

22 April, 2020

## **Press Release**

This April 25, it will be five years since the massive earthquake struck Nepal. In this context, we express our sincere condolences to all those who lost their lives in the earthquake.

The National Reconstruction Authority (NRA), which was established for reconstruction and rehabilitation after the damages caused by the earthquake and the subsequent aftershocks, is completing 52 months of its establishment.

In almost four and a half years of the NRA, we have been able to attain significant achievement in reconstruction and rehabilitation. Using disaster as an opportunity to work, the NRA adopted the principle of 'Build Back Better'. Today, hundreds of thousands of earthquake-resilient structures have been resurrected in 32 earthquake-affected districts and many more are currently undergoing reconstruction.

The support and goodwill received from various sectors have enabled us to showcase our achievement, experience and learning gained in Nepal's reconstruction and rehabilitation work at the global front, with confidence and pride. Taking this opportunity, I would like to thank all the three levels of government, various social and professional organizations, the international community, non-governmental organizations, staff, local communities, common people and media including all those who supported directly and indirectly in the reconstruction work.

As of today, there has been 88 percent progress in the reconstruction of private houses which is the primary focus of the NRA. Out of 781,176 beneficiaries, who have signed grant agreement for the government grant, 494,044 (63%) have already built their houses. And, 190,145 (25%) beneficiaries are at different stages of their private house reconstruction. The number of beneficiaries approved for the third and final installment of the grant has reached 561,560 (72%).

The NRA has addressed the grievances of around 500,000 complaints. A provision has been arranged for solving the problem through an appellate committee for those dissatisfied with the complaint hearing of the NRA.

As for the reconstruction of schools, out of 7,553 schools, reconstruction of 5,598 (74%) has been completed while 1,492 (20%) are currently under-construction. As some schools have insufficient land for reconstruction, we are coordinating with the local governments to provide adequate land for school reconstruction.

As for the reconstruction of heritage sites, out of 920 sites in 32 districts, the reconstruction of 402 (44%) heritages has been completed while 141 sites (15%) are currently under-construction. Out of 170 heritages damaged inside the Kathmandu Valley's World Heritage Sites, the reconstruction of 101 (59%) has been completed while 54 (32%) are under-construction. Thus, we have attained 91 percent progress in rebuilding the monuments of the World Heritage Sites, including those reconstructed and that are under-construction. The reconstruction of heritage sites is relatively complex and challenging than the reconstruction of other areas. Proper consideration must be made concerning competent human resources, building materials, preservation of religious and cultural aspects, agreement with local

communities, universal standards on heritage, the time required in wooden artistry and sculpting.

As for the reconstruction of health institutions, out of 1,197 health centers, the reconstruction of 669 (56%) has been completed while 145 (12%) are undergoing reconstruction. We have attained 68 percent progress in the reconstruction of the health centers. Resource arrangement has been a major challenge for the reconstruction of these health institutions.

As for the reconstruction of public buildings, out of 415 government buildings, the reconstruction of 349 (84%) has been completed while 49 (12%) buildings are under-construction. Most of these public buildings are nearing their completion.

As for the reconstruction of security sector buildings, the reconstruction of 194 of them has been completed while 22 are under-construction.

Altogether, 4,204 beneficiaries living in vulnerable areas have been provided with land in safer areas to reconstruct their houses while 8,744 landless people and landless settlers have been provided land to rebuild houses.

The NRA has approved the plan of constructing 43 integrated settlements and 9 integrated settlements have already been constructed while the detailed project reports of 27 integrated settlements have been approved and are currently under-construction. Thus, a total of 79 integrated settlements are being constructed in the earthquake-affected districts.

Besides, out of 762 km of roads that required reconstruction after the earthquake, reconstruction of 443 km has been completed while 319 km of roads are in their final stage of completion.

The Department of Drinking Water has reconstructed 1,000 projects while 100 projects are in the implementation phase.

Since the establishment of the NRA, the government has spent Rs. 381 billion in the post-earthquake reconstruction until now, including Rs. 309 billion from the government and donor agencies and Rs. 72 million through various non-government organizations.

The NRA has above-mentioned achievements in the last four and half years despite various problems and challenges like political instability, blockade at southern borders, lack of human and financial resources, geographical remoteness, transition into the implementation of federalism, a situation requiring focus on the election of three levels of governments and civil servants' adjustment. Had the situation been favorable in all sectors, there would have been more progress. But, that is a past now.

At the moment, however, the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) has impacted the whole world. Our country is also under lockdown for the past one month due to the pandemic. When the reconstruction and rehabilitation works were moving forward speedily, the new situation created for the control and prevention of coronavirus has seriously impacted the works of reconstruction and rehabilitation. All the other things have become insignificant compared to saving human lives. The reconstruction works will resume as soon as the situation improves.

The international community has praised Nepal's achievements in post-earthquake reconstruction and rehabilitation. The experiences and learning we have gained despite various adversities will be exemplary for other countries as well as our future generations to adopt. In this context, we have considered documenting our experiences and efforts and publicizing them through an international conference.

The problems and challenges related to financial resource arrangement, creating an environment to reconstruct houses of those who have not started reconstruction even after receiving the first installment, making people economically prosperous by conducting additional livelihood programs and finding practical solutions to problems faced at ground level were present in the past as well. The effect of coronavirus has added to the pre-existing challenges in completing the reconstruction and rehabilitation work.

We have learnt from April 2015 earthquake that the damages are caused by human-made weak structures rather than the earthquake itself. Lately, the awareness to build earthquake-resilient structures has increased. To realize the dream of safe Nepal, it is imperative that all the weak structures throughout Nepal are retrofitted and rapid work is done in ensuring all new structures are constructed in an earthquake-resilient manner.

Finally, we are committed to moving forward by resolving the existing problems and challenges in reconstruction and rehabilitation works. With the belief that the support and goodwill received from all in the past will continue in days to come, I would like to express my gratitude once again to all those who worked with us hand-in-hand in post-earthquake reconstruction and rehabilitation.

**Sushil Gyewali**  
Chief Executive Officer  
National Reconstruction Authority