

FOREWORD

The World Health Organization is very happy to be able to present the report *Non-Structural Assessment of Hospitals in Nepal* prepared by the National Society for Earthquake Technology – Nepal (NSET) in collaboration with the Epidemiology and Disease Control Division (EDCD), Department of Health Services (DHS), Ministry of Health (MoH) and WHO.

The publication of this report is yet another important step in the process of assessing the vulnerability of the health sector of Nepal in future earthquakes. The first step was taken when MoH, WHO and NSET carried out a structural assessment of 14 hospitals in Kathmandu Valley in 2001-2002.

This study found that one of the biggest threats to the functionality of these hospitals could in fact be the damage stemming from non-structural components being overturned, falling down or sliding into other objects. In addition to rendering the hospital non-functional, non-structural elements could also pose a major threat to the lives of staff and patients alike.

Therefore, it was recommended to carry out a detailed non-structural assessment of essential emergency facilities throughout the country in order to come up with appropriate mitigation measures, set priorities and outline actions to minimize the risk and enhance the emergency response capacity of the health sector.

The fact that such a non-structural assessment has now been carried out for 9 hospitals and the findings documented demonstrates the continuous commitment of MoH and the Disaster Health Working Group towards ensuring adequate emergency response capacity, and here I would particularly like to thank Dr B.D. Chataut, Director General, DHS and Dr M.B. Bista, Director, EDCD for their support and involvement.

The findings provide us with the knowledge we need in order to begin the challenging but crucial efforts to prepare the hospitals for dealing with a potential major earthquake in Nepal. However, the knowledge alone is not sufficient. It is imperative that the recommendations find reflection in realistic action plans and are implemented in a phase-wise manner. Given the importance and magnitude of the task, I would like to express my hope and my confidence that this responsibility will be successfully shouldered by all concerned parties in the years to come.



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