

Talking points for MR. Chandra Prasad Dhakal, Vice President FNCCI
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1. First of all, let me extend my heartiest thanks to the European Commission and other co-organizers for providing me this opportunity to put across Nepalese private sector's view on reconstruction in Nepal.
2. Before I touch upon some of the works that private sector has done during the devastating Earthquake and our experience and perspective on reconstruction in Nepal, I would like to express our deepest gratitude to the international community for their magnanimous support and cooperation in building back Nepal.
3. Immediately, after the Earthquake, we, the FNCCI- as the apex body of private sector organizations in Nepal- mobilized our network of members, spread across Nepal, and especially Nepalese youth, in distributing immediate emergency supplies to the people, as our focus at that time was rescue and relief.
4. Our members, at that time, contributed with their products like medicines, drinking water, food and shelter items, as well as rescuing the citizens of other nations in coordination with foreign missions in Nepal. We received enormous support from our international partners, like the Confederation of Indian Industry, SAARC Chamber of Commerce, Confederation of Asia Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI), among others in this regard.
5. The Nepalese private sector also coordinated with the security forces and other governmental agencies in rescue and relief work- not only in the Capital, but in all 14 most-affected districts. Cooperation among all stakeholders at that time was exemplary, as we did not experience a single chaotic incident.
6. Now, coming to the reconstruction and rebuilding phase. We feel that the pace of reconstruction has been slow in Nepal, despite the huge success of the June 2015 Donor Conference. Two years have been passed, but still too many people are living in temporary shelters in villages and in dilapidated homes in urban areas. Dr. Pokharel, the CEO of Nepal Reconstruction Authority, has already said a lot in this regard, so I don't need to say any more on this.

7. From the private sector perspective, we feel that, had there been better coordination of NRA with other governmental agencies and also greater speed in the decision-making process, the reconstruction work would have been much smoother. These are of critical importance to any post-disaster recovery.
8. We believe that the absence of effective local government bodies, until last month's elections, also hampered the reconstruction work. Now, after the successful conclusion of the local elections, which has happened after 20 years, we hope that the reconstruction will gather its pace, authority and resources for reconstruction will be devolved and in the next Conference we will be talking about the success of reconstruction in Nepal. Effective local governance is crucial to disaster recovery and preparedness.
9. We also feel that private sector's role in reconstruction work was not much valued by either the government or by international partners. I am sorry to say that we were not included very much in the reconstruction work, as we had been during rescue and relief. Our role was just limited to suppliers of construction materials and others supplies – and even that was done without consultation on the best way to address logistics, access or pricing issues, for example. Of course, now, private banks are playing a major role in enabling affected people to access housing grants from the government, and low-interest (or no interest) loans.
10. Some of our members, and the Nepalese diaspora are involved in reconstruction. They are constructing shelters in remote areas. It will take time to successfully complete their projects. But again, FNCCI has not been asked to ensure coordination and best use of private sector capacities. It is only now that we see are beginning to see some effort by Dr. Pokharel to outsource to the private sector and use our considerable skills and knowledge.
11. FNCCI has a wide network of members, which is second only to the government's in its outreach. We have chambers of commerce in each of the 14 badly affected districts. We could mobilize them in reconstruction as well. As a departing note, I hope they could be involved in reconstruction in their areas. This, I believe, would be helpful to Build Back Nepal. Nepal has to improve its disaster preparedness planning –and that should include the private sector and the capacities, resources and innovations–like insurance or re-insurance schemes - that we can bring to the table.
12. Thank you.