



National Federation of the Disabled – Nepal (NFDN)

राष्ट्रिय अपाङ्ग महासंघ नेपाल

POSITION PAPER

Disability-Inclusive Humanitarian Response and Recovery after the Bhotekoshi–Trishuli Flood

Rasuwa, Nuwakot and Dhading Districts | Flood of 26 August 2026

Prepared for the Government of Nepal, humanitarian and development partners, and the public

Data cut-off: 27 August 2026 — situation figures remain dynamic and will be updated

PREPARED FOR IMMEDIATE ADVOCACY, COORDINATION AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

NFDN's Core Position

The emergency response to this flood disaster must be grounded in disability inclusion, human rights and humanitarian principles. **Persons with disabilities and their representative organizations (OPDs) must be meaningfully and systematically included from the outset in every stage of the response** — needs assessment, search and rescue, relief distribution, shelter, health, WASH, protection, accessible information, recovery and reconstruction.

Their meaningful participation is essential so that humanitarian assistance is inclusive, accessible, equitable, accountable, and responsive to the specific needs, rights and priorities of persons with disabilities and their families.



1. Situation and Purpose

On 26 August 2026, a sudden and devastating flood swept through the Bhotekoshi River system in Rasuwa and moved downstream along the Trishuli corridor, severely affecting settlements, communities and critical infrastructure in Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Dhading and other downstream areas. National reports as of 27 August indicated catastrophic loss of life, a large number of people missing or unaccounted for, injuries, displacement, and extensive damage to roads, bridges, settlements, hydropower facilities, communication networks and other essential infrastructure. The Government of Nepal has prioritized search and rescue, emergency medical care, relief and recovery, and has declared the affected local levels crisis-hit disaster areas for three months.

This position paper presents NFDN's key concerns, priorities and recommendations to the Government of Nepal, humanitarian organizations, local authorities, civil society organizations, development partners and other relevant stakeholders. It calls for a disability-inclusive, rights-based and people-centred humanitarian response that ensures persons with disabilities are not overlooked, excluded, or placed at additional risk during emergency response, early recovery and reconstruction.

The paper emphasizes the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations (OPDs) from the outset and throughout every stage of the response, so that humanitarian assistance and recovery efforts remain accessible, equitable, accountable and responsive to the diverse needs and priorities of persons with disabilities.

Planning Baseline: Persons with Disabilities in the Three Districts

The 2021 national census is the best district-level baseline available for immediate planning. It is not a count of persons affected by the 2026 flood, and it should be complemented by rapid local identification and a functional-needs assessment in the field.

District	Total population	Persons with disabilities	Share of population	Largest recorded disability groups
Rasuwa	46,689	1,293	2.77%	Physical 477; low vision 183; multiple 139; speech 100; deaf 96; hard of hearing 95
Nuwakot	263,391	6,939	2.63%	Physical 2,381; low vision 1,508; multiple 633; deaf 523; hard of hearing 514
Dhading	325,710	9,017	2.77%	Physical 2,775; low vision 2,077; deaf 827; hard of hearing 793; multiple 760
Total	635,790	17,249	2.71%	Planning baseline only — not the number affected by the flood

Source: National Population and Housing Census 2021 (Nepal's National Statistics Office). The disability count is the sum of the twelve recorded disability categories, excluding "not stated".



2. Why Disability Inclusion Is Urgent in This Flood

The three priority districts recorded 17,249 persons with disabilities in the 2021 census. This baseline includes 5,633 persons with physical disabilities, 4,675 persons who are blind or have low vision, 3,135 persons who are Deaf, hard of hearing or deafblind, 1,532 persons with multiple disabilities, and others with speech, psychosocial, intellectual, autism and haemophilia-related disabilities. These figures do not show how many people have been directly affected by the flood, and disaster injuries may also create new, temporary or long-term impairments among survivors.

- **Evacuation barriers.** People with mobility, sensory, intellectual or psychosocial disabilities may need accessible warnings, guided evacuation, transport, personal assistance, communication support or continuity of assistive products.
- **Loss of essential supports.** Wheelchairs, crutches, hearing aids, white canes, communication devices, medication, continence supplies and personal-assistance arrangements may be lost or disrupted during a sudden evacuation.
- **Inaccessible relief systems.** Queues, distribution points, shelters, toilets, information channels and complaint mechanisms can exclude persons with disabilities unless accessibility and reasonable accommodation are planned from the start.
- **Protection risks.** Separation from family or support persons, inaccessible shelters and disrupted community networks can increase the risk of neglect, violence, exploitation and loss of autonomy — particularly for women, children and people who need a high level of support.
- **Recovery exclusion.** If reconstruction and livelihood recovery are designed without universal design and OPD participation, the barriers that existed before the flood can simply be rebuilt into homes, public infrastructure, services and warning systems.

3. Legal and Policy Basis

NFDN's position is grounded in binding national law and Nepal's international commitments. Article 11 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) requires the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters. Section 10(2) of Nepal's Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2074 (2017) provides that persons with disabilities have the right to priority safety, rescue and protection during armed conflict, emergencies or disasters. Nepal's Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act, 2074 (2017) requires special plans and programmes for groups at risk, including persons with disabilities, and requires minimum relief standards that address their needs. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction further recognizes persons with disabilities and their organizations as critical stakeholders in disaster-risk assessment and in designing and implementing plans tailored to their specific requirements.



4. NFDN's Position and Recommended Asks

NFDN calls on the Government of Nepal, local authorities, humanitarian agencies and development partners to take the following actions:

Disability-disaggregated data and information

Every rapid assessment, registration list, missing-person list, shelter list and relief database should record disability in a respectful and usable way. Where possible, use the Washington Group Short Set or equivalent functional questions, rather than relying only on disability identity cards.

OPD participation in coordination

NFDN, its Bagmati Province structure and local member OPDs should have a formal place in coordination and assessment mechanisms at the federal, provincial, district and local levels.

Accessible early warning and public information

Warnings, relief information, registration procedures and public-health messages should be available through multiple channels and formats, including plain language, audio, large text and pictures, and Nepali Sign Language wherever practicable.

Inclusive rescue and evacuation

Search-and-rescue and evacuation teams should identify people who cannot self-evacuate, allow support persons and essential assistive products to travel with them, and arrange accessible transport or one-on-one assistance where needed.

Accessible relief, shelter and WASH

Distribution points, temporary shelters, health posts and toilets should be physically accessible or provide reasonable accommodation. Home delivery or proxy collection by a trusted person should be available where necessary.

Continuity of health, rehabilitation and assistive technology

Essential medicines, rehabilitation, wound and injury care, mental health and psychosocial support, and the repair or replacement of assistive products should be built into the health response and referral systems, not treated as an afterthought.

Protection and safeguarding

Response actors should actively identify and mitigate risks facing women and girls with disabilities, children with disabilities, people with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, deafblind persons, and people who rely on personal assistance.



Inclusive recovery and Build Back Better

Reconstruction of housing, schools, health facilities, public buildings, roads, WASH facilities and warning systems should follow accessibility standards and universal design. Funding for disability inclusion should be budgeted, tracked and verified.

Accountability and accessible feedback

Affected persons with disabilities must be able to make a complaint, request accommodation, report exclusion and take part in monitoring the response through accessible and confidential feedback channels.

5. NFDN's Proposed Role

NFDN does not seek to duplicate the mandate of the Government, security agencies, the Nepal Red Cross Society or general relief organizations. Its comparative advantage is to act as the disability-inclusion technical lead and accountability partner within the wider response:

1. **Activate the OPD network.** Mobilize the Bagmati Province structure and member OPDs in Rasuwa, Nuwakot and Dhading for community identification, referral, verification and feedback.
2. **Operate a temporary Emergency Disability Desk.** Maintain a small federal/provincial coordination cell for information, case referrals, technical advice, accessible communications and partner liaison.
3. **Undertake a rapid disability-inclusion assessment.** Map high-risk individuals, accessibility barriers, lost assistive products and urgent support needs across the priority flood corridor.
4. **Provide technical support to responders.** Offer short, practical briefs, accessibility checks and problem-solving support to local governments, health teams, the Red Cross, coordination clusters and humanitarian partners.
5. **Build the capacity of responders.** Support humanitarian and government stakeholders with training on inclusive assessment and emergency response.
6. **Advocate at the local and district level.** Press for the fulfilment of the basic and specific needs of persons with disabilities and other affected populations.
7. **Make information accessible.** Support the sharing of response and recovery information in accessible formats for all persons.
8. **Support accessible relief and shelter.** Assist with the distribution of relief materials and with making shelters accessible.
9. **Facilitate targeted gap-filling.** Where mainstream systems cannot immediately meet a disability-specific need, facilitate time-bound transport, personal assistance, assistive products, communication support and referrals.
10. **Monitor inclusion and advocate with evidence.** Document recurring barriers and corrective actions, and share short evidence updates with Government, donors and humanitarian coordination bodies.



6. Existing NFDN Network Makes This Operationally Feasible

NFDN's official member database shows a member organization in Gosaikunda Rural Municipality in Rasuwa, several member OPDs in Bidur Municipality in Nuwakot, and member organizations in Dhading, including in Gajuri and Galchhi. These locations overlap important parts of the Bhotekoshi–Trishuli impact corridor. NFDN can therefore work through existing, trusted disability-led structures instead of building a new parallel field network from scratch.

7. Immediate Public Commitments NFDN Can Make

- Work with Government and humanitarian actors so that no person with a disability is excluded from rescue, relief or essential services because of an accessibility or communication barrier.
- Mobilize member OPDs to identify urgent cases and refer them into existing rescue, health, relief and protection systems.
- Provide practical, evidence-based disability-inclusion advice to responders and advocate for rapid corrective action where barriers are found.
- Share verified information responsibly, protect personal data, and avoid publishing a person's name or disability details without real necessity and their consent.
- Support an inclusive recovery process so that reconstruction does not reproduce the barriers that existed before the disaster.

8. Call to Government and Partners

NFDN calls on the Government of Nepal, Bagmati Province, the affected local governments, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA), security agencies, the Nepal Red Cross Society, United Nations agencies, INGOs, NGOs, health and rehabilitation actors, development partners and the private sector to recognize disability inclusion as a cross-cutting requirement that runs through every part of this response, not as a separate or optional activity.

NFDN stands ready to work in partnership, offering OPD-led community connections, rapid assessment, technical advice, accessibility support and monitoring, alongside Nepal's existing humanitarian system.

“Nothing about us, without us.”



Key References

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