

Disastrous Earthquake in Nepal and the Neighbouring Countries

The disastrous earthquake of magnitude 7.9 with epi-centre at east-southeast of Lamjung, Nepal has led to a great loss of life, property and infrastructure in Nepal and neighbouring countries including India, China and Bangladesh. The earthquake had triggered an avalanche at Mt. Everest leading to the death of at least 19 mountaineers. It is a natural calamity of great magnitude with more than 6,300 deaths reported so far. It is feared that the death toll may reach 10,000 or even more. The heavily damaged buildings included several centuries old monuments at UNESCO World Heritage sites at the Kathmandu Darbar Square, the Patan Darbar Square and the Bhaktapur Durbar Square. These were of great cultural and historic importance. The UN Agencies and individual countries, particularly those in the immediate neighbourhood like India, China, Pakistan and others are actively involved in rescue operations and supporting affected population through food, shelters, transportation and medical facilities. Rebuilding of damaged educational institutions: schools, colleges and universities and R&D institutions will take a lot of resources, as well as expert inputs. At the same time these educational and S&T bodies are key vehicles of nation building, particularly after this disaster.

The Association of Academies and Societies of Sciences in Asia (AASSA) expresses deep grief and conveys solidarity, sympathy and best wishes to the people and leadership of Nepal and all affected countries of the region. AASSA particularly wishes to convey that the scientific community in the Asia-Pacific as well at the global level through organizations like IAP and ICSU is deeply concerned about the consequences about this calamity.

The Association of Academies and Societies of Sciences in Asia appeals to international bodies of science like InterAcademy Partnership (IAP) and the International Council for Science (ICSU) for providing all possible assistance to rebuild the educational institutions and research bodies engaged in S&T. The Nepalese R&D establishment needs to be assisted and helped to evolve efficient strategies for recovery from the disaster. We appeal to major agencies like UNESCO, World Bank and Asian Development to provide all possible financial support. The academies and societies, being apex bodies of scientists and engineers volunteer to provide subject experts in the areas of relevance.

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