

# Country Statement—Afghanistan

Hadi Abawi

We in Afghanistan very much appreciate the position of the Government of Nepal regarding the problems of mountainous, landlocked developing countries. Only this year, the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan was among the first countries to support a motion moved by Nepal during the 39th session of ESCAP on difficulties of rural economies and management of water resources in mountain areas, and the utilization of the natural potential for development in the long term sustainability of resources as the main target. The same understanding exists within UNGA and other international organizations and agencies.

As you are aware, Afghanistan's mountains, especially the Hindu Kush, control the economy of the country. It is the source of hydro-power, irrigation water, timber, minerals, and range land. About 60 per cent of the country's population lives in the mountainous areas. Traditional use of trees and shrubs meets over 50 per cent of domestic requirements of energy, which leads to deforestation.

Thus, the importance of the integrated development of the mountains in Afghanistan is obvious.

Stability of the Hindu Kush is of vital importance to us for conservation of soil and control of sedimentation in water storage facilities. It is equally important from the point of view of generation of hydro-power, irrigation supplies, and timber and fruit resources.

Therefore, the concept of integrated mountain development is fully supported, and we feel that development of mountain resources, including forest management, is of vital importance. We have identified a number of projects which are technically sound and economically viable, some of which have since been appraised and accepted by some international organizations. Unfortunately, there seem to be other factors which have, perhaps, made these organizations change their neutral and purely technical approach. We believe that in this task, combined efforts of the regional countries and international assistance can be more fruitful.

My delegation, as a delegation from a mountainous, landlocked developing country, therefore, expresses its satisfaction over

the establishment of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development. The establishment of this Centre will serve as a motive for further co-operation and common actions. The Centre should promote economically and environmentally sound development in this region and should improve the well-being of the local population. The Centre should be a focal point for multi-disciplinary documentation, training, and applied research, as well as a consultative service for resource management and development activities.

In general, we would like to support this idea to internationalize the activities of the Centre, but, at the same time, would like to draw your attention to the existing conditions and realities in our region of the Hindu Kush-Himalayas, which belongs to the land-locked and least developed countries. Therefore, we strongly ask for concentration of activities of the Centre on the problems of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region. Priority should be given to integrated mountain development in this region. We also call for bilateral co-operation between the countries of the region to bring about all-round development and promotion of conditions of life for our people.

Allow me to take this convenient opportunity to draw the attention of this meeting to the crucial economic situation of the least developed, land-locked countries, among them the mountainous countries of this region, which are facing the most serious socio-economic difficulties and profound structural problems.

We do emphasize and reaffirm the imperative need for urgent and effective implementation of all resolutions and decisions taken by various international organizations. We appeal to all countries and international organizations to take immediate, concrete, and adequate measures and ensure sufficient resources for combating this problem.

In concluding, I cannot but express my gratitude to the sponsors of the Centre, namely His Majesty's Government of Nepal, the Federal Republic of Germany, Switzerland, and UNESCO. My gratitude goes equally to Dr. S.J.B. Rana, Vice Chancellor, Royal Nepal Academy of Science and Technology, and Mr. Gueller, the Regent, for their successful efforts.

# Country Statement—Bangladesh

Faridul Islam

It is an immense pleasure for me to be able to speak on this inaugural session of ICIMOD, which is taking place in the excellent hill country of Nepal, known for its natural beauty and scenery.

At long last, crossing many hurdles, ICIMOD has come into being. Location-wise, the site has been ideally suited to the needs and orientation, and I am personally very happy to see that it is appropriately located in Nepal. I hope that ICIMOD shall be able to function in line with the stated objectives. As a necessary condition for this, I think there should be a clear

understanding and a sense of co-operation and gesture of good will among the member countries for common welfare.

I am impressed by the excellent hospitality His Majesty's Government of Nepal and the people of Nepal have shown to us during our stay here. I am also thankful to the sponsors, the Royal Nepal Academy, the volunteers, and the distinguished audience for the co-operation they have extended to us in making the symposium a success.

Thanking you very much.



# Country Statement—Bhutan

D.C. Dorji

It is with a sense of great happiness that we attend this meeting of ICIMOD for the first time. We attach great importance to the emergence of ICIMOD as the first ever co-operative endeavour of the Himalayan countries of South Asia. We fully support all programmes and activities of ICIMOD.

It is now generally recognised that the preservation of our environment is an integral part of development. Any development project or programme that we may formulate must include effective measures for the conservation and rational management of the environment in order to improve the quality of life and safeguard the interests of future generations.

Many national programmes for the care and management of the environment have been undertaken. The population explosion, deforestation, depletion of natural resources, soil erosion, and air, water, and other pollution have adversely affected our physical environment, and, thereby, threatened the lives of 50 million people living in our region. To combat these challenges, our national efforts in the past alone have not proved adequate.

The problems of environment faced by the countries in our region are not confined to national boundaries. In fact, in no other sphere is the interdependence of the countries of this region more evident than in that of environment. There are many potential areas in which fruitful, co-operative environmental programmes can be undertaken to supplement our national efforts. Our collective efforts will be an important factor for enhancing regional capability to face environmental challenges. In this, ICIMOD can play an important role.

For us in Bhutan, fortunately, the problems of environment do not pose any serious threat at present. Abundance of natural resources, small population, and other favourable factors have helped to preserve our environment. We are fully aware, however, that negligence and defective planning in the process

of modernizing our country may create serious environmental problems in the future. We seek to achieve harmonization of environment with development through careful planning and judicious use of nature's bounty. In this endeavour we seek the co-operation of other countries of our region.

It is gratifying to note that the workshop organized to discuss activities and future plans for implementation has concluded with meaningful results. I congratulate the Chairman, the Regent of ICIMOD, and the delegates of the workshop for the commendable job they have done.

The Kingdom of Bhutan shall make special efforts and extend all possible co-operation to the countries of our region in the process of realizing the objectives and aspirations set forth by ICIMOD for the welfare of our hill people.

In conclusion, I would like to state that the success of our programme shall mainly depend on the proper design of a strategy.

I strongly feel that such strategy should involve maximum participation of the people, as these programmes are intended for the people and should be implemented by the people, under technical guidance from the executing agencies and governments.

Perhaps this newly born Centre will take some time to establish itself. With the zeal and dedication with which the Centre has initiated its activities, however, we should expect the following in the near future.

- collection and dissemination of useful data to the member countries on a regular basis;
- transfer of technology, especially on alternative energy sources—solar, wind, and mini and micro-hydels; and
- strengthening of the government departments concerned, through training support.



# Country Statement—Burma

## Kyaw Htain

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Burmese delegation, I would like to first tender our thanks for inviting us to attend the Symposium and Inauguration Ceremony of ICIMOD. The Burmese delegation also wishes to convey their deep appreciation for the excellent arrangement proffered and warm hospitality being extended by the Government and people of Nepal.

The current Symposium and Inauguration Conference is the first of its kind in this region. During the past few days the Symposium has dealt with the integrated approach to mountain development towards AD 2000. It has also included discussion on the formulation of the Southern mountain ecosystem and considerable emphasis has been placed on improvement of the living standard of the mountain population of the Himalayan region.

Of importance too positively was the site, objectives and functions of ICIMOD. Similarly the numerous papers presented were highly interesting and informative. The combined effort, we are sure, will contribute greatly to this region.

Mr. Chairman, the Socialist Union of Burma is an Asian country, as such the economic development of the country is highly dependent on agriculture and its produce. Burma has been endowed with an abundance of natural forests. The area of forests approximates 96 million acres and constitute 57% of the country.

It has contributed immensely towards the country's economy where the forest produce presented 24% of our country's foreign export earning during 1982/83. Apart from such economic importance their impact on the ecology, environment and climatic conditions also is, by no means, small.

As inevitably most of these forests are confined to the mountainous region of Northern Burma and the range traversing the eastern, western and central sector of Burma, the improvement of living conditions of these mountainous region is therefore of high significance to the country.

Mr. Chairman, in our development efforts, we are carrying out the programme in which the mountainous region has received equal attention. The national finance of the country has been proportionally allocated for their development and have been increased yearly.

In an approach toward all-round development, attention has been focussed on agriculture, livestock, farming, reforestation and the principal appropriate industries. The scope and assistance to health and education have also been expanded. More roads have been constructed while postal and other communication have been enhanced.

Mr. Chairman, in the development of this region one of our national objectives has been the attainment of self-sufficiency in food. Efforts are being made to replace the traditional type of paddy with the regionally appropriate and high yielding varieties. The cultivation of fruits, vegetables, and garden crops is being attuned to modern scientific techniques. At the same time, our Agricultural Research Institute has assisted in a variety of research in other practices. In addition, fertilizers, pesticides, and sprayers have been made available on an increasing basis. Consequently, these measures have generated a remarkable improvement in mountain agriculture.

Efforts for the adoption of permanent terrace cultivation in lieu of shifting cultivation has also been undertaken. Evidently, these measures have been one of the attributes for improved agriculture. Therefore, our government has annually increased investment towards these. The benefits have been tangible and helped toward a wider acceptance in the participation of the people of these areas.

Mr. Chairman, I had earlier mentioned the role of the forestry in our national economy. I had also recounted their economic importance to the mountainous regions. My government has been extending all efforts for the protection and conservation of the forests in the mountainous regions of Kayah, Karen, Kachin, and Shan states. The approach adopted has been:

1. Systematic protection and conservation of the hills, existing national forests; and
2. Reforestation of the denuded areas.

The inhabitants of these mountainous regions meet their needs for timber and fuel from these forests. Besides, the multitude of villagers in these regions depend on water from the springs and streams generated from these forests. The livelihood and sustenance of the people of this region are highly dependent on the permanency of these forests. They have, thus, under the guidance of pertinent bureau concerned fully cooperated in the protection of these forest areas and their watersheds.

Mr. Chairman, reforestation and afforestation is being undertaken with the following four objectives:

1. The extraction of commercial supply forests using valuable tree species, such as Teak, Pengru, Betau for domestic use and exports.
2. The extraction of local supply forests, using fast growing species for the supply of house posts, fencing, fuel, and charcoal.
3. The extraction of industrial supply forests, using fast growing soft wood for utilization in paper and match factories.
4. The extraction of protection of forests using climatically suitable species for the protection of watersheds, prevention of erosion, and maintenance of watersheds, that supply reservoirs and dams.

We wish to inform that in addition to the 1 million acres we have planted during the past 4-Year Plan, 3 million acres more are to be planted during the current 4-Year Plan.

Mr. Chairman, our major problems in the mountainous region have been extensive soil erosion and soil depletion which have been taking place over a considerable number of years. The Forest Department has accordingly been undertaking the following measures:

1. Areas extensively damaged by gully erosion, are being patched;
2. Barren hilltops are being reforested with the fast growing species; and
3. The reforestation of forest cover on hilltops and terrace cultivation along the slopes have been established for educational purposes.

Mr. Chairman, in the foregoing summarization, I have



attempted to portray the efforts being undertaken for overall development, forest protection, water management, and assurance of favourable climatic conditions. These measures are being implemented under the special plan with fixed targets. The plans in Shan and Karen states are being carried out with assignment of science graduates in agriculture and forestry. The active participation of local populace, however, is extremely important. Here the pertinent bureau concerned and peasant organizations have rendered leadership, support, and encouragement and helped them achieve success in their endeavours.

Mr. Chairman, the problems and concepts of integrated mountain development are very numerous and complex. Con-

certed efforts, both at the national and international levels, will be required to meet these challenges.

We are here today for the inauguration of an International Centre for the Integrated Mountain Development. The sponsors of this Centre, the Government of Switzerland, the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, UNESCO and the host country, the Kingdom of Nepal, deserve high credit for their dedication to this purpose.

We sincerely hope that this Centre will serve as a model for this region and contribute immeasurably towards the concept of mountain development. We wish it all success.

Thank you.

# Country Statement—China

Qin Lisheng

At the invitation of His Majesty's Government of Nepal and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, the Chinese Delegation is very pleased to be able to attend the inauguration of this Centre today. Now, allow me, on behalf of the Chinese Government, to extend our heartfelt congratulations on this happy occasion and to express our sincere appreciation for your kind invitation and the hospitalities afforded to my delegation.

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development is an international mountain research institution of a scientific nature, established with the initiative and active participation of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization and active support and financial assistance of the Federal Republic of Germany, Switzerland, and His Majesty's Government of Nepal. The Centre is planned to be a focal point for multi-disciplinary documentation, training, and applied research, as well as a consultative service for resource management and development activities, as stated in the Draft Work Programme. We are convinced that the Centre will play an important role, particularly in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region, in disseminating scientific information, promoting training and exchange, strengthening applied research, and providing advisory services in connection with mountain development.

Environment protection and natural resource management is one of the most pressing problems of our times and has arrested the attention of all nations. The problems of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region are as serious as those existing in the Alps and Andes regions. The establishment of this Centre, which aims at stabilizing environments, promoting the national economies of the countries, and improving the living standards of the mountain people, conforms to the objectives of the International MAB Programme and the general wish of the peoples of various countries. The People's Republic of China,

like many other countries in the region, is a developing country, a considerable part of which is mountains. She shares the same problems as other countries in the region. Mountain development in our country also calls for a multi-disciplinary and integrated approach to these problems. For this reason, my country supports the setting up of this Centre and wishes the Centre success in achieving its goal of contribution to promoting the economy of the mountainous region.

As I have just mentioned, China is a country many parts of which are mountainous. Mountain development is an important link in the whole chain of China's national construction. Therefore, the Chinese Government has now, as always, attached great importance to integrated mountain research and development. With the aim of conserving nature and developing mountainous areas in a comprehensive manner, combined efforts have been made by multi-disciplinary scientific expeditions to the Himalayas and Mount Qomolangma in Tibet; Tianshan Mountains and To Mur Peak in Xingjiang; Taihan Mountains in North China; and Wiyi Mountain in Fujian Province. The same activities are also going on in the Hengduan Mountains. As a result of these scientific surveys, a great amount of valuable data has been collected, providing the scientific basis for the country's long-term planning of integrated development of agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, and other occupations in these mountainous regions.

The establishment of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development is, indeed, a great event for the peoples of various countries in the region. We are willing to co-operate with the countries concerned in the smooth operation of the Centre to ensure that the Centre will contribute, both in theory and practice, to integrated mountain development internationally, in general, and regionally, in particular.

Thank you.



# Country Statement—India

N.N. Jha

In this entire region of the Himalayas, we, as one of the countries directly benefiting from them, are deeply conscious of the thousands and thousands of years of history and tradition that have bound us, the peoples of the Himalayas, to the Himalayas themselves. When I use the term, "peoples of the Himalayas", I use it in a very liberal sense, that is to say, to cover categories of persons living both within them and immediately below them.

The Himalayas have shaped the thinking, and almost everything else, of a very large sector of the northern part of the Indian subcontinent, involving millions upon millions of people. It is, perhaps, only appropriate that the Himalayas, despite the occasional fury unleashed by them, have carefully nurtured and sustained us and conferred immense benefits on the peoples of the area—even more than they may be aware. The Himalayas have given them the life-sustaining waters which have enabled them to give full vent to their creative genius and give rise to several different civilizations. It is, therefore, appropriate that sometime at this point of time in this vast span of timelessness, one should pause and, in one's own humble way, return with gratitude something to the Himalayas. In this case, it is obviously a question of managing, preserving, and renewing their ecosystems.

India is rather uniquely situated, vis-a-vis the Himalayas, because we have, first of all, territorial jurisdiction over a very large proportion of them. We are, at the same time, directly affected—in that region which we control, as well as other regions below other Himalayan countries—by any imbalance or deterioration in the environmental ecology of the Himalayas.

We, in India, therefore, together with the other Himalayan countries, have a very special responsibility for preserving and renewing their ecosystem.

We are always grateful for the assistance that other countries may be able to render towards this noble and very laudable objective. It must be borne in mind, however, that the functioning or the success of the Centre—the functioning of which will be watched with great interest—will really depend on the outcome of a meeting of minds. This meeting of minds, apart from the work the Centre may carry out in the future, will have to be conditioned by governmental action in the areas concerned. We must not, at any time, arrogate to ourselves—that is to say, those who are working in the Centre or those who will work even indirectly with it from time to time—the role of arbiters or the decision-makers for the entire Himalayan area.

It is first and foremost the Himalayan countries which have the responsibility and, while any external input that may come to it is always welcome, the primary responsibility will always lie upon them, which includes the important decisions that may be taken in the future regarding the renewal and preservation of the Himalayan ecosystems.

We certainly welcome the assistance of other countries from other similarly affected areas, but there is a difference between high population area models and low population area models. The two have some relevance for each other but are not identical. It is in that context that it is a question of supplementing local or indigenous efforts, not supplanting them. This is a very important distinction which, for the successful future working of the Centre, one must bear in mind.

Earlier, Dr. Maurice Strong, in his excellent statement, likened the Centre, its foundation, and its inauguration today, to that of a newly born child which has to be very carefully nursed and nurtured and looked after until it grows into adulthood. We must keep in mind the fact that the newly born child has to be nurtured by his parents, or, at the most, by very close relatives, not by the neighbour next door. This is a very important consideration which, I think, we shall have to follow as the rule of thumb in this case also.

Over the last four days, we have been working out the work programme, among other things, for the future functioning of the Centre. It is, indeed, an interesting work programme, but I would like to suggest that before it is formally considered as officially a part of the documentation of the Centre for future implementation, it might be a useful idea to give it a very extensive airing and individual hearing in the eight countries concerned. I am sure that when the document prepared in the last four days goes before experts and others in various international seminars, a great many new ideas—ideas which could even supplement the programme already adopted—would arise. They would be of considerable assistance to the future functioning of the Centre. Therefore, one should not be in a tremendous hurry just to go ahead and implement something merely because it has been discussed in these four days here in Kathmandu, however laudable and worthy the individual contributions may have been to it.

We are aware, for example, that in the Himalayan areas the greatest nuisance, or the greatest danger to ecology, has been deforestation. This is something that the Centre, and, even more, the governments of the member nations will have to concentrate upon much more in the years to come. For example, deforestation has been caused, as we all know, by lack of fuel for cooking and heating purposes. It is here, just to cite an example, that the bio-gas examples could be very relevant. We have about 500,000 such plants operating in India, and, perhaps, it is just this kind of sharing of experiences among ourselves that could initially set the ball rolling in a happy direction.

With these words, may I thank you once again and once again convey my warm appreciation to the Government and people of Nepal for their very kind hospitality.

Thank you.



# Country Statement—Pakistan

Hasan Nawab

At the end of this symposium, which coincides with the end of autumn in Nepal, the season of "mellow fruitfulness", we see the rawness of our ideas about ICIMOD ripen into a burgeoning programme of action.

While embarking on this programme on the basis of a truly felt need, let us, here and now, clear our ecological philosophy of all obscurities. As I see it, heredity and environment are the two ultimate categories of the phenomenon called Life. Of these, environment is our immediate concern. It has both clearly discernible parameters and imponderables that defy analysis. It is one of those things that is to be treated as a whole. It intimately affects the totality of living organisms within its ambit, its flora and fauna, the plant and the animal, including man. By constant interaction with it, the living organisms attain an equilibrium, a balance that is delicate and precarious in the extreme, even in the case of a gigantic mountain, like the fragile heart beating in the body of a rugged human being. Erosion of the topsoil constitutes the heart-break of the giant called the mountain.

Culture, to me, is the ultimate product of environment in the long chain of cause and effect. A dynamic culture is only a movement of the human ecosystem in time. It is the accumulated overlayings of ages on that basic foundation. But it is the prerogative of man only. Other living organisms, the plants and the animals, live and have their being at different environmental levels other than the cultural level. Environment is an ecosystem in general. Cultural is a particular, human ecosystem. It is a

value system that applies only to a human society and not to an animal herd.

I would, therefore, like to see all the phenomena of environment in the light of culture, its end product. Paradoxically enough, we know more about cultures or value systems than about ecosystems in general. In ICIMOD we will have to use our cultural insights in the generalized study of ecosystems of mountains.

Both systems have common features. Culture is earth rooted. So is an ecosystem. Both have a delicate balance and are always precariously poised on the brink of irreversible disruption. Societies suffer anguish when thrown into a changed culture; so do herds of cattle and yaks when their environment is changed; so do the groves of trees and plantations when their ecosystem is disturbed by logging or landslide.

For ICIMOD, the watchword will have to be a multi-disciplinary approach to all problems of mountains instead of a mono-disciplinary methodology. Forestry is not the only subject relevant in the management of forests; there is the biology of forests, the economics of forests, the history of forests, the sociology of forests, and their people. A total tackling of problems will alone make ICIMOD a viable institution in future. We hope that the overall guidelines which will be provided from time to time to ICIMOD by its international Board of Governors will steer it clear of the otherwise usual course of lopsidedness and routine.