



Integrated Planning for Environmental and Economic Development of Mountain Areas

**Report of a Regional Meeting of
Planners and Experts**

**Editor
T.S. Papola**

**Organised by the
International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)**

**July 22-24, 1996
Kathmandu, Nepal**

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Cover Photo: Irrigated agriculture with mulberry hedgerows in
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Foreword

Conservation of mountain natural resources is essential not only from the environmental point of view but also in the context of sustainable economic development and the livelihoods of mountain people. A minimum level of economic well-being with a reasonable and continuous improvement is necessary for conservation of environmentally sensitive resources. There is an obvious need to strike a balance between conservation and development, by choosing a pattern of economic development that is in conformity with the comparative advantages of mountain areas. It is quite evident, from the widespread poverty and rapidly deteriorating environment in mountain regions, that the approaches adopted in the past have not integrated environmental and developmental goals, on the one hand, and have failed to generate adequate benefits from investments on the other. Approaches to planning the development of these regions have been characterised by attempts to conserve environment and achieve economic growth in isolation from each other. These have been attempted largely on a narrow sectoral basis, with very little attention being paid to intersectoral linkages.

ICIMOD has been engaged in the task of evolving suitable approaches that could meet the two paramount objectives of mountain development reflected in its mandate, namely, conservation of natural resources and improvements in the living standards of mountain people. Its past work has led it to believe that goals of environmental protection and economic development can be attained simultaneously – in fact, pursuit of one to the neglect of the other may not succeed in achieving either – and that the mountain people do not have to remain poor because of the constraints that nature has imposed on their habitat, since the mountain environment also has certain unique advantages in regard to development. It is, however, necessary that the approaches and strategies that could operationalise these propositions are consciously built into development plans, policies, and programmes.

It is with this end in mind that ICIMOD introduced a programme on Integrated Planning for Environmental and Economic Development of Mountain Areas. The programme aims to develop and disseminate suitable methodologies for planning to integrate environmental and development goals and sectoral activities and to assist planners and development workers in using these methodologies. A Regional Meeting of Planners and Experts organised from 22 to 24 July 1996, in which about two dozen high-level planning officials and experts in mountain and area development planning participated, constituted the first major initiative in this programme. The meeting provided the participants and ICIMOD staff with an opportunity to share experiences and exchange views on the subject. It also provided a significant advance in the future development of the programme. The proceedings of the meeting are being published not only

to record the meeting and input for the ICIMOD programme, but also with the hope that they will be of use to planners and development workers in work related to formulation of plans and programmes for the development of mountain regions.

Dr. T.S. Papola, Head, Mountain Enterprise and Infrastructure Division, ICIMOD not only coordinated the meeting and provided the major input for discussion in the form of a substantive background paper (now issued as Discussion Paper No. MEI/96/2), but also prepared this Report on the discussions at the meeting. Thanks are due to him, as well as to other ICIMOD professional, editorial, and administrative staff who contributed and assisted in the organisation of the meeting and preparation of the Report.

Egbert Pelinck
Director General

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- a) Review studies on the methodologies employed at the national and sub-national levels in the planning exercise at national, regional and local levels and the extent to which they are practiced in different countries and methodologies
- b) Studies on environmental impact and economic impact assessment and development
- c) Consultative and advisory missions to different countries
- d) Development of training materials and actual training for planners and development workers

As the first step towards the implementation of the programme, a meeting of planning officials and area planners experts was