

Day Three

Concluding Session

Mr. Robert Pollack
Director General, ICIMOD

First of all I would like to apologise for not being in a position to participate or contribute to the proceedings of this workshop. The few times I listened, I was very impressed by the commitment and enthusiasm of the different participants, whether of the person giving the first introduction or whether it was of those taking part in follow-up discussions or involved in the intensity of discussion on recommendations this morning. If the recommendations are adopted without discussion, it is very unlikely that the recommendations will be followed up. But, when so many people participate in discussing the recommendations, it is a sign that the matter has been taken very seriously. Therefore, I am very pleased to note the discussion. I am also happy that ICIMOD is associated with this workshop.

You must have noticed that there was front page information about Lanchangzong in 'The Kathmandu

Times' on 12th March. This is a very good example of the role of ICIMOD in bringing countries, governments, NGOs, and scientists together on a common platform and with a common interest for the well-being of the mountain people in the Hindu-Kush Himalayas and of their environment. I was very pleased to note in the commemorative book that a collaborative scientific framework, as well as environment and development are very well reflected. As I mentioned in my opening speech, one of the Ministers of the Ministry had asked during his involvement, that, unfortunately, Parliament was closed preventing us, more particularly a Member of Parliament, to have a chance to make a speech. But, since we are talking about Lanchangzong's conservation and development, so that we are going to build up a...

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Mr. Egbert Pelinck
Director General, ICIMOD

First of all I would like to apologise for not being in a position to participate or contribute to the proceedings of this workshop. The few times I listened, I was very impressed by the commitment and enthusiasm of the different participants, whether of the person giving the first introduction or whether it was of those taking part in follow-up discussions or involved in the intensity of discussion on recommendations this morning. If the recommendations are adopted without discussion, it is very unlikely that the recommendations will be followed up. But, when so many people participate in discussing the recommendations, it is a sign that the matter has been taken very seriously. Therefore, I was very pleased to note the discussions. I am also happy that ICIMOD is associated with this workshop.

You must have noticed that there was front page information about Kanchanjunga in 'The Kathmandu

Post'. The fact that the photograph portrayed the Ambassador of China looking at a display of photographs on the Indian Himalayas was very significant. This is what ICIMOD tries to do by working on transboundary collaboration, whether on tourism, watershed management, or biodiversity. The essence of ICIMOD's role is bringing countries, governments, NGOs, and scientists' together on a common platform and with a common interest for the well-being of the mountain people in the Hindu-Kush Himalayas and of their environment. I was very pleased to note in the recommendations that a collaboration, common framework, as well as environment and development are very well reflected. As I mentioned in my opening speech, one of the Members of Parliament had other duties in Parliament. But, fortunately, Parliament was closed yesterday, so, since yesterday, a Member of Parliament has been present. I am also pleased that, on the Nepal side, we are talking about Kanchanjunga's conservation and development, so that we are looking at both aspects.

I listened to discussions yesterday on Sikkim — about how people can benefit from the numerous tourists that are coming. Sometimes we have looked at negative impacts, but the development perspective has been maintained during your discussions. Eighty or 90 per cent of the people around the table have a conservation mandate and a conservation background. Conservationists were conserving 20 - 30 years ago, and they are still conserving. They do so by using different tools of participation, by listening to people, by looking at maximising benefits but, indeed, also, by reducing some of the negative impacts. But, the group here, very much together, gives me hope for the future of Kanchanjunga. That is a future in which we can see a unique ecosystem, one of the highest mountains in the world, being preserved, a vision of environment that is spreading across the Himalayas.

Since Kanchanjunga is located in the Eastern Himalayas, it is quite important from the perspective of biodiversity. Not only the ecosystem but also the cultural diversity is being protected. The long history of that part of the world may be changed through the process of planning for development and conservation. Our achievement, during two and a half days of bringing three countries together on a platform of commitment to sustainable conservation and management of the Kanchanjunga ecosystem, is quite remarkable.

I think several practical steps have been taken in which we acknowledge mutual strength and we accept that everything cannot be done straight away. I think there is more strength in the national commitment. What is being done by the national government and by the local government? This is very important. The next step is how we can bring those commitments together. I noticed that all of you would

like to see a continuation of the dialogue that started this week, maybe at the end of the year or early next year. But the dialogue is continuing.

That brings me to the role of ICIMOD. More important is the role that ICIMOD plays in bringing countries together and, in some cases, some of the multidisciplinary of our activities. In future, ICIMOD will be happy to collaborate with you, particularly with WWF, in continuing this process of dialogue. We will be happy to facilitate and to bring people together. Maybe, sometimes, we should encourage exchanges between two countries, but we are in your hands concerning what ICIMOD should contribute. Whenever we talk about ICIMOD, it should concern the added value we have. The added value is that we have an organisation that emphasises regional collaboration as well as multidisciplinary. We not only talk about conservation but, also, if you need advice on gender, tourism, agrobiodiversity, and other subjects, we will be happy to add that kind of expertise to what you bring yourself.

I would like to thank all of you for your very active involvement in the discussions. I am particularly happy that the participants from the Tibetan Autonomous Region came all the way from Lhasa. I hope it has been useful to you. We are looking forward to crossing the boundary and seeing what is happening on the Tibetan side. I was very pleased with the information that was provided and hope it can be incorporated in the overall proceedings. I am very happy with the large presence from Sikkim, with the Principal Chief Conservator for Forests' Secretary leading the delegation. I am not sure if I am allowed to say that he is leading a delegation which includes NGOs, but I was very pleased that the Sikkim delegation included the government, NGOs, and semi-government organi-

sations - the GB Pant Institute, for example.

I think everything went smoothly in terms of the collaborative arrangements we need to develop Kanchanjunga. In looking at mutual strength, we ask what is the strength of the government? what is the strength of the NGOs? what is the strength of the scientific institutions? Added together, you are bound to come up with a good programme.

I am also very happy with the presentation from Nepal. First of all, the Foreign Minister opened the workshop as well as the photo exhibition. We also have very high-level representation from the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation and the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation. This is a very good indication. WWF was both an organiser and a partner in this meeting. We are happy that representatives from WWF-Bangkok and WWF - International, Gland, could attend. This is the first time that ICIMOD has had a collaborative programme with WWF. For many years, we have interacted at workshops and seminars but this is the first time that we had a formal agreement and joint organisation. I am really looking forward to other types of collaboration.

I am very happy that the Government of India was represented by Dr. Rai who is very close to members of the ICIMOD Board of Governors and the Secretary of Environment and Forests, and I am happy that you could participate also. Unfortunately, the representative from Beijing was held up at the airport and could not participate, but I understand he had a keen interest in this programme. Last, but not least, I hope it has been useful for the DGIS Liaison Officer, whose interest lies in the Mechi Zone, to listen to the conservationists from the higher mountains. At ICIMOD, we consider

highland-lowland interactions extremely important. What happens in the higher mountains can be of interest for the lower areas, but, sometimes, the people from the highlands can also benefit from those from the lowlands. I think we noticed that, in Sikkim, the people from the lowlands came as tourists to the highlands and benefited the people there. I hope this has been useful to SNV.

It was very interesting for us to work together with TRAFFIC - India. The whole issue of transboundary trade in wildlife products is something that ICIMOD has never tackled before. I would also like to thank Brian Penniston, the representative from the Mountain Institute, because many of us can benefit from the experience they had and that of the Department of National Parks in the Makalu/Barun area. Thank you very much for your collaboration and your interest. ICIMOD is very keen to continue this dialogue, and whatever we can do within our means, we will be happy to assist you.

Thankyou very much.

**Mr. Mingma Norbu Sherpa,
Country Representative, WWF
Nepal/Bhutan Programme**

First of all I would like to thank ICIMOD for taking this initiative and helping organise this regional workshop in a marvellous way. Thanks are due especially to Prof. Pei Shengji, Ajay Rastogi, and Devendra Amatya of the WWF Nepal Programme. I would also like to thank WWF International who will actually foot the bill. More important were the participants because, for me, it was a very useful forum with people from Taplejung, Sikkim, Tibet, Delhi, and Kathmandu interacting. The lessons learned here are going to go a

long way, and it has been impressive in terms of sharing knowledge about policy implementation at field level. So, I think this is really useful, and I am glad to see that you have asked ICIMOD and WWF to play a role again in future to further this kind of collaboration. Professor Pei and I will convene next week and I will see what we can do in terms of talking to donors as well as in exchanging information. WWF has a presence in India, Nepal, Bhutan, and China, especially for the Kanchanjunga Mountain Ecosystem, so we will be very happy to work with the government and NGOs and other development agencies to share our experiences on biodiversity conservation and also on integrating conservation and development. This is something that we have really been working for over the last 10-15 years. Our experience for the last 30-40 years is that we cannot just protect wildlife in one particular area, we have to think about a wider landscape. We are coming up with an ecoregional map, because wildlife has no boundary. They do not see the political boundaries. So, we are promoting this ecoregional approach or a landscape approach to conservation, which is more important in terms of transborder reserve systems or trinational reserve systems. There will be more collaboration in information sharing between countries in conservation of biodiversity. We are very happy to be a partner of ICIMOD for this workshop, and we look forward to being a partner in the future. This workshop has been a great success. I am very pleased to have people from the ground implementation level to the policy level, the NGOs, and the Member of Parliament from Taplejung. Even the politicians and the local communities are now talking about conservation as a means of economic development. I think this is something which is good for conservation. I would like to thank everybody who partici-

pated, shared information, and took part in the discussions. I enjoyed all the discussions that took place and the interactions that we had. Once again, I would like to thank ICIMOD for making excellent arrangements.

Thankyou.

Dr. Eklavya Sharma, Scientist in-Charge, G.B. Pant Institute for Himalayan Environment and Development, Sikkim Unit, Sikkim

Director General of ICIMOD, Mr. Egbert Pelinck, Mr. Mingma N. Sherpa of WWF, Professor Pei, and friends, we were here for the last three days and there has been active participation on the part of all the participants, and I have been asked to speak now on behalf of them. First of all, I would like to thank ICIMOD and WWF for organising this excellent workshop. In fact, the composition of the participants is very good. We had managers, scientists, and some of the people actually working in the field—like the Hon'ble Member of Parliament from Taplejung and the NGO participants. We had a lot of interaction, and it has been a learning experience for us.

Secondly, people from three countries who are very close, are living and working in similar conditions, but who never interacted earlier, came together. This was a good exercise in coming together around one table and discussing what we have, what are the potentials, and what we can do to conserve this unique Kanchanjunga Mountain Ecosystem. So, it was a good exercise in terms of gain for the participants. I personally have gained a lot from this workshop. On behalf of the participants, we strongly feel that

the recommendations which have been made should be followed up with a lot of commitment by the respective countries, as we have already gone through the recommendations and we have agreed to them. As participants, we have commitment from the government side as well, and we look forward to ICIMOD and WWF calling two follow-up meetings and a framework workshop. I would like to thank the ICIMOD staff and WWF who have made our stay comfortable. Ms. Fahmeeda came to me and said that she did not know much about Kanchanjunga before, but, after so much discussion she felt confident about attending future workshops.

Thankyou.

Chairperson's Remarks

Finally, I thank all of you for your excellent contributions and your collaboration in making this workshop successful. The fact that the workshop has been successful is evident from the six recommendations and important information provided by all of you and the outputs from the three group discussions. I would like to thank the Director General of ICIMOD and the WWF Representative to Nepal for supporting this workshop on time. I would also like to thank my colleagues, Mr. Amatya and Mr. Rastogi, for coordinating this workshop, and also the staff who supported this workshop in different ways through logistics and secretarial work. I finally declare the workshop closed.