



STUDENTS' SUMMIT FOR EARTHQUAKE SAFETY, 2008

14-17 August 2008, Kharipati, Bhaktapur, Nepal

Organizer: Department of Education (DOE), Ministry of Education & Sports
National Society for Earthquake Technology – Nepal (NSET)

Maiko High School, Kobe, Japan

Support for International Disaster Education (SIDE), Kobe

Supported by: ActionAid Nepal, Bank of Kathmandu Ltd., JICA, Save the Children Alliance Nepal, UNICEF Nepal, & USAID

PRESS RELEASE

As a part of the **School Earthquake Safety Program (SESP)** being implemented by National Society for Earthquake Technology (NSET), the **School Physical Improvement Program**, being implemented by Department of Education (DOE), and as part of the **Disaster Education Program** of Maiko High School, Kobe, Japan the three institutions jointly organized the **Students' Summit for Earthquake Safety- 2008** during 14-17 August 2008 at Kharipati, Bhaktapur, Nepal in close collaboration with ActionAid Nepal, Bank of Kathmandu Ltd, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Save the Children Alliance Nepal, UNICEF, and USAID.

The residential 3-day Summit drew a total of 127 participants including 96 students and 13 teachers from 26 public schools in 13 districts of Nepal, a delegation of 17 Japanese participants including 3 teachers and 10 students from Maiko High School of Kobe and 4 delegates from Support for International Disaster Education (SIDE) – a Japanese NGO created by previous students of Maiko High School.

Campaign theme of the Summit was ***"Let's Keep Our Schools Safe from Earthquakes"***. Objectives of the Summit were:

- 1) Raising earthquake awareness of participating schools and institutions by sharing of knowledge and experience among schools of Nepal and between Nepalese schools and Maiko High School of Japan
- 2) Promote in Nepal international good practices including rich experience of Japan on earthquake safety, especially after the Kobe Earthquake of 1995.
- 3) Provide a common platform for cultural exchange among school children nationally and internationally and for discussing methods of developing and implementing School Earthquake Preparedness and Evacuation plan.
- 4) Develop understanding and fraternity among school students of different parts of Nepal and with students from Kobe, Japan.

The 3-day Summit program included physical exercises and games, cultural programs, earthquake drills, lectures and discussion on aspects of earthquake and preparedness, and practical exercises on developing School Earthquake Preparedness/Response Plan.

The Chief Guest of the opening ceremony, Mr. Shankar Prasad Pandey, Secretary, Ministry of Education and Sports, emphasized on the importance of the summit in developing earthquake safety in day to day life of people. Referring to the recent Sichuan, China Earthquake, he endorsed the advocacy by NSET in making schools safe against natural hazards including earthquakes. He

reminded that seven million school students of Nepal constitute 25 % of the total population of the country and referred to the successful collaboration of the different national and international agencies including NSET in the implementation of the governments **Safe School Building Program** currently underway in Nepal.

Representatives of the collaborating institutions referred to the high casualty of school-going children and teachers during recent earthquakes in the region, critically evaluated the programs in Nepal, highlighted the immense potential contribution of the students in achieving earthquake safety in community by carrying the message from schools to family and ultimately to the community. A consensus opinion was the necessity of expanding the outreach of disaster safety message to all households and to all communities of Nepal. The speakers endorsed the efforts made so far in the country and tasked NSET to continue the School Earthquake Safety Program including creative advocacy at policy-makers level.

During the 3-days program the participants happily engaged in all activities. Presence of Japanese students and teachers was extremely motivating.

The Summit ended with a “Bhaktapur Resolution 2008” in which the students, the teachers, the activists committed to work further to ensure 1) all schools to be made earthquake safe, 2) to promote inter-school and international collaboration in school earthquake safety, and 3) proposed to expand the summit outreach to other seismic countries of the Asia.