



Government of Nepal
Ministry of Forests and Environment



MOUNTAINS MATTER: FOR PEOPLE AND THE PLANET

CELEBRATING

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SUSTAINABLE
MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT IN NEPAL

2022

CO-ORGANIZERS



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

ICIMOD



Background and Context

Mountains are home to approximately 15 percent of the world's population covering 27 percent of the earth's surface. They contribute to sustaining the livelihoods of 1.1 billion people living in the uplands and a much larger population living in lowlands. The role of mountains in supporting the humankind's needs are well acknowledged as mountains store water in the form of snow, glaciers, permafrost, wetlands, and rivers, and they also supply watersheds with ground water recharge. Mountains hold ecological, aesthetic, and socioeconomic significance, not only for the people who derive their day-to-day subsistence from mountain resources but also for the estimated 40 percent of the global population depending indirectly on these resources for water, hydroelectricity, timber, biodiversity, tourism and mountain niche products. Global food systems utilize 80 percent of the fresh water available. Mountains also harbour one-third of global terrestrial biodiversity and due to this, more than half of the 34 global biodiversity hotspots are in mountainous landscapes.

These global significances of the mountains, however, are under threat from climate change impacts. With the global realization that the changes occurring in mountain areas have far-reaching consequences and beyond the mountains, the global importance of mountains as water towers, biodiversity hotspots, indicators of climate change, and hubs of traditional indigenous knowledge means that mountain regions also offer strategic opportunities for humanity to ensure prosperity and happiness. Sustainable mountain development is thus a key requirement for overall progress and prosperity of not just the mountains but of the lowlands as well that are ecologically, economically, and culturally connected to the mountains. Sustainable mountain development is essential for achieving inclusive and equitable growth of green economy including addressing food security, poverty alleviation, and sustainable development goals.

Nepali Himalayan Mountains are important sources of water, energy, agricultural and forest products, and as centers of biological and cultural diversity, spiritualism, recreation, and nature-based tourism. In recent years, nonetheless, the country has experienced an increase in flash floods, glacier outbursts, landslides, heat and cold waves, wildfires, droughts and irregular rainfall, making it one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change. Nepal's development achievements are exposed to high risk from climate vulnerability, and this is only going to further increase in the future. All development and infrastructure projects will need added cost for climate risk proofing. These additional cost are transferred to the people of Nepal, especially the indigenous peoples, local communities, women and other marginalized groups residing in more vulnerable rural areas in the mountains and adjacent lowlands.

International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development (IYM 2022)

Detailed knowledge about the impacts of climate change in mountain regions has also increased, with the Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 2019, which includes a chapter on High Mountain Areas. In spite of this increased international emphasis on and research in the mountain issues, people and ecosystems in and around the mountains remain highly vulnerable and require specific attention. In this connection, **UN General Assembly has designated the year 2022 as the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development (IYM2022)**. The UN resolution invites the Member States, the UN system, other international organizations, and stakeholders, including civil society, private sector, and academia, to celebrate this international year appropriately to raise awareness of the importance of mountains for humanity and nature, as well as conservation and sustainable use of mountain ecosystems. The resolution was endorsed by 94 governments including Nepal. The IYM2022



marks the 20th anniversary since the IYM 2002 and the establishment of the Mountain Partnership, of which Nepal is an active member. As a part to the IYM, it is in the best interest of Nepal to celebrate the year and promote its mountain challenges and solutions at local, national, regional and global levels.

As a mountainous country with 14 of the world's heights peak, Nepal has been expressing concerns over the impacts of climate change and threat to biodiversity and cultural heritages in various international forums such as Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and Conferences of the Parties to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Initiative of Nepal to consolidate its mountain agenda and continue lobbying during the negotiation processes will be important so that mountain issues are part of the resolutions that will be adopted by the Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC (COP 27 in November 2022) and of the CBD (COP 15) in May 2022. For this, continued efforts are needed with wider collaboration among government agencies, civil society organizations, academia, researchers, community groups, private sector and development partners. These efforts may include, but are not limited to, stakeholders meetings, workshops, conferences, research works, publications, policy reforms and community actions.

IYM2022 is an opportunity for Nepal to draw local, national, regional and international attention to its mountain challenges and solutions. It will bring together the mountain countries, particularly in the Hindu-Kush Himalaya to share knowledge, experiences, learnings and research findings associated with mountains and downstream linkages. In this connection, the Ministry of Forests and Environment, on behalf of the Government of Nepal and also as national focal point to the Mountain Partnership, is celebrating the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development in partnership with other government agencies, UN agencies, civil society organizations, academia and development partners through different campaigns and programs over the year 2022. There will be a number of events and programs including a regional policy dialogue in Kathmandu and an advocacy summit in Mustang.

Overall Goal of celebrating IYM 2022 in Nepal

Draw attention of local, national, regional and international communities to Nepal's mountain issues and to develop a collaborative roadmap to sustainable mountain solutions through the implementation of various activities in celebration of the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development (IYM 2022)

Expected Outcomes of IYM 2022 celebration in Nepal

It is expected to have the following outcomes:

1. Deliver messages to the Government of Nepal, province governments and local levels to integrate mountain concerns (mountain biodiversity, ecosystems, cultures, agro-economy) into their policies, programs and budgets.
2. Support the Government of Nepal to synthesize key mountain agenda encompassing climate change, economy, agriculture, energy, biodiversity, and water resources for international negotiations and dialogues.
3. Promote Nepal's mountain biodiversity and ecosystems for sustainable mountain tourism.
4. Develop a roadmap for collaboration, partnership and actions among mountainous countries for cooperation in addressing challenges faced by the mountains regions of the world.

Major Thematic Areas



Proposed Activities for IYM 2022

Ministry of Forest and Environment is taking initiative to celebrate IYM2022 in Nepal with following programs:

Regional Policy Dialogue on Mountain Solutions

As an opening of IYM 2022 celebrations, a two-day regional policy dialogue will be organized on 23–24 March in Chandragiri mountain in the outskirts of Kathmandu valley. Keynote speeches from scientists, policy makers and mountain stakeholders both from Nepal and abroad will be delivered followed by panel discussions on the major thematic areas: economy, biodiversity, cultures, women and mountain–lowland connections (see major thematic areas). Around 200 participants (virtual and physical) are expected to take part in this important event, which will be inaugurated by the Rt. Honorable Prime Minister of Nepal. This event will also be the opening of the celebration of year-long IYM2022 in Nepal. Based on the synthesis of two days' discussions, this regional meeting will finalize the year-long roadmap of Nepal's IYM2022 celebrations with a collective commitment from partners at various levels for sustainable mountain solutions.

Meet the Members of Parliament

A one day interaction program will be organized for the key members of House of Representatives and National Assembly on mountain issues and solutions. The event will have two major objectives---to draw attention of parliamentarians toward the challenges of mountains including the impact of climate change and to seek their views and commitments to Nepal's roadmap on mountain solutions. Besides the parliamentarians, other participants will also include local government representatives, key province parliamentarians, policy makers and media. This discussion will be held in the last week of April in Kathmandu.

Mountain Advocacy Summit 2022 (MAS2022) in Mustang

Mountain Advocacy Summit (MAS 2022) on the title “Unlocking Mountain Potentials: Connecting the Dots for Sustainable Planet” will be organized in Mustang on May 24–25 as an important technical milestone of IYM event. Government agencies, UN agencies, researchers, CSOs, mountain related experts, private sector and media people among others will be the participants. This Summit will diagnose key challenges faced by mountain environments and communities and forge a common message on mountain solutions to be disseminated at global platforms. This MAS 2022 will play an important role in addressing and responding to climate change in mountains and associated downstream highlighting the urgent need for actions at various levels and scales. The detail programme for MAS 2022 will be developed after the Kathmandu Policy Dialogue.

Road to COP27

Nepal as a party to a number of Multilateral Environmental Agreements including UNFCCC, Paris Agreement and CBD, there are opportunities for the country to raise mountain issues and agenda in these fora. Impact of climate change on cryosphere (including snow, glaciers, permafrost, glacial lakes and river ice), mountain economy, biodiversity, cultures, lives and livelihoods of women, indigenous peoples and local communities and associated linkages with adjacent lowlands should be the focus of Nepal’s negotiation in international platforms. Although some discussions will be held among key stakeholders on mountain issues for COP15 of CBD and UNCCD, a one-day detail workshop will be organized for policy makers, negotiators, researchers, women leaders, leaders from indigenous peoples and local communities and community climate actors to interact and recommend key points for climate negotiators in COP27. It will be held in Kathmandu during October.

International Mountain Day

The International Mountain Day is on the 11th of December and this marks the closing of the IYM 2022. A one-day dialogue will be organized to mark the day and the official closing of IYM 2022. The key recommendations of Kathmandu conference, MAS 2022 and Meet the Members will be articulated and disseminated during the day along with a strategy and action plan that mainstreams mountain solutions to national policies and programs.

Operation Modality of IYM2022

A steering committee headed by the Secretary of Ministry of Forests and Environment (MOFE) oversees IYM2022 in Nepal. The committee comprises of National Planning Commission, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, UN Agencies in Nepal, Development Partners and representatives from Civil Society Organizations. Likewise, a technical committee has been formed with the coordination of the Chief of Participatory Forestry Division of MOFE. The secretariat will be set up in Participatory Forestry Division. Karnali Integrated Rural Development and Research Centre (KIRDARC) provides secretarial services to celebrate the IYM activities and programs in coordination with the Secretariat.

Contact



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