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Mountain Forum Secretariat

In 2009, the Mountain Forum (MF) continued its work in information sharing, mutual support, advocacy and policy support, and global network facilitation. The Global Mountain Forum Secretariat (MFS) has been hosted by ICIMOD in Kathmandu since 2002. The MFS team has been managing the various on-line resources, the user-registration, e-contests, e-dialogues, networking, content generation, and policy support. However, in June 2009 the MF Board decided to reduce and decentralise global activities, so the MFS office in Nepal closed in December 2009. As of January 2010, the Consortium for the Sustainable Development of the Andean Ecoregion (CONDESAN) in Lima, Peru hosts the Global Node.

The number of people registered in the Mountain Forum network has risen from 2,800 individuals and 340 organisations in 2007 to over 5,100 individuals and 540 organisations in 2009. The monthly number of website visitors accessing general global information, news, the calendar of events, and the online library increased from 20,000 per month in 2008 to nearly 58,000 in November 2009. The number of documents in the online library of the Mountain Forum community increased from 2,000 to over 3,400.

In 2009, the MF gave the Bulletins a stronger thematic focus relating to key international themes and events. The December 2009 issue of the Bulletin was on Payments for Environmental Services in Mountains and contains overview articles by the World Bank, ICRAF, ICIMOD, IUCN, and MFS. Some 30 PES schemes are described by the MF network and partner organisations such as WWF, SNV, and TNC. These relate to watershed services, scenic beauty, agriculture, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity in various regions. It also contains an interview with Dr. van Noordwijk of ICRAF and an overview of key resources.

The MF explored various partnerships to enhance technical aspects of its services and generate expertise and content relevant for SMD. A workshop in January 2009 brought MF networks and key partners together to review MF systems and tools. MF elaborated strategic alliances with MRI and MRD for joint content generation and dissemination.

MF also carried out support activities for the Secretariat of the Convention on Mountain Biodiversity (CBD) until June 2009. News and on-line surveys were prepared to underpin the Programme of Work and capture lessons learnt from the wider MF community in preparation for COP-10, in 2010.



Asia-Pacific Mountain Network The Asia-Pacific regional node of MF

Asia-Pacific Mountain Network (APMN), the Asia-Pacific node of Mountain Forum, is a knowledge sharing platform connecting regions and members. ICIMOD hosts and manages the network. It captures, enriches, and disseminates information on mountain development issues in the Asia-Pacific region through a small grant from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

APMN has shared resources including a dedicated web page, experts database, e-dialogue platform, thematic and geographic discussion lists, online library, calendar of events, survey, and e-election tool. It publishes the Asia Pacific Mountain Courier, e-dialogue synthesis reports, mountain development briefs, and publicity materials. ICIMOD uses the APMN platform to disseminate information and updates on ICIMOD's activities to a broader public.

The network continues to grow, showing a clear need for information on mountain development issues in the wider Asia-Pacific region. By December 2009, APMN had 263 organisational users from 25 countries and 1,867 individual users from 40 countries, a net increase of 25% within a year.

APMN and ICIMOD staff participating in 'Youth in Action' to mark International Mountain Day 2009



In 2009, APMN has diversified its information sharing by utilising social networks and brown bag seminars, participating in user organised events and international meetings, preparing and sharing thematic digests, strengthening partnerships with like-minded organisations, observing international days and years, supporting capacity building of its users, and implementing youth and media focused activities. It continued to facilitate e-discussions and networking, prepare special info sheets on relevant issues, offer knowledge and technical support to partners and users, and implement joint projects with ICIMOD, MF, MP, and others.



Mountain Partnership Secretariat Asia-Pacific Decentralised Hub

The Mountain Partnership is an alliance dedicated to improving the lives of mountain people and protecting mountain environments around the world. It currently has over 160 members – governments, intergovernmental organisations, NGOs, civil society, and the private sector.

The Secretariat of Mountain Partnership has a central hub in Rome hosted by FAO. Each decentralised hub is hosted by a well established organisation: the Asia Pacific Hub by ICIMOD in Nepal; the North American Hub by the Banff Centre in Canada; and the Latin American Hub by CONDESAN in Peru. As well, UNEP hosts an Environmental Reference Centre in Vienna.

MPS-APDH has 16 institutional and 10 government members (Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Russia, Sri Lanka, and Tajikistan).

In February-March 2009, MPS-APDH organised online advocacy training on Sustainable Mountain Development Concepts as capacity building for the members. Altogether 11 countries benefited through this activity. MPS-APDH worked on a Central Asian Outreach Initiative with partners in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. It is maintaining a bilingual (Russian and English) website (<http://www.camp.kg/>) and blog (<http://ca-dialogue.blogspot.com/>).

The members produced a book 'Dreams of Mountain Children in Central Asia' with topics ranging from climate change adaptation and environmental refugees to street children. As well, issues about sustainable mountain development were communicated with the Central Asian members through a radio programme and newspaper.

South Asian Network for Development and Environmental Economics (SANDEE)

SANDEE is a regional network focusing on the economics of environmental change in order to identify mechanisms for the region's countries to develop economically and sustainably. It works in seven South Asian countries – Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Maldives, and Sri Lanka. In mid-2009, SANDEE joined ICIMOD in a hosting agreement.

SANDEE aims to build the research skills and capacities of individuals and institutions in South Asia to develop evidence-based policy recommendations. It works with professional researchers, analysts, teachers, and trainers with environment-development linkages.

In 2009, SANDEE made 11 grants to researchers in South Asian countries for careful research and consideration of how their research outputs can identify policy solutions. The current research questions include an assessment of the impacts of climate change on agriculture in Nepal, implications for health and water

borne diseases in India, and the costs to agriculture in Bangladesh.

SANDEE offers training programmes to develop research capacity, such as its three-week environmental economics training for 'trainers'. Additional training was offered on research proposals, econometric tools, survey methods, and questionnaire design.

One of SANDEE's objectives is to take research to policy makers and influence policy discussions. In 2009, research supported by SANDEE influenced the development of guidelines for indoor air pollution in Nepal and an environmental impact assessment of a harbour development project in the Maldives. Our discussions with policy makers culminated in a workshop on 'Economic Approaches to Climate Change and Poverty', jointly organised by UNDP, UNEP, and the Planning Commission of Bangladesh.