

Introduction and Objectives

Throughout the countries of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan Region, there is an urgent need for realistic strategies for progressive, sustainable, and environmentally sound hill farming systems. This is evident in policy discussions within the Governments of the Region as well as within multilateral and bilateral aid agencies.

Due to the problems of relentless population pressure on marginal lands in mountain areas, the emphasis on horticulture is essential in long-term strategies for agricultural development. This is reflected in the development plans of most of the countries in the Region. This emphasis on horticulture is especially relevant in areas which are accessible by roads.

The real challenge is how to get horticulture moving in the hills and mountains. In this respect, knowledge gleaned from past experiences can be analysed, modified, and re-applied in future undertakings.

Against this background, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), together with the Ministry of Agriculture/Nepal and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), sponsored the International Expert Meeting on Horticulture and Beekeeping from 19th to 23rd June, 1989, in Kathmandu. The purpose of the meeting was to review the present status, future prospects, and constraints and to suggest sound strategies for the development of horticulture and apiculture in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas. This report covers the first part of the meeting (from 19th to 21st June, 1989) which dealt with horticulture. A separate report covering the proceedings on beekeeping (on 22nd and 23rd June, 1989) has already been published.

The specific objectives of the Horticultural Expert Meeting were:

- to facilitate a systematic exchange of experiences in horticultural development in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan Region;
- to facilitate discussion on the linkages involved in production and processing technologies, marketing organization and extension services, and the economic management of input supply and marketing systems;
- to assess the environmental issues in large-scale horticultural development in mountain areas; and
- to examine the role of mountain horticulture, within national strategies, as a component of sustainable farming systems.

The duration of the meeting was for three days. The initial deliberations were concerned with the production and productivity of horticultural crops. This was followed by the diversification of horticulture through ancillary programmes, by marketing and utilisation of horticultural produce, and the finalisation of recommendations evolving from all three segments. A detailed schedule is shown in Annex 1.

The participants in, and contributors to, the Expert Meeting came from various horticultural disciplines and were representative of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan Region. They came from Bhutan, China, India, Nepal, and Pakistan. Representatives of the FAO were also present. Certain experts from Bhutan and India were unable to attend but contributed papers. The list of invitees is given in Annex 2, the list of papers in Annex 3, and Annex 4 contains summaries of the papers.

The salient points raised, together with the ensuing deliberations, are highlighted in the main report under the following headings:

- o Production and Productivity of Horticultural crops;*
- o Diversification of Horticulture through Ancillary Horticultural Programmes;*
- o Marketing and Utilization of Horticultural Produce;*
- o Horticultural Research Requirements; and*
- o Conclusions and Recommendations.*