Bhutan+10
Gender and Sustainable Mountain Development in a Changing World
Thimphu, Bhutan, 15–19 October 2012


“Ten years is a moment in the ocean of eternity, but in terms of the calendar it is significant”, said the Honourable Lyonpo Thakur S. Powdyel, Minister of Education and Chair of NCWC, noting how much has happened since the previous conference on mountain women in Paro.

Honourable Lyonpo Dr. Pema Gyamtsho, Minister of Agriculture, Bhutan, expressed his pleasure that the vision of this conference has expanded beyond the mountains.

“These days will not be enough if we are not ready to challenge ourselves to think outside the box. We’re here to share, learn, innovate, and so contribute to more sustainable development processes in mountain regions.” – Maija Peltola, IFAD

Marchang Ceremony

“It’s not about the people in the room, but about those who can’t be here; policy makers need to put policy in place and get action into the field.” – Dr David Molden, Director General, ICIMOD

Elbegzaya Batjargal, Mountain Partnership: “Gender does matter”

“Bhutan is admired for its efforts to bring happiness into the world. After only a few hours here I already feel it.” – Dr Christoph Beier, Vice Chair of the Management Board, GIZ

Matthias Meier, SDC proposed considering in the next days the rich resources of culture in the mountain regions. “Globalizing countries may prize conformity over diversity, but diverse cultural backgrounds are the hallmark of sustainable development”, he said.
Rolf Schinkel, SNV, noted that mainstreaming gender is key to inclusive development, but people often trust someone else will deal with it. “This conference provides a podium to bring new insights in understanding of gender and how to properly mainstream it.”

Chief Guest, the Honourable Chief Justice of Bhutan, Lyonpo Sonam Tobgye, noted that legal remedies and social controls must be in place for equality of women and men. “Women are agents that help us build social capital that contributes to strengthening the fabric of our societies”, he said.

The ICIMOD Study on Gender and Biodiversity Management in the Greater Himalayas was launched.

HE Heikki Holmas, Minister of International Development, Government of Norway described how he “grew up under a table in a meeting room” because he attended meetings with his mother, a women’s movement leader in Norway. “I learned it was important to be silent when women talk”, he said, explaining how he grew up recognizing the existence of systematic inequalities. He noted that Norway has 50% women in government, although there is still room for progress because fewer elected officials are women. “Norway is rich from oil; but what most people don’t know is that of all OECD countries, Norway has the highest participation of women in the pension fund. Women contribute more wealth than oil.” He continued that it is wise to increase women’s contribution to income. “If you don’t have oil, you know where your fortune is: in the women.”