

# Nepal Post Disaster Reconstruction Experience: Current Status and Lessons Learnt

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SAWTEE Dialogue on Post Disaster  
Reconstruction

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# The Disaster

- On April 25, at noon an Earth Quake measuring 7.6 magnitude with epicenter in Barpak area of Gorkha district struck Nepal.
- Then on May 12, 2015, 6.8 magnitude EQ struck again followed by hundreds of aftershocks.
- This was the worst EQ to hit the country in 80 years.
- Heavy loss of human lives and property across the difficult hilly terrain of Nepal.
- Almost ten million people—more than one-third of the population—were affected across 31 districts.
- The death toll surpassed 8,700 and over 25,000 people were injured.
- Some settlements were wiped out.
- Total value of damage was assessed over \$7 Billion
- Social fabrics were seriously affected in the worst hit rural areas

# The Geographic Extent Of Effect

## Categories of Affected Districts



# Immediate Response

- Relief: Massive volume of relief material (food, clothing, water, tents and other items) were pouring in from different countries and agencies; managing was difficult
- Rescue: massive search and rescue operations were conducted with the participation of national and international community, GO and NGO all over the world.
- Opening up of roads, establishing communications network, clearing debris, looking for missing people, ensuring supplies were carried out with unprecedented support from within and outside the country

# Immediate: Safety First

- Sheltering– tents, tarpulin, sanitation, food, security and safety arrangements.
- Checking buildings for safety – engineering opinion (red, yellow, green stickers)
- Trainings– demolition, debris clearance
- Call for international assistance
- Coordination with NGO and other eager contributors
- Initiated various funds for resource collection: PMDRF, NRRF for easy transfer of contribution
- The government claimed that “no one died of lack of treatment” once rescued.
- **Not a “war footing”**: Badly managed initially but under control/ improved as moved on.

# Damage Assessment

- Highly affected districts: 14
- Affected districts: 17
- Deaths: 8685
- Injured: 16808
- Government Buildings:
  - Fully destroyed: 979
  - Partially destroyed: 3021
- Private Houses
  - Fully destroyed: 500223
  - Partially destroyed: 269156
- Settlements relocation: 136 of which 60 total and remaining partial relocation
- PDNA prepared for ICNR to raise funds

# Funding Need

- Total Need Assessed: \$ 9.38 billion
- Total committed by international community: \$2.83 billion
  - GON and Other: \$ 1.08 billion
  - Resource Gap: \$ 5.47 billion (approximately)

# Longer Term Response

- Post Disaster Reconstruction Framework (PDRF)– Policy Framework, Implementation Framework and Funding Framework.
- Underlying concepts
  - “Build well planned resilient and safe prosperous society”
  - “Build safe and resilient Nepal”
  - “Build Back Better”
  - “Build your own house”– state will support
  - Decentralized implementation
  - “Get implementation done by relevant government agencies– MOUD, MOE, MoFALD and MoTCA
  - A ” mahayagya”
- Sector Plan and financial projection



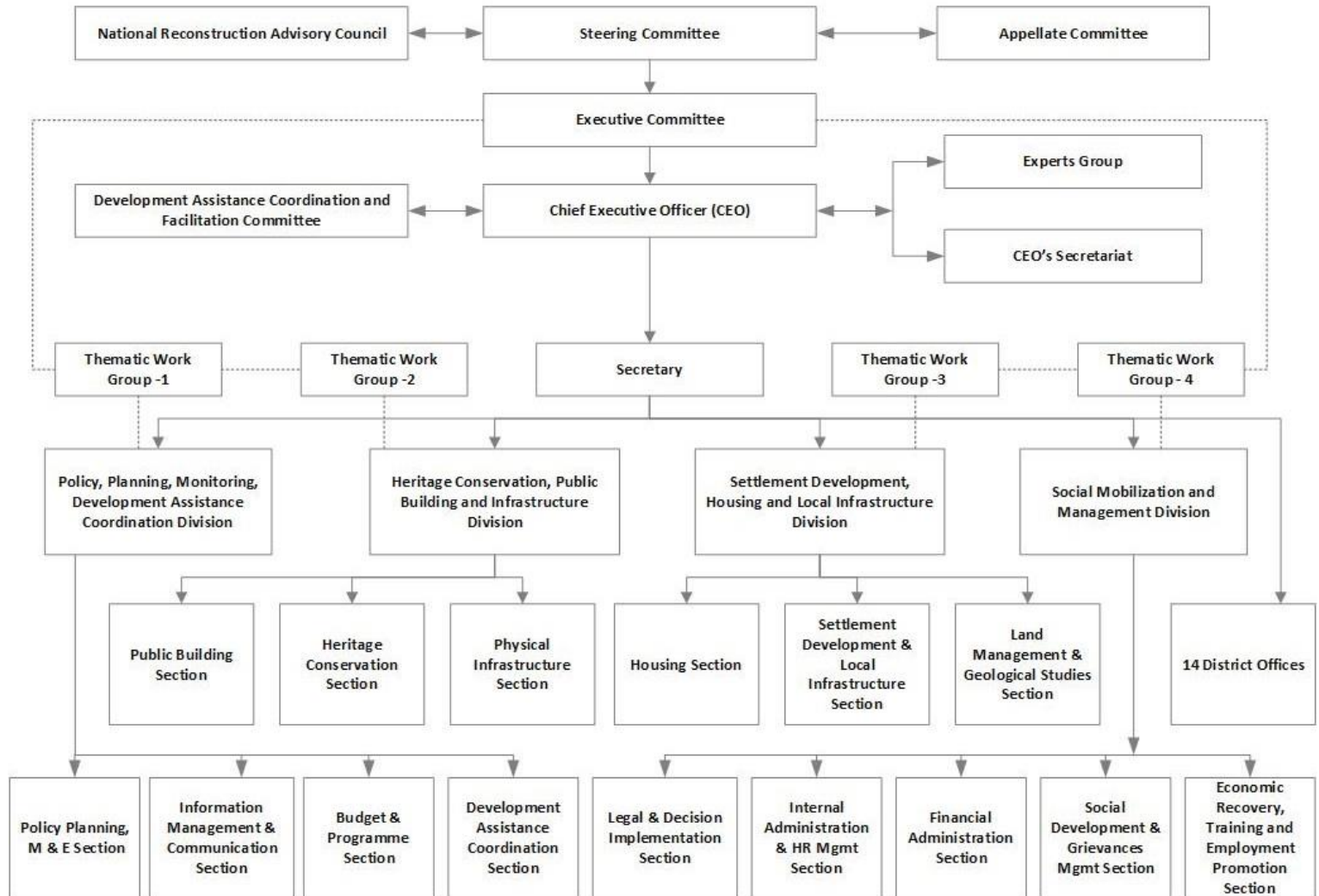
# Strategic Objectives of Reconstruction

- Restore and improve disaster resilient housing, government guiding and cultural heritage in cities and villages/ rural area
- Strengthen capacity of people and community to reduce their risk and vulnerability and enhance social cohesion
- Restore and improve access to services, and improve environmental resilience
- Develop and restore economic opportunities and livelihoods and reestablish productive sectors
- Strengthen capacity and effectiveness of the state to respond to the peoples need and to ... future disasters

# Institutional Arrangement

- National level: Advisory Committee Chaired by PM, Vice Chair: opposition leader in the parliament.
- Steering Committee Chaired by PM, Key ministers, experts and CEO member
- Executive Committee Chaired by CEO of NRA, politically appointed expert members
- Implementation mechanism 4 ministries– CLPIUs
- District and Local level– DLPIU, Dist Coordination Committee, LDO, CDO, Municipality Chief Exec., VDC Sec.
- Resource Center at VDC level– secretary, engineer, social mobilizer
- Coordination by NRA

# Institutional Structure



# Plan Implementation

- Private house damage assessment
- Surveys of affected households
- Identification/ screening of eligible beneficiaries (surveys)
- Provision for grievances for left out. NRA final say.
- Phased implementation plan– severely affected and affected districts

# Operational Policies

- MOU between NRA and beneficiary
- 300k Release fund in 3 installments
- Grants policy– Rs. 15K as relief and Rs. 300k, plus subsidized loan for house construction
- Soft loans (2% interest) of Rs. 15lakhs for rural and 25 lakhs for urban houses
- Model house designs (17 plus)
- Engineering services/ supervision from NRA Technicians
- Recommended by DLPIU and approved by DTO for release
- Livelihood recovery programs by NGOs/ Line Agencies
- Construction of Schools, Hospitals, Monuments and other public buildings by government agencies

# Status

## Low level of Achievement in reconstruction

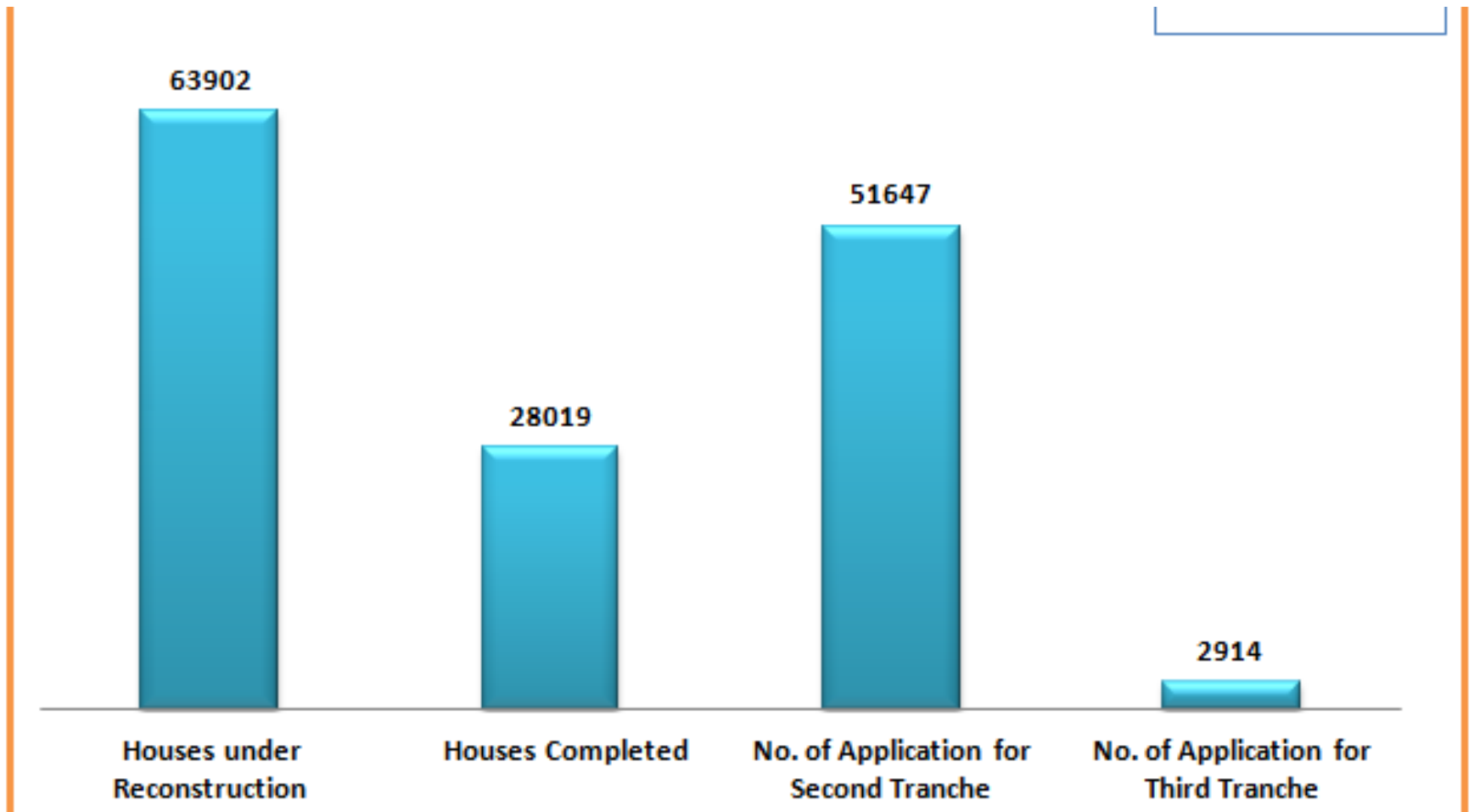
- Private houses (63 thousand vs 500 thousand)
- Settlement relocation (136 studied and identified)
- Public buildings
- Monuments
- Livelihood rehabilitation

Very good data base and Monitoring System is established

# Grant Distribution Progress



# Private House Reconstruction Progress





# Why the progress is as low as it is?

## Institutional causes

- Valuable time spent in instituting NRA
- Difficulty of coordinating and getting things done by other government agencies
- Lack of capacity– assumption does not stand
- Disputes over data, and eligibility
- Equal grant and social inequality.
- Donors concerned mostly over delay and reporting
- Reconstruction as a “national movement” – loosing steam.
- NGOs seem doing better and completing works in their own way state agencies do not have that leverage.

# Why the Progress...

## Beneficiary level

- People are not taking the 2<sup>nd</sup> installment and build their houses? It is overloaded with technical and administrative requirement.
- House is a social product. Several things determine desire to build a house (not only physical output).
- Beneficiaries not interested in government's 3ook grant and facilities. "Too much bureaucratic hassle". "Poor are poor" to take advantage while rich do not value it.
- Disputes over data, and eligibility– "complaints"
- Engineering design/ code/ technology and conditions
- Land issues– landless, Guthi land, municipality vs NRA standards

# Lessons -1

## Intensity and urgency declines

- Perceived urgency and eagerness for action in the post disaster activities, erodes with time. The intensity declines and they become normal business; once normalized it becomes difficult to raise the issue high and maintain the momentum.
- The value of time therefore, is different for different stakeholders– Government, NGOs, the affected people, the donors.
- “humanitarian/ donors have their own its own priority..”.
- “mahayagya” requires maintaining momentum.

# Lessons -3

## Post Disasters Reconstruction Are Politically Sensitive

- Who controls the process becomes politically sensitive issue. Controlling \$9 plus billion project naturally, blows up the problem and ignites political chords.
- Reconstruction and creation of National Reconstruction Authority and appointment of Chief Executive became highly political as if it were above the Prime Minister. Political parties made it such an issues that the issue itself got overshadowed.

# Lesson 3:

## Avoid Temptation of Creating Top Heavy Institution

- Aggregation of problem often gives a different picture of the problem. Disaggregation gives real picture. This is problem with designing a national level project. The size then dictates/ tempts to come up with heavy ineffective institution. In reconstruction After all, the unit is a house of couple of rooms, often in rural context. They need deeply decentralized approach.
- How powerful should the Authority be? Nepal is a soft state.
- What is the context? (examples from abroad– Gujrat, Pakistan model may or may not work)

# Lesson 4:

## Decentralize Authority for Local Issue

- The balance between central control / coordination vs local level targeting is always a challenge. Individual target becomes blurred as we move higher. As we raise our level vantage point from higher-- family, community, village, district, region, nation, and international levels see less and less clear the problem at the lowest level. When Our system is not sharp enough to see things as “eagle’s eye” does.
- The aggregated number of private houses gives a different picture of the reconstruction problem.

# Lessons: 5

Be clear about underlying policy concepts

- Unclear policy leads to misunderstanding and misplaced demand and expectations on the part of people. The issue of “compensation” vs “relief” or “right” vs “privilege” should be understood clearly while making interventions. Politically it is always easier to make it a “right” of the citizen to be “compensated” for his/ her hardship.

# Lessons 6

## Timely and Clear Communication is Key To Trust

- This is an age of messaging and communication. How the issues are messaged and communicated is critical for generating positive or negative perception, correct or false expectation, one can easily overshadow the truth. People watch.
- How to float timely and correct information at a time when everyone has access to international network?



# Lessons 7

Balance the long term vision and immediate need

- Long term goal of creating a nice society and safe nation building (BBB, safe housing etc) is good but the immediate need of an individual is to have a shelter. “I am still under shade after 2 years....” and “... they should follow the safety parameters or we cannot support them” are difficult to balance.
- Trade off between “Ideal” vs “practical” solution?

# Recent Policy Change Effort By NRA

- Effort to implement decentralize reconstruction– working out to “devolve” to the newly formed local government bodies– resource and responsibility.
- Bringing the implementation units (CLPIU, DLPIU etc) under NRA
- Relaxing the designs and implementation guidelines/ engineering codes and other requirements.
- Provide larger number and varieties of house designs
- Increasing amount of group loans
- Making it easy for supplies of construction material.
- Incentives for “safe house construction” (grant of 50k?)
- Donors need for information and data. what is feasible?

# 476 Million Dollar Questions

- Demand Side (private houses)
  - Why people do not “take” government money?
  - Who does not take? Why?
- Supply side (NRA/ Govt)
  - Why government cannot “distribute” money?
  - Is this case only with Reconstruction or normal planned development?

# How differently would we respond to the next Earth Quake?

How can we avoid damage? (practical questions)

- Are we prepared? Do we have mechanism in place
- to address the issues we faced?
- Are we alert enough to avoid damage?
- How to spend resource?
- Do we need a permanent institution to address the issue of disaster?

How to frame Reconstruction question? (political economic questions)

- Living against or with disaster?
- Who frames the issue?
- Who sets agenda?
- Whose interests are considered? Whose interests get priority?
- How is the voice of “voiceless” heard?
- What are the assumptions regarding– capacity, nature of state, role of different actors?
- other

# Thank You

## Discussion and Comments