REGIONAL WOOD ENERGY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN ASIA
GCP/RAS/154/NET

**REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON STOVES
USED FOR SPACE HEATING AND COOKING
AT DIFFERENT ALTITUDES
AND/BY ETHNIC GROUPS**

Pokhara, Nepal
12-16 February 1996

In Collaboration with

international Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Bangkok, April 1997

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FOREWORD

Space heating is an important function of household stoves in many parts of Asia, particularly at higher altitudes, but is often overlooked by policy makers and stove programme designers. In some areas, the same stove serves for both cooking and space heating; in others, there may be a special stove for space heating alone. The different practices depend, among other factors, on the customs and traditions which prevail in different ethnic groups. So far, little information is available on space heating stoves, and few development activities have been undertaken in this field. This is a serious omission, as it is estimated that half a billion people in South and Southeast Asia alone use stoves for space heating, whether as an absolute daily necessity in the coldest climates, or for comfort during cooler seasons or nights.

At the same time, there are some obvious problems associated with space heating stoves. For instance, space heating requires relatively large amounts of fuel, usually wood or other biomass, and health aspects are particularly significant in poorly ventilated houses, common at higher altitudes.

Over the years, it has become common experience that addressing domestic energy problems successfully is a complicated and difficult matter. Addressing the problems associated with space heating stoves is no exception. It is vital to understand the users' needs in planning interventions, as existing domestic practices are almost always linked to prevailing customs and traditions, values, norms and social structures, particularly regarding gender roles – we should not forget that the overwhelming majority of domestic stove users in Asia are women. All of these, along with several other real and perceived constraints and the users' particular priorities, can be obstacles to an intervention's success. From a policy or programme perspective, there are additional concerns in the form of environmental management, institutional constraints and limited human and financial resources.

The Regional Workshop on Stoves Used for Space Heating and Cooking at Different Altitudes and/by Different Ethnic Groups was aimed at addressing these issues, by determining methodologies and formulating recommendations for the introduction of improved stoves with space heating functions. The workshop, which took place at Pokhara, Nepal on 12–16 February 1996, was jointly organized by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and the FAO-Regional Wood Energy Development Programme (RWEDP). Thanks to contributions from expert resource persons (in particular Dr. K Rijal of ICIMOD and Mr. A Koopmans of the RWEDP) and participants from 10 countries in the region, most of whom had their own experiences in the subject at hand, the workshop provided a unique forum to obtain an overview the present situation. This report summarizes the outcomes of that workshop. It is hoped that it will add to the general awareness of space heating requirements, and contribute to the development of policies, strategies and action for the wider introduction of suitable space heating devices in the region.

Willem Hulscher
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Director General
ICIMOD

Participants in the Regional Workshop on Stoves Used for Cooking and Space Heating at Different Altitudes and/by Ethnic Groups

Mahapuchera Mountain, which provided a stunning backdrop to the regional workshop

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Above left: Solar water heaters like this one can help conserve biomass energy. **Below left:** A discussion group in the regional workshop enjoy some direct solar heating, while **above right:** a Pokharan villager supplements the sun's power with a wood-fired space-heating stove.