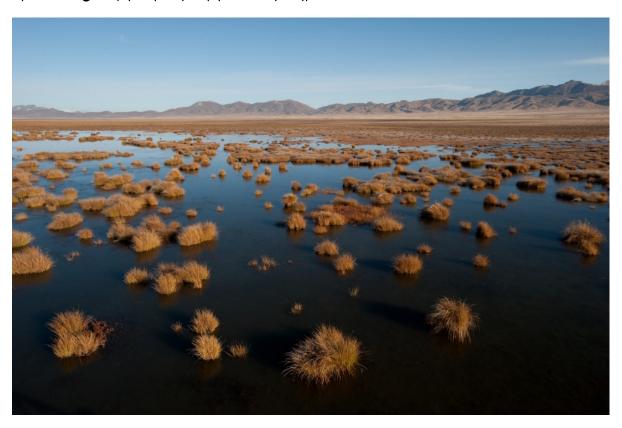
MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

र्षेत्राख्यायर् केतायरायम् तस्ति।

Mountains matter for biodiversity

गम्बान्द्रिः श्रुकाञ्चवन्द्रिगबाञ्चवरे वृत्याः इत्वाक्षेत्र



High-altitude wetlands provide a wide range of ecosystem services, supporting local livelihoods, regulating hydrological flows, sequestering carbon, and providing habitat for species with trans-Himalayan ranges. (Photo: Alex Treadway/ICIMOD)

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Mountains are a barometer of the planet's health – changes in these lofty parts of the world dictate how rivers flow and crops grow and livelihoods endure elsewhere. And yet, global recognition of these vital regions has been rather <u>underwhelming</u>, in contrast to say the Amazon or the polar regions. International Mountain Day (IMD), celebrated on this very day every year, is a plea to the world to value these mighty, important, neglected regions. We need to recognize that our battle against climate and other changes must be fought at this front – at the highest, most fragile regions of the world where impacts are <u>accentuated</u> – if we are to secure our collective future. And this year's IMD theme is an apt one – "Mountain biodiversity" epitomizes the uniqueness and importance of mountains. It also brings attention to the multitude of threats that could <u>drastically diminish the diversity of life</u> as we know it, and throws into sharp relief the need to mount a unified effort to protect our mountains.

मिर्यः द्रप्रस्थित्वा मिर्यः व्यक्षियं त्रात्ते चाडुचा म्र्रीणसञ्जया तीया स्वायः मिर्यः म्रीयः म्रीया म्यायं त्याप्ता स्वायं त्याप्ता स्वायं त्याप्ता स्वयं त्या स्वयं त्याप्ता स्वयं त्या स्वयं त्याप्ता स्वयं त्याप्ता स्वयं त्याप्ता स्वयं त्याप्ता त्याप्ता स्वयं त्याप्ता स्ययं त्याप्ता स्ययं त्याप्ता स्वयं त्याप्त्य स्वयं त्याप्त्य स्वयं त्याप्त्य स

Immense diversity in the mountains

ग्नन्थ-२:र्सु-द्रन्यवतय्यश्र-प्रते-रेग्न्थ-स्र्

Mountains are a veritable treasure trove of biodiversity. They cover only around 27% of the world's surface, yet they contribute disproportionately to the terrestrial biodiversity, especially in the tropics, where they host about <a href="https://half.org/half.com

We can see that mountains matter for diversity in every sense. Mountain ranges across the world act as water towers, regulate climates, and nourish diverse life and culture downstream. The Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) provides ecosystem services to nearly two billion people, more than any other mountain system in the world.

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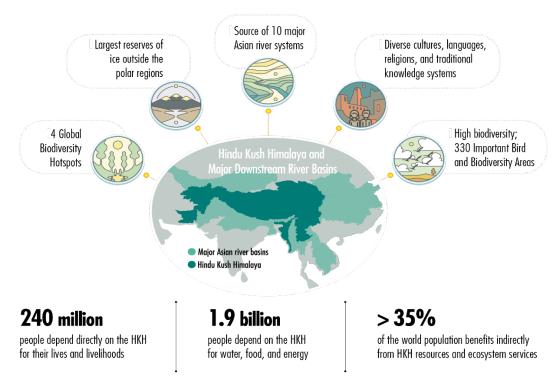
HKH biodiversity under threat

⁵वर्.या.व.के.ब.ल.ल.स.च्चेर सं.केष.क्वर्या

The HKH is a bastion of biodiversity, teeming with extraordinary life and interconnectedness across boundaries. More than 85% of rural communities in the HKH directly depend on biodiversity for their subsistence. The region is a <u>cradle</u> for over 35,000 species of plants and more than 200 species of animals. Interestingly, this is where numerous crops and animals – including <u>today's domesticated chicken</u> – originated. And we are still finding new species: Between 1998 and 2008, an average of <u>35 new species</u> were discovered each year in the eastern Himalaya alone.

चालप्ताः वत्तः स्वालप्ताः स्वालप

The HKH encompasses four global biodiversity hotspots, six UNESCO natural world heritage sites, 30 Ramsar sites, and 330 important bird and biodiversity areas. It is home to diverse cultures with more than 1,000 living languages, along with a unique range of traditional knowledge systems associated with these cultures.



Four global Biodiversity hotspot- गुण' श्वेते' सुक्ष' स्व 'रेणक' सूते' पर्व 'र्'

Largest reserves of ice outside polar regions- বেৰ্ছমান্ত্ৰীন্দ্ৰান্ত্ৰীৰ্শ্বাৰ্থ নিৰ্দ্তি ন

Source of 10 major Asian river systems- क्षेत्र प्रते कुळेत् १०० क्षेप्रहूट पुरुष्

240 million- ષાંખાવુલ people depend directly on the HKH for their livelihoods ને કેવાવો એ તું વીષા વિદ્યાસ તે વર્ષે વર્ષે ત્રાપ્ત ત્રાપત ત્રાપત ત્રાપ્ત ત્રાપત ત્રાપત

1.9 billion-প্রমান্তর্মাপূন্দ

>35%-বর্মু'ক'র০ প্রবামা

of the world population benefits indirectly from HKH resources and ecosystem services-ठैग'गो' तर्ह्याञ्चीरगो'क्षेःक्वेंच्या हैव'तु'गुन्न'हे'याया'पा'र्रे क्चुत्र्यों क्वेंब्रामुर्द्यान्यव्यक्षेंच्यां प्रवास्थित हैव'तु'गुन्न'हे'याया'पा'र्रे क्चुत्र्यों क्वेंब्रामुर्द्याच्यक्षेंच्यां प्रवास्थित हैव'तु'गुन्न'हे'याया'पा'र्रे क्चुत्र्यों क्वेंब्राम्यव्यक्षेंच्यां प्रवास्थित हैव'तु'गुन्न'हे'या'पा'र्यक्षेत्रा

(Illustration: ICIMOD)

However, exploitation is rampant in all ecosystems today, and climate change is aggravating matters. Fragile and important ecosystems – forests, wetlands, rangelands, and mountains – are being devastated and vital links between species and ecosystems are being altered or severed. The HKH is not an exception. Under current rates of biodiversity loss and land degradation, we could witness the extinction of a quarter of the endemic species in the Indian Himalaya by the end of the century. Our unchecked exploitation of resources and encroachment of wildlife habitats have grave implications, as made abundantly clear by the devastating COVID-19, a zoonotic disease which lays bare our neglect and abuse of nature. After all, healthy and biodiverse ecosystems safeguard us against pandemic-scale zoonotic diseases, among the host of other benefits they provide, and the HKH is also susceptible to such outbreaks.

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Nature-based tourism can provide an important source of livelihoods and incentivize conservation in high biodiversity landscapes. (Photo: Jitendra Raj Bajracharya/ICIMOD)

पर्यमुषात्रवर्ण्यनाःश्रुषी (तर. हु.२४.२. हैह. वैह.२.३४०)श्रुष्युः यो.श्रुष्युः विह. वीत.३४. वीत.३४.वी.वर्षुः वर्षुः वर्षः वर्षुः वर्षुः वर्षुः वर्षुः वर्षुः वर्षुः वर्षुः वर्षुः वर्षः वर्यः वर्षः व

A collective voice

ষ্ট্রীর্ব শন্তী শ্বদ স্থা

There are several examples of efforts by HKH communities to mitigate mountain biodiversity loss. One such example is the conservation of crop genetic diversity by farmers in the highlands of India, through exchanging, reusing, and saving seeds. Protection of red panda habitat by communities in eastern Nepal, protection of wintering habitat of black-necked crane in Bhutan, conservation of sacred groves in the Western Himalaya, and the management of grazing and forest resource use by the traditional office of the Dzumsa in North Sikkim, India, are other notable examples of indigenous stewardship. Encouragingly, national efforts are also falling into place. HKH countries have remained committed to Aichi Target 11, which calls for conservation through protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures by 2020. About 40% of the HKH region is designated as protected areas, and countries such as Bhutan and Nepal have exceeded their target, with 51.44% and 23.39% of their area under protected area coverage, respectively.

 तयर सूर्या लुर्गा स्ट्र्या लुर्गा स्ट्र्या साम् क्रिया स्ट्र्या साम् क्रिया स्ट्र्या साम् क्रिया साम् क्रिया साम क्रिया स्ट्रा साम क्रिया साम क्राय साम क्रिया साम क्राय साम क्रिया साम क्रिया साम क्रिया साम क्रिया साम क्रिया साम क्

It is high time HKH mountain communities and countries work together to conserve our mountains and biodiversity for our own wellbeing. This cooperation is particularly important in transboundary landscapes of global significance.

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We are committed to working towards the sustainable development goals and commitments made by our eight HKH countries under the <u>Convention on Biological Diversity</u> and the <u>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</u>, among others. Moreover, Action 5 of our <u>HKH Call to Action focuses on enhancing ecosystem resilience for sustained flow of services by halting biodiversity loss and land degradation. The recent momentous HKH <u>Ministerial Summit and declaration</u> have recognized and solidified the Call to Action, and this can pave the path to transboundary cooperation on biodiversity conservation and a united voice on the global stage.</u>

દ્વાના સાત્રવસ્ત્રાન્ય વર્ષ્ય સર્થય સર્થય સર્થય સર્થય તાર્કાના કેન્સા કેન્સા કેન્સા કેન્સાના કુન્સાના કુન્સા કુન્સાના કુન કુન્સાના કુનસાના કુન્સાના કુન્સાના કુન્સાના કુન્સાના કુન્સાના કુન્સાન કુન્સાના કુન્સાના કુન્સાના કુન્સાના કુન્સાના કુન્સાના કુન્સાના કુન્સાના કુન્સાના કુન્સાના

Protecting our habitats and wildlife cannot wait. On IMD 2020, let's reaffirm our commitment to saving the HKH's immense biodiversity!

Wishing you all a happy International Mountain Day! ભુત્રાન્યાસું મુખ્યાસું માત્રસ્ત્રે જે ત્રસાવને પ્રાથમ સ્ટ્રેન પ્રસાવન સ્ટેંપ્સ્ટ્રી

Pema Gyamtsho

Director General ICIMOD

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र्षेदशःख्यःसर्दे केता

क्चुताः श्चेदिः मानसः रे में निष्यसेया मुर्वेमा प्रश्चेया हो पा (की सी से हो)