

Part II

Overviews

This part includes seven papers: one each on the HKH region, South Asian countries represented at the Conference, and the Qinghai Tibetan Plateau region of China. The first paper describes the experiences in development and emerging trends in the economies and environment of the region from an eco-regional perspective. It describes some of the distinguishing features of the region, looking at them from the point of view of its biophysical, demographic, economic, and environmental conditions and processes. The paper argues that poverty and environmental degradation are increasing, and that this is reflected in the vulnerability to natural hazards of the growing population. It also makes suggestions and recommendations about future strategies for sustainable development.

Papers relating to different countries have a common theme, insofar as they all attempt to relate development issues to environmental concerns in mountain areas. Yet, as experiences are varied, they have also tried to focus on specific aspects of development in particular contexts. For example, the paper on Bangladesh focuses on the new development environment in Chittagong Hill Tracts following the Peace Accord after an insurgency lasting two decades. A number of development activities had been undertaken in the past, but some of these had adverse impacts on the population of the hill tracts. Shifting agriculture, a key feature of the hill economy, has raised important economic and environmental questions. There is, nevertheless, much optimism about the future of the hills tracts because of the peace accord. The paper from Bhutan emphasises the unique resource endowment of the country and its goal of Gross National Happiness - the Bhutanese version of sustainable development. Bhutan, in many ways, is very different from other parts of the HKH as currently there is little pressure on its natural resources because of its relatively small population. However, the country has already embarked on a strong environmental programme that is closely linked with issues of sustainable livelihood and conservation of resources. The paper on India deals with the variety of situations and experiences in

different mountain states and regions with varying resource endowments, socioeconomic contexts, and levels of development and the way in which the national planning system has tried to accommodate the problems and concerns of different areas within its development strategy. The Indian Himalayas provide examples of many interesting experiences and changes over time. If the rapid expansion in education in some parts of the mountains is noteworthy, the relatively poor economic performance of the mountain areas compared to other parts of the country is almost a uniform experience. The case of Nepal is presented within the overall context of the concerns for environment, development, and poverty alleviation and the need for differentiated strategies for its three ecological divisions, the Terai, mid-hills, and the high mountains. In Nepal's case the poor performance of agriculture as the dominant sector in the country appears to be the primary reason behind the increasing poverty and deterioration of the environment. The problems appear to be more serious in the mountain areas, although most of the solutions lie in developing better linkages between different regions and sectors. The paper on Pakistan focuses on poverty alleviation strategies in mountain areas with the help of a detailed analysis of selected programmes and projects in the public, private, and NGO sectors. It also brings out the emerging issues in and efforts made towards use and conservation of natural resources. In the case of Pakistan also, the focus on mountain people and their problems is more recent. Earlier development efforts were oriented towards the extraction of mountain resources (like water and forests), primarily for use in the plains.

The paper dealing with the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau illustrates how national and local governments have tried to tackle the problem of poverty through programmes reorganising production structures, investments in infrastructure, technological interventions, and sustainable use and regeneration of natural resources. The paper emphasises the need to move away from subsistence to market production and emphasises the role of the government in establishing the infrastructure and support services needed. It also argues that mountain areas need to make themselves attractive for outside investors.

Chapters

2. **The Hindu Kush-Himalayas: Searching for Viable Socioeconomic and Environmental Options** — M. Banskota
3. **Socioeconomic Status and Development of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh: An Overview** — M.R. Shelley
4. **Integrating Economy and Environment: The Development Experience of Bhutan** — C. Lhamu, J.J. Rhodes, D.B. Rai
5. **Development Experience in the Himalayan Mountain Region of India** — B.K. Joshi

6. **Sustainable Poverty Alleviation and Mountain Development in Nepal: Status, Experience and Strategy** — H.K. Upadhyaya
7. **Growth, Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Resource Management in Mountain Areas of Pakistan** — S. Zia
8. **Strategies and Experiences in Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development in the HKH and the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau Region in China** — Y. Ruizhen