

# Mountain People Adapting to Change

**Solutions Beyond Boundaries Bridging  
Science, Policy, and Practice**

9 –12 November, Kathmandu, Nepal



Daily Conference Brief

12 November 2014

## Mountain voices must make it on global agenda

The international conference on 'Mountain People Adapting to Change: Solutions Beyond Boundaries Bridging Science, Policy, and Practice' ended on a high note with a leadership policy panel agreeing that more needed to be done if mountains were to make it on the global agenda.

Both panelists and the audience voiced their personal reflections, thoughts, and commitments to take forward the messages from the Conference to promote action on climate change adaptation in the region.

Dr Ganesh Thapa of International Fund for Agriculture Development provided an overall summary of the conference. Among others, he noted the need to generate a unified mountain voice through regional and global cooperation without losing sight of local needs, the need to promote institutional pluralism while carrying out global assessments (with more inputs from HKH region), and the need to create and support mechanisms for collective reflection and learning among diverse stakeholders.

The need to support local level adaptation through technology, capacity building, and financial resources, and the need for greater collaboration with media and civil society to facilitate better communication of science on adaptation was also highlighted by Dr Ganesh Thapa.

"Engagement in conferences and collaborative process can expedite placement of mountain voices on the global agenda. There is a need to set up regional monitoring



and data sharing platforms," pointed out the UN Resident Coordinator of Nepal, Jamie McGoldrick.

Not forgetting the voices of the young professionals, who will carry the work into the future, one of the five winners of the poster session, Dilli Bhattarai, said the conference encouraged the youth to keep working to fill the existing data gaps and find innovative solutions to climate change problems.

### ICIMOD commits to action

ICIMOD's Director General Dr David Molden who moderated the closing policy panel spelt out some of the ways in which the new knowledge from the Conference would be translated into action through ICIMOD's work and commitments. Among others, ICIMOD will:

- Put ideas into action through pilot testing;
- Take global and regional knowledge to the local level through its programmes and initiatives;
- Support NAP processes, regionally and locally;
- Promote good science and generate new knowledge to fill regional data gaps, through existing and new initiatives such as HIMAP (Himalayan Monitoring and Assessment Programme);
- Take the mountain agenda to regional and global forums;
- Promote gender inclusiveness, including through the Women, Gender, Environment (WGEM) and Mountain Initiative, and;
- Build capacities at the grassroots/local level.



## Diversifying livelihood options emphasized

The interactive session on 'Adding Value: Promoting Climate Resilient Livelihoods and Value Chains' identified a number of alternative livelihood options and suggested a shift in government policies.

The panelists said governments should act as catalysts and facilitators in promoting climate resilient livelihoods. They said engaging the private sector and developing niche tourism like eco- and village tourism offer opportunities for diversification.

Panelist Kallur K Murali of the Asia Regional Office, International Development Research Centre, pointed out that value chains should be reasonably flexible for economic improvement of all the actors involved in the system. "It is a key to equitable benefit sharing," he said.

Anu Joshi, ICIMOD Value Chain Development Specialist, suggested continuous tracking of business opportunities and capacity enhancement to improve people's livelihood options.



Pankaj Ratori of Dabur, a private company working on medicinal plants, said another noteworthy livelihood option is in the area of herbal farming, particularly aromatic plants, spices, and medicinal herbs.

The audience agreed that livelihood options must be diversified through diversification of products, and by focusing on niche and climate resilient mountain products. They said research, investment, and documentation are the key to livelihood options.

"If nothing works out, the last solution for mountain people will be permanent migration from their native place," said the session Chair, TS Papola of ISID.

## Adaptation strategies must be all-inclusive

A panel of development practitioners shared their experiences on the use of indigenous, existing, and emerging practices in managing livelihoods at the session 'Adaptation in Action'.

The panelists pointed out successful examples from Bolivia, India, Pakistan, Myanmar, and Nepal where knowledge from local communities was used in devising adaptive strategies. They said documenting indigenous practices and understanding communities were critical in designing adaptive strategies.

The session Chair, Dr Ekalabya Sharma of ICIMOD, said adaptation is possible despite the numerous challenges. He said community engagement in the design of risk evaluation is important to capture ground realities and reflect community expectations.

The panelists noted that agro-advisory services could make local communities strong, and adaptation at local level needs to respect common resources. "Resources are scarce in mountain regions and maladaptation needs to be avoided," said Dr Pushkin Phartiyal, Executive Director of the Central Himalayan Environment Association.

The panelists also stressed on raising awareness at institutional levels, and to take into consideration the



**"Good indigenous practices should be supported by policies and institutions"** Ekalabya Sharma, ICIMOD

changing social, economic, and demographic profiles while devising adaptation strategies. They said vulnerability frameworks should be tested on the ground by engaging communities, and local institutions must be strengthened.

The audience raised some pertinent points. They reminded that involving the marginalized groups in adaptive strategies is important. Among others, they recommended reclaiming lost local knowledge, building mechanisms to synergize bottom-up and top-down knowledge, devising gender-sensitive strategies for adaption, and ensuring the quality of indigenous knowledge.

## For innovation to work, integrate not isolate

In his opening remarks to the session on 'Climate Smart Strategies: Large and Small-scale Innovations and Services for Changing Climates', Professor Yang Yongping of Kunming Institute of Botany, China, pointed out that top-down approaches are more visible at the regional and national level whereas the bottom-up approaches are effective at the community level. However, in order for climate smart strategies to be successful, it is important to link the two.

Many examples of innovative strategies were given by the panelists, which successfully merge technological innovations with community participation. Some of these strategies included crop insurance, weather-based agro advisories, early warning system for floods, flood resistant crops, and the use of ICT for linking farmers with markets.

But these innovative strategies do not get rolled out in a vacuum. Certain conditions must be met for them to be successful. For example, for technological solutions to work, they must have bottom-up involvement of the community and must be linked with local development plans. They need also to integrate and not isolate, as marginalized groups are often isolated from modern technology.

In order for climate smart strategies to be successful, it is important that policymakers encourage local governments to address these challenges. Information communication technology using services such as mobile SMS was noted as playing an important role in empowering women as farmers.

The Regional Programme Leader of the CGIAR Research Programme on Climate Change, Dr Pramod K Aggrawal, pointed out that the key ingredients in the scaling out of strategies include clarity among scientists on the usefulness of the technological innovations and clarity on impact pathways.



“Scaling out should not be left to the government but must include public-private sector partnership”

Pramod Kumar Aggrawal, India

### Tweets of the day

**svrkprabhakar @svrkprabhakar**

Successful and helpful conference comes to close...over to action and communication! #adaptHKH

**ICIMOD @icimod**

#adaptHKH Day 2 on video by our media partner - NEFEJ <http://j.mp/1wi7zPr> archived #livefeed also available <http://j.mp/1xgaCxb> ICIMOD @icimod

Get an overview of the discourse from Day 1 <http://j.mp/1B5EChI> Video by NEFEJ, our media partner for #adaptHKH Conference.

**Sumeet Keswani @SumeetKeswani**

Great to see @icimod's int'l conference on #adaptHKH end with commitments. #ideas baked over 4 days, time for #action.

**TV Padma @tvpadma**

U cannot separate top-down & bottom-up climate-smart approaches. Both need to converge through innovation : @icimod MSR Murthy #adaptHKH

**ICIMOD @icimod**

Unless solutions for mountain people are developed, we would end with a permanent immigration out of the mountains - Dr TS Papola #adaptHKH

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@geologist\_ita Deliberations from the past three days are available as daily briefs <http://icimod.org/?q=15512> #adaptHKH



Press Conference

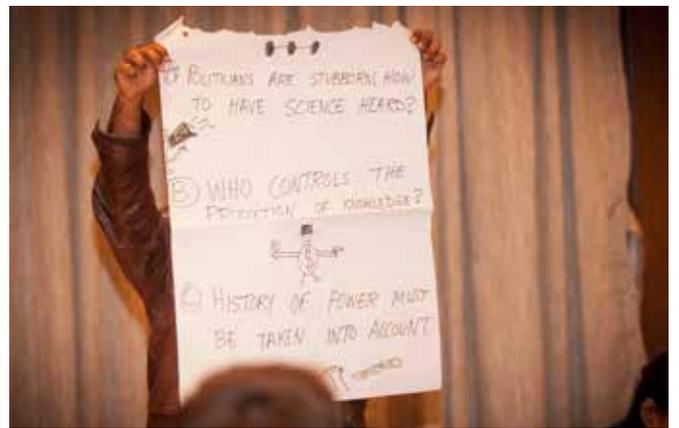
# Thank you, ladies and gentlemen

## People behind the conference

Abdul Wahid Jasra	Deepak KC	Miriam Lindwer	Sabina Thapa
Abid Hussain	Deependra Tandukar	Mohammad Akram Salamani	Saisab Pradhan
Achala Sharma	Deo Raj Gurung	Mohan Shrestha	Samden Lama Sherpa
Aditi Mukherji	Devjit Roy Chowdhury	Monika Pradhan	Sami Joshi
Aishworya Tamrakar	Dharma R Maharjan	MSR Murthy	Sanjeev Rajbahak
Amy Sellmyer	Dhruba KC	Naina Shakya	Santosh Nepal
Anandeeta Gurung	Dhrupad Choudhury	Nand Kishor Agrawal	Sarita KC
Andrew Steele	Dipshika Gurung	Narendra Bajracharya	Saroj Thapa
Aneel Piryani	Eklabya Sharma	Nasana Badyakar	Shekhar Ghimire
Anil Gurung	Erling V Holmgren	Nawang Sherpa	Shiva Hari Khatri
Anil Kumar Jha	Farid Ahmad	Neera Shrestha-Pradhan	Shradha Ghale
Anita Thapa Magar	Ganga Rana	Nira Gurung	Shristy Shrestha
Anja Møller Rasmussen	Giri Bahadur Shrestha	Omaid Seddiqi	Shubhuti Ghimire
Anjal Prakash	Golam Rasul	Pashupati Sadashankhar	Shyam Shrestha
Anju Pandit	Gopilal Acharya	Philippus Wester	Smita Ghimire
Anne Solgaard	Haiya Zhang	Pooja Pathak	Soumyadeep Banerjee
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Arun B. Shrestha	Jay BdrSubedi	Pramila Shrestha	SudamaKC
Asha KajiThaku	Jitendra Raj Bajracharya	Prem Kumar Pari	Sudas Sharma
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Bhawana Syangden	Kebina Pal Adhikari	Radha Krishna Shrestha	Sushil Pandey
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Bikash Dangol	Kishore Shrestha	Rajendra Shrestha	Tshering Lama
Bikram Barahi	Krishna Shrestha	Rajendra P Mali	Udayan Mishra
Bindiya Manandhar	Krishna Maharjan	Rakshya Roy	Ujol Sherchan
Bishnu Magar	Krishna Chandra Paudel	Ram Maharjan	Umesh Khanal
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Chanda Gurung Goodrich	Lasta Acharya	Ram Prasad Lamsal	Wu Ning
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Kansakar	Linda Maharjan	Rishi KC	
Chini Kaji Maharjan	Lipy Adhikari	Ritu M Shrestha	
David Molden	Marjorie van Strien	Rucha Ghate	
Deepa Basnet	Min Kumari Khadka	Sabak Singh	



# Glimpses...



## Difficult but not impossible

Improving livelihoods without compromising ecosystem services is a good step toward balancing development and adaptation. This was the message from the plenary on 'In Practice: Integrating Adaptation Knowledge into Development'.

The session Chair, Jigme Rinzin, Member of Parliament from Bhutan, opened the session with some thought-provoking questions: "Is it the politicians who do not want to integrate adaptation into development planning? Is it the difficult scientific reports that could not convey the messages? Or is it the bureaucracy that could not translate the language of the report into action?"

Dr Hari K Upadhyay of CEAPRED, a Nepalese NGO, noted that integrating climate change adaptation into development planning is difficult but not impossible. Some of the major bottlenecks he identified were low or no participation and ownership from governments and communities, and weak coordination among national and sub-national agencies.

The panelists noted the need to integrate climate change adaptation into development planning, the need to build capacity of local people, strengthen data bases, improve institutional mechanisms to address trade-off between ecosystem and development needs, and ensure resources and funding.

Dr Maurizio Busatti of the International Organization for Migration said the focus should shift from international migration to internal migration. He pointed out that there is a disjoint between multiannual plans and local plans, and disciplinary and funding gap. "National adaptation plans and local adaptation plans must be a joint process," he said.

Dr Muhammad Hashim Popalzai, Ministry of National Food Security and Research, Pakistan, said people-centric approaches and engagement of all the relevant stakeholders in adaptation planning is important.



**"Critical institutions are still under-funded"** Sunil Tankha, IISS, The Netherlands

Dr Bernard Cantin of International Development Research Centre, CARIIAA, said that climate change risks should be considered among other risks in risk management and planning, and there is a need to be careful in using language in a way that make sense to both local people and policymakers. He also pointed out that one of the major challenges is that of scale. "While climate science talks of the long-term future, decision-makers and politicians look for short-term information," he said.

In his concluding remarks, the session Chair said that besides climate change, there is the need to think of all the global drivers of change like market forces, migration, policy frameworks, and natural changes.

### FOLLOW the event

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