



Proceedings of the E-consultation on the Cusco Plan of Action

30 August - 17 September 2004

This document is a report on the contributions and conclusions of the e-consultation on the draft Cusco Plan of Action, conducted by the Mountain Forum through its Latin American node (CONDESAN-Infoandina), between 30 August - 17 September 2004. The Mountain Forum Secretariat (MFS) and all the regional nodes of the Mountain Forum network provided technical support.

The Cusco Plan of Action is a central framework document to be approved at the Second Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership (Cusco, Peru, 28 - 29 October 2004). The aim of the e-consultation was to allow a wide and open participation of Mountain Partnership members to define a final draft of the Cusco Plan of Action, considering that the document will not be extensively discussed during the Cusco Conference.

The organizers of the Cusco Conference, namely the Peruvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the International Potato Center (CIP), commissioned the e-consultation. A total of 36 representatives of members of the Mountain Partnership participated in the discussions (see Annex). The e-consultation was structured into four themes, and several questions pertaining to each theme were asked to promote active participation. Themes and questions were structured in the following agenda:

First Week: (30 August 30 - 3 September)

Theme 1: Objectives of the Cusco Plan of Action

Questions:

- A. Keeping an operational focus in mind, do you think that these stated objectives for the Cusco Plan of Action are realistic and can achieve tangible results?
- B. Are there major gaps or areas missing in the current list of objectives?
- C. Which would you consider the most important objective?

D. Any other comment?

Theme 2: Operational Foci for Action

Questions:

A. Do you think that these stated operational foci for action are relevant and can achieve tangible results, in particular with respect to Partnership Initiative workplans?

B. Are there major gaps or areas missing in the current list of operational foci?

C. Would you like to suggest any other foci for action?

D. Any other comment?

Second Week: (6 - 10 September)

Theme 3: Mechanisms and Tools for Action

Questions:

A. Do you agree with the above identified mechanisms and tools, to be used by members and/or provided as services by the Secretariat for the Mountain Partnership?

B. Do you have suggestions on how the mechanisms could be implemented at all levels, particularly at the country and/or regional level?

C. Would you like to suggest some other mechanisms and tools that could be used/implemented by members and/or services to be provided by the Secretariat for the Mountain Partnership, in collaboration with the Mountain Forum?

D. Any other comment?

Theme 4: Role of Members

Questions:

A. Given the stated objectives of the Cusco Plan of Action and the roles and responsibilities of members as defined and approved in the 'Organization, Membership and Governance' document of the Mountain Partnership, do you have any practical suggestions on how to make members' involvement in the Mountain Partnership more effective?

B. Any comment?

Third Week: (13 - 17 September)

Wrap-Up Discussion and Summary Conclusions

This report follows the following (?)thematic structure to present the results of the e-consultation.

Theme 1: Objectives of the Cusco Plan of Action

Most contributions endorsed the relevance of the stated objectives of the Cusco Plan of Action but caution was expressed by the representative of Ghana and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity among others, that the results and outcomes will depend on the development of specific work plans for Partnership Initiatives, supported with adequate budgets for their implementation. The representative of PRAKRITI pointed out that lead members should be asked about their respective workplans and their role in (already identified) Initiatives. He stressed that the Mountain Partnership must ensure that required resources be available to support the timely implementation of such workplans. It was also suggested that more emphasis should be placed on moving towards concrete action. Despite agreeing with the objectives, the participant from Cuba voiced his concern about the lack of a clear structure to put into effect those objectives. A similar position was expressed by the Argentine Environmental Center (CAMBIAR), which stressed the importance of mechanisms, instruments of action and modalities to carry on the actions for achievement of the objectives. For them, the Mountain Partnership reflects diverse situations, concerns and needs so they question attempts to bring everything under one standard 'framework'.

The representative of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) agreed with the objectives but cautioned that in order to achieve them, it is important to get the right level and type of representation from the members, particularly from the member countries. He stressed that it should be more than just a token representation and member countries should ensure that the right agency with the mandate and the interest to participate actively in the process be represented.

However, a significant percentage of participants voiced their opinion that the objectives are rather vague and general, and oriented to serve the Mountain Partnership as a group: there was little connection with the reality of mountain areas and mountain dwellers. In discussing the objectives, the Peruvian Focal Point went back to the Governance paper in order to establish a logical relationship between different framework documents of the Mountain Partnership. She considered that the objectives listed in the draft Cusco Plan of Action are not quite satisfactory as an expression of the character of the Mountain Partnership as a tool to achieve sustainable development of mountain people. The participant proposed the re-ordering of the stated objectives under the following goals: (i) contribute to sustainable development of mountain communities; (ii) knowledge management; (iii) strengthening of the

Partnership; and (iv) financial sustainability of the Mountain Partnership. This exercise of establishing a logical relation between documents coincided with the opinion of the representative of the Foundation for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions (FDDM) who pointed out that given that the vision, the mission and the aims of the Mountain Partnership have already been defined, an objective such as "to create or reinforce the mechanisms of linkages, synergies and cooperation between members in order to network more efficiently at all levels" lacks substance and is too general. He suggested that the formulation of the objectives be reviewed, in order to separate those that specifically relate to the Mountain Partnership from the rest of the objectives.

Concurrently, the representative of the Mountain Research Initiative (MRI) said that the current objectives are mostly related to governance of the Partnership and say little about the desired outcomes in the larger world. This desirable distinction between the objectives that pertain to the strengthening of the Mountain Partnership as a group and those that belong to the population the Mountain Partnership must serve was the focus of the contribution from the Nile Basin Society and prompted a comment by the representative of Broad Initiatives for Negros Development (BIND) who stated that we have to differentiate mountain communities from members of the Mountain Partnership. The participant from the Asia Regional Office of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) concurred by saying that in the Action Plan, there was sometimes confusion as to whether we mean the members of the Mountain Partnership, or several stakeholders who may not be partners but are most relevant to the achievement of the objectives. He also thought that the goals and objectives as stated were really a means to an end. His suggestion would be to have a simple goal such as 'sustainable and consistent improvement in the quality of life of mountain communities throughout the world'. In this respect, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) pointed out that the empowerment of mountain people and participatory development approaches should be a key objective.

The CBD representative recommended the inclusion of a new objective on ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of mountain biological diversity, including cultural diversity, and this proposal was supported by the participant from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). In this regard, UNEP proposed that efforts should be made to evolve consensus along the lines of the Alpine and Carpathian Conventions for other mountain regions of the world (e.g. Andes, Balkans, Caucasus, Central Asia), in order to develop a comprehensive policy and framework for the protection and sustainable

development of mountain regions, and to provide for inter-regional exchange of policy-related information, experiences and best practices.

The participant from the Kyrgyz Republic suggested the inclusion of objectives related to increasing the education of mountain people and reducing the burden of external debt of poor mountain countries. This last opinion was heartily endorsed by the BIND Programme Coordinator's proposal that the Mountain Partnership should bring its prestige and collective voice to bear to lobby for debt relief. This would mean converting external debts into funding mechanisms such as 'debt-for-nature' swaps into something like 'debt-for-sustainable mountain development (SMD) programmes'.

The focal point from the Government of Argentina proposed the incorporation into the Mountain Partnership of a mechanism to periodically review and update the objectives, and the strengthening of national committees. In this regard, the representative from the Secretariat for the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) suggested that the national action programmes of those countries that have critical mountain ecosystems might serve as a framework for sustainable mountain development.

Several participants raised the issue of the funding of Mountain Partnership initiatives as a key determinant of success. ICIMOD believed that financing means and mechanisms remain the crucial determining factor for the success of the Mountain Partnership. The Nile Basin Society said that there should be solid commitments from the governments and the UN agencies that spearheaded the Mountain Partnership. The governments of Italy and Switzerland, as well as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and UNEP, should make public their commitments, both financially and in-kind to the Mountain Partnership.

The Nile Basin Society raised the question about the likely benefits that mountain people and members of the Mountain Partnership could expect from the Partnership. The representative from the Consortium for Sustainable Development of the Andean Ecoregion (CONDESAN) suggested that the question we may need to ask ourselves is what can the Mountain Partnership provide that otherwise the partners could not do by themselves. In his opinion, the Mountain Partnership should add clear value, of a 'second-level' nature, to the activities that are currently being carried out by different partners in every region. He emphasized that the Mountain Partnership should have specific goals and activities that complement those of the partners and help them go beyond their specific institutional activities. At the same time, partners should feel that

through the Mountain Partnership they are contributing to a 'higher-level' objective for each particular Initiative.

Mountain Forum was rather late in posting its ideas. However, this was helpful for the e-consultation moderator as the representative of Mountain Forum reflected on previous postings and provided some thoughts from Mountain Forum's perspective. Due to the length and integrated character of the submitted analysis, we have decided not to extract highlights but to include the whole contribution in the following reference link:

www.condesan.org/e-foros/Cuzcoactionplan/lmontgomery1.htm

This contribution should be considered an integral part of the present proceedings. However, a summary of his contribution to this section and all other sections is provided in 'General Comments'.

Theme 2: Operational Foci for Action

Although there was general agreement about the relevance of the listed foci for action, some concerns were voiced by participants. The participant from the Government of Argentina asked for a more clear definition of the meaning of "foci for action". For the representative of the Nile Basin Society, it was not clear how different actors got involved in the different 'Initiatives'. He asked: Who made the decisions and on what basis? Who was consulted? Were NGOs involved in these decisions? Or was it all done by the Secretariat? He stressed the importance of NGO involvement in the decision-making process and of avoiding looking at NGOs as merely 'implementers'.

The representative of CAMBIAR believed that the foci for action could be relevant and helpful to obtain tangible results, provided the Mountain Partnership promoted all-level decentralization and the strengthening and self-sustainability of local groups.

The participant from Mountain Research and Development (MRD) saw several of the foci for action as particularly relevant to its own mandate - namely, capacity-building (training, education, extension), and information and knowledge. The representative thought that dedication on the part of all members to fulfilling the operational aims of the already established foci was more important than considering any additional foci. The Peruvian Focal Point thought that the listed foci for action were relevant as "strategic lines"; she called attention to some repetition in their description and suggested reducing these to three "strategic lines", namely: policy, institutional strengthening and financing. All these lines were oriented to promote sustainable development.

The representative from Ghana stressed the importance of the financing focus by pointing out that the workplans of Mountain Partnership members and the Partnership Initiatives could not be realized if adequate financing is not provided. He thought that the success of the Mountain Partnership depended on this focus. He also pointed out that the operational foci did not specifically include the reduction of poverty and vulnerability of mountain people, even though these were implied in the first two foci, and suggested that these two operational areas needed to be emphasized when developing national programmes, particularly for developing countries.

It was stated by the representatives of the SARD-M Project that the proposed operational foci are consistent with those identified as being of paramount importance by the many stakeholders (i.e. governments, civil society and international organisations) involved in the participatory formulation process of their project. They suggested some minor changes to the current draft Plan of Action, such as including collaboration in institutional synergies and networking. Similarly, communication could complete advocacy and awareness-raising issues.

The Mountain Research Initiative commented that the operational foci listed are necessary but are insufficient to ensure effective Initiatives. They suggested that operational foci, as aspects of Initiatives, should include some or all of the following:

- policy development or regulatory reform
- funding
- targeted outreach
- research
- performance evaluation

As with its contribution to theme 1, the whole contribution of Mountain Forum to this section can be found in the following reference link:
www.condesan.org/e-foros/Cuzcoactionplan/lmontgomery1.htm

Theme 3: Mechanisms and Tools for Action

Many members like Mountain Research and Development commented that these mechanisms and tools are already a part of the mandate, and among the principal functions, of their respective organizations.

However, other participants examined the mechanisms and tools with regard to the ultimate goals of the Mountain Partnership. Thus, the Nile Basin's Community-Based Impact Assessment Network for Eastern Africa (CIANEA) from Uganda voiced its view that they would only agree with the proposed mechanism if the Mountain Partnership put in place a serious monitoring and evaluation programme that would ensure that the Partnership kept on track. They were aware of many such programmes that have been developed with a lot of resources but who have failed to achieve objectives. The representative of the Network proposed the establishment of regional / national centres for the monitoring and periodic assessment of programme implementation. They also commented that mountain communities in different areas of the world have unique problems that would require a unique approach in addressing these concerns.

The representative from Mexico also thought that there was a high diversity of situations in mountain regions, even within a country, but considered that it was useful to have common objectives and adhere to general principles that could be applied everywhere. Incidentally, the participant from FDDM expressed the opinion that it was only possible to apply an appropriate mechanism once the region in question had been analysed.

In CIANEA's opinion, regional and/or a national foci office would best handle such an approach. This idea of a regional/national foci is consistent with the suggestion of the Nile Basin Society to establish a regional foci, described as an East African (or African) Mountain Partnership Regional Center, which would deal with challenges posed by (in?) Africa.

Related to this issue, the representative from Ghana pointed out that the African Highland Initiative could be institutionalized and made to play a coordinating role in promoting the active participation of African members of the Mountain Partnership. The representative from Argentina seemed to concur with the idea of regional/national foci by suggesting that a pre-condition for the appropriate application of mechanisms and tools at local level was the effective coordination through 'National Mountain Groups', which should lead to the channelling of information to mountain communities. For this purpose, the setting up of national information networks, along the lines of international networks, was proposed.

However, the representative from Romania made a comment, which could be relevant in this regard. He pointed out that not all countries have already established networks for mountains, and some existing ones do not have enough knowledge on mountain-specific issues. Moreover, he considered that some

national governments (even in Europe) were unwilling or unable to consider efficient mountain policies and that their attitude would be, in most cases, to marginalize mountain areas. In his intervention, the representative from Romania suggested a number of policy issues that could be taken into account by Mountain Partnership members.

The monitoring proposal put forward by CIANEA was also mentioned by MRI, which claimed that the Mountain Partnership needed performance indicators to measure its success. Similarly, the representative of the Nile Basin Society agreed with the proposed mechanisms and tools for action but he suggested that the members evaluate the Secretariat's work on a periodic basis. Acknowledging that the Secretariat was doing a marvellous job, his concern was that the Mountain Partnership was adopting the hierarchy of UN organizations, which may stifle the flexibility needed to allow for initiatives taken particularly by NGOs. He raised the question of whether it would be necessary to add an NGO Coordinator -- from the NGO members of the Mountain Partnership -- to the Secretariat.

The representative of BIND felt that the section on 'Information (collection, analysis, dissemination and exchange)' was 'reinventing the wheel'. He thought that Mountain Forum has done and continues to do this work through the Internet. Therefore it might seem redundant for the Mountain Partnership to do what Mountain Forum has already been achieving. He suggested allowing Mountain Forum to do what it does best and to allow the Mountain Partnership to concentrate on other areas of communication and networking, such as developing ties with mainstream international, national and local TV and other electronic mass media and other media events; linking up with well-known performers for music and theatre; producing multimedia products like CDs and DVDs, along with developing traditional media products such as brochures, posters, manuals and books on best practices in sustainable mountain development.

However, on the same topic of information, the representative from Ghana felt that there was a need to focus on making information and knowledge accessible and usable for partners, policy-makers, advocates and development practitioners. He stressed the fact that traditional/indigenous information and data were available, but not properly documented, packaged and channelled. He urged the Mountain Partnership to improve the ability of mountain people to access information, particularly on sustainable agriculture and agro-processing, at the local level.

PRAKRITI concurred by saying that the establishment and/or generation of national, sub-regional and regional level databases are important priority areas at this time. The participant from the Nile Basin Society asked members to commit the Mountain Partnership to producing an annual 'State of the World Mountains' for which specific data should be collected on a regular basis to monitor the state of the world's mountains. This publication would also highlight best practices and promising projects and technologies.

On networking as a tool, the MRI participant thought that networking would be most effective if it focused on stakeholders and clients and if it was conducted with some degree of understanding of, and in relation, to the various scales of authority and funding characteristic of the Initiative's central focus. Again on networking as a tool, the representative from Italy believed that networking was an added value of the Partnership and should be emphasized as a way to define cooperation among countries and among governmental and non-governmental members.

However, the ICIMOD representative thought that mechanisms and tools seemed to be heavily weighted towards networking, information sharing and advocacy and pointed out that a close look at the effectiveness of the already existing networks and advocacy measures at national, regional and international levels was necessary. ICIMOD believed that more focus should be given to capacity-building and action research and development.

The representative from Tebtebba Foundation agreed with the mechanisms and tools that had been identified but voiced some critical concerns. She thought that these same mechanisms and tools could also subvert the goal of sustainable development in mountain regions as happened among the indigenous peoples of Benguet in Northern Philippines, where information had led to biopiracy (i.e. Philippine yew tree - *Taxus matrana* in Mt. Pulag) and the aggressive extraction and exploitation of natural resources and the environment by industrial corporate investments, mostly with the endorsement or support of states for so-called 'national development'. The representative of Tebtebba Foundation cautioned that information and fundraising and promotion of investments should be done only with the genuine free and prior informed consent of concerned mountain communities and stakeholders. The organization suggested that a mechanism be established whereby indigenous peoples in mountain regions would have informed participation and suggested that the Mountain Partnership should consider (nominating?) an indigenous focal person to ensure that initiatives do address sustainable development from an indigenous perspective.

Commenting on Ghana's proposals, the contributor from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) proposed the inclusion of the pilot T-21 tool, an initiative of the national government with UN assistance.

The representative from UNCEM from Italy pointed out that the analysis of mechanisms and tools must be preceded by more information about the needs and demands of the members. It proposed that the Secretariat gather information on those needs and demands and the results of the inquiry be included in the Plan of Action. This inquiry could be conducted through the Internet.

CONDESAN proposed convening annual or biannual meetings to synthesize knowledge and integrate it into the different approaches of the partners on a certain specific topic that is a priority for a given mountain region. CONDESAN also suggested the promotion of exchanges between different projects or different partners within a mountain region, in order to address such questions as: 'What was the best strategy to upscale local successful experiences to achieve higher impact or facilitate replication?'

Discussing how the proposed mechanisms could be implemented at all levels, the representatives of the Project for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in Mountain Regions (SARD-M) put forward its OWN adopted mechanisms as a model for the Mountain Partnership. The SARD-M Project plans to make use of those mechanisms and tools at three different levels:

1. at **global level**, producing and disseminating SARD-M-related analysis, information, awareness-raising and training materials, methods and tools; this will be done notably through the SARD-M project e-mail list and a new Web site currently under preparation. The project also plans to develop an advocacy role aimed at orienting further activities by donors and other partners towards a SARD approach to mountain development that would effectively enhance rural livelihoods;
2. at **regional and subregional levels**, promoting the concrete application - with the support of project partners - of the above materials, methods and tools in order to assist in the concerted formulation of operational measures;
3. at **country level**, providing (in selected cases) - and with the direct involvement of project partners - policy advisory services on mountain-specific SARD policies and assistance in their effective implementation through appropriate institutions.

The SARD-M project indicated that regional/trans-regional partners acting as “regional focal points”, covering a mountain range or a geo-political unit, would support activities.

The contribution of Mountain Forum to this section can be found at the following reference link:

www.condesan.org/e-foros/Cuzcoactionplan/lmontgomery1.htm

Theme 4: Role of Members

The representative from Mountain Research and Development contended that members of the Mountain Partnership would have to focus as soon as possible on substantive issues and actions, rather than on the organization and governance of the Mountain Partnership. He has been impressed with the comments of several other members who have pointed out the excess of attention to matters of governance, at the expense of the need to focus now on such issues as policy development, targeted outreach, and impacts on the world outside the Mountain Partnership. He suggested that by the time of the Cusco Conference, members should state what they were willing to commit in these matters. Mountain Research and Development has a particular interest in commitment to research for development. Coincidentally, Nile Basin Society suggested that each member should present a formal commitment statement to the Mountain Partnership. This commitment should include resources, specific programmes of action, acceptance of the principles of the Mountain Partnership, willingness to cooperate with all other members of the Mountain Partnership, and acceptance of controls established by the Mountain Partnership.

The representative from MAKMONTANA (Association for the Development of Mountain Regions in the Republic of Macedonia) suggested a number of defined roles for members, such as:

- Governments should play a regulatory and promotional role not only to develop infrastructure but also to establish an appropriate legal and regulatory framework;
- NGOs should emphasize local capacity-building by providing support for the development of community-based organizations, especially producers organizations’, to give them access to markets, inputs and technology;
- Research and training institutions should strengthen their training and research programmes to relate more specifically to the needs and opportunities in mountain areas.

- Multilateral and bilateral organizations should re-focus their efforts, resources and investments on filling in the gaps in the basic requirements of development and environment in mountain areas.

The Focal Point from Peru thought that, in order to achieve efficient action by Mountain Partnership members, common objectives must be identified and a sense that the Mountain Partnership serves those common objectives had to be developed. The representative of FDDM proposed the creation of expert focal groups dealing with different issues, formed according to specific competences to which members could contribute. Examples of themes might be ecotourism, water management or education. All members would thus be engaged in the Mountain Partnership according to their concerns and interests.

However, the representative of the National Centre of Mountain Region Development of the Kyrgyz Republic put forward a proposal related to the governance of the Mountain Partnership. He suggested the establishment of a leading group (council or committee), including 5-7 people representing members and elected by the full membership in a democratic way. Representatives would be elected every two years on a rotational basis. He also proposed to set up a system or conditions to allow representatives from the least-developed countries to work in the Secretariat on a rotational basis. He would like to discuss the possibility that the UN grants the Mountain Partnership the status of observer member. The Nile Basin Society supported the idea and further suggested that the "Steering Committee" should be formed of two components:

1. A permanent one (no elections) from the Italian and Swiss governments (as sponsors of the Mountain Partnership) and FAO and UNEP (representing the Secretariat).
2. Elected representatives of regional offices of the Mountain Partnership on a rotational basis. The elections would be held on a regional level.

Several members such as the Nile Basin Society and CIANEA voiced their concerns about the jurisdiction of the Mountain Partnership and raised a question about the criteria for determining the participation of mountain communities in the work of members of the Mountain Partnership and in support of the Mountain Partnership as a whole.

PRAKRITI stressed the importance of the availability of human and financial resources, and would like to assign a leading role to the Secretariat as a

facilitator for training, educational visits and workshops and for identifying and collaborating with donor agencies and partners.

The Focal Point from Argentina commented that the draft Plan of Action was too general in describing the role of members, which she felt was a consequence of similarly general objectives. In her opinion, the Governance document presented a clearer definition of those roles.

The Mountain Forum's analysis of this section is found in the following reference link:

www.condesan.org/e-foros/Cuzcoactionplan/lmontgomery1.htm

General Comments

Several participants stressed the need to review the whole draft Plan of Action. The Peruvian Focal Point urged members to re-write the document as a true Plan of Action with clearly identified objectives and prioritized activities, workplans, budgets, timetables and responsible members.

The Peruvian Focal Point referred back to the Governance paper in order to establish a logical relationship between different framework documents of the Partnership. Similarly, the Executive Secretary of the Mountain Forum decided to review the draft Plan of Action as a whole and commented on its initial sections since these were not the subject of any of the 4 themes discussed in this e-consultation. As with his contribution to the other themes, the entire text can be found in the following reference link:

www.condesan.org/e-foros/Cuzcoactionplan/lmontgomery1.htm

Another contribution of an encompassing nature was submitted by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). SDC proposed a modified Plan of Action, which they stated was, in comparison to the draft PoA,

- shorter, lighter and more flexible;
- stressed where we came from (from WSSD to Cusco);
- contained no repetitions within the document and in relation to, for example, the Bali document and the Governance paper;
- affirmed the adoption of the Governance and Membership paper;
- underlined the importance of the workplans of the individual Partnership Initiatives, but without having them as an integral part of the Plan of Action;

- a much more political document.

SDC prepared a draft taking into account both the above-mentioned points, as well as the spirit of the draft Plan of Action. As with the Mountain Forum analysis, the SDC proposal is provided in the following reference link:

<http://www.condesan.org/e-foros/cuscoactionplan/lfrey1.htm>.

The representative from UNEP supported the position expressed by SDC, proposing a considerably streamlined and more 'political' revised draft. He also agreed with the Mountain Forum analysis of the current document. He thought that it made sense to adopt a pre-agreed, concise but operational framework in Cusco as "Conclusions", and leave space open to develop actual workplans (dynamic plans of implementation) under the various initiatives, to be annexed to the Cusco "Conclusions", but subject to further development on a dynamic and rolling basis.

Against this background, UNEP recommended that more attention be paid to the issue of the protection of the mountain environment, and separate attention could be paid to biodiversity conservation and managing mountain areas as ecosystems. UNEP agreed with the comments by CBD, which recommended the inclusion of a new objective on "*ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of mountain biological diversity including cultural diversity*". UNEP further proposed that (at least) one thematic initiative on this issue should be added as "mountain biological diversity", which would aim at supporting implementation of the related CBD work programme on mountain biological diversity.

The SDC proposal was also supported by CAMBIAR and the representative from Italy who suggested that the Cusco Conclusions be enriched by attaching to them the Governance Paper and proposals resulting from the Working Panels to be held in Cusco. He thought that this would give the proposed 'Conclusions' the necessary dynamic and operational component.

Furthermore, ICIMOD also supported the spirit of the Mountain Forum and SDC proposals. One of their representatives pointed out that we should keep in mind the fact that the Mountain Partnership provides a forum and mechanisms for collaboration among its members and that the document to be approved in Cusco should provide a framework for an action plan based on individual initiative workplans, and build upon past work on sustainable development in mountain regions. ICIMOD believed that the primary aim of the Mountain Partnership was to exchange information on sustainable mountain development and that it should focus more on building upon existing networks and

information exchange mechanisms such as the Mountain Forum and other regional networks, rather than encouraging the establishment or creation of new mechanisms.

The representative of the host country (Peru) of the Second Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership sent an integral document as a contribution to the general discussion on the draft Cusco Plan of Action. This proposal is named the Cusco Action Plan Project: 2004-2008. The representative from Peru felt that this contribution complemented the SDC contribution, which could be called the Andes Declaration, as previously suggested by the Peruvian Focal Point. As in the case of the contributions of Mountain Forum and SDC, the text provided from Peru is provided in the following reference link:

<http://www.condesan.org/e-foros/cuscoactionplan/mpalomino1.htm>.

Italy showed its appreciation of the Peruvian contribution but argued that they cannot subscribe to proposals aiming at the creation of financial mechanisms and recalled that during the last meeting of the Core Group in Rome, participants did not consider these mechanisms coherent with the character and the spirit of the Mountain Partnership and the Type II Initiatives in general. As to the Plan of Action, Italy believed that good operational conclusions of the working panels could give the Partnership much more impetus than just a theoretical Plan of Action, which would add up to an already abundant literature (from the Bali document to the Merano Conclusions and the Governance Paper).

The Ev-K²-CNR Committee contributed to the wrap-up discussion by raising some overarching issues. The Committee agreed with the doubts raised about whether the Cusco Plan of Action, or the “lighter” Cusco Conclusions as proposed by SDC, would truly represent the start of the Mountain Partnership’s operational phase. It also shared concerns that the Cusco Conference could become another self-referential gathering if its main tangible outcome is approval of just another document containing reiterations of recognized principles and intents stated in other accepted documents. The Committee admitted the need for attaining collective approval of a unique Cusco Plan of Action but considered that Mountain Forum’s suggestions for renaming sections and SDC’s proposal to sum up the background principles were good but might be insufficient. Therefore, the Committee proposed that more emphasis be placed on the contributions of the actual working groups in Cusco, each group producing a draft for their theme/geographic area, following an action-oriented approach to the operational foci. This statement of Ev-K²-CNR Committee was endorsed by CAMBIAR. The problem the Ev-K²-CNR Committee envisioned was that the two half-days reserved for working groups to meet may not be

sufficient time in which to produce expected results, which have not been defined.

The United Nations University (UNU) representative felt the closest to a consensus regarding the goal of the Cusco Action Plan seemed to be the idea that the document should provide a framework for the elaboration of specific action plans. UNU subscribes to that idea but is cautious about the extent to which the versions of the document that have been proposed so far can serve that purpose. UNU thought that the original draft Cusco Action Plan might not only be of little help but might actually be counter-productive since mixing together purposes, objectives, and the tools and mechanisms for achieving them entails the risk of losing sight of the overall purpose of acting and of turning means into ends. In this sense, the suggestions for dealing with the repetitions by deleting them, and joining some of the remaining points from the different sections under the general heading of "principles" could not provide the necessary remedy. In UNU's view, if the purpose of the document was to provide a framework for achieving the "vision" and "objectives" of the Mountain Partnership in line with the "principles" guiding it (all of which are already defined in the document regarding the Organization, Membership and Governance of the Mountain Partnership), this should be stated clearly at the beginning; then the rest of the document should focus on defining that framework, rather than on explaining what the framework should do and/or what principles it should be based on.

UNU suggested a brainstorming exercise before or during the Cusco Conference, aimed at identifying the major systematic level capacity gaps and challenges to sustainable mountain development, and a few (1-3) basic areas of focus for the Mountain Partnership. UNU's contribution provided an example of one of a number of possible directions in which the action framework could be revised. It also highlighted the need for a systematic approach for defining and distinguishing between the purposes, objectives, priority areas of action, and the mechanisms and tools of the Mountain Partnership itself and of the work initiatives of its members within the Mountain Partnership.

The Peruvian Focal Point suggested that as a result of the meeting in Cusco we should have:

- The Governance paper discussed and approved;
- The Action Plan as a management tool;
- 'The Declaration of the Andes' (document proposed by SDC), from which it would be necessary to delete the tables since these will appear on the Action Plan.

Mountain Forum supported the proposal of the Peruvian Focal Point that the Partnership have, as an outcome of the Cusco meeting, the political document as proposed by SDC, the broad Plan of Action (which Mountain Forum felt should be renamed and presented as the 'Framework for Action' upon which each Initiative builds its own Plan of Action), and the approved Governance paper. Mountain Forum added that we should also have workplans for the different initiatives as an outcome of the Cusco Conference, as these workplans will provide guidance for all the other documents. Mountain Forum pointed out that the Governance paper provided the structure for the Mountain Partnership, the political paper provided the will to accomplish the goals, the framework paper provided the outline for how work could be planned, but without the actual workplans we had nothing. Mountain Forum hopes that some of these workplans would be sufficiently far along by the time of the Cusco Conference.

The representative from UNCEM proposed that the Mountain Partnership maintain a periodical e-discussion forum on different topics, in order to keep members in touch and allow them to share experiences and best practices. They thought that the Plan of Action should stress the need for members to assume a leading role in the collection, exchange and dissemination of relevant data and information.

As a conclusion, we refer to Mountain Forum's general outline of a revised Plan of Action, which they suggested could be renamed the 'Framework for Action'. The proposed outline and comments were:

- The purpose of the document is satisfactory, with a bit of re-wording.
- The vision, mission, and goals could simply be removed since they were just taken from the Governance paper. If they were included for the sake of emphasis, they need to be presented as sections that come out of the Governance paper. In addition, the goals must be renamed as 'Strategic Objectives' so that it matches the name given to this section in the Governance paper.
- The sections on Objectives, Operational Foci, and Mechanisms and Tools need significant revision, and should be reduced to one single section since they overlap in meaning and content to such a great degree.
- 'Priority Areas for Action' was considered fine.
- The section on the Roles of Members should either be removed or expanded, with reference provided to the relevant section of the Governance paper upon which it would build.
- The Annex was considered the best part of this document since it provided the specific detail about how to set out the work that was

to be done by each of the initiatives. It needed to be made clear whether the content included under each of the columns was there simply as an example of how to fill out the tables, or whether it was supposed to be suggestive of the types of activity each Initiative might consider.

CLOSING REMARKS

The Interim Secretariat for the Mountain Partnership, FAO, Rome, Italy

The Interim Secretariat for the Mountain Partnership wishes to express its appreciation to the organizers and the many participants of the e-consultation for generating such rich dialogue and debate on the Cusco Plan of Action in particular and the Mountain Partnership as a whole. The e-consultation is a highly significant event in our collective efforts to shape the Mountain Partnership into a truly participatory and open alliance that responds to the views, interests and priorities of its members at all levels. Your insight, contributions and support over the last three weeks ensures that we will arrive at the Cusco Conference next month with a clearer vision of the future course of the Mountain Partnership and a dynamic framework in which to plan collaborative action that will bring positive change to lives and environments in the world's mountain regions.

Dr. Hugo Li-Pun, Deputy Director General, International Potato Center (CIP), Lima, Peru

On behalf of the Cusco Meeting Organizers, the International Potato Center (CIP), is grateful to the countries, organizations and major groups who have participated in the E-consultation on the Cusco Action Plan. This three-week rich global debate was facilitated in three languages by CONDESAN-InfoAndina, the Latin American Node of the Mountain Forum, hosted at CIP in Lima (Peru), with support from the Mountain Forum Secretariat, the Mountain Forum Regional Nodes (North America, Europe and Asia-Pacific), and the Interim Secretariat of the Mountain Partnership (Rome).

The debate provided a participatory platform for 50 partnership members: countries (20), major groups (25), and international organizations (5), who participated actively in the E-discussion, sharing their insight regarding the Mountain Partnership objectives, structure, and future perspectives. Several proposals have been submitted that will serve as an input to the work of the panels in the II Meeting of the International Mountain Partnership to take place in Cusco next month.

We are grateful to the moderators of this E-Consultation: Victor Mares (CIP) and Ana Maria Ponce (CONDESAN-InfoAndina), who have conducted the rich debate over the past weeks. This is an example of collaborative platforms to foster mutual support among regional information networks for sustainable

development of mountain regions. We look forward to welcome the Mountain Partnership members in Cusco next month!

Annex: Registered participants
(* indicates active contributor to the consultation)

Countries

Registered: 19; active contributors: 11

1. CAMEROON: Ministry of Environment and Forestry
2. BOLIVIA: Institute for Conservation and Research of the Biodiversity/
National Academy of Sciences (*)
3. IRAN: Ministry of Foreign Affairs
4. AUSTRIA: International Environmental Affairs
5. SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO: Environment Department of Federal Secretariat
for Labour, Health and Social Care
6. SPAIN: Dirección General de Conservación de la Naturaleza
7. CUBA: Comisión Nacional Plan Turquino - Manatí (*)
8. KYRGYZ REPUBLIC: National Centre of Mountain Regional (*)
9. SLOVAK REPUBLIC: State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic /
Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic
10. ITALY: Unità Tecnica Centrale (Italy) (*)
11. MÉXICO: Comision Nacional Forestal (Mexico) (*)
12. ARGENTINA: Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*)
13. PERU: Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*)
14. GHANA: Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology (*)
15. CONGO: L'Observatoire du Bassin du Nil (Congo) (*)
16. REPUBLIQUE TUNISIENNE: Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Environnement et
des Ressources Hydrauliques
17. ROMANIA: Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Rural (*)
18. SWITZERLAND: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) (*)
19. PAKISTAN: Ministry of Environment

Intergovernmental Organizations

Registered: 6; active contributors: 6

1. United Nations University (UNU) (*)
2. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)-Regional Office for Europe
(*)

3. Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (*)
4. International Potato Center (CIP) (*)
5. Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) (*)
6. International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) (*)

Major Groups

Registered: 29; active contributors: 19

1. Mountain Environment Protection Society (MEPS)
2. Centre for Development and Environment (CDE) (*)
3. Euromontana
4. Dean's Beans Organic Coffee Company
5. World Conservation Union (IUCN) (*)
6. Broad Initiatives for Negros Development (BIND) (*)
7. Consortium for the Sustainable Development of the Andean Ecoregion (CONDESAN) (*)
8. ProMONT-BLANC (*)
9. Unione Nazionale Comunità Comuni Enti Montani (UNCEM) (*)
10. SARD-M Project (*)
11. Banff Centre for Mountain Culture
12. Bulmontana - Bulgarian Association of Mountain Regions (*)
13. Ev-K²-CNR Committee (*)
14. The Mountain Institute (TMI)
15. III Millennio Foundation
16. Women Organising for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (WOCAN) (*)
17. MAB-6 Centre - Russia
18. Tebtebba Foundation (*)
19. Mountain Forum (MF) (*)
20. Central Asia Mountain Information Network (CAMIN)
21. Foundation for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions / Fondation pour le développement durable des régions de montagne (FDDM) (*)
22. Nile Basin Society (NBS) / Community Based Impact Assessment Network for Eastern Africa (CIANEA) (*)
23. Mountain Research Initiative (MRI) (*)
24. MAKMONTANA - Association for the sustainable development of mountain regions (*)
25. African Mountain Association (AMA)
26. Mountain Research and Development (MRD) (*)
27. World Mountain People Association (WMPA)
29. PRAKRITI (A research & advocacy group in mountain environment) (*)

29. CAMBIAR (*)