

Peak to Peak

The Mountain Partnership Newsletter

Issue 34 - March 2009

"Peak to Peak" is an opportunity to keep you up-to-date with the latest news, activities and events related to the Mountain Partnership. This newsletter, prepared by the Mountain Partnership Secretariat, is sent by e-mail to all members and other interested partners and can be read on-line at www.mountainpartnership.org

Membership

We wish to welcome four new members who have recently joined the Mountain Partnership: the Government of Yemen, CAMP Kuhiston which is part of the Central Asian Mountain Partnership Programme (CAMP), the non-profit organization Nepal Development Research Institute (NDR) and the Pakistani New World Hope human rights and environmental organization.

As of March 2009, there are 162 members of the Mountain Partnership, 50 countries, 16 IGOs and 96 major group organizations (i.e. civil society, NGOs and the private sector). For information on their activities and contact details visit the members section of the Mountain Partnership web site www.mountainpartnership.org.



Update on Partnership activities

IPROMO course

Following the success of last year's IPROMO summer course, we are happy to announce the second training programme on sustainable mountain development for Mountain Partnership members. The overall purpose of the second summer IPROMO course is to provide professionals working on mountain development related areas with an overview of traditional and innovative tools for promoting the sustainability of mountain economy and improving the livelihood of mountain communities. The first week of the course will provide an overview of the key issues to be considered for enabling a sound development of mountain economic activities; it will include lectures and case studies on governance, policies and laws, value chain approaches, etc. During the second week participants will explore in depth one of three separate topics: 1) mountain eco-tourism; 2) mountain agriculture; 3) mountain forestry.

The course will run from 17 July to 1 August 2009. It will be held in research institutes in Monte Rosa and at the University campus in Grugliasco (Piedmont Region of Italy), with field activities in several locations.

The course - which will be held in English - will be open to a maximum of 30 professionals, with priority given to those coming from developing countries or countries in transition, with a University degree and working in mountain development in either the public or private sector. There are a limited number of fellowships available to cover all costs for participants coming from developing countries. Those interested in participating should send a detailed CV along with the registration form to rosalaura.romeo@fao.org ermanno.zanini@unio.it and silvia.stanchi@unio.it specifying if financial support would be required. For more information on IPROMO visit: <http://www.ipromo-school.it/en/course.html>



Mountain Partnership and Convention on Biological Diversity agreement

The Mountain Partnership has entered into a new agreement with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to help countries to implement the Convention's programme of work on mountain biological diversity. Doug McGuire, Coordinator of the Mountain Partnership Secretariat, recently visited the CBD Secretariat in Montreal to work out details of the agreement.

This collaborative effort will mobilise the experience and expertise of Mountain Partnership members to enhance the capacity of governments and other stakeholders to meet the goals that were agreed to at the Conference of the Parties in 2004 for the conservation, sustainable use and equitable sharing of benefits of biological diversity in mountains, some of the most valuable but threatened biodiversity in the world. The Mountain Forum will provide selective information and networking services that will help to document and share good practices. Mountain Partnership member, Global Mountain Biodiversity Assessment (GMBA), is helping to document challenges and constraints to effective implementation which will lead to the identification of ways and means of overcoming them. This process will provide input to the formulation of recommendations that will be agreed to by the Parties at the COP in Japan in October 2010, providing a road map for more effective conservation, sustainable use and equitable benefit sharing of biological diversity in mountains.



Online Training Advocacy Course

Supporting the Mountain Partnership members' capacity building process in advocacy is one of the Mountain Partnership Secretariat-Asia Pacific Decentralized Hub's (MPS-APDH) focuses of work. To address the strengthening of members' capacity and equipping them with the latest approaches and tools to undertake advocacy work which is locally designed and specific to the cultural and political context of the countries in the region, the MPS-APDH held an online advocacy training (OAT) course from 26 February - 26 March 2009. The course employed the latest online platforms and tools available on the Internet such as D-groups, Google Discussion groups at the Mountain Partnership Asia Pacific-Online Advocacy Training (MPAP-OAT) googlegroup space; www.4shared.com site; Youtube/Mountain Partnership space; Skype P2P call, chat facility services and e-conferences. The course was designed in seven, easy-to-understand, progressively upgrading modules, and replicates a similar training course conducted by ICIMOD's SLPR Program for Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH) region in 2007-2008.

Mediterranean Mountain Initiative

On 5 February 2009, the Mountain Partnership Secretariat at FAO in Rome hosted a preparatory meeting with representatives of the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation, representatives of several Italian regions and environmental organizations to discuss building a Mediterranean Mountains Agenda within the Mountain Partnership. Building on the outcome of an earlier IUCN workshop in 2007, participants at the Rome meeting agreed upon the need to work together on key issues and actions and to formally launch a Mediterranean Mountains initiative within the Mountain Partnership. Lessons learned from similar regional initiatives supported by the Mountain Partnership Secretariat were discussed as well as the advantages of the Mountain Partnership providing an institutional framework for the initiative. The Italian participants underlined their intention to share and exchange information, best practices and knowledge relating to experiences such as those linked to the Apennine Convention and several Italian conservation projects. IUCN agreed to take the lead and will draft a programme of work with a regional focus on mountain issues.

We invite Mountain Partnership members, in particular from the Mediterranean Basin, to participate in the initiative and share their priorities, experiences and suggestions to help build a strong and active Mediterranean Mountains Initiative. Please send your contribution to the IUCN colleagues - Rami Salman and Pedro Regato - at: rami.salman@iucn.org and pedro.regato@iucn.org



News highlights from around the world

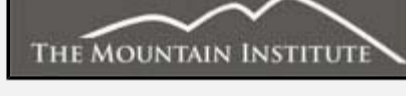
'Mountain Views' compiles information on climate change in western North American mountains

The Consortium for Integrated Climate Research in Western Mountains (CIRMOUNT) is a network based in North America dedicated to promoting greater understanding of the effects of climate on Western Mountain Ecosystems and Resources and a pilot regional research project that is part of the global Mountain Research Initiative. CIRMOUNT is coordinated by volunteers who work on their own research activities and produce a biannual newsletter, *Mountain Views*, with research updates from their mountain climate research. The latest issue features a number of short papers from across the western United States. To download the latest issue visit: www.fs.fed.us/psw/cirmount/publications/

The Mountain Institute tries to turn 'trash' into 'gas'

The Mountain Institute (MI) is working with officials from West Virginia (USA) to explore the possibility of turning the gas from trash landfills into energy. As trash in landfills decomposes it creates emissions that can be turned into methane - an alternative to natural gas. Capturing landfill emissions also addresses climate change. There are currently 450 projects in the United States using landfills for energy.

MI is particularly interested in how methane from landfills could help power local industries that help employ people in small mountain communities. The cost savings to these industries could help support jobs and wages. In addition, landfill energy initiatives themselves could be worth cash in the future as carbon offsets. Importantly, landfills in West Virginia are also publicly owned - which means the profits from these landfills stay in local communities. Of the eight solid-waste authorities in West Virginia, one has a project underway. The Raleigh County Solid Waste Authority has installed a gas collection system as the first step in a larger process. Once the system is in place, the Authority will decide on the most economically viable way to proceed.



National winners of ENERGY GLOBE Award 2008

Mountain Partnership member Ecoforum, an NGO working in Uzbekistan, has received the Honorary Energy Globe Award for Sustainability for its project "Involvement of population into the process of sustainable development through the approach of environmental and economical safety of a family in Uzbekistan". The project was chosen among a total of 769 projects from 111 nations. Launched in 1999, the prize is awarded annually to environmental projects from all over the world that conserve resources such as energy and water or that utilize renewable or emission-free forms of energy. The Award is presented in the categories Earth, Fire, Water, Air and Youth. In 2009 the ENERGY GLOBE celebrates ten years of activity.



Focus on Latin America

Practical Action awarded UN prize

A Mountain Partnership member, Practical Action, has been awarded the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Sasakawa Prize. Worth US\$ 100 000, the Prize is awarded yearly to individuals or institutions who have made a substantial contribution to the protection and management of the environment. The Prize acts as an incentive for grassroots environmental efforts that are sustainable and replicable. It recognizes extraordinary initiatives from around the world that make use of innovation and groundbreaking research and ideas and empower people at the local level.

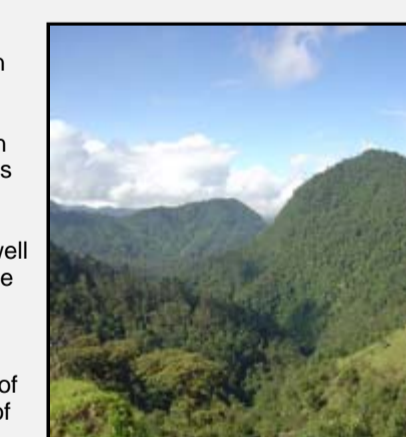
Practical Action, an international NGO founded in 1966, is working in Peru's eastern Andes where 68 per cent of the population - around 5 million people - do not have access to electricity. The project makes use of the region's vast potential for hydroelectricity: to date, 47 micro-hydro schemes have been installed in the area through Practical Action, bringing clean power to about 30,000 people. Through this project, Practical Action is also boosting local industry, as most of the turbines are manufactured by small companies in Peru, with each company making three or four turbines a year. Practical Action says it sees local manufacture as a key step towards widespread use of renewable energy. The electricity supply is boosting the development of the remote communities. Previously, people moved away to start businesses in places where the infrastructure was better, but the electricity from the micro-hydro schemes has brought them back. Some villages have doubled in size, with people returning and others starting or expanding businesses including restaurants, bakeries, furniture makers, welders and internet cafes.



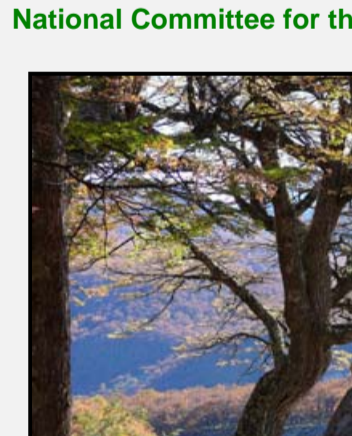
Mountain Partnership meeting of the Andean members

The Members of the Andean Initiative of the Mountain Partnership met on 16 March 2009 during a workshop that formed part of a series of events that CONDESAN and the Mountain Partnership Secretariat Decentralized Hub for Latin America (MPS-DHLA) organized in Manizales, Colombia. The meeting aimed to convene members of the Andean Initiative and other key actors within the Andean region, to present activities, create synergies, strengthen communication networks and establish specific collaboration agreements around the themes prioritized by the MPS-DHLA for 2009.

Participants included representatives of the Governments of Colombia, Argentina, Chile, Ecuador and Peru along with focal points from the two NGOs (CONDESAN and ITDG) as well as a representative of the Mountain Partnership Secretariat Central Hub in Rome. Due to the nature of the topic and the objectives of the meeting, several scientific, academic and environmental organizations working in the Andes, as well as development agencies were also present. This diversity of sectors enabled a dynamic and productive discussion. As a result of this workshop, a collaborative agreement among the Andean Initiative focal points of Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador and Peru was strengthened. Also, the representative of the Strategic Partnership "Aymaras without Borders" committed to facilitate a more active involvement of the government of Bolivia, in particular the Ministries of Agriculture and the Environment, in the Andean Initiative. Finally, the dialogue among participating organizations from different countries resulted in several proposals for new collaborative activities.



National Committee for the sustainable development of the mountain regions of the Argentine Republic



Launched in 2005 by building on the mechanism created for observing the International Year of Mountains 2002, the Argentinean National Committee is formed by 18 national institutions and 18 nongovernmental organizations. Together with the other countries of the Mountain Partnership's Andean Initiative the committee is a neutral forum for promoting dialogue and action on issues related to mountain development. In September 2007, the first meeting of the Andean Initiative was organized by the Argentinean Committee and held in Tucumán. Its most important outcomes were the Tucumán Declaration and the Plan of Action for the Sustainable Development of the Andean Mountains, according to which the Andean countries identified regional priorities and joint actions in order to protect and promote the sustainable development of these fragile ecosystems. The Argentinean Committee has been working hard during 2008 in order to establish cooperation with the several NGOs located in four important mountain areas (North West, Centre, Patagonia and Región Serrana). This work is being carried out with the aim of establishing criteria reflecting the biological diversity, cultural identity and uniqueness of each of these regions. During 2009, the Committee has also been working on the publication of a book with inputs from its different institutional members. The Committee is also organizing capacity building courses in issues like environment, geology, satellite imagery reading, sustainable tourism and Andean products, aimed to improve the knowledge of local technicians and officials.

Grants

Enabling Bio-Innovation for Poverty Alleviation in Asia is a competitive research programme supported by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC, Asia Regional Office, Singapore) in partnership with the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Thailand. The project aims to stimulate and enable research on bio-innovation in Asia that addresses poverty alleviation, and to initiate and support the building of a network of researchers and scholars committed to understanding and enhancing bio-innovation towards economically progressive and socially responsible goals. The grant competition is open to individual researchers and groups/organizations interested in the subject of bio-innovations for poverty alleviation in the Asian Region. The programme is extending grants of up to 18 000 CAD. Applications should be submitted in the form of a letter of intent explaining the proposed research project, and its relevance to the themes discussed in the Call for Proposal. Deadline 31 March 2009. For more information visit: <http://www.bioinnovationpolicies.ait.asia>

Past events

Mountains of the World: Water Towers for the 21st Century? (Istanbul 20 March 2009)

In the context of the 5th World Water Forum, a side event entitled "Mountains of the World: Water Towers for the 21st Century?" was jointly organized by FAO, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), the Nepal Glacier Conservation Foundation (NWCF), and the Institute of Geography of the University of Berne (GIUB). During the Side Event five international experts gave their presentations and introduced a general discussion guided by the key UN statement which recognizes the global importance of mountains as the source of most of the Earth's fresh water (UN General Assembly: Resolution 12 December 2007). The main message that emerged from the event was that mountain water resources are under increasing pressure; innovative management approaches, appropriate institutional mechanisms (which allow crossing administrative boundaries) and forward looking political decisions are required in order to face the future challenges. For more information on the programme please visit: http://ext-ftp.fao.org/fo/data/Upload/Ceci/flyer_programme.pdf

For more information on the Water Forum please visit: <http://www.worldwaterforum5.org/>



Future events

MRI Workshop at EGU Meeting

MRI will host a workshop on global change research in mountain regions in Vienna on Saturday, 18 April, 2009, the day before the European Geosciences Union (EGU) meeting officially begins. The workshop is about creating relations between existing research projects. The workshop will be limited to 25 participants. Each participant must submit responses to a questionnaire about their on-going research to be sent by MRI to prospective participants. For further information, please contact: drexler@giub.unibe.ch

Call for abstracts

Second DIVERSITAS Open Science Conference (OSC2) "Biodiversity and Society: Understanding connections and change" (13-16 October 2009, Cape Town, South Africa). To access abstract submission form and guidelines (only on-line submission is accepted), please visit the conference website: http://www.diversitas-osc.org/index.php?page=oral_papers Notice that the deadline to submit your abstract is Tuesday 31 March 2009..

Books

Transhumanz

Transhumanz, a photographic book by Mauro Gambicorti, Maira Pelizzoni and Silvano Pergher which documents the annual migration of sheep on the mountains of Alto Adige (Italy). The book reports the century old tradition, which takes the flocks from the Val Venosta up to Val Senales and the pastures of Otztal in Austria. Through stunning images, Gambicorti documents the long route across mountains and the hardships and sacrifices of the shepherds. Available in Italian, English and Spanish. For more info please visit www.bandedicchievaldi.it

