



BAM-E-DUNYA WEBINAR SERIES | EPISODE III

Conservation challenges on the roof of the world

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DATE: 21 May 2021
TIME (NST): 14:30–16:35 NPT (UTC+05:45)
PLATFORM: Microsoft Teams

ORGANIZERS

Hindu Kush Karakoram Pamir Landscape (HKPL) Initiative, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD); World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF); and Global Snow Leopard & Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP)

Background

Mountains constitute around 24% of the world’s land area and are home to one-fifth of the world’s population. These regions provide 80% of the world’s freshwater and host about half of the global biodiversity hotspots. The Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region harbours over 35,000 species of plants, over 200 species of mammals, and four out of 36 global biodiversity hotspots. The HKH mountains offer an array of ecosystem services to one-fourth of the global population and host significant populations of rare and unique wildlife species.

The HKPL, one of the four transboundary landscapes in the HKH region where ICIMOD works, represents the roof of the world, or “Bam-e-Dunya” in Persian. The landscape stretches across the high-altitude areas of Afghanistan, China, Pakistan, and Tajikistan, converging on the Pamir Plateau. The HKPL, with six contiguous protected areas, is a fragile alpine ecosystem threatened by climate change and other anthropogenic stressors. Communities in the HKPL region face a multitude of challenges such as geographical isolation, limited research and technology, and lack of value chains and access to markets for mountain products and





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services. Increasing competition for natural resources and rising human-wildlife conflict also pose major ecological and epidemiological risks.

Biodiversity in the HKPL

The HKPL provides ecosystem goods and services for diverse ethnic communities and offers habitats for an array of wildlife species. It harbours rare wildlife species such as the snow leopard, argali, markhor, and blue sheep. Maintaining this rich biodiversity and the integrity of its ecosystems is crucial for the developmental aspirations of transboundary landscapes. Biodiversity sustains traditional livelihoods such as mountain farming and livestock herding, and offers potential for exploring niche mountain products and livelihoods.

Despite increased conservation efforts through protected area networks and community conservation areas in HKH countries, habitat fragmentation has increased the inbreeding of isolated populations and caused a rapid decline in genetic diversity. Illegal hunting of wildlife and retaliatory killing of apex predators further add to biodiversity loss. There is a critical need to strengthen joint conservation planning and management of wildlife corridors, migration and dispersal routes, and breeding and lambing habitats. This could help mitigate human-wildlife conflict and curb illegal wildlife trade across transboundary landscapes.

About the webinar

ICIMOD's Regional Programme on Transboundary Landscapes and HKPL Initiative, in partnership with World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Programme (GSLEP), is organizing this webinar – the third episode in the Bam-

e-Dunya webinar series – to observe the International Day for Biological Diversity 2021 (22 May). This year's theme – “We're part of the solution” – highlights the significance of biodiversity for mountain ecosystems and human wellbeing and raises awareness about emerging biodiversity conservation issues and solutions in the HKH region. This builds on the momentum generated last year under the overarching theme “Our solutions are in nature”, which served as a reminder that biodiversity is the answer to several sustainable development challenges.

The webinar will offer a platform to deliberate on priority conservation challenges such as human-wildlife conflict, poaching for illegal trade, and habitat fragmentation to inform actions for a healthy Bam-e-Dunya. An experts' panel will draw attention to the prevailing conservation challenges and change dynamics across landscapes and help prioritize areas for solution packages. The knowledge shared during the webinar will inform development and conservation planners on how enhanced resilience, inclusive and integrated development, and adaptation to change can be achieved in the HKH region.

Objectives

- Develop a common understanding of the critical biodiversity issues in the mountain areas of the HKH in general and the HKPL in particular
- Improve knowledge sharing and exchange of experiences among HKPL countries
- Strengthen knowledge, innovation, and networking for joint planning and management of biodiversity across landscapes
- Identify solutions linking science-policy-practice to better conserve the landscape's biodiversity

Agenda

Time (NPT)	Programme
14:30–14:35	Opening Setting the stage – Laurie Vasily , Head of Knowledge Management and Communication, ICIMOD
14:35–14:45	Welcome remarks ICIMOD for mountain people and systems, and IBD 2021 – Pema Gyamtsho , Director General, ICIMOD
14:45–15:30	Key speeches Human–wildlife interactions: wildlife conservation in high mountains of Asia – challenges and solutions – Koustubh Sharma , International Coordinator, GSLEP Illegal wildlife trade, zoonotic diseases, and pandemics: An emerging issue for Asia’s high mountain ecosystem – Rishi Kumar , Lead, Snow Leopard Conservation Programme, WWF-India Human–wildlife conflict in Wakhan: Looking to the past and anticipating future challenges – Peter D. Smallwood , Associate Professor of Biology, University of Richmond, USA
15:30–15:50	Reflections Biodiversity challenges, strategies, and opportunities – GM Malikyar (Afghanistan), Professor Ruijun Long (China), and Naeem Ashraf Raja (Pakistan)
15:50–16:15	Discussion (all participants) Biodiversity challenges in the HKH region
16:15–16:30	Conclusion and way forward Adaptation to change: Key messages from the webinar and action points – Sandro Lovari , Chair, Steering Committee of the Snow Leopard Network
16:30–16:35	Vote of thanks – Ghulam Ali , Programme Coordinator, Hindu Kush Karakoram Pamir Landscape (HKPL) Initiative, ICIMOD

For further information www.icimod.org/hkpl/webinar
For registration queries hkpl@icimod.org

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