



Mountain Partnership
Rio+20

Concept note



Concept note of activities to be carried out in the Mountain Pavilion under theme 4: Food security, food sovereignty and gender

The Mountain Pavilion at Rio+20

The Mountain Partnership (MP) is a voluntary alliance of partners dedicated to improving the lives of mountain people and protecting mountain environments around the world. The Mountain Partnership addresses the challenges facing mountain regions by tapping the wealth and diversity of resources, knowledge, information and expertise, from and between one another, in order to stimulate concrete initiatives at all levels that will ensure improved quality of life and environments in the world's mountain regions. Currently, 50 countries, 16 intergovernmental organizations and 130 Major Groups are members.

Together with key partners, the government of Peru, one of the first members of the Mountain Partnership, has taken the lead in the organization of a Mountain Pavilion at Rio+20.¹ The Pavilion is conceived as a global initiative and the Mountain Partnership has mobilized its members and mountain stakeholders from all regions of the world to showcase their work in

¹ The 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro was a milestone for the political recognition of the unique services mountains provide to global sustainability. With the adoption of Chapter 13 on Sustainable Mountain Development (SMD), Agenda 21 demanded better stewardship of mountains and mountain regions for global well-being. Since then, an uncounted number of highly rewarding international and regional initiatives emerged, including the International Year of Mountains 2002 and the establishment of the Mountain Partnership, all contributing with success to enhancing knowledge and understanding of the issues and approaches of SMD. Now, 20 years on, the "call for action" to enhance the stewardship of mountains is more relevant and pressing than ever before. Hence the decision to hold the Third Global Meeting on the sidelines of the UNCSO Rio+20 summit.



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contribution to sustainable development. Moreover, the Mountain Partnership will hold its Third Global Meeting in the Mountain Pavilion and high-level meetings with mountain countries will be hosted therein. In order to articulate the content of the 'Mountain Pavilion', the Pavilion Organizing Committee is proposing five main thematic areas. The Mountain Partnership Secretariat and FAO, as its host, are jointly coordinating activities to be carried out within thematic area number 4: Food Security, Food Sovereignty and Gender.

Background for theme 4

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, “food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Food insecurity exists when people do not have adequate physical, social, or economic access to food as defined above.” This definition identifies the four main dimensions of food security: food availability, food access, utilization, and stability. These dimensions are especially important in mountain areas where the fragile environment negatively influences food availability and access.

The evidence suggests that countries where more than 40 percent of the population lives in mountain areas are likely to have higher levels of undernourishment than is average for developing countries. Covering 24 percent of the Earth’s surface, mountains are home to over 720 million people. About 40 percent of the mountain population in developing and transition countries, or nearly 300 million people, are estimated to be vulnerable to food insecurity. Of these, nearly 90 percent live in rural areas and almost half of those are likely to be chronically hungry. Most rural mountain people engage in some form of agriculture as the main source of their livelihood. The land resources in mountain areas of the world comprise barren land (33 percent), forage (25 percent), forest (25 percent), cropland (7 percent), and protected areas (10 percent). In virtually all of the mountain areas across the world, crop-based farming systems are important components of local livelihoods. These include the maize-bean system in the upland areas of Central Mexico and Central America, the perennial crops-based system in the Ethiopian and Eastern African highlands, and the rice-wheat (highland mixed) system across the entire Himalaya range. However, for millions of mountain people, hunger and the threat of hunger are nothing new. Harsh climates and the difficult, often inaccessible terrain combined with political and social marginality make mountain people vulnerable to food shortages. Hunger and micronutrient deficiencies are contributing factors to the significantly higher infant mortality rates in mountain regions. The level of maternal mortality is also higher than in the lowlands. It is important to understand that hunger and malnutrition are not merely a symptom of poverty in mountain communities – they contribute to perpetuate poverty.

Women are vital to the sustainability of mountain communities and play a prominent role in agricultural production, resource management and the household. Since females often have less access to household resources, women and girls are at greater risk of hunger and poor



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nutrition. The result is growing outmigration, food deficits and incidences of trafficking of mountain women into lowland and urban centres. Moreover in most cases, mountain women also have only limited access to health care and education and are prevented from full participation in politics because of their lack of education in addition to their heavy workload.

Mountains provide key environmental services such as freshwater, biodiversity conservation and hydropower to more than half of humanity. Water is our planet's most precious resource and mountains are of strategic importance to supply it. All of the major rivers rise in mountain regions, providing about 50 percent of all freshwater to downstream users. Without water, there is no food to feed growing populations. Without water and mountains, there are no solutions to meet the growing demand for clean energy. Without water, biodiversity and ecosystem integrity cannot be sustained. Without safe and reliable water, human and global well-being are at severe risk. While mountain services are vital, there are growing threats to their sustainable supply. The effects of climate change are observed to be highest in mountains, jeopardizing the sustainability of mountain ecosystems and the socio-ecological stability of these landscapes. Globalization is another important driver of change responsible for new challenges and dilemmas, as well as opportunities, for mountain women and men.

Objectives

- **Discuss** options aiming at improving food security in mountain populations with special focus on gender issues.
- **Showcase** an alternative agricultural development paradigm, one that integrates ecologically, biodiverse, resilient, sustainable and socially just forms of agriculture, looking at mountain regions as living solutions for water, food security and clean energy.

Outcomes

- **Awareness raised** on the need to identify production and distribution of food and access to income and other resources.
- **An integrated approach to food security is showcased**, linking crop-forestry-pasture, taking into account indigenous knowledge and the gender dimension, while unlocking the climate-smart potential of mountains.
- **Linkages between mountain regions are established**, in particular, between Small Island Countries and Mountainous Countries.



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Tentative schedule of events to take place in the Mountain Pavilion under theme 4

While the Pavilion Organizing Committee has yet to establish the exact number of side events proposals, the following events are proposed under thematic area number 4.

1.1 Food Security and Climate-smart Mountains: An Integrated Approach

What: Meeting on food security

Why: Mountain ecosystems play a critical role in our world development: they provide key environmental services such as freshwater, biodiversity conservation and hydropower to more than half of humanity. An integrated approach linking crop-forestry-pasture, taking into account indigenous knowledge, could unlock the climate-smart potential of mountains and their benefits. Concept note could be drafted together with FAO/NR

Who: *Mountain Partnership Secretariat, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, other Mountain Partnership members*

1.2 Gender in Mountains event (Run-up to Bhutan+10)

What: Run-up to the International Gender Summit to be held in Bhutan after Rio+20 (organized by ICIMOD from 15-19 October 2012 in Thimpu, Bhutan)

Why: Globalization, climate change and other drivers of change are creating new challenges and dilemmas, as well as opportunities, for mountain women and men. In light of these changes, emerging concerns, and persistent challenges, ICIMOD, Bhutan's Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, and the National Commission for Women and Children are organizing an international conference, Bhutan+10, which will bring together mountain women and men, researchers, policy makers, and development practitioners from the HKH region and around the world in a post-Rio+20 world for a comprehensive update, stock-taking, and new agenda setting.

Who: *Mountain Partnership Secretariat, ICIMOD, other gender-related Mountain Partnership members*



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1.3 Highlands to Oceans: Linking Mountains to Islands

What: The Mountain Partnership meets the Global Island Partnership

Why: To build alliances between the two global partnerships by promoting the dialogue on a common ground: the specificity of insularity in the sustainable management of mountain ecosystems. In their effort towards sustainable development -and in spite of their isolation- mountainous islands might face problems that can be more related to those faced by some continental mountain regions than to the problems of other islands, such as the atolls. If properly shared, the knowledge acquired within one partnership could be particularly valuable to a number of members of the other, and help identify knowledge gaps as well as prioritize research activities to ensure proper tailor-making of development actions to the islands' specificities.

Who: *Mountain Partnership Secretariat, Italian Development Cooperation representative, Small Island States representative/s, other gender-related Mountain Partnership members*

Others (as requested by interested parties)



2. Stands and project market place

2.1 Thematic stand set-up

The Mountain Partnership Secretariat will provide thematic posters containing key mountain-specific messages. Given the paper-less nature of Rio+20, promotional material (postcards) and brochures will be made available through the market place “for display”.

2.2 Posters and exhibitions

1 overall poster for the thematic stand

3 standard size posters with thematic messages

Posters/photographs and a variety of mountain products as provided by Mountain Partnership Members

2.3. Multimedia presentations

During the Third Global Meeting, the Mountain Partnership Secretariat will launch a video message from its first Mountain ambassador Mr Reinhold Messner, world renowned mountaineer, former politician, farmer and explorer.

Together with the Mountain Partnership Secretariat Decentralized hubs, several documentaries have been prepared as videos to raise awareness of mountain issues. A few selected videos and customized ppt Shows will be run at Mountain pavilion – including a thematic Rio+20 ppt.

2.4 Press (social media, podcasts, live streaming, radio/TV, press conferences etc.)

The Mountain Partnership Secretariat has designated IISD to assist with press coverage of key events, such as the Third Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership. In collaboration with ICIMOD, one person will be disseminating updates from Rio almost in real time. Together with the Communications Officers of the Decentralized hubs, this person will effectively utilize Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Blogs etc. to get the message out to outside audiences.

Heavy contents and event outputs will be packed and disseminated in the form of Press Releases and periodic digests on a variety of web sites.