

International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

Contribution to UNSG Report on Sustainable Mountain Development

For nearly 40 years, Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) has worked in close collaboration with researchers from the developing world in their search for the means to build healthier, more equitable, and more prosperous societies.

IDRC supports research that furthers sustainable mountain development mainly through its Environment and Natural Resource Management (ENRM) Program Area, which focuses on the sustainable use and management of environment and natural resources, stressing the involvement of local communities, with a view to enhance food and water security, human health and livelihoods, and bridging the gap between community-based resource management and policy-making.

In Asia IDRC has a long history of support to the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and has funded key projects on watershed management and knowledge management that have yielded strong results. Current IDRC-funded research projects with ICIMOD include:

- *Shifting Cultivation : Promoting Innovative Policy and Development Options in the Eastern Himalayas* -- This project builds on a series of experiences with shifting cultivation in India, Nepal and Bhutan that challenge the prevailing view among policymakers and forestry officials that shifting cultivation is unsustainable and destructive to forests and wildlife. The project is based on the hypothesis that shifting cultivation, if improved and rationalized as an agroforestry system, has high potential for poverty alleviation, food security and biodiversity conservation. Researchers take a pragmatic approach to dealing with the livelihood issues of the cultivators and the health of the ecosystem, and assess the effects of increasing population pressure and market forces. The idea is to share good policies and practices related to shifting cultivation and alternative options through regional exchange.
- *Land Use Transition and Human Health in the context of Climate Change in the Eastern Himalayas* -- The overall goal of this research project is to reduce the vulnerability of mountain people to health issues caused by land use change using ecosystem approaches to human health (Ecohealth) in the regions of Nepal, Yunnan province and the autonomous region of Tibet, China.
- *Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Program in Asia (MAPPA)* – Building on work accomplished during earlier phases, this initiative endeavours to widen the MAPPA network to include a larger range of partners. The overall objective is to institutionalize capacity and a system for promoting sustainable and equitable use of medicinal and aromatic plants, thereby improving resource conservation and livelihood security in rural and marginalized areas of South Asia.

In the Andes IDRC has launched the *Scaling-up Rural Innovations* project in partnership with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), building mainly on IFAD Peru experiences over the past 15 years and the joint research efforts of IDRC and IFAD in the specific Corredor Puno Cusco project. This new initiative seeks to identify, understand and expand the use of successful rural innovations that value the strategies and assets of the rural poor. In collaboration with stakeholders, researchers will examine instances of scaled-up innovation in farm production, natural resource management and off-farm income generation and develop policies and programs in consequence.