



OCHA Nepal Situation Overview

Issue No. 54, covering the period 1-31 October 2009

Kathmandu, 4 November 2009

Highlights:

- Fiscal budget still not passed due to blockade of Legislature-Parliament
- New Disaster Legislation approved by the Parliament
- International Day for Disaster Reduction celebrated and marked by new risk reduction initiative
- Home Minister claims reduced criminal activities

CONTEXT

Political Developments

Efforts were made during the month by the major parties (the Nepali Congress (NC), United Marxist-Leninists (UML) and Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (UCPN-M) to solve the political deadlock.

UCPN-M Chairman Prachanda met President Ram Baran Yadav on 30 September, reportedly for the first time since he resigned as Prime Minister on 4 May. The meeting was seen as a breakthrough in improving relations between the president and the UCPN-M Chairman. The President expressed concerns over the delay in the drafting of the constitution and called on Prachanda to expedite the process and to work towards successfully concluding the peace process "while taking heed of national integrity, sovereignty and the public interest". Prachanda assured the President of his commitment in this regard while noting the need to achieve a "national consensus".

On 2 October, the parties agreed to table a resolution in the Legislative Parliament (L-P) (Sankalpa Prastav) which would address the issue of civilian supremacy. It would also provide for the Government to amend the Military Act 2063, amongst other measures.

A task force comprising a member from each party – NC, UML and UCPN-M – was set up to try and agree on the wording of the resolution. The NC and UML drew up their own draft, which was then amended by the Maoists. The NC was resolutely opposed to any reference to the President that casts blame on his authority. UCPN-M on the other hand has stuck to its "bottom line" that the incorrect move by the President should be addressed. The party has demanded an amendment to the Interim Constitution and to the Army Act.

Meanwhile, the blockade of the L-P by the UCPN-M continued. This has created a problem in that the fiscal budget for the year could not be passed. Certain areas of government spending are exceeding 33% expenditure, which will create financial strain for certain sectors of the economy such as jail administration, public hospitals, food transportation for remote areas, schools reform projects, payments to Embassy staff and civil servants.

Minister of Defence Bidya Bhandari fuelled controversy by calling for new recruitment into the Nepal Army and for the revision of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). On 7 October, the Defence Minister reportedly told the Parliamentary State Affairs Committee that the CPA, which contains provisions restricting training, was affecting the strength and functioning of the Nepal Army (NA) and thus needed to be reviewed for the NA's "able and meaningful existence". She said that the NA was facing a "crunch" given the vacant posts and restrictions on training, and that NA personnel were needed for VIP security, peacekeeping and wildlife protection among other things. Senior UCPN-M leader Baburam Bhattarai subsequently criticized Minister Bhandari for violating the CPA by seeking its revision.

UNMIN responded by saying – as it has done in the past – that recruitment by either side would be an infringement of the CPA.

The UML-led coalition fuelled controversy by appointing Foreign Minister Sujata Koirala to the post of Deputy Prime Minister. She took oath on 12 October. This appears to be a unilateral decision taken by the party president, G. P. Koirala. The appointment led to serious debate within the NC about how the party is run. The NC Mahasamiti meeting which began at the end of the month was discussing forms of leadership at with a majority in favour of introducing collective leadership.

Maoist Chairman Prachanda visited China and met the President Hu Jintao, bringing questions about the relationship of the UCPN-M to India.

On 23 October, a UCPN-M Standing Committee meeting issued a fresh ultimatum to the NC and UML. It proclaimed a deadline of 1 November to reach agreement on ending the political deadlock and for its various demands to be met, after which it said it will start a second phase of protests and possibly file a no-confidence motion against the UML-led government in the L-P. These demands have expanded beyond the resolution to also include: 1) abiding by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA); 2) concluding the peace process; 3) finalizing the constitution-drafting process; 4) national sovereignty, and; 5) forming a Maoist-led national unity government. It seems that the UCPN-M's central goal, as stated publicly by senior leaders and also in some key documents, is to lead a new national government.

On 27 October, The Joint National People's Movement (JNPM), led by UCPN-M Chairman, Baburam Bhattarai, which was established to organize the party nationwide protest programmes, announced the second phase of the UCPN-M protest programme, starting on 1 November, involving mass gatherings, picketing of government office and a Kathmandu valley blockade. This has given rise to fears to violent confrontations between the UCPN-M members and government security forces.

There are five Constitutional Committees (CC) which still have not presented their concept papers to the Constituent Assembly, giving rise that they will not meet the deadline of 15 November. There are still differences among the political parties on the issues of state restructuring and forms of governance and what type of federal system should be adopted. The issue has not been discussed within and among the parties. No party except for the UCPN-M has to date presented its proposal on the federal model to the CA Committee.

On 9 October, sub-committee Chairman Dev Gurung submitted an incomplete draft at the CC meeting, while the 19-member sub-committee remained divided over issues such as the national flag, national emblems and the national bird. On 11 October, the CC met and representatives suggested that the major political parties should agree on the basic elements, framework and fundamental principles of the constitution before the CC begins a clause-wide debate.

The Cabinet approved the National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management (NSDRM) for Nepal, creating a dedicated disaster management authority on 11 October. The new authority will report to the Prime Minister, with the Home Minister as Chairperson. The Strategy identifies priority actions to reduce disaster risk and increase response preparedness, and had been awaiting approval since April 2008.

On 13th of October 2009, 165 participants from disaster affected communities participated in a national symposium on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). The symposium provided an opportunity to share survivors' testimonies and direct experiences of DRR. The symposium culminated in a 9 point people's declaration, rationalizing the need for a policy framework on DRR and seeking measures to ensure the rights of disaster affected and disaster vulnerable populations. The Deputy Prime Minister and other political leaders also addressed the gathering, giving momentum to the need for a strong policy framework on DRR.

Ms. Margareta Wahlstrom, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction visited Nepal on 13 and 14 October. Ms Wahlstrom launched an initiative to reduce risk in Nepal on 14 October in honour of the international day for Disaster Reduction. Representing a Risk Reduction Consortium comprised of ISDR, UNDP, OCHA, the WB and ADB, the initiative focuses on five main areas: school and hospital safety, emergency preparedness

and response capacity, flood management, community-based disaster preparedness, and policy and institutional support. The flagship programmes evolved through a multi-stakeholder participatory process with the Government and civil society organizations in identifying short to medium term disaster risk reduction priorities. The Prime Minister and Home Minister were present and expressed their strong commitment to support the implantation of the flagship programmes.

Special Security Strategy

On 8 October, Home Minister Bhim Rawal, at a press conference in Kathmandu, claimed that criminal activities had significantly reduced following the implementation of the Government's Special Programme. [Special Programme for Effective Peace and Security, Ending Impunity and Protecting Human Rights (SSP) "The SSP is not directed against any race, community, religion, class, gender or region" he maintained. Armed Police Force (APF) personnel have been deployed in 10 eastern hilly districts, and security personnel will also be deployed in Mustang and Manang along the border with China. There are also plans to recruit 10,000 more Nepal Police (NP) personnel. Madheshi political parties and ethnic groups in eastern hilly districts have complained that the SSP has been used to curb their activities. Armed groups have also accused government security forces of extra-judicial killings of some of their leaders in "fake encounters" under the guise of the SSP.

As a result of the Special Security Programme launched by the government to maintain law and order in 36 districts across the country, security personnel have increased their actions and activities.

Safety and security

The overall security situation has not improved in comparison to previous months but the magnitude and frequency of political bandh¹, strikes declined during the festivals of Dashain, Tihar and Chhath.

On 6 October, some ethnic groups such as the Kochila Autonomous Council constructed road blocks in Jhapa, Morang and Sunsari districts.

As of 9 October, 50 people are reported to have died and three thousand have been displaced in several districts of Far Western, Mid-Western and Western regions due to floods and landslides caused by heavy rainfall from 4 to 7 October. Search and rescue efforts have been hindered because of damage to roads and telecommunication networks.

On 12 October, there was a clash between police and UCPN-M cadres in Rupandehi district during a UCPN-M protest against the visiting Minister for Irrigation. Six UCPN-M cadres, including a central-level leader, were injured.

The government established Armed Police Force (APF) base camps in eight hill districts in the eastern

¹ A short general strike

region for the implementation of the SSP. The Nepal Police and APF have started to launch joint operations in the eastern hill districts to control criminal activities of ethnic groups.

On 23 October, the UCPN-M announced a bandh (general strike) in Rupandehi, Kapilvastu and Nawalparasi districts to demand action against two police inspectors reportedly in command during a protest, though the bandh was subsequently withdrawn after the police agreed to form a committee to look into allegations of excessive use of force during the protest.

During the last week of October, the Tharuhat Autonomous State Council (TASC) geared up its activities in the MWR/FWR Terai districts. On 23 October, Tharuhat cadres of 22 Terai districts met to discuss their future strategy, and decided to conduct trainings and orientations for district level cadres on various issues including ILO 169. On 25 October, TASC organized an orientation program in Dhangadhi for its cadres in Kailali and Kanchanpur. On 26 October, around 100 Tharuhat attended an event organized for cadres from Surkhet, Banke and Bardiya in Kohalpur, and on 27 October, an orientation program was held in Dang. The Tharuhat have reportedly decided to suspend the taxation and parallel governance activities announced two months ago, but may intensify their protest program if the political deadlock in Kathmandu continues.

On 25 October, a number of individuals were reportedly injured in three violent incidents related to UCPN-M protests against visiting government ministers in Dang district.

On 27 October, Tharuhat, Khumbuwan and Limbuwan organizations jointly called a general strike in the Eastern Region to oppose the SSP and demanded the reintroduction of previous agreements and an autonomous state.

The Kirant Janabadi Workers Party (KJWP) reportedly carried out armed demonstrations in Dhankuta and Bhojpur districts. These groups such as Kirant Janabadi Workers Party (KJWP), JTMM and Limbuwan factions organized protest programmes against the SSP. JTMM and KJWP declared a ceasefire during the Dashain, Tihar and Chhath festivals for one month. Police arrested the Chief of the Nepal Defence Army (NDA) and its cadres, a central commander of Ranvir Sena, a commander of JTMM-Ranbir faction and a number of armed cadres affiliated with Terai-based ethnic outfits.

Matrika Yadav's CPN-M reportedly formed a company of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in Jhapa district with 120 PLA fighters on 25 October.

The regional stadium construction committee in Itahari called a general strike in Sunsari district from 28 October demanding the construction of a stadium in Itahari and allocation of land for its construction. The government had announced that a regional stadium would be built in Sunsari district in the current fiscal

year without determining a specific location for its construction.

The Limbuwan State Committee (LSC) affiliated to UCPN-M reportedly called for an indefinite general strike in Limbuwan districts from 29 October protesting against the indifference of the government over the killing and physical assaults of their cadres. The effect of the strike was observed in 6 districts of eastern region.

The local administration (DAO) of Bhojpur reportedly imposed a curfew order in Bhojpur from 28 October for an indefinite period against gatherings of more than five persons, displays of weapons and disruption of public life in and around a 5 kilometre radius of The Bhojpur authorities cited possible clashes between students affiliated to the All Nepal National Free Students Union (ANNFSU) of CPN-UML and the All Nepal National Independent Students Union – Revolutionary (ANNISU-R) of CPN-M over the issue of an attack on the chief of the Bhojpur campus on 25 October.

Reach of the State

According to a report provided by the OCHA Sub Office in Biratnagar, out of 596 VDCs in 12 districts of Eastern Region, 480 VDCs have a presence of VDC secretaries i.e. 80% including secretaries working from District Head Quarters (DHQ).

The media reported that on 13 October, UCPN-M cadres disrupted relief distribution programmes in several flood-affected Village Development Committees (VDCs) of Kailali district and beat the Secretary of Tikapur VDC. It was reported that the party disrupted the distribution because the VDC secretaries were distributing relief materials to individuals based on their political affiliation and denied that the party had any involvement in the beating of the VDC secretary.

The service delivery (civilian services and development activities) of the Bhimdutta Municipality in Mahendranagar, Kanchanpur, has been affected due to the absence of the Executive Officer for the past two months. A meeting of eight political parties in the district decided to delegate the Municipality authority to other staff in the Municipality office. However, according to the Local Self Governance Act 1999, only the Ministry of Local Development or the officiating Executive Officer of the Municipality can delegate authority to other staff, so the eight political parties have recommend to the Ministry of Local Development to appoint an Acting Executive Officer from other staff.

Operational Space

Overall operational space and humanitarian access has improved in comparison to previous months, as the frequency of political strikes, threats and bandhs have reduced.

OCHA Sub Office in Biratnagar reported that no agencies recorded impediments to their activities during the festival period. Cadres of Kirant Janabadi

Workers' Party (KJWP) continued extortion campaigns against teachers and locals in Khotang and Bhojpur Districts.

However, international organizations and their partners in the eastern districts faced travel obstructions from bandhs, strikes and protests called by political parties, ethnic groups and Terai-based outfits. Protesting groups asked I/NGOs to close their office operations during the bandh and protest programmes. Many educational institutions and markets remained closed.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

Koshi Flood Recovery, Eastern Region:

General Updates

The distribution of compensation for land and crops to the Koshi flood affected families is ongoing. As of 13 October, 1781 families have received the compensation package and the total amount distributed so far is 218.5 million rupees. This distribution has started from the most affected areas in the red, yellow and green zones respectively.

According to a report, 6 potential locations have been identified to allocate land for the landless. A total of 98 hectares of land is expected to be provided.

UN Habitat is planning to construct some 225 low cost houses for landless families. A team from UN Habitat along with implementing partner Lumanti, visited the potential land locations identified by the task force. The DDC-Sunsari has designated a focal person to verify landless families, to distribute land to the landless and to support the implementation of low-cost housing.

According to the CDO, Indo-Nepal Adjoining Districts Coordination meetings are being held once a month to discuss issues related to the Koshi River and repair and maintenance work.

Recovery and Reconstruction

ADB funding support seems uncertain as the parliament has not endorsed any programmes. UNDP and WFP supported Food for Work programmes with cash top ups provided 50 days of employment to 7085 households but has now ended. QIPSI Program with UNDP support is still on going.

A USAID team visited Sunsari District. USAID will provide support to the infrastructure and agriculture sectors. USAID have established their office in Inaruwa to implement programme activities.

Cluster Recovery Sector Updates

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

An ADB consultant for Koshi flood recovery activities in WASH has started work. The Water Sanitation and Sewage Disposal Office (WSSDO) completed the decommissioning of WASH facilities from vacated IDP camps in Jhumka and ongoing in Khuniyadhar camp with support from Plan Nepal. Also, arsenic testing of newly installed tube wells in flood affected areas is ongoing.

ADB will support in three sectors for drinking water and sanitation. They will construct 4 overhead tanks, 3500 tube wells, and 4500 toilets. ADB has allocated the funds but the financial bill is yet to be passed by parliament to allow funds to be channelled to local implementing partners.

869 tube wells have been installed in returnee areas by different three agencies. DEPROSC Nepal and DDC/LDF implemented these schemes with UNDP's fund support.

Plan Nepal has introduced Selenium test to the tube wells of flood affected areas.

Iron level has been found high in flood affected areas. Save the Children will install iron normalization plant in all schools. WSSDO will provide the technical assistance.

Agriculture and Livestock

FAO has procured 254 MT of fertilizer for distribution. FAO was advised to monitor and verify the beneficiaries that received paddy seed from SFRALSO with support from the District Agriculture Development Office (DADO) and distribute the fertilizer to only those who have already planted the seeds. A field monitoring report obtained from DADO was further verified by Concern, a partner NGO. A total of 164 MT of fertilizer has been distributed to the farmers who have planted the paddy seed.

DADO can only utilize the funds of ADB after the financial bill is passed by parliament. Activities under agriculture will be implemented through agricultural groups which have been started in the flood affected areas by DADO.

All line agencies that are involved in agriculture and livestock activities have submitted their plans to the government and are waiting final approval. ADB will financially support all line agencies in their early recovery work.

Food Security:

A total of 7484 individuals from 7085 households benefited from a UNDP/WFP/QIPSI/DDC/DEPROSC joint collaborative programme of Food for Work and Cash for Work. Rural roads, irrigation dams, culverts, tube wells and community fish ponds were constructed during the programme.

Health and Nutrition:

District Health Office (DHO) has been providing regular health services to all Koshi victims through the health posts of respective VDCs. Major health problems faced by the victims are eye, ear and respiratory infections, skin diseases, diarrhoea, and fever.

UPCA Nepal, a local NGO, with support from Save the Children has conducted health checks of all students from flood affected schools (16 schools and 11 madrasahs).

HOLD Nepal, a NGO, with support from World Vision International is supporting nutrition activities to children under 5 years of age in 21 wards of flood affected areas. Priority is given to severely malnourished children. District level as well as VDC level orientations have been completed. HOLD also plan to support 2500 Households (HHs) to establish kitchen gardens.

Education:

The District Education Office's regular programme has been running in all schools and madrasahs in the flood affected area. PCF programmes have been implemented in all community schools and madrasahs. The budget has been released to the schools at the rate of NPR 150 for primary level students and NPR 250 for lower secondary level students.

Plan Nepal has distributed school kits containing playing materials and story books to 15 schools and 11 madrasahs. UPCA Nepal is constructing 3 schools in flood affected VDCs. All work has been completed except for roofing. It has also started Out-of-School programmes in 3 VDCs through 15 centres. Of the planned 10 schools, 7 schools have been equipped with child friendly classrooms, education material and furniture. World Vision has carried out a needs assessment of ECD centres in flood affected areas. Based on their recommendations, education sector agencies will mobilize funds.

Protection

UPCA Nepal has developed peer educators to advocate for child rights, early marriage and child education in the flood affected area. This work is still on going.

Livelihoods

MEDEP has conducted 8 trade related trainings to 219 participants. They have constructed 8 fish ponds. DEPROSC Nepal distributed food to all participants. MEDEP has started a boutique training programme for 90 participants. 36 individuals completed Zetropha (extracting diesel fuel from plants) training and 28 individuals will start the second session in the near future. Zetropha training was only conducted for participants from the Red Zone.

Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wetlands in Nepal has been supporting community mobilization and income generation to communities in the surrounding areas of Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve. After the return of IDPs, it has started to revive these community groups. It has formed 60 user groups in 3 flood affected VDCs. Besides this, the Wetlands project has constructed 6 fish ponds. It has also distributed fishing lines to the community.

Skills Training

UN HABITAT supported training programmes have been completed. All graduates were given completion certificates along with tools. 250 participants received training in 5 different trades - electrical, masonry, plumbing, carpentry and hand embroidery. Skilled manpower from these training programmes will be

employed by local construction companies and small industries. DEPROSC has distributed food to all training participants.

Infrastructure

Ground Water Irrigation Division Office (GWIDO), Biratnagar, District Technical Office, Inaruwa, Morang Sunsari Irrigation project and Irrigation Development Division No.2 have submitted plans for long term recovery work to the government and are waiting for approval from parliament. All plans have been funded by ADB.

GWIDO will install 500 shallow tube wells. Groundwater has prepared a work plan and has devised monthly activities such as tube well boring, distribution of pumps and accessories, command area identification and operational fuel support. They have developed a 9 point plan for installing shallow tube wells.

Issues and Challenges:

Since the ADB is a major donor involved in long term recovery works in four sectors (Water and sanitation, Irrigation, Rural roads and Agriculture) in the flood affected areas, funding has not been released so far to the district level implementing partners. There is a need to address the immediate needs and priorities in these areas to resume their livelihoods.

National Cluster Updates

Food Security

The protracted food insecurity in 13 FWR and MWR Districts further deteriorated during festival time as the Nepal Food Corporation (NFC) has not delivered the allocated quantity of rice to the District food depots. The north-eastern part of Bajura District suffered a lot from rice shortages.

According to the Regional Agriculture Directorate, the MWR hilly Districts saw a 40% decline in the production of winter crops earlier this year. Before Dashain, the DFSN in Kalikot met and identified that 12 of their 30 VDCs are highly food insecure. In addition, the food stocks in the District have started drying up, and if the Karnali highway is not repaired within a month, the people will start facing food commodity shortages due to the lack of replenishment of the food stock. The DFSN has predicted a decline in the district's rice production as the late onset of the monsoon delayed rice cultivation, and blast diseases also affected the paddy crops.

According to the national media, the NFC has reduced the food quota in Humla District for this year, and plans to supply only 6,000 quintals of rice (1,100 quintals less than last year).

Protection

On 29 October, LWF organized a programme to raise awareness on the Act against Domestic Violence 2009. District stakeholders, including government line agencies, lawyers, civil society members, and I/NGOs participated in the meeting.

On 27 October, the Nepal Family Planning Association (NFPA) organized an interaction programme on girl trafficking in Dang. The NFPA is implementing the anti-trafficking programme in 8 VDCs in Dang district.

Agriculture and Livestock

The continuous heavy rainfall that affected Terai districts in the Mid and Far Western Regions during the first week of October resulted in extensive floods which severely impacted local agricultural production and hence food security. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in coordination with OCHA and the District Agriculture Development Offices (DADOs) carried out an assessment in order to quantify the damages to agricultural production. It was initially estimated that in Kailali, Kanchanpur, Banke and Bardia districts, over 17 000 hectares of crops belonging to approximately 23 000 households were severely damaged by torrential rains. In addition to this, several small and large ruminants as well as poultry lost their lives. A total of 500 hectares of fish ponds were damaged while hundreds of thousands of fish fingerlings were washed away. The most affected district was Kailali, followed by Kanchanpur, Bardia and Banke respectively.



Figure 1 : Farmers in Kailali district struggling to recover rice grains covered by silt

In order to assist farmers affected by floods, FAO is currently finalising the distribution of wheat and winter vegetable seeds to 5,500 households in Kailali and Kanchanpur districts.

In the 5 districts of Mid Western Region and as part of FAO's project on the rehabilitation of agricultural communities affected by conflict, Trainings of Trainers (ToT) on winter crops as well as a TOT and beneficiary level training on nutritional aspects of agriculture in Jajarkot district were carried out during the month of October. In the same five districts, galvanized iron sheets for the construction of goat sheds were distributed to 1,595 households in addition to 134 Mt of wheat seeds and 12,800 composite winter vegetable seeds' packages.

In Sunsari district in the Eastern Region of Nepal, during the month of October, FAO distributed 164 Mt of complex (N:P:K:S) and urea fertilisers. A second lot of fertilisers will be distributed shortly in order to support the winter cereal production of the area.

Avian Influenza Support Programmes

During the month of October, FAO's Avian Influenza control programme concentrated on Rapid Response Trainings (RRT) for the containment of potential disease outbreaks. Technician level RRTs were conducted in Chitwan covering Bara and Parsa districts. At Kathmandu level, training on laboratory diagnosis of avian influenza for the technical staff of the Central Veterinary Laboratory (CVL) was conducted.

Disaster Preparedness

The disaster preparedness plan for 2010 was endorsed by the Operational IASC meeting on 30 October. Subsequently, the plan will be forwarded to the Government for their endorsement, translation into Nepali, and distribution to all 75 districts (DDRCs) across Nepal. It has been agreed among the IASC partners that there will be district, regional and central level lessons learned workshop in the near future with the participation of all stakeholders including government. District level preparedness events will start from the beginning of January through May 2010 (i.e. before the onset of the monsoon season.)

Pre-monsoon DP workshops were completed in 13 districts in eastern region and central Terai districts. Geographic Vulnerability Mapping was completed and clusters established in 12 districts except Sankhuwasabha. Similarly, Contingency Planning workshops were conducted in three districts - Sunsari, Saptari and Sarlahi.

On 26 October, a District Disaster Relief Committee (DDRC) meeting took place in Dadeldhura and reviewed the impact of the recent landslides and relief provided to the affected families to date. The meeting decided to provide food assistance to the displaced people according to the directives received by the Ministry of Home affairs (MOHA). UNFPA provided the relief items as requested by the DDRC. The total number of displaced households in the district is 77, and among them there are 8 pregnant women and 22 lactating women whom UNFPA will be supporting with pregnant women's kits, lactating women's and baby kits.

On 28 October, the quarterly meeting of District Project Advisory Committee (DPAC) of the disaster preparedness projects funded by DIPECHO took place in Dhangadhi, Kailali. Mercy Crops and Care Nepal are implementing the disaster preparedness projects along with NRCS and CCSD in Kailali. The meeting reviewed the progress made in disaster preparedness in the district and also discussed the challenges. On 29 October, all stakeholders including representatives from the District Administration Office (DAO) and the

District Development Committee (DDC) jointly visited the project areas.

I/NGO Updates: Handicap International

Handicap International Nepal in partnership with the National Federation of the Disabled Nepal (NFDN) conducted two steering committee meetings in October

2009 to finalize resolutions adopted during a National Planning Workshop organized in September.

The resolution of the workshop is complementary to the National Policy and Plan of Action on Disability (NPPAD), and reinforces the need for ratification and implementation of the UNCRPD.

It was presented to the President Dr Ram Baran Yadav during the closing ceremony.

The Steering Committee comprises representatives from the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction, Ministry of Local Development, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, National Federation of Disabled Nepal, National Association of Blind, Disabled Human Rights Centre Nepal and Handicap International Nepal.

The inclusion of persons living with disabilities and their families in savings credit groups or cooperatives were implemented by 17 partner organizations in 12 districts. In order to include people with disabilities and their families in the existing savings credit groups, Community Disability Workers (CDWs) from the partner organizations coordinated and established links with existing microfinance groups, cooperatives and saving credit groups. Specific messages were given to these groups' members to dispel the myth that people with disabilities never repay their loans. Through such activities, CDWs aim to prevent discrimination by actors of existing financial support activities, so that people with disabilities, who are among the poorest of the poor in Nepal, can benefit from support mechanisms on an equal basis with others and can accelerate economic empowerment in their communities.

Health/HIV/AIDS Updates

18 VDC level sub-health posts in remote areas of Taplejung district have been reportedly running without Assistant Health Workers (AHW), in charge of sub-health posts, as of 22 October. According to the District Public Health Office (DPHO) Taplejung, 17 sub-health posts and one health post in the district are without AHWs and only Peons have been attending health posts for treatment of patients, vaccination programmes and other health campaigns. According to local media reports, the absence of AHWs caused the deaths of many pregnant women, children and elderly persons, due to the lack of immediate treatment at the VDC level. Altogether, 54 positions of health workers are vacant as the Department of Health did not deploy

health personnel in the required numbers, according to DPHO.

COORDINATION

Coordination meetings at district, regional and national levels are ongoing. In the FWR/MWR, OCHA is supporting DDRCs in a series of coordination meetings to respond to the floods and landslides that occurred during the first week of October and have reportedly affected 18000-20000 people in 14 different districts in the above regions.

OCHA has approved an emergency cash grant to enable FAO to purchase and distribute seeds following flash floods that affected more than 9,900 families in the MWR/FWR. The floods washed away crops during the critical planting season. Wheat must be planted by the first week of December. (Note: OCHA has issued separate situation reports on the floods and landslides).

At the central level, the disaster preparedness plan has been endorsed by the Operational IASC meeting on 30 October by IASC members and by the Ministry Of Home Affairs.

UPCOMING EVENTS/ MEETINGS

- Wed 11 November, 2009: Contact Group Meeting, 10:30 am – 12:00 pm, UN Conference Room (open to all)
- 19 November, 2009: Emergency Health and Nutrition Working Group Meeting, 10:00 am – 11:30 am, WHO Meeting Room
- 13, 20 and 27 November, 2009: Operational IASC Meeting, 10:30 am – 12:00 pm, OCHA Conference Room

For more details, please visit "Meeting Schedules" at the UN Nepal Information Platform (NIP).
<http://www.un.org.np/WebCalendar/month.php>

RECENT MAPS AVAILABLE

OCHA IMU produced a number of mapping products, some of which are listed below and are also available on the Nepal Information Platform (NIP) (<http://www.un.org.np/>).

NEPAL: Reports of Security Incidents, January - September, 2009 (<http://www.un.org.np/maps/metadata.php?id=675>)

Nepal: Reports of Bandhs/Blockades, January – September, 2009 (<http://www.un.org.np/maps/metadata.php?id=676>)

Nepal: Reports of Security Incidents - 1 to 30 September, 2009 (<http://www.un.org.np/maps/metadata.php?id=672>)

Nepal: Reports of Bandhs / Blockades - 1 to 30 September, 2009 (<http://www.un.org.np/maps/metadata.php?id=673>)

Nepal: Initial Assessment of Flood Affected Families in Kailali District (<http://www.un.org.np/maps/metadata.php?id=674>)

RECENT REPORTS AVAILABLE:

Some of the recent reports available on NIP are listed below:

National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management 2009
http://www.un.org.np/reportlibrary/table_metadata.php?mid=555

UN: UNDAF Annual Report 2008
http://www.un.org.np/reportlibrary/table_metadata.php?mid=554

WFP Report: A Sub Regional Hunger Index for Nepal.
http://www.un.org.np/reportlibrary/table_metadata.php?mid=550

WFP: The Cost of Coping
http://www.un.org.np/reportlibrary/table_metadata.php?mid=551

Disclaimer: The information in this report is consolidated from media, UN, NGO, and other humanitarian partners, subject to availability of data. Although OCHA aims to confirm reports independently, occasional factual inaccuracies can occur. For inputs, questions or comments please contact: Rita Dhakal Jayasawal, National Coordination Officer on ph. 9851072938, dhakal@un.org

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Visit the Nepal Information Platform at <http://www.un.org.np>