

## PARTNER PLAN

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Greetings from Nepal

Nepal has been recovering from political turmoil for the last 13 years and immediately after promulgation of the new constitution in September this year, India has issued a border blockade which is severely affecting trade ties with Nepal. The two countries have had cordial relationship for a long time as people share almost same values, beliefs and culture. All occupations and sectors are affected in one way or another in Nepal because of this.

For the last 3 months, Nepal has had a shortage of petroleum products such as diesel, petrol, kerosene, aviation fuel and cooking gas. There are also limited essential food commodities, very limited distribution of humanitarian supplies, no security of cargo vehicles and their staff near the India-border land. Most of the industries have shut down, there is few print media, schools and hotels in operation. Prices of essential commodities have skyrocketed across the country. A 13kg cylinder of gas that normally cost Rupees 1500 is now sold at Rupees 7000-8000. There are people and companies that take advantage of this situation.

There is public frustration, emotion and anger escalating over New Delhi's perceived interference in Nepal's internal affairs. Yet India is saying, "Madhesi protesters are in no-men's-land, blocking the roads at custom checkpoints. 400 loaded trucks are stranded at the border to Nepal. What is true is India urges to initiate meaningful dialogue with the protesters to end the standoff of transit in Nepal. The leaders of the ruling parties and main opposition, Nepali Congress today agreed to pass the constitution amendment bill registered in the Legislature-Parliament by forging consensus with the Madhes-centric political parties.

As protests in the Tarai area turn violent, the Central Security Committee headed by the home minister decided to take stern measures to quell the violence. This semi-autonomous body of the government, mandated to regulate sales and purchase of the timber related produces, has already distributed around 305,000kg of firewood to as many as 3075 households. The Ministry also requested the public to use the firewood only for household purposes.

In Nepal, nearly a third of the population has no access to electricity and those who have access have a challenge of load shedding. In some places, ambulances are not operating due to lack of fuel and insecurity from the agitating groups. The Deputy Prime Minister said the government has taken the initiative to open all border points in the north with China. In some areas, the local people and protesters defy administration clamped curfew and continue to stage demonstrations. Those who are the poorest continue to face many challenges as they depend on their casual wages.

It is absurd to see how people are struggling to make ends meet. The country is facing double tragedy as people continue to cope up with the huge loses inflicted by the earthquake. The Nepalese people are still trying to recover from this devastation. Most of the hospitals are running out of fuel, gas and medicine. Motorbikes and private cars continue to queue for fuel for 6-7 days for 5 and 15 litres of petrol respectively.

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Despite the problems, UMN staff have been working tirelessly to make sure that programmes continue to benefit those in poor areas. Most of the staff spend time walking several days to reach those in remote areas.



*Nepalese Christian gathering in Nepal praying for the current situation*



*Peer Education on HIV continue in some districts*

I have bought food to last for two weeks and have cooking gas enough for 3 months. However essential commodities are still scarce.

Please pray for,

- Nepal's political parties, that they will be able address the demands from agitating groups without causing further problems
- Peace as Nepal and India continue to go through this difficult time
- UMN partners including hospitals facing fuel, medicine and water shortage
- Churches as they continue to reach those unreached
- My upcoming visit to my family

God bless you all

Joel, Agnes, Grace and Francis.