

HIGHLIGHTS OF MOUNTAIN FORUM ACTIVITIES, 2007-2008

The Mountain Forum (MF) is a global 'network of networks', promoting equitable and ecologically sustainable mountain development through information sharing, mutual support, awareness raising and advocacy. It is composed of five Regional Networks and is facilitated by the Mountain Forum Secretariat (MFS). Currently the MF encompasses around 5500 individual and organisational members.

The MF's electronic information services now incorporate global, regional and thematic discussion lists, e-conferencing, calendars of events and online resources of mountain related documents, experts and organisations. 2008 saw eight regional e-discussions and conferences and two international e-conferences on key themes such as the use of GIS and disaster recovery strategies. These conferences attracted as many as 750 participants from over 70 countries.

In 2007-2008, mapping exercises generated online profiles on over 800 organisations. This was intended to support networking and enable communications, information exchange, strategic alliances and/or joint activity development between members working in the same geographical or thematic focus area.

Meanwhile, emerging issues relevant to SMD have been explored in regional and international bulletins. The international publications have featured transregional and cross-disciplinary articles on climate change adaptation and impact (Jan 2008); natural resource management, women and conflict (July 2008); mountain agriculture (Jan 09), and mountain biodiversity (July 2009). In conjunction with ICIMOD and the Asia-Pacific Mountain Network, the Secretariat also coordinated a global "For Mountains and People" photo contest in 2008, receiving over 1100 entries.

Responding to demands from members and partners, the MF has recently expanded advocacy and policy engagement and gained visibility within regional and international decision making arenas. For example, in 2008/9 the MFS mobilised member inputs to inform the Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity on progress in implementing the Programme of Work on Mountain Biodiversity.