I. Situation Overview

An earthquake measuring 6.9 on the Richter Scale affected the eastern region of Nepal, as well as the capital of Kathmandu in the Central Region, at around 6:25 pm Nepal time on 18 September 2011. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) and the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) continues to coordinate the response to the earthquake. Latest figures released on 23 September by the NEOC, indicate that the number of fatalities remains at 6 persons, 24 people are severely injured and 160 persons have minor injuries. 2986 persons are reportedly displaced. 2322 houses/buildings are completely destroyed and 2780 partially damaged. 81 public buildings (Government infrastructures such as health facilities, community buildings, schools, electricity stations etc) are reported to be destroyed with a further 406 buildings partially damaged. There remain some discrepancies in the corroboration of damage estimates, especially the number of schools and health facilities damaged or destroyed. MoHA will meet with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) to resolve this issue. There are still difficulties in accessing some remote areas and reports and updates continue to be received at the NEOC from previously inaccessible areas.

The main affected districts included, Sankhuwasabha, Taplejung, Ilam, Dhankuta, Pachthar, Sunsari, Bhojpur in the Eastern Region, Bhaktapur, Nuwakot, Kavre-Palanchwok and Kathmandu in the central region and Syangja and Tanahu, in the western region. The tremor was felt across 22 districts of Nepal.

II. The Government Response - Including Military

The NEOC is receiving information from the respective DDRCs (mainly from security forces and other local agencies). The DDRCs are in contact with all affected VDCs (police posts, Ilaka offices and others) to obtain detailed information. The MOHA, jointly with other Ministries, has prepared a recovery programme which is now under discussion. The recovery programme is for the reconstruction of public infrastructures such as schools, health facilities, VDC buildings, jails etc, and is being discussed with CNDRC, Ministry of Finance, Department of Building Construction and other relevant Government ministries and departments. A CNDRC meeting is planned for Monday 26 September to discuss and finalize the recovery programme.

As of 23 September, the Government has already provided NPR 5.5 million (equivalent to US$ 73,540) across 19 districts as immediate relief and has indicated that the relief work will continue for the next 4-5 days. After the relief operation is over, the recovery plan will be started.

CNDRC instructed the districts to provide NPR 25,000 (equivalent to US$ 347) for the families of the deceased for immediate relief and has requested the Prime Minister’s Relief Fund to approve NPR 100,000 (US$1389) for every family, and free treatment for injured persons from the nearest health centre.

DDRCs had been instructed to assess the losses to private properties and provide relief support to the affected sites, and were requested to send detailed collated assessment reports to the NEOC by 22 September. However, the rapid assessment is still underway. According to MOHA, they are expecting the assessment report by next Wednesday, 28 September.

Press statements in Nepali are posted on the website http://moha.gov.np/.
III. Cluster Updates

**HEALTH**

The Health Cluster is closely working with the Ministry and Health and Population (MOHP) regarding planning for joint health cluster needs assessment (MOHP, IASC Health Cluster partners and WHO). All health institutions have been instructed by the Government to provide free health services to people affected by the earthquake.

According to the initial assessment reports from MoHP, three health facilities out of 31 in the east are completely damaged. A detailed assessment is ongoing in the eastern region under the leadership of MoHP and district Health Offices. The Epidemiology and Disease Control Division (EDCD) will compile the final assessment report and share with WHO and Health Cluster partners.

**EDUCATION**

The Education cluster convened a meeting on 21 September to discuss the assignment of personnel from individual organizations to assist in conducting an initial education rapid assessment. Schools all over the country will be closed from Wednesday, 28 September, due to the big festival of Dasain. Key cluster partners such as Save the Children, World Education, UNICEF, Plan and NSET have agreed to provide support for the assessments, together with the relevant government agencies at central, regional and district levels.

UNICEF is releasing 1700 pieces of tarpaulin from its stock in Biratnagar in the Eastern Region, and is also providing transportation costs amounting to US$ 2700 through NRCS to support damaged schools in seven districts in Eastern Region.

According to the latest report of the Regional Education Directorate (RED) in the Eastern Region, 128 schools have been destroyed and need urgent action and 547 have been partially damaged (Source UNICEF)

UNICEF in consultation with education partners is preparing an Education Response Plan. NRCS has already mobilized an assessment team from Kathmandu to the highly affected districts in the eastern region and issued their third situation update on 22 September.

**WATER SANITATION AND HYGIENE**

UNICEF is releasing 17,200 pieces of AQUATAB from its pre-positioned stocks in Biratnagar Zonal office through NRCS to support 162 households in the communities in Ilam district where water supply systems have been damaged due to the earthquake. NRCS has agreed to orient all affected households on the proper use of chlorine solution before its distribution. UNICEF has committed to NRCS to provide pre-positioned hygiene kits and other WASH items (buckets and mugs) for displaced families, as and when the need arises.

The WASH cluster is in contact with the sectoral ministries and their respective departments to investigate the extent of the damage to water supply systems, particularly in the most quake-affected districts. Members from the WASH Cluster are also joining the Education team to conduct rapid assessment in these districts. So far neither the NRCS, nor the MOHA have provided any information regarding the damage of WASH infrastructure.

**PROTECTION**

OHCHR spoke with the human rights defenders and the representatives of FNJ in Tapplejung, Bhojpur and Sankhuwasabha districts to get an update on the extent of damage and the response efforts in the respective districts. There were no initial reports of camps and no reports of immediate shortages of food and medicine. The protection cluster is ensuring that the protection concerns of the affected communities and persons are prioritised in responding to their needs. Cluster partners are working with human rights organisations in the districts to assess the situation. Concerns were raised about assessing the situation in the remote VDCs and the delivery of assistance. At a meeting on 22 September, the Government focal point indicated that they are liaising with the District Women Development Officers in the affected areas. Next Protection cluster meeting will be held on Tuesday 27 September.
The mission of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is to mobilize and coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors.

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**SHELTER AND NON-FOOD RELIEF ITEMS**

NRCS, with the support of IFRC, has taken the lead in the distribution of non-food items and shelter items to the families in the affected districts. NRCS has a stock of 6000 non-food relief items in NRCS warehouses in different strategic locations.

**NUTRITION**

The Nutrition Cluster led by UNICEF is convening a cluster coordination meeting on 22 September 2011 to review the impact of the earthquake and any immediate nutritional issues that need to be addressed.

**IV. The Role of Humanitarian Agencies and Partners**

The Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator with the support of OCHA HSU convened a HCT Principals and Operational meeting on 23 September. The meeting was attended by all humanitarian clusters including the Red Cross Movement. The meeting discussed and agreed on the following:

1. Different assessment teams are already in six districts led by the Government with the support of UNICEF. Others humanitarian partners are also participating in the assessment.
2. The need for further assessments by HCT partners will depend on the outcome of the Government’s ongoing assessment.
3. OCHA should track the status of ongoing assessments (what sorts of assessment, which areas, VDCs/districts, tentative date for reports etc).
4. Contact needs to be maintained with the Government for the planned Recovery Programme, which is being prepared by MOHA in consultation with all CNDRC members.
5. The UN needs to strengthen communication channels with the NEOC for major disasters
6. The stock-pile inventory of the HCT agencies needs to be updated and maintained on a regular basis. The Logistics cluster will manage this process and report back next week.
7. All cluster leads are requested to urge their Government counterparts and focal persons to coordinate with DDRCs to ensure information and data are corroborated.
8. Clusters were requested to participate in the Early Recovery meeting planned for 28 September for recovery planning and consideration of the Government’s recovery plan
9. OCHA needs to document and track meeting schedules (where, when, who initiated and who convened)

UNICEF is maintaining a stock of pre-positioned emergency supplies in Biratnagar to address the immediate needs of 2500 families. These materials can be immediately released to district partners for distribution to affected families, should the concerned authorities in the district send requests to UNICEF for emergency assistance. Long Term Agreements (LTA) have been signed with local suppliers for locally supplied relief items.

The NRCS appeal of 170,000 Swiss Francs from the IFRC Disaster Relief Fund has been approved and will be spent mainly in disaster assessment and NFI distribution to 1500 families across affected districts. Already, the NRCS Eastern Region warehouse has delivered 200 sets of NFRI and 100 pieces of tarpaulin to Ilam, 100 NFRI sets to Panchar and 200 NFRI sets to Taplejung.

According to requests made by DDRCs, CARE Nepal is providing NPR 375,000 (equivalent to US$ 5000) for relief items in Tehrathum, Panchthar and Dhankuta districts through NRCS district chapters.

**V. Coordination**

In support of the Government’s relief efforts, partners including UN agencies, NGOs and Red Cross Movement are conducting assessments from their bases in Biratnagar in the eastern region, and inter-cluster coordination meetings have been held by the humanitarian community both at the national and regional levels. The Government led District Disaster Relief Committees are leading the response efforts at the district level. Several clusters such as Education, Health, Nutrition and Protection held cluster meetings at the national level.

DDRC coordination meetings are being held in most of the affected districts to ensure an effective relief operation at the district level and stakeholders meetings and media briefings are being held regularly by MoHA.
VI. Needs and Gaps

Information received from the districts, indicate that shelter, food and NFRI support is needed for the displaced and affected families. However, a detailed plan will only be developed once the collated results of the Government’s assessments is finalised by the NEOC.

The UNFCO and UNICEF assessment team in Taplejung received a request from the CDO for assistance in assessing the remote VDCs of Yamfudin, Lelep and Olangchungola. No information has come from these VDCs to date. The District is requesting support from central level to reach these areas. It was suggested that an aerial survey may be needed with support from MOHA or the Nepal Army.

VII. Need for International Assistance

As of today, there is no formal request from the Government for external support at the national or regional and district levels. However, the Health and Education Clusters have indicated that their respective Government counterparts have requested support for assessments and longer term recovery, as several schools and health facilities are damaged and require rehabilitation.

VIII. Contact

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For more information, please visit UN Nepal Information Platform http://www.un.org.np

Disclaimer: The information in this situation report is consolidated from humanitarian clusters, NGOs, humanitarian partners, UN field coordination offices, media and National Emergency Operation Center subject to availability of data. Although OCHA HSU aims to confirm reports independently, occasional factual inaccuracies can occur.