

Regional Report- Americas, NRNA-ICC

October 2015 to April 2016

Prepared and Submitted
By

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Photo: Joint site assessment by the representatives of NRA, Laprak village and NRNA to construct permanent houses for the earthquake affected households; April 2016

Introduction

I am honoured to have been elected as Regional Coordinator (RC) for Americas region at the 7th NRNA International General Assembly and Global Conference held on 14-17 October 2015, in Kathmandu, Nepal. The Americas region traditionally covers two National Coordination Councils (NCCs) - the NCC in the USA and that in Canada. However, we are delighted to report one more NCC in the region, that is, the NCC in Chile, thereby bringing the total number of NCCs in the Americas to three. This report covers highlights of activities and accomplishments of the Americas region after the global conference in October 2015 until the end of April 2016 as follows.

Demonstrations Against Unofficial Blockade of Nepal-India Border

Both NCCs in the USA and Canada actively took initiatives and mobilized fellow NRNs to protest against the border blockade. This has already been reported widely, and therefore has just been re-iterated in this report as a reminder.

NRNA's Crisis Response Support to Nepal during the Unofficial Blockade

The NCCs in the USA and Canada supported the NRNA's efforts to respond to emergency needs of fellow Nepalese during the crisis, especially through financial contribution to buy medicines.

Formation of NCC in Chile

NCC Chile was formed in January 2016. It is led by President Mr. Durga Prasad Aryal, along with General Secretary Nabin Sikhrakar, Youth Coordinator Amar Pun, and Women Coordinator Ms Babita Gurung.

Joint Meeting and Site Visit with the Representatives of National Reconstruction Authority and Laprak Village

A joint meeting between the representatives of National Reconstruction Authority (NRA), Laprak village and NRNA took place at the NRNA Secretariat in Kathmandu. The meeting was coordinated by NRNA-ICC Advisor Dr Ganesh Gurung. From NRA, Mr Kamal Ghimire was present, while more than a dozen representatives of Laprak village attended the

meeting. From NRNA's side, ICC Advisor Naba Raj Gurung, RC Sonam Lama, ICC member (from USA) Nabin Sherchan and Executive Director Rajesh Shamser Rana participated. The meeting discussed expectation of all stakeholders for the reconstruction of permanent houses (including resettlement of the village) and logistics for a detailed field assessment for the same.

The field visit to Laprak took place with the following representatives of experts from the NRA: Mr Kamal Ghimire (Coordinator), Mr Sujan Devakota (Geologist), Mr Satrughan Shah (Engineer from Soil and Watershed Conservation Office), Mr Kedar Thapa (Engineer, Department of Urban Development and Building Construction), Mr. Amrit Pandey (Surveyor), Mr Bed Prasad Gaudel (Engineer, NRA). Similarly, six representatives of Laprak village joined the field assessment team. The NRNA representatives included Sonam Lama (RC, Americas), Nabin Sherchan (ICC member, USA), Rajesh Shamser Rana (ED, NRNA), and Suresh Chitrakar (MIT representative). The team of experts also consulted the Chief District Officer, and submitted a detailed report to NRA, which paved way for an MOU between NRNA and NRA for the execution of this project.

Preparation to host Ninth NRN Regional Conference

The ninth regional conference will be held in New Jersey, USA, on Aug 27-28, 2016. The venue will be hotel Double Tree by Hilton near Newark Airport at 128 Frontage Road. An Executive Committee under the leadership of RC, Americas, has been formed to initiate the planning process, and Sub-Committees will be set up as we move forward:

- Sonam Lama, RC Americas (Coordinator)
- AC Sherpa , DRC Americas
- Khagendra GC, ICC Member
- ICC Advisors Mr. Naba Raj Gurung and Mr. Ratan K. Jha
- Dr. Keshab Paudel, President NCC USA
- Tulsi Sapkota , President NCC Canada
- Krishna Pokhrel , Sr VP NCC USA
- Tilak Shrestha , General Secretary NCC USA

Facilitating Transfer of Funds for Post-Earthquake Response

In April 2016, Mustang Kyidug, USA, transferred Rs. 9,334,108.00 to NRNA Earthquake Relief Fund, which will be used to contribute towards building 1,000 permanent houses for the earthquake victims in Nepal as pledged by NRNA.

Meeting with Hon Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Kamal Thapa

In April 2016, the Nepali Diaspora in the USA had the opportunity to welcome and interact with the Hon. Deputy Prime Minister Thapa. The NRNA team led by RC Sonam Lama had a fruitful interaction with him at the Nepalese Consulate in New York on various relevant issues, including the continuation of Nepalese citizenship. DRC Mr. AC Sherpa, ICC members, NCC leadership and members joined this meeting.

Progress to Set-up Lord Buddha's Statue in Muktinath

RC of Americas Mr. Sonam Lama deposited Rs 28 Lakh to NRNA account in March 2016 as the fourth instalment to fund this project. The previous three tranches had already been deposited. The project is expected to complete by October 2017.

International Women's Day 2016 Celebration

The NCCs in the USA and Canada, along with a number of local Nepalese associations, celebrated International Women's Day in March 2016.

Nepali Women's Health Support Fund Established by NCC of Canada

The NCC of Canada has set up this fund and the Women and Children's Welfare Committee has started fundraising efforts to support projects related to women's health in Nepal.

Interaction with the Nepalese Entrepreneurs in Greater Toronto Area

The NCC in Canada recently organized an interaction event with the Nepalese entrepreneurs in the Greater Toronto Area. The event came up with a number of recommendations to encourage entrepreneurship among Nepalese in Canada.

Fundraising for Fire Victims in Nepal by NCC of USA

The NCC of USA has initiated fundraising to provide relief support to the recent fire victims in Nepal.

Safe Menstruations Project in Nepal

The NCC of Canada provided financial support to implement this project in partnership with Sancharika Samuha.

Support to Mahendra Leela High School, Gorkha

The NCC of Canada, in collaboration with several Nepalese and Canadian associations, has extended financial support to rebuild this earthquake affected school.

Meeting of NCC USA's Colorado Chapter

A face to face meeting of the NCC of USA was held in Denver, Colorado at the end of April 2016. It was hosted by the Colorado chapter and was attended by the RC, DRC, NCC President and executives. The meeting decided to expedite membership campaign of the NCC, among others.

Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge continued support and encouragement from the current ICC Advisors from the region- Mr. Naba Raj Gurung, Mr Ratan Jha, Mr Kanaihya Lal Shrestha and Ms Radha Basnyat. Support from Deputy Regional Coordinator Mr. AC Sherpa, NCC Presidents Dr Keshab Paudel (USA), Mr. Tulsi Sapkota (Canada), Mr. Durga Aryal (Chile) and the entire NCC teams is always appreciated. In addition, I am thankful to all ICC members from the region, ICC Committee and task force representatives from the region, NRN leaders and senior colleagues, friends and community members for your willingness to work with NRNA and support and promote Nepal in several ways. We are all together in this noble journey of "For Nepali, By Nepali". Jai NRN!