

Sixth Monthly Forum

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN NEPAL

EVENT REPORT

KATHMANDU, 30 November 2017: South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE) organized a discussion program titled “*Disaster Preparedness and Community Resilience in Nepal*”, here, today. The experts present at the forum stressed that community resilience could only be achieved through collective effort.

This is a sixth discussion forum organized by SAWTEE under the project ‘*Initiating dialogue on Post Disaster Reconstruction Experience*’ undertaken with support from The Asia Foundation (TAF). Making the presentation on ‘Unpacking and operationalizing resilience’, Mr. Ajaya Dixit, Executive Director, Institute for Social and Environmental Transition (ISET)-Nepal said community resilience depends highly on the disaster affected community’s accessibility to resources that helps them mitigate the adverse shocks and their impacts. Adding to that, he said, when already vulnerable community becomes exposed to the hazards such as earthquake or floods then getting back to feet is harder.

The natural system, such as forest, vegetation etc can revert back to their pre-damaged status on their own but human built system such as infrastructure cannot, that is where resilience of the community matters, he said.

Similarly, Mr Basanta Raj Gautam, former Chief District Officer of Kathmandu, said that community are overburdened with disaster preparedness but they lack funds, at the same time, communities do not have access to related information, which is essential to build a resilient community.

Dr. Prem Nath Maskey, earthquake expert, pointed out that Nepal adopts crisis management only but hardly prepares for disasters during normal times. Similarly, Dr. Amod Mani Dixit, Executive Director, National Society for Earthquake Technology (NSET), pointed out that the narrative of resilience in Nepal has never been able to include insurance service which is of utmost importance.

Chief guest of the program, Mr Narayan Gopal Malegu, Former Secretary, Government of Nepal , said the recent act on disaster management, provisions for multi-tiered structural management of disasters —from community level to central level —which should efficiently address the hazards related to disasters. He emphasized on the role of government as well as individuals in facing the challenges.

Giving his remarks as the chair of the programme Prof. Dr Pramod Bdr. Shrestha, Former Professor of Institute of Engineering, said community resilience is much higher than the sum of individual resilience. Further emphasizing on resilience, he said that though resilience and sustainability are not synonymous, there is a link between them. Resilience has also been emphasised on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).The reason that world has shifted from Millennium Development Goals to SDGs is to include multidimensional aspect with the focus not only on economics but social and environmental aspects also.

Some 30 participants from various organizations, including research institutions, experts, activists and development partners, participated in the event.

SAWTEE has undertaken similar discussion forums related to post-disaster reconstruction under themes such as “Nepal Post Disaster Reconstruction Experience: Current Status and Lessons learnt”, “Migration and Labour Dynamics in Post Disaster Nepal”, “Expenditure Analysis and Tracking of Post-Earthquake reconstruction programmes” and “Rebuilding Safer Urban Spaces” and “Post-Disaster Conflict Resolution Mechanism”.