



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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*American Society of Nepalese Engineers (ASNEngr),
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Computer Association of Nepal–USA (CAN-USA) jointly releases*

**“Earthquake Preparedness and Disaster Relief in Nepal
– A Position Paper”**

Prompted by the devastating Haiti earthquake of January 2010, members of the Nepali community living in the United States undertook a joint initiative, led by the three professional, non-profit organizations - to understand the current state of earthquake preparedness in Nepal. The lead organizations are the American Society of Nepalese Engineers (ASNEngr), America Nepal Medical Foundation (ANMF) and the Computer Association of Nepal–USA (CAN-USA).

Nepal is one of the world’s most earthquake-prone countries. Being a rugged, mountainous, land-locked country with a single small-sized international airport, Nepal will likely suffer greater human casualties than Haiti. The United Nations and other organizations that assess earthquake hazards, currently rank Kathmandu at the highest risk for fatalities from a major earthquake than any other city in the world.

In modern days, Nepal has witnessed unregulated, uncontrolled, and rapid urban growth, particularly in the Kathmandu Valley, which is inhabited by approximately 2.5 million people. It is estimated that a Modified Mercalli Intensity Scale IX earthquake (Richter scale of approximately 7 or greater) would result in a catastrophic 100,000 deaths, 300,000 injured, and nearly 1.5 million homeless in the Kathmandu Valley. Furthermore, 60% of buildings will be destroyed beyond repair, the airport will likely be isolated because of destroyed roads and bridges, and 60% of telephone lines will be useless for at least one month. Approximately, 80% of previously reviewed hospitals in the Kathmandu Valley would not meet the required safety

level and would be nonfunctional; 20% are at high risk of life-threatening collapse.

The areas of infrastructure (building, bridges, roads, water supply, etc.), transportation systems, telecommunication networks, medical, and other essential services will be quickly overwhelmed. Kathmandu, therefore, requires unprecedented preparedness to endure the burden of widespread structural destruction and mass casualties resulting from such a major earthquake. Since the exact timing of earthquakes is impossible to predict, disaster preparedness is the crucial factor that we can plan and implement now to minimize the loss of lives and property.

This 110-page document titled “*Earthquake Preparedness and Disaster Relief in Nepal – A Position Paper*” outlines the challenges that Nepal will face, if and when, another large magnitude earthquake strikes. It presents technical information on earthquake preparedness, mitigation, training, and rescue operations that will be needed before, during, and after a major earthquake. The suggestions and recommendations in this document are intended to be preliminary. They are divided into three main areas of concern in earthquake disaster mitigation: engineering, communication, and medical and public health.

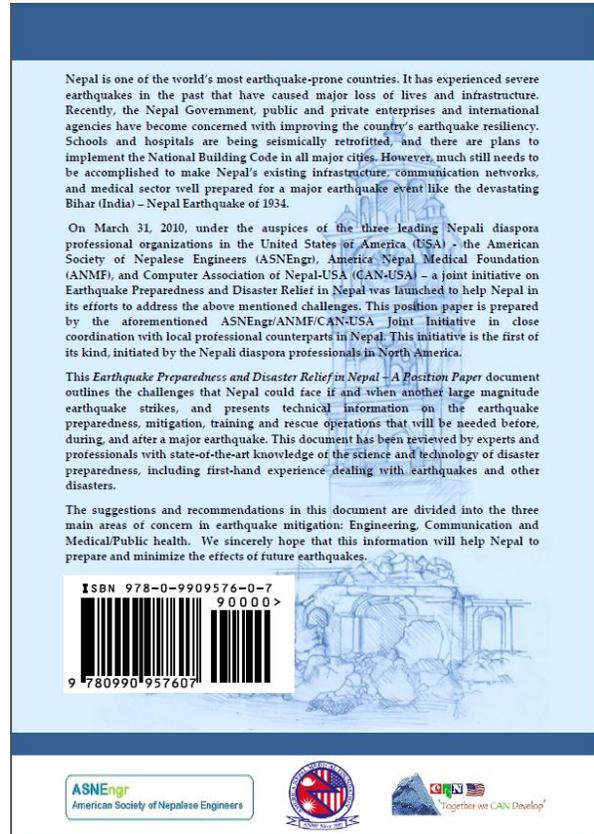
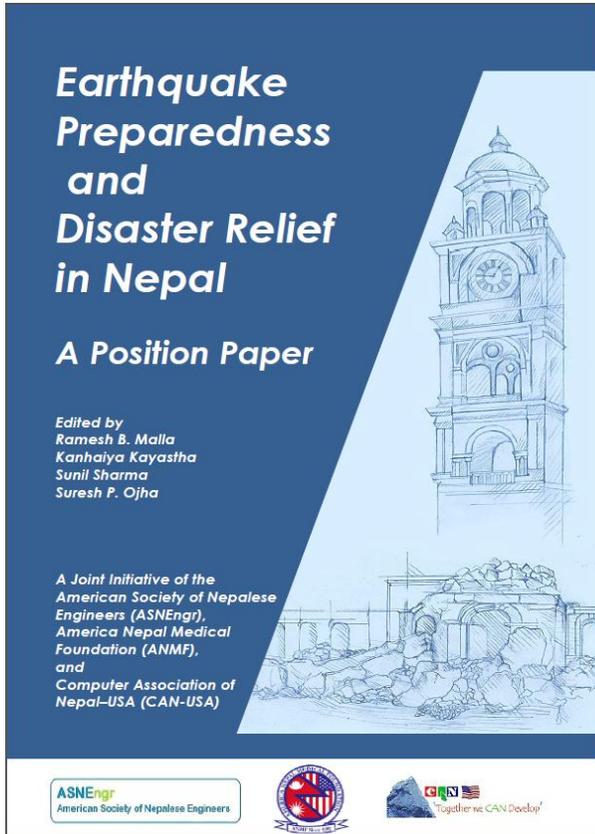
The government of Nepal has started to establish a rudimentary foundation for earthquake preparedness. With focused, concerted effort and greater willingness from all sectors, Nepal has an opportunity to be a leader and a role model in developing a sustainable and sound disaster preparedness program for resource- poor countries.

We hope that this position paper will create a pathway for implementation and initiate the necessary plans for establishing a coordinated mechanism to draw together the resources and efforts by public and private stakeholders both in Nepal and the U.S. We also hope that the information presented in this paper will help generate constructive and meaningful questions and discussions towards better preparedness and mitigation of earthquake-related hazards and tragic situations expected from major earthquakes.

As this position paper was going to press, we heard news of a major 7.8 magnitude (Richter) earthquake with the epicenter at Gorkha District in Nepal, April 25, 2015, followed by a series of frequent aftershocks, including a strong 6.7 magnitude aftershock the next day. This has resulted in a large number of casualties (7171 dead, 1480 in Kathmandu alone, and 14446 injured at this time) and severe damage to buildings, homes and temples, including the world heritage Basantapur Durbar Square in central Kathmandu. The historical landmark Dharahara observation tower in Sundhara, Kathmandu which was recommended for an immediate seismic-retrofit in this report has collapsed. Early reports indicate considerable damage to infrastructure and extensive damage to local traditional houses, for as much as 90 percent to 100 percent, in some hard-hit villages leaving thousands homeless in these areas. The final casualty reports have not yet been received. We hope this position paper will contribute to needed discussions on future efforts of preparedness and enhancement of the country’s total earthquake resiliency program. Now there is a need to review the lessons learned in the areas of engineering, communications and medical care in the immediate response and recovery periods following this earthquake.

We are greatly saddened and grieved by the loss of life and property caused by this recent devastating earthquake. Our hearts and minds go to Nepal at this trying and difficult moment.

The position paper can be found at the following links:
ASNEng - http://www.asnengr.org/earthquake_position_paper
ANMF – www.AmericaNepalMedicalFoundation.com
CAN-USA – <http://www.CAN-USA.org>



American Society of Nepalese Engineers (ASNEng), a nonprofit organization established in September 2007 with IRS 501(c) (3) tax exempt status, aims to provide a common platform for people of Nepalese background and their friends, in engineering and closely related scientific and technical areas, to come together, exchange ideas, and support each other for their and the larger society's common good and benefit. It operates for engineering, scientific, and technological research and educational purposes. The Society also strives to promote engineering, scientific, and technological advancement in Nepal. The membership application form and detailed information on ASNEng and updates on its recent activities can be found at <http://www.ASNEng.org>.

America Nepal Medical Foundation (ANMF) – The objective of ANMF, a U.S. 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is to promote the advancement of medical training and practice in Nepal. ANMF focuses on improving the quality of medical care, medical education, and medical research in Nepal. For more information, please visit <http://americanepalmedicalfoundation.com>.

Computer Association of Nepal-USA (CAN-USA) is an American organization dedicated to the professional development of its members and the technological progress of Nepal. It is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with members throughout the United States. The organization continues to utilize the creativity and talent of its members and the broader American community to develop technology-rich solutions that address some of Nepal's challenges. Please visit <http://www.CAN-USA.org/> for more information.