SUSTAINABLE MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT

in the greater Himalayan region

Greater Voice for All Mountain Peoples

Improved Access to and Benefits from Genetic Resources for Mountain People

Language Diversity: A Multitude of Mountain Voices

Assessing the First UN Decade of Indigenous Peoples in Asia

Advocacy Tools for Empowering the Marginalised

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From the Director General's desk….

Following the tumultuous Spring of 2006 in Kathmandu, there is now a new agreement and a reason to hope that a new path to lasting peace in Nepal will follow. The transitional phase ushered in by these events continues to be rocked by upheavals, and loud demands from those who have felt excluded from economic prosperity and decision-making. As with excluded and ignored or discriminated groups elsewhere in the Himalayan region, this assertiveness takes on either political or violent forms if not addressed to the satisfaction of the people concerned.

While the future of Nepal continues to remain uncertain in 2007, issues of social and economic exclusion that have come to the fore reinforce the new directions taken by ICIMOD and reported in this issue. Increasing access of marginalised mountain peoples to better and more sustainable livelihoods is central to ICIMOD's mission. Providing mountain peoples with better opportunities to voice their concerns and empowering them to play responsible roles in managing their resources through sound knowledge are some of ICIMOD's most important strategic objectives.

The articles in this issue provide examples of how ICIMOD is working with state and NGO partners throughout our Himalayan region to address these objectives. Building the knowledge base for wiser policies, strengthening institutions for grassroots learning and sharing, providing tools for more scientific and effective policy advocacy, and documenting the need and opportunities for marginalised communities to increase their access to – and control over – the natural resources are the major elements of our work with partners.

The task of building more inclusive societies and decision-making systems in these mountainous areas, containing hundreds of different ethnic and social groups with long histories of both cooperation and conflict, is huge. It is also never ending – as new configurations and opportunities also bring with them new winners and losers – and new needs to adapt to the rapidly growing and changing societies of China and South Asia. We are pleased that ICIMOD is working with a wide group of partners to help mountain peoples increase their resilience, integrate their livelihoods with new opportunities, and take their rightful roles in more equitable and inclusive decision making institutions.

I thank Dr. Michael Kollmair, our Programme Manager for Culture, Equity, Gender and Governance (CEGG) for putting together this issue. I also thank all the authors, our partners, and editors for their hard work.

As this will be my last issue as Director General, I also want to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to all of you for a full and satisfying two terms with ICIMOD. To our Board of Governors, our ICIMOD Support Group, our many wonderful research and development partners, I express my profound gratitude. I also thank particularly our regional member countries and our host country, Nepal, for all their support and assistance. Finally, I thank most of all my colleagues in ICIMOD for the opportunity to work together, become friends, and jointly serve the mountain people and environments of the magnificent Himalayan region.
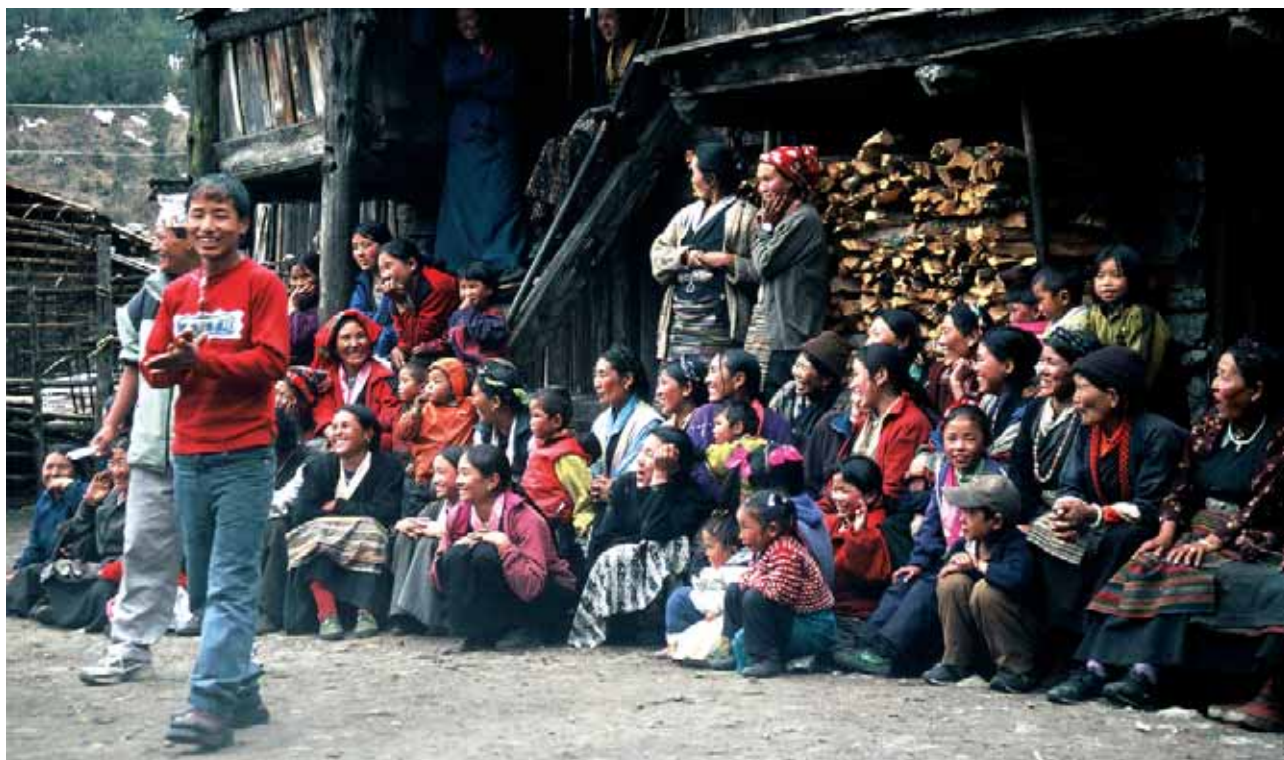
Thank you all very much.

I look forward to continuing our cooperation and friendship in the future in other ways, and to your continuing support for ICIMOD and our shared mission.

J. Gabriel Campbell
March 2007

Greater Voice for All Mountain People in the Himalayan Region

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A gathering for a nature conservation project in Walangchung Gola in the remote far eastern part of Nepal

In this issue of *Sustainable Mountain Development* we focus on how ICIMOD and our partners try to contribute to a more equitable society in which the voices of all mountain people are heard.

People living in mountainous areas often have to live in remote places at the fringes of states with weak infrastructure and limited access to means of communication. Their fair share of political and social representation is not always ensured and they are not entitled to influence the power relations controlling their livelihood options. The inequalities of opportunities are manifold: mainstream societal norms and institutions which discriminate against ethnic groups, gender, and age. In other words, physical and social marginalisation has kept the voices of *all* mountain people from being heard adequately.

In the ICIMOD context, ensuring 'greater voice' means enhancing the capacities of individuals to influence the decisions that shape their lives. This relates closely to the concept of equity, of a fair treatment of all individuals. In general we can relate these issues to the well-known concepts of empowerment, participation, and social inclusion leading to more equity in a society. With the focus on the 'rights-based approach', which makes

an intrinsic link between the right to development and human rights, governments and development agencies have over the last two decades increasingly turned their attention to issues of equity.

However, structural economic and political inequalities are embedded in social and cultural institutions. Unfortunately, these cultural and societal structures tend to be readily reproduced. Girls and women have had limited options for individual development (education, health, power, assets) for generations, so why should it change now?

Equity is a normative concept which means different things to different people, but nevertheless is in the core of development theory and practice. All societies have abundant normative rules, like ideals on social justice, and support for a more equitable society. In addition, economists argue that equity matters also instrumentally because it generates more efficiency and sustainable development (World Bank 2006).

A basic argument for the promotion of more equitable societies is that they perform better on an economic, societal, and sustainable scale. However, promoting equity creates costs that return only in the long run, and therefore it is difficult to see that this is the key element of all possible development strategy.

Inefficiency in a society is also created by inequality in access to facilities that enable income generation. Unequal access to political rights also leads to hindrances in economic development. A society where the governance system is not adopted because it does not allow equitable political voice of all its citizens wastes valuable resources for development. Excessive inequity and weak institutions could finally generate serious disorder in society, like crime and violence, or even political instability and conflict.

New and innovative forms of governance are required to address the complexities and uncertainties associated to rapid change (institutional, economic, and cultural) related to globalisation processes. A better understanding of local knowledge and practices can help to identify what are important and can be promoted at various levels. Building upon local knowledge and practices – that is, capitalising on local strengths whenever relevant – can decrease dependencies on external aid. However, the main obstacle societies in the region need to overcome is the gap between policy and practice.

Throughout the region there is a move towards more democratic governance systems. More and more people see themselves and act as citizens of democratic states than as subjects of an authoritarian government with no say in development issues. Very often in the development debate, 'reduction of poverty' although the main aim, is reduced to economic growth and wealth accumulation. The relevance of equitable distribution of growth, welfare, and income is often overlooked.

Policies supporting equitable societies must cover all members of the society. Poverty reduction policies that are only oriented towards the poor and not the rest of the population are prone to fail. We should not pursue the illusion that it is possible to come to more equitable societies without raising a fair share of contributions from people who can afford it, and without reducing the

influence of elites in state organisations. Creating more inclusive societies is not a one-time achievement; it is a long-term and dynamic process. It needs a permanent bargaining mechanism on the fair contribution of responsibilities, resources, and power.

The examples featured in this journal illustrate how ICIMOD and its partners contribute to raising the voice of the mountain people. And they raise the questions: Why do societies often forget the most vulnerable people in disasters? Who gets benefits from the abundant biological and genetic resources of the mountains? Why are indigenous peoples excluded? Why do we prefer external knowledge before hearing the people? But they also provide some answers to these pertinent questions. If marginalised groups use their rights and organise themselves, they raise their voices in an organised way and increase their chances of being heard.

> **Inequity and weak institutions could generate serious disorder in a society, like crime and violence, political instability, and conflict.**

The article by Turin shows impressively how diverse the 'voices' of the mountain people are. Considering only language diversity, several hundred languages are spoken in the Himalayan region, of which over 400 are spoken by minorities of less than 100,000 people. With examples from Nepal and Sikkim he shows also how complex language policies are, and how a fair approach could look like.

The relevance of the category 'indigenous peoples' is exemplified in Gupta's article. Indigeneity has come to a centre-stage in a time marked by ethnic strife and conflict in many parts of the world. Indigenous groups are under threat by political and economic marginalisation, cultural stigmatisation, and their lack of rights and persistent poverty. Some indigenous peoples criticise that national and international development programmes often demonstrate little sensitivity to the cultural difference and special resources of indigenous peoples. However, with the 'Decade of Indigenous Peoples', the implementation of an international convention, and the creation of representation at the UN level, the voices of indigenous peoples are now much better heard. They are explicitly mentioned in the CBD and its access and benefit sharing mechanisms. ICIMOD activities to support the implementation of an ABS regime in the Himalayan region with a strong focus on equitable benefit sharing for all mountain people are accounted by the article of Oli, Dasgupta, and Dhakal.

The CBD recognises the state's sovereignty over genetic resources. However, this does not touch the ownership rights for biological and genetic resources by local people, and their right to benefit from the use of these resources as determined by national laws.

ICIMOD and its partners raise the awareness at the citizens' level by developing and disseminating information materials on the processes and potential benefits of an ABS regime. Media awareness programmes are also in place. In many cases the efforts are pioneering, as the concept of an ABS regime is very new.

The importance of accounting for and integrating local knowledge into poverty reduction projects gained recognition within academia, inter-national development agencies, NGOs, and with policymakers since the '80s. Interestingly, local knowledge and practices have been barely explored in the field of disaster preparedness. Accounting for them can substantially support national and international organisations to better formulate and plan for disaster and implement disaster preparedness plans. The article by Dekens gives a good example of how this can contribute to a build-up of mutual trust, acceptability, common understanding, and a community sense of ownership and self-confidence. She proposes a framework that aims to contribute towards a greater sensitivity to and a better understanding of local knowledge on disaster preparedness.

Very closely linked in theme is the article by Mehta, stressing the inclusion of gender consideration in disaster preparedness. In nearly all kinds of disaster females suffer higher mortality rates, and despite women's roles as 'first responders' in disasters they tend to be excluded from policy and decision-making in reconstruction efforts. The experience of disasters in the region illustrates how physiological vulnerabilities, socio-cultural and economic marginalisation, and gender stereotypes can make all the difference in whether an individual manages to survive a disaster or not, and if having survived, the extent of access he or she has to aid and rehabilitation afterwards.

Apart from physiological and biological factors different kinds of 'cultural permisions' between women and men and a 'learned powerlessness' in girls and women account for gender-differentiated mortality rates, in much of the Himalayan region. Evidence from the Pakistan earthquake suggests there was a higher

Michael Kollmair

A mountain family in Bajura district, Nepal

female mortality rate in areas where 'purdah' norms prevailed.

Gender matters in disaster risk reduction. Here equity pays again: more equitable responses to people in crises helps to ensure that human and material resources are used more efficiently. ICIMOD with its disaster preparedness project is ideally situated to initiate dialogues on gender and disaster with practitioners in the region at the policy, development, and field levels. The Centre could facilitate documenting and disseminating lessons learned and best practices emerging from disasters that have taken place across the region. The challenge is for national governments and the development community to find the political will and capacity to develop and put gender-sensitive methodologies into practice.

To raise the voice of marginalised people, ICIMOD has several activities that could be placed under the umbrella of advocacy (Subedi and Kollmair). Support of civil society in the mountain areas is one of the most effective ways to enhance democratisation and good governance. A key focus of civil society is to empower their constituency by undertaking lawful, people-oriented advocacy to safeguard people's rights.

Advocacy is a relatively new concept in the development arena. As part of the rights-based approach it functions

as a tool to protect individual and group rights which have been denied by other actors. The rights-based approach argues that the absence of a process of realising fundamental human rights and freedoms calls for advocacy to attain them in a respectful manner.

Past lessons indicate that NGOs and community-based organisations and their networks in mountain areas are able to advocate better by bringing the issues in the sphere of public debate to exert greater influence in local, national, and regional policies. Under this changed context, civil society organisations can play important roles negotiating between the state and market mechanisms to hold both accountable to the people they are supposed to serve.

The case study of Jana shows how the lives of indigenous communities dependent on the natural resources in Southern Nepal have been affected by biodiversity conservation efforts. The marginalised groups of Bote-Majhis and Musahars in these communities have never been at the centre of the conservation discourse, nor have they had adequate voice in the global environmental movements that have affected their lives. Their struggles and sufferings have not found adequate space in research, mainstream media, or popular discourse.

Despite the so-called 'democratisation' in Nepal, the National Park authorities simultaneously confiscated boats and fishing nets in several villages in 1993. One of the community leaders remembers: "The incident shook us. A ringing in our ears nagged: Why are we silent? If our forefathers have grown up to this land, river, and forest, why can't we exercise our rights over these resources?" By organising themselves and raising their voices together they could achieve improvements in their livelihood situation.

The struggle of indigenous peoples like the Bote-Majhis and Musahars has exerted its influence on the contemporary debate on democratisation and in rethinking the policies governing protected areas and wildlife conservation in Nepal and elsewhere. Their experiences as a part of a movement for life and dignity illustrates how the spontaneous resistance of marginalised communities, when it takes the shape of a non-violent movement, could engage powerful conservation agencies and influence democratic practices and state policy.

An ICIMOD-supported initiative which tries to influence the voice of the citizens at a policy level is described in the article of Dhakal. The "Right-to-Information' (RTI) legislations have a comparably short history in the Himalayan region, even if the concept is well-known long since. It ensures the citizens' right to information about all state activities. RTI has both a governance as well as a rights perspective. It helps governance systems function better, holds service providers accountable for their actions, and creates a participatory and transparent environment for people to contribute to policy formulation and establishing the rule of law. Correct information at the right time reduces the chances to misuse resources and lessens corruption. It also gives people a legal right to demand entitlements and monitor the use or misuse of funds meant for the public good.

Advocacy can serve as a tool to achieve changes in a constructive, constitutional, and peaceful manner.

India is considered the regional pioneer in implementing the RTI law. The Indian RTI movement originating from Rajasthan is well known and has attracted stakeholders in many countries. The demand for an RTI law has taken the form of a mass movement at the grassroots level in India, with a strong advocacy component. Through the advocacy of ICIMOD-supported groups, an RTI law will most likely be promulgated and implemented in Nepal in the near future to achieve inclusive democracy for its citizens. However, broad sections of the society must be made aware of this legislation and strong enforcement will be needed for the law's effective use.

All voices should be heard, and societies must make the decision on how to include all the different voices in their governance system. And finally, it is important to understand that equity matters – always and everywhere!

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Improved Access to and Benefits from Genetic Resources for Mountain People

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Mountain women carrying fodder in Rasuwa district, Nepal, on the way to Langtang National Park

Access to biological resources and benefit sharing is characterised by power inequities between people of influence and marginalised people. The challenge is to ensure a transition in the power relations towards a more equitable sharing of benefits and to guarantee greater voice for marginalised mountain people.

This paper highlights the emergence of an Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) regime and discusses key issues of ownership over genetic resources, and how ICIMOD is addressing the issues while supporting the security of livelihoods of mountain people.

Emergence of an Access and Benefit Sharing regime

Before 1992, access to biological and genetic resources for economic gain was relatively free and did not have to adhere to a benefit-sharing regime. In 1993, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) moved away from the concept of a *"common heritage of mankind"* over biological resources and associated traditional knowledge and established the notion of conservation of biodiversity as a *"common concern of humankind"*. The Convention thus transferred the sovereign rights over natural resources to individual nations and, by that, "the authority to determine access to genetic resources rests with the national governments and is subject to national legislation''. Article 15(5) of the Convention on Biological Diversity requires the users of genetic resources to obtain the permission (prior informed consent) of the nation where the resources are located before they are taken out.

The CBD emphasises conservation, sustainable use of biodiversity, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from its use and associated knowledge. Following the CBD, the Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) was enacted in 2004; it aims to establish a multilateral system of access and benefit sharing of plant genetic resources for food security and agriculture. Payments are required from persons and entities who commercially use such resources and payments are to be made to nations from which such resources originate (Moore and Tymowski 2005).

Sovereignty and ownership

Though the CBD and ITPGRFA affirmed the sovereignty of the nation-states, the challenge lies in understanding, applying, and negotiating what sovereignty and ownership means in the context of biological diversity use while facilitating access for bioprospecting. The Convention recognises the state's sovereignty over (not ownership of) genetic resources. Ownership of biological resources including genetic resources is determined by national law. If the federal or central

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The aim of the ABS Project is to promote more equitable access rights for marginalised groups and communities in the Himalayan region.

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government grants lands and resource ownership to a province, district, local level entity, or the private sector, this does not affect national sovereignty over these genetic resources. However, the federal system can also grant administrative powers to its lower levels or units of governance to develop and implement regulations that ensure such sovereignty. Regarding the use of genetic resources the different apparatuses of the state may become, in fact, the implementers of national sovereignty.

On the other hand, there is often confusion over the precise distinction between the terms, 'genetic', and 'biological resources'. Bio-logical resources (for example, the trees or microbes) are subject to ownership legislation and regulation. Genetic resources – any material of plant, animal, microbial, or other origin containing functional units of heredity – are basically genetic materials and information existing at the level of molecules and cannot

be owned by anyone in particular because it would be like "owning the DNA" of a particular species of tree. The sovereignty of every national government allows it to regulate access to the DNA of the living resources in its territory. This is not directly related to the ownership of a biological resource like a tree. The only link is the law; legal measures may establish procedures such as prior informed consent and mutually agreed terms of the owner of the biological material (e.g., the tree's owner) for collecting parts of the tree, as well as benefit sharing with the tree's owner, if and when the resulting product produces benefits.

While discussions over ownership of biological resources is ongoing at both the local, national, and international levels, several countries have initiated activities to implement the CBD within their national jurisdictions. Many institutions are also involved in facilitating the process of developing an ABS regime so that local and indigenous communities can benefit from accessing their biological resources. ICIMOD is active in facilitating the ABS process with support from GTZ, Germany in four countries of the eastern Himalaya: Nepal, India, Bangladesh, and Bhutan.

Project overview

The aim of the ABS Project is to facilitate the access and benefit sharing process and raise awareness and enhance the capacity of marginalised communities in the Eastern Himalayan region for it. In this context, the project is working with eight partners to promote more equitable access rights for marginalised groups and communities. The project's interventions have been designed to have impact on two levels: (i) at the level of the citizenry, where the idea is to impart awareness about ABS-related issues, and (ii) at the government level, providing policy-related research

ABS Project

Meeting with traditional knowledge holders in Chirang, Bhutan as part of ABS project monitoring

K. P. Oli

Marketing traditional knowledge of local women in Darjeeling district, West Bengal, India poses a challenge

inputs that can be used to develop a more socially inclusive ABS regime. At the regional level, efforts are being undertaken to develop a common regional ABS strategy to facilitate access of genetic resources and the fair and equitable share of benefits on a regional level by the holders of such resources.

At the citizens' level, the project and its partners have developed and are disseminating information materials to raise awareness on the processes and potential benefits of an ABS regime. In many cases the efforts are pioneering, as the concept of an ABS regime is very new. The programme has helped add value to the efforts to foster an ABS regime by building the capacities of our partners, and the process has strengthened many civil society institutions. The project is also working with international and regional networks like Mountain Forum and the Himalayan Grassroots Women's Natural Resource Management Association (HIMAWANTI) to promote a more socially inclusive and gendered ABS paradigm. Media awareness programmes covering both print and electronic media are in place. In Nepal, the Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists (NEFEJ) is playing a leading role, publishing ABS-related articles in their quarterly magazine, *Haka Haki,* airing programmes on Sagarmatha Radio, and producing an exclusive episode on the ABS for the *Aankhijhyal* programme on Nepal television. Other project partners are expected to carry out similar advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns on the ABS across the region.

Tara Dhakal

Rare wild mushrooms found in Maipokhari, Ilam, Nepal

At the policy level, the process of developing policy-based research has been initiated. The research findings will influence the long-term implementation of an ABS regime in the member countries by creating empirical evidences of the claims of marginalised communities. The project is also providing technical support on ABS laws at different levels. Such inputs have helped familiarise lawmakers with the ABS scenarios, both at the international and regional levels. An ABS policy for the states of Nagaland and Mizoram in India is being developed as a result of state level workshops held with support from ICIMOD. An Eastern Himalayan ABS Strategy based on other regional ABS strategies, like the Andean Pact, is also being developed. The rationale behind a regional strategy is that ecological and political boundaries do not coincide and a large part of knowledge and genetic resources are commonly shared in the region. A regional strategy will also enhance the bargaining power of all the Eastern Himalayan countries.

Conclusion

The development of an ABS regime is a complicated process and it is easy to lose sight of the realities of poverty and marginalisation on the ground. ICIMOD's regional member countries are in different stages of developing and implementing an ABS regime. But an ABS regime alone, no matter how good, cannot guarantee fair and equitable benefit sharing for poor mountain communities who are the holders of these resources unless their awareness and power to negotiate their share and rights are enhanced. If the poor are not aware of, and their capacity to understand the value of genetic resources and associated knowledge are not strengthened, the arising benefits may not be shared equitably. The aim of the ABS Project should therefore be how its benefits could be brought to marginalised groups and not concentrated only among groups who are able to influence laws and policies.

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A Multitude of Mountain Voices

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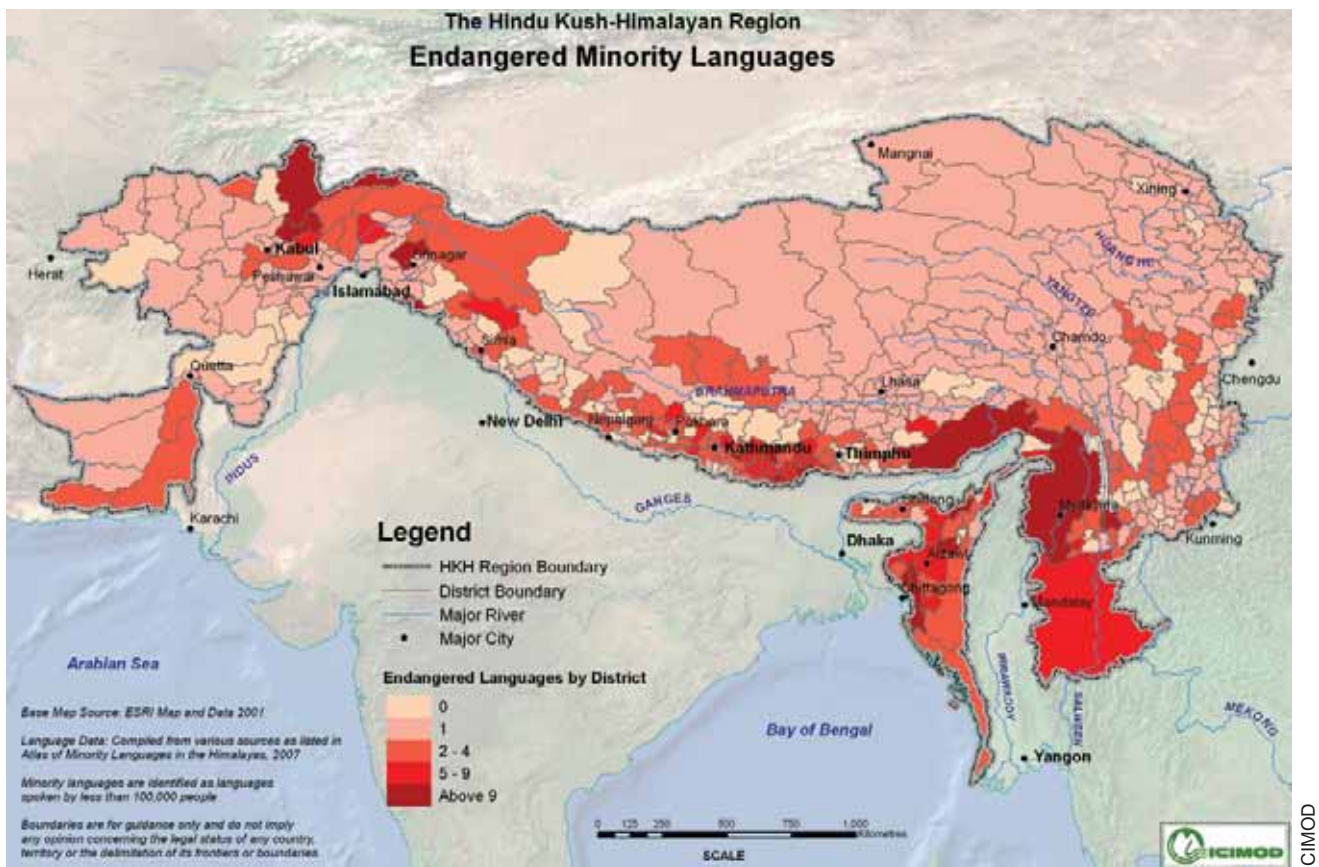
Distribution of endangered minority languages in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region

The greater Himalayan region sustains over 150 million people and is home to many of Asia's most endangered languages. Moving across the region, Afghanistan boasts 47 living languages, Bangladesh is home to 39, Bhutan has 24, China 235, India 415, Myanmar 108, Nepal 123, and Pakistan 72 (Ethnologue 2005, online edition)**.**

The Himalayan region is included in the 34 biodiversity 'mega centres' or 'hotspots' of the world. But since this stretch of mountainous Asia is also home to one-sixth of all human languages, it should be thought of as a linguistic and cultural 'mega centre' as well.

According to the most conservative projections, at least half of the world's 6,500 languages will become extinct in the next century. While the documentation of endangered mother tongues has traditionally been the domain of academic linguists and anthropologists, international awareness about this impending socio-cultural catastrophe is growing, and development organisations are becoming involved in the struggle to preserve spoken forms. The death of a language marks the loss of yet another piece of cultural uniqueness and inalienable heritage from the mosaic of our diverse planet, and is therefore a loss for all of humanity. Language death is often compared to species extinction,

and the same metaphors of preservation and diversity can be invoked to canvas support for biodiversity as well as language documentation and preservation programmes.

Over the last two years, ICIMOD's Culture, Equity, Gender and Governance (CEGG) Programme has been investigating the interrelation between linguistic diversity and biodiversity, and how these issues correlate to the Centre's mandate to improve the sustainable livelihoods of mountain peoples in the extended Himalayan region. In this short article, I provide an overview of the three main language-related projects in which CEGG has recently been engaged.

Mapping linguistic diversity

Recent international research points to an intriguing correlation: language diversity appears to be inversely

A student doing her Lepcha homework by candlelight in North Sikkim, India: the teaching of local vernaculars in school is encouraging and gives symbolic value to the mother tongue, even if it does not ensure verbal proficiency.

related to latitude, and areas rich in languages also tend to be rich in ecology and species. Both biodiversity and linguistic diversity are concentrated between the tropics in inaccessible mountainous environments such as the Himalayas, while diversity of all forms decrease in deserts.

Building on ICIMOD's strengths in mapping and in conceptualising all forms of diversity, we prepared an interactive digital atlas of endangered languages of the Himalayan region to test the above hypothesis. Do endangered languages indeed cluster in areas of geographical inaccessibility? Which districts of the Himalayan region are most linguistically diverse? And how does ethno-linguistic diversity correlate with biodiversity hotspots?

Working with publicly available data on the distribution of Himalayan languages and their alleged levels of endangerment, we constructed a database of all mother tongues used in the Himalayan region with less than 100,000 speakers. This process isolated 415 languages which lie at some point on the continuum between comparable safe and moribund. With support from MENRIS, an interactive digital mapping tool using Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG) was designed and developed. The tool allows the users to search and retrieve data on endangered mother tongues spoken in the Himalayan region. The central interface is a scalable, zoomable map of all mountainous administrative units of the ICIMOD member countries, onto which cities and rivers can be overlaid. Users can select from a list of language families, or from

individual languages, and see in which districts they are spoken. More information about each language and its distribution, the number of speakers, and its endangered status are provided in colour tabs. We hope that this visually-rich language mapping tool will help those involved in development, advocacy, and policy to get an accurate picture of the distribution of endangered minority languages in the region. The CD is presently in production, and the online version will be hosted at **http://www.icimod.org**.

Linguistic Diversity and the Preservation of Endangered Languages: A Case Study from Nepal

The first addition to ICIMOD's *Talking Points* series in 2007 will be a short monograph with the above title. The *Talking Points* series contains short presentations of topical, controversial, or problematic themes where general consensus has not yet been reached or where action may be appropriate. The series is intended to stimulate thought and discussion.

The discussion paper situates language in its social context, specifically within Nepal, but in general across the greater Himalayan region. Language rights and access to education in one's mother tongue are fundamental aspects of sustainable livelihoods, all the more so when the languages and communities who speak them are under threat. In this issue of *Talking Points*, I begin by discussing the linguistic diversity of Nepal in the frame of wider debates about diversity of all forms, and move on to situate language in the context

of ecology, the state, the legal system, the national census, the media, the education sector, gender, the Maoist insurgency, and finally, culture. The last section is devoted to comparative examples from other states in the Himalayan region and to an analysis of government institutions and non-government organisations that are supporting linguistic rights in Nepal. Throughout, the frame of reference has been to position language in the context of wider social and cultural issues.

It is intended that policy makers will benefit from an increased appreciation of the complexity of the ethnolinguistic fabric of modern Nepal on the ground, and that scholars will pause for a moment to reflect on the formation and implementation of suitable policy. Alongside a print edition, this paper will be available for download from: **http://www.icimod.org/home/pub/publications.php?pcid=2**

A linguistic survey of Sikkim

In collaboration with the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, and with financial and institutional support from ICIMOD, we are conducting the first modern linguistic survey of the State of Sikkim. The survey has three main objectives:

(i) to compile an inventory of all of the languages spoken in Sikkim

(ii) to determine the geographical distribution of each language spoken as a mother tongue in this Himalayan state through a 30-question survey form distributed to school children at every secondary school in the state

(iii) to estimate the number of speakers of each language on the basis of disaggregated census data, roof counts and on-site field investigation, and to collect accurate GPS readings of the locations where languages are spoken

A baseline linguistic survey of a state is an essential requirement for planning language policy in education, media, and the public sphere. Detailed linguistic surveys have been conducted in Nepal (1986) and Bhutan (1991), the findings of which have augmented rudimentary data already available from national census bureaus. Building on data already in the public domain, the linguistic survey field team travelled to the four districts of Sikkim to visit local schools and

administrative offices in order to better understand the complex linguistic reality of the Sikkimese state. While the detailed results of this survey will be published at a later date, four preliminary findings can already be made.

First, the spread of Nepali is far more extensive than expected, and aside from several Lepcha and Bhutia students from more traditional families, the vast majority of students now speak Nepali in almost all situations.

Second, the issue of self-ascribed mother tongue is politically charged and, in certain circumstances, may be more of an ancestral ethnic label than an indication of spoken competence or fluency. In some cases, students offered a language which they themselves did not even speak as their mother tongue.

Third, the mother tongues of the communities whose ancestors came from Nepal are particularly under threat: most of their descendants no longer speak Gurung, Newar, and Tamang, only Nepali.

Fourth, the teaching of local vernaculars as subjects in school is very encouraging and helps give symbolic value to the mother tongue, even if this does not ensure spoken proficiency.

Through these interlinked research projects, ICIMOD's CEGG programme is exploring ways to introduce a layer of programmatic support for projects focused on linguistic and cultural diversity. Only by understanding and embracing diversity at all levels will we be able to build sustainable mountain societies that enhance equity and empower marginalised mountain people across the Himalayan region.

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Assessing the First UN Decade of Indigenous Peoples in Asia: Achievements and Gaps

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J. Gabriel Campbell

Tamang Shamans of Nepal

Even as caste, class, and gender, the three traditional poles of social inclusion, continue to remain important in the ongoing discussions on indigenous people, a fourth pole: ethnicity and indigeneity, has come centre-stage in a contemporary era marked by ethnic strife and conflict in many parts of the world.

The identity of the 'indigenous' has now been accepted as legitimate, underscored by the direct correlation between their political and economic marginalisation, cultural stigmatisation, and their lack of rights and persistent poverty. With the focus on social inclusion, participatory development and the 'rights-based approach', which makes an intrinsic link between the right to development and human rights, development agencies have over the last two decades increasingly turned their attention to indigenous peoples around the world. Several initiatives have been promoted to empower indigenous peoples. Perhaps the most significant was the declaration by the United Nations of 1995-2004 as the first 'International Decade of Indigenous People'. As this Decade came to a close, it was followed immediately with the pronouncement of a second Decade (2005-2014), indicating that many issues from the first remained unresolved.

In 2005, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in collaboration with ICIMOD and the Tebtebba Foundation, embarked upon an assessment of the first Decade in ten countries in Asia – a continent that is home to 70% of the world's indigenous peoples. An assessment of the first Decade came at a critical juncture, where the reflection on the successes and failures of the Decade and an analysis of the outstanding issues could serve as a benchmark and baseline upon which strategies and actions for the second decade could be developed. While this defined the broader objective of the assessment, a more specific focus of enquiry was to examine how pronouncements such as this at the international level, at the behest of institutions like the United Nations, translate into concrete changes at the policy and programme levels in individual countries. The ten countries covered by the assessment were Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, and Nepal, by ICIMOD; and Cambodia, Indonesia,

Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam, by the Tebtebba Foundation. This article provides a glimpse into some of the findings emerging from the assessment.

Disaggregating the overall Impact of the Decade

The overall impact of the Decade could be disaggregated on two levels. First, by looking at the changes at the international level, and more specifically within the UN system compared to changes at the national levels. Second, by gauging the perception of the impact of the Decade as seen in how awareness of it differs among indigenous activists and the common indigenous person at the grassroots.

The most marked achievement of the Decade at the international level was the creation of a heightened awareness on indigenous peoples issues, which in turn exerted what may be called an intangible moral pressure on UN agencies and nation-states to address, in some way, the issue of marginalisation of indigenous peoples. At the level of the UN system, the creation of a 'Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues' as a space where, for the first time, indigenous people and states could discuss among themselves and with each other the problems they face, has been the most significant achievement. The Permanent Forum meets once a year and makes recommendations to the Economic and Social Council. Some UN agencies such as IFAD, ILO, and UNDP have been more active than others in developing specific policies and programmes for indigenous peoples. Yet, ironically, the level of awareness about the Decade amongst the staff of these agencies at the country level was quite low. The

Sanjay Madnani

Virtually no projects were implemented by the states for indigenous people despite the Decade (Nagaland, India)

lack of coordination amongst UN agencies on thematic issues was again reflected through this Decade. Lack of sufficient funds has been cited as one of the reasons by the UN itself as a reason for its limited activities during the Decade.

Further, the limited influence of the UN within the context of the sovereignty of nation-states must be kept in mind, especially on issues of indigenous peoples. Indicative of this is that most states still do not accord official legitimacy to the term indigenous, leave alone 'peoples', but refer to them variously as tribals, ethnic minorities, traditional people, upland people, amongst others, and that no state in Asia has ratified ILO Convention 169 (with the exception of Nepal, where ratification is in process).

> **The most significant achievement of the Decade is heightened awareness on indigenous peoples' issues around the world.**

The level of awareness of the Decade, its objectives, and 'Programme of Activities', differed radically between indigenous leaders and activists who have had the opportunity to take part in meetings of the UN and other conferences at the international level, or are active in lobbying for rights at the national level, and the common indigenous person at the grassroots level. In fact, several indigenous people have made allegations that the UN system did not encourage a more inclusive, wide-ranging, or rotational participation in its processes, leading to new forms of power and hierarchy amongst indigenous peoples themselves.

That awareness of the Decade did not permeate the grassroots, in turn, points to the need to ensure greater responsibility on the part of indigenous leaders to create awareness, as well as the need for agencies to make greater investments in awareness creation and capacity building at different levels. Without this, Decades such as this do not touch the lives of the common indigenous person in any way, unless the mere objective is to promote negotiations at the international level.

Those aware of the Decade, however, unequivocally stated that one of its most valuable outcomes was to foster greater solidarity amongst indigenous peoples in different parts of the world. The course of the Decade saw the formation of several indigenous peoples' organisations and networks that are at the

forefront of advocacy for indigenous peoples' rights in their respective countries. The celebration of the 'International Day of Indigenous Peoples' every 9 August has become a symbolic marker of the struggle and solidarity of indigenous peoples around the world, while also contributing to raising awareness on indigenous peoples issues in civil society.

Policy changes

In the last decade several policy changes, both positive and negative, can be seen in most countries, which directly or indirectly have an influence on the lives of indigenous peoples. However, these changes cannot be attributed directly to the Decade. They would have taken place regardless of the Decade and were more an outcome of the long struggles that indigenous peoples have been waging. Major changes have been often an outcome of changes in political regimes in some countries (e.g., in Cambodia, Indonesia, and Nepal), which created spaces for renegotiating the relationship between the state and its citizens.

Where positive policies and laws do exist from the perspective of indigenous peoples, there is a lack of political commitment in effective implementation. Further, the policy terrain is a disordered one, with contradictions and a lack of coordination among different sectorial policies, particularly under the pressure of new economic imperatives driven by neo-liberal policies and globalisation, which are not always conducive to indigenous peoples rights. Budgetary allocations, for example, reveal that there is a dramatic shift away from investment in agriculture to industry. Two broad areas where this trend is especially visible are in the increasing exploitation of indigenous peoples lands and territories by extractive industries, and the leasing out of lands for plantations. In many areas, indigenous peoples are also experiencing a loss of land to politically-induced settlement of lowland, non-indigenous people in upland areas. Many positive policies are also limited by conditionalities, the pre-eminent one being the exercise of the principle of the 'eminent domain' of the state.

Programmes

Several programmes and projects have been implemented to further the rights of indigenous peoples. However, like in the case of policies, they do not bear any direct correlation to the Decade. Most of the programmes have been implemented by non-government organisations with the support of international donor agencies. At least with specific reference to the Decade, the states implemented virtually no projects. A major thrust of donor support has been in infrastructure development and income generation as part of poverty alleviation projects. Some indigenous people's groups have criticised these programmes as promoting conventional models of development rather than challenging them, often demonstrating little sensitivity to the cultural difference and special resources of indigenous peoples. Even cultural tourism projects, for instance, tend to commoditise and make a spectacle of indigenous culture rather than ensure the dynamic aspects of genuine survival. Indigenous people have also expressed that the work carried out by UN agencies is governed by complex regulations and bureaucratic procedures, with most of the communication often carried out in languages difficult for indigenous people to access.

Conclusion

Some important concrete recommendations for action in the second decade that emerged from the assessment include the following:

❯ The need for disaggregated data that will strengthen the case for indigenous peoples' rights;

❯ Capacity building of indigenous peoples to use and monitor national and international instruments to promote and protect their rights;

❯ The need for a mechanism within the UN system to ensure the compliance of states to international conventions and treaties;

❯ The need to establish mechanisms and provide support to existing conventions and treaties that will actively promote awareness raising, capacity building, and translation of relevant documents into the local languages;

❯ The need to promote culturally sensitive poverty alleviation and development programmes that take into account the diverse needs of indigenous peoples rather than imposing standardised packages; and

❯ The need to set up activities on sharing and learning for non-indigenous persons, governments, civil society, and the media on indigenous issues in order to increase awareness and recognition of cultural diversity.

Gender and Natural Disasters: New Challenges for Mountain Development

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The broad trend in South Asia and elsewhere is that women have an especially difficult ability to withstand and respond to crisis situations (Enarson 2001, UN 2004).

The alarming increase in the incidence and scope of natural disasters since the 1990s has placed disaster preparedness and management at the forefront of global and national development agendas (WHO 2002, IUCN 2006). This has important implications for mountain development in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas, given that Asian mountains suffer disproportionately from heightened vulnerability to natural hazards and that mountain communities routinely face risks of floods, earthquakes, and landslides.

In 2006, the Water, Hazards and Environmental Management (WHEM) Programme at ICIMOD initiated a European Commission-supported project to develop capacity in multi-hazard risk assessment and to provide a platform for enabling cross-regional interaction and exchange of ideas, knowledge, and experiences in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan. One element of the project, to which the Culture, Equity, Gender and Governance (CEGG) Programme has contributed, draws attention to gender as a dimension of vulnerability. The project aims to generate greater awareness of how and in what ways natural disasters have differential impacts on the sexes, and to lay out a framework for integrating a gender perspective into disaster preparedness and management in the South Asian context.

That gender is a factor in shaping people's vulnerability to disaster is not immediately obvious: It is generally believed that disasters are great 'levellers,' affecting everyone within their orbit in much the same way. In fact, the *risk of vulnerability* and the *impacts of disaster* are disproportionately carried by those who are already socioeconomically and physically disadvantaged and who have fewer resources to 'bounce back' to normality. Gender relations in particular appear to be a precondition of people's ability to anticipate, prepare for, survive, cope with, and recover from disaster. Gender roles and statuses that give women considerably less access than men to productive and social resources and decision-making processes often place them at social, economic, and political disadvantage relative to men. Thus, while men are obviously affected (and,

Julie Dekens

"Our houses that just collapsed were better than the new ones!"- Dalit women from Deuri VDC, Dhanusha District, Eastern Nepal, in a focus group discussion about their experience with floods.

depending on context, often harder hit by disasters) the broad trend in South Asia and elsewhere is that women have an especially difficult ability to withstand and respond to crisis situations (Enarson 2001, UN 2004).

The experience of disasters in the region over the past decade-and-a-half illustrates how physiological vulnerabilities, socio-cultural and economic marginalisation, and gender stereotypes informing policy and relief work can make all the difference in whether an individual survives a disaster or not and, having survived, the extent of access he or she has to aid and rehabilitation afterwards.

In many disasters females suffer higher mortality rates. During the Bangladesh cyclone of 1991, mortality levels amongst females over the age of ten were three times higher than that of males; while in the Maharashtra, India earthquake of 1993, women constituted 48% of the affected populations but constituted 55% of those who died. In the Asian tsunamis, five times as many women as men are believed to have died, and disproportionate numbers of women were killed in the earthquake that devastated large areas of northern Pakistan in 2005 (Chew and Ramdas 2005).

Physiological and biological factors partially account for gender-differentiated mortality rates. Women's physical size, states of pregnancy and lactation, their primary responsibility for infants, small children, and the elderly and, often, clothing may all serve to slow them down in crises where timing is everything. Less obvious issues also affect women's ability to protect themselves. In much of South Asia women and men have different kinds of 'cultural permission' to move about in physical spaces: anecdotal evidence from the Pakistan earthquake suggests there was a higher female mortality rate in areas where 'purdah' norms prevailed compared to those where women were more easily able to flee their homes on their own. During the Bangladeshi cyclone of 1991, early warning systems may not have reached women who, in addition, were reluctant to move far from home and thus lost their lives waiting for their men folk to return to make the decision to go to relief shelters.

Socialisation processes are also implicated in inculcating in girls and women a 'learned powerlessness': in some tsunami-affected regions the disproportionate number of female deaths is attributed to the fact that, unlike boys and men, girls and women were less likely to know how to swim or thought they couldn't climb trees or roofs to save themselves (Chew and Ramdas 2005). Finally, women's domestic responsibilities are likely to keep them inside or close to dwellings, rendering them more susceptible to injuries or death when these dwellings collapse.

The power of 'cultural permission' in shaping women's mobility or lack thereof also affects their ability to benefit from relief efforts. Prevailing social norms in northern Pakistan made it hard for widows, single women, and women-headed households to access relief or the tent camps that had been set up outside their local areas

In many disasters across the region and beyond, women suffer higher mortality rates.

because of concern of having to deal with unrelated men (IUCN, 2006). Similarly, sex-segregation norms in Bangladesh and Afghanistan have prevented women from taking the initiative to go to shelters and relief centres where they would have to deal with non-kin males, a concern which has also been noted in areas where no formal constraints on women's physical mobility exists.

Women also experience a harder time recovering from disasters. Compared to men, they often have less access to education, productive resources, and income-generating opportunities. They constitute a disproportionately higher number of the unemployed or those employed in marginally paid work, and carry a double work burden that combines their primary responsibility for domestic work with supporting their households through productive labour in farming and a range of off-farm activities. Despite their work contributions, women lack equal access to decision-making pertaining to divisions of labour, control of household resources or their well-being. It is commonplace throughout South Asia for women to have poorer health and nutritional status, for widows to be socially stigmatised, and for girl-children to be subject to a host of discriminatory practices relative to their male counterparts. As a result, after disasters they are more vulnerable to destitution, which in turn renders them susceptible to labour exploitation and trafficking.

Women's socio-cultural and economic vulnerabilities are further accentuated in the aftermath of disasters by gender-blind official thinking. The common gender stereotype permeating thinking at both policy and field levels is of the male head of household, whilst women are seen as secondary income-earners. Consequently, compensation, assistance, jobs, and training tend to be directed at men only: in one area of Sri Lanka in the post-tsunami period, women whose husbands

had died were unable to claim compensation money. Female heads of households also face considerable hardships in putting their lives together after disaster since they lack collateral to raise funds for alternative economic activities, often lack awareness of their legal rights to property and, being less mobile than men, find it hard to migrate in search of work.

Finally, despite women's roles as 'first responders' in disasters, they tend to be excluded from participating in policy and decision-making in reconstruction efforts. This lack of participation can reveal itself in startling ways: in Sri Lanka, the lack of women's inputs into housing designs resulted in dwellings being built that lacked kitchen facilities (Chew and Ramdas, 2005).

In much of South Asia, different kinds of 'cultural permission' and a 'learned powerlessness' inculcated in women and girls contribute to a higher disaster toll for women.

Gender matters in disaster risk reduction for both women and men. Taking it into account contributes to more equitable responses to people in crises, and helps to ensure that human and material resources are used efficiently. ICIMOD is ideally situated to initiate dialogues on gender and disaster with practitioners at the policy, development, and field levels in the HKH region, facilitating documentation and disseminating lessons learned and best practices emerging from disaster situations from across the region. The real challenge is for national governments and the development community to find the political will and capacity to develop and put gender-sensitive methodologies into practice.

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Local Knowledge on Disaster Preparedness: A Framework for Data Collection and Analysis

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Part of the ICIMOD research process was to record and document local songs and proverbs relating to disaster, letting the people hear their own recording. Local songs and proverbs can be used in preparing communities for disaster (photo from Shreepur VDC, Sharlahi district, Nepal).

How do we document local knowledge on disaster preparedness? Case studies on local knowledge exist in several fields of study, but usually the links between local knowledge and disaster preparedness are not explicitly made. An assessment of the available literature reveals the absence of a framework through which they may be linked.

This paper attempts to fill in this gap by presenting a general framework for data collection and analysis on local knowledge related to disaster preparedness. The framework addresses the needs of development and research organisations working in the field of disaster management.

Since April 2006, ICIMOD and partners in four South Asian countries – Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan – have been working on the project, **'Living with Risk. Sharing Knowledge on Disaster Preparedness in the Himalayan Region'**, supported by the European Commission through its Humanitarian Aid department Disaster Preparedness European Commission for Humanitarian Aid Office (DIPECHO).

As part of the project, ICIMOD is compiling secondary information related to local knowledge on disaster preparedness. Additional primary information has also been collected through case studies in Nepal and Pakistan. The need to understand better and integrate local knowledge into disaster preparedness is in the focus of this article.

Why local knowledge?

Local knowledge and practices have rarely been explored in disaster and hazard literature

Since the 1970s, the importance of accounting for and integrating local knowledge into poverty reduction projects including decision-making processes gained recognition within academia, international

development and funding agencies, NGOs, and with policy makers. The interaction between western conventional science and local knowledge is not new and the history of the sciences demonstrates that those two knowledge systems have often been more intertwined than separated (Agrawal 1995). What is new is that local knowledge including indigenous knowledge and practices and knowledge systems are now more widely acknowledged.

Much of the literature on local and indigenous knowledge is dispersed in various fields including anthropology, geography, natural resources management, rural sociology, urban planning, and engineering. However, local knowledge and practices have been barely explored in disaster literature in general – and even less in literature on disaster preparedness. Until recently much focus was directed towards relief aid, but this is now slowly changing. An example comes from the impact of the 2004 tsunami in South Asia. Following the disaster, the media especially reported how some communities managed to save their lives and property using local knowledge through the ability to identify early warning signals of the tsunami from local songs and observed changes in animal behaviour patterns. The failure of relief aid following the 2004 tsunami is now largely attributed to a general misunderstanding of people's needs and practices. However, even if implementing organisations acknowledge the existence and importance of local knowledge and practices related to disaster preparedness, there is little documented evidence of their inclusion in disaster preparedness planning.

A better understanding of local knowledge can help implementing organisations to empower communities for improved disasters preparedness

Accounting for local knowledge, practices, and contexts can help implementing organisations, to better plan for disaster preparedness. It can contribute to project performance in the local area; that is, build project acceptance, ownership, and sustainability. Many implementing organisations do not have a clear understanding of (1) the value of local knowledge for their projects' success and sustainability, (2) the meaning of local knowledge on disaster preparedness, and (3) the methods to identify and collect information related to it.

Understanding, accounting for, and respecting local knowledge can contribute to project cost-effectiveness in the long-term, both from a financial and from a social

point of view. As Berkes (2002) puts it: "instead of looking for the one 'correct' scale for analytical purposes, it may be useful to start with the assumption that a given resource management system is multiscale, and that it should be managed at different scales simultaneously." Solutions in the context of resources management need to go beyond the dichotomy between local versus state management levels and to integrate cross-scale institutions. As the rate of change (institutional, economic, and cultural) related to globalisation processes is increasing, new and innovative forms of governance are required to address the complexities and uncertainties associated with it. A better understanding of local knowledge and practices can help to identify what is important and can be promoted at the local level. Building upon local knowledge and practices that is capitalising on local strengths whenever relevant can decrease dependencies on external aid.
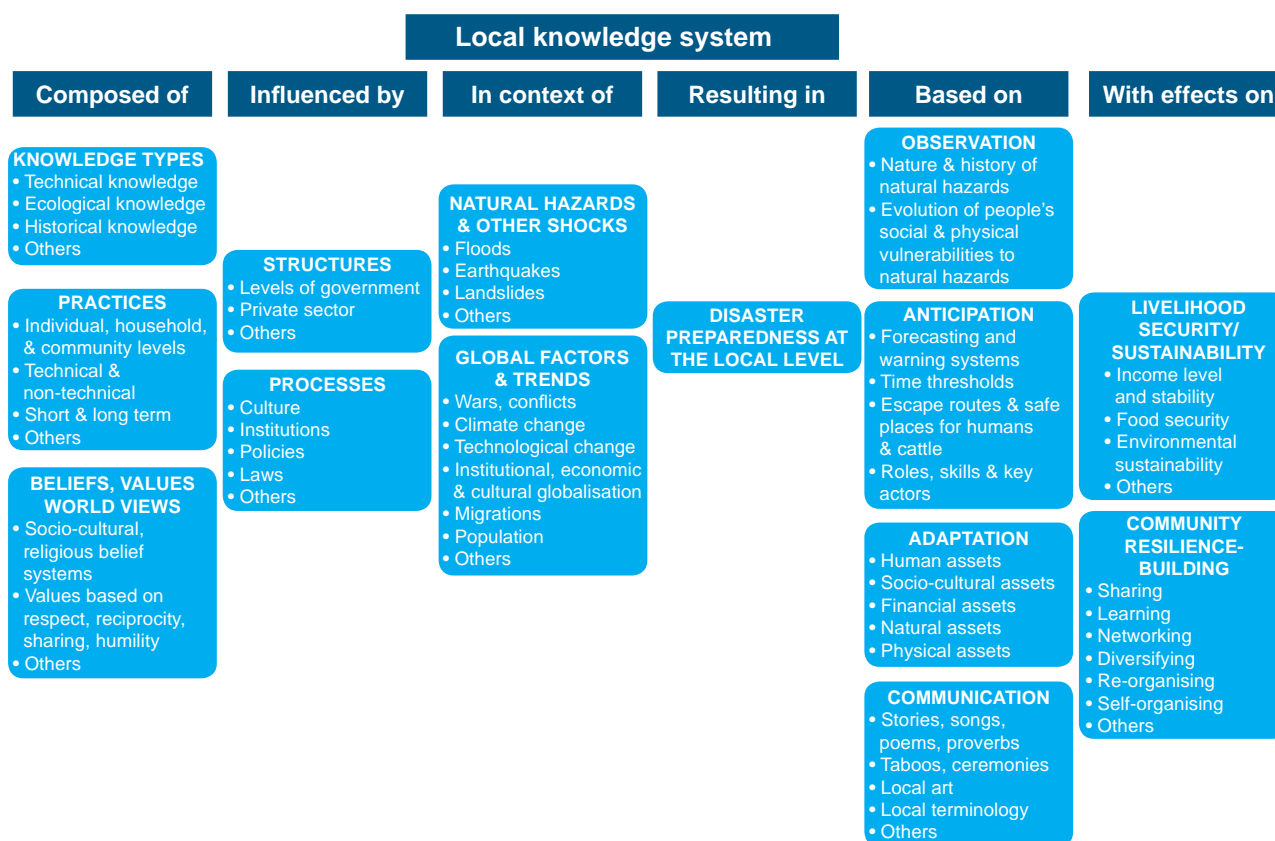
> **In the 2004 tsunami in Asia, some communities were reportedly saved through their ability to identify early warning signals through local songs and observed changes in animal behaviour patterns.**

On the other hand and from a social point of view, accounting for local knowledge and practices can contribute to a build up of mutual trust, acceptability, common understanding, and community sense of ownership and self-confidence. Understanding and accounting for local knowledge, practices, and contexts can help community-based organisations tailor their project activities and communication strategies. They can also act as intermediary organisations able to translate messages from governmental levels to communities in a way that is understandable and trusted by the communities.

How to understand local knowledge?

Pieces of the puzzle: identifying linkages between local knowledge and disaster preparedness and what influences them

An analytical framework provides a simplified grid with which to think about and analyse a specific topic. It is an analytical map that lays out the key aspects related to a topic and shows how those aspects are related and influence each other. The framework we propose (see next page) can help to identify the linkages and relationships between local knowledge

Local knowledge system

Composed of	Influenced by	In context of	Resulting in	Based on	With effects on

KNOWLEDGE TYPES
- Technical knowledge
- Ecological knowledge
- Historical knowledge
- Others

PRACTICES
- Individual, household, & community levels
- Technical & non-technical
- Short & long term
- Others

BELIEFS, VALUES WORLD VIEWS
- Socio-cultural, religious belief systems
- Values based on respect, reciprocity, sharing, humility
- Others

STRUCTURES
- Levels of government
- Private sector
- Others

PROCESSES
- Culture
- Institutions
- Policies
- Laws
- Others

NATURAL HAZARDS & OTHER SHOCKS
- Floods
- Earthquakes
- Landslides
- Others

GLOBAL FACTORS & TRENDS
- Wars, conflicts
- Climate change
- Technological change
- Institutional, economic & cultural globalisation
- Migrations
- Population
- Others

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

OBSERVATION
- Nature & history of natural hazards
- Evolution of people's social & physical vulnerabilities to natural hazards

ANTICIPATION
- Forecasting and warning systems
- Time thresholds
- Escape routes & safe places for humans & cattle
- Roles, skills & key actors

ADAPTATION
- Human assets
- Socio-cultural assets
- Financial assets
- Natural assets
- Physical assets

COMMUNICATION
- Stories, songs, poems, proverbs
- Taboos, ceremonies
- Local art
- Local terminology
- Others

LIVELIHOOD SECURITY/ SUSTAINABILITY
- Income level and stability
- Food security
- Environmental sustainability
- Others

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE-BUILDING
- Sharing
- Learning
- Networking
- Diversifying
- Re-organising
- Self-organising
- Others

Framework for Local Knowledge on Disaster Preparedness

Adapted from DFID (1999) and Ellis (2001) livelihood framework, and Gardner and Dekens (2007)

and practices and disaster management and what influence them. The framework can be used as a checklist of key issues to be taken into account. These can be summarised around the following key areas:

the impacts of globalisation, road construction, and natural resources policies. From a local knowledge perspective, and as suggested by Battista and Baas (2004), it is more interesting to "look at shocks that are recurrent and chronic and that contribute to gradually

The framework can help identify the linkages and relationships between local knowledge and practices and disaster management.

First, with respect to understanding local knowledge (A in the Framework figure). What people know is influenced by (and influences) what people believe in and what they do and do not do. To understand local knowledge one has to understand and account for people's various ways of knowing (i.e., different knowledge types such as technological and ecological knowledge) as much as people's practices and beliefs, perceptions, and values.

Second, with respect to understanding the vulnerability context and contextualising local knowledge/practices and disasters (B and C). Local knowledge is influenced by the type, frequency, and intensity of past and present natural hazards as well as by other shocks and global trends – for instance,

increasing the vulnerability of the community instead of exceptional natural event which require emergency operations from outside".

Third, with respect to the key dimensions of local knowledge related to disaster preparedness (E). Local knowledge on disaster preparedness relates to four major dimensions of people's knowledge: (1) their observations of natural hazards through daily experiences of their local surroundings; (2) their anticipation of natural hazards through identifying and monitoring local indicators such as early warning/environmental signs of eminent hazards, time thresholds, escape routes, safe places for humans and cattle, and key skills and actors; (3) communication strategies on natural hazards among community

members and between generations; and (4) adaptation strategies – i.e., how people adjust, experiment, and innovate in the face of natural hazards and learn from it.

Fourth, with respect to livelihood security and community resilience-building (F). Ultimately, a better understanding of the linkages between local knowledge and disaster preparedness can help implementing organisations promote livelihoods security and resilient communities.

How to make use of local knowledge?

The wider picture: linking local knowledge, disaster preparedness, and sustainable livelihoods for poverty reduction

The lack of an explicit connection between local knowledge and disaster management in the literature echoes the lack of linkages between poverty reduction and disaster management and, more generally, the dominance of a sectorial approach to disaster management. Did we forget that disaster management is poverty reduction? In order to provide a more holistic view of disaster management, the framework builds upon the livelihood framework. As such it aims at situating the issues of local knowledge on disaster

Circular mud repository 'chachkha', with unique pigeon holes to keep valuable belongings during floods in Katarait VDC, Dhanusha district, a flood-prone Terai region of Nepal

preparedness into the wider issues of sustainable livelihoods and poverty reduction. Within this framework, local knowledge can be used as a key entry point.

The proposed framework aims to contribute towards a greater sensitivity to and a better understanding of local knowledge on disaster preparedness. The assumption here is that local knowledge and practices, whether they are relevant or not in a specific context for a specific project, should not be ignored. Local knowledge always needs to be taken into account. However, and importantly, this does not mean that all local knowledge and practices are appropriate or sustainable. Therefore, the next important step in order to provide further policy recommendations includes: assessing how to integrate local knowledge into your activities; which local knowledge you can support within your timeframe; for whom and for which objectives; how it can be combined with other knowledge for disaster preparedness; and under which contexts local knowledge and practices contribute to improving your disaster preparedness activities.

The framework presented in this paper continues to be developed. Readers are encouraged to send comments and contributions to: **www.disasterpreparedness.icimod.org**

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Tools for Empowering the Marginalised

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An exposure visit to Pakuwa VDC, Parbat district, west Nepal as part of the ICIMOD Advocacy Project

One of the myths about advocacy is that this is an NGO business to disturb government machinery. We try to overcome this misconception, which we face everyday, as we work with our partners in the ICCO-supported ICIMOD Advocacy Strategy project in the mountains of the Himalayas.

Advocacy was first practiced among civil society groups, but in reality the concept is equally important and useful for government. The governance of a country is only as good as its contact and adequate responses to the needs and wishes of its citizens. Advocacy offers ways for the government apparatus to be closer to the citizens' desires and problems, but also closer to identifying joint solutions to pressing problems. Good governance must not only be perceived as donor-driven, but as a unifying aim for the development of an equitable society.

National governments need to apply the same advocacy strategies at the international level (often called diplomacy) that civil society organisations use. Government officials face international forums and deal with UN organisations, bilateral and multilateral donors, international financial institutions, and multinational companies that are, in many cases, stronger, more influential and powerful than they are in shaping the destiny of people of their countries (SANSAD 2006). In circumstances of negotiation and bargaining, the government needs to carry out a strong and meaningful advocacy campaign to protect the rights and interests of the country. The level and gravity of advocacy and its actors may vary, but the processes of dealing with issues remain the same.

Advocacy provides tools by which arguments for change may be made more logical. Experiences in building capacity in advocacy strategies in the Himalayan region indicate that some groups, wittingly or unwittingly, propagated the myth about advocacy by misunderstanding the concept and misusing the term for various other purposes. In the best possible case, these misconceived notions may be overcome through a clarity of the concept among all actors.

Issues for advocacy

Advocacy is a relatively new concept which was first practiced in the development arena. As part of the rights-based approach it functions as a tool to protect individual and group rights which have been denied by other actors. Good governance is closely linked to the rights-based approach, which argues that development

is a process of realising fundamental human rights and freedoms (UNP 2002). Their absence in the community calls for a need for advocacy to attain these essential elements in a respectful manner.

The first and crucial step is to identify the appropriate topic and scale of an issue up for advocacy. In connection with the rights-based approach a differentiation between the scale or magnitude of the problem is important. Using the tree as a symbol (see Fig.), it is possible to distinguish between visible symptoms (e.g., the dying branches of the tree) and the root cause for such problems (the rotten roots of the tree). Mountain people today are often marginalised because of problems deeply rooted within social and political systems. Service delivery projects focus on mitigating the symptoms by aiming to provide relief for those who are presently suffering from various problems. Advocacy in the rights-based context tries to address the root causes of poverty and marginalisation, like access to rights and services, and not poverty itself.

Clearly, not all root causes (like the roots of a tree) are equal in size and importance. It is necessary to balance between the gravity of a cause and the capability of the initiator to bring changes. A small CBO can identify a genuine root cause but may not be in the position to address it. Advocacy cannot be effective in bringing changes to the communities in such a case. However, if a particular agency does not have the capability to deal with the bigger root cause, an option would be to address several smaller causes linked to the main cause so the main cause can at least be weakened step-by-step and changed later on (DFID 2001).

There are many cases where development agents identify and start advocacy campaigns for change addressing all root causes at the same time, and they fail because the consequent drastic changes in the society are not manageable. Applying the advocacy concept properly can help avoid such mistakes (Tondon 2002).

Peaceful and structured advocacy

Advocacy can serve as a tool to achieve changes in a constructive, constitutional, and peaceful manner. Confrontation should be avoided and used only as a last option. Past lessons indicate that non governmental and community-based organisations and their networks in mountain areas are able to advocate better by bringing the issues in the sphere of public debate, to exert greater influence in local, national, and regional policies.

Analysing the problem

Visible symptoms

Often invisible causes
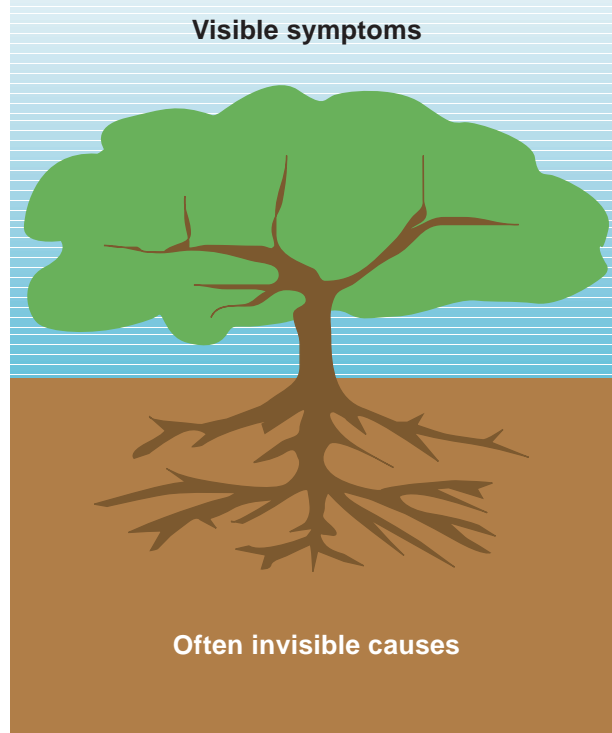
Under this changed context, civil society organisations can play important roles in influencing state and market mechanisms, to hold them accountable to the people they are supposed to serve.

Support of civil society in the mountain areas is among the most effective ways to enhance democratisation and good governance. One of the key focuses of civil society is to empower its constituency by undertaking lawful, people-oriented advocacy to safeguard people's rights. It is necessary to create an environment of trust and to acknowledge civil society's role in representing citizens' voices . It goes without saying that civil society organisations also have to follow transparent, participatory, inclusive, and accountable governance structures.

The process of issue-based advocacy should follow a structured approach, exemplified by a set of questions that public advocates should answer before starting advocacy initiatives (see Box, p. 26). If public advocates can answer all of the questions posed, they can define the road map for expected changes.

Advocacy offers a set of tools for improving governance.

Questions to raise while taking up advocacy causes

What do we want? *(goals)*
What is the audience expected to do after hearing the advocacy message?

Who can bring the changes? *(target audiences)*
Which segment of the public is in the best position to hear and act effectively upon the advocacy message? (Note that the 'general public' is too general to be a target audience.)

What do they need to hear? *(messages)*
What language and use of words will best impact policy makers (or whoever is the target audience) in a powerful way and motivate them to take action?

Who do policy makers need to hear the message from? *(messengers)*
Who is this particular target audience most likely to listen to and believe?

How can advocates get policy makers to hear the message? **(delivery)**
What is the best medium to reach policy makers (or your target audience). Is it print, radio, television, email, others?

What are the strengths of the advocates? *(resources, personal qualities, coalition they belong to, others)*
What resources do advocates already have at their disposal (good messages, graphic artists, websites, specialists, motivating speakers, among others) that can help them achieve their advocacy goal?

What do the advocates need to develop further? *(challenges and gaps)*
Who do they need to bring into the coalition? What skills do advocates need which they do not have at present? What organisational culture or issues might hamper their efforts?

How to begin? *(step-by-step planning and division of roles)*
What are some things that the advocates can do right away to get the effort moving forward? What will they have to do afterwards?

How will advocates know that advocacy is working? *(periodic monitoring and evaluation)*
What mechanisms will the advocates have to put in place to measure the impact of their message and approach?

Conclusions

Advocacy offers a set of tools for improving governance. However, advocacy efforts will not be purposeful without first analysing problems and root causes. Advocacy should not be perceived as an individual activity; the concept argues that all development interventions must address the root causes of problems and should be able to reduce some of these causes, along with immediate relief, by reducing some of the symptoms. Working with the symptoms entails less risks, and is timely and produces easily measurable outputs to report to the donors. But they are not often sustainable. Working on root causes may be more sustainable, but it is not practical from the humanitarian point of view because poor people cannot wait very long for better livelihood options. When projects start working with the root causes of the problems, it is more challenging, more risky, more likely to be 'political', and interventions should go beyond the timeframe set by donors or development agencies. Therefore, bringing service delivery and advocacy together is the most challenging of tasks.

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Empowering Marginalised People of the Chittagong Hill Tracts through Advocacy

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Amiya Kanti Chakma

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The Chittagong Hill Tracts, located in the south-eastern part of Bangladesh, differ from the rest of the country because of its mountainous geography and the existence of 11 ethnic and indigenous communities, each with its own distinct lifestyle and culture.

Since time immemorial this region has been contributing significantly to the economy and the nation's image through its abundant natural resources and rich indigenous culture and heritage. However, Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) is one of the poorest areas in Bangladesh and prone to political instability. The effective role of local government institutions is crucial, but has always been a subject of controversy because of their non-accountability, lack of commitment, poor efficiency, and lack of transparency.

The NGO Green Hill has come to realise that without improvements in governance from local institutions and other relevant actors, development interventions will not generate sustainable impacts in the CHT. The application of appropriate advocacy tools and techniques can help improve the state of local governance in CHT, and civil society organisations play a crucial role. The wider scope of advocacy is to empower marginalised communities to ensure their

basic human rights and at the same time facilitate local government institutions and others to address community rights more effectively and with greater transparency and accountability. With this perspective in mind, WaterAid Bangladesh and CARE, since 1999 and with the support of Action Aid Bangladesh, has been focusing their efforts on specific issues of marginalised communities. Green Hill has achieved remarkable success in improving the quality of education, access to safe drinking water and sanitation, and in diversifying market days to help farmers and producers get fair prices for their agricultural produce as well as improving access to rehabilitation for fisherfolk communities. Based on this success, and also considering other challenges, Green Hill has learnt that there is greater scope for advocacy initiatives in the CHT.

As one of the strategic partners of ICIMOD in Bangladesh, Green Hill (GH) along with some local organisations participated in the regional 'Training

of Trainers' (ToT) in Advocacy Strategies in 2005. Participation in the ToT has enhanced the organisation's capacity for advocacy and has deepened the confidence of its members. Accordingly, GH and ICIMOD agreed to organise local level advocacy training activities. The aim is to strengthen the capacity of local organisations in advocacy tools and techniques so that they can play an important role in empowering the marginalised communities they work with. Advocacy training can also contribute to improving governance of local institutions and other actors.

Training on advocacy tools and techniques

The opening ceremony of an advocacy training workshop in Bandarban district.

With support from ICIMOD and in joint collaboration with local partners ALO, Aga Khan School, and the Himalayan Grassroots Women's Natural Resources Network (HIMAWANTI), Green Hill organised five training programmes in the three hill districts of the CHT from December 2005 to November 2006. Altogether participants from 18 organisations have been trained. The last was a training of trainers (ToT) workshop with participants who have attended four previous training workshops.

Participation in training has enhanced Green Hill's capacity for advocacy and has deepened the confidence of its members.

The training methodology included a mix of lecture-presentations, group discussion, role playing, field exposure visits to a community, and ample feedback sessions. Group presentations were documented in video for the participants to review and analyse afterwards.

Lessons learned

❱ In training, selection of the right participants is crucial. Organise ToT on Advocacy for participants who have received previous training; they can build on previous knowledge and be part of a 'training pool' which can pass on the training they receive to other grassroots groups.

❱ Organise training programmes on advocacy at the grassroots level; a needs-based modular course of three to five days may be more effective, with sufficient time for discussion and presentations on important topics.

❱ Provide separate training for participants of different backgrounds, such as for NGOs, CBOs, journalists, network/forum, women development organisations, local government institutions, and others.

❱ Develop case studies relevant to CHT through research and short film demonstrations; video demonstrations of relevant case studies and role-playing and games are more effective for learning than purely thematic discussions.

❱ Develop a handbook for local trainers as appropriate for CHT-based trainers.

❱ Develop a network or forum and take on joint advocacy initiatives with network partners.

A field visit to Bhuban Mohon Karbari Para, Sadar Upazila, Khagrachari district was a part of the Training of Trainers course on Advocacy.

A network or forum that will take on the practical challenges and opportunities to exchange learning will strengthen the community empowerment process.

Sanjay Madnani

A puppet show in Bangladesh: Alternative media is a creative advocacy tool that is very effective in getting community attention.

Despite limitations, the participants liked the training course because of its broader scope. The participants and the training's local administration also liked the participation of non-indigenous participants from various organisations.

Outputs

❯ Of the total participants to the training programmes, a high 97% claim to have gained comprehensive knowledge on advocacy concept, strategies, tools and techniques.

❯ Seventy percent of the participants have been identified as having the promising potential to conduct training at the grassroots level and can empower marginalised communities and conduct policy advocacy.

❯ After training, participants have become more confident, interested, and committed to contribute to future advocacy training programmes. Everyone received a copy of Advocacy Bangla

❯ CD and video-cassette copies of group presentations and facilitation – particularly on facilitation as a learning tool – are available for those who wish to use these tools in future training programmes.

Some observations

The local administration in CHT, the hill district council, civil society, and the political parties have all expressed appreciation for the advocacy training programme and have suggested that it be made a continuing initiative, pledging to extend their best possible cooperation. The participants also expressed keen interest in a network or forum that will take into account the practical challenges and opportunities to exchange learning and strengthen the community empowerment process. In the process of advocacy training the organisational capacity of Green Hill and other organisations has been enhanced, in keeping with the NGO's effort to empower marginalised communities in CHT. Training has added value to and boosted the confidence of marginalised, poor communities and rekindled in them a new hope. Green Hill appreciates the collaboration with ICIMOD and other regional partners in the Advocacy project and vows to support future advocacy and training activities.

Two heads are better than one

except when they don't share information
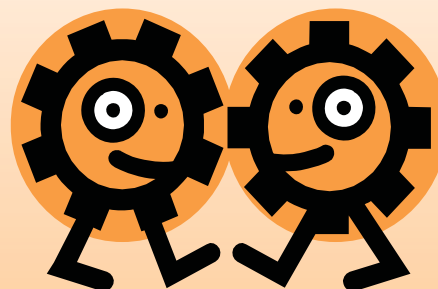
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Humanitarian Aid

Local Movement of Indigenous Fishing Communities Around Chitwan National Park

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Bote Majhi youths fishing in the Narayani River against the backdrop of a buffer zone community forest in Chitwan National Park, Nepal

The lives of indigenous communities dependent on natural resources have been affected by nature conservation, and the more recently fashionable 'biodiversity conservation' movement. These communities have never been at the centre of the conservation discourse, nor have they had adequate representation in global environmental movements that have affected their lives.

Their struggles and sufferings have not found adequate space in research, mainstream media, or popular discourse. This research, conducted in the context of ICIMOD's project, 'Advancing Minority Rights to Environmental Justice' supported by the Ford Foundation, revisits some of these communities and presents a glimpse of the history of the grassroots social movements of the Bote-Majhis and Musahars – indigenous fishing communities living along the river banks of Chitwan National Park in Nepal.

The Botes and Majhis are fisherfolks categorised as marginalised 'janajatis' (indigenous groups) historically and culturally dependent on forest and river resources for a living. Musahars are considered Madheshi Dalits of the southern lowlands of Nepal. They are treated as untouchables and are also traditional fisherfolks. Both these groups are socially, economically, culturally,

and politically excluded landless communities. In Nawalparasi district they can be found in 19 villages; the majority are residing in the vicinity of Chitwan National Park. They delineate spaces within the forest as sacred ('than'), guarded by the forest god, Bhairu. They revere and worship the river. They also worship Gaidu, the god of the rhinoceros, and other animals such as the tiger (Bagheysari), the deer (chital), and wild boars. They believe each type of fauna has its own capital or favourite location; Chitwan is the capital of the rhinos. Their acquaintance with the diversity of forest and riverine ecology reflects their indigenous wisdom and ecological knowledge.

The elders of the Bote-Majhi and Musahar groups idealise their past as free and uninhibited by state-imposed restrictions. They used to reside in the forest in the vicinity of rivers, and depended on both these

resources for a living. When the monsoon set in they moved to safer locations. They fished in the stretches of the Narayani River from Deughat (between Kali Gandaki and Trisuli rivers) north of the dam near Tribeni-Bhainsalotan, along the south-western boundary of Chitwan National Park, adjacent to the south Indian border. River ferry points were treated as common property. Documents intact with the community show that these traditional fisherfolks had authority over the use of the rivers. Ferrying villagers in exchange for food provided them additional livelihood.

When the state began protecting forest cover to conserve the endangered one-horned rhinoceros, a 'Rhino Patrol' was deployed. Bote-Majhi men accompanied the officials on patrol duty, ferrying them in exchange for unimpeded access to the river. The women, however, had their first brush with harassment when they collected fodder and wild vegetables.

Slowly, the forces of modernisation and the intrusion of state control over natural resources displaced these groups from their traditional occupations and sources of livelihood. Apart from constructing bridges and roads, state authorities began issuing private ferrying contracts to outsiders to generate revenue, at the cost of the ferrying business of the local communities.

The Royal Chitwan National Park was established in 1973 as the first national park of Nepal and came under the protection of the Royal Nepal Army from 1975 onwards. Park management favoured wildlife conservation and restricted access to forests and made fishing in the river illegal. By the mid-1980s even ferrying passengers across the river was banned. Like many other conservation areas around the world this kind of exclusionary conservation logic disregarded the dependence on and relations of indigenous populations with nature, alienating local communities from their usufruct rights and customary resource use practices, and creating a serious livelihood crisis amongst landless groups. The severe restrictions imposed by conservation authorities posed problems for indigenous fishing communities including the Bote Majhis and Musahars. Their nutrition standards dropped and incidents of atrocity against them by the conservation authorities such as seizure of fisherfolks' items, fish catch, forest produce and verbal abuse, physical assault, forced labour, and sexual harassment committed against them grew. The struggle launched by marginalised Bote-Majhis and Musahars must be understood in this historical context.

The communities began to resist park impositions and abuses from 1983/84. Ten active community members across different villages began organising at the local level. Almost a decade after the establishment of the Chitwan National Park, an amendment to the National Park and Wildlife Conservation Act 1973 allowed the provision of forest products or other services against payment of prescribed fees (Section16a). Some traditional fisherfolks were permitted to fish in the river after 26 years in 2000, upon annual payment of a fee of fifty rupees, but the provision did not include the Majhi and Musahar communities.

Despite this so-called 'democratisation', January 30, 1993 marked a dark day in the lives of the fishing communities. National park authorities simultaneously confiscated boats and fishing nets in several villages including Sandh, Badruwa, Laugain, and Piprahar, torching fishing nets and baskets, smashing boats, and battering the villagers. Recalled one of the community leaders:

> **"The incident shook us. An inner voice in us revolted and nagged: Why are we silent? If our forefathers have grown up in this land, river, and forest, why can't we exercise the same rights (as they enjoyed) over these resources?"**

Immediately after the incident activists and leaders of fisherfolks held their first convention ever at Laugain, which led to the formation of an informal body of fisherfolk representatives. The organisation was registered under the name of Majhi Musahar Bote Kalyan Sewa Samiti (MMBKSS) in 1994. By 1997, MMBKSS had expanded its network through village level groups in 16 villages of Nawalparasi. MMBKSS began to work closely with an organisation called Community Development Organization (CDO) in the mid-1990s, which was to become an important ally in their struggle.

During one of their meetings in 1997, amidst continuing atrocities against the fisherfolk, the idea to organise a 'gherao' (blockade) at Laukhaney range post emerged. Around 200 protesters surrounded the post, exerting pressure on the authorities. This was the breakthrough that carried the MMBKSS towards its sustained campaign. Following this protest, on 20 August 1999, around 900 people, the majority coming from the tribal fishing communities, marched to a mass meeting in Kasara, the headquarters of Chitwan National Park,

demanding fishing licenses and that they be allowed to gather wild vegetables; demanding also a complete stop to army violence against them.

This was a turning point in the movement. Collective pressure, including from political parties, made the conservation authorities concede to their demands. **A right has to be seized, it is not a given,** was a lesson learnt that day. After the Kasara mass gathering and dialogue with park authorities, the process of issuing six-month fishing licenses to the fisherfolks began.

Beyond the struggle for fishing rights and protest against violence on fisherfolk, MMBKSS led the campaign for secured housing for the fishing communities – constantly exposed and vulnerable to floods during the monsoon. The Bote-Majhis and Musahars began to claim their rightful space and share in resources management through institutions like the village development committee, community forest group, buffer zone users group, school education committee, amongst others. They also began winning electoral seats at ward levels in some villages, and claiming their citizenship rights. Finally their dignity, identity, and place in society began to be recognised.

Conclusion

The tide of the movement has ebbed in recent years. Internal discord amongst activists within MMBKSS has affected the pace and spirit of the movement. Yet, looking back, the movement had succeeded in triggering campaigns beyond Nawalparasi and has encouraged traditional fisherfolk in buffer zone areas in various protected areas of the country to launch similar non-violent social campaigns.

The struggle of indigenous peoples like the Bote-Majhis and Musahars has exerted influence on the contemporary debate on democratisation and in rethinking policies governing protected areas and wildlife conservation in Nepal and elsewhere. Their experiences as a part of a movement for life and dignity illustrate how the spontaneous resistance of marginalised communities, if they take the shape of a non-violent movement, could engage powerful conservation agencies and influence democratic practices and state policy. The struggle of the Bote-Majhis and Musahars serves as an exemplary example for grassroots movements of poor and powerless groups to obtain environmental justice.

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A village meeting of indigenous communities at Laugain settlement

Naya Sharma Poudel

Right to Information in the Himalayan Countries: The Nepalese Initiative

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To be informed is to be enlightened: a woman participant expressing her views at a regional workshop

Freedom of information laws, which include the right to access state held information, have existed for more than 200 years but few of these laws are more than 20 years old. Their history can be traced back to Sweden where, in 1766, the Parliament passed the Freedom of the Press Act, which required the disclosure of official documents upon request.

Colombia is another country with a long history of freedom of information legislation, where the 1888 Code of Political and Municipal Organization allowed individuals to request documents held by government agencies or in government archives. The concept of freedom of information has changed to right to information (RTI) in recent years.

RTI has both a governance as well as a rights perspective. Correct information at the right time reduces the chances to misuse resources and lessens corruption. It also helps governance systems function better, holds service providers accountable for their actions, and creates a participatory and transparent environment for people to contribute to policy formulation and the rule of law. It also gives people a legal right to demand entitlements and monitor the use or misuse of funds meant for the public good.

The right to information regime is also a means for government to empower and inform the poor about pro-poor policies and social security programmes. Public as well as private bodies, corporations, NGOs, and international institutions performing a public function that affects public rights and influences the destinies of millions should all be made responsible for providing information.

Right to information in the Himalayan region

The concept of right to information started simultaneously in several countries of the Himalayan region in the 1990s. But India is considered the pioneer in moving forward and implementing the RTI law. The Indian RTI movement, originating from Rajasthan, is well known and has attracted stakeholders in many

Participants discussing local level activities to promote the right to information

Santosh Sigdel

countries, demanding the right to information. The demand for an RTI law has taken the form of a mass movement at the grassroots level in India, with a strong advocacy component.

> **Nepal's Interim Constitution of 2006 has made a provision on the right to information in Article 27, under the chapter on Fundamental Rights. However, the lack of a specific statute has impeded people from exercising this fundamental right.**

The government passed the law in May 2005, which came into effect in October 2005. The law is regarded as a radical measure in India and contains clear rights for those requesting information and has in place a strong enforcement mechanism. Under the Act, information concerning the life and liberty of a person is required to be provided within 48 hours, and other information within 30 days. The Act's most commendable part is its enforcement mechanism. A commission in each state has been created headed by a high profile chief information commissioner as main arbitrator to oversee compliance.

In Pakistan, the Freedom of Information Ordinance was promulgated in October 2002 to provide transparency and freedom of information to all. According to the ordinance, Pakistani citizens have the right to access public records. There is widespread criticism that the ordinance has broadly defined exemptions and makes accessing information extremely difficult, however. It

does not override the Official Secrecy Act and applies only to federal records and not provincial and local records. Nearly all records may be exempted from public access by classifying them as important for national security.

In Bangladesh, there is no specific statute dealing with the Right to Information. The Bangladesh Law Commission has drafted a working paper on the Right to Information Act in 2002, but little is known of its present status. There is information that the draft Act is with the Ministry of Information for further review. Apart from these two countries there are no specific RTI law initiatives in the other Himalayan region countries such as Bhutan, Myanmar, China, and Afghanistan.

The RTI movement in Nepal

Nepal's 1990 Constitution was the first to guarantee the right to information as a fundamental citizens' right. Article 16 of the Constitution provides everyone the right to be informed on government or non-government public activities, except when the law explicitly says otherwise. The current Interim Constitution of 2006 has made a similar provision on RTI in Article 27, under the chapter on Fundamental Rights. However, the lack of a specific statute has impeded people from exercising this fundamental right.

The struggle and movement for an RTI law in Nepal was led by the media community in Nepal in the beginning. After the restoration of democracy in 1990, the government submitted a draft RTI bill in Parliament in 1992, but withdrew it after strong opposition to the bill. In 2000, the Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ)

and Nepal Press Institute (NPI) renewed the initiative to constitute an independent 10-member RTI law drafting team comprising media experts, lawyers, government officials, and members of Parliament. The team crafted and submitted a draft bill to the government, which in turn submitted the draft to Parliament, but like the bill submitted by the Law Reform Commission the effort failed because of disruptions in the operation of Parliament.

After the successful people's movement of 2006 and the restoration of the Parliament, the move to enact an RTI law regained momentum. The Freedom Forum submitted a demand letter for the immediate promulgation of the RTI law in Nepal to the Prime Minister, the Speaker of House of Representatives, and the Minister for Communication and Information. The government scheduled the bill for discussion in Parliament but had to withdraw it in mid-stream because it failed to incorporate some important features and principles of RTI. Thereafter, a taskforce was constituted to review the draft bill. The taskforce submitted the bill to the government, which made some alterations prior to putting it for Parliamentary review. Currently, the bill is in the interim Parliament.

The RTI movement in Nepal is spearheaded by the some organisations active in this field. ICIMOD, considering the importance of sharing good practices of member countries, organised a regional workshop in Rishikesh to share the experience of the India RTI movement. Representatives from four countries of the region (India, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Pakistan) participated in the workshop.

A discussion group among women in Palpa, western Nepal

The Nepalese participants of the Rishikesh workshop finalised a work plan and committed to advocate and lobby for the passage of the RTI law. They formed a 'Citizen's Campaign for Right to Information' (CCRI) to initiate the movement's activities. CCRI is a loose network of international and local NGOs, professional organisations, and experts working and interested in the subject. Freedom Forum is coordinating the campaign.

Various initiatives have been started by CCRI since 2006. The Freedom Forum organised a workshop on the RTI in October 2006 and published the draft bill for dissemination to the public. The Forum has also developed advocacy materials such as leaflets, posters, and banners promoting RTI. Currently, the Forum organises regional workshops in different parts of Nepal and a national workshop is being prepared to be held soon. The primary objectives are to raise the awareness and advocate for a pro-people right to information law.

Conclusion

An RTI law will most likely be promulgated and implemented in Nepal in the near future to achieve inclusive democracy for its citizens. However, broad sections of the society must be made aware of this legislation and strong enforcement will be needed for the law to be effectively used. Without such a mechanism, the law will only be on paper. Learning from the examples of other countries where an independent commission has worked wonders in assisting people to get information and address grievances when access has been denied is necessary.

Merely passing a bill will not do justice to information seekers until the bill-turned-law is implemented with conviction. But laws alone cannot create a climate for a democratic way of life. A law for the right to information can be effective only through people's active involvement.

Repositioning Human Health in Development

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People's health is closely linked to the environment in which they live and work, a Tibetan farmer and children.

The relationship between human health and development is undisputed. On the one hand, a healthy human resource is the precondition of human development. On the other, human health is one of the goals pursued by human development.

This is clearly indicated in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): four of the eight goals are direct health indicators (eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases) and three are closely health-related (achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, ensure environmental sustainability).

Interestingly, despite the clear and close connection between human health and development, the thoughts and practices on the ground at different levels, including policy, programme, project, and day-to-day work, has not well reflected the virtual relationship between the two. Health is widely perceived as the business of the health sector, and that is, in most countries, dominated by medical knowledge, technologies, and professionals who have been trained in medical schools. As a consequence of this thought, and other related factors such as the sector or theme-oriented funding mechanism, development agencies around world may or may not work on health issues. It seems normal if a development agency pays no attention to

health issues but focuses on other development issues such as agricultural technology extension and better management of natural resources, and a bit abnormal if the agency chooses to work on health issues while it has no medical expertise and has no funding for health issues.

In fact, health goes far beyond medicine. Its widely accepted definition by the World Health Organization (WHO) clearly states that: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (WHO 1948)." Early research by WHO revealed that human health is affected by four categories of factors, namely, biological factors such as gene and sex; environmental factors including natural and social environments; health care services, and behaviour and lifestyle. Lalonde (1974) and Labonte (1993) further argue that health is affected by biological factors such as age, sex and ethnicity; personal or family circumstances and lifestyles such as education, income, employment, risk taking behaviour, diet, exercise, recreation and leisure; the social environment such as culture, social

networks, and community participation; physical environment such as air quality, housing, crime, civic design and transport; and public services such as access to health service and quality of services. The recent efforts by WHO on social determinants of health further broaden this list by incorporating global issues, health systems level issues and lifecycle issues as the important determinants of human health, which is manifested by the nine knowledge networks of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health, namely, Early Child Development, Employment Conditions, Globalisation, Health Systems, Measurement and Evidence, Priority Public Health Condition, Social Exclusion, Urban Settings, Women and Gender Equity.

Health service today, which is mainly used as the vehicle of medicine and medical technologies, is only one of many factors that affect human health.

Since health is affected and determined by many factors, the measures for maintaining and improving it should be multiple and holistic and should not be limited to the health sector; it is the responsibility of every individual and organisation, including development agencies.

In fact, development agencies that focus on natural resource management, agricultural production, and environmental conservation can encounter numerous health issues and also have opportunities to address these issues in their daily work. For example, disease epidemic, particularly water-borne diseases, always follows a disaster, such as a flood or an earthquake. The introduction or extension of new agricultural production or environmental conservation technologies, which are the jobs of some development agencies, may create new hazards to women and men's health. The widespread use of chemical pesticides was an example of such.

Development agencies can also do much to avoid, minimise, or redress adverse health outcomes by taking an integrated and holistic approach. For example, preparedness for disasters such as floods and earthquakes should include how to prevent and control possible disease epidemic. The research on climate change should include examining its health implications, thus the strategies and measures for mitigation and adaptation will pay attention to maintaining and improving health and minimising adverse health outcomes to the most possible extent. A health impact assessment should be undertaken prior to the introduction of any new technology to identify existing or potential health implications, thus necessary measures can be taken to prevent, mitigate, or reduce the negative consequences. The decision should be made by taking into account the benefits brought about by the new technology, and existing or potential health and other costs. In some cases, small measures can be taken to avoid a big health hazard.

Thus, health should be treated as a crosscutting issue on which every person and organisation has a stake, like gender and equity, rather than as the business of the health sector alone.

There are many ways to work on health issues and to contribute to human health. For development agencies where Health is not a primary objective, like ICIMOD, the first step is awareness raising (or putting awareness into action if the awareness is already there). Every staff member should be aware of his/her responsibility for mountain people's well-being, in which health is the core; and aware that he/she can do something to maintain and improve people's health. Second is to undertake health impact assessment prior to the introduction of any programme or project. This can be done by using a simple checklist or more systematic health impact assessment tools (see Scott-Samuel, 1998; Birley et al, 1998; NHS Health Development Agency, 2002). Health impact assessment can ensure that the health and well being of people who are likely to be affected by such programmes and projects is maintained or enhanced. Third is to make decisions taking all factors into account and establish trade-offs, which usually require a participatory, transdisciplinary, and equitable approach.

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FECOFUN , Nepal

Nepal's community forestry programme is a courageous, innovative, and forward-looking approach to participatory forest management by local people. It is widely celebrated as a progressive policy example of devolving control over forest resources to community-based user groups. The Federation of Community Forest Users, Nepal (FECOFUN) has contributed in large measure to this development.

Xu Jianchu

The Genesis of FECOFUN

FECOFUN emerged out of the idea that Nepal's forest users should be linked to strengthen their role in policy making. FECOFUN is a national federation of forest users across Nepal dedicated to promoting and protecting users' rights. The Federation works to strengthen the institution of community forest users groups (CFUGs) and increase their awareness of forest resource management in order to reduce poverty among local people.

Since its inception in 1995, FECOFUN has grown into a social movement of eight million forest users. More than 11,200 CFUGs across Nepal are affiliated with FECOFUN, and membership is still growing. The Federation has become an effective mechanism for fostering dialogue between policy makers and users, and a learning centre on forest management.

Achievements

FECOFUN has effectively lobbied government officials and politicians, organised marches, demonstrations, signature campaigns, and filed court cases on forest use issues. It has united forest users across Nepal to act collectively for their resource management rights. From these experiences it has developed expertise in community forestry and its prospects, and has provided technical support to user groups in forest resource management and empowerment. The process and role of the Federation continues to evolve as it faces new challenges. Besides national level advocacy, FECOFUN has made its presence felt in the international arena to secure users' rights and to conserve the environment.

Who runs FECOFUN?

The Federation has a three-tier structure: the village or range post, the district post, and central level committees, with general and elementary category members. Elected representatives of forest user groups from grassroots to central levels run the Federation. A General Assembly, with equitable representation from all districts including minority groups, political interests, and regional balance convenes every three years and is FECOFUN's ultimate decision-making authority. It approves future plans and allocates resources for programmes at the national level. Day-to-day decisions are made by a Steering Committee under the National Executive Committee (NEC). The NEC is composed of 53 members including 28 elected representatives in 14 zones of the country; 20 elected representatives from various ethnic groups including the Dalits, regional representatives, the physical-handicapped, and the poorest groups, and five members nominated by the Central Committee.

FECOFUN's Secretariat is based in Kathmandu and has offices in 75 districts of Nepal and an overall staff of 250. It operates largely on donor assistance (60%) and membership fees of forest users' groups (40%), but is working towards developing self-reliance and reducing dependence on donors.

For more information on FECOFUN
Email: fecofun1@wlink.com.np
Website: **www.fecofun.org**

Green Hill, Bangladesh

Green Hill works for the poor in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), Bangladesh, with special focus on women and children, the indigenous, and those in least developed areas. It aims is to enable these groups to improve their livelihoods and exercise their rights. Since its founding in 1994, Green Hill has reached out to 230,000 poor and deprived populations in 850 villages, or 17% of the total population of CHT, and 19% of the villages in CHT.

Amiya Kanti Chakma

Green Hill works in close collaboration with ICIMOD in promoting advocacy skills and strengthening links with regional networks on advocacy and indigenous peoples. Other ongoing projects include sustainable safe water supply and sanitation, promotion of indigenous peoples' rights, entrepreneurship development and promotion, and accountability for people's rights and equity. Among others, they are co-sponsored by WaterAid Bangladesh, DFID, GTZ, ActionAid Bangladesh, Manusher Jonno Foundation, CIDA, and the Grameen Trust.

Major achievements as a result of its projects and advocacies:

❯ About 100,000 poor and deprived populations have enjoyed safe drinking water supply, and hygiene education and capacity building efforts have helped improve health and livelihood conditions.

❯ More than 800 community-based organisations have been promoted in village development committees and human rights groups, sustaining the village development process. Local government institutions and duty bearers are supporting these groups to access improved education and other livelihood facilities.

❯ Training in integrated entrepreneurship, skills development, and micro-finance has supported the livelihoods of some 1021 marginalised borrower families and is empowering those who have so far received about 24 million taka.

❯ 125 trainers representing NGOs of three hill districts have been trained in advocacy

For more information on Green Hill
Email: info@greenhill-cht.org
Website: **www.greenhill-cht.org**

SAWTEE, Nepal

South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE) is a regional network of 11 member institutions from five South Asian countries (Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka) whose aim is to enable South Asian communities to benefit from and minimise the harms of changing regional and global economic paradigms as a result of globalisation and liberalised trade. SAWTEE's broad objective is to build the capacity of stakeholders to voice their concerns on these issues through relevant knowledge, information, and skills. It aims to analyse the impacts of multilateral and regional trade agreements and how these agreements function; conduct programmes that enhance the participation of developing countries, particularly least developed and landlocked countries, in the global trading system; contribute towards the process of regional integration within South Asia; establish linkages and promote cooperation with other organisations with similar objectives; and conduct research and advocacy programmes on trade, regional cooperation, and sustainable development issues affecting South Asia.

SAWTEE's strengths lie in networking and partnership building. It has established close links and partnerships with NGOs, the media, academia, research organisations, and government and inter-governmental institutions at national, regional, and international levels. At present it is the secretariat of the National Alliance for Food Security-Nepal, and two other international networks: the Farmers' Rights Advocacy Network and the Least Developed Countries Network for Economic Transformation. SAWTEE's member institutions are active in various national, regional, and international alliances. Other activities include policy research, sensitisation, and advocacy.

Programmes

Securing Farmers' Rights to Livelihood in the Hindu-Kush Himalayan Region Phase II; Progressive Regional Action and Cooperation on Trade, Phase III; Competition Advocacy and Education Project; Reform and Capacity Building Agenda in the Post WTO Accession Era; Trade, Development and Poverty; Addressing the Impact of Phasing Out Textile and Clothing Quotas on Nepal; and Grassroots and Policy Linkage on WTO Issues.

Publications

Under these programmes, SAWTEE publishes newsletters, discussion papers, monographs, books, briefing papers, and policy briefs. Trade Insight magazine is a major SAWTEE publication that aims to facilitate dialogue on trade and development issues in South Asia.

For more information on SAWTEE
Email: sawtee@sawtee.org
Website: **www.sawtee.org**

Freedom Forum, Nepal

Freedom Forum is an NGO working to institutionalise democracy, the protection and promotion of human rights, press freedom, and freedom of expression, and the right to information in Nepal. The Forum is registered with the District Administration Office of Kathmandu and the Social Welfare Council of Nepal. The head office is in Kathmandu, with offices in five regional centres to coordinate programmes at the local level.

Santosh Sigdel

Organisation's objectives

❱ Promotion and protection of press freedom and freedom of expression
❱ Monitoring the status of human rights and civil liberties in Nepal
❱ Reconciliation and peace building
❱ Consolidation of pluralism and the democratic processes
❱ Promotion of the right to information

Current activities

Right to Information

With support from ICIMOD, Freedom Forum initiated a 'Citizens' Campaign for the Right to Information (CCRI)'. The programme aims to promote advocacy for a pro-people Right to Information Law to make people aware of the importance of this right.

Legal support

The Forum's 'Strengthening Media though Legal Support Project' with support from DANIDA/HUGOU provides legal support to media and media practitioners in the course of litigation, the conduct of studies on media laws and policies to initiate media reform, and capacity building programmes for mid-career journalists.

Freedom Forum also conducts a regular discussion programme called, 'Dialogue for Democracy' to increase citizen awareness, and under this programme has organised 25 discussion programmes to date. The Forum is also engaged in a 'Media and Social Inclusion Programme' with support from SNV Nepal to promote the role of media in the process of social inclusion. With support from The Asia Foundation, the Forum engages in research and discussions on the relationship between civilian rule and the military, and is working towards a balanced civilian-military relationship under the emerging political set-up in Nepal.

For more information on Freedom Forum
Email: info@freedomforum.org.np,
Website: **www.freedomforum.org.np**

Centre News

Expanding partnerships in Afghanistan

ICIMOD opens country office in Kabul

ICIMOD Director General, Dr. J. Gabriel Campbell, Chairman, ICIMOD Board of Governors, H.E. Gulam Mostafa Jawad (far right), and guests from the government and the development community at the country office inauguration

At the request of the Government of Afghanistan, ICIMOD inaugurated its country office in Kabul on 11 February 2007. The Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, H. E. Obaidullah Ramin, keynote speaker and special guest, described the event as "an important and valuable step at this stage in Afghanistan's history".

He stressed the importance of food security and addressing sustainable livelihood issues in Afghanistan, and welcomed ICIMOD's cooperation. He also expressed a desire for his country to learn from ICIMOD's over two decades of experience in forestry and forest protection and the need to mobilise support

(from ICIMOD and other international agencies) in implementing Afghanistan's Agricultural Master Plan. Water and soil conservation, desertification, and deforestation are the other critical areas he identified for potential collaboration.

ICIMOD Director General, Dr. J. Gabriel Campbell, thanked the distinguished guests from the government and from international community for attending the inauguration. He briefed the distinguished audience about ICIMOD and its programmes, and its key areas of cooperation, and expressed special gratitude to Chairman H. E. Ghulam Mostafa Jawad, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and Afghanistan's representative to the ICIMOD Board of Governors for his support in establishing the Afghanistan office, and his contribution to fulfilling ICIMOD's mandate and role. H. E. Ghulam Mostafa Jawad is the current Chair of the ICIMOD Board for 2007.

In concluding remarks, the Honourable Deputy Minister expressed appreciation for the partnership with ICIMOD, especially the workshops and training programmes carried out with ICIMOD assistance. He saw the need for capacity building in the various areas of ICIMOD's work, and the value to Afghanistan of belonging to a regional organisation that linked the country with other mountain areas in the Himalayan region.

The inaugural ceremony was facilitated by Mr. Hazrat Hussain Khaurin, Director of Forest, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Afghanistan. From ICIMOD, Mr. Farid Mateen Ahmad, the new Programme Coordinator for ICIMOD based in Kabul, Mr. Anupam Bhatia, and Ms. Tika Gurung attended the inauguration. The country office is located at the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Department of Forest, Kabul.

Tika Gurung, tgurung@icimod.org

ICIMOD begins the process of setting the strategic direction for 2008-2012

ICIMOD held a series of focused consultations towards developing the next **Medium-term Programme Strategy for 2008-2012.** A three-day internal workshop developed a draft concept paper on a future strategy. To guide the workshop process, the Director General-designate, Dr. Andreas Schild, held consultations with the Integrated Programmes as well as with the Directorate. He also reviewed reports on policies, programme priorities, and planning cycles of the regional member countries, specially prepared for the strategic planning exercise. Discussions with the ICIMOD Directorate were also held regarding ongoing projects, organisational obligations, and the outputs of earlier workshops.

Narendra Bajracharya

Dr. Andreas Schild, Director General designate, leads a small group discussion on ICIMOD core competencies during the focused consultations.

The workshop was facilitated by a team led by PPD and participated in by ICIMOD's professional staff. Views were exchanged on critical lessons learned during the implementation of the current MTAP, prospects, ICIMOD's core competencies, and partnership strategies. Deliberations were also carried out on the monitoring and evaluation process. Successive versions of the draft concept paper evolved, incorporating the inputs of the participants through a critical examination of strategic elements related to knowledge management, improved member country presence, core competence, and performance monitoring. The concept paper was finalised in mid-February 2007 and shared internally.

The draft strategy paper will be shared by the DG-designate with the donors and the Board members, especially the Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) members of ICIMOD and will be finalised as ICIMOD's Strategy Paper (2008-12) by June 2007. In consultation with the members of PAC and the ICIMOD Board, the document will be shared with key RMCs partners and donors to obtain their support and ownership. The process of developing the MTAP (2008-12) is expected to begin in April 2007, and the final version of the Strategic Paper and the MTAP to be completed in October and approved by the Board in its annual meeting in November 2007.

Prem Manandhar, pmanandhar@icimod.org
Madhav Karki, mkarki@icimod.org

'Kathmandu Valley Environment Outlook' released

ICIMOD, with support from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), recently released and launched, *Kathmandu Valley Environment Outlook*. The book paints a picture of environmental decline in the Kathmandu Valley, citing growing urbanisation, population growth, unhampered and poorly planned land development, and insufficient coordination among government agencies as the major causes. It was launched during the 10th Governing Council Meeting and silver jubilee of the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) in Kathmandu, 25 January 2007. The Honourable State Minister, Mr. Man Bahadur Biswokarma, Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology (MoEST), Government of Nepal, was special guest.

ICIMOD and UNEP hope the book will provide sound bases for decision-making by the Government of Nepal and concerned authorities at the policy level, to address Nepal's deteriorating environment. The book can also serve as reference for all those who are involved in the field of environmental management.

The book was disseminated through various development networks, and was well covered through book reviews in various local, regional, and international mass media.

The Honourable State Minister of MoEST shows a copy of the book.

During its launching, MENRIS, ICIMOD also launched the Mountain Environment Knowledge Hub (M-eKH), which is a part of UNEP's Environment Knowledge Hub (eKH). The Mountain Environment Knowledge Hub is a platform for both users and providers to build, share, and communicate environment data, information, and knowledge on mountain ecosystems and services of the HKH region for sustainable mountain development. It can be accessed at **http://menris.icimod.net/m-ekh**.

Bidya Banmali Pradhan, bbanmali@icimod.org

'Mapping the Status of Bhutan's Renewable (Agricultural) Natural Resources' launched in Thimphu, Bhutan

A policy dissemination workshop was jointly organised by the Policy and Planning Division of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA/PPD), Royal Government of Bhutan and ICIMOD on 12 January 2007 in Thimphu, Bhutan. More than 50 participants from different organisations attended the workshop, which also launched the joint publication, *Mapping the Status of Bhutan's Renewable (Agricultural) Natural Resources.*

The book, which comes with a multi-media CD version, is the outcome of a successful joint collaboration between ICIMOD and MoA/PPD to package and disseminate renewable natural resources (RNR) census indicators at the district level, in the form of an atlas making use of GIS tools and techniques. It was launched by Dasho Sangay Thinley, Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, and aims to assist decision makers and
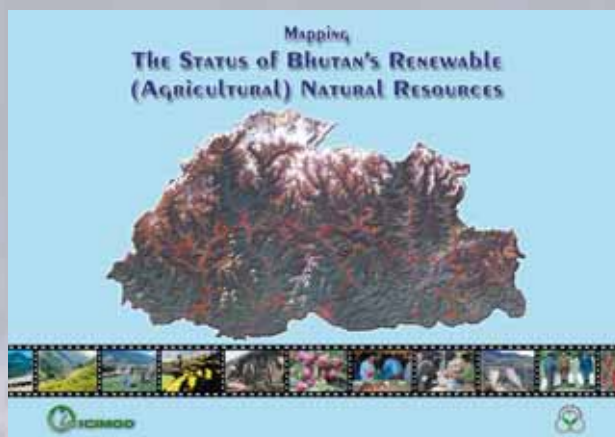
development planners make informed decisions and plans. The event was covered by *Kuensel*, the national newspaper of Bhutan.

Basanta Shrestha, bshrestha@icimod.og

Agreement for launching the CFC-FAO-ICIMOD-MAPPA Project in Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal

ICIMOD signed Project Implementation Agreements (PIAs) with the Governments of Bangladesh (19 October 2006), Bhutan (18 December 2006) and Nepal (8 January, 2007) for implementing the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC) supported "Medicinal Plants and Herbs: Developing Sustainable Supply Chain and Enhancing Rural Livelihood in Eastern Himalayas" project in these countries. The Ministries of Commerce, Finance and Forests, and Soil Conservation signed the agreements on behalf of the respective Governments. Ninety percent of the US$ 1.29 million grant will go directly for implementation in the countries.

The project, to be implemented and coordinated by the ICIMOD based Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Programme in Asia (MAPPA), aims to develop and promote the appropriate production and post harvesting technologies, marketing strategies with community based enterprise approach and marketing information dissemination systems. In addition, conserving valuable rare medicinal plants in their natural habitats and developing appropriate policies to enhance rural livelihoods in these countries.

Dyutiman Choudhary, dchoudhary@icimod.org
R.B.S Rawat, rrawat@icimod.org

MAPPA Project

New Independent Board Members

ICIMOD is pleased to announce the addition of three highly respected experts in their particular fields as new Independent Board Members of the ICIMOD Board effective November 2006. They were appointed during the 37th ICIMOD Board of Governors meeting held in Swat, Pakistan.

Dr. Jacqueline A. Ashby, Senior Research Manager, Development Sociologist, CIAT, Cali

Dr. Jacqueline Ashby is currently Director of the Rural Innovation Institute at the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), Colombia and Associate Editor of the *International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability*. She is also associated with the University of Florida, USA, where she teaches a graduate course on Managing Innovation, and is a senior technical adviser to Catholic Relief Services, a global NGO, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Latin America Programme.

Before 2001, Dr. Ashby was CIAT's Director of Research for Natural Resource Management and Coordinator of the CGIAR Programme on Participatory Research and Gender Analysis, which she helped launch in 1997. Widely recognised internationally for path-breaking work that established participatory action research as a scientific methodology relevant to agricultural fields as diverse as soil science, plant breeding, and pest management, she is the author of numerous journal articles, book chapters, and training manuals. As a practitioner of participatory action, Dr. Ashby helped to found two successful NGOs in Colombia, one of which promotes farmer-led research.

Dr. Ashby has a Ph.D. in Development Sociology from Cornell University, USA, a Diploma from the University of Cambridge, and a B.A. Honours from the University of York, England. She is not new to the region, having started her career in Nepal as a volunteer under the British Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) in the early '70s.

Announcing…

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29 June - 5 July 2008

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• Pre-, Mid- and Post-Congress tours
• Workshop themes
• Delegate Sponsorship and Sponsoring Organisations

visit **www.IGC-IRC2008.org**

Xu Jianchu

Dr. Amir Muhammed, Rector,
National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences, Pakistan

Dr. Amir Muhammed from Pakistan is currently the Rector of the National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences, Pakistan, in addition to being active in several organisations including Asianics Agro-Dev International, Pakistan, where he is President; Japan Scientific Planning Group of Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN) Kobe, as Co-Chairman; the System of Training, Analysis and Research (START) in Global Change Research as steering committee member; and the South Asia START Committee (SASCOM) as chairman.

He helped establish the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), where he retired as Chairman in 1990. At one time the Federal Secretary of the Government of Pakistan, he was also closely associated with the Consultative Group of International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), International Service for National Agriculture Research (ISNAR), serving the boards and several committees. He did consulting work for various development organisations including World Bank, Asian Development Bank, FAO, UNDP, and, in 1990, led ICIMOD's 3rd Quinquennial Review.

A recipient of many honours, including the Gold Medal from the Prime Minister of Pakistan for outstanding contribution to agricultural research in 1989, Dr. Muhammed has an M.Sc. (Hons) 1953; B.Sc. (Hons) in 1952, from Punjab University, Lahore; and a Ph.D. in Biochemistry from Oxford University, United Kingdom, 1959. He has written over 150 research papers and articles and several books.

Dr. Linxiu Zhang, Professor and Deputy Director,
Center for Chinese Agricultural Policy (CCAP)

Dr. Linxiu Zhang is a Professor and the Deputy Director of the Center for Chinese Agricultural Policy (CCAP), Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), Beijing. An agricultural economist, she currently heads the research programme, 'Integrated Rural Urban Development and Anti-Poverty Policy' in China, and has led other important projects including the Outstanding Young Scientists Project (2003-2006); Social and Economic Determinants of Fertiliser Application by Rural Farmers (2003-2005); Rural Governance and Community Development (2001-2005); Land Tenure and Gender in Rural China (2004-2005); and Integrating Social and Gender Analysis in Natural Resources Research (2006-2008); Rural Education and Health Care (2007-2009); Public Goods Investment in Rural Areas (2006-2008) Her expertise and contributions in these fields are reflected in books, reports, and articles that she has published, in both the English and Chinese languages.

Dr. Zhang is associated with many professional organisations and has served on the boards of several Chinese research academia and international organisations. She has also worked as a consultant to various international development agencies including UNDP, FAO, UNEP, IFAD, World Bank, and was a member of ICIMOD's Quinquennial Review in 2006. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Economics and Management (1982) from the Nanjing Agricultural University, China; an M.Sc. in Agricultural Economics (1986) from the University of the Philippines, Los Banos; and a Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics (1995) from University of Reading, England.

Keep up to date on mountain issues in the Asia-Pacific region.
Visit
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Asia pacific node of the Mountain Forum

ICIMOD workshops, meetings, and training programmes
November 2006-February 2007

Event	Date	Place
Second South Asia Sustainable Tourism Forum	3 November 2006	Kathmandu
ICIMOD's 35th Board of Governors Meeting	3-5 November 2006	Swat, Pakistan
Training Workshop on "Earthquake Vulnerability and Multi Hazard Risk Assessment"	13-14 November 2006	National Centre of Excellence in Geology of Pakistan, University of Peshawar, Pakistan
International GIS Day Celebration 2006: Discovering the World through GIS	15 November 2006	Kathmandu, BICC
Geographic Information System (GIS) for Beginners	13-17 November 2006	Kathmandu
Hands-on Training on Bio-briquette Making	17-18 November 2006	Lalitpur, Nepal
Exposure Visit of the Agricultural Marketing and Enterprise Promotion Project (AMEPP) team to North East India	18-24 November 2006	North East India
Land Use Transition and Human Health in Eastern Himalaya: an Adaptive Ecosystem Approach	20-23 November 2006	Kathmandu
Training on Rapid Urban Assessment	20-24 November 2006	Kathmandu
Training in Beekeeping Management for Honey Production and Pollination	20-29 November 2006	Himachal Pradesh, India
Hands-on Training on Bio-briquette Making	21-22 December 2006	Kathmandu
Culmination Workshop for the Assessment of the Decade of Indigenous Peoples in Asia	27-29 November 2006	Kathmandu
A National Policy Workshop on Policies for Sustainable Use and Management of Rangeland Resources in Pakistan	28-29 November 2006	Islamabad, Pakistan
The 4th Project Meeting of "ASSESS-HKH"	2-6 December 2006	Lahore, Pakistan
Consultation Workshop on Capacity Building for Flash Flood Management and Sustainable Development in the Himalayas	4-5 December 2006	Kathmandu
Regional Workshop on Policy Priorities for Sustainable Rangeland Management in Hindu Kush-Himalayas	4-7 December 2006	Kathmandu
M & E workshop	8 December 2006	Kathmandu
Himalaya Tourism Conference 2006, Mountaineering, Livelihoods and Environment	11-12 December 2006	Kathmandu
'Sharing Mountain Knowledge' Book and Technology Fair	11-12 December 2006	Kathmandu
Regional Workshop on Sharing Geographic Information in the HKH region – Geo-Network Metadata Implementation	11-15 December 2006	Kathmandu
International Workshop on 'Integrated Beekeeping Development in South Asian Countries'	13-14 November 2006	New Dehli, India
Third Project Steering Committee Meeting of Indigenous Honeybees and Field Visit	14 December 2006	Dangadi, Far Western Nepal
Policy Seminar on Creating a Useful Dossier for Policy Work	14 December 2006	Kathmandu
Regional Exposure Visit Programme to Observe Effective Advocacy-related Activities in Nepal	18-28 December 2006	Kaski, Parbat, Baglung, and Palpa districts of Nepal
Training Course on 'Geo-informatics for Conservation and Management'	6-20 January 2007	Myanmar
Gather Professional Inputs in Developing the next MTAP Programme Strategy	10 January 2007	Kathmandu
Book Launch, Mapping the Status of Bhutan's Renewable (Agricultural) Natural Resources	12 January 2007	Bhutan
Training on Sustainable Tourism Market Linkages	15 January-17 March 2007	Kathmandu
Earthquake Safety Day	16-18 January 2007	Kathmandu
Mountain Forum Open House	18 January 2007	Kathmandu
Meeting on ICIMOD Funding Strategies	24 January 2007	Kathmandu
Book Launch, Kathmandu Valley Environment Outlook and MeKH Portal Launch	25 January 2007	Kathmandu
To develop ICIMOD'S next Medium Term Programme Strategy	29-31 January 2007	Kathmandu
World Wetlands Day	2 February 2007	Kathmandu

Appreciation evening for Gabriel

Narendra Bajracharya

It was a night of nostalgic songs, touching speeches, and deep gratitude, but will also be remembered for the fun and entertainment, and the easy camaraderie that has come to characterise the ICIMOD family.

Over 150 ICIMOD staff members, well-wishers, and friends showed up at the Radisson Hotel on 23 February 2007 for the 'Appreciation Evening for Gabriel'. It was ICIMOD's way of honouring Dr. James Gabriel Campbell, outgoing Director General, and his work for the Centre and the cause of mountain development; also honouring the inspiring leader and collegial work colleague and friend that he has come to be for most of us. It was also during his term that the Centre acquired its own building with the generous contribution of the regional member countries.

The staff presented him a plaque of appreciation for these contributions, and a poster capturing some memorable moments at the Centre during his term, special gifts including a book of messages from the staff, some ICIMOD Board of Governors, and ICIMOD Support Group members, and a portrait done by ICIMOD's own 'artist-in-residence', Asha Kaji Thaku of the Information Management, Communication and Outreach Division. Dr. Madhav Karki, Deputy Director General, Programmes; Mr. Milan Raj Tuladhar, Director, Administration and Finance; Dr. Eklabya

Sharma, Programme Manager of NRM and Staff Club representative, and Ms. Tika Gurung, Directorate, all paid tribute to Dr. Campbell the anthropologist, work colleague, boss, and friend. In a warm response, Dr. Campbell – plain 'Gabriel' to most of us – thanked everyone, the Board and ISG members, and the ICIMOD staff, taking time out to name each staff member in recognition of their individual contribution to making ICIMOD and his over seven years with the Centre productive and fulfilling. In a light moment, he also invited one and all to break bread and toast 'aila', a local Newari brew, with him using his new set of Newari silver cups which came as part of the gifts. A programme followed showcasing the talents of the staff, and songs in Nepali, English, Chinese, and Hindi, as well as dances representing Nepali, Chitrali, and Tibetan cultures, and a medley of mountain songs from all over the world were performed in his honour – the last number bringing the house down and making everyone break into a dance.

Dr. Campbell came with his wife, Dr. Lynn Bennett, a respected development anthropologist with the World Bank. ICIMOD bids the well-liked Director General good wishes for the future and continuing contributions to mountain development as Senior Fellow of The Mountain Institute (TMI), with a new email address gcampbell@mountain.org.

Global Mountain Forum Secretariat

Biodiversity conservation featured at the Mountain Forum Open House

The Mountain Forum Secretariat and the Asia-Pacific Mountain Network (APMN)/ICIMOD co-organised an Open House for Mountain Forum members on 18 January 2007. The focus of the Open House was Biodiversity Conservation, also the theme of the International Mountain Day celebration in December 2006. The programme featured two guest speakers: Dr. Nakul Chettri, ICIMOD Community Biodiversity Specialist, who spoke on 'Biodiversity conservation beyond boundaries: A landscape approach through partnership'; and Dr. Siddartha Bajracharya, Member Secretary of the National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), who presented the 'Community-based biodiversity conservation in Annapurna Conservation Area'.

Abstracts of both papers can be accessed at:
http://www.mtnforum.org/apmn/mfoh2007/1-AbstractPaper-session1.pdf
http://www.mtnforum.org/apmn/mfoh2007/2-AbstractPaper-Session2.pdf

More than 50 participants attended the event, which was also an opportunity to be familiar with the services provided by Mountain Forum which include publications, an online library, a website, and e-conferences.

Certificates of membership were distributed to participating Mountain Forum members.

The Mountain Forum Open House was widely covered in local newsletters by stakeholders such as FIT-Nepal and EV-K2-CNR.

Mountain Forum's new website launched in March 2007

Mountain Forum launched its new and improved website, which features, among others:

❯ New design
❯ New section on Mountain News
❯ Aggregated content on specific themes each month
❯ Individual web pages for each member including facility to add photographs and documents
❯ Real-time profile updating systems
❯ Improved membership systems which allow for city-specific networking
❯ New features

E-conference Report and MF Bulletin to be released soon

The e-conference report on 'Mountain-to-Mountain Cooperation: Sustainable Use of Biodiversity, including Genetic Resources in the Andes and the Himalaya' will be released by mid-March 2007. The e-conference was held during 12-30 June 2006, and organised by the Mountain Forum Secretariat in association with the Mountain Partnership Secretariat, the HimalAndes Initiative, ICIMOD, and the Asia-Pacific and Latin-American nodes of Mountain Forum.

The January 2007 issue of the *Mountain Forum Bulletin* will also be released in mid March. Both the report and the *Bulletin* are already available online.

New intern at MF

Mr. Suman Jaiswal joined Mountain Forum Secretariat as an intern beginning January 2007. Mr. Jaiswal, a Nepali national, has a background in Computer Engineering. He has worked with several IT companies in Kathmandu, and brings with him expertise in programming and web development and design. He will be developing a database of images for Mountain Forum's internal, and possibly public use.

Asia Pacific Mountain Network

The Asia-Pacific Mountain Network (APMN) is the Asia-Pacific node of the Mountain Forum (MF). It is an informal and democratic information network of individuals and organisations interested in the promotion of sustainable mountain development in the mountain countries of the Asia-Pacific region. At present APMN is funded by SDC and hosted by ICIMOD, where it is managed by the Information Management, Communications and Outreach (IMCO) Division. As well as moderating two MF discussion lists (mf-asiapacific and mf-centralasia) and contributing to Mountain Forum's other activities, APMN has its own programme and website (**http://apmn.icimod.org**).

The spring issue of *APMN Bulletin* (**http://apmn. icimod.org/publications/APMN-bulletin_vol_7_no_ 2.pdf**) has just been published. The Bulletin is intended particularly for off-line members of the network. It highlights recent activities of APMN and critical and emerging mountain issues, as well as mountain-related events and activities taking place in the Asia-Pacific region. APMN is also carrying out three different tasks for the Mountain Partnership Secretariat (MPS) and the MFS led UN-FAO/ ICIMOD agreement. In the first, APMN will carry out a brief assessment of the potential for broadband communications to contribute to socioeconomic development in areas of low connectivity in the mountain areas in Nepal. The second activity is developing communication tools to support information exchange and activities of the Biodiversity Conservation Initiative; and in the third, APMN will perform a communication needs assessment and look at partner linkages in the Central Asia region.

To help Mr. Udayan Mishra, Acting APMN Node Manager, a new intern Ms. Sapana Lohani has joined APMN from January 2006. She will be helping to bring out two issues of the *APMN Bulletin* as well as facilitating other activities of APMN.

Change of ICIMOD telephone numbers

Effective January 2007 ICIMOD telephone numbers have changed to:

Main line
5003222 (in place of 5525313)
Fax
5003299 (in place of 5524509)

Our other numbers are

	New Numbers	Old Numbers
Direct inward station access line	5003310	5525310
Direct inward station access line	5003311	5525311
Directorate	5003318	5525318
NRM	5003013	5531903
ARID	5003141	5536741
WHEM	5003177	5543227
CEGG	5003040	5536740
IKM/IMCO	5003246	5536746
IKM/MENRIS	5003242	5536742
Mountain Forum	5003139	5522839
Alternative Fax number	5003277	5536747

New Memoranda of Understanding and Agreements signed
October 2006 to February 2007

October 2006

Bangladesh Neem Foundation (BNF), Ministry of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh
Medicinal Plants and Herbs: Developing Sustainable Supply Chain and Enhancing Rural Livelihood in Eastern Himalayas

November 2006

CGIAR Consortium for Spatial Information (CGIAR-CSI), Sri Lanka
Promoting Spatial Information and Applications for Sustainable Development

November 2006

Geo-informatics Centre of Asian Institute of Technology (GIC-AIT), Bangkok, Thailand
Cooperation and Participation in Digital Asia Project

November 2006

Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD), Pokhara, Nepal
Land Management and Livelihood Options and Opportunities for Shifting Cultivation and Sloping Land Areas

December 2006

Department of Aid and Debt Management (DADM), Ministry of Finance, Royal Government of Bhutan
Medicinal Plants and Herbs: Developing Sustainable Supply Chain and Enhancing Rural Livelihood in Eastern Himalaya

December 2006

Development of Biotechnology and Environmental Conservation Centre (DEBTEC), Dhaka, Bangladesh
Medicinal Plants and Herbs: Developing Sustainable Supply Chain and Enhancing Rural Livelihood in Eastern Himalaya

January 2007

United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNTWO), Madrid, Spain
To collaborate towards sustainable development and promotion of mountainous areas for tourism to ensure maximum socioeconomic benefits to local communities and minimise possible adverse environmental impact

Narendra Bajracharya

January 2007

Herbs and NTFP Coordination Committee (HNCC), Kathmandu, Nepal
Medicinal Plants and Herbs: Developing Sustainable Supply Chain and Enhancing Rural Livelihood in Eastern Himalaya

January 2007

Institute of Forestry, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal
To share competencies in designing and delivering specific courses in mountain development focusing on natural resource management

15 February 2007

Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC), Dhaka, Bangladesh
Collaborative programme-level effort in the fields of mutual interest as determined by the priorities of BARC and ICIMOD and the comparative advantages and resources within the two institutions

Recent ICIMOD publications

The following are the major documents published between December 2006 and February 2007. The three prices quoted are applicable to developed countries, developing countries, and ICIMOD's regional member countries respectively, and include post and packing. Publications are available at a reduced rate at the Centre itself. Publications can be provided free-of-charge to institutions actively involved in sustainable development of the greater Himalayan region. Order on-line (see below) or from the Distribution Unit, distri@icimod.org
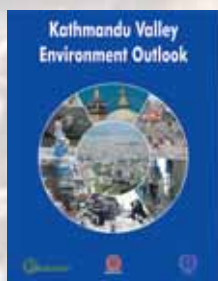
ICIMOD (2007) Kathmandu Valley Environment Outlook. 33p ISBN 978-92-9115-019-9 / ISBN-978-92-9115-020-5 (electronic)
Price: $20 / $15 / $10

Kathmandu Valley is a place of extraordinary natural and cultural beauty. But it is a valley now transformed almost beyond recognition. Constantly growing traffic congestion, polluted air from vehicles and brick factories, rapidly expanding urban sprawl, streams and rivers that too often resemble sewers, piles of waste, and shortages of drinking water too often obscure the beauty beneath and beyond. In Kathmandu Valley Environment Outlook, ICIMOD has joined with the United Nations Environment Programme and the Nepal Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology to provide a detailed account of the status of the Kathmandu Valley environment highlighting five key environmental issues – air quality and traffic management, unplanned settlement, degradation of water resources, waste management, and natural disaster preparedness. The book reviews their status, and recommends measures to prevent or minimise negative impacts, providing direct options for management by various levels of government, civil society, the public-private sector, and residents. (Erratum: Please note on p. 64, Table 5.10, 'm/d' should read 'm^3/day'.)

ICIMOD (2006) Mapping: The Status of Bhutan's Renewable (Agricultural) Natural Resources. 147p ISBN 978-92-9115-011-3
Price: $20 / $15 / $10

In 2000, the Ministry of Agriculture of the Royal Government of Bhutan carried out the first ever agricultural census for the whole country to give the Renewable Natural Resources Statistics 2000. The present publication presents these data in the form of thematic maps showing the distribution of selected indicators by district, thus allowing a rapid visual grasp of the implications in terms of geographic distribution and difference. The publication is divided into four parts: an introduction with a brief background on the work, and a description of the main features of the census together with a discussion of its limitations; a brief overview of Bhutan with descriptive information of some major features; the RNR Statistics 2000 in the form of text, tables and maps; and a final section with a summary of the data, the conclusions and recommendations from the study, and a short bibliography. The themes covered include agricultural land use characteristics, cereal production and yields, agricultural inputs, horticultural production, livestock population and production, agricultural marketing, and major constraints faced by the rural farm households.

General publications

❯ Newsletter No. 51: Managing Watershed in the Himalayan Region (Winter 2006)
❯ Annual Report 2006
❯ ICIMOD Brochure: Partnerships in Mountain Development, Securing the Future of the Himalayan Region Update, Feb 2007
❯ ICIMOD Catalogue of Publications 2007

Leaflets

❯ Living with Risk - Sharing Knowledge on Disaster Preparedness in the Himalayan Region. Update, Feb 2007
❯ Conservation Beyond Boundaries - Participatory Biodiversity Conservation in Transboundary Landscapes of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan Region Feb 2007
❯ Flash Flood Management and Sustainable Development in the Himalayas. 4p. Nov 2006
❯ Regional Cooperation for Flood Disaster Mitigation in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan Region. Oct 2006

ICIMOD publications on-line order direct at

http://www.icimod.org
http://www.panaseanemall.org/shop/icimod/
http://www.earthprint.com/icimod

New appointments

Farid Mateen Ahmad, Afghanistan Programme Coordinator, PPD

Mr. Farid Mateen Ahmad completed a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture in his home country, Afghanistan. He was awarded a one-year fellowship to the US, where he did postgraduate studies in International Agriculture Development at the University of California-Davis. He later joined the agriculture faculty of Herat University as lecturer, but soon moved on to civil society organisations and NGOs, where he has eight years of experience in implementing agriculture, rural development, and alternative livelihood programmes in different parts of Afghanistan. He was also in monitoring and evaluation, community development, and capacity building. Before joining ICIMOD, he was development officer with Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). He joins ICIMOD as Afghanistan Programme Coordinator.

Chodok, DSS Programme Officer, IKM-MENRIS

Dr. Chodok, a Chinese national from Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), joined ICIMOD in January 2007 as Country Coordinator TAR, China of the Decision Support Systems-Hindu Kush-Karakoram-Himalaya (DSS-HKKH) Project. He has a Ph.D. in Geography from the Institute of Geographical Sciences and Natural Resources Research of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and a Bachelor's degree in Atmospheric Science from Nanjing Institute of Meteorology. Before joining ICIMOD, he was Division Head and Associate Professor of the Tibet Center for Remote Sensing Applications, Tibet Meteorological Bureau.

Dr. Chodok has considerable experience in Tibetan Plateau meteorology and various aspects of GIS and remote sensing applications as applied in the Tibetan Plateau environment. He successfully coordinated several Tibetan Plateau studies including land use/land cover changes and integrated environment evaluation in the central Tibetan Plateau, satellite mapping of surface biophysical parameters, vegetation and snow cover monitoring, a study of ultraviolet and ozone layers, and climatic resources assessment in the Tibet Autonomous Region. At ICIMOD he will be responsible for the RS components of the DSS-HKKH project specialising in land cover and land use mapping and analysis.

Tawheed Gul, Assistant Coordinator, Decentralisation and Local Governance, CEGG

Ms. Tawheed Gul from the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), Pakistan joined ICIMOD in February 2007 as Assistant Coordinator of the Decentralisation and Local Governance in CEGG programme.

Ms. Tawheed has an MA degree in International Relations from the University of Peshawar, NWFP and has worked for a decade with development organisations and foreign-funded projects with special focus on gender, empowerment, and poverty aspects. She was the Human and Institutional Development/ Planning and Monitoring Coordinator of a Swiss-funded Innovation for Poverty Reduction Project (IPRP) implemented by Swiss Inter-Cooperation before joining ICIMOD. Amongst the pioneers who have taken up the challenge of working in the conservative Malakand division of Northern Pakistan, Ms. Tawheed has broken ground in bringing women in these areas into the development chain. Through her work and dedication, IPRP received the Swiss Inter-cooperation Gender Award in 2006 for best performance in gender mainstreaming interventions.

Ms. Tawheed also worked with the UN World Food Programme, DHV the Netherlands, and Asian Development Bank in close collaboration with the government Forest Department and a special unit for the development of the rural poor. She facilitated organisational strengthening and institutional development of local NGOs in Pakistan and added value in their services for the community.

Nonna Lamponen, Project and Programme Development Specialist, PPD

Ms. Nonna Lamponen joined ICIMOD in January 2007 as Project and Programme Development Specialist to work within the PPD programme. Ms. Lamponen brings with her over 10 years of work experience in the UK and Nepal combining both business and development activities.

Her main experience lies within project management, report writing, partner and customer management, as well as market development. Prior to joining ICIMOD, she was a consultant to SNV-Nepal and with private firms in the UK. In her free time, Ms. Lamponen also runs two charitable organisations in Nepal - an orphan centre in Kathmandu and an education programme for underprivileged Nepali girls. Ms. Lamponen has an M.Sc. in Business and Economics and is originally from Finland but has resided in London for all of her adult life.

She is also an active freelance journalist writing in both English and Finnish languages, mostly on outdoor activities and extreme sports.

Dechenla Sherpa, Gender Specialist, CEGG

Ms. Dechenla Sherpa joined ICIMOD as Gender Specialist at CEGG in November 2006. She is responsible for gender training programmes for the organisation and the regional partners. She brings in the experience of gender mainstreaming in the tourism programme of UNDP Nepal. The youngest regional professional at ICIMOD, Ms. Sherpa has a strong grassroots foundation and has travelled to 22 districts of Nepal to train rural women and men as well as to monitor and implement programmes.

She started out a career in journalism and has worked as a communication specialist. She was involved in different promotional campaigns within and outside Nepal, has led journalists' familiarisation tours, and developed communication strategies. She has a strong passion for travel documentaries and to date has written 14 documentaries focusing on poverty, tourism, environment, women, and community development issues. She has also taken courses on conflict and women's development.

Ms. Sherpa comes from a predominantly ethnic village in the lower belt of the Everest region in Nepal. She is a graduate of Delhi University, India and Tribhuvan University, Nepal

Salman Asif Siddiqui, DSS Programme Officer, IKM-MENRIS

Mr. Salman Asif Siddiqui completed his M.Sc. in Forestry with specialisation in Forest Engineering from the Pakistan Forest Institute, Peshawar and afterwards did a Mastère SILAT, a specialised masters degree programme in geographic information systems (GIS) and remote sensing (RS) from CEMAGREF/ENGREF, Montpellier, France in 1997-1998.

He has over a decade of work experience in GIS and RS and has worked with international research and development organisations such as the International Irrigation Management Institute (IIMI) and the United Nations Development Programme in Pakistan. Prior to joining ICIMOD he was with the newly established Water Management Center of the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) as head of the GIS unit, involved together with a team in the formulation of mitigation and preparedness plans for drought-affected areas and providing support to hydro-geological studies using GIS techniques.

Associates, consultants, and interns
(as of February 2007)

Associates/Consultants

Chhetri, Payas, IKM-IMCO

Dangol, Pradeep Man, IKM-MENRIS

Gurung, Deo Raj, IKM-MENRIS

Joshi Sharad Prasad, IKM-MENRIS

Karmacharya, Jay, IKM-IMCO

Mahat, Tek Jung, IKM-IMCO

Maskey, Rejina, IKM-MENRIS

Mishra, Udayan, IKM-APMN

Rai, Numa, CEGG

Regmi, Prajna, IKM-MENRIS

Shrestha, Rakesh, MENRIS

Shrestha, Ram Kumari, NRM

Uddin, Kabir, IKM-MENRIS

Yu Haiyang, WHEM

Interns

Chhipi Shrestha, Gyan Kumar, WHEM

Dhakal, Subodh Prasad, WHEM

Dhakal, Tara, CEGG

Hamal, Nagma, ARID

Htun, Khin Thida, CEGG

Ghimire, Shobhana, PPD

Jaiswal, Suman, Mountain Forum Secretariat

Lama, Sonam, ARID

Lohani, Sapana, IKM-APMN

Nepal, Santosh, WHEM

Pradhan, Paribesh, Mountain Forum Secretariat

Rai, Xitij, CEGG

Shrestha, Prawesh, Directorate

Upadhyay, Lokendra, ARID

Staff separation

Bhatta, Mandakini, Web Assistant, IKM-MENRIS (1 Oct 2003–31 Dec 2006)

Dhakal, Susmita, Intern, Kyoto-ARID (1 May 2006–15 Feb 2007)

Ghaffar, Sardar M. Abdul, Intern/Beekeeping Project, ARID (1 Apr 2006–31 Dec 2006)

Gupta, Radhika, Coordinator, Equity and Rights (1 Nov 2004 - 5 Jan 2007)

Li Qiaohong, Research Associate, WHEM (6 Sept 2006 - 13 Jan 2007)

Li Zhouqing, Consultant, WHEM (10 Oct 2006- 15 Feb 2007)

Min Zao Oo, Intern, CEGG (15 Sept-9 Feb 2007)

Liang Chungfang, Intern, MENRIS (27 Nov 2006 -12 Jan 2007)

Sah, Ram Prasad, Consultant, PPD (23 Aug 2006-22 Feb 2007)

Min Zao Oo, Intern, IKM-MENRIS (15 Sept 2006-9 Feb 2007)

Tian Yugiang, Assistant Coordinator, Mobile Workshop, WHEM (6 Aug-5 Nov 2006)

ICIMOD staff members

As of February 2007

Directorate
Campbell, J. Gabriel, Director General
Karki, Madhav Bahadur, Deputy Director General - Programmes
Tuladhar, Milan Raj, Director, Administration & Finance
Technical and support staff: Gurung, Tika
Laxmi; Shrestha, Anjeli; Thapa, Prerna

Natural Resource Management (NRM)
Sharma, Eklabya, Programme Manager/Sr. Agricultural Specialist
Bhuchar, Sanjeev Kumar, Assistant Programme Coordinator, PARDYP
Chettri, Nakul, Transboundary and Biodiversity Specialist
Choudhary, Dhrupad, Programme Coordinator, IFAD-ICIMOD Programme
C. N., Anil, Associate Coordinator, IFAD-ICIMOD Programme
Dong, Shikui, Visiting Scientist
Ismail, Muhammad, Assistant Research Officer-RRP II
Kerkhoff, Elisabeth, Agroforestry Specialist
Providoli, Isabelle Anita, Soil and Water Conservation Specialist
Sherpa, Samden Lama, Godavari Centre Manager
Sthapit, Keshar Man, Watershed Specialist
Yan Zhaoli, Rangelands Specialist
Technical and support staff: Ghale, Neetu; Joshi, Sami; Shakya, Bandana; Shrestha, Mamata; Tamang, Jiwan

Agriculture and Rural Income Diversification (ARID)
Banskota, Kamal, Programme Manager/Sr. Env. Resource Economist
Ahmad, Farooq, Project Coordinator, High Value Products and Sustainable Agriculture
Bhattarai, Nirmal, MAPs Conservation and Research Specialist
Choudhary, Dyutiman, MAPs Marketing and Enterprise Development Specialist
Gurung, Min Bahadur, Institutional Development Officer, Beekeeping
Jodha, Narpat Singh, Senior Associate Scientist
Kruk-van der Blonk, Ester, Eco-tourism Expert
Partap, Uma, Research Officer/Pollination Specialist, Beekeeping
Rawat, R.B.S, Regional Programme Coordinator, MAPPA
Sharma, Bikash, Energy Specialist
Technical and support staff: Bhandari, Shova; Chhetri, Prativa; Shah, Rajendra; Shukla, Anirudha Nath; Upadhaya, Satananda

Water, Hazards, and Environmental Management (WHEM)
Xu Jianchu, Programme Manager/Ethno-ecologist
Bajracharya, Sagar Ratna, Satellite Hydrology Officer
Dekens, Julie, Institutional Specialist/Researcher
Eriksson, Mats, Senior Environment Economist for Water Resources
Fang, Jing, Eco-Health Specialist
Mehta, Manjari, Senior Associate Scientist
Sharma, Rita, Visiting Scientist, Environment Management
Shrestha, Arun Bhakta, Climate Change Specialist
Shrestha, Mandira, Water Resources Specialist
Thapa, Rajesh, Water Resources Analyst
Vaidya, Ramesh Anand, Senior Visiting Scientist
Technical and support staff: Joshi, Sarita; Khadgi, Vijay Ratan; Shilpakar, Rajendra Lal

Culture, Equity, Gender and Governance (CEGG)
Kollmair, Michael, Programme Manager/Senior Social Scientist
Dasgupta, Joy, Assistant Coordinator, Strengthening ABSBIO-EH
Gerharz, Eva Kristin, Associate Scientist
Gul, Tawheed, Assistant Coordinator, Decentralisation and Local Governance
Oli, Krishna Prasad, Regional Coordinator, Strengthening ABSBIO-EH
Sherpa, Dechenla, Gender Specialist
Subedi, Nani Ram, Coordinator, Decentralisation and Local Governance
Technical and support staff: Shrestha, Govinda

Policy and Partnership Development (PPD)
Ahmad, Farid, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
Ahmad, Farid (Mateen), Programme Coordinator, Afghanistan
Blaikie, Piers, Visiting Scientist
Choudhary, Inayatullah, Regional Programme Coordinator, Pakistan
Lamponen, Johanna (Nonna), Project and Programme Development Specialist
Manandhar, Prem Krishna, Partnership and Planning Officer
Pacia, Ramonette Jeanne Marie, Training Support Officer
Rasul, Golam, Policy Development Specialist
Technical and support staff: Thapa, Samjhana

Information and Knowledge Management (IKM)
Information Management, Communications, and Outreach /IKM
Murray, A. Beatrice, Senior Editor
Gurung, Nira, Communications Officer
Mendez, Joyce M., Publications Editor
Pandey, Sushil Raj, ICT Specialist
Technical and support staff: Bajracharya, Shanti Prabha; Jha, Anil; Khatri, Shiva Hari; Maharjan, Dharma Ratna; Mishra, Udayan; Pradhan, Punam; Pradhan, Saisab; Sharma, Bishwanath (Sudas); Tandukar, Deependra; Thaku, Asha Kaji; Thapa, Ram Sharan, Tuladhar, Anjesh

Mountain Environment and Natural Resources Information Systems /IKM
Shrestha, Basanta, Division Head/Systems Specialist
Bajracharya, Birendra, GIS Analyst
Bajracharya, Samjwal Ratna, Geomorphologist/GIS Analyst
Byers, Alton, Visiting Scientist
Chodok, DSS Programme Officer, China
Mool, Pradeep K., Remote Sensing Analyst
Pradhan, Bidya Banmali, Environment Officer
Pradhan, Sushil Man, GIS Analyst
Siddiqui, Salman Asif, DSS Programme Officer, Pakistan
Technical and support staff: Bajracharya, Rajan Man; Dangol, Gauri Shankar; Dangol, Pradeep Man; Joshi, Govinda; Limbu, Srijana; Moktan, Monica; Rajbhandari, Lokap; Regmi, Prajna

Global Mountain Forum Secretariat (Hosted by ICIMOD)
Ponce, Ana Maria, Executive Secretary, Mountain Forum
Curi, Celine, Programme Development Officer
Fox, Elizabeth, Programme Assistant, Information Services
Karami, Sani Malam, Information Technologies Officer
Sharma, Prashant, Deputy Executive Secretary
Sherchan, Ujol, Programme Officer, Information Services & Content Development
Technical and support staff: Rana, Anju

Administration and Finance

Budget and Finance Section
Mali, Rajendra P., Budget and Finance Officer
Nepal, Akil; Shrestha, Kiran Man; Shrestha, Nabindra Raj; Shrestha, Prabha R.; Shrestha, Pramila

Store Unit
Vaidya, Jenny; Ranjit, Rabindra

Personnel Section
Kansakar, Chandra Bir Singh, Personnel Officer
Amatya, Shree Mani; Bajracharya, Nani Keshari

Communications Unit
Basnyat, Ayushma R L; Sadasankar, Pashupati

Procurement and Equipment Maintenance Section
Khanal, Niranjan, Operations and Security Officer
Bajracharya, Narendra; K.C., Sudama

Photocopy Unit
Rana, Ganga; Shrestha, Shyam

Travel and Hospitality Section
Upreti, Rajen, Travel Officer
K.C., Rishi Ram

Motorpool Unit
K.C., Dhurba; Magar, Bishnu; Maharjan, Chinikaji; Maharjan, Krishna; Maharjan, Pancha Narayan; Maharjan, Ram; Maharjan, Ram Lal; Shrestha, Kishore; Shrestha, Mohan Krishna; Singh, Sabak; Subedi, Jai Bahadur

Security and Maintenance Unit
Jirel, Birkha; K.C., Ram Bahadur; Maharjan, Kishore; Malla, Prem Dhoj; Thapa, Shambhu

Opening of the ICIMOD - Afghanistan Country Office
February 2007

Appreciation Evening for Gabriel
February 2007

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