

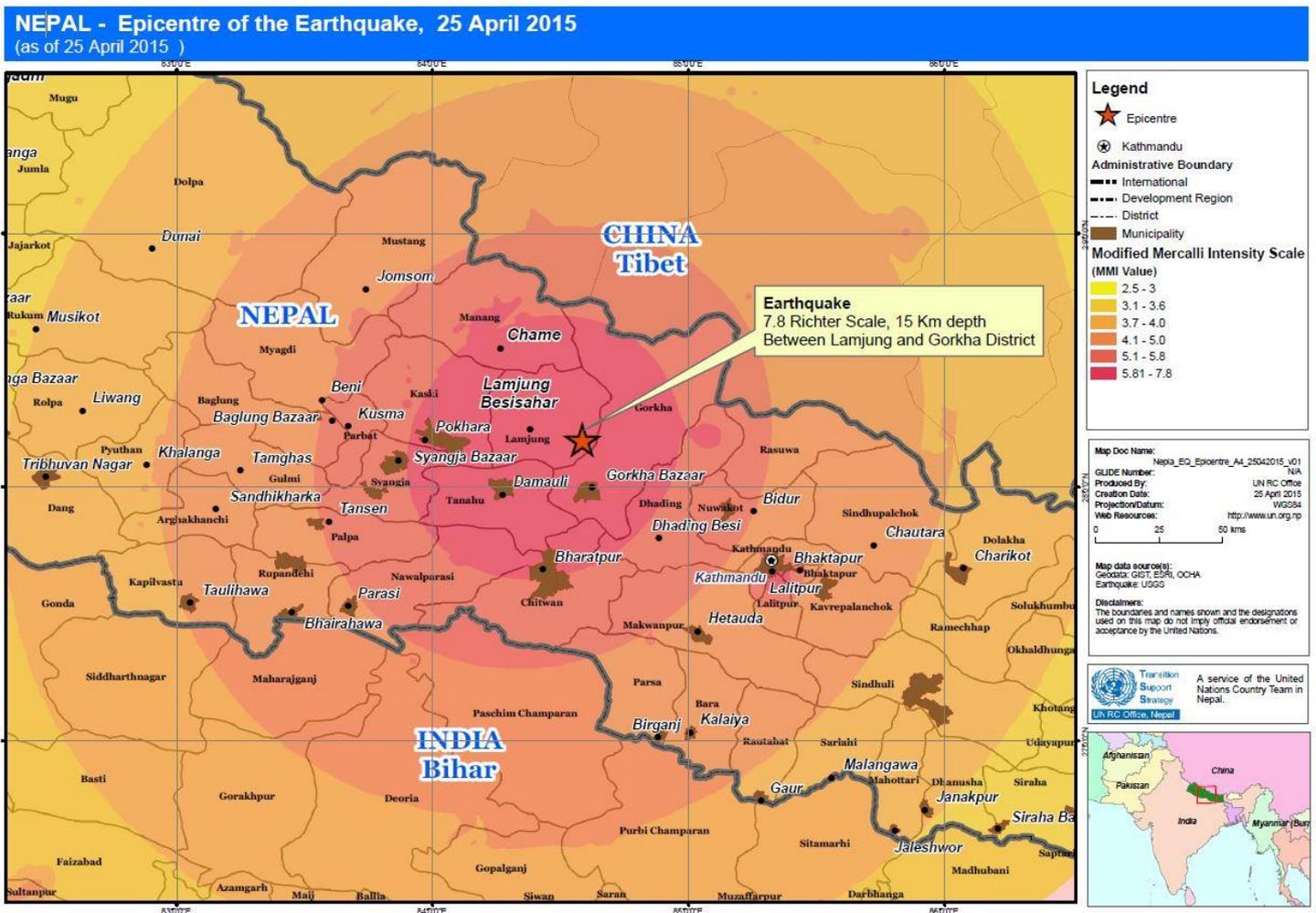
UNICEF Nepal Information Note

Earthquake - 25 April 2015



Overall Situation

An earthquake measuring 7.8 on the Richter scale occurred at 11:56 p.m. Kathmandu time, striking a large area of central Nepal between the capital Kathmandu and the city of Pokhara. It was followed by 16 aftershocks of around 5 on the Richter scale. The epicentre was in Lamjung District, northwest of Kathmandu.



According to the latest report, more than 1,150 people have been killed and the number of casualties has been increasing hourly. It is Nepal's deadliest earthquake for more than 80 years. According to the Government, 30 out of the country's 75 districts in the Western and Central Regions have been affected. This includes mountain and hilly areas with disperse rural populations as well as some very densely populated districts and Nepal's two largest cities – greater Kathmandu and Pokhara. The **Government has declared a state of emergency** in the affected areas. Most affected districts are Sindupalchowk, Kavre, Nuwakot, Rasuwa, Dolakha in the Central Region and Kaski, Gorkha, Lamjung in the Western Region. However, detailed information from these districts has been very difficult to obtain. There has been no figure on affected population yet. The size of the geographical areas concerned, scattered

population and road blockages are expected to pose serious challenges to reach the affected population.

Impacts in Kathmandu Valley include collapsed buildings and walls including historic buildings in different parts of the valley. Hospitals area overcrowded and running short of emergency supplies. A majority of people, including those whose houses did not collapse, are remaining outside houses at night, due to the fear of aftershocks and structural damage to buildings.

UNICEF's response

As part of its preparedness activities, and following the major floods that affected the country in December 2014, the UNICEF Country Office had updated its Business Continuity and Contingency Plans as of February 2015.

UNICEF started to receive requests for assistance for essential drugs, medical and surgical equipment (trauma kits), and tents for emergency hospitals.

Currently, UNICEF has US\$800,000 worth of pre-positioned materials to cover immediate needs in the sectors of WASH, Health, Nutrition, Protection and Education. Forty per cent of these items are in Kathmandu warehouses, and the balance is in Biratnagar, Nepalganj and Bharatpur in Terai (southern plain) area. UNICEF Supply Division in Copenhagen is also on alert should additional supplies need to be dispatched from stocks in Dubai, and they have technical staff on standby for surge deployment.

Emergency staff are on standby for surge deployment from NYHQ, Copenhagen and Global Clusters. The Regional Office also located in Kathmandu is already providing technical support to the CO. There are 20 staff from the WASH sector who are available in Kathmandu as they were attending a workshop there. The CO will be able to draw on this crucial technical support for the response.

Government's response

The Government has held an emergency meeting of their Central Natural Disaster Relief Committee (CNDRC) followed by meetings with Cabinet and the humanitarian community including UNICEF. All health staff are mobilized and being deployed in small teams to hospitals in Kathmandu and worst-affected areas such as Gorkha and Lamjung Districts on a priority basis. The Government is also trying to mobilize heavy equipment to remove rubbles and carry out search and rescue operations. To this end, the governments of China and India have offered the use of their military assets to support the response.

The Government is planning to set up camps for displaced population in Kathmandu and other affected districts and there will be a substantial need for temporary shelter materials. As more information becomes available and the relief and rehabilitation activities get stepped up, the needs for assistance in other sectors is expected. They will include Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Health, Food/Nutrition, Protection and Education.

The National Emergency Operating Centre is operational. The Kathmandu and Pokhara Airports remain open. Some commercial flights appear to be coming in. The status of the main and feeder roads outside of Kathmandu Valley is still unclear. More detailed information is being collected in view of the criticality of logistics. Also, the Government has been requested to expedite customs clearance for emergency cargo and processes at the airports.

Humanitarian leadership and coordination

On 25 April, the UNCT led by the Resident Coordinator met with Government officials who have indicated they will activate the Clusters for the emergency response.

On 26 April, Humanitarian Cluster Meetings will be held to assess the latest situation and organize the initial needs assessments in each area. It will be followed by a meeting with the Government, UN agencies and other humanitarian partners in country to agree on priority programme areas for assistance. Sectoral response plans already under discussion will also be shared during the meeting. The UN Resident Coordinator contacted the Regional Office of the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and requested the dispatch of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team to facilitate inter-cluster coordination.

Funding

In addition to pre-positioned supplies in-country, UNICEF has released US\$1 million from its Emergency Programme Fund (EPF) to ensure that life-saving needs are met and sectoral interventions are initiated. Furthermore, the majority of NatComs are already actively fundraising and the US Fund for UNICEF has pledged the release of US\$1 million as early as next week for the response.

**Who to
contact for
further
information:**

Tomoo Hozumi
Representative, Nepal
Telephone: +977 1 552 1342
Email: thozumi@unicef.org

Rownak Kahn
Deputy Representative, Nepal
Telephone: 977-1-5523325
E-mail: rkhan@unicef.org

John Brittain
Chief of Communications, Nepal
Telephone: 977-1552-3200 x1182
E-mail: jbrittain@unicef.org