

RESILIENCE SUMMIT IGNITES WELL-INFORMED DIALOGUE AND GREATER ATTENTION

On September 3, on the heels of unprecedented flooding across Nepal, USAID organized a special Resilience Summit in Kathmandu to discuss and look for new models to solve complex and interrelated challenges such as extreme poverty, food security, and climate-induced shocks. The Summit provided a timely platform for well-informed dialogue with key stakeholders from the broad development community – with more than 160 participants from government, donors, INGOs/NGOs, private sector, and media – on the topic of resilience in Nepal. Mission Director Beth Dunford launched the Summit by highlighting USAID’s vision and approach to building resilience (speech here).

The Panel Discussion on ‘Making Smarter Investments to Build a Resilient Nepal’ was especially stimulating and important. Topics covered broad-ranging perspectives on resilience, calling for greater attention and resources for preparedness than for response; stronger coordination between the various government ministries; improved government accountability for disaster mitigation and preparedness; investment in nutrition; and a national authority for disaster preparedness and management to coordinate disaster preparedness and response.

Chief Guest at the Summit, Dr. Govinda Raj Pokhrel, Vice Chairman of the National Planning Commission, talked about the importance of prudent development planning, citing poorly constructed roads as a major contributor to the increased flooding in Nepal. He also highlighted declining budgets and the need to use



Panelists discuss ‘Making Smarter Investments to Build a More Resilient Nepal.’

PHOTO: USAID

available resources strategically while maintaining that 2/3 of investment in resilience should come from the private sector.

At the event, USAID also announced three new initiatives valued at up to \$70 million in funds that will help communities more quickly recover from natural disasters and other stressors.

- An up to \$70 million Community Resilience Program integrating disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into USAID’s food and nutrition security efforts in Nepal. A quarter of Nepal’s population lives below the international poverty line of \$1.25 per day, and this program will

benefit an estimated 5 million of the most vulnerable in Nepal’s hill regions.

- A \$500,000 Innovative Early Warning Flooding System: USAID’s Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance will fund an early warning system to help protect communities in the Eastern region from flooding. The project will install gauges along flood-prone rivers and share real-time data with district authorities using SMS and email. This will help save lives in the event of flood.
- A \$100,000 Science and Technology Competition for Resilience – a call for bold and innovative solutions to

“building sustainable food security” in Nepal. The Competition opens on September 4, and will be open to individuals, non-profits, academic institutions, and the private sector, with a focus on districts primarily in the Mid- and Far-West regions of the country.

Given the increasing and irrefutable link between resilience and ending extreme poverty, USAID will continue to encourage smarter decisions and approaches to doing development and partner with the government and the private sector to better manage risks. The Summit received extensive coverage in the Nepali media. (Nepal News and The Himalayan Times).

Resilience is Essential to Win The Fight against Poverty

- U.S. Ambassador Peter W. Bodde

(Excerpts from remarks delivered at the Summit)

As many of you know, I have a personal interest in resilience. This is my third tour in Nepal. And I think we, the international community and government, have to remember to give credit to the Nepali people for the resilience they exhibit every single day.

You have talked about the challenges to doing development work in a context of recurring economic crises, natural disasters, climate change, and other shocks and stressors. Experts from government, civil society, and the private sector have shared creative ideas for making smart investments—investments that mitigate risks and build people’s capacity to rebound after a shock.

You have heard about some of the great work the U.S. Government, in partnership with the Government of Nepal, is doing to improve local governance, raise the incomes and nutrition status of women and marginalized groups, prepare for disasters, and adapt to



Chief Guest Dr. Pokhrel and U.S. Ambassador Peter W. Bodde launch three new USAID initiatives.

PHOTO: NEPALNEWS.COM

climate change.

Ultimately, resilience is all about making sure that individuals, families, and communities are prepared to deal with severe shocks and stresses. It is about helping farmers use better seeds that resist drought and give greater yields. It is about helping children start life with good nutrition so they are less vulnerable to diseases and better able to learn in school and contribute to society. It is about constructing

strong buildings that can withstand earthquakes. It is about managing forests in a way that protects against landslides and ensures a sustainable income for surrounding communities.

And it is about thinking through all these risks and solutions together—all of us bringing our unique resources and expertise.

I have been fortunate to spend a significant part of my

Continued ... on Page 12

Working Towards a Resilient Nepal



PHOTO: KASHISH DAS SHRESTHA

- Gagan Thapa, Parliamentarian, and Chair of Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture, Natural Resource and Energy
(Excerpts from remarks delivered at the Summit)

Development is uneven in Nepal –while attention is duly needed in Nepal’s vulnerable, remote areas outside of Kathmandu, we need to also bear in mind that today Nepal is the least urbanized country in South Asia but also its fastest urbanizing country. By 2050

more than half of Nepal’s population will be living in large urban centers. As we address the needs of rural Nepal, we should do so keeping in mind that those regions are on a fast track to becoming an urban center.

As an elected Member of Parliament from Kathmandu, I am committed to making this city a model for a resilient urban center so that it can serve as an example for other parts of Nepal. This is why working in close

Continued ... on Page 12