

PRESS RELEASE: MOUNTAIN DAY 2 , COP 18, DOHA

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON MOUNTAINS: THE TIME FOR ACTION IS NOW

Mountain Day 2 **“Mainstreaming Rio+20 outcomes in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) processes for prosperous, resilient, and sustainable mountain ecosystems and communities”** was held in Doha, Qatar, on 3 December 2012, on the sidelines of the 2012 UN Climate Change Conference. The strong negative impact of climate change on the life of mountain communities, the role of mountains as water towers of the world and how they are being threatened by the melting of glaciers and the need to globally support mountain communities through political action, capacity building and scientific research were highlighted.

Plenary session discussions included climate change stories from the various mountain regions; integrated management of mountain water resources; the role of mountains in food security and livelihoods and the relevance of implementing the mountain agenda in post Rio+20 scenarios. The closing high-level round-table session focused on the key messages to be conveyed to climate change negotiators.

The Day started with the keynote speech made by Gyan Chandra Acharya, Under Secretary General and High Representative for Least Developed, Landlocked and Developing Small Island States, UN, who recalled the International Conference of Mountain Countries on Climate Change organized by Nepal and noting its importance for the inclusion of mountain concerns in the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD or Rio+20). He concluded by emphasizing the need for coordinated work between the Rio Conventions, noting the need to include mountains in their action plans.

Thomas Hofer, Mountain Partnership Secretariat Interim Coordinator, underlined how “Mountain communities are used to cope with climate change variability but the effects of climate change are very strong and thus they need support to implement their adaptation strategies and capacity development. There is a need for partnerships and strong and rigorous science to understand and address climate change in mountain ecosystems, which are extremely complex.” Mats Eriksson, Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), recalled the centrality of water when approaching climate change and mountains, stating that local knowledge needs to be “brought on board.” V Pal Singh, World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF), said that climate change remains poorly understood due to the lack of capacity-building and limited knowledge and that learning opportunities through the theme of food security should be enabled. Marco Onida from Alpine Convention stressed the importance of coming together to push the mountain agenda, as mountains may not always be a political priority for many countries.

Governments were also called upon to provide examples of climate change effects in their countries. Keshab Man Shakya, Minister of Environment, Science and Technology, Govt. of Nepal underscored the increased frequency of floods and glacier melts and the unpredictable uncertainty in water availability and unprecedented damage to the entire mountain landscape. He highlighted the challenges of addressing sustainability in a rapidly changing climate, emphasizing that such challenges call for stronger partnerships and increased funding for financing climate adaptation in mountain environments. Jose Luis Balmaceda, ambassador of Chile, highlighted the severity of glacier melt in his country mainly caused by climate change. Minister Gonzalo Beker, a diplomat from Peru, noted

that the capacity to respond to climate change is present among local people and traditional knowledge should be harnessed. Alfredo Guillet, Directorate General for Development Cooperation (DGCS), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Italy, stressed that key to mobilizing the global mountain agenda is to engage at the national level. Minister Maria Fabiana Longuzzo, Director General for Environmental Affairs and head of the Argentinean delegation to the UNFCCC, underlined how plans for sustainable mountain development should take into account the vulnerability of local communities and contribute to their empowerment. Longuzzo stressed that attention to mountains should be included in national policies through institutional mechanisms and she mentioned the Mountain Committee of Argentina as an effective example that provides a voice to mountain people.

In the parallel session, Sameera Zaib, youth ambassador, ICIMOD, highlighted the need to enable the participation of young people in climate negotiations as well as to raise the mountain agenda and reach the most marginalized communities.

David Molden, DG ICIMOD highlighted the role of science in understanding the growing impacts of climate change and called for non-mountain people and countries to support the adaptation programme in Mountains. Reflecting on the day's proceedings the Coordinator of the Conference Madhav Karki emphasized the need to maintain the momentum gained at Rio+20 to further the mountain agenda in all global environmental conventions. Thomas Hofer called on participants to "break the silos" by integrating water and food security in the mountain agenda.

The Mountain Day 2 was jointly organized by the Mountain Partnership Secretariat (MPS)/FAO and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), with support from World Bank, the Government of Nepal and other development research partners based in different parts of the world. Other sponsors and partners included the Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS), Water and Climate Coalition (WCC), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

For further info <http://www.iisd.ca/climate/cop18/md/>

The Mountain Partnership is a voluntary alliance of partners dedicated to improving the lives of mountain people and protecting mountain environments around the world.
www.mountainpartnership.org