



#MovingMountains

ICIMOD @COP27: HKH2SharmElSheikh

Mountains, glaciers, and people: Preventing glacial lake outburst floods in the Third Pole

9 November 2022 | 10:00–11:15 Egypt time | Cryosphere Pavilion, COP27 Blue Zone

Visit www.icimod.org/cop27 to watch the livestream

Background

In the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH), moraine-dammed glacial lakes are common and numerous glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) events have been traced back to the failure of moraine dams. GLOFs have repeatedly caused the loss of lives and severe damage to downstream infrastructures and communities. The frequency of GLOFs and risk from potential GLOFs are expected to increase as the climate continues to change.

In 2020, a [joint report](#) by UNDP and ICIMOD stated that due to the rapid melting of glaciers in the Himalayas, new glacial lakes were being formed and existing ones were expanding, increasing GLOF risk. At least 47 glacial lakes in the Koshi, Gandaki, and Karnali river basins of Nepal, India, and the Tibet Autonomous Region of China were categorised as potentially dangerous.

Even the most ambitious Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 °C by 2100 would lead to a 2.1 °C spike in temperatures and the melting of one-third of the HKH region's glaciers, a critical water source to some 250 million mountain dwellers and 1.65 billion others living in the river valleys downstream. If global climate efforts fail, current emissions would lead to 5 °C in warming and a loss of two-thirds of the region's

glaciers by 2100. This is ominous news when it comes to GLOF risk.

Addressing these changes and risks requires substantive transboundary, regional, and international cooperation in terms of finances, data and technology, and knowledge transfer. It is therefore important to learn from past events and assess the overall GLOF risk in the region for better planning and implementation of disaster risk reduction measures and climate change adaptation. Global and regional climate and biodiversity financing opportunities need to be leveraged to tackle these complex development challenges in the region to benefit mountain communities and ecosystems.

Event objectives

- Forge collaboration among HKH countries on the dynamics, risks, and scale of impact of GLOFs and identify areas of cooperation
- Identify avenues of cooperation between different multilateral organisations in terms of finance, data, technology, and knowledge sharing
- Broaden understanding of GLOF risks for planning and implementation of disaster risk reduction measures and climate adaptation measures

Agenda

Time (Egypt)	Programme
Moderator: Deepshikha Sharma , Climate and Environment Specialist, ICIMOD	
10:00–10:02	Welcome remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none">• UNDP representative (TBC)• HKH representative (TBC)
10:02–10:20	Remarks from youth representative <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purnima Shrestha, climate change activist, photographer, and mountaineer (ascended seven peaks above 8,000 metres)
10:20–10:25	Presentation on GLOFs <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arun Bhakta Shrestha, Regional Programme Manager, River Basins and Cryosphere, ICIMOD• UNDP representative (TBC)
10:25–10:35	Remarks from the HKH High-level Task Force members and HKH representatives
10:35–11:05	Panel discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none">• UNDP representative (TBC)• Miriam Jackson, Programme Coordinator, Cryosphere, ICIMOD (joining online)• ICCI representative
11:05–11:15	Briefing about ICIMOD–UNDP collaboration and closing remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arun Bhakta Shrestha, ICIMOD• UNDP representative (TBC)

Jointly organised by [ICIMOD](#) and [UNDP](#)

For further information

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ICIMOD gratefully acknowledges the support of its core donors: the Governments of Afghanistan, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Norway, Pakistan, Sweden, and Switzerland; and programmatic support from the Government of the United Kingdom.