

# CONSULTATIONS WITH MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT IN NEPAL

THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION – IOM UN MIGRATION AGENCY, WITH SUPPORT FROM USAID/OFDA, HAS CONDUCTED CONSULTATIONS WITH MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT OF SIX COMMITTEES TO DISCUSS THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS IN DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT.



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## PROJECT BACKGROUND

The consultations held by International Organization for Migration, with financial support from USAID/OFDA, are part of the project "Technical Support to Government of Nepal to Implement the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act". This project was formulated in June 2018 with an aim to contribute to the establishment of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority following the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017.

## CONSULTATIONS

### 1. Members of Parliament of House of Representatives, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2018

The programme was facilitated by former Education Minister and Senior DRM expert Dr. Gangalal Tuladhar and attended by senior Parliamentarian and Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs Ms. Indu Ghimire. The opening remarks were given by Mr. Jitendra Bohara, Program Manager at IOM Nepal, welcoming all Honorable Members of Parliament to the meeting and emphasized that the consultation would support the prioritization of disaster risk reduction and management on the agenda of Honorable Members of Parliament. Senior Government Official (Under Secretary) from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Mr. Bamshi Kumar Acharya presented the existing policies and provision in disaster risk management in Nepal, including the National Disaster Response Framework and the proposed structure and function of a National Disaster Management Authority. He further commended IOM for gathering the Honorable Members of Parliament for the consultation to discuss such an important topic. Dr. Tuladhar gave a presentation on disaster risk reduction and management, which included lessons learnt from the 2015 Gorkha earthquakes as well as best practices from other nations including policy formulation and implementation. Ms. Kristina Dewi from IOM Indonesia presented disaster risk reduction and management policy and legislation in Indonesia, from local to national level, highlighting the vital role they have played in terms of achieving effective disaster risk management.

#### Recommendation 1-1

It was recommended for Honorable Members of Parliament to receive trainings on the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017 as well as the current legislative and institutional provision of disaster risk reduction and management in Nepal.

#### Recommendation 1-2

It was recommended by the participants during the plenary session to IOM to hold consultations with other Honorable Members of Parliament including Ministers of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration, as well as holding consultations for all the local level units. This resulted in another six consultations with Committees in Parliament to advocate for disaster risk reduction and management and the institutional setup of a National Disaster Management Authority.

#### Recommendation 1-3

It was recommended to hold a consultation on the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017 and the formulation of a National Disaster Management Authority with the Chair and Committee Secretaries of various Committees in Parliament.

#### Recommendation 1-4

It was recommended to conduct exposure visits to countries with good practices on disaster risk management.

### 2. Law, Justice and Human Rights Committee, 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> March 2019

The national consultation on "Inclusion of DRRM into law making process" was chaired by Honorable Krishna Bhakta Pokhrel, chair of the Law, Justice and Human Rights Committee. The programme was facilitated by Dr. Tuladhar, focusing on the inclusion of Disaster Risk Reduction and Management into the process of drafting laws in the new devolved federal structure. Honorable Subash Chandra Nembang, Chair of Constituent Assembly, commenced the programme with his opening remarks and highlighted that DRRM being one of the important issue considered and included in development planning.

On the second day, Dr. Tuladhar focused on "Inclusion of disaster risk reduction and management into law making process" and presented a session on sharing practices from different countries. The Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Honorable Bhanu Bhakta Dhakal highlighted the legislative amendments that have been made, providing the government an opportunity to appoint well-versed and capable Chief Executive Officer of National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority. Following his remarks, an interactive television show was organized to further discuss the role of Parliamentarians to ensure disaster risk reduction and management to be mainstreamed into sectoral laws, from which the recommendations listed below are taken.

## **Recommendation 2-1**

It was recommended to monitor whether the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017, laws and policies are being formulated and implemented at the Provincial and Local Government level, and whether they reflect local disaster risks.

## **Recommendation 2-2**

It was recommended to incorporate and mainstream disaster risk reduction into all future development plans and into school and high school curriculum.

## **Recommendation 2-3**

It was recommended that the formation of a National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority must be led by disaster risk reduction and management experts.

### **3. Development and Technology Committee, 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> May 2019**

Dr. Tuladhar presented different disaster scenarios in Nepal with a focus on how disaster induced issues can be addressed at a Parliamentary level. Furthermore Dr. Tuladhar stressed how development projects need to become more systematic and planned in order to be in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

Dr. Tuladhar proceeded on the second day with a focus on inclusion of disaster risk reduction and management in the law making process and briefed on the current legislation, the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017. Dr. Tuladhar further listed five actions that Parliamentarians can take to make development disaster resilient: 1) improve legislation and legislative oversight for disaster-resilient development, 2) Improve policy and regulations to make development resilient to disasters, 3) improve institutional frameworks to give development authorities lead responsibility for disaster risk reduction, 4) support decentralization for local action toward disaster-resilient development, and 5) promote climate change adaptation through disaster risk reduction.

Furthermore, Dr. Tuladhar explained recommendations regarding disaster risk governance, including: the government needs to define the roles and responsibilities in DRRM to ensure accountability and transparency, and ensure that disaster risk reduction law, policies and plans are gender and diversity sensitive to include and protect those most vulnerable in the event of a disaster. Honorable Kalyani Kumari Khadka gave closing remarks, highlighting that the technical sectors should be provided similar disaster risk reduction and management trainings and simulations as the Committee Members.

## **Recommendation 3-1**

It was recommended a transition from disaster management to disaster risk management and investment in multi-sector and stakeholder platforms to ensure disaster risk reduction mainstreaming.

## **Recommendation 3-2**

It was recommended to share responsibility between the government and non-governmental actors and stakeholders to ensure that actors outside of the government can contribute to decision-making and implementation of disaster risk reduction.

## **Recommendation 3-3**

It was recommended to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of actors in disaster risk management in order to assure accountability and transparency.

## **Recommendation 3-4**

It was recommended that disaster risk reduction related legislation, policies and plans to be gender and diversity sensitive to protect those most vulnerable during a disaster.

### **4. Finance Committee of House of Representative, 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019**

Dr. Tuladhar facilitated and coordinated the program, which was formally chaired by Chief of Finance Committee Honorable Krishna Prasad. Dr. Tuladhar gave a presentation on the disaster management cycle and disaster impacts. Honorable Juli Kumari Mahato, following Mrs. Sarita Shrestha Maskey-Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Urban Development, Honorable Ram Babu Kumar Yadav and others expressed concern that Nepal is a geographically diverse, meaning the same mechanisms may not be applied to all the regions. The consultations identified challenges in addressing disaster risk reduction and management due to budgetary and time constraints. The consultation contributed to awareness among the Honorable Members of Parliament on their role in allocating resources for risk reduction.

## **Recommendation 4-1**

It was recommended further coordination with Honorable Members of Parliament for technical assistance and effective implementation of the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017.

## **Recommendation 4-2**

It was recommended for Honorable Members of Parliament to allocate a budget for disaster preparedness and for the effective implementation of the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017.

## 5. Agriculture, Cooperative and Natural Committee, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2019

The program was facilitated by Dr. Tuladhar and formally chaired by Chairperson of Agriculture, Cooperative and Natural Resources Committee, Honorable Purna Kumari Subedi. Dr. Tuladhar presented disaster management in three phases: pre-disaster, disaster and post-disaster, and stressed that issues such as water shortage and climate change need to be included in the common agenda for discussion in Parliament. Dr. Tuladhar further addressed flood and landslide risk, highlighting that river side encroachment and urban development are the main reasons for the increasing risks. Honorable Purna Kumari Subedi held closing remarks, emphasizing the importance of the consultations on disaster risk reduction and management and the contribution to enhanced knowledge about the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017.

### Recommendation 5-1

It was recommended that the disaster risk reduction and management consultations continue on long-term planning in order to assist the implementation of plans and policies related to disaster risk reduction and management.

### Recommendation 5-2

It was recommended that there should be a strict implementation of land use planning, land management and building codes.

## 6. Health and Education Committee, 14<sup>th</sup> July 2019

Dr. Tuladhar presented disaster scenarios in Nepal and highlighted the role of education in understanding the geology of Nepal and the scientific development procedures. Referring to the Sendai Framework of Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, Dr. Tuladhar highlighted education as a means to make future generations more aware of disaster risk reduction and disaster management. A questions and answers session followed the presentation, during which Honorable Jaya Puri Gharti expressed a wish to turn the consultation into a national campaign to mainstream disaster awareness raising throughout Nepal.

### Recommendation 6-1

It was recommended that settlements located in hazard exposed areas should be relocated to carefully assessed new settlements.

### Recommendation 6-2

It was recommended the immediate establishment of a technical committee to focus on inevitable disasters, such as the floods and landslides brought by the monsoon.

## 7. Women and Social Committee, 19<sup>th</sup> July 2019

The consultation was facilitated and coordinated by Dr. Tuladhar, and the program was formally chaired by the Chairperson of the Women and Social Committee, Honorable Nirudevi Pal. Dr. Tuladhar held a presentation with visual materials of disaster impacts such as video footage of earthquakes, floods and landslides, as well as news articles covering the monsoon floods in Terai and Kathmandu. Dr. Tuladhar applied the visuals to stress the encroachment of the river side being one of the major causes for the increased flood risk. Dr. Tuladhar further addressed the role of Parliamentarians as political leaders, legislators, lobbyists and campaigners in terms of in disaster preparedness and the implementation of the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017. Honorable Nirudevi Pal expressed gratitude towards IOM on behalf of the Committee for arranging the consultation and stressed that disaster risk reduction and management is linked with the work of the Committee.

### Recommendation 7-1

It was recommended that consultations also need to be organized with the heads of State, such as the Prime Minister, President or the Speaker of the Parliament, who hold sole authority to execute and formulate such act and policies.

### Recommendation 7-2

There was expressed interest in further coordination with IOM Nepal for technical assistance for the effective implementation of the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017.

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