

The voice of the mountains: High level panel on the Hindu Kush Himalaya Call to Action

11 December 2019

Hall 8, Cryosphere Pavilion, Madrid, Spain

13:00–14:30

An event organized by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) at COP25 as part of the Hindu Kush Himalaya Focus Day on 11 December



The voice of mountains: High level panel on the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) Call to action

This Session aims to bring a unified voice of HKH countries to the global stage to build up momentum towards a shared vision of a prosperous, peaceful and poverty-free HKH. Key findings from the HKH assessment report, as well as envisaged actions and early outcomes from the HKH Call to Action will set the stage for a high-level panel discussion. The key messages from the session will further contribute to the mountain agenda being shared across the eight HKH countries and on the global stage.

The future of the HKH mountains matters to over two billion people

Extending 3,500 km over eight countries, from Afghanistan in the west to Myanmar in the east and crossing Pakistan, India, China, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh, the HKH is one of the world's greatest mountain systems: home to the world's highest peaks, unique cultures, diverse flora and fauna, and a vast reserve of natural resources. The HKH directly supports the livelihoods of over 240 million people living in its hills

and mountains, and it yields many benefits to the 1.65 billion people living downstream. As the source of 10 major Asian rivers, the HKH provides essential resources, especially water and biodiversity, to 1.9 billion people. Its waters irrigate the grain baskets of Asia.

The HKH is a vital regional lifeline, but human drivers and climate change pose grave and immediate threats to the region's livelihoods, biodiversity, and ultimately sustainability. Changes on the rooftop of the world are having and will continue to have major consequences, not only for the region but globally. Local, national, regional, and global actions are urgently needed to sustain this global asset, focusing on substantially increased investments and more robust regional cooperation for sustaining mountain environments and improving livelihoods in the HKH and concerted action to limit global warming to 1.5°C by 2100.

The HKH Call to Action consultations

Based on the key findings of the *HKH Assessment* report, published (Springer Nature 2019) and released early this year, the HKH Call to Action has been developed as a roadmap for the future of the HKH region. The *HKH Assessment* report concludes that we know enough to take action, and that action is urgently needed.

Through a series of HKH Call to Action Consultations in ICIMOD's regional member countries held from April to November 2019, the key findings and main messages of the *HKH Assessment* report and the HKH Call to Action were shared with a larger audience with the aim of building momentum for more robust regional cooperation and a roadmap for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the mountains. During these consultations, think tanks, senior experts, and high-level decision makers discussed the key findings of the *HKH Assessment* report, debated and validated its Call to Action, and charted a way forward for more robust regional cooperation around mountains to sustain this globally critical region.

Specifically, the HKH Call to Action Country Consultations used the multi-stakeholder platform to share the key findings of the *HKH Assessment* report, solicited inputs on the HKH Call to Action for integration with national and regional priorities and jointly identify and develop the road map for the HKH Call to Action to promote the mountain agenda. The response to both the *HKH Assessment* report and the HKH Call to Action has been very positive and has been leading to increased ownership of the HKH Call to Action in the HKH countries.

Agenda

Time	Programme and speakers / panelists
13:00–14:30	<p>High-Level Panel on the HKH Call to Action: The Voice of the Mountains</p> <p>Facilitator: Dr David Molden, Director General, ICIMOD</p> <p>Opening remarks: HKH Call to Action: Mr Brij Rathore, Chief Policy Advisor, ICIMOD</p> <p>Panel: HKH Ministers and high-level delegates, and community representatives</p> <p>Dr Schah-Zaman Maiwandi Director General, National Environmental Protection Agency, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan</p> <p>Hon'ble Lyonpo Yeshey Penjor Minister, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests and Chairperson of the National Environment Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan</p> <p>Hon'ble Shri Prakash Javadekar Minister, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Government of India</p> <p>Hon'ble Shri Shakti Bahadur Basnet Minister, Ministry of Forests and Environment, Government of Nepal</p> <p>Ms Pasang Dolma Sherpa International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change</p> <p>Interaction with the audience</p> <p>Summarizing key messages and vote of thanks</p>

For further information

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