

**Continued 'Resilience is Essential to Win The Fight against Poverty' from page 2**

career in Nepal. Out of a thirty-year career, I have spent nine years in Nepal. This is my third tour here, and I have seen so much progress in so many areas. For example, Nepal is one of only a few countries on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals for maternal health, infant mortality, and universal education. Nepal is also cementing its peace process and institutionalizing a stable government after last year's free, fair, and inclusive elections. These are no small accomplishments. These are incredible accomplishments.

It is critical that we protect this progress, and support future growth, by investing in resilience. This means ensuring that people at all levels—from the vegetable farmer in Surkhet, to the Community Forest User Group in Bardiya, to the urban planners here in Kathmandu—have a plan and the resources to deal with an economic dislocation, a natural disaster, a disease outbreak, or any other kind of shocks.

Development can be so much stronger if we prepare for these kinds of shocks before they hit. A farmer with crop insurance, who has a bank account and access to credit, and who uses proven techniques and improved seeds, can bounce back from a year of drought. A district with a disaster management plan in place and access to an early warning system can act to save lives when floods strike. A company that constructs seismically sound buildings and creates a business continuity plan can quickly return to operations after



U.S. Ambassador Peter W. Bodde speaking at the event. PHOTO: USAID

a disaster.

Resilience is essential if we are to win the fight against poverty. We know we cannot prevent floods and landslides, but we can work much harder, smarter and more strategically to ensure these shocks don't devastate families or set back hard-won development gains.

This kind of resilience results from thoughtful planning, careful investment, and collaboration between government, donors, civil society, and the private sector. Today's Resilience Summit has been a chance to spur this kind of thinking and collaborating. The next step is to start putting it into action. No country in the world is better at developing plans than Nepal. And we in the donor community are pretty good at it, too. But plans are just plans. Action is necessary. Resilience should be part and parcel of everything that we do. It's all about day-to-day life.

The lamp that Dr. Pokhrel and I just lit represents the collaboration

required to achieve our goals. The saplings that we watered symbolize resilience: If their roots are strong and they receive the proper nourishment, then storms may bend them, but they will not break. They will grow stronger and more beautiful.

The United States Government is proud to support the people of Nepal and all of you in your efforts to make Nepal more prosperous and resilient. We look forward to working with you in the months and years to come as we help families and communities become better able to adapt to whatever challenges come their way.

Over the past 60 years, the American people have given Nepal \$1.2 billion in development assistance. We want to continue to support the people of Nepal in building a prosperous, economically sustainable future. Let's protect the progress Nepal has made with a focused effort on resilience.

**- U.S. Ambassador Peter W. Bodde**

**Continued 'Working Towards a Resilient Nepal' from page 2**

partnership with all of Kathmandu's 15 elected Parliamentarians and local government bodies, I've helped start a campaign called Livable Kathmandu, which is a concerted effort towards the sustainable development of Kathmandu Valley. With a rapidly growing population, Kathmandu is expected to have a population of about 6 million by FY 2035. With such projections, there is a dire need for well-planned and coordinated urbanization of the city. Livable Kathmandu provides a bi-monthly platform to discuss some of the more poignant issues, starting with waste management, water availability, air pollution, sewage, energy and transportation, which need to be addressed in order to create a Kathmandu that we can be proud of and can thrive economically and socially.

Having said that, rural Nepal continues to face immediate challenges too – one of which is the agriculture sector. This season Nepal's paddy output is expected to drop at least 18 percent due to damage caused by landslides and floods, making this fiscal year's targeted 6 percent growth unachievable. On top of that, a late and dry start to the monsoon had already been a cause for deep concern. Agriculture continues to contribute 35% of our GDP. And economics aside, as a country with

more than 3 million people who are food insecure, and as a country that continues to deal with issues of nutrition, our agriculture sector holds a lot more importance. And so in my Committee, I am actively working to figure out how Nepal's agriculture future can be not just about volume, but resilient to expected and unforeseen challenges, and sustainable for generations to come.

Another major crisis, as this monsoon has been a harsh reminder, is our natural disaster preparedness. Historically, Nepal has had a poor track record of preparedness and relief. But now the challenge has multiplied significantly and will continue to multiply more because what the global scientific community is sure of is the growing intensity of our natural disasters. A recent data has shown that disasters since June 2014 have cost Nepal over US \$40 million! And this is not counting the other tragic human and social cost of such disasters.

This is why as a Parliamentarian I have submitted a bill in the Parliament to explore the establishment of a National Authority for Disaster Preparedness and Management. This body would work at multiple levels to look into issues of simply evaluating risks, such as where might people be allowed to settle and what regions face what risk. This ties into some of the work that is already being done by development agencies in partnerships

with different government departments, but it is time to bring all of this work under one body whose only full-time job is to understand where risks are, and figure out how to mitigate those risks, and respond in times of emergency.

If we look at all these crises, there is one underlying cause and effect: our local and global ecology and how we interact with it – how we have in the past, how we do now, and how we will in the next crucial 15 to 25 years. So in the end, I want to express my firm belief that only a resilient ecology can ensure resilient communities for a resilient Nepal. We must pay attention to what we put into our soil, our air, our water. A resilient economy depends on a resilient ecology, too. Which is why we must seriously reconsider the way in which we have viewed development, and make sure we are on the path of a sustainable model, the only model that can ensure resilience. Without resilient ecologies, the work we do on nutrition will fail, the work we do on infrastructure will be meaningless, and public health crisis as well as agriculture crisis – deeply linked to each other – will become worse. These are defining years for Nepal, and the global community. And as an MP I am committed to working with my colleagues and other stakeholders to ensure the work on building a resilient Nepal never takes a back seat.

**- Gagan Thapa**

**NEW VIDEOS**

**Using Satellites to Spot and Manage Forest Fire in Nepal (SERVIR Himalaya Program)**



On June 5, World Environment Day, USAID released a short video on how a USAID partnership with NASA and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), through the SERVIR-Himalaya program, is utilizing satellite data to create innovative solutions to meet international development needs, including forest fire detection and monitoring in Nepal, which can be used by forest managers to improve their ability to respond to forest fires.

**Stories of Being Me (USAID and UNDP's "Being LGBT in Asia" initiative)**



On July 15, USAID hosted a public launch event at the U.S. Capitol in Washington DC for the Agency's new LGBT Vision for Action: Promoting and Supporting the Inclusion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Individuals. This Vision highlights the increasing inclusion of LGBT concerns in global development work and demonstrates the U.S. Government's commitment to the international human rights of LGBT persons.

This beautiful video, by the amazing Nilu Doma Sherpa, was showcased at the event.

**The Last Yak Herder of Dhey (Hariyo Ban program)**



Can climate change actually change everything, even a whole village?

In the upper Mustang region of Nepal, a traditional way of life is being threatened by climate change. Historically, the people of this region have been resilient, and adapted to the harsh dry environment, but today they are struggling to keep up. This video, released on June 5, World Environment Day, brings to you the life and times of a Himalayan community in one of the most climate vulnerable regions of the world, and an individual's struggle to cope with the changes.

**CONTACT US**

USAID Nepal  
G.P.O Box: 295,  
U.S. Embassy, Maharajgunj, Kathmandu, Nepal

+977- 4007200 +977- 4007285

Questions, Comments or Need more information?  
usaidnepal@usaid.gov  
www.usaid.gov/nepal

