

## Introduction

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The grandeur and beauty of the Himalaya are world - renowned, yet few people are aware of the area's unique problems. Himalaya ecosystems are more densely populated by human beings and their livestock than mountain ecosystems elsewhere. The consequent pressures on natural resources are taking a rising toll ; people living in the mountains are hard - pressed to meet their subsistence needs, and downstream residents share the adverse environmental and socioeconomic impacts. Upland and lowland populations are caught in a vicious cycle of deteriorating social, economic, and biophysical environments, not only at a microscale, but also on the larger river basin scale, transcending national boundaries.

Management of natural resources has been the focus of efforts to promote ecological balance and the well - being of Himalayan populations for nearly three decades. Many national and international meetings have been held, but the first regional effort and information exchange took place in October 1985, when ICIMOD and the Commission for Integrated Survey of Natural Resources (CISNAR) of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) collaborated in the organisation of an International Workshop on Watershed Management in the Hindu Kush - Himalaya, held in the People's Republic of China.

Prior to the Workshop, state - of - the - art country review papers were prepared by expert nationals of the concerned countries and ICIMOD staff to delineate the watershed management problems of the Hindu Kush - Himalaya Region, examine the causes and consequences of degradation, and compile information regarding development programmes, institutional structures, research and training facilities, and government policy priorities and legislation.

The specific objectives of the Workshop were :

- to review and evaluate progress made in the field of watershed management in the countries of the Hindu Kush - Himalaya
- to exchange practical project experience on a regional basis, with particular emphasis on identifying common constraints such as knowledge, skilled manpower, finance and organisation, and more effective programme implementation

- to identify key priorities, on the basis of this assessment of experience, for concerted action in the field of watershed management at national and regional levels
- to promote regional cooperation in research, training, and information exchange, for integrated mountain development in the Hindu Kush - Himalaya Region

Sixty participants attended, including professionals of relevant government departments from China, India, Nepal, and Pakistan, professionals from ICIMOD and the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and individual academics and consultants from countries of the Region. Staff members from multilateral and bilateral agencies and university departments from outside the Region, concerned with watershed management in the Himalaya, also participated.

The Workshop activities, over a period of six days, included nineteen paper presentations, group and panel discussions, and a two-day field visit to Wolung Nature Reserve, where watershed management for wildlife conservation and mountain environment rehabilitation is being practised.

The Workshop Report summarises the discussions into three main themes: Pressures on Watersheds, Management of Watersheds, and Policy and Planning Framework. This is followed by Recommendations and Conclusions of the Workshop. Paper summaries are presented in Annex 4.