

# **Nepal: Updates on the Flooding in Seti River**

## **Situation Report-02**

### **07 May 2012**

*This report has been prepared by OCHA Humanitarian Support Unit with direct field observation of UN team, information from District Disaster Relief Committee (DDRC), Security Forces, Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) and other humanitarian agencies involved in response activities.*

#### **I. Background:**

A landslide near Machhapuchhre Mountain in Kaski district triggered a catastrophic flash flood in Seti River, sweeping settlements and breaching the river banks downstream on 05 May 2012 at around 0930 hrs. Kharapani village in Sardikhola Village Development Committee (VDC) and Sadal village in Machhapuchhre VDC are worst hit by the powerful outburst. According to National Emergency Center (NEOC), total of 20 people have confirmed dead and 44 gone missing as of 1800 hrs, 07 May 2012. Most of the deceased are pilgrims, people picnicking, locals, tourists and laborers working on sand/stone quarry in the river bank. The level of Seti River was as high as 30 ft at some locations during the time of flooding. The bad hit area is 40 km north from Pokhara valley.

#### **II. Situation Overview:**

Total 20 persons confirmed dead and 44 persons missing including 4 children and 3 foreigners, the number of missing is expected to increase which may go beyond 100 persons. Total of 14 families (nine in Kharapani village of Sardikhola VDC, also called as Tatopani and five in Machhapuchhre VDC-09) have been displaced; two children of age 8 and 11 respectively lost their both of the parents during the incident and they are taken care by their relatives for the time being. Total of 20 houses (4 permanent and 16 temporary), two temples, one community building have been completely swept away by the flooding. However, there is no information on water system damaged and affected communities in two upstream VDCs. Half of a kilometer of the road section, two suspension bridges, water supply system to the Pokhara valley (which supplies around 60 percent of water supply in the valley) and electric poles have been damaged. Access to Annapurna Lower Secondary School, which is in the safe location in other side of the River, has been interrupted due to collapse of the suspension bridge over the Seti River. The school is closed now and around 50-60 children from other side of the river have no access to school. The affected families in the major two sites in Kaski district are comparatively less than non local residents especially visitors, pilgrims, students having picnic, labors etc. Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) has already provided the immediate relief items to the affected family and District Disaster Relief Committee (DDRC) has not yet appealed for the external support for this incident.

#### **III. The Response Activities:**

- DDRC members of Kaski district, Nepal Army, Nepal police, Armed Police Force, Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS), UN Agencies and other humanitarian partners are continuing the search and rescue operation;
- Total four excavators have been mobilized today to search the bodies of missing people;
- NRCS Kaski district chapter, in coordination with DDRC provided cash support, non-food items (NFI) and food items to the affected population; A team comprising members from District Administration Office (DAO), District Development Committee (DDC), District Technical Office (DTO), NRCS, UN Field Coordination Office (FCO), UNICEF was mobilized today to have the damage assessment of the affected area which was led by the DDRC Kaski;
- Health cluster members at district level met on 07 May 2012 in the afternoon at District Public Health Office (DPHO) and decided to conduct some activities immediately. According to DPHO, local health facilities will be mobilized to disseminate health and hygiene preventive related messages in the affected communities in collaboration with local media. In this respect, DPHO, Regional Monitoring and Supervision Office (RMSO) of the Department of Water Supply and Sewerage (DWSS) and Nepal Water Supply Corporation (NWSC) will have work together to develop and disseminate consistent hygiene preventive messages through radio, TV and print media.

- Representatives of UN OCHA, UN Field Coordination Office-Bharatpur, UNICEF (Kathmandu and Field Office, Bharatpur), WHO, UNDP, WFP and OXFAM are in the field to support the DDRC's effort of rapid assessment and other humanitarian coordination activities;
- UN team members shortly met with RMSO this evening and learnt that there is no significant damage of rural water supply systems in the affected communities of two VDCs. However, further confirmation will have to be made after the joint field visit and consultation with local communities;
- People who are under treatment in private hospitals will be recommended for free treatment and Western Regional Hospital is to manage dead bodies. Regional health office, nursing association and other agencies will be mobilized for health checkup in the flood affected area.

#### **IV. Major Gaps and Challenges:**

- There is difficulty identifying the dead body as majority of them are not from the local community; it is also very difficult to estimate the number of missing as many people were there for recreation and pilgrimage from adjoining districts;
- There is difficulty managing the dead bodies due to lack of proper identification and mortuary in the hospital;
- As the water supply system which supplies around 60 percent of city supply in Pokhara valley has been damaged, there is scarcity of drinking water and people may use unprotected water sources;

#### **V. Other Development:**

- Searching of the missing people is ongoing along the Seti River by the security forces using additional heavy equipment today;
- Five-member task force has been mobilized for damage assessment which comprises the representative from District Administrative Office (DAO), DDC, NRCS, Nepal Police, and District Technical Office (DTO) and UN Field Coordination Office;
- Water Supply Sanitation Division Office shall take lead in reconstruction of water supply system damaged by the flood;
- Nepal Water Supply Corporation (NWSC) joint team from Kathmandu and Pokhara visited damaged water points and informed that over 60 percent discharge to the municipal areas and Regional Monitoring Supervision Office (RMSO);
- UN team members along with other humanitarian partners are accompanying the rapid assessment initiatives led by the DDRC Kaski on 08 May 2012.