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May 11, 2021

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The Honorable Patty Murray
U.S. Senate
c/o Madeleine Pannell, Health Care Aide
154 Russell Senator Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

Re: To facilitate COVID-19 vaccine, medical equipment & supplies relief aid for Nepal

We, Nepali Americans, are writing to you as a community of concerned residents of the State of Washington, and as **your constituents on behalf of our 30 million mothers, fathers, children, cousins, and neighbors in Nepal. We are writing because they need your help. We are writing because every day that passes without help simply due to lack of a cylinder of oxygen someone else in our family and community struggles and suffers or might even die alone with COVID-19.** We are writing seeking help in securing much needed humanitarian relief for the COVID-19 crisis that Nepal is currently facing. Our families and other loved ones who are in Nepal are facing the COVID-induced health disaster that is worsening by the minute but has received little global media coverage.

Whilst much of the world's attention has been focused on India and its humanitarian crisis given the explosion of COVID-19 cases there--which we wholeheartedly support--Nepal, which shares open borders with India, is facing an equal and perhaps more catastrophic outcome given the lack of infrastructure to deal with the spillover in COVID-19 infections in Nepal.

Per the World Health Organization, today, on May 11, the COVID-19 positivity rate in Nepal is 44% with reported new 9,483 cases and 250 deaths. Some heart-wrenching statistics:

- **Nepal has the fastest infection rate in South Asia, faster than even India;** the daily average rate of infection in the last 7 days is a staggering 30 per 100,000 people (compared to 28 in India) according to John Hopkins University
- More than 404,000 people in Nepal have tested positive, overwhelming the hospitals and health service system that are turning away critical patients
- Severe shortage of oxygen supply, resulting in increasing daily deaths
- 600 ventilators for the entire country, and the UW's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation predicts that Nepal will need over 10,000 ventilators by May 24
- Less than 2,000 ICU beds for the entire country with a scarcity of beds for patients
- Only about 1% of the country has received vaccines against COVID-19 thus far

"I spent harrowing 48 hours during Mother's Day frantically calling hospitals in Kathmandu searching for an open ICU bed for my COVID positive, seriously ill 67 year old mother. Even though we finally found a hospital bed, **we were told to manage oxygen supply on our own and there is a massive shortage of oxygen in Kathmandu.** All I can do now is pray." -
Angad Pun, Snohomish County resident.



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"Time is of essence, money alone can't solve the problem, and we need to mobilize local professionals and local leaders with basic equipment like oximeters, thermometer and oxygen concentrators. **Local professionals like Biomedical Engineers can fix the non-functional oxygen plants and ventilators in the health care facilities.** But international development partners including UN agencies who are working are not able to mobilize these local resources and are **not able to procure those minor equipment and supplies on time simply because of their complex procurement policies.**" - Voice of a local development professional from Nepal.

"My mom's caretaker got COVID a couple of days back; she stopped coming to see my mom. **She is a poor woman with two kids now staying at the community isolation center as her landlord asked her to leave the house because of COVID.** This is just an example...many more moms and children are suffering with this kind of incident." - Roshan Shrestha, Seattle resident.

"When my 71 year old mother with pre-existing conditions went to a hospital in Kathmandu to get her vaccine when it became available to elders, she was turned away and told that vaccines had run out. **Health equity approach is central to protecting the most vulnerable.**" - Maya Magarati, King County resident.

This is an urgent appeal from the local Nepali communities throughout Washington State asking you to please advocate for and do what you can to ensure that the extra COVID vaccines earmarked for donations include distribution to Nepal. Additionally, medical supplies like oxygen concentrators and oximeters; oxygen cylinders; oxygen tanks and other related supplies are crucial and immediately needed; and chartered flights to Nepal with these equipment and supplies be arranged as soon as possible in order to prevent a mass scale loss of life.

The local Nepali communities throughout the State of Washington stand ready to help and provide whatever assistance we can offer you to ensure that Nepal receives these life saving supplies to avert a humanitarian crisis in the making.

We look forward to your encouraging response and cooperation.

Yours very sincerely,

Dasharath Budhathoki
President
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