Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) has concluded a project to control the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in the Republic of Nepal, by building the capacity of Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) and enhancing the protection of its medical staff and facilities.

The $20,000 project serves up to 15,000 people in 21 districts of seven provinces as follows: Province 1 (Jhapa, Sunsari, and Udayapur), Province 2 (Sarlahi, Bara, and Rautahat), Bagmati (Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Lalitpur, and Dhading), Gandaki (Baglung and Syanjha), Lumbini (Kapilvastu, Parasi, and Rupandhei), Karnali (Jumla, Dailekh, and Jajgarkot), and Sudur Paschim (Acham, Bhajhang, and Darchula).

Instead of 20 as originally planned, a total of 55 ambulance vehicles from different districts were upgraded with compartment divisions, oxygen cylinders, oxygen masks, and flow meters.

Moreover, 20 ambulance drivers were oriented on infection prevention and control (IPC) and the proper way of using masks and personal protective equipment (PPE). Altogether, 20 orientation events were conducted (nine in Bhaktapur, one in Jhapa, two Udayapur, six in Sunsari, one in Kathmandu, and one in Lalitpur). At the same time, 1,733 PPEs were distributed to the frontline volunteers in 21 districts.

To ensure the safety of NRCS volunteers and staff, the premises of its blood transfusion service centers and eye hospitals were regularly
disinfected. Disinfectant spray bottles (hypochlorite) were distributed in the potentially COVID-19 contaminated areas, offices, and health posts.

Dan Bikram Thapa, an ambulance driver at NRCS’s chapter in Jhapa, said, “The project not only provided me with an employment opportunity, but also inspired me to serve the community. These days, I am involved in transferring those who need to be taken to the designated hospital for COVID-19 test. We were provided with PPE and received first-aid training”.

“Initially, I was so scared and had no idea what would come up after transferring the infected people from Bharadashi Gapa to Biratnagar Corona Hospital, which was my first case regarding COVID-19 response,” said Mr. Thapa. “After getting back, I stayed in quarantine for 14 days. I received psychosocial counselling at office, which helped me to keep my spirit up. I waited for the result of rapid diagnostic test (RDT), with the hope that it would be negative. Finally, it was a relief for me to find the result negative. Now, I am happily engaged in my service, feeling proud of being on duty to serve humanity’.

The project is part of QRCS’s initiative to back the fellow National Societies in 22 countries across six continents, aimed at protecting 320,000 persons against the virus, with a total budget of approximately QR 2.2 million.

These countries are: Palestine, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Tajikistan, Mongolia, Laos, Vanuatu, Ethiopia, Chad, Senegal, Mauritania, Ivory Coast, Mali, Sierra Leone, Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, Venezuela, El Salvador, Peru, and Panama.

The list of activities conducted by QRCS in support of those countries includes provision of equipment and supplies for health facilities, provision of medicines and medical supplies, protection for medical
professionals and volunteers, provision of food and shelter for families worst affected by loss of income, and provision of protective supplies (masks, gloves, sanitizers, etc.).

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About Qatar Red Crescent (QRCS)
Established in 1978, Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) is a humanitarian volunteering organization that aims to assist and empower vulnerable individuals and communities without partiality or discrimination.

QRCS is a member of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which consists of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and 191 National Societies. QRCS is also a member of several GCC, Arab, and Islamic organizations, such as the Islamic Committee of International Crescent and the Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Organization (ARCO). In this legally recognized capacity, QRCS has access to disaster and conflict zones, thus serving as an auxiliary to the State of Qatar in its humanitarian efforts — a role that distinguishes it from other local charities and NGOs.

QRCS operates both locally and internationally and has ongoing international relief and development projects in a number of countries throughout the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Europe. QRCS's humanitarian actions include providing support in disaster preparedness, disaster response, risk reduction, and disaster recovery. To mitigate the impact of disasters and improve the livelihoods of affected populations, QRCS provides medical services, healthcare, and social development to local communities. It is also active at the humanitarian advocacy front. With the help of a vast network of trained, committed staff and volunteers, QRCS aspires to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity.

QRCS works under the umbrella of the seven international humanitarian principles: Humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, and universality.