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## Scientific learning exchange on landslide management and bio-engineering in Nepal: from data to landslide mitigation - new venues for collaboration October 2-6, 2016

### Learning event description

The focus of this learning event was to bring together Nepali and international landslide researchers, NGOs, UN agencies, students and government officials responsible for mitigating landslides to discuss on-going and completed research on landslides, landslide mitigation, landslide inventories, national policy on ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction and curricula development in Nepal. The event was organized by the Soil and Water Conservation Society of Nepal (SOWCOS) and the University of Lausanne (UNIL) under the leadership of the Department of Soil Conservation and Watershed Management (DSCWM) in collaboration with IUCN, ICIMOD, FAO, UNEP and UNDP<sup>1</sup>. It was conducted over 5 days (October 2-6, 2016) in conjunction with a national policy workshop on Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction, and included a field trip to visit community based “bio-engineered roads” in Western Nepal.

### Outline of the learning event

The workshop was organized around four main panel discussion topics, including 24 panelists and presenters and over 80 participants, followed by two days of high level policy discussions, community interactions, a field trip and a wrap-up session including a discussion of next steps for improving collaboration among stakeholders.

Main discussions were organized around four panel group themes:

Panel 1: Updates from the DSCWM Working Groups on landslide inventories, hazard mapping methodology, landslide prioritization and mitigation methodology and capacity building;

Panel 2: Stocktaking of post-earthquake research on landslides and landslide inventories;

Panel 3: Research gaps, needs and opportunities for establishing a repository and collaborative platform for landslide inventories and research;

Panel 4: Addressing landslides: Understanding underlying causes for more effective mitigation.

A field trip brought 30 participants to visit two bio-engineering sites in the Pokhara area of Western Nepal, which were implemented by UNIL and IUCN together with communities to demonstrate the use of locally available deep-rooted plants and simple engineering structures for reducing erosion and landslide risk. The wrap-up session focused on steps for improved collaboration and the creation of a data sharing platform. In addition, student poster sessions were organized to highlight student work in the field.



<sup>1</sup> International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN); International Centre for Integrated Mountain Research (ICIMOD); Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

### **Added value for participants**

Participants from diverse stakeholder groups: national and local government, academia, NGOs and UN agencies exchanged experiences about current landslide research efforts, landslide inventories, key policy issues and possible solutions to mitigating landslides. The event strengthened the network of international and Nepali researchers of landslide research and mitigation. It gave impetus toward strengthened collaboration and networking in order to make data and research on landslides in Nepal more accessible. In addition, it provided a learning opportunity for policy makers to capture policy recommendations and it gave a group of students the opportunity to develop posters and get feedback on their work.

### **Feedback from participants**

“The Department of Soil Conservation and Watershed Management, (Government of Nepal) thanks the workshop organizers, including SOWCOS, UNIL and the Swiss Academy of Sciences for the opportunity to bring together this diverse group of people highly dedicated to reducing impacts and suffering due to landslides in Nepal” – Director General Paudyal, DSCWM.



### **Conclusions and lessons learned**

- A draft inventory of “who is doing what” in terms of landslide inventories and research in Nepal, which can form the basis of a data sharing platform under the auspices of ICIMOD until the Government of Nepal has built the capacity to house this platform. UNIL has compiled the inventory based on a quick survey of over 20 international research groups which can form the basis for this data sharing platform.
- Participants voiced next steps and policy recommendations with regards to landslide mitigation with special attention to bio-engineering methods for roadside landslides which were carried forward at the October 3-6, 2016 National workshop on Ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction, organized by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the UNIL under the leadership of DSCWM;
- Achievements of the DSCWM Working Groups were highlighted and momentum was gained for each group to complete its final report and strengthen coordination between the groups.
- An opportunity for strengthened network of international and Nepali researchers working toward landslide research collaboration and data sharing.

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