



## **Nepal declared safe for travelers**

### **Campaign launched to recover Nepal tourism**

#### **Press release**



**Kathmandu, August 15, 2015** – Nepal’s government welcomes the recent adaptation in the travel advisories of most Western countries. Now the Himalayan nation can be considered “a safe place to visit,” according to Kripasur Sherpa, Nepal’s Culture and Tourism minister. More than three months after the earthquake, the authorities want to jumpstart the tourist sector, a key component of the country’s economy.

Mr Sherpa said, "the earthquake affected only a small portion of the territory and now visitors are no longer at risk. Almost 80 per cent of the country and most tourist destinations were not touched by the earthquake”.

Nepal welcomed 800,000 visitors last year, but the government anticipates a 50 per cent drop this year due to the earthquake. Mr. Ramesh Kiumar Adhikari, Administrative Chief of Nepal Tourism Board (NTB), states “The best way to support Nepal is to visit Nepal now. Most key tourism areas are safe. Kathmandu is back to normal and all hotels, shops and restaurants in Thamel are open”.



## **Popular trekking areas officially declared save**

From the 35 trekking routes only two are affected. Two of the most popular trekking areas of Nepal, Annapurna and Mount Everest have been given the green light by US based Earthquake engineering specialists Miyamoto International. Operators looking for reassurance on safety for travelers in the Annapurna and Mount Everest regions had to rely on anecdotal evidence to date.

The reports on earthquake-related damage in the Annapurna and Mount Everest region have been welcomed by the government of Nepal, trekking companies, and development agencies behind the assessment, who see it as an important step towards the country's economic recovery.

Kripasur Sherpa, said: "There has been a decline in foreign tourists since the earthquake. Tourism is very important for Nepal's economy and for the Nepalese people. But, we needed to formally assess the trekking regions for the safety of our visitors."

The reports confirmed that the Annapurna region sustained "very little damage, with the three percent of buildings which were damaged in the earthquake all easily repairable".

Dr Kit Miyamoto, the technical team leader and a structural earthquake engineer, said: "The aim of the report was to develop an overall understanding of the extent of the damage from the earthquakes so that we could assess the safety of the region's trekking routes."

The assessment mission received funding from UK-AID and World Bank on behalf of the government of Nepal in a joint public-private initiative to conduct the expert assessment.

## **Travel Advisories adapted**

Major Western source markets have adapted their travel advise. While Switzerland and Japan never had a negative travel advise, USA, Finland and Italy recently changed their advise and only provide general precocious warnings. Italian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Benedetto Della Vedova stated "Nepal is safe to visit after earthquake. There has been damage but its not unsafe to visit Nepal, and hotels are safe and anyone can visit Nepal".

Most Western countries including Germany, Austria, UK, The Netherlands, USA and New Zealand have recently changed the Travel Advisory into a geo specific advice stating not to visit the Earthquake effected regions.





Spain, France and Poland still remain the same warnings as just after the Earth Quake and advise against any but essential travel. Mr. Ramesh Kumar Adhikari from the Nepal Tourism Promotion Committee, “we urge these countries to re-evaluate their position in line with other key markets. By that they will comply with the UN-WTO code of conduct for travel advisories, which states that these should be up to date and geo specific”.

### **Information web site and public campaign launched**

The Nepal Tourism Board in partnership with Nepal Tourism Promotion Committee has recently launched a public campaign to promote travelling to Nepal. The campaign is focus around the new Nepalnow.org web site providing up-to-date information for the potential traveler and professional sectors. As part of the campaign the Tourism Board is offering familiarization visits to Nepal for journalists, travel writers and potential business partners. The initiative is supported by the Dutch government CBI program which promotes tourism in Nepal by increasing entrepreneurial skills, promoting sustainability and creating awareness within European markets.

Sarad Pradhan from the Nepal Tourism Board states, “There has been a lot of negative publicity related to tourism to Nepal. Now that life in most parts of the country has been normalized, most travel advisories have been adapted and key trekking areas have been declared open and save, we need to inform the general public about this. Visitors are more than welcome!”.

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### **More information**

- ➔ Nepal Tourism recovery - Media pack containing photo's, video's, testimonials and media report (upon request)

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