



# ICIMOD

## *The First International Mountain Centre*

**T**he International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) was established in 1983 with the dual mandate of reducing poverty and conserving the environment in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan (HKH) region, which covers all or parts of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan.

The idea of creating an institution to promote the ecologically sound development of mountainous regions was first discussed at the International Workshop on the Development of Mountain Environment in December 1974 in Munich, Germany, but it was only five years later in 1979 during a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Regional Meeting in Kathmandu, under the framework of the Man and the Biosphere Programme, that concrete commitments were made to establish the Centre. His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMGN) offered to host the new institution, and the Governments of Switzerland and the Federal Republic of Germany and UNESCO agreed to act as the founding sponsors. His Majesty's Government of Nepal and UNESCO signed the agreement that provided the legal basis for establishing the Centre in September 1981 in Paris. The Centre was finally established and inaugurated in December 1983 with its headquarters in Kathmandu, Nepal and legitimised through an Act of Parliament in Nepal in the same year.

*ICIMOD's dual mandate is to reduce poverty and conserve the environment of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region.*

As per Article 1 of its Statutes, the primary objectives of the Centre are to "help promote the development of an economically and environmentally sound mountain ecosystem and to improve the living standards of mountain populations of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan area, which, for the purpose of these Statutes, includes Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan. To this end the Centre will serve:

- a) as a multi-disciplinary documentation centre,
- b) as a focal point for training and applied research activities, and
- c) as a consultative centre in scientific and technical matters for all the countries of the region upon their request."

*ICIMOD's geographic area is the extended Himalaya, whose socioeconomic diversity is matched by a high degree of environmental diversity.*

ICIMOD's geographic area of coverage spreads across the greater Himalayan region from Afghanistan to Southwest China extending over 3,500 km. Within it are included the world's tallest peak (Mt. Everest, 8848 masl), largest glacier (Siachen, 1112 sq.km), and highest plateau (the Tibetan Plateau). The area is the water tower of Asia; many major rivers originate from these high mountains including the Brahmaputra, the Ganges, the Indus, and the Mekong. The vegetation cover ranges from lush evergreen forests in the foothills of the eastern Himalayas to barren cold desert steppes in the north of the Tibetan Plateau.

The HKH region is home to an estimated 150 million inhabitants with exceptionally rich ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds. With two of the world's biggest countries, China and India, within its fold and with a number of unresolved sensitive issues between the member nations, it continues to be one of the most challenging regions for fostering cooperation.

ICIMOD is governed by a Board of Governors consisting of one representative from each of the eight regional member countries (RMCs) and seven independent members who are nominated by the ICIMOD Support Group based on their recognised professional expertise and experience. The ICIMOD Support Group is composed of representatives from all the organisations and institutions, including the RMCs, that provide financial contributions to the Centre.



Source: base map ESRI Data and Maps

The extended Himalayan region