

One million Nepalis slip below poverty line due to earthquakes

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Kathmandu: Nearly one million people have slipped below poverty line in Nepal due to two powerful earthquakes that left about 9,000 people dead and a trail of destruction across the country.

"The earthquakes have pushed 982,000 more people back into poverty due to the loss of assets and income generating opportunities," according to a report by Nepal's National Planning Commission.

The draft report on Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA), which will be given final shape soon, has put the needs estimate of the country at USD 6.66 billion or nearly one-third of the country's Gross Domestic Product.

The draft PDNA, prepared by the NPC working with some 250 Nepali and international experts, divides the damage assessment into 21 sectors.

It has calculated the damage extent in housing and human settlements, the sector suffering the most damage, at Rs 330 billion.

Damage to education and tourism is estimated at Rs 28 billion and Rs 18 billion respectively. NPC handed over the PDNA draft report to Prime Minister Sushil Koirala on Friday.

Vice-Chairman of NPC Govind Raj Pokharel claimed that the report will be finalised by June 18 and will include inputs from broader consultations to be organised in Kathmandu on Saturday, as well as donors' comments thereafter.

The report will be tabled before the donor community at an international donors conference here on June 25 to collect resources for the post-quake rebuilding and reconstruction.

The government is also mulling to form a high-level implementation agency for the reconstruction tasks and a law for this purpose is in the making.

In order to convince the donor community, the government is also expected to establish an agency for implementation and reconstruction in a fast-track mode.

Altogether 36 out of the total 75 districts in Nepal are affected by the 7.9 magnitude earthquake on April 25 which was followed by another 7.3-magnitude earthquake on May 12.

However, 14 districts including three districts in the Kathmandu valley fall under most-hit regions.