

BANKING ON BIODIVERSITY

REPORT ON THE REGIONAL CONSULTATION
ON BIODIVERSITY ASSESSMENT IN THE
HINDU KUSH-HIMALAYAS

Editor
Pei Shengji

Organised by
International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)

December 19-20, 1995
Kathmandu, Nepal

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Foreword

No other part of the world is vertically and horizontally as diverse as the Hindu Kush-Himalayan mountain range. Rising from the plains of the Indian subcontinent to the highest peaks of the world, altitudinal sequences determine a great variety of natural and man-made ecosystems. And from west to east rainfall patterns vary from the very arid zones of Afghanistan in the west to zones with extremely humid conditions in the east.

The assessment, monitoring, and management of the biodiversity of this unique region was the focus of a workshop that ICIMOD organised in December 1995. It brought together experts from all its eight regional member countries, who, for the first time, had the opportunity to jointly review the status of biodiversity in the region and make recommendations for future action. They did so on the basis of twelve review papers written by authors from different countries in the region who also attended the workshop.

The present report contains both a record of the discussions that took place and all the twelve papers presented. The papers were subsequently modified based on the comments received. It is the first time that such a wealth of information on biodiversity of the HKH Region has been brought together in one volume.

It became clear during the consultation that we have only touched upon the most significant aspects of this subject and that urgent action is needed to ensure that this treasure house of biological and genetic diversity does not further deteriorate. Participants emphasised the **importance of a regional** approach to assessment and monitoring of biodiversity in the HKH, in particular through the application of GIS and Remote Sensing. As this will be a major undertaking, ICIMOD cannot rely only on its core programme resources and will actively search for additional resources. It is hoped that the present document will play a supportive role in this endeavour.

I would like to thank the authors of the review and background papers for their contributions. Without these papers and the presence of the authors it would have been very difficult to achieve. I am also very grateful to Greta Rana, Senior Editor at ICIMOD, and her Publications' team for bringing together the records of the meeting and the 12 papers within a common framework of presentation, language, and style. Professor Pei Shengji, Coordinator for the Workshop, ensured a smooth preparation, conduct, and follow-up.

Egbert Pelinck
Director General

September 1996

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