



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

# 15 years of Mountain Partnership

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# Foreword

Mountains are crucial to life. Mountains serve as the essential “water towers” on every continent, and billions of peoples downstream rely on mountain water for drinking, sanitation and irrigation. Mountains are also a source of food, biodiversity and clean energy that is vital for all humanity.

Yet mountain peoples, rich in traditional knowledge and heritage, suffer from high rates of hunger and political marginalization, as well as from constraints linked to altitude, rugged terrain and isolation.

Despite the services and solutions they offer, mountains and mountain peoples have been neglected by investments and they have not gained the political attention they deserve.

Since its launch in 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa, the Mountain Partnership (MP) has worked hard to address the many challenges facing mountain regions worldwide by harnessing the knowledge of the peoples who live there and promoting the mountain agenda at global, regional and national level.

This publication aims to celebrate 15 years of MP members’ achievements, success stories and lessons learned and to thank all those who are working towards a more equitable and sustainable future in mountains. The Fifth Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership and the launch of the Framework for Action on 11 December 2017 will be a further step in ensuring that mountains and mountain peoples are firmly included in the 2030 Agenda, and that no one is left behind.



*Thomas Hofer*  
*Mountain Partnership Secretariat Coordinator*

## Mountains and their peoples at a glance

- Mountains cover 22 percent of the world's land surface area.
- Almost 1 billion people live in mountain areas.
- More than half the human population depends on mountains for water, food and clean energy.
- Mountain forests stretch over 9 million km<sup>2</sup>, representing 23 percent of the earth's forest cover.
- Mountains are under threat from climate change, land degradation, overexploitation and natural disasters.
- Climate change is already causing more than 600 glaciers to disappear, resulting in springs and rivers drying up.
- Some 39 percent of the mountain population in developing countries, or 329 million people, is estimated to be vulnerable to food insecurity – one out of every three mountain dwellers.
- There was a 30 percent increase in the number of mountain peoples vulnerable to food insecurity between 2000 and 2012.
- Half of the world's biodiversity hotspots are concentrated in mountains, which support approximately one-quarter of terrestrial biological diversity.
- In the Andes, there are 200 different varieties of indigenous potatoes and, in Nepal, mountain farmers cultivate 2 000 varieties of rice.
- Hydropower provides one-fifth of all electricity worldwide. In Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, Colombia and Peru, at least 95 percent of hydropower is generated in mountain regions.
- Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in mountain regions, attracting around 15–20 percent of global tourism.
- With their vast experience and traditional knowledge of how to cope with climate variability, mountain communities offer solutions for resilience to climate change.





# Partnering for mountains

Founded in 2002, the Mountain Partnership (MP) has grown into a vibrant alliance of more than 300 governments and organizations committed to working together with the common goal of achieving sustainable mountain development around the world.

The only United Nations (UN) voluntary alliance dedicated to mountains and mountain peoples, the Partnership has the advantage of bringing to the table diverse players from governments, civil society and the private sector, each offering rich experiences and different voices.

The Mountain Partnership is supported by a Secretariat, hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome, Italy, which caters to members' needs and promotes the interests of mountain peoples and their habitats. The Mountain Partnership Secretariat (MPS) is financed by the Italian Development Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Swiss Federal Office for Agriculture and FAO.

Over the past 15 years, the Mountain Partnership has proved to be highly effective in keeping mountains firmly in the spotlight.

Advocacy campaigns conducted by MP members contributed to the UN decision to include three mountain-related targets in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Previous advocacy efforts on behalf of mountains led to the UN deeming them “essential” to sustainable development in the outcome documents of Rio+20, the Earth Summit and the triennial UN General Assembly resolutions on sustainable mountain development.

A valuable source of information, including research and data, the MP plays an important role in generating and sharing compelling evidence that greater attention and investments are needed to address hunger and poverty in mountain areas.

The MP is also a platform for action and programmes. Joint activities have led to members coming together from different parts of the world to exchange knowledge, share innovation and promote South–South cooperation and technical training.

Increasing investments to address mountain issues, as well as promoting sustainable resource management, sharing climate change adaptation approaches and strengthening institutions and partnerships are required to ensure that mountains continue to provide crucial goods and ecosystem services well into the future.



## Charting the history of the Mountain Partnership

- Political awareness of the importance of mountain communities and ecosystems grew in the wake of the adoption of Agenda 21's Chapter 13, "Managing fragile ecosystems: sustainable mountain development", in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992.
- This commitment to implement sustainable mountain development gained momentum during the International Year of Mountains (IYM) in 2002.
- In the same year, the WSSD resulted in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, whose paragraph 42 describes specific actions required to address the sustainable development of mountain regions.
- Another significant outcome of WSSD was the launch of the International Partnership for Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions, commonly referred to as the Mountain Partnership.
- Since its launch, the MP has steadily grown to encompass more than 300 member governments, civil society groups and intergovernmental



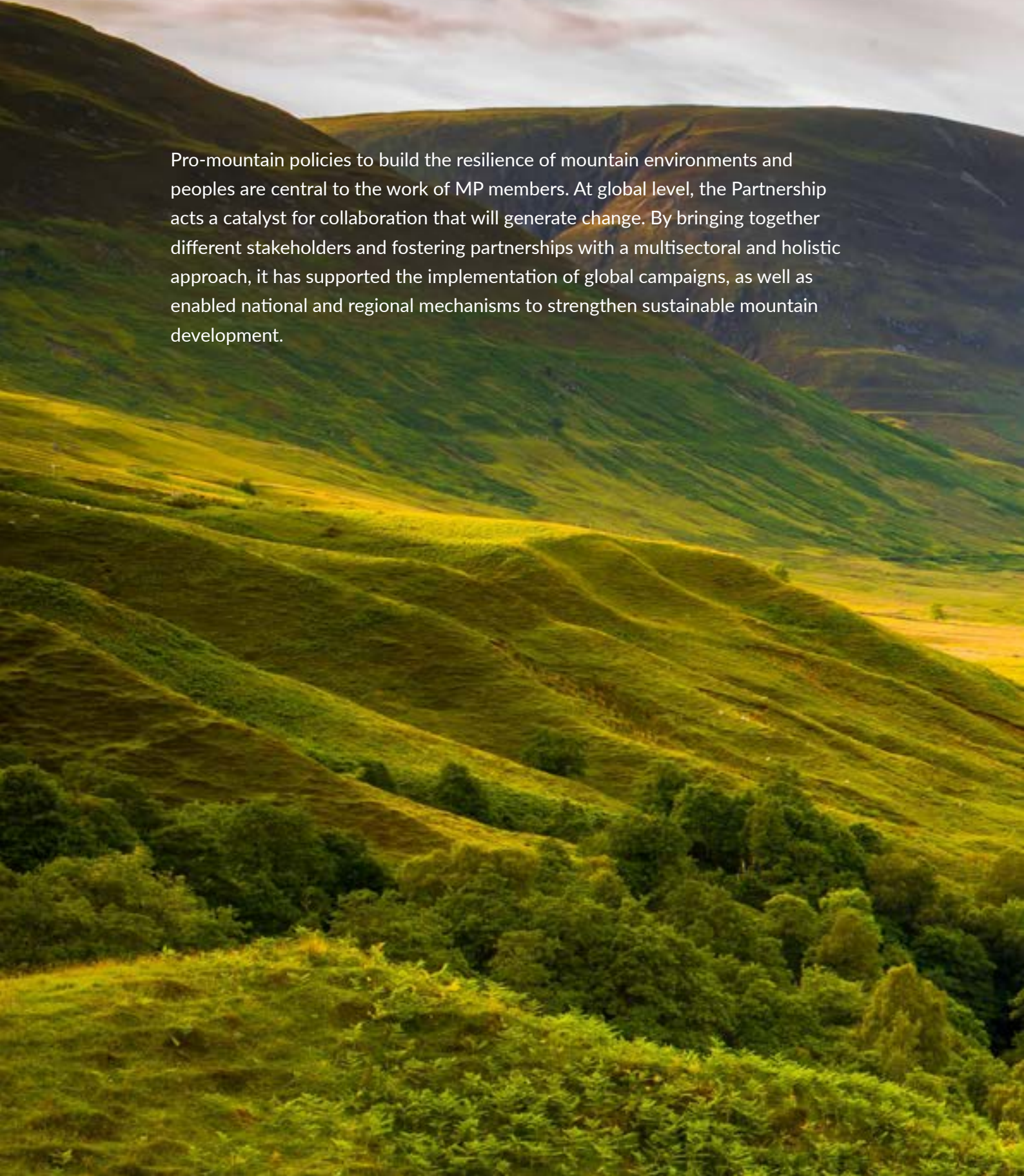


organizations. And it keeps growing. In 2017 alone, three governments and 29 civil society groups joined.

- In 2002, the UN General Assembly designated 11 December as International Mountain Day (IMD). Since 2003, FAO has been mandated to lead the annual observance of IMD.
- In 2012, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, or Rio+20, included three paragraphs on mountains in the final outcome document, “The Future We Want”.
- In 2015, the UN adopted three mountain-related targets under two of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Every three years, FAO supports members’ contributions to the Secretary-General’s Report to the UN General Assembly, in which it describes the status of sustainable mountain development at national and international levels, and provides suggestions for consideration by the Assembly.

# Instruments of change for mountains

Pro-mountain policies to build the resilience of mountain environments and peoples are central to the work of MP members. At global level, the Partnership acts a catalyst for collaboration that will generate change. By bringing together different stakeholders and fostering partnerships with a multisectoral and holistic approach, it has supported the implementation of global campaigns, as well as enabled national and regional mechanisms to strengthen sustainable mountain development.



## National committees

During the IYM in 2002, 78 national committees were set up to lead observance of the Year and promote action in Sub-Saharan, Asia, Europe, South America and the Caribbean, the Near East and North Africa, and North America. In many countries, national committees are the only national mechanism for sustainable mountain development, and the multidisciplinary composition of these committees has provided a unique opportunity to implement an integrated approach to mountains. Many of these committees have evolved into more permanent bodies, such as the National Mountain Committee of Argentina or the Mountain Area Agency of Romania.

## The Andean Mechanism

Requested by six Andean governments—Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru—the Andean Mechanism was launched in Bariloche, Argentina, in 2014 within the framework of the MP. It was supported by an FAO Technical Cooperation Project that ran from 2011 to 2013. Implemented by the MPS in collaboration with the FAO Regional Office for Latin America, the project improved the participatory management of natural resources in the Andes by strengthening national institutions, increasing political attention and training, and developing knowledge about mountain ecosystems. It also focused on promoting regional dialogue and cooperation on mountain issues and identifying the different activities, strategies and policies being implemented in the Andean mountain region at local, national and regional levels. In July 2017, a meeting of all the Andean governments (including Venezuela) took place in Colombia the Government of Chile was given a two-year coordination role.

## Championing sustainable mountain development for Africa

In Africa, countries have joined together to form a regional initiative – the African Mountains Regional Forum (AMRF) – aimed at galvanizing sustainable mountain development on the continent. The African Champions Committee, originally formed by members of the MP in Africa, is in charge of moving the region's sustainable mountain development agenda forward, as well as defining the regional partnership's work plan and attracting new members. The African Mountain Partnership builds on initiatives launched by a number of governments in the region, some of which are working on national sustainable mountain development strategies – Madagascar, for example, which published one in 2015. Every two years, the AMRF is held to raise the profile of African sustainable mountain development, discuss key issues for the region and share information and best practices on topics that include biological diversity, water, energy, food security and climate change. Members of the MP participate actively in the forum, hosted by the Albertine Rift Conservation Society (ARCOS), an MP member.



## The Alpine Convention

The Alps are one of the largest continuous natural areas in Europe and home to 14 million people. They cover an area of over 190 000 km<sup>2</sup> and host some 30 000 animal species and 13 000 plant species. Launched in 1991, the Alpine Convention, an MP member since 2006, is an international treaty between the Alpine countries (Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Slovenia and Switzerland) and the European Union. Its aim is to ensure the sustainable development and protection of the Alps as one territory. Following its signature by member countries, specific protocols for different fields were developed for topics including nature protection, agriculture, spatial planning, forests, tourism, energy and transport. More information about the Alpine Convention and its activities can be found at [www.alpconv.org/pages/default.aspx](http://www.alpconv.org/pages/default.aspx)

## The Carpathian Convention

Protecting the largest mountain range of Central and Eastern Europe, the Carpathian Convention, a long-standing MP member, is a subregional treaty and the only multilevel governance mechanism to cover the entire Carpathian area. By adopting the Convention in 2003, seven countries that share the Carpathians – Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine – committed to protecting the diverse native flora and fauna while developing the peripheral region in a sustainable manner. Since then, a range of activities in a variety of sectors has helped to shape the region into a model for sustainable mountain development. For example, the recently adopted Carpathian Convention Protocol on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development focuses on a climate-smart circular rural economy, incorporating organic production and rural innovation. The importance of climate change mitigation and adaptation is underscored by a recent amendment of the Convention. More information about the Carpathian Convention and its activities can be found at [www.carpathianconvention.org](http://www.carpathianconvention.org)

## Key Mountain Partnership events

The **Merano Conference**, held in Italy in October 2003, was the first Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership. It resulted in Guiding Principles and a decision for FAO to host an MP Secretariat.

The **Cusco Conference**, held in Peru in October 2004, gave 126 participants the opportunity to review progress and chart the future course of the MP.

The **Third Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership** took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012, on the sidelines of the Rio+20 summit. It began with a video message by renowned mountaineer and first MP ambassador, Reinhold Messner, and ensured that three paragraphs on mountains were included.

At the **Fourth Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership**, held in Erzurum, Turkey, in September 2013, members approved the Partnership's four-year strategy (2014-2017), developed a two-year work plan and elected a 16-member Steering Committee.

Coinciding with the 15th anniversary of the Mountain Partnership on 11 December 2017, the **Fifth Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership** was staged in Rome, Italy, to launch a Framework for Action to implement the 2030 Agenda for Mountains.

*Three paragraphs on mountains now form part of the [Rio +20] outcome document, and that is largely our collective achievement as members of this Partnership.*

*Ambassador Gyan Chandra Acharya  
former Permanent Representative of Nepal to the UN*



“  
Coordinating the Mountain Partnership Secretariat was truly a highlight of my professional career. I've never been associated, before or since, with more dedicated and committed people, whose passion and hard work have resulted in greater public awareness, political support and positive change on the ground. There is something intangible about mountains that really does connect us all. Looking back on all that has been accomplished in its first 15 years, and seeing the challenges that remain, I have no doubt that the Mountain Partnership will continue to thrive and serve the needs of mountain communities and the quite unique environment they depend on.  
”

*Douglas McGuire  
former Mountain Partnership Secretariat Coordinator*







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“  
*The role of the Mountain Partnership is seen as pivotal in taking the mountain agenda to the next level, forging new relationships and also exploring innovative approaches to managing and conserving mountain ecosystems for the benefit of communities and ecosystems under a changing climate.*  
”

*Musonda Mumba  
Ecosystem-based Adaptation Flagship Programme Coordinator,  
United Nations Environment Programme*

“  
With more than 300 members representing governments and non-state actors from mountain areas all over the world, the Mountain Partnership is the only international multistakeholder partnership promoting sustainable development in mountain areas. Switzerland has been one of its main supporters since its launch at the Johannesburg 2002 Earth Summit. As a grandson of two Swiss mountain farmers, I am very proud of the results achieved during the last 15 years in the areas of advocacy, capacity building and joint actions. Two illustrative examples: the visibility of mountains in the 2030 Agenda and the relevant international negotiations, and the development of the label Mountain Partnership Products.  
”

*François Pythoud  
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to FAO,  
IFAD and WFP*



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“

*The Mountain Partnership has allowed Madagascar to be informed and to put into practice new global concepts, to share tools and concepts, to strengthen the capacities of key actors (government officers, NGOs, communities, municipalities, Parliament) in strategic planning of sustainable mountain development at global and national level.*

”

*Hanta Rabeliana*

*President of the World Mountain People Association, Madagascar*

“  
*Italy is proud to be among the founding members of the Mountain Partnership and continues to support its activities with great conviction. The success of the Partnership is further demonstrated by the continued expansion of its membership, making it the main global forum for the sustainable development of mountain areas. The Mountain Partnership has achieved significant results in terms of sharing knowledge, strengthening technical and institutional capabilities and mobilizing resources for the protection and enhancement of mountain ecosystems and stimulating innovative forms of South-South cooperation, especially through the alliance with the Global Island Partnership (GLISPA), which Italy has strongly supported.*  
”

*Luigi De Chiara  
Minister Plenipotentiary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Italy*





© Luigi De Chiara

“

*We need to address the sacredness of mountains while harmoniously introducing technological innovation and ancient knowledge, together with indigenous peoples and local communities, for a better quality of life. I celebrate the creation of the Mountain Partnership as a voluntary coalition of the United Nations, thanks to which the voices of the voiceless are heard, where the same vision is shared, and a platform for joint action, the promotion of sustainable development, negotiations and global, regional and national policy is created*

”

*Yolanda Ortiz  
former Environment Minister, Argentina*

“  
We thank the Mountain Partnership for bringing members from all over the world to a single platform where we cross-learn and collaborate with each other. We are so diverse, yet we are united! It enables us to have ONE VOICE for mountains. It provides an equal opportunity and level playing field for all the participants. Thanks to this inclusive process, regions such as Central Asia – once considered the terra incognita or “periphery” – have gained considerable visibility in the international movement for sustainable development in mountains.  
”

*Elbegzaya Batjargal*  
*Programme Officer, Central Asia Mountain Partnership Hub*





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“  
*Despite the various services they provide, mountains are easily forgotten. The Mountain Partnership brings together voices from all corners of the world, for the mountains that we all depend on in our cycle of life. Join the MP and contribute to a better future through sustainable mountain development, for today's and future generations.*  
”

*Sam Kanyamibwa  
Executive Director, Albertine Rift Conservation Society (ARCOS)*

# The Mountain Partnership in action

The Mountain Partnership brings countries, groups and organizations together to work towards a common goal: to improve the lives of mountain peoples and protect mountain environments around the world.

It does this by tapping the wealth and diversity of resources, knowledge (including traditional knowledge), information and expertise of its members to stimulate concrete action on the ground that will bring positive change in mountain areas. Our work is organized under four main pillars: advocacy, joint action, capacity development and communications.





## Advocacy

The Mountain Partnership advocates for global attention and tangible commitments from the international community to protect mountain environments and communities.

It works hard to ensure that sustainable mountain development is high on the global agenda, and that mountain peoples are involved in decision-making that affects their lives.

Advocacy activities include pressing for mountain issues to feature in international processes, negotiated texts, declarations and outcome documents. The Partnership promotes and participates in international campaigns and events, drafts policy and issues briefs, key messages and UN reports, and ensures that sustainable mountain development is included in global, national and regional negotiations and policies.

Mountain Partnership members contribute to the preparation of the UN Secretary-General's triennial Report on Sustainable Mountain Development to the General Assembly.

They also promote advocacy and awareness-raising activities at regional and national level, for example by supporting the work of national committees for mountains.



## The UN Secretary-General's Sustainable Mountain Development Report and Resolution

Together with FAO and key partners, the MPS drafted the United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG)'s Report on Sustainable Mountain Development, which was presented at the 71<sup>st</sup> session of the UN General Assembly in September 2016. The report provided an overall analysis of challenges and progress achieved, and included recommendations on how to advance sustainable development in mountain regions more effectively. Some 46 countries agreed to co-sponsor the subsequent resolution, which will be reviewed again in 2019.

## How green are the mountains?

The MPS has developed the official indicator to monitor progress towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal Target 15.4. Indicator 15.4.2, the Mountain Green Cover Index, is designed to measure changes to green vegetation – forests, shrubs and trees – in mountain areas. A reduction in green cover will generally be linked to forest exploitation, timber extraction, fuelwood collection, cropland degradation and fire. An increase will be due to vegetation growth, possibly linked to reforestation or afforestation programmes. The index uses FAO Collect Earth and the 2015 global map of mountains produced by FAO/MPS as its data sources.

## Joint action

The MP promotes networking between member countries and institutions, laying the foundations for partnerships, technical cooperation and resource mobilization.

Many MP members are working together on activities and initiatives in support of mountains and mountain peoples around the world.





## Mountain Partnership Product initiative

A voluntary label for quality mountain products is helping to promote access to markets for small-scale mountain producers in developing countries. Applied to mountain goods that support local biodiversity and production methods, the labels allow producers of food, beverages and handicrafts to obtain fair compensation for their products.

To date, 15 products from seven different countries have applied for the Mountain Partnership Product label, ranging from coffee produced in the Panamanian Central Cordillera to herbal tea and rice from the Indian Himalaya. In collaboration with Slow Food, the project works with mountain farmers on the value chains of high-value products and participatory guarantee systems.

## Capacity development

Facilitating capacity development is an important part of the MP's work, helping members to develop and manage activities aimed at sustainable mountain development and share technologies.

Recent initiatives have included training sessions and workshops on methodologies to encourage the participation of local communities in the collection and use of information to improve their livelihoods.





## IPROMO

Since 2008, the **International Programme on Research and Training on Sustainable Management of Mountain Areas (IPROMO)** has engaged hundreds of professionals, mainly from developing countries, working on mountain issues in public and private institutions.

Each year, the MPS trains government and NGO staff to better understand mountain development issues during a two-week summer course held in the Italian Alps. An ever-expanding virtual network of IPROMO alumni continues the sharing of mountain-related knowledge and information.

## Communications

A man wearing a vibrant, multi-colored striped poncho and a traditional woven hat with red and blue tassels is speaking at a wooden podium. A microphone is positioned in front of him, and a laptop is visible on the podium. The background is a textured, light-colored wall.

As a platform for communications and knowledge management, the MP engages with decision- and policy-makers at key global, regional and national events, shares knowledge and fosters communication among members. It produces informative publications on sustainable mountain development, takes an active role in the celebration of IMD, and shares mountain news and events via the MP website, the monthly Peak to Peak newsletter, and the MP Facebook page. As a contribution to the International Year of Farming 2014, it produced *Mountain Farming is Family Farming*, while in the International Year of Soils 2015, the MPS, in collaboration with FAO and the University of Turin, Italy produced a publication on mountain soils.



## Mapping the vulnerability of mountain dwellers

Together with FAO, the MPS has mapped the vulnerability of mountain peoples to food insecurity in all developing countries, producing the only comprehensive global overview after more than a decade. The methodology was developed to make the best use of the technologies and data available, taking into account the specificities of mountain ecosystems. The study is now being used as a resource mobilization tool and as a basis for policy advice.

## International Mountain Day

The United Nations General Assembly designated 11 December as International Mountain Day. As of 2003, it has been observed annually to create awareness about the importance of mountains to life, highlight the opportunities and constraints in mountain development, and build alliances that will bring positive change to mountain peoples and environments around the world. Each year, mountaineers, mountain lovers, governments and civil society groups gather to celebrate mountain environments and peoples. Festivities take the form of conferences, exhibitions, hikes, workshops, contests and readings.

## Sharing knowledge about climate change in mountain areas

In 2011, the MPS received a grant from the Development Grant Facility of the World Bank to support a Strategic Initiative on Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation and Development in Mountain Regions. The initiative strengthened cross-regional and cross-thematic cooperation to address climate change impacts in mountain regions and mobilize international support and resources to promote climate change adaptation in mountain ecosystems.

A series of regional meetings was held in Sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, South America, the Middle East and North Africa. Each gathering brought together government delegates, policy-makers, scientists and experts to share knowledge about the impacts of climate change on mountain areas, discuss adaptation options in mountain ecosystems and promote better alliances and cooperation among countries with mountain territories.

## Success stories

For more than 15 years, the Mountain Partnership has led efforts to improve the lives of mountain communities and protect mountain ecosystems. The following stories, drawn from various regions, range from local projects working on climate change adaptation to partnerships with different stakeholders to develop national policies and offer solutions to mountain-based emergencies.





## Sub-Saharan Africa

### The first West African Mountain Forum

Although West African mountains are not the world's highest, they play a key role in the area's food security, are rich in biodiversity and are important to the overall sustainable development of the subregion. They also have strong cultural significance for local communities. The first West African Mountain Forum, held in Kpalime, Togo, in October 2017, sought to address some of the challenges facing West African mountains and their ecosystems. Taking the theme "Mountains' contributions to economic development and climate change adaptation", the forum was organized by the Platform of Civil Society Organizations for the Safeguard of Mountains, in partnership with the Togolese Ministry of Environment and Forest Resources, within the framework of the MP.





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## South America

### Chile leads the way

In 2016, Chile launched a public consultation to involve citizens in shaping the government's priorities as it developed a national public policy on sustainable mountain development, an issue of key importance to this nation and its people. With the Andes stretching along the eastern border of Chile, mountains form part of the country's national identity. They also contain valuable mineral resources, such as copper, and vital freshwater reserves that are increasingly threatened by climate change. Chile's mountains are a major tourist attraction, containing biodiversity hotspots, and are home to the country's many indigenous peoples. More than 1 000 individuals from civil society, NGOs and academia responded to the public consultation, providing over 3 000 observations. Drawing up a national policy on mountains followed a year of work by the 14 government institutions that comprise the National Mountain Committee, which was set up in 2007 (the same year in which Chile joined the Mountain Partnership) – and formalised in 2014.

## Central Asia

### Bringing climate information to mountain women

In the mountain valleys of Kyrgyzstan, agriculture is the primary source of income. The sector accounts for nearly 40 percent of the total female labour force, while 27 percent of households are headed by females. Weather patterns are changing, making it difficult to predict when it will rain and when to plant, irrigate and harvest. Thanks to MP member NGO, the Agency of Development Initiatives, Kyrgyz women are pioneering a rural early-warning weather system and training sessions for better adaptation to climate change. The initiative is helping women farmers to improve vegetable yields, despite changing weather patterns, and empowering them to contribute to the fight against hunger and malnutrition.





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## Asia and the Pacific

### Members join forces in Nepal

On 25 April 2015, a 7.8-magnitude earthquake struck Nepal. This was followed by a 7.3-magnitude aftershock on 12 May, resulting in 9 000 deaths, with another 23 000 injured, more than 785 000 homes damaged or destroyed, and about 2.8 million people displaced. In the aftermath of the earthquake, many MP members in Nepal immediately took part in the emergency relief efforts, providing vital support in areas ranging from fundraising and logistics to providing information portals for better coordination of the country-wide relief activities. The Mountain Institute and the Resources Himalaya Foundation conducted rapid environmental assessments in several districts, while the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development supported the Government of Nepal in processing and analysing satellite data to inform relief and recovery operations.

## Europe

### Iberian Mountain Research Network

With large swathes of Andorra, Portugal and Spain occupied by mountain territory, there was an urgent need to tackle issues of joint interest, including climate change, forests, the environment, the agrifood sector and tourism. This gap has now been filled with the launch, in May 2017, of the Iberian Mountain Research Network (Rede Ibérica de Investigação de Montanha RIIM). Formed by a group of 19 universities and research centres from the three member countries, the network is studying issues affecting mountain areas on the Iberian peninsula. RIIM is an initiative of the Centro de Investigação de Montanha (CIMO), based at the Instituto Politécnico de Bragança in Portugal.







## North & Central America and the Caribbean

### Fog catchers in the mountains of Costa Rica

Mountain ecosystems in Costa Rica are “factories of water”. In July 2016, the Environmental Unit of the Municipality of La Unión, Costa Rica managed the project “Promoting and facilitating the integrated and sustainable management of the upper region of the Tiribí River watershed”, for the Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI). The project promotes an integrated approach to the management of water resources in the upper area of the Tiribí River, along with conserving the ecosystems, preserving the aquifer’s mantles and improving the availability and cost of water. Five systems of fog catchers were installed near the Llano Grande of Cartago. The installation sites were identified in collaboration with the National Meteorological Institute, taking into consideration factors, such as slope, wind direction and fog stability, density and persistence. The project shows how water-harvesting techniques can reduce vulnerability to water shortages while also promoting adaptation to the adverse effects of extreme meteorological events and climate change.

# A development roadmap for mountains

In recent years, advocacy by the Mountain Partnership and its members has helped to shape a series of international development frameworks that target mountain areas and their peoples

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 sets out a pathway for reducing the impact of global disasters and increasing countries' preparedness to deal with them. Endorsed by the UN General Assembly following the 2015 Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, this major agreement will also benefit mountain areas, which are both vulnerable to natural disasters and important custodians of a balanced ecosystem, protecting watersheds and other fragile services at lower altitudes.

In the wake of the 2016 Paris Agreement – the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change – Nepal was one of 36 countries whose Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) made specific reference to mountains, and the acute vulnerability of mountain peoples and ecosystems to the effects of climate change. In Nepal's Himalayas, the total estimated ice reserve declined by 29 percent between 1977 and 2010, and the country has suffered from a rise in extreme weather events such as landslides, floods and droughts, causing deaths and massive economic losses. In their NDCs, MP members Lesotho, Morocco and Tajikistan also highlighted the





fragility of mountain ecosystems to climate change and the importance of preserving them.

Following a vigorous advocacy campaign to build a greater understanding of the critical role of mountain ecosystems for sustainable development, the UN adopted three mountain-related targets in its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The three mountain-related targets come under two of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

- **SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation), Target 6.6**  
By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes.
- **SDG 15 (Life on land), Target 15.1**  
By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements.
- **SDG 15 (Life on land), Target 15.4**  
By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development.

# The way ahead

In the light of the Paris Agreement, and the commitments of the 2030 Agenda that “no one be left behind”, it is crucial to step up the level of attention that mountains receive, and ensure that they are always included in relevant international negotiations. Climate change, land degradation and natural disasters place increasing pressure on natural resources and communities that are already vulnerable. And this will eventually affect the rest of the planet.

The MP requires an evolution, and the following actions are needed:

- The launch of a Framework for Action to implement the 2030 Agenda for Mountains, which will support concrete actions, set in place long-lasting processes and establish policies that strengthen the resilience of mountain peoples and environments.
- A strengthened political alliance of the MP governments to raise attention and investment for mountain areas.
- The creation of a political coalition of countries for fragile ecosystems.
- The creation a multidonor small grants facility for fragile ecosystems (projects to be selected by a joint committee).
- Capacity strengthening of members to leverage resources through climate funding, such as the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Facility.
- Improvement of data, research and knowledge to support policy evidence for pro-mountain issues.







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