

# Regional cooperation for addressing the triple planetary crisis in the Hindu Kush Himalaya

A side event by ICIMOD at the fifth  
Forum of Ministers and Environment  
Authorities of Asia Pacific

3 October 2023 | 12:15 – 14:00 (Sri Lanka time – GMT +5:30)  
Lotus Ball Room B, Shangri-La Colombo | Sri Lanka  
Event mode: Hybrid ([Zoom link](#))

The Hindu Kush Himalaya is one of the regions most exposed to the triple planetary crisis. With the cryosphere here vital for the water and food security of 2 billion people in Asia, the rapid and irreversible loss of snow and ice held in mountains here caused by global temperature rise – with glaciers disappearing 65% faster in 2011–2020 compared with the previous decade – has huge humanitarian implications.

Wildlife, rivers, springs, rangelands and forests across the region are in crisis – with 80% of habitat within the region’s four global biodiversity hotspots already lost, and more than half of wild species in the region in decline. The HKH is also one of the most polluted in the world, with billions regularly breathing air that exceeds safe limits. Toxic air hits human health – shortening life expectancy by years, with children particularly vulnerable. It also reduces crop yields, impacts water security by accelerating the loss of snow and ice in the mountains and harms plants, water sources and animals. All these devastating impacts are compounding the socio-economic vulnerability of millions, with “one major event capable of setting communities back two decades in development.”

Resolving an interlocking crisis on this scale and of such transboundary nature requires regional cooperation on an unprecedented pace and scale. Regional and global efforts are essential to meet commitments outlined in international agreements and sustainable development goals (SDGs) while safeguarding the 240 million mountain communities directly dependent on HKH’s resources and the 1.6 billion downstream.

Following the publication of the first comprehensive assessment of the region ([HKH Assessment](#)) in 2019 and the [HKH Call to Action](#) 2020, ministers from the eight HKH countries signed the [Ministerial Declaration 2020](#) at the first [HKH Ministerial Mountain Summit](#) on 15 October 2020. The Summit directed the constitution of a High-Level Task Force (HLTF) represented by senior government officials from the eight ICIMOD regional member countries – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan – to undertake a feasibility study of establishing a regional institutional mechanism and to submit a recommendation report to the next HKH Ministerial Mountain Summit.

ICIMOD has advanced on its journey to develop this High-Level Regional Institutional Mechanism –which will play a pivotal role in fostering cooperation and collaboration among HKH countries, to address the unprecedented challenges the region faces – and turbocharging the transition to remake the HKH as a green, resilient, and prosperous region for its people and the world.

## Objectives

This side event aims to:

1. Set out the ambition for the new High-Level Regional Institutional Mechanism for the HKH, as developed by the HKH High-Level Task Force.
2. Seek participant's advice and feedback on establishing the proposed mechanism.

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## Agenda

Time: 12:15 – 14:00 | Sri Lanka time (GMT +5:30).

Moderator: **Babar Khan**, Senior Ecosystem Management Specialist, ICIMOD

TIME	PROGRAMME
12:15 – 12:30	Arrival of guests
12:30 – 12:35	Welcome Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Izabella Koziell</b>, Deputy Director General, ICIMOD</li></ul>
12:35 – 12:40	Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Pem Narayan Kandel</b>, Chief Policy Advisor, ICIMOD</li></ul>
12:40 – 13:00	The High-Level Regional Institutional Mechanism - a platform for a coordinated approach to addressing the triple planetary crisis in the HKH region. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Izabella Koziell</b>, ICIMOD</li></ul>
13:00 – 13:15	Discussion
13:15 – 13:45	Remarks from <b>Hon. Ministers/Heads of Delegations from the HKH countries</b>
13:45 – 13:55	Remarks from the Chief Guest <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Dechen Tsering</b>, Regional Director and Representative for the Asia and Pacific, UN Environment Programme</li></ul>
13:55 – 14:00	Conclusion and vote of thanks <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Nakul Chettri</b>, Senior Biodiversity Specialist, ICIMOD</li></ul>

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