

DIRECTOR GENERAL'S OVERVIEW



The year 2001 is the third year of the Second Regional Collaborative Programme (RCP-II), with one year remaining. Most of our efforts over this year have been to continue our progress towards this programme's objectives. This annual report highlights achievements in critical areas during the year 2001 at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD).

This year provided the opportunity to reflect and review the work of ICIMOD over the last five years. An independent high-level panel was appointed by the Board of Governors to conduct the Third Quinquennial Review (QQR). The constructively critical review produced by the QQR has enabled us to examine our strengths and weaknesses and take immediate steps to improve our work while also improving our planning for the longer-term. We are gratified that this distinguished QQR panel has strongly endorsed the value of ICIMOD to the mountain region we serve while helping identify future directions and recommendations.

The year 2001 is also the first full year with a new management team appointed by the Board. All of us at ICIMOD have continued our efforts to transform our institution into a genuine team of mountain specialists who can build on our strengths and address our weaknesses openly, and together. Through continuing staff 'advances', new gender balanced recruitment, staff training, and programme initiatives we have worked to increase integration, accountability for results, and partner orientation. We have also addressed issues of financial integration of programmes and projects, overhead recovery, and financial stability. While this organisational development process will continue, and much remains to be done, progress is now discernible.

Overall, ICIMOD's progress in achieving its specific RCP-II objectives has been, as noted by the QQR, reasonably satisfactory in many - though not all - of its activities. Methodologies and technologies that have been identified and are being tested and shared with its 300 partner institutions have already made significant impacts.

On-going achievements described in this report are based on both a continuation of existing activities and the introduction of new approaches. Among the latter are several examples that illustrate ICIMOD's initiatives to increase regional collaboration, strengthen internal teamwork, and make ICIMOD's knowledge more useful to end users.

For example, ICIMOD convened the first regional meeting of high-level officials and experts to develop a framework for regional collaboration on flood forecasting in collaboration with World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and with support from the United States and Denmark. This has resulted in a joint action plan for information sharing that has the potential to save hundreds—and possibly thousands—of lives downstream and build a basis for increased cooperation on vital water resources.

The programme 'Securing Livelihoods in the Uplands and Mountains of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan (HKH) Region' initiated with International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) support has also introduced a new model of collaboration with rural development and watershed projects that combines documentation with technical assistance, information sharing and ICIMOD's on-going research. It is an attempt to bridge the gap between specific implementation activities and their policy implications. It shows considerable promise as a model for more structured interaction with other projects and donor-funded efforts to increase their policy impacts.

Another noteworthy endeavour this year has been the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) supported work on State of the Environment reports and glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs). GLOF mapping was carried out for Bhutan and Nepal and additional regional countries have shown interest in joining this effort. The study identifies 44 potentially dangerous lakes of immediate importance for infrastructure planning and disaster mitigation. This work continues to increase trust in regional information sharing and builds on our regional hydrological and climate change activities as well as our work in risk engineering.

In response to the opportunities presented by the International Year of Mountains 2002, ICIMOD has geared up to play a key role within the region, as well as globally. It is an opportunity to integrate ICIMOD's interests further afield with organisations outside of the HKH. Planning and fund raising work has been carried out to enable us to support conferences, celebrations, policy dialogues, grassroots networks, and initiation of new mountain programmes in the region.

This report also highlights a number of other exciting programmes being carried out in the HKH region together with over 300 partners. These include programmes on beekeeping, livestock, ecoregional assessment, renewable energy, women's entrepreneurship, mountain women, equity and poverty, rangelands, watersheds, water harvesting, flood forecasting, hazard mapping, state of the environment reports, GIS and communication and outreach initiatives.

On the financial side, despite some continuing volatility in exchange rates, the commitments made by some of our regional and European donors to increase their contributions (or reflect them in

US dollar equivalents) have resulted in stable core programme financing. While the anticipated increase in project funding and some staff recruitment are taking longer than expected, most programmes had sufficient resources to carry out most of their planned activities. However, some activities were inadequately funded and staffed and had to be merged with activities that are logically connected, whereas others were discontinued or suspended as reinforced by the QQR which emphasised that ICIMOD should concentrate its activities in areas where it can be most effective.

We are redoubling efforts to raise core programme and project funding and develop new staff positions in innovative ways. Approved by the Board in their last meeting, these efforts will allow us to raise more funds and recruit additional staff. The fund-raising effort has already brought in new donors and shows more promise for the future.

The Board has approved our finally launching an ICIMOD headquarters building with judicious use of Reserve Funds. Savings from 2001 provide almost half of the funding required to turn this long held dream into a reality. The generous allocation of 1.5 hectares of land by the government of Nepal (with a market value of over US dollars one million) enabled the Centre to proceed with its design competition and for the winning architectural firm to be selected for detailed design and building supervision.

In 2002 ICIMOD is challenged to develop its strategic plan for the coming years. We hope that this report will lead to a better understanding of ICIMOD and promote closer interaction and support from you for this next phase in ICIMOD's commitment to serve the people and ecosystems of the HKH region.

J. Gabriel Campbell
Director General