Evolution of Mountain Farming Systems

Sustainable Development
Policy Implications

International Workshop Report

Edited by
Sugandha Shrestha

Proceedings of the FAO/ICIMOD Seminar at
Lumle Agricultural Research Centre, Nepal
October 3-6, 1994

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View of the Himalayas - B.R. Bhatta

Inset - Harvesting Wheat, the ICIMOD Jikhu Khola Project Area

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FOREWORD

Historically, farming is a major source of sustenance for people in the hills and mountains. Because of this, at macro-level, there has been a strong emphasis on improving farming systems, producing mixed results. Many areas have rather depicted several negative changes in various aspects of farming and natural resource usage systems. Concurrently, some positive changes realised in terms of production and consumption in localised areas were also reported to be subject to environmental degradation. Hence the sustainability of hill and mountain farming systems has become a global concern.

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) is committed to promoting the development of an economically and environmentally sound ecosystem and to improving the living conditions of mountain communities. At ICIMOD, Mountain Farming Systems (MFS) is a dominant programme, and it is actively involved in developing a fuller understanding of the sustainability and unsustainability of mountain farming systems.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations has also been actively involved in documenting various sustainability issues of farming and natural resource systems.

To synthesise the findings, based on comparative studies from different parts of the mountain areas of the Andes, Africa, and the Asia and Pacific Region, ICIMOD and FAO jointly organised an international workshop on the **Evolution of Hill and Mountain Farming Systems** in order to draw sustainable development policy implications.

This workshop has been able to analyse the general trend of various types of major farming systems, reflecting their past, present, and future directions. Despite the general trend of unsustainability in the present situation, hopes were raised concerning improvement in hill and mountain farming systems and the natural resource base leading to sustainability. For this, policy guidelines have been drawn. In addition, this workshop also discussed the emerging tenets of sustainability affecting mountain development, in general, and hill and mountain farming systems in particular. Therefore, we believe this document has been able to generate some insights into methods of promoting sustainable hill and mountain farming systems.

On behalf of ICIMOD, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to FAO for jointly organising this international workshop. Thanks are also due to LARC for hosting the workshop. In particular, I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Ram P. Yadav, former member of the National Planning Commission of HMG/Nepal, Mr. K.H. Friedrich, Chief of AGSP, FAO (and co-signer of this foreword), representatives of participating countries and national and international organisations, and resource persons for their valuable contributions. Sincere thanks are rendered to the Ford Foundation, New Delhi, for their strong support to the Sustainable Mountain Agriculture Programme of ICIMOD.

For ICIMOD, Mr. Sugandha Shrestha coordinated the Workshop, and Dr. Mahesh Banskota, the Deputy Director General of ICIMOD, and Mr. Anupam Bhatia made important contributions to this report. Others who were involved in organising this successful workshop and preparing the report also deserve sincere thanks.

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