



Quarterly Newsletter of  
SAARC  
Disaster Management Centre  
New Delhi

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## From Editors Desk

### Ex-ante Investment for Disaster Risk Reduction

One after another disaster in the region has created a wave of shock, despair, hopelessness amongst the people who are poor and have exposure of disaster risks. They at times become fatalist and leave everything on the God. But, if we are determined to reduce the risks then it is possible. Taking clue from here, in last one decade, the SAARC Member States worked very hard in identifying, analyzing and treating risks. Investments have been made for enhancing capacities and putting institutional arrangement in order. Investment made in DRR has paid in reducing impact on lives.

Pre-disaster investment has paid. Recently, Cyclone Phailin made landfall near Gopalpur in the state of Odisha, India on October 12, 2013 with wind speed of around 200 km/hr. This Cyclone was a category 4 storm. It was the biggest storm to have hit the Indian Coast in past 14 years. If we compare this to 1999 super cyclone which had similar severity and had hit Odisha 14 years ago, caused massive devastation, killing more than 10,000 people. In contrast to this the response to recent cyclone Phailin was successful in giving early warning for evacuation of a million people, which was not a small task, resulting in zero causality. This has happened due to years of planning, consultation, early warning system, creating disaster resilient infrastructure, preparing disaster response system etc.

Such initiatives have been taken in the past in other SAARC Member States for risk reduction. Afghanistan has developed a National Disaster Management Framework as a key document to guide policy makers and stakeholders to deal with DRR with its main focus on Risk Management, Capacity Building and build effective disaster response system. Similarly, Bhutan making disaster risk management as priority ensured DRR as a national priority with strong institutional basis for implementation. Maldives & Nepal developed national frameworks, policy and plans and also brought legislation to support disaster management initiatives. Nepal is implementing its five flagship programmes-school/hospital safety, building response capacity, flood management, CBDRM and building institutional support. Pakistan & Sri Lanka also capacitated their institutions which was related to DRR and consistently making investment for risk reduction by brining projects and programmes, so, the South Asia Region proactively worked all through the period of HFA-1 and committed to continue its policy in future also i.e. HFA-2 for attaining Sustainable Development Goals.

The current issue of SDMC Informs has been able to capture initiatives taken by SDMC as a supplement to the SAARC Member States initiatives. I wish this will further help Member States in fulfilling their commitments for DRR. I wish all success and disaster free region.

## H. E. Arjun Bahadur Thapa takes over as 12th Secretary General SAARC



His Excellency Arjun Bahadur Thapa took over as the 12th Secretary General of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) on 1st March 2014, succeeding Mr. Ahmed Saleem of Maldives.

Mr. Thapa was born in January 1956 and has a Masters' Degree in International Law. Prior to this appointment, H. E. Mr. Thapa served as the Foreign Secretary of Nepal. In his diplomatic career, he has also served as Ambassador of Nepal to the United

Arab Emirates and as Deputy Permanent Representative/Minister Plenipotentiary as well as Charge d'Affaires, i.e., at the Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations in New York. To add feathers in his career he has been decorated with Gorkha Dakshin Bahu (IV Class) in the year 1995. He is well travelled personality with broad experience of different areas of work.

The Secretaries-General of SAARC are appointed by the Council of Ministers upon nomination by a Member State on the basis of the principle of rotation in alphabetical order for a period of three years.

## SAARC Regional Training Programme on Incident Command System (ICS) for Disaster Response in South Asia, Kathmandu, Nepal

SAARC Disaster Management Centre, New Delhi and Ministry of Home Affairs Government of Nepal organized a 6 days training on Role of Incident Command System for Disaster Response, from 16th to 21st February 2014 at Hotel Country Villa, Nagarkot, Bhaktapur, Nepal. Disaster Preparedness Network Nepal coordinated the training program at

to the Government led ICS in future. All together there were 24 participants in the training. The overall objective of the training course was to provide in-depth knowledge on ICS by covering a range of topics that are essential to the application of ICS in disaster response management. The programme aimed to find out the importance of ICS in Emergency Response Management and planning during disaster, and to discuss about principles, concepts, and practices of ICS, and its role in disaster response. Various methodologies were adopted for conducting the training; such as Lectures, Discussions on lessons learnt and good practices, Group Exercises, table top simulation exercise and Presentations by Participants and Interaction.



implementation level. Senior disaster management officials and delegates of government of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka attended the training programme. Being the host, DPNet Nepal board members also attended the training with an aim of contributing

The inaugural program was chaired by Mr. Shankar Prasad Koirala, Joint Secretary of Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) Government of Nepal. Other dignitaries were Prof. Santosh Kumar, Director, SAARC Disaster Management Centre (SDMC), Mr. Pitambar Aryal, Chairperson, DPNet-Nepal and Mr. Kevin Misenheimer, Program Manager, The program was inaugurated by Mr. Shankar Prasad Koirala) by lighting a traditional lamp as a sign of



good omen. Welcome remarks were given by Mr. Pradip Kumar Koirala, Under Secretary, Disaster Management Division, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of Nepal. Mr. Shankar Koirala, JS, MoHA expressed his gratitude to SAARC Disaster Management Centre for organizing the training in Nepal and appreciated USAID and USFS for their support. He also appreciated DPNet Nepal for their contribution in assisting the training programme. He concluded his remarks by wishing all the success and pleasant stay of all involved in the training. Prof. Santosh Kumar, Director SDMC highlighted that SAARC Disaster Management Centre has been making its efforts for policy coherence in Disaster Risk Management sector to reduce the adverse impact of disasters in the SAARC member countries. He provided the information about the various aspects of disasters and its impact in South Asia.

The five day technical sessions were taken by USFS disaster experts namely Mr. Joe Reyes, Fire Chief, USFS; Ms. Cathy Scofield, Disaster Expert, USFS and Mr Kevin Misenheimer, Program Manager, USFS. Indian resource person Mr Pathak was also present to give South Asia field experience. On the sixth day Mr M. P. Sethy Senior Consultant (KM & CD), SDMC along with Ms Cathy Scofield took session on future professionalization of ICS in the region. This training program, organized second time in Nepal trained a total of 24 participants from six countries in the region who are now a good resource in further expanding and implementing ICS in their respective countries. The training has been a milestone in the field of effective disaster response, strengthening capacity at national and regional level through respective Governments. The SAARC training on ICS concluded with official closing program under the chairmanship of Mr. Lakshmi Prasad Dhakal, Joint Secretary/Chief of Disaster Management Division, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of Nepal. He awarded certificates to the participants. The training concluded with participants from SAARC member countries being trained on ICS in emergency response management and planning during disasters. Trainees are now able to apply ICS in disaster response management in their respective countries. Coordination and communication mechanism of SAARC member countries is enhanced through ICS training.

### **Director, SDMC meeting with Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of Nepal officials**

In the side events of ICS Nepal (16-21 February 2014), Prof. Santosh Kumar, Director, SAARC Disaster Management Centre met with Mr. Janardan Nepal, Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), Government of Nepal on 17th February 2014 and discussed the current happenings and cross cutting issues bothering the SAARC region and respective countries especially in the field of disaster management. Mr. Shankar Koirala Joint Secretary MoHA also was present in the meeting. The issues boggling Nepal viz. building fire, man-wildlife conflict and disposal of hospital bio-waste were discussed by Mr. Nepal who requested SDMC to take them up in future. Director thanked Secretary MoHA for sharing his views and assured that the discussion shall help SDMC in drafting future activities.

### **Director, SDMC participated in International Recovery Platform Forum-2014 in Japan**

International Recovery Platform, Japan organized a IRP Forum-2014 in the month of January in Kobe, Japan. The Forum this year dealt with the subject "Role of Private Sector in Disaster Recovery". This forum discussed the experiences, lessons of private sector, senior citizens and other marginalized groups. The outcome of this workshop will feed into the HFA-2 World Conference. Professor Santosh, Director, SAARC Disaster Management Centre made a presentation on the subject and expressed his views on Private Sector in Disaster Risk Reduction in South Asia.

## Consultation Process on SAARC Regional Roadmap for Disaster Risk Reduction-Post 2015, New Delhi



In continuation to the global process on HFA-2, SAARC Disaster Management Centre initiated a consultation process particularly for South Asia region on Post 2015 DRR agenda. The objective of the consultation process was to develop the Post 2015 SAARC Regional Roadmap for DRR which will focus on completing the unfinished tasks of HFA-1, address the challenges and take up newer interventions which are relevant in the context of emerging risks and changing development scenario in the region. SAARC Disaster Management Centre is working under the guidelines of SAARC Charter and committed to its various functions given for Disaster Risk Reduction in the region. A number of efforts have already been taken by Member States with SDMC in the SAARC region for disaster risk reduction. The link between disaster and development has been appreciated by Member States of South Asia and all the countries have also endorsed the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005-2015): and adopted the SAARC Comprehensive Framework on Disaster Management.

The key objectives of the Regional Workshop were: a) Taking a stock of the progress achieved in implementing the priority areas of HFA, SAARC Regional Framework and thematic roadmaps for Disaster Risk Reduction and the various challenges faced by the member states, b) Identifying the Priority Areas –Post 2015 in the SAARC region for DRR, c) Developing an outline for the South Asia Regional Roadmap on DRR-Post 2015. Presentations and discussions on some of the key areas of intervention as

proposed for South Asia Region were held during the workshop. The participants were divided into various groups to deliberate and identify the actions to be taken up by SAARC as a region. Detailed guidance notes were developed for doing the group work. There were discussions on following areas- Urban Risk Reduction; Building Community Resilience; Fostering Partnerships with Civil Society Organizations and Private Sectors for Resilience Building in the region; Integrating DRR and CCA in the Development Framework; Women's Leadership role in DRR-CCA and gender equality and Regional Intergovernmental Issues. The outcome of the workshop was to identify the priority areas of focus (Post 2015) with inputs from various member states and experts working in the SAARC region develop an outline for the SAARC Regional Roadmap on DRR-Post 2015.

Based on these discussions the draft position paper for the South Asia region was developed which was then discussed in a Consultative workshop held with two representatives from each of the Member States. The forum was represented by all the Member States. After obtaining the comments the position paper for the region was firmed up and circulated to all the participants of the Consultative meeting and the regional experts. Their comments were incorporated and the final draft was forwarded to the SAARC Secretariat for circulation to all the Member States for rectification. Once rectified it will be placed at the Asian Ministerial Conference on DRR in May 2014 and subsequently this will be also be placed in the World Conference in March 2015 as input from the SAARC Region.

## SAARC Regional Training Programme on Techniques for Retrofitting & Earthquake Resistant Structures in South Asia, IIT-Roorkee, India



SAARC Disaster Management Centre (SDMC), New Delhi, India in collaboration with the Centre of Excellence in Disaster Mitigation & Management and Department of Earthquake Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology-Roorkee, India conducted a two weeks SAARC Regional Training Programme on "Techniques for Retrofitting & Earthquake Resistant Structures in South Asia" for Geoscientists, Civil Engineers, Architects & Planners, Disaster Management Professionals from March 19<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at IIT-Roorkee, India. A total number of 15 participants represented all SAARC Member States except Pakistan of SAARC and were from a wide spectrum consisting of: Civil Engineers, Urban Planners, Architects, Geoscientists and Disaster Management Professionals. The training methodology included lectures, tutorials, practicals and educational tour.

The training course was inaugurated by Professor Santosh Kumar, Director-SAARC Disaster Management Centre, New Delhi. He explained the role of SAARC. He mentioned that all the SAARC Member States have almost similar ecological, historical and geographical profile and are facing analogous disasters like earthquake, cyclone, landslides, floods etc. SAARC Disaster Management Centre (SDMC) was established to minimize the adverse effect of these disasters by combined study of broad field data of the region. Now SDMC is working for its Member States for disaster management and mitigation by Training Programmes, capacity building of technical experts, documentation preparation and disaster control strategies. At the end he wished

for a good technical capacity building programme. Professor D. K. Paul, Course Coordinator from IIT-Roorkee apprised participants about the glorious history of Earthquake Engineering at the institute and pointed out the importance of such courses. Professor Yogender Singh at the end of inaugural session gave Vote of Thanks with lot of thanks to all guests and organizing team. The SAARC Training Programme was coordinated by Mr. M. P. Sethy, Senior Consultant (Knowledge Management & Capacity Development) and Mr. Hari Dass Sharma, Training Assistant of SDMC.

The participants were exposed to lectures on wide ranging topics on earthquake resistant designs, architectural practices, retrofitting suitable for various buildings, application of remote sensing techniques in disaster mitigation, response of soils under liquefaction etc.

Padmashree Dr. A.S. Arya, former National Seismic Advisor, Government of India was the Chief Guest at the valedictory session. He also distributed the certificates to the participants. In his address, he blessed and appreciated the performance of the participants. He appreciated the involvement of faculties of Department of Earthquake Engineering for successful conduction of the SAARC Training Programme. He stressed upon the need to arrive at development and implementation of common methodologies of earthquake resistant structures and practices in South Asia. He also reminded the audience of their duty to create awareness among the common people about how to make earthquake resistant structures.

## SAARC Regional Training Programme on Integrated Coastal Zone Management for Sustainable Development, Male, Maldives



SAARC Disaster Management Centre (SDMC) New Delhi, India and SAARC Coastal Zone Management Centre (SCZMC) Male, Maldives organized a training programme on Integrated Coastal Zone Management for Sustainable Development in South Asia From 24<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> March, 2014. In total 15 participants participated including 8 participants from member states of SAARC countries. The main objective was to enhance the capacity of regional participants from South Asia and to strengthen technical supports and integrate the knowledge and skills for the awareness of DRR practitioners on the role of healthy coastal ecosystem in disaster mitigation and prevention. Apart from this, the course emphasized on the importance of adopting Integrated Coastal development planning (a combination of structural and non structural measures) for reducing risk.

The inaugural ceremony was conducted with the presence of Mr. Mohamed Zuhair, Hon'ble Minister of State, Disaster Management Centre; Director, SCZMC, Mr. Ibrahim Nasser along with the Coordinator of the Training programme and Ms. Surbhi Saxena, Administrative Officer, SDMC. Ms. Surbhi Saxena presented the message of the Director of SAARC Disaster Management Centre and also set the context of the training. The vote of thanks on the occasion of Inauguration of the Training Programme was delivered by Ms. Yashika Sharma, Programme Coordinator, SDMC thanking all the delegates, dais chairs, training participants and all team members. SDMC joined hands with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) by inviting

their team Ms. Marisol Estrella, Project Coordinator, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and Ms. Niloufar Bayani, DRR-Project Advisor, United Nations Environment Programme to give technical inputs in designing and delivering of the training. UNEP team also participated actively in the deliberations of the training programme and conducted sessions with the SDMC team. Participants also had a field trip to the island of HURRA which is about 50 km from Male. The objective of the trip was also to demonstrate on field, the coastal bank protection measures undertaken by the national government to protect the settlements and communities. The field visit also took a note of the issues of the communities tackling the aftermath of the Tsunami. The visit also narrated the community level preparedness, developmental aspects along with other disaster issues like EWS, Mitigation Measures adopted, Demographic Representations in the island, Developmental Aspects, DM Plans in action and Emergency plans. The team also focused on the need for expansion of islands in the coastal area.

Valedictory Session was organized on 30th March 2014, wherein Prof. Santosh Kumar, Director SDMC, addressed virtually the participants and took a lecture on the "Adaptation and coastal livelihood development" wherein he dealt the various livelihood development measures that could be adapted by the coastal communities to reduce their vulnerability to coastal hazards. He also congratulated all the delegates & participants and all colleagues at SDMC, SCZMC and UNEP for providing their support and cooperation in successful completion of the programme and attainment of the goals of the training programme. Hon'ble Minister of State, Disaster Management Centre, Mr. Mohamed Zuhair presented the closing remarks and reflected the need for integration of sustainable development for better coastal zone management. He also stressed on the need for placing a well build Disaster Management Plan and involvement of Community at all levels. He showed the need of Community Preparedness & participation at all levels. The programme ended successfully with a thanks vote to all the participants and delegates.

## Harsh weather in Afghanistan: Snowfall, Avalanche and Accidents



In the start of the year in the month of February, heavy snowfall occurred in many areas of Afghanistan which was followed by avalanche and rains. Major link roads were blocked and affected the daily lives of the residents. The affected districts were cut off from the rest of the country. Passengers got stuck in between also crippled the trade activities. Many people lost their lives, mainly children. Livestock also paid the toll of harsh cold weather. Towards the end of January, snowfall had started which triggered avalanche on 31st January 2014 in Kofab district of Badakhshan and landslide in Yakawlang district of Bamyan provinces of Afghanistan. Avalanches often occur in Badakhshan as it is a mountainous province in northeastern parts of the country. Total 8 persons were killed and 19 wounded according to reports. Two consecutive days of heavy snowfall brought trade activity to a standstill at the Hairatan dry port and in Mazar-i-Sharif, the capital of northern Balkh province. Balkh Chamber of Commerce & Industry Chief informed that all roads to the port had been blocked by heavy snowfall, forcing a halt to import and export activities. He said all public and private trade centers and markets remained closed in Mazar-i-Sharif after goods supplies could not reach from the port. About 60 tons of different materials would arrive from the port to Mazar-i-Sharif, but the shipping had been stopped due to heavy snowfall.

Shibar Pass, one of the two main routes between Kabul and central Bamyan province, had been closed by heavy snow on 4th February; leaving several vehicles stranded, drivers said. Authorities closed the highway before noon after snowstorms and slides hit it at various places. Heavy snowing had also blocked the Ghogardan Pass in Punjab district

of Bamyan and roads in Behsud district of Maidan Wardak. Bamyan Emergency Response Committee head confirmed the two passes had been closed due to bad weather conditions. He said another pass Shato, which connects Waris, Punjab and Yakawlang districts, had also been shut for traffic, but efforts were ongoing to clear the routes. Residents of 10 districts in Badakhshan, six in Takhar, three in Balkh, one each in Kunduz and Samangan and two each in Jawzjan, Sar-i-Pul and Faryab provinces have been cut off on 4th February 2014. Six people, most of them children, lost their lives to severe cold and a blast in Jawzjan and Farah provinces. As were the humans so were animals suffering the impact of cold weather. Around 2,000 livestock died because of cold weather amid heavy snowfall in Jawzjan Province while another 25,000 cattle were stuck in snow-hit areas of the Province. The local nomads had warned that additional 25,000 cattle would die if sufficient food was not provided to the animals stuck already in mountainous areas. Heavy snowfall, accompanied by a severe cold wave killed 10 people and 920 domestic animals in Darz Aab and Qush Tapa districts of Jawzjan province. More than a dozen people were killed in a car accident in northern Sar-i-Pul province, when the vehicle slipped over snow and overturned in Kohistanat district on 7th February 2014. Thirteen people including five women and children were killed in the accident. About 50 people have been killed due to heavy snowfall and cold weather conditions in different parts of the country. Similar accidents were reported from Helmand and Daikundi province. Looking at the occurrence of avalanche in the area, it is predicted that it may flood in summer season.

## NAC Plane crash in Nepal



On 16th February 2014, a Nepal Airlines twin otter crashed due to bad weather at Masine hill in the Dhikura village of Argakhanchi district, 200 km (125 miles) west of the Kathmandu. All eighteen people on board the ill-fated Nepal Airlines twin otter were killed. All dead bodies were recovered at the crash site in Masine Lek of the village. Among the deceased, seven bodies have been identified. Bodies of Nepal Army Major Deepak Shrestha and Members of Nepali Congress Jumla have been recognised.

A MI-17 chopper of Nepal Army and two other helicopters of Simrik Air were deployed for rescue operation. The dead bodies were airlifted at the Tribhuvan International Airport in afternoon. The bodies were strewn all over the hill. The rescue

workers comprising personnel of Nepal Army, Nepal Police and Armed Police Force had difficulty in collecting the bodies due to high altitude, snow and chilling cold weather. The crash site is 45 km from the district headquarters, Sandhikharka, and two hours steep walk from Narapani of Sandhikharka-Gorusinghe road stretch. The Jumla-bound aircraft had gone missing since 16th February afternoon minutes after it took off from Pokhara Airport. The 9N-ABB aircraft that was scheduled to land at 1:45pm at Jumla Airport had last contacted air traffic control (ATC) tower of Bhairahawa at 1:13pm asking permission for diverting the plane. The wreckage of the state-owned national flag carrier was found next morning. The crew members of the ill-fated aircraft included captain, co-pilot and Air hostess.

## Dr. A. K. Singh joins SDMC



Dr. Ashish Kumar Singh, Ph. D in Disaster Management from Kumaun University, India, joined SDMC on 3rd January, 2014, as Specialist (Hydro-Met Division). Besides contributing significantly as Associate Professor (DRR & Development Planning) at TISS-Mumbai and Head (DRR & CCA Division), Knowledge Links Pvt. Ltd. Dr. Singh brings more than 15 years of research and management experience with various agencies in the field of Disaster Management like NDMA-India, NIDM, UN, UPAA, UAOA, ASDMA, etc. Dr. Singh has to his credit 22 peer reviewed publications on various aspects of Disaster Management.

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