



Mountain Partnership Steering Committee meeting  
Summary report  
21 June 2022 – Zoom meeting

## Agenda

**Chair: Roberto Natali (Italian Government)**

- 1. 15.00-15.05** Opening and adoption of agenda by Chair
- 2. 15.05-15.40** Update on the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development 2022 – item for discussion
  - a. Briefing on Kyrgyz Republic’s event in New York on 24 May and the five-year plan – MPS
  - b. Update on the Open-ended Scientific Committee – MPS
  - c. Update on the support unit for the IYM 2022 – MPS
  - d. Building on future key events and processes – HLPF, UNFCCC, CBD and others – MPS and SC members
  - e. Next steps and discussion
- 3. 15.40-16.00** Update on the Mountain Partnership Global Meeting – item for discussion
  - a. Draft agenda – MPS
  - b. Update – AIMF
  - c. Next steps and discussion
- 4. 16.00-16.30** Update on the process to finalize the Mountain Partnership strategies – item for decision
  - a. Mountain Partnership strategies – MPS
    - i. Advocacy strategy
    - ii. Communication strategy
    - iii. Governance strategy
  - b. Next steps and discussion
- 5. 16.30-17.00** Other matters, discussion and conclusions

### Section 1: Opening and adoption of agenda by Chair

Roberto Natali, representative of the Government of Italy and Chair of the Mountain Partnership (MP) Steering Committee (SC), opened the meeting. The agenda was adopted without change.

The SC expressed its condolences to the Government of the Dominican Republic for the loss of Orlando Jorge Mera, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.



## Section 2: Update on International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development 2022

### **a. Briefing on Kyrgyz Republic's event in New York on 24 May and the five-year action plan**

The Mountain Partnership Secretariat (MPS) briefly reported on the event hosted by the Permanent Mission of the Kyrgyz Republic to the United Nations (UN) in New York on 24 May 2022. At this meeting, the Kyrgyz Republic presented the five-year action plan for the development of mountain regions (2023-2027). The MPS moderated the event and provided a presentation on the MP and the IYM2022. Delegations from over 40 countries attended, and 19 statements were made, including 18 from governments and one from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The main outcomes of the meeting were to:

1. formalize a coalition of countries to advocate for mountains in UN processes (i.e. governments of Group of Friends of Mountainous Countries, MP governments + others);
2. establish a dedicated development fund for mountains and specific budget lines for mountain development within existing funding mechanisms; and
3. strengthen existing coordination mechanisms in the framework of the MP.

The Kyrgyz Republic will contribute to the triennial resolution on sustainable mountain development during the seventy-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in September 2022. The Kyrgyz Republic will likely request to have the plan included as an annex of the resolution.

Switzerland inquired how to ensure a global perspective in the five-year action plan and suggested to include a designated session for members to provide inputs to the plan in the programme of the Mountain Partnership Global Meeting.

The MPS reiterated that the development of the plan is a government-led process taking place within the UNGA and not the MP, and that the MPS was invited by the Kyrgyz Republic to play a facilitating role only. The MPS suggested that the SC government representatives engage their respective Missions in New York and encourage them to suggest to open the plan to inputs from MP members.

### **b. Update on the Open-ended Scientific Committee**

The MPS updated the SC on the activities of the Open-ended Scientific Committee (OESC). The OESC is composed by 82 members and has held three online meetings to date. The members are working on 25 policy briefs related to sustainable mountain development, to be published before the end of the year. The member organizations are voluntarily developing the briefs, and the MPS is facilitating this process. A fourth online meeting of the OESC will be held in early July. The development of the briefs is promoting alliances between MP members and non-members.

### **c. Update on the support unit for the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development 2022**

The MPS reported on the results of the first meeting of the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development 2022 support group, composed by the Governments of the Dominican Republic and Switzerland and the MRI.



The main points discussed included to:

- produce a brief on the overview of the Year;
- ensure high-level participation at the Mountain Partnership Global Meeting as an important event for celebrations of the Year;
- build on ongoing events and share information on relevant events;
- convene monthly one-hour meetings; and
- invite other regional organizations to participate in the support group.

**d. Building on future key events and processes – HLPF, UNFCCC, CBD and others**

The MPS presented a brief list of important upcoming events in 2022 where to discuss mountains and highlight the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development. The SC is invited to continue sharing events with the MPS for promoting the Year. Euromontana added that they will organize the 2022 European Mountain Convention on 25-27 October in Calabria, Italy.

### Section 3: Update on the Mountain Partnership Global Meeting

The MPS presented a preliminary draft agenda of the MP Global Meeting, to be held on 26-29 September 2022 in Aspen, Colorado, United States of America.

The Aspen International Mountain Foundation (AIMF) then provided an update on the current status of the organization of the Global Meeting. Around 130 people have registered to date, the majority of whom have requested financial assistance to attend, especially considering the high costs of Aspen and currently high costs of airfare.

The AIMF has raised approximately 40 percent of the costs needed to cover all participants' on-site and travel fees and is continuing to fundraise. The AIMF invited the SC members to consider financially supporting the organization of the Global Meeting. To ensure a high level of participation, the AIMF is engaging the US Embassy in Rome to host a meeting of the Rome-based Permanent Representations to promote the Global Meeting.

The SC members thanked the AIMF for the great work they have done so far to raise funds and organize the Global Meeting. The following points were discussed:

- the SC members are invited to provide support to identify key speakers and to facilitate sessions of the Global Meeting as they see it appropriate;
- consideration should be given to initiating the review and adoption of the strategy documents on day two of the meeting, to ensure that there is enough time for discussion;
- a potential “worst case scenario” or “Plan B” should be developed in case the funding gaps cannot be filled in time;



- the Global Meeting should be further promoted, including through presentations to regional groups, e.g. the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Regional Groups, as feasible.
- technical options for the hybrid mode of the meeting should be in place, including with regards to voting for the SC member elections and for the adoption of the strategies. The AIMF confirmed that the venue of the Global Meeting has excellent IT capabilities;
- it is important to bring as many partners on board as possible for fundraising, including other UN agencies. FAO confirmed that it will dedicate part of its regular programme budget to support some costs for the Global Meeting;
- in response to the Chair's request as to whether UNEP would provide some funding, UNEP noted that it had not received an official request for funding support. The Nairobi office is well aware of the meeting and will send a delegation.

Decision:

- The AIMF and MPS will develop an alternative plan in the case of unfilled budget gaps by 30 July.

#### Section 4: Update on the process to finalize the Mountain Partnership strategies

The SC Chair introduced this agenda item noting that the object of the discussion was the process to finalize the draft strategies and not their content.

The MPS briefly recalled the timeline and process that the SC had previously approved for the revision of the MP strategy documents ahead of the Global Meeting:

- **26 November 2021:** SC members send comments and revisions to MPS.
- **15 January 2022:** The MPS consolidates revisions and, in consultation with the SC Chair, prepares the drafts. The MPS shares with all MP members giving three months for commenting.
- **20 January to 15 April 2022:** Comments are gathered by the MPS from all MP members.
- **15 June 2022:** MPS finalizes the drafts, in consultation with the SC.
- **23 July 2022:** MP members receive final drafts at least six weeks in advance of the Global Meeting.

The MPS provided an overview of MP members' responses and noted that all comments that were within the agreed scope of the revision – such as updates, clarifications and corrections – had been integrated in the revised drafts, which had been shared with the SC members on 14 June.

The next step after the SC meeting is for the MPS to share the documents with the entire membership, highlighting the main changes that have been made. MP members will have four weeks to review them and provide further feedback on the drafts, which will be approved during the Global Meeting.

Switzerland expressed some disagreement with the revised versions of the documents, noting that several of its suggestions had not been incorporated, including to have a full-time MP Secretary instead of a part-time Coordinator as well as to include detailed hosting arrangements in the governance paper. The MRI requested an explanation of the basis on which MP members' comments were and were not integrated. She suggested to organize another SC meeting to finalize the process and to understand whether the previously discussed



changes to the governance document would be a part of that same process and timeline.

FAO informed the SC that it has sought guidance from FAO's Legal Office on the comments submitted by Switzerland on the governance document, specifically on the hosting arrangements and on the process for the nomination of the MPS Coordinator. FAO recommended that these important issues be discussed within the donor cluster in a separate meeting and requested that this SC meeting focus instead on endorsing the process for finalizing the strategies, as proposed.

Fundación Agreste, alternate SC representative for Major Groups of South America, lamented that she had not received the revised drafts in time as they were sent to the SC member, and requested that documentation for all SC meetings always be shared with both the SC representative and alternate.

The MPS reassured the SC that all of the inputs received by MP members' are highly appreciated and taken into account. The MPS expressed that some of the changes proposed by Switzerland to the governance document suggest an important shift in governance, hence the MPS is reluctant to include such major, fundamental changes by simply editing the MP governance documents without first consulting the greater Partnership, as it was the case in the past. The MPS clarified that, based on the response from FAO Legal Office to the requests made by Switzerland, options are being looked into on the issue of the hosting arrangements, including the possibility of a Memorandum of Understanding between FAO and the donors to the MPS, and will be made available before the Global Meeting. The MPS stressed that these matters take time to address and develop the necessary documentation.

The MPS observed that the contentious issues raised at this SC meeting did not fairly represent all the comments submitted by the wider group of MP members during the revision process, noting that the Global Meeting is the appropriate venue for further discussions on the key MP documents, as at the Global Meeting all MP members will have the opportunity to express directly their opinions on these important issues.

Decisions:

- The revised advocacy and communication strategies and the governance document will be sent as planned to all MP members to solicit feedback on the main changes included and to identify of any other issue(s) to be brought to the attention of the Global Meeting;
- FAO offered to prepare a paper on clarifying the hosting arrangements of the MPS;
- MPS will convene a meeting of the donor cluster (Andorra, Italy, Switzerland and FAO);
- The MPS will share all SC meeting preparatory documentation also with the SC alternates.

## **Section 5: Other matters, discussion and conclusions**

The SC Chair will inform the MPS of his availability for the next SC meeting, and the MPS will communicate those possible dates with the SC.



## Annex 1: Participants' list

### Steering Committee members

#### Donor Organizations

François Pythoud, Switzerland

#### Governments

**Europe** – Roberto Natali, Italy (**Chair**)

**North & Central America and the Caribbean** – Julia Vicioso, Dominican Republic

**South America** – Corina Sarli, Argentina

#### Host Institution of the Mountain Partnership Secretariat (MPS)

Tiina Vähänen, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

#### Intergovernmental Organizations

Harald Egerer, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

#### Global Civil Society Organizations

Carolina Adler, Mountain Research Initiative (MRI)

#### Major Group Organizations

**Central Asia** – Anara Alymkulova, Institute for Sustainable Development Strategy Public Fund (ISDS)

**Europe** – Guillaume Corradino, Euromontana

**North & Central America and the Caribbean** – Karinjo DeVore, Margi Levitt, Eric Smith, Aspen International Mountain Foundation (AIMF) (**Vice Chair**)

**South America** – Marisa Young, Fundación Agreste

### Absent Steering Committee Members

#### Governments

**Asia and the Pacific** – Nepal

**Near East and North Africa** – Tunisia

**Sub-Saharan Africa** – Uganda

#### Major Group Organizations

**Asia and the Pacific** – Karnali Integrated Rural Development and Research Centre (KIRDARC) (**Vice Chair**)

**Near East and North Africa** – Mountain Environment Protection Society (MEPS)

**Sub-Saharan Africa** – Foundation for Environment and Development (FEDEV)

### Mountain Partnership Secretariat

Samantha Abear

Eric Chavez

Fabio Parisi

Rosalaura Romeo

Valeria Barchiesi

Sara Manuelli

Patricia Quillacq

Antonella Sorrentino