

Mountains and development The future is now



The “Zero Draft” of Rio+20 highlights some crucial issues for humankind.

When it comes to green growth and sustainable development, mountains provide a portfolio of opportunities for public-private partnerships: clean energy, sustainable forest management, sustainable tourism, responsible industrial development and climate-smart agriculture, including the promotion of natural products.

As towers of life, mountains sustain our future. Mountains are living solutions for energy, water and food security. As such, they could act as indicators of Sustainable Development Goals.

Mutual support between highland and lowland governments is needed as they search for ways to cope with a changing climate and its impact on societies and ecosystems.

Downstream populations, especially in urbanized regions, depend on mountains for their present-and future needs. They rely on them for receiving the water they need to sustain their livelihoods. Cooperative planning and research could take place in a context of “Highlands to Oceans” (H2O) collaboration.

Towers of Life

A VISION FOR MOUNTAINS IN A POST RIO+20 WORLD



Lean energy, food security and water generation: mountains are the best insurance against global change in climate-stressed times

Mountains and development

From Rio 1992 to Rio 2012

In the first Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, mountains were recognized as a source of important goods: water, energy and biological diversity, as well as minerals, forest and agricultural products and recreation.

Chapter 13 of the document resulting from Rio 1992 (known as Agenda 21) stated:

“ As a major ecosystem representing the complex and interrelated ecology of our planet, mountain environments are essential to the survival of the global ecosystem ”



Twenty years on, the second Earth Summit – “Rio+20” – will be held in Rio de Janeiro from 20 to 22 June 2012. The “Zero Draft” declaration for the Rio+20 conference states:

“ Unsustainable development has increased the stress on earth’s limited natural resources and on the carrying capacity of ecosystems. Food insecurity, climate change and biodiversity loss have adversely affected developmental gains. We are deeply concerned that about 1.4 billion people still live in extreme poverty, one-sixth of the world’s population is undernourished and pandemics are ever-present threats ”