

International Petition on Mountain Ecosystems and Peoples affected by climate change

The undersigned,

coordinated by the Mountain Partnership Secretariat hereby invite the 21st session of the Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to give adequate attention to the impact of climate change on mountain regions and human communities that depend on them.

The undersigned

Acknowledge the global importance of mountain areas as providers of water, hosts of cultural and biological diversity and sources of products essential to humankind as a whole; and as places of great spiritual, recreational, touristic and historic relevance.

Recall that mountains are often fragile and easily damaged ecosystems, as stated in the Agenda 21 and in the Rio+20 outcome document, The Future We Want, and need specific investments and due political attention.

Recognize that mountain communities have developed traditional techniques and knowledge that could be highly valuable in climate change adaptation and for resilience building.

Recognize the key role played by mountain women as custodians of traditions and promoters of innovations and development.

Recognize that mountain regions are food baskets for both mountain people and low land communities but that climate change is threatening the ability of mountains to continue to provide these services and functions.

Underline that climate change in many mountain areas is advancing faster than in other parts of the world, creating high concern for:

- the livelihoods of mountain peoples, and the safety of local communities and visitors due to changes in precipitation, increasing number of extreme events, melting of permafrost, destruction of forests needed for protection from avalanches and for slope stabilizations;
- rapidly-melting glaciers and significantly reduced snow cover in many parts of the world, are threatening vital water sources, especially during dry seasons, with devastating effects for local communities and populations further downstream, affecting regional food security and economic development; and
- the loss of biodiversity, as specialized mountain plants and animals are very sensitive and vulnerable to changing conditions.

Encourage all international, regional and national governments and other relevant stakeholders to take urgent measures to improve the lives and livelihoods of mountain peoples and safeguard mountain ecosystems by promoting adaptation measures, investments and specific policies as well as promoting better understanding of the impacts of climate change to mountain areas.

Invite stronger cooperation within existing mechanisms such as the Mountain Partnership and funding mechanisms as well as with global and national climate change governance systems.

Call for the integration of mountain indigenous traditional knowledge systems when devising climate change adaptation strategies.

Highlight the need to specify that mountains are among the fragile ecosystems referred to in the text of the UNFCCC COP 21 Agreement, in acknowledgement of their high susceptibility to climate change and the associated impact on the flow of ecosystem services that are vital for all humankind and

Request that mountains are adequately included in the climate change negotiations, and adaptation and mitigation policies.