

Devastating "Gorkha earthquake" has been unable to break down the wall of caste based discrimination embedded in the very foundation of Nepal

Thank you Mr. Chair for the opportunity! I am Bhakta Bishwakarma, representing International Dalit Solidarity Network & Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization

The survivors of devastating earthquake in Nepal are eagerly waiting for just and sustainable recovery for one and half year. The earthquake claimed 8,856 lives and over 22,309 were injured. The total loss and recovery is estimated about 706 and 838 billion Nepalese Rupees respectively.

The most marginalized and excluded Dalit, women, children and people with disabilities were discriminated against even during the relief and rescue time. Earthquake hit all peoples equally but it impacted diverse caste and ethnic groups differently. "*Discrimination in Disaster*" observed during relief and rescue time, about 60% Dalit people felt discrimination during relief and rescue operation time which is a denial of human rights and dignity of people. Numbers of survivors who are homeless and landless, they need special attention and provision for sustainable recovery.

Disaster policies and programs have not been inclusive and sensitive enough towards most marginalized - Dalit, women, children, people with disabilities, senior citizens etc. Despite number of intervention by the government, the tangible changes have not been seen even after one and half year of the devastation. People are still waiting for sustainable recovery.

Now, time has come for strong determination for inclusive, just and equitable recovery by treating all in an equitable manner for "Build Back Better". Hence, I also want to add the following suggestions to the draft recommendations:

- Security measure should be in place following disaster to prevent trafficking of Dalit and Minority girls and children
- To provide special attention to the needs of landless Dalit and minorities for a sustainable recovery process
- Independent mechanisms to oversee the actions and ensure the downward accountability where affected populations' concerns and complaints can be heard.
- All the mechanism in regards to DRR should be inclusive for ensuring the participation of Dalit, women, senior citizens and people with disabilities and access to humanitarian assistance of survivors needs to be ensured without any barriers and exclusion.
- Rebuilding/new building from the disaster is an opportunity for creating a social cohesion, harmony, equality and unity among citizen so humanitarian plan should address integrity, dignity and humanity.
- Recovery should be embedded with earthquake friendly shelter, livelihoods supports, employment opportunities, health care facilities, education schemes and provision for strengthening local economy, skills and traditional occupations.

I Thank you Mr. Chairperson!