

New Faces at the Centre: From Them to You

Ojaswi Josse, Assistant Coordinator Secretariat for Celebrating Mountain Women (July 2001), MA in International Relations, San Francisco State University, USA

"It is indeed a great honor to work for an organisation as renowned as ICIMOD and for a cause as important as Celebrating Mountain Women. This is indeed one of the most exciting years to be a part of the ICIMOD family. The International Year of Mountains provides a unique opportunity to highlight the issues of mountain people and their environment as well as to project the unique issues of mountain people at the very forefront of the international agenda.

Through CMW, we hope to get mountain women's voices heard and their issues concretely addressed. Let us all look forward to a future where there is gender equality, environmental sustainability and economic viability in the mountains and elsewhere!"



Andrew David Inglis, GIS Officer (August 2001), MSc in Geography, University of Western Australia

"I joined ICIMOD in August 2001 as a GIS Officer, under the Australian Youth Ambassador for Development (AYAD) programme that funds young Australians to work in developing countries to gain experience and to generate strong links between Australia

and developing countries. So far, I have worked on various GIS projects and am involved in the development of other projects within ICIMOD within the HKH region. I look forward to working in MENRIS and throughout ICIMOD on the unique challenges that are faced in the HKH region."



Dr. Jit Pradhan 'Bhuktan', Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialists (August 2001), PhD in Community Development, University of the Philippines, Philippines

The type of poverty in the HKH is characterised by a complex network of interlocking problems vis-à-vis opportunities. With slope and altitude, climatic and biological diversities abound. There is a rich complex of cultures. Development history has portrayed mountain people as simply a factor of production. I joined ICIMOD because I believe that the Centre has the institutional commitment and potential to transform perspectives on mountain people from being seen as factors of ecologically degenerative

production into actors of ecologically regenerative and gainful economic production. Mountain people do not lack skills or potential, they lack opportunities. Through a sound Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation system, I aspire to contribute to the Centre to 'prove' and 'improve' its organisational excellence in the pursuit of transformation of mountain areas and sustainable mountain development.



Armila C. Shakya, Coordinator International Year of Mountains

(August 2001), BSc in Business Administration, University of the Philippines, Philippines

"I am delighted to be working in ICIMOD at this exciting time when mountains take centre stage worldwide in response to the UN declaration of 2002 as the International Year of Mountains. Despite a rich heritage, most mountain communities are poor and marginalised due to their isolation and complex ecosystems. It is a

privilege for me to learn more about mountain development and be able to contribute to ICIMOD's efforts in this special year at catalysing actions that will lead to positive and timely changes in the conservation of mountain ecosystems, for the benefit of mountain people and those dependent on them, including ourselves."



Mandira Shrestha, Water Resources Specialist

(August 2001), MSc in Civil Engineering, University of Washington, USA

"The project 'Development of a Framework for Regional Cooperation on Flood Forecasting and Information Exchange in the HKH Region' aims to promote regional cooperation, build confidence and trust among the countries to share hydrometeorological information to provide reliable and timely warnings in order to save lives and property. One of the tangible outcomes of the project is a website www.southasianfloods.org that has been developed as a regional platform for

sharing flood information and data. It has indeed been very challenging as well as interesting to work in this Project, particularly with the interest, enthusiasm and cooperation shown by the participating countries. Besides this, I have been assisting in the coordination of HKH-FRIEND (Flow Regimes International Exchange Network) a regional network for hydrological research and data exchange."



Suman Rai, Coordinator, Equity & Poverty

(September 2001), MA in Economics, North Bengal University, India

"The mountains are my home where I was born and bred. Working with ICIMOD in the HKH allows me to combine profession with personal mission. I feel proud to acknowledge the rich cultural diversity, resources and the pristine panorama that is the hallmark of mountains. On the other hand mountains are characterised by lack of infrastructure, lack of access to markets and marginalisation from mainstream development processes. This means

that mountain people significantly depend on available natural resources in their locality. In this regard, mountain commons are especially important, as they are often part of the high livelihood strategies of mountain people; especially in terms of the degree of dependence of poorer and marginalised sections on mountain commons. This compels us to think and analyse issues of equity and poverty in the management of mountain commons from the perspective of poorer and marginalised people's lives, rights and dignity."



Dr. Eklavya Sharma, Senior Agricultural Specialist/Division Head, MFS

(September 2001), PhD in Botany (Ecology), Benaras Hindu University, India

"Sharing experiences of mountain farming system management problems and solutions from different countries of the HKH region can be rewarding and valuable. Food crop cultivation and livestock rearing in the mountains have centered around subsistence and throw is a great challenge for improving the livelihoods of 150 million poor inhabitants in these mountains. An open market economy and globalisation risks have cornered the poor mountain

farmers. The challenge is to use this opportunity for exploiting mountain specific niche products for the benefit of poor people in the mountains. Resolving conflicts over sharing and management in natural resources, and securing year round food availability for vulnerable groups of mountain people need attention from all.



Moushumi Chaudhury, Assistant Coordinator (November 2001)

I believe one of the biggest challenges in the HKH region is to link the needs of the highlands and the lowlands in a way that is fruitful wherein all can equitably share natural resources and the benefits of development. ICIMOD is the place to initiate such a

connection, and therefore, I am very enthusiastic about taking part in ICIMOD's endeavour to exchange ideas, create awareness, and build concrete relationships among those who face the complexities of sustainably using natural resources over national and geographical boundaries.

