



Convention on Biological Diversity COP-10

Aichi-Nagoya, Japan
18 – 29 October 2010

ICIMOD Event, 25 October 2010

Facing the Challenges of Mountain Biodiversity Conservation and Management in a Changing Climate across the Hindu Kush-Himalayan Region

Venue: Room 212 A, Building 2, First Floor, Nagoya
Convention Centre

Time: 16:30 to 18:00

The Hindu Kush-Himalayas, the working area of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), is shared by the eight countries of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan. In the mountain areas, both ICIMOD and the individual countries are guided by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and especially the Programme of Work on Mountain Biodiversity. The rich biodiversity is closely linked to climate, and thus threatened by current changes in climate, as well as other factors. Notwithstanding, the linkages between the CBD goals and the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations are still weak and need to be strengthened

This event aims to raise awareness of the vulnerability of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region as a hotspot for biodiversity, and for climate and other environmental changes. It will also provide a platform for the countries in the region to share with the international community and among themselves, the biodiversity-related policies and strategic measures that their national governments are pursuing in response to the challenges. The discussion will focus on how mountain communities are being affected, and the consequences in terms of biodiversity and ultimately for ecosystem services, food security, and people's livelihoods in the mountains, downstream, and beyond. An analysis will be given of the implementation of the mountain biodiversity and protected area programme of work of CBD in the region, and suggestions solicited for a regional initiative on research needs related to climate change and biodiversity. Overall the event is expected to help develop a common understanding and links between the UNFCCC and the CBD Mountain Programme of Work in the region.

This side event is being organised by ICIMOD in partnership with the Hindu Kush-Himalayan countries to share and discuss information on how climate and other change is affecting the mountain biodiversity in their countries, and the initiatives being taken by their national governments to conserve and manage biodiversity, and strengthen and build resilient mountain communities that can adapt to climate change.

Provisional Agenda

Welcome and Theme Introduction by Andreas Schild, Director General, ICIMOD	Facing the challenges of mountain biodiversity conservation and management in a changing climate across the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region
Panel Presentation by the HKH countries	Heads of the Delegations (Minister Level) of ICIMOD member countries, namely Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan
Discussion	Questions from the floor
Brief on the ICIMOD publication	Eklabya Sharma , Implementation of the CBD: A retrospective analysis in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan countries (preprint for discussion and comments)
Closing Remarks	Andreas Schild , ICIMOD
Dinner	Panelists and all participants

Regional needs

Various needs have been identified for action in the Hindu Kush-Himalaya region using special lenses and sensitivity. Some of important needs in the region are summarised below for discussion:

- 1. Mainstreaming the CBD Programme of Work on Mountain Biodiversity into regional and national priorities:** The Hindu Kush-Himalayan (HKH) region hosts all or part of four of the 34 global Biodiversity Hotspots and a large number of high altitude wetlands. The region provides abundant ecosystem services to downstream populations in terms of provisioning services (for genetic resources, food, fibre, freshwater), regulating services (including the regulation of climate, water, and some human diseases), supporting services (including productivity, soil fertility, and nutrient cycling), and cultural services (such as spiritual, recreational, and aesthetic experiences). There is a need to conserve and manage ecosystem structures, processes, and production functions to ensure both the conservation of biodiversity, and the sustainability of ecosystem services such as the availability of natural resources and food, environmental regulation, flood control, drinking water purification, and hydropower generation. To this end, it is necessary to integrate environmental concerns, and particularly biodiversity conservation and management, into national and regional policy enabled frameworks for implementing natural resources and community development policies and projects that are pro-actively biodiversity friendly.
- 2. Reducing scientific uncertainty:** There is an urgent need to look at the consequences of climate change on biodiversity and conservation efforts, and to understand the effects of the loss of biodiversity resources on mountain communities. The HKH region is one of the least studied, monitored, and scientifically understood areas in the world, with the result that it has been characterised by the recent IPCC Fourth Assessment Report as a 'data-deficit' region. Basic climatic and hydro-meteorological data are lacking (or not readily available) throughout the HKH, as are data collection efforts on biodiversity, land use change and sustainable land management, climate change impacts on farming systems and genetic resources, ecosystem services, and carbon cycles. An improved understanding of regional climatic change processes is essential to provide the basis for informed decision making, risk and vulnerability mapping, sustainable (i.e. climate proof) development, the delineation and development of both adaptation and mitigation strategies, and especially important for effective biodiversity conservation and management.
- 3. Connecting biodiversity and climate change:** The CBD Secretariat has highlighted the linkages between the CBD goals and the UNFCCC deliberations, and produced a number of documents about the need to create links between biodiversity and climate change adaptation and mitigation, including the report of the Second Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biodiversity and Climate Change (2009). Synergies between climate change adaptation, mitigation and biodiversity conservation efforts, development of similar win-win opportunities, and the elimination of perverse incentives should be identified and supported through coherent regional policies promoting ecosystem management approaches to address transboundary issues and to effectively meet both sustainable development and biodiversity goals across the region. Both the UNFCCC and CBD must be harnessed in support of sustainable development in the HKH region.
- 4. A regional initiative:** There is an urgent need to launch a regional initiative to improve the understanding of regional change and provide the knowledge base necessary for decision-making and planning based on better information and scientific evidence. Policy makers and planners are currently not in a position to make evidence-based and scientifically informed decisions, as this information is currently lacking or not being collected and/or openly shared regionally or internationally. A regional approach that will enable national and regional stakeholders to participate in essential knowledge development, and make international research in the region transparent and accessible, as well as regionally usable and locally relevant, is proposed. Systematically developing an enabling framework, open data exchange, and a regional environmental knowledge base is fundamental and necessary to create both the basis for planned adaptation measures, in terms of biodiversity conservation, and a framework for the assessment of spontaneous adaptation process. There is also an urgent need for regional cooperation among the regional member countries for implementation of the CBD Programme of Work on Mountain Biodiversity in the HKH region

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