

Eastern Emergency

Thousands of locals of Kusaha, Haripur, Shreepur, Loukahi and Bhokraha Village Development Committees (VDCs) of Sunsari district have fled their homes after the swollen Sapatakoshi (Koshi) River damaged an embankment in western Kusaha immediately inundating dozens of settlements in these VDCs.

Apart from these VDCs, seven other VDCs were also partly affected. Two spurs in western Kusaha VDC started to erode on 17 August 2008; it damaged the embankment the same night. Settlements on the eastern bank of the Saptakoshi River started to be submerged from mid-day 18 August.

The Ministry of Home Affairs estimates that 7,000 families (35,000 persons) have been directly affected and displaced. Seventeen cases of missing and two deaths have been reported but it has not been verified yet. A local correspondent says thousands of people are still stranded in the inundated area and are waiting for rescue.

LWF Nepal had provided relief and emergency services to meet the life-saving need of disaster survivors, especially the most vulnerable, in various parts of the country in the past. In this hour of humanitarian crisis, it stands ready to serve the affected people.

The floods have caused significant damage to the lives, livelihood and infrastructure. The East-West Highway, which connects the Koshi and Mechi zones of the eastern region, including Nepal's second largest town Biratnagar, with the rest of the country, has been totally damaged due to flood waters.

Bridges and culverts have collapsed. Land and mobile phone networks have been out of service for two days and are only gradually being repaired. Drinking water and electricity supplies, schools and public buildings are destroyed and many private houses, property, domestic animals and corpses were swept away.

Sunsari district is located on the plains of eastern Nepal. The Saptakoshi is the biggest river of Nepal. Many parts of the affected locations are still not accessible. The displaced people have taken refuge in public buildings and open space in and around the Koshi embankment, and in Saptari and Sunsari districts.