



## Steering Committee Meeting

Summary Report

21-22 October 2016

Mount Elgon Hotel – Mbale (Uganda)

### Participants:

1. Baldomero Casillo, Argentina – Governments of South America;
2. Jeanine Volken, Switzerland – Donor Organizations to the MP Secretariat
3. Moujahed Achouri, FAO – Host institution of the MP Secretariat
4. Musonda Mumba, UNEP – Intergovernmental Organizations
5. Andrew Taber, TMI – Global Major Groups Organizations (Chair)
6. Abdollah Ashtari Nakhaei, MEPS – Civil Society of Middle East and North Africa
7. Karinjo DeVore, AIMF – Civil Society of North & Central America and the Caribbean
8. Golam Rasul, ICIMOD – Civil Society of Asia and the Pacific
9. Erin Gleeson, MRI - Civil Society of Europe
10. Marisa Young, Fundación Agreste – Civil Society of South America
11. Sam Kanyamibwa, ARCOS – Civil Society Africa

### Observers:

1. Eric Smith, AIMF
2. Elbegzaya Batjargal, UCA
3. Christian Hergarten, UCA
4. Alisa Rai, TMI Nepal
5. Thomas Hofer, MPS
6. Rosalaura Romeo, MPS

### Overview:

This was the third formal meeting of the Steering Committee (SC) after its election at the Fourth Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership (MP) in Erzurum in 2013. Reporting and stocktaking, MP governance and strategy, work planning and prioritization, financial report and resource mobilization, and the fifth global meeting of the MP in 2017 were the main agenda items covered during the meeting. The document “Three years after Erzurum: reflections by the Coordinator of the Mountain Partnership Secretariat” was used as a basis for the discussion under the different agenda items.

The deliberations during the SC Meeting were very fruitful and productive. The participants expressed repeatedly appreciation and confidence for the work of the Mountain Partnership Secretariat (MPS) and for their significant achievements, but they also voiced concern about the heavy workload for the small MPS staff. The meeting resulted in a number of important decisions and in a go-ahead for the strategic proposals that the MPS had presented for discussion and consideration.



On the morning of 22 October (second day of the meeting), the SC was honoured by the presence of His Holiness Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang, Mountain Partnership Ambassador, who has committed himself to spreading the MP's vision to his followers all over the world.

## **Session 1: Welcome, introductory remarks and adoption of the agenda**

The SC Chair welcomed the SC members and Observers. He emphasized the strategic importance of the meeting by recalling the main items on the agenda. He subsequently invited all participants to briefly introduce themselves. The absence of five SC members representing the government sector (Mexico, Tunisia, Cameroon, Turkey and Nepal) was noted with concern. The reason for the absence is different for each of these countries:

- Mexico: no reply from the SC member in spite of several reminders;
- Tunisia: since his function has changed, the SC member forwarded the invitation to the SC meeting to Algeria, from which a reply was never received;
- Nepal: no replacement has been identified yet by the Nepal Government for the SC member who has retired;
- Turkey: although the participation of two Representatives had been confirmed, they did not appear at the meeting;
- Cameroon: the SC member declined at the last minute because of family reasons.

The draft agenda of the meeting was adopted with two proposed changes:

- To anticipate the agenda item on financial matters on the afternoon of 21 October in order to allow Jeanine Volken (with scheduled departure after lunch on 22 October) to fully participate in the discussion;
- To include a short space during the opening of day 2 for a message by His Holiness Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang, Mountain Partnership Ambassador.

## **Session 2: Reporting and stocktaking**

### ***2.1. MPS report (October 2015-September 2016):***

The Coordinator of the MPS presented the report by highlighting the key issues for each section. He clarified that this was a specific report of the MPS (and not of the MP as a whole), which the SC needs to validate and approve. The report was appreciated by the participants, and the following points were made / discussed:

- Very positive reaction to the 2016 IMD theme on "mountain cultures";
- Proposal to add the World Mountain Forum to the list of joint action since the MPS was very much involved in its preparation and implementation, as well as in coordinating with the ARCOS team to prepare for this SC meeting;
- Good feedback about IPROMO from Argentina, ARCOS and ICIMOD; scope to widen capacity development and promote regional courses; concern about the large workload on the MPS for the organization of IPROMO courses because it means one MPS staff member will dedicate a full month in Turin plus the time needed to prepare;
- High appreciation for the resource mobilization efforts by the MPS in the reporting year; discussion of other experiences with hosting arrangements for Secretariats within FAO, South-South cooperation;



- Current composition of the MPS vis-à-vis the workload.

## **2.2. Inputs and feedback from SC members:**

As in past SC meetings, the low response rate of MP members to request for information was expressed by several SC members as an important concern. The following specific points were raised by the SC members:

- Argentina: the Andean Initiative is very committed to move forward, but there is a question regarding its host institution: FAO Santiago or CONDESAN?
- AIMF: strong interest in the Mountain Facility. Clear messages are important which the members can use;
- ARCOS: there is a good momentum in Africa for the mountain agenda (Regional Forum in Africa, AMCEN, African Champions Committee). MP could be a model to replicate in order to promote better collaboration between governments and civil society;
- UNEP: need to clarify what the benefit of being a MP member is. Proposal to develop a flyer on this;
- Fundación Agreste and TMI: how to mobilize the Civil Society and what kind of support the MPS could provide, particularly in liaising more with the governments;
- ICIMOD: a strong cross-border collaboration exists in the HKH region. Regional mountain champions committee is under development;

The members of the SC were also interested in knowing the views of those present as Observers. In particular, the representatives of UCA expressed how the membership in Central Asia (38 members) is very active but that there is a challenge to maintain the momentum, which is why (among other reasons) it is so important for Central Asia to have representation in the SC.

On this issue, the SC agrees to incorporate one more representative for Central Asia in the governance text to be approved during the next global meeting (3.2). The UCA representatives further expressed that there is a strong interest in the Mountain Facility among the Central Asia membership.

In his closing remarks to this feedback session, the Chair of the SC recalled that the SC members do not represent their own institutions but rather their electoral groups.

## **Session 3: MP strategy and governance**

To introduce this strategic session, the Coordinator of the MPS presented the background paper entitled “Three years after Erzurum: reflections by the Coordinator of the Mountain Partnership Secretariat”. The subsequent extended discussion under this agenda item followed more or less the structure and contents of this background document.

### **3.1. Membership fee:**

The discussion of this matter resulted with the majority of participants in a general agreement that the introduction of a membership fee was necessary, not as a resource mobilization measure but as an approach to increase membership commitment.



The Chair recalled page 7 of the MP Governance and Strategy document where the expected membership commitment is clearly spelled out. The introduction of a fee was considered as a possible way to even leverage additional funds from donors. The following specific comments were made during the discussions:

- It would be important to carry out a review of the current membership commitments: has it declined or increased over the last years, e.g. since Erzurum? This assessment could be carried out by the SC members within their electoral groups;
- A membership fee carries the risk of excluding small and not well-resourced organizations. Can we expect small NGOs in the Himalaya to contribute to the work of the MP? Furthermore, what would be the process to delete members, especially countries or global organizations, that will not pay a fee? We need to leave the door open for any member to be part of the partnership and outline a fair mechanism to implement it;
- When introducing a fee system, a difference should be made between developed and developing countries;
- Whatever fee system will be introduced, it should still be voluntary;
- Do we want to have a smaller number of members that are active, or do we want to have many members for advocacy purposes?
- A membership fee should be part of a broader system of incentives: for example, who pays a fee would have access to small grants;
- Administering a fee structure is very time consuming, so there is a need to evaluate the cost-benefit;
- Possibly foresee a phased approach in the introduction of a membership fee that would allow for gradually collecting experiences and further building on lessons learned.

#### **Decisions:**

**The SC mandated the MPS to develop a concept paper for deciding on the introduction of a membership fee, based on existing models and experiences of other mechanisms. The paper should:**

- **present different options (pros and cons, scaled fee structure; fee structure with a fixed figure; fee structure which also allows for in-kind contributions; etc.);**
- **propose the use and beneficiaries of the fee resources and the decision process; and**
- **present the structure and governance of the fund (including the link to the MP Facility).**

**The SC would review the paper and agree on one of the proposals to be submitted to the GA 2017 for consideration.**

#### **3.2. Steering Committee:**

The SC reviewed the current structure of the SC, the geographical representation as well as the ToR as specified in annex 1 of the MP Governance and Strategy. The Observer from Central Asia once again voiced the desire from the Central Asia members to have a seat on the SC. Overall it was felt that the SC members should take a more active role in the promotion of the MP agenda. The following specific issues were discussed under this agenda item:

- Appropriateness of increasing the number of SC seats to include, for instance, the scientific community, big donors, the private sector, etc.;



- What to do with inactive SC members or SC members who disappear;
- Geographical representation: should we continue with the 6 regions, reduce them to the 5 standard UN regions, or increase it to consider language or cultural issues, among others (as with Asia-Pacific and Central Asia)?
- For SC members from small institutions, it is a challenge to mobilize the resources for the implementation of regional events and meetings or to contract human resources exclusively dedicated for MP issues;
- Make sure not to overload the SC members when amending their ToR, without confusing MPS' duties with those of the SC members as representatives and not as coordinators of actions at the regional level (or hubs, according to previous governance).

#### **Decisions:**

**The SC decided to keep the current structure of the SC, which was developed through an extended negotiation process during the preparations for the Erzurum meeting, but to optimize it. A change would jeopardize the continuity of the MP. The SC further decided to propose at the next GA a) the introduction of a system of alternate representation in the SC, and b) the extension of the SC seat to Central Asia.**

**In terms of the ToR, the following amendments were proposed:**

- **Include in the preamble of the ToR the fundamental role of the SC members in promoting the MP agenda;**
- **Add one bullet: “Each SC member is accountable for mobilizing the members from the respective electoral group to contribute to the MP’s work plan and agenda,”;**
- **Add one bullet: “Take an active role in promoting the mountain agenda in different fora such as CoPs and UN events,”;**
- **Amend the third bullet: “Monitor and support the implementation.....”;**
- **Add one bullet to enable the SC to address non-performance of SC members and allow for consultation between GAs to elect a new SC member in case the incumbent is no longer active and interested;**
- **Last bullet: clarify the language to make it more precise and positive.**

## **Session 4: Work planning**

The SC took note of the priorities, initiatives and key events foreseen for the last quarter of 2016, but the discussion under this agenda item was focused on the 2017 work plan.

### **4.1. Priority setting**

The question was deliberated whether a thematic prioritization of the work of the MP as a whole (not of single MP members, which all have their own specific work programmes) would increase the impact and visibility of the MP, make the results more tangible and facilitate resource mobilization. There was a general agreement of the SC for such an approach, and the following specific points were made:



- Prioritize on issues in which the MP has competence in and for which the MP can make a difference and shine;
- Four years could be an appropriate time span to work on the priorities;
- Regional specificities need to be taken into consideration in the prioritization;
- Have we done a survey of what our members are doing?
- Look at the bigger picture: priorities should be compelling to stakeholders beyond the mountain agenda. Why is a topic relevant? For a Government? For a donor?
- The SDGs provide a very important framework and justification for prioritization and implementation;
- Water in mountains received a high score as a potential priority: it is a rather new topic, receives a strong attention in the SDGs and the MP could benefit;
- Need to be opportunistic: for example, the Green Climate Fund offers an important opportunity to work on climate change adaptation and mitigation in mountains;
- The following additional potential thematic priorities were mentioned: reducing poverty in mountains in a changing climate, vulnerability in mountains, land degradation (link to the Green Cover Index), and importance of mountains for the water-food-energy nexus.

**Decision:**

**The SC confirmed that the MP's work needs clear prioritization and mandated the MPS to compose a suggestion.**

#### **4.2. Running the MPS**

During the work planning section, the MPS Programme Officer explained the current staffing situation of the MPS. SC members highlighted the importance of keeping the workload of the MPS in mind when discussing the 2017 work plan.

**Decision: The SC decided to hold the next SC meeting, either virtually or face-to-face, in June 2017.**

#### **4.3. Advocacy**

The extended discussion under this agenda item focused on the following issues:

- Vulnerability study: all SC members appreciated the importance and relevance of this study for the advocacy value it holds, particularly in the context of the SDGs. Some concerns were raised in terms of the future upscaling of the study vis-à-vis the workload of the MPS. The broadening of the partnership regarding the vulnerability study as well as the stronger anchoring of this work into FAO's regular programme were proposed.
- SDG monitoring and Green Cover Index: clarifications were provided by the MPS about the Green Cover Index, which is the "official SDG Indicator" to monitor Target 15.4. The SC members voiced the need to also develop additional indicators for the monitoring of mountain ecosystems – such a process has already started under the coordination of MRI (see section 4.4).
- Mountains in international processes and events: there was unanimous agreement that the MP needs to continue its advocacy efforts with regards to the inclusion of mountains in



international negotiations and processes. After a presentation by the MPS Programme Officer about the MP mountain side events under preparation for COP 22 in Marrakech, the SC debated:

- that a more long-term strategy regarding the MP advocacy efforts in the conventions was required;
- that the participation in the COP preparatory processes was essential (e.g. providing mountain language to delegations);
- that advocacy should go beyond side events and the usual target audience; and
- that SC members representing governments have to play a leading role.

The importance of making more use of the UNGA Resolutions on mountains for the MP advocacy efforts was also highlighted.

#### **Decisions:**

**In collaboration with SC members, the MPS is mandated to develop an Issues Paper for a 3-5 year period for the advocacy efforts of the MP in the 3 UN Conventions (Climate Change, Biological Diversity and Desertification). The Paper should outline the vision for mountains in the conventions at the end of this 3 to 5 year period and, based on this vision, define the specific objectives and steps to get there (including the promotion of the establishment of an alliance of mountain countries). This Issues Paper should be part of the overall MP Advocacy Strategy, which needs to be revised and updated in the preparations for the GA in 2017.**

**Regarding the Vulnerability Study, the MPS will assess the situation in January 2017 and decide about the follow-up and eventual upscaling.**

#### **4.4. Knowledge management and communication**

The State of the World's Mountains publication, which was proposed at one of the previous SC meetings, received the main attention in the deliberations under this agenda item. Although the value of such a publication was widely acknowledged, there were queries about the efforts and resources required to complete it. Questions were raised about the target audience (policy or scientific?), the usefulness and feasibility of such a product and how it would relate / add value to the UNSG Report, which now needs to be submitted every three years. A suggestion was to move away from traditional publications and focus on more effective means of communication (e.g. go for series in broadcasting blocks? See also report from the SC meeting in Turin). The following additional points were deliberated under this agenda item:

- The ongoing scientific “comparable assessments of the status of SMD in mountain regions” that were initiated in the Kunming conference and are spearheaded by MRI;
- The need to take advantage of Mountain Film Festivals; and
- The need to develop for 2017 (15 years of MP) an attractive publication about the achievements of the MP.

#### **Decisions:**

**Abolish the idea to develop a State of the World's mountain report on a regular basis, but build on ongoing work with MRI (“comparable assessments of the status of SMD in mountain regions”);**

**Develop a punchy brochure for the 15-year anniversary of the MP to be disseminated in 2017, particularly in the context of the GA;**



**Review the communication capacity in the MPS after the departure of Mia Rowan.**

#### ***4.5. Joint action***

The very successful and evolving mountain products programme, which is financially supported by the Italian Government, was the main subject of discussion under this agenda item. The deliberations were based on a presentation by the MPS Programme Officer, who provided an overview of the programme and then focused on the Mountain Partnership Product label, which was launched in Turin during the Terra Madre Forum on 24 September 2016. The SC members expressed appreciation for the progress and innovative approach of the programme.

#### **Decision:**

**The SC formally approved the Logo and the Terms and Conditions of the Mountain Partnership Product label. In the implementation of the programme, it is important to ensure that all regions are covered.**

#### ***4.6. Capacity development and technology transfer***

The short deliberations under this agenda item focused on the annual IPROMO course, which to some extent was already covered under the discussion of the MPS report (see section 2.1). The Representative from UNEP proposed considering a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) in addition to IPROMO. The Representative from Fundacion Agreste recalled that the NGO had a platform to offer courses. The ongoing initiative to develop an online platform about available curricula and capacity development courses on SMD was considered to be very relevant. No specific decision was taken under this agenda item.

#### ***4.7. Calendar of events***

The MPS presented a draft list of events in 2017 that could be relevant for the MP. There was a preliminary discussion about those events at which the MP should be present. A number of events will need to be added to the list.

#### **Decision:**

**The SC members committed to review the list and to:**

- **add any events they consider important; and**
- **provide their views about priority events at which the MP should be represented.**

## **Session 5: Financial matters**

The discussion under this agenda item was held in different sessions over both days of the SC meeting. The following summary report does not follow the chronological order but rather the thematic logic of the deliberations.



### **5.1. Financial report by the MPS**

The short discussion that followed the presentation of the financial report by the MPS focused on:

- which contributions should be included in the report;
- the difference between the budget and the expenditure figures; and
- the sustainability of the MPS team.

#### **Decisions:**

- **Include in the table, which specifies the contributions to the MPS, the Italian funded project GCP/GLO/538/ITA (in which the mountain products programme is embedded);**
- **In addition to the 2016 expenditures, develop a slide that presents the 2017 budget.**

### **5.2. Membership fee and facility (see section 3.1)**

### **5.3. Private sector**

There was unanimous agreement that resource mobilization through the private sector had significant potential and was worth exploring with priority attention. The following points were made:

- The need to communicate clearly what the MP can offer to the private sector. This “case for support” has to be different for different types of companies;
- The need to clarify, within the context of the UN, how to publicize private sector support (logos, acknowledgements of sponsorship, etc.); and
- The need for a communication strategy on how to engage with the private sector and which kind of companies to target.

#### **Decisions:**

- **The MPS was requested to clarify the possibilities within the UN to publicize sponsorship from private sector companies;**
- **Identify 1-2 private sector companies (maybe from the water sector?) and develop a document that specifies the benefits for these companies;**
- **Explore the willingness of these companies to support the MP and analyse the lessons learned in the process of building the partnership.**

### **5.4. MPS funding**

The MPS Coordinator reiterated the current financial situation of the MPS. He recalled that both traditional donors to the MPS (the Italian and Swiss Government) expect a diversification of the resource partner basis for the MPS (as, for example, a membership fee). In fact, this is a condition for their future support to the MPS. The MPS Coordinator presented the many resource mobilization efforts the MPS has undertaken since the last SC meeting (bilateral meetings in Rome, New York and Washington, events with country representatives at FAO HQ, etc.), based on a modular resource mobilization communication tool kit. He also highlighted the challenges for a global Secretariat to bring additional resource partners on board.

#### **Decision:**



**The search for additional resource partners for the MPS needs to be a high priority in order to make the MPS more sustainable. This is not just a task for the MPS but a corporate responsibility of the SC.**

## **Session 6: Fifth global meeting of the MP in 2017**

The holding of the fifth global meeting in 2017, four years after Erzurum, is essential since a new / revised strategy needs to be approved and elections to the SC need to take place. The proposal by the MPS to organize the meeting at FAO HQ in Rome in order to save costs and simplify the logistical arrangements was unanimously endorsed by the SC. The offers from Togo and GB Pant Institute of Himalayan Ecology were appreciated but considered too complicated and expensive. The following specific issues were raised under this agenda item:

- The need to be strict about who we invite and support to attend the global meeting. No travel support to inactive members;
- Aim for a participation of 50 percent of the MP members and particularly target the active members;
- A funding strategy for the meeting. Sponsoring options by members could be explored. The resource mobilization needs are approx. USD 200,000;
- The meeting should be framed by a clear objective and structured along a core theme.

### **Decisions:**

- **The fifth global meeting will be held at FAO HQ in Rome, either in the first or last week of October 2017;**
- **The MPS was mandated to develop a concept note for the meeting with proposed objectives and thematic priorities as well as a draft agenda. The concept note should also foresee different formats for the meeting (e.g. group sessions, market places, speed geeking, etc.) and possibly a field trip;**
- **The MPS was mandated to draft a detailed road map, specifying the process of review of the MP strategy as well as of the SC elections and proposing a funding strategy for the meeting, for the preparation of the meeting.**

## **Session 7: Other matters and general discussion**

Under this agenda item some more discussion was held about the process for revising the MP strategy in preparation for the fifth global meeting. Both the consultations about the strategy as well as the nomination and election process for the SC will be handled in a way similar to the preparations for Erzurum. Regarding the SC elections, the importance was highlighted for at least some members to serve for a second term in order to ensure continuity.



Regarding the flow of communication, the MPS Coordinator encouraged the SC members to be in more regular contact with the MPS. On the other hand, the SC members stressed the importance for the MPS to communicate through the SC members to the MP members.

Finally, the long-term vision of the Mountain Agenda was discussed. Questions included the need for a UN Forum on Mountains or a Mountain Convention. There were no final deliberations, but these issues will be discussed again during the fifth global meeting of the MP.

Some SC members noted that the FAO logo had been used on some MP communication materials and asked for clarification. They stressed that the MPS is formally hosted by FAO but that it is not a FAO unit per se, and this should be reflected in its branding and communication at large.

The MPS Coordinator appreciated the very fruitful and substantive deliberations during the SC meeting as well as the constructive spirit in which the discussions took place.

The SC Chair closed the meeting by thanking the participants for their very active participation and wished everybody a safe journey back home.



## **STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**

DRAFT AGENDA

21-22 October 2016

Mbale - Uganda

### **21 October 2016**

**09.00-09.30 session 1:** Welcome, introductory remarks and adoption of agenda

**09.30 -11.00 session 2:** Reporting and stocktaking

- MPS report October 2015 – September 2016 #1
- Discussion of the report

**10.30-11.00** Coffee Break

**11.00 -11.30 session 2:** Reporting and Stocktaking (cont'd):

- Inputs and feedback from SC members, including regional concerns and perspectives

**12.30-13.30** Lunch

**13.30-17.00 session 3:** MP strategy and governance – “3 years after Erzurum” #2

- Vision: have we reached where we hoped to be 3 years after Erzurum? reflections by the MPS Coordinator
- Reflection on the impact of the MP work
- Reflection on the MP Strategy (mission, guiding principles, functions, etc.)
- Reflection on the MP governance (reviewing the different ToRs, representativeness of the SC, engagement of members and the relations within the electoral groups, participation in the SC and alternate SC members, etc.)

**17.00-18.00** Conclusions of day one

**20.00** Group dinner



## **22 October 2015**

**09.00-09.30** Introduction to day two

**09.30-11.00 session 4:** work planning

- 2016 work plan: priorities, initiatives and key events for last quarter of the year #3
- 2017 work plan: priority setting, calendar of events, responsibilities #4 #5

**11.00-11.30** Coffee break

**11.30-13.00 session 5:** financial matters

- Financial report by the MPS #5
- Financial sustainability of the MP - resource mobilization and strategy #6 (membership fee?)

**13.00-14.00** Lunch

**14.00-15.30 session 6:** Organizing the fifth global meeting of the MP in 2017

- Potential dates and venue of the meeting
- Preparatory process
- Identification of key agenda items
- Funding strategy

**15.30-16.00** Coffee break

**16.00-17.00 session 7:** Other matters and general discussion

**17.00-18.00** Conclusions of the meeting and next steps

**20.00** Group dinner