



International Conference on

Resilient Hindu Kush Himalaya

Developing Solutions towards a Sustainable Future for Asia

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Commitment for a common narrative

The four-day international conference on ‘Resilient Hindu Kush Himalaya: Developing Solutions towards a Sustainable Future for Asia’ concluded yesterday with the commitment to weave a common narrative for the HKH.

ICIMOD’s Director General David Molden said the Centre provided an ideal platform for its eight member countries to work together for a common pursuit. He reiterated the need to rewrite the mountain narrative. “The strength of our resilience building efforts will depend on the strength of our common narrative,” he said.

The speakers at the concluding high-level panel on “Committing to resilience-building solutions: Mapping the way forward” agreed to adopt a more internationalist approach to solving the challenges of the HKH. They called for a transformative change that doesn’t leave anyone behind.

They suggested leveraging water and energy as the entry point to promote regional cooperation, reduce water footprint, generate evidence-based knowledge, and design farm-based livelihoods.

Kallur Murali of the International Development Research Centre, Canada, said accountability and responsiveness are the two key aspects of resilience that require immediate attention of all stakeholders.

Rojina Manandhar of the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change said UNFCCC is committed to strengthening institutional arrangements through south-south and north-south collaboration.

Mozaharul Amal of UN Environment said that ICIMOD should continue to fill the critical gap in mountain knowledge by providing inputs to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and through its contribution to the Asia Pacific Adaption Network.

“We will continue to look at ICIMOD to identify gaps and challenges in the Hindu Kush Himalaya, and design appropriate interventions,” said Solveig Andresen of the Norwegian embassy in Nepal. “We are here to listen to you.”

A marketplace of ideas and innovation

A major attraction at the ongoing international conference on 'Resilient Hindu Kush Himalaya: Developing Solutions towards a Sustainable Future for Asia' is the entrepreneurship and technology showcase outside the discussion halls.

The showcase includes photos, posters, and marketplace – all aimed at sparking ideas and thoughts for innovative local solutions for resilience.

Young change-makers displayed their innovative knowledge products covering a wide range of themes that included climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, ecosystem-based adaptation, food security and agriculture, gender and social dynamics, and renewable energy.

Twenty posters were selected from the 92 applicants. The posters depicted some of the most pressing issues facing the Hindu Kush Himalaya.

The marketplace featured a live demonstration of innovative solutions. For example, visitors got to see how the community-based flood early warning system (CB-FEWS) worked. ICIMOD and its partners developed the CB-FEWS to address flood risks and enhance the resilience of vulnerable communities.

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Several social entrepreneurs and community-based organizations displayed their agro-forestry and waste-based products. More than 25 stalls showcased various innovations that have brought transformation in the lives of mountain people and ecosystems. This included resilient agriculture practices, high value products, collective marketing and branding of mountain products, upstream downstream linkages, disaster risk reduction, community-led decision making tools, technology solution and process innovations, waste management (recycle and reuse), and renewable energy.



A 12-point Action Agenda for a Resilient HKH

The conference participants adopted a 12-point action agenda for a resilient Hindu Kush Himalaya unanimously. Ideas for the action points were crowd-sourced over the period of four days. These action points will provide a common framework for various stakeholders to work toward building resilience in the HKH through common purpose and collective action.

1. Strengthen the regional and global voice of the HKH region and its mountain people, including youth.
2. "HKH Calling...", a regional awareness to action campaign.
3. Encourage mass promotion of resilience-building technologies and solutions that are proven to be simple, affordable, and replicable.
4. Promote and strengthen cooperation at all levels across the HKH region through the co-creation of knowledge for resilience-building and sustainable mountain development.
5. Strengthen and build capacity at all scales of governance, and interlinkages, to facilitate resilience building.
6. Allocate significantly greater resources to resilience building, including incentives for conservation of benefits from mountain ecosystems and equitable benefit sharing.
7. Support the incubation of businesses and the formation of cadres of mountain entrepreneurs and business leadership, particularly among women and youth.
8. Encourage the use of innovative ICT, RS, and GSS technologies for data and information generation and sharing.
9. Build long-term funding arrangements that are consistent, flexible, and responsible.
10. Respond to existing and new gender spaces.
11. Invest in mountain youth and engage them.
12. Establish and mobilize ICIMOD as a regional forum for knowledge generation, repository, and dissemination.



A marketplace of ideas *(con't from p. 2)*

Hundreds of people visited the marketplace, including a special student group who came on the recommendation of the Right Honourable President of Nepal, Bidya Devi Bhandari, who inaugurated the conference on 3 December 2017.

“The marketplace not only helped people understand the various technologies on display, but also gave them the opportunity to take home mountain products as souvenirs,” said Bhawana Syangden, ICIMOD’s focal point for organizing the marketplace. These products included

cardamom and other spices, honey, natural fiber products, yak milk products, and handicrafts, among others.

The country director of the Red Panda Network, Ang Phuri Sherpa, said the event provided an ideal opportunity to showcase various innovative practices that help build mountain resilience. “The marketplace has been a wonderful knowledge sharing platform where people can learn about different technologies across the HKH,” he said.



Solutions must fit contexts

Building resilience is a prerequisite for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. However, the challenge is to find windows of opportunity at the grassroots for local actions within the context of these global goals.

The speakers at yesterday's first plenary session on "Solutions at scale: Grassroots, across boundaries, and beyond for a sustainable Asia" agreed that a solution must fit the local context.

Bhutan's former prime minister and ICIMOD Programme Advisory Committee Member, Lyonpo Kinzang Dorji, said boundaries must also be viewed from wider institutional perspectives. He said gender has to be at the center of any resilient building discourse.

The panelists shared their experiences about generating solutions and integrating them into decision-making and policy at all levels. Modern science must be blended with traditional and indigenous knowledge for better uptake of solutions, they pointed out.

The inventor of the ice stupa and the founding director of the Students' Educational and Cultural Movement of Ladakh, Sonam Wangchuk, reemphasized on the investment in education to change social mindsets. "I play with sun, earth, ice, fire and children, as these are the most important elements that make mountains most resilient," he said.

Rajendra Singh of Tarun Bharat Sangh shared his experiences from Rajasthan in India, and stressed the need

for respecting geo-cultural diversity and moving beyond the Gross Domestic Product. He said wellbeing and happiness must be key to measuring success.

Sristi Joshi Malla of SAARC Business Association of Home Based Workers (SABAH) Nepal said that many people lost their assets, family members, and their livelihood to the 2015 Earthquake. "But one thing we did not lose was hope and our inherent resilience to bounce back better," she said.

Understanding local problems and finding solutions to scaling out is a challenge. However, there are also opportunities for positive change. The panelists were unanimous in their recommendation to keep people at the center in all actions for piloting and scaling up.



Thank you, dear rapporteurs

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|------------------------|---------------------|
| Abid Hussain | Nilhari Neupane |
| Acchyata Shrestha | Nisha Wagle |
| Ajaz Ali | Nishikant Gupta |
| Aleeza Karki | Nuvodita Singh |
| Amina Maharjan | Pradyumna Rana |
| Anju Pandit | Pratikshya Kandel |
| Anu Joshi Shrestha | Sakhie Pant |
| Avash Pandey | Sanjeev Bhuchar |
| Chhaya Vani Namchu | Seema Karki |
| Erica Udas | Serena Amatya |
| Idunn Holthe | Soumyadeep Banerjee |
| Marie Delalay | Srijana Joshi Rijal |
| Mona Sharma | Suman Bisht |
| Nakul Chettri | Sunita Ranabhat |
| Nawraj Pradhan | Tashi Dorji |
| Neera Shrestha Pradhan | Vishwas Chitale |
| Neha Bisht | |

"I don't understand how to increase the GDP, but I understand how to increase local happiness."

Rajendra Singh, Tarun Bharat Sangh

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