

Reconstruction of health systems should remain top priority in Nepal: WHO

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Six months since the devastating earthquake on 25 April, Nepal has come a long way in restoring essential health services in the most affected 14 districts, filling healthcare gaps and mitigating health-related consequences of the disaster.

"However, challenges continue," said Dr Poonam Singh, regional director, WHO South-East Asia Region. "The approaching winter and the ongoing need for trauma management, rehabilitation and mental health services to the affected population highlights the need for continued efforts for reestablishing health services at the earliest."

The Ministry of Health and Population, with support from WHO and other health partners, is training primary level health workers across the districts to identify and treat acute malnutrition.

Health workers are also being trained to screen and refer patients suffering from mental illnesses.

Intermediate injury rehabilitation centers for injured patients called "Step Down facilities" are being established, with technical support from WHO, by partners such as IOM in Sindupalchowk district.

These facilities provide intensive rehabilitation before the injured patients go back to their places of origin.

The 40 Medical Camp Kits deployed at the onset of the rainy season have helped restore primary health services at the damaged health facilities.

The reproductive health camps have been providing ante and post-natal check-ups, safe delivery, family planning and essential drugs.

"An immunization campaign in the 14 districts was implemented to maintain high immunity against vaccine preventable diseases," said Dr Poonam.

She continued, "Moving forward, it is important that all partners together keep sight of the urgency with which health care gaps must be filled. For those still suffering as a result of the quake, that urgency remains as pressing as it did on 25 April."