

JICA Nepal Office par International Operation Agency JICA Nepal Office Quarterly Newsletter

BUILDING A SAFER FUTURE: PROMOTING COMPLIANCE AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS IN NEPAL



DRR Demonstration for students in Lalitour

In a nation vulnerable to natural hazards, the importance of building safety and disaster preparedness has not still been clearer. In Nepal, where seismic activity is frequent due to the collision of the Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates, the risk of catastrophic earthquakes looms large. The devastating Gorkha Earthquake in 2015, which resulted in over 9,000 fatalities and damaged more than 600,000 houses, underscored the urgent need for enhanced building regulations and disaster risk reduction (DRR) education.

IMPLEMENTING BUILDING CODES FOR SAFETY

"The devastation from the 2015 Gorkha earthquake, alongside the 2023 Western Nepal earthquake in Jajarkot that caused 161 deaths and heavily impacted around 34,000 homes, made us realize the urgent need for safer construction practices. This includes the implementation of robust building codes that regulate design, construction, and materials to enhance building resilience. Additionally, there is a critical need to strengthen the capacities of municipalities for design checks and construction inspections, as well as to improve the supervision skills of architects and engineers, ensure quality control by contractors, and raise awareness among stakeholders."

- Mr. Prakirna Tuladhar, Deputy Director General, Department of Urban Development and Building Construction (DUDBC).

For over three decades, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has collaborated with the Government of Nepal (GoN) to improve disaster resilience. Following the 2015 earthquake, JICA shifted its focus to recovery and disaster risk reduction with the principle of Build Back Better (BBB). The JICA supported project for Earthquake Risk Assessment of Kathmandu Valley contributed to the revision of the Nepal National Building Code (NNBC) in 2020. This updated code aims to ensure that new constructions can withstand potential future earthquakes.

Despite these advancements, awareness and compliance among stakeholders—designers, engineers, contractors, and municipal officials—remain insufficient. To address this gap, JICA initiated "The Project for Promotion of Nepal National Building Code Compliance for Safer Building Construction (NBCC)," which runs from 2021 to 2025. This project is currently being piloted in seven municipalities of the Kathmandu Valley, including Lalitpur and Tokha.

The NBCC project has introduced a Building Construction Working Procedure (BCWP) that includes mandatory orientation sessions for homeowners, the registration of designers and contractors, provision of supervision consultants, series of inspections and other provisions. These measures aim to elevate compliance rates and ensure that buildings are constructed to meet safety standards.

Mr. Tuladhar also adds that, "During my master's study in Earthquake Engineering at Building Research Institute of Japan, I could observe and study about standards, practices and technologies of Japan which made them resilient to earthquakes. In addition, I also felt the need to learn about the ways to increase awareness about hazards and risk and implement in Nepal. One such way could be the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) education at school levels."

EDUCATION AS A TOOL FOR RESILIENCE

Simultaneously, disaster risk reduction education is gaining momentum, particularly in schools. The "School Club-Based Resilient Community Model Project," supported by JICA's Partnership Program, focuses on enhancing public awareness through engaging educational activities. This initiative, which involves partnerships with various NGOs, aims to instill a culture of safety among students and their communities.

Since its launch, the project has reached at least 50 schools across the Kathmandu Valley, integrating DRR education into the curriculum through interactive games and hands-on activities. Students learn about safer housing construction techniques, health risks, and mental health support, equipping them with the knowledge to respond effectively to disasters. Workshops and training sessions have enabled teachers to adopt innovative teaching methods, turning theoretical knowledge into practical skills.

"Over time, teachers and students have transformed from skeptics to confident advocates of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), embracing innovative teaching strategies and proactive participation, effectively utilizing local resources to enhance community resilience and preparedness." - Mr. Deepak Marahatta, Founder, Disaster Education Promotion Office (DEPO).

He further reiterates, "Integrating outdoor activities and games into DRR education enhances engagement and equips students with practical skills and confidence, fostering a sense of agency that contributes to more resilient communities and empowers young people to be proactive citizens for a safer, more resilient Nepal."

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Both the building code compliance efforts and DRR education share a common thread: the empowerment of key actors from the community, municipality and overall the government. As building codes are updated, municipalities are tasked with ensuring compliance, necessitating improved systems and capacity building. Training programs have been established for local officials, engineers, and contractors, enhancing their understanding of building regulations and safety standards.

In schools, DRR clubs serve as vital hubs for disaster education and community engagement. By organizing awareness campaigns and drills, these clubs not only educate students but also involve parents and community members, creating a network of informed individuals prepared to respond to emergencies.

The emphasis on community involvement is particularly important in Nepal, where many areas lack immediate access to external resources during disasters. By fostering self-reliance, these initiatives cultivate resilience, ensuring that communities are better equipped to handle the challenges posed by natural hazards.

LEARNING FROM INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

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Nepal can draw valuable lessons from Japan, a country that has successfully implemented rigorous building codes and disaster preparedness measures over decades. Japan's experience illustrates the importance of continuous education, improvement and implementation of regulations, and community involvement in enhancing resilience. In Japan, schools conduct regular disaster drills, and citizens are well-informed about the risks they face, leading to a culture of preparedness.



Conversely, Nepal's innovative approaches to disaster education, such as the use of games and interactive learning, provide insights that can be beneficial even in more developed contexts. Engaging communities through practical experiences ensures that disaster education is accessible and impactful.

"Despite differing resources and infrastructure, both Japan and Nepal acknowledge the importance of DRR and strive to enhance their preparedness and resilience, with Japan's advanced technology and systematic approach, particularly in early warning systems and building codes, offering valuable lessons for Nepal's ongoing DRR strategy development." - Mr. Deepak Marahatta, Founder, Disaster Education Promotion Office (DEPO).

THE PATH FORWARD

As Nepal navigates the complexities of building resilience against natural hazards, the dual focus on building code compliance and DRR education presents a comprehensive strategy fo future preparedness. The government's collaboration with JICA and various NGOs emphasizes a multifaceted approach, addressing both structural safety and community preparedness.

To further enhance these efforts, it is crucial to continue raising public awareness about the importance of building codes and disaster preparedness. The success of these initiatives hinges on the active participation of all stakeholders- from policymakers to local communities.

"Promoting building code compliance is crucial for safer construction in Nepal, necessitating increased public awareness and capacity development for municipalities; JICA's support in finalizing the Building Construction Working Procedure (BCWP) is essential, particularly its provision of orientation program for homeowners to enhance safety awareness and potentially save lives.", states Mr. Prakirna Tuladhar, DDG, DUDBC in his concluding remarks.

The ongoing projects supported by JICA not only aim to protect lives and properties but also strive to foster a culture of safety that transcends generations. By prioritizing education and code compliance, Nepal can move toward a safer future, where the devastating impacts of disasters can be significantly mitigated.

In conclusion, the concerted efforts to promote building code compliance and implement DRR education signify a crucial step toward safeguarding Nepal's future. As communities become more informed and resilient, the hope is to build a nation that stands strong against the challenges posed by nature.

-Ms. Brinda Singh
Public Relations Officer

(This article is based on the JICA Nepal Radio Show "Jica Sanga Sahakarya" aired in Radio Nepal on 25th August and 15th September 2024.)



Master Training of Trainers (MToT) program for Engineers by NBCC Project.



JICA BEGINS RECONSTRUCTION OF SHREE BHAGAWATI SECONDARY SCHOOL ALONG WITH 10 MORE IN JAJARKOT

The groundbreaking ceremony for the new buildings at Shree Bhagawati Secondary School, located in Kudu-13, Bheri Municipality, Jajarkot, was successfully held on Feb 20, 2025.

The school, founded in 1975, currently includes 416 students and was severely damaged during the Western Nepal earthquake of 2023. Several blocks of the school were damaged, leading to insufficient classroom space and challenges in providing quality education.

To address this, the school's reconstruction will include two new blocks featuring nine classrooms, lavatories, and other essential facilities to improve the learning environment for students.

During the ceremony Mr. Laxmi Prasad Bhattarai-Project Director, Central Level Project Implementation Unit (CLPIU) and Mr. Matsuzaki Mizuki, Chief Representative of JICA Nepal jointly laid the foundation stone for the new classroom blocks. The new buildings will be constructed with multi-hazard resilient structures which are child, gender and disable friendly and is expected to significantly improve learning environment for the students.

This reconstruction effort is part of a larger initiative to rebuild 11 schools in Bheri and Nalgad municipalities through the Emergency School Reconstruction Project (ESRP). The Project is being implemented by CLPIU of Ministry of Education under Japanese ODA loan assistance.

Speaking at the event Mr. Laxmi Prasad Bhattarai, Project Director, CLPIU expressed his gratitude to the Government of Japan and JICA for extending their swift support in the reconstruction of damaged schools in Jajarkot. He further committed to making every effort to ensure the timely completion of high-quality construction.

Similarly, Mr. Matsuzaki Mizuki, Chief Representative of JICA Nepal shared that, "JICA is proud to support the reconstruction of schools in Western Nepal. Our goal is to build resilient learning facilities that will foster a better educational environment for future generations."

Emergency School Reconstruction Project (ESRP)

ESRP was launched in 2016 with an aim to reconstruct schools damaged by 2015 Gorkha Earthquake with support from JICA's concessional loan of JPY 14 billion. Thus, 274 disaster resilient schools were built in six districts Gorkha, Dhading, Nuwakot, Makwanpur, Rasuwa and Lalitpur under the principle of "Build Back Better (BBB)". These rebuilt schools are designed to serve as regional hubs for improving education quality.

In response to the 2023 earthquakes in Western Nepal, the remaining ESRP funds were extended to reconstruct schools in the region. Now, 11 schools in Bheri and Nalgad municipalities of Jajarkot will be rebuilt through this initiative.





IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF PUBLIC SERVICES

JICA'S SUPPORT FOR NEPAL'S EARTHQUAKE RECOVERY

On 25 April 2015, a devastating earthquake of magnitude 7.8 struck Nepal with its epicenter in Gorkha. Immediately after the earthquake, the Government of Japan and JICA provided emergency relief to affected people. After that, JICA provided assistance to Government of Nepal for recovery and reconstruction based on the principle of Build Back Better (BBB). JICA also contributed to capacity development through its various programs to develop resilience amongst the people and also the nation.

JICA's BBB based recovery and reconstruction support has covered various sectors, such as housing and school reconstruction, cultural heritage restoration, infrastructure reconstruction, livelihood recovery, DRR education and recovery planning, and disaster preparedness.

One of its Major Focus Areas was to restore small public facilities and improve livelihood of earthquake affected people through Quick Impact Projects (QIPs). JICA reconstructed 22 various types of small-scale public infrastructure which included Public Buildings, Health Facility buildings, Road and bridge construction, and conducted some Livelihood Recovery program through QIPs under the Project on Recovery and Rehabilitation from Nepal Earthquake (RRNE). The detail project list of the program is as follows.



Palungtar Police Station in Gorkha.



Ward Office, Barpak, Gorkha



Thokarpa VDC Office, Sindhupalchowk

SN	Project Name	Location
1	Disaster Resilient Construction Technology Training through the Construction of a Demo Model for Earthquake-Resilient Housing	Irkhu, Chautara Sangachokgadi Municipality, Sindhupalchok
2	Disaster Resilient Construction Technology Training through the Construction of a Demo Model for Earthquake-Resilient Housing	Bungkot, Gorkha
3	Recovery of social service for women, children and social welfare through the Construction of a Women and Children Office (WCO) facility	Chautara, Sindhupalchok
4	Strengthening of health and hygiene through the Reconstruction of Amppipal Hospital	Palungtar Municipality, Gorkha
5	Recovery of social services through the establishment of peace, order and security with the Reconstruction of Palungtar Area Police Office buildings	Palungtar Municipality, Gorkha

SN	Project Name	Location
6	Recovery of social services and development activities through the	Thokarpa Sunkoshi Rural Municipality,
	Reconstruction of the Village Development Committee building	Sindhupalchok
7	Recovery of agricultural activities through the Reconstruction of the District Agriculture Development Office building	Chautara, Sindhupalchok
8	Recovery of agriculture activities through the Reconstruction of the Small Farmer Agriculture Product Collection Centre	Bhotechaur, Melamchi Municipality, Sindhupalchok
9	Recovery of transportation and irrigation facilities through the Improvement of Road facilities in Bhotechaur VDC and a part of Melamchi Municipality	Bhotechaur and Melamchi Municipality, Sindhupalchok
10	Recovery of social services for the community and social welfare through the Reconstruction of the Village Development Committee	Barpak Sulikot Rural Municipality, Gorkha
11	Recovery of social services for women and social welfare through the Reconstruction of Women Community Centre	Barpak Sulikot Rural Municipality, Gorkha
12	Recovery of social services for community health and social welfare through the Reconstruction of the Health Post	Barpak Sulikot Rural Municipality, Gorkha
13	Recovery of social services for the community and social welfare through the Reconstruction of the Village Development Committee	Saurpani, Barpak Sulikot Rural Municipality, Gorkha
14	Recovery of social services and development activities through the reconstruction of the Village Development Committee building	Maneshwara, Barhabise Municipality, Sindhupalchok
15	Establishment and Enhancement of a Women's Cooperative in Barpak	Barpak Sulikot Rural Municipality, Gorkha
16	Livelihood recovery through Goat Farming for Women in Barpak	Barpak Sulikot Rural Municipality, Gorkha
17	Improvement of Vegetable Farming practices for Women	Barpak, Kharibot, Khoplang, Mirkot, Muchok, Simjung), Gorkha
18		(Bansbari, Irkhu, Maneshawara, Mangkha, Talamarang, Thokarpa), Sindhupalchok
19		(Khoplang, Mirkot, Simjung), Gorkha
20	Improvement of Maize Farming Practices	(Bansbari, Irkhu, Maneshwara, Talamarang, Thokarpa) Sindhupalchok
21	Improvement of the production of quality seed through Construction of Seed Storage Facilities and Training	Ichok,Helambu Rural Municipality, Sindhupalchok
22		Kiwool, Helambu Rural Municipality, Sindhupalchok
23		Irkhu, Chautara Sangachokgadi, Sindhupalchok
24		Phulpingdanda, Balefi Rural Municipality, Sindhupalchok
25	Promotion of Safety Measures for Housing Reconstruction Engineers	Chautara, Sindhupalchok
26	Khahare Khola Bridge Construction Project	Srinathkot and Gankhu VDC, Gorkha
27	Jhyalla Khola Bridge Construction Project	Muchok VDC, Gorkha
28	Construction of Guita Domar Disaster Management Park	Lalitpur Metropolitan City
29	Rehabilitation of Water Supply Line through Majhuwa source for Chautara City	Chautara, Sindhupalchok

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3RD JICA CHAIR DISCUSSION ON

"DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN NEPAL AND JAPAN: CONCEPT OF PUBLIC, MUTUAL AND SELF-HELP"

JICA Nepal office organized "JICA Chair" academic symposium in collaboration with the Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS), Tribhuvan University (TU) on 05 and 06 March 2025 with gross 50 participants, calling on Prof. MURATA Masahiko, Professor, Kansai University of International Studies.

This year 2025 marks the 10th anniversary of the Gorkha earthquake, hence JICA aims to create an opportunity to discuss what Nepal, as a country with high disaster risk, should do to prepare for public, mutual, and self-help respectively, considering Nepali social features as well as Japan's experience in disaster risk reduction, and to raise awareness of DRR.

The symposium provided an opportunity to learn from Japan's experience in disaster risk reduction and management as well as discussion on how these kinds of helps are functioning in Nepal that "as a nation, one of the most important thing is to invest the national budget to reduce disaster damage in order to protect the safety of citizens (public help)", and that "self-help" and "mutual-help" are possible only with risk reduction efforts of the government i.e. "public help".

Prof. Murata presented report on Japan's Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategies after the 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake (GHAE) and highlighted the importance of Public, Mutual, and Self-help in disaster preparedness as well as disaster response and recovery. Similarly,

he shared key lessons from the GHAE and emphasized the role of self-help in personal preparedness, mutual help especially communitybased efforts, and public help in government-led DRR-related activities.

Following his lecture, the symposium provided an opportunity to discuss what is needed regarding DRR and disaster preparedness in Nepal, taking consideration of social value including cultural, geological, social condition, and so on.

From the Nepali side, mainly represented by Moderator/Speaker of the discussion, Prof. Mrigendra Bahadur KARKI, Executive Director, CNAS TU, presented his views on significance of Disaster Management in Nepal along with Risk Reduction and Preparedness for enhancing sustainable development.

The symposium featured interactive sessions that fostered productive discussions among panelists and the audience on the positive impacts of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategies. A panel discussion included prominent figures such as Prof. Murata, Ms. Roshani Shrestha, Joint Secretary of National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Authority (NDRRMA), Mr. Dangol, Mayor of Kirtipur Municipality, Mr. Owada, JICA Expert in Department of Urban Development and Building Construction (DUDBC), Mr. Dan Bahadur Karki, DIG, Nepal Police and Dr. Sanjay Uprety, Professor, Tribhuvan University, Institute of Engineering.

The panel focused on a comparative analysis of DRR strategies from both national and community perspectives, considering how cultural and political contexts shape the approaches in Nepal and Japan. The discussion addressed challenges and opportunities in implementing DRR strategies, with panelists sharing personal experiences, lessons learned, and successful practices. The session proved successful in sharing knowledge and strategies for building a resilient Nepal.

(Reference)

'JICA Chair' is an initiative of Japan International Cooperation Agency launched with an objective to develop future leaders in developing countries. JICA Chair is organized in JICA partner countries in collaboration with the leading universities to strengthen existing research and education programs as well as becoming a starting point to new initiatives. JICA Chair's activities include intensive lectures conducted by leading professors and lecturers dispatched from Japan to disseminate Japan's development experiences in various fields such as politics, economics, public administration, law, and others.

The first and second symposium of 'JICA Chair' in Nepal was organized on Jan 2023 and Feb 2024 respectively. JICA Nepal aims to continue academic fruitful dialogue between Japan and Nepal through similar extensive interaction sessions in the future as well.

WORKSHOP ON DISASTER AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK TO STRENGTHEN LOCAL RESILIENCE

On January 17, 2025, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA) held a workshop to introduce the "Local Disaster and Climate Resilience Framework (LDCRF) Preparation Guideline, 2081." Developed with JICA's cooperation "The Project for Strengthening Disaster Risk Governance for Resilience in the Kathmandu Valley (REKV)", the guideline aims to integrate Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation into local government development

plans. The event brought together 93 participants, including mayors, government officials, and stakeholders, who praised NDRRMA's efforts in creating an integrated framework. The session also included exercises for DRR focal persons and planners to apply the guideline.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA), in collaboration with 'The Project for





Strengthening Disaster Risk Governance for Resilience in the Kathmandu Valley (REKV)', organized one workshop and Training of Trainers (TOT) respectively aimed at enhancing local resilience to disaster and climate risks.

On March 16, 2025, the 2nd Workshop on Local Disaster and Climate Resilience Framework (LDCRF) was held, building on the first workshop conducted on January 17, 2025. A total of 34 participants from various

ministries and local government bodies under the disaster management and planning sectors participated.

Following this, from March 17 to March 19, 2025, TOT was conducted which focused on the Local Disaster and Climate Resilience Framework (LDCRF) Guideline 2081, developed with cooperation from JICA. A total of 27 participants from federal ministries, provincial ministries, and seven municipalities from each province attended the TOT.

These initiatives are key to enhance the capacity for disaster risk reduction and climate resilience at the federal, provincial, and local levels by allowing participants to better understand the risks, hazards, and priority DRR measures relevant to their respective municipalities.

The guidelines are available here.

"https://bipad.gov.np/np/1458"

INDIA-JAPAN COLLABORATE ON CLIMATE-RESILIENT FOREST MANAGEMENT TRAINING FOR NEPAL

Joint India-Japan Initiative Strengthens Nepal's Environmental Resilience

An eleven-member delegation from Nepal, including officials from the Ministry of Forest and Environment, visited India from February 17 to 24, 2025, for advanced training on climate change adaptation through sustainable forest management. This initiative, facilitated by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Forest Department, Himachal Pradesh, focused on policy development, institutional capacity, and climate-resilient forestry practices.

This training is part of JICA's five-year 'Project for Climate Change Adaptation through Sustainable Forest Management in Nepal, 'launched in 2022. The initiative aims to enhance the institutional capacities of government entities responsible for climate change adaptation, as well as forest and watershed management.

Due to its mountainous terrain, Nepal is particularly susceptible to soil erosion and water resource depletion, threatening both ecosystems and local livelihoods.

The country's economic and technical constraints further limit its ability to implement large-scale adaptation

strategies, making capacity-building programs like this training crucial.

During the program, the delegation observed best practices in Himachal Pradesh, through JICA-supported project called Himachal Pradesh Forest Ecosystems Management and Livelihoods Project (PIHPFEM&L). Key learnings included sustainable forest management through a community-based approach, mitigating human-animal conflicts, self-help group initiatives, and soil conservation techniques. Participants also studied effective policy frameworks and government initiatives that have strengthened community resilience to climate challenges. The delegation paid a courtesy visit to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India, where they received certificates in the presence of officials from MEA, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, the Embassy of Japan, and JICA. This training program is a significant step, taking forward India and Japan's development cooperation efforts in third countries.

Speaking about the program, Mr. TAKEUCHI Takuro, Chief Representative of JICA India, said, "This trilateral



partnership between India , Japan , and Nepal exemplifies the power of regional collaboration in addressing climate challenges. By equipping Nepalese forestry officials with practical knowledge and innovative approaches, we're not just building technical capacity – we're helping to strengthen the entire region's resilience to climate change through sustainable forest management."

The initiative aligns with the broader India-Japan development cooperation framework in third countries, reinforcing shared commitments to environmental sustainability and cross-border knowledge exchange. Through such collaborations, the two countries continue to support Nepal in achieving its sustainable development goals and enhancing its forest management policies for a resilient future.

News Source: JICA India Website (Press Release)



PROMOTING IRRIGATED AGRICULTURE: KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF JICA'S PIAT PROJECT FOR IRRIGATED AGRICULTURE IN TERAI PLAINS

On January 28, 2025, JICA's Promotion of Irrigated Agriculture in Terai Plains (PIAT) project organized a seminar to share its achievements and progress. The event highlighted key accomplishments and unveiled guidelines and manuals for replicating the project's successful model in other areas.

The seminar brought together more than 50 attendees, including high-level officials Dr.
Rajendra Prasad Mishra, Secretary of Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, Mr.
Shishir Koirala, Joint Secretary of Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, Mr. Dev Raj Niroula, Director General of Department of Water Resources and Irrigation, Mr. Endo Toshiyuki First Secretary of Embassy of Japan, Mr. Matsuzaki Mizuki, Chief Representative of JICA Nepal, Mayors and Deputy Mayors from project areas, secretary from Koshi Province and senior officials of relevant ministries.

The PIAT project (2019-2025) focused on improving water management and irrigation facilities through collaboration among three tiers of government and water users' association. Main purpose of the project is to develop an irrigated agriculture model by the collaboration among the federal, provincial, and local governments and water users' associations (WUA). The project's expected output was.

- Equitable and efficient water distribution system is established at the Kankai irrigation scheme. Income and technical capacity of extension officers and farmers in target areas are increased are increased through the practice of market-oriented agriculture.
- The Activity Execution Cooperation System
 for improvement of irrigated agriculture among
 stakeholders of Kankai Irrigation Scheme is
 established, and the results of the cooperation
 activities are diffused to other irrigation
 schemes in Terai area through the training.





It is expected the government of Nepal will replicate the Irrigated Agriculture Model developed by the project to other irrigation system in Nepal to improve irrigation systems and to promote the market-oriented agriculture in terai.

In the long run, PIAT aims to stabilize Nepal's food supply, boost farm competitiveness, and support the country's economic growth.



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