



# Koshi River Floods in Sunsari and Saptari OCHA Situation Report No. 10

Kathmandu, 3 October 2008

This situation report is based on information received from UN Agencies and humanitarian partners, government sources, and OCHA staff based in Sunsari and Saptari Districts.

## Highlights:

- Inter-agency assessment reveals more than 72% of the displaced have received assistance, yet only 15% of displaced in host families are being assisted.
- Concerns persist over lack of coherent registration policy, and equitable assistance to displaced in host families.
- Food distributions delayed due to slow delivery from local suppliers.
- Alternate shelter sites still not identified, causing over-crowding in current shelter sites and poor service provision.

## I. Situation in Sunsari and Saptari Districts, Eastern Nepal

- 1) More than a month after the breach of the Koshi River eastern embankment on 18 August, the East West highway still remains impassable. Many displaced families are living along the embankment wall and in neighbouring VDCs of Saptari district (particularly Bhardah and Hanumanagar VDCs) that were not flooded.
- 2) Nepal Ministry of Foreign Affairs estimates approximately 70,000 people have been affected by flooding in the area. According to the preliminary results of the Multi agency Koshi River Flood Impact assessment, 66,500 individuals have been displaced by the flood, of which 42% are of Indian origin.
- 3) **In Saptari District**, according to the latest registration done by the Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) volunteers and the District Administration Office (DAO), 20,284 Nepalis (4,186 families) have been displaced. Confirmation of the number of the number of Indians currently receiving humanitarian assistance is ongoing. Data entry for the registration is being done by students from St. Xaviers College and the District Electoral Office. Progress on the same will be available in the first weeks of October.
- 4) The **Sunsari District** Government registration report of 21 September mentions 43,917 displaced individuals (7,597 Households) of which 6,576 are Indian Nationals. They are living in 29 recognized camps. The majority of Indians displaced in VDCs south of the highway have returned back to India, though a residual displaced population remains.
- 5) A new displaced population of approximately 500 people in host families and collective centers in Guski VDC of Sunsari has been identified. Registration and services have not reached this population.
- 6) Current response priorities include responding to immediate needs such as food, temporary shelter, sanitation facilities, temporary schooling arrangements and protection concerns, especially of women and children. Government cluster leads are taking an active role in the efforts supported by humanitarian agencies.

## II. Ongoing Humanitarian Response

- 7) From 12-17 September, an interagency assessment in all 12 flood-affected VDCs of Sunsari and Saptari districts was conducted to support a humanitarian response plan that complements the government's relief plan. Key findings of the preliminary report include:
  - One third of the affected population is Muslim and eighteen percent are Dalits. Of these, only 35% have received a government identity card.
  - More than 72% of the displaced people currently receive humanitarian assistance.
  - Humanitarian aid is focussed mainly on people based in established camps. Only 15% of the displaced who live with host families are currently being assisted, forcing those living outside camps to find additional coping strategies.
  - The acute malnutrition rate among displaced children under 5 years of age is 13% and another third are at risk of being malnourished.
- 8) On September 30, the District Disaster Relief Committee (DDRC) in Saptari started providing cash support to IDPs to celebrate Dashain and Ramadan-Eid. Families with less than five members received NPR 800 and those with more than five received NPR 1,000. At the OCHA-facilitated coordination meeting on October 2, the DAO reported that 3,500 families had received money. DDRC meetings have been suspended until after Dashain (12 October).
- 9) **Actors on the ground:** At the central level, the Central Natural Disaster Relief Committee (CNDRC) oversees the process of flood response from the Government of Nepal. A Regional Disaster Relief Committee as well as District Disaster Relief Committees (DDRC) in both Sunsari and Saptari supports the CNDRC.
- 10) OCHA has prepared a Who What Where Report for both Sunsari and Saptari Districts. This report is available on the OCHA website <[www.un.org.np](http://www.un.org.np)>.
- 11) **NFI: Saptari** – NRCS so far distributed a total of 4,437 cooking utensils in camps A, B, C and D. Camp E will soon receive the sets. Norwegian Refugee Council is to provide 100 NFI sets through NRCS. Gaps still exist in distribution, especially families from India, who have reportedly received food but do not have utensils to do cooking.
- 12) Firewood distribution was completed in camp A, B and D1. A total of 1,352 families received 25 kg (estimated for 10 days). A second round of distribution in camp A, B and C is

- scheduled for this week as well as to other planned camps. Firewood is collected from local Community Forest Users Groups by the Department of Forestry and distributed in the camps by the Camp Management Committees. A total of 2,851 families received battery lights in camps D1, D2, I, J, K and L.
- 13) In **Sunsari**, agencies have completed the distribution of 6,700 NFI sets to the affected population. A further 5,000 shelter kits including tools and plastic sheets are planned for distribution. Plastic sheets distributed at the onset of the emergency will be replaced with those of higher quality. Agencies are urged to work together to reduce the potential for duplication.
  - 14) **Emergency Shelter: Saptari** – Oxfam and its partner Koshi Victims Society has completed 4,200 shelters complete with tarpaulins, mats and rope. An additional 890 bamboo frames have been constructed and are waiting for NRCS to distribute tarpaulins. Replacement heavy-duty tarpaulins (4,000) have been ordered and will arrive after Dasain festival. In addition, OXFAM has provided firewood to 1,352 families.
  - 15) Rotary International constructed 294 shelter box kits. The quality of the materials used differs from that which is used in the camps.
  - 16) According to the DDRC, if IDPs are willing to return back to their homes as the water level is receding in some villages, assistance will be provided to resettle them. DDRC will request agencies to assist reconstruction of their houses on their own land.
  - 17) Some community groups, local NGOs, and schools have asked for additional tarpaulin from NRCS for common services, which were not initially planned for by NRCS. UNICEF is exploring the possibility of bringing in additional stocks to cover the needs.
  - 18) **Sunsari** – The Government has planned 275 huts for the relocation site in Laukahi VDC. This will provide 15 sq meter/person in total space. NRCS has begun construction of the huts.
  - 19) Rotary International has provided 320 shelter box kits to the DDRC of which 165 have already been set up in east Laukahi camp. These will be given to dalit and deprived groups. The remaining shelter box kits will also be in the same camp.
  - 20) NRCS Biratnagar office godown has 5000 shelter kits. Similarly LWF has 325 shelter kits and NRCS/AAN has 1000 shelter kits to make huts but work has been stalled due to unavailability of land so far. According to the CDO, 60 Bighas of land is required for resettling all flood displaced. (1 bigha=2500 square metres)
  - 21) **Camp management and camp coordination:** The CCMM cluster led by IOM has rolled out Displacement Tracking teams (DTM) to monitor the situation of three types of settlement- Planned camps, spontaneous camps and collective centres (in pre existing buildings, school etc.) The purpose of these teams is to ensure that the correct status of population residing in various camps is known for proper camp management.
  - 22) The CCCM has established a google group to post up-to date information on DTM and a discussion forum on CCCM issues at <http://google.groups.com/group/cccmnepal> and those who want to be included in the group can contact [cccmim@gmail.com](mailto:cccmim@gmail.com)
  - 23) In **Sunsari**, CCCM displacement tracking teams have been actively collecting data on the displaced communities, who are currently residing in various camp environments which include five spontaneous sites, 4 formal sites and 19 collective centers in Sunsari District. Accurate data collection as well as registration is hampered by fluid population movements within these environments. The de-stabilization of the affected population is due in part to over-crowding of formal sites and grazing land for their livestock, families wishing to be close to their places of origin, reception of humanitarian assistance, closure of collective centers and poor service provision in the formal sites.
  - 24) The Laukhi Border Camp is currently under construction to accommodate 275 families and expected to be completed after the Dashain holiday.
  - 25) At the 1 October coordination meeting, the Sunsari CDO reported that the district government has identified three possible new sites in Narsing-7 for additional formal camps. Negotiations with the land owners are underway and expected to be finalized by the end of October.
  - 26) In **Saptari**, the CCMM is led by OXFAM with technical support from IOM. OXFAM informed that 10 camp management committees have been formed in eight different camps. Similar committees will be formed in remaining camps.
  - 27) **Food:** WFP continues to distribute food in both Saptari and Sunsari in order to ensure all beneficiaries have food for the holiday period. All distribution should be completed 5 October and thus will not have to occur over the holidays. WFP continues to be concerned over the lack of a legitimate registration exercise. In order to obtain a clear and accurate picture of the number of people needing food aid, and relief in general, a thorough registration exercise is needed in both Sunsari and Saptari.
  - 28) **Saptari** – WFP (with DEPROSC as implementing partner) finished the second round distribution (including one month ration to cover Dashain holidays) on the 29th of September and covered 6,147 households and 31,936 individuals. There was an increase in the number of households from the first distribution, but a decrease in the number of individuals. First round distribution covered 5,788 household and 34,728 individuals. A local NGO Manang Marhamdi Team distributed food based on the WFP ration size during the second round distribution to 412 households.
  - 29) WFP and Concern continue to provide supplementary feeding in the different camps targeted at all under 5 children and pregnant and lactating mothers. CARITAS has also agreed to assist this program with the supply of stoves and bricks of fuel. The program will be expanded soon to cover additional locations.
  - 30) WFP through DEPROSC started distribution of third round of rations. As of 1 October, 1,025 families and 5,124 members were covered. A total of 727 MT of ration has been distributed so far. This distribution will be for 15 days and additional 15 days as advance because of the festival

- season. By the end of the distribution, WFP will have provided food to about 40,000 people in the district.
- 31) In general the supply of food continues to be an issue for WFP. Slow delivery of food from local suppliers has resulted in delays in distribution. WFP is following up with suppliers to ensure a better pipeline situation.
  - 32) **Sunsari** – The second round distribution covering a 30-day ration finished on 1 October and covered 5,433 households consisting of 31,468 individuals. This is an increase from the first round distribution, which saw 5034 households and 28,334 individuals receive a ration. Distribution took place in all camps and in three central distribution points. 15,881 individuals collected their rations from central distribution points. This is an alarming trend as it shows just how many are not living in the camps and thus not receiving other benefits besides food.
  - 33) There is no official government record of how many ID cards have been issued. IDs are the bases for obtaining ration cards. While the government has started to create a data base of cards holders, this once again stresses the need for official registration.
  - 34) The next round of 30-day ration will begin on October 18 with completion within in one week or 10 days.
  - 35) **Nutrition:** Nutrition programs are active in both Sunsari and Saptari. Targeting children of the correct age has been a challenge in both locations.
  - 36) **Saptari:** Concern Worldwide provided supplementary feeding to around 7000 people (children, lactating mother and to pregnant women twice a day). On 29 September, UNICEF and Concern conducted an orientation session on infant feeding in emergencies for OXFAM's public health supervisors. 6 additional supplementary feeding centres have been added in the spur areas and the service will continue over the festival period.
  - 37) UNICEF and Concern conducted a survey to assess the nutritional status of children and lactating mothers in the camps. The survey found 2,509 (87%) out of 2,871 children surveyed are normal, 304 (11%) moderately malnourished and 58 (2%) severely malnourished. Following the findings, the two agencies initiated steps to ensure that the 58 severely malnourished children get consistent supplementary feeding.
  - 38) **Sunsari:** There are severely malnourished children who are currently being referred to the NRH in Biratnagar and Jhapa for treatment. Field work for a nutrition assessment led by District Health Office, Nutrition Rehabilitation home (NRH), UNICEF and World Vision is completed and a report is expected soon.
  - 39) World Vision International Nepal/SBADP Sunsari in partnership with HOLDS (Holistic Development Society Nepal), Itahari is providing Nutrition Support (Super Flour/Lito feeding) to under 5 children, pregnant and lactating mothers in Sunsari. As of September 24, 3231 children under 5 years age; 264 pregnant women and 157 lactating mothers benefited from the supplementary feeding program. 27 camps have been covered thus far. Orientation and counselling to breast-feeding mothers in emergencies has been provided through the government.
  - 40) WFP and UNICEF will cooperate with World Vision International (WVI) to continue supplementary feeding more effectively. WFP will support Wheat Soya Blend and oil, while UNICEF will provide technical/NFI if needed to WVI. A total of 3,500 children under 5 and 900 lactating and pregnant women are expected to be covered.
  - 41) **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Saptari** – There is a need for 1,200 toilets in the camps. UNICEF has agreed to build 600, CONCERN, through RRN, 200 and CARITAS 400. A total of 350 latrines are completed so far. A total of 304 hand pumps and 154 bathrooms have been installed as of October 2 by UNICEF/SABAL, Concern World Wide/RRN and CARITAS/Save Saptari. UNICEF has committed to do additional 200 tube wells. Since Women had been observed to be avoiding toilet use, sanitation awareness targeting women is ongoing through OXFAM. Some of the concerns for non-usage of toilets by women like unavailability of toilet doors for privacy and proximity to their living quarters as well as separate toilets for women to increase privacy are being addressed. DWSSO reported that water from certain tube wells is contaminated and that this is a general problem in the whole of Saptari District.
  - 42) UNICEF and OXFAM are working on public health/hygiene awareness issues. Both have committed to supply hygiene kits for the next six months covering all camps. OXFAM has mobilized 51 volunteers for the campaign.
  - 43) UNICEF has hired two staff members in Saptari District, one to coordinate the WASH Cluster and another to monitor WASH activities.
  - 44) **Sunsari** – A total of 507 toilets and 94 hand pumps have been built so far in 20 shelters. 258 baths have been built in 24 shelters, including 3 women-only bathing spaces at Jhumka. Jhumka city is supplying 47 taps.
  - 45) The construction of toilets, bathing spaces and hand-pumps has begun in Laukahi.
  - 46) 17,440 PURE and hygiene kits have been distributed to 3,215 families. 54 WASH volunteers and 26 helpers have been deployed in the camps to disseminate materials on appropriate hygiene practices. While enough water is being pumped from tube wells to service IDP needs, the quality of the water is not good. According to UNICEF there is a risk of sanitation-related illnesses since direct tube well water is being used by IDPs because it is cooler.
  - 47) In Jhumka, Laukahi and other camps such as Jamiya Islamiya, construction materials for tube wells and toilets including tin and bamboo have been stolen. In some shelters, thefts have left already-built toilets open. Recent rains and winds have blown away some of the plastic sheeting, which provides privacy in toilets and bathing spaces. There is still a shortage of phenyl.
  - 48) **Health:** Health sector response has been focused on disease prevention. WHO completed a measles and polio vaccination campaign in Sunsari and Saptari districts. Disease trends in the affected area appear to be decreasing. WHO notes there could be problems related to upper-lower chest respiratory infections.
  - 49) **Saptari** – As of October 2, there has been no health cluster meeting for two weeks and reports from the health outlets do not systematically reflect the health trends. Acute Water Diarrhea cases continue to be treated at the camp, with 59 admissions requiring intravenous fluids

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recorded at the CTC since September 17. The results of the tests from suspected cholera cases are yet to be released.

- 50) As of September 24, DPHO and Sagarmatha Zonal hospital and clinics reported to have provided health services to 26,000 flood affected through the OPD and hospitalised around 400.
- 51) There are four health camps in the area of which two run 24 hours. DPHO is seeking logistic support to establish a 20-bed field hospital and locate additional paramedical staff in Bardaha. Reproductive services have also started from September third week. The Cholera Treatment Centre (CTC) run by MSF managed by 2 doctors treated 101 patients within the last 6 days. This has contributed to the reduction in the number of referrals being made to public health centres and the Zonal Hospital.
- 52) DPHO requires an ambulance. UNFPA has approved costs and will support the repair of 2 rickshaw ambulance for use.
- 53) **Sunsari** - There are 16 medical camps that seek to cover all camps where flood survivors are located. Management of ambulance is a cause of concern as NRCS is covering the fuel, operating and maintenance cost to run four ambulances in operation instead of DDRC, which is supposed to do the same. This support may therefore be discontinued.
- 54) **Education: Saptari** – All the nine schools earlier used by flood survivors have been completely vacated and UNICEF/SABAL Nepal is taking the lead in cleaning the area and add necessary infrastructures where required. With the help of UNICEF, Nepal Teacher's Union has started 20 safe spaces aimed at 1,550 children (age between 3-5) in spur areas. Additional 30 such spaces are required.
- 55) **Sunsari** – As of October 2, 1 campus and 11 schools have been evacuated and cleaning are near completion. During Dashain, formal schooling will be suspended until October 14. The DEO estimates that there are 10,000 students affected by the closure of schools in the district. In addition, 27 temporary classrooms are being constructed. Three schools have already resumed schooling on a shift basis.
- 56) The DEO has deployed 4 staff to collect data on the IDP children and teachers in Jhumka camp. A total of 18 safe spaces are operating -10 safe spaces (from Save the Children) in shelter schools for 3-5 years children and 6-12 children; 8 safe spaces for 3-5 years children in new relocation sites in Jhumka and Laukahi(World Vision) with materials support from UNICEF. Training is ongoing for 10 safe spaces facilitators that Plan International intends to support soon.
- 57) **Protection/child protection:** To date, out of 127 missing or separated people, 35 people have been reunited with their families, including 16 children, through the efforts of protection cluster members, particularly the NRCS and World Vision.
- 58) **Registration** is a concern in both Saptari and Sunsari. Large numbers of Indians, those living in host families, and, in Sunsari, those in VDCs south of the highway have missed out on registration and the associated food and NFI distributions. On both sides, many families have also succeeded in registering more than once. Much of the registration data is also presented by camp, which does not reflect the reality that many people are resident outside camps even when registered there. The CDOs in both Sunsari and Saptari have requested technical assistance on registration.
- 59) **Host Families:** Displaced people resident with host families are receiving less assistance and are more likely to employ severe coping strategies.
- 60) **Saptari** –The displaced people are spread in 25 camps located along the East-West Highway as well as the spur areas located in the east of Koshi barrage, Sunsari District, but accessible only from Saptari District. Humanitarian assistance is reaching out to these groups, but the number of the affected population, who are living with host families and who might equally need assistance remain unknown. Requests for assistance, some with threats of violence, are being received from host populations as well as people from fishing communities, who lost livelihood opportunities due to the river changing its course, but are not displaced.
- 61) District Administration in Saptari deputed ten police women to provide security in spur areas of Camp E in response to the protection cluster' request for women police to conduct night patrolling. The administration will increase the number of policewomen soon to cover night patrolling.
- 62) Action Aid-supported recent report on Koshi mentions the lack of security and discomfort that women and girls experience while using toilets and bathing in Sunsari camps. Similarly in Saptari district 9 cases of sexual and Gender based Violence were reported but not confirmed in subsequent follow up.
- 63) In Saptari, 32 children missing/requiring tracing and family re-unification were identified. 8 of these children were re-united with their families. Psychosocial counsellors to be deployed by UNICEF and WOREC to the camps expected to fill the current gap.
- 64) **Sunsari** – Watch Groups have been formed in all of the registered shelters, and Para-Legal Committees have finished orienting the Watch Groups on sexual violence, abuse and exploitation. A one-day orientation was held by the Women Development Officer (WDO) for the security personnel guarding Jhumka camp supported by other protection cluster group members including UNICEF, on developing a code of conduct for the security personnel of the camp.
- 65) Registration of people coming in and leaving Jhumka camp has been established to minimize protection risks. Monitoring indicators for the long-term response in Sunsari are being developed, as is a system for gathering the appropriate data.
- 66) **Agriculture and Livestock:** Response in both districts is being led by the District Livestock Services Officer (DLSO). FAO, WFP and others are supporting the response at different levels. Problems related to disposal of dead animals, lack of pasture land and spread of diseases like rabies which are a cause of concern is being addressed in collaboration with the other clusters. The allocation of CERF funds to FAO is expected to boost response in both districts.

- 67) In **Saptari**, three animal health camps have been established and five mobile teams have been deployed to various shelter camps to look at the situation of livestock. DLSO has vaccinated 23,623 animals. Foot and Mouth disease is becoming a serious threat to animals and needs special attention in this area.
- 68) In **Sunsari**, four animal camps are currently being run by DLSO and mobile team have been dispatched for prevention and treatment of animals. FAO has allocated NPR 70,000 for animal feeding and maintenance of affected animals. Budget allocation is expected from Central government.
- 69) 51,063 animals have been affected by different diseases such as jaundice. Approximately 11,264 animals have died. About 20,000 animals graze near Madhuwan and there are concerns about alternatives once the grazing land is finished.
- 70) **Security and Logistics:** Both Sunsari and Saptari remain UN Security Phase-III.
- 71) Boat crossings of the Koshi river remain dangerous and not recommended due to swift currents and overloaded boats. However, boat access to flooded areas through flat water is safe with life jackets.
- 72) An UNMIN helicopter flight between Saptari, Biratnagar and Kathmandu has been made available to agencies working on the flood response. The flight is scheduled for Fridays. Interested parties should contact OCHA offices for the necessary forms. Forms are due by Wednesday mid day.
- 73) IOM charter flights continue to provide in kind support to agencies that need to send goods to affected regions via its scheduled flights to Bhadrapur. Chris Hoffman at [choffman@iom.int](mailto:choffman@iom.int) can be contacted to access this support.



OCHA Nepal – Where the Koshi River Used to Flow

### III. Appeals and Additional Funding Needs

- 74) On 25 September, the United Nations and partners issued a Floods Humanitarian Response Plan and Appeal. The appeal seeks US \$15.5 million to cover the needs of at least 70,000 people over the next six months. Working in close collaboration with the Government, the humanitarian community has prioritised ten clusters. The appeal includes 6 NGO projects, and 27 UN agency projects. Appealing agencies obtained USD 2.5 Million from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to kick start the floods response. The Flash Appeal is currently funded at 42%, with US \$9 Million in unmet requirements.
- 75) Updates on contributions to this disaster may be found in the Financial Tracking section on Reliefweb ([reliefweb.int/fts](http://reliefweb.int/fts)). Donors are requested to verify this table and inform OCHA Geneva of corrections/additional contribution.

### IV. Coordination

- 76) The Humanitarian Coordinator convened 3 Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Meetings in Kathmandu to discuss strategic issues in responding to the flooding in both districts. The Humanitarian Coordinator discussed concerns over site selection and temporary re-settlement to the Ministry of Home Affairs. Cluster leads also held regular meetings in Kathmandu to plan and coordinate response with other cluster members.
- 77) In **Sunsari**, the general coordination meeting will be held every Wednesday at 0900 hrs at OCHA Satellite Office/CDO's Residence in Inaruwa.
- 78) In **Saptari**, the general coordination meeting is scheduled for 7.30 hrs every Mondays and Thursdays at OCHA Satellite Office, NRCS Office in Rajbiraj.
- 79) Cluster Leads at the district level have been asked to schedule regular meetings and move away from the ad-hoc meeting schedule of the past weeks.
- 80) All available assessments, reports, photos and tools can be accessed at the FLOODS section on the Nepal Information Platform <http://www.un.org.np/floods/index.php>

**NOTE:** This will be the last Situation Report focusing specifically on the Koshi flood disaster. Additional updates will henceforth form part of OCHA's regular fortnightly Humanitarian Situation Overview.

**For more detailed and updated information please visit the Nepal Information Platform ([un.org.np](http://un.org.np)) or contact:**

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