
Incorporate disaster risk in dev planning: UN

POST REPORT
KATHMANDU, March 9

Officials with the United Nations today warned that natural disasters could thwart development efforts in disaster prone countries like Nepal, if measures are not taken to reduce disaster risk and that factor is not incorporated on the governance agenda – a fact acknowledged also by top government officials.

Spread across the Himalayan slopes, mountains and plains, Nepal is vulnerable to earthquakes, landslides and floods. So, in terms of natural disaster risk, Nepal ranks 11 highest in the world, according to Kamal Kishore, regional disaster reduction advisor at the UN-

DP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery.

The ranking was done after studying the impacts of earthquakes that occurred in Nepal in the last 20 years, he said, adding, "it (the ranking for Nepal) could have been even higher if we've had a major earth quake in recent times." Iran, for instance, is on top of the index dubbed Disaster Risk Index.

Given that the country at large is unprepared for major natural disaster, for instance a devastating earthquake, impacts of disasters could be proportionately much higher in Nepal, he added.

He was speaking at the national launching of the global report on natural disaster – Re-

ducing Disaster Risk: A Challenge for Development, in the capital. Also present were UN-DP's Resident Representative to Nepal Matthew Kahane, NHPC member Dr Hari K Upadhyaya, who launched the report, and other top-ranking government officials.

A devastating earthquake – like the one that rocked eastern Nepal and northern Indian in 1934 – is overdue in Nepal, according to some experts. Already, we have monsoon disasters such as landslides and floods, which kill between 350 to 500 people each year. These are the second largest killers in Nepal after epidemic according to experts.

Also, the recurring floods

and landslides displace thousands of people across the hills and plains every year, rendering them homeless.

So officials have urged governments to incorporate disaster risk factor in development planning. That would go a long way also in achieving ambitious development goals such as Millenium Development Goals – which would mean halving the population of the hungry and the poor by 2015.

The report's key recommendations, among others, include disaster preparedness, improving governance, incorporating disaster risk in development planning and addressing information gaps.

Earthquake, flood risk quite high in Nepal

Himalayan News Service

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Nepal ranks 11th in terms of risk from earthquakes, and 30th in terms of flood-risk. This was revealed in a global report on Reducing Disaster Risk: A Challenge for Development published by the United Nations Development Programme that was released amidst a function today.

"Since natural disasters exert an enormous toll on development, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) cannot be achieved or sustained without working out a proper disaster management plan and policy," said Hari Krishna Upadhyaya, a member of National Planning Commission.

The risk from natural disasters threatens the prospects of achieving the MDGs, especially the target of halving the global poverty by 2015.

"While only 11 per cent of the people exposed to the natural hazards live in countries classified as low human development, they

account for more than 53 per cent of total recorded deaths," said Upadhyaya.

The report argues that disaster risk is not inevitable and offers examples of good practice in disaster risk reduction that can be built into ongoing development planning policy. The report shows that countries that face similar patterns of natural hazards often experience differing impacts as per the development choices they had made.

"The disaster risk in the country has been compounded by rapid and unplanned urbanisation coupled with lack of strict enforcement of building codes," said Som Lal Subedi, joint secretary at Ministry of Local Development.

The report shows that billions of people in over 100 countries are periodically exposed to at least one event of earthquake, tropical cyclone, flood or drought. As a result of these disasters triggered by natural hazards, more than 184 deaths per day are recorded in different parts of the world.

Some 75 per cent of the world's population live in areas affected at least once by earthquake or tropical cyclone or drought between 1980 and 2000. Ananta Raj Pandey, secretary at Ministry of Home Affairs informed that 105 people died due to natural disasters in the country every year.

Dr Madhav Prasad Ghimire, joint secretary at Ministry of Finance, stressed the need for higher political commitment to reduce and mitigate the risk of disaster management. "The development plans and programmes need to be revised and reoriented," he said.

The specific recommendations made by the report include enhancing global indexing of risk and vulnerability to enable more and better inter-country and inter-regional comparisons, supporting national and sub-regional risk indexing to enable the production of information for national decision makers, developing a multi-tiered system of disaster reporting and supporting context driven risk assessment.

प्राकृतिक प्रकोप राष्ट्र विकासको प्रमुख चुनौती

■ स्पेसटाइम संवाददाता

काठमाडौं, फागुन २६ । नेपाललगायत विश्वका एक सयवढी राष्ट्रमा प्राकृतिक प्रकोप विकासको प्रमुख बाधकको रूपमा रहेको राष्ट्रसंघीय प्रतिवेदनले जनाएको छ।

ती राष्ट्रमा योजनाअनुरूप विकास नहुनुको पछाडि प्राकृतिक प्रकोप मुख्य कारण रहेको प्रतिवेदनमा उल्लेख छ।

प्राकृतिक प्रकोपको प्रत्यक्ष असर मानवीय विकासमा पर्ने भएकाले उक्त प्रकोप राष्ट्र विकासको चुनौतीको रूपमा रहेको समेत प्रतिवेदनमा उल्लेख छ। संयुक्त राष्ट्रसंघीय विकास कार्यक्रम (यूएनडीपी) को संकट समाधान र सहयोग व्युरोले तयार पारेको 'जोखिमपूर्ण प्रकोप नियन्त्रण विकासका लागि चुनौती' विषयक उक्त प्रतिवेदनमा नेपाल प्राकृतिक प्रकोपको प्रमुख राष्ट्रमध्ये ११औं स्थानमा रहेको समेत उल्लेख छ।

राष्ट्रसंघीय सहस्राब्दी विकास लक्ष्यमा पुग्न पनि प्रकोप प्रमुख बाधकको रूपमा रहेको जनाइएको छ। भूकम्प, बाढीपहिरो महामारीलगायतका विपयलाई समेटेर

तयार गरेको उक्त विश्वव्यापी प्रतिवेदनले प्रकोपग्रस्त राष्ट्र दिनानुदिन बढ्दो रहेको समेत जनाएको छ।

उक्त प्रतिवेदनमा प्रकोपग्रस्त राष्ट्रमा आर्थिक संकटसमेत पर्दै गएको पनि उल्लेख छ।

राष्ट्रिय योजना आयोगका सदस्य डा. हरिकृष्ण उपाध्यायले उक्त प्रतिवेदन सार्वजनिक गर्दै भन्नुभयो,

राष्ट्रसंघीय प्रतिवेदन

'सोही प्रकोपलाई ध्यान दिँदै विकाससम्बन्धी कार्यक्रम तर्जुमा गरेको भए पनि उक्त प्रकोप सधैं बाधककै रूपमा रहनेछ।

उहाँले नेपालले सहस्राब्दी लक्ष्यअनुरूप नै राष्ट्रिय लक्ष्य रहेकाले त्यो हासिल गर्न सरकार तल्लीन रहेको बताउँदै भन्नुभयो, 'योजना आयोगले त्यहीअनुरूप आफ्नो कार्य अघि बढाइरहेको छ।

गृह मन्त्रालयका सचिव अनन्तराज पाण्डेले प्रकोप

नियन्त्रणमा सरकारले आफ्नो क्षेत्रबाट कार्य गरिरहेको बताउँदै प्रकोपले पारेको असरबारे जानकारी गराउनुभयो।

उहाँले भन्नुभयो, 'नेपाल प्रकोपग्रस्त प्रमुख राष्ट्रमध्ये पर्ने भएकाले त्यसको नियन्त्रणका लागि दातृ समुदायले समेत विशेष सहयोग गर्नुपर्ने छ।'

कार्यक्रममा अर्थमन्त्रालयका सहसचिव डा. माधवप्रसाद घिमिरेले सरकार र दातृ निकायबीच सहकार्य भएर नियन्त्रण कार्य अघि बढाउनुपर्ने बताउनुभयो।

प्राकृतिक प्रकोपले राष्ट्रमा निकै ठूलो असर पार्ने बताउँदै नेपालस्थित राष्ट्रसंघीय आवासीय प्रमुख मैथ्यू काहानेले नेपालको प्रकोप नियन्त्रणका लागि वैदेशिक गृहकार्य आवश्यक रहेको बताउनुभएको छ। उहाँले सहस्राब्दी लक्ष्यमा पुग्न नेपालले उक्त प्रकोपप्रति पनि विशेष ध्यान दिनुपर्ने स्पष्ट पार्नुभएको थियो।

प्रतिवेदनमा प्रकोपको कारणबाट वसाईसराइदेखि लिएर महामारी रोगको समेत प्रकोप बढ्ने जनाइएको छ। उक्त कार्यक्रममा युनिसेफका सुओमी माकांडले पनि बोल्नुभएको थियो।