

SUMMING UP

The concluding session was chaired by the Director General of ICIMOD, Mr. Egbert Pelinck. The conclusions and recommendations of the working groups were presented, discussed, and accepted unanimously. The Director General expressed his overall satisfaction with the proceedings of the Workshop and remarked that it signified a promising beginning for greater fruitful collaboration among the women entrepreneurs in the mountain areas of different countries in the HKH region, as well as between their organizations and ICIMOD. He urged the participants to take the follow-up steps they had suggested within their own areas of operation and assured them of help and support from ICIMOD whenever possible under its mandate.

Finally, the workshop coordinator summed up the major highlights of the conclusions and recommendations of the workshop as follows.

- Women-run enterprises in mountain areas are mostly concentrated on products based on local resources and skills; but they lack support for product development and diversification and for sale in wider markets. They need strong support from government and non-government organizations in these areas.
- Marketing constitutes a central problem because of both limited access to information on markets and lack of mobility and organization among women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs need advisory services and training in locating and promoting markets from government and non-government agencies. They need to organize themselves into producers' groups for marketing.
- Enterprise development among women has so far been on a low key, because of their lack of access to assets and resources, the lack of sensitivity to their potential, and problems in programmes and policies. Reforms are necessary in the legal and institutional framework to provide women with rights to property and access to credit and training for enterprise development, and to reorient policies and programmes to make them more suited to the conditions of women entrepreneurs.

The Workshop concluded with the understanding that the recommendations will be followed up by the participants themselves and by ICIMOD. The participants agreed to establish networks for sharing information on products, technologies, and markets. From ICIMOD, they expected documentation and facilitation for sharing experiences, advisory services, and advocacy for appropriate policies. They suggested that ICIMOD organize a Workshop like the present one every year.