Mountain Partnership Steering Committee meeting

Thursday, 20 April 2023
15.00 – 17.00 hrs (CEST)

Agenda

15.00 – 15.05 Opening and adoption of agenda

15.05 – 15.25 Update on the closing ceremony of the International Year for Sustainable Mountain Development 2022 – For information

15.25 – 15.45 Update on the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions 2023–2027 – For discussion
  • Task Force
  • Discussion

15.45 – 16.05 Discussion on the process leading up to the UNFCCC COP 28 – For discussion

16.05 – 16.15 Update on Mountain Partnership Secretariat’s recent events and initiatives – For information

16.15 – 16.25 Update on the “Science and Knowledge Advisory Committee of the Mountain Partnership” – For decision/approval
  • Report from the working group and presentation of the draft Terms of Reference
  • Discussion

16.25 – 16.45 Reports from constituencies by Steering Committee members

16.45 – 17.00 Other matters, discussion and conclusions
Opening and adoption of agenda

Julia Vicioso, Mountain Partnership (MP) Steering Committee (SC) Vice Chair, Government of Dominican Republic, welcomed participants to the SC’s first meeting of 2023. She chaired the meeting on behalf of the Chair, Livio Spadavecchia, who was unable to join. She also welcomed the new representative of the Government of Andorra in the Steering Committee, Marc Rossell, Secretary of State for Agriculture and Sustainability.

The agenda addressed several important items, including the closing ceremony of the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development (IYM 2022) and the path ahead for the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions 2023–2027. Other important agenda items were the roadmap to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 28th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP), the work of the new Science and Knowledge Advisory Committee, and an update on the work of the Mountain Partnership Secretariat (MPS).

The agenda was adopted without change.

Update on the closing ceremony of the International Year for Sustainable Mountain Development 2022 (IYM 2022)

Samantha Abear, MPS, presented an overview of the IYM 2022 closing ceremony on 26 April 2023, which celebrated the Year’s achievements and provided a launch pad for the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions 2023–2027. The event included high-level remarks from the UN Security-General António Guterres, FAO Director-General QU Dongyu, UNWTO Executive Director Zoritsa Urosevic and government representatives from Andorra, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Peru and Switzerland. It featured a segment with MP members, Ada Rasulova and Patricia Moreno, and conclude with a concert of mountain music and launch of a joint publication on mountain tourism by FAO and UNWTO.

In the ensuing discussion, the following was confirmed:

- The forthcoming IYM 2022 policy briefs will be published on the IYM 2022 webpage, which will remain active and continue to host the IYM 2022 publications.
- The MPS plans to create a new webpage for the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions 2023–2027.

Update on the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions 2023–2027

Rosalaura Romeo, MPS, provided an update on the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions 2023–2027, which is considered the main outcome of the IYM 2022 and an opportunity to keep the momentum going strong for the mountain agenda within important UN frameworks.
The Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions 2023–2027 was proposed by the Government of Kyrgyzstan and adopted on 14 December 2022 by the UN General Assembly, sponsored by 110 UN member states. Rosalaura highlighted that the resolution has no specific requests, but the main objectives are to enhance awareness among the international community and address the challenges and problems of mountain countries while inviting Member States and relevant UN agencies to further enhance support to sustainable mountain development within their mandates.

The MPS was invited by the UN resident coordinator in Kyrgyzstan to play an active role in mobilizing action among UN agencies and relevant organizations. A task force was established with a smaller working group dedicated to drafting a global plan of action with contributions by different UN agencies and regional organizations. The financing mechanisms are also an essential part of this plan, and the MPS stressed the need for some ad hoc resources. The task force aims to have a first draft of the global plan by end of May or mid-June, and the Government of Kyrgyzstan plans to organize an event to present this document.

In the ensuing discussion, the importance of promoting the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions 2023–2027 during FAO council week was underscored and the MPS was requested to send a message to all the MP members who are currently also FAO council members. Task allocation within the working group was highlighted and it was assured that it will be done jointly and transparently.

**Discussion on the process leading up to the UNFCCC COP 28 – For discussion**

Marc Rossell, Government of Andorra, presented the initiative to launch a coalition of governments to promote increased attention to mountain issues within UN COPs. The Government of Andorra sent a letter to the UNFCCC Secretariat requesting for mountains to be included in the COP28 agenda, aiming to increase dialogue on mountains in COP28 events. The UNFCCC Secretariat responded, asking the title for the proposed agenda item on mountains during the COP plenary, which the Government of Andorra proposed to be “Climate change and mountains”. The MPS shared that other governments supported this initiative and sent similar letters.

The following was discussed among members:
- The IYM 2022 policy briefs on climate change could serve as scientifically-sound policy messages as we move towards COP28.
- If the UNFCCC Secretariat decides to include the agenda item on mountains, then we will need to join forces to develop a strategy for COP28.
- The MPS stands ready to facilitate side events at COP28, which presents an opportunity for MP members to share ideas, present data and research, promote policy briefs or discuss relevant topics.

**Update on Mountain Partnership Secretariat’s recent events and initiatives – For information**
Samantha Abear, MPS, provided an update on the recent activities of the MPS. She reported on the successful International Mountain Day 2022 celebrations that included a photo contest, publication and fact sheet on the theme of "Women move mountains". The targeted communication campaign reached a wide audience and was successful in generating awareness on the importance of empowering women in mountain regions.

Samantha discussed MPS participation in various events, including the UN 2023 Water Conference, and the launch of several publications/policy briefs related to mountain ecosystems, climate change, disaster risk reduction, sustainable tourism, mountain wetlands and peatlands, and mountain women and Indigenous Peoples.

The MPS is currently working on developing key messages for this year’s International Mountain Day theme, "Restoring mountain ecosystems", in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and within the framework of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. More information will be available soon on the International Mountain Day website.

**Update on the “Science and Knowledge Advisory Committee of the Mountain Partnership” – For decision/approval**

Fabio Parisi, MPS, presented an overview of the main achievements of the Open-Ended Scientific Committee (OESC) established for IYM 2022 and the next steps taken to move towards a new permanent science advisory body. Fifteen members of the OESC volunteered to be part of a working group committed to proposing a name for this body (Science and Knowledge Advisory Committee), identifying its main role and functions and drafting its Terms of Reference.

Nakul Chettri, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and member of the working group, presented the Terms of Reference drafted by the working group to the SC.

**Decision**
- The Terms of Reference and proposed name were endorsed by the SC.

**Reports from constituencies by Steering Committee members**

Margi Levitt, Aspen International Mountain Foundation, reported on a regional group of mayors and County commissioners from western Colorado that are collaborating to develop a regional climate action plan. The Canadian Mountain Network is active and may change their name to Braiding Knowledges Canada. The Telluride Institute is building a dispersed campus to help counterbalance the effects of changes that are happening in mountain communities.
Carmen Azurín, Peru, reported on the first regular meeting of the Council of Member Countries of the Andean Initiative for Mountain (AIM), which was held virtually on 23 February. The meeting was attended by the delegations of Argentina, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia with support from UNEP and the MPS. Member countries ratified the Consortium for Sustainable Development of the Andean Ecoregion as the organization in charge of the technical secretariat of the IAM. Colombia will take charge of the regional coordination of the AIM for the next two years.

Macpherson Nthara, Malawi, spoke on behalf of the sub-Saharan Africa region and discussed ongoing initiatives such as the exchange programme for mountain products and the importance of sharing information on restoration of mountains.

Björn Alfthan gave updates from the Global Major Groups organizations, including the International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation (UIAA)’s Mountain Protection Award, the Mountain Research Initiative’s regional workshops on mountain observatories, and a planned webinar on the intersection between mountain issues and plastics.

Mohamed Ddich, Coalition Civile pour la Montagne, presented plans for a conference in Lebanon on mountain legislation and an upcoming regional forum on mountains and the right to development.

Matthias Jurek, UNEP, reported on the Sports for Nature initiative and framework, which aims to deliver transformative action for nature across all sports by 2030 and beyond.

Nurlan Aitimurzaev, Government of Kyrgyzstan, informed the group that a meeting with representatives organizing a conference in Kyrgyzstan was held. The conference date is still being established but will likely be during the week of 26 June.

Other matters, discussion and conclusions

In conclusion, Julia Vicioso thanked the MPS and the SC and the MPS will report soon the date of the next SC meeting.
Annex 1: Participants’ list

**Steering Committee members**

**Donor Organizations**
Martina Coppola, Italy

**Governments**
- **Asia and the Pacific** – Sindhu Dhungana, Nepal
- **Central Asia** – Nurlan Aitmurzaev, Kyrgyzstan
- **Europe** – Marc Rossell, Andorra
- **North & Central America and the Caribbean** – Julia Vicioso, Dominican Republic *(Vice Chair)*
- **South America** – Carmen del Rocío Azurín Araujo, Cristina Leucci, Peru
- **Sub-Saharan Africa** – Macpherson Nthara, Malawi

**Host Institution of the Mountain Partnership Secretariat (MPS)**
Tiina Vahanen, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

**Intergovernmental Organizations**
Melissa de Kock, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

**Global Civil Society Organizations**
Björn Alfthan, GRID-Arendal

**Major Group Organizations**
- **Asia and the Pacific** – Gobinda Bahadur Shahi, Karnali Integrated Rural Development and Research Centre (KIRDARC) *(Vice Chair)*
- **Europe** – Guillaume Corradino, Euromontana
- **Near East and North Africa** – Mohamed Ddich, Coalition Civile pour la Montagne
- **North & Central America and the Caribbean** – Karinjo DeVore, Aspen International Mountain Foundation (AIMF)
- **South America** – Hugo Mantilla, Centro de Estudios de Alta Montaña
- **Sub-Saharan Africa** – Nchunu Justice Sama Esq., Foundation for Environment and Development (FEDEV)

**Absent Steering Committee Members**

**Governments**
- **Near East and North Africa** – Yemen

**Major Group Organizations**
- **Asia and the Pacific** – Gobinda Bahadur Shahi, Karnali Integrated Rural Development and Research Centre (KIRDARC) *(Vice Chair)*
- **Central Asia** – Abduvohid Safarov, Tajik Social and Ecological Union

**Observers**
Aspen International Mountain Foundation
   Margi Levitt
   Eric Smith

Dominican Republic
   Patricia Rodriguez

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)
   Nakul Chettri

Peru
   Luis Fernando Cisterna Aguilar

United Nations Environment Programme
   Matthias Jurek

Mountain Partnership Secretariat
   Samantha Abear
   Valeria Barchiesi
   Allison Bozzi
   Stefania Corrado
   Giorgio Grussu
   Yuna Lee
   Federico Mattei
   Fabio Parisi
   Rosalaura Romeo
   Antonella Sorrentino