

Summary of Symposium Working Group Reports

During the Symposium the participants divided into Working Groups comprising representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations and of the scientific community to discuss the Draft Work Programme and make recommendations to ICIMOD. The Working Group discussions were important exercises aimed at bringing the talents of the professional participants to bear on the substantive work that the Central must begin addressing.

The Working Groups examined four areas of the Draft Work Programme: Information and Documentation, Research, Training, and Expertise services. The following is a summary of the major recommendations and comments of the Working Groups.

ICIMOD offers its special thanks and appreciation to Dr. Harka Gurung, Dr. D.R. Pandey, Dr. T.N. Pant, and Mr. K.P. Upadhyaya for their dedicated work in leading the discussions of the Groups and in summarizing and presenting their recommendations to the Symposium.

Information and Documentation

The need for a Documentation Centre was endorsed, but a strong recommendation was made that the boundaries of documentation must be established, e.g., documentation of integrated mountain development, or mountain development from a multi-sectoral basis.

ICIMOD should establish working links with existing documentation centres in the region—or world—from which to draw and/or share material when needed, rather than duplicate existing work.

ICIMOD should not burden itself too much in its formative stages by taking on too heavy a programme in Information and Documentation. It should forge good linkages with other institutions and built its own capabilities carefully and deliberately.

A top priority for ICIMOD should be to identify its appropriate audiences and clientele and develop a communications strategy to reach each one effectively; not just storing information, but making it available in readily usable form.

The following brief points were comments or items that concerned the content and services of Information and Documentation.

- Maps and remote sensing data should be collected.
- Efficient services to collect, process, translate, abstract, and reproduce full texts of appropriate material should be instituted.
- Primary attention is needed in delivering needed material rapidly to users.
- An important Info./Docu. activity that would support Research and other programme activities of ICIMOD would be to compile and regularly update an inventory of who is doing what and where relating to integrated mountain development.
- As a part of Info./Docu. activities, a Communications or public information unit should be established to produce a newsletter or bulletins, educational materials, press releases, and radio and video programmes. This latter could be contracted out to specialized organizations, perhaps, rather than have ICIMOD form its own media production unit.

- Mapping, as an aid to studying population distribution, hydrology, agriculture, etc. would be a good early activity for ICIMOD.

Research

Research is a priority and, therefore, ICIMOD should become involved in adaptive research; move from experimentation and study to direct application in the field.

Member countries should be directly involved or consulted in developing the research agenda.

ICIMOD should strengthen existing institutions, facilities, and local perceptions in research.

Staff with experience and proven abilities in research *management* should be engaged.

Procedures for contracting or forming agreements for research with organizations and institutions in member countries need to be resolved.

Dialogue between persons engaging in research, both inside and outside the region, should be encouraged and expedited by ICIMOD.

ICIMOD should promote research that can be applied and that will directly benefit the neediest. Such practical results of research will help to build confidence in ICIMOD among the beneficiaries, as well as encourage sponsors to support the Centre.

Development donor agencies should be encouraged to finance research (through ICIMOD) to provide a larger scientific data base.

Training

It would be too ambitious for ICIMOD to begin major training programmes during the first two years. During this time ICIMOD should be a catalyst in promoting training by other agencies and organizations in appropriate subject areas.

ICIMOD should conduct an inventory of existing training programmes available in the region, disseminate this information to member countries, and assist members in placing trainees in programmes by coordinating placement between members and training sponsors.

An inventory of training needs among the member countries related to integrated mountain development should be carried out, following a priority needs assessment in each country.

ICIMOD's role in long term training must be integrated with the other work programme components as the Centre grows.

Emphasis should be placed on training of trainers to strengthen existing institutions. Trainers must be leaders in their field.

Expertise

A roster of expertise is of paramount importance in establishing ICIMOD's credibility. The roster should have three levels of detail or activity: a general roster of available expertise; a method of selection of appropriate expertise from the roster when ICIMOD is requested by an outside organization to assist in securing expertise services; and a means for using the roster effectively to support internal staff and programme needs of ICIMOD.

ICIMOD should take note of—and establish links with—existing rosters, e.g., FAO and IUCN.

Regional, national, and local expertise should be identified and made use of.

High merit must be a criterion in selecting names for the roster and in making referrals.

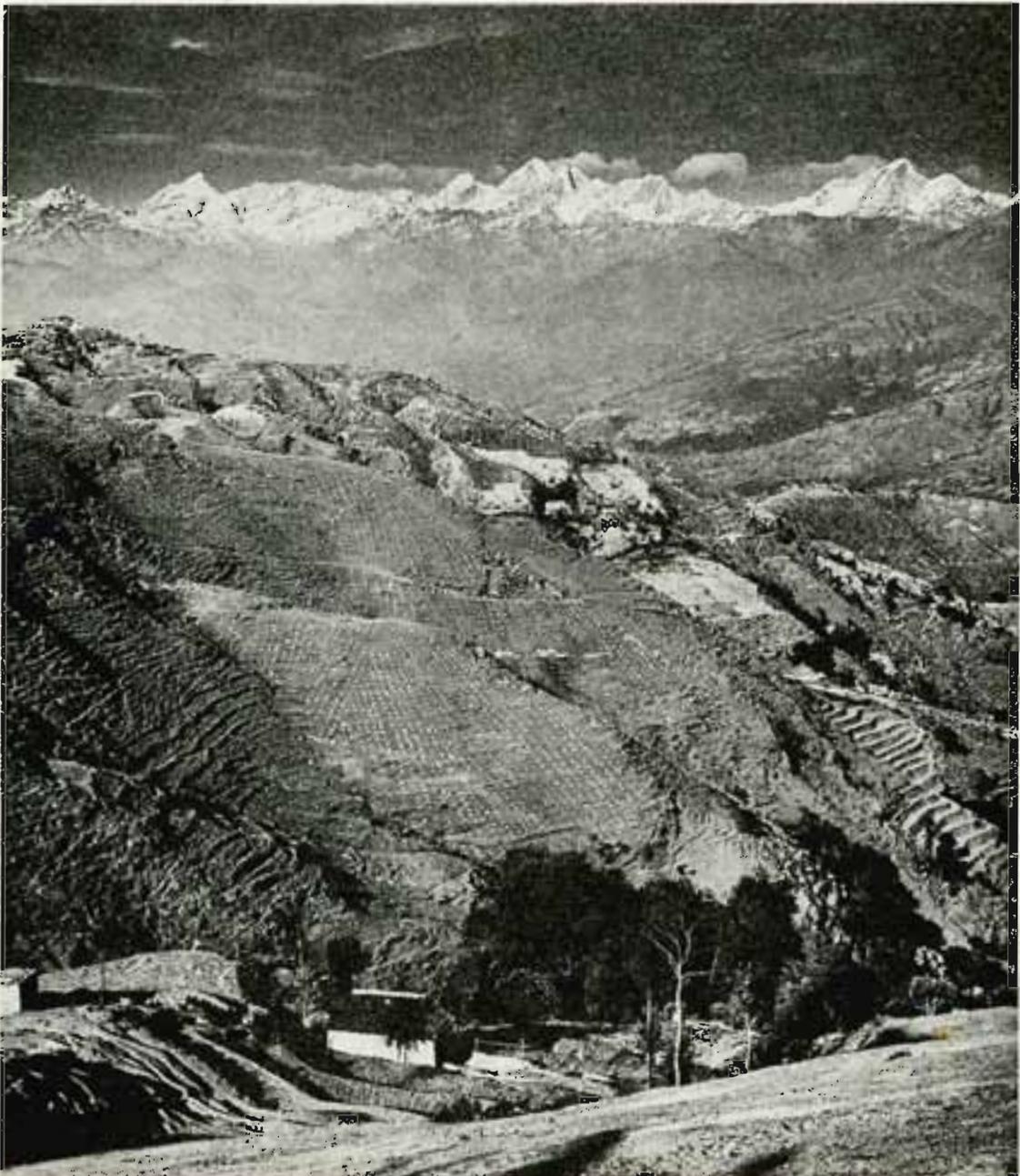
Other

Work Programme Objectives: The Draft Programme seems ambitious. For credibility, ICIMOD should prioritize and separate objectives into realizable immediate ones that would build a base of successful work, and longer term ones allowing more effective setting of priorities.

Administrative: ICIMOD's institutional links with governments is not clear. It is recommended that the member governments be requested to designate focal points through which all ICIMOD activities would be coordinated or channeled in each country.

Non-Governmental Organizations: ICIMOD should develop closer relationships with the many NGOs operating in the region to benefit from their expertise and involvement at the micro-level. ICIMOD should assist NGOs by facilitating communications and contacts between them and the Centre to take advantage of their local experience, as NGOs are often innovative and are willing to take risks with new ideas. ICIMOD involvement with NGOs should take place through the member governments.

Seminars and Workshops: A variety of professional or subject-oriented seminars and workshops conducted at a high professional level would be valuable in generating quality dialogue and publications on integrated mountain development. Seminars for training purposes should be aimed at the organizational and regional/national level, and at the local level.



Key Priorities for the ICIMOD Work Programme: A Summary Statement

Colin Rosser
(Director-Designate)

The last four days have been highly instructive for all of us, but particularly for me charged as I now am with the spectacular task of building an International Centre here in this ideal mountain location capable of an effective *professional* response to the developmental and environmental challenges expressed so vividly by participants to this Symposium.

As Director-Designate, let me express at once the thanks of ICIMOD, embryonic as it now is, for the serious collective contribution to its fundamental institutional conception that has been made here. We have appreciated both the informative and detailed country assessments of need and priority by distinguished national delegations and the personal contributions of individual professionals who represent nobody but themselves—but rather, in that memorable phrase, 'represent a concern'. As always at such gatherings, we have all learnt a great deal also from informal exchanges outside this conference room. The specific comments and recommendations from each Working Group, so efficiently presented, will be studied in full and at length by the professional staff of ICIMOD, as this staff is now assembled, and will doubtless exert a significant influence on the practical organisation of the first-phase work programme of this new International Centre: this working contribution from this Symposium is particularly appreciated.

And so, finally, we come to the beginning. With the close of this Symposium and the formal Inauguration tomorrow, the stage is set for the vigorous effort of professional institution-building that must now take place. If this effort is to be effectively organised it must be guided from the outset by a sharp and clear understanding of what exactly ICIMOD is seeking to achieve—both in the short-range future and over the longer term. In institution-building here as elsewhere the three great virtues are Faith, Hope and Clarity: and the greatest of these is Clarity. I would like to use the opportunity of this brief 'summing up' not so much for some kind of encyclopaedic review of the discussions of this Symposium, but rather just to concentrate on summarizing the views that have emerged (and indeed my own thoughts) on two key issues only: the basic operational conception of ICIMOD (and therefore the priorities of its work programme), and the vital international dimension of ICIMOD's activities.

1. The concept of ICIMOD, and its operational priorities

The ecological and developmental concerns, throughly inter-related as they are, which led to the creation of ICIMOD have been well-evidenced in paper after paper at this gathering. These concerns need no detailed elaboration on this occasion beyond what has been amply emphasised in Symposium contributions. Since however, they are fundamental to an understanding of ICIMOD's intended role, we need to keep before us the central issues. Allow me to summarise them with the following extract from an ICIMOD 'foundation document':

"In many parts of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region, population growth has now exceeded the carrying capacity of the available habitable land. It has led to over-stocking of grazing land and an ever-increasing need for new agricultural and pastoral land. Consequently, forested upper slopes which hitherto protected the lower slopes from excessive erosion are being cleared for cultivation, grazing, fodder, firewood and timber.

Excessive deforestation and overuse of mountain slopes trigger acute problems: massive erosion, landslides with resulting soil impoverishment and soil losses. Thus decreasing agricultural yields and increasing poverty are linked to a deteriorating physical and biological environment. Further, ecological problems experienced in the high mountains have serious repercussions (physical, social and economic) in the lower valleys and lowland areas.

At the present time, there is a danger that the ecological balance in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region will be irreversibly ruptured.

Development of this mountain region thus poses a dilemma: development efforts must necessarily involve the exploitation of the available resources, yet the fragility of the mountain ecosystems makes it necessary to exploit these resources in an ecologically sound manner which will preserve the productivity of these systems for future generations.

This development dilemma—reconciling economic needs with those of maintaining biological productivity—will never be solved by sectoral and isolated measures at the local level. What is needed is an integrated approach to development which takes into account the myriad factors (ecological, economic, social, cultural, governmental) involved in the functioning of the man-environment systems of the Hindu Kush-Himalaya."

These few sentences, elaborated and illustrated and expanded as they have been in contribution after contribution (most notably in the Country Statements) made at this Symposium, set out the essence of the growing national and international awareness of an ecological crisis in these mountains of alarming proportions, directly affecting populations, rapidly increasing, of some 50 million people in the mountains themselves and a further 300 million or so in the great plains below. As we have seen in our discussions, there is equally an awareness of the direct relationship between relentlessly increasing population pressure in the mountains and the process of environmental degradation: as Sir Edmund Hillary recently put it in a memorable phrase—"environmental problems are essentially social problems: they begin with man as the cause and end with man as the victim."

This alarm has underlined the urgency of the search for constructive, progressive, practical solutions to the basic 'development dilemma' summarised in the above quotation. It is clear from the Country Statements made at this Symposium that

this need for a more effective developmental response to this critical ecological situation in the mountains is acutely felt by each of the countries involved. This is true also for the international aid community as is evidenced by the increasing concentration of aid projects in the mountains on better techniques of environmental impact assessment, soil conservation, forestry development, watershed management—as well as on 'integrated hill development' projects. Clearly a great deal is being done in these mountains, albeit in a fragmented fashion, both in national development programmes and in international aid assistance and re-inforcement. Equally clearly there is still much to be done—and much to be learnt—before we can say with confidence that, in terms of the basic development dilemma as posed above, the great challenges of mountain development are being met with effective responses on the spectacular scale required.

If it is possible to summarise the basic conclusion of this Symposium so briefly, it can be asserted that two main needs have been consistently emphasised:

- i) the need for a more systematic and practical understanding of the linkages and inter-relationship between the 'myriad factors' involved in progressive mountain development i.e. development with built-in environmental management;
- ii) the need to mobilise professional and scientific expertise on an international scale for the development of this understanding, to organise a purposeful exchange of relevant knowledge among the countries of the Hindu Kush-Himalayas, to promote regional cooperation in this field on a specific and structural professional basis.

However the professional contribution of ICIMOD may be elaborated over the coming years, it is essential to recognise that the establishment of ICIMOD, in its basic conception, is an attempt to provide an effective institutional response to the above two needs.* Perhaps it could be added that this recognition seems to underlie the marked euphoria which has characterised this inaugural Symposium.

Essentially, ICIMOD has two objectives: the furtherance of practical knowledge and the promotion of effective regional cooperation and exchange—with, of course, direct relevance to mountain development and environmental management. Having stated this, however, it is important to state, with equal clarity, what ICIMOD is not.

It is *not* an institute of mountain research, or of agricultural research in the mountains, or of mountain ecology, or of the geography (or geomorphology) of mountain regions, or of the anthropology or demography or economics of mountain communities. Above all, it is *not* an academy of mountain studies, or mountain sciences: everything you ever wanted to know about mountains—but were afraid to ask. It does not aim at any kind of encyclopaedic, academic view of mountain knowledge or research.

The exceptional and tenaciously sustained efforts of the founding fathers of ICIMOD—both within this region and in Europe—were clearly not undertaken to found a new kind of academic institution here in these mountains. We have heard during this Symposium of the considerable catalogue of hill universities and research institutions widely distributed through the mountains (and throughout the eight participating countries of the Hindu Kush-Himalaya). On the contrary, if our work is not to be completely misdirected and misunderstood, it is

essential to assert with due emphasis that it was clearly the intention of these founding fathers, enlightened and far-seeing as they were, to found a practical *development institute* focused on a single (if highly complex) problem which I will phrase as a question—in the active tense:

"How best can we structure the *practical relationship* between the effective social and economic development of mountain communities and the ecologically sound resource management of the national environment inhabited by these communities?"

The key operational words are "development" and "management". The key tools are practical research, systematic evaluation of programme and project experience in specific development situations, the organised assembly and exchange of knowledge, and integrated development planning and implementation through the full partnership of government and community. The work priorities of ICIMOD, adjusted as they must be to the varying developmental and ecological situations within and between the countries in this markedly heterogeneous Hindu Kush-Himalayan region, must reflect a ruthless relevance to that single and central question.

Our first and most obvious professional task is to establish the current state of knowledge throughout these mountains with regard to this question: the "interface" between socio-economic development and resource management in mountain regions. This is the unique field of ICIMOD. And we need to understand not just the current state of knowledge but, equally, the current experience with the *use* of the knowledge in practical development programmes and projects in the mountain districts of the eight "participating countries" of this region.

If ICIMOD, over the critical first phase of its institutional development (say over the two-year period from now to the end of 1985), is to get itself quickly into the position of being able to contribute with confidence and competence—in the service of the hill communities, of working professionals of all relevant disciplines in field programmes in these mountains, and of government decision-makers at all levels—we need to *command* four related categories of understanding:

- i) the current state of knowledge regarding the *socio-economic situation* of mountain communities, and of the causes and consequences of environmental damage: that is, a vigorous exploration of at least the five major themes that have been repeatedly raised during contributions to this Symposium: a) the dynamics of increasing population pressure throughout the region, and the processes and consequences of rural-to-rural and rural-to-urban migration; b) the vital importance of generating increased employment in the non-agricultural sectors; c) the urgencies of developing and applying more useful techniques of ecological assessment and environmental monitoring in mountain regions; d) the need for a better understanding of the complex social and economic inter-relationships and linkages within hill farming systems examined holistically; and e) the need to understand mountains/plains interactive systems.
- ii) the current state of the art with regional and district development concepts and methods in mountain regions: i.e. *the development response*—with particular regard to such key issues as the accessibility of communities in the high mountains, the developmental consequences of improved communications, the need to learn the lessons

* See the paper by Dr. Gisbert Glaser in these 'Proceedings' (pp. 60–61) in which he sets out lucidly and succinctly—indeed with enviable clarity—the motivation which led to the foundation of ICIMOD, and its objectives and tasks as set out in its Statutes.

of practical experience, and to identify the criteria of "success" or "failure" in programme and project formulation and implementation.

- iii) the current situation with government policy formulation and with governmental institutional structures and powers: i.e. *the organisational response*, with particular emphasis no doubt on the themes, raised so often at this Symposium, of decentralisation, community consultation and participation at all relevant levels of development policy and development implementation, and the need for much stronger emphasis on issues of effective organisation, accountability, and sustained management.
- iv) the current state of play with regard to the perceptions, policies, attitudes, priorities of international aid agencies directly concerned with programmes and projects in these mountains: i.e. *the aid response* which, as a number of contributions here have pointed out, could well do with a thorough, systematic and independent examination so far as assessing the relevance and effectiveness of "aid agency" approaches to the specific developmental and environmental conditions of hill communities is concerned.

These four categories of understanding need to be developed quickly as the "knowledge base" of ICIMOD, and as "the intellectual platform" upon which the Centre can construct its own distinctive contribution over the next few years. If the Centre is to develop this contribution to "integrated mountain development" in a constructive and significant fashion, it must start with establishing what is known (or thought to be known). The four "statutory functions" of ICIMOD on which there has been so much discussion over these last few days—applied research, training, documentation/information exchange, and expert advisory services—have a common base in *knowledge*: and cannot be developed effectively unless and until that knowledge base is adequately and firmly established. This is our first task.

From that basic conception flow the judgments that now will be necessary about ICIMOD's work programme and priorities. The excitement of the challenge that now confronts this new International Centre lies not in the performance of mechanical services (however useful, in information exchange, or training, for example) but in *the development of ideas* of direct practical relevance to the long-term welfare of the people who live in these splendid but "fragile mountains"—constructive, innovative, imaginative, doubtless even irreverent, ideas. And in the dissemination of these ideas wherever they originate. We, therefore, have to start at once—given the lead time required to assemble the Centre's first professional staff numbers and to organise these in multi-disciplinary, and multi-national, "task forces"—with a conceptual work programme that is *problem-oriented* not *function-oriented*: a work programme that is an immediate engagement with this world of ideas (how to manage watersheds effectively, how to generate increased off-farm employment, what are the most effective alternative sources of rural energy and what are the constraints on their widespread adoption, what are the environmental consequences of infrastructure engineering projects of varying scale in mountain regions). The design of the Phase I Work Plan for the Centre needs to be formulated not on a random listing of questions of this type, however obviously important, but rather on a systematic conceptual appreciation of their linkages and inter-relationships.

Whatever the final design of this initial Work Plan, it is clearly essential to translate this conceptual thinking into an *operational*

work programme that is realistically structured around the constraints of available resources in both staff expertise and budget terms, and which, therefore, is realistically implementable—with clear productive goals—over a defined period of time (say the first two years). On behalf both of myself as the Director-Designate of ICIMOD and of the professional staff yet to be appointed, I would like now to thank all who have participated in, and contributed so enthusiastically to, the Working Groups of this Symposium. The detailed discussions on the Draft Work Plan of ICIMOD, prepared so skillfully and so usefully by Nancy Axinn and Devendra Raj Pandey of Integrated Development Systems as consultants to the Centre, have been both extensive and intensive. We have had a very useful opportunity at this Symposium for a full exchange of views on this vital subject of the Centre's objectives, priorities and modus operandi.

However, no operational work programme, no matter how clearly constructed, can be effectively implemented for an international centre of this type without the whole-hearted support and involvement of the governments, and particularly of our professional colleagues, in the eight countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, China, India, Nepal and Pakistan) of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region. And this brings me to the second subject—that of regional cooperation—on which I would like to make some brief comments in this short summary of the key themes, as I see them, that have emerged during this Symposium.

2. The International Dimension of ICIMOD's Activities

However ICIMOD be organised and whatever the content of its work programmes, this new International Centre at the very basis of its conception is essentially a bold venture in regional cooperation. At the heart of the matter is the shared understanding among a group of "participating countries"—all with common if not identical interests in the promotion of the welfare and well-being of their peoples living in adjacent or similar mountain habitats—that there is a collective benefit to be obtained through a sharing of knowledge and experience on the developmental and environmental problems that confront these mountain communities, and through the organisation of a collective effort to identify more effective responses to these problems (with better techniques of analysis, of plan and programme and project formulation, and of development *implementation and management*) than those currently being used. This regional cooperation is indispensable to ICIMOD's effective development.

In this light, it has been immensely encouraging to see all eight countries of this Hindu Kush-Himalayan region represented at this Symposium, and at the Inauguration which follows tomorrow. And not merely represented, but actively and vigorously participating. This already augurs well for the future of regional cooperation in integrated mountain development—and indeed for the future of ICIMOD. Within our professional and scientific field of mountain development—and given our central conception of ICIMOD as a development centre rather than as an academic research institute—the *promotion* of this regional cooperation will remain one of ICIMOD's essential objectives. The *achievement* of effective and significant professional cooperation on this regional basis will constitute one of the surer tests of the Centre's success or failure.

I have particularly appreciated the many suggestions that have emerged during this Symposium on the best ways of building this collaboration and cooperation on this international basis. All

such recommendations will, of course, receive the most careful examination. I would just like to emphasise on this occasion that, in this critical field of inter-country collaboration, I see the Centre as having three immediate, and indeed permanent, priorities:

First, full and detailed consultation with those concerned in each country on the content and priorities of ICIMOD's work programme. This seems to me an inescapable requirement if the Centre is to develop an effective contribution of recognised significance within this region. Agreement, indeed consensus, on the work programme is the basis for the active professional involvement on a cooperative basis in each country that ICIMOD is seeking to promote. This can only be achieved on the scale required if each country of the region is fully consulted with regard to its own identification of the areas and subjects of urgency on which ICIMOD should concentrate its professional expertise, resources, and capacity to mobilise a region-wide effort of professional collaboration.

This process of detailed consultation with regard to ICIMOD's work programme is all the more important when we recognise, as indeed we must, the complexity of the international political situation in this mountain region—extending as it does from Afghanistan in the far west to northern Burma, north-eastern India, and to southern China at its eastern extreme. It is all too easy to assert that ICIMOD is a completely autonomous international organisation structured on a professional and scientific basis, owing allegiance to no government whatsoever. Above all, that ICIMOD is not a inter-governmental organisation either in conception, funding or in practice. Having made these perfectly correct assertions about the Centre's international but independent status, it would nevertheless be folly not to acknowledge, and to take practical account of, the facts of inter-national relationships in this region, and of every nation's obvious right to be its own judge of what constitutes its national priorities, and indeed its national interests. We will make sure that ICIMOD's style of operation, its work programme priorities, its professional relationships are developed with the skill and common sense required. ICIMOD is wholly non-political (in the accepted sense of this term) but equally the Centre will seek to develop good working relationships with the proper government departments and agencies in each of the eight countries of the region, and with relevant professional and scientific institutions in each country. As an autonomous organisation, we have the great advantage of a multi-national Board of Governors, on which four of the countries of the region have full representation and to which the other four may send observers for full participation in the Board's deliberations. In each of these eight countries of the region, ICIMOD has a "focal point" within the government. Thus, we can develop ICIMOD's style of operation with the support and advice of Board Member, observer, or focal point in each country. The first requirement, however, is

full and significant consultation throughout the region to formulate a work programme acceptable to each country and which will indeed stimulate the active professional commitment on the regional cooperative basis that is essential to ICIMOD.

The second requirement, to which I will give immediate emphasis, is the assembly at ICIMOD of a *multi-national* professional staff drawn mainly from the participating countries of this region. We hope to have senior and experienced professionals from all eight countries represented on the core staff of ICIMOD, and working together at the Centre as colleagues on the problems of integrated mountain development that are shared, in varying degree, by mountain communities throughout this region.

Thirdly, we will begin at once with the organisation of a regional Documentation and Information Exchange network in which, desirably, all eight countries will participate. This practical step in regional cooperation will, I am very glad to hear, receive immediate assistance in terms of expert advice from UNESCO and the International Development Research Corporation (IDRC) of Canada jointly. This expert help is particularly welcome at this first critical phase of ICIMOD's development since it correctly focuses on the practical organisation of ICIMOD's first efforts in the field of regional cooperation.

Perhaps in closing these remarks, I may just be allowed to add two final personal comments. First, my warm appreciation of the organisational work undertaken by Mr. Peter Gueller, as Regent of ICIMOD, through the long period of preparations that have led to this First International Symposium and to the "rite de passage" of the Inauguration tomorrow. His totally committed efforts will enable ICIMOD to get off to a running start once I take over as the first director mid-April. He has played a major part, warmly appreciated by me, in building the ship: it remains to me to put the crew aboard and chart the course. ICIMOD fully recognises its debt to Peter Gueller.

I have also greatly appreciated the many warm good wishes—and indeed the many active offers of support—that I have received personally from all sides over the last four days, and certainly from all national delegations. With the Board of Governors, under its distinguished Chairman, Dr. Ratna S.J.B. Rana, we now begin the tasks of building a completely new international institution here in this ideal location in this mountain kingdom. A very considerable challenge by any standards. This highly stimulating Symposium, where a great depth of international expertise has been assembled, has been a very encouraging beginning for the tasks of professional leadership that I now undertake. The good wishes I have received here make me indeed feel that I have joined a society of friends linked by a common concern for the peoples of these mountains and for the magnificent but fragile environment that they inhabit.



The Keynote address of the Symposium being delivered by the Chairman of the Board of Governors, Dr. Ratna S.J.B. Rana.



In Session



Mr. Qin Li-Sheng, Chairman MAB Committee, China, planting a tree at Godavari.



Delegates listening to an address during the Symposium.