



## **New Regional Initiative for Mountains agreed for the MENA region**

MENA Regional Meeting  
19 December 2012  
Press Release

Over 15 representatives from the Middle East and North African (MENA) region met in Marrakech this week to discuss the effects of climate change in mountains.

After two days of fruitful discussions, they agreed to form a Regional Initiative for Mountains in the MENA Region within the context of the Mountain Partnership.

The meeting was organized by the Mountain Partnership Secretariat and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in partnership with the Moroccan Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, in the context of the Strategic Initiative for Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation and Development in Mountain Regions funded by the World Bank.

Participants were a mix of Mountain Partnership focal points and ministerial representatives from Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey and Yemen. They came to the table to discuss the specific effects of climate change in their countries and look at common issues across the region with a view to developing a strong common platform for promoting adaptation measures, capacity and advocacy.

“The decrease of productivity in mountains and the effects of climate change are leading communities to migrate to cities and foreign countries,” said

Moujahed Achouri, FAO deputy regional representative for the Near East, who welcomed participants. “We need to ensure adequate investments in the mountains so that people will stay.”

“I am very keen to see the building of a strong alliance among Mountain Partnership members from the MENA Region,” he added. “This will allow us to share information and lessons learned as well as to create a common front for advocating the importance of climate change in the mountains of the MENA Region.”

Mohamed Ait Kadi, president of the General Council of Agricultural Development in Morocco, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, said: “We need to find solutions to problems that will become bigger and bigger. We cannot expect to have the same answers to questions that have radically changed.”

“Climate change is an accelerating factor for a number of threats that mountains are already facing. Through the Mountain Partnership we can drive a regional movement towards the solutions.”

The participants also discussed the new and existing funding mechanisms and tools related to climate change.

The new Regional Trust Fund resource mobilization initiative launched by the FAO office for the Near East was also mentioned.

“This could serve for the implementation of activities at country, sub-regional or regional level, such as the sustainable development of mountains in the region,” said Achouri.

The Regional Initiative for Mountains in the MENA Region under the framework of the Mountain Partnership will provide a strong, common platform for dialogue and action.

The Mountain Partnership Secretariat, represented by Rosalaura Romeo and Sara Manuelli, and FAO confirmed their commitment to support the governments in their efforts.