

onwards and beyond CMW...

to advance the mountain women's agenda



The CMW meeting was conceived as a starting point, a catalyst for future action – from research to fill gaps, through creation of networks, to stimulating changes in policies and education. A great many follow-up activities were suggested during the thematic sessions, some to be directly implemented by participants, some for more formal forums. Participants were encouraged to find ways to share success stories and connect voices for advocacy through forums (newsletters and e-groups); link with experts and other people working in the same field; sustain interest on new areas of research on mountain women; organise face-to-face gatherings to share new visions; and ensure translation of learning into practice. More formal outcomes included the drafting of a 'Thimphu declaration', its presentation at the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit, and the development of the Global Mountain Women Partnership. Highlights of these are given below.



What shall we do with this awareness of achievements, this confidence, and this strong voice? Let us make sure that we bring it all back home, let it influence our personal lives, our families, our working environment, and the society in which we live. Let us integrate the gender perspective in debates and policy-making at all levels, whether the impact expected is big or small.

Representative of SDC, Dr. Ulrich Lutz



The Thimphu Declaration

One of the major outputs of CMW was the Thimphu Declaration, drafted in Bhutan and presented at the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit in Kyrgyzstan. This important document contains the voices of many mountain women who do not see their needs being adequately met by the latest development initiatives. The full text can be found in



Empowered Women



"When power is based on women's vision and values, it is transformative. Politics and governance will most decidedly change when women engage in public discourse and play a significant part in decision-making. As we continue to search and work for development that is humanly meaningful and ultimately sustainable, the political space opened by women from the grassroots to the highest reaches of government is the one space where women must belong."

"...let me share with you the ten qualities of an empowered woman I have put together from all these years of being with women as they empower themselves."

First, an empowered woman lifts up other women. There is enough for everybody. Sometimes women tend to fight for the little piece of the pond. I say, enlarge the pond so that we can all play!

Second, an empowered woman inspires others and mentors young women. Libby Roderick, a wonderful feminist singer and songwriter, has a beautiful song entitled, 'Inspire Me'. The song goes:

'Everybody needs someone to show them what is possible
Everybody needs someone to go as far as she can see
I need to stand up on the shoulders of giants
I need a woman who's as big as me
When I was a little baby sittin' on my Mama's knee
I looked around to see just what the future had in store for me
I need to see women who are living without limits
I needed to see women making history
So I said
Give me a woman who can climb the tallest mountain
Give me a woman who can swim across the widest sea
Women need women who lead lives of boldest daring
Tell me their stories, they inspire me.'
And so mountain women must continue to tell their stories.

Third, an empowered woman never feels guilty. Why? Because it is a useless feeling. It has been used against women for so long. Women are made to feel guilty that they are neglecting their family because they go out to work, that they are loose women because they like a good time; that they are a liability as workers because they get pregnant and have to take maternity leave; that they are not ladylike because they speak their mind and show their brains. I tell you this. Develop a conscience. Follow your conscience. But after you have decided on a course of action, don't allow others to make you feel guilty.





Fourth, an empowered woman does not try to be a superwoman. That's only for comic books or the movies. The difference between a female and a male is only two chromosomes, but because of those two chromosomes the world thinks that we can work in the fields, sell vegetables and chickens in the market, take full responsibility not only for home and children but also for livestock, be a volunteer in our church or temple, and mediate all manner of conflict at home and the neighbourhood. Unless we stop being superwomen, our men will not be fully human.

Fifth, an empowered woman lives the truth of the saying: don't agonise, organise. If something is wrong, she does not bellyache. She sees it as an opportunity to gather others to right the wrong. She lights the fire.

Sixth, an empowered woman honours diversity. When society does not consciously manage the need for distinct identities among various groups and people, conflict and war will result. When managed well, it can lead to an increase in productivity, peace, harmony, and a rich collective life.

Seventh, an empowered woman has the capacity for intelligent rage. We must feel a sense of outrage against injustice and violence, a sense of outrage that leads to political action. An African-American writer and law professor, Patricia Williams, has called it the 'girl of intelligent rage'. It is so difficult for women to rage because they have been taught to accommodate, and even to suppress their anger. "Love and anger", a feminist wrote once said, "are both emotions of the free will, yet only love is acceptable for the powerless to express. For women or any category of people whose fair treatment would upset the social order, anger becomes the most punished and dangerous emotion." But such expressions are valid and, in the end, utterly liberating.

Eighth, an empowered woman knows and claims her rights, not just her obligations. We have been trained since childhood to subsume our welfare to the welfare of others, especially family members. When we become adults, this sense of duty is so strong that often it is difficult to claim our rights. Equality and non-discrimination form the cornerstone upon which all human rights are constructed. An understanding of these concepts is central to the exercise of the social, political, economic, and cultural rights of women and girls.

Ninth, an empowered woman claims power. When you walk out of here today, you are going to take steps to claim power because that is what mountain women need. Remember, power is the potency to act for what is good. Can you imagine how transformed the world would be if we all claimed that kind of power?

And lastly, an empowered woman says, no more waiting!"

from the Keynote Address by Irene Santiago



Annex 4 of the CMW Report 'Advancing the Mountain Women's Agenda' and at <<http://www.mountainwomen.net>. The Thimphu Declaration calls on the United Nations, the international community and the regional, national, and local authorities and organisations to

- Heed the voices and concerns of mountain women and listen to their perspectives on peace, natural resource use, and sustainable mountain development;
- Provide the institutional and financial support for future policy and action on the principles of gender equality and gender mainstreaming;
- Strengthen mountain women's rights to resources and their role in their communities and cultures; and
- Promote a rights-based approach to development and strengthen economic and technological opportunities to empower mountain women.

The Thimphu Declaration...will be carried to the rest of the world as one of the crowning achievements of the International Year of Mountains. Through Bishkek, and most importantly, individually and collectively, we all are challenged and energised to translate this call for action into realities – realities that will make mountain women's lives better. The Mountain Women's Partnership launched here can become a dynamic network. Through this partnership we can act on our own, and together, can share problems and solutions to build synergies between our actions. We can create a global voice for the cause of the mountain women of the world.

Closing Speech by J. Gabriel Campbell

The Global Mountain Women's Partnership

The Global Mountain Women's Partnership (GMWP) was drawn up by ICIMOD to translate the views and concerns articulated during CMW and expressed in the Thimphu Declaration into action beyond 2002. The main objective of GMWP is to promote the interests and perspectives of mountain women and contribute to an improvement of their livelihoods. The GMWP will provide a framework for cooperation between mountain women and all stakeholders, such as development partners/donors, governments, policy-makers, non-government organisations and civil society organisations, the private sector, indigenous mountain women and their representatives and organisations, researchers and practitioners, entrepreneurs, and media professionals.

The GMWP seeks to do the following.

- Advocate policies and laws that provide equality-based social, political, and economic rights to women; ensure that such policies and laws exist for reasons that specifically address women's well-being and rights

- Inform mountain women about their human, political, and economic rights – including property, environmental, health, cultural, and intellectual rights – and provide adequate training to claim these rights
- Promote equitable representation of mountain women in decision-making bodies at all levels, and promote their participation in negotiation and decision-making processes, including in conflict prevention and resolution
- Ensure that health programmes focus on reproductive and sexual health problems including HIV/AIDS, and other emerging diseases in mountain areas
- Encourage research and disseminate results of mountain women's indigenous knowledge in areas key to mountain women such as natural resources, traditional farming and conservation techniques, and cultural, health, and religious practices
- Increase access to information about business, markets, technology and other livelihood opportunities that utilise and conserve the diversity of mountain environments; and promote training programmes and social services to meet the development needs of mountain women
- Promote physical and social infrastructure (roads, electricity, schools, telecommunications, markets) that is sensitive and responsive to women's needs, particularly regarding location, design, and utility; enhance income generation and entrepreneurship among mountain women, reduce their workload, and generally improve the quality of their lives

The full text of The Global Mountain Women's Partnership can be found in Annex 5 of the CMW Report Advancing the Mountain Women's Agenda and at <<http://www.mountainwomen.net>>.

CMW Participation at the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit

A small delegation of mountain women led by the Cabinet Secretary of Bhutan, Ms. Neten Zangmo, attended the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit (BGMS) from 29 October to 1 November. Ms. Zangmo presented the Thimphu Declaration to the plenary opening session on 29 October as a message from the 250 women who met in Bhutan. A four-minute video clip was also shown.

A round table session 'Empowering Mountain Women, Moving Mountains' was put together by the CMW delegation in which the highlights of CMW, findings from the CMW research, and the role of culture, indigenous knowledge, and ICT were shared. A second round table session was held, at which the Global Mountain Women's Partnership was launched. Many individuals and organisations who attended the round table session supported and endorsed the partnership.

Last but not least, the CMW team participated actively to ensure that the principles of the Bishkek Mountain Platform – the main output of the BGMS – incorporated a gender perspective.

Resource Materials

The present volume is only one among a wide range of resource materials that were and are being produced for and from the CMW activities, including the following.

Conference briefs were prepared soon after CMW in late October summarising the main points discussed in the thematic sessions.

A resource book titled **‘Her Way Forward’** was prepared in which the proceedings of the thematic sessions are presented in more detail.

A comprehensive report was prepared documenting the gathering: **‘Advancing the Mountain Women’s Agenda’**.

A 22-minute **video documentary** has been produced, which chronicles the events of CMW and captures the most memorable moments. It also contains interviews with guests and participants, speaking about the future of mountain women and CMW.

A 4-minute **video clip** was produced with some of the documentary highlights and a background of music with no narration to be shown at the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit (BGMS).

The images, faces, and events of CMW were captured by Mr. Anupam Bhatia of ICIMOD in a large collection of photos. All are being posted in the photo gallery of the website.

The CMW Secretariat developed a dedicated CMW **web site** <www.mountainwomen.net>, which was used as a tool to bring CMW participants together, to convey information about the event, and to ensure that participants were well informed before attending the conference. The website is undergoing reconstruction as a pre-eminent site dedicated to mountain women and their issues. Apart from promoting mountain women and their global partnership, the web site will continue to share the other outputs of CMW. The site will have a photo gallery of mountain women; the video clips and other outputs will be available for downloading.

A large number of **background papers** were prepared for the thematic sessions. These were provided to participants on a CD-ROM, and are now being collated and summarised to be published as a major resource of information on mountain women and their issues.

and let us close



"...What you have dreamed, and said, and written, began in your own mountains...all over the world, the ideas came with you to Bhutan, and now they will travel to the north towards China, to Bishkek, another land of high mountains and strong women who understand the struggle.

What else will bloom from these seeds? We must be sure that action follows the declaration we take to Bishkek.

Your hard work here, and in your communities, must move forward. In each gathering in the tents and in the conference hall nearly all of you committed to real action when you leave...at your community level, at the regional level, some at the global level.

I close with the words of a Chinese poet named Lu Xun:

'Hope is like a path on the mountainside.
At first there is no path.
But then there are people passing that way,
And then there is a path.'

We are all on that path of hope on the mountainside. We are travelling together, to Bishkek and beyond. The road is long; but the road is clear. Let's move forward together."

Valedictory Address, Catherine N. Cooke



".....I feel that there is a great role for young women in mountain communities. With greater access to education and modern tools many of us have the advantages that our parents lacked. There are also more civil societies and institutions to guide and to assist us in our just cause. Networking and information sharing is more common now than before. If we are able to utilise the wisdom and experience of the older generation and combine it with the miracles of technology we can make a difference for our communities.

We are all brought together by our common love for the mountains and by our determination to enjoy the immense opportunities, beauty, and wealth as well as face the challenges. As a young person, I look for inspiration from the participants gathered here today. Each one of you has taken on leadership role and will now take the goals of the Thimphu Declaration forward."

From the Closing Address by

Her Royal Highness, Ashi Chimi Yangzom Wangchuck

