

## **Opening Speech by the Honourable Minister Khum Bahadur Khadka, Minister for Home Affairs and Local Development of HMG**

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank the organisers for their invitation to inaugurate the ‘Regional Workshop on Water-induced Disasters in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan Region’ organised by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in conjunction with the Participatory Disaster Management Programme/UNDP with support from the Japan Women in Development Fund/UNDP.

All of us are aware that the Hindu Kush-Himalaya is one of the most fragile regions and prone to natural hazards due to its steep slopes, unstable geology, and highly concentrated monsoon precipitation. Various forms of water-induced natural hazards such as landslides, debris flows, glacial lake outburst floods (GLOF), floods, river bank cutting, erosion, siltation, and shifting of river channels commonly occur. Such natural hazards cause loss of life and property in all countries in the region.

Nepal has been experiencing a high rate of land use and land cover change as a result of the high population growth rate and rapid development in physical infrastructures, such as settlements, roads, dams, and irrigation canals. As a result, life and property is increasingly at risk from natural disasters. At the same time widespread poverty, illiteracy, inaccessibility, and economic and social inequality have resulted in a weak response and recovery capacity to natural disasters. Loss and damage have caused increasing disruption to the socioeconomic development of countries. There is a need for further development of infrastructure – irrigation canals, rural agricultural roads, and rural electrification, in order to improve the living standard of the people. But it is likely that loss and damage will increase in the future if effective mitigation measures are not implemented.

His Majesty’s Government of Nepal has given high priority to poverty alleviation and empowerment of local people through decentralisation. More recently, environment has been integrated with development, and a participatory approach for protection, conservation, and management of the environment has been introduced. Environmental Impact Assessments have become an inseparable part of the development programme. The government has endorsed the National Action Plan prepared by the Nepal National Committee on IDNDR. This comprehensive plan has identified the main actions necessary for reducing the risk from disaster. Efforts have also been made to improve the national capability in disaster management including the provision of rescue and relief services to disaster victims.

Water-induced disasters in Nepal are so frequent and widespread that government efforts alone are not sufficient in reducing risks. Efforts from all sections of society are equally

important. It is necessary to raise awareness among people in communities so that investment in hazard prone areas can be minimised and the response and recovery capacity of the people improved.

A consolidated and integrated approach for disaster management and control, which includes a myriad of tasks and responsibilities such as mitigation, preparedness, reconstruction, and rehabilitation, is relatively new. There is a need to upgrade the hazard management capability so that disaster management and control becomes an integral part of the regular development activities of the government.

Dissemination and transfer of information and technology are crucial in planning, design, and implementation of disaster mitigation and control measures. Often individuals or groups or institutions do not take mitigating action because they do not know what to do or how to do it. Well-tested effective mitigation programmes and technologies developed in some areas in the region can be transferred to other areas. The challenge is how to transfer the expertise and technologies to the users and implementing agencies.

It is in this context that such a regional workshop is necessary to share experiences and knowledge about the issues related to disasters. I am confident that the deliberations in the workshop will come up with valuable recommendations for policy guidelines and measures, which will help to reduce the risk of water-induced disasters.

## **Speech by Minister Takemichi OKABE Embassy of Japan, Kathmandu, Nepal**

Honorable Minister of Home, Mr. Khum Bahadur Khadka, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is indeed my great pleasure to take part in this opening ceremony of the Regional Workshop on Water-induced Disasters in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan Region.

Ladies and gentlemen, as is well known, the Himalayan range was only recently formed by tectonic activity, resulting in many geological folds and fractures on both sides of Himalayas. Being one of the youngest mountain ranges in the world, it has a fragile geological composition. In addition, each summer, monsoon clouds bring torrential rains to the southern slopes of the Himalayas during a short span of time.

Because of this combination of weak geology and heavy rainfall, as well as some unfavourable human activities, the people living in Nepal have frequently faced water-induced disasters, including flash floods, landslides, and debris flows, causing each year a heavy loss of life and great damage to property and national infrastructure. Consequently, the mitigation and management of water-induced disaster is one of the most important issues for the Kingdom of Nepal.

In light of this, the Government of Japan has supported the Participatory Disaster Management Programme (PDMP) in Nepal under the Japan special trust fund for Woman in Development/UNDP. This unique project, which provides an exceptional opportunity for joint collaboration among ICIMOD, UNDP, and the Government of Japan, supports the empowerment of women and their families for the purpose of mitigating and managing water-induced natural disasters in Nepal. In addition to this project, the Disaster Mitigation Support Programme Project (DMSP) is being implemented under the technical cooperation of JICA, in order to strengthen the capacity of HMG and local communities to cope with water-induced disasters.

In these programmes, government organisations, local governments, NGOs, and CBOs are working together to enhance the capacity of women and communities to mitigate and manage water-induced disasters. I believe that the information provided at this workshop will be helpful for the participants.

Distinguished participants are here today to share their experiences concerning this important issue. I believe this workshop will provide a good opportunity for discussing ideas and coming to mutual conclusions concerning water-induced disasters and their countermeasures, and I believe it will also greatly contribute to strengthening mutual cooperation and understanding between the participating countries.

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere belief that the outcomes of this workshop will be very practical and useful. I am certain that it will provide valuable input to all participating nations which will help them conduct proper planning for water-induced disaster mitigation and management in the future.

I would like to express my hope that the activities today will enhance mutual cooperation and coordination in the field of water-induced disaster mitigation and management for years to come.

Thank you.

## Workshop Schedule

### DAY 1: Tuesday, 11 December 2001

- Welcome address – Dr. Binayak Bhadra, Acting Director General, ICIMOD
- Inauguration of the Workshop – Hon'ble Minister Khum Bahadur Khadka, Minister for Home Affairs and Local Development
- Speech – Minister Takemichi Okabe, Embassy of Japan
- Inaugural address – Hon'able Minister Khum Bahadur Khadka
- Vote of thanks – Mr. Man B. Thapa, National Manager, PDMP

### **Session 1: Chair Binayak Bhadra**

- Flood Disaster Mitigation in Bangladesh
  - Mohsina Yasmin and Rownag Jahan, Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs, Dhaka, Bangladesh
- Flood and Disaster Reduction in China
  - Wang Angsheng, Director of the Centre for Disaster Reduction, Chinese Academy of Sciences
- Flash Flood Disaster in Phetchabun Province, Thailand: What are the lessons learned?
  - Apichai Thirathon, ADPC, Bangkok, Thailand

### **Session 2: Chair Wang Angsheng**

- Flood Risk Assessment for Yunnan Province, China
  - Zhu Jing, Geographical Institute of Yunnan Province, Kunming, China
- Flash Floods: Causes, Consequences and Management in the Indian Himalaya
  - Varun Joshi, G.B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development, Garhwal Unit, Srinagar-Garhwal, India
- Flood Hazard and Risk Mapping in Selected VDCs of Two Districts
  - Moti Lal Ghimire, Narendra Khanal, TU, Kathmandu; Rajesh Thapa, Li Tianchi, ICIMOD

### **Session 3: Chair Meen B.P. Chhetri**

- Flood Forecasting and Warning System in the Philippines
  - Susan S. Ramos-Espinueva, Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration, Diliman, Q.C. Philippines
- Regional Cooperation in Flood Forecasting and Information Sharing
  - Mandira Shrestha, ICIMOD
- Failures of Natural Dams in Pakistan
  - Basit Masud, National Engineering Services of Pakistan; Lahore, Pakistan
- Flood: Causes, Impacts and Countermeasures in Nepal
  - Koji Kamee, Chief Advisor, DMSP/JICA
  - Damodar Bhattarai, Department of Water-induced Disaster Prevention (DWIDP), Kathmandu, Nepal

### DAY 2: Wednesday, 12 December 2001

### **Session 4: Chair Apichai Thirathon**

- Activities of the Asia Disaster Reduction Centre
  - Satoru Nishikawa, Deputy Executive Director, ADRC, Kobe, Japan
- Glacier Lake Outburst Floods and Infrastructure Development in the Nepal Himalayas
  - Pradeep Mool, ICIMOD

**Session 5: Chair Basit Masud**

Mechanism of Rapid Landslide Motion

- Hiroshi Fukuoka, Disaster Prevention Research Institute, Kyoto University, Japan

Natural Dam Created by a Rapid Landslide and Flash Flood from the Dam Failure in Tibet, China

- Li Tianchi, ICIMOD, Kathmandu, Nepal

**Session 6: Chair Suresh R. Chalise**

Landslide Hazard Mapping for Community Disaster Management

- Rajesh Thapa, Li Tianchi, ICIMOD
- Moti Lal Ghimire, Narendra Khanal, TU, Kathmandu

Mobilising Communities for Sustainable Development: The Case of Community Led Disaster Management in Nepal

- Man B. Thapa, National Manager, PDMP, UNDP/Nepal

Chisapani Community Development and Disaster Management

- Bishnu Das Shrestha, Department of Soil Conservation and Watershed Management

**Session 7: Chair Satoru Nishikawa**

Indigenous Knowledge on Disaster Mitigation in Nepal

- Youba Raj Luintel, Kiran K. Amatya and Bhupendra Gauchan, PDMP, UNDP/Nepal.

Disaster and Development: A Gender Perspective

- Man B. Thapa, National Manager, PDMP, UNEP/Nepal

Disaster Management Strategies of the Government of Nepal

- Meen B. P. Chhetri, Director of Department of Narcotics Control and Disaster Management, Ministry of Home Affairs

Floods, Causes, Impacts & Counter Measures, Mitigations

- Damodar Bhattarai, Department of Water-induced Disaster Prevention (DWIDP)

**DAY 3: Thursday, 13 December 2001****Session 8: Chair Mohsina Yasmin**

Women Amidst Disasters

- Sumitra Manandhar Gurung, Consultant for Environmental Management and Watershed Management

The Complex of Risks and Vulnerabilities in Mountain Areas

- Narpat S. Jodha, ICIMOD

Community Risk and Vulnerability Analysis: Examples of Eight Pilot Target Communities of Nepal

- Narendra Khanal, Department of Geography, Tribhuvan University
- Li Tianchi, ICIMOD

**DAY 4: Friday, 14 December 2001****Group discussions and presentations****Drafting recommendations****Presentation and finalisation of recommendations****Closing Ceremony**

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