



**Transforming Mountain Forestry:  
Bridging Transboundary Challenges under 21st Century Paradigms for the  
Welfare of Mountain People, Forests and Environment in the Hindu Kush  
Himalayas**

18–22 January 2015

Forest Research Institute, Dehradun, India

## **Background**

ICIMOD is organizing a symposium geared towards transforming mountain forestry for the welfare of people, forests, and the environment in the Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH) region. The symposium, which will be held in Dehradun, India from 18 to 22 January 2015, will be the first ever symposium to specifically focus on mountain forestry in the HKH region. The event is supported by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change of India through its Forest Research Institute in Dehradun, the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), DFID-UK Aid, and the Austrian Development Agency.

Forests cover about 25% of the Hindu Kush Himalayas and provide vital ecosystem services. They provide timber and non-timber resources that help sustain local livelihoods, ensure the provision of food, water and energy, and protect the environment by sequestering carbon. The 2007 UN Climate Change Conference in Bali and the 2008 World Forestry Congress drew the world's attention to the role of forests in supporting climate change adaptation and mitigation, particularly in the Hindu Kush Himalayan region. However, the health and vitality of many forest ecosystems are steadily eroding as a result of climate change and rapid socioeconomic changes. In this context, it is imperative for stakeholders in the Hindu Kush Himalayas to promote sustainable and inclusive forest management that brings together practice, policy, and science. Moreover, issues related to forestry management, such as the illegal trade of forest products, corridor connectivity, human-wildlife conflict, water management, and value chain sustainability, are not confined to national borders and cannot be resolved through isolated efforts. It is hence important to find solutions based on strong transboundary cooperation.

The Mountain Forestry Symposium will provide a forum for over 200 regional and global experts to identify sustainable forest management practices and policies that can address the changing conditions in the Hindu Kush Himalayas and propose a way to address conservation and inclusive development simultaneously. All eight countries of the Hindu Kush Himalayas, as well as key global mountain forestry centres, will be represented at the symposium. Participants will include policy makers, scientists, practitioners, donors, civil servants, media, market actors, and legal experts. High-level representatives from all of the mountain states of India, as well as from the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change and other key ministries of the Government of India, will also be among the participants.



The five-day symposium has a number of specific objectives. It seeks to establish a common understanding of forest ecosystem dynamics and the management of mountain forest ecosystems in the Hindu Kush Himalayas to set research and development agenda on a transboundary scale. Participants from different countries in the region will share good practices in forest ecosystem adaptation, and explore ways of mainstreaming incentive-based mechanisms (e.g. REDD+, payment for ecosystem services). They will also identify policy deficits and propose priority actions for ensuring inclusive adaptation and good forest governance on a transboundary scale so as to address climate change and globalization processes. Another key objective of this gathering is to promote global, regional, and national partnerships and networks for collaborative research, development, and policy advocacy.

The workshop will consist of keynote sessions, parallel presentations, and panel discussions, live streaming coverage, and output-oriented brainstorming sessions on a range of issues such as green felling bans, human-wildlife conflicts, the role of remote sensing science, and forest engineering. One of the event's highlights will be the 'Lawmakers and Ministers Session', which will bring parliamentarians and forest ministers from Indian mountain states together with forest ministers from SAARC. It will broadly cover five themes, namely, institutions and governance; forest dynamics and management; incentive-based mechanisms; opportunities for regional market; and knowledge sharing and regional cooperation. Prior to the workshop, some of the participants will make a daylong fieldtrip to the Watershed Management and Biodiversity Conservation Area near Mussoorie Hills, Oak Forest Watershed, and *van panchayats* (local forest councils). The event will also feature a crafts mela and an exhibit of posters that will shed light on the state of forest ecosystems in the HKH region and the opportunities forests provide.

It is hoped that the symposium will help bring out key policy, practice, and science outputs that can set the pace for transformation of mountain forestry and also create conducive transboundary political and institutional conditions for protecting forest ecosystems while simultaneously improving the lives of rural populations in the Hindu Kush Himalayan region.

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