

Center for Public Health and Environmental Development (CEPHED) initiative of COVID 19 in Nepal

On 14th April 2020, Center for Public Health and Environmental Development (CEPHED), currently also serving as ANROEV Secretariat wrote a formal letter (see the box in 2nd page) to Rt. Honorable Prime Minister, Honorable Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security (MoLESS) and Honorable Minister of Health and Population (MoHP), Government of Nepal requesting for recognizing COVID 19 as an Occupational Disease and enlist under the list of Occupational Diseases.

Responding to the letter, Spokes Person from the MoLESS, Government of Nepal assured us that they will take the initiative to publish the lists of Occupational Diseases and see the best possible ways to include the COVID 19 as an Occupational Disease and directed the concerned Official to address the concerned raised by CEPHED.

Further based on our personal communication with the concerned government officials assured us that they will initiate the process of hiring the expert consultant to recommend the list of occupational disease as per the provision of Labour Act 2017 and Labour Regulation 2018 of Nepal. He also discussed about the process of listing of COVID 19 as an occupational diseases based on the ILO criteria to include any diseases like COVID 19 under the list the of occupational diseases. Due to the lockdown as well as circulation from Ministry of finance not to process for the new programs at this time of pandemic, it seems the whole process of publishing lists of Occupational diseases and inclusion of COVID 19 under this list will take some time. CEPHED will follow the issues and do the necessary campaign for the same.

On the same day, CEPHED also made a press release on the same. The News were massively covered by three newspaper and one radio channel from Radio Thaha Sanchar on 14th and 15th April 2020.

“Demanded to include COVID 19 as Occupational disease” published in SETOGHAR newspaper on 16th April 2020, Can be seen from <https://www.setoghar.com/archives/59349/04/>

“CEPHED demanded to include COVID 19 as Occupational disease” published in SETOKHARI newspaper on 16th April 2020, Can be seen from: <https://www.setokhari.com/health/3123>

“Recognize COVID 19 as Occupation Disease” news article published in the Rising Nepal, National daily dated 18th April 2020 (see below)

‘Recognise COVID-19 as occupational disease’

By A Staff Reporter
Kathmandu, Apr. 17

The Centre for Public Health and Environment Development (CEPHED) Nepal has requested the government to recognise COVID-19 as an occupational disease.

Ram Charitra Sah, executive director of CEPHED and an

environment scientist, said that the countries like USA, Korea, the Philippines and Malaysia had already recognised COVID-19 as an occupational disease and had ensured availability of required security, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and relief packages to the health professionals.

Sah said that the Office of the Prime Minister

and Council of Ministers (OPMCM) and the Ministry of Labour, Employment, and Social Security were especially requested to enlist COVID-19 as an occupational disease.

He said that it was high time that occupational safety of the frontline workers was ensured.

“We lack the list of occupational diseases on the

whole, as the government has not published the list on Nepal Gazette as provisioned in Article 82 of Labour Act 2074 and Rule 2075,” said Sah.

“Thus, we have requested the government to publish the list of occupational diseases by including COVID-19.”

Sah, further, urged the government to adopt adequate security measures

for those working in the frontline.

The PPE sets and relief packages for the frontline health workers such as doctors, nurses, paramedics, cleaners and for those who have been ensuring availability of other essential services such as lab workers, ambulance services, cemetery services, distributors of food, medicines, water, fuel, media

persons and the security officials must be provided by the government, he said.

As the pandemic has claimed thousands of lives and has infected over 2 million people around the world, it is crucial for the government to ensure safety of the frontline workers as they are at higher risk of being infected with the virus, added Sah.

Published in Rising Nepal National Daily, dated 18th April 2020

Date: 14 April 2020

To

Rt. Honorable Prime Minister, OPMCM, Singhdurbar, Kathmandu
Honorable Minister, Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, Singhdurbar, Kathmandu
Honorable Minister, Ministry of Health and Population, Ram Shah Path, Kathmandu

Subject: Request for recognizing COVID 19 as an Occupational Disease and enlist them under the list of Occupational disease.

Dear Sirs,

With reference to above mention subject, COVID 19 disease spread all over the world from the Corona Virus has been already declared as pandemic disease. As of now about 2 Million people have got infected out of it and about 1.2 million have even losses their lives. Most of the front line workers like Doctors, Nurses, paramedical, waste workers including officials and associated millions of workers working in meeting other essential services like laboratory testing, ambulance services, mortuary, crematoria, production sales and distribution of medicine, food supply, drinking water supply, fuel, transport, security and media during such pandemic situation are well known to all of us.

There are many examples in the countries worldwide like USA, Korea, Philippines, and Malaysia etc. that had already recognized COVID 19 disease as an Occupational diseases and have been ensuring the accessing and availability of required security, personal protective equipment (PPE) and compensation.

Therefore it is being requested to settle and to be settled the following matters of concerned associated with COVID 19 diseases in Nepal.

- A. Legally recognize the COVID 19 diseases as an Occupational diseases.
- B. In the absence of the list of Occupational diseases which has not yet been published through gazette notice by Government of Nepal, Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security (MoLESS) as per the required provisions of Labour Act 2074 BS (2017) Article 82, Labour Regulation 2075BS (2018) Rule 52, it is requested to published and COVID 19 disease should also be enlisted under such occupational diseases list.
- C. Ensure adequate security, personal protective equipment (PPE) and compensation to all front line workers like Doctors, Nurses, paramedical, waste workers including officials and associated millions of workers working in meeting other essential services like laboratory testing, ambulance services, mortuary, crematoria, production sales and distribution of medicine, food supply, drinking water supply, fuel, transport, security and media during such pandemic and emergency situation are well known to all of us.
- D. Swiftly ratify and effectively implement the UN ILO Convention 155 on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH).

Thanking you all in anticipations,

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