

Concluding Session

Rapporteur's Summary

Working Session I: Securing the Mountain Environment

Chair: Mr Egbert Pelinck

Mr Pelinck congratulated everyone on the opening of the new ICIMOD headquarters, which placed it in a better position to serve the people of the Hindu Kush-Himalayas. He introduced the session format, comprising a Keynote Address and four panel presentations to be followed by a floor discussion.

The keynote speech by Dr Massimo Antoninetti on Advanced Technologies for Mountain Environment Research and Management highlighted the role of modern advanced technologies in greatly improving our knowledge of the complex interactions between the environment and human activity. Technological opportunities must foresee the involvement of experts to avoid misinterpretation of data and resulting errors, while reaching out to as wide a user community as possible. Only multidisciplinary expertise like ICIMOD's can successfully contribute to avoiding the risks posed by the inappropriate adoption and use of advanced technologies, while ensuring that their benefits are taken advantage of for the maximum common good.

The presentation by Mr R Rajamani on the Impacts of Global Warming and Climate Change on Mountain Ecosystems recommended possible future areas of studies and for action plans. The suggested areas include the rise in temperature and/or humidity in mountain ecosystems; the effects of anthropogenic pressure; heat islands; the direct impact of global warming on all of the special characteristics of mountain ecosystems; and others. Moreover, it was suggested that ICIMOD persuade GEF and others to fund related projects and to take on joint studies of Indian mountain ecosystems.

The presentation by Dr M Sharif Zia on Environment Services and Upstream-Downstream Relationships in Pakistan suggested the development of a systematic mountain environment monitoring system and associated capacity building of national institutions. Other recommendations included the development of environmental services agreements and region specific approaches for the valuation and contracting of upstream environmental services. Policy makers now need to focus on creating a high rate of sustainable national growth.

The presentation by Prof Xu Jianchu on Securing Community Participation in Conservation suggested a participatory approach for learning by sharing and creating space for local communities in terms of representation, resilience, and readaptation, and by levelling the playing field. It made a call for community based science.

The presentation by Mr Basanta Shrestha on Geographic Information for Sustainable Mountain Development in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region argued that geographic information provides a unifying framework for understanding mountain ecosystems, their functioning, and management. Geographic information promotes regional collaboration and supports sustainable mountain development planning and decision making.

The subsequent floor discussion focused on two key issues, upstream-downstream relationships and the use of knowledge thus far accumulated. Under the existing social and economic systems, upstream problems tend to be neglected and upstream environmental services are not well compensated, although some efforts are now geared towards development in upstream areas. On knowledge management, concerns were raised about how the knowledge created is being put into practice and what constraints there are for policy/decision makers to use the generated knowledge. The floor discussions also touched upon the need for community involvement in addressing sustainable development issues and the fact that given proper training, increased population could be turned into a valuable asset.

Working Session II: Securing Sustainable Use of Mountain Resources

Chair: Mr Peter Gueller

The Keynote Address given by Dr Phrang Roy, Assistant President Asia Pacific of IFAD focused on the role of common property resources in improving the livelihoods of mountain people, especially as more and more of these resources now have open access. There is a need to understand indigenous people's knowledge, in particular women's knowledge, and the traditional checks and balances used to manage CPRs. Appropriate technologies need to be developed for uplands and mountain regions. This was echoed by Dr Nyima Tashi during the discussions in Session III when he pointed out that there need to be technologies that address rural poverty, but that farmers will only accept such technologies if they sustain and utilise their traditional knowledge and culture and improve their livelihoods at the same time. The need to develop rural non-farm activities for livelihood improvement was emphasised along with the need for micro-finance, including savings, not just credit, to help to develop these activities. Finally, Dr Roy emphasised the need to promote peace in mountain areas and that to secure peace we need to promote social justice, human rights, and the elimination of unequal power and development relations

The presentation of Dr Quamrul Islam Siddique emphasised the need for real regional collaboration and cooperation in addressing transboundary issues such as water resources management. He emphasised that integrated water resources management can solve many problems for the three interrelated river systems of the Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Meghna. The need for regional collaboration and cooperation is particularly relevant in the case of Bangladesh as the control, or lack of control, of water flows upstream, affect both floods and droughts in the downstream. Efforts such as ICIMOD's flood forecasting and country treaties, are now making progress in this direction.

Dr Hari Upadhyaya provided an insight into Economic Policies for Sustainable Land Use. He pointed out that sustainability is about people and how they collectively decide to manage their resources. Economic policies play a key role in this as they can either

promote or hinder sustainable land use practices depending on their nature. Policies need to promote sustainable land use systems and institutions like ICIMOD can help in this.

Dr Tone Bleie looked at the Institutional Dimensions of Sustainable Use of Mountain Resources and emphasised the need to look at the diversity, complexity, and political and economic environments that lead to conflict in mountain areas and the need to understand these deeply and thoroughly in a historical context. There is an especial need to understand the historical context of the formation of formal and informal institutions and states in the region. It is also very important to understand, and work with, women's groups in mountain regions, as often they are the agents of change

Finally, Professor Jamuna Sharan Singh discussed the need for Sustainable Management of Biodiversity. He emphasised the need for assessment and data collection on the immense biodiversity in the HKH region; identification of site specific threats and mitigation; sustainable use and value addition; restoration using appropriate interventions; conservation outside protected areas; scaling up of transboundary approaches and public participation; and appropriate methodologies.

The discussions focused on the issue of conflict in the region and the impact of globalisation on these conflicts. There was discussion on how to recognise the early warning signs of conflict, especially as outside influences occur rapidly and abruptly. There is a need for intervention at the early stages. The discussion also focused on the important issue of regional cooperation on issues such as water resource management. We now have the development of partnerships to address this but there is still much more to do, especially at the regional level

Working Session III: Securing Livelihoods

Chair: Dr Hans Gsaenger

The keynote speech by Dr Mohan Man Sainju on Securing Livelihoods for Mountain People provided us with a review of past success and critical aspects for ICIMOD to improve upon. The suggestions made were that (i) the policy-making process be relevant and responsive to the needs of mountain areas, (ii) the nexus between poverty and environmental sustainability be recognised, (iii) institutions like ICIMOD be used to strengthen partnerships and collaboration in planning, achieving, and monitoring programmes, and (iv) it is important to make mountain knowledge and information accessible and usable.

The presentation by Dr Nyima Tashi on Sustainable Rural Development in Mountain Regions drew lessons from the Tibet Autonomous Region of China. Coping strategies were needed leading to sustainable development that entail a balanced and integrated approach; and systematic poverty assessment and poverty alleviation plans should be carried out. The need for assessment and promotion of niche opportunities and the comparative advantages of different areas was highlighted.

The presentation by Dr Rob Visser on Poverty and Environmental Linkages touched upon the close ties between environment and poverty and the context specific connection with gender. Some critical remarks were provided on the current debate, especially the marginal rather than central attention paid to gender, the apolitical character of analyses, and the lack of attention paid to institutional matters (culture, gender, governance) before planning activities.

The presentation by Dr Kamal Banskota on New Opportunities for Mountain Economics looked briefly at some of the emerging opportunities, and constraints and needs for their development. Factors such as improving physical access, access to improved technologies, markets, natural resource management, and an enabling environment were discussed.

The presentation by Dr Ruth Egger on Mountain People, Economic Benefits, and Biodiversity looked at the valuation of goods and services from the HKH, the prerequisites for achieving this valuation and promoting these goods and services, and the role of ICIMOD. The presentation pointed out the considerable under-utilised potential for mountain goods and services and suggested that investment be made in research, information and education, the women, men, and young people living in the mountains, and local conditions like infrastructure.

The subsequent floor discussion focused on the marketing problems of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and the realisation of the complementarity between the papers presented in the session. Accessibility has now been accepted as a critical factor in poverty alleviation, which was not the case two decades ago. Various suggestions were made for promoting securing of livelihoods for mountain people, and developing and promoting the potential of mountain goods and services. It was suggested lessons and coping strategies leading to sustainable development entailing a balanced and integrated approach be drawn from around the region, and that a built-in alarm system be developed to safeguard mountain societies from future negative impacts.

Working Session IV: Strengthening Cooperation and Knowledge Sharing

Chair: Dr J Gabriel Campbell

Lyonpo Dr Kinzang Dorji's keynote address on Strengthening Cooperation and Knowledge Sharing (read out by Mr Sonam Rinchen of the Ministry for Works and Human Settlement, Royal Government of Bhutan) emphasised the relevance of ICIMOD to Bhutan, for example in terms of the challenges posed by global developments such as global warming. Institutions like ICIMOD can play a role through the continuous development of early warning and monitoring systems.

Dr Anne Whyte gave a provocative and challenging talk on the ten key characteristics of successful formal knowledge networks, including factors such as being purpose driven,

built on expertise, and requiring effective management and institutional commitment. They must be first and foremost communicating networks. They can only succeed if they engage the end users of the knowledge that they are creating.

Mr Shoaib Sultan Khan, founder of the Agha Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP), wanted rural incomes to double in the next ten years and a replicable model for poverty reduction. The successful strategy employed by AKRSP, with development coming from the bottom and not from the top, was found to be applicable in many contexts. The challenge is to get the backing of government without them interfering in the development strategy. The programme's success was because AKRSP was not a government programme. AKRSP has been successfully replicated nationwide. In Mr Khan's experience the time for 'feel-good' projects is over. The problem is not what to do, or how to do it, but how to scale it up. Organisations like ICIMOD need to show that they are effectively scaling up and reaching more of the 120 million poor in the region.

Dr Zbigniew Mikolajuk in his talk on Linking Knowledge Providers and Users pointed out that we have many mechanisms and operations for creating knowledge, but the main issue is how to get that knowledge to the people who really need it in a form that they can use. Knowledge is there, but it is not readily available or accessible. Farmers need knowledge, policy makers need knowledge, and our job is to deliver information to them in appropriate ways. Knowledge is the ability to take appropriate action. ICIMOD and its partners are both seekers and knowledge providers; it is a two-way exchange. It is important to find an effective means of delivering knowledge and how best to package knowledge for different audiences and needs.

Dr Eklabya Sharma discussed lessons learned from the Alpine Convention and their relevance for the HKH region and ICIMOD. Transboundary mountains face more challenges as they are governed by different political systems; cooperation is paramount. The Alpine Convention provides a valuable source of information about processes and possibilities for collaboration and cooperation in mountain systems like the Himalayas. However, each region needs its own approach, and regional cooperation does not necessarily require a convention and can be done at a lower level. ICIMOD has some good examples in its programme activities. Our experience shows that there has to be more political commitment and stewardship from regional countries to foster such cooperation. There is a need for policies and strategies for parallel pursuit; joint programmes at the national level interlinked by a regional umbrella; and for building of trust. Stronger cooperation may lead to a greater Himalayan convention in the future; in which case ICIMOD could be an implementation institution.

There was extensive floor discussion on the need for, and ways to, scale up. The key to scaling up is demonstration; suggestions were made to introduce demonstration sites like Godavari in the member countries. Another issue raised was language, as all of the deliberations and presentations at the Symposium had been in English. It would be good if information could be made available in local languages and in a way that is useful to grassroots organisations. Moreover, questions were raised about the provision of continual support, both financial and technical, to the networks set up by ICIMOD.

Closing Remarks

Chairman U Soe Win Hlaing, ICIMOD Board of Governors

Madam Chairperson, distinguished delegates from the region and from abroad, Mr Kenneweg, Chairperson of ICIMOD's Support Group, and Dr Gabriel Campbell, Director General and staff of ICIMOD,

I am extremely honoured to be making a short closing remark at the end of what has been, in my view, a very successful Symposium.

Over the past one and half days, we have covered a huge range of subjects and came up with so many useful ideas and experiences from which we can draw valuable lessons for ICIMOD to guide its future research and development programmes.

We had an excellent inaugural address by Professor Bruno Messerli, which indeed set the scene very nicely for the Symposium. The keynote speeches and panel presentations have been of a very high quality and we are all better educated on the issues and challenges that our region, the Hindu-Kush Himalayas, is facing. Throughout the Symposium, there was an atmosphere of warmth and sharing among all of the participants and the core message that I personally received was that ICIMOD has a leading role to play in fostering cooperation, the sharing of information, and the dissemination of knowledge among our eight member countries. We have heard very encouraging remarks from representatives both of our regional governments and from the ICIMOD Support Group. I am confident that, with the healthy capital of goodwill and support that I witnessed here, ICIMOD will be able to meet the challenges ahead of it successfully.

Finally, I felt that the idea of having this Symposium as the first major event was an excellent one and has fully justified the grandeur of this new complex. The success of this Symposium indeed augurs well for better times to come for ICIMOD.

May I conclude by congratulating the Director General and all of the staff of ICIMOD for the wonderful arrangements and for organising this Symposium.

Thank you.