



Photo: UN Women/Piyavit Thongsa-Ard

NEWSLETTER  
JULY 2015

## UN WOMEN NEPAL

# INTERNATIONAL DONORS MET IN KATHMANDU TO SUPPORT NEPAL'S RECONSTRUCTION

Two months after massive earthquakes impacted Nepal, representatives of foreign governments, development partners and multilateral agencies gathered in Kathmandu for the International Conference on Nepal's Reconstruction. Before the Conference the Government of Nepal presented the Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA), which estimates the damages, losses, and needs for Nepal to resume a normal national life.

The PDNA -prepared by the National Planning Commission in line with international best practices and methods is an exceptional example of coordination among all the ministries of the government and nearly 500 national and international experts, including UN Women.

The PDNA recognizes women, along with children, senior citizens, people living with disability, caste-based and ethnic minorities are the social groups that have not only limited opportunities, ownership and access to economic resources to support their recovery, but also limited ability in the decision-making processes to influence how the recovery and reconstruction resources are distributed and shared.

Women - who represent 51 of the population of Nepal-, have been the single most adversely affected group.

Fifty-five of the earthquake casualties were women; 26 of the damaged houses belong to female headed households and 52 per cent of at least 84,000 workers in the tourism sector hat have been affected by the earthquakes are women.

During the Conference, Roberta Clarke, UN Women Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific joined the UN system and the international community in extending solidarity to the Government and people of Nepal. The Regional Director stated that "as the Post Disaster Needs Assessment notes, because

of intersecting inequalities and gender roles, many women and girls were and continue to be affected differentially by the earthquake's aftermath. Because of their limited access to assets and economic opportunities, limited educational attainment and the burden of care for families, many women, especially in remote areas cannot access resources and services for recovery."

Donors pledged 4.4 of the 6.7 billion dollars that the Government of Nepal estimated will be needed not only for bolstering the efforts towards recovery and reconstruction, but also for building Nepal's resilience to be better placed and resources for a safer future. Among the biggest donors are India, China, Japan, United States, the European Union and the World Bank.

Ms. Clarke closed her remarks by assuring that "UN Women is wholly committed to continue to work with the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare in support of the implementation of the PDNA recommendations [and will continue] working with women's organizations to promote women's economic engagement to build resilience in the long run."

### RELATED:

[PDNA Vol. A: Key findings](#) ▶

[PDNA Vol. B: Sector reports](#) ▶



ABOVE | UN Women Regional Director Roberta Clarke, Representative in Nepal Ziad Sheikh and local staff members meet with women's groups which contributed to the Common Charter. Photo: UN Women/Samir Jung Thapa

## A COLLECTIVE VOICE FOR WOMEN

With the support of UN Women, women’s groups met in Kathmandu five days after the earthquake to adopt a “Common Charter of Demands for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in the Humanitarian Response.” The Charter calls for the use of a gender lens in the assessment, planning, development and implementation of policies and programmes responding to the disaster.

The eight signatory organizations that represent a vast diversity of Nepal’s civil society, highlight the role of women as agents of change and ask that women be provided with livelihoods and income generation based on direct consultation to ensure that activities are tailored to their needs, circumstances and capacities.

[Full text of the Common Charter of Demands...▶](#)

## RESPONDING TO THE MOST URGENT NEEDS

As part of the immediate relief efforts, UN Women in coordination with civil society partners and government authorities has distributed more than 4,500 dignity kits, set information desks and multi-purpose women centres in 5 districts and is providing psycho-social support.

Dignity kits provide women with emergency clothing and hygiene items, as well as non-food items such as solar lanterns. These have been distributed in Kathmandu, Sindhupalchowk, Gorkha, Kavre, Lalitpur Dhading, Bhaktapur and Nuwakot via the Department of Women and Children through civil society partners such as SAATHI, Women for Human Rights, Women’s Rehabilitation Center, Positive Women Network, Home Based Workers Network - SABAH, Migrant Women Workers Network – Pourakhi, Rural Women’s Network-Hemawanti, Feminist Dalit Organisation, Trafficking survivors Network - Shakti Samuah, National Network of Women living with HIV/AIDS, Beyond Beijing Committee and National Disability Women’s Association in coordination with local authorities and security forces.

Three information centres in Nuwakot, Gorkha and Sindhupalchowk have been set up via Media Advisory Group partnership. The desks provide women with up-to-date information about the services available, and will also



ABOVE | Woman exiting the Information Centre in Sindhupalchowk. Photo: UN Women/Samir Jung Thapa

monitor the relief response to continue assessing if women and girls’ needs are being identified and addressed.

With the Centre for Victims of Torture, psychosocial first aid, group counselling and individual counselling are being offered. The focus of this initiative is to address immediate trauma and psychosocial needs of earthquake affected women and their families in the Sindhuli, Ramechhap and Kavre districts.

Five multi-purpose women’s centres have been established in Sindhupalchowk, Gorkha, Kathmandu, Kavre and Nuwakot districts. The centres are being managed by UN Women civil society partners in close coordination with the Department of Women and Children. The centres will act as hubs, providing dignity kits, solar lamps, trauma counselling, referrals, life-saving information, carrying out women’s safety audits in each district and facilitating early recovery and livelihood activities.

With the support from Norwegian Capacity (NORCAP) seconded staff, these centers are being visited to evaluate the activities and services provided to the earthquake affected population and provide technical support to the partner’s organization during the implementation.



ABOVE | Dignity kits distribution in Melchour, Chautara. Photo: UN Women/Samir Jung Thapa

## THE GENDER FACTOR IN NEPAL’S RECONSTRUCTION BY ZIAD SHEIKH, UN WOMEN REPRESENTATIVE IN NEPAL

On 25 April, life changed for all of us who live, love or are related in any way to Nepal, especially for the family members and loved ones of more than 8,800 people who perished, for those who were injured and for the hundreds of thousands who lost their homes and sources of livelihood. The 7.8 magnitude earthquake left 2.8 million people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance and

billions of dollars in damages and losses. The earthquake impacted everyone, but poverty, exclusion, discrimination and widespread inequalities were critical factors that defined who died and how the survivors are dealing with and responding to disaster. | [Read more...▶](#)

## A NATIONAL DEBATE ON GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING

High level representation from the Women, Children, Senior Citizens and Social Welfare Committee of the Constituent Assembly, the National Planning Commission, the Ministry and Finances and UN Women met for the first time with law-makers, gender equality advocates, socio-economist and civil society representatives to discuss how the integration of policy and programmes can address gender equality and women's empowerment concerns across all sectors in the forthcoming fiscal year 2015/16

Government of Nepal's annual budget, to be approved in July 2015. The Ministry of Finance and the National Planning Commission and Women, Children, Senior Citizens and Social Welfare Committee have appreciated and agreed to consider many recommendations to address in the coming budget as well as monitoring the allocated budget to ensure effective use in changing life of women.

The Government of Nepal has been implementing a Gender Responsive Budgeting system (GRB) since 2007/08.

Accordingly, the proportion of budget directly contributing to gender equality has increased to 21.93 in 2014/15 from 11.30 in 2007/08.

The country has developed, implemented and refined a tracking system to provide critical information on gender-responsive investments that can serve as a great example for other countries and instances ahead of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa.

In an interview, Nepal's Minister of Finance Ram Sharan Mahat discussed how this developing country has been able to prioritize gender equality in its planning and budgeting, as well as its achievements and the challenges ahead, particularly after the recent earthquakes: | [Read more ...](#) ►

## LEVERAGING THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

The Right to Information (RTI) was for the first time recognized in Nepal's 1990 Constitution guarantying it as a fundamental right of citizens to demand and obtain information held by public agencies on any matter of public importance.

Later in 2007 a government taskforce drafted a bill on right to information which a specific law to regulate it. The Right to Information Act has provided for an independent National Information Commission (NIC) for the protection, promotion and execution of Right to Information in Nepal.

Recently NIC partnering with the UN Women organized two consultations with women's group who drafted the Common Charter of Demand with specific focus to government initiative to humanitarian response. The platform was created so that women's group could have face to face dialogue with the government representative from the National Planning Commission, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Women Children and Ministry of Federal affairs and Local Development.

The recent earthquakes highlighted in a very real way how critical for survival has been to know where and how to access relief, where the cash-for-work may be taking place, how to follow up on lost documentation and other basic necessities. It has also evidenced the challenges faced by particular discriminated or disadvantaged sections of the population to gather accurate and timely information.

The second consultation was organized with the high level women dignitaries from Nepal Government to discuss how the RTI Act can be leveraged to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The encounter helped to explore ways in which UN Women, civil society, the NIC and other relevant government agencies can best utilize the existing laws and framework to further women's rights in the country.

## HELPING NEPALI WIDOWS REGAIN THEIR FOOTING

Mina Shrestha, 30, was visiting her parents some 90 kilometres from the Nepali capital of Kathmandu on 25 April 2015. She had not seen them in a few months, so she left her two sons with her husband at home in Dharmasthali, a small town on the outskirts of Kathmandu.

When the earthquake struck, she immediately tried to contact her husband but the phones were jammed. Unable to reach her family, she tried to leave early the next morning, but the roads were blocked. | [Read more ...](#) ►



ABOVE | Mina Shrestha, a 30-year-old mother widowed during the earthquake in April, is one of the many women receiving much-needed assistance in Dharmasthali. Photo: UN Women/ Samir Jung Thapa

# REACHING OUT TO SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE IN POST-EARTHQUAKE NEPAL



ABOVE | A case worker at the Kabhre multipurpose women's center in Panchkhal, Nepal, Sabitri Lamichanne attends a programme on 1 July. The multipurpose women's centre provides dignity kits, solar lamps, trauma counselling, information, referrals, carries out women's safety audits and facilitates early recovery and livelihood activities. Photo: UN Women/Samir Jung Thapa

Rajani BK\*, 26, was sitting in front of her house when her father came home early in the morning and started verbally abusing her mother, who was getting ready to go to work. "He was drunk, angry and started threatening to kill my mother," says BK. She tried to intervene, and was dragged near a wall, and thought she was going to die. This was not the first time BK felt physically threatened by her father. She doesn't remember a time when he was not abusive.

BK has not been able to sleep properly since the 25 April 7.8-magnitude earthquake and 12 May 7.3-magnitude aftershock that devastated Nepal. Her house was destroyed, but she couldn't even live in the temporary tent that was set up by her family because she feared her father would assault her. "If we had a house, I would know where to hide to stay away from my father, but in a tent, I didn't feel secure enough," says BK. | [Read more ...](#) ▶

## COORDINATING THE GENDER WORKING GROUP

Co-chaired by OCHA and UN Women, the Humanitarian Response Inter Cluster Gender Working Group (GWG) was established with the endorsement of the Humanitarian Coordinator in Nepal, on 30 April 2015, five days after the earthquake. Supported by a GENCAP Advisor, the GWG has ensured that a gender marker was incorporated in the Flash Appeal, and has prepared Gender Indicators for the Monitoring Framework. The Group is also working very closely with the Inter-Agency Communicating with

Communities Group in order to ensure the voices of women are fully captured and their specific needs and priorities identified, when feedback from affected people is collected.

The GWG has prepared a baseline Gender Profile for Nepal as well as regular Gender Update.

[Read more | No. 1](#) ▶ | [No. 2](#) ▶ | [No.3](#) ▶ | [No.4](#) ▶ |

## UN WOMEN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TO NEPAL EARTHQUAKE

