

# High time for action

## FOOD SECURITY IN MOUNTAINS

The problem of hunger in mountains is getting worse. Harsh climates and the difficult, often inaccessible, terrain combined with political and social marginality make mountain people vulnerable to food shortages. Indigenous knowledge about local foods and traditional agricultural practices in mountain areas is eroding and agricultural diversity as well as productivity are declining, further increasing the vulnerability of mountain people.

Recent studies indicate that mountain populations suffer from high rates of micronutrient deficiencies, which is one of the contributing factors to the significantly higher infant mortality rates in mountain regions.

Now food prices are soaring worldwide and increased transportation costs to remote mountain areas mean mountain communities are paying that much more for their food.



**International Mountain Day 2008**, with its theme of **Food security in mountains**, is an apt occasion to reflect on how hard it is for mountain people to consistently get adequate and nutritious food to lead healthy and active lives. Priorities for improving food security in mountains include promoting and expanding traditional mountain crops; safeguarding indigenous land use practices; improving breeding programmes of mountain-adapted livestock; better market access; and mountain-specific public policy, developed with the participation of mountain people.

