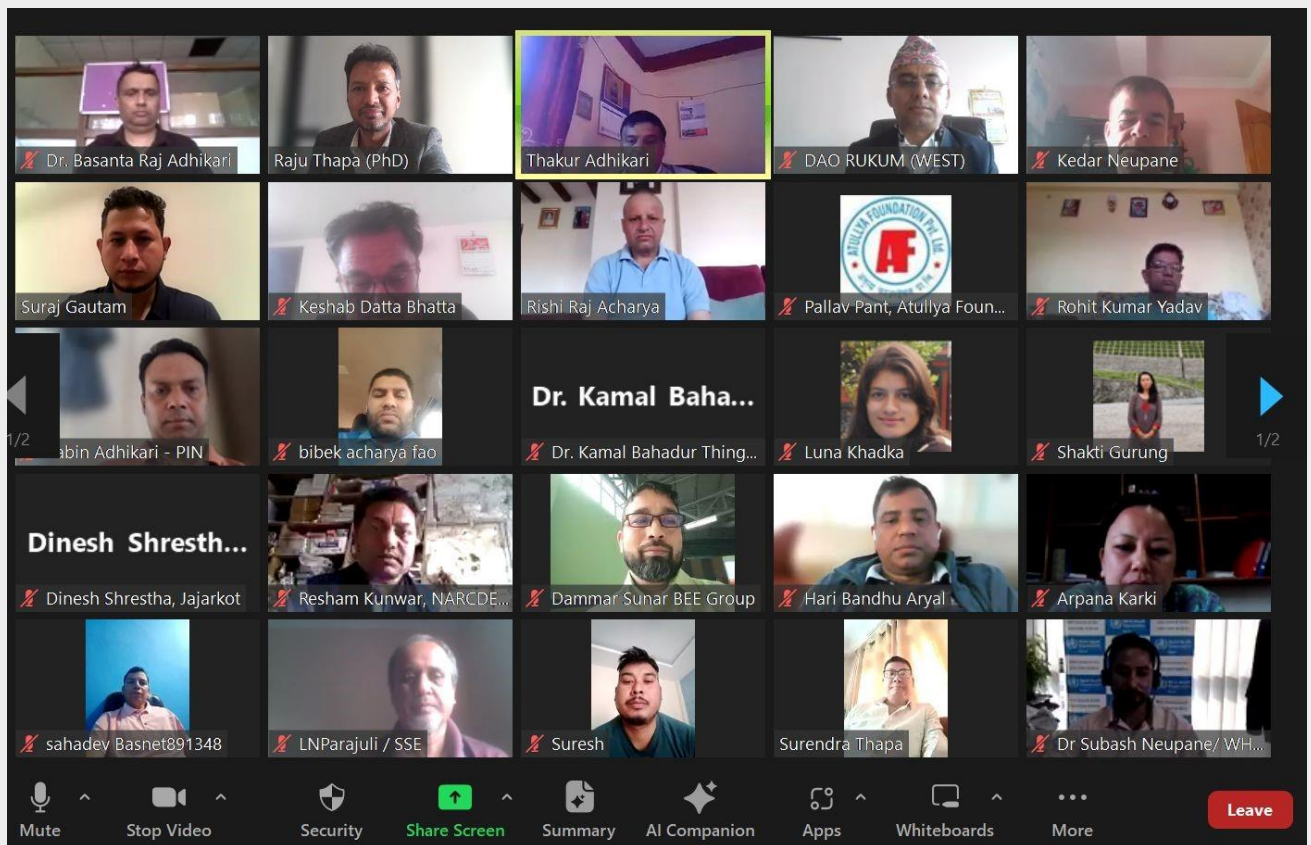




Summary

The May-June 2024 DPNet e-bulletin outlines a range of initiatives and discussions aimed at improving disaster preparedness, response, and resilience in Nepal. DPNet's activities from March to April 2024 include a session on localizing the Core Humanitarian Standard and Sphere Standards in Nepal, providing a platform for sharing strategies for effective local implementation. Additionally, a virtual program deliberated on the draft Climate Change Act, engaging stakeholders to enhance the legislative framework addressing climate challenges. The 15th General Assembly in Kathmandu emphasized disaster risk reduction and early warning systems, highlighted by the election of a new executive committee led by Dr. Raju Thapa. Discussions also focused on post-earthquake recovery, addressing the slow pace of reconstruction and the importance of community involvement. The bulletin underscores the critical role of media in disaster risk reduction, with a specific focus on proactive communication during heatwaves. Insights from recent fire incidents highlighted the need for improved firefighting resources and community engagement. Collectively, these efforts reflect DPNet Nepal's commitment to shaping policies, enhancing community capacities, and fostering a culture of preparedness and proactive disaster response. The e-bulletin also covered a discussion program on the Jajarkot Earthquake Recovery, which evaluated ongoing recovery efforts and identified strategies to enhance collaboration among stakeholders. Additionally, the APMCDRR Preparatory Meeting emphasized the importance of stakeholder engagement and collaboration in disaster management, setting the stage for the upcoming conference. Through these engagements, DPNet continues to play a crucial role in disaster management in Nepal.

Discussion Program on Jajarkot Earthquake Recovery



On May 2nd, 2024, DPNet Nepal organized a "Discussion Program on Jajarkot Earthquake Recovery." The program saw the participation of 40 individuals from diverse sectors, including NGOs, INGOs, and government representatives. Key speakers included Dr. Dijan Bhattarai from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA), Mr. Rishiraj Acharya, the Chief District Officer (CDO) of Jajarkot, Mr. Hari Prasad Pant, the CDO of Rukum West, Mr. Kedar Neupane and Former Secretary of the Government of Nepal. The program was facilitated by Mr. Suraj Gautam, General Secretary of DPNet Nepal.

Mr. Surya Bahadur Thapa, Immediate Past President, DPNet Nepal, began the session by extending a warm welcome to all participants. He outlined the program's objective, which aimed to offer insights into the ongoing recovery efforts following the Jajarkot Earthquake. The focus was on evaluating the progress achieved so far, identifying prevailing challenges, and exploring strategies to enhance collaboration among stakeholders. Thapa highlighted the onset of the monsoon season and the anticipated increase in storm cases. He emphasized the need for prompt action to accelerate the recovery process and address emerging issues effectively.

Mr. Kedar Neupane, Former Secretary Government of Nepal and DPNet Advisor, discussed several key issues during his address. He discussed concerns regarding the delay in the distribution of the second

installment and the transition from temporary to permanent housing solutions. Additionally, with the approaching harvesting season, he emphasized the importance of preparedness for seeds and agricultural activities including storage facility. Mr. Neupane stressed the need for collaboration at all levels, beyond just governmental bodies. He called for timely coordination between development agencies, other institutions, and the government to ensure effective and efficient work towards addressing these challenges.

Mr. Hari Prasad Pant, CDO, Rukum West, provided an update on the current situation in the area. He noted that six months have passed since the earthquake struck West Rukum and Jajarkot, emphasizing the urgent need for guidelines on reconstruction before the onset of the monsoon season, and stressed that the funding should align with the capacity of the Nepalese government. Mr. Pant advocated for a system that can differentiate between the types and complexities of earthquake damage, facilitating proper categorization for either reconstruction or retrofitting of properties. He also highlighted the importance of addressing the reconstruction of schools and emphasized the need for collaboration between the three tiers government and stakeholders to streamline recovery efforts. Furthermore, Mr. Pant highlighted the importance of understanding the requirements for rural reconstruction, taking into account the social and cultural significance of affected areas. He emphasized the significance of collaboration, timely distribution of aid, and infrastructure rehabilitation to ensure effective recovery for affected communities. He mentioned that coordinated efforts from all stakeholders will be essential in tackling ongoing challenges and facilitating sustainable recovery in the region.

Mr. Rishi Raj Acharya, CDO Jajarkot, highlighted that earthquake with its epicenter in Jajarkot, resulting in 101 fatalities and significant damage to social and cultural aspects. He also addressed that these details are outlined in a situation report provided by DPNet Nepal. Following the earthquake, effective search and rescue operations were conducted with support from the government and various organizations, including NGOs and INGOs. Rehabilitation efforts for damaged infrastructure in Jajarkot are ongoing. Mr. Acharya noted that out of 16 government buildings, 4 were completely damaged, including the District Administrative Building, District Court, and District Police Station. In the temporary learning centers, education is being provided to children and operations are ongoing. However, on Chitra 17th, a windstorm caused damage to the temporary learning centers, as well as the temporary health post and police station. This has created a critical situation in providing basic facilities to the people of Jajarkot. Rehabilitation efforts are crucial not only in terms of sociocultural aspects but also for sustaining income sources, as unemployment rates have risen. Many used to seek employment opportunities in India, but they are now staying in village due to earthquake damage. Mr. Acharya insights regarding shelter that 38,000 individuals have received the first installment, but delays are being faced in obtaining the second installment. As per the NDRRMA housing guideline, there is a provision of match fund which seeks fund from local level- 20%, provincial- 30%, and central levels- 50% and urged for the urgent wayout because local government is not

in this position to allocate such a huge amount of money for reconstruction so the guideline should be amended to make it practical. He emphasized that there is a provision to send pictures of dismantled houses to ensure they are ready for reconstruction. However, he inquired about the procedure for houses that only require retrofitting. With the monsoon approaching, challenges persist as people lack adequate shelter, and service providers are struggling. Mr. Acharya elaborates that the damage assessment for infrastructure is still pending, hindering the construction of temporary shelters, which are 90% completed. He concluded that training programs for local laborers should be enhanced to aid in house construction. He also emphasized the necessity of providing psychosocial counseling to the affected communities from a health perspective.

Dr. Meen Bahadur Chhetri, advisor, DPNet Nepal, primarily focuses on the model housing proposed by Dr. Prof. Jib Raj Pokhrel, who constructs cost-effective houses using locally available materials like bamboo. He requested the CDO of both districts to consider for the model houses built by Dr. Prof. Jib Raj Pokhrel. He also emphasized lessons learned from Melamchi, where houses with three rooms may not be suitable for large families. Therefore, the number of family members needs to be considered when building houses for effectiveness. He addressed that bamboo is not only used as a construction material but also for retrofitting purposes, making it a versatile option for infrastructure improvements.

Dr. Dijan Bhattarai, NDRRMA, discussed the recommendations made by West Rukum and Jajarkot, as well as the issue surrounding rehabilitation and recovery. He mentioned that the need for amendments in the guidelines has been recognized, and meetings and discussions are underway regarding this matter. For incidents such as fires, floods, and landslides, all three tiers of government should collaborate. However, in the context of major events like earthquakes, it has been acknowledged and discussed that the central level must play a significant role. The roles and responsibilities of the three tiers of government appear to be confusing and overlapping. He also informed that discussions are ongoing regarding the division of responsibilities as aid provision would be handled at the local level, search and rescue operations at the district level, temporary settlements overseen by the provincial level, and leadership in permanent settlement efforts would be taken by the federal level. He concluded by emphasizing the importance of collaboration among all stakeholders to effectively accelerate the reconstruction process.

Dr Raju Thapa, Chairperson DPNet- Nepal, provided an overview of the Jajarkot earthquakes, emphasizing the significant devastation caused by the earthquake event and providing situational updates. Dr. Thapa stressed that according to data from the 2021 census, there are 37,446 household, while the number of beneficiaries stands at 42,521 household. Dr. Thapa also addressed the concern that some municipalities are forcefully asking earthquake affected beneficiaries to contribute at least Rs 1000 to be in in the first priority to get second installment, which imposes an additional economic burden. He also highlighted the dilemma regarding the dismantling of houses, noting that many people are hesitant to

dismantle damaged houses, believing they could still serve as cowsheds. Additionally, he shared that humanitarian partners are providing WASH facilities and temporary shelters, which attracted people away from government schemes. However, delays from these partners led people to construct their temporary shelters on their own. Issues such as narrow spaces with zinc sheeting unsuitable for both summer and winter, increased incidents of family violence, rising school dropout rates, anxiety due to insect and snake dangers in temporary shelters, and the loss of forested areas in community forests for temporary shelter construction were also mentioned. People are also struggling with house dismantling, land fissures, and other challenges. In the closing remarks, Dr. Thapa provides recommendations including the need for clearer guidelines, extended support, and prioritization of vulnerable groups for future preparedness efforts.

Youtube Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-BnrsZ2OWM>

Koshi Province Monsoon Preparedness and Response Plan 2081 Workshop



On May 12, 2024, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Law (MoIAL) in Koshi Province organized the Monsoon Preparedness and Response Plan 2081 Workshop, with collaborative support from DPNet Nepal, Habitat for Humanity Nepal, Nepal Red Cross Society, and SAHARA Nepal. Mr. Laxmi Prasad Poudel, Secretary of MoIAL in Koshi Province, chaired the event, while Minister Ram Bahadur Magar graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. The program was facilitated by Mr. Surya Bahadur Thapa, the

immediate past president of DPNet. Minister Magar inaugurated the proceedings, which drew the participation of 75 attendees, comprising stakeholders and representatives from various organizations and sectors.

Mr. Kedar Neupane, DPNet Nepal Advisor and Former Secretary of the Government of Nepal highlights the objectives of the program sharing insights gathered from his tenure as Chief Secretary of Koshi Province, where he encountered multiple instances of monsoon-related events. He emphasized the critical role of the Koshi Province as the primary gateway for the monsoon's entry into Nepal. Neupane elaborated on the challenges posed by the province's extensive network of rivers and the presence of dry rivers, particularly when faced with heavy rainfall. He highlighted the dual nature of the Koshi River and its tributaries, which not only provide opportunities for the local population but also present significant challenges during monsoon seasons. Neupane stressed the importance of developing a comprehensive preparedness and response plan to mitigate the impact of monsoon-related disasters in the region. His remarks highlight on the necessity of addressing the unique vulnerabilities and opportunities inherent in the Koshi Province's geographical landscape, emphasizing the need for collaborative efforts to ensure the resilience of local communities in the face of monsoon related disasters and shared that the program will help to build consensus to make the remarkable monsoon preparedness and response plan.

Mr. Kamal Thapa, Spokesperson of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Law (MoIAL) Koshi Province, highlighted on the existing challenges in implementing disaster management policies within the province, attributing the primary obstacle to resource scarcity. Drawing attention to the catastrophic Sankhuwasabha flood of June 2023, Thapa highlighted its significance as a dark reminder of the vulnerability of Koshi Province to climate-induced monsoon-related disasters. He emphasized that while the province possesses adequate policy frameworks, the effectiveness of these measures is often hindered by the lack of sufficient resources for implementation. Thapa detailed the Sankhuwasabha flood, attributing its cause to heavy monsoon rains triggering landslides that obstructed the Hewa and Sabha rivers, leading to widespread devastation. He highlighted the flood's impact, including the loss of life, damage to infrastructure, and displacement of residents. Thapa outlined the consequential damages, such as the destruction of hydropower projects under construction and the washing away of houses and a crucial bridge, critical infrastructure like a water pump project supplying drinking water to households was also severely affected. Using the Sankhuwasabha flood as bitter example, Thapa emphasized the imperative of incorporating extreme case loads into the formulation of monsoon preparedness and response plans. He stressed that such considerations are essential to prevent chaotic conditions and effectively mitigate the adverse impacts of monsoon-related disasters in Koshi Province. Thapa called upon development partners to join hands in this endeavor, urging collaborative efforts from the initial stages of plan development to the implementation of response strategies. By engaging in comprehensive preparedness measures and

coordinated responses, Thapa asserted that the negative consequences of monsoon-related disasters could be minimized, enhancing the resilience and safety of communities within Koshi Province.

Dr. Dijan Bhattarai, Spokesperson for the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA), presented the initial draft of the Monsoon Preparedness and Response Plan prepared by the NDRRMA. He highlighted that while the monsoon outlook was about to be introduced by the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (DHM), the NDRRMA had yet to incorporate anticipated case loads and relevant strategies into the plan. Dr. Bhattarai emphasized several key areas that the Koshi Province government should prioritize in the plan, including resource management, delineation of responsibilities and contributions, establishment of relief and stockpiling mechanisms, sectoral case load analysis, assessment of co-lead agencies' capabilities, and formulation of resource management plans. He highlighted the importance of having a fully functional provincial emergency operation center, equipped with a provincial command center, to ensure effective preparedness and response measures. Dr. Bhattarai emphasized that careful consideration of these elements would be instrumental in crafting an effective and high-quality monsoon preparedness and response plan for the Koshi Province. By addressing these critical aspects, the plan would be better equipped to anticipate and mitigate the impact of monsoon-related disasters, ultimately enhancing the resilience and safety of communities within the region.

Mr. Suraj Gautam, DPNet's General Secretary, emphasized community engagement and resilience building in the plan to ensure holistic preparedness and highlighted the aspects that need to be incorporated in the Monsoon Preparedness and Response Plan 2081. Mr. Gautam shared key strategies to reducing the disaster risks. He particularly emphasized the use of engineering techniques to strengthen the resilience and adaptability of infrastructure systems. In addition to highlighting the significance of preparedness efforts for effective disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM), he emphasized the critical role of information management in these efforts. He provided insights into monsoon patterns, discussing historical data on monsoon duration and extreme weather events. Post-monsoon, Mr. Gautam drew attention to specific incidents of heavy rainfall leading to floods and landslides in the Koshi Province. He highlighted the importance of scientific analysis in estimating the potential impact on affected populations. Moreover, Mr. Gautam discussed various triggers for early action, citizen science initiatives, and effective risk communication and early warning messaging strategies, all aimed at enhancing community resilience and preparedness.

Dr. Dharam Upreti, Hydro-Meteorological Expert, presented that the implementation of people-centered, multi-hazard, end-to-end EWS had become an important approach to reducing the negative effects of natural catastrophes. These systems were essential for reducing damage to people, property, and livelihoods since they were made to initiate planned and thoroughly tested early measures. In 2021, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) underlined that early warning saves lives and can limit

damage by as much as 30% when given 24 hours in advance. One example of this was the significant decline in flood-related deaths in Nepal, which had been linked to the successful application of Flood EWS. He also highlighted that building on this success, organizations like Practical Action had worked with government agencies like the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (DHM) to develop and improve flood EWS throughout Nepal's various river systems. These initiatives, which involved migrating from manual to telemetry-based systems, had given community participation a top priority. This allowed warnings to reach and empower vulnerable communities. Additionally, initiatives have been made to move toward impact-based forecasting, which would allow for more accurate projections and focused responses. Acknowledging the wider range of natural hazards, efforts had been expanded to involve the piloting of landslide EWS in collaboration with agencies such as DFAT, especially in areas like Sindhupalchok district. Furthermore, activities like capacity-building have been carried out in partnership with organizations such as TAYAR Nepal to enable local governments to use EWS tools for disaster preparedness and response in an efficient manner. Furthermore, innovative techniques like incorporating EWS into index-based flood insurance plans highlighted how adaptable and successful these systems were.

He brought to light that in 2022, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres had called for early warning systems to protect every person on Earth within five years, and it seemed like a vital task. Strong and comprehensive EWS were becoming more and more necessary as climate projections showed above-normal precipitation in certain areas and below-normal levels in others. The pursuit of equitable and extensive early warning coverage was being facilitated by collaborative efforts and partnerships, with the ultimate goal of protecting lives and livelihoods from the capricious forces of nature.

Mr. Mean Kumar Aryal, Senior Divisional Meteorologist, Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (DHM), presented the weather forecasting, monsoon patterns, and their potential impacts in his presentation. Mr. Aryal highlighted Nepal's expansive array of monitoring stations, including synoptic and aero synoptic stations, rainfall and climate monitoring sites, real-time automatic stations, lightning detection networks, and weather RADAR systems. Despite these resources, Mr. Aryal underscored notable hurdles such as a scarcity of skilled IT professionals, challenges in communicating complex forecasts, and difficulties maintaining instruments in remote locals.

Looking forward, he stressed the significance of government investment and partnerships with development organizations and research institutes to effectively tackle these obstacles. He emphasized the necessity for bolstering technical expertise and allocating more resources for meteorological research and development. Aryal concluded that these initiatives are very important for enhancing Nepal's weather forecasting capabilities and mitigating potential weather-related impacts across the Province.

Workshop/Open Floor Discussion:

In the workshop/question-and-answer session, participants raised various critical issues concerning monsoon preparedness and response plans. One significant topic discussed was the implementation of forecast-based financing and cash transfer mechanisms, highlighting the importance of incorporating financial aspects into disaster response strategies. Participants emphasized that the preparedness plan should serve as a comprehensive guide for all stakeholders involved, ensuring a coordinated and efficient response to monsoon-induced disasters. Additionally, the prepositioning of heavy equipment and mapping out potential disaster-prone areas in anticipation of monsoon events were key points of discussion. Participants stressed the importance of proactively addressing challenges such as water management in hill areas to mitigate the risk of floods and ensure groundwater recharge. Concerns were also raised about the vulnerability of local governments, particularly Biratnagar Municipality, to monsoon floods despite being the provincial government headquarters. To manage flood risks effectively, participants emphasized the necessity for river training initiatives. Another prevalent issue discussed was the challenge of insufficient budget allocation for executing preparedness and response plans effectively. Many participants expressed the view that while comprehensive plans could be formulated, their effectiveness was often hampered by a lack of financial resources. Therefore, there was a unanimous call for provisions to be made for budget allocation when drafting such plans, ensuring that adequate funding is available for implementation. Participants also discussed the need to identify and map areas most vulnerable to monsoon-related disasters, focusing on geographic and demographic factors to ensure accurate risk assessments. Enhancing coordination and communication between government agencies, non-governmental organizations, local communities, and international partners was deemed crucial for a unified approach to disaster preparedness and response. Ensuring sufficient resources, including financial, material, and human resources, are allocated for monsoon preparedness and response activities, with a focus on sustainable and equitable distribution, was another key recommendation. Improving the effectiveness and reach of early warning systems for floods and landslides, including the use of modern technology and local knowledge, was emphasized to ensure timely warnings to all at-risk populations. Strengthening the resilience of critical infrastructure such as roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, and other public buildings was also highlighted to reduce potential disruptions and damages. Encouraging the active participation of local communities in disaster preparedness and response planning was recognized as essential, acknowledging their valuable insights and fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility. Providing comprehensive training and capacity-building programs for local responders, community leaders, and volunteers on disaster response techniques, first aid, search and rescue operations, and emergency management was deemed important. Enhancing data collection, analysis, and sharing mechanisms to inform decision-making and response efforts, including real-time data on weather patterns, water levels, and affected populations, was also discussed. Conducting widespread public awareness campaigns to educate the public about monsoon risks, safety

measures, and the importance of preparedness using various media platforms to reach diverse audiences was recommended. Ensuring that the needs of vulnerable groups, such as women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities, are explicitly addressed in the preparedness and response plan was emphasized, including tailored communication, evacuation assistance, and specific support services. Preparing healthcare facilities to handle the surge in medical needs during monsoon disasters by ensuring the availability of medical supplies, trained personnel, and emergency response protocols was discussed. Developing and regularly practicing evacuation plans for communities in high-risk areas, including clear evacuation routes, safe shelters, and transportation arrangements to ensure timely and orderly evacuations, was recommended. Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of relief and rescue operations during and after disasters, including the rapid deployment of trained personnel, equipment, and supplies to affected areas, was also highlighted. Participants stressed the importance of identifying sources of funding and financial support for monsoon preparedness and response activities, including government budgets, aid, private sector contributions, and community fundraising initiatives. Finally, session pointed out the importance of reviewing and updating policies and legislation related to disaster management was deemed essential to enhance preparedness and response efforts, ensuring that legal frameworks support proactive measures, coordination, and resource allocation.

Mr. Ram Bahadur Shrestha from Habitat for Humanity Nepal shared that his organization work in disaster response and housing solutions, actively engaging in both areas. He highlighted Habitat's involvement in disaster response by providing immediate relief such as emergency shelter kits, winterization supplies, and other necessary support following disaster events. Additionally, Habitat focuses on reconstructing permanent and safe homes for affected families in collaboration with local governments, identifying vulnerable communities and promoting disaster-resilient housing. Mr. Shrestha highlighted the importance of capacity building, stating that Habitat trains local communities in safe construction practices and disaster preparedness to enhance resilience. He addressed potential conflicts between NGOs and the government, stressing the need for continuous dialogue to overcome misunderstandings. As Habitat closely collaborates with government and stakeholders, they supported the organization of the program and expressed gratitude to all involved.

Subodh Kumar Singh, Chairperson of NRCS Morang, emphasized the collaborative efforts between NRCS and the government in disaster management. He highlighted NRCS Morang's active participation in previous monsoon preparedness and response plans, showcasing their commitment to community welfare. Mr. Singh expressed NRCS Morang's willingness to take a role in drafting, finalizing, disseminating, and implementing the upcoming plan, emphasizing their dedication to ensuring the safety and well-being of the community.

Laxmi Khanal from the NRCS Head Office highlighted the organization's role in Nepal's monsoon preparedness and response. Acknowledging the life-sustaining rains that the monsoons bring, Khanal emphasized the accompanying risks of floods and landslides, which NRCS actively works to mitigate. Leading up to the monsoon season, NRCS conducts community awareness programs, educating residents on flood and landslide risks, evacuation procedures, and essential supplies to stockpile. NRCS collaborate with local authorities to strategically position relief materials and train volunteers in search and rescue operations. During disasters, NRCS provides immediate relief including food, water, shelter, and medical aid. NRCS also assist in search and rescue, damage assessments, and long-term recovery programs to help communities rebuild. Expressing NRCS's commitment, Khanal conveyed NRCS readiness to contribute to the monsoon preparedness plan of Koshi Province and actively participate in its implementation.

Dr. Raju Thapa, Chairperson of DPNet Nepal, stressed the importance of the Monsoon Preparedness and Response Plan learning from past experiences while being forward-thinking for future preparedness. He emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach involving all sectors of society, highlighting the government's recognition of the annual threat of monsoon-related disasters like floods and landslides. Thapa suggested that the plan should cover various key aspects, including risk assessment, early warning systems, community preparedness, resource allocation, response and relief protocols, and long-term recovery programs.

Furthermore, Thapa emphasized the necessity of a "whole of society" approach, requesting the Minister and Secretary to consider establishing a provincial platform for Disaster Risk Reduction to engage all stakeholders, as disaster management is everyone's business. He assured that the outcomes of the program would be documented, and recommendations would be provided to the provincial government to formulate an effective plan. Dr. Thapa also committed DPNet's support, mentioning the engagement of their expert roster to provide final observations on the draft plan. Additionally, DPNet promised assistance in organizing a dissemination program to inform respective stakeholders and communities about the plan.

Prem Prasad Bhattarai, CDO Morang District, pointed out that the district faces flood risks, especially in certain areas. Showing how serious he is about dealing with monsoon disasters, he promised to help with the plan and its effective implementation. He talked about how floods have suffering districts and caused deaths before, and stressed that we need to work on preparedness. The government, along with the organizations like the Nepal Red Cross Society and the media, is sensitizing people about flood risks and what to do to stay safe. He requested the provincial government to include important things in the plan, like informing people, having emergency things, and finding safe places to go. He said we all need to work together - the government, local community, and everyone in the community to make sure we're ready for the monsoon and keep each other safe.

Hon. Minister, Ram Bahadur Magar, Koshi Province, who provided full time in the program shared a personal reflection during the program, recalling cultural beliefs about rain, including marrying frogs and seeking assistance from Lord Indra. He expressed gratitude for the enlightenment gained from the workshop, particularly from scientific experts who elucidated rainfall mechanisms and the importance of strengthening early warning systems to safeguard lives and property. Magar pledged his commitment to enhancing preparedness efforts, citing the recurring infrastructure damage witnessed during monsoon seasons, including the devastating Sankhuwashaba flood of the previous year. Recognizing the potential for extreme events to cause significant loss, he stressed the need for proactive anticipation and comprehensive planning for monsoon seasons. Thapa acknowledged the absence of various sectors such as semi-governmental, media, academic, private, and affected communities in the program, highlighting the importance of a Provincial Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction to engage all stakeholders in a holistic societal approach. He tasked the Secretary of MoIAL with initiating efforts to establish such a platform, emphasizing the necessity of multi-stakeholder collaboration. Thapa expressed appreciation to supporting organizations, including DPNet, NRCS, Habitat for Humanity, and Sahara Nepal, for organizing the workshop and requested for a follow-up program to disseminate the plan incorporating suggestions, ensuring stakeholders are well-informed and engaged in the process.

In his closing remarks, **Laxmi Prasad Poudel, Secretary of MoIAL and Program Chair**, expressed heartfelt gratitude to all participants and supporting agencies for their invaluable contributions and time invested in the workshop. He emphasized that the collaborative efforts showcased during the event would play a pivotal role in crafting a comprehensive Monsoon Preparedness and Response Plan, crucial for safeguarding communities during the upcoming monsoon season. Reflecting on the increasing frequency of human-induced disasters, Poudel highlighted the collective responsibility of society towards disaster management, advocating for a whole-of-society approach. He acknowledged the tireless efforts of the three tiers of government but considered a gap between efforts and desired outcomes, stressing the imperative of effective prevention and mitigation strategies. Poudel highlighted the disconnect between the availability of robust EWS and public responsiveness to disseminated information, opinion for enhanced community engagement and adherence to warnings. Emphasizing the significance of adequate planning, he emphasized the potential of a well-structured plan to mitigate monsoon risks and streamline disaster response efforts. Poudel expressed gratitude for the fruitful interactions during the workshop, noting that the discussions had shed light on prominent issues essential for inclusion in the preparedness plan. He concluded with a call to action, requesting continued collaboration and commitment from all stakeholders to ensure the successful implementation of the Monsoon Preparedness and Response Plan, thereby fostering resilience and safety within Koshi Province.

DPNet Koshi Province Committee Formed



On May 12, 2024, a DPNet Koshi Province Committee Formation Meeting was organized by DPNet Nepal at Biratnagar. The meeting was attended by DPNet members of Koshi Province including Nari Biwash Sangh, Bikash Sahajikaran Sanjal, Jalpa Yekikrit Samaj, HUSADEC Nepal, Nepal Gramin Punanirman Sanstha (RRN), Lutheran Samudayik Kalyan Samaj, LWF Nepal, Social Network for Justice and Development (SN-JD), Sahara Nepal, Baal Sewa Samaj along with Dr. Raju Thapa, Chairperson, Mr. Surya Bahadur Thapa, Immediate Past President (IPP), Mr. Kedar Neupane, Advisor, Mr. Suraj Gautam, General Secretary and Mr. Harshaman Maharjan, Deputy General Secretary of DPNet Nepal.

Dr. Thapa introduced DPNet among participants, highlighting DPNet as a key national umbrella organization aimed at enhancing disaster management in Nepal through a unified approach involving national and international agencies, with a core focus on fostering coordination, collaboration, learning, and sharing of experiences to strengthen disaster management practices, playing a crucial role in knowledge management, capacity building, policy advocacy, and facilitating networking among government and relevant stakeholders, boasting a unique relationship with the Government of Nepal, particularly with the Ministry of Home Affairs and National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA), serving as a bridge between governmental and non-governmental agencies in disaster management, and as the Secretariat of the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRR), DPNet-Nepal endeavors to convene DRR stakeholders on a common platform for more effective disaster preparedness and management across the country, with significant contributions in advocating for the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act and supporting the formulation of

subsequent vital policies. He expected similar coordination role of DPNet Province Committee in Koshi Province.

Mr. Surya Bahadur Thapa, emphasized the establishment of the DPNet Committee in the Koshi province, highlighting that such committees have already been formed in six other provinces. He stressed that the primary objective of setting up these committees at the provincial level is to ensure that DRR efforts are carried out with the same diligence as at the central level. He also emphasized the importance of a Provincial Platform for DRR, calling for coordinated and collaborative efforts from all stakeholders.

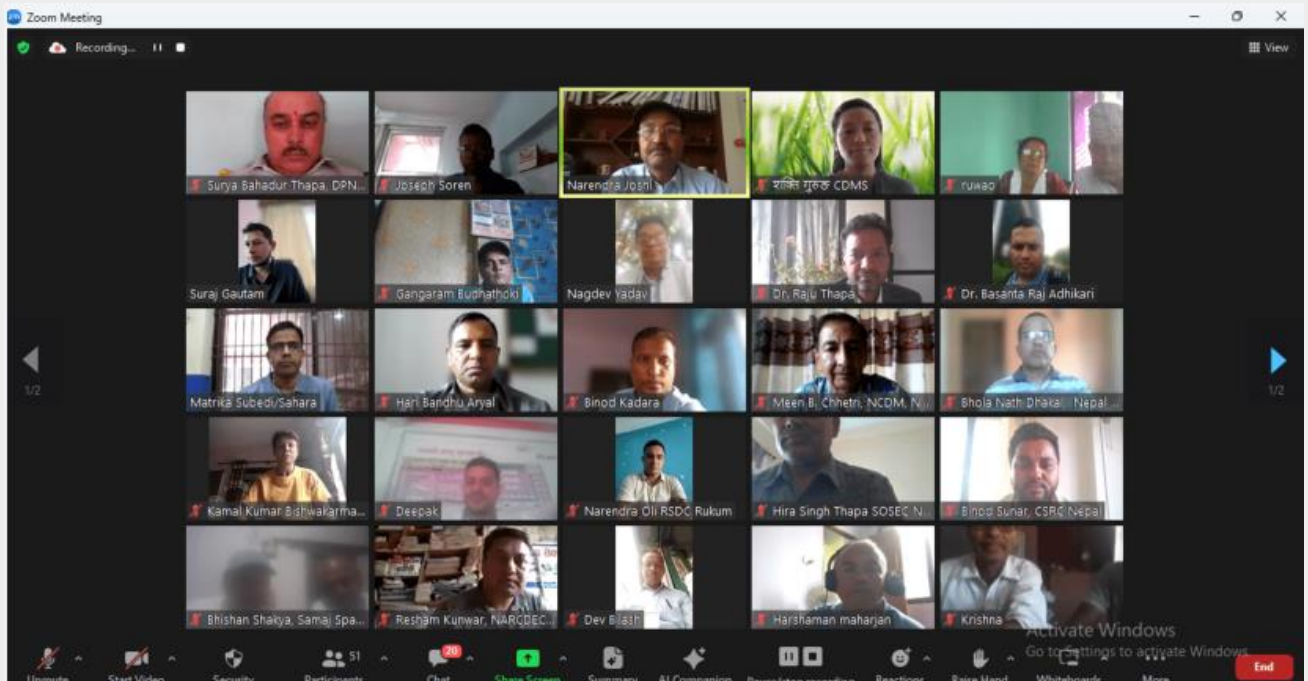
Mr. Suraj Gautam, General Secretary, DPNet Nepal, emphasized that in the coming future we will be developing the program from the DPNet Central Committee aiming at sensitizing the provincial committees so that provincial committee will also explore more initiatives to engage provincial stakeholders

In Koshi Province, DPNet has thirteen member organizations are members these include, Nari Biwash Sangh Biratnagar, Bikash Sahajikaran Sanjal in Gaighat Udaypur, and Jalpa Yekikrit Samaj Udaypur in the Triyuga municipality of Udaypur. Additionally, HUSADEC Nepal from Dhankuta, Nepal Gramin Punanirman Sanstha (RRN) in Biratnagar, and Lutheran Samudayik Kalyan Samaj in Rangeli-2, Morang were present. Other participants included LWF Nepal from Damak Jhapa, Social Network for Justice and Development (SN-JD) in Jhapa Birtamode, and Sahara Nepal from Birtamode. Furthermore, Habitat Nepal from Biratnagar and Baal Sewa Samaj from Khotang Diktel were part of the committee formation. These organizations play vital roles in community development, disaster response, and capacity building across various districts within the province, contributing to the collective efforts in disaster risk reduction and management.

The DPNet member organizations in Koshi Province in a common consensus established a committee consisting of 9 members, with Sita Sharma from Nari Bikash Sangh appointed as the Chairperson. The committee includes Durgananda Chaudhary from DIFAN as the Vice Chair, Kumar Chudal from SNJD as the Secretary, and Kamala Basnet from Jalpa Udayapur as the Treasurer. Additionally, the committee comprises Matrika Subedi from Sahara Nepal, Yubraj Rijal from Bal Sewa Samaj, Krishna Govinda Adhikari from HUSADEC, and Josef Suren from LCWS as members.

After the formation of DPNet Koshi Province Committee, Dr. Thapa extended congratulations to the newly appointed coordinator and all participants, emphasizing their dedication to collaborating closely with the provincial committee to effectively enhance disaster risk reduction efforts across Koshi province.

Discussion Program on Establishment Day of DPNet Nepal



On June 7, 2024 DPNet Nepal organized the DPNet Nepal's 28th Anniversary program via a virtual Zoom meeting. The program was attended by more than 60 participants. Mr. Suraj Gautam, General Secretary, DPNet Nepal moderated the event and welcomed all participants. The event was chaired by Dr. Raju Thapa, chairperson of DPNet Nepal.

Mr. Surya Bahadur Thapa, IPP DPNet Nepal, shared the opening remarks and provided a brief introduction to DPNet Nepal. Mr. Thapa led the celebration of its 28th anniversary and thanked all participants and expressed his gratitude for this milestone. He shared that DPNet Nepal, established in 1996, initially focused on disaster discussions and later broadened its objectives to include disaster management. He narrated the organization's story, emphasizing its work in capacity building, policy advocacy, coordination and networking, and knowledge management. He highlighted DPNet Nepal's journey, its collaborations with local governments and other organizations, and its commitment to information sharing, policy advocacy, and capacity building. Regarding the criteria for membership, he explained that initially, membership was provided to organizations that included the term "disaster" in their objectives. However, we later amended this provision. Now, institutions that have worked in disaster areas for three years can submit their documentation and become members of DPNet Nepal.

Dr. Raju Thapa, Chairperson, DPNet Nepal, provided a detailed introduction of the organization. From 1996 to 2000, DPNet Nepal was established as a loose forum, initiating policy dialogues on disaster management (DM). From 2001 to 2005, efforts were made to bridge the gap between the government and stakeholders, and advocacy for a DM Act began. Between 2006 and 2010, the organization became a registered legal entity, published the Nepal Disaster Report, and started advocating for strategic planning.

From 2011 to 2015, DPNet Nepal developed draft guideline for the Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan and served as the Secretariat of NPDRR, chaired by the Secretary of MoHA. Between 2016 and 2020, it interacted with Members of Parliament (MPs) to formulate the Disaster Management Act and coordinated among ministries, AINTGDM, and stakeholders for the formulation of National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy, 2018 and the National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategic Action Plan, 2018-2030. He addressed that since 2020, the organization has organized a National Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, conducted Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) review reflections, and engaged in various policy dialogues at the federal and provincial levels.

Dr. Thapa provided insight into the diverse members of DPNet Nepal including 33 INGOs, 133 NGOs, 3 academic representatives (including the Institute of Crisis Management Studies, Nepal Engineering College (NEC), and the Center for Disaster Studies), and 2 UN agencies. The network also includes 8 life members and 6 individual members, reflecting a broad coalition dedicated to disaster management and advocacy. Dr. Thapa highlighted that DPNet Nepal has facilitated participation in international DRR-related events and serves as the focal point for Sphere Geneva. The organization has localized the Sphere Standards, prepared national human resources cost-effectively on the new version, and disseminated the Sphere Handbook. DPNet efforts include human resource development, sensitization programs at the provincial level, and the production of Sphere drama and folk songs. DPNet has ongoing activities, including creating a web-based 'Online Resource Center' with over 1500 DRR-related documents and a 'Virtual Discussion Platform' to discuss on contemporary issues. He addressed recent significant activities as DPNet has established a committee in all seven provinces of Nepal. The other significant and ongoing recent activities included publishing situation analysis reports on the Bajhang and Jajarkot earthquakes, and providing weekly updates with information on national and international opportunities for grants, awards, conferences, trainings, seminars, and workshops. Dr. Thapa summarized DPNet's plans, which include facilitating Nepal's meaningful participation in APMCDRR 2024 and hosting national conferences on the Chure issue and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). DPNet also aims to strengthen the capacity of provincial committees, establish the largest DRR network in each province, and form Provincial Platforms for DRR. Additionally, DPNet plan to create a webpage for each province on the DPNet website and organize at least one provincial conference on DRR.

Lastly, Dr. Thapa emphasized that the monsoon preparedness plan in Koshi, organized by DPNet Nepal, was a success, and a similar initiative is planned for Madesh. In collaboration with UNFAO, DPNet Nepal is actively taking anticipatory action to enhance disaster readiness and response.

Ms. Sita Sharma, Chairperson, Koshi Province committee, mentioned that the Koshi Province committee is the youngest among the provinces. She emphasized the need for insights on how the province can plan and operate its activities. Regarding the updates from Koshi province, Ms. Sharma

shared concerns about glacier lake outburst risks and elephant attacks in Jhapa and Morang. She expected to mention these issues on various discussion platforms. She mentioned that comprehensive reports like LDCRP/DPRP have been developed. With the monsoon season approaching, preparations are underway to ensure effective provincial response and readiness.

Mr. Nagdev Yadav, Chairperson, Madhesh Province committee, congratulated all DPNet Nepal members on this occasion. Mr. Yadav emphasized regarding the increased likelihood of heavy monsoon rains this year, discussions focusses around the implementation of a successful monsoon preparedness and response plan in Madesh. This included engagements with the Chief District Officers (CDOs) of Saptari, Siraha, Dhanusa, and Rautahat to ensure alertness and preparedness in last 5-7 days. Emphasis was placed on collaborative efforts with stakeholders and local governments to effectively mitigate risks associated with the monsoon season. Early warning information was disseminated to locals about the monsoon risks. Mr. Yadav also noted the significant loss of biodiversity due to recent forest fires. He emphasized that in close coordination with the District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC), the Local Disaster Management Committee (LDMC) has been actively working on disaster risk management in Madesh Province, highlighting the collaborative efforts with DPNet Nepal.

Mr. Hira Singh Thapa, Chairperson, Karnali Province committee, reported that the devastating earthquake in Jajarkot had impacted Karnali Province and DPNet Karnali Province working on recovery and reconstruction initiatives.

Mr. Hari Bandhu Aryal, Chairperson of the Gandaki Province Committee, shared that today they celebrated DPNet Day in Gandaki Province, focusing on the theme of aligning disaster management with climate change. He mentioned that as the monsoon preparedness plan is being developed in Gandaki, they are actively working to provide insights and inputs for its formulation.

Kamal Kumar Bishwakarma, Chairperson, Bagmati Province committee, discussed various issues faced by Bagmati Province, including drought, epidemics, road accidents, urban flooding, and animal attacks in some areas. He noted that laws and policies related to disaster risk management were not fully enforced. Despite this, Bagmati Province had carried out more disaster management activities compared to other provinces. Mr. Bishwakarma emphasized the need for more organizations to join DPNet Nepal to work together and called for the development and implementation of additional policies. He also urged for feedback and suggestions from member organizations about the future work to be done by DPNet Nepal.

Open Floor Discussion:

Ms. Sita Sharma inquired about the process of preparing and utilizing letter pads effectively. She also inquired for how could we plan strategies and organize future programs.

Mr. Meen Bahadur Chhetri, former Chairperson DPNet and NCDM Nepal, emphasized the distinction between DPNet and other NGOs, noting that DPNet is a controversy-free and non-profit organization. He praised the young and energetic board, highlighting their creativity. Chhetri stressed the importance of establishing strict criteria and clarifying objectives for new members to ensure transparency. He suggested that new members should be informed about what DPNet can offer them before being granted membership, preferably through Zoom meetings or in-person discussions. Chhetri also highlighted DPNet's major achievements, including international training seminars conducted in 2007 and 2010 in collaboration with Turkey, Sweden, and Queensland University of Australia. Additionally, he expressed gratitude to the Red Cross Nepal for providing office space to DPNet. He recommended modeling DPNet as a model NGO.

Mr. Bishnu Chalise, RUWAO Nepal, Sarlahi, expressed gratitude to the chairperson for organizing the online Zoom program. He highlighted two major disasters in Madhesh: flooding during the monsoon season and droughts and fires during the dry season. Mr. Chalise urged DPNet Nepal to increase its participation in such issues. He mentioned that the government provided only 15,000 rupees for individuals affected by fires, which he believed to be insufficient.

Mr. Deo Narayan Yadav suggested that the membership renewal fee should be based on a 3-year or 5-year cycle rather than an annual basis. He expressed gratitude to DPNet as a guiding force and path provider, emphasizing its role as an advocacy-supporting organization. Addressing resource gaps, he proposed planning resources for 3-5 years and actively seeking additional resources.

Mr. Saroj Bhujel, HUSADEC Nepal expressed appreciation to DPNet for providing insights on disaster management, which serves as valuable learning for them. He highlighted the issue of animal attacks on agricultural fields and urged for the organization of discussion events to address this concern. Additionally, he mentioned climate change issues, noting a decline in rainfall in the eastern mountain region due to climate change.

Dr. Raju Thapa , Chairperson sharing his insights regarding queries:

In a recent development, DPNet Nepal has announced a series of measures aimed at streamlining its operations and enhancing disaster management efforts across provincial committees. Plans include organizing orientation meetings to familiarize provincial committees with the use of letterheads, ensuring strict adherence to DPNet membership criteria, and clarifying that DPNet does not engage in competition with member organizations for project bids. Additionally, a provision has been made to allow member organizations to pay their annual fees during the Annual General Meeting (AGM) offering added convenience. In response to pressing issues such as animal attacks and Chure conservation, DPNet plans to conduct discussion events and leverage its previous experience in addressing similar challenges.

Moreover, the organization has been advocating among stakeholders to work on earthquake induced landslide affected areas of Jajarkot and West Rukum. He thanked everyone and closed the program.

Ms. Shakti Gurung, Vice Chairperson, DPNet Nepal, shared her vote of thanks with all member organizations. Ms. Gurung expressed her hope that DPNet will celebrate its silver, golden, and diamond jubilees in the future. She emphasized that we are all part of a single family working together to achieve a common goal and that we will continue to work with the same spirit in the coming years.

Madhesh Province Monsoon Preparedness and Response Plan 2081 Workshop



On June 18, 2024, the "Madhesh Province Monsoon Preparedness and Response Plan 2081" workshop organized by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Communication, and Law Madhesh Province at Mithila Yatri Niwas in Janakpur, in support of DPNet, Habitat for Humanity, Nepal Red Cross Society, NHSRP, and CDAFN, The program was chaired by Mr. Birendra Kumar Yadav Secretary Ministry of Home Affairs, Communication, and Law (MoHACL), while Chief Minister, Madhesh Province, Hon. Satish Kumar Singh graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. The program was facilitated by Mr. Tek Bikram Shah, MoHACL. The event was participated by key stakeholders from various government ministries, local authorities, security agencies, and development partners, which drew the participation of 94 attendees. The objectives of the workshop were to discuss Madhesh Province's Monsoon Preparedness and Response Plan 2081 for the monsoon season by focusing on strategies and plans for monsoon preparedness and response.

Mr. Uttam Prasad Kharel, Under Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Communication, and Law (MoHCL), opened the session with his welcome remarks. He gave an overview of the program's objectives,

focusing on how important it is to improve the province's reaction and readiness plans for the approaching monsoon season. Mr. Kharel emphasized the value of cooperative efforts amongst different stakeholders to reduce the risks connected to disasters related to the monsoon.

Kedar Neupane, a former Government secretary and DPNet advisor, gave the event's background after the inauguration. In his remarks, Mr. Neupane emphasized the serious difficulties that the monsoon season presents as well as the need to have thorough preparation and mitigation plans. His observations provided a clear structure and emphasized the importance of efforts to protect local communities from monsoon-related disasters.

Dr. Dijan Bhattarai Spokesperson, NDRRMA presented the National Monsoon Preparedness and Response Plan. He provides an overview of the past incidences and losses faced by Madhesh province from monsoon-induced disasters over the previous ten years examined from 2070 to 2080 B.S. In this time frame, 259 events occurred in the province leaving 3,640 houses damaged, 136 deaths, and 26 individuals missing. The districts that were identified as being most impacted included Rautahat, Saptari, Mahottari, Sarlahi, and Bara. In this period of ten years, a lightning event took 140 lives, with the highest evidence on Saptari and Parsa. Dr. Bhattarai provides an overview of the current work being done in response to monsoon-induced disasters. This includes engagement with the Chief District Officers, along with the heads of security agencies and concerned parties, including the District Magistrate of the border area of India. The Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport, the local level and the district disaster management committee have been requested to make arrangements for the immediate removal of the accumulated materials to protect the physical structures (bridges, bridges, roads) that are at risk due to the accumulation of stones, gravel, and sand. According to a risk assessment, monsoon catastrophes might potentially affect 412,000 families and 1.81 million people by the year 2081. Dr. Bhattarai highlighted the key rapid response plan managed by the Monsoon Preparedness and Response Command Center, which includes search and rescue, food security, emergency shelter, health care, and infrastructure restoration. He mentioned that steps were also taken to ensure Madhesh Pradesh was prepared for the impending monsoon, including measures for resource management, communication readiness, and support for vulnerable people.

Mr. Mean Kumar Aryal, Senior Divisional Meteorologist, DHM provides a presentation on, Weather Forecast and Observation, monsoon and its potential impact. He provides details about the services offered by the weather forecast system, which include open-source weather models, quality weather anticipation, satellite and ground observation and monitoring, and the use of weather radars. Highlighting the DHM services, Mr. Aryal provided an overview of flood forecasts, climate services, weather forecasting for aircraft, and agro-meteorological services. He emphasized the three types of services that DHM provides: routine services, non-routine services, and on-demand services. He also described the current

monsoon situation in Nepal, stating that it starts on June 10 in Koshi Province and lasts for several days. It is now affecting Koshi Province and the eastern regions of Bagmati and Madhesh Province, and it will continue to advance from southeast to northwest. Mr. Aryal also discusses the obstacles, chances, limitations, and strategies for better weather observation and cooperation to respond to dangers and provide precise forecasts.

Mr. Sandip Kumar Singh, Law Officer, MoHCL shared a presentation that highlighted important topics that are necessary for successfully managing yearly catastrophes. Firstly, he highlighted the background of the province along with its vulnerability to a variety of natural disasters, such as landslides, floods, erosions, and inundations, which makes a thorough preparedness plan necessary. He stated goals as to minimize financial and human losses, integrate disaster response strategies across agencies, and estimate risks. He highlighted the need for detailed analysis of current frameworks, identification of areas for improvement, and alignment with relevant policy and legal norms were all part of the preparation process. Anticipated monsoon conditions for 2081 indicated possible rainfall patterns and particular danger locations, directing preparedness activities in the right direction. He explains that the lead and co-lead agencies in the relevant area were assigned key organizational roles to provide a coordinated approach to disaster management. The key initiatives of the Ministries of Home Affairs, Communications, and Law were also described in detail. Mr. Singh provided details about Madhesh Province's preparedness and response for the impending monsoon season. The roles included funding allocation, rescue operation coordination, and emergency operation center maintenance. Additionally, information was provided regarding relief supplies, search and rescue activities, and contact details for disaster-focal persons.

Mr. Nagdev Yadav, Chair, DPNet Madhesh Province/ Chair, CDAFN/Chure Expert NAST delivered the presentation on the "Chure Conservation for Water Resource Management, Biodiversity Conservation, Livelihood Promotion". He elaborates on the Chure region's best practices and indigenous innovations. He discussed the effective tactics and cutting-edge methods that have been used to address the region's socioeconomic and environmental problems. Mr. Yadav focuses on the strategies and concepts used in the Ratu River region of the Mahottari and Dhanusha Districts, Nepal. Building rainwater harvesting ponds to increase water availability, using subterranean seepage for drinking and irrigation, and using bioengineering techniques to reduce soil erosion and preserve biodiversity were some of the major activities performed. To improve local livelihoods, sustainable agricultural methods on riverbeds were also encouraged. He explains that the initiatives placed a strong emphasis on capacity building and community involvement. Successful models were expanded through knowledge exchange and cooperation with domestic and foreign partners. Numerous honors and recognitions were given to the efforts, highlighting their significance for both socioeconomic development and environmental preservation in the area. He shared that his best practices will be useful for all stakeholders including governments to prepare better for the monsoon and hydro-metro-related disaster.

Inputs and Feedback

The participants provided various inputs on the Madhesh Province Monsoon Preparedness and Response Plan 2081. Emphasis was placed on the need for government engagement with civil society, NGOs, and INGOs in developing the plan. It was suggested that the upcoming monsoon preparedness and response plan should prioritize inclusive participation, community empowerment, and sustainable development practices. The importance of collaboration to enhance resilience and ensure effective disaster response was stressed, along with proactive measures in risk reduction and timely response mechanisms. The workshop highlighted that the monsoon preparedness and response plan should encompass key aspects such as risk assessment, early warning systems, community preparedness, resource allocation, response and relief protocols, and long-term recovery programs. The significance of coordination with federal ministries, provincial departments, local governments, and disaster management committees to protect high-risk areas and mitigate risks was emphasized. Additionally, the importance of creating long-term solutions to deal with disasters was stressed, pointing out that many unavoidable tragedies occur unexpectedly. The efficiency of local government management was questioned, with comparisons drawn to more effective systems in other countries. It was noted that problems related to rain have significantly increased in the Terai region, underlining the necessity of an integrated approach moving forward. The necessity of orientation and training in disaster management was emphasized.

Remarks

Mr. Ram Bahadur Shrestha, Habitat for Humanity Nepal, emphasized the need for government engagement with civil society, NGOs, and INGOs in developing the monsoon preparedness and response plan. He highlighted Habitat for Humanity's active support of such initiatives within its project areas, including organizing workshops in Koshi Province. Mr. Shrestha suggested that the upcoming monsoon preparedness and response plan of Madhesh Province should prioritize inclusive participation, community empowerment, and sustainable development practices. He stressed the importance of collaboration to enhance resilience and ensure effective disaster response, urging proactive measures in risk reduction and timely response mechanisms.

Dr. Raju Thapa, Chair, DPNet Nepal, emphasized in his remarks that the monsoon preparedness and response plan should encompass various key aspects, including risk assessment, early warning systems, community preparedness, resource allocation, response and relief protocols, and long-term recovery programs. He highlighted that numerous disaster events occur annually in Koshi and Madhesh Province, highlighting the necessity of organizing participatory workshops to get feedback from various stakeholders. Dr. Thapa highlighted the need to form NPDRR provincial-level committees in Madhesh Province. He ensured that DPNet Nepal would facilitate and implement these initiatives with the support of all member

organizations. In developing a monsoon preparedness and response plan, Dr. Thapa emphasized that Madhesh Province must prioritize several critical aspects. First, a comprehensive risk assessment based on historical data and scientific studies should be conducted to evaluate potential impacts such as floods and landslides. He stressed the importance of coordination with federal ministries, provincial departments, local governments, and disaster management committees to protect high-risk areas and mitigate risks. Dr. Thapa also highlighted the importance of immediate and long-term actions for monsoon-related disaster response. This includes setting up early warning systems, training emergency response teams, and collaborating with local communities, NGOs, and private sectors for efficient resource management and relief distribution. He mentioned that establishing effective communication channels and organizing regular stakeholder meetings will further enhance the province's preparedness and response capabilities. In the program, he handed over some publications like Sphere Standard to the Chief Minister and other guests.

Hon. Braja Kishor Yadav, Province Policy Commission emphasized several important issues regarding disaster management. He emphasized the significance of creating long-term solutions to deal with such calamities and pointed out that many unavoidable tragedies would undoubtedly happen unexpectedly. Hon. Yadav concurred with the participants' statements, saying that since the precise start date of the monsoon was already known, the workshop should have taken place before its arrival. He questioned the efficiency of the local government's management, drawing comparisons with Bangladesh's and India's more effective systems. Hon. Yadav said that problems related to rain have increased by 52% in the Terai region and underlined the necessity of an integrated approach going forward.

Special Remarks

Hon. Satish Kumar Singh, Chief Minister of Madhesh Province, emphasized the necessity of training youth and children in disaster management in his closing remarks. He stressed the importance of integrating disaster management education into the school curriculum, highlighting the current lack of participation from young people. According to Singh, engaging school-level children and youth is crucial for shaping the future and building a resilient society. The Chief Minister noted that disaster management programs have traditionally been implemented by non-governmental organizations. Moving forward, the state government will collaborate with these organizations to enhance disaster management efforts. He highlighted the importance of effective monsoon preparedness and sustainable practices in disaster management. Drawing from his experience as the former Mayor of Tilathi Koiladi, Chief Minister Singh shared successful initiatives, such as establishing early warning systems in collaboration with neighboring municipalities, Rajbiraj and Rupani. These initiatives were sustained through dedicated funds, ensuring long-term resilience against monsoon-induced hazards. "Developing a robust monsoon preparedness and response plan is vital for mitigating the impacts of heavy rainfall and associated disasters," said Chief Minister Singh. "This year, Madhesh Province is expected to receive significant rainfall, and we must focus

our preparedness activities accordingly. Our provincial government is committed to supporting all development partners and facilitating collaborative efforts to enhance disaster resilience."

Closing Remarks

Mr. Birendra Kumar Yadav Secretary Ministry of Home Affairs, Communication, and Law

Mr. Birendra Kumar Yadav, Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Communication, and Law, expressed his gratitude to all participants and supporting agencies for their valuable contributions to the "Madhesh Province Monsoon Preparedness and Response Plan 2081" workshop. He emphasized the importance of collective efforts in enhancing disaster resilience and acknowledged the feedback provided by the attendees. Mr. Yadav highlighted that the insights and suggestions received during the workshop are essential for refining the draft Monsoon Preparedness and Response Plan. He assured that these inputs would be incorporated into the final plan, which will be made public soon. Mr. Yadav stressed the necessity of coordinated actions, sustainable practices, and youth engagement in disaster management. He reiterated the commitment of the provincial government to support all development partners in mitigating the impacts of monsoon-induced disasters and ensuring the safety and well-being of the community.

APMCDRR Preparatory Meeting-2024



On July 2nd 2024, DPNepal Nepal organized a virtual program for the APMCDRR Preparatory Meeting. The meeting was graced by the presence of Mr. Anil Pokhrel, Executive Chief of National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA), and Dr. Bhisma Kumar Bhusal, Chief of the Disaster

Management Division, Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) and was attended by various stakeholders and member organizations of DPNet with about 60 participants.

The program was facilitated by Mr. Suraj Gautam, General Secretary, DPNet. Mr. Gautam welcomed the guests Dr. Bishma K Bhusal, Chief of the Disaster Management Division, MoHA, Mr. Anil Pokhrel, Executive Chief, NDRRMA, and all the virtual participants joining the Preparatory Meeting. Mr. Gautam also highlighted the role of DPNet as a secretariat to the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRR) and also iterated the fact that the APMCDRR is just 103 days away from today. Similarly, Mr. Gautam highlighted the objective of the program to update the preparatory activities and prioritize the remaining preparatory works.

Dr. Raju Thapa, Chairperson, DPNet Nepal, provided a brief introduction highlighting the significance of APMCDRR 2024. Dr. Thapa outlined the primary objectives and goals of the preparatory meeting, which included setting the stage for the upcoming conference, identifying key areas of focus and priority actions, and fostering stakeholder engagement and collaboration. A comprehensive presentation covered the agenda for APMCDRR 2024, expected outcomes, and the roadmap to achieving the goals by 2030. The presentation highlighted the importance of collective efforts and innovative approaches to disaster risk reduction (DRR) in the region. Dr Thapa shared that APMCDRR occurs every two years and previously known as AMCDRR, the name was changed to APMCDRR in 2022 as Australia was included. In 2023, a midterm review of the Sendai Framework was conducted, and this year's objective is to address the remaining goals needed to fulfill the Sendai Framework. The introductory meeting for APMCDRR 2024, themed "Eyes on 2030: Enhancing Ambition in Asia-Pacific," provided an overview scheduled for October 14-17, 2024, in Manila. The conference focused on practical solutions to enhance disaster risk financing, gender-responsive and inclusive disaster risk governance, and localization and resilience in urban and rural areas. Key areas of focus included sustainable investments in DRR, the role of technology and knowledge, and multi-stakeholder collaboration. The cross-cutting themes emphasized the integration of science and technology, convergence across DRR, climate, and development, and private sector engagement. Dr. Thapa also discussed the challenges and opportunities in DRR, aiming to enhance resilience and sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region. He stated that Nepal's participation in APMCDRR, under NPDRR and coordinated by DPNet, involved developing a common position paper, raising funds through a basket fund, and ensuring visibility for all contributors. Planned activities included attending main and parallel sessions, participating in sideline events, and managing the marketplace. He added that preparatory efforts involved organizing a basket fund, creating an official statement and position paper, producing a short video, and holding coordination and pre-departure meetings among prospective participants.

Discussion Session

In the discussion session, participants raised various issues concerning the preparation of the position paper and the registration process for the upcoming APMCDRR conference. They inquired about the number of people who had already registered and those who had yet to do so, emphasizing the need for discussions after receiving registration confirmations to determine the number of participants and the extent of preparation required. This highlights the necessity for organized planning and effective communication among all stakeholders to ensure a well-coordinated presence at the conference. Concerns were also raised regarding whether organizations should register individually or as groups, and it was clarified that registration should be done individually. Additionally, questions about the organization of the next preparatory meeting were addressed, with the response indicating that it would be conducted within a loose network. This part of the discussion highlights the need for clear guidelines and efficient coordination in the preparatory activities, ensuring that all participants are well-prepared and aligned with the collective goals for APMCDRR 2024. The emphasis on individual registration and networked planning reflects a strategic approach to fostering collaboration and comprehensive engagement among the various stakeholders involved.

Registration Link:

<https://apmcdrr.undrr.org/2024/register-apmcdrr>

Remarks

Dr. Bhisma K Bhusal, Chief of the Disaster Management Division, MoHA, thanked all the participants and emphasized that lessons learned from past hazards are often forgotten. Dr. Bhusal highlighted the strong sense of volunteering among Nepalese, which can be showcased at the conference. He also suggested demonstrating the functionality of the Bipad portal, which facilitates inter-organizational collaboration in DRR. He requested development partner to strengthen the capacity of NDRRMA. He identified a gap where efforts often focused on individual benefits and easy tasks, stressing the need for better coordination and consideration of national priorities in DRR activities. The Jajarkot earthquake illustrated the gap in learning from past disasters. He observed a lack of coordination between the government and NGOs/INGOs in his recent observation and stressed the importance of working together for a better future.

Mr. Anil Pokhrel, Executive Chief, NDRRMA, acknowledged Dr. Raju Thapa's vital role in last year's APMCDRR, thanking him for his hard work and effective coordination of the 2023 conference preparations. He noted Dr. Bhusal's experience in the field of DRR and emphasized the need to create a task force and a WhatsApp group for APMCDRR 2024 similar to last year, for better coordination as early as possible. He mentioned that Ms. Smita from NDRRMA who look after NPDRR would assist in the process. He highlighted the necessity of collectively preparing for this year's theme and determining what works related

to risk financing, multi-hazard risk assessment, and early warning systems in Nepal could be showcased. He emphasized discrete actions and clear roles and responsibilities. Continuous update reporting was recommended to ensure thorough preparation. Mr. Pokhrel expressed confidence that, with the experience gained from last year, better results could be achieved. He concluded the program by stressing the importance of discussing and preparing the program highlights and showcasing the work done by NPDRR and the BIPAD portal, emphasizing collective effort for success.

Interaction program on Establishing Media Beats Dedicated to DRR and International Lightning Safety Day



On June 28, 2024, DPNet Nepal organized an interaction program on Establishing Media Beats Dedicated to DRR and International Lightning Safety Day. The discussion program was attended by prominent media personalities, NGOs, INGOs, UN agencies and other stakeholders. The program was facilitated by DPNet IPP, Mr. Surya Bahadur Thapa. Mr. Thapa explains that the interaction session aims for strategic planning meeting for DRR media beats as well as International Lightning Day. He stressed the current ongoing issues such as heat waves, monsoons, floods, and landslides. Mr. Thapa emphasized the role of the media in raising awareness, sensitizing the public, and informing authorities. DPNet, as the umbrella organization for all DRR-related efforts, recognized the need to establish dedicated DRR media beats. He expected that this interaction will play a significant role in enhancing our capacity to address and manage these concerns. The natural calamity relief act, 1982 has been in effect for a long time, and we have made significant efforts to integrate management into policy through the DRRM Act. The MoHA and NDRRMA alone cannot address these issues effectively; there is a need for a dedicated preparedness and mitigation

section for successful implementation. He added, DPNet emphasized the need for a unified strategy in reporting and policy advocacy for DRR. Highlighting DPNet's role as a representative body for all participants, Mr. Thapa called for collective efforts to achieve common DRR goals. He addressed that historically, DRR-related issues lacked a dedicated focus in news reporting. However, significant progress has been made, with most media outlets now equipped to cover DRR topics effectively. The speaker encouraged continued development in this area to ensure thorough and accurate dissemination of DRR information.

Welcome remarks by Mr. Suraj Gautam, General Secretary, DPNet Nepal

Mr. Gautam delivered the welcome remarks, extending greetings to all participants. He highlighted that DPNet Nepal had organized a discussion program focusing on media, on August 5th, 2023. Mr. Gautam mentioned that despite the development of a forecasting system by the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (DHM), there remains limited awareness regarding its effectiveness and application. Therefore, he emphasized the need to enhance awareness efforts to mitigate property and life losses mobilizing media effectively.

Mr. Kedar Neupane, former government Secretary and DPNet Advisor outlined the program's objectives, emphasizing the role of media and his past governmental experience. He highlighted the need for political improvements to better support the media sector in Nepal. He stressed the importance of specialized media beats for DRR to ensure effective information dissemination. Mr. Neupane requested media personnel to promote DRR coverage, noting its current early development stage. He also mentioned the DHM new daily weather bulletins and the significance of disseminating this information. Lastly, he addressed the importance of observing Lightning Safety Day, a topic often overlooked.

Dr. Shriram Sharma, SALNET, presented a presentation on International Lightning Safety Day, 2024. Dr. Sharma is a representative from Nepal who has chaired the South Asian Lightning Network (SALNET) Since 2019, and first Nepalese member since last year for International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC). He highlighted that lightning is a significant yet often overlooked hazard, posing greater risks to developing countries. International Lightning Safety Day was established in 2011 after a tragic lightning strike in Uganda which killed 18 children. Nepal hosted its first international lightning conference in October 2011, inspired by this incident. Lightning hazards, closely related to electrical engineering, have caused severe incidents worldwide. In South Africa, lightning struck a football field, collapsing players, and in Congo, 11 players were died. Nepal is also vulnerable, particularly as it belongs to the Hindu Kush Himalayan belt. Nepal, India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka collectively lose about 4,000 lives annually due to lightning. Although the number of lightning-related deaths in Nepal has decreased in recent years, it still records 100 deaths and 300 injuries annually. He mentioned that the Makawanpur is the most affected

district in Nepal. Dr. Sharma emphasized that Nepal lacks advanced lightning forecasting technology. Compared to the U.S., where only 16-17 lightning deaths occur annually, developing countries are more vulnerable. Lightning strikes are more common in the Terai region at midnight and in hilly areas during the afternoon. He also explained the common myths associated with lightning have been debunked, such as the belief that Kathmandu is immune. Electrical and electronic equipment is highly susceptible to lightning damage. Surge Protective Devices (SPDs) can help protect against lightning, and the IEC has guidelines for using thick wires to handle the high currents generated by lightning, which can reach up to 300,000 amperes. Lightning is an underrated hazard, with 360 annual incidents reported by the police bureau. Efforts to revive damaged lightning recording equipment in Nepal have been unsuccessful. Mr. Shriram has been advocating for lightning issues since 2007, emphasizing the need to incorporate disaster management into the curriculum. His initiatives include installing lightning protection systems in schools and developing a training module for lightning and electrical inspections. He overviewed that tall buildings are more prone to lightning strikes than shorter ones. The SALNET website features an alert map showing current lightning incidents. Lightning requires specific conditions to strike and produces loud thunder, indicating proximity. Lastly, he provided safety tips including avoiding outdoor areas during lightning, but vehicles and planes are safe. Closing doors and windows can help prevent lightning from changing its path and entering buildings. The speaker recommended using alert apps for safety.

Remarks by Dr. Meen Bahadur Chhetri, DPNet Former Chairperson and Present Advisor, highlighted the importance of discussing lightning safety alongside urging media personnel to reconsider posting sensitive photos and videos on social media, as these can often lead to mental trauma. He urged the DPNet team to organize more intensive discussions on lightning issues during their monthly dialogue programs, emphasizing the need for increased awareness in this area. He also noted the observed trend that events with ministers as guests attract more public attendance, whereas those with academics as core speakers are less attended.

Mr. Rajendra Dahal from Media Sector appreciated the presentation shared by Dr. Shriram Sir and emphasized the need to incorporate it into the curriculum study. In the past, the lack of research hindered information flow, but now we should disseminate information gathered from research efforts. Despite Nepal's limited local research capacity, many projects rely on funding from donors and expertise from foreign-trained professionals. It is essential to prioritize the integration of disaster topics right from the beginning. He stressed that the media personnel require sensitization to grasp the context and effectively engage with experts by asking pertinent questions.

Mr. Govinda Luitel, Consulting Editor, Setopati, highlighted that while the government often assesses disaster impacts in terms of percentages, the individual losses for affected families are substantial. In Nepal, there are over 7,000 suicides annually. He pointed out that while there is extensive coverage of

incidents after they occur, there is a significant lack of media content focusing on prevention, preparedness, and raising awareness. He highlighted that the FM radio channels have a more direct impact at the community level. Mr. Luitel noted that only the current Home Minister has actively discussed DRR issues, contrasting with past ministers who did not prioritize such discussions. He advocated for the mapping of historic heritage sites to assess their vulnerability to disasters and emphasized the importance of providing media with comprehensive coverage of these issues.

Mr. Keshab Dutta Bhatta, Treasurer, DPNet Nepal, emphasized that the media should write content on a balanced way from all three phases of the disaster while not only focusing on a single one.

Mr. Surendra Pandey, DRR Media Platform, Chairperson, stressed that when the media is perceived as being aligned with NGOs and INGOs, usually creates a negative impression that the media might be benefiting from these organizations. In reality, the media plays a crucial role as a bridge between the community and experts, helping to fill informational gaps. He called for suggestions on how we can enhance our approach in this regard, emphasizing the need for action-oriented strategies rather than mere paperwork. It is crucial to focus on process-oriented initiatives to effectively address these challenges.

Ms. Anita Bindu, Senior News Editor, NTV, highlighted the importance of collaboration among all stakeholders with shared objectives in DRR. She emphasized that the media should maintain a critical writing approach in their reporting. During the program, there was a realization of the importance of not only raising awareness but also mainstreaming DRR efforts. Ms. Bindu pointed out that the establishment of the DRR Media Platform aimed to foster collaborative efforts. However, she also noted a lag in how government roles and media approaches handle DRR information. She stressed the necessity for media personnel to be well-versed in DRR basics through training or workshops. One significant concern raised by Ms. Bindu was ensuring the safety and precautions for media personnel during dangerous disaster events. She also highlighted the importance of psychological counseling for media personnel in such situations.

Mr. Jiwan Bhandari, Treasurer, DRR Media Platform, highlighted the diverse reporting nature of television, radio, and Social media, noting their distinct approaches. He suggested that representatives from each type of media should receive training in DRR to ensure comprehensive coverage. Mr. Bhandari emphasized the importance of media investing efforts in producing quality news. He also mentioned the significance of fellowship programs aimed at enhancing media skills in this area. He suggest on the creation of a roster of experts covering various aspects and hazards of disasters, which should be readily accessible to the media. Given the technical nature of DRR, he stressed the need for clear technical terminology and news guidelines. He highlighted the importance of discussing DRR-related issues in the

news and covering reports and exercises conducted by relevant organizations, which could significantly enhance coverage and impact.

Mr. Krishna Raj Kaphle, Project Liason Specialist, UNDP, appreciated the presentation and information shared by Dr. Shriram Sir. He overviewed, that following the Koshi floods, efforts in disaster management have increased, but disasters are often treated in isolation, focusing mainly on incidents and losses. It is crucial to ensure information reaches the grassroots level. Although policies integrate DRR and resilience aspects of the SDGs, implementation is lacking. The media tends to highlight losses rather than preventive measures like Early Warning Systems. Mr. Kaphle highlighted that there is a need for better training access and a proactive approach, to integrate DRR into development. Knowledge sharing in the media and from experts is essential. He shared that UNDP and DPNet are closely linked, as DPNet was initially supported by UNDP. Donor partnerships are proposal-based, and donors are also members of DPNet. Therefore, this forum should facilitate meetings between the media and donors. It is important to convey disaster risk information to those who are directly affected by disasters.

Mr. Kedarnath Koirala, Bagmati TV, highlighted the importance of livestock in providing early warning signals before a disaster. He emphasized the need for media outlets to create a comprehensive list of experts across various sectors. Mr. Koirala stressed the necessity of establishing a network of journalists, regardless of their sector, and connecting them with these experts. He urged the media to actively seek out expert opinions and highlighted the importance of sensitizing the media to raise awareness about disaster preparedness and risk reduction. "INGOs and UN organizations mostly focus on documentation and recording," Mr. Koirala noted. He emphasized that DPNet must operate across all seven provinces, ensuring effective allocation and expenditure of resources to enhance disaster management efforts.

Mr. Rabin Dahal, a representative of AIN, emphasized the importance of two-way communication as a crucial aid in disaster management. Speaking at a recent program, he shared that there was confusion about whom to invite from the media, despite wanting their participation. Mr. Dahal pointed out the challenges in organizing these programs, including the lack of clear ideas on whom to invite. He stressed the need to use mass communication to disseminate learned information effectively. "Our collective objective is to reduce the impact of disasters," Dahal said. He also highlighted the need to bridge the gap between AINTGDM and media networks, calling for their collaboration. While facilities for reporting are available in Kathmandu, significant efforts are required outside the capital. Mr. Dahal mentioned the recent dissemination in Jajarkot, supported by DPNet, and emphasized that media houses should also take responsibility for sharing critical information. He further noted that accurate forecasting and information sharing can save lives. "The more we forecast and share information, the more lives we can save," he added. He concluded by emphasizing that disaster management requires robust communication strategies, especially to reach and educate communities beyond major cities.

Closing Remarks by Dr. Raju Thapa, Chair, DPNet Nepal

Dr. Thapa emphasized that there exists a symbiotic relationship between the media and the community. He highlighted the importance of involving the media at the community level to ensure effective communication and information dissemination. Dr. Thapa also requested INGOs and UN agencies to include the role of media in their proposals and programs to strengthen this vital connection. Dr. Thapa highlighted the crucial role of media and the need for enhanced awareness efforts, particularly concerning the effectiveness of DHM's forecasting system and the importance of observing Lightning Safety Day. He stressed for the improved communication strategies to effectively educate and inform communities, about disaster risks and mitigation measures and formally closed the program.