On 25 April 2015, an earthquake of 7.9 magnitude struck Nepal. As of 8 May 2015, 7885 people have been killed and 17 803 injured. An estimated 2.8 million are displaced. Of the country’s 75 districts, 35 have been affected, 14 of them severely.

Within three hours of the disaster, WHO and the Ministry of Health and Population met at the Emergency Operations Room in Kathmandu and embarked on medical relief operations.

Within six hours, WHO gave four emergency health kits comprising medicines and medical supplies for 40 000 people for a period of three months. The first tranche of WHO’s emergency funds were approved for Nepal with a quick disbursement.

WHO Director-General Dr Margaret Chan said “My heart goes out to the people of Nepal who have suffered such a massive calamity. At this time of tragedy all of us in WHO are standing by to help Nepal in every way you need – with funds, medicines and experts. Many experts from various WHO regions are already working side by side with health experts from the national health ministry staff in Nepal.”

According the Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, WHO Regional Director for the South-East Asia Region, “WHO stands with the Government of Nepal as it strives to overcome this crisis. We are committed to supporting Nepal’s health system to deliver life-saving and essential services to its people and build back resilient health facilities that will be safe in emergencies.”

Thus far, WHO has allotted over US$ 1.1 million for emergency operations in Nepal. Of this, US$ 175 000 was released within hours of the earthquake from a unique fund – the Nepal earthquake: Overview
South-East Asia Regional Health Emergency Fund – created by WHO and Member States of the Region for urgent emergency funding for any emergency and to meet immediate financial needs and fill critical gaps in the aftermath of the 25 April disaster. WHO has 20 emergency response staff in Nepal to support the Ministry of Health and Population, and is sending medicines and other health supplies to treat tens of thousands of people.

WHO is supporting the Ministry of Health and Population in coordinating medical relief to the most-affected and even the remotest areas; coordinating with foreign medical teams to set up field hospitals owing to destroyed health facilities; supporting water and sanitation intervention; and health messaging on critical interventions and issues along with the government and partners.