



First Hindu Kush Himalaya Science-Policy Forum

Actions to Sustain a Global Asset

13 – 14 November 2018 | ICIMOD Headquarters, Kathmandu, Nepal

Background

The future of the HKH matters to over two billion people

The Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) is one of the greatest mountain systems in the world, extending 3,500 km over eight countries, from Afghanistan in the west to Myanmar in the east. Home to the world's highest peaks, unique cultures, diverse flora and fauna, and a vast reserve of natural resources, the HKH supports the lives and livelihoods of over 240 million people living in the hills and mountains of the region. This region also provides numerous benefits to people living downstream. As the source of 10 major Asian rivers, the HKH provides essential resources, especially water and biodiversity, to nearly two billion people in Asia.

The HKH is undergoing rapid change, driven by forces such as climate change, disasters, economic growth, globalization, infrastructure development, land use change, migration, and urbanization. Changes on the rooftop of the world are having and will have major consequences, not only for people living in the region but globally. Actions at national, regional, and international scales are urgently needed to sustain this global asset, focusing on more investments and robust regional cooperation for sustaining mountains, environments, and livelihoods in the HKH and concerted action to keep global level climate change to 1.5 degrees by 2100.

HIMAP and the HKH Science-Policy Forum

The Hindu Kush Himalayan Monitoring and Assessment Programme (HIMAP) is a long-term, integrated science-policy initiative coordinated by ICIMOD that aims to support enabling policies and sustainable solutions, and promote regional cooperation to address some of the region's most immediate challenges by:

- Comprehensively assessing the current state of knowledge of the HKH region, including thematic assessments, sub-regional assessments, and topical outlooks
- Increasing the understanding of various drivers of change and their impacts
- Developing evidence-based policy solutions and recommendations
- Engaging decision makers across sectors and institutions through a series of HKH science-policy forums



HIMAP is a platform for long-term collaboration and coordination among a broad and diverse group of more than 350 leading researchers, practitioners, and policy specialists working in the HKH. Under HIMAP, experts from the region have come together to develop the first Comprehensive Assessment of the HKH, to be published by the end of 2018, as the first in a series of monitoring and assessment reports. It deals with major issues such as climate change, biodiversity, energy, cryosphere (frozen water), water, food security, air pollution, disaster and resilience, poverty, adaptation, gender, and migration.

The assessment report consists of 16 chapters, which comprehensively assess the current state of knowledge of the HKH region, increase understanding of various drivers of change and their impacts, address critical data gaps, and develop a set of evidence-based and actionable policy solutions and recommendations. The assessment addresses the social, economic, and environmental pillars of sustainable mountain development, and will serve as a basis for evidence-based decision-making to safeguard the environment and advance people's wellbeing. To provide a roadmap for action, HIMAP has developed nine mountain priorities consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to contribute to achieving these goals for mountain communities.

Aims and Objectives

During the first HKH Science-Policy Forum, think tanks, senior experts, and high-level decision makers from the region will discuss the key findings of the Hindu Kush Himalaya Assessment, debate and validate the Assessment's Call to Action, and chart a way forward for more robust regional cooperation around mountains to sustain this globally critical region. The outcomes of the forum will contribute to a future in which the region's people and societies are:

- Prosperous, healthy, peaceful, and poverty-free
- Food, energy, environment, and water secure
- Climate and disaster resilient

Through a series of HKH Science-Policy Forums, the key findings and main messages of HIMAP will be shared with a larger audience with the aim of building momentum for more robust regional cooperation for mountains, environments and livelihoods, and a roadmap for implementing the nine SDG-consistent mountain priorities.

Specifically, the forum has the following objectives:

- Share key findings of the HKH assessment
- Share and discuss the HKH Call to Action and solicit its validation
- Build agreement/consensus on the road map for actions
- Build agreement on establishing the HKH Forum as a regular annual feature for dialogue on regional cooperation