

9 Future Outlook

ICIMOD has travelled far, but not yet far enough to accomplish its mission of supporting its regional member countries to achieve the twin goals of protecting the fragile environment and improving the livelihood of the poor mountain people of the greater Himalayan region. It is a commendable achievement to have reached as far as it has, given the magnitude of the obstacles placed in its path by the highly volatile geo-political situation in the region and the extreme physical conditions. ICIMOD has grown much, but needs further development to fulfil its role as an international body to which its stakeholders look for stewardship and guidance in sustainable mountain development and natural disaster reduction.

ICIMOD has reason to be optimistic about the future.

Yet, ICIMOD has made its presence felt at the national and regional levels as well as on the world stage and is increasingly having wide scale impacts. It has pioneered the Mountain Perspective Framework, contributed to charting the mountain development agenda in Rio, taken a lead role in the celebration of the International Year of Mountains 2002, has become a founding member of the Global Mountain Partnership, and is hosting the Global Mountain Forum Secretariat. It has firmly put down its roots as the leading learning and knowledge centre for the HKH region, firm enough to support its further growth by nurturing the accumulated wealth of experience and lessons it has learned from the past.

The Medium Term Action Plan (2003-07) has charted a more strategic course for ICIMOD to reach further, faster, deeper, and more effectively than before to meet the challenges and needs of its partners and member governments. ICIMOD has a reason to be optimistic about the future – a future where it is a leading player worldwide in the area of mountain development. It has the frontier knowledge of a mountain region that is confronted by increasing connectivity requiring an increasingly integrated approach to find innovative solutions. To conclude, there is wisdom in the key statement made in the 2nd Quinquennial Review conducted in 1995:

**"If ICIMOD did not exist,
it would have to be invented."**

Left photo: A system of rice intensification promoted by ICIMOD's PARDYP project has increased yields by 20% in watershed areas.

