



World Mountain Forum 2016

MBALE CALL FOR UPSCALING ACTION

Don't Leave Mountains Behind

Introduction

Representatives from across the world including governments, international organisations, civil society, academia and private sector, met in Mbale – Uganda, from 17th to 20th October 2016 at the World Mountain Forum 2016. The forum was organised by the Government of Uganda and the Albertine Rift Conservation Society (ARCOS) with technical and financial contribution from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), in collaboration with partners including CONDESAN from Latin America, ICIMOD from Asia, University of Central Asia, Department of Geography at Zurich University, The Centre for Development and Environment, University of Berne, Foundation pour le Development Durable des regions de Montagne; as well as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Africa Mountains Partnership Champions Committee, the Mountain Partnership Secretariat, East African Community and the Embassy of France in Uganda.

The overall objective of the World Mountain Forum 2016 was to share lessons and experiences on Sustainable Mountain Development (SMD) and to discuss future challenges and opportunities for SMD building on the recommendations from the WMF 2014 in Cusco, Peru, and the African Regional Mountain Forum 2014 in Arusha, Tanzania, as well as the conclusions of on-going international policy processes including the Paris agreement on climate change and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Preamble

The participants of the World Mountain Forum 2016,

ACKNOWLEDGING that mountains provide indispensable goods and services for both highland and low land communities, and that they harbour unique biological and cultural diversity, providing timber and non-timber forest products, water, food, genetic resources and energy at local, national and international levels;

RECOGNISING that mountains play a key role in sustainable development as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation of mountain and lowland communities; and are home to some of the world's poorest and most marginalised people;

CONCERNED that pressure from human activities and climate change is leading to rapid montane biodiversity loss, land degradation and increasing disasters, jeopardizing mountains' capacity to support community livelihoods and the continued provision of ecosystem services;

RECALLING the various conventions essential to mountain communities and biodiversity including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); the World Heritage Convention, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and other relevant global conventions and agreements relating to Sustainable Mountain Development;

RECOGNIZING the importance of mountain areas, as underlined in Chapter 13 (Sustainable Mountain Development) of Agenda 21 (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) and in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002);

REAFFIRMING the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want" (Rio de Janeiro, 2012) especially under its paragraphs 210, 211 and 212 which specifically recognize the importance of mountains and their services in achieving sustainable development as well as acknowledging the role of mountain people and their indigenous knowledge in addressing the current global challenges including climate change;

RECALLING Resolution 68/217 adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 2013 related to sustainable mountain development and other relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions encouraging states and all stakeholders to give appropriate consideration to the issues of Sustainable Mountain Development in the elaboration of the Post 2015 Development Agenda;

RECALLING the outcome of the "Africa Regional Mountain Forum" held in Arusha, the resolutions from the "World Mountain Forum 2014" held in Cusco on 23-24 May 2014 as well as the conclusions of the "Fourth Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership" held in Erzurum, Turkey on 17-20 September 2013;

ACKNOWLEDGING ongoing global initiatives aiming at addressing the challenges faced by mountain regions and promoting sustainable development of mountains globally such as the Sustainable Mountain Development for Global Change (SMD4GC) and the Mountain Partnership;

RECOGNIZING that mountain ranges are often shared among several countries hence the need to strengthen trans-boundary cooperation including adopting transboundary and regional frameworks for the sustainable management of mountains ecosystems to develop appropriate research, disaggregated data, awareness, adequate laws and policies;

CONCERNED that one in three mountain people in developing countries is vulnerable to food insecurity and the trend is on the rise, as stated in a recent Mountain Partnership study;

NOTING the need to promote and safeguard mountain cultural diversity and traditional knowledge for sustainable and resilient mountain livelihoods, protection of ecosystem services and the wellbeing of the mountain people of present and future generations;

BEING AWARE of the crucial role played by women and indigenous peoples in protecting mountain environment, cultures and traditions;

ACKNOWLEDGING the deliberations in the World Mountain Forum in Mbale under the main theme of “Mountains for our Future” and sub-themes: 1) Mountains and Climate Change, 2) Mountain Communities and Livelihoods, 3) Mountain Ecosystem Services, and 4) Sustainable Mountain Agriculture.

Have made recommendations on policy, knowledge and action on the ground, targeting actors at Global, Regional and National levels in regards to sustainable mountain development as follows:

1. POLICY

1.1. Global

- a) Recognize mountains as key contexts for sustainable development.
- b) Raise awareness that warming in mountain areas is significantly above global average according to scientific evidence, endangering the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement's global temperature goals.
- c) Recognize upstream and downstream links, especially with regards to mountain ecosystem services like the provision of freshwater.
- d) Promote the inclusion of mountain countries and communities in international processes and negotiations through one strong mountain voice.
- e) Encourage closer collaboration among mountain stakeholders within the Mountain Partnership.

1.2 Regional

- a) Strengthen existing and promote the creation of new regional frameworks and mechanism for cooperation related to mountain ecosystems.

1.3 National

- a) Take into account Mountains in relevant strategy and planning tools at national and sub-national levels, including National Development Strategies, National Adaptation Plans and Nationally Determined contributions to the Paris Agreement (NDCs).
- b) Put in place specific policies with regard to benefit sharing and incentive for sustainable use of mountain ecosystems services, and for reducing the backlog in mountain development and high levels of poverty, including policies that enhance the rights of mountain communities to natural resources and land.
- c) Implement the SDGs at national level by defining specific national mountain targets with the involvement of mountain peoples, and consequently address them in coherent reporting and monitoring mechanisms.
- d) Promote the integration of ecosystem-based adaptation, mountain community-based adaptation and other supporting approaches into relevant national development processes.

2. KNOWLEDGE

2.1 Global

- a) Raise awareness and mobilize politicians, decision makers, the media and the public based on sound scientific information, data and assessments.
- b) Strive for a dedicated chapter on mountains in the forthcoming IPCC Assessment Report 6 by mobilizing mountain scientists to be nominated through their respective national focal points by the end of Oct 2016.
- c) Support the series of World Mountain Forum and other platforms to allow for exchange of knowledge and policies between different mountain regions and to provide a space for assessing global progress in mountain development in line with Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement.

2.2 Regional

- a) Facilitate regional and transboundary dialogue on sustainable mountain development and the Sustainable Development Goals through science, knowledge exchange and evidence.
- b) Strengthen existing and promote the creation of new regional mountain competence centres to support regional knowledge management and science-traditional knowledge-policy exchange.

2.3 National

- a) Generate mountain-related baseline data, assessments and monitoring and provide free access to this data.
- b) Support long term monitoring of mountain indicators as a key to assess and ensure progress on implementation of SDGs (including the Green Cover Index).
- c) Recognize, strengthen and protect local and traditional knowledge, as well as SMD gender responsive practices and include them in SMD knowledge generation and sharing.

3. ACTION ON THE GROUND

3.1 Global

- a) Facilitate access to finance, capacity building, exchange of technologies (traditional and modern), science and monitoring for sustainable mountain development, through the various established financial as well as technical assistance programmes including the Green Climate Fund, the Global Environmental Facility, etc.

3.2 Regional

- a) Promote dialogue on regional opportunities and challenges in SMD.
- b) Promote transboundary cooperation on the ground.

3.3 National

- a) Invest in sustainable management of natural resources and in strengthening mountain livelihoods, local culture, empowerment, and access to resources and basic services such as microfinance.
- b) Strive for resilient livelihoods for mountain people, with a particular focus on indigenous people, gender and inclusive development.
- c) Support exchange of effective practices and innovations amongst indigenous mountain people and local communities.
- d) Support the development of Small and Medium Enterprises and promote benefit sharing and the creation of sustainable jobs and local community enterprises, focusing on mountain goods and services.
- e) Strengthen food security and resilience in mountain regions by diversifying food systems, income sources and diets for better nutrition.
- f) Become a committed member of the Mountain Partnership.

Appreciation

We appreciate the warm welcome and hospitality extended to participants by the Government of the Republic of Uganda and its people.

Done in Mbale on 20th October 2016

