

Events

Virtual discussions in preparation for the Rio+20 processes

Started in early 2011 in the Asia Pacific region, ICIMOD together with partner organisations and individual experts initiated a preparatory process towards the Rio+20 processes. A Mountain Partnership Consortium (MPC) meeting in February 2011 outlined the structure of the global as well as regional assessment reports, identified lead partners, and defined the process. Following guiding documents and inputs received from MPC, ICIMOD together with the partners organised three virtual debates (email and web based), focused on the HKH (April 2011, 200 contributions, 296 participants), on South and Central Asia (May 2011, 550 participants, 400 contributions), and on Southeast Asia (June 2011, more than 160 participants), which were warmly welcomed by SMD communities across the region with an exceptionally high number of participants and extremely valuable contributions.

Media Workshop on Adaptation to Climate Change

APMN, together with the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Knowledge Platform for Asia and the Asia Pacific Adaptation Network (APAN) organised a Media Workshop on Adaptation to Climate Change from 18 to 20 May 2011 in Dhulikhel, Nepal. The objective of the workshop was to provide updated scientific information on environmental issues, particularly with regard to increasing impacts and vulnerability due to growing climate and socioeconomic changes and the adaptation needs of the people in South Asia. Twenty-four media representatives from the South Asian countries of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka attended the programme.



Asia-Pacific youth forum on mountain issues concluded with adoption of 'Declaration' and 'Position Paper' on climate change and Rio+20

APMN organised the largest ever Asia-Pacific regional youth gathering on climate change and mountain issues in the context of upcoming Rio+20. The gathering, entitled 'Asia-Pacific Youth Forum on Climate Actions and Mountain Issues', took place from 8 to 12 August 2011 and was attended by 43 youths from 17 countries in the Asia Pacific region representing a diverse geography, a rich cultural background and a variety of issues. Participation was done through a pool of 1050 applicants representing almost half of the countries in the region. At the Forum participants adopted two important documents prepared in the context of ongoing debates on climate change adaptation and Rio +20 preparation. The 'Asia Pacific Youth Declaration on Climate Change and Sustainable Development' and the 'Asia Pacific Youth Position paper on Rio +20' both were launched on 12 August amid a special function organised to mark International Youth Day (IYD), the conclusion of the International Year of Youth





(IYY 2010/2011) and a 'key message communication' session of the Youth Forum.

The event was supported by more than a dozen global and Asia Pacific regional initiatives promoting climate and sustainability actions. These included Rio+ twenties; Road to Rio +20; UN CSD Youth Caucus; 350.Org; Activating Talent in Sustainability (ACTIS); Adaptation Knowledge Platform (AKP); Asia and the Pacific Adaptation Network (APAN); Eco-Singapore; Peace Child International; Schumacher College UK; Sustainability Asia; and UNEP TUNZA. The event was widely covered by national, regional, and global media and Rio+20 stakeholders,

including the UNCSD Secretariat and IISD, among others. The Position Paper will be submitted to the UNCSD Secretariat and the Declaration will be widely distributed during relevant events, including UNFCCC COP 17, Rio+20 and during preparatory consultations etc.

Details can be found at: www.icimod.org/apyf2011

Regional sharing workshop on assessment of challenges and opportunities in the Asia Pacific region for Rio+20

ICIMOD, as a member of the Mountain Partnership Consortium, organised a three-day workshop on 'Regional Sharing of Experiences, Challenges, and Opportunities' in promoting sustainable mountain development in the context of the upcoming Rio+20 conferences. The workshop was held from 23 to 25 August 2011 in Kathmandu. The meeting brought together more than 40 experts from the Hindu Kush-Himalayan (HKH) countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan) as well as from the Southeast Asian and Pacific countries (Indonesia, the Philippines, and Papua New Guinea) to share the progress made since the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, and to deliberate on the environmental, economic, and social challenges that people living in fragile hilly and mountain ecosystems face in meeting the goals of sustainable development.

The workshop came up with key messages and recommendations based on the 15 case studies on diverse mountain themes; on the findings of the e-conferences in the HKH, South East Asia and the Pacific, and South and Central Asia; on key informants' presentations from other countries; as well as based on discussions conducted in various sessions. These are expected to contribute to a regional assessment report on the challenges and opportunities for Rio+20 in the HKH as well as the Asia Pacific Region. The report was presented at a global conference on sustainable mountain development in Lucerne, Switzerland in October 2011. The Lucerne conference is expected to prepare a global report on the same theme to feed into the preparatory process for the Rio+20 conferences to be held by the United Nations in June 2012.



Regional Media Workshop on Green Economy and Climate Change Adaptation

APMN organised a Regional Media Workshop on Green Economy and Climate Change Adaptation from 2 to 4 November 2011 as a follow-up activity of the South Asia Media Workshop on adaptation to climate change organised in May 2011. The objective of the workshop was to familiarise media professionals with the different issues, challenges, options and opportunities with regard to the promotion of the Green Economy and Climate Change Adaptation in the region, including raising awareness of the International Mountain Day celebrations in December 2011, and Rio+20 meeting in 2012 among others. Twenty-six media representatives from seven of ICIMOD's regional member countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Nepal, and Pakistan) attended the programme.

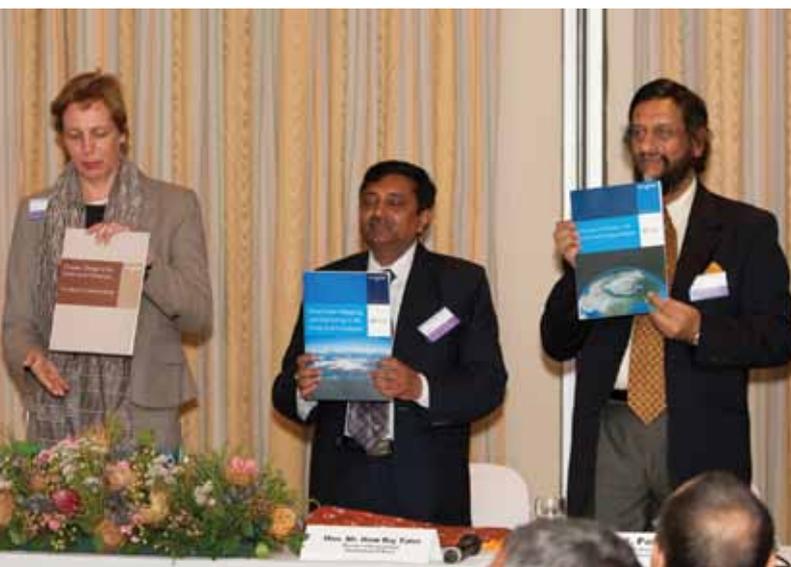


ICIMOD at UNFCCC COP17, Durban, South Africa

ICIMOD participated in the recently concluded COP17, Durban, in a substantive way, leading an international team in organising the first ever Mountain Day on the sidelines of COP17. The rationale and objectives of the event were to highlight the urgent need to raise awareness and sensitise UNFCCC COP17 delegates on the implications of climate change in the mountain regions; to share the emergence of stronger scientific evidence and implications; and to stress the need for policy actions to ensure the critical contribution of mountain ecosystems in climate change adaptation, mitigation, and sustainable development. In this regard, ICIMOD joined hands with its global partners particularly GIZ, the World Bank (WB), The Mountain Partnership Secretariat, and UNEP.

Dr Rajendra K Pachauri, IPCC Chair, gave the keynote speech and Dr Pema Gyamtsho, Agriculture, Environment, Forest Minister, Bhutan; Dr René Castro Salazar, Minister of Environment, Energy and Telecommunication, Costa Rica; and Mr Hem Raj Tater, Minister of Environment, Nepal, participated in the panel discussion. Dr David Molden, Director General of ICIMOD, welcomed the participants and shared the Call for Action. A number of top policy makers from ICIMOD's regional member countries and global development partners including the WB, UNDP, and UNEP also participated in the discussions. Also taking part were COP17 delegates from more than 14 mountain countries – including 6 of ICIMOD's Regional Member Countries.

Mountain Day concluded by issuing a draft call for action which made a strong plea to mainstream the role of mountains in global processes, including the UNFCCC COP, and to support adaptation in mountains for improved livelihoods and sustainability by introducing appropriate policies and creating specific financing windows. ICIMOD took this opportunity to release three publications – *The Status of Glaciers in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan Region*; *Snow-Cover Mapping and Monitoring in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas*; and *Climate Change in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas* – which have broken scientific ground in the understanding of climate change in the region.



The second event jointly organised by GIZ/ICIMOD was 'The Meeting of Minds – International Conference on Sharing of Experiences in the Design and Implementation of Adaptation Strategies and Programmes in Asian Mountain Regions'. This brought together climate change experts and policy and decision makers from China, Nepal, Pakistan, and Tajikistan together with experts from ICIMOD and GIZ to discuss climate change adaptation in mountain countries in Asia. They prioritised capacity building, knowledge management, and regional and cross

border sharing and networking as priority activities and expressed great interest in mainstreaming their erstwhile InWEnt-ICIMOD activities with ICIMOD's overall programmes.

ICIMOD joined hands with the Center for International Climate and Environmental Research (CICERO) and UNEP's GRID-Arendal, and organised a side event on 'Adaptation in the Himalayan Region: Lessons from an Integrated, Policy-relevant Research Programme'. This provided a good opportunity to debate the gender aspect of climate change adaptation in the Himalayas. All the ICIMOD activities can be accessed online at www.icimod.org/cop17.

'Youth Engagement on Climate Change and Rio+20 Processes' at UNFCCC COP17

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development – Major Group on Children and Youth (UNCSD-MGCY) and British Council International Climate Champions – Sri Lanka, together with other climate activists, UNCSD heads and youth climate ambassadors organised a side event on Youth Engagement on Climate Change and Rio+20 Processes in Durban on 8 December 2011 as part of the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The side event was useful in bringing together global youth attending the COP17 meeting to debate a future course of action in preparation for the Rio+20 meeting next year and the ongoing climate discourse. The event was moderated by Mr Tek Jung Mahat, APMN Node Manager from ICIMOD. The side event panellists included Dr Henry de Cazotte, Special Advisor to the Executive Director of UNCSD (Rio+20);

Mr Brice Lalonde and Ms Kiara Worth, representatives of the MGCY/Youth Caucus; Mr Nimo Bassey, Nigerian environmental activist; Mr Jamie Peterf, YOUNGO Bottom Lining Tem/UK Youth Climate Coalition; Mr Sikander Sabeer, British Council Climate Champion – Sri Lanka; and Mr Hemantha Withanage, a leading Sri Lankan climate activist.



11 December 2011: Celebrating International Mountain Day and launch of the World Mountain Forum

ICIMOD celebrated International Mountain Day (IMD) by holding a joint programme with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The event saw the launch of the World Mountain Forum for Sustainable Development (WMF-for-SD). This is a joint public-private partnership that aims to connect communities with the private sector and which is keen on launching a strong public relations campaign on mountain issues in civil society.

With the theme 'conserve, construct and celebrate' a video conference was linked to IMD Day celebrations in Verbier, Switzerland. Gregory Greenwood, Director, the Mountain Research Initiative, introduced the programme in Switzerland. This was followed by an opening address by Peter Brabeck-Letmathe, Chairman, Nestlé Group in Switzerland. At ICIMOD, Mr Daan Boom, Programme Manager, Integrated Knowledge Management, introduced the keynote speaker, Mr Rajesh Hamal, a noted cine artist from the Nepalese film industry, panellist to the joint discussion panel, which included Mr Dawa Steven Sherpa,





noted mountaineer and environmental activist, and Dr Rajan Kotru, Watershed Management Specialist, ICIMOD.

In his keynote address, Mr Hamal stated that mountain people are essentially poor and marginalised and that mountain people are the right people to bring to the world's attention the importance and relevance of the mountains. In the context of globalisation and the changing climate, he stated that ICIMOD as a regional institution can play an important role in the conservation of mountain ecosystems and the general well-being of mountain people.

Mr Sherpa said that mountain people are perceptive about the problems they face and are aware of the solutions to such problems, but lack the requisite resources and the technical know-how. They need to be heard and empowered to help themselves. Dr Rajan Kotru noted that the development paradigms in the last few decades have been economically driven and have not been able to address the needs of the mountain people adequately. There is a need for proper institutional mechanisms for the effective and equitable sharing of resources in the Himalayas. Dr David Molden, who moderated the panel discussion, summarised the significant role that actors and public figures could play in bringing the message of the mountains to the general public.

Dr Madhav Karki, Deputy Director General and Chair, Mountain Partnership Consortium, thanked the speakers for their participation and highlighted the public-private partnership of WMF-for-SD. He indicated that plans are underway to involve schools in the initiative in the near future.

Due to a technical issue ICIMOD was forced to disconnect with Verbier, Switzerland but continued with its own programme.

Street Drama 'Prakriti Prem'

As a soft opening to the International Mountain Day 2011 celebration, a street drama entitled 'Prakriti Prem' by the Mandapika Art Group was held at ICIMOD Headquarters. The street drama enacted the conflict between humankind and nature by putting Hindu mythological symbols in a twenty-first century setting. Lord Shiva, the ocean, mountains, ozone, clouds, and greenhouse gases were characters dwelling on problems such as temperature rise and loss of snow cover in the mountains, eventually realising that anthropogenic activities are behind the problems. The drama stressed the need to conserve forests and mountains and was attended by school children and invited guests including Mr Rajesh Hamal, the well-known cine artist from Nepal.



Children's painting competition, 'Why We Love Our Mountains'

ICIMOD, in partnership with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the arts organisation, Kakhara, organised a painting competition on the theme, 'Why We Love Our Mountains' among school children aged 5-7 and 8-12 on 26 November 2011. About 85 children from 24 schools in Kathmandu participated in the event at the Valley View School. They were briefed on the importance of mountains by a resource person from ICIMOD, and fine artists and illustrators helped children work on their paintings.

The painting competition was organised in the framework of the launch of the World Mountain Forum for Sustainable Development (WMF-for-SD) and was organised concurrently by partners across Venezuela, Ecuador and Peru in the Andes, and by ICIMOD/APMN in Kathmandu, Nepal.

The three best entries in each age category were awarded prizes at the ceremony at ICIMOD marking International Mountain Day on 11 December 2011.

Age group 5-7

- Winner: Sushan Rai, Sagarmatha Educational Academy
- 1st Runner Up: Ishan Karkee, Cambridge Public School
- 2nd Runner Up: Neema Shrestha, Global Public School

Age group 8-12

- Winner: Achyut Nakarmi, Amenity English School
- 1st Runner Up: Aman Gupta, Steiner Academy
- 2nd Runner Up: Kabiraj Rai, Bagmati Boarding School

The winner in each age group receives a desktop computer and a year's Internet access for his or her school. While adding to the school's existing facilities, the computer and Internet access will also facilitate access to the World Mountain Forum for Sustainable Development (WMF-for-SD) communication platform.

