

Peak to Peak

The Mountain Partnership Newsletter

Issue 36 - July 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

Update on Partnership activities

International Mountain Day theme announced



International Mountain Day 2009 (11 December) will focus on "disaster risk management in mountain areas". Given the increasing frequency and severity of natural disasters occurring in mountain regions today, this is an issue that requires greater awareness, attention, and action.

It was the UN General Assembly which designated 11 December, from 2003 onwards, as 'International Mountain Day'. This decision results from the success of the UN International Year of Mountains in 2002, which increased global awareness of the importance of mountains, stimulated the establishment of national committees in 78 countries and strengthened alliances through promoting the creation of the Mountain Partnership (WSSD, Johannesburg, 2 September 2002). FAO was the designated lead coordinating agency for International Year of Mountains and is mandated

to lead observance of International Mountain Day.

For this year's theme, we are looking for background material as well as documented cases related to disaster risk management in mountains that deal with the following phenomena: flash floods; landslides; droughts; typhoons and hurricanes; wildfires, and pests and diseases to crops and animals. Any papers, data, statistics, case studies, points to highlight, as well as photos dealing with these issues would be highly appreciated. We kindly ask you to send the material by Friday, 31 July 2009, to the following address: Antonella Sorrentino (antonella.sorrentino@fao.org) with copy to Thomas Hofer (thomas.hofer@fao.org) and Paolo Ceci (paolo.ceci@fao.org). To read about past International Mountain Days: http://www.fao.org/mnts/index_en.asp

Saffron Production in Morocco

In the context of the Mountain Products Programme, FAO is supporting a project in the Anti-Atlas Mountains of southern Morocco to promote and develop the production of high quality saffron. The project, which began in 2008, has recently completed a number of studies which will be used as the basis for introducing to local farmers and cooperatives improved techniques for production and processing, which are expected to significantly improve the yield and quality of saffron. The regional agricultural extension service and a local NGO (Migration et Développement) are providing technical training to farmers and helping cooperatives to improve their organizational and accounting skills which are allowing them to sell their saffron at significantly higher prices to both Moroccan and foreign consumers. The project has carried out a thorough analysis of the entire saffron value chain in Morocco which has identified opportunities, bottlenecks and constraints which, once addressed, should lead to a much greater contribution of saffron to local incomes and development efforts in southern Morocco, as well as eventually at the national level. The Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity recently awarded a prestigious Presidium to Taliouine Saffron, providing international recognition of its high taste, environmental and social quality. This should be a further boost for Moroccan farmers to realize the full potential of this important mountain product. Based on this experience, the Government of Morocco, with the help of FAO, is considering expanding the value chain approach to the development of other high quality products in the Mountains of Morocco.



WOCAN Online Library Offers Gender and Development Resources



Excellent resources on gender and development are available on the Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture (WOCAN) website. The latest addition to the library, 'Gender and Climate Finance: Double Mainstreaming for Sustainable Development', joins an extensive collection of sustainable development resources including research papers and policy papers about agriculture and rural development, young women, men supporting women, livestock, biodiversity, desertification, water, fisheries, forest resources, energy, and mountain areas. The library also has information about capacity building, organizational change, leadership and tools for sustainable development, as well as documents related to the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment, the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for Agriculture, and the Major Group Women in UN Forums. A specific section about mountains is also available, including a one-page Brief on Gender in Mountain Areas. For more information please visit: <http://www.wocan.org/>.

CEE tackles climate change

To address the issue of climate change in the Kashmir Valley, India, Mountain Partnership Member, the Centre for Environment Education (CEE Himalaya) has launched a nationwide campaign "Pick Right", an educational pack on how people can contribute to tackle climate change. It promotes energy efficiency, resource conservation and sustainable consumption. The "Pick Right" campaign is being introduced in the schools of Jammu and Kashmir through the Directorate of School Education, Jammu and Kashmir State Pollution Control Board and NGOs. After understanding Climate Change issues, children are asked to vote for a Paryavaran Ambassador (PA) who will champion the cause of environment and sustainable development through another parallel campaign "Kaun Banega Bharat Ka Paryavaran Ambassador". Pick Right packages have been distributed in the schools through out Kashmir Valley. Teacher training workshops (TTW) on the subject "Climate Change education for disaster risk reduction" have also been organized at district and zone levels.



Mountain Partnership website

The Mountain Partnership website has been updated with a series of new pages and sections. The Share Conference and the CSD 17 Partnerships Fair event, both held in May, have now their own page from which users can download all the speakers' presentations. The Mountain Products Programme website has also been revamped (in English and French) with new sections and documentation to reflect the achievements of the programme that was launched in 2003. For more information please visit: www.mountainpartnership.org/mpp



News highlights from around the world

New appointment for Mountain Forum

The Mountain Forum has appointed Robert Hofstede as the new Chairman of the Board. Hofstede studied Tropical Ecology at the University of Amsterdam and joined the Mountain Forum Board of Directors as a representative of elected members from Latin America. His professional background includes work in the Andean Páramo Project CONDESAN, the direction of the regional office for South America of IUCN, the foundation of the ECOP Corporation, among others.



In an interview with InfoAndina, Hofstede said: "It is a big challenge to join such a wonderful organization and this makes me happy," he added. Hofstede also stated that the main challenges will be to strengthen the management nodes in Europe and Africa, to promote communication and support between Latin America and other mountainous regions and provide the regional nodes of the Mountain Forum with greater responsibility and autonomy.

Bolivia and Paraguay reach a border agreement

Bolivia and Paraguay have settled a long-running dispute over the Chaco region of South America. With Argentine President Cristina Kirchner serving as a guarantor, Paraguay's President Fernando Lugo and Bolivia's President Evo Morales have signed an agreement in Buenos Aires. Lugo and Morales agreed to resolve their differences over the Chaco area, which was the basis for the bloody Chaco War in the 1930s. The ceremony was held at the Argentina Government House, since Argentina is currently chairing the committee responsible for setting the boundaries between the two countries. The Gran Chaco region is the second largest forested area in South America after the Amazon.



The leaders of three civil society organizations - Native (Bolivia), Mountain Partnership member ProYungas (Argentina) and Moises Bertoni (Paraguay) - visited the Biosphere Reserve Forest of M'Baracayú, where they signed a Framework Agreement for the implementation of the Biosphere Reserve of the Gran Chaco, involving the territories of three countries in the basin of the Pilcomayo River, encouraging the protection of biodiversity, sustainable development of communities, inhabiting the region and a long-term strategic planning of a special valuable area between the three countries. The aim of this transboundary agreement is to promote development and local empowerment in the Trinational Chaco area (Bolivia, Argentina and Paraguay), based on differential positioning of this particular area, associated with its environmental and social values, contributing to the development of local populations and conservation of biodiversity and its outstanding scenery, including impacts of global and regional climate change and the processes of change in land use associated.

A Manifesto for Mountain Development

The National Organization of Mountain Municipalities, Communities and Bodies (UNCEM) is an Italian national organization which represents the interests of mountain municipalities, communities and bodies and promotes the socio-economic development and environmental protection of the country's mountain regions. It is promoting a campaign for developing Italian mountains, focusing on the self-government of Mountain communities and the development of the mountains natural resources. For more information, please download the text in English [here](http://www.uncem.net) and to subscribe to the Manifesto please contact mt.pellicori@uncem.net or f.demaria@uncem.net.

Past Events

The Share Conference

(Milan, 27-28 May 2009)

The international conference "Mountains: energy, water and food for life. The SHARE project: understanding the impacts of climate change" was attended by scientists and global experts to present the latest scientific research on climate change in mountains as a preparation for the 2015 Expo in Milan, which will have a major focus on food security.

The conference was organized by Mountain Partnership member EvK2Cnr Committee, Milan Municipality-Commission for Mobility, Transportation and the Environment, Milan-Expo 2015 Committee, CNR-Italian National Research Council, in collaboration with UNEP and the technical cooperation of FAO and the Mountain Partnership. The conference has also received the High Patronage of the President of the Italian Republic, the patronage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Research, and the Lombardia Region.

Atmosphere, climate, water, glaciers, agriculture and biodiversity were among the issues on the table. In addition to the role of mountains as key indicators of climate change, the impact of global warming on mountain ecosystems, with a special attention to adaptation policies, health, and energy and food security was also discussed. The Mountain Partnership coordinator, Douglas McGuire, attended and chaired the food security session during which the Mountain Partnership Programme Officer, Rosalaura Romeo made a presentation on "High value mountain products as a means for promoting food security in mountain areas."



PARAMUNDI : 2nd Paramos World Congress

(Loja Ecuador, 21-27 June 2009)



The 2nd Paramundi Congress' aim was to promote Paramo as a strategic ecosystem within the international, national and local areas, and endorse joint commitments and action strategies for its preservation and sustainable management. The event was an opportunity to promote the exchange of information, knowledge, practices and know-how. The main outcomes of the congress were an official declaration recognizing the importance of Paramo, which stressed to the authorities the need to adopt conservation and adequate management measures. It endorsed a wider knowledge on the state of conservation of Paramo around the world, through conferences, panels and work groups. It drafted an agreement and action plan giving priority to geographic regions that need immediate attention. Strategic alliances were built during the congress to move forward the conservation and sustainable

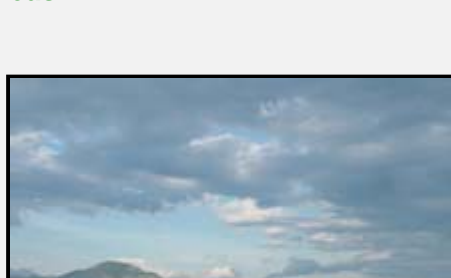
management processes.

Workshop on "Transboundary Cooperation of Mountain Protected Areas in South Eastern Europe – Towards the Dinaric Arc and Balkan Network of Mountain Protected Areas"

(Podgorica, Montenegro 16-17 June 2009)

The Workshop on "Transboundary Cooperation of Mountain Protected Areas in South Eastern Europe – Towards the Dinaric Arc and Balkan Network of Mountain Protected Areas", was held in Podgorica, bringing together over 60 national experts, protected areas professionals and managers, representatives from local communities as well as NGOs.

Montenegro confirmed its strong commitment to cooperate on the regional level under the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) and Dinaric Arc Initiative (DAI), include protected areas in country and improve their management, build functional partnerships and promote transboundary cooperation with neighboring states on biodiversity conservation, and progress towards the establishing of the Natura 2000 network in Montenegro. The Austrian Development Agency expressed Austria's commitment to support activities under the leadership of UNEP in the framework of the ENVSEC initiative for the establishment and efficient management of cross-border protected mountainous regions, pointing to the importance of exchange of experiences with regions of Alps and Carpathian, in terms of establishing and managing protected mountainous areas, and the implementation of appropriate regional Conventions.



Adapting to living in a World without Glaciers: realities, challenges and actions (Lima, Peru 7-15 July 2009)



The conference-workshop was organized by The Mountain Institute in collaboration with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), National Science Foundation (NSF), CONCYTEC (the National Council of Science and Technology) and the University of Georgia. It brought together actors from the scientific community (national and international), state, NGOs and representatives of international cooperation. This initiative was a response to one of the most urgent issues resulting from climate change: the water crisis that will affect mountain countries. In mountain countries such as Peru, processes that affect peaks and upper watersheds will inevitably affect the lower regions.

In the Andes, Himalayas and other regions, glaciers are retreating dramatically, affecting mountain populations in the world. Both urban and rural populations are questioning how to respond to this complex issue. The conference-workshop sought to bridge the work of scientists that research climate change impact and processes in high mountain areas, and those that are in charge of formulating and implementing policies that respond to climate change.

Future events

XIII World Forestry Congress (WFC)

(Buenos Aires, 18-23 October 2009)

A session on mountain forest products has been recently approved and included in the Congress Programme, and will take place on Friday 23 October 2009. This topic has proven to be of high interest to promote sustainable mountain development and fight poverty and hunger, while supporting economic growth and enterprise development in mountain areas. It allows tapping the experience of a number of key Mountain Partnership members who are actively working in this area, to build on the results of the recent CSD session at the UN and on the ongoing IPROMO course. The session will be in addition to the two mountain side events being organized, one by the Argentinean Committee for Mountains and the other by CONDESAN, which will focus on the Mountain Partnership at global and Andean levels respectively. Also, in the context of the "Forests and Water" sessions, a slot will be devoted to watershed management. The new session on mountains has been inserted in the official programme under section 3: "Forests in the service of people". For more information please visit: <http://www.wfc2009.org/en/index.asp>



Brainstorming Workshop on Climate Change Adaption in Mountain Ecosystem

(Kathmandu, Nepal 29-31 July, 2009)

UNEP Office for Asia Pacific is organizing at ICIMOD a workshop on climate change adaptation which the Environmental Reference Centre will be contributing. For further information please contact : PierCarlo.SANDEI@unvienna.org

Publications

Mountains as early indicators of Climate Change

In 2008 UNEP Vienna, in partnership with several institutions and with the support of the Italian Government organized the conference "Mountains as early indicators of Climate Change" which took place at Padua University. The publication, prepared by UNEP ROE/Vienna office as the Environmental Reference Centre of the Mountain Partnership Secretariat, reflects the discussion and findings of that event. [Click here to download PDF](http://www.mountainpartnership.org/mpp/publications/mountains-as-early-indicators-of-climate-change)

Mediterranean Mountains in a Changing World

In 2007 IUCN-Med brought together member organizations and experts in a regional workshop which took place in Malaga to discuss successful practices and case studies and priority lines of work for Mediterranean mountains. This publication is an outcome of the workshop and includes a set of strategic guidelines and key conservation and development issues grouped into eight priority themes as a starting point towards the elaboration of action plans for the Mediterranean mountain chains. [Click here to download the PDF.](http://www.mountainpartnership.org/mpp/publications/mediterranean-mountains-in-a-changing-world)