

Newsletter on DMSP/FU (DWIDP) from JICA Nepal

A follow-up program of the Disaster Mitigation Support Program Project (DMSP)
(Department of Water Induced Disaster Prevention (DWIDP) of Ministry of Water Resources)

No.3 / 2004.11.30

Japan will enter “Shiwasu (December)” from tomorrow. It wrings my heart to hear the news that people affected by the Chuetsu Earthquake in late October will soon face severe winter weather with much snow. It’s getting colder here in Nepal, too. The shortage of food caused by the drought due to this year’s small rainfall is now a major concern in the western part of Nepal. The other day, a very strong rain occurred abruptly, after which temperatures dropped significantly. People now need a heater at night.



A man pedaling a bicycle
under sudden rain

As to the social order, the Maoist group escalated their activities after the end of “Tihar” and the Government Army responded to it with a sweeping operation. A fighting has been continuing in various areas. For example, from the night of Nov. 20 to the predawn of Nov. 21, a skirmish occurred between the security unit and the Maoist group in the Kailali District in western Nepal. According to the national army, 10 soldiers of the security unit and 16 fighters of the Maoist group were killed. In Katmandu, a bomb was planted at a complex building now under construction next to the Central Post Office near the Ratna Park, and part of the building was destructed by explosion. The unstable conditions are still continuing and the situations in distant areas are dangerous to foreigners. Therefore, when we must go out of the Katmandu area, we are taking every caution to avoid danger by collecting as much information as possible.

On Nov. 25, Prime Minister Deuwa called on the Maoist group to begin a peace talk by Jan. 13, but the Maoist group chairman, Prachanda, announced that that they would not enter into a peace negotiation with the Deuwa Administration.

Because of the lingering unstable conditions, the number of tourists appears to have dropped from that of the last year. But, the tourists strolling around Katmandu and trekkers heading for Mt. Everest and the Annapurna Himal may have not decreased so much. According to sources, it is Japanese tourists that have significantly decreased in number as compared with Europeans and Americans. The season from now on is particularly good because the magnificent view of the Himalayan mountains can be seen from the streets of Katmandu.



The Lukla Airport with many trekkers

People in Nepal are earnestly waiting for the peaceful days to come when the kingdom is thronged with tourists from around the world. We, technical experts from Japan, are also determined to continue efforts to mitigate natural disasters in Nepal and to

help reduce those suffering from the damage.

Field surveys were made at three damage sites

From Nov. 17 to 19, field surveys were made at the following three locations based on the request from the Department of Roads (DOR) of the Ministry of Physical Planning and Works and other organizations.



A scene after the removal of debris at Section I of the Sindhuli Road

[1] Survey of Construction Sections I, II of the Sindhuli Road [Joint survey by DWIDP, DOR, JICA]

[2] Survey of damage due to this year's July flood at the Lakhandehi River in Sarlahi District in the Terai region which is requesting a project by the new grant aid fiscal 2006 [Survey by DWIDP]

[3] Survey of emergency restoration and subsequent damage at the Mugling-Narayanghat Road [Survey by DWIDP]

Those participated in the field surveys were: from DWIDP, Mr. S.B. Regmee, Director General; Mr. S.K.Sharma, Deputy Director General; Mr. Jeevan L.Shrestha, Director of Landslide Division; Mr. S.P.Manandhar, Director of District River Office No.2 (participated only [1]); Mr. H.K.Jha, Director of District River Office No.4 (participated only [2]); and Mr. Moriyama, JICA expert. From DOR, Mr. Adhikari, engineer (participated only [1]) . From JICA Office, Mr. Yoshiura, Chief Representative; Mr. Tokuda, officer; and Mr. S.B.Rana, officer.

At the Construction Sections I and II, detailed damage conditions, the present status, and major technical problems were explained from engineers working at the sites, including Mr. Katagiri of the Nippon Koei, Co., who is the Director of the Sindhuli Road Work Office in charge of design and construction management, and from Mr. Murata who is the Director of the Sindhuli Road Construction Office in charge of construction, which is being undertaken by the JV of Hazama Corporation and Taisei Corporation of Japan. Thank you very much!



Damage at Section II of the Sindhuli Road

Further measures are needed at these sites, because a number of debris flows occurred in Section I and three major collapses occurred in Section II, due to this year's rain.

At the disaster site of the Lakhandehi River, both local representatives and residents explained about their sufferings that a vast tract of agricultural land exceeding several thousand hectares as well as a number of houses were taken away by the large-scale flood



Damage at the Lakhandehi River

disaster in July. They earnestly appealed that they are in need of early implementation of remedial measures to Director General Regmee.



Local people explained about their damage

The emergency restoration of the Mugling-Narayanghat Road appeared to be going smoothly by the efforts of the Department of Roads (DOR). When the last survey was made, five locations were restricted to one-way traffic. But, it has reduced to just one location this time.



Restoration work is in progress at the Mugling-Narayanghat Road

However, the serious conditions are still not fully improved and they may result in damage in the next rainy season. For example, the height of the retaining wall on the river side which was constructed as a restoration work is lower than the flooding height of the last disaster, and no measures are virtually taken against the danger of a debris flow and a collapse on the mountain side. This year, owing to miraculously small rainfall, no marked debris flows and failures occurred. However, the unstable conditions exist, such as new failures that were not found in the last survey and other failures that have enlarged due to this year's rain.

Major Events & Topics

A back-home meeting was held to report on study results in Japan.

On Nov. 23, a back-home meeting was held at the seminar hall of DWIDP to report on the results of study in Japan. The following four persons presented their study results. As part of the counterpart personnel exchange program, they stayed in Japan for a month from Aug. 17 to Sept. 18 and deepened their professional fields at governmental agencies, prefectural governments, and other institutions related to construction work.

- Mr. Sundar Prasad Sharma (SABO (Erosion and Sediment Control) Division) Slope vegetation method and soil cement method (Area of study: Vegetation technology)
 - Mr. Prasun Mishra (Information Training Division) GIS technology and information database (Area of study: disaster prevention information)
 - Mr. Bharat Raj Kharel (Landslide Division) Landslide prevention technology (Area of study: landslide-related information)
 - Mr. Thal Bahadur Tamang (River Improvement Division) Hydraulic model test in river (Area of study: River course planning)
- We hope that they had valuable experience during their stay in Japan, and that their gained knowledge will be best utilized for their work in Nepal.



Participants at the meeting to report on their study results in Japan

Follow-up activities under way

Cooperation from related organizations was sought to establish a disaster restoration system on the local level

To establish a disaster restoration work unit on the local level, we visited offices of various organizations in the Katmandu District (the model area), together with our counterpart. We explained why the disaster restoration system on the local level is important to the directors of those offices and sought cooperation to this year's model project. Six offices we visited were:



We sought cooperation from the Governor of Katmandu District (Mr. Baman Kamar Neupane)

CDO-office (District Governor's office of Ministry of Home Affairs), DSCWM - District Soil Conservation Office (DSCO) (Katmandu Office of Department of Soil Conservation), DDC-office (District Development Office of Ministry of Local Development), DOLIDAR – District Technical Office (DTO) (District office of Department of Local Infrastructure Development and Agricultural Road), DOR - District Road Office No.2 (District office of Department of Road), DOI - District Irrigation Office No.6 (District office of Department of Irrigation)

In the DMSP follow-up program, main activities planned for this year are holding of the disaster restoration seminar, establishment of RDSC (regional disaster survey committee) and its meeting, and the execution of disaster restoration model work.

Until now, disaster restoration work has been carried out by various organizations without systematic coordination and hence the availability of technology and budget has been restricted.

But, hereafter, an efficient and effective disaster restoration work will be enabled based on extensive cooperation between those organizations.



At the District Road Office No. 2 in Katmandu

(Prepared by Y.SUMI, JICA Expert)

Visitor

On Nov. 17, Mr. Takashi INOUE, who had worked in Nepal as the first river expert of the DPTC project, came to Nepal for his current dedication to a NPO activity (a foster-parent activity supporting the education of Nepalese children). After a lapse of two years, he dropped in at the DWIDP and had a good time with dear old faces at the office.



Inoue (front, right) and Mr. and Mrs. Upreti (back)

He also visited the house of Mr. Upreti who is a correspondent of Japan's NHK to deepen their long friendship. Mr. Inoue recounted very interesting stories when technical cooperation in the field of flood control and sabo engineering had started between the two countries. He also introduced an episode when Mr. Inoue's team at DPTC had asked Mr. Upreti to produce a video program to raise awareness of Nepalese people towards disaster mitigation. Mr. Upreti was then working at NTV, but it gave him an impetus to be independent from the TV station.

Supervised by: Yuji MORIYAMA, Long-term expert: Yoshinaga SUMI

Tel : +977-1-5535407 Fax: -5523528

E-mail: dmspfu@wlink.com.np URL: <http://www.dwidp.org>