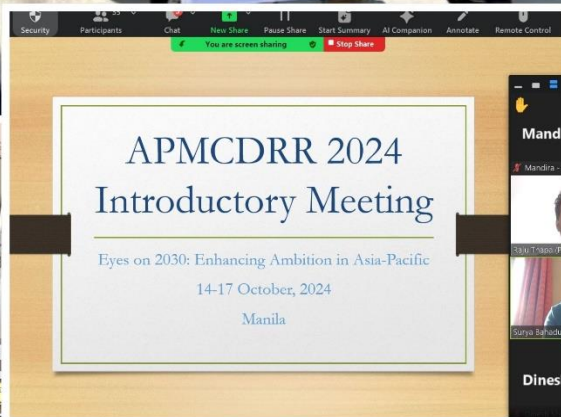


JAN-FEB 2024



Summary

This report highlights key initiatives and activities undertaken by DPNet Nepal from January to February 2024, focusing on disaster preparedness, earthquake recovery efforts, and global engagement towards DRR. On January 2, 2024, DPNet Nepal, in coordination with NDRRMA and other stakeholders, organized a program to standardize the Relief Data Tracker Form. This initiative aimed to unify the diverse forms used by various entities, simplifying documentation processes for government and non-government agencies. Stakeholders provided feedback to refine the form, which DPNet will integrate and submit for further review, ensuring its broad acceptance and incorporation into the MDSA system.

The 26th Earthquake Safety Day (ESD), organized under the theme "Let's promote local materials and technologies for earthquake-resilient structures," took place from January 16, featuring national and provincial symposiums. This event aimed to strengthen the earthquake resilience of Nepali communities, with various stakeholders, including government ministries, the NDRRMA, and DPNet Nepal, participating. Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal highlighted the government's commitment to disaster preparedness and resilience, emphasizing the importance of utilizing local materials for construction and the need for national and international collaboration in disaster management.

In February, DPNet conducted a field visit to assess the ongoing recovery challenges in earthquake-affected areas, revealing issues such as lack of uniformity in relief distribution and inadequacies of temporary shelters. Despite these challenges, the visit highlighted innovative solutions, such as cost-effective and culturally relevant model shelters, and underscored the critical need for enhanced healthcare support and infrastructure.

The participation of DPNet in the World Social Forum rally on February 15 exhibited its commitment to global solidarity against various crises, including environmental issues and natural disasters. The forum served as a platform for advocating for a better world through justice, peace, and equality.

A virtual event on February 19, supported by UN FAO, shared insights from the Jajarkot earthquake recovery efforts. The discussion emphasized the importance of early warning systems, the need for comprehensive disaster preparedness, and the potential of sustainable recovery solutions. Recommendations for future disaster preparedness and response highlighted the necessity of technical training, policy clarification, and the importance of community involvement in reconstruction efforts.

Finally, a preparatory meeting for the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (APMCDRR) 2024 was held on February 28. The meeting focused on outlining Nepal's position and contributions towards DRR, emphasizing the need for sustainable and predictable investments, the role of technology, and multi-stakeholder coordination. The discussions aimed to shape future actions and reinforce Nepal's commitment to DRR on a global stage.

Program organized for standardizing the relief data tracker form



On January 2, 2024, NDRRMA under the coordination of DPNet Nepal organized a program to standardize the existing Relief Data Tracker Form. The event saw participation from various stakeholders, including representatives from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), the

Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA), the Association of International NGOs (AIN), UN agencies and various relevant organizations. Dr. Raju Thapa, Vice Chair of DPNet, brought attention to the diverse relief data tracker forms currently used by different entities such as district administration offices, Karnali Province Government, AIN, the Social Welfare Council (SWC), and the Health Emergency Operation Center (HEOC). DPNet Chair Mr. Surya Bahadur Thapa requested all participants to consider adopting a unified and broadly accepted relief data tracker form. This initiative aims to alleviate the burden of completing similar documentation for various government and non-government agencies. The stakeholders provided valuable feedback to refine the form, ensuring its broad acceptance. DPNet has taken the responsibility of integrating these suggestions into the form's content and will circulate it among stakeholders for further feedback. After a round of revisions incorporating this feedback, DPNet will submit the revised form to NDRRMA for additional review within 15 days. NDRRMA will then consult with key government stakeholders, including the SWC, to integrate the Relief Data Tracker Form into their MDSA system, completing this process within another 15 days. Mr. Dhurva Bahadur Khadka, Spokesperson for NDRRMA, stated that the final relief data tracker form will be included as an annex in the upcoming revised relief standard

DPNet Nepal and AIN Jointly set stall for the 26th Earthquake Safety Day (ESD)



On January 16, 2024, Earthquake Safety Day (ESD) was organized ESD National Committee, under the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of Nepal, under the theme "Let's promote local materials and technologies for earthquake-resilient structures." The event last for 2 days on the football ground of Naikap, Chandragiri. A month-long series of one national-level symposium and seven provincial-level symposiums was planned aiming to strengthen the earthquake resilience of Nepali communities from December 31 to January 29. Participants included the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA), the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA), the Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD), the Ministry of Forest and Environment (MoFE), Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), District Administration Offices of Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, and Lalitpur, Nepal Red Cross Society, Nepal Scout, Nepal Police, Nepal Army, Armed Police Force, Valley Traffic Police, FNCCI, Nepal Engineering Association, DPNet Nepal, AIN, Nepal Nursing Association, Nepal Medical Association, and many more. The occasion featured 26 stalls, including one jointly set up by DPNet Nepal and AIN, showcasing various publications related to earthquake safety and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

The first day of ESD was initiated with the National Anthem of Nepal. All the participants participated in one minute of silence to honor those deceased by the past earthquake. The welcome session was addressed by Mr. Surendra Mohan Shrestha, Director General, Department of Urban Development and Building Construction (DUDBC). The speech was led by other dignified personalities such as Hon. Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Hon Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, and Chair of ESD National Organizing Committee Hon. Narayan Kaji Shrestha, Hon. Sita Gurung, Minister, Ministry of Urban Development, Member Secretary ESD National Committee Mr. Surya Narayan Shrestha, Executive Director, National Society for Earthquake Technology-Nepal (NSET), Ms. Hanaa Singer-Hamdy, Representative from the Resident Coordinator of United Nations, Mr. Anil Pokhrel, Executive Chief, NDRRMA.

In the speech, Hon. Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal emphasized the significance of Earthquake Safety Day and recalled that Nepal has been celebrating this annual event since 2055 BS, as a national commitment to preventing loss of life and property due to earthquakes. He recounted his prompt response to the Jajarkot earthquake and mentioned the government's decision to donate 50,000 for the construction of temporary housing after the Bajhang earthquake. Due to the series of earthquakes this year, there is a heightened focus on earthquake-safe structures. The priority now is quick preparation for reconstruction, creating earthquake-resistant designs, and utilizing local materials like stone and wood for safety. The government has ensured timely budget and policy arrangements for reconstruction, with 50,000 provided per household for temporary housing. A significant amount from the Constituency Development Fund, Rs. 10 billion, has been allocated to the disaster management fund. The prime minister emphasized that the Local leadership is encouraged to construct temporary housing, while provincial and local levels are urged to initiate permanent private housing reconstruction. He signifies that the Damage assessment and needs identification in earthquake-affected areas are almost completed. Reconstruction will commence under the leadership of provincial and local levels, coordinating actions across all three levels. The focus extends beyond housing to include public structures, economic, and cultural aspects. The constitution assigns disaster risk management responsibility to all three government levels, emphasizing careful prevention and effective response. He reminded that the Local Government Operation Act and the Disaster Act place the main disaster-related responsibilities on local governments. The prime minister highlighted that the Private sector involvement is deemed essential, not only as a liability but also as an investment in green and sustainable development, and the government is committed to facilitating such participation. Prime minister stressed that Nepal is facing not only events like

earthquakes but also climate change, enhancing disasters like landslides, floods, forest fires, snow melting, and droughts. Prime minister shared that Antonio Guterres United Nations Secretary-General, who visited Nepal and saw the situation here directly, has also raised the issue that countries including Nepal should get climate justice. This is also a matter of happiness for us. Learnings from the Jajarkot and Bajhang earthquakes provide an overview regarding the need to focus on intensive risk assessment, mitigation, preparedness, and early warning systems. Emphasis will be placed on building local capacity to effectively handle major disasters. Hon. Prime Minister also informed the participant that the Council of Ministers has decided to explore the possibility of insuring all buildings and structures, including personal residences. This decision is based on the suggestion to gradually implement insurance for private residences and government structures nationwide. As a concluding remark he emphasized that for the sake of safeguarding humanity from large-scale and destructive disasters, both national and international collaboration and assistance are essential. PM highly expects cooperation and support from national and international organizations, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations in this endeavor.

The Deputy Prime Minister Minister of Home Affairs and Chair of the ESD National Organizing Committee Hon. Narayan Kaji Shrestha stressed that Nepal has experienced both small and large earthquakes at various points in its history. Notable seismic events in the last century include the Great Earthquake of 1990, the Bajhang Earthquake of 2037, the Udaypur Earthquake of 2045, and the Gorkha Earthquake of 2072. Following the Gorkha earthquake, Lamjung in 2078, Khotang in 2079, Doti in 2079, and more recently, Bajhang on Ashoj 16 and Jajarkot on Kartik 17, have all experienced moderate earthquakes. Unfortunately, even these moderate seismic events have caused significant damage and hardship. He urged the entire country to unite in efforts to minimize potential human losses from any future disasters, including earthquakes. As a representative of the government, he was wholeheartedly committed to this cause. He assured that the government will actively undertake planned initiatives to ensure institutional sustainability and tangible results in disaster risk reduction.

The first-day closing was concluded with the closing remarks from the Chair, the Coordinator for the 26th ESD Management Sub-Committee Mr. Ghanshyam Giri, Mayor, of Chandragiri Municipality. At last the Inauguration and Observation of the "Earthquake Safety Exhibition" were conducted by the Minister of Home Affairs and Chair of the ESD National Organizing Committee Hon. Narayan Kaji Shrestha.

The stall exhibition continued on the second day. At the end of the event, all the stall participants were provided with a certificate of appreciation.

DPNet Conducted Field Visit to Assess Earthquake Recovery Efforts.



From February 7th 2024, DPNet conducted week long field visit to assess the ongoing recovery challenges in earthquake affected area. Nearly after three and half months of the devastating earthquake struck on November field visit was conducted in the leadership of DPNet Chair Surya Bahadur Thapa align with Dr. Meen Bahadur Poudyal Chhetri and Dr. Sushila Paudel. Recognizing the importance of DPNet's initiatives in information dissemination and field assessment, the Mayor of Bheri Municipality extended a letter of appreciation to the team. This gesture highlights the value of DPNet's contributions to the earthquake response efforts, particularly in facilitating communication and coordination among stakeholders.

The field visit revealed several key challenges, including the lack of uniformity in relief distribution, delayed government reconstruction assistance, and the inadequacies of temporary shelters made from galvanized iron sheets. In contrast, a model shelter developed by Prof. Dr. Jiba Raj Pokharel presents a promising alternative, emphasizing cost-effectiveness, insulation, and cultural relevance.

The health sector in Jajarkot faces its own set of challenges, with increased maternal and neonatal deaths reported alongside a rise in mental health issues. The lack of specialized medical personnel and facilities exacerbates the situation, highlighting the critical need for enhanced healthcare support and infrastructure.

Despite DPNet's efforts in reporting and information dissemination, feedback from NGOs, INGOs, and local government officials indicates a gap in the effective use of such reports for decision-making. This points to the necessity for a more streamlined and accessible reporting mechanism to better support recovery and relief operations.

DPNet jointly marched in a rally at the World Social Forum



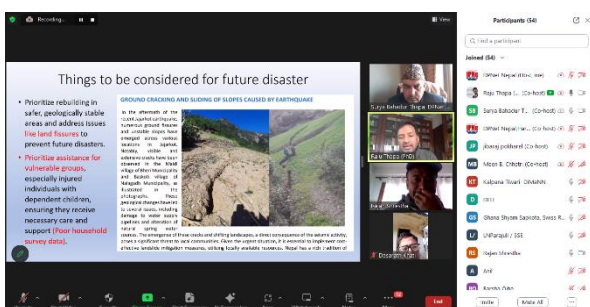
On February 15, 2024, the World Social Forum was inaugurated in Nepal. The event last for five days from February 15 to 19 in Bhrikutimandap Kathmandu. In the present context where the global community is currently coping with a multifaceted crisis encompassing environmental issues, food insecurity, epidemics, natural disasters, poverty, inequality, discrimination, and intensifying violence and conflict worldwide. Extreme right-wing groups are causing trouble by supporting more military power and working against human rights,

freedom, and fair democratic processes. Consequently, the majority of marginalized citizens face increasing challenges, while a privileged few exploit the crisis to accumulate significant wealth, widening the gap between the rich and the underprivileged. The World Social Forum symbolizes a collective resistance against violence, discrimination, and hatred associated with neoliberalism, globalized capitalism, the climate crisis, patriarchy, castes, untouchability, gender discrimination, and sexuality issues. The forum advocates for an alternative world, encapsulated by the shared belief that another world is possible. The history of the World Social Forum dates back to 2001 AD.

To accomplish World Social Forum 2024 Nepal, the World Social Forum Nepal Council, World Social Forum Nepal Organizing Committee, and various sub-committees have been formed. The theme of the forum is “Another World is Possible”. The forum was enriched by more than 1252 groups from 92 countries either in person or virtually. The event offers a variety of discussions, self-planned activities, cultural programs, and chances to connect with others. It marks an important moment in the worldwide solidarity movement, highlighting strength and diversity. The event started with a solidarity march at around 10:00 am from the Bhrikutimandap Kathmandu. It went through Bhandrakali, New Road Gate, and Ratna Park, and back to Bhrikutimandap. March participants displayed banners and signs advocating for justice, peace, equality, and the cessation of discrimination.

DPNet Nepal along with Disaster Management Network (DiMaNN) and the National Network of Community Disaster Management Committee (NCDMC) marched in a rally at the World Social Forum. The team of DPNet in the rally was led by Mr. Surya Bahadur Thapa, DPNet chairperson. Dr. Raju Thapa, Vice-chair, along with Mr. Harshaman Maharjan, Deputy General Secretary from DPNet also participated in the opening session. DPNet's participation in the rally was part of its commitment and solidarity, emphasizing the belief that another world is possible. It aimed to actively engage in a global platform that promotes social justice, equality, and the possibility of a better world.

Lessons Learned and Future Directions from Jajarkot Field Visit



In a virtual event held on 19th February 2024 in support of UN FAO, the DPNet shared the aftermath and recovery efforts following the devastating Jajarkot earthquake. This online gathering, chaired by DPNet Chair, Surya Bahadur Thapa, and with the contextual stage set

by Vice Chair Dr. Raju Thapa, drew participation from 64 attendees, highlighting the urgency and importance of post disaster review in the wake of recent Jajarkot earthquake.

Dr. Thapa opened with a thought-provoking presentation on the Jajarkot earthquake, contrasting it with the Bajhang earthquake to highlight the critical role of early warning systems in mitigating disaster impact.

Dr. Thapa highlighted the recent seismic events in Bajhang and Jajarkot, emphasizing their distinct characteristics. The Bajhang earthquake, with a magnitude of 6.3 during the day, was preceded by a foreshock measuring 5.3, just 26 minutes earlier, tragically resulting in one fatality. Conversely, the Jajarkot earthquake struck with a magnitude of 6.4 at 11:48 PM midnight, without any foreshock, yet the toll was significantly higher, with 154 fatalities recorded. Dr. Thapa highlighted the importance of early warning systems in mitigating such losses, particularly noting that there was an early warning issued prior to the Jajarkot earthquake by google earthquake center. He also discussed the Earthquake Alert Service provided by Google, which utilizes a crowdsourced approach, suggesting its potential in enhancing timely alerts and preparedness for seismic events in vulnerable regions. However, the presentation also touched upon a sobering reality: despite a Supreme Court directive in 2015, Nepal has seen little progress in establishing its Earthquake Early Warning System. This stagnation calls for an urgent reassessment of priorities, with potential collaborations with entities like Google suggested as a viable pathway to enhancing Nepal's disaster response capabilities.

The field visit segment, led by Dr. Meen Bahadur Poudel Chhetri, provided an in-depth analysis of the Jajarkot and Rukum West districts' situation post-earthquake. The findings were a sober reminder of the earthquake's extensive damage, including the loss of 154 lives and the destruction or damage of over 61,000 homes. This segment underscored the dire need for comprehensive disaster preparedness and resilient infrastructure to mitigate such devastating outcomes in the future.

The recovery efforts, as shared by the field team, showcased a commendable swift response from security agencies, government, and humanitarian organizations. The immediate deployment of resources and the quick restoration of essential services of effective crisis management. However, the discussions also highlighted significant areas for improvement, particularly in terms of coordination, policy enforcement, and technological adoption for disaster management.

Prof. Dr. Jib Raj Pokhrel's presentation on temporary shelter construction using local materials such as bamboo, mud, and plastic sheets offered practical insights into sustainable disaster recovery solutions. Emphasizing the shelters' thermal efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and the use of local manpower and materials, Dr. Pokhrel's talk illustrated the potential for such innovative approaches to form the backbone of future recovery efforts.

The event also shed light on the crucial role of agriculture and livestock in the affected regions' economies. FAO initiatives, including the distribution of 40,000 hermetic bags in collaboration with DPNet, highlighted as key interventions in safeguarding the livelihoods of the earthquake-impacted populations to prevent grain and seed in times of disaster.

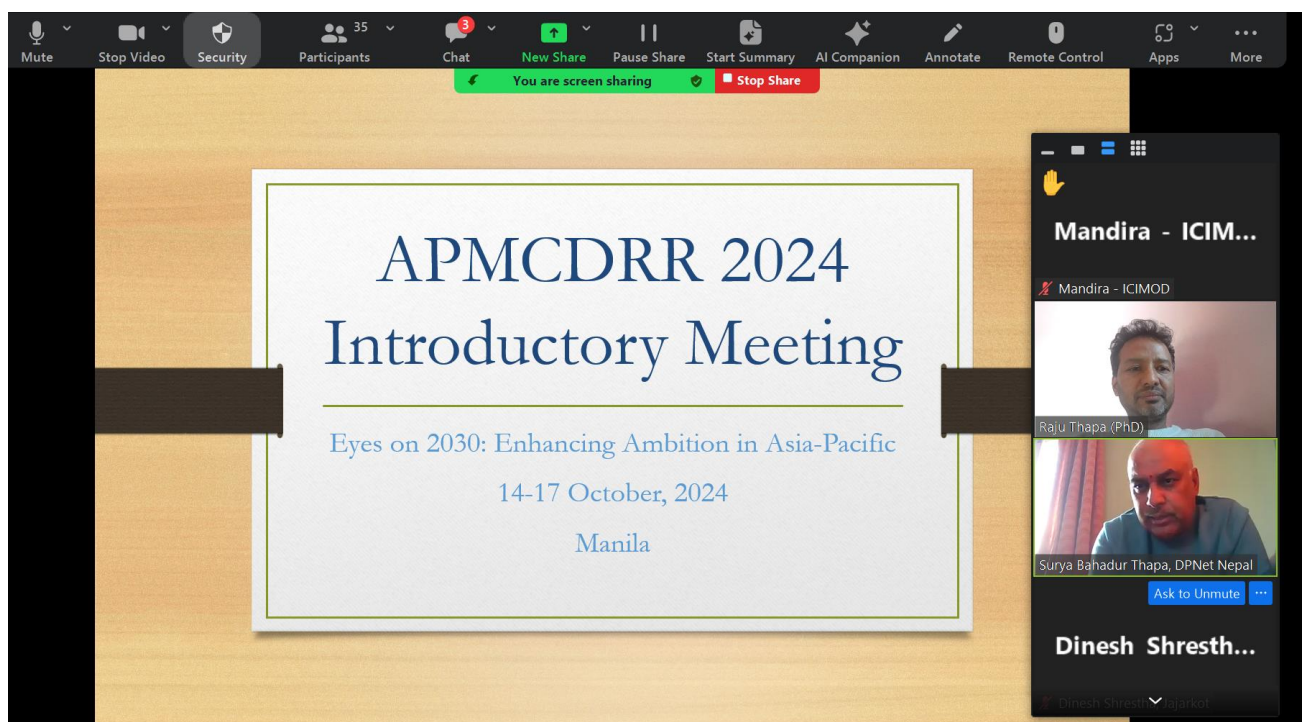
Looking forward, Chair Thapa outlined several recommendations for enhancing disaster preparedness and response. These included the introduction of a unified relief tracking form, the clarification of the One Door policy, the prioritization of rebuilding in safer areas, and the establishment of special care programs for the most vulnerable populations. Additionally, the need for technical training for local masons and builders was emphasized, aiming to address the critical shortage of skilled labor necessary for constructing resilient houses.

After this presentation, the open floor discussions culminated in a vibrant question and answer session, where attendees engaged with the presenters on various aspects of disaster management, from policy implementation to the technical nuances of earthquake resilience. During a discussion session, various experts and advisors shared insights and concerns regarding disaster preparedness and response plans. Mr. Pitambar Aryal, former chair and current advisor of DPNet, suggested conducting informative programs physically to enhance their effectiveness. He also inquired about the durability of plastic sheets in sunlight and rainfall, as well as the suitability of bamboo versus wood for supporting water tanks on rooftops. Mr. Ram Prasad Bhandari, Technical advisor at DPNet, highlighted a discrepancy in the Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan between districts and stressed the importance of effective utilization of such plans. He emphasized record-keeping for temporary residents and the need for organized volunteer efforts during and after disasters. Mr. Nabin Kumar Shahi from Jajarkot emphasized the necessity of training local elected representatives and requested experts to provide training on temporary housing. He raised concerns about deforestation for shelter construction and urged leaders to consider environmental implications.

Mr. Kedar Neupane, also a Technical Advisor at DPNet, emphasized analyzing efforts under the Build Back Better initiative to assess progress and identify areas needing improvement,

including employment opportunities. Mr. Deepak Acharya from CIN, Acorab Nepal, focused on health and hygiene issues, highlighting incidents of water source depletion leading to waterborne diseases. Mr. Govinda Rimal, another Technical Advisor at DPNet, stressed the importance of feedback mechanisms and targeted approaches in humanitarian efforts. Ms. Chadani Joshi, an Advisor at DPNet, urged prioritizing women in disaster response efforts, emphasizing their significant role and the need for gender-segregated data and documentation. Prof. Dr. Jiba Raj Pokherel clarified technical aspects regarding water tank support and plastic sheet durability, promoting bamboo over wood usage. Mr. Prakash Acharya from UNICEF mentioned ongoing work on complaint-feedback mechanisms. Mr. Gopal Krishna Basnet from CSRC raised concerns about maintaining temperature-friendly environments in already constructed shelters, prompting further discussion on potential solutions. Finally, Chair Thapa thanked all for their active participation and formally close the program.

APMCDRR-2024 Preparatory Meeting



On February 28, 2024, DPNet hosted a virtual discussion program in preparation for the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (APMCDRR), 2024, using the Zoom platform. This online gathering, chaired by DPNet Chair, Surya Bahadur Thapa, and with the contextual matter of APMCDRR Preparations set by Vice Chair Dr. Raju Thapa, drew participation from 40 attendees. The purpose of this gathering was to begin early

preparations for the future APMCDRR-2024 program, which will take place in the Philippines from October 14–17, Manila.

Dr. Raju Thapa, Vice-chair, DPNet in his presentation on the APMCDRR gives a synopsis of the conference. He provided an Overview of APMCDRR 2024 and its significance following the review of Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. Dr. Thapa elaborates on three thematic pillars of APMCDRR as Practical Solutions to Enhance Disaster Risk Financing; Leaving No One Behind: Gender-Responsive and Inclusive Disaster Risk Governance and Localization and Urban and Rural Resilience. The key focus areas of the conference lie on Sustainable and predictable investments in DRR; the Role of technology, science, and knowledge and Multi-stakeholder coordination and collaboration. Dr. Thapa also illustrated the cross-cutting theme of APMCDRR as Science, Technology, and Knowledge; Convergence and Coherence across DRR, climate, and development and full private sector engagement in DRR. He also illustrated a concrete example from Philippines, where DRR efforts are exclusively supported by the private sector, demonstrating its greater success and highlighted the importance of participation of private sector. He shared that the APMCDRR also explores the challenges and opportunities in DRR and the opportunities for enhancing resilience and sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region. Dr. Thapa also informed that the participants from Nepal has a tradition to participate under the banner of NPDRR in such regional and International events. Therefore, there is a need to collaboratively develop a position paper and an official statement that reflects a consensus. The program's activities also included the main session, parallel session, ignite state, which allows participants to run a marketplace, and side events, which allow organizations to form networks.

Dr. Thapa elaborated that the primary goal of this meeting was to compile ideas and proposals that should be included in the next AMPCDRR program so that we can address Nepal's DRR and climate change issues. This was the first conversation about APMCDRR readiness, and DPNet is cooperating for facilitations. The APMCDRR will receive a position paper and an official statement that has been prepared. He also assured that DPNet will conduct a series of dialogues of this type to facilitate APMCDRR in the coming future.

During the discussion session following the presentation, various issues were raised to guide future actions. Suggestions included focusing on the mid-term review of SENDAI to progress effectively, evaluating Nepal's current progress in comparison to the past, and determining the international attention given to issues such as the Greenhouse Effect and climate change.

It was emphasized that identifying major issues collectively would enable unified progress. There was gratitude expressed for organizing the session, with an emphasis on building an inclusive team that incorporates successful past practices under government leadership. The importance of precise and timely planning, particularly regarding the coinciding dates of IDDRR day and APMCDRR, was stressed, along with the need to address minor yet recurrent disasters and highlight them on a global platform. Proposals were made to establish a committee dedicated to shaping the position paper and to engage non-governmental and private sectors in collaborative efforts. Strengthening the three tiers of government based on their roles and responsibilities was highlighted, along with concerns about inadequate documentation, research, and evidence, particularly in agriculture. Additionally, the importance of including the perspective of Persons with Disabilities in the position paper and showcasing Nepal's significant progress across various sectors was emphasized, leveraging extensive experience in disaster management to share insights globally.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Surya Bahadur Thapa, Chair of DPNet, highlighted the challenge of discrepancies in figures and data between research conducted within the country and externally, emphasizing the importance of finding solutions to maintain consistency both nationally and internationally. He also emphasized the importance of building on past learnings and addressing current challenges. To facilitate this, DPNet Nepal will organize preparatory discussion sessions from the outset. Mr. Thapa assured that DPNet will collaborate with the concerned ministry and national platform for discussions and the generation of suggestions.