

**THE ASPEN DECLARATION
A NEW MOMENTUM FOR MOUNTAINS**

Preamble

Mountain ecosystems provide humanity with essential goods and services such as water, food, biodiversity and energy. As of 2017, mountains were home to about 1.1 billion people. However, biodiversity loss, climate change, land degradation and pollution are severely and increasingly affecting mountain ecosystems. Meanwhile, mountain people are among the world's poorest: in 2017, half of the rural mountain dwellers living in developing countries faced food insecurity. Mountain communities are highly dependent on small-scale and family-based agriculture. Exposure to natural hazards, lack of key services, and impacts of crisis and conflicts are factors contributing to the high vulnerability of mountain populations. The COVID-19 pandemic has further disrupted life in mountains and compounded existing vulnerabilities including those of endangered mountain species. Identifying new and sustainable livelihood opportunities, adopting new and supporting existing practices that combat land degradation and assist mountain ecosystem restoration and promote climate change adaptation and resilient agrifood systems are urgent requirements for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Recalling:

1. The Mountain Partnership – the United Nations (UN) alliance dedicated to mountains – is guided and inspired in its actions and commitments by: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Declaration of the UN Conference on the Human Environment (1972), the World Charter for Nature (1982), the Declaration of the UN Rio Conference and the Agenda 21 and its Chapter 13 on mountains (1992), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015).
2. Founded in 2002, the Mountain Partnership addresses the challenges facing mountain regions by tapping the wealth and diversity of resources, knowledge, information and expertise, from and between its members, in order to stimulate concrete initiatives at all levels that will ensure improved quality of life and environments in the world's mountain regions.
3. The Framework for Action approved by the members of the Mountain Partnership in 2017 during the Fifth Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership, the Group of Friends of Mountainous Countries established in 2019 under initiative of the Kyrgyz Republic and the resolution A/76/L.28 for an International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development (IYM) 2022 are the most recent measures to align the efforts of the international community towards improving livelihood of mountain peoples and protecting mountain environments around the world.
4. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) with UNEP and FAO as assigned leading agencies of the UN System, aiming to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of mountain ecosystems on every continent.
5. The importance of key regional organizations such as the Permanent Alpine Convention, the Carpathian Convention, the Andean Initiative, the African Regional Mountain Forum and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) are key partners for the

achievement of Sustainable and their role in the achievement of Sustainable Mountain Development.

Noting that:

1. The principles and legal obligations of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) including that of the future Global Biodiversity Framework and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), as well as their respective programmes of work and agendas linked to the achievement of and the SDGs (2015), have strongly determined the orientation of the work of the Mountain Partnership.
2. The Mountain Partnership is also guided by the conclusions and recommendations of the World Meteorological High-Mountain Summit Call for Action (2019); the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment (AR6), including the Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (2019) and the Cross-Chapter Paper on Mountains in the Working Group II Contribution to AR6 on Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability (2022); the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (2019); the resolution A/RES/74/227 on sustainable mountain development adopted by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on 19 December 2019; and the report A/77/217 on sustainable mountain development adopted by the UNGA on 22 July 2022.

In light of the unfolding environmental, climate and health crisis, following up on the 2017 Framework for Action and building on the new momentum provided by the proclamation of the IYM 2022, we, the members of the Mountain Partnership, commit to:

- increase efforts towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, aiming to secure the contribution of resilient mountain ecosystems and communities to a sustainable world;
- support the establishment of processes and mechanisms within the Mountain Partnership that engage diverse stakeholders across society in science-policy dialogues, thereby jointly identifying and addressing knowledge needs associated with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in mountain areas.

Furthermore, we, the members of the Mountain Partnership commit to support and to follow-up on the main outcomes of IYM 2022:

- engage the international community to tackle the problems of mountain countries including the impact of climate change;
- mobilize mountain countries to jointly advocate for their interests in the UN processes;
- establish dedicated financial and scientific mechanisms for improved cooperation among mountain countries and specific investments and initiatives;
- promote cooperation among mountain countries in the sphere of economy, social development, environment, culture, science and education as well as the achievement of the SDGs;

- contribute to implementing the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030;
- build on the outcomes of the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit for the development of more sustainable food systems in mountains;
- encourage climate finance and private sector inclusion and contributions for climate change adaptation in mountains; and
- enhance knowledge, research, monitoring, and data access on mountain-specific issues at local, national and regional levels.

To support these commitments, we request the Mountain Partnership Secretariat to:

- engage and support Mountain Partnership members in international advocacy processes for mountains where appropriate and necessary;
- monitor the main results achieved by the Aspen Declaration and the follow-up activities of IYM 2022;
- Engage MP members with regards to preparation for key events and participation in relevant activities, with the view of providing coherence between the activities of the Mountain Partnership and the follow-up outcomes of IYM 2022;
- ensure that Mountain Partnership members' efforts, impacts and results on sustainable mountain development as outlined in the Framework for Action are reported in relevant fora, documents and processes; and
- upscale initiatives and projects in support to the sustainability and resilience of mountain communities and ecosystems.