



Final Synthesis of the e-consultation on “Biodiversity Conservation in the Hindu Kush Himalaya”,  
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## 1. INCOME GENERATION AND BIODIVERSITY

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### BACKGROUND

Although biodiversity has become the property of sovereign countries, communities and individuals, bio-piracy has increased and benefit sharing is still a distant dream for many poorer countries. Biological resources in the HKH region relate to subsistence living, traditional knowledge that shape customary practices, lack of technical knowledge to emerge from livelihood into income generation, and faulty marketing system.

### RESOLVING OUTSTANDING ISSUES

- Biopiracy is a well-organized covert activity and often disguised as inventory, survey or scientific exploration. Although traditional/indigenous knowledge (TK) always require prior informed consent, illegal usage of TK in biopiracy, is perceived widespread. Local custodians and communities do not have capacity to restrain these activities. Therefore, collective actions are required on policy instruments and regulatory mechanism. Perhaps, all stakeholders including governments, communities, prospectors and private companies can come together to address biopiracy and open a channel for bio-prospecting to benefit people.
- The growth of ecotourism in PAs, has overlooked ecological pitfalls because of cash economy. Successful projects are rare and efforts to replicate them, are limited. Sustaining ecotourism to benefit communities without degrading biodiversity will be challenging. Therefore, generation of cash income is not necessarily the best

indicator of success. Perhaps, the greater distribution of income among the poorer mass and options in income generation through ecotourism for them, have remained illusive.

- As mountain communities move from subsistence to market, developing access related legislations to encourage technology transfer is important. In this regard, commercialization of genetic resources is perhaps possible where traditional knowledge, biotechnology and global markets can come together. Any or all market development on genetically diverse products and in particular, product awareness building, rural communities should be centrefold as they enhance biodiversity conservation through income generation.
- Capacity building and technology transfer for bio-prospecting has been recognised as a key to participatory conservation for income generation at commercial scale. Therefore, countries in the HKH region must have a regional front with a common voice seeking technical and financial support from developed countries in research and conservation programmes with emphasis on resource management, capacity building in collection and marketing of NTFPs and agriculture produce. These countries also need to develop appropriate policies and legislative measures. As there are already difficulties for small scale rural industries to compete and survive because of open and free markets globally, each country should resolve these complexities gradually, ensuring legal and trade environment in favour of local and indigenous peoples.
- The question who owns the biological resources is mundane because what maintains biological resources even in adverse settings, are more fundamental than anything else. In this context, a socially inclusive policy and planning in biodiversity conservation are must to embrace women and poor. An inclusive plan can examine the intricacy of social and hierarchal issues and resulting promotion (advocacy) may arrest factors that beset many mountain communities from betterment.

#### CASES OF SUCCESS STORY ON INCOME GENERATION

1. Participatory and sustainable eco-tourism in Annapurna Conservation Area, Nepal
2. Large cardamom farming in Sikkim, India
3. Ecotourism in Sagarmatha National Park, Nepal
4. Ecotourism in Kibale National Parks, Uganda
5. Income Generation and sustainable development in Sucse-Scota, Scota District, Peru
6. North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project for Upland Areas (NERCRMP), a joint project of the IFAD & Govt of India.
7. Income generation for indigenous peoples through mouza forest in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), Bangladesh.

## 2. TRANSBOUNDARY CORRIDORS LANDSCAPE

Guest Moderator: Balakrishna Pisupati

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### BACKGROUND

The worldwide chronicle of trans-boundary corridors(TBCs) is straightforward but its processes are still unfolding. In the HKH region, several protected areas in borderline, suffered in the past because adjoining countries have had differences in managing their land. With rapidly-growing trans-boundary corridors in place, species and ecosystems are now protected at landscape level, suggesting regional cooperation is must for biodiversity conservation.

### HIGHLIGHTS AND CONSERVATION ISSUES

- In the HKH region, many countries are small and landscape-level conservation is almost unachievable without cooperation of two or more countries. Therefore, TBCs are landscape-level conservation that warrant a strong political will for regional cooperation and management to facilitate both national and global commitments.
- TBCs in future, should promote conservation, revitalize economies, and increase positive interaction between land and its people of two or more countries. Such vision needs an institutionalized mechanism for resources allocation, expertise, information sharing, strong commitment for coordination, and joint ventures on several fronts.
- Many of the TBCs operate successfully as they fine tune management at three levels: regional, national and local. At local level, participatory approach amongst stakeholders is the best option to deal with their individual mandates and interests. Experiences from TBCs suggest that integration of conservation and community development broadens the goal of biodiversity conservation and economic development for poverty alleviation, peace and security. Unfortunately, several TBCs have become refuge for insurgents and conservation goals have been overshadowed by security measures.
- TBC landscapes often include remote, marginalized areas where collective community empowerment is crucial to deal effectively with the spread of markets and market forces. This also brings priority on developing human capacity to benefit from ecotourism in remote communities.
- Although political boundaries may restrict movements and isolate areas, many national borders in the HKH region are open and porous where illegal activities are real threats to biodiversity. In this regard, collaboration with international or local NGOs can not be over

emphasized because they bridge communication between participating countries with scientific, political and financial commitments.

- All participating countries may prepare a joint plan and implement management activities in their land. Also, participating countries may promote exchange of views and information through meetings, establish dialogue and cooperation between government officials to enforce greater cooperation and arrest illicit activities in border areas.
- It is recognized that TBCs in the HKH region will gather a greater momentum for its success because its conservation agenda are inherently global in nature to benefit humans.

#### TBCS AND CANDIDATE TBCS IN THE HKH REGION

Terai Arc Landscape

Mt. Everest Complex

The Kangchenjunga Complex

Pamir Landscape

Kailash Landscape

Kawagebo- Namdapha - Hkakaborazi Landscape

### **3. ACCESS AND BENEFIT SHARING**

Guest Moderator: Joy Dasgupta

Contributors: Desh Deepak Verma, Kanchan Lama and Md. Kharul Alam

#### BACKGROUND

Access and benefit sharing have gained momentum both in the international and regional context because existing laws carry serious loopholes and bear divergent understandings about who should have access and how to conserve biodiversity. In the HKH region, this issue is even more contentious and multi-dimensional because access-related laws promulgated in colonial times have spread out into the present. Therefore, inequity in biodiversity access and benefit sharing, do exist between the elites and the marginalized communities because of the legal and policy structures that lack custodian rights of local guardians in managing natural resources.

#### CRITICAL ISSUES

- Prior Informed Consent (PIC) in biodiversity conservation is an ideal norm, recognized globally to benefit rural communities. As PIC gets more refined in developing its working modality, it has to connect ground realities with the legal framework of each country in the region. For it to happen, robust homework and pace to bring the change, are fundamental.

- A certain level of conflict over the ownership of natural resources and the associated knowledge between state and the local communities exists. Though in rhetorical terms states have tended to argue about greater community access and control but in real terms state bureaucracies have not fully relegated their share and control to marginal people and their communities.
- The need to democratize state structures along with local structures is the basis to ensure fair and equitable access. Perhaps, community structures are probably more difficult to influence given the complexities in their social hierarchy, power structures, caste, and age-old social systems.
- Although the knowledge systems such as intellectual property rights (IPR) are dynamic in nature and keep evolving through usage and product availability, traditional knowledge systems have perceived onslaught of the market economy on them. Perhaps a balance between the market economy and traditional knowledge systems can bring opportunities in synthesizing new forms of products on the basis of scientific knowledge.
- At present, IPR regimes are in transition because their policy development and legal structures are facing a host of inconsistencies and market-related challenges. A full-length reconciliations are to be tested for their worthiness, which means we still have a long way to go.

#### 4. REGIONAL COOPERATION AND LEARNING

Guest Moderator: Harald Egerer

Contributors: Sandei Pier Carlo and Joy Dasgupta

##### BACKGROUND

All mountain regions of the world, are facing extreme difficulties to safeguard their environment, protect biological diversity and sustain mountain communities. However, each mountain regions appear to have different sets of conservation issues connected with their sustainable development and livelihood. Thus, they require adaptive strategies and solutions.

##### DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL COOPERATION

- In the HKH context, the CBD -led country programmes can probably serve a lead in regional cooperation in the conservation of biodiversity of global significance harboured in mountains. Perhaps, this alone could be the initial driving force for and overall objective of a sub-regional agreement to be developed.
- It appears that conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the HKH region will require integration of all other forms of land-use development as all aspects of sustainable development affects

biodiversity. Therefore, a platform for dialogue and mutual exchange of experiences is much needed to scope long-term mountain development as in the case of the Carpathian Convention.

- As international and regional instruments are not enough to grant sustainable development to the priority areas of a given state, enhancing effective regional cooperation needs analyses of existing cooperative agreements and areas already covered by international programmes or instruments. Therefore, benefits of enhanced cooperation need to be spelled out, and tools of cooperation be identified. Such possible tools of cooperation would include the options of a legally binding framework (agreement/convention), charter (non-binding and of political nature), programmatic approaches (action plan), establishment of networks or trans-national partnerships, or a mix of such options.
- Countries in the HKH region may develop their own tailor-made cooperative framework according to their needs and priorities. For this to happen, following steps are suggested: 1) determine available level of information for decision-making (regional assessments of HKH etc); 2) initiate dialogues on needs and priorities of cooperation to determine the scope of a possible agreement; 3) discuss tools and options for cooperation as well as their potential strengths and weaknesses; 4) agree on an informal strategic plan of next steps, actions required and get governments and stakeholders involved; and 5) advise on how to initiate and organize the formal process as well as how to generate the required co-funding for activities under considerations.

#### EXAMPLES OF REGIONAL TREATIES FOR THE MOUNTAIN REGIONS

Alpine Convention  
Carpathian Convention