

International expert Dialogue on Mountain, People and Climate Change

Government of Nepal

22-24 May 2024, Kathmandu, Nepal

1. Background

Mountains are invaluable natural assets. These regions are home to 15% of the global population and nearly half of its biodiversity hotspots. They are home to a wide variety of flora and fauna and many distinct communities with different languages, cultures, and traditions. Mountains include all regions with glaciers, snow, or permafrost; river basins with headwaters in the mountains supply freshwater to local as well as all communities downstream who benefit directly or indirectly from these services, ensuring food and water security.

Climate change, overexploitation, and contamination threaten mountains, putting people and mountains are at peril. Water flow is threatened by climate change, and rising temperatures are driving mountain people and ecosystem-dependent species to adapt or relocate. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) projects up to 84% of indigenous mountain species are at risk of extinction, and many mountainous plant and animal species may decline and go extinct.

Despite its significance, mountains still do not get due attention and recognition in global forums. The vital ecosystem services provided by mountains have been severely neglected by the global monitoring system; it is now critical to prioritize mountain areas in all global action plans. A unified mountain voice is urgently needed to address the growing concern about the effects of climate change on mountain communities and the ecosystem services they provide. This urgency of 1.5 Degree Celsius should be accompanied by a focus on regional and global cooperation to promote mountain people's well-being, increase ecosystem diversity, stability, and sustainability, and find sustainable development solutions that take local needs into account.

2. Recognition of the Mountain Agenda

The IPCC has identified fragile mountain ecosystems as most vulnerable to climate change due to rapid temperature raises that affect population and ecosystem services. These climatic variations have substantial impacts on socioeconomic activities, especially those associated to biodiversity, landscape, and nature, making mountain peoples and their livelihoods highly vulnerable. In 2023, the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report highlighted mountain regions' irreversible adverse impacts and adaptation limits and their catastrophic impacts on people, infrastructure, and the economy.

The CBD COP15 decision, which aims to safeguard 30% of Earth's lands, oceans, coastal areas, and inland waters by 2030, provides an impetus to protect mountain landscapes. Additionally, on December 14, 2022, 110 governments co-sponsored the triennial Resolution on Sustainable Mountain Development at the 77th UN General Assembly, urging member states to enhance support for sustainable mountain development. The Resolution declares 2023–2027 as “Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions”. The Resolution aims to attract grant funding and investments for mountains, develop “green” economies and technologies, strengthen collaboration between mountainous countries, and develop science and education in the field of sustainable mountains and their development.

Previously, the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development 2022 highlighted the importance of prioritizing sustainability and resilience in mountain ecosystems and communities in national and international development, promoting synergies and coherence with other goals like the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, Paris Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity and Sendai Framework.

As a result of high-level round table discussion chaired by the Prime Minister of Nepal, addressed by the UNSG and other leaders, the mountain agenda is being recognized. The first Global Stocktake endorsed by the most recent Dubai climate COP 28 in December 2023 highlights the significance of mountains; the report contains five explicit indications of mountains as well as an official request for dialogue on mountains and climate change at UNFCCC’s 60th session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA 60). Additionally, a forum on the role of mountains within the context of the Nairobi Work Programme (NWP) – a workstream of the UNFCCC – was held at UNFCCC COP 28. The forum resulted in mountains, high-latitude areas and the cryosphere being declared a priority thematic area for 2024 within the Nairobi Work Programme.

3. About the Expert Dialogue

The Government of Nepal is eager to work with other governments and agencies, especially mountain countries and partners, to better recognize and promote mountain agendas and solutions. Nepal has promoted mountain agendas with regional and international partners since 2009.

This expert dialogue on mountains aims to strengthen, coordinate, and prioritize mountain-based actions in the context of climate change and encourage mountain countries and agencies to collaborate on UNFCCC mountain work programs and mandates. This discourse should allow government and stakeholders in mountain countries and their allies to better understand mountain-climate concerns and solutions, share expertise and experience, and enable synergies. More crucially, the dialogue aims to

produce concrete roadmaps and strategies for mountains at the experts' dialogue on mountains and climate change in SBSTA 60 session and beyond.

- Develop a shared platform "Group of Mountain Partnership to raise awareness of mountain vulnerability to climate change, promote collaboration for common understanding and position of the mountainous countries', and give mountain communities their due in international and regional processes.
- Explore and exchange knowledge, research, and innovative solutions for adapting to climate change, minimizing loss and damage to mountain peoples and their livelihoods, and optimizing clean energy transition.
- Promote multilateralism, collaboration, and partnerships concerning technology transfer, capacity development, and climate finance for mountainous nations and their inhabitants.

4. Dialogue themes

Theme One: Climate Science and Mountain Evidence

- The science and evidence on climate change impact, vulnerability and risks
- Emerging threat and crisis in the mountains: Loss and Damage
- Ambition for 1.5 Degree Celsius: Urgency for action in mountains and beyond

Theme Two: Mountain solutions: Common Grounds and Common Understanding

- People, policy and prosperity: living in harmony with nature
- Locally Led-Adaptation: From mountain to marine ecosystems
- Climate justice, equity and local voices: gender and Youth

Theme Three: Mountain prospective: resources and opportunities

- Economic growth: clean energy and green economy
- Climate finance and the role of private sector
- Advancing mountain agenda: global cooperation and regional partnerships

5. Date, Venue and Potential Participants

Date and Venue: The workshop will be held in Kathmandu, Nepal May 22-24 2024

Participants

The dialogue will bring together around 200 participants from a diverse group, including:

6. Agenda of the Dialogue

The event will feature as presented below.

Day-1: 22 May 2024	
Time	Agenda
08:00-09:00	Registration and Breakfast
09:00-10:30	Opening Session
10:30-11:00	Tea break
11.00-15.00	Theme One: Climate Science and Mountain Evidence
11:00-12:30	Ambition for 1.5 Degree Celsius: Urgency for Action in Mountains and Beyond
12:30-13:30	Lunch
13:30-15:00	The Science and Evidence on Climate Change Impact, Vulnerability and Risks
15:00-16:30	Emerging threat and Crisis in the Mountains: Loss and Damage
15.18.00 and day two	Theme Two: Mountains: Common Grounds and Common Understandings
16:30-18:00	People, policy and prosperity: living in harmony with nature
18:00-20:00	Dinner
Day-2: 23 May 2024	
08:00-09:00	Breakfast
09:00-10:30	Locally Led-Adaptation: From Mountain to Marine Ecosystems
10:30-12:00	Climate Justice, Equity and Local Voices: Gender and Youth
12:00-13:00	Lunch
13.00-17.30	Theme Three: Mountain Prospective: Resources and Opportunities
13:00-14:30	Economic Growth: Clean Energy and Green Economy
14:30-16:00	Climate Finance and the Role of Private Sector
16:00-17:30	Advancing Mountain Agenda: Global Cooperation and Regional Partnerships
17:30-18:30	Summary of the Chair: Take Home Messages
18:30-20:00	Dinner
Day-3: 24 May 2024	Mountain Flight (only interested participants)

Potential field visit: 24 May Field Visit (optional): To observe climate change impacts, including climate actions in Nepal.

For more information

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