canal and the Indian-built Laxmanpur dam meandering in.

Meanwhile, farmers have informed that paddy crops of more than one dozen VDCs, situated in southern part of the Nawalparasi district, were affected by the inundation.

Life has been affected in Bharatpur municipality due to the rain and water level in Narayani River has risen. Rain inundated some wards of Jagatpur VDC. People living on the banks of Narayani river are edgy, fearing flood.

Meanwhile in Saptari, villages have once again become swamped, as the Khado River started swelling over the last two days. Sakarpura, Rampura Malhaniya, Koilado, Barsain and other VDCs in the district are frequently flooded by the river.

Floods started impacting the villages after torrential rain wrecked the Bhim Dam in Bishhariya area in mid-July. Locals of Portaha, Bhardaha, Mainakaderi and Dhiwan villages are also suffering as flood water meandered in through a wrecked dam at Portaha VDC-8. Flood victims have expressed anger at government apathy, accusing the latter of not taking measures to curb the floods that have been troubling them for the last two months.

In Myagdi, landslides triggered by unceasing rainfall have disrupted transport and also cut off local trails over the last two days. Dozens of landslides have occurred along the Farse and Beni-Galeshwor road sections, as well as on the Chutreni, Faparkhet, Dhadkharka and Beni-Jomsom trails. Vehicles remain stranded in Nangliwang of Parbat district.

(Posted on 30th September)

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