

Advancing the Mountain Women's Agenda

a report on a global gathering 'Celebrating Mountain Women'
in Bhutan, October 2002



International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development



Advancing the Mountain Women's Agenda

a report on a global gathering 'Celebrating Mountain Women'

in Bhutan, October 2002



July 2003

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development

Internal Report

Copyright © 2003

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
All rights reserved

Editorial Team

Rosemary Thapa (Consultant Editor)
Dharma R. Maharjan (Technical Support and Layout)

Printed and bound in Nepal by

Hill Side Press (P) Ltd.
Kathmandu

The views and interpretations in this paper are those of the author(s). They are not attributable to the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and do not imply the expression of any opinion concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Advancing the Mountain Women's Agenda

Reporting on a global gathering in the

International Year of Mountains

"Celebrating Mountain Women" –

1–4 October 2002

Paro, Bhutan

Executive Summary

Women living in the mountain regions of the world make major but invisible contributions to both their local and national economies. They are the main producers of food crops and are managers of common property resources, with principal responsibility for assuring food security. Women have access to, and control over, an enormous store of indigenous knowledge and wisdom. As men migrate and leave the mountains for long periods of time, mountain women's workload and responsibilities increase substantially. Yet national policies and data hardly ever reflect these ground realities. Hence the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and the Mountain Forum proposed that an international meeting for and on mountain women be held during the International Year of Mountains (IYM) 2002 to highlight the role of women in sustainable mountain development. Most importantly, the gathering would be a 'pinnacle' event in a process whereby mountain women's networks could grow, be strengthened, and contribute to more sensitive policies and practices that empower mountain women and communities in innovative ways. This gathering, called "Celebrating Mountain Women", brought together approximately 250 mountain people, and included

- Indigenous mountain women
- Representatives of mountain women's formal and informal groups
- Key academics and resource persons from different mountain regions
- Women entrepreneurs
- Local/elected political leaders

- Media representatives
- Policy makers and planners
- Donors

The problems and progress of mountain women in the following five major theme areas were examined from a gender perspective within the framework of policy, practice, and research:

- Natural Resources and Environment
- Health and Well-being
- Entrepreneurship
- Legal, Political, and Human Rights
- Culture and Indigenous Knowledge

This first-of-its-kind, global celebration of mountain women focused on empowerment through innovation and entrepreneurship; and provided a platform for mountain women to articulate their concerns, as well as share their experiences and ideas related to the future of mountain livelihoods and cultures. CMW was an effort to put mountain women centre-stage, and to mainstream their reality into the year-long IYM discussions, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) 2002, and The Bishkek Global Mountain Summit, in order to enable a major paradigm shift. Additionally, CMW allowed a message from mountain women to be sent, in the form of the "Thimphu Declaration" which was drafted and sent to BGMS immediately after CMW. The Global Mountain Women's Partnership was launched at Bishkek as a programme to translate the demands of mountain women into action, post-CMW and post-IYM.

Foreword

The year 2002, formally declared “International Year of Mountains” by the United Nations, was an important year for mountain people and mountain issues. It was an equally important year for us here at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) as IYM provided us with many unique opportunities to highlight the issues of mountain people and their environment. One such opportunity was the organisation of the global gathering “Celebrating Mountain Women” (CMW) which was the only global event throughout the year which focused on the women of the mountains. It brought together approximately 250 women and men from 35 countries to celebrate the drive and spirit of mountain women, to discuss critical issues at hand, and search for new ways forward.

This global gathering was an attempt to recognise and draw the world’s attention to mountain women’s immense contribution to sustaining life in harsh and fragile environments; to their roles, responsibilities, and rights as the nurturers of their families and communities; and to their stewardship of mountain ecosystems. It was chance to admire and appreciate mountain women’s resilience and drive, their arduous labour, and their willingness to adapt to a changing milieu by taking on entrepreneurial activities to catch up with monetised economies whilst still preserving their old traditions and cultures for future generations. It is they who are the reservoirs of precious indigenous knowledge, and it is they who in the face of change and new challenges, struggle to keep themselves, their families and their communities intact. As their men out-migrate in ever-increasing numbers, life and living in the mountains is becoming harder by the day for the young, the old, and for women.

The gathering created a space for learning, connecting mountain women so they might share their experiences, exchange knowledge, and bring to light gender issues from different mountain areas of the world. Viable and compelling lessons were shared, applicable across different regions, where degraded upland environments and threatened food security affect the livelihoods of mountain women. Gaps in knowledge were identified and further research recommended to allow concrete action. Finally, working group sessions looked at ways of creating opportunities for mountain women to be recognised as ‘agents of change’.

A number of intense discussions and presentations took place. These were built around the five theme areas of CMW, namely, ‘Entrepreneurship’, ‘Culture and Indigenous Knowledge’, ‘Health and Well-being’, ‘Natural Resources and Environment’, and ‘Legal, Political and Human Rights’. Finally, each group made recommendations to be incorporated in the Thimphu Declaration, which was later presented at the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit in Kyrgyzstan, where the world came together to discuss mountain policies to ensure sustainable mountain development.

As part of the celebrations, we put together various informal activities and events that exemplified mountain women’s important and varying roles in their society. Included was a Mountain Costume Show, which showcased the elaborate costumes that had been woven, spun, or stitched by the mountain women themselves, in most cases with local materials. These costumes displayed the aspects of culture and tradition that make mountain women proud and unique and are living testimony to their exceptional talent and enduring spirit.

The exhibition stalls displayed an eclectic collection of arts, crafts, ceramics, clothing, food, herbs, and spices, as well as other products produced by women of various mountain regions of the world. This was an excellent way to highlight the scope of mountain women’s innovation, talent, and entrepreneurial skills. It also provided a chance for mountain women to exchange ideas and share the stories of their lives and their work with participants from other parts of the world. Many were seen exchanging gifts from each other’s regions, buying different items, and selling their products to those attending.

The human relationships that were established were perhaps the most inspiring result of the CMW gathering. We would like to thank each and every participant who helped make this event happen, and hope that this report is of help in bringing to life the proceedings of the conference.

I would also like to put on record how grateful both ICIMOD and mountain women are to those whose generous financial assistance helped make CMW possible:

- The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Rome

- United Nations Development Fund for Women, South Asia Regional Office (UNIFEM-SARO), New Delhi, India
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Berne, Switzerland
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)
- Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation (ICCO), The Netherlands
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Rome
- Austrian Development Cooperation in Bhutan (ACB)

We are also grateful to the Mountain Forum and The Mountain Institute, who made significant in-kind support to the organisation of this major event. The global organising and steering committees, who guided the process throughout the year, are among the many whom we should thank for standing together with ICIMOD as a team in order to make CMW a success.

J. Gabriel Campbell, PhD
Director General

Acknowledgements

“In mountain regions, as in the world over, women, as a class, are more undernourished, more under-compensated for their labour, and are more under-represented in formal decision-making bodies than men, as a class.”

“What is clearly missing is a description of their situation as told by mountain women themselves.”

“...it is clear that state structures are dominated by patriarchal interests that have worked to the detriment of women.”

These are some excerpts from ICIMOD's publication (1999), *Searching for Women's Voices in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas* edited by J.D. Gurung, which was based on fact-finding studies conducted by researchers in the regional member countries of ICIMOD. The book was published as a first attempt to reach out and consolidate mountain women's situation and perspectives on national and international policies and mountain development in general.

Against this background, the then-Director General of ICIMOD, Mr. Egbert Pelinck, had proposed at the First Mountain Forum Council Meeting in Cusco, Peru (October 1999), that ICIMOD would host and organise an international conference for mountain women as part of its plans for celebrating IYM 2002. ICIMOD organised a planning meeting in May 2001 in which 22 senior women professionals from 13 countries participated. Next, ICIMOD raised funds to host the larger global gathering of mountain women, which eventually grew into the gathering in Bhutan of 250 mountain women and men from 35 countries around the globe, called “Celebrating Mountain Women”.

This was a historic and unique event by any standards. It was the very first global conference that focused only on mountain women. It was also ICIMOD's only global event in its year-long list of activities organised to celebrate the International Year of Mountains. This was an event which was geared to bringing real mountain women together, to listen to them and hear their stories. Some of the outputs — audio, video and print proceedings, briefs, and a resource kit — are simply the testimonies of mountain women from all over the globe. In the end, CMW was a down-to-earth, yet unforgettable gathering with much life, energy and colour.

Without the foresight, vision and commitment shown by ICIMOD's recent ex-Director General, Mr. Egbert Pelinck, and the current Director General, Dr J.G. Campbell; and without the passion of my senior ex-colleague Jeannette D. Gurung for mountain women; I am sure CMW would not have been realised. We appreciate the initial grant made available to us by two United Nations agencies — the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Rome, which meant that a well-represented planning meeting could be organised in May 2001. The highest level delegate at this planning meeting was Ms. Chandni Joshi, Regional Director of the South Asia Regional Office of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM-SARO), New Delhi: herself a mountain woman with a difference. Ms. Joshi's pledge of the first major portion of funds to implement the planned activities was immediately matched by IFAD, Rome, through its WID grant from the Government of Japan. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Berne, joined us next as mountain women occupy an important place on their development agenda. The grants that later followed from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida); the Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation (ICCO), The Netherlands; the Austrian Coordination Bureau for Development in Bhutan (ACB); together with the organisational and outreach support from the Mountain Forum and The Mountain Institute are highly valued. All assistance that came our way was appreciated, both in kind and in funds.

I am sure this celebration would have remained a dream had it not been for the diversity of the support the CMW team received. We have benefited immensely from the willing guidance of the five Global Steering Committee members: Ms. Anita Anand for Asia-Pacific, Ms. Elizabeth Byers for North America, Ms. Josefa Nolte for Latin America, Ms. Francoise Mees for Europe, and Dr. Esther Njiro for Africa. We also knew that organising committee members were always there for us to assist in any situation if required. Dr. Govind Kelkar was one of those who most ably and willingly took upon herself the coordination of the research component of CMW. The Chief Executive Officer and President of The Mountain Institute, Ms. Catherine Cooke, was one of the most inspiring and encouraging of partners and she was instrumental, among

other things, in mobilising a number of mainstream media and other professionals from North America.

Media coverage of CMW was something we tried to pay particular attention to. The Women's Feature Service (WFS) ably managed the media aspects by sensitising the media to mountain women and their issues in order to create a 'multiplier effect' and a lasting impact on general audiences around the world. Among other things, the WFS sent out pre-conference postings, daily press releases over the Internet from Paro, and post-CMW news releases. WFS tried to get the media interested enough to come to CMW to write about mountain women. Let me take this opportunity to thank all media organisations who demonstrated their support and offered mountain women their space in the media by sending their representatives to participate in CMW. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Newsweek, United News of India, The Times of India, South China Morning Post, Nepali Times, and Kuensel were among the major media houses represented, while we also had the good fortune of having with us some free-lance journalists who were making films on women or preparing stories for major women's magazines.

Above all, what I found most touching was the spontaneous goodwill and participation by my country Bhutan, and its determination to help make CMW a success under any circumstances. Without the keenness and enthusiasm of the Royal Government of Bhutan as a whole and the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Dzongkhag Administration of Paro, the Management of Wang Watershed Project in Paro, and the commitment and interest of all the staff concerned, the organisation of such a large gathering in Paro would have been an impossible task. The management of Druk Air was also most supportive. Mr. Wangchuk Wangdi and Ms. Sonam Chopel of Thunder Dragon Tours and Treks handled most ably the highly complicated travel schedules of the international participants coming from five regions of the globe. Mr. Wangdi went out of his way to fly to Bangkok at his own cost to "shepherd" (as he said) some of the participants into Paro.

I owe special gratitude to Dasho Sangay Thinlay, ICIMOD Board Member, whose committed leadership and enduring support helped ensure that we received coordinated assistance. Dasho took a deep interest in the event and painstakingly visited the venue several times beforehand, staying at the venue throughout the duration of the conference.

Aum Neten Zangmo, Bhutan's Cabinet Secretary and its highest-ranking woman official, was exemplary in her expression of support and solidarity. Despite her busy schedule and her responsibilities as cabinet secretary, Ms. Zangmo took a sincere interest in CMW and stayed at the venue throughout the conference. She was most informal, and moved around freely discussing issues with participants, giving interviews, as well as always ensuring that the locally elected Bhutanese women participants were taking part in the event and were comfortable.

The input provided by Ms. Dorji Yangki, professional architect of the Special Commission for Social and Religious Affairs, cannot be matched, as it was she who designed and supervised the making of the ramp for the Mountain Costume Show in the open grounds of Olathang Hotel on which mountain women paraded to show off their costumes on that memorable evening. We are equally grateful to civil engineer Tshering Dukpa of the Ministry of Agriculture who willingly managed the organisational and building work. It was again Ms. Dorji Yangki, together with her able and creative colleague Tshering Uden Penjor of the National Textile Museum, who choreographed and conducted the entire Mountain Costume Show.

The venue of Olathang Hotel and the help of "the man who never says no" — Mr. Chencho Tshering, manager — was a great blessing indeed. Despite never-ending demands, which were later extended to 250 women and men, Mr. Tshering went about his business with a smile and did his very best to cater to our needs.

Without the quiet, firm, organised, and efficient support I received from my friend and colleague Ms. Deki Pema of the Ministry of Agriculture I am not sure I would have survived it all! Tshering Gem was also superb, always ready to take orders from Deki and myself and implement them immediately.

Overall, I am deeply obliged to everyone in Bhutan who supported us and gave a helping hand at any time without any complaints.

We are so pleased and grateful to Himel Film South Asia and its team of Mr. Maneesh Shrestha, Ms. Ramyata Limbu, Mr. Basanta Thapa, and Mr. Sudarshan Karki, who put together the mountain women's mini film festival at CMW after months of searching for films specifically on mountain women. It was a most valuable input. While Mr. Shrestha could not travel to Paro, the rest of the team overcame the initial technical difficulties and did a good job with the shows, which gained quick popularity.

And of course we are extremely grateful to the participants who readily accepted the invitation to be facilitators and did an able job of leading the sessions. The documentation and editorial team led by Mr. Amba Jamir and his creative and 'roving' reporters and artists put in many intense hours of work to help us come out with an innovative documentation style. The conference briefs provide the gist of all the exchanges that took place at CMW, while a resource kit attempts to capture the essence, colour, and excitement of the event. The two products include and reflect the expressions, voices, and perspectives of a number of mountain women who contributed to the process.

I must thank my dear ICIMOD colleagues who stood by me throughout this period of organising and implementing CMW. Special thanks and gratitude are due to Dr. J.G. Campbell, Director General, who accorded high priority to the project and took a personal interest in helping ensure that we were on track. My appreciation and thanks go to

Mr. Rajen Upreti and his travel and hospitality team who put in many hours of hard work as we were finalising the travel itineraries. To Mr. Milan Tuladhar, Mr. Rajendra Mali, and Mr. Kiran Shrestha — I will never be able to thank you enough as you demonstrated your willingness and capacity to be flexible and open when the situation called for it. Thank you for your support.

Thanks also to the prompt and generous help from my senior colleague, Mr. Anupam Bhatia. His superb photographic skills mean that we have beautiful still pictures from the Mountain Costume Show and the gathering as a whole, which vividly capture the colour and essence of the gathering. Many of these have been scanned and put into a photo gallery on the www.mountainwomen.net website. The video documentation displays the beauty of the costumes still further. Ms. Ragini Deshpande and her camera team did a wonderful job of filming the whole event. We have made copies of the film on video CD, which will be available to all participants as a memento of CMW. The four minute video clip will also be uploaded on our website to reach a wider audience.

Without the untiring, energetic, efficient, prompt, and intelligent support from my colleagues Ms. Ojaswi Josse and Ms. Atsuko Toda, the teamwork that went into making CMW a success would not have been possible. Together we could rely upon Ms. Anita Anand, steering committee member for Asia-Pacific, who flew up from Delhi at short notice to give us a helping hand.

And last and most importantly, thanks are due to the participants for coming to CMW, despite the hazards and endless challenges of international travel, and the adjustments in personal lives as mothers, daughters, wives, and farmers that had to be made simply to get away.

The single most beautiful aspect of “Celebrating Mountain Women” was that bonds were established between mountain women from all over the world. Thank you for being there to make CMW 2002 an unforgettable reality.

Phuntshok Chhoden Tshering
ICIMOD, Coordinator of CMW 2002

List of acronyms and abbreviations

ACB	-	Austrian Coordination Bureau, Bhutan
AKRSP	-	Agha Khan Rural Support Programme
BBC	-	British Broadcasting Corporation
BGMS	-	Bishkek Global Mountain Summit
CBS	-	Central Bureau of Statistics
CEDAW	-	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEO	-	Chief Executive Officer
CMW	-	Celebrating Mountain Women
FAO	-	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FWCW	-	Fourth World Conference on Women
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
GMWP	-	Global Mountain Women's Partnership
HKH	-	Hindu Kush-Himalayas
ICCO	-	Interchurch Cooperation Organization
ICTs	-	Information and Communication Technologies
IFAD	-	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IT	-	Information Technology
IYM	-	International Year of Mountains
NGO	-	Non-government Organisations
NTFP	-	Non-timber Forest Product
ODA	-	Overseas Development Assistance (Japanese Government)
RGOB	-	Royal Government of Bhutan
SDC	-	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SHGs	-	Self-help Groups
Sida	-	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SNV	-	Royal Netherlands Development Organisation
TMI	-	The Mountain Institute
UN	-	United Nations
UNCED	-	UN Conference on Environment and Development
UNEP	-	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFPA	-	United Nations Population Fund
UNIFEM	-	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WFS	-	Women's Feature Service
WSSD	-	World Summit on Sustainable Development

Brief on Authors

Phuntshok Chhoden Tshering (Bhutan)
Coordinator of CMW- ICIMOD

Currently serving as Coordinator of Gender Mainstreaming at ICIMOD, Phuntshok is part of the new Integrated Programme for Culture, Equity, Gender, and Governance in the HKH. With a natural sciences background, she has experience and training in both the natural and social science fields of development. At ICIMOD, her work focuses on a range of gender-related issues in mountain farming systems, enterprise development, women's entrepreneurship, capacity building for gender and organisational development, and now gender equity and women's empowerment to mainstream gender more effectively. She is the Gender Representative in Management and is a member of several other project and activity teams at ICIMOD. Phuntshok was appointed to coordinate and lead the organisation and implementation of the CMW conference in Bhutan, which brought together over 250 mountain women and men from 35 countries, to commemorate the International Year of Mountains 2002.

Ojaswi Josse (Nepal)
Assistant Coordinator of CMW – ICIMOD

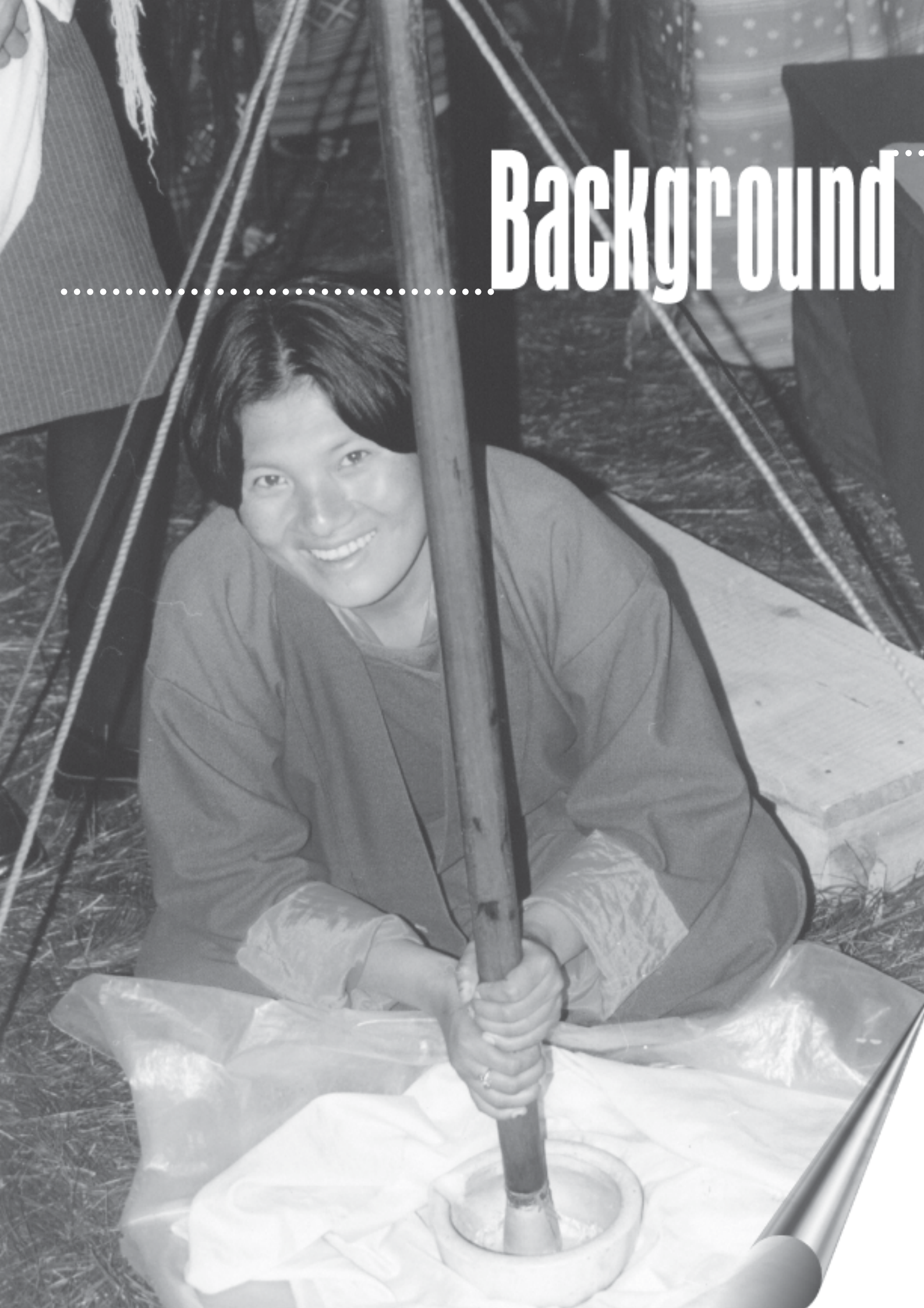
Ojaswi was recruited to assist in the preparation and implementation of the CMW project. She is a graduate of international relations from San Francisco State University, California, and has a keen interest in development and women's issues. After the completion of her graduate studies she decided to return to Nepal and work in the field of women's development. She has also worked for the WWF Nepal Programme as a research consultant and as an assistant to the Asia Director at the International Development Exchange (IDEX), a San Francisco-based NGO working towards fighting global inequalities. Ojaswi eventually plans to pursue a doctorate degree in development studies after a few years of on-hand experience.

...

Table of Contents

Background	1
Introduction	3
Conceptualization of CMW	4
Why CMWs?	4
Planning of CMW	4
Fund Raising	5
CMW Programme	5
Challenges	6
Rewards	6
Overview of Background Papers	7
Themes of CMW	11
Output of CMW	17
The Thimphu Declaration (See Annex 4 for complete document)	19
Global Mountain Women's Partnership (See Annex 5 for complete document)	19
Conference Briefs	20
Resource Book	20
Video Documentary	20
Video Clips	20
Photos	20
Web Site	20
Research CD	20
Outcome of CMW	21
CMW Participation at BGMS	23
Mainstreaming/Integration into ICIMOD's New Strategic Planning Framework and Medium-term Action Plan (2003-2007) :	23
Annexes.....	25
1. Programme	27
2. List of Participants	29
3. Opening and Closing Statements	41
4. The Thimphu Declaration	63
5. The GMWP (Draft Outline)	65
6. Press Releases	67
7. Articles on CMW	75
8. List of Films Screened	83
9. The Mountain Costume Show	85

Background



Background

Introduction

Mountain people rank amongst the most deprived of the world's population, and yet, their stewardship of mountain natural resources is closely linked to the sustainability of life in both upland and lowland areas. Their marginalised status compared to those who dwell in the plains is well documented.

Mountain women play a crucial, and in many respects, a dominant role in natural resource management, agricultural production, income generation, and in the well-being and the very survival of mountain families. Women across the Hindu Kush-Himalayas (HKH) are responsible for almost all farm activities as well as household maintenance, and are an enormous source of indigenous knowledge related to these activities.

Moreover, they are also entrepreneurs, heavily involved in small-scale businesses related to crafts, food products, and so on. The increasingly common migration of men to urban centres and their involvement in armed conflicts have exacerbated women's already heavy responsibilities in managing farms and households. And yet, in mountain regions, as in the world over, women, as a class, are more undernourished, more under-compensated for their labour, and more under-represented in formal decision-making bodies than men.

Despite their dominant role in the production systems of the mountains, there is little understanding of the contributions made by mountain women and of gender relations in mountain regions. The studies that have been carried out are neither well known nor accessible, and policies remain inadequate. In addition, the personal accounts of mountain women about their unique situation are missing. Thus far, processes of historical, economic, and social development have been told almost exclusively from a male and non-gender perspective.

Therefore, a discussion of gender relations must start from the so-far neglected perspective of women. This would allow an understanding of the differences and similarities between the conditions of mountain men and women. These perspectives must directly reach policy makers in a way that will encourage them to make the necessary changes.

Since mountain women often appear independent, the need to revise policies has not been evident to local leaders. Because of the predominance of less rigid religious beliefs within the indigenous systems, and the dominant role of women in the livelihood systems of the mountains, mountain women have traditionally been afforded more freedom of movement, greater independence in decision-making, and higher status than women of the lowlands. Perhaps due to the difficulties of eking out a living in a harsh mountain environment, the women of highland areas have historically played a dominant role in agricultural production and natural resource management. Yet, instead of celebrating this traditionally higher status and its benefits to the community, the current social and economic integration of mountain areas into nation-states is rapidly eroding the status of mountain women.

However, it is evident that mountain communities will not survive if women reduce their responsibilities. Strategies of survival have always included the frequent absences of males for trading and herding purposes; hence, women have traditionally been responsible for the maintenance of the farm and the household, in addition to participating in small-scale trading and income-earning activities.

Male biases in the development process are built into institutions, policies, and processes, and promise to continue along a similar path despite the increasing

availability of data on the predominant roles of women in the primary sectors of economic development and natural resource management.

These issues are of particular interest to those working in mountain development, because socialisation in mainstream societies relegates women to a lower status. This occurs through a number of processes involving religious, cultural, and legal mechanisms. In addition, biological differences are also used negatively to allot an inferior status to women. And yet, study after study has exemplified the paramount role of women as custodians of not only their families and culture but also the environment at large. It is only through their arduous labour and extensive indigenous knowledge of the environment that the mountain community and its livelihoods are sustained. How can this knowledge be translated into constructive action that will strengthen mountain communities?

Given this milieu and the opportunity presented by the International Year of Mountains 2002, the challenge is to provide a platform that brings together and highlights the experiences and aspirations of mountain women. At the same time, there is an additional challenge to begin building a community of concerned individuals who will promote the interests of mountain women within development circles, in the marketplace, and within decision-making bodies. Policy-making and advocacy have more recently been assisted by developments in information and communication technologies (ICTs). Since 1992, networks of mountain women have slowly begun to emerge, finding a common cause in their double marginalisation – as ‘poor and unsophisticated’ mountain people, and as women. Many mountain regions are rich in economic resources such as minerals, timber, hydropower, and fresh water. The scenic, cultural, and sacred beauty of mountains draw increasing numbers of tourists and pilgrims to remote mountains all over the world. Have mountain women benefited from these local resources? Can they benefit?

The real challenge lies in creating networks – nationally, regionally and internationally – that will take the discussion and empowerment of mountain women forward. The International Year of Mountains provides just this opportunity.

Conceptualisation of CMW

To respond to the situation and to meet the challenge, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) proposed that it host an international gathering of men and women around the issues of mountain women.

This was a result of ICIMOD’s commitment to focus on mountain women, made during the Mountain Forum

Council Meeting in Cusco, Peru, in 1999. “Celebrating Mountain Women” as the gathering came to be called, was the first such event that sought to give a platform to the unheard voices of mountain women from around the world, and the first ever international gathering devoted to the issues and concerns of mountain women.

The idea of calling the event a ‘celebration’ was deliberate. While mountain women have hard lives, are undoubtedly exploited, discriminated against, and disenfranchised, they also have enormous resilience, strength, knowledge, and power. It is these latter aspects that the gathering wished to capture and take forward.

Why CMWs?

The purpose of “Celebrating Mountain Women” was to celebrate the wonder and challenge of mountain living, and to bring to the public’s attention the major contributions women make to the environment, and to national economies through their various roles as nurturers and caretakers. Their stories enable the wisdom of the mountains to be passed on to the next generation. Their traditional knowledge about caring for the environment, providing fuel and fodder, and raising families without the support of modern infrastructure, have lessons for the 21st century.

The meeting was designed so women would have opportunities to learn about each other’s experiences, and be exposed to modern communication techniques such as the Internet, which could enhance their lives and livelihoods. By bringing together women from diverse backgrounds who have a shared love and passion for the mountains, the meeting enabled the creation of new and improved networks that could work together in creative problem solving.

Yet another very important objective of CMW was to create new coalitions and networks to work on policy issues related to mountain women, and an effort was made to identify and connect groups of mountain women and intermediaries. Throughout CMW, a great deal of interaction between intermediaries, mountain women, and policy makers took place.

Therefore, while women’s voices need to be heard and need to be incorporated into decision-making processes if we are to achieve sustainable development, there is an even greater need to address the issues and concerns of mountain women. Without their active involvement in the planning and implementing of development initiatives, no real impact can be made in their lives. Measures need to be taken to address their specific issues, hence this conference.

Planning of CMW

The first major step in making CMW a reality was the planning meeting held in Kathmandu in May 2001. Twenty-three women from around the world met to

discuss the significance of such a gathering and to plan this unique event in a most creative and fruitful manner.

The women attending represented mountain women from their respective regions and had a great deal of experience working with them. These women chose five from the group to form the CMW Steering Committee, representing five different regions of the world. The steering committee was responsible for assisting and guiding the CMW Secretariat, based at ICIMOD in Kathmandu.

CMW was organised with the aim of providing a platform for mountain women to articulate their concerns, and share their experiences and ideas related to the future of mountain livelihoods and cultures. In short, it was intended to provide a means for unheard mountain women's voices to be heard.

In July 2001, the CMW Secretariat was formed to coordinate and organise CMW. Based in Kathmandu, the secretariat was responsible for corresponding with potential participants, contracting work related to CMW, and making logistical and other arrangements. It was also responsible for raising funds, organising press conferences, advertising, spreading the word about CMW, selecting participants, and finally, producing reports.

The secretariat began by collecting and disseminating information on the situation of mountain women. It then looked at strategic points where this information exists, and in what form (for example, written or anecdotal).

CMW was also a very effective means of increasing interaction between development players and mountain women. During planning and coordination, groups in mountain areas who could learn from each other were identified. CMW provided a venue where all these different groups could come face to face for more effective interaction and results.

Among other things, the importance of the media's role was identified and plans were made to pursue this more vigorously. It was decided that more relevant resources and incentives needed to be provided to the media in order to increase and improve coverage on mountain women and their specific needs and issues.

It was decided that a message from CMW should be taken to a global forum for wider dissemination. Thus the participants of CMW drafted the Thimphu Declaration, which was presented at the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit (BGMS) in October 2002. The Thimphu Declaration proved an important tool for beginning the dialogue on what has been achieved and what still needs to be done to better the lives of mountain women everywhere.

Originally, CMW was to be held in Nepal from 28-31 May 2002, but was later postponed and moved to Bhutan due to the volatile political situation in Nepal. Bhutan provided a perfect venue, as it is a mountainous country where mountain women enjoy much more freedom than other mountain countries around the world. Bhutan is an

enchanted kingdom nestled in the eastern Himalayas — a country of breathtaking natural beauty.

Based on discussions with various CMW counterparts in Bhutan and the tourist industry, the dates were fixed for 1-4 October 2002. The full CMW event as planned for Kathmandu would now be held in Bhutan.

These dates (despite being at the height of Bhutan's tourist season) made it possible for the CMW delegation to be sent to the BGMS — the culminating global event for IYM, which was held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, from 28 October to 1 November, 2002.

Those planning CMW ensured that it would still be the same kind of event that had been planned originally for Kathmandu, only now with Bhutan's charm, the enthusiastic support of the Bhutanese Government, and the warm hospitality of the Bhutanese mountain people. The Royal Government of Bhutan also generously agreed to waive the normal \$200 per day visitor's fee to all CMW participants and played an important role in organising the entire event.

Fund Raising

The total budget proposed for CMW was approximately US\$ 600,000. A total of \$318,000 was raised with support from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) through the Japanese Government; the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, South Asia Regional Office); the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC); the Interchurch Cooperation Organization (ICCO), the Netherlands; and Sida. In addition to intellectual guidance, coordination and supervision of the entire effort, ICIMOD's in-kind contribution also consisted of a full-time professional staff member together with space, equipment, secretarial services, Internet connectivity, and other operational conveniences.

CMW Programme

CMW started with a traditional Bhutanese ceremony. Women and men had gathered around the venue of the conference in colourful outfits to watch the procession led by the Prime Minister of Bhutan and the Director General of ICIMOD.

There were workshops on five theme areas — Natural Resources and Environment; Entrepreneurship; Legal, Political and Human Rights; Culture and Indigenous Knowledge; and Health and Well-being — as well as a mountain women's film festival, a mountain costume show, exhibition stalls and booths, presentations, photo exhibitions and informal sharing of experiences, and story telling. All of these activities took place in the spirit of learning and celebration. In this age of information technology, the organisers of CMW saw this as a unique opportunity to start working on developing new networks, new ideas, and new alliances amongst mountain women worldwide.

Markets for mountain women's products

Mountain women's products from around the world were displayed around the grounds of the CMW venue. Participants took a keen interest in showcasing their own products, including arts and crafts; and were equally interested in examining others' booths and learning about the different items and cultures represented there. Many participants left Bhutan with an eclectic collection of goods from all over the world, most of which were made by mountain women. Among the different products on sale were spices and herbs, clothing and jewellery, arts and crafts, and pottery and food items. Products from Bhutan, Bolivia, Columbia, Ethiopia, India, Mexico, Nepal, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, and Swaziland were sold during the event. For many it was the first chance ever to see, feel, buy, and wear products from across the mountain regions of the world. Many participants were seen exchanging information and details of the products at the stalls — who made them and how, who wore them, and why they were made in that particular way.

Mountain Costume Show

The Mountain Costume Show was truly a feast for the eyes, where women and men paraded in their national and tribal costumes. These outfits were often very elaborate, handmade, and colourful. Some were woven, as in the case of the Bhutanese traditional dress called the 'kira'. The women from Bolivia wore their Bolivian hats and long skirts, while the women from the Columbian mountains showed off their cotton dresses with intricate embroidery. Each costume told a story about the mountain people's age-old traditions embedded in culture, customs, and a unique set of beliefs and values.

Last day

The last day of the conference was to take place in Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan, where the arrangements for the closing ceremony included Bhutanese folk dances. The drive to Thimphu was stunning and the beauty of the land, which for so many years was closed to outsiders and is still restricted to tourists, captivated the participants.

Participants had once again worn their very best attire to the closing ceremony, which was to be graced by Her Royal Highness Ashi Chimmi Yanzom Wangchuck. A young woman in her twenties, she thanked the participants and wished them a pleasant stay in her mountainous country. She also told them that she, as a young person, had a lot to learn from their experiences.

Challenges

Although organising the conference was extremely interesting and very rewarding, it also presented many unique challenges. Making sure that participants were attended to and arrived in Bhutan safe and sound was at times difficult, due to the fact that many were travelling very long distances. Some were even travelling outside

their country for the first time. Many were anxious about travelling to an exotic destination where travel is not always easy.

Another challenge was meeting the various needs of the participants, which were as varied as the participants themselves. Some participants were not well due to the high altitude, while others were simply exhausted from their long journey. Many wanted to stay connected with their offices and homes, however this was difficult to provide given the number of participants. Many had thought that the same kind of technological infrastructure would be available in Bhutan as elsewhere.

One of the other challenges was transportation. Participants were put up in different hotels around Paro, as the venue of the conference, Hotel Olathang, could not accommodate everyone. Participants often wanted to go back to their hotel before the last event of the day was over. Many also wanted to go back and rest between events. Drivers were not instructed to take two or three of them at a time. Many also wanted to stay at the venue and were not happy with their hotel arrangements.

Because of the nature of the conference, language was yet another challenge we needed to tackle. The diversity of the group meant that many different languages were spoken. However, to ensure that no-one felt left out, we had selected participants in pairs. Often the two were an indigenous mountain woman, who did not speak English and a NGO professional who worked with her. This way, they knew each other and could translate and facilitate for those who did not speak the language.

Rewards

In spite of some challenges, the overall conference was very fruitful and achieved what it set out to do. The five theme areas were discussed within the framework of policy, practice, and research. Many interesting presentations were made from different regions of the world, highlighting various issues and concerns. Stories, experiences, thoughts, and ideas were openly shared and discussed.

CMW is only the beginning of things to come. It was a way to bring the world's attention to the issues of mountain women, to provide a platform for them, and to ensure that their voices do not go unheard in this important International Year of Mountains. It was an opportunity to celebrate the wisdom, hard work, lives, and contributions of mountain women towards the stewardship of the mountains, mountain resources, and their families.

Participants left Bhutan with renewed zeal and enthusiasm to further the cause of mountain women. Sharing experiences and ideas opened ways to finding new solutions to age-old problems. As varied as the cultures and countries represented at CMW were, one thing that became very apparent was the fact that mountain women all over the world are marginalised,

and their voices need to be heard and their roles in decision-making bodies — both national and international — need to be strengthened if sustainable mountain development is to be attained. Mountain women can no longer be sidelined if the world wants to protect the mountains and the mountain environment, on which both mountain and the lowland people worldwide depend to such a great extent.

Overview of Background Papers

Research on the five theme areas, namely, Natural Resources and Environment; Entrepreneurship; Legal, Political and Human Rights; Culture and Indigenous Knowledge; Health and Well-being; and the interdisciplinary 'Gender Roles and Relations' was carried out prior to CMW. Research papers were carefully reviewed and selected by the research coordinator, Dr. Govind Kelkar, to be presented and discussed during CMW.

Gender Roles and Relations

The following research was collected and presented at CMW:

- Gender Relations, Livelihoods and Supply of Eco-system Services: A Study of Lashi Watershed, Yunnan, China — Yu Xiaogang
- Gender and Management of Mountain Resources in Africa: A Participatory Approach — Esther L. Njiro
- Sustainable Livelihoods and Poverty Alleviation: Study of Kullu District, HP, India — Vinay Tandon
- Gender-sensitive Study of Perceptions and Practices In and Around Bale Mountains National Park, Ethiopia — Fiona Flintan
- Tourism and Forest Management in Mosuo Matrilineal Society, Yunnan, China — He Zhonghua
- Engendering Economic Valuation of Forests — Pierre Walter and Gadsaraporn Wannitikul

Natural Resources and Environment

- Participation of Women in Joint Forest Management in India — Pratima S. Jattan
- Role of Mountain Women in the Management of Sustainable Eco-Systems — Chhaya Kunwar
- National Income with an Eco-feminine Perspective — Pushplata Rawat
- Development Strategies for Qiang Nationality Women in Ero Village, Sichuan Province, China — Zuo Wenxia and Li Junlin
- Devolution of Forest Management and the Alangan Mangyan Women — Merlyne M. Paunlagui
- Working with Community Based Conservation with a Gender Focus: A Guide — Mary Hill Rojas
- Improved Labour Saving Options for Mountain Women — Pampa Mukherjee
- Biodiversity and the New Voice of Women — Maria Mayer Scurrah

Health and Well-being

- Health and Well-being of Women in the Mountain Areas of the Asia-Pacific Region — Ritu Bhatia
- Afghanistan Country Profile: Reproductive Health — Farah Usmani
- Old Laws and Morals in the Beautiful Mountains of Albania — Xhi Xhi Xhenis
- Decentralised Food Security Systems and Women: Sustainable Food Security Arrangements in Chattisgarh — Ilina Sen
- Status of Women's Health and Well-being in Northern Pakistan — Fareeha Ummar
- Economic Role and its Impact on Mountain Women: Strategies for the Future — Jatinder Kishtwaria

Entrepreneurship

- Development of a Strategy for the Promotion of Mountain Women's Entrepreneurship — Phuntshok Tshering (ed.)
- Women and Work: An Exploration into the Lives of Trading Women — Tiplut Nongbri
- A Study on Three Women's Enterprises in the High Altitudes of Uttarakhand, India — Malika Virdi
- Organising the Unorganised Mountain Women: A Case Study of Gender Tourism in Garhwal Himalayas — Mondira Dutta
- Mountain Women Entrepreneurship in Slovenia: Policies and Practices — Patricia Verbole
- Women, Forests and Markets: Researching Poverty Alleviation through Commercialisation of Forest Resources in Mexico and Bolivia — Elaine Marshall and Kate Schreckenbergh

Political, Legal and Human Rights

- The Gender Asset Gap: Land in Latin America — Magdalena Leon
- Women's Rights to Land in the Kyrgyz Republic — Renee Giovarelli et al
- Patterns and Trends of Women's Participation in Land Markets in Uganda — Abby Sebina-Zziwa
- Social Norms and the Educational Needs of Women in Central Asia — Nuria R. Ismagilova

Culture and Indigenous Knowledge

- Gender Roles in Columbian Mountain Areas — Angela Castellanos
- The Cradle of Life: Symbolism of Naxi's Sudu — Xi Yuhua
- Indigenous Asia, Knowledge, Technology and Gender Relations: Discursive Invisibility — Navjot Altaf
- True Stories of Dangi Innovations from South Gujarat, India — Tisha Srivastav
- Matriliney in a Patriarchal Mould — Patricia Mukhim
- An Experience in Assisting Mountain Women in Six Districts in East Java — Indonesia Romlawati
- The Impact of Tourism on Gender Relations amongst Communities Living near Mt. Kinabalu, Sabah — Paul Porodong

- Rural Women of Mongolia — Amarsanaa Darurisen
- Gender Relations and Housing in Matrilineal and Patriarchal Communities — Girija Shrestha
- Gender Relations in Forest Societies in Asia — Govind Kelkar and Dev Nathan
- Women of the Mountains: From Silence to Recognition — Michela Zucca
- Celebrating the Tribal and Indigenous Women of Thailand: Bringing Women's Voices to the Forefront of Development — Anchalee Phonkling

Study Highlights

- a) Gender relations in mountain areas – matrilineal and patrilineal systems. Papers discussed the “deeply embedded patriarchal structures” and the erosion of women's rights even in matrilineal communities (Mosuo in Yunnan, China, Khasi in Meghalaya, India). Exceptions are seen in South American countries, with the recent (1998) adoption of legal measures for dual-headed households and the strengthened possibility that assets acquired during marriage will actually be jointly owned and managed. As a result of *ad hoc* gender mainstreaming and gender sensitising efforts, some changes occur in traditional institutions in South Asia as well, although only marginally.
- b) Several papers on art forms in mountain societies suggest the significant role of women as mothers — the producers of life in traditional settings. However, this ideal is much eroded today. Some common typical features of mountain women in the present day are:
 - Patriarchy or emerging patriarchy in matrilineal societies
 - Low self-image and self-esteem
 - Patri-local residence except in a few matrilineal societies
 - Inequitable inheritance rights
 - Decreased access to forest and water resources
 - Heavy workloads
 - Absent men within families
- c) A study that took place in the Alps points out the interesting phenomenon of women's historical revolt against their subordination: their response to centuries of repression and “being treated like goats” was to flee from the priests, the villages, the fathers, the brothers, and the husbands (a similar example can be found in the Central Highlands in Vietnam). In recent years, however, a new economic concept of “the identity economy” has begun to take shape. In addition to producing an income, these initiatives preserve and assist traditional cultures, becoming the base for production and supplementary income. Women are emerging as innovators in professional agriculture and innovators in new enterprises that link agriculture to tourism.
- d) Women's exclusion from community and forest decisions, when they are heavily involved in work in

forests, agriculture, other sources of their livelihood, was examined. The issue was also considered in the context of matrilineal societies.

- e) The gender asset gap, and women's ownership of land and resources was scrutinised. Three papers (Latin America, Uganda, and Kyrgyzstan) demonstrated that land and education inequality is negatively related to the income growth of the poorest in the population. Women's formal property rights are much stronger in all three regions than in South Asia, both because of more favourable inheritance rights, and recent advances establishing a dual-headed household in most of Latin America – where husband and wife both legally represent the household and jointly manage household assets. Women value assets and land ownership because of the security it offers against minimum food requirements for the family; as well as the intrinsic value of owning assets which they can rent, sharecrop etc; and the bargaining power assets and land ownership gives them within the household.
- f) Ecological benefits and services by mountain women and men were also the subject of some papers, grouped under various types, as follows.
Direct: provision of fish, aquatic edible plants, fodder, medicine, irrigation and transport
Indirect: water regulation, water purification, and genetic resources
Recreational: cultural, educational, and scientific benefits
The case of Lashi Lake in China was presented, where a large area of the local people's traditionally owned land was submerged. Women suffered the most from this change, since women bore the responsibility for agriculture there.
- g) The promotion of tourism and its effects and impact on gender relations was considered: economic development, ecological services, and whether more women have entered the sex trade. The fact that problems are displaced to other non-local forest areas was also discussed. Sustainability of resources requires gender equality in social relations and women's adequate participation in community and forest management decisions.
- h) The engendering of the economic valuation of forest resources was studied. The importance of gender as an analytical framework, the questioning of male dominated scientific knowledge particularly in the field of environmental economics; and the issue as it affects the economic value of fuelwood, NTFP collection, and the direct and indirect use value of environmental services were all discussed. Mountain women have a great deal of knowledge about and special interest in conserving biodiversity, including seeds and weeds. They are also skilled in various methods of storage.
- i) Another area of concern was policy making for the development of mountain women, which is far

removed from the reality of indigenous societies. There seems to be a lack of adequate recognition of women's role in joint forest management and other natural resources. Although several papers did talk about the 'two pillars' of the mountain economy: forests and women.

Devolution has failed to create an impact on the political capacity of women.

- j) The lack of political rights (for example citizen ID cards in Thailand) and human rights of mountain women and men was presented for discussion. The Thai Government's signing of CEDAW does not work in this regard as they are not citizens and the concerned government lacks political will.
- k) Figures for education/schooling of mountain women and girls reveal a particularly grim picture in South Asian and Central Asian regions. Some methods that were suggested for overcoming cultural norms which exclude girls and women from education include:
 - Securing the approval of community leaders (usually all men)
 - Creating an educational environment sensitive to cultural norms (free of gender stereotyping, gender responsive technology, and gender-biased science text books)
 - Employing women staff: teachers and trainers
- l) When building or strengthening capabilities (health care, education, employment, self-employment) attention should be given to the personal over the institutional. A number of papers from South Asia and Central Asia make explicit and implicit recommendations for this approach.
- m) Possible and potential change in gender relations through the following were discussed.
 - Women's engagement in income generation/employment — when the opportunity cost of women's labour is recognised and she brings in money, men are reportedly willing to share housework and caring for dependents and children.
 - The presence and implementation of supportive legislation for the women's right to education and asset security — this empowers them to take decisions.
- n) Mountain areas in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region have some of the highest infant and maternal mortality rates in the world. Gender was found to be the most significant determinant of malnutrition among children. The shortage of water and inadequate sanitation causes many diseases among mountain women and men. These are coupled with poor health infrastructure, high illiteracy of women, and gender based violence, e.g. 'honour killing', persecution of 'witches', and trafficking of women. Despite of all the rhetoric of joint management of forests and despite their very strong dependence on forest food resources, women and men have very

little control over the way forest resources are used.

- o) Mountain women and entrepreneurship papers, (including an ICIMOD paper on Bhutan) suggest the following:
 - Matrilineal pattern of inheritance is common and widespread throughout Bhutan.
 - By and large, women have better status in Bhutanese society than in other South Asian countries. However their weakness, as anywhere else, lies in the burden of household responsibilities and lack of mobility, and lack of exposure to markets.

In another matrilineal society (Khasi in Meghalaya) women frequently find themselves at the mercy of more powerful traders who control the movement of goods in the market. In many cases, a lucrative business belonging to a woman is passed into male hands because of the marginalisation of the daughters from production.

As mountain communities move into the monetary economy, subsistence roles are devalued and women's status is increasingly eroded with marketing processes and structures. The wool-based enterprises in Uttanchal, India, provide some exceptions to this, however.

Women who are self-employed or own a business are more concentrated in the retail trade and in services. There is, however, some change in this trend. Women are increasingly becoming financially independent, seeking inclusion in the labour market and control over the products of their labour. A case study of Slovenia provides some hope.

- p) Built technology: The degree to which women interact with outsiders (other than family members) is revealed in the spatial arrangement of houses in their community.

The location of the Newar (Nepali ethnic group) women's workplace — the kitchen — is on the top floor of the house, while the living room (space for interaction) is on the first floor, so that the outsiders can rarely interact with women who are usually cooking on the top floor. Thus the restriction over women is supported by the built technology.

Karen women (from the Kirat ethnic group), who have fewer restrictions on interaction, have joint kitchen and living space and this is the place where outsiders are entertained. Even as the woman carries on with her household chores, she can interact with the outsiders.
- q) Whether formally or informally, directly or indirectly, establishing new norms requires political struggle. Mountain communities have experienced protracted struggles to establish patriarchal norms. Simultaneously, and often in the same communities, struggles to overcome these patriarchal norms take place. The difference in these struggles is often that external agencies too have a substantial role to play

in bringing about the democratic functioning of the home and society. What is necessary to note is the dialectical relationship between the internal struggle and external enabling rules and decisions. Each one feeds into the other.

Policy intervention, research, and gaps

- a) The dual-headed household and its impact on women's empowerment / agency development, productivity and development in general.
- b) The ways of addressing the time constraints or increases in the workload of mountain women — largely a result of development projects and modernisation.
- c) Effects of tourism on mountain women and men and strategies for strengthening women's local knowledge and practices in the conservation of resources and women's equality and dignity.
- d) Enabling mountain women to establish NTFP-based enterprises through addressing problems related to lack of control over assets, finances, technical know-how, and marketing.
- e) Culture and institutional factors are often barriers to women's effective participation. A number of papers talked about the "cruelty of social norms" regarding mountain women in Central and South Asia, denying women access to education, resources such as land, and community decision making. How structural changes are/can bring about cultural and social constraints on women's inclusion need to be examined.
- f) Positive interpretations of cultures and religions to advance gender equality.
- g) Violence against mountain women: the role of familial and social violence in disempowering women, not permitting them access to education and government / public structures.
- h) Economic valuation of mountain women's work in management of natural resources.
- i) Effects of quota system-related measures (India, Bangladesh, Pakistan) on women's empowerment in mountain societies. Inclusion of women's voices in community affairs as being essential to the attainment of just societies and sustainable development.

Themes of CMW

Natural Resources and Environment

Women are the primary resource managers of many mountain regions. They have an intimate knowledge of their complex and diverse mountain environments, and often know the use and proper management of literally hundreds of native species for food, fodder, fuel, medicine, and micro-enterprise purposes. In recent years, environmental degradation, poor resource management, and increased migration of men to the plains have added to the already high rate of food insecurity and to the workload of women in the remote, mountainous regions of the world. Additionally, non-local interests, including extractive industries, profit from mountain resources (timber, minerals, hydropower) but seldom re-invest any of the revenues locally. This has devastating effects on women, as they are most dependent on common property resources. In most parts of the South, women

do not have rights to the land they work. Often, decisions made about land take place without any input from the women, who have an intimate knowledge, relationship, and vested interest in the land and environment around them.

Issues highlighted at CMW

- Predominant role of women in mountain natural resource management
- Land tenure/user rights from various mountain regions
- Links between culture and agriculture
- Indigenous knowledge and use of biodiversity
- Biodiversity conservation and religion
- Impacts of extractive industries such as timber and mining on mountain women's ability to manage natural resources
- Critical dependency of mountain women on natural resources



Significantly, the largest group was 'Natural Resources and Environment'



Smaller groups were formed to tackle different sets of issues within 'Natural Resources and Environment'



Women and men share their differing views



Participants from four countries are present here

Health and Well-being

Mountain people have a major disadvantage in access to primary health care due to their remote locations. Other factors also contribute to the poor health of mountain people, especially women. Cold stress and cold-related illnesses are common. Food is more difficult to grow on steep fields with short growing seasons, yet calorific requirements are greater in the difficult terrain and colder climates of mountain areas. The various life choices and activities of men — such as migration, and their involvement in armed conflict among other things, have added to women's already heavy responsibilities in managing farms and households. This affects their health and well-being, which is already under stress due to excessive and early child rearing, as well as malnutrition. Women are more vulnerable to illness because of their lower socioeconomic status in society.

Given the increasing migration of males from these remote villages to the city centres, there is also a growing risk of, and increasing cases of, sexually transmitted diseases. Men often return from outside with these

diseases and pass them on to their wives: many women are unaware of these diseases and this increases the risk of transmission. Bold steps are needed to redress this current trend. Improving women's health and well-being would mean taking a hard and creative look at women's workload, as well as the provision of information about HIV and STDs.

Best practices that could be highlighted include:

- Prominence of women's health in health policy
- Promotion of various contraceptives at all levels
- Launching of safe motherhood and family planning programmes
- Provision of training for female health care workers

Research and discussions could focus on:

- How women's health in the mountains is affected by the lack of infrastructure
- HIV in the mountain regions
- Prominence of traditional medicines such as herbs, and practitioners such as shamans and wise women, as well as on traditional knowledge and home remedies



The theme facilitator notes important points from the discussion



Two women from Mongolia and Bhutan share a laugh during the session



The Vice Governor of a mountainous province of the Philippines makes a point



Director of UNIFEM South Asia Regional Office talks about UNIFEM's work in women's rights

Entrepreneurship

Mountain women have traditionally engaged in small-scale, entrepreneurial activities based on the use of natural resources — crafts, food, medicine, and utilitarian products. Such activities help in human resource development, build local capacity, and contribute significantly to revenue generation in the community.

How can factors such as credit, regulations, and policies be created to encourage women's capacity to engage in entrepreneurship and contribute to the economic well-being of their families and societies? Are there ways that private entrepreneurs and mountain women can develop businesses together?

Issues to be highlighted are:

- Examples of success stories and case studies of various projects undertaken by women with access to micro credit
- How women's knowledge of crafts and natural resource-based products can be passed on from generation to generation
- The importance of credit
- A woman's extra earnings and the positive impact on her children and society at large



Participants from (clockwise) Thailand, India, Italy, Uganda, Mexico, India, Vietnam, and Bhutan



Women from Colombia and Mexico discuss the indigenous knowledge of mountain communities



African viewpoint: a South African and a Ugandan talk it over



Thai mountain women in their traditional attire exchange notes

Political, Legal and Human Rights

In a few traditional, matriarchal highland societies, women enjoy a relatively higher status than their lowland sisters. This status is coupled (not surprisingly) with a significant level of resource control, a clear voice in the affairs of the community, and even with lower reproduction rates. However, the majority of mountain women do not enjoy the same legal, political, and human rights as men, and subsequently lag behind in education, health, and public participation. As mountain communities move into the monetary economy, subsistence roles are devalued, and women's status is increasingly eroded. In most mountain societies, women are the primary caretakers of the land; yet they do not have the right to own the very land that they work on. At the same time, women in mountain areas have little knowledge of their rights, and enormous demands made on their time, making it difficult for them to be involved in the public sphere or in decision-making processes. Therefore, women's voices and concerns are not

incorporated into the programmes and policies that impact their lives and their environment. To achieve sustainable mountain development, women need secure access to resources and to decision-making power. It is essential for women to enjoy the same legal, political, and human rights as men, and for women's work to be recognised as an important contribution to the national economy. Revolutionary changes can be attained if women can enjoy social justice and have access to resources.

Some of the issues to be highlighted are:

- Women as agents of change/leaders
- Women's roles in matriarchal highland societies
- Links between legal and political rights and globalisation/liberalisation and how they affect mountain women's productive, reproductive, and other roles
- How to uphold indigenous women's rights to land and resources



A woman from Mexico talks about her work, related to mountain women's health



The group discusses which points to highlight in the Thimphu Declaration



A woman from the Philippines shares her experiences with the other members of the session



A doctor from India working for UNFPA in Nepal facilitated the session on health

Culture and Indigenous Knowledge

Until recently, development policies and programmes had largely ignored the rich culture and the indigenous knowledge base of mountain people. Development paradigms had initially focused on modernisation and mainstreaming people into development, rather than encouraging their diversity and uniqueness. In a changing world, the mores and traditions of mountain people have evolved too. Their rich tradition of oral history, songs, myths, and legends is being lost. Many young people in these communities want different lives, which often means migration out of the community. While some attempts have been made to capture the lives of mountain people, much more can be done.

Knowledge gaps exist in terms of data relating to mountain peoples' ways of life and mountain resources such as medicinal plants, as well as a critical examination of the historicity of cultures and their relevance to contemporary times.

There is, and can be, increased and deliberate activity to generate markets for women's products that use the cultural and indigenous knowledge of mountain people. This will help mountain women and communities see themselves as vehicles of change rather than requiring outside assistance.



A mountain woman from the north-east Indian Himalayas shares her views



A Peruvian mountain woman who heads an NGO working with women artisans



The facilitator records the points made



Output of CMW.....



Output of CMW

The Thimphu Declaration (see Annex 4)

One of the major outputs of the Celebrating Mounting Women gathering was the Thimphu Declaration, drafted in Bhutan and presented at the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. This important document contains the voices of many mountain women who do not see their needs being adequately met by the latest development initiatives. The pivotal importance of mountain women for attaining sustainable development is stressed in the declaration. The need for peace, gender equity, effective policies, access to health care, education, and training has also been emphasised throughout the document.

The Thimphu Declaration calls on the international community, including the United Nations, and others to:

- Heed the voices and concerns of mountain women and listen to their perspectives on peace, natural resource use, and sustainable mountain development;
- Provide the institutional and financial support for future policy and action on the principles of gender equality and gender mainstreaming;
- Strengthen mountain women's right to resources and their role in their communities and cultures; and
- Promote a rights-based approach to development and strengthen economic and technological opportunities to empower mountain women.

Global Mountain Women's Partnership (see Annex 5)

The Global Mountain Women's Partnership (GMWP) was drawn up by ICIMOD to translate the views and concerns articulated during CMW, and as expressed in the Thimphu Declaration, into action beyond 2002. The

GMWP is one of the major follow-up activities of the CMW conference. The main idea behind the GMWP is to promote the interests of mountain women, thereby improving mountain women's livelihood options. The GMWP will provide a basis for collaboration between the major stakeholders and mountain women. It will help bring together stakeholders such as development partners and donors, governments, policy makers, NGOs and civil society organisations, members of the private sector, researchers and practitioners, entrepreneurs, and media professionals who will work to address the needs of mountain women to bring about sustainable mountain development.

The GMWP seeks to:

- Advocate policies and laws that provide equality-based social, political, and economic rights to women. Ensure that such policies and laws exist for reasons that specifically address women's well-being and rights;
- Inform mountain women about their human, political, and economic rights — including property, environmental, health, cultural, and intellectual rights — and provide adequate training to claim these rights;
- Promote equitable representation of mountain women in decision-making bodies at all levels, and promote their participation in negotiation and decision-making processes, including in conflict prevention and resolution;
- Ensure that health programmes focus on reproductive and sexual health problems including HIV/AIDS, and other emerging diseases in mountain areas;
- Encourage research and disseminate results of mountain women's indigenous knowledge in areas key to mountain women such as natural resources, and traditional farming and conservation techniques, as well as cultural, health, and religious practices;

- Increase access to information about business, markets, technology and other livelihood opportunities that utilise and conserve the diversity of mountain environments, and promote training programmes and social services to meet the development needs of mountain women; and
- Promote physical and social infrastructure (roads, electricity, schools, telecommunications, markets) that is sensitive and responsive to women's needs, particularly regarding location, design, and utility. Enhance income generation and entrepreneurship among mountain women, reduce their workload, and generally improve the quality of their lives.

Conference Briefs

Conference briefs were prepared soon after CMW in late October. These detail the main points of various discourses that took place during the event.

Resource Book

The resource book is a document that sets out the proceedings of the various theme sessions. For the benefit of those who were not able to attend the conference, this will be an eye opener.

Video Documentary

A 22-minute documentary has been produced, which chronicles the events of CMW and captures the most memorable moments on video. It also contains interviews of guests and participants of CMW, speaking about the future of mountain women and CMW.

Video Clips

A 4-minute video clip was produced just before the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit (BGMS) to be

screened there. It highlights some scenes from the documentary, shown with a background of beautiful music and no narration.

Photos

Thanks to Mr. Anupam Bhatia — who gave his time free of charge and for whom photography is a major interest — all the images, faces, and events of CMW were captured. There are photos of the opening ceremony, the inauguration of stalls, of theme sessions, and the mountain costume show. Some are included in this document.

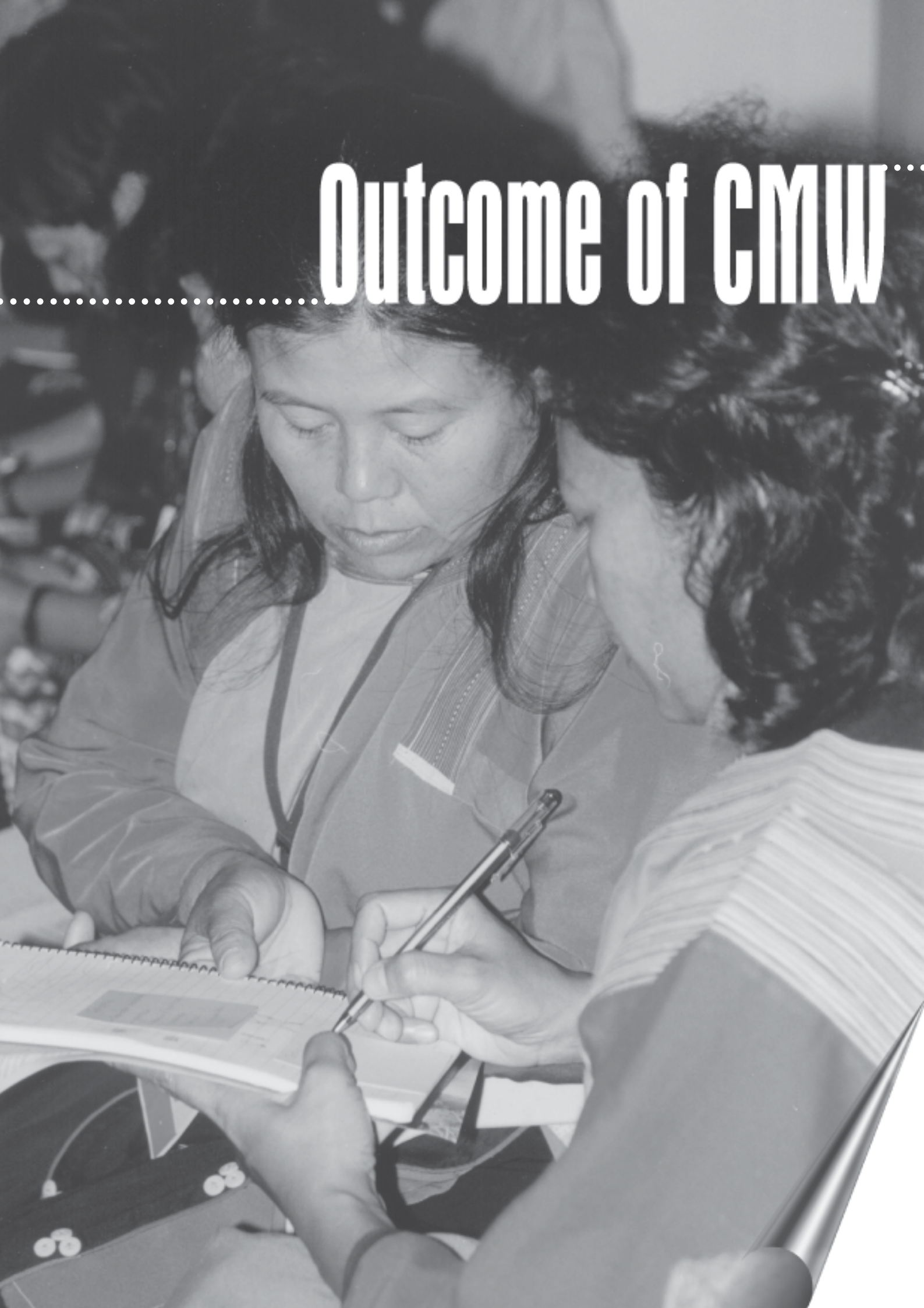
Web Site

The CMW Secretariat developed a web site dedicated to CMW, which was used as a tool to bring CMW participants together and to post/convey information regarding the event. It contained all relevant information so that participants were well informed before attending the conference in Bhutan. Now after the conference, the secretariat has been working to reconstruct the same website to make it a pre-eminent site dedicated to mountain women and their issues. Apart from promoting mountain women and their global partnership, the web site will continue to share the other outputs of CMW. The site will have a photo gallery of mountain women and the video clips will be available for downloading.

Research CD

All the research material gathered for CMW was thoroughly reviewed and compiled to represent all the themes of the conference. A total of 35 papers were included in the CMW research database. These studies were also put onto a CD and distributed to interested participants during the conference.

Outcome of CMW



Outcome of CMW

CMW Participation at BGMS

A small delegation of mountain women led by the Cabinet Secretary of Bhutan, Ms. Neten Zangmo, was at BGMS from 29 October to 1 November. Ms. Zangmo presented the Thimphu Declaration as a message from the 250 women who met for the first time in Bhutan to the plenary opening session on 29 October. A four-minute video clip of CMW Bhutan was also shown.

On 29 October, the Thimphu Declaration, along with a presentation on CMW itself, was also presented to the Kyrgyzstan Women's Forum, a satellite symposium in which the CMW delegation participated. The First Lady of Kyrgyzstan and Ms. Chandni Joshi chaired the session. Some 80 women attended this session, which was well received and appreciated.

On 30 October, a 90-minute round table session "Empowering Mountain Women, Moving Mountains" was put together by the CMW delegation (comprised of five women) in which the highlights of CMW, findings from the CMW research, and the role of ICTs, and culture and indigenous knowledge were shared. Ms. Chandni Joshi made a presentation on policy and gender budgeting innovations and experiences.

As the main follow-up event and to take the spirit and principles of the Thimphu Declaration forward, another

90-minute round table session on the Global Mountain Women's Partnership was conducted on 31 October. This was the launch of the new partnership, which was drawn up at the end of CMW, and incorporated the needs and perspectives of the 250 mountain women and men who came to CMW. This was by far the most well attended session at BGMS. Many individuals and organisations who attended the round table session supported and endorsed the partnership.

Last and most important, the CMW team took it upon themselves to see that the principles of the Bishkek Mountain Platform — the main output of the BGMS — was engendered.

Mainstreaming/Integration into ICIMOD's New Strategic Planning Framework and Medium-term Action Plan (2003-2007)

As part of the institutionalisation of the major outcomes of IYM, the Thimphu Declaration of 4 October 2002 has been used extensively to guide the formulation of a new gender mainstreaming action initiative. This ensures that there is focus on the main issues raised by mountain women and that the new projects address these issues adequately.

Annexes



Programme

Celebrating Mountain Women A Global Gathering in the Year of Mountains 2002

Sunday 29 September

Arrivals

Monday 30 September

4.00 – 5.00 PM

Arrivals, check-in, registration, set up of stalls/exhibits, and sight seeing
Press Conference

6.00 – 7.00 PM

Warm up and getting to know each other in the 'gataen', or carnival area, with music, mountain dances, and exhibition stalls

7.30 PM

Dinner

Tuesday 1 October

Setting the Stage

8.30 – 9.30 AM

Registration

9.30 AM

Arrival of Chief Guest, The Hon. Prime Minister of Bhutan, His Excellency Lyonpo Dr. Kinzang Dorji

Chipdrel, Marchang and Zhugdrel Phuensum Tshogpa
(Traditional Bhutanese inaugural ceremony)

10.00 AM

Welcome address by Representative of the Royal Government of Bhutan

10.05 AM

Chief Guest addresses the conference and declares it open

10.25 AM

Addresses by ICIMOD, ODA-Japan, IFAD, UNIFEM, SDC, others

11.10 AM

Video clips "Mountain Women Speak"

11.25 AM

Keynote address by Irene Santiago

12.00 PM

Group moves into the gatoen area

Chief Guest cuts the ribbon of stalls' area and meets participants to the sound of music in the background

12.30 PM

Lunch

(After lunch, Chief Guest departs)

2.30 – 4.30 PM

Introductory session on five themes (20 minutes each)

Natural Resources and Environment

Entrepreneurship

Legal, Political, and Human Rights

Health and Well-being

Culture and Indigenous Knowledge

4.30 – 5.30 PM	Open discussion
5.30 PM	Networking, interaction, films, music, dances, tents
7.30 PM	<i>Dinner</i>

Wednesday 2 October

Theme Sessions

9.00 AM – 5.00 PM

Issues and Ideas

Participants will break into five groups to listen, share, and discuss theme areas. Each group will have two facilitators to guide the process.

Natural Resources and Environment

Entrepreneurship

Legal, Political, and Human Rights

Health and Well-being

Culture and Indigenous Knowledge

Tents (All day)

Tents, according to the five themes of CMW, will be set up in the open air and presentations and discussions will be scheduled, facilitated, and the proceedings documented. These activities, in a less formal way, will run parallel to the theme sessions.

Film festival (All day)

Select films of mountain women will be screened all day, parallel to the theme discussions and tent activities

Booths (All day)

The booths will feature crafts, foods, photographs, and music from the various mountain areas.

1.00 – 2.30 PM

Lunch

5.00 PM

Networking, mountain costume show, tents, films.

Circulation of "Thimphu Declaration" draft

7.30 PM

Dinner

Thursday 3 October

All day

Summing up

booths, tents

9.00 – 12.30 PM

Group work on

a) Summary of theme discussions

b) Inputs into draft Thimphu Declaration

c) CMW follow-up activities

12.30 – 2.30 PM

Lunch

3.00 – 5.00 PM

Plenary Presentations

a) Theme and tent summaries

b) Thimphu Declaration

c) CMW follow-up activities

5.30 PM

Tents, interaction, film festival, booths

7.30 PM

Dinner

Friday 4 October

In Thimphu

Closing programme at the Royal Banquet Hall, Thimphu, Bhutan

10.00 AM

Arrival of participants from Paro

10.15 AM

Arrival of the Chief Guest RGOB Prime Minister Lyonpo Dr. Kinzang Dorji

Closing Ceremonies — Marchang and Zhugdrel

10.45 AM

Valedictory Address (by Catharine Cooke)

11.15 AM

Adoption of Thimphu Declaration/Message to BGMS

11.35 AM

Closing Address by Chief Guest, RGOB

(Her Royal Highness Princess Chimi Yangzom Wangchuck)

11.50 AM

Vote of Thanks by Director General, ICIMOD

12.00 PM

Press Conference

12.30 – 1.30 PM

Closing Lunch

7.00 PM

Gather to return to Paro

October 5 and 7

Departures of CMW Participants from Paro

List of Participants

AFRICA

Dr Abby Sebuna-Zziwa
Researcher/ Anthropologist Makerere Institute of Social
Research MUK
PO Box 16168 Wangegeya
Kampala, Uganda
Tel: + 256 41 554 582 Ext 115
Fax: + 256 41 532 821
Email: zziwa@infocom.co.ug

Bongile P. Dlamini
Economist, Researcher
Wonderland Operation Development
PO Box A1035
Swazi Plaza
Mbabane, Swaziland
Tel: + (268) 604 8579 or (268) 404 9981
Fax: + (268) 404 9980
Email: ngile1999@yahoo.com

Cornelius W. Utazirubanda
PO Box 4169 H 100 Mbabane
Swaziland - Southern Africa
Tel: + 268 6045035
Fax: + 268 4049980
Email: corubanda@yahoo.com
wod@linuxmail.org

Dr. Elizabeth Migongo-Bake
Programme Officer
Land Use Management
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
Division of Environment Policy Implementation
Tel: + 254 2 623261
Fax: + 254 2 624249
Email: Elizabeth.migongo-bake@unep.org

Dr Esther Igandu Njiro
CSIR Water, Environment and Forestry
Sustainable Livelihoods
PO Box 395
Pretoria 0001
South Africa
Tel: + 27128413630
Fax: + 2712 841 2689
Email: enjiro@csir.co.za_enjiro@absamail.co.za

Kabihogo Beatrice
Accountant/ Rural Development Worker
CARE International in Uganda
(Kabale Sub Office)
PO Box 702
Kabale, Uganda, East Africa
Tel: + 256 0486 23517/8
Fax: + 256 0486 22307
Email: careba@africaonline.co.ug

Meron Genene
Gender Specialist
PO Box 7931,
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: + 251 1 451463 (R); 251 1 664421 (O)
Email: meron0@lycos.com

Siriri Namukose Liz Miriam
Agriculture Economist
Monitoring, Evaluation and Information Specialist
Care International in Uganda
Development Through Conservation Project
PO Box 702 Kabale, Uganda, East Africa
Tel: + 256 486 23517/8 (O); 256 77 443809(R)
Fax: + 256 0486 22307
Email: dsiriri@africaonline.co.ug
carekba@africaonline.co.ug

ASIA

Abdul Gaffar
Freelancer/Align Graphics
House # 460, Sector 23
NIT, Faridabad 121005
Haryana, India
Tel: + 91 0129 5445320
Email: gaffarfbid@yahoo.com.in

Aida Priscilla T. Cadiogan
Gender Unit Staff
Tebtebba Foundation, Inc
#1 Roman Ayson Road
2600 Baguio City, Philippines
Tel: + 63 74 444 7703
Fax: + 63 74 443 9459
Res: #165 Paraan Street

Upper Victoria Village
2600 Baguio City, Philippines
Tel: + 63 74 445 7520
Email: tebtteba@skyinet.net

Amba Jamir
Director
The Missing Link
A.K. Singh, Lakhimi Path
R.G. Baruah Road, Guwati-781024
Assam, India
Tel: + 91 361 528695, 591202
Email: thelink1@sancharnet.in

Anchalee Phonklieng
Inter Mountain Peoples Education and Culture in
Thailand Association (IMPECT)
252, Moo2, T. Sansainoi, A. Sansai
Chiang Mai 50210, Thailand
Tel: + 66 0 53 398 591
Fax: + 66 0 53 398 592
Email: impect@cm.ksc.co.th anchaleeph@hotmail.com

Arisuren Amarsanaa
Programme Officer
Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development
APWLD, YMCA Building, Team 305 308
Tel: + 66 53 404613
Fax: + 66 53 404615
Email: amersanaa@spwld.org

Aruinchimeg Luvsanjamts
Centre for Human Rights and Development
Ulaanbaatar-13, Central Post Office
PO Box No. 551
Mongolia
Tel: + 976 11 325721
Email: chrd@mongolnet.mn
<<http://www.owc.mn/chrd>>

Babita Lama
Nepal Trust
PO Box 8975, EPC 4131
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 4429112
Fax: + 977 1 4436224
Email: ntrust@mail.com.np

Bhaskar Singh Karki
Programme Officer
King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation
PO Box 3712
Kathmandu Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 5526571
Fax: + 977 1 5526570
Email: bskarky@kmtnc.org.np

Bibi Nagina
NGO Employee
P10 Karimabad Karakoram
Handicraft Development Programme Hunza N. As
Pakistan
Tel: + 92 584 58135 / 05811 55865
Email: kadohun@hg.comsats.net.pk
Kado@gl.comsats.net.pk

Bimala Rai (Paudyal)
Research Student
Institute of Social Studies ISS
The Hague, PhD Fellow
PO Box 4885
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: 977 1 4410929, 977 1 5526624 (R)
Fax: + 977 1 4419718
Email: bimalarp@yahoo.com / bimalarp@enet.com.np

Bishnu Gharti Magar
Entrepreneur
PO Box 8975
Rukum, Rapti Anchal, Ward # 1
Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 5522883
Email: wean@ccsl.com.np

Bishnu Maya Ghale
Entrepreneur
Ward No 4, Thanchok, Manang, Nepal
c/o Din Dayalu Lower Secondary School
Thankchok
Chame, Manang, Nepal
Email: amritg@yahoo.com

C. P. Jaya Lakshmi
C8/8016 Vasant Kunj
New Delhi, 110070, India
Tel: + 91 11 6893700, 91 9810817561

Charu Chadda-Rijal
Nepal Women's Crafts
GPO Box 3721
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 4422957 (O), 4420868 (R)
Fax: + 977 1 4422957
Email: Chaurinnepal@hotmail.com

Chimi Dolma
National Assembly Member
Nabja & Shaba, Paro
C/O Dzongkhag Administration
CHIMI, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 8 271227

Cholpon Imanalieva
Pediatrics
136 Panfilov Street, Apt. # 9
Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic (CIS)
Tel: + 996 312 220 630
Fax: + 996 312 663 477
Email: ch_imanalieva@hotmail.com

Dasho Leki Pemo
Royal Advisory Council
Tashichhodrong
Thimphu, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 2 32339 (O); 328073 (R)

Dasho Sangay Thinley
Secretary
Ministry of Agriculture
Thimphu, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 2 322379
Fax: + 975 2 323153
Email: s_thinley@moa.gov.bt

Dechan Wangmo Penjor
Tour Operator
Yarkay Tours and Treks and Association of Bhutanese
Tour Operators
CEO and Executive Committee Member
Thimphu, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 2 322628
Fax: + 975 2 323894
Email: dwpenjor@druknet.bt

Dr. Dechan Tshering
Head, PPD
National Environment Commission
Thimphu, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 2 323384
Fax: + 975 2 323385

Dechen Zangmo
National Assembly Member
Chongshing-Borang, Pema Gatsel
c/o Dzongkhag Administration
CHIMI, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 7 471100

Deki Om
Peoples' Representative
Menbi
Lhuentse Dzongkhag
Lhuentse, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 4 546106

Deki Pema
Planning Officer
Policy & Planning Division
Ministry of Agriculture
Thimphu, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 2 323782
Fax: + 975 2 323153
Email: d_pema@moa.gov.bt

Dorji Beda
National Assembly Member
Mewang, Thimphu
c/o Dzongkhag Administration
CHIMI, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 2 322219

Dorji Yangki
Architect
National Commission for Cultural Affairs
PO Box 233
Thimphu, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 2 321285, 322694
Fax: + 975 2 321285
Email: dyangki@druknet.bt

Dorothy M. Hamada
Independent Consultant
194 Camp 7, Kennon Road,
2600 Baguio City, Philippines
Tel: + 63 74 447 2587
Fax: + 6174 447 3478
Email: hamadas@mozcom.com

Dungkar Drukpa
GIS Officer
PPD
Ministry of Agriculture
Thimphu, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 2 323745
Fax: + 975 2 323153
Email: dungkardrukpa@hotmail.com

Durlabh Bhattacharjee
Lecturer in Applied Art
Government Art College
PO Bharalumukh, Santipur, Guwahati
Assam, India
Tel: + 91 0361 200040

Edna Tabananda
Provincial Vice Governor
2nd floor, Right Wing Benguet Provincial Capitol
Poblacion Km. 6 La Trinidad, Benguet
Tel: + 422 7141 422-2046
Fax: + 422 2046
Cell: 09185213088
Email: ectvice@digitelone.com
Home Address:
JC-20 4 La Trinidad, Benguet
Tel: + 442 4741

Eleanor P Dictaan – Bang-Oa
Researcher
Tebtebba Foundation Inc.
#1 Roman Ayson,
2600 Baguio City, Philippines
Tel: + 6374 443 9459, 6374 444 7703
Email: tebttebba@skynet.net
edbang_oa@yahoo.com

Farah Usmani
UNFPA - CST/SAWA
PO Box 5940
Sanepa, Kathmandu
Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 523 880
Fax: + 977 1 527 257
Email: fusmani@unfpa.org.np

Fareeha Ummer
Gender Coordinator
Aga Khan Rural Support Programme
40-Bazar Road, G6/4
Islamabad
Pakistan
Tel: + 92 51 2275722
Fax: + 92 51 2275722
Email: f_malik_99@yahoo.com,
freehaummar@yahoo.com

Farida Begum
Farida Bano: Oshkindas Centre
506-Babar Rd, Gilgit
Pakistan
Email: akrspak@isb.paknet.com.pk

Dr. Govind Kelkar
United Nations World Food Programme
No. 02, Poorvi Marg, Vasant Vihar
New Delhi – 11 00 57
India
Tel: + 6150000 ext – 406
Fax: + 6150019
Email: govindkelkar@yahoo.com
govind.kelkar@wfp.org

He Zhonghua
Researcher
Yunnan Academy of Social Science
Huancheng Xi Yu No 577
Kunming City, 650034
Yunnan Province
China
Tel: + 86 871 4154705 / 86 888 51557188
Fax: + 86 888 5157188
Email: zhhe37@sina.com

Helen Calingayan Valdez
Business Development Advisor
Swiss Contact-Philippines
#35 Lower Phil-Am Compound
Phil-Am Barangay, Baguio City 2600
Philippines
Tel: + 63 74 444 8553
Fax: + 63 74 444 8956
Email: hcvaldez@mozcom.com

Hemlata Rai
Journalist//Reporter
Nepali Times
PO Box 7251
Kathmandu
Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 5543333, 977 1 5543336
Fax: + 977 1 5521013

Hoang Ha
Caritas Switzerland
Room 120, La Thanh Hotel
218 Doi Dan, Ha Noi
Vietnam
Tel: + 84 832 5943
Fax: + 84 762677
Email: carswi@vietnam.org.vn

Hongray Thotchuila
Executive Secretary
PASDO P.O. Box No. 22, Ukhrul
Manipur-795142
North East India
Tel: + 91 3870 22032
Fax: + 91 385 224897
Email: csd@sancharnet.in

Ina Irawati
Postal address: S. Supriyadi 4B
No: 260 Rt 07/01 Malang, 65147
East Java, Indonesia
Tel: + 062 0341 461238, 062 0341 345510
Fax: + 062 0341 462190
Email: yaseru@indo.net.id inairawati@yahoo.com
inairawati@hotmail.com

Isabel Ross
C/- CECI
PO Box 2959
Baluwatar, Kathmandu
Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 4431296
Email: isabel80@yahoo.com.au

Jaidev Baghel
Sculpture
Paramparik Bastasshilpi Parivar
Bhelwapadar Para, Kondagaon Dist.
Bastar (Chattisgarh)
India 494226
Tel: + 07786 42357, 42978
Email: jbaghel@sancharnet.com

Janita Gurung
Programme Officer
WWF Nepal Programme
Baluwatar, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 4410942 / 4434820
Fax: + 977 1 4438458
Email: janita@wwfnepal.org.np

Jasmaya Tamang
National Assembly Member
Dagapela, Dagana
c/o Dzongkhag Administration
CHIMI, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 6 481107

Dr. Jatinder Kishtwaria
Scientist/Researcher
CSKHPKV Palampur
#12 Housing Board Colony Holta
Palampur
176062 HP India
Tel: + 91 1894 30407
Fax: + 91 1894 34274
Email: Kishtwaria@rediffmail.com

Jigmi Tenzin
Protocol Division
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Thimphu, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 2 322 781
Email: jigten@hotmail.com

Ms. Kalawati
Social Activist
Aadiwari Harijan Kalyansamiti, ASNA
Aadiwari Mahila Shilpvikas Kendra
Kondagaon
H.NO. 155 Village ASNA, Jagdalpur Dist.
Bastar (Chattisgarh)
India
Tel: + 07782 67204

Karma Doma Sherpa
Entrepreneur
Himalaya CFUG
Mt. Kailash Lodge, Moju
Chaurikharka-1, Solukhumbu District
Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 4494456
Email: chombitrete@wlink.com.np

Karma Yangzom
Kilikhar
Mongar
Bhutan
Tel: + 975 4 641299

Kavita Rai
PhD Fellow
Walter-Flex-Str. 3
D-53113 Bonn, Germany
Tel: + 49 0 228 73 1727
Fax: + 49 0 228 73 1972
Nepal: PO Box 8975, EPC 4053
Maharajgung, Kathmandu
Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 4410032
Email: Krai@uni-bonn.de / kavita_rai@hotmail.com
raiskb@wlink.com.np

Krishna Kakad
Programme Officer
United Nations World Food Programme
IFAD-WFP Gender Mainstreaming Project
No. 02, Poorvi Marg, Vasant Vihar
New Delhi – 11 00 57
India
Tel: + 6150000 ext – 406
Fax: + 6150019
Email: Krishna.kakad@wfp.org

Kunzang Choden Namgyel
Head of Asia Division, Bilateral Division
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Thimphu, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 2 322278
Fax: + 975 2 323240
Email: kcnamgyel@mfa.gov.bt

Lata Baghel
Director
Adivasi Mahi Shilpeecendra
Bhelwapadarara
PO Kondagaon District Bastar
(Chattisgarh)
India, 494226
Tel: + (07786) 42357 2978
Email: jbaghel@sancharnet.net

Laxmi Murthy
Journalist
378 Sector 37 Noida
Uttar Pradesh-201303
India
Tel: + 91 120 4430871
Email: L_murthy@yahoo.com

Lenh Thi Lien
Vice Chairperson
District People's Committee
Ug Ban Nhan Dan Huyen
Quan Ba, Ha Giang Province
Vietnam
Tel: + 019 846 6150

Dr. Lungten Zangmo Wangchuck
Medical Superintendent
Gidakom Hospital
Ministry of Health and Education
Thimphu, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 2 3271063 / 3271055
Email: docknancry@hotmail.com

Malika Virdi
Researcher
Village Sarmoli, Post Munsiri-262554
District Pithoragarh, Uttaranchal
India
Tel: + 91 59612 2367
Email: malika_virdi@rediffmail.com

Manish Tiwary
Consultant
FAO, Rome
ESAF, C346
FAO, Viale De Termedi Caracalle
Rome, Italy
Tel: + 3966 57054395
Fax: + 3906 57055522
Email: Manish.tiwary@fao.org

Manshi Asher
Project Officer
Foundation for Ecological Security
c/o FES, Village Sakmoli
Pangtey Bhawan, Madkot Rd
Munsiri, Pithoragarh Dist.
Uttaranchal, India
Tel: + 91 59612 2229 or 2367
Email: preeti@irm.ernet.in / gori_himp@rediffmail.com
manshi_munsiri@rediffmail.com

Maya Devi Khanal
Himawanti Regional Office
Jwagal, Kupondol, Lalitpur
PO Box 12811, Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 5542717 / 5548231
Fax: + 977 1 5542717
Email: himawanti@wlink.com.np

Ms. Meena Thapa
National Assembly Member
Chengmari, Samtse
c/o Dzongkhag Administration
CHIMI, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 5 383017

Meenakshi Ahluwalia
Programme Officer
UNIFEM-South Asia Regional Office
223 Jorbagh, New Delhi 110003
India
Tel: + 91 11 4698297
Email: meenakshi.ahluwalia@undp.org

Meenakshi Jamir
Consultant, Group Coordinator
The Missing Link
A.K. Singh, Lakhimi Path
R.G. Baruah Road, Guwati-781024

Assam, India
Tel: + 91 361 528695, 591202
Email: thelink1@sancharnet.in

Megh Ranjani Rai
Gender Specialist/ Development
Consultant
P.O. Box 1930
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: + 9771 5546568
Fax: + 9771 4350375
Email: megh_rai@hotmail.com

Merlyne Malabayoc Paunlagui
University Researcher
ISPPS, College of Public Affairs
Institute of Strategic Planning and Policy Studies
University of the Philippines Los Baños
College, Laguna 4031
Philippines
Tel: + 063 49 536 3455
Fax: + 063 49 536 3637
Email: mmmmp@mudspring.uplb.edu.ph
merlynep@yahoo.com

Miguel Braganza
Horticulturist and Freelance Editor
S-1, Gracinda Apts
Near Asilo Hospital, Mapusa-403507
Goa, India
Tel: + 091 832 255139
Email: miguel12@gatecom.com

Mohammed Ali Iqbal
Social Activist, Journalist
Chief Executive Officer
Aadiwasi Harijan Kalyan Samiti, ANSA
H.NO. 155 Village Asna, Jagdalpur Dist.
Bastar (Chhattisgarh), India
Tel: + 07782 61204

Namgay Om
Director
Royal Institute of Management Semtokha
Thimphu, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 2 35101
Email: namgay_om@rim.druknet.bt

Nanu Rajbhandari
L.N. Chemical Industries Pvt. Ltd
GPO Box 3953
Maitighar, Thapathali
Tel: + 977 1 4243818 (O); 4482183 (R)
Email: saral_Inchem@hotmail.com

Nazaneen Muhammad Wusu
Minister
Kurdistan Regional Government
Ministry of Works & Housing
Tel: + 2230080
Mobile: 061 760 3200
Email: nazaneenmw@hotmail.com

Neeloshree Biswas
Filmmaker/Activist
Cinema Theque, MANAN
WIB (M) – 15/7
Phase-II, Golfgreen Urban Complex
Calcutta – 700095, India
Tel: + 91 33 414 0966
Fax: + 91 33 0197
Email: ahalya31@yahoo.co.in draupadi24@yahoo.com/
neelosree2002@hotmail.com

Neten Zangmo
Cabinet Secretary
Tashichhodzong, Thimphu
Cabinet Secretariat
Tel: + 975 2 321437, 3214396, 321435
Fax: + 975 2 321438
Email: cabinet@druknet.bt
Nidhi Agarwal
Project Officer
Foundation for Ecological Security
Pangtey Bhawan, Madkot Rd
Munsiari, Pithoragarh Dist.
Uttatanchal, India
Tel: + 91 59612 2229 or 2367
Email: preeti@irm.ernet.in
gori_himp@rediffmail.com
nidhimunsiari@rediffmail.com

Nim Dorji
Director
SDS/Ministry of Finance
Thimphu, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 2 321425
Fax: + 975 2 325853
Email: sds@druknet.bt

Nima Om
Deputy Director
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Thimphu, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 2 322278
Fax: + 975 2 323240

Nyla Qureshi
Deputy Secretary
Ministry of Kashmir Affairs, and Northern Areas
House # 383, Street # 17, Sector
I –10/2 Islamabad, Pakistan
Tel: + 92 51 9203647
Fax: + 92 51 9203022
Email: nyla_qureshi@hotmail.com

Dr. Pampa Mukherjee
Department of Political Science
Arts Block IV, Punjab University
Chandigarh, India-160014
Tel: + 91 172 534760, 541819, 534755(O), 549462(R)
Fax: + 91 172 784695
Email: pampa@pu.ac.in, pmkh@rediffmail.com

Patricia Mukhim
Upper Nongthymmai
Dum Dum, Shillong-793014
Tel: + 91-0364-534966 Mobile - 98630-61543
Fax: + 91-0364-501551
Email: patricia17@rediffmail.com

Pedon Tshering
EIA Officer
National Environment Commission
Thimphu, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 2 323384
Fax: + 975 2 323385

Pema L. Dorji
Under Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Royal Government of Bhutan
Thimphu, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 2 323 297
Fax: + 975 2 323 240
Email: pldorji@mfa.gov.bt

Pemba Doma Sherpa
Mountaineer
PO Box 4515
Lazimpat, Kathmandu, Nepal
Thamserku View Lodge
Namche Bazaar Ward No 1
Solukhumbu, Nepal
Tel: + 38 40073, 40107
Fax: + 977 1 4418890
Email: p_thaktopa@hotmail.com

Phuntsho
Head of PPD
National Commission for Cultural Affairs
Thimphu, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 2 322694, 325116
Fax: + 975 2 323040

Prashant A.V.
Artist (Freelance)
31 F A2 MAYR VIHAR Phase III
New Delhi, India
The Missing Link
Tel: + 91 00 2624784
Email: prakritiant.groups@hotmail.com

Dr. Pratima S. Jattan
Consultant
Natural Resource Management Group
c/o Dr. R.V. Singh
176 Vasant Vihar I
PO New Forest
Dehra Dun 248006
Uttanchal, India
Tel & Fax: + 91 135 773261
Email: ranvir@nde.vnl.net.in
pratima_jatttan@yahoo.co.uk

Rahima Joldosheva (Raya)
20 Sultangazy Street
Chui-region, Sultan
Kyrgyz Republic 720000
Tel: + 996 312 660331
Email: eibraimova@yahoo.com

Raj Verma
The Missing Link
Documentation Team
D-327 Sarojini Nagar
New Delhi 110023
India
Tel: + 91 11 4677832
Email: rajverma@vsnl.com

Romla Wati
Centre for Women's Resources
Development
JI Candi Mendut Qarat Olok D No. 14
Malang – East Java
Indonesia
Tel: + 62 0341 498913
Fax: + 62 0341 498913
Email: ppswjtm@indo.net.id

Sadhna Jha
World Food Programme
No. 02, Poorvi Marg, Vasant Vihar
New Delhi – 11 00 57
India
Tel: + 6150000 Ext – 406
Email: sadhnajha@hotmail.com
sadhna.jha@wfp.org

Shabnam Ara
Aga Khan Rural Support Programme
Pakistan
Social Organiser
Tel: + 92 0933 412727
Fax: + 92 0933 41256
Email: aeni@yahoo.com

Shalini Sharma
Project Officer
Energy Environment Group
Village Nari, P.O. Dera Baba Rudru
Una-174303,
Himachal Pradesh, India
Tel: + 91 11 5265212, 91 1975 72017
Fax: + 91 11 5265212
Email: sujhbujh@vsnl.net

Shanti Gurung
King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation
PO Box 3712 Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 5526571
Fax: + 977 1 5526570
Email: gurungshanti2002@yahoo.com

Shradha Basnyat
Yeti Travels
Hotel Annapurna
PO Box 140
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 5521704
Fax: + 977 1 4270009
Email: s_basnyat@hotmail.com

Shreejana Rana
Social Worker
General Printing and Packaging
Durbar Marg, Kathmandu
Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 4270147 Mobile: 981024964
Fax: + 977 1 4270009
Email: Shreejana_rana@hotmail.com

Sitara Rajbhandari
Entrepreneur, Member of WEAN
Spicy Home Spices
Rajbhandari Niwas, Thapathali
Tel: + 977 1 4260936
Fax: + 977 1 4230291
Email: sitararajbhandari@hotmail.com

Sonam
National Assembly Member
Saling, Mongar
c/o Dzongkhag Administration,
CHIMI, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 4 641267

Sonam Zangmo
Dzongkha News Editor,
BBS, Thimphu, Bhutan
Bhutan Broadcasting Service
Tel: + 975 2 323072 (O); 351434 (R)
Fax: + 975 2 323073
Email: szangmo@yahoo.com

Dr. Sudhirender Sharma
Director
Energy Environment Group
7 Triveni Apts, A Paschim
Vihar, New Delhi 110063
India
Tel: + 91 11 5265212
Fax: + 91 11 5265212
Email: sudhirendra@vsnl.net

Sumaira Sagheer
Communications Officer
Aga Khan Rural Support Programme
AKRSP-Pakistan
40-Bazar Road, G-6/4, Islamabad
Tel: + 92 051 2275746
Fax: + 92 051 2275772
Email: sumo@brain.net.pk
Sunmaya Gurung
National Assembly Member
Gaylegphu, Sarpang
c/o Dzongkhag Administration
CHIMI
Bhutan
Tel: + 975 6 365194

Surjeet Kaur
Sports Assistant
Directorate of Physical Education Sports
Kashmir University
Kashmir, India
Tel: + 91 194 423345
Fax: + 91 194 421357
Email: cas99@rediffmail.com

Tandin Dorji
EIA Officer
National Environment Commission
Thimphu, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 2 323384
Fax: + 975 2 323385

Tshering Gem
Office Assistant/Librarian
PPD
Ministry of Agriculture
Thimphu, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 2 322168
Fax: + 975 2 323153
Email: t_gem@moa.gov.bt

Ms. Tshering Pem
Under Secretary
Planning Commission Secretariat
Thimphu, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 2 322503 / 325192
Email: tpem@pcs.gov.bt

Tshering Uden Penjor
Research Officer
The Textile Museum
National Commission for Cultural Affairs
Thimphu, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 2 321517, 321516
Fax: + 975 2 321518
Email: museum@druknet.bt, tupenjor@druknet.bt

Ulziisaikhan Sodov
Centre for Human Rights and
Development
Ulaanbaatar-13, Central Post Office
PO Box 551
Mongolia
Tel: + 976 11 325721
Email: chrd@mongolnet.mn
<<http://www.owc.mn/chrd>>

Wangmo
National Assembly Member
Phongmey, Trashigang
c/o Dzongkhag Administration
CHIMI, Bhutan
Tel: + 975 4 521155

Wipha Srilimpanon
Inter Mountain Peoples Education Association in
Thailand
252 Moo 2 Sansai-noi Sansai
Chiangmai, Thailand
Tel: + 66 53 398591, 66 53 492544
Email: impect@em.ksc.co.th,

Yu Xiaogang
Green Watershed, 7th Floor
Office Building, 133 Qixiang Lu, Kunming
China, 650034
Tel: + 86 871 4140488
Fax: + 86 871 4140488
Email: yxgood@hotmail.com
yxgood2001@yahoo.com

Zuo Wenxia
Associate Professor
Dujiangyan Campus of Sichuan Agricultural University
No.241, Jianshe Road, Dujiangyan City
611830, Sichuan Province, China
Tel: + 86 28 87119564 (O); 87131300 (R)
Fax: + 86 28 87133366
Email: zwenxia@scfc.edu / zuowenxia@yahoo.com.cn

EUROPE

Adele L. Pander
Social Development Worker
OMAK- Organizacion de Mujeres Almakes del Kollasuyo
Casilla 13195
La Paz – Bolivia
Av. Romero 2045, Zona Amor de Dios,
El Alto de La Paz, La Paz, Bolivia
Tel: + 591 2 280 6890; 591 2 245 6869
Email: omakbol@hotmail.com
omak@latinwide.com

Anne Zimmerman
Editing and Translations (MRD, NCCR North-South)
Centre for Development and Environment
Institute of Geography, University of Berne
Steigerhubelstrasse 3
CH-3008 Berne, Switzerland
Tel: + 41 31 631 52 73 (direct line)
+ 41 31 631 88 22 (secretariat)
Fax: + 41 31 631 85 44
Email: azimmer@giub.unibe.ch

Clara Abatecola
Civil Servant Executive
Italian Prime Minister's Office
Department of Regional Affairs
Rome, Italy
Tel: + 39 06 677 96254
Fax: + 39 06 67796128
Email: c.abatecola@palazzochigi.it

Elaine Marshall
Senior Forest Programme Officer
DFID/FRP Funded Research Project
Coordinator
UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Programme
219 Huntingdon Road
Cambridge
CB3 0DL, UK
Tel: + 44 1223 277314
Fax: + 44 1223 277136
Website: <http://www.unep-wcmc.org>
Email: Elaine.Marshall@unep-wcmc.org

File Hasaj
Social Worker
CAFOD Albania
Koplik, Malesi e Madhe, Albania
Tel: + 355 227 2099, 355 423 5462
Fax: + 355 424 7662
Email: contact@cafodalbania.org

Fiona Elizabeth Flintan
Environment/ Development Consultant
Centre Manager
The International Famine Centre
University College Cork
8, Grenville Place
Cork, Ireland
Email: flintan@eircom.net,
Tel: + 353 21 4904 330
Fax: + 353 21 4904 328
Website: <http://www.ucc.ie/famine>

Fionnualla McHugh
Hong Kong-based journalist
c/o TMI, USA

Franscoise Mees
Coordinator
European Mountain Forum
28 Rue Mauverney
CH 1196 Gland
Switzerland
Tel: + 41 22 999 01 24
Fax: + 41 22 999 00 10
Mobile: 00 41 79 201 83 03
Email: europe@mtnforum.org

Irma Weiglhofer
Project Director
Salzburg State Board of Tourism
PO Box 1 A-5300 Hallwang
Salzburg, Austria
Tel: + 43 662 6688 24 Mobile: 00 43 699 16 66 88 62
Fax: + 43 66 88 66
Email: alpin@salzburgerland.com

Ismene Stalpers
Associate Expert on Social Protection
PO Box 8971,
Kupandole, Lalitpur, Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 5522259 ext – 302
Fax: + 977 1 5531322
Email: stalpers@ilo.org

Jean MacFarlane
Journalist
Express Newspapers/ Roving Reporter
77 Golf Links
New Delhi, India 110003
Tel: + 91 11 461 8448, 461 7349
Email: orrdavid@compuserve.com

Leonor Gimelfarb
PO Box 3459
Ekantakuna, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 5530313, 5538273
Fax: + 977 1 5532013
Email: lgimelfarb@yahoo.com

Maria Antonia Sironi (Tona)
President/Italy
Eco Himal
Via Crispi 134 21100 Varese Italy
(25, Acrefield Drive CB4 1JW Cambridge, UK)
Tel: + 39 0332 227245, (44 1223 503574)
Fax: + 39 0332 220075, (44 1223 503574)
Email: ecohimal@working.it / ecohimal@ntlworld.com

Maria Assunta Paci
Via Montefeltresca 118
61020 Pietrarubbia Pu Italia
Tel: + 39 0722 75135
Email: paci.marie@libero.it
Michela Zucca
Castel Madruzzo 10
Lasino (Trento)
Italy
Tel: + 39 0461 564577, Mobile: 00 39 335 6155055
Fax: + 39 02 6128157 / 39 0461 948190
Email: michela.zucca@tin.it

Miranda Kate Whitcomb
Manager
The Cairngorms Partnership
14 The Square, Grantown-On-Spey
Morayshire, Scotland
Tel: + 44 1479 873 535
Email: mir1@tarf.fsnet.co.uk,
miranda@cairngorms.prestel.co.uk

Monique Whelan
Butterwalk Cottage, 39 High Street
Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5NP, UK
Tel: + 01803 868242
Email: sunrise@ekno.com

Nazeli Vardanyan
Lawyer
Yanus Environmental Legal NGO
Armenian Forest Programme
1 Brusove St. Apt. 4,
Yerevan 375023, Armenia
Tel: + 3741 585019; 3749 425019
Fax: + 3741 528279
Email: nazely@bsc.am
vnazeli@yahoo.com

Patricija Verbole
Le Clerck Consulting
Tourism and Education
Podgorje 30 d, SI - 1241 Kamnik, Slovenia
Tel: + 386 41 540 219
Fax: + 386 1 515 30 61
Email: patricija.verbole@siol.net

Rita Tiberi
(Home) Via Marco Aurelio 47 – 00184 Rome, Italy
(Work) Via Salaria 403 – 00199
Rome, Italy
Tel: + 39 06 86268331
Fax: + 39 06 86218474
Email: legambiente.tiberi@tiscalinet.it

Roland Marchi (Rolly)
Journalist, Publisher, Photographer
Corso Garibaldi, 34
20101 Milano, Italy
or
Chiave 69
32043 Cortina d'Ampezzo (Belluno)
Italy
Tel: + 02 867568
Fax: + 02 72023860

Rosalaura Romeo
Food and Agriculture Organization - FAO
Via Delle Terme Di Caracalla
00100 Rome, Italy
Tel: + 39 06 57055961
Fax: + 39 06 57055137
Email: rosaura.romeo@fao.org

Sarah McMillan
Students Partnership Worldwide
PO Box 4892, Lazimpat, Kathmandu Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 4434645
Room 5FC1, 189-205 Pentonville Road
London, N1 9NF
Tel: + 07980 588 492
Email: sarah.mcmillan@soas.ac.uk
sarahcmumillan@hotmail.com

Susan Mary Carpenter
1 Brockwell Park Gardens
London SE24 9BL
UK
Email: suecarps@yahoo.co.uk

Theodore F.J. Whelan
Butterwalk Cottage, 39 High Street
Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5NP, UK
Tel: + 01803 868242
Email: sunrise@ekno.com

Xhixhi Xheni Sinakoli
CAFOD Albania
Rruga e Dibres 139, Tirana, Albania
Tel: + 355 423 5463
Fax: + 355 424 7662
Email: xhenis@cafod.tirana.al
xhenis@yahoo.com

LATIN AMERICA

Andrea Flores Tonconi
President, OMAK
Av. Romero 2045 Zona Amor De Dios
El Alto De La Paz, Bolivia
Tel: + 591 2 280 6890
Email: omakbol@hotmail.com
omakbol@caoba.entelnet.bo

Aquelina Chuquechambi
Handicrafts Entrepreneur
President CIMAT
Casilla 13195
La Paz, Bolivia
CIMAT-OMAK
Tel: + 591 2311355, 591 2 2806890
Email: omakbol@caoba.entelnet.bo

Delia Villalobos Arciga
General Coordinator
Paseo Del Nogal #554 Fracc. Prados Verdes,
Morelia, Michoacan, Mexico
Tel: + (43) 27 38 49 and 16 55 89
Fax: + 443 316 55 89
Email: loba@integra.net.mx

Diana Pombo
Calle 73 No. 7-51, apto 501
Bogotá, Colombia
South America
Tel: + (57 1) 211 23 54
Fax: + (57 1) 211 23 54
Email: dianapombo@hotmail.com dianap@rds.org.co
dianapom@mac.com

Domicilio Conocido
Tarerio
Municipio de Tzintzuntzan, Michoacan

Luz Adiel Rossas Vivas
Luz Adiel Rossas Mosquera
Current Postal Address:
Vereda Ventanas

Corregimiento de Siberia
Municipio de Caldonio
Cauca, Colombia
Apartado Aéreo No. 1284 Popayán,
Cauca, Colombia
Tel: + (57 28) 47 30 06; (5728) 47 30 31
Email: rodriven@hotmail.com; luyaviro@hotmail.com

Maria I. Mayer B de Scurrah
Agronomist
Tripoli 365, Miraflores
Lima 18, Peru
Tel: + 51 1 4468729
Fax: + 51 1 444 5368
Email: Mariasurrah@terra.com.pe
m.scurrah@cgiar.org

Marina Villalobos Díaz
Eucaliptos No. 74
CO1 Balcones De Santa Maria
Morelia, Mich. 58090 Mexico
Tel: + (52 443) 323 60 00 and 323 60 06
Fax: + (52 443) 32360 00 and 32360 06
Email: lobomar@unimedia.net.mx

Rosa Maria Josefa Nolte
Anthropologist
Executive Director Mercomujer
Madrid 568, Lima 18 (Miraflores)
Perú
Tel: + 0511 4448006
Fax: + 0511 4236959
Email: jnolte@manuel.org.pe, josefa@tsi.com.pe

Salud Lucas Pérez
c/o Marina Villalobos Díaz
Eucaliptos No. 74
CO1 Balcones De Santa Maria
Morelia, Mich. 58090 Mexico
Tel: + (52 443) 323 60 00 & 323 60 06
Fax: + (52 443) 32360 00 & 32360 06

Susanna Moscoso
Sociologist/ Coordinadora Técnica Reprosaud
Movimiento Manuela Ramos
Juan Pablo Pernandint
1550 Pueblo Libre-Lima, Peru
Tel: + 51 1 4238840
Fax: + 51 1 4236959
Email: smoscoso@manuela.org.pe

NORTH AMERICA

Andrew David Tyson (Andy)
Instructor
Creative Energies
PO Box 333, Lander, Wyoming 82520 USA
Tel: + (011) 307 349 4515
Email: a_tyson@yahoo.com

Anne Beatrice Leibig
RR 1, Box 318
Dungannon, Virginia 24248 USA
Tel: + 1 276 467 2437 (home)
Fax: + 1 276 467 2437
Email: abjl@mounet.com,

Beth Schommer
Comitato Italiano per il 2002
Anno Internazionale delle Montagne
c/o Comitato Ev-K2-CNR
Via San Bernardino 145
24126, Bergamo, Italy
Tel: + 39 035 32 30 525

Fax: + 39 035 32 30 541
Email: beth.schommer@montagna.org

Catherine Nixon Cooke
President and CEO
The Mountain Institute
1828 L Street, NW, #725
Washington, DC 20036
Tel: + (202) 452 1636
Fax: + (202) 452 1635

Dr. Elizabeth A. Byers
The Mountain Institute
107 Westridge Drive
Elkins, West Virginia 26241 USA
Tel: + 1 304 636 6980, 1 202 452 1636
Fax: + 1 304 637 1988
Email: ebyers@mountain.org

Jolene Atencio
PO Box 1357
Warm Springs, Oregon 97761
USA
Tel: + 1 541 553 3270 (work)
Fax: + 1 240 250 2262
Email: jatencio@wstribes.org

Julia Robinson
Coordinator, Programme Development Unit
IUCN Nepal – The World Conservation Union
GPO Box 3923
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 5528761; 5528781; 5527781; 5526397
Fax: + 977 1 5536786
Email: Julia@iucn.org.np

Kelly Matheson
Wyoming Outdoor Council
262 Lincoln St.
Lander, WY, 82520, USA
Tel: + 307 332 7031 ext. 20 (O) 307 335 7444 (R)
Fax: + 307 332 6899
Email: Kelly@wyomingoutdoorcouncil.org

Linda Marie Pace
445 North Main Avenue
San Antonio, Texas 78205. 1441
Email: lpace@artpace.org

Martha Elizabeth Brant
Newsweek/Journalist
White House Correspondent
1835 Kalommard NW #4
Washington, DC, USA
Email: mbrant@newsweek.com
Tel: + 011 202 626 2046
Fax: + 011 202 626 2010

Mary Frances T. Farenthold
c/o The Mountain Institute
USA

Mary Justice Thomasson- Croll
MJPR Ltd.
2301 Winsome House
73 Wyndham Street
Central, Hong Kong
Tel: + 852 2525 6980 Mobile: 9862 4171
Fax: + 852 2525 6910
Email: mjpr@netvigator.com

Renda Faye Keith
Rt. 1, Box 174A
Nickelsville, Virginia 24271 USA
Email: rendafaye@yahoo.com

Dr. Sandra Jean Brown
Senior Research Fellow
Institute for Resource and Environment
UBC
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
V6T123
CIAT A.A. 6713 Cali, Colombia
Tel: + 011 604 822 0437 (Canada)
Fax: + 011 604 822 9245 (Canada)
Email: sjbrown@interchange.ubc.ca

Stephan F Rasmussen
Chief Executive
Aga Khan Rural Support Programme – AKRSP-Pakistan
40-Bazar Road, G-6/4, Islamabad
Tel: + 92 051 2275746
Fax: + 92 051 2275772
Email: akrsp@isb.paknet.com.pk

Virginia Carroll Dunham
Herbalist
Wild Earth Private Limited
PO Box 2187
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 443883
Fax: + 977 1 4426308
Email: cdunham@mos.com.np,
cdunham@wildearthnepal.com

FILM/MEDIA/VIDEO/E-COMMERCE/ WEB

Angana Parekh
Director, Women's Feature Service
G-69, Nizamuddin West
New Delhi, India
Tel: + 91 11 4359886
Fax: + 91 11 4354606
Email: wfsdelhi@vsnl.com

Anita Katyal
Special Correspondent/ Journalist
The Times of India,
A-31, Gulmohar Park
New Delhi-110049
Tel: + 91 11 3492049 (O) 91 11 6512383 (R)
Fax: + 91 11 335 1606
Email: Anitakat@indiatimes.com

Basanta Thapa
c/o Himal Associations
Film South Asia
Kathmandu, Nepal

Bindra Kumari Manandhar
Lotus Holdings
PO Box: 3459, Ekantakuna
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 5530313, 5538273
Fax: + 977 1 5532013
Email: info@lotusholdings.com.np
bindira@lotusholdings.com.np

Daniel Lak
BBC Correspondent South Asia
Based in Kathmandu, Nepal

Ellen E. Skeele
USA/ HimalayanTechies
PO Box 20896, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 523030 (R)
Email: ellie@himalayantechies.com

Ragini Deshpande
Director
Livewire Images
B-1/1802 Vasant Kunj
New Delhi, India
Email: panjiar@vsnl.com

Rajneesh Sharma
c/o Live Wire Images

Ramyata Limbu Gurung
Himal
PO Box 8975, EPC 472
Tel: + 977 1 4414193 / 5543334
Fax: + 977 1 5521013
Email: kimff@himalassociation.org

Sudarson Karki
MD, Multimedia Service Centre
GPO Box 11793,
Lazimpat, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 4411859
Fax: + 977 1 4411859
Email: wavetex@wlink.com.np

Surendra Shahi
Peoplink
Trading Partner Liaison
PO Box 15142, PPC 334
Kathmandu, Nepal

Susmita Mitra
Journalist
United News of India
132 Samachar Apartments
Mayur, UIHAR-Phase-I
New Delhi, India
Tel: + 91 11 3718861
Email: sushmitamitra@yahoo.com

CMW DONORS

Dr. Brigitte Dekrout
Coordinator
Austrian Development Coordination in Bhutan
P.O. Box 307, Thimphu
Tel: + 975 2 324495
Fax: + 975 2 324496
acb@druknet.bt

Chandni Joshi
Regional Programme Director
UNIFEM, South Asia Regional Office
223 Jorbagh, New Delhi 110003
India
Tel: + 91 11 4698297
Email: chandni.joshi@undp.org

Dr. Ganesh Thapa
Regional Economist
Asia and the Pacific Division
International Fund for Agricultural Development
Rome, Italy
Email: g.thapa@ifad.org

Dr. Ulrich Lutz
Senior Executive
Natural Resources and Environment Division
Coordinator IYM 2002
Freiburgstrasse 130 CH-3003 Bern
Switzerland
Tel: + 41 31 325 91 30
Fax: + 41 31 325 93 62
Email: Ulrich.lutz@deza.admin.ch

ICIMOD

Alejandro Camino Diez-Canseco
Executive Secretary
Mountain Forum
GPO Box 3226
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 5525313
Fax: + 977 1 5524509
Email: camivela@ntc.net.np acamino@mtnforum.org
acamino@icimod.org.np

Anita Anand
c/o ICIMOD
IB Mathura Road, Jangpura
New Delhi 110014, India
Tel: + 91 11 4323065
Fax: + 91 11 432 3064
Mobile: 91 9811157812
Email: anandanita@vsnl.com

Anupam Bhatia
ICIMOD
GPO Box 3226
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 5525313
Fax: + 977 1 5524509
Email: abhatia@icimod.org.np

Atsuko Toda
ICIMOD
GPO Box 3226
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 525313
Fax: + 977 1 524509
Email: atoda@icimod.org.np

Dr J. Gabriel Campbell
Director General
ICIMOD
GPO Box 3226
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 5525313
Fax: + 977 1 5524509
Email: gcampbell@icimod.org.np

Jane Dermer
ICIMOD
GPO Box 3226
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 5525313
Fax: + 977 1 5524509
Email: jdermer@icimod.org.np

Kiran Shrestha
ICIMOD
GPO Box 3226
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 5525313
Fax: + 977 1 5524509
Email: kshrestha@icimod.org.np

Melinda Nicholls
Australian Youth Ambassador
ABC Nepal
c/o ICIMOD
Email: nichollsmel@yahoo.com.au

Ojaswi Josse
ICIMOD
GPO Box 3226, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 5525313
Fax: + 977 1 5524509
Email: ojosse@icimod.org.np

Phuntshok C. Tshering
ICIMOD
GPO Box 3226
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 5525313
Fax: + 977 1 5524509
Email: ptshering@icimod.org.np

Prativa Chhetri
ICIMOD
GPO Box 3226
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 5525313
Fax: + 977 1 5524509
Email: pchhetri@icimod.org.np

Ujol Sherchan
ICIMOD
GPO Box 3226
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 5525313
Fax: + 977 1 5524509
Email: usherchan@icimod.org.np
apmn@mtnforum.org, gypsybond@yahoo.com,

GUEST / KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Irene Santiago
Chair and CEO
Mindanao Commission on Women
73 Fourth B Street,
Ecoland, Davao City, Phillipines
Tel: + 63917 811 0386
Fax: + 6382 298 0475
Email: irenesantiago@yahoo.com

Opening and Closing Statements

Opening Address by Neten Zangmo

A very good morning!

"The interdependent nature of the external environment and people's inward nature has verily been vindicated by our present experience.

Being attentive to the nature of the interdependence of all creatures, both animate and inanimate, one should never slacken in one's efforts to preserve and conserve nature's energy.

Forsake wastage; pollute not the clean, clear nature of the four elements and destroy the well-being of the people; but absorb yourself in actions that are beneficial for all."

This quotation is an excerpt from a renowned Buddhist monk's reflection on "Ecological Responsibility".

Lams,

Your Excellency, Prime Minister Lyonpo Dr. Kinzang Dorji,

Representatives of the International Community,

Representatives of the Royal Government,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen —

On behalf of the people and the Royal Government of Bhutan, it is my honoured responsibility and pleasure to extend to all the delegates, our heartiest and warmest welcome to our country, where mountains stand lofty and formidable, but breathtakingly beautiful, the pride of its men and women who throughout the centuries have treasured their natural environment and have looked upon it as the source of all life.

At the risk of sounding presumptuous, I feel that it is only appropriate for this milestone event, "Celebrating Mountain Women", to be hosted in Bhutan, where people and nature live in close harmony; where Gross National Happiness, as propounded by His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuk, is its development beacon; the middle path its approach to achieving the vision; and a country where perhaps men feel threatened by women!



Neten Zangmo

It is indeed our privilege to host this landmark event.

It is only befitting that the Honourable Prime Minister is gracing the inaugural ceremony of this significant event. His Excellency is also the Minister for Agriculture, responsible for Forestry and Livestock Services, and is in addition, the Chairman of the National Environment Commission. We are indeed honoured, Sir. On behalf of the delegates of the organising committee, I have the privilege to extend a very warm and hearty welcome to Your Excellency.

A very warm and hearty welcome also to all our esteemed guests. Madams and Sirs, Aums and Dashos, we are indeed gratified by your mere presence.

For our mountain countries, the International Year of Mountains is recognition that mountains and

mountain people matter very much. It is a recognition that could not escape the wisdom of common sense and the patience of time, for it is a common peril that unites us: mountain people and people of the lowlands, the powerful rich and voiceless poor, developed and developing countries. It is after all, the survival of humanity.

We have gathered here today to celebrate the spirit, courage, and hard work of mountain women and those associated with them from mountain countries. A significant and important outcome of this conference will be the message to the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit, which will ensure that the realities, achievements, dreams, and challenges of mountain women will be heard and taken into consideration in global mountain development policies and practices.

The themes of the conference are these: first, Natural Resources and Environment, which sustain our very existence. Second, Culture and Indigenous Knowledge. These sustain us as individuals, families, communities and societies, both spiritually and socially. The third theme is Entrepreneurship; while Legal, Political and Human Rights, the fourth theme, empower us and sustain our physical, psychological, political, and spiritual health and well-being — which are also the principal tenets of “Gross National Happiness”. The fifth theme of CMW is Health and Well-being.

The conference has brought face-to-face, mountain women and men, NGOs and civil societies, planners and policy makers, researchers, and not least importantly, development partners, to share rich experiences, articulate challenges and concerns, and to forge a closer cooperation in defining solutions that will be articulated in the local, national, regional,

and global development policies and strategies and implemented in a sincere spirit and form — at this point I recall the youth at the WSSD who said signatures do not feed people and words on paper do not stop deforestation.

Amongst us today are many distinguished and accomplished women and men who have contributed and continue to contribute with their vision, social consciousness, and commitment to many commendable initiatives which have transformed the lives of mountain communities all over the world.

Let us all celebrate the courage, endurance, selflessness, and ingenuity of our mountain women as we gear up to blaze new trails in our journey towards the goal of Gross National Happiness for our peoples.

Let us sing mountain songs, enjoy the rich variety of mountain food, and listen to the wisdom of mountain stories.

I am hopeful that the drive and enthusiasm of the delegates and the momentum gained from Johannesburg to Bishkek will ensure that the objectives of this conference are achieved. But in the end, this will not depend on how eloquently the declaration is drafted and announced on 4 October, but by the quality of life that our mountain women, men, and communities achieve one year, five years, and ten years from now.

Dear delegates, I hope that you will enjoy the beauty of our mountains and the warmth and hospitality of our people, and that your brief stay will be a memorable one.

Thank you and Tashi Delek!

Opening Address by the Honorable Prime Minister of Bhutan, H.E. Lyonpo Dr. Kinzang Dorji

Distinguished Delegates,

Representatives of International Organisations and Agencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen —

It gives me great pleasure to be here this morning to welcome you to Bhutan and to the global gathering “Celebrating Mountain Women”. It is indeed a great honour and privilege for my country to host this important gathering.

Mountains are crucial to all life on earth. They are home to one tenth of the world’s population and are a source of biodiversity, minerals, and forests. More than 3 billion people rely on mountains for water to grow food, to produce electricity, to sustain industries, and most importantly, to drink. As you are all aware, the United Nations declared 2002 as the International Year of Mountains to increase awareness of the global importance of mountain ecosystems and the challenges faced by mountain people; and to stimulate long-term, on-the-ground action. This unprecedented opportunity to address mountain issues and celebrate mountain culture evolved from the 1992 Rio Summit, where mountains became the singular focus of Chapter 13 of Agenda 21, the blueprint for sustainable development. We, the mountain people, have made the most of this opportunity and have already marked the year with many international events, such as the High Summit, the International Conference of Mountain Children, international meetings on mountain ecosystems, sustainable agriculture and rural development in mountain regions, and world meetings on mountain populations.

“Celebrating Mountain Women” is one of the events marking the IYM and I am pleased that the organisers have chosen to hold the event in Bhutan. I think it is very apt that the event be held in this country. We are an entirely mountainous country with almost 80% of our population living in rural areas, and therefore our policies in conservation and sustainable development aim to tackle the challenges faced in the mountainous regions due to the physical terrain, remoteness, lack of infrastructure, capital, and so on. All our social and economic development policies are geared towards achieving our ultimate goal of “Gross National Happiness” which is to be achieved through the four main pillars of economic development, good governance, environmental protection and conservation, and preservation of cultural heritage. I am confident that the outcome of this gathering will support and complement our efforts to achieve our ultimate goal since the thematic issues of this gathering are Natural Resources and Environment; Health and Well-being, Entrepreneurship; Legal, Political and Human Rights, and Culture and Indigenous Knowledge. We hope we can share some of our experiences and also learn from yours.

It is a known fact that life in all mountain countries is hard, and it is harder for women. While women have a difficult time they are not helpless. There are many cases where women have transformed their communities by their vision and social consciousness. They have made their environment a better place to live in, brought people together, and served as an example to others.



H.E. Lyonpo Kinzang Dorji

Over the last three decades, there have been declarations in which mountain women’s concerns have been incorporated. In 1972, at the first global meeting on the environment in Stockholm, the conference noted that women were an important part of environmental solutions. After Stockholm, importance was accorded to mountain women in the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). In Johannesburg last month, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) reaffirmed the principles of 1992, taking the last decade’s reality into consideration. However, in each of these conferences and declarations, women had to struggle to place their concerns on the table.

Parallel to these environment dialogues and debates were the women’s conferences. In 1975, the first UN Conference on women was held in Mexico City, followed by international meetings in 1980, 1985, and then 1995. Each of these meetings paid some attention to the issues of mountain women. A great deal has been learned about mountainous communities, especially mountain women, over the last decade. This is due to the persistent research, documentation, and fieldwork of many individuals and institutions, some of whom are present here today.

Today, with technological advancements, mountain women who have been living in isolated and remote areas can be connected to each other and can communicate outside their immediate environment. This has had an empowering influence on women. For example, mountain women who for decades have been isolated in subsistence living, now dream of branching out into entrepreneurial activities that will expand their horizons and generate income for themselves and those with whom they communicate. Many women who are in the audience here today are such women.

Mountain women are often guardians of agricultural biodiversity and know more about plant varieties, characteristics, and plant susceptibility to diseases, as well as options for food preparation, than men. Knowing this, how do we ensure that this knowledge

is preserved, passed on and shared with others? How do we tap the potential of women, while bringing men along at the same time? These are some of the questions I hope this gathering will address.

We in Bhutan believe that every individual has a role to play in life and society. Both sons and daughters are treated by equally by their parents. Therefore, there is no discrimination towards women. The status of women in Bhutan, I am proud to state, is much better than in many other developing countries. The inheritance practices are more in favour of women and there are no wage differentials. The Marriage Act has been amended recently to protect women.

It is true that you will see fewer women in management positions or in white-collar jobs. However, this is because in the earlier phase of our development, schools were few and far between, sometimes requiring days of walking to reach, and also because parents were more protective of their girl children. Perhaps this reflects the specific nature of challenges faces by mountain countries where settlements are scattered, accessibility is difficult, and delivery of services impossible.

We in Bhutan, under the wise and far-sighted leadership of His Majesty the King, have tried to address these constraints and have mitigated the challenges through the Five Year Development Plans (FYP). Today, 77.8% of the rural population has access to basic health facilities within a walking distance of two hours. The enrolment ratio in schools between male and female children is almost 50:50. Of the 117,297 students enrolled this year, 54,284 are girls. We also have an NGO, the National Women's Association of Bhutan, which was established in 1981. This NGO continues to provide support to rural women.

During the Ninth FYP, beginning in July 2002, the above programmes and activities will be continued, while priority will be given to infrastructure development, particularly roads, telecommunications, schools, hospitals, and market infrastructure. Twenty-five per cent of the plan outlay has been earmarked for health, education, water supply, and sanitation.

We have realised that the present population growth rate has to be further reduced if the country's fragile ecosystem and economic growth are to be maintained. The Government has endeavoured to educate the general population and Her Majesty Queen Ashi Sangay Chhoden Wangchuck, the UNFPA Goodwill Ambassador, has travelled the length and breadth of the country to spread the message of population control and development. I fear that the population pressure will ultimately lead to the

degradation of the forests and the destruction of the mountains if corrective measures are not taken now.

In conclusion, I look forward to the Declaration of this event, documenting the realities, achievements, dreams, and challenges of mountain women. I understand that there is a broad consensus on several fronts related to mountain women. Some of these are as follows.

- Mountain women's concerns are similar and yet different from the concerns of women in the plains.
- Mountain women make a substantial contribution to their environment, for which they get a little or no credit.
- Despite the odds, mountain women have made great strides in preserving their habitat, transferring cultural values to the next generation, and in seeking new and different ways to enter the world of enterprise and commerce.
- Mountain women want contact with the external world and to be part of the twenty-first century.
- Policies and practices related to sustainable development of mountain regions are not possible without the involvement of women in an integral way.
- Bringing mountain women into the mainstream of development needs the cooperation of many development partners, including mountain communities, NGOs and civil society organisations, policy makers, governments, researchers, the corporate sector, and the media.

I understand that from Bhutan the voices and actions of mountain women will be taken to Kyrgyzstan, where the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit, the final global gathering for the IYM, will be held towards the end of this month. The Bhutan Declaration will be presented at the plenary, and ICIMOD, in partnership with other organisations, will initiate and be part of a round table session and panel presentations. Follow-up activities recommended by the participants at this meeting will also be formulated into projects, plans, and action. Together, I hope, we will be able to protect the mountains and remove the mountainous challenges relating to many mountain people.

We wish you all a pleasant stay in our country and a successful deliberation. With this, I declare this important conference, "Celebrating Mountain Women", open.

Thank you and Tashi Delek!

Opening Address by the Director General of ICIMOD, Dr. J. Gabriel Campbell

Your Excellency, the Prime Minister of Bhutan,
Lyonpo Dr. Kinzang Dorji,

Dashos,

Mountain Women of the World — of South America, of Africa, of Europe, of North America, and of Asia,

...and fellow men who respect and deeply appreciate mountain women, and who sometimes (and on this occasion particularly) wish we were mountain women, to better express our solidarity with you —

For my colleagues and myself at ICIMOD, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, this occasion is a dream come true. A dream conceived in the Andes over four years ago, a dream that has become reality through the joining of key partners and the guidance of a dedicated group of mountain women from around the world.

This is the first time the mountain women of the world have come together in a world celebration — a global meeting to chart future actions to make their lives better.

Among the approximately 250 people from 35 countries here with us today, we are pleased that over one-third are mountain women from the grassroots.

We have with us farmers and agriculturalists, craftswomen and entrepreneurs, herders and livestock specialists, writers and film makers, scholars and independent thinkers; as well as development workers and service providers, networkers and advocates, mountain climbers, spiritual leaders; and of course mothers and care givers, daughters, sisters and wives, home makers and bread makers.

The world's attention is focused on mountains this year and much concern is being expressed about mountain regions' disproportionate poverty, their vulnerability to environmental degradation, the fact that mountains supply 60% of the world's fresh water, that they contain important biological diversity, that they are refuge to extraordinary cultural diversity, and are sacred and beautiful places of spiritual renewal.

And yet mountain people are neglected in policy and development, and marginalised in government decision-making. Moreover, mountains are home to most of the world's conflicts. Those at the centre, the backbone of mountain livelihoods, the mountain women, are rarely heard, rarely govern, rarely seen for who they are, too often not allowed to grow, learn, and energise our search for a better future.

In most, but not all, of our Hindu Kush-Himalayas and mountains of the world, it is women who are the main farmers, the ones who select and sow the seeds, weed and harvest, thresh and prepare the grains, feed and milk the cows, weave the clothes,

feed the children, and care for forests and pasture.

Yet rarely do they own the land, obtain or control the cash from market sales, receive the information on technology choices or markets, or make the policy decisions that affect their lives.

Mountain women work longer hours — in Nepal, eleven hours of productive labour to men's seven hours — but too often do not reap the benefits.

We are gathered here in this beautiful, thoughtful mountain kingdom to change this.

Many of you have demonstrated already how this can be done.

Women's strengths in social mobilisation, in developing new skills and self-confidence, have been proven by your wonderful work throughout the world.

You are here:

- To bring the world's attention to the strength and plight of mountain women
- To chart courses for future action
- To build networks for solidarity and strength
- To celebrate the role of mountain women
- To strengthen their rights to resources
- To voice concerns and influence public affairs
- To bring peace where men wage war
- To make all our lives better, and
- To develop our concrete follow-up actions

ICIMOD is privileged to organise this event with many partners and under the guidance of the Steering Committee, and with the support and collaboration of the Mountain Forum, UNIFEM, IFAD, SDC, ICCO and TMI: all organisations that share of our commitment to really care for mountain women. This event is part of our commitment to securing better livelihoods for mountain people of the Hindu Kush-Himalayas and the world.

Most of all, we are all privileged to be hosted by the Royal Government of Bhutan — a developing mountain country, which perhaps more than any other, has shown its sincerity and commitment to doing development the right way for all its people — both women and men. Honourable Prime Minister, you inspire us; Bhutan inspires us.

As a member country of ICIMOD, we seek to serve the Hindu Kush-Himalayas as a mountain learning and knowledge centre. We are honoured to learn from all of you. May all of you make a difference in



Dr. J. Gabriel Campbell

the lives of mountain women. May this be the birth of a global movement for mountain women, and better, more sustainable lives for all of us.

This morning you are hearing, yet again, many men's voices. From now on, let it be women who show us the way.

Thank you!

Opening Address by the Representative of IFAD, Rome, Dr. Ganesh Thapa

The Honourable Prime Minister of Bhutan,
Senior Officials of the Royal Government of Bhutan,
Distinguished Guests, and Participants —

I am deeply honoured to have the opportunity to address this conference. I bring with me the best wishes from my colleagues at the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) for the success of this important meeting. IFAD is an international financing institution and a specialised UN agency focusing on agriculture and rural development. IFAD's mission is to enable the rural poor to overcome their poverty. We are very happy for the opportunity to collaborate with the Royal Government of Bhutan, ICIMOD, and other bilateral and multilateral bodies in organising this conference.

IFAD's strategic framework for 2002-2006 identifies the addressing of gender inequalities and increasing women's capabilities as preconditions for achieving the Millennium Development Goal of halving poverty by 2015. We believe that unless efforts and resources to address gender inequalities by increasing the resilience of poor rural women are significantly scaled up, little progress will be made towards achieving this target. The strategic framework also points to the importance of empowerment and institutional development, which we see as an integral component of poverty reduction. No change is sustainable if poor rural women and men do not acquire a greater capacity to influence the decisions — public and private — that have a bearing on their lives.

IFAD's field experience and analysis has shown that poverty in Asia and other parts of the world is concentrated along two dimensions: geographical and social. Geographically, poverty is concentrated in less favoured areas such as remote uplands and mountains, marginal coastal areas, and rain fed areas. Socially, it is concentrated among women, indigenous peoples, the landless, and small and marginal farmers. This implies that the mountain women are doubly disadvantaged. I am confident that this conference will address the issues faced by these mountain women in different parts of the world.

IFAD has accumulated considerable experience in designing and implementing projects and programmes for the various groups of the rural poor. It is significant that in almost all IFAD-funded projects, women have always emerged as a notable group of participants. This important feedback demonstrates the desire and potential of women to be agents of change — once their chance to build human capital and physical assets has been improved, or once they have the capability to find 'exit options' from exploitative home or work situations. Today, in many areas of the world, particularly in the mountains and other less favoured areas, there are more poor women than there are poor men. Women tend to experience poverty more

deeply; they also find it more difficult to escape from poverty. Women suffer from more severe social deprivation. Even in the more egalitarian societies of the indigenous peoples — where women often have an immediate ownership and decision-making role over land — there is a disturbing trend of final and ultimate control over land and any other property increasingly being exercised by men.



Dr. Ganesh Thapa

Enhancing women's capabilities requires action on a number of fronts. Property rights, access to finance, including micro-finance, building of women's organisations, effective participation in community forums, measures to curb domestic and other violence against women, tackling discrimination against the girl child in matters of nutrition, health care and education — all these are aspects of transforming gender relations. Micro-finance, for example, has been shown to have beneficial effects not just on women's entitlements to nutrition and health care; it also improves women's mobility, social visibility, dignity, and self-esteem.

The effects of transforming gender relations, however, go much beyond benefiting women alone. They are efficient and cost-effective measures for reducing poverty and increasing GDP (Gross Domestic Product) per person, particularly through lower child mortality, higher literacy, and lower couple fertility. IFAD's Rural Poverty Report for Asia and the Pacific argues that enhancing women's agency will enable an increase in agricultural production and productivity, and will create a ripple effect across all spheres of human existence. Enhancing women's agency could create new dynamics in the politics of transforming the nature of human societies. This strategy of promoting women's agency will be part of IFAD-supported projects in all the less favoured areas, including the mountains.

In addressing poverty in Asia and other regions of the world, IFAD seeks to address the structural causes of the lack of agency of the poor. This means, for IFAD, the challenge of tackling the causes of restricted access to productive resources, and actually increasing control over the use of these resources. Changes in access to resources, such as property reform for forests in the uplands and mountains, access to finance and other resources, and land reform through land distribution to the landless, will increase the income and overall capability achievement of the poor. It will also contribute to increasing production and productivity in their respective local and national economies. Such changes are redistributions that enhance productivity,

essential if poverty reduction is to be sustained in an age of globalisation.

In the uplands and mountains, the central issue is secure and reasonable property rights over the forests, land and water, the productive bases of women, the indigenous people, and other marginalised groups of rural poor. Through their management of the forest systems, these people provide the rest of the world with many valuable environmental services, including carbon sequestration, hydrological services, and biodiversity conservation. But these and other valuable services are not compensated for in any way. Instead, the people who perform these services are forced to bear costs 'external' to the mainstream economies. IFAD's property rights reform proposal aims to link improved livelihoods with increased provision of environmental services. This important reform proposal recognises the right of the indigenous people to sell these services, and to manage their land-use systems so as to combine the needs of production with those of providing local, regional, and global environmental services.

Strategic gender impact and women's social transformational roles have also been observed in many IFAD-funded projects. For example, in the Andhra Pradesh Tribal Development Project in India,

Self-help Groups (SHGs) of women took up contracts for local construction and, with the help of supportive bureaucrats, were instrumental in the elimination of contractors for such work in all indigenous people's areas of the state. More recently, federations of SHGs in the project have taken on multiple functions in addressing social and administrative issues at the block and sub-divisional levels. They have taken up issues like construction of toilets, repair of roads, improvements in drinking water and electricity supply — all matters of good governance at the local level. In other IFAD-funded projects, women's groups were able to fight against social evils such as female infanticide and alcoholism.

I am happy to see that women representatives from three Indigenous Women's Resource Centres from China and India, supported by IFAD, are here with us. We all look forward to hearing from them and from participants of other regions of the world about their work in empowering women from different mountain regions of the world. I believe that the conference will provide a unique opportunity for all of us to exchange ideas and experiences, and to network with one another. I wish the conference great success.

Thank you.

Opening Remarks by Regional Director of UNIFEM-South Asia Regional Office, Ms. Chandni Joshi

Honourable Prime Minister of the Royal Government of Bhutan, Your Excellency,

Friends,

Ladies and Gentlemen —

It really is a privilege for UNIFEM to be partnering this global conference, “Celebrating Mountain Women”, with ICIMOD and the Mountain Forum, in collaboration with other international agencies. I take this opportunity to congratulate both ICIMOD and the Mountain Forum for taking the lead in organising such an innovative celebration. This platform will bring to the fore mountain women’s voices, concerns, and realities, which have been negligible in the development discourse for so long.

One of the most remarkable things that has been happening towards the end of the last century — no less dramatic than the developments in science and technology — is the emergence of the global consensus to respect, protect, and promote the human rights of the people as the ultimate and immediate goal of governments, institutions, and civil society. People-centred development that respects the fundamental freedoms and human dignity of individuals has now become a common and shared agenda of the international community. This gathering is very opportune and special for us, the disciples of development.

Since yesterday, I have been feeling nostalgic being here in Paro — some of it is of course childhood memories, and the other is the occasion of this celebration. I will begin with briefly sharing the vignettes of some personal experiences with you. In 1990, UNIFEM had organised a series of peasant women summits in four countries of South Asia — Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan — a process that carried their voices to the Earth Summit in Rio. During this process, the peasant women had the opportunity, for the first time, to share a platform with the policy planners, and to express their views on the management of natural resources. At one of these summits in Kathmandu, the women were assembled in a small room talking animatedly with senior functionaries responsible for charting National Perspective Plans. It was well past sunset and one of the senior-most (and I must add, one of the most gender sensitive) members of the National Planning Commission happened to look at his watch, indicating that it was getting late. The women would have none of it. This was one day they had got to talk to the Planning Commission and they would talk whatever it took, or however long it took. If that meant someone’s meal was being delayed, so be it. I can’t forget that day or the women’s faces.

Listening to them, I felt like there was so much one did not know about, there was so much one needed to unlearn about development as we saw it, and so much to learn from these women and their sheer existential realities. They simply needed to be given

a chance and an opportunity to talk, while we for a change, listened. In a similar setting in Bangladesh, in reply to a question as to what message they had for t h e i r government, the answer was, “We will tell



Ms. Chandni Joshi

them that they should not approach us individually: we stand united as one group and they should ask us collectively what we want.” In Bangalore they told us, “We want equal participation.” Then, this year in Afghanistan, it was the women themselves who outlined their role in the re-building of their country.

This confidence was similar everywhere, only the women’s faces were different. They are their own advocates, and entirely capable of having a meaningful dialogue with any stakeholder on an even footing, with knowledge, confidence, and dignity. Women know what they need and what their families and communities need — as they have been preserving natural resources all their lives. What they have said time and again is that they need spaces and opportunities for equal participation. What we have learnt from them is the source of UNIFEM’s work in South Asia. We try to apply this very approach in all our work, be it engendering planning processes, gender budgeting exercises, carrying out a large census exercise, facilitating the implementation of CEDAW, or combating violence against women.

Despite progress in many areas, women worldwide face barriers to their advancement. Women are the majority of the world’s poor, lack economic and political power, and are the primary victims of conflict and violence. While mountain women face many of the same inequalities as women throughout the developing world, they face additional challenges. Local realities, such as altitude, rough terrain, severe climate, limited access to resources and services, environmental degradation, and the out-migration of men are factors that contribute to making their situation even more difficult.

Despite the recognition of women’s rights as human rights in Vienna, their identification as an issue of central importance at Beijing, and the creation of human instruments like CEDAW, women’s rights continue to be excluded from the mainstream human rights discourse, both at the conceptual and operational levels. True people-centred development must be underpinned with the imperative of equality between women and men at all levels. This calls for equal material well-being, a value system based on equity and equality, equal participation in decision-making, and equal control over resources and benefits for both women and men. This has been

the continuous refrain at the major UN conferences of the last two decades: Rio, Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen, and Beijing. The challenge lies in making this a reality. UNIFEM visualises the global Celebration of Mountain Women as an opportunity to revisit this agenda together.

The recent World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg confirmed the unequal access of women to resources, including information. The Gender Opinion Survey of the Gender Equality Commission noted that gender perspectives were not keeping pace with the new legislation and that knowledge of these new rights was not filtering through to the users. Several issues were debated, including the right of women to own and inherit land and the gender neutrality of markets.

Although ten years have passed since Rio, we are still reconfirming Agenda 21 and are repeating that only the effective participation of women as environmental managers can ensure sustainable development and sustainable livelihoods. We need to look again at the findings of Johannesburg and set the goals holistically by listening to the dynamic women present there. History will not forgive us if we repeat the rhetoric again. In order to understand their reality as it exists, let us identify these stars, listen to their untold stories, sing with them their unsung songs, and come up with forward-looking strategies — and we could do this nowhere better than in Bhutan, with like-minded people like you.

Thank you!

Opening Remarks by the Representative of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation Berne, Switzerland, Dr. Ulitz Lutz

Your Excellency,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Colleagues and Friends —

On behalf of SDC, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunity to be among you. It is an honour for our agency to be able to participate in this important conference. And it is a particular source of pleasure for me to be back in this beautiful country with its spectacular scenery, its fascinating culture, and its very hospitable people.

For Switzerland, it is obvious that participation in events focusing on highly important mountain topics is a must, especially during the International Year of Mountains 2002. And merging the theme of 'women' with the theme of 'mountain development', as will be done during this conference, is a challenge that we could not ignore.

Today, the importance of the role of women and of their contribution to sustainable development has been widely acknowledged. But we still lack the will and the strategies to take action based on this awareness.

So, to be honest, when I first read the title of this conference "Celebrating Mountain Women", I was puzzled. Is this enough? What does the phrase really imply, and what could it be made to mean? Is celebrating mountain women the appropriate response to the need for the enhancement of mountain women's social status and political position?

I guess it is! Celebration means joy and pride in achievements; it means solidarity, a common spirit of commitment, and strength. This is crucial for a

strong sense of identity, for sound self-confidence, and for self-esteem. Indeed, it is important for women to develop a strong enough voice to participate in negotiations and decision-making.



Dr. Ulitz Lutz

What shall we do with this awareness of achievements, this confidence, and this strong voice? Let us make sure that we bring it all back home, let it influence our personal lives, our families, our working environment, and the society in which we live. Let us integrate the gender perspective in debates and policy-making at all levels, whether the impact expected is a big or a small one.

This integration is the most important contribution to our common quest to improve the livelihoods of women and men in a sustainable manner. It is also a crucial step towards gender equity, as well as towards real gender balance in our lives.

To conclude, I would like to affirm Switzerland's and SDC's commitment to our common cause: we recognise that without fully integrating gender issues in our programmes and projects — in other words, without promoting gender mainstreaming — we will never be able to appropriately address our major concern, which is to improve livelihoods in a sustainable way, be it in mountain regions or elsewhere. We count on your involvement to achieve this goal. And you can count on our commitment!

I would like to thank the Royal Government of Bhutan, ICIMOD, the Mountain Forum, and all other institutions and persons who contributed to making this conference happen. It's good to be here — thank you for your attention.

Keynote Address by Ms. Irene Santiago

'Madadyaw na adlaaw Kamayong tanan! Maglipay kita mga kaiban ko na bubay sa kanato pagtapok ngadi sa madayaw nga nasud sa Bhutan!'

(From the mountain women of southern Philippines, a beautiful day to all of you! Let us all celebrate our coming together here in the beautiful country of Bhutan!)

At the outset, allow me to congratulate the Royal Government of Bhutan, particularly the Ministry of Agriculture, ICIMOD, The Mountain Institute and the institutions that have supported this conference, for doing a splendid job in bringing us all together in what promises to be a milestone in the movement to improve the lives of mountain women.

Yesterday, as I went around to see the tents and exhibit areas go up, I remembered the NGO Forum on Women in 1995. Seven years ago, at the grand opening of the NGO Forum on Women 1995 in Beijing, the voices of 30,000 women rose in unison to sing a song that resonated strongly with each one of them. They sang, "Gotta keep on moving forward, gotta keep on moving forward, gotta keep on moving forward, gotta keep on moving forward, never turning back, never turning back!"

Here we are in Bhutan at another celebration. But perhaps before we can sing, "never turning back", it will be good to "look back".

And since the NGO Forum on Women 1995 was such a milestone in the women's struggle, it is to the NGO Forum that I would like us to look back even for a brief moment today. The Forum was the culmination of a vast empowering process that started in our villages and towns, to our national capitals, and from there to our regional meetings, to New York for preparatory meetings, and then finally to Beijing.

As we all know, the Forum was the parallel NGO event to the UN Fourth World Conference on Women. While these two events were parallel, the NGO Forum was dynamic, multi-dimensional, sometimes chaotic, but fun. The official conference was formal, structured, sometimes chaotic, occasionally fun, too. We came to lobby there for what we wanted, what we didn't want, what we hoped would change, and how we wanted that change to take place. The

Beijing Platform for Action was the culmination of all our work. The document defined a set of strategic objectives and identified actions to be taken by governments, the international community, NGOs and the



Ms. Irene Santiago

private sector for the removal of existing obstacles to women's advancement.

Perhaps it would be good to review the twelve critical areas of concern identified in the document. These twelve were obstacles that still needed to be overcome. They were: women and poverty, education and training, women and health, violence against women, women in armed conflict, women and the economy, women in power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights of women, women and the media, women and the environment, and the girl child. Seven years after, you don't have to pore through any rigorous assessment to conclude that the twelve concerns continue to be obstacles to the advancement of women, including mountain women.

While the UN document is important and we all have to be engaged in ensuring it does not remain a piece of paper to be forgotten by our governments and the international community, I would like to draw your attention today to what the NGO Forum plenary sessions identified as the five global forces that have a great impact on women's lives. I bring them to your attention because as mountain women you are all touched by these forces, some more strongly than others, but touched by them nevertheless.

At the NGO Forum, women discussed their hopes and fears about the future in the midst of the rising tide of conservatism sweeping the world; the globalisation of the economy, including the speed and nature of the technological revolution and its impact on work; the breakdown of political systems and alliances and the emergence of new ones, bringing questions about governance, including citizenship and political participation; and the homogenisation of culture, media and communication.

Certain cross-cutting themes emerged with broad implications for the future of the women's movement. These included issues of identity, an issue of great importance to this conference. Because of the rise of conservatism, people are being forced into increasingly narrow definitions of self, such as those based on gender, race, ethnicity, or religion. As the world shifts and turns, the issue of identity comes to the fore even more sharply. Wars of recent memory have been fought over the issue of identity.

The question of how to create unity while accommodating differences becomes a central problem for the future of the women's movement. But for women who are even more invisible than others, it is quite disconcerting to talk about unity because they fear this will result in their retreating into the shadows even further. For the issue of identity cannot be separated from the struggle for visibility. It is therefore necessary that within the women's movement, as we continue to create strategies to resist narrow definitions of what a woman is, we have to keep pulling other groups of women from the shadows into the sunlight of visibility. I hope that in the next few days our

conference will be able to create effective strategies to make mountain women and their issues visible.

The second emerging issue was human rights, which this conference is also addressing. Throughout the past two decades, women have been struggling for a re-definition of human rights to include women's rights. This reached its peak at the UN conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1995, where wide recognition was gained for women's rights as human rights. However, at the NGO Forum, panellists spoke of the continued erosion of such rights resulting from the wide range of negative circumstances now facing women.

The unregulated labour markets and the failure of development policies to provide sustainable livelihoods have eroded our rights. The ascendance of repressive politics which threaten women's reproductive rights and access to health care have eroded our rights. The rise of homophobic, racist, and nationalist assaults which target the most vulnerable have eroded our rights. So has violence against women, including violence that results from warfare and ethnic conflicts, domestic abuse, and sex trafficking across national borders. Last but not least, the treatment of women as objects in the media has eroded our rights. In discussing human rights, women have gone beyond questions of individual rights to those of collective rights, especially indigenous people's rights to the natural resources that have sustained their communities for millions of years.

The third emerging issue was about the roles and responsibilities of governments and NGOs. There was strong concern about the nature of the contract between governments and civil society. With the expansion of transnational activity not subject to the laws of nations, the responsibility of governments to ensure justice, and to protect people from policies that threaten their livelihoods or their lives has become more urgent. The strategies that women have used, and might use, to engage and confront the private sector, the state, and international organisations are critical to the future. The role of NGOs in bringing about change and promoting democratic values was also a strong concern. NGOs can play their role effectively if they remain independent of governments and donors, are self-sustaining and accountable to their constituencies, especially grassroots women, and act vigilantly as pressure groups to make governments accountable.

Finally, the issue of institutional transformation was repeatedly brought up as an issue of concern. The struggle continues for women to have access to and representation in institutions of decision-making, whether economic, political, professional, governmental, inter-governmental, or non-governmental; and at all levels, from local, to national, to global. However, the emphasis is not only on mainstreaming, but also on transforming these institutions, and through them the structures of inequality and oppression in society.

Seven years after Beijing and two years into the new millennium, we find that the five global forces identified by women at the NGO Forum seem to have intensified and widened. The flirtation with globalisation has become an engagement — with uneven results, depending on a country's capacity and the political will of its leaders to take advantage of liberalised economies.

So how can we as women, and you as mountain women, respond to these forces?

Having read the draft Thimphu Declaration, it would be imprudent of me to offer any comments on the substantive issues you have listed. You are the experts. And you are spending the next few days sharpening your understanding of your issues. I cannot and will not subtract or add to the 'what' of the declaration. But because along with the substance must also come the strategies, would you allow me to be so bold as to offer you my personal reflections from my almost three decades spent in organising women. These are some of the important things I have learned working to make women speak with their own voice.

- 1. In the beginning is the word.** It is important to *name* what we want or don't want. For example, "personal is political", "gender", "women's rights are human rights". If we can't name it, we can't get it. It's as simple as that. This naming constitutes a paradigm shift. It is hard to transform difficult and complex demands into a simple message but if we can't express it, it will be difficult to create the public consciousness that will lead to its acceptance.
- 2. Deconstruct to construct.** This is related to my first point. One of the most amazing things I have learned, as a feminist is the ability — and the necessity — to deconstruct in order to construct. Why, you ask? And here I am going to mix my metaphors. Can't we just get the blocks that will help us construct the edifice we want? Alas, as women, there is so much baggage we need to throw out. Deconstructing is the necessary first step to empowerment because as women we have had the scripts written for us from the day we were born.
- 3. Start where the women are, but don't end there.** Your entry point to organising is always what women say they want the first time you ask them what they need. Usually it is most obvious: water, credit, childcare. But as they gain experience and confidence, they will have to move on to confronting what are called the 'strategic needs'. These are needs for equality and voice, for dismantling the structure of exploitation and oppression. Conferences like this one enable women to move their agenda toward these strategic needs.

4. Two types of help to avoid: the 'helping hand strikes again' and the 'small islands of peace and happiness'. The first type is that one that creates dependence among those it purports to help. It is the kind of help that devastates people's dignity and self-respect. The second one goes merrily along, feeling very helpful indeed because it reached 500 women with its day care centre, its livelihood project, and its revolving loan fund. It doesn't go beyond its secure borders to see what is going on in the other village and communities. Nor does it question why the women are poor in the first place.

5. Underdevelopment and gender inequality are about power. Think about any issue confronting you today. Land tenure. Work. Food. Culture. Knowledge. Health. Environment. Rights. All the problems in these areas are about power and powerlessness: who has it, who wields it, how, and for what purpose.

There is most decidedly tremendous resistance to our demands to equalise power. But there is an equally tremendous struggle among women to *claim* power. Women have shied away from power because it has always meant control, domination, and manipulation. As I talk to women about power, I realise that there is a need to re-define it. Remember: "in the beginning is the word". "Deconstruct to construct".

Would you claim power if it meant manipulation, domination, and control? No, you would not.

How about this? Power is the potency to act for what is good. The operative words are 'potency', 'act', 'good'. If this is what power is, would you claim it? You most certainly would! The politics we want needs new rules, not just new numbers; new goals, not just new actors. From the likes of Mary Robinson, the former President of Ireland, to the Panchayat Raj women leaders in India, there is much evidence that in positions of power, women want to make the world "less brutish, less dangerous, less un-giving, less unreasonable," as someone once wrote about Mary Robinson's goals.

I contend that women's political voice is still weak in most parts of the world in both developed and developing countries, including my country, the Philippines, despite currently having a female president, the second in our history. I believe, therefore, that this is one of the significant areas for intervention not only because the numbers on women's political representation are dismal, but also because of the high impact on society of an improvement in women's political participation. For example, Transparency International writes that there is now evidence that as the political participation of women increases, corruption decreases. Priorities and styles of governance change too.

Regarding public representation, Dr. Pippa Norris of Harvard University has a starkly simple statistic that says it all. She says that since 1975 or the year the UN declared International Women's Year, there has been a one per cent increase every *decade* in the numbers of women in positions of public leadership. This is clearly and totally unacceptable.

When power is based on women's vision and values, it is transformative. Politics and governance will most decidedly change when women engage in public discourse and play a significant part in decision-making. As we continue to search and work for development that is humanly meaningful and ultimately sustainable, the political space opened by women from the grassroots to the highest reaches of government is the one space where women must belong.

And while we are discussing power, let me share with you the ten qualities of an empowered woman I have put together from all these years of being with women as they empower themselves. They may not find their place in the Thimphu Declaration but I hope they will be helpful in developing our individual and collective strategies and tactics to reach our goals. You may wish to add your own to these ten I have listed.

First, an empowered woman lifts up other women. There is enough for everybody. Sometimes women tend to fight for the little piece of the pond. I say, enlarge the pond so that we can all play!

Second, an empowered woman inspires others and mentors young women. Libby Roderick, a wonderful feminist singer and songwriter, has a beautiful song entitled, "Inspire Me". The song goes:

*Everybody needs someone to show them what is possible
Everybody needs someone to go as far as she can see
I need to stand up on the shoulders of giants
I need a woman who's as big as me
When I was a little baby sittin' on my Mama's knee
I looked around to see just what the future had in store for me
I need to see women who are living without limits
I needed to see women making history*

So I said

*Give me a woman who can climb the tallest mountain
Give me a woman who can swim across the widest sea
Women need women who lead lives of boldest daring
Tell me their stories, they inspire me.*

And so mountain women must continue to tell their stories.

Third, an empowered woman never feels guilty. Why? Because it is a useless feeling. It has been used against women for so long. Women are made to feel guilty that they are neglecting their family because they go out to work, that they are loose women because they like a good time; that

they are a liability as workers because they get pregnant and have to take maternity leave; they are not ladylike because they speak their mind and show their brains. I tell you this. Develop a conscience. Follow your conscience. But after you have decided on a course of action, don't allow others to make you feel guilty.

Fourth, an empowered woman does not try to be a superwoman. That's only for comic books or the movies. The difference between a female and a male is only two chromosomes but because of those two chromosomes the world thinks that we can work in the fields, sell vegetables and chickens in the market, take full responsibility not only for home and children but also for livestock; be a volunteer in our church or temple; and mediate all manner of conflict at home and the neighbourhood. Unless we stop being superwomen, our men will not be fully human.

Fifth, an empowered woman lives the truth of the saying: don't agonise, organise. If something is wrong, she does not bellyache. She sees it as an opportunity to gather others to right the wrong. She lights the fire.

Sixth, an empowered woman honours diversity. When society does not consciously manage the need for distinct identities among various groups and people, conflict and war will result. When managed well, it can lead to an increase in productivity, peace, harmony, and a rich collective life.

Seventh, an empowered woman has the capacity for intelligent rage. We must feel a sense of outrage against injustice and violence, a sense of outrage that leads to political action. An African-

American writer and law professor, Patricia Williams, has called it the "girl of intelligent rage". It is so difficult for women to rage because they have been taught to accommodate, and even to suppress their anger. "Love and anger", a feminist writer once said, "are both emotions of the free will, yet only love is acceptable for the powerless to express. For women or any category of people whose fair treatment would upset the social order, anger becomes the most punished and dangerous emotion." But such expressions are valid and, in the end, utterly liberating.

Eighth, an empowered woman knows and claims her rights, not just her obligations. We have been trained since childhood to subsume our welfare to the welfare of others, especially family members. When we become adults, this sense of duty is so strong that often it is difficult to claim our rights. Equality and non-discrimination form the cornerstone upon which all human rights are constructed. An understanding of these concepts is central to the exercise of the social, political, economic, and cultural rights of women and girls.

Ninth, an empowered woman claims power. When you walk out of here today, you are going to take steps to claim power because that is what mountain women need. Remember, power is the potency to act for what is good. Can you imagine how transformed the world would be if we all claimed that kind of power?

And lastly, an empowered woman says, *no more waiting!*

And on that note, thank you so much. More power to mountain women!

Valedictory Address, Ms. Catherine N. Cooke

Your Royal Highness,

Excellencies,

Respected Colleagues,

Esteemed Women from the mountains of the world

It is a great honour to be with you,

To hear your voices, in many languages, in harmony,

Planning a better future for the mountains, which
will affect communities all over the globe,

Who are inspired by the beauty of your high peaks,

Who rely on your water and timber,

And who have realised during this International Year
of Mountains how very important your homelands
are.

Although the official thanks will be delivered in
another address, I would like to take just one minute
to recognise all of the partners who have made this
conference possible...especially ICIMOD, directed by
Gabriel Campbell, my mentor on mountain issues,
the remarkable Phuntshok Tshering and Ojaswi Josse
(who have continued to smile through every
challenge) and the rest of the team!

I know that we have in our gathering many
representatives from non-government
organisations, and generous funders and service
providers. We also have real mountain women, who
are the heroes of this conference and the reason
we have gathered. These stories from five continents
are for you.

Gathered during our four days together, each story
is different...and yet they are also the same. See if
you can hear the repeated themes.

From the Andes Mountains, Columbia, South America

‘Mientras las guerrillas estaban destruyendo los
pueblos,
Nosotros — las mujeres — planteaban flores en al
Montana.’

(While the soldiers were destroying the villages,
We — the women — were planting flowered on the
mountainside.)



Ms. Catherine N. Cooke

Flowers in
Caldrono,
Colombia, are
becoming a new
cash crop to
replace the
declining coffee
industry there.
These women —
Hermanas — are
here in the
audience.

From the Zagros Mountains, Kurdistan, Iraq

Once upon a time there was a young Kurdish girl,
Living with her family,
In love with a young man.
She was soon to celebrate her wedding.
The soldiers came and took everyone from the
village,
But the girl ran away, high into the mountains.
She ate wild food and was afraid of the wolves.
Missing her family, she made a bed for them each
night.
Years later, she led a large group of women
On a fifty mile walk to demand
That the Peshmergas — fighters — stop the war.
Three women from Kurdistan are here with us today.

From the Appalachian Mountains, Kentucky, USA

Last year a young mother who could not read to
write

Wanted a better life for her own young daughter.
A teacher came up the mountains.
They read books about brown bears; and drew with
pens.
Today the little girl — and her mother — can read.
That teacher, who also grew up in those same
mountains,
Is here today.

From the Himalayan Mountains, Chitwan, Nepal

A strong woman wanted more for her family.
She helped organise a women's cooperative group
To produce 'allo', a strong, soft fibre that grows in
the mountains.
Weaving the beautiful scarves and garments like
this one,
The community raised enough money to build a
small village school.
That mountain woman is here with us today.

There is struggle in these stories, and some sadness.
But there also is joy and hope. Seeds of hope have
been sown at this conference, and like the flowers
of Caldrono, Colombia, may they grow. But we know
that seeds are not enough. They must be watered,
fed, cared for if they are to bloom. What will bloom,
like flowers on a mountainside, from our time
together?

The Thimphu Declaration is the first blossom. In
just a moment, our global gathering of women will
adopt the document that everyone has produced.

Many, many voices — yours — have been heard here.
What you have said will travel to far away Bishkek,
Kyrgyzstan, where the declaration will become a part
of the last world summit for this important
International Year of Mountains.

What you have dreamed, and said, and written,
began in your own mountains...all over the world,
the ideas came with you to Bhutan, and now they
will travel to the north towards China, to Bishkek,
another land of high mountains and strong women
who understand the struggle.

What else will bloom from these seeds? We must be sure that action follows the declaration we take to Bishkek.

Your hard work here, and in your communities, must move forward. In each gathering in the tents and in the conference hall nearly all of you committed to real action when you leave...at your community level, at the regional level, some at the global level.

Already many of the partners who organised this gathering are discussing how best to follow up — with action as well as words, and regional activities are being planned. I am also privileged and very happy to announce another small action step that will begin today. In response to some of the mountain women's telling us that a small amount of financial support for entrepreneurial projects would help, I invite the mountain women in this room to describe women's projects that you have dreamed of doing, or have already worked on in your village.

If you could receive a small amount of financial support, how could your work help the women and families who live in your community? Would it buy a loom, bring in training, start a women's cooperative?

Talk to one of our conference partners today or tomorrow and complete this one-page paper. Fax it to The Mountain Institute by November 15th. Every idea is a seed that might grow.

One of your wonderful 'seeds' will receive a small grant of \$5000 from The Mountain Institute. It is a symbol for today, to show our respect for each of you, mountain women. It celebrates your hard work and your good ideas. It will produce action and we hope it will grow into something important.... as very small seeds often do.

These papers will also be available back in Paro, on the registration table. Take one back to your community, and send us an idea.

I close with the words of a Chinese poet named Lu Xun:

"Hope is like a path on the mountainside.

At first there is no path.

But then there are people passing that way,

And then there is a path"

We are all on that path of hope on the mountainside. We are travelling together, to Bishkek and beyond. The road is long; but the road is clear. Let's move forward together.

Closing Address by RGOB representative, Her Royal Highness, Ashi Chimi Yangzom Wangchuck

Honoured Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen —

After very hectic but fruitful sessions at Paro, I am glad you now have an opportunity to see yet another part of our small kingdom.

As participants of “Celebrating Mountain Women,” you have just adopted the Thimphu Declaration, a document I am confident will bring about positive changes in the lives of mountain women. The success of its recommendations will depend on our own commitment. We can ask our governments, development partners, and international agencies to help bring about change, but as you will agree, it is our own personal commitment to the betterment of the lives of mountain women that will make it a reality.

As a woman from a mountain country, I have had the privilege to grow up around women from



**Her Royal Highness,
Ashi Chimi Yangzom Wangchuck**

different social and economic backgrounds. I know that the lives of most women in Bhutan and their sisters in mountain areas and other countries are hard. Despite setbacks, women have made great strides in many parts of the

world, moving beyond the domestic and household realms to assume integral roles in local and national decision making institutions. This conference has, more than ever, demonstrated that there is much we can learn from one another through the sharing of experiences and best practices. Let us maintain and use the links established in Bhutan over the past few days, and seek to enrich them further.

I feel that there is a great role for young women in mountain communities. With greater access to education and modern tools, many of us have the advantages that our parents lacked. There are also more civil societies and institutions to guide and to assist us in our just cause. Networking and information sharing is more common now than before. If we are able to utilise the wisdom and experience of the older generation and combine it with the miracles of technology we can make a difference in our communities.

We are all brought together by our common love for the mountains and by our determination to enjoy their immense opportunities, beauty, and wealth, as well as to face the challenges. As a young person, I look for inspiration from the participants gathered here today. Each one of you has taken on leadership roles and will now take the goals of the Thimphu Declaration forward.

I would like to thank and congratulate Dr. Gabriel Campbell, Director General of ICIMOD, and other partners for not only making this event possible, but for drawing it to a successful conclusion. I would like to thank each and every one of you for coming to Bhutan and for contributing towards the adoption of the Thimphu Declaration. It was an honour and pleasure for the people of Bhutan to receive you and discuss our role in preserving the mountains that we hold so close to our hearts.

Thank you all and Tashi Delek!

Closing Remarks from the Director General of ICIMOD, Dr. J. Gabriel Campbell

Your Royal Highness,

Distinguished Officials of the Royal Government of Bhutan,

Astonishingly varied and wonderful participants of Celebrating Mountain Women,

Ladies and Gentlemen —

We are at the close of an extraordinary event. For the first time, 250 mountain women, and people who care deeply for mountain women, from 35 countries from every continent of the globe, have gathered together to celebrate mountain women — to find a common voice for their unheard concerns.

Through dialogue, debate, exhibitions, films, and days of informal interaction, we have celebrated the wonderful diversity of mountain women. We have worked hard to bridge perspectives from the South and the North, from the grassroots to academia, from the specific stories of mountain women, to the varied natural and social environments in which all of you live.

We have marvelled, with smiles of appreciation glued on our faces, at the beauty and creativity of mountain women's dresses, of mountain crafts, of worlds revealed to us in eyes, expressions, films, and photographs.

We have formed friendships across mountain ranges, across languages, even across gender barriers. We have listened, learned, and found ideas to help each of us in our individual work and lives.

With hard work and intensive discussions, all of you, representing the mountain women of the world, have come together to find common concerns and shared views of life, to create the Thimphu Declaration and a set of detailed recommendations.

This declaration will be carried to the rest of the world as one of the crowning achievements of the International Year of Mountains. Most immediately, it will be presented at the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit by an ideal spokeswoman from Bhutan, Ms. Netan Zhangmo, and the Cabinet Secretary of the Royal Government of Bhutan.

Through Bishkek, and most importantly, individually and collectively, we all are challenged and energised to translate this call for action into realities — realities that will make mountain women's lives better. The Mountain Women's Partnership launched here can become a dynamic network. Through this partnership we can act on our own, and together, can share problems and solutions to build synergies between our actions. We can create a global voice for the cause of the mountain women of the world.

Much more work is still required to shape and energise this network into a linked set of concrete actions and advocacy at the global, regional, national, and local levels. Special efforts will be required to ensure that the momentum built here continues to build after we

leave this beautiful country and its gracious, and incredibly hospitable people.

As the main organisers of this event, with the magnificent cooperation and initiative of the Royal Government of Bhutan, we at ICIMOD know our work is really just starting.



Dr. J. Gabriel Campbell

Most immediately, we are responsible for producing a number of tangible outputs together with the help of many of you. These include:

- Copies of the Thimphu Declaration, hopefully before you leave Bhutan
- Additional CDs of the 39 papers prepared for this meeting for those of you who did not get a copy or who are unable to download them from the website <www.mountainwomen.net>
- Selected photographs from this extraordinary event to be sent to all of you, and additional photographs for electronic downloading to be posted on the site
- A video of CMW prepared by Live Wire Images, the release of which will be announced to all of you over the next six weeks
- Highlights of the conference for your reference
- Proceedings in the form of a resource kit by Missing Link

In the intermediate term, we look forward to continuing our close collaboration with the Mountain Forum to maintain an active list serve for mountain women. Through this medium, Bishkek round table sessions, and active dialogue with interested partner institutions and individuals, we hope to jointly evolve mechanisms that will enable CMW to grow and work together; to become an active and path-breaking global partnership that will make a real difference in the lives of mountain women. A partnership that supports and energises the efforts of governments, parliamentarians, NGOs, grassroots' groups, development programmes, entrepreneurs and artists, and researchers and educators.

And, of course, in our own Asian and especially, Hindu Kush-Himalayan region, we will follow through with specific operational programmes to support and implement many of the excellent recommendations that fit with our mandate, inspire our partner interest, and that are within our capacity.

It would have been satisfying to have these mechanisms and follow-up programmes already defined. But then we would have either had to stay here for at least another week or have assumed the results before you created them. I am not sure that even friendly Bhutan could have handled that much

female energy for so long, and I know our budget couldn't.

So our real work begins now that we have laid the framework, discovered our paths together, and know each other in conference rooms and dance floors.

The real measure of what this conference accomplishes depends on what each of you take from it, create out of it, and do in your own mountains.

For this reason, I must first of all, and most fervently, thank you, the participants. You have been thoughtful. You have been creative. You have been patient and forgiving when travel and organisational arrangements have been difficult and less than perfect from our side. You have pitched in to help produce the results, to translate for your sisters, to adjust to changes in schedule and programme. You have shown me, and all of us, the strength, resilience, and beauty of mountain women of the world. You have proven that mountain women are indeed worthy of celebrating.

Thank you all so much. Please join me in appreciating each other and all of you for coming so far and making CMW such a special event.

We hardly have words to adequately express our deeply felt gratitude to the Royal Government of Bhutan for hosting this event. The word hosting does not begin to capture the warm welcome, the outstanding arrangements, the generous hospitality and the hard work that so many officials and citizens of Bhutan gave to CMW.

The Bhutan CMW Secretariat, especially established to host this event, began work long before our arrival, along with the Bhutan International Year of Mountains Committee. The government generously invited all of us as special guests and waived the substantial fees that would normally be required for us to visit this spectacular land. Hotels forewent their high season rates and made room for us to take over Paro. The government of Paro went to special lengths to provide a spectacular welcome and ensure our security and comfort. Computers were installed; telephones provided, volunteers mobilised, and most valuably, a number of Bhutanese women joined us to provide local knowledge and insight.

We were personally welcomed by the Right Honourable Prime Minister and are graced today by Her Royal Highness. The Secretary of Agriculture and Cabinet Secretary joined us throughout.

Inspiring traditional ceremonies of welcome and closing, along with a beautiful procession and decorated paths have enriched and awed us with their mysterious beauty and demonstration of a living mountain heritage.

We could not imagine a more generous host, a more beautiful country, or more gracious companions than you have provided.

We express our gratitude especially to:

Her Royal Highness Ashi Chimi Yangzom Wangchuk,

His Excellency Lyonpo Dr. Kinzang Dorji,
Dasho Sangay Thinley,
Ms. Netan Zhangmo,
Ms. Deki Pema,
Ms. Tshering Gem,

and wish to offer them a very small token of our appreciation.

We also thank Dongkar Drukpa and other staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and the very helpful officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

We especially thank the Dasho Dzongdhag of Paro and the other local authorities of Paro and Thimphu – and wish to recognise the Dzongda also with a small gift.

We thank Bhutan Tourism Corporation and the Olangthang Hotel for going out of their way to accommodate our conference, exhibitions, and many demands with great courtesy and special efforts.

We also thank the other eight hotels in Paro, Druk Airlines for their special arrangements during this tourist season, and the travel agencies for all their hard work.

Would you all please join me in expressing our great and lasting appreciation to Bhutan.

We have also been blessed with the generous and caring support of our donors and partners, who from the beginning demonstrated their deep commitment to mountain women and the International Year of Mountains by enthusiastically providing financial and technical support. Without you, this would not have happened. With you, we gained not only the means to carry out this conference, but we gained the participation of mountain experts.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) with special funding from the Government of Japan, provided initial substantial support. Mr. Phrang Roy, the Assistant President, took a personal interest, and Dr. Ganesh Thapa represented IFAD at CMW.

I hope there is a representative of the Japanese Government to whom we can express our thanks here today.

The South Asia Office of UNIFEM, the United Nations agency devoted to women, joined in the first organising meeting and provided a generous grant. We are especially grateful to Ms. Chandni Joshi for her personal interest and support, and special effort to participate in the first three days of the conference.

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation has long been the energising force behind mountain development and the principal supporter of the International Year of Mountains. Dr. Ulrich Lutz, here with us throughout this conference, has been the man behind this mountain changing effort. We are honoured to have him here and thank him not only for his commitment to sustainable mountain development, but for his special concern and support for CMW.

Thank you Uli!

We also want to give special thanks to our long-standing partner, and close friend, The Mountain Institute. Ms. Catherine Cooke's personal enthusiasm for CMW was more than evident in her beautiful valedictory address. We treasure this partnership as an institution, just as I value it deeply at a personal level. I thank Catherine and her wonderful colleagues at The Mountain Institute for all they have done to plan, support, and bring many special participants here.

Thank you Catherine!

We also are privileged to thank someone who is better known to those of you in Bhutan than to most of us. Except, that is, to those of us in ICMOD who know her as the Chairperson of our ICIMOD Support Group. Dr. Brigitte Dekroute is responsible for Austrian Government Cooperation in Bhutan. We thank her for her assistance in providing support for Bhutanese participants and for her continuing commitment to mountain development and mountain women.

Thank you Brigitte!

Although there is no representative present, we also express our appreciation towards ICCO of the Netherlands for providing support for participants from Nepal and India to attend.

There are so many other people to thank that this could take all morning. I hope you will forgive me if I have to leave off mentioning all of you by name.

Celebrating Mountain Women started with an intensive meeting of the Organising Committee at Hattiban, Nepal. We are most grateful to all of them, whose names are enshrined in our documents.

The work of this committee was passed on to a sub-group, the Steering Committee, who worked throughout the last year-and-a-half to make this conference happen. They have given so much of their time, wisdom and effort to CMW that I hope you will agree they are more than deserving of very special recognition and gratitude.

In alphabetical order, we thank profusely:

Anita Anand, who spent many months directly working with us in liaison with the committee;

Elizabeth Byers of TMI and the Global Server Node of the Mountain Forum, who has given generously of her time and effort in both capacities;

Francoise Mees, of the European Mountain Forum, who organised a special preparatory European meeting in Chambéry, France;

Easter Njiro, who worked especially to ensure Africa's representation; and

Josepha Nolte, who brought us Latin America along with her advice and guidance.

I ask all of you to join me in very special appreciation for these wonderful, committed, and wise women. We wish to express our gratitude with a small mountain token.

Thank you Anita, Elizabeth, Francoise, Easter, and Josepha!

I would also like to thank Ms. Irene Santiago for her awe-inspiring keynote address, where she shared with us the ten qualities of an empowered women and urged all women to play an active role in transforming their society for the better.

A great deal of work has also gone into compiling research for CMW. For that I would like to thank Dr. Govind Kelkar and her team, who coordinated research on the five theme areas from different regions of the world. Thank you so much for all that hard work!

Without the active participation and outreach of the media, the voices of mountain women gathered here would not be heard.

We thank each media person from Kuensel, BBS, BBC, Nepal, Hong Kong, Italy, India, and the USA for joining us here. We hope you have benefited from the opportunity and will serve as objective, and hopefully friendly, partners in the cause of mountain women.

We are also very grateful to:

Women's Feature Service for their press service;

Himal Association for a fantastic and inspiring film festival on mountain women;

Missing Link for their documentation service and the resource publications they will produce to enable us to remember and keep in touch;

Live Wire Images for the video film, which we are all eagerly looking forward to seeing;

The creative, hard working, and superb facilitators of each of the theme sessions;

The drafters of the Thimphu Declaration who worked long and late hours;

The many wonderful and creative exhibitors who showed us what mountain women can create and gave us such a wonderful ambiance in which to meet and learn; and

Each of the costume bringers and wearers, who provided us with the highlight of the entire CMW event.

Thank you all!

Finally, it is my great pleasure to thank my colleagues in ICIMOD who have worked so hard for so long, with so much patience and commitment to organise Celebrating Mountain Women.

Ms. Phuntshok Tshering, who provided guidance from the beginning, and so ably shouldered the huge job of organising this conference when it was moved to Bhutan, her native country, is first to be appreciated and thanked.

Ms. Ojaswi Josse, who has provided full-time coordination over this last year-and-a-half, no matter

how onerous the task, or how long the hours, or the number of emails required.

We would like to present you two mountain women with a small token of our deep appreciation.

Thank you so much Phuntshok and Ojaswi!

Finally, I thank my other colleagues who have worked so hard both before and during this conference. In

alphabetical order,

Jane Dermer,
Prativa Chhetri,
Melinda Nicholls,
Kiran Shrestha, and
Atsuko Toda.

Thank you colleagues, and thank you friends one and all!

The Thimphu Declaration

Preamble

The 250 participants — mountain women, members of civil society organisations and NGOs, policy makers, entrepreneurs, media professionals, researchers, representatives of development agencies and the donor community — attending the Celebrating Mountain Women conference in Thimphu, Bhutan, October 1-4, 2002, held in the context of the International Year of Mountains (IYM), submit the following Thimphu Declaration to the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit (BGMS), and call upon the international community to:

Include the perspectives of mountain women and the principles of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the Bishkek Declaration;

Strengthen mountain women's influence in decisions in public affairs and ensure a strong presence of women in all mountain partnerships;

Build networks of solidarity and endorse and support the Global Mountain Women's Partnership (GMWP).

We declare that

- 1) Without women, it is impossible to achieve sustainable development in mountain areas. Women have crucial knowledge about resource use, traditional health systems, and social, cultural, and spiritual customs. Their productive activities contribute to the economy; they promote family and community development; they create innovative solutions to cope with change under harsh physical and political conditions. In many mountain regions they constitute well over 50 per cent of the population.
- 2) Without peace, an un-degraded and uncontaminated environment, and food security, which are currently under heavy stress in

mountain areas worldwide, it is impossible for mountain women to nurture their families, sustain livelihoods, carry out business activities, contribute to the well-being of their communities, and protect their environment.

- 3) Without gender equality and social justice, and a supportive social, political, legal, and economic environment, mountain women cannot make their voices heard, and exercise rights that enable them to contribute their full potential to community development and conservation of natural and cultural resources.
- 4) Without access to health services, education and training, recreation and adequate infrastructure — water, sanitation, roads, markets, credit — and without addressing the remoteness and physical challenges of the mountain environment, poverty, and social and political marginalisation that prevail in most of these areas, mountain women's ability to fulfil their roles is seriously impaired.
- 5) Without effective policies, networks, partnerships and alliances at the local, national, regional, and international levels, mountain women's economic, social, and political marginalisation will continue to hamper their development and the development of their communities.

These realities are not given sufficient recognition, and are even negated in some areas. Moreover, women are not adequately integrated into planning and decision making processes at all levels, and do not have effective access to, control of, and ownership of resources.

In view of this, we call upon the United Nations, the international community, and the regional, national, and local authorities and organisations to:

Heed the voice and concerns of mountain women and their perspective on peace, natural resource use, and sustainable mountain development,

Provide the institutional and financial support for future policy and action on the principles of gender equality and gender mainstreaming,

Strengthen mountain women's right to resources and their role in their communities and cultures,

Promote a rights-based approach to development and strengthen economic and technological opportunities to empower mountain women.

We recommend the following:

1. Inform mountain women about their human rights, including political, economic, property, environmental, health, cultural, intellectual, and other rights, and provide adequate training in claiming these rights;
2. Promote and enforce gender equitable laws, policies, and programmes that facilitate participation of mountain women in the management of natural resources, and secure access to ecosystem goods and services;
3. Advocate that policies and laws provide equality-based political, social, and economic rights to mountain women. Ensure that such policies and laws exist for aspects that specifically address women's well-being and rights;
4. Promote equitable representation of mountain women in all decision-making bodies, and advocate their participation in negotiation and decision-making processes at all levels, including in conflict prevention and resolution;
5. Ensure that health programmes focus on reproductive and sexual health problems, including HIV/AIDS, and encourage the involvement of men in the prevention of these problems;
6. Advocate addressing mountain women's reproductive and sexual health rights and support community-based health care and insurance;
7. Create awareness and appreciation of gender equality issues and traditional health practices among all kinds of health professionals;
8. Integrate indigenous knowledge systems into formal education, and develop alternative,

flexible and context-specific curricula, including indigenous and practical knowledge, and employ indigenous teaching staff;

9. Promote communication among mountain women and communities while preventing the erosion of linguistic diversity;
10. Encourage research and disseminate the results of mountain women's indigenous knowledge in cultural and religious systems, natural resource use, traditional farming and conservation techniques, and health practices;
11. Collect and document disaggregated data on mountain people (by sex, age, region, etc.) in all fields;
12. Ensure increased access to information about businesses, markets, technology, and other livelihood opportunities that utilise and conserve the diversity of mountain environments, and promote training programmes and social services to meet the needs of mountain women;
13. Encourage and promote fair trade and ethical business in mountain areas in order to ensure that producers reap a fair share of the benefits from the sale of their products;
14. Promote peace to prevent mountain women and their families from suffering the consequences of armed conflict, eradicate trafficking of women and children in poor mountain areas, stop domestic violence, and promote social programmes which aim to overcome violent cultural practices;
15. Promote physical and social infrastructure (roads, electricity, telecommunications, markets, health care, schools, etc.) that are sensitive and responsive to women's needs and enhance income generation and entrepreneurship among mountain women, reduce their workload, and improve the quality of their lives;
16. Analyse and mitigate the impacts of increasing privatisation of resources within mountain communities, and create safety nets where the impacts of globalisation destabilise mountain communities;
17. Provide gender budgets and increase budgetary allocation for mountain women's initiatives to make development sustainable.

Adopted October 4, 2002
Thimphu, Bhutan

The Global Mountain Women's Partnership

The Global Mountain Women's Partnership (GMWP)

(A draft document prepared for launch at BGMS)

Date of initiation: October 2002

Expected date of completion: October 2012

1. Potential Lead Partners

- International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)
- United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)
- The Mountain Institute (TMI)
- Agha Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP)
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Berne
- The Government of Japan (ODA)
- Austrian Coordination Bureau, Bhutan (ACB)
- Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation (ICCO), Netherlands
- Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)

Agencies listed above have supported and participated in CMW. This global gathering of many stakeholders served as the inspiration for the GMWP. The Partnership welcomes many more stakeholders.

2. Main Objectives of the Partnership

The main objective of the GMWP is to promote the interests and perspectives of mountain women and contribute to an improvement of their livelihoods. The GMWP will provide a framework for cooperation between mountain women and all stakeholders, such as development partners/donors, governments, policy makers, non-government organisations and civil society organisations, the private sector,

indigenous mountain women and their representatives and organisations, researchers and practitioners, entrepreneurs, and media professionals.

The GMWP will be guided and defined by the values expressed in the Thimphu Declaration adopted by the participants of Celebrating Mountain Women (CMW), a global gathering, held in Bhutan from October 1-4, 2002, as part of the International Year of Mountains celebrations. The operations of the Partnership will be based on commitments made by partners and implementation will be supported through linkages between partners/institutions/organisations and improved monitoring systems.

The GMWP will work within the overall framework of the International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions, laid down by the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD 2002), and will provide scope for implementing Agenda 21 of the Rio Declaration, the Beijing Platform for Action, and the Thimphu Declaration.

Ultimately, the Partnership should enhance the capacity of mountain women to be the source of energy and the driving force behind all its initiatives so that it caters to their needs and aspirations and helps to sustain them. In the short to medium-term, the Partnership will aim to:

1. Advocate policies and laws that provide equality-based social, political and economic rights to women. Ensure that such policies and laws exist to specifically address women's well-being and rights;
2. Inform mountain women about their human, political, and economic rights, including property, environmental, health, cultural, and intellectual rights, and provide adequate training to claim these rights;
3. Promote equitable representation of mountain women in decision-making bodies at all levels,

and promote their participation in negotiation and decision-making processes, including in conflict prevention and resolution;

4. Ensure that health programmes focus on reproductive, mental, and sexual health problems including HIV/AIDS, and other emerging diseases in mountain areas. Women are especially vulnerable in an environment, in and outside the home, where a great deal of physical and mental abuse takes place;
5. Encourage research and disseminate results of mountain women's indigenous knowledge — such as natural resources, traditional farming and conservation techniques, cultural, health, and religious practices;
6. Increase access to information about business, markets, technology and other livelihood opportunities that utilise and conserve the diversity of mountain environments, and promote links to existing and emerging markets; access to skills-based training programmes and social services to meet the development needs of mountain women which must be improved;
7. Promote physical and social infrastructure (roads, electricity, schools, telecommunications, markets) that is sensitive and responsive to women's needs, particularly in location, design, and utility. Enhance income generation and entrepreneurship among mountain women, reduce their workload, and improve the quality of their lives.
8. Ensure dissemination of information on all activities and information gathered as a result of the Partnership through mainstream media.

3. Relationship of GMWP to Objectives of Agenda 21 and Relevant Goals and Objectives of the UN Millennium Declaration

The GMWP will work within the framework of the goals and objectives of Agenda 21. While the GMWP relates to the entire agenda, it will focus more specifically on:

- Chapter 3: combating poverty
- Chapter 11: combating deforestation
- Chapter 13: managing fragile ecosystems: sustainable mountain development
- Chapter 14: promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development
- Chapter 15: conservation of biological diversity
- Chapter 24: global action for women towards sustainable and equitable development
- Chapter 25: children and youth in sustainable development
- Chapter 26: recognising and strengthening the role of indigenous people and their communities
- Chapter 27: strengthening the role of NGOs: partners for sustainable development

Chapter 28: local authorities and initiatives in support of Agenda 21

Chapter 30: strengthening the role of business and industry

Chapter 31: the scientific and technical community

Chapter 32: strengthening the role of farmers

Chapter 34: transfer of environmentally sound technology, cooperation, and capacity building

Chapter 36: promoting education, public awareness, and training

Chapter 37: national mechanisms and institutional cooperation for capacity-building

Chapter 40: information for decision-making

The goals and objectives of the GMWP overlap and are an integral part of the eight UNDP Millennium Development Goals, to be achieved between 1990 and 2015. More specifically:

- halve extreme poverty and hunger
- achieve universal primary education
- empower women and promote equality between women and men
- reduce under-five mortality by two-thirds
- reduce maternal mortality by three-quarters
- reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria, and TB
- ensure environmental sustainability
- develop a global partnership for development, with targets for aid, trade, and debt relief

4. Expected Results

The results of the Partnership will be the products of networking, research, advocacy, and practice.

The Partnership will be organised under seven thematic areas. The first five were the CMW themes and the last two were adopted based on feedback from CMW:

- Natural Resources and Environment
- Health and Well-being
- Entrepreneurship
- Legal, Political, and Human Rights
- Culture and Indigenous Knowledge
- Technology (with a focus on ICTs and time/labour saving devices)
- Conflict Resolution and Peace.

The themes will be examined in the framework of:

- Research
- Policy
- Practice: Advocacy and Mainstreaming of Mountain Women's needs and concerns

5. Arrangements for Funding and Budget Estimate

The Executive Committee will assist the Secretariat in developing strategies for mobilising resources.

An estimated budget of US \$1 billion for ten years is visualised to materialise commitments at the global, regional, national, and local levels. A detailed budget for the GMWP is to be worked out.

Press Releases

1. October 4, 2002

Paro, Bhutan: The four-day international gathering of mountain women — Celebrating Mountain Women (CMW) — ended today with the adoption of the Thimphu Declaration. The declaration will be taken to the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit to be held later this month. The four-day conference was organised by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), and The Mountain Forum. CMW is one of the events planned for the International Year of Mountains declared by the United Nations in 2002.

CMW, the first-ever global gathering of mountain women, had 250 participants from 35 countries. Over the four days, the participants discussed a wide range of issues concerning women in mountainous regions. The five main themes, which were taken up for in-depth discussion, were:

1. Natural Resources and Environment
2. Health and Well-being
3. Entrepreneurship
4. Legal, Political and Human Rights
5. Culture and Indigenous Knowledge

Gender was a cross-cutting theme. The outcome of these discussions served as important inputs for the Thimphu Declaration.

The Prime Minister of Bhutan, H.E. Lyonpo Dr. Kinzang Dorji, inaugurated the conference on 1st October. The Prime Minister stressed the importance of mountains, which, he said, are home to one-tenth of the world's population, and are sources of diversity, minerals, and forests. He said that more than 3 billion people rely on mountains for water — to grow food, produce electricity and sustain industries — and, most importantly, to drink. Mrs. Irene Santiago, an internationally-reputed development expert and women's activist, delivered the keynote address. The Director General of

ICIMOD, Dr. J. Gabriel Campbell, said at the inaugural function that this was the first time mountain women were coming together to chart a future course of action to make their lives better. Even as the world's attention is focused on mountains this year, women who are the backbone of mountain livelihoods, "are rarely heard, rarely govern, rarely seen for what they are, too often not allowed to grow, learn and energise their search for a better future."

At the end of their deliberations on Thursday, the delegates also drew up strategies to build on the process initiated at CMW. As a follow-up, it was suggested this dialogue be continued through meetings at various levels, ranging from grassroots to global, to enable women to form strong collectives. It was felt that the creation of networks and partnerships would help them share information, success stories, and other experiences.

In addition to the discussions, several other activities were organised. These included a film festival on mountain women (featuring documentaries from different parts of the world), and tents and stalls displaying special products from mountain regions. The highlight of these parallel activities was a colourful costume show featuring the attire of mountain women and men from over 20 countries.

2. October 3rd 2002

Paro, Bhutan: A crystallisation of concerns took place here today on the third day of the Celebrating Mountain Women (CMW) conference, with the submission of the recommendations of the five working groups to the plenary. These recommendations will be inputs into the Thimphu Declaration that is to be adopted tomorrow.

The plenary also discussed strategies to build on the process initiated at CMW, the first international

gathering of mountain women. As a follow-up, it was suggested that this dialogue be continued through meetings at various levels ranging from grassroots to global, in order to enable women to form strong collectives. It was felt that the creation of networks and partnerships would help them share information, success stories and other experiences.

The working groups had intensive discussions over one-and-a-half days and looked at challenges, research gaps, and possible solutions to the issues facing mountain women all over the world. The five themes were:

1. Natural Resources and Environment
2. Health and Well-being
3. Entrepreneurship
4. Legal, Political, and Human Rights
5. Culture and Indigenous Knowledge

The group on Health and Well-being identified 14 priority health issues for mountain women, including reproductive health, increasing incidence of HIV/AIDS, limited accessibility and affordability of quality health care, inadequate government policies and allocations in the health sector, and lack of education, information, and communication. The group provided recommendations for policies, programmes, networking, and research for the next five years.

The recommendations included:

- Lobbying for increased budgetary allocation for the health needs of mountain women and their families,
- Incorporation of gender perspectives and local knowledge into public policy,
- Collective mobilisation of resources and policy analysis, and
- Advocacy to address the reproductive and sexual health and rights of mountain women.

On the programmatic level, the group recommended:

- Framing of strategies for male involvement,
- Incorporation of gender and community issues, and
- Innovative approaches such as health micro-insurance schemes.

Research gaps identified included lack of disaggregated data and the need to examine the HIV/AIDS situation in the mountains.

The group on Entrepreneurship made the following recommendations:

- Create training tools adapted to the needs of mountain women, such as managerial skills, product development skills, market intelligence, and financial and accounting skills,
- Create the necessary infrastructure to enable income generation and entrepreneurship skills,
- Raise awareness among mountain women about the uniqueness of their knowledge and the need to protect it as well as market their products,

- Develop relationships with trading partners through specialised trade platforms and mountain support groups, and finally,
- Increase mountain women's access to capital.

The group on Culture and Indigenous Knowledge identified globalisation as one of the biggest influences on mountain culture and felt that traditional knowledge had been undermined in the last few decades. The group recommended support for documentation and research on indigenous cultures, religions, and knowledge systems, especially those involving women, who are the custodians of memory. Other suggestions included:

- Integration of indigenous knowledge systems into all levels of education, and involving indigenous women as teachers and trainers,
- Participation of governments, NGOs, public and private bodies, and women's groups in the creation of training programmes for empowerment,
- Establishing a network of mountain women,
- Programmes for capacity building, and
- Developing educational programmes to raise awareness of harmful cultural practices.

Taking note of the fact that mountain women do not have a say in decision-making processes, the group on Political, Legal, and Human Rights recommended a one-third reservation for mountain women in decision-making bodies at the state and traditional levels. It further suggested the formation of mountain women committees and gender sensitisation programmes for governments, academia, the private sector, institutions, and law enforcement agencies. Mountain-specific policies and laws based on mountain women's needs should be prepared in a decentralised and participatory manner, the group said.

The group took special note of the impact of armed conflict on women and recommended a situation analysis on this. Women should be trained and appointed as peace builders for conflict resolution, it suggested.

The group on Natural Resources and Environment identified several research gaps. For instance, more needs to be done towards knowledge sharing on alternative technologies and best practices, it was felt.

Research on how changes in social and ecological environments have affected women needs to be documented, as well as problems that have arisen due to the conflict between conventional and traditional natural resource management systems.

The group recommended that alternative, flexible, and context-specific learning systems are included in the formal education system. The impact of increasing privatisation of resources in mountain regions (particularly on women) needs to be recognised and mitigated, the group said.

3. October 2nd 2002

Paro, Bhutan: The second day of Celebrating Mountain Women (CMW), an international gathering of people from the mountainous regions of 35 countries, was devoted to in-depth discussions on five main themes:

1. Natural Resources and Environment
2. Health and Well-being
3. Entrepreneurship
4. Legal, Political, and Human Rights
5. Culture and Indigenous Knowledge

ICIMOD and the Mountain Forum organised the four-day conference. Delegates broke up into small groups to deliberate on each of these themes. The recommendations from these groups will be presented at the plenary on Thursday and serve as important inputs for the Thimphu Declaration.

Natural Resources and Environment: Speakers in this group highlighted the fact that women are the primary resource managers in mountain regions, with an intimate knowledge of their complex environments. Their problems have been compounded in recent years by environmental degradation and poor resource management, and increased migration of men to the plains.

A paper by Yu Xiaogang looked at “Gender Relations, Livelihoods and Supply of Eco-system Service: a Study of Lashi Watershed in China”. Vinay Tandon’s paper focused on sustainable livelihoods and poverty alleviation in Kullu district of Himachal Pradesh in India. A paper on “Gender and Management of Mountain Resources in Africa — A Participatory Approach” by Esther L. Nijiro was also discussed.

Legal, Political, and Human Rights: The majority of mountain women do not enjoy the same legal, political, and human rights as men and therefore lag behind in education, health, and public participation.

Women in mountainous areas have little knowledge of their rights and the enormous demands on their time makes it difficult for them to be involved in the public sphere or in any decision-making processes. A paper presented by Renee Giovarelli focused on women’s rights to land in the Kyrgyz Republic. Two other papers, “Gender-Asset Gap: Land in Latin America” by Magdalena Leon and, “Patterns and Trends of Women’s Participation in Land Markets in Uganda” by Abby Sebina-Zziwa also dealt with the issue of land ownership. The group identified other concerns such as reproductive rights, education, and economic, social, and cultural rights. Women’s lack of participation in the political arena was another concern. Speaking of legal rights, a question was raised about whether existing laws actually protected the above-mentioned rights. The role of women in conflict resolution was also discussed.

Health and Well-being: Living in remote and rough terrain where food is more difficult to grow, workloads are heavy, and access to health care is poor, has impacted heavily on the health status of women living in mountain regions. In addition, the

high degree of male migration and armed conflict has further affected women’s health, which is already under stress due to excessive and early childbearing as well as malnutrition. Lack of clean drinking water, and poor sanitary conditions in the house result in a high incidence of disease.

The group felt that despite variations from region to region, the basic problems of mountain women are not very different. A paper on “Health and Well-being of Women in the Asia-Pacific Region” by Ritu Bhatia cited the example of Nepal, where 80 per cent of women of child-bearing age are anaemic and suffer from iron and protein deficiencies; similarly in Myanmar, mountain women have no access to basic health, education, and social services compared to other women in the country.

Farah Usmani’s paper, ‘Afghanistan Country Profile: Reproductive Health’ presented a detailed account of how years of conflict have affected the health of women there. Although there is a lack of sufficient data, there is clear evidence of high rates of maternal morbidity and mortality. Further, malnutrition, frequent pregnancies without basic care or trained medical help, and lack of access to information or services all contribute to the poor health of women in Afghanistan. Xhi Xhi Xhenis’s paper gave an account of “Old Laws and Morals in the Beautiful Mountains of Albania”.

Culture and Indigenous Knowledge: The group focused on the rich culture and indigenous knowledge base of mountain people that development policies and programmes have largely ignored. It was felt that in this fast-changing world, the rich tradition of oral history, songs, myths, and legends were being lost. However, women, being the custodians of traditional knowledge, could help preserve their unique culture.

Michela Zucca, in her paper on “Women of the Mountains: from Silence to Recognition” spoke of the vital role women could play in the future of the Alps and the Alpine micro-economy. Angela Castellanos’s paper on “Gender Roles in Colombian Mountain Areas” concluded that women make an outstanding contribution to preserving culture. Further, due to an increase in poverty in highland areas, women have turned traditional handicrafts into a remunerative activity and, in the process, have preserved local culture.

Entrepreneurship: Participants in this group fell into five broad categories — those in the tourism industry, researchers, entrepreneurs, policy makers, and development workers. The day’s discussion was broadly divided into the presentation of the three lead papers, exchange of experiences, and finally, challenges and needs, such as for research into various aspects of entrepreneurial activities.

A paper from Slovenia by Patricia Verbole looked at a study of women entrepreneurs and policies and practices in that country. It concluded that there was a need for women entrepreneurs’ networks, as well as for the provision of information on financing and so on from local advisory boards. Another paper,

edited by Phuntshok Tshering, dealt with the “Development of a Strategy for the Promotion of Mountain Women’s Entrepreneurship”. Elaine Marshall and Kate Schreckenbergs’ paper on “Women, Forests and Markets: Researching Poverty Alleviation through Commercialisation of Forest Resources in Mexico and Bolivia” examined parameters to gauge which natural forest products could be successfully commercialised in terms of yield, perishability, and availability.

4. October 1st 2002

Paro, Bhutan: Celebrating Mountain Women (CMW), an international gathering of women from mountainous regions in 35 countries, got off to a colourful and ceremonial start here today. CMW is one of the events planned for the International Year of Mountains declared by the United Nations in 2002.

The four-day event will take up five broad theme areas for discussion:

1. Natural Resources and Environment
2. Health and Well-being
3. Entrepreneurship
4. Legal, Political, and Human Rights
5. Culture and Indigenous Knowledge

Gender will be a cross-cutting theme. The CMW event will conclude with the adoption of the Thimphu Declaration on October 4. The issues and concerns highlighted at CMW will be taken to the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit in Kyrgyzstan later this month.

Inaugurating the conference, H.E. Lyonpo Kinzang Dorji, the Prime Minister of Bhutan, stressed the importance of mountains, which, he said, are home to one-tenth of the world’s population, and are a source of diversity, minerals and forests. He said that more than three billion people rely on mountains for water to grow food, produce electricity, and sustain industries — and, most importantly, to drink.

It was very apt that the event was being held in Bhutan, he said, as it was an entirely mountainous country. He explained that the Bhutan government’s policies were aimed at conservation and sustainable development to overcome challenges due to physical terrain, remoteness, lack of infrastructure, capital and so on. The ultimate goal of all the government’s social and development policies is to achieve ‘Gross National Happiness’ he said.

Referring to women, the Prime Minister said that although life in the mountains was hard, it was harder for women. However, women were not helpless: “There are many cases where women have transformed their communities by their vision and social consciousness. They have made the environment a better place to live in, brought people together and served as an example to others.”

The involvement of women was integral to the success of policies related to the sustainable development of mountain regions, he added. Emphasising the important role played by women

living in mountains, the Prime Minister said they were often guardians of agricultural biodiversity and knew more than men about plant varieties as well as options for food preparation. The issues that the CMW event needed to address over these four days were to see how this knowledge could be preserved, passed on, and shared by other mountain communities; and how to tap the potential of these women while carrying the men along.

Delivering the keynote address, Ms. Irene Santiago, international development expert and an eminent women’s activist, said that the obstacles to women’s development, identified at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, remained, even seven years later. In fact, forces such as conservatism, globalisation, the breakdown of political systems and alliances, and the homogenisation of culture, and media and communications had “further intensified and widened.”

She hoped that CMW would create strategies to make mountain women visible and “bring them out of the shadows and into the sunlight of power.” Drawing on her extensive experience and involvement in various international conferences on women, Ms. Santiago extended a few words of advice to the delegates who will be deliberating on the special problems and needs of mountain women. She urged them to create public consciousness, express their demands, and move ahead to create spaces in political fora.

Underlining the fact that that inequality and gender underdevelopment is about power, she pointed out that all issues concerning women — land tenure, work load, health, environment, and rights — are problems about power and powerlessness. She therefore urged women to redefine power. “Power is the potency to act for the good,” she said, exhorting women to shed their resistance to claiming power in order to make the world “less brutish, less dangerous, less un-giving, less unreasonable.”

Speaking earlier, Director General of the International Centre for the Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Dr. Gabriel Campbell, observed that it was the first time that mountain women were coming together to chart a future course of action to make their lives better. Even as the world’s attention is focused on mountains this year, women who are the backbone of mountain livelihoods “are rarely heard, rarely govern, rarely seen for what they are, too often not allowed to grow, learn and energise their search for a better future,” he added.

In mountainous regions throughout the world, it is the women who are the main farmers, who select and sow the seeds, harvest, take care of livestock and care for forests. Yet, he said, they rarely own any land, obtain or control cash from market sales, receive information on technology or markets, or make policy decisions that affect their lives.

Referring to a study conducted in Nepal, he said mountain women work longer hours than men —

eleven hours of productive labour compared to seven hours by men — but do not reap the benefits.

Dr. Campbell said the four-day deliberations would be aimed at charting a course of future action, building networks for solidarity, and strengthening mountain women's rights to resources and influencing public affairs.

Ms. Chandni Joshi, Regional Director of UNIFEM, said CMW provided a platform for mountain women's voices and concerns, which had so far been absent from the development discourse. "Women know what they need — they need space and opportunity for equal participation like the one provided here," she said. Women all over, she said, faced barriers to their advancement but mountain women faced additional challenges like rough terrain, climate, limited access, and migration of men.

Others who spoke included representatives of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the Austrian Coordination Bureau and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), which is the UN's lead agency for the International Year of Mountains.

5. September 30th 2002: Countdown to the Conference

Paro, Bhutan: The Royal Bhutan Government places a great deal of importance on the welfare and development of its people in this mountainous country, according to the Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Chairperson of the National IYM (International Year of Mountains) Committee, Dasho Sangay Thinley.

Addressing a press conference here on the eve of the four-day international conference, Celebrating Mountain Women (CMW), Dasho Thinley welcomed media persons who have come from many countries and said that Bhutan was happy to host such an event. Delegates from as many as 34 countries are attending the conference, which begins on October 1.

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and the Mountain Forum have organised CMW. Dr. Gabriel Campbell, Director General of ICIMOD, said CMW was "a truly unique and creative effort to focus on issues being faced by women in the mountainous areas and also to celebrate their contribution."

2002 having been declared the Year of Mountains by the United Nations, ICIMOD had been working through the year in various fora on the issue. The main points emerging from CMW will be taken up for discussion at the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit to be held in Kyrgyzstan, later in October.

The contribution of women in the mountains is frequently overlooked, Dr. Campbell noted, "even though they are at the centre of the economy and the life in the mountains." In fact, the 'real' mountain farmers are women, he said. A detailed survey in Nepal had shown that mountain women spend

eleven hours a day in the farm and household whereas men spend only seven hours. "One of the biggest challenges of this meeting is to make heard the unheard and make visible the invisible," he observed.

Ms. Chandni Joshi, Regional Director of UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women), described CMW as a 'special event' for UNIFEM, which is one of the sponsors. And there could not have been a better place to host it than Bhutan, she added. Ms. Joshi emphasised that this was the first time in the world that mountain women were coming together to discuss issues concerning them. Men and women from across the globe have come to celebrate and deliberate on gender justice, she said.

Ms. Joshi also expressed the hope that at the end of CMW, concrete plans would emerge that would directly impact and empower mountain women at the grassroots.

The CEO of The Mountain Institute, Ms. Catherine Cooke, said that unlike women living in the plains, mountain women do not have access to networks and other fora. One of the challenges at CMW was the formation of more networks — nationally, regionally and internationally — to empower mountain women and enable their voices to be heard. Finally, all the speakers expressed their thanks to the Royal Bhutan Government for hosting such a unique global gathering.

6. Pre-conference

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and the Mountain Forum are organising an international gathering, "Celebrating Mountain Women", as part of the activities under the United Nations-sponsored International Year of Mountains (IYM) in 2002. This global gathering will be held in Bhutan from October 1-4, 2002.

The Honorable Prime Minister of Bhutan, His Excellency Lyonpo Dr. Kinzang Dorji, will inaugurate CMW. Irene Santiago (internationally known development expert) will deliver the keynote address; Catherine N. Cooke (President and CEO of The Mountain Institute) will give the valedictory address. The conference will end with the adoption of the Thimphu Declaration.

This first-of-its-kind global celebration of mountain women will focus on empowerment through innovation and entrepreneurship. It is unique in that it will facilitate face-to-face interaction of various actors in the development sector who do not normally come together. This is an occasion to draw the world's attention to the realities of life in the mountains. Additionally, it will provide a platform for mountain women to articulate their concerns, and share experiences and ideas related to the future of mountain livelihoods and cultures.

The conference will bring together approximately 200 people, including:

- Representatives of mountain women's formal and informal groups

- Indigenous mountain women
- Key academics/resource persons from different mountain regions
- Entrepreneurs
- Elected political leaders
- Media representatives
- Policy makers and planners
- Donors
- NGO representatives

The five theme areas are:

1. Natural Resources and Environment
2. Health and Well-being
3. Entrepreneurship
4. Legal, Political, and Human Rights
5. Culture and Indigenous Knowledge

These will be highlighted in the framework of research, policy, practices through various presentations, songs, stories, theatre, and videos. A cross-cutting theme will be gender roles and responsibilities. Various development players will come together to share the problems and progress of mountain women. Most importantly, the meeting will be a 'pinnacle' event in a process in which mountain women's networks will grow, strengthen, and contribute to more sensitive policies and practices that empower mountain women and communities in innovative ways. The two most compelling movements in the last century — women and environment — have been reflected in the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW). Both conferences highlighted the diverse needs of these movements and the failure of planned development to meet them. They stressed the need for research, analysis, and experience that examined policies and programmes through a gender lens, which would ensure empowerment of women and communities and, thereby, attain sustainable development.

Women living in the mountain regions of the world make a major contribution to the economy. They are the main producers of food crops and managers of common property resources, with principal responsibility for assuring food security. They have access to and control an enormous store of indigenous knowledge and wisdom. Despite this, there are multiple biases working against women as is evident in the institutions, policies, and processes of development. Women have little or no participation in policy planning and implementation that would meet their needs. Therefore, despite their predominant role in the primary sectors of economic development, mountain women today continue to be marginalised, with limited access to public and private services. To counter these trends, the experiences and perspectives of mountain women need to be heard, and their capacity for economic and social contributions to the community recognised and strengthened.

The international gathering in Bhutan will be a forum for the voices of mountain women. The programme

contains activities in preparation for the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit to be held in Kyrgyzstan from October 29 to November 1, 2002. The planned activities will put mountain women centre-stage; and mainstream their reality into the IYM discussions, thus enabling a major paradigm shift.

7. November 8th 2001

Mountain women are preparing to voice global solidarity at an international gathering that will be held here in Kathmandu in May 2002, bringing together almost 200 participants, including mountain women, NGOs, mountain entrepreneurs, researchers, senior government officials, funding agencies, and media representatives. Participants from approximately 65 countries, representing the world's major mountain ranges, especially the marginalised communities, are expected to attend.

The focus of the CMW event in May 2002 will be to show the strength and commitment of mountain women in making a positive contribution to local and national economies. Towards this end, discussions, activities, and events will highlight and showcase practical aspects of mountain life — their stories, songs, dances, foods, crafts, textiles, traditional knowledge, and efforts to make constructive change.

The meeting will also address issues of concern such as legal and political rights, health and well-being, conservation of traditional wisdom and natural resources, women's labour and opportunities for entrepreneurship.

This first-of-its-kind global celebration of mountain women will focus on empowerment through innovation and entrepreneurship. It is unique in that it will facilitate face-to-face interaction of various actors in the development sector that do not normally come together. The planned activities will put mountain women centre-stage, mainstream their reality into the IYM discussions and Rio+10, and enable a major paradigm shift.

Mountains were placed on the international agenda at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro; and the 1995 UN World Conference on Women in Beijing called for special attention to mountain women.

8. May 11th 2001

Kathmandu, Nepal: Twenty women from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin and North America concluded a three-day meeting during which they finalised a plan of action for a mountain women's agenda.

The meeting proposes an international gathering in May 2002 to be held in Kathmandu, bringing together almost 300 participants, including mountain women, NGOs, mountain entrepreneurs, researchers, parliamentarians, senior government officials, funding agencies, and media representatives.

Participants from approximately 70 countries representing the world's major mountain ranges, especially the marginalised communities, are expected to attend.

The focus of the meeting will be to show the strength and commitment of mountain women in making a positive contribution to local and national economies. Towards this end, discussions, activities, and events will highlight and showcase practical aspects of mountain life — their stories, songs, dances, foods, crafts, textiles, traditional knowledge, and efforts to make constructive change.

The meeting will also address issues of concern, such as legal and political rights, health and well-being, conservation of traditional wisdom and natural resources, and women's labour and opportunities for entrepreneurship.

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development and the Mountain Forum are organising the May 2002 event, planned as a part of the UN-declared International Year of Mountains. The decision to hold this event was made at a meeting of the Mountain Forum Council in Cusco, Peru in 2000.

As a forerunner to the May meeting, a curtain-raiser is being planned on March 8, International Women's Day.

Mountains were placed on the international agenda at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro; and the 1995 UN World Conference on Women in Beijing called for special attention to mountain women.

Articles on CMW

The First Global Mountain Summit

By Anita Anand

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, November 4, (WFS): The largest-ever gathering of governments, international organisations, NGOs, and individuals concerned with mountain issues — the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit (BGMS) — closed last week, as the culminating event of the UN International Year of Mountains (IYM).

It adopted the Bishkek Mountain Platform, which is designed to guide governments and all involved with mountain issues on future activities and action in the 21st century. Its ultimate goal is to improve the livelihoods of mountain people, to protect mountain ecosystems, and to use mountain resources more wisely.

At the global level, the Bishkek Platform supports the International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions, agreed to at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg in September 2002. A generous grant from the governments of Italy and Switzerland will enable the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) — the lead agency — and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), to ensure that follow-up institutional arrangements are made, including support to the proposed creation of a Network of Development Mountain States and Regions which forms part of the Partnership.

Although small by most UN standards, the Summit was an important one, not just for mountain people, but for all citizens of the world. Mountain areas cover 26 per cent of the Earth's land surface and host 12 per cent of its people. They provide essential resources for both mountain and lowland people, including fresh water for at least half of humanity, critical reserves of biodiversity, food, forests, and minerals. And, according to the Bishkek Platform,

climate change, natural hazards, and other forces are threatening the complex webs of life that mountain support.

All year long, the IYM has been celebrated with great élan across the world's mountain regions. Mountain people, many of whom have never been out of their ranges, have travelled to attend workshops, seminars, and conferences. They have been joined by others who care and work in and around mountain issues — NGOs, policy makers, media professionals, entrepreneurs and representatives of the donor community.

Just prior to BGMS, another one-of-a-kind meeting — Celebrating Mountain Women (CMW) — was held in Thimphu, Bhutan, in the first week of October. Hosted and organised by the Nepal-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), the gathering in Bhutan produced the Thimphu Declaration, which was carried to Bishkek and presented at the plenary of the opening day of the BGMS.

As a follow-up strategy to CMW, the Global Mountain Women's Partnership (GMWP) was launched at Bishkek. The main objective of the Partnership is to promote the interest of mountain women, improve their livelihoods, and provide a framework for cooperation between mountain women and all stakeholders. At Bishkek, CMW representatives participated in roundtable sessions, addressed the plenary, provided inputs for drafting the Bishkek Platform for Action, and presented a session on the GMWP. About 600 people from 60 countries attended the Summit. Most delegations were from Central Asia. There was a strong South Asian presence from Nepal and Bhutan. India's Minister of State for Tourism and Culture, Vinod Khanna, led a small delegation. Participation from Latin America and Africa was low. Coming at the end of the year, and six weeks after the WSSD, fatigue and shortage of

funds were a major reason. About twenty-five per cent of the Summit was female. There were few women in delegations and none as head of delegations. There were no high-profile UN heads of agencies or donor institutions.

Barring all this, the Summit happened in the backdrop of the rather awesome snow covered central Tian Shan and Pamir Alay ranges, past the Ala-Too Square where a magnificent statue of Lenin — with his outstretched right arm — invited you to the view.

Most people attending the Summit said that Bishkek was only the beginning. And in coming together to define their agenda, they realise that the concerns of developing and developed mountain countries are sometimes similar, and sometimes different. "The differences are related to degrees of development. In a country like Bhutan, infrastructure such as roads, communications, and schools are a major challenge, and must be balanced between development and environmental considerations," said Dr. Kinzang Dorji, Prime Minister of Bhutan.

No declaration is worth the paper it is written on if it does not have sound financial backing and a practical plan of action. As partnerships were a major strategic intervention and follow up, there was optimism and caution.

"We see partnerships as informal, benchmarking, quick, efficient, non-bureaucratic, and as keeping a log of what's happening, where," said Maritta Koch-Weser of NGO Earth 3000. She went on to stress that those partnerships should have institutional homes, as without this, it would be difficult to take them forward.

"We want to be cautious about the partnerships that mushroom here," said Remo Gautshi, Deputy Director-General of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, a major donor for the IYM and mountain development.

The Bishkek Declaration calls for capacity building and invites the science and technology community to come into the partnerships in programmes of research, monitoring and early warning systems. There is recognition that trans-boundary mountain regions have specific environmental, social, political, cultural, and economic characteristics, and potential for development. Therefore, they require specific approaches and resources.

At the national level, governments are called upon to delegate political decisions to the lowest possible level of decision-making, and to develop legislation, policies, and procedures in favour of mountain areas. There is a call for spatially disaggregated socioeconomic and environmental data that hampers the recognition and specific analysis of mountain livelihood issues. Governments are also called upon to introduce compensation mechanisms for goods and services provided by mountain communities, enterprises, or natural and cultural landscapes through negotiations between affected peoples and the beneficiaries. And to use information and

communication technologies to bring benefits to mountain people.

Mountains are a source of livelihood, beauty, spirituality, relaxation, and an opportunity to examine our roots. Most people living in the mountains experience hardships due to their remoteness and lack of infrastructure. If life is hard in the plains, it is doubly so in the mountains. The Summit brought this, and more, to light.

The Summit did not focus only on the problems, but what has worked, what can work, and what is needed to make things work. It brought together a year of hard work on mountain issues — a good start.

Mountain Women Raise Questions, Give Answers

By Anita Anand

Chambery, France, July 8, (WFS) — In the majestic city hall of the town of Chambery, located in Southern France, a two-day meeting on mountain women begins. Andre Gilbertas, President of Montanea, welcomes the participants.

"During the French Revolution, Sylvie de Concordet exclaimed: 'At a time when women's heads are being cut off, it is only natural that they demand to know why'." Gilbertas stresses the fact that questions about mountain women are complex, difficult and sensitive. Mountain women face the same problems as women of the plains, but more amplified.

The United Nations General Assembly announced 2002 as the International Year of Mountains (IYM), and Chambery is the French focal point. This beautiful medieval city, nestled in the valley between the Bauges and Chartreuse massifs, served as host for the European preparatory meeting for Celebrating Mountain Women (CMW). A global gathering, CMW, will be held in Thimphu, Bhutan, in October this year.

How different are the lives and concerns of European mountain women from women in other parts of the world? "In traditional Alpine society, women were the first to get up and the last to go to bed. Just like their male peers, girls started working from the moment they could walk. Despite this, the financial well-being of the family, community, and village revolved around the women," says Michela Zucca of the Centre for Alpine Ecology in Trento, Italy.

From the times of the hunters and gatherers, young girls and mothers maintained the ancient inheritance of knowledge, which allowed for the exploitation of forest resources, says Zucca. Medicinal herbs, small fruits, and mushrooms were collected and sold in markets. They worked the loom, knitted, provided clothing and linen, and made their homes more welcoming. In some areas, women would rent rooms or do 'seasonal' work in hotels.

There was no such thing as a holiday for women. A man had the local tavern, where a woman was not

allowed to enter unless she went to collect her drunken husband. In times of economic hardship, women left the villages before the men in some areas. Under the 'hereditary farm' system, daughters were forbidden to inherit land if they had brothers. They either married a prospective heir, or became servants in their fathers' homes. Otherwise they left home for evermore, and did the most menial of jobs far from their own village. Under these conditions, female protests were voiced in lyrical form or by telling or rewording stories of legends and myths. Thus women also became the custodians of customs, memory, and culture.

Migration from the mountain areas to plains is worldwide, and also common in the Alps. Zucca says that women began migrating when the men left. But women also left to get away from priests, villages, fathers, brothers, and husbands. She points out that in the last few years, the situation has changed. Disillusioned by the urban reality, more women in the Alpine region have begun economic activity and initiatives.

The main economy of the Alps — luxury hotels, mountain lift systems, and tendering of public works — is in the hands of men. But the economy of the valley or the family business that allows people to continue living in the high mountains is in the hands of women. Tourism has for a long time overtaken agricultural income, animal breeding, and rearing. It is the main income earner in the Alps, and in the hands of women. The majority of the tourism businesses are family-run, and even though the proprietor is a man, it is women who manage the business.

The Alps and Sardinia, both regions with great pastoral traditions, are leading the way in linking agriculture to tourism. In Sardinia, women have founded a farm-tourism association. "There is a new economic concept: the identity economy," says Zucca. Businesses whose origins date back to a remote past are developing in a modern way, with modern technology, and with different goals and objectives. In addition to generating an income, these initiatives preserve and assist a 're-launch' of traditional cultures, allowing them to become the base for supplementing incomes.

This is also happening in other parts of the world, a positive reconciliation of the old and new ways of working and making a living. The transition economies of Eastern Europe — Bulgaria, Slovenia, Albania, Armenia, and Ukraine — bring similar stories, with a difference. They are younger countries, but with years of tradition, not unlike what is happening in the Alps. There is a dearth of gender-disaggregated data, and few pro-women policies that are being implemented.

"Domestic violence in Albania remains behind closed doors and is supported by the traditional and patriarchal attitude attendant to the Kanun (code of customary laws used in northern Albania)," says Xhixhi Xheni Sinakoli. Despite this and other discrimination and obstacles facing women, there is an overwhelming need of women in this region to

be economically independent, and the entrepreneurial spirit is fierce.

"Women played an important role in the first entrepreneurial wave in Slovenia during the early 1990s," says Patricija Verbole. The transition from self-management to a market economy removed many administrative barriers for the establishment of a new venture. The service sector grew, and global trends increasingly favoured conditions that fostered women's entrepreneurship. In addition, says Verbole, high unemployment and a job market in which women were not skilled to enter the workforce, or be in managerial positions, encouraged them to the turn to entrepreneurial activities.

The European gathering agreed on a Chambéry Declaration, which will serve as a draft to the Thimphu Declaration, to be finalised in the October global gathering, and sent to the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit (BGMS) — the final event of the IYM.

The Chambéry Declaration calls for recognition of the strength and contribution of mountain women to the national and international economy. It seeks policy measures that enable mountain women to create a life of dignity for themselves and their communities. It spells out what an enabling environment for health and well-being should be, and it stresses the importance of structures for information dissemination, knowledge sharing, and networking, and the promotion of indigenous knowledge and culture. It hails the entrepreneurial spirit of mountain women and calls for more support for expanding this activity for women.

Raising questions and giving answers is a first step for European mountain women. Working to get structures to work for them is a longer haul. But moving mountains has never been easy, and of all mountain people, women know this best.

Mountain Women: Moving Mountains, Moving Women

By Anita Anand and Ojaswi Josse

*(source: Mountain Research and Development
Vol. 22, NO. 3, August 2002 (Women in
Mountains: Gathering Momentum))*

It is 2002, a special year for mountain people. The United Nations proclaimed it the "International Year of Mountains" (IYM). A whole year devoted to issues and concerns of mountain people, and mountain women.

Are these concerns and issues different to people living in the plains? Yes, and no. Women in the mountains and plains face discrimination no matter where they live.

The difference is in the level and their ability to do something about it. Mountain women live in more remote areas, and their challenges are multiplied a hundred times over, compared to their sisters in the plains. Whether it is collecting water, fuel, and

fodder, going to a health centre, or sending a girl child to school — it is that much more difficult. If women in the plains feel that policies ignore their needs, mountain women feel it doubly so.

Mountain women's concerns have been the subject of discussion in at least two important international forums. First, at the UN Conferences on Women and second, at the UN Conferences on Environment and Development. While the first women's conference was held in 1975 and the environment conference in 1972, the issue did not come up proactively on the agenda until the 1980s and 1990s, after the discussion on women and development and then gender and development. From these sprouted many smaller regional, national, and local forums in which greater understanding of mountain women's needs and realities were explored and revealed. The discussions at the macro level filtered down to the micro level, and vice-versa.

Because of this impetus, many things happened. More research and action was activated. Individuals and organisations working in mountain areas began to pay attention to women's specific needs. There is better understanding of mountain women's realities internationally, by region, within nations, and in local communities. And there are renewed efforts to lobby for, and do advocacy for more gender sensitive policies, programmes and opportunities for mountain women.

With the growth of NGOs and civil society organisations and movements, mountain women have access to information and services. While they may not benefit directly and immediately from the services, simply because they are non-existent, knowledge about their existence is a start. Organisations and individuals committed to and passionate about mountain people have been working and serving as important intermediaries to women.

In changing times, mountain women feel the acute need to be financially independent as most men in the communities migrate to the plains. In most cases it is because of the need to search of a living, coupled with harsh mountain conditions, lack of opportunity, and the lure of the plains. Women and children are often left to fend for themselves. Income generation from what is available in their environment has become a crucial issue for women. Knowledge of markets, products, transportation, and how to manage small businesses are very much on the minds of mountain women.

Mountain communities, despite their remoteness, are not immune from change. They go out into the world and the world comes in to them. This means a re-definition of mountain life at many levels: for one, relations between men and women and their roles in and outside the home. With more women taking on roles outside the home (which they were engaged in anyway) and men migrating, who will do which work becomes important. Traditionally, as in all other communities, roles have been gendered. A pressing question for those working on mountain issues is whether these roles be challenged or left

as they are.

The mountains are a storehouse of indigenous knowledge. Medicinal plants, biodiversity, animal products, coffee and tea growing — the list is long. Can mountain women harness these and become managers of their lives and fates? National and international corporations are also keen to exploit mountains of their rich resources. Can women be part of these ventures, or will they lose out to vested interests?

Mountain women's participation in local decision making happens in various ways. Many communities have their own councils, where women are appointed or nominated. In many parts of the world, it seems that they come to these positions by being active in movements to represent women, often related to an income generation activity. Forming cooperatives, syndicates and groups, they get empowered and go on to empower other women. These developments have emerged by promoting activities and schemes whereby women can come together, often to avoid exploitation by middle men (and they are often men), have access to micro-lending and small start up schemes, and so on. In this, women of the plains have worked with their mountain sisters, and the ventures have been a collaborative sharing of skills and knowledge, and many valuable lessons have emerged.

One important forum where some of these developments and findings will be shared is "Celebrating Mountain Women", an international gathering of mountain women, in Thimphu, Bhutan in October 2002. Hosted by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) based in Nepal, it will bring together about 250 mountain women, researchers, media professionals, policy makers, NGOs and civil society representatives, and the donor community. A major focus of the gathering will be the sharing of mountain women's lives and how they have been able to empower themselves, their families and communities. Under the theme areas of Natural Resources and Environment, Health and Well-being, Culture and Indigenous Knowledge, Political and Human Rights, Entrepreneurship, and Gender Roles and Responsibilities, the areas of policy, research and practice will be discussed. The Mountain Forum (see box) provides networking linkages to groups of mountain women around the world who are participating in CMW.

The idea of calling it a celebration was deliberate. While mountain women have hard lives, are undoubtedly exploited, discriminated against, and disfranchised, they also have enormous resilience, strength and power. It is the latter aspects that the gathering wishes to capture and take forward. The goal is to empower women as potential agents of their own change, and to expose them, in all their strength and vulnerability, to people and communities are that do not normally witness this side of their personality.

While mountain women are marginalised, there are exceptions. They represent many different ethnic

A growing group of mountain women and their advocates are coming together to voice common concerns through the women's network of the global Mountain Forum. A "Mountain Women" email list was created in 1998, and now serves over 700 subscribers, with the majority coming from developing countries. The Mountain Forum also hosts a dedicated web page for mountain women. <<http://www.mtnforum.org/women/>>, including a calendar of events, an on-line library, and other resources

groups, and are not homogeneous across a geographical region. Customs and customary laws may have favoured a better status for mountain women in the past (such as more involvement in decision-making and access to household assets), as opposed to the women in the plains; but this is changing.

More recently, with the mainstreaming of mountain women and communities being a development norm, the somewhat higher status in certain aspects enjoyed by mountain women is on the slide. Paradoxically, researchers talk about the inaccessibility of mountain areas, but they have not demonstrated this feature when it comes to the spread of practices and norms that marginalise and work against mountain women.

Similar and different

The status of women in the mountain areas varies enormously, even in one region. For example in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan (HKH) region, in the village of Istalif in Afghanistan, the people of the Tajik and Pashtu communities are predominantly Muslim. Their area is very remote; there are no basic amenities, and no transport. Women do work in the home, care for the house, family, kitchen garden, and livestock. Men fetch water and fuelwood, do all the farm work, and cultivate fruit. Men make all the decisions, in and outside the home, and women cannot even decide what to cook. There is almost no education for women and very little for men. Women do not participate in public life, and only meet in seclusion during family and sometimes community events. Many men are absent and inactive due to the depression and/or war injuries. Women have taken on roles and responsibilities outside the home.

At the other end of the spectrum, in Bhutan, there is no rigid division of labour, but men plough, and women handle manure. Mostly women do household work and childcare, but men also participate in this to an extent. Both market goods, and share community work. Women fetch water. Bartering, marketing, and pastoral work is shared by both sexes. Daughters inherit parental land and property in the north, east, and west. In the south, sons inherit. Women make decisions equally with men.

Girls and boys are given an equal access to education, and the ratio of girls to boys is 1:1. Female literacy levels are low among older women. Rural women participate actively in community and local meetings and are vocal and strong. There are few women in civil service and in visible public positions. Due to urbanisation, mobility, and levels of education, women's workloads have increased, but so has their participation in public life as well as elected local bodies.

To understand the full implication of differences within countries, Nepal presents a good case study. The greatest challenge is limited availability of data, without which it is difficult to make sound policy and programme decisions.

As the distribution of poverty within the country is widespread, it is hard to point out where the poor (and poor women) are concentrated. However, district-wide statistics are available through the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) and other national sources. A large number of prosperous and well-educated people in the Kathmandu Valley enjoy a fairly high quality of life, which corresponds to medium-income countries of the world. But, in the remote mountainous districts in the Far and Mid Western region, and clusters in the southern fertile plains (known as the Terai), which make up of one-third of the districts, people live in appallingly low standards. An ICIMOD-SNV study showed that overall literacy rate in Kathmandu district is 69 per cent, while in Humla and Kalikot it is less than 20 per cent. Infant mortality is 32 out of 1000 live births in Mustang, while it is 201 in Mugu. The study indicates that child deprivation, gender discrimination, and women's empowerment are more critical in those districts where overall literacy is lower than in those districts where the overall literacy rate is higher. The study points out, among other things, that policy and programme interventions should be in areas with a higher concentration of disadvantaged groups (such as the Terai area), keeping in mind the value of infrastructure (physical and social) in attaining higher levels of development.

Beyond the International Year of Mountains

The process of the development of mountain areas can be nudged along by understanding the vital role that women have played and are playing in their environment. This needs to be based more in the present day reality and context, and solutions must be sought that will empower women.

Although the infrastructure and policies that will empower mountain women may not all be in place, what exists can be harnessed and brought together, so that various interested parties — mountain women and their communities, researchers, entrepreneurs, NGOs, markets, and producers — all work together to make it a success.

The year of mountains provides an excellent opportunity to create a momentum in which women can move mountains, so that the mountains, in turn, can move them.

References

SNV-ICIMOD (1997) *Districts of Nepal: Indicators of Development*. ICIMOD, Kathmandu.

Gurung, Jeannette D., Editor. (1999). *Searching for Women's Voices in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas*. ICIMOD, Kathmandu.

Mountain Women on the Agenda

By Anita Anand

Kathmandu, (WFS): Twenty women from Africa, Asia, Europe, as well as Latin and North America concluded a three-day meeting in Kathmandu during which they drafted a two-year plan of action, which they called the "Mountain Women's Agenda".

The meeting proposed an international gathering in May 2002 to be held in Nepal, which will bring together almost 300 participants — mountain women, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), mountain entrepreneurs, researchers, parliamentarians, senior government officials, funding agencies, and media representatives. The participants will be from about 70 countries, representing the world's major mountain ranges, especially the marginalised communities.

The focus of the proposed meeting would be to show the strength and commitment of mountain women in making a positive contribution to local and national economies. Towards this, discussions, activities, and events will highlight and showcase practical aspects of mountain life — stories, songs, dances, foods, crafts, textiles, traditional knowledge, as well as efforts to make constructive change.

The meeting will also address issues of concern such as legal and political rights, health and well-being, conservation of traditional wisdom and natural resources, women's labour and opportunities for entrepreneurship.

The Mountain Women's Agenda will be part of the many activities during 2002, which was designated International Year of Mountains (IYM) by the United Nations resolution in November 1998, based on an initiative from Kyrgyzstan. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN has been appointed the lead agency in collaboration with governments, NGOs, and other UN agencies.

The May 2002 meeting will be organised by a secretariat located at the Nepal-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), and the Mountain Forum, a network founded in 1995 along with its nodes in all regions, active worldwide. The idea for a meeting to focus specifically on women in the IYM was first mooted at a meeting of the Mountain Forum Council in Cusco, Peru last year.

The Action Plan of the Mountain Women's Agenda includes establishing a Steering Committee, selected from the women attending the meeting, which would

guide the work of the secretariat based at ICIMOD. Regional focal points would identify mountain women's groups and build networks. They would prioritise areas for action, and document promising women's initiatives through video, radio, and oral testimonies.

Interactive databases are planned, as well as an e-conference with regional moderators and NGO gateways to bring in marginalised women's voices. The FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) South Asia Regional Office, have made financial commitments. ICIMOD and the Steering Committee will be seeking further funds to enable the proposed plan of action to be carried out.

Why an International Year of Mountains? The concern is not new. In the last decade of the 20th century, the UN hosted a series of international conferences, to bring together collective wisdom and concerns on issues facing humankind.

The 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (or the Earth Summit as it was popularly called), in its final document, Agenda 21, devoted an entire chapter to sustainable mountain development. It highlighted the urgency of action focusing on two areas: generating and strengthening knowledge on the ecology and sustainable development of mountain systems; and promoting integrated watershed development and alternative livelihood opportunities. The FAO was appointed Task Manager of this work.

Three years later, at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, the Platform of Action, the document adopted by 184 countries, also recognised the value and marginalisation of mountain women.

How much of the world is in mountain areas? Cartographic compilations show that 48 per cent of the world's total terrestrial surface lies above 500 metres; 27 per cent above 1000 metres; and 11 per cent above 2000 metres. These mountain areas contain high biological diversity, often of global relevance. They are important centres of crop diversity, a key factor in agriculture.

Several issues of importance arise with regard to mountain areas. Due to the very nature of the terrain, all land-use activities are disadvantaged compared to the lowland, bringing livelihood and environmental problems into centre-stage. Mountains often constitute geographical and political borders and can be sites of conflict, often owing to their natural resources and strategic relevance.

Because of their remoteness and inaccessibility, they are sometimes places of refuge for political opposition groups and fringe movements. The remoteness has enabled protection of areas as well as diversity. But much of this is changing as the outside world comes in closer, through media, traffic with the plains, and lack of paid work. All these changes affect women doubly so.

The 2002 gathering of the Mountain Women's Agenda hopes to provide a platform to discuss all this and more.

March 15, 2003

Women in Virginia, Bhutan Share Common Concerns

By Jessica Fischer

Trekking through the Himalayan mountains and conversing with the prime minister of a remote Asian kingdom are definitely among the highlights of Renda Keith and Anne Leibig's trip to Bhutan last year.

But the realisation that many of the issues they face living in the foothills of the Appalachians are shared by mountain women all over the world was by far the most valuable souvenir they brought home.

"Those women are a lot like us," said Keith, a mother of four who works as a home visitor for the Head Start programme in Dungannon, Va. "They have the same issues about childcare, they have the same issues about making sure their family is provided for. They have the same issues about, 'Am I going to be warm in the winter? Are my kids going to have a good schooling? If they get sick, how is the health care?' It's the same issues, just a different world."

The Scott County, Va., residents travelled halfway around the world to Bhutan, a tiny country nestled in the Himalayan mountains between India and China in October 2002 to attend the "Celebrating Mountain Women" conference sponsored by the United Nations as part of its "International Year of Mountains."

Keith and Leibig joined some 250 other women from 35 countries across the globe at the conference, held in the capital city of Thimpu, as representatives of In Praise of Mountain Women, a non-profit grassroots organisation based in St. Paul, Va.

"We had a big gathering in Abingdon in 1990," Leibig said. "People told their stories, and we talked about things we wanted to do to help make women's lives better. It was such a good event that people said, 'Let's do it again!'"

They've gathered almost every other year since. At a meeting last August, 48 women from five states got together in Abingdon to create a report they asked Keith and Leibig to carry with them to Bhutan. In it, they made suggestions for promoting the continued development of women and their families living in mountain regions. They also brought items expressing life in the Appalachian Mountains, which fabric artist Margaret Gregg of Erwin used to create a five-foot quilted collage banner.

Along with the report and the banner, Keith and Leibig introduced the Celebrating Mountain Women participants to 'the recipe,' a process In Praise of Mountain Women came up with as a way to lend structure and support to meetings of the mind in a nurturing and goal-oriented way.

"Our message of how we do things is as important as what we do," Leibig said. "When I facilitated one of the four workshops we had, my part of facilitating was to help them follow this process."

They also had a chance to showcase their Appalachian ways during the indigenous people's walk. Keith and Leibig wore hiny binders designed by local storyteller Anndrena Belcher and flatfooted to "Wildwood Flower."

"They liked our energy when we went out on stage," Leibig said. "Everybody was cheering, and we were just dancing."

The Scott County women even caught the attention of the prime minister of Bhutan, His Excellency Lyonpo Kinzang Dorji, who was so impressed with the report Keith gave on the Head Start programme in Dungannon that he invited her to return to Bhutan and begin a Head Start programme there — quite an honour, considering the country carefully limits its contacts with the outside world. Only 5594 tourists were allowed into Bhutan in 2002.

"They have been very careful about not letting people from other places come into their country because they want to protect it," Leibig said. "They just recently opened it up to visitors, and as it turns out, this Celebrating Mountain Women event, which was hosted by a group in Nepal through the United Nations, was really the first international conference ever held in Bhutan. They don't really want a whole lot of people to come, so we felt really blessed to be there."

When they weren't busy with conference activities, Keith said she and Leibig got to do lots of sightseeing. They visited the royal palace in Thimpu, took a cab ride through the countryside and played with the local children, who were able to speak English.

Keith, an amateur photographer, documented their experiences, taking almost 70 rolls of film of everything from the monastery at the summit of Tiger's Nest to a 100-year-old lady and her cat.

"All the people I talked to would say, 'Yeah, you can take my picture, but I know I'll never see it,'" she said. "I heard that so much. 'I'll never have it. I'll never get to see it. I've never seen a picture of my children.' I've got thousands of pictures of my children."

Keith decided then and there she would make every effort to get copies of those photos back to the people in Bhutan. To raise the money needed to fund the project, Keith and Leibig are giving slide-show presentations on their trip to groups throughout the area. Their first presentation was at the March 3 meeting of the AT&T Women in Norton.

"It's a way we can raise money and help people learn about a different part of the world," Leibig said. "By us learning about different countries, it's really a way to bring the world more together." Keith and Leibig will also share their story at the next In Praise of Mountain Women gathering in October.

Anyone interested in scheduling a presentation on the Bhutan Photo Project or finding out more about the next In Praise of Mountain Women gathering should call (276) 762-5050 or email khelbert@naxs.net.

Tax-deductible donations may be sent to In Praise of Mountain Women at PO Box 660, St. Paul, Va.,

24283. Cheques should be made out to the Federation of Communities in Service, the fiscal agent for In Praise of Mountain Women.

*Copyright 2002, Kingsport Publishing Corporation.
All rights reserved*

List of Films Screened

Himal Associations, based in Kathmandu, was sub-contracted to plan for, mobilise for, and organise a film festival on mountain women during the four-day conference in Paro, Bhutan. On the basis of subject matter, relevance, and film quality and duration, the following films were chosen for screening at the Celebrating Mountain Women Film Festival.

Ten films were shown in total during the event to an enthusiastic crowd. This added to the richness of this unique gathering and focused on the various issues relevant to mountain women. The films that were shown are as follows:

Afghan Women, Afghanistan

Kham Zam Yodan (Be Happy), India, 22 minutes
Director: Biyot Projna Tripathy
Producer: Biyot Projna Tripathy

The film speaks about the fear and pain of a seventy-five-year-old Ladakhi mother who is a victim of the border problem between India and Pakistan. Is the peace of the Himalayan valley vanishing?

The Dragon Bride, Nepal, 45 minutes
Producer: BBC/National Geographic
Director: Joanna Head

Among the Nyinba of Humla in north-west Nepal, no bride is more desired than a woman born in the year of the dragon. Tsering Kangzun is a Dragon Bride, and at 15 years, it is time for her to marry. Reluctant to leave home, Tsering Kangzum has a greater challenge in marriage than most. She will marry not just one husband, but, according to tradition, will be shared by four brothers. Intimate and emotionally revealing, this is a vivid portrayal of the sacrifices that must be made for survival in the harsh hills of Humla.

Faces of Eve, Pakistan, 25 minutes
Director: Shireen Pasha
Producer: The Filmmakers

This film deals with a group of women in the mountain areas of Pakistan who changed their lives by organising themselves and learning income-generating skills. The film was sent to the Beijing Conference by the Family Planning Association of Pakistan, which commissioned the film.

Garhwal: A Home in the Himalayas, India, 22 minutes
Producer: Cyril R. Raphael
Director: Ramon Chibb and Anku Pande

In the mountain villages of Garhwal in northern India, the men have migrated to the cities in search of jobs since the produce from their fields is hardly enough to feed the family for half the year. As such, women are managers and planners. The women leave home for the jungles at dawn in search of firewood and fodder. But they also plant trees because the jungles are also the source of water they need for irrigation. Natural resource management is not just a concept for them, but a way of life.

Inheritance, India, 57 minutes
Director: Ananya Chatterjee
Producer: Ananya Chatterjee

Uttaradhikar is a personalised documentary on the Uttarakhand movement as seen through the eyes of five women of Kumaon and Garhwal. The women belong to three different generations and their points of view establish the changing perspective to the movement that time imparts to each successive generation.

Rather than narrating the history of the movement through the beaten track of a historian, the

documentary allows the story of the movement to unfold itself through the eyes of these women.

Mask of Desire, (Mukundo), Nepal, 105 min
Producer: Tsering Rhitar Sherpa
Director: Tsering Rhitar Sherpa

Dipak and Swarwati are a happily married couple with two daughters, but long for a boy. The sadhu (holy man) tells Swarwati that only the goddess Tripura at a small brick shrine by the riverbank can answer her prayers for a son. The pregnant Swarwati gives birth to a boy but he soon dies, causing great sorrow, anger, and guilt. The sadhu then suggests that she be treated by particular 'mata', the vehicle of the goddess.

Paradise on a River of Hell, India

Thirst for Knowledge, China

A Tale Unfolds, Pakistan

Taller than the Mountains, Pakistan, 33 minutes
Director: Huma Mustafa Beg and Dr. Farooq Beg
Producer: Huma Mustafa Beg and Dr. Farooq Beg

In northern Pakistan, women play a dominant and crucial role in running the household and are the source of all indigenous knowledge. In the absence of men who migrate to the cities in search of jobs, women are responsible for bringing up the children and managing the household. But women are treated "like dirt" by the men. However, with social mobilisation and emerging role models among women, their lives are changing, however slow this process may be. Men and women today are seen sitting together and planning the future. Traditional taboos are beginning to crumble.

The Women in Yazhe Village, China, 50 minutes
Director: Zhang Shengyong
Producers: Sun Jianying and Lu Liang

The women of Baima, Tibet, don't worry about their family's economic situation. They have little say on

family issues. Villagers here make their living from the mountains. Lumbering was once their main source of income, but this has now changed to pasturing and planting grain. When the government issued the order to stop cutting down the natural forest, the women of Yazhe village worked together to find new ways for their village to develop and prosper.

A Woman's Place, Switzerland/ Bhutan, 58 minutes
Director: Marianne Pletscher
Producer: Swiss Television/ DOK

This film tells the story of farming women in a valley in Bhutan, a valley with a matrilineal culture, where women own the house and the land and their daughters inherit it, a place where women have more rights than men, but only in certain matters. Tina, a farming woman from Switzerland, visits this magic and remote place and makes friends, especially with one woman, Dorje Lama. They get to know each other and develop a deep friendship. Half a year later, Dorje Lama visits her Swiss friend and is exposed to Swiss life, Swiss culture, a rich, abundant world with very different values.

The Winter at Elevation of 3000 Metres, China, 62 minutes
Director: Leng Shan
Producers: Sun Jianying and Lu Liang

Cong Huan is a 9-year-old girl who lives in a mountain village at an altitude of 3000 metres to which no roads lead. There are nearly 100 households together in this village, all descendants of one of China's oldest ethnic groups, the Qiang. Within this group, the language is spoken but not written. Cong Huan cannot speak it. Her father takes her to the elders to listen to the Qiang stories and learn the Qiang language. Her mother teaches her Qiang women's virtues and skills, as well as songs and dances. She must adapt to her living environment.

The Mountain Costume Show



A woman from the Indian Himalayas
dances to her traditional music

Women from the Bolivian Andes





Traditional Bhutanese attire, the 'kira', showing intricately woven fabric



An elaborate display of Indian and Kurdish traditional dress



A woman from Kyrgyzstan in traditional clothes



A Nepali Sherpa woman shows off her costume

