

Declaration on Mountains and Climate Change for COP21

We, undersigned non governmental organizations, representing associations and individuals which missions are to protect the environment and livelihoods in mountainous areas worldwide, including mountaineering and climbing:

Recalling the Rio + 20 Declaration « The Future we want », which has recognized that benefits derived from mountain regions are essential for sustainable development at the global level,

Emphasizing that mountain regions support many different ecosystems and have among the highest species richness globally, which play a significant role in biospheric carbon storage and carbon sequestration and thus can contribute to the achievement of important objectives in the fight against climate change,

Bearing in mind that mountains are « water towers » for billion of people, and that mountain ecosystem services such as water purification and climate regulation extend beyond their geographical boundaries and affect all continental main lands,

Bearing in mind that mountains provide many goods for subsistence livelihoods, are home to many indigenous peoples and are attractive for recreational activities and tourism, including eco-tourism, mountaineering and climbing,

Recalling that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) identified mountain regions as having experienced above-average warming in the 20th century, with related impacts including an earlier and shortened snow-melt period, rapid water release and downstream floods which, in combination with reduced glacier extent, are very likely to cause water shortage during the growing season,

Bearing in mind that these exacerbated impacts entail a disproportionately high risk of extinction for many endemic species in various mountain ecosystems, such as tropical mountain cloud forests, where habitat loss due to warming threatens and aggravate the vulnerability of plant and animal species, as well as of livelihoods, in particular for women who are more exposed to such impacts, and some economic sectors, including tourism, due to lack of adaptation options or limited adaptative capacity,

Bearing in mind that the preamble and article 4.8 of the UNFCCC already recognizes that fragile mountainous ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change in developing countries,

Considering that such vulnerability must be recognized for all mountainous areas worldwide, without prejudice to the common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities principle as enshrined by article 3 of the UNFCCC,

Considering therefore that it is in the interest of humanity and its environment to undertake particular efforts to protect all mountainous areas, ecosystems and local populations from the adverse impacts of climate change,

Strongly support the adoption of a legally binding and universal agreement in Paris (Paris Accord) at COP21 under the auspices of the UNFCCC, which is to be ambitious, equitable, durable and dynamic in order to achieve the objective to limit global warming below 2°Celsius as compared to pre-industrial levels,

Call upon all Contracting Parties to the UNFCCC to address in an explicit manner the key role and vulnerability of all mountainous areas, in both the preamble of the future Paris Accord and a substantive way in its implementing COP Decisions, in a manner comparable with other very vulnerable areas such as small islands and low lying coastal areas,

Welcome efforts made by a number of Contracting Parties to the UNFCCC, in particular developing country Parties, who have already submitted their INDC (Intended Nationally Determined Contributions), but further call upon all Contracting Parties to ensure a full integration of mitigation and adaptation measures in mountainous areas in INDC, in a consistent manner with the Rio + 20 Declaration which has encouraged all States to adopt a long-term vision and holistic approaches, including, *inter alia*, poverty reduction plans and programs in mountain areas, particularly in developing countries,

Invite all Contracting Parties to the UNFCCC, the Green Climate Fund and other international donors to consider the benefits which can derive from investment in mountain areas for adaptation and mitigation efforts in developing countries, to develop livelihood-based adaptation strategies that increase the income and resilience of mountain women and men, investments into disaster preparedness and risk reduction, building cross-border collaboration and supporting the knowledge base so that policies are made on sound evidence while taking account of traditional knowledge and practices,

Further invite all Contracting Parties to the UNFCCC, in implementing the “Paris Accord”, to strengthen the use of mechanisms existing under the UNFCCC for the benefit of mountains, in particular with the view to:

- ✓ building effective capacity to address mountain areas in NAPs (National Adaptation Plans) and LEDS (Low Emission Development Strategies) and reflect appropriate measures in their proposed and future INDCs,
- ✓ improving the knowledge and exchange of best practices on adaptation in mountain areas through the Nairobi Work Program, taking account of the adaptation goals set by the “Paris Accord”,
- ✓ supporting the transfer of low carbon and adaptative technologies through the Technology Mechanism, taking into account traditional knowledge and practices in mountain areas,
- ✓ strengthening existing arrangements, agreements, and centers of excellence for sustainable mountain development worldwide,
- ✓ opening a special window in the Green Climate Fund to provide financial support to developing countries with fragile mountainous ecosystems.