

OTTAWA REPORT

By Lois Brown, MP
Newmarket-Aurora

Most of you will have heard about the devastating 7.8 magnitude earthquake that struck Nepal late April 25. I know everyone in Newmarket-Aurora offers their deepest condolences to the people of Nepal and northern India who have lost family and friends. Our collective sympathies are with everyone affected by this catastrophe.

Thousands of Canadians are mobilizing to help. As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, the Minister responsible for Canada's global humanitarian aid budget, it has been heart-warming to personally see firsthand so many stepping up and working tirelessly to assist.

Canada's Immediate Response

Canada itself has taken swift action on several fronts to meet immediate humanitarian needs. Within hours of hearing of the disaster, Canada announced a \$5 million contribution of humanitarian assistance funding to respond to the immediate devastating effects of the earthquake and aftershocks.

Shortly thereafter, the Government of Canada created the Nepal Earthquake Relief Fund. The Government of Canada is matching every eligible dollar contributed by individual Canadians to a registered Canadian charity from April 25 to May 25, 2015, in response to the Nepal earthquake.

Canadians have consistently shown that they are willing to help those most in and this fund will provide financial support to experienced Canadian and international humanitarian and development partner organizations working on the ground to deliver life-saving assistance.

DART

The Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) helps Canada to respond to natural disasters abroad. It is a military organization ready to deploy quickly to conduct emergency relief operations anywhere in the world. On Monday of this week an assessment team deployed from Canadian Forces Base Trenton to pre-position its personnel and resources who will assist in the aftermath of an earthquake. Hundreds of replacement travel documents were included on Canada's DART contingent destined for those affected Canadians in the region. Accelerated processing of existing applications in the system out of the effected region has been authorized and extensions to visitor visas, student visas and work visas from people currently in Canada from Nepal will be processed on an expedited basis.

We are working with our partners and allies to ensure the safe evacuation of Canadians to neighbouring countries by helping to identify commercial flights and using Department of National Defence flights.

Red Cross Partnership

The Government of Canada has partnered with the Canadian Red Cross to support the deployment of an emergency health-care unit that will have the capacity to provide urgent care for up to 200 people per day.

Relief supplies from DFATD's emergency stockpile have also been deployed to the hardest-hit regions of Nepal. Canada's stockpile can support 25,000 people for three months and includes an array of items such as tarps, blankets and hygiene kits that meet established international specifications set out by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Emergency Contacts

Canada will continue to work with officials in Nepal and India, as well as international partners and aid agencies, to contribute to helping those affected by this crisis. Canadians in the affected region requiring emergency consular assistance should contact the High Commission of Canada in New Delhi, India, by calling +91 11 4178 2000, or contact Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada's 24/7 Emergency Watch and Response Centre at +1 613 996 8885 (collect calls are accepted where available). An email can also be sent to sos@international.gc.ca.

The UCCB ? Are you eligible?

The Government of Canada estimates there are tens of thousands of families with children in Ontario who may be eligible for the enhanced Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB), but at risk of not receiving it.

Under the enhancements to the UCCB, families would receive almost \$2,000 per year for each child under 6 and \$720 per year for each child aged 6 through 17. The new benefit amounts would be retroactive to January 1, 2015 and reflected in monthly payments to recipients in July 2015.

The enhanced UCCB is expected to more than double the number of families who benefit from over 1.6 million to around 4 million. As a result there will be some Canadian families eligible for UCCB who will need to apply or confirm their eligibility.

If you are not currently receiving the UCCB, never applied for the Canada Child Tax Benefit and still have children under 18 in your care, please go to www.canada.ca/taxsavings in order to find out how you can apply.