

Statement of the Adelboden Group on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in Mountain Regions (SARD-M)

October 3, 2007

The members of the Adelboden Group

Underline their strong consensus for the promotion of SARD-M at the very moment when mountains are experiencing a severe impact from climate change.

Moreover, express their concern at the accelerating melting of mountain glaciers and confirm their commitment to undertake immediate actions to preserve the glaciers as the major reservoirs of water in the world.

Renew their commitment to cooperating to help reduce the loss of natural resources in mountain areas, such as water which is essential both for local and associated ecosystems, or biodiversity, eroded by the progressive disappearance of endemic flora and fauna species; which is impacting negatively on agriculture and food security and further impoverishing the vulnerable mountain populations – which amount to more than 720 million people – and on billions of lowlanders which are dependant on mountain resources.

Reaffirm that sustainable development in mountain areas calls for joint actions to fight against such global threats as climate change and its impacts on vulnerable ecosystems and to contribute to improve the living conditions of mountain populations and to maximize their environmental, economic and social contributions to the world.

Consider that the adaptation to the effects of climate change is fundamental and requires support of the international community in line with the Rio Conference principles of shared and differentiated responsibilities.

Recognize the opportunity offered by the International Year of the Potato (2008) and agree, in the context of the observance of the year, to support the local, national and regional initiatives focussing on SARD-M.

Underline the role of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Mountain Partnership, among others, as well as the efforts undertaken by various national, regional and international actors.

Are determined to promote the strengthening of the various processes undertaken in the context of the FAO SARD-M Project to define appropriate approaches to SARD-M by both governments and civil society.

Call for the implementation of a second phase of the FAO SARD-M Project on the basis of the criteria established by the Third Meeting of the Adelboden Group to enable concrete actions such as the development of regional projects, the promotion of the full participation of local populations as well as the establishment of a specific work plan to which the Adelboden Group members are committed.

Preamble

- Mountains, like the earth's oceans and rainforests, are crucial to human life. Mountains are the source of freshwater for half of humanity. They are storehouses of genetic diversity that help feed the world, as well as of valuable commodities. Yet, mountain ecosystems are fragile and under threat from climate change, overexploitation or land abandonment and environmental degradation. Mountain people are among the world's poorest and hungriest: a disproportionate number of the world's 840 million chronically undernourished people live in mountain areas.
- Making agriculture sustainable in mountain regions is a prerequisite for protecting the mountain environment, promoting the rural economy and assuring the provision of environmental services to the rest of the world.
- Improving sustainable livelihoods in mountains and maximising contribution of the mountains to society require holistic and coherent policy packages, appropriate institutional arrangements and capacity-building, and innovative partnerships between the public sector and civil society, including the private sector.
- Mountains are a significant source of positive externalities which have to be better recognised and valorised through policies and markets.
- The growing impact of major issues affecting mountains (e.g. climate change, loss of biodiversity, migrations, globalisation, etc.) requires the strengthening of the multi-stakeholder processes, which aim at defining appropriate actions by governments and the civil society.
- The recommendations formulated in this Statement should be taken into account in on-going policy processes at national, regional and global levels.

The Adelboden Group stresses that:

- Highlands and lowlands are tied together in the context of challenging interactions; they are economically and environmentally interdependent.
- Migrations (highlands to lowlands as well as the other way around) are increasing, leading to accrued challenges. For instance, depopulation trends are often jeopardizing valuable anthropo-zoogenic landscapes and biodiversity which depend on traditional activities and indigenous knowledge-based management practices, contributing to loss of cultural and natural heritage as well as agricultural resources.
- Sustainability in the mountains contributes to the lowlands in terms of socio-economic development (e.g. commodities and products, cultural heritage, etc.), provision of environmental goods and services (e.g. water, biodiversity) and prevention of natural disasters (e.g. silting, floods, water shortage).
- Despite the serious physical, economic, social, cultural and political constraints mountain people face, the potential exists to improve their livelihoods and reduce poverty. To realize this potential, a higher priority needs to be given to mountain areas and to mountain people at the national, regional and international levels.
- In this context, sustainable agriculture as well as rural development policies and institutions have a major role to play.

Against this background, the members of the Adelboden Group¹, on the occasion of their Third Meeting in Rome, 1-3 October 2007, express their serious concern and fully endorse the following recommendations:

Policies

- A long-term vision and holistic approaches should be adopted by governments and their development partners, in order to remedy the present common lack of strategies and integrated approach to policies for SARD in mountain regions;
- higher priority should be given to mountain issues in national, regional and global policy-making, either through incorporating mountain-specific requirements into general policies or through specific mountain policies;
- awareness of mountain specificities and of possible impacts of current policies on mountains needs to be improved among policy-makers and civil society partners;
- economic diversification as well as value-added production and services need to be fostered, with the objective of improving employment and incomes;
- better integration of mountain economic activities through improved access to markets and the promotion of public-private partnerships must be encouraged;
- securing long-term land tenure for mountain agriculturalists, including for women-headed households, is a fundamental prerequisite for SARD-M;
- higher priority should be given to indigenous traditional knowledge in order to protect mountain environments and promote SARD-M.

Institutions and processes

- The institutional capacity for SARD-M policy formulation and implementation as well as for policy coordination should be improved at the national level to achieve better complementarity and coherence between policies;
- transnational approaches to SARD-M should be fostered at the regional level, for instance in the context of regional mountain conventions, such as the Alpine Convention and the Carpathian Convention;
- knowledge generation and management, information sharing and networking need to be rapidly developed at all levels;

¹ Participants in the Third Meeting of the Adelboden Group (FAO HQ, 1-3 October 2007):

- **Governments:** Argentina, Austria, Bhutan, France, Iran, Italy, Japan, Morocco, Peru, Romania, Serbia, Switzerland
- **Civil society organizations:** Asociación Desarrollo Medio Ambiental Sustentable (ADMAS) - Peru, Association de développement local (ADL) – Morocco, Asociación Nacional para el Fomento de la Agricultura Ecológica (ANAFAE) – Honduras, Balkan Foundation for Sustainable Development (BFSD), Centro Peruano de Estudios Sociales (CEPES) – Peru, EUROMONTANA, International Charitable Foundation "Heifer Project International"- Ukraine, International Indian Treaty Council, Kenya Freedom From Hunger Council (KFFHC), Programme for Sustainable Agriculture in the Hillside of Central America (PASOLAC), Sikkim Development Foundation – India, Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (WOCAN)
- **International organizations:** Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) - Global Mountain Programme, Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies – Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari (CIHEAM-IAMB), International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Mountain Forum (MF), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) - Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, World Food Programme (WFP).

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- participation of civil society in policy formulation should be ensured at all levels;
 - the capacities of all stakeholders should be strengthened to ensure that they can participate effectively in all policy formulation and implementation processes;
 - the evaluation and monitoring of mountain-relevant policies as well as their implementation should be systematic.

Valorisation of positive externalities through policies and markets

Furthermore the Adelboden Group considers that specific actions are required to valorise the positive externalities produced in mountain regions:

- The awareness of society as a whole needs to be raised in respect of the role of mountains as an important source of positive externalities, the internalization of which would generate financial revenues which could help to improve livelihoods of mountain communities and to reduce poverty;
- the externalities, their sources and their beneficiaries need to be better identified;
- the key role of the private sector and of communities should be fully recognised and their capacity for the valorisation of externalities should be strengthened;
- payment mechanisms for externalized mountain goods and services need to be developed in a participatory manner through appropriate institutional arrangements to ensure that they are favourable to mountain populations.

In the light of the above messages and recommendations, the following concrete actions are required from the various stakeholders of SARD in mountain regions:

From all stakeholders, in particular governments and civil society

- To disseminate the outcomes of the FAO SARD-M Project and of the Adelboden Group to relevant international fora (United Nations General Assembly, Commission on Sustainable Development, etc.), intergovernmental organizations (FAO, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), etc.), national and regional institutions, as well as to civil society;
- to strengthen their advocacy for mountains, including through joint efforts between public institutions and all components of civil society;
- to re-examine existing policies, institutions and processes through joint reflections and actions by governments and civil society;
- to maintain and develop participatory, multi-stakeholder and decentralised approaches, such as those developed by the Adelboden Group;
- to improve mutual information sharing and to foster cooperation among various activities related to mountains at the national, sub-regional, regional and international levels.

From FAO

- To give higher priority to sustainable mountain development through inclusive multidisciplinary approaches and programmes covering its various aspects;
- to make use of the social capital built by the FAO SARD-M Project for extending an FAO SARD-M activity, maintaining its focus and identity, and taking into account proposals and commitments already made by the participants of the Third meeting of the Adelboden Group for further concrete actions (see Annex to this Statement);
- to address also emerging issues of major importance for the future, as identified in previous and current discussions, such as the internalization and the valorisation of positive externalities, rural-urban linkages and migrations, gender and socio-cultural issues, climate change, etc.

From UNEP

- To pay particular attention to SARD in mountains, to related policies and institutions, and to positive externalities in the context of its forthcoming activities, to support the above recommendations and to facilitate their implementation;
- to help ensure the consideration of environmental concerns into SARD-M related activities.

From other relevant global, regional and sub-regional intergovernmental organizations

- To pay particular attention to SARD in mountains, to related policies and institutions, and to positive externalities in the context of their forthcoming activities, to support the above recommendations and to facilitate their implementation.

For their part, the Adelboden Group participants will:

- Contribute to the objectives mentioned above in a multi-stakeholder and participatory spirit;
- review the substantial mandate and institutional framework of the Adelboden Group and develop a strategic plan in the light of the above recommendations.

Annex

Category	Region	Institution	Commitment
Dissemination	Global	Asociación Desarrollo Medio Ambiental Sustentable (ASDMAS) - Peru	Develop and disseminate an Adelboden Group web page
		Global Mountain Program (GMP)	Integrate dissemination of SARD-M Project outputs into GMP information theme activities (with Mountain Forum)
		International Indian Treaty Council	Use the permanent forum for indigenous issues to disseminate the results and key messages regarding SARD-M
		Mountain Forum (MF)	Provide a platform for knowledge sharing, dialogue, advocacy, and dissemination of SARD-M Project results at global, regional, and inter-regional levels
		Mountain Partnership Secretariat	Facilitate the dissemination of results/lessons learned from the SARD-M Project to date
		United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	Disseminate the outcomes of Adelboden Group meeting and the SARD-M Project at all levels and increase institutional capacity for their implementation
	Europe	Euromontana	Disseminate and valorise the results of the SARD-M Project
	Hindu Kush-Himalaya	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)	Share regional experiences, knowledge/good practices with the Adelboden Group in trans-boundary issues, glaciers, watershed management, rangeland management and community forestry
		Sikkim Development Foundation - India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communicate the basic principles of SARD-M to the State Government in Sikkim. ▪ Disseminate SARD-M principles to civil society organisations ▪ Partner with the SARD-M Project for future information dissemination
South America	Asociación Desarrollo Medio Ambiental Sustentable (ASDMAS) - Peru	Disseminate information to mountain stakeholders in South America	

		Centro Peruano de Estudios Sociales (CEPES) - Peru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Disseminate of the results of the SARD-M Project and the Adelboden Group through the media and arenas of information exchange ▪ Raise awareness of mountain producer organizations, local governments ▪ Disseminate information (radio, internet, print) 	
Integration of SARD-M Approach into International Processes	Global	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	Introduce/promote SARD-M methodologies, approaches, lessons in UNDP portfolio	
	Central America	Asociación Nacional para el Fomento de la Agricultura Ecológica (ANAFAE) - Honduras	Influence the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to promote regional projects in SARD for Central America with the support of FAO	
Network/ Networking mechanisms	Global	Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (WOCAN)	As the lead organiser for the women major group at CSD 2008-2009, bring the findings from the SARD-M Project (case studies, best practices and policies) to the process of CSD particularly in Africa (Addis Ababa, October) and Asia (Jakarta, November)	
	Central America	Asociación Nacional para el Fomento de la Agricultura Ecológica (ANAFAE) – Honduras	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthen the work of ANAFAE as a Honduran network as well as similar ones that exist in Nicaragua and El Salvador ▪ Make the most of the existing agro-ecological movement in Latin America and the Caribbean as a platform for SARD ▪ Encourage the development of a hillside youth and agro-ecological movement in Latin America and the Caribbean 	
	Europe		International Charitable Foundation "Heifer Project International" - Ukraine	Contribute through networking and dissemination of information
			United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	Support the development of regional platforms for SARD-M in South East Europe mountains, Caucasus and beyond
	Mediterranean region		International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies – Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari (CIHEAM-IAMB)	Strengthen network mechanisms at the regional/sub-regional and national levels through the setting up of communication facilities

		Association de développement local (ADL) - Morocco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish a SARD-M and Adelboden Group network in the Maghreb ▪ Establish an e-network for mountain issues
Trans-National Contribution	Europe	Balkan Foundation for Sustainable Development (BFSD)	Contribute through the South East European (Balkans) mountains process for the protection and sustainable development of mountain regions
		International Charitable Foundation "Heifer Project International" - Ukraine	Contribute through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing EU/Carpathian Project ▪ Existing HPI/MQ funded projects
		Standing Working Group for Regional Rural Development (SWGRRD)	Contribute through its activities and members, which include Ministries of 7 countries and 2 territories (provinces)
		United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stress trans-boundary issues and assessment of experiences from Alpine Convention ▪ Support the development and implementation of a holistic strategy for SARD in the Carpathians
Working inputs	Global	Global Mountain Program (GMP)	Support the rural-urban/migration priority activity through ongoing Rural-Urban Linkages thematic activities
	Global	United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	Support and co-finance SARD-M activities (i.e. concerning trans-national and regional approaches)
	Central America	Asociación Nacional para el Fomento de la Agricultura Ecológica (ANAFAE) - Honduras	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contribute to integrate the "hillsides" theme in the revision and formulation arenas for SARD-M policies and strategies ▪ Strengthen the work of forums and roundtables on environmental services in Central America
	Mediterranean region	Association de développement local (ADL) - Morocco	Establish a working group to link with the SARD-M Project and the Adelboden Group
	South America	Centro Peruano de Estudios Sociales (CEPES) - Peru	Stimulate studies on the use/valorisation of externalities
	Sub-Saharan Africa	Global Mountain Program (GMP)	Act as a Focal Point for Africa
	Sub-Saharan Africa	Kenya Freedom From Hunger Council (KFFHC)	Mobilise stakeholders in East Africa to discuss and develop strategies to address SARD-M in the region