



Fourth Global meeting of the Mountain Partnership

17 September 2013
Erzurum, Turkey

Opening remarks
by
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Excellencies,

Dear colleagues and friends,

It is a pleasure to open this important assembly of governments and organizations committed to working together with the common goal of achieving sustainable mountain development around the world.

I wish to thank the Government of Turkey, for hosting the Fourth Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership and for making a substantive contribution to the implementation of the event. We have the opportunity to witness Turkey's commitment to sustainable mountain development in recent years and we very much hope that we will have the chance to work closely with the Turkish government in the future to support mountain communities and ecosystems worldwide.

I also wish to express highest appreciation to the World Bank. Without its substantive financial contribution through its Small Grant Facility, the holding of this meeting would have been impossible.

I also thank the governments of Switzerland and Italy for their continuing support to sustainable mountain development and for allowing the Mountain Partnership Secretariat to operate and fulfil its mandate.

Finally and most importantly I wish to thank you all, the Mountain Partnership Members, for being here. Of the 51 governments that belong to the Mountain Partnership, 35 are in this room today, and almost half of our 212 Members have traveled to Erzurum to set our priorities and develop a common agenda for next four years. Your efforts demonstrate your strong commitment to mountains and mountain people.

We have before us a full three-day programme. Building on a process that started at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development Rio+20 summit in June 2012, we are here to renew and strengthen the Partnership. We will endorse a strategy intended to make this a more powerful platform for advancing the global agenda on sustainable mountain development. We will elect a steering committee that will lead us.

I would also like to encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to meet and network with other members from across the world, share the good practices you are all doing in your respective countries and promote collaborative action.

Dear friends and colleagues, the Mountain Partnership is a voluntary alliance of interested governments and organizations committed to working together with the common goal of achieving sustainable mountain development around the world. This 4th Global Meeting of the MP is an opportunity to overcome formalities and to engage in substantive, innovative and forward-looking discussions.

I have been serving as interim coordinator of the Mountain Partnership Secretariat for the past year and even though I already knew the Partnership quite well, in this last year I have been surprised by the enthusiasm, commitment and dedication of the members. The potential of this Partnership is huge and together we can achieve a lot, building on our respective strengths. We are here in Turkey to crystallize that potential.

A most productive meeting to you all.