

Program on “Localizing Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Enhancing DRR Governance” at Koshi Province

On September 22, 2024, a significant discussion program titled "Localizing Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Enhancing DRR Governance" was held in Biratnagar, Koshi Province, organized by DiMaNN, ARWSO Nepal, DPNet, and the NGO Federation. The event was chaired by Mr. Lakhan Lal Shah, representing the NGO Federation of Koshi Province, and featured Hon. Ram Dev Yadav, Chairperson of the Industry, Tourism, and Environment Committee of the Koshi Provincial Assembly, as the chief guest, alongside Hon. Jaya Prakash Chaudhary, a member of the same committee, as a distinguished guest. The program attracted notable attendees, including Mr. Surya Bahadur Thapa, Chair of DiMaNN and Immediate Past President of DPNet, Mr. Jit Ram Lama, Immediate Past President of the NGO Federation of Nepal, and Dr. Raju Thapa, Chair of DPNet, along with other key stakeholders from various sectors, including government officials, NGOs, media, and the private sector.



Dr. Raju Thapa provided an insightful presentation that outlined Nepal's disaster management scenario, emphasizing significant challenges in DRR governance, particularly in rural areas. He identified increasing vulnerability to climate change, lack of preparedness at the local level, inadequate funding for DRR initiatives, and the need for community-level awareness programs. Dr. Thapa highlighted the insufficient integration of disaster management into local governance, ineffective early warning systems, and the absence of anticipatory action frameworks. He also underscored the need for better coordination among local governments, the private sector, and civil society organizations, advocating for capacity building in rural areas and a holistic approach to addressing both DRR and climate change adaptation.



Building on Dr. Thapa's insights, Mr. Surya Bahadur Thapa offered solutions to the issues raised, emphasizing the importance of raising awareness about DRR and preparedness while advocating for inclusive strategies involving all stakeholders. He urged increased investment in DRR initiatives, recommending a proactive approach over mere reactive responses. Mr. Thapa stressed the significance of empowering local communities, especially in urban areas, to take ownership of disaster preparedness and resilience efforts. He also highlighted the close relationship between natural disasters and climate change,

advocating for the implementation of climate adaptation programs alongside DRR initiatives. Furthermore, he called for stronger compliance mechanisms, greater youth involvement in DRR efforts, and the recognition of community volunteers, emphasizing the need for DRR to be integrated into regular development processes.



Mr. Jit Ram Lama echoed these sentiments, pointing out the current inadequacies in disaster preparedness despite the growing frequency of disasters. He emphasized the need for local communities and government bodies to prioritize disaster preparedness, advocating for renewed localization efforts to start at the community level. Lama underscored the importance of mainstreaming DRR across all sectors of work and highlighted the role of civil society organizations in promoting transparency and accountability in disaster response efforts.

In his remarks, Hon. Jaya Prakash Chaudhary expressed concern over the focus on disaster response at the expense of preparedness, recovery, and rehabilitation. He called for stakeholders to shift their attention towards these crucial areas to enhance community resilience. Chief Guest Hon. Ram Dev Yadav stressed the necessity of mainstreaming disaster management into all development sectors, particularly industries and tourism, noting the potential economic impacts of disasters on these industries. He emphasized the growing costs of climate change for rural communities and suggested involving geologists and environmental scientists in future DRR programs to provide valuable insights into the geological challenges contributing to disaster risks.

The program chair, Mr. Lakhan Lal Shah, acknowledged the readiness of NGO Federation members to engage in disaster management efforts and urged all stakeholders to integrate disaster management into their work. The discussion culminated in a set of recommendations focused on enhancing local capacity, mainstreaming DRR in governance, increasing investments in preparedness, adopting a holistic approach to DRR and climate change, improving stakeholder coordination, leveraging indigenous knowledge and scientific expertise, engaging youth and volunteers, and strengthening localized risk mapping and early warning systems.

This program in Koshi Province, coordinated by local organizations, proved to be a remarkable and cost-effective initiative, providing a valuable learning experience for all participants and generating important discussions around building disaster resilience in the region.