

Welcome Address

Fatteh Singh Tharu
Honourable Minister of State for Education and Culture

On behalf of His Majesty's Government of Nepal, I take great pleasure in extending our heartiest welcome to the Right Honourable Prime Minister, the Director General of UNESCO, Dr. Maurice Strong, the delegates of the participating countries, and to all the distinguished guests, ladies, and gentlemen at this auspicious Inauguration of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development.

This day, indeed, marks the culmination of several years of ceaseless efforts by concerned agencies and interested governments to see that a centre serving the needs of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region be established to check any further degradation of mountain ecology of the whole South Asian mountain system. Nepal has always attached great importance to this kind of endeavour.

The Himalayas, as you all know, constitute a substantial part of our country and for centuries these have been the natural habitat of the majority of our people. We have always adored these mountains, worshipped them as manifestations of divinity, been inspired by their sheer splendour and majesty, and have also derived our succour and sustenance from them. The snowcapped mountains in their majesty have inspired some of our greatest poetry, as well as nurtured some of our toughest warriors down through the ages.

A few years ago, however, the realization began to dawn that the mountains, denuded of their protective vegetation, would hardly sustain the growing numbers of people who had been inhabiting them for so long. It suddenly seemed that these mountains could no longer support them as they had done for years.

Thoughtless deforestation, soil erosion, loss of productivity, landslides, frequent floods, and drought have made their continued existence in the hills difficult. They have been fleeing to the lower plains in search of better prospects of living, but, to their disappointment, things there are not any better. The destruction of the mountain environment has also taken its toll on the plains, almost as if nature were taking revenge on man for stripping her naked. As it is, these mountains seem to have lost their mooring for mountain people. And, needless to say, something has got to be done to restore the balance between man and his mountain environment before it is too late.

Ladies and gentlemen, ICIMOD was conceived to help restore this all-importance balance. It all started as a result of the findings of an international workshop on the development of mountain environments in which UNESCO and the German Foundation for International Development played pioneering roles. UNESCO, within the framework of its programmes on Man and the Biosphere, organized a regional meeting in

Kathmandu on integrated ecological research and on training needs in the South Asian mountain system, particularly in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas. At this meeting, among other things, we offered to host the establishment of ICIMOD in Kathmandu.

Thus, we have the privilege to become the host of ICIMOD which, we believe, is central to all we have been doing so far for mountain development. We are gratefully to UNESCO, as well as to the governments of the Federal Republic of Germany and Switzerland, for taking the lead in seeing to it that the Centre can now begin to address its objectives of integrated mountain development through research, exchange of information, and training.

We all know that the potential exists in these mountains to unleash a chain of developmental activities which would lead to the total well-being of the inhabitants of these areas. Mountains are the sources of hydro-power, timber, fuelwood, irrigation, livestock, medicinal plants, and minerals, and could also provide an outlet to the sea for land-locked countries like Nepal.

Our problems of mountain development are well known. I would like to mention here only two of them: population growth and deforestation. These two problems move in a vicious circle. We have to find a way to get out of it by adopting an integrated approach to the whole issue of mountain development.

I am confident that the countries of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region—Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, China, India, Nepal, and Pakistan—will pool their expertise and know-how and, by participating in the activities of ICIMOD, will see that not only is further damage avoided to our mountain ecology, but that improvements are also effected to ensure the all-round prosperity of the region. We have great promises to keep in order that we may share great prospects together.

I hope that mountain scientists and experts within as well as outside the region will put their heads together to meet the challenges, as well as unfold opportunities for a happy and prosperous future.

I would also like to mention here that the contributions of institutions, agencies, and governments all over the world will go a long way towards achieving this goal of ICIMOD.

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to conclude with a quote from His Majesty, King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Deva: "Given genuine friendship and mutual co-operation, I declare in the name of my government that Nepal is willing to co-operate in such a joint venture that will lead not only to planning prosperity together, but will also emphasize our independence through inter-dependence."

Once again, I welcome you all. Thank you very much.

Inaugural Address

Sri Lokendra Bahadur Chand
The Right Honourable Prime Minister of Nepal

Mr. Chairman, Director General of UNESCO, His Excellency Mr. M'Bow, Dr. Maurice Strong, Your Excellencies, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

It is, indeed, a matter of much pleasure for me to extend to you all a warm and cordial welcome, on behalf of His Majesty's Government and on my own, to this inaugural function specially convened to mark the formal opening of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) here in Nepal. We are particularly happy to have amongst us His Excellency, Mr. M'Bow, without whose deep and abiding interest this project would certainly not have come into being today. Similarly, the presence of Dr. Maurice Strong, whose efforts in this field resulted in the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme, is also a matter of satisfaction to us. I would also like to extend our heartfelt welcome to all the distinguished delegates and participants who have come from all over the world to be with us on this historic occasion.

This is an important event in the annals of international co-operation for conservation of one of the greatest heritages of mankind—that of Hindu Kush-Himalaya—which has shaped the destiny and sustained the life of the millions of people of this region. The setting up of this international centre, therefore, symbolizes the hopes and aspirations of all those who have been very acutely concerned about the future of these mountains, as well as the people whose life depends upon them.

The Hindu Kush-Himalayan mountains are inhabited by about 30 million people and an additional 350 million live in adjacent large river basins and plains. These mountains, while being fragile, are unquestionably the greatest physical feature on earth. They are also the source of rivers which bind the countries of the region present here on this occasion. The river systems present a vast potential by harnessing them for the benefit of all the peoples of the region.

The Himalayas are regarded as the "abode of the Gods" No other natural or man-made structure is as lofty as the Himalayas; their beauty and grandeur stand for purity, courage, and hope.

The Hindu Kush-Himalayas have immensely contributed to the growth and development of myriads of cultures and ethnic groups, some in isolation but others blossoming into living faiths for millions.

The great basins formed by the mighty rivers originating in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas have witnessed the rhythm of cultures during the past millenia, and are now part of world history. But, of late, these mountains have been undergoing a process of change of great consequence. The deteriorating physical and biological environment of the Hindu Kush-Himalayas is the result of ecological degradation—reckless destruction of trees, soil erosion, loss of top soil, landslides, silting of rivers, and floods downstream. Large areas have undergone the process of desertification leading to the drying up of streams and springs. This man-made wilderness has led to the loss of fertility of soil and agriculture production.

The frequent occurrence of drought in the hilly and moun-

tainous regions of the Hindu Kush-Himalayas can be explained in the context of rapid loss of vegetative cover in large parts. It is estimated that the forest cover in the Himalayan region has been reduced by 40 to 50 per cent.

Human behaviour, therefore, has done much to contribute to the destruction of the life support system. It would be wrong, however, to draw the hasty conclusion that the hill people are ignorant of the untoward effects of their actions; on the contrary, they are quite aware of the adverse effects that forest destruction and cultivation of steep mountain slopes have on the maintenance of environmental balance. They are caught in the vicious cycle of abject poverty, which, in fact, is the cause and effect of environmental degradation.

The environmental problems are nowhere more acute than in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region; it is here that nature is most mercilessly pitted against man. In his relentless quest for food, fuel, shelter, and other basic needs, man has accelerated the process of environmental degradation. An adverse land/man ratio due to high rate of population growth has further aggravated the problem. In many parts, population has far exceeded the carrying capacity of the land, forcing the people to leave their homes in search of employment and means of livelihood. This, besides uprooting the traditional social structures, has brought forth new problems which defy an easy solution. The proper management of the resources of mountain areas, therefore, cannot brook any further delay. It is hoped that this new centre now being set up will study and find feasible solutions to the problems which I have enumerated here.

The response of the international community to the setting up of an international centre exclusively devoted to promoting the idea of integrated mountain development in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas has been most encouraging. In this regard, we feel, indeed, very grateful to UNESCO for its persistent efforts which have resulted in the setting up of this Centre. We are also indebted to the Federal Republic of Germany and Switzerland for making generous grants without which ICIMOD would not have come into existence.

The development dilemma before the world in general, and the Third World in particular, appears in sharp focus in relations to the environment. The resources of the world are not inexhaustible and we must utilize these prudently. Pollution of the earth is related to the poverty from which nearly three-fourths of mankind suffer. One can recall here that at the Stockholm Conference a forceful plea was made that, in order to solve the environmental problems, the pace of development should be accelerated. Hunger, poverty, and disease are both a cause and effect of environmental degradation.

The concept that development plans should be economically viable and environmentally sound has now gained wide acceptance. Efficient environmental management mitigates the cost of development. The dilemma faced by the developing countries—choosing between growth and environmental quality—is no doubt there, but one cannot conceive growth with

total disregard of the ecosystem. I whole heartedly agree with Dr. Strong's observation that, "the need is to try to harmonize socio-economic and environmental goals by redefining patterns of resource use and uses of growth." This concept of eco-development has to be taken into serious consideration by all development planners.

Intensive use of natural resources, both by the developed and developing countries, cannot be sustained over long periods unless we give equal attention to their preservation and enhancement. There is need to use resources on a sustainable basis. The fragility of the Hindu Kush-Himalayas make it imperative to pursue sound resource management policies.

The setting up of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development in Nepal, the first international institute of its kind, is of great significance to us. Nepal's Himalayas have been subjected to much adverse impact by human activity which has resulted in disruption of ecological systems—often of an irreparable nature. The more serious consequence of this is reflected by cyclical drought and food shortages in large parts of the country. This forces the people to migrate to the lowlands, generating new ecological and socio-economic problems. Serious shortages of fuel, fodder, and fibre affect the entire village economy. There is, therefore, a compelling need to plan and implement an effective resource management policy in Nepal which would restore ecological balance.

In this context, alternative resources of energy—bio-gas, solar, and hydro-power—need to be encouraged. In the hilly and mountainous regions, improvement of grazing lands can improve the village economy considerably. Science and technology can play a most crucial role in finding solutions to the complex problems in environmental management. Most impor-

tant of all, we should economize on the utilization of both commercial and non-commercial forms of energy.

In the current Sixth Plan, a number of schemes have been launched in Nepal with a view toward conserving natural resources, a task with which the local panchayats (village councils) have been actively associated. Several integrated rural development schemes have a strong component of environmental protection, and the new decentralization act specifically calls upon the people to take concrete measures to safeguard the environment. During the past decade, many concrete steps have been taken for environmental protection, especially in the field of wildlife preservation, soil and water conservation, afforestation, and other related activities. We have been much helped and encouraged by bilateral and multilateral support in the implementation of these programmes.

Above all, no one in Nepal is more acutely aware of the need for environmental protection than our beloved Sovereign, His Majesty, King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev, who has constantly inspired us to pursue policies which are compatible with preservation and judicious use of our natural resources. We are firm in our conviction that any conservation strategy should aim at preservation of natural and cultural as well as spiritual heritage. We believe that such a policy has much wider relevance than for just our own country.

I have no doubt in my mind that ICIMOD will play a most fruitful role in our efforts in meeting the challenges before us. The co-operation and collective wisdom of all will be available generously to the sapling that we have planted today. Nepal, for her part, is honoured and privileged to be the host country for this Centre whose impact should transcend the national boundaries and bring benefits to all those whose well-being is so much inter-linked with the Hindu Kush-Himalayas.

Address on The Occasion of the Inauguration of The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development in The Hindu Kush-Himalayan Region (ICIMOD)

Mr Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow

Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Mr Prime Minister,
Ministers,
Your Excellencies,
Mr Chairman of the ICIMOD Board of Governors,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to be associated with the inauguration of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region, in the heart of this magnificent range which forms the highest and one of the most extensive mountain areas in the world.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to His Majesty King Birendra, the Prime Minister, Mr Lokendra Bahadur Chand, and the Minister of State of Education and Culture, Mr Fatteh Singh Tharu, for the invitation extended to me to take part in this ceremony which, to my mind, is of special significance, since this is the first time that a centre of this kind has been founded in this part of the world.

UNESCO is particularly happy that it should be established in Nepal, for we know that the country is unanimously in favour of strengthening international co-operation, by means of which we have begun on substantial joint efforts with a view to preserving the cultural and natural heritage of the valley of Kathmandu.

The presence of the Prime Minister of Nepal adds signal lustre to this meeting. I am also glad to see in our midst the ministers, ambassadors and delegations of various countries of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region, the representatives of other countries and of many international organizations, and leading members of the scientific community; their presence here today is testimony to the importance they attach to this achievement. I extend to them my warmest greetings.

We are also happy to note that this ceremony has been preceded by the holding of ICIMOD's first symposium. I greet those who took part in it, here with us today; their work constitutes a significant starting-point for the Centre's future action.

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The establishment of ICIMOD meets a need which has become more pronounced with each passing day. It was in 1975 that UNESCO, in collaboration with the Nepalese National Committee for the Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB), organized for the first time, in Kathmandu, a regional meeting on integrated ecological research and training needs in the

southern Asian mountain ecosystems, in particular those of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region.

That meeting immediately brought out the magnitude of the problems presented by mountain life and the urgent need to find new solutions to them. The desire was thus expressed that our Organization co-operate with the government of His Majesty the King of Nepal with a view to founding an institution capable of providing all the countries of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region with the scientific knowledge and qualified personnel needed for the implementation of integrated development activities.

The UNESCO General Conference approved this project at its nineteenth session, and at its twentieth and twenty-first sessions supported the steps being taken to pave the way for its implementation. More recently, the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Science and Technology in Asia and the Pacific (CASTASIA II), convened by UNESCO in Manila (Philippines) in March 1982, gave its full support to the Centre, adopting a recommendation to that effect.

The main purpose of the Centre is to help to improve the living conditions of populations by fostering the development and rational utilization of resources of every kind, together with the lasting preservation of mountain ecosystems, as part of the overall development of the countries concerned.

An almost general tendency is to be observed in mountain areas for agricultural land to deteriorate, and erosion to be speeded up as a result of deforestation, and for landslides to become more and more frequent owing in particular to highway construction. Efforts to protect the environment and improve agricultural productivity are thus being increasingly jeopardized, at a time when there is an imperative need constantly to increase resources if the needs of populations are to be met.

Moreover, the ecological problems besetting high-altitude areas have serious repercussions on valleys situated at lower altitudes and on near by lowlands. Examples are the silting of streams, the filling up of reservoirs with sedimentations and floods, with their attendant consequences, such as loss of cattle or the destruction of crops and highways.

There is also a social and human phenomenon which is now becoming more marked, namely population migrations, both from rural to urban areas and from mountains to the valleys. All future action must, I think, take account of this trend.

In all mountainous regions the basic concern is to strike a satisfactory balance between population, resources and environment. Such a balance no doubt entails, first and foremost, a diversification of the sources of income available to each

population. The subsistence economy, which has long predominated in many high mountain areas, is now in a critical state, which is steadily worsening due in particular to population pressure, increased by improvements in health and in living conditions, on the one hand, and on the other to the emergence of new needs connected with the development of communication and trade. Under these circumstances, populations are making greater demands on the land, without any corresponding improvement in productivity. It therefore seems necessary to envisage measures that will ensure more productive and more varied land use and at the same time to seek other sources of income, such as for instance craft industries.

All the countries of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region are currently faced by the problems to which I have just alluded, albeit in varying degrees of acuteness from one time and place to another. This in itself amply justifies regional co-operation. But such co-operation is also made necessary by the fact that many instances occur of interaction between highland and lowlands, the effects of which are passed on from one country to another, and cannot be controlled within a purely national context.

This being so, the implementation of joint research by all countries of the region, the exchange of knowledge and experience and the execution of joint activities seem particularly conducive to the mobilization of the resources, both at home and abroad, which are necessary for economic and social development. Solutions for the future are likely to be found only within the framework of integrated projects, so designed as to take into consideration all relevant human and natural factors, including in particular problems of education and health.

ICIMOD's first symposium, devoted to 'Mountain development 2000—challenges and opportunities', took a searching look at all the problems arising in this connection and at possible solutions to them.

Its conclusions bring out, in particular, the need to reconcile the goals of progress with environmental protection by means of an integrated approach to development at all levels. The symposium emphasized that the main task lying ahead would be precisely to give to the concept of integrated mountain development specific practical applications in the field. For this reason the participants strongly encouraged ICIMOD to include among its priorities for action the formulation of practical advice for planners, project managers and technicians so as to help them to carry out their integrated development programmes.

All the countries of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region, as well as the other countries that back their efforts and the international institutions participating in the symposium, have reaffirmed their full support for ICIMOD, stressing in many cases the obvious links between the activities it intends to carry out and the action already taken under the MAB Programme, and commenting UNESCO's role in this field.

We in UNESCO, are convinced that ICIMOD will be able to play a role commensurate with the hopes placed in it by the states of the region, as an international centre for documentation, training and applied research and as a technical support agency for the preservation of ecosystems and integrated mountain development. By drawing in particular on experiences gained within the framework of UNESCO, ICIMOD will be able to develop its activities in such a way as to meet all the challenges justifying its foundation.

I should therefore like to take this opportunity to congratulate the countries which are helping to activate the Centre and to thank the governments of all the countries, particularly the Federal Republic of Germany and Switzerland, that have so kindly provided support. I very much hope that the governments of other countries, as well as other organizations and many members of the international scientific community, will be able in their turn to provide assistance to the Centre.

I also wish to thank all those who have helped to bring this undertaking to fruition, starting with the Royal Nepal Academy of Science and Technology; and extend a warm greeting to Dr. Rana, Dr. Strong and Dr. Singh for their contribution to this ceremony.

I can assure you that UNESCO fully aware of its responsibilities towards ICIMOD and that it will do everything in its power to support the Centre's activities and facilitate the implementation of its regional co-operation programmes.

In conclusion, I should like once again to convey my warmest thanks to His Majesty the King, and to the Government and people of Nepal, for the cordial hospitality shown towards us in this country of majestic beauty and age-long history, which was the birthplace of the Buddha and whose cultural treasures and lofty spirituality have always been admired.

Mr Prime Minister, Ministers, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish ICIMOD every success in its work on behalf of the governments and people of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region.

Keynote Address

Dr. Maurice F. Strong

I feel very privileged, indeed, to have this opportunity of participating in the ceremonies marking the opening of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development. This is, indeed, an auspicious occasion as it represents the realization of dreams and plans of a number of enlightened and far-seeing people, many of them here today. And it marks a new era of hope and of promise for the future of this great and beautiful region and its peoples.

I am pleased to join with you in paying tribute to the people, the institutions, and the governments who have made ICIMOD possible, and particularly to our host country, Nepal. For it is only the enlightened leadership and support of His Majesty, King Birendra Bir Bikam Shah Dev, and his Government that have enabled ICIMOD to become a reality and to make its home in this ancient and magnificent mountain kingdom. There could be no more appropriate site for ICIMOD. Nepal is the home of the greatest mountains on earth, some of the most magnificent and representative mountain environments, and, most important of all, a richness and diversity of people whose values, culture, and ways of life have made such a unique and seminal contribution to the human experience and nourishment of the human spirit. There is no country which exemplifies to a greater degree both the positive values and potential of mountain life, as well as the problems and challenges which now confront mountain peoples; and no country has shown a higher degree of awareness and concern for these problems and challenges.

I was most impressed by the prospectus outlining a "National Conservation Strategy for Nepal", prepared recently by His Majesty's Government of Nepal, in conjunction with the Conservation for Development Centre of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, as a follow-up and national counterpart of the World Conservation Strategy. It provides a vivid and informed analysis of the conservation and environment-related development issues confronting Nepal, and points the way to the kind of policies and actions required to deal with these issues. It is one of the most enlightened and promising approaches to these important issues that I have seen on the part of any national government.

Mountain regions not only represent the most spectacular and beautiful of the ecosystems which make up the environment of our "Only One Earth", but are indispensable to the survival and well-being of a substantial portion of its inhabitants. As the most awesome manifestations of God's creation, mountains have always been a prime source of inspiration for man's spiritual life. When David said in the Psalms, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help", he articulated a feeling which strikes a responsive chord in all of us. As the physical meeting place between the earth and the heavens, the mountains have been seen by people of all ages as dwelling places of the spirits and of the presence of God. Thus, mountains have figured prominently in the development of virtually all the world's great religions as well as the religious experience of indigenous and primal peoples throughout the world. In the mountain valley in Colorado where I have a home, the most prominent and awe-inspiring feature is a mountain that is sacred to all the

Indian tribes in that area of the southwest United States.

Mountains have been just as important in nourishing the cultural and the physical needs of people. Some of the finest, richest, and most durable human cultures have grown up amongst mountain peoples. There is a remarkable diversity in these cultures, ranging from the Zuni Indians of New Mexico to the Kogi Indians of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in Colombia, from the peasant farmers of the alpine highlands in Switzerland to the Sherpas of the Himalayan region, to name but a few. But underlying this diversity are some common characteristics—strength of character, diligence, reliability, deep affinity for nature and the land, an earthy wisdom, and the ability to co-operate with others within a cohesive social unit.

These qualities have come out of centuries of experience in confronting and learning to live with the harsh, demanding, and often hazardous conditions imposed by mountain environments. And it is a tribute to these people that, in most cases, a sustainable balance was achieved between the needs of mountain peoples for food, shelter, fuel, and water, and the capacity of the natural environment to provide these. But in the past century, and particularly in the last three or four decades, these delicate balances have been subjected to accelerated pressures resulting largely from the substantial increases in population growth accompanied by the consequences of modernization. This has led to a dramatic reduction in forested areas, both through expansion of cultivation and commercial exploitation of forests, as well as the growing needs for fuelwood. It has produced a vertiable explosion of road building and air transport which has linked areas that were previously difficult of access and virtually self-reliant from the external economy. The opening up of the areas to commerce and tourism is undermining the traditional self-reliance and the values of mountain peoples, who are disadvantaged in their ability to confront the new and intensified pressures which accompany modernization and the opening up of the economy and to obtain a fair share of the benefits of these processes.

At the same time, pressures on the land—always a precious and scarce resource in mountain regions—have been mounting at unprecedented rates. As the limits of cultivatable areas are reached, the density of human and animal populations on existing lands is growing to the point which threatens to overwhelm the capacity of the land to continue to produce its crops and support its populations on a sustainable basis. I understand that this, in fact, is the situation right here in the Kathmandu-Kakani area.

When these vital ecosystems become unstable, there is an imminent threat to the very livelihood of the people who depend on them. Once the forests that control the watersheds begin to disappear and the uncontrolled waters open up clefts and gullies in the land, more and more of the precious soil will be washed away and with it the very means of life for the people of the area. Once this process begins it is difficult to arrest. The soil and the diversity of the plant and animal life it supports have taken millions of years to develop. For centuries the mountain peoples have cultivated and cared for these lands, and the land has

provided for their needs. But all of this can be destroyed within the lifetime of a generation, and, as you well know, that is exactly what is happening in mountain regions in virtually every part of the world, and particularly in the developing world. These processes are accompanied by an increase in landslides and avalanche activity which adds immensely to the hazards and, all too often, the horrors of mountain life.

The consequences are devastating for the people of the mountain regions concerned. They are just as bad for the people who live in the lowland areas where a disruption of the mountain watersheds produces accelerated cycles of flood and drought which exact a heavy toll in terms of human life and misery.

All of these phenomena are well documented in the papers prepared for the seminar that has preceded this opening ceremony. The experts who are with us today are better able than I, as a layman, to elaborate the risks to which I have been referring, as well as to point the way to remedies. I have had the privilege to seeing a good deal of this planet; one does not have to be an expert to see what is actually happening in mountain regions, including this one, and to appreciate the dire and ominous consequences of the imminent threats that are now posed to the peoples of these regions. Indeed, I see in this the grim prospect of one of the greatest human tragedies of all time.

You, more than any outsiders, know the horrendous implications for this country and the entire Himalayan region. In no region is the threat more ominous. And while conditions in various parts of the great Himalayan ecosystem vary considerably, the threat is common to all parts and is shared by all countries of the region—Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, China, India, Nepal, and Pakistan. Similar threats confront peoples of the Andean nations of the South America, the Atlas Mountains of Morocco, and the mountain regions of Ethiopia, Tanzania, Ruanda, and Burundi, as well as the mountain areas of the Pacific Island region. The list is a long one, and one need not mention every region to make the point that there is scarcely a mountain region in the developing world which is exempt from this threat.

Thus, the creation of ICIMOD responds to what I believe is one of the most urgent and important threats confronting the peoples of our planet. We must believe that there is still time to arrest the destructive processes, already far advanced, that are undermining so many mountain ecosystems and the futures of the people they sustain. Clearly there is little time, for the processes of destruction are accelerating.

One of the principal insights which emerged from the United Nations conference on the human environment held in Stockholm in 1972 was that the processes of development and of care and protection of the natural environment are inextricably linked and interdependent. Development necessarily impinges on and alters the natural environment which, in turn, provides the principal resource base on which development depends. Development that undermines and destroys the natural resource base cannot be long sustained. The natural resource base of forests, soil, water, plant, and animal life represents the real wealth on which people must depend for their continued survival and well-being. The destruction and loss of these previous natural resources will literally deprive the people who depend on them of the means of life. A country's reserves of gold can be replenished; but when the productivity of the renewable resource base is lost, the loss is usually, for all practical purposes, irreparable.

Development itself is not the villain, however; it cannot and must not be arrested. It is through the development process that

the needs and aspirations of people, material, cultural, and spiritual, may be realized. It is destructive development that must be stopped; we must pursue modes of, and pathways to, development which maintain ecological balances and permit renewable resources to yield their bounty on a sustainable basis. Sustainable development is not an option, but an absolute imperative. There simply is not other way.

We now realize that development that is confined to individual sectors or narrow purposes and approaches cannot be successful and is usually self-defeating. Development takes place within a complex system of social, cultural, physical, and economic factors, each of which affects and is affected by the other. The success of development depends upon maintaining harmony and balance amongst the various elements of that system and requires an understanding of the cause and effect of relationships within the system as a whole before embarking on actions which will change even a single component. Changes in growth and distribution of population, in land use, in work and consumer habits and expectations, in the inter-actions with the external economy, and in the interface between traditional values and the processes of modernization introduce new dynamics and pressures into the development process, and all must be taken into account in evaluating development options and prospects.

This is why integrated development is the only approach that makes sense, the only kind of development that can be successful, particularly in mountain areas where the sensitivities and balances involved are especially delicate. This is why I am so encouraged and pleased that the concept of integrated development has been incorporated into the very theme and, indeed, the name of ICIMOD. It bodes well for the success of its mission.

The challenge of ICIMOD, as I see it, is to lighten the pathways to sustainable development for the peoples of mountain regions; to help them evolve the modes of development which are most appropriate to their own values and needs, and to the ecological realities with which they must contend. By concentrating its attention in this, the greatest of all mountain regions, ICIMOD can help produce experiences, information, insights, and examples which can be of benefit to peoples of other mountain regions throughout the world.

Having been involved in the building of a number of institutions, I would like to take this opportunity to point out a number of areas of risk which will inevitably accompany the vast range of opportunities and challenges that confront a new institution like ICIMOD. First, there is the very importance and complexity of the issues which ICIMOD will be addressing. As ICIMOD is truly unique as an international centre for integrated mountain development, and the need for it is so compelling, there will inevitably be pressures on it to do more than it will be capable of doing. Expectations of what it could or should be doing will be set very high indeed.

In the initial stages, the pressures on ICIMOD to take on more than it can do will be especially great—yet this is the time when it must concentrate its attention on mobilizing its resources, developing a sound institutional and technical infrastructure, and recruiting its people and giving them the opportunity to work as a team.

The resources available to ICIMOD are still, unfortunately, all too modest in relation to the size of the task it faces. There is a danger that these resources and the energies of its staff may, therefore, become too inwardly focused on the operation of the organization itself and too little on the basic objectives for which it was created. All international institutes also face the dangers of over-politicization of their staffs and bureaucratization of

their activities. Professional, technical, and operations competence must be the prime criteria for recruiting and rewarding personnel.

Let me also make a strong plea for an operating style which makes ICIMOD the centre of a network of institutions and peoples from both inside and outside the region whose diverse skills, insights, and resources can be brought to bear in a concerted and co-ordinated manner to assist the people of the region, their institutions, and their governments, to develop and apply the solutions to their own problems. ICIMOD must be a centre of leadership, of consultation; a means of exchanging experience and information and identifying needs and opportunities, as well as mobilizing the skills and resources required to meet them. It should be able to draw on the co-operation and support of the development assistance programmes of governments, like those of the Federal Republic of Germany and Switzerland, which have already been so helpful, and of international organizations, like the United Nations Environment Programme, UNESCO, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, the World Wildlife Fund, and others.

ICIMOD must surely resist the temptation to try and go it alone, to set itself apart from other institutions, to compete with them, or to keep them at a safe distance. In the mammoth struggle we face to maintain the vitality and the life-sustaining qualities of mountain ecosystems, what we need most of all is enlightened leadership, and surely it is the prime task of ICIMOD to provide this leadership.

The temptation to try and be a doctor prescribing solutions for its patients must also be resisted. ICIMOD must be a partner in integrated development with the people whose experience is most relevant and whose livelihood most intimately affected by the issues to which it directs its attention—the peoples of each of the mountain regions concerned. They must be involved in every stage of the process, from identification of issues and goals through the formulation of plans and programmes designed to address these issues, and through the implementation and follow-up of every practical measure and project undertaken. Without their involvement, no programme, however well-conceived in technical terms, can ultimately succeed. ICIMOD must always be seen as a source of necessary help, information, and resources, and not as a distant authority or dispenser of patronage.

One of the most important attributes of ICIMOD is its international character. At the same time, this poses one of the most difficult challenges to its effectiveness. It must be admitted that the political differences that divide the countries of this region are formidable. They will make it extremely difficult, on occasion, to enlist the co-operation that will be so necessary for ICIMOD's programmes to benefit all parts of the region, and for all to benefit from the experience of others within the region. This makes it imperative for ICIMOD to develop a network of co-operative relationships on the technical, professional, and operational levels which take necessary account of, but do not involve it directly in areas of political sensitivity. All of the countries of the region, whatever their current political differences may be, have a common interest in the sound development of the region and preservation of its threatened renewable resources and ecosystems. The kind of co-operation which ICIMOD can facilitate is of special importance to all. Its success in developing international co-operation in this key region will set an important and constructive example for other mountain regions which also transcend national boundaries.

I am encouraged by what I have seen of the proposed programme of ICIMOD, of the staff it is putting together under the distinguished leadership of Dr. Rana, and of the interest in it, as evidenced by the participation in these opening ceremonies. This will enable ICIMOD to rise to the great and compelling need which has led to its creation and avoid the risks and pitfalls I have mentioned. To do this, it will need the active and continuing support of all of us, those from within the region and those from outside. The work has just begun. The sense of excitement and accomplishment we all feel in celebrating today the opening of this new institution must be accompanied by a sense of commitment in helping it meet the colossal challenge it now confronts. As one who has been involved for many years in the struggle to create greater awareness of, and a more positive response to, the need for better care and maintenance of our "Only One Earth", I can say with all conviction that there is no greater imperative, no challenge which will affect to a greater degree the future of our planet and its peoples than that for which ICIMOD was created. Just as the mountains of the earth have lifted the spirits and nourished the aspirations of people throughout the ages, they now point up the threats and enshrine our hopes for the future of the human experience.

Address on the Occasion of the Inauguration of ICIMOD

Dr. Ratna S.J.B. Rana

The Right Honourable Prime Minister, The Honourable Ministers, Your Excellency, the Director-General of UNESCO, Your Excellencies, Dr. Strong, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies, and Gentlemen.

It is, indeed, a great honour and privilege for me to address this distinguished gathering.

The Right Honourable Prime Minister, we are particularly grateful to you for finding time, despite your busy schedule, to be with us for this inauguration. We are also grateful for the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and address this gathering. I am sure your address will provide us inspiration, practical wisdom, guidance, and support.

Your Excellency, Mr. M'Bow, we are particularly grateful to you for coming all this way, despite your heavy engagements, to be with us for this inauguration. We are also grateful for the inspiration and invaluable guidance which you have provided in your address.

The right Honourable Prime Minister and Your Excellency, Mr. M'Bow, your very presence on this occasion is indicative of the commitment of your institution and of your own to the nurturing and growth of ICIMOD. I am sure all of us here remain indebted to you for this and for the inspiration that we shall derive from the assurance of your interest in the establishment and future growth of this organization.

Please allow me, then, to take this opportunity to also express how grateful we are for the support we have received from His Majesty's Government of Nepal.

As you all know, HMG/N has provided us the host facilities. The fact that HMG/N set up a Preparatory Committee for this inauguration under the Chairmanship of the Honourable State Minister for Education and Culture, whom you heard just a moment ago, indicates the importance the government has attached to this institution.

It may not be out of place here also to record our sincere gratitude to UNESCO, GTZ, and SATA on this occasion. Without the dedication of the concerned officials engaged in these agencies and in HMG/Nepal, the setting up of ICIMOD thus far would never have been possible.

I would like also to place on record our sincere thanks and appreciation to all those individuals and institutions, which are too many to mention here by name, who, in many ways, supported our concern.

May I also take this opportunity to extend a very warm welcome to the visiting Honourable Ministers and the distinguished delegates and individual scientists. I wish to express my sincere thanks to the governments of the region who have honoured us by sending high level delegations to our symposium and inauguration. This action by governments, I hope, indicates their concern and exemplifies the forum of co-operation that ICIMOD can become. It is clear evidence of the future success of our co-operative efforts.

One eminent historian pointed out many years ago that every epoch has its own world view of what is good and what is desirable. If there is such a thing, and I believe there is, it has of

late been epitomized by two key words: development and environment. Development now is such a common word that I hardly need to elaborate it; as for environment, I would rather not attempt to do it. The reason for this should be obvious to you. For we have the privilege to have amongst us as the Keynote Speaker, Dr. Maurice Strong. As you might all know, Dr. Strong was the key person in piloting the UN Conference on Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972. He did the same with regard to UNEP, as well. With all due respect to others in this field, I wonder who else would be a more appropriate speaker than Dr. Strong, himself, who, in a way, has already voiced our concern for environment. It is precisely for this reason that we approached him. We are most grateful to you, Dr. Strong, for accepting our invitation. And I extend to you a warm welcome. I am sure your speech will be as inspiring as always. All of us here are probably getting eager to hear you, as I myself am. So, I shall be brief and limit myself to what I consider is essential.

As for our concern, it is by now already known and voiced. Poverty, increasing population, lack of technology, and development itself have put the supporting capacity of the mountain environment under strain. If we let this situation continue, we are putting ourselves and our children in great peril in the years ahead. Thus, even to preserve what we already have, we will have to work harder now. Moreover, we will have to keep on working and, perhaps, make sacrifices for this cause as long as we live. If we do not, we will be depriving future generations of the very opportunity to do anything about it at all.

Towards this end, the first step is the recognition of the need; a need not only for common concern, but also for working together to tackle the problem which may now look only like an iceberg, floating in the sea obscured by the waves and the morning mist. Let me ask you whether we'll also have the will to steer clear of the danger looming before us before, rather than after the event? Let us not, therefore, forget the need for co-operation, a philosophy that caused ICIMOD to be created in the first place.

The creation of ICIMOD is not something that occurred suddenly. The seed for this Centre actually germinated in Kathmandu eight years ago in a UNESCO MAB meeting held here, but the concept itself had been seeded in the fertile meeting grounds of a group of individuals who were concerned about the future of mountain environment. From then on, the spark has been carried over here by HMG/Nepal, UNESCO, GTZ, and SATA. Today, this park will change into a lamp, giving an official birth to ICIMOD. As we shall witness in a short while the Right Honourable Prime Minister will light a lamp to signal that event. This light, I hope, will ever burn brighter. And many of you present here will join hands and come forward to keep this lamp ever burning.

Today, the seed which was then planted has germinated and taken root. We hope that in due course more roots and branches will be added to it. Given your support and co-operation, and with patience, I am confident that this seedling will blossom and bear fruits in due course.

I hope we can all be gratified that today we are contributing to the official beginning of a process of fundamental importance, a process that creates opportunity for co-operation and participation.

Your Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies, and gentlemen, this is an occasion of great importance. It is so, not only because we are witnessing the official birth of an institution, which is important as it is, but we are also engaged in creating a learning machine, to use the expression of one of the speakers in our symposium the other day, to forge a new form of co-operation. A new co-operation, I hope, which will be guided by understanding, respect, and humility to work together to meet the challenge of development and environmental management in our mountain areas.

I think co-operation such as I have proposed should not be difficult if we perceive common interests and similar challenges

to our future prospects arising from the neglect of the past.

There is yet another reason for me to think so. During the past four days of our deliberations and discussions on various issues, one thing that has clearly emerged is optimism for the future; optimism, I would say, not only for what ICIMOD stands for, but also for ICIMOD itself. I would say so because what became manifest during our symposium is a spirit that I reckon as co-operative and participatory. This spirit and understanding, and desire to work together, I am confident, will endure in future.

In closing, I would like to add that your presense on this historic occasion is a source of great encouragement. For us at ICIMOD it is also reassurance that we are engaged in a worthy cause.

Thank you once again for the privilege you have given me.

Vote of Thanks

Dr. N.N. Singh
Secretary, Ministry of Education and Culture, HMG/N

The Inaugural function is a gratifying and rewarding day for all of us. It is, indeed, a day of fulfillment of the cherished wish to host a centre that really cares for the integrated mountain development in the Hindu Kush-Himalaya.

On behalf of the Preparatory Committee for ICIMOD, I have the honour to propose our grateful thanks to the Right Honourable Prime Minister for kindly inaugurating this function and also addressing us.

We are also grateful to the Director-General of UNESCO, Dr. M'Bow, for his kind initiative and consistent support but for which we could not have been able to see this day. His inspiring address has really provided very important guidelines for the functioning of the Centre and his very kind appeal to the international community to come to the aid of this newly established Centre, will, indeed, go a long way in ensuring the successful functioning of this Centre. It is, indeed, because of Dr. M'Bow's major interest in the cause of the Centre that soon after the exhausting and very excruciating proceedings of the General Conference of UNESCO, he has found time to come to Nepal and be in our midst and bless this establishment of the Centre. We are, indeed, very grateful to Your Excellency, Dr. M'Bow, for your consistent support and inspiration to all of us in our preparations for the establishment of this Centre. We are, indeed, very grateful and we will continue to look forward to your consistent guidance and support to this Centre.

We are grateful also for the general support provided by the governments of the Federal Republic of Germany and Switzerland. We are thankful for their interest and their tireless works in the establishment of this Centre. I would like to mention here the great works done by Dr. Ratna S.J.B. Rana, Dr. Lampe, Dr. Hoegger, Dr. Glaser, and Mr. Gueller for their meticulous spadework without which the establishment of this Centre would not have been possible.

I would also like to thank all the governments of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region who have sent very high delegates to this Inaugural function and we express our deep gratitude for their interest and for their participation in the activities of ICIMOD.

Last, but not least, we would like to put on record our grateful thanks to the delegations of the friendly countries of the region and also to the experts and scientists who have been taking part in the symposium and who have kindly come to attend this Inaugural function.

Ladies and gentlemen, we would also like to thank all those who have directly or indirectly contributed to the making of this day possible. We thank you all, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, for responding to our invitations and participating in this Inaugural function and making it a success.

Thank you.

Message on the Occasion of the Inauguration of ICIMOD

Mr. S.A.M.S. Kibria
Executive Secretary, ESCAP

It gives me great pleasure to extend my best wishes and heartfelt congratulations to the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development on the auspicious occasion of its inaugural ceremony. As much as I would have liked to, I very much regret that I cannot be present with you today owing to unavoidable prior commitments.*

It is only very fitting and timely that an international centre like ICIMOD has been established, with the primary objective of promoting economically and environmentally sound development in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas, thereby improving the welfare of the people of the sub-region. I have noted with great interest that the major functions of the Centre are documentation and information dissemination, training, and applied research in the context of integrated mountain development. These tasks are especially urgent considering that the sub-region is still in its early stages of development.

It is gratifying to note that in pursuing its major objective of promoting integrated mountain development, the Centre will be adopting an interdisciplinary approach and that, at the same time, the importance of a balanced approach in integrating environmental measures and resource development activities is to be stressed and practiced.

We, in ESCAP, have, for the better part of some four decades of our existence, been devoting our best efforts to assist the developing countries of our region in the rational development and environmentally sound management of natural resources. We, therefore, greatly welcome the establishment of ICIMOD to supplement further the effectiveness of the national, bilateral, and international efforts in developing this vast and underdeveloped sub-region.

I should very much like to compliment the host nation, the Kingdom of Nepal, the supporting countries, the Federal Republic of Germany and Switzerland, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization for having acted as the founding sponsors of ICIMOD. I am confident that all the developing countries contained in the sub-region will earnestly participate in the activities of ICIMOD; endeavouring towards the common goal of development of the sub-region.

I should like to wish the Centre success in its undertakings and to assure you that we at ESCAP stand ready to co-operate with and assist the Centre in its development activities.

* Mr. Kibriá's message was delivered at the Inauguration in absentia