



Nepal continues to heal its wounds

(Paris, 25 October 2015) **It has been six months since the earthquakes hit Nepal, killing 8,000 people and wounding 22,000 others. Already confronting the challenges of reconstruction and with winter approaching fast, the humanitarian situation continues to give much cause for concern.**

"Life has not returned to normal in Nepal. People continue to live in hardship, as most have not yet been able to re-build their homes. And healthcare infrastructure remains largely insufficient", explains President of Doctors of the World, Dr Françoise Sivignon. *"Reconstruction will take years",* she adds.

The devastation left by the earthquakes is immense. More than 90% of healthcare facilities were destroyed in the district of Sindhupalchok and the delivery of aid is further complicated by the logistical challenges of working in this mountainous country. Resumption of activities is being hampered by an often tense economic and political climate. Recent fuel shortages all but paralysed travel, which in Nepal is not easy at the best of times.

Deploying its system of mobile clinics, Doctors of the World – Médecins du Monde (Mdm) has been able to provide 13,000 consultations since the earthquakes hit on 25 April and 12 May. People mainly suffer from skin diseases and digestive disorders caused by lack of clean water and sanitation. *"It's set to be a hard winter, which is worrying. To make it through, the Nepalese need improved access to clean water and better-adapted shelters. Without them, the impact on people's health will be disastrous, and respiratory infections will soar",* continues Françoise Sivignon.

Seeking to maintain access to healthcare, Mdm is focussing on rehabilitating the health system. The organisation's teams are building thirteen semi-permanent health centres to remain in place for five years and providing training in epidemic preparedness and first-aid to Nepalese communities and health workers.

The winter also risks worsening still further the post-traumatic stress so prevalent since the earthquakes, which has resulted in alcohol abuse and increased domestic violence. *"To mitigate this, the Nepalese must be allowed to play an active role in reconstructing their country",* concludes Françoise Sivignon.