

Discussion and Finalisation of Recommendations for the Hindu Kush-Himalayan FRIEND Project

Chairman: Dr. Bashir Ahmad Chandio, Pakistan

Dr. A. Herrmann, representing the German IHP/OHP Committee, proposed a structure for the FRIEND project. According to his suggestion, the Steering Committee should be comprised of representatives from the countries of the region. Three membership categories were suggested: participating countries, collaborating institutions, and observer organisations or other FRIEND projects. The core activity of each FRIEND group should be database generation, and he requested ICIMOD to host a data centre. Presenting the organisational structure, he emphasised the need to move on from the Delhi meeting.

Professor S.R. Chalise, referring to the proposal submitted to the Regional Workshop, suggested that the project proposal needed to be fine-tuned and developed as a fully-fledged project. He suggested that Mr. K.S. Yogacharya continue the task of preparing a complete proposal which could then be submitted to donors. He also emphasised that the project proposal should clearly spell out the responsibilities of all members. He also suggested that WMO become a full member of the steering committee of the proposed FRIEND for the HKH, as it had already been a member of the Regional Working Group since its inception. He also said that UNESCO and ICIMOD could continue to provide a joint secretariat for the Regional Working Group.

Dr. W. Grabs said that they should not be divisive but come to a consensus. The spirit of FRIEND was to have the maximum number of members – countries and institutions. It facilitated comparison of results and arriving at scientific conclusions. He confirmed that GRDC could assist in the collection, selection, and transfer of data to the database centre.

Mr. L.A. Mandalia recounted the long history of collaboration between UNESCO and ICIMOD. He also stated that because of the geopolitical placement of Kathmandu, ICIMOD would be well-suited as the proposed HKH-FRIEND database centre.

Dr. S. Shah said that, in principle, they agreed with the mandate of HKH-FRIEND; what needed to be addressed was the issue of collaboration.

Dr. A. Gustard suggested that the future coordinator of HKH-FRIEND should be a part-timer – a maximum of three to six months a year should be devoted to HKH-FRIEND. He also drew the attention of the members to funding aspects.

Dr. B.A. Chandio, from the Chair, said the house was in consensus about the name HKH-FRIEND.

Mr. L.A. Mandalia stated that UNESCO would try to fund the coordinator and ICIMOD could provide help in kind.

Dr. B.A. Chandio stated that the coordinator should first establish a framework and then get the technical aspects together. He also opined that identification of project activities was up to the coordinator.

Dr. L. Molnár proposed Mr. Yogacharya as the Interim Coordinator until the next Steering Committee Meeting, and Professor Herrmann seconded the proposal.

Professor M.F. Bari stated that the Coordinator should be a rotational post and that ICIMOD could act as the clearing house.

Mr. K.S. Yogacharya clarified that out of the eight activities in the draft proposal (Annex 3), the first three were priorities. It was decided that the Regional Working Group would launch the HKH-FRIEND Group with representatives from all member countries and institutions. He also explained that, in principle, ICIMOD was well placed to shoulder the work of the Secretariat.

Dr. A. Gustard suggested that HKH-FRIEND should consist of participating countries/institutions/agencies. He also suggested that one person from each of the agencies represented at the workshop could be considered for membership. From each country, there could be one from a university and one from the IHP committee.

Dr. M.F. Bari suggested that with a full and complete house, the Steering Committee should be elected immediately.

The Chair urged him to give the Coordinator some more time.

Concluding Session

Endorsement of Recommendations for Launching the Hindu Kush-Himalayan FRIEND

Chairman: Mr. E. Pelinck, Director General, ICIMOD.

Dr. B.A. Chandio presented a summary report of the previous session.

After detailed discussions and deliberations, the following was agreed upon by the house.

1. **Name of the Project: HKH-FRIEND**

2. **Coordinator:** It was recognised that when the project became fully operational, the job of the Coordinator would be a part-time job ranging from between two to six months. It was also agreed that the post of the Coordinator should rotate among member countries, subject to the required qualifications, experience, and clearance from the country from which he/she came.

For the time being, **Mr. Kiran Shankar Yogacharya** was requested to continue as the Interim Coordinator to finalise the project proposal by incorporating comments and suggestions from the participating countries.

3. Project Implementation/Identification of Priority Activities: All activities mentioned on Annex 3, page 3 of the project document should be split into two phases. Monitoring of existing research projects, incorporation of data in a common format, database generation, identification of the needs and rehabilitation of stations, flow frequency analysis, and training of staff in the above-mentioned field should be carried out during Phase I (three years from the start of the project). Analysis of snowmelt runoff, modelling, and assessment of the impact of change in land use should be undertaken later in Phase II. **Dr. A. Gustard** suggested that cataloguing and assessment of existing data might be a tangible programme that could be carried out in the first six months. This suggestion was approved.

4. Regional Working Group Membership: **Professor A. Herrmann** made a presentation on the concept of the project and the role of donor agencies and member countries. Incorporating the modifications suggested by the house, he confirmed that eight member countries, ICIMOD, UNESCO, and WMO would continue to constitute the regular membership, whereas other scientific and donor agencies willing to collaborate would be observers on the Regional Working Group.

5. Project Secretariat: It was unanimously agreed by all participants that ICIMOD would be requested to provide a Secretariat for the HKH-FRIEND Project. **Professor S.R. Chalise** asked whether the Secretariat at ICIMOD was going to be temporary or long term. **Mr. L.A. Mandalia**, expressing UNESCO's views, suggested that for the time being the Secretariat of HKH-FRIEND and the database centre should be located at ICIMOD and the Secretariat of the Regional Working Group provided jointly by UNESCO and ICIMOD, as had been the practice so far. These suggestions were approved.

6. Steering Committee: Concerns were raised that if the nomination of a steering committee was left to the respective governments, competitive and functional organisations and experts might not be selected. **Dr. A. Gustard** suggested that the committee should be comprised of experts and institutions dealing with water but scattered into various departments; NGOs and universities might also be members of the steering committee on merit. He also added that the Steering Committee should be comprised of organisations actively working on the FRIEND project. He said that the onus of appointing members for the steering committee lay with UNESCO and ICIMOD. **Mr. L.A. Mandalia** was of the opinion that individual IHP groups might be stimulated by proper guidance to be flexible in making nominations.

After detailed discussion, this item was left for the time being to be finalised by the UNESCO Regional Office and ICIMOD until the project became operational.

7. Project Support: As support to the proposed HKH-FRIEND project, UNESCO committed \$2,000. WMO offered to help assist with training. The Institute of Hydrology, U.K., offered to contribute by training GIS personnel, with fellowships, and also by preparing a proposal to be submitted to the European Union (EU). **Dr. W. Grabs** said that since the core programme was database generation, GRDC would like to help with information and training and to set up, collect, disseminate, and analyse data in coopera-

tion with expertise from the Institute of Hydrology, U.K. He also pointed out that GRDC had prepared a catalogue of discharge information available from the HKH region. The information contained therein could be used as the first step in the establishment of a HKH-FRIEND database. **Professor A. Herrmann**, on behalf of the German IHP/OHP Committee, said that this was a good suggestion. He also confirmed that the German IHP/OHP Committee would discuss the possible nature and magnitude of its future technical and financial support to the project at its next meeting. **Dr. L. Molnár**, on behalf of the Slovak Committee on Hydrology, expressed willingness to assist in the training programmes.

Mr. E. Pelinck expressed happiness that the Steering Committee would be comprised of the regional countries as well as UNESCO, ICIMOD, and WMO. He noted that a project activity such as this was of a long-term nature. He also added that, once commitments from donors were received, it would be possible to reach out and provide services. He also hoped that commitment from the member countries would be forthcoming.

Dr. B.A. Chandio, on behalf of his organisation, offered to help with the equipment and, possibly, the training facilities.

Professor M.F. Bari, on behalf of his organisation, offered assistance with the laboratory and computing facilities as well as free exchange of data.

Mr. E. Pelinck thanked the participants for their help and said that, as part of the Regional Collaborative Programme of ICIMOD that had been endorsed by the Board (for the period from 1995-1998), ICIMOD had a sub-programme dedicated to "Improved Understanding of the Conditions of Water Resources and Mountain Climate Changes," under which the following programme activities were being carried out: (i) assessment and identification of appropriate methods and techniques for water harvesting and management of local water resources; (ii) promotion of a better understanding of mountain climate changes and their relationship to the ecology and hydrology of the region; and (iii) reinforcement of the present regional network of research and study in mountain hydrology. He added that ICIMOD would continue to provide the professional assistance of its staff, as in the past, to the proposed project within the above programme activities of ICIMOD. However, he also emphasised that any input beyond that would require additional resources. On behalf of ICIMOD, he was happy to provide a database centre for the proposed HKH-FRIEND project at ICIMOD.

Mr. L.A. Mandalia urged all the members to continue working to promote the project when they returned to their countries. **Mr. S.K. Yogacharya** and **Professor M.F. Bari** gave a vote of thanks on behalf of the participants.

Concluding the Workshop, **Mr. E. Pelinck** thanked all members for their keen interest and support and said that ICIMOD looked forward to developing this project with the regional member countries of the HKH, and that it could very well develop into a very important programme.