

Statement by Ambassador Asoke K. Mukerji, Permanent Representative, at the Adoption of the UNGA resolution on the 'Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction in response to the devastating effects of the earthquake in Nepal' on May 15, 2015

**Mr. President, Mr. Secretary General,**

Let me join other delegations in conveying our deepest condolences to the Government and people of Nepal who have endured large scale devastation in the aftermath of a massive earthquake on 25 April and several other aftershocks. While we share the grief of people of Nepal, we are gratified to see the International community rise to the occasion and assist in alleviating the suffering faced by Nepalese people. Today's adoption of the UNGA resolution is an expression of this strong support and we are happy to be one of the co-sponsors of the resolution.

**Mr. President,**

India has been responding to several global humanitarian relief operations in keeping with our resources and capabilities. We were at the forefront of providing support after the Asian Tsunami, extending assistance in the aftermath of Fukushima disaster, contributing to the Ebola Trust Fund and evacuating Indians as well as many foreign nationals from war-torn Yemen recently. We have endeavored to be the early responders in cases of humanitarian crisis.

We are united with Nepal by history and a border, an open border. The courage with which people of Nepal have handled the situation shows the vitality of the people of Nepal. Our Prime Minister has visited Nepal twice since assuming office around a year back. The visit of our Prime Minister in August 2014 further strengthened the broad spectrum of political, economic, social and cultural ties that are deep-rooted at both government and peoples' levels. In many ways, the destinies of our countries are interlinked and therefore, we feel the pain of our Nepalese brethren even more. Our Prime Minister spoke with both President and Prime Minister of Nepal soon after the earthquake occurred. The relief and rescue work provided by India was done in consultation and coordination with the Nepalese Government.

As a close friend and neighbour, we launched 'Operation Maitri' (meaning Friendship), to aid rescue and relief efforts in Nepal. Government of India swiftly swung into action after the devastating Earthquake in Nepal on 25 April by immediately dispatching National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams and special aircrafts with rescue and relief materials. The relief efforts from India were guided by a National Crisis Management Committee, chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India and continuously monitored by a Committee of senior Government of India officials.

**Mr. President,**

Special flights were launched with teams from our National Disaster Response Force with rescue and relief materials. The first flight was dispatched with relief

material within four hours of earthquake. There were non-stop 37 sorties of C-17 Globe Master, IL-76 and C-130 aircrafts carrying 550 tonnes of relief material. 13 helicopters of the Indian Army were operating from Kathmandu and Pokhara. We deployed 16 teams of the National Disaster Reaction Force, comprising of over 700 trained personnel and 18 army engineering team were deployed. It was not just the Government, 650 trucks carried 5000 tons of relief material were sent by NGOs and state governments.

With regard to medical assistance, the Indian Army set up three field hospitals and the Air Force deployed a rapid action team. Our medical personnel comprise of surgeons, anesthetists, nurses and technicians drawn from premier hospitals. A National Trauma Center having five operation theatres was operationalized by the team sent by our Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. We provided medical supplies, stretchers and oxygen concentrators. We helped with the restoration of electricity supply and have made operational query based single database of missing persons

**Mr. President,**

Finally, we would like to mention that we are also closely engaged with the efforts of United Nations in Nepal. Now that the search and rescue phase is over, our commitment extends to partnering with the Government and the people of Nepal for rehabilitation and re-construction. In conclusion, I would quote our honourable Prime Minister "India will make all efforts to wipe the tears of every person in Nepal, hold their hands and stand with them".

**I thank you, Mr. President.**