

# **Summary Highlights of**

## **ANMF/ASNEngr/CAN-USA Joint session on**

### **“Earthquake Disaster Preparedness in Nepal”**

**at the Joint ANMA/NASeA Convention 2010**  
**Lexington, Kentucky, U.S.A.**  
**September 03-06, 2010**

A joint session of America Nepal Medical Foundation (ANMF), American Society of Nepalese Engineers (ASNEngr) and Computer Association of Nepal-USA (CAN-USA) on “*Earthquake Disaster Preparedness in Nepal*” was held at the ANMA/NASeA Convention in Lexington, Kentucky on September 05, 2010. This session was attended by about 25 people. Dr. Prakash B. Malla, Member of the ASNEngr Board of Directors, opened the session with welcoming remarks and an overview of the session. The importance and timeliness of discussion on this issue was underscored because of the imminence of an earthquake of 8 or greater magnitude in Nepal.

On behalf of ASNEngr President Dr. Ramesh B. Malla, Dr. Bishnu Phuyal, Member of the ASNEngr Board of Directors, provided a quick update on the activities of the American Society of Nepalese Engineers. These included a brief history of the society, objectives, current officers and BOD, various committees, and ongoing projects and activities including joint efforts with other associations. He also distributed the membership forms and encouraged the engineers, scientists and technical professionals to join the society as members.

Dr. Prakash Malla then gave the ASNEngr presentation on “*Necessity of Earthquake Preparedness in Nepal.*” This presentation was prepared by ASNEngr Vice President Dr. Rajendra K. Shrestha. This presentation highlighted the likelihood of an earthquake of mega magnitude (8.0 or higher in Richter scale) occurring in Nepal based on the history of earthquakes and geology of Nepal. The last earthquake of 8.4 magnitude occurred in 1934 and the Earthquake of such a magnitude is expected to occur about every 75 years. Also, Nepal is sitting on an area of high micro-seismic activities. In 2010, two earthquakes occurred in the Americas back to back: one in Haiti and another one in Chile. Although the earthquake that hit Haiti was of a smaller magnitude, Haiti experienced a much greater degree of deaths and destructions. This can simply be attributed to the facts that Haiti was not prepared for such a disaster. Nepal is not necessarily in any better situation than Haiti. This presentation also provided recommendations for disaster preparedness and recovery plan such as meetings, rallies, exhibitions, web sites, mobile camps, mock drills, first aid & CPR procedures training, food, medical care, and shelter, emergency relief centers, trauma centers and restoration of

infrastructure, earthquake design code development for infrastructure, communication, and water supplies.

Dr. Bishnu Phuyal delivered the CAN-USA presentation on ***“Elephants Will Shake Head, Catfish Will Move, Gods Will Walk With Heavy Foot, Are We Ready?”*** The presentation was prepared by CAN-USA Vice President Prabudhda Dahal. This presentation highlighted two aspects of communications that would be very critical dealing with the disaster (before, during and after): telecommunications and geographic information. Telecommunication networks is the Central Nervous System of any search and rescue or resupply operation and save lives by allowing the first responders to be quickly and optimally deployed and survivors to inform rescuers of their location. While the exact state of Nepal’s disaster telecommunication networks is not known, it can be assumed that they are relatively rudimentary at best. The devastation that may occur in Nepal requires the unified responsible efforts across multiple disciplines, and everyone must be involved. Again, the key questions that need to be addressed during the earthquake disaster preparedness are: How do we send resources and expertise, who do we offer them to, what can we do right now to prepare, and what should one do to help one’s family prepare?

Dr. Bhargab Dixit gave the ANMF presentation on ***“Promoting the Advancement of Healthcare in Nepal.”*** He began with providing an update on the ANMF mission, activities and current projects. He then moved on to emphasizing the need to act and get ready as soon possible and come up with a plan before the earthquake strikes in Nepal." His suggestions and discussion included creating a closer dialogue with expert organizations in the private and public sector that specialize in disaster relief in Nepal and mobilizing manpower from all levels of the health care delivery from nurses, health assistants to physicians, to provide immediate first aid and trauma relief. The biggest asset in such endeavor is the local manpower. Forming a database of local and foreign manpower should be a high priority and ANMF can work along this line. Fund raising mechanism for immediate needs as well as for long term rehabilitation and treatment of the injured, prevention of infection and epidemics, and sustainable nutrition supply are essential. An example of this would be to set up an online fund raising link so that this can be coordinated with different Nepalese organizations here in the Americas and effectively monitor the fund transfers to the legitimate organizations in Nepal so that money is channeled to the right places and right people.

The time constraint on the session precluded a lot of follow-up discussions. There were a couple of questions related to how they could prepare the family members back home for such disasters. Overall, the session was very effective in arousing interests and a sense of urgency in the attendees as to the imminence of an earthquake in Nepal and the disasters that may follow. The attendees were requested to send their comments and suggestions to the presenters via email.

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*For information on America Nepal Medical Foundation (ANMF), American Society of Nepalese Engineers (ASNEng), and Computer Association of Nepal-USA (CAN-USA), please visit the following websites:*

<http://www.ANMF.net>

<http://www.ASNEng.org>

<http://www.CAN-USA.org>