



## PRESS RELEASE

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# Government of Nepal and World Bank Sign Financing Agreement for Nepal's COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Response

**Kathmandu, April 7, 2020** – The World Bank has approved a fast-track \$29 million **COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health Systems Preparedness Project** to help Nepal prevent, detect, and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and strengthen its public health preparedness. The agreement was signed today by the Ministry of Finance and the World Bank.

The project will focus on the immediate response and preparedness needs to fight the virus. The project provides emergency support to enhance Nepal's capacity to detect cases and ensure prompt contact tracing consistent with World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines and Ministry of Health and Population protocols. It will also help set up new intensive care units, beds, and isolation facilities across the country. The project will be implemented by Ministry of Health and Population.

*"We are thankful to the World Bank for the response in a record short period of time, which will help Nepal respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and strengthen our capacities to deal with future public health risks,"* stated **Sishir Kumar Dhungana, Finance Secretary**. He added, .  
*"Immediately after the outbreak of COVID-19 in the country, the Government of Nepal has made several arrangements to prevent and address the possible crisis. Due to these measures, the socio economic activities are going to be affected. Further support is being anticipated from the World Bank to cope with the emerging pandemic situation."*

The project will also equip designated health facilities with personal protective equipment and hygienic materials and increase the diagnostic capacity of laboratories for responding to public health emergencies. It will enhance the National Public Health Laboratory to handle harmful infectious diseases and strengthen public institutions to coordinate and better manage response activities in all three levels of government.

*"Given the unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government's rapid response will help save lives across Nepal,"* stated **Faris Hadad-Zervos, World Bank Country Manager for Nepal**. *"The World Bank and its development partners are committed to helping Nepal beef up its health infrastructure and access the resources it needs to fight the spread of COVID-19 and protect the livelihoods of its people."*

The project is financed from the International Development Association (IDA), the World Bank's concessional credit window for developing countries, through the World Bank Group's COVID-19 Fast-Track Facility. It will be effective immediately after the signing. It has also an option of World Bank-facilitated procurement as and when required as per the request of the implementing agency.

The agreement was signed by Finance Secretary Mr. Sishir Kumar Dhungana on behalf of the Government of Nepal and World Bank Country Manager for Nepal, Mr. Faris Hadad-Zervos on behalf of the World Bank.

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