



Indian Mountain Initiative

Sustainable Mountain Development Summit 2012

(IMI SMDS 2)

Gangtok, Sikkim

25th – 26th May, 2012

Summit website: www.imi-smds2.org

Hosted by:



THE ECOTOURISM & CONSERVATION SOCIETY OF SIKKIM (ELOSS)

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In association with:



Central Himalayan Environment Association (CHEA), Nainital

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1. Second Sustainable Mountain Development Summit – 2012

The second edition of the Indian Mountain Initiative - Sustainable Mountain Development Summit 2012 (IMI SMDS2) is being held in Gangtok, Sikkim on the **25th and 26th of May, 2012.**

This document seeks to address the rationale for the Summit. Why is it being held and why is it needed?

The planning and execution of the Summit is being headed by a Steering Committee and the event will be hosted by the Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim (ECOSS), Gangtok in association with Central Himalayan Environment Network (CHEA), Nainital, Uttarakhand. CHEA hosted the Summit in its inaugural year, 2011.

The two day event promises to bring together academicians, scholars, practitioners, government representatives, NGOs and students from all eleven of India's mountain and hill states. A detailed process has been designed to help us achieve our desired outcomes and outputs.

We expect active participation from attendees as there is already a keen enthusiasm from various quarters on mountain development. The first Summit ensured wide publicity for the event and for IMI.

Please note: Whenever reference is made to mountains it covers hills as well.

2. Context: Mountains - A perspective

(i) The global context:

“Mountain regions need our special attention in view of their fragility and the disadvantages they face”

-Koïchiro Matsuura, DG (1999-2009), UNESCO

Mountains and hills cover a large part of the landmass and have attracted mankind for both material and spiritual well being for decades now. Around 12% of the world’s population lives in the mountains, with 70% of these being in rural areas. About 28% of the world’s forests are in the mountains, which support about half the world’s biodiversity. Millions of people downstream depend on the mountains for water and other ecosystem services. What happens in the mountains affects nearly 1.2 billion people living in the downstream river basins, and up to 3 billion people are affected indirectly as they depend on the mountains for food and energy.

More recently, mountains have attracted renewed attention in the light of climate change, diminishing pool of global biodiversity and shrinking reserves of freshwater. Biophysical conditions in mountains are extremely fragile, making mountain populations and their livelihood conditions extremely vulnerable. Globalisation, economic growth, rapid population growth and changes in lifestyle are increasing stress on the sensitive mountain ecosystems. With the increased focus on global climate change and the far reaching impact it will have on mountain people, mountain ecosystems and the goods and services that they provide to more than half of mankind, mountains are gaining a new importance in the national, regional and global arenas. Climate change places mountain systems in developing countries and their growing socio-economic vulnerability, at the centre of this discussion.

The inclusion of the Mountain Agenda in Chapter 13 “Managing Fragile Ecosystems: Sustainable Mountain Development” of Agenda 21 at the UNCED “*Earth Summit*” at Rio de Janeiro in 1992 was a landmark first time acknowledgment on a global scale of the relevance of mountain socio-ecological systems. Since then there has been increased awareness about the importance of mountains as vital providers of resources and services which include water, biodiversity, culture, heritage, ecosystem services and recreation.

Over the years, however, it became quite apparent that Chapter 13, although a good starting point for recognizing the importance of mountains, did not adequately address many key issues related to sustainable mountain development. These issues included water resources, biological diversity, cultural diversity and heritage, adequate infrastructural development for mountain people (access to health services, markets and so on), appropriate recognition and valuation of services and benefits derived from mountains, importance of mountains for people’s livelihoods and the recreational and spiritual significance of mountains and hills.

To this long list has recently been added yet another aspect – that of ‘mountain governance’ both at the macro and micro levels - which now assumes much greater significance as mountain countries jostle for attention and priority in international negotiations related to climate change. Climate change dialogues have further highlighted ‘mountain governance’ especially as it applies to non-mountainous countries which have populations that subsist on mountain ecosystems.

During the decade following the Earth Summit, many specific initiatives by governments, international institutions, NGOs and scientific organisations emerged from Chapter 13. One important initiative was the establishment of the Mountain Forum in 1995; a global network for information exchange, mutual support, and advocacy for equitable and ecologically sustainable mountain development and conservation. Another milestone was the designation 2002 as the International Year of Mountains (IYM) by the United Nations General Assembly. The IYM was an excellent occasion to raise awareness about the importance of mountains to life at a global scale and to promote action. The UN supported ‘Bishkek Global Mountain Summit’ hosted by the Kyrgyz Republic was held in the same year. Within the same year, the Mountain Agenda gained new momentum and many new initiatives materialised, including the Adelboden Group out of which the Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in Mountains (SARD-M), Global Change in Mountain Regions (GLOCHAMORE) and the Mountain Research Initiative (MRI) emerged. Also in 2002, the Mountain Partnership was launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg to promote and facilitate closer collaboration between governments, civil society, intergovernmental organisations, and the private sector towards achieving sustainable mountain development.

The institutions, research and development projects, conferences, workshops and others which developed from Chapter 13 and the IYM effectively raised awareness about the importance of mountain systems and some of the subsequent programmes initiated and supported successful interventions promoting sustainable mountain development. But despite all these vital initiatives and the UN General Assembly regularly restating the importance of mountain areas, mountain systems have not received the expected attention in the international development agenda. Other priorities tended to dominate the sustainable development agenda such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), which were largely implemented as national schemes, not considering specific eco-regions such as mountains.

(ii) The Indian context:

The 11 mountain and hill states constitute almost 20.3% of the total land mass of India. As per the Provisional Census Totals (Census of India, 2011) approximately 4% of the Indian population lives in the mountain states of Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and the hill districts of Assam, Tripura and West Bengal. These mountain and hill states directly or indirectly affect nearly half of the Indian population residing downstream especially in the Indo-Gangetic plain.

The fact that the various development approaches followed in the country so far have not had the desired impact on the mountain states was made plain by the Working Group constituted during the **Eighth Five Year Plan** (1992-97), which said: *“The hill areas of the country are faced with certain peculiar problems inhibiting the process of development. On account of the difficult terrain, variable agro-climatic conditions, distinct socio-cultural features, the hill areas have remained backward.”*

Mountains had never been a priority for the Government of India. The nonchalant participation of India at the Bishkek Summit in 2002 is evidence to support this. However, in the year 2008 the Prime Minister of India made an observation in the 54th Meeting of the National Development Council about the relative backwardness of the mountainous regions of the country. Planning Commission of India, in response, set up a **Task Force** *“for analyzing the problems of hill States and hill areas and for preparation of a proposal for comprehensive development of these States and areas, over the next three to four years.”*

In September 2011, a Working Group was constituted by the Planning Commission of India on 'Mountain eco-systems and challenges faced by the people living in the hilly areas' for formulation of the 12th Five Year Plan. It has 17 members and is chaired by Mr. B. K. Chaturvedi, Member Planning Commission. Its members include the Chief Secretaries of 8 mountain states, Secretaries of the MoEF, Ministry of Tribal Affairs and Ministry of Development of NE Region plus five other eminent members.

3. Rationale for the Summit

Historic and geographical importance notwithstanding, the mountains and hills have been encumbered by isolation and slow economic growth associated with poverty and low levels of development. Further, the realisation and recognition of the unique needs of mountains and hills have always been overlooked in developmental plans and programmes of the Government of India. This aggravated the situation and the states became laggards in the overall developmental process.

The tangible manifestation of the Himalayan voice, long overdue for attention, at the highest level has always been delayed and subdued by the Government of India. However, of late the situation has slowly started taking a turn for the better with the Task force being set up in 2011 for the overall development of the mountains. One of the recommendations of the latest Task Force on the Mountains was to establish a functional discussion platform for “all Indian Mountain States.”

The Indian Mountain Initiative (**IMI**) aims to 'establish a functional discussion platform for Indian Mountain States with the determination to follow up what gets collectively agreed upon'. The need to discuss the mountain agenda both horizontally and vertically and much more frequently than a few stand alone workshops and seminars for continuous dialogue on mountain concerns has been the call of the hour.

In pursuit of this objective, IMI would organize an annual conclave of 11 Indian Mountain States under the name and title of '**Sustainable Mountain Development Summit**'. Each year 3-5 salient themes engaging the immediate attention of and relevant to the mountains and hills would be taken up for threadbare discussion and debate.

Conclusions and recommendations emerging from this exercise would be pursued by IMI subsequently. IMI would also encourage, assist, and even anchor 'Mountain and Hill Networks' on various themes, across the eleven Indian Mountain and Hill States with a view to gain collective insight, develop a vibrant mechanism for information sharing, and draw upon the synergies generated by such an arrangement.

4. Genesis of Indian Mountain Initiative (IMI) and Role of CHEA

The Indian Mountain Initiative (IMI) is essentially a civil society movement.

IMI takes into account, the Global Mountain scenario and the Regional and Indian Mountain scenario, as narrated in the preceding first two sections. It particularly takes note of the fact that there now exists, a Mountain Initiative of the Government of Nepal technically assisted by the only inter-governmental organisation in the HKH region, which has India as one of the eight Regional Member Countries. Besides the Mountain Initiative announced in the Copenhagen meeting of COP now there also exists a National Action Plan on Climate Change, which has a specific National Mission on Sustainable Himalayan Ecosystem (NMSHE). NMSHE expressly speaks of regional cooperation among South Asian countries in context of the climate change. These two major developments in the region suggest that there has to be an initiative to complement the Mountain Initiative in context of the on-going global discussions of climate change. The Indian Mountain Initiative has been initiated to ensure that all Indian Mountain states, which presently have no mechanisms in place, can be provided one such forum, where all stakeholders could hold open and informed dialogues from time to time.

It therefore attempts to address the lack of a platform for sustained and effective dialogue to bring mountain concerns, centre stage to the regional, national and global agenda. It seeks to bring the eleven mountain states of the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) including the hill districts of Assam and West Bengal onto this platform.

Task Force on hill states and hill areas has also recently suggested that “*The IHR States must agree to a common essential platform for regular interaction and from therein, decide on a common essential plan for the region.*” It has recommended establishment of a Himalayan Development Forum for all IHR States. In view of the fact that various similar recommendations of the various Working Groups and Task Forces have not had any tangible manifestation in terms of concrete timely action at the national level, the Central Himalayan Environment Association (CHEA) based in Nainital, Uttarakhand has resolved to take upon itself to follow-up this extremely timely and relevant recommendation of the Task Force. CHEA has also decided to attempt to get all stakeholders involved in the process and create and generate sufficient momentum that through the implementation of the Mountain Agenda, as envisaged in Chapter 13, Agenda 21 of Rio Declaration and the National Mission on Sustainable Himalayan Ecosystems.

5. IMI SMDS1 (Nainital, Uttarakhand): *Themes and Outcomes*

The first Summit meet was held in Nainital on the 21st and 22nd of May 2011 and was conceptualized and hosted by CHEA. The two day event had an inaugural session followed by two breakout sessions on Day I and two on Day II. A final session saw the conclusion of the summit on Day II. There were also two side events- The First Himalayan Photography Competition and an exhibition on herbs and medicinal plants promotion organized by the Herbal Research Development Institute (HRDI) Gopeshwar, Uttarakhand.

The four themes selected for the Summit were finalized after a detailed debate within the Steering Committee set up to oversee the organization of the Summit. The themes are current and have a direct bearing, not only on the mountains and mountain communities of the Indian Himalayan region but also, on the downstream population of the plains which are dependent on the mountains for goods and services ecosystem services. The selected themes and the number of papers presented for each are given below:

1. Hydropower Projects in Mountain Regions (11 presentations)
2. Adaptation Measures under Climate Change Scenario in Mountain Regions (18 presentations)
3. Rural Tourism in Mountain Regions (10 presentations)
4. Community Forestry in Mountain Regions (10 presentations)

The two day event was inaugurated by Her Excellency Mrs. Margaret Alva, Governor of Uttarakhand. Keynote speakers included Dr. Andreas Schild, Director General International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Mr. Manfred Haebig, the Principal Advisor GIZ-RED Programme, Dr. R.K. Pachauri, Director General, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), Dr R.S. Tolia Chairman CHEA. The Member of Parliament from Sikkim, Shri P.D. Rai also addressed the plenary. He had made a specific plea that he would take up the issue of formation of a working group on mountains in the Planning Commission. This was finally achieved. The other was to have the second edition of the Summit in Gangtok.

There were over 260 participants with representatives from all the Indian mountain states and the Darjeeling district of West Bengal. Participants included a rich mix of eminent scientists, researchers, academicians and scholars from reputed scientific, research and educational institutions, senior and distinguished officers from various State Governments and Governmental organisations, local government representatives, representatives from national and grassroots level NGOs, business and industry representatives, consultants, and experts, eminent citizens and representative of the media.

The principal objective of the summit was to serve as a platform for various stakeholders from the mountain states to come together to engage in an informed debate on identified

themes with the objective to inform and influence public policy formulation with regard to the mountain region. The creation of the platform was well achieved and the extent of debate considerable, as reflected in the number of papers presented in the summit (49). The latter objective of informing and influencing public policy, manifested post summit, with the setting up of a Working Group by the planning Commission to look into mountain specific issues in relation to the formulation of the 12th Five Year Plan. The baton of the annual thematic summit was passed on to Sikkim for the next summit, as declared in the valedictory session of 2011.

In addition to the outcomes of the thematic group discussions, the concluding session brought about the following consensus amongst the participants:

- The need for a nuanced approach to sustainable mountain development
- Mountain regions are different from other regions of the country and therefore their growth trajectory is different.
- Key concerns are: what kind of development, how much of it, for whom and how to go about it.
- Consensus building via research and informed debate among like minded institutions and individuals is the key to finding answers to the above questions
- Need to build autonomous thematic networks and information sharing through the annual summits
- Consider the setting up an IMI Secretariat initially facilitated by CHEA with a core committee of representatives from the eleven mountains states and the hill districts of West Bengal

6. IMI SMDS2 (Gangtok, Sikkim): *Objectives and Structure*

There was general consensus amongst all participants in IMI SMDS1 “*agreeing to a common essential platform for regular interaction and from therein, decide on a common essential plan for the region*”.

The baton had now been passed to Sikkim and North East Region to host the IMI SMDS2.

The primary objective of the IMI SMDS2 is to look at policy governing issues around the broad themes proposed and to suggest key interventions in those, based on field experiences along with academic and intellectual inputs. In doing so the secondary objective of sharing of best practices and experiences amongst the different participants would also be fulfilled. Another objective of SMDS2 would be to look into and discuss the direction and form that the mountain stakeholders would like this mountain initiative to evolve into. Ideas of institutionalising the initiative can be examined along with ways and means of sharing and collaborating in research, information and knowledge dissemination. All this would help in making for more enriched advocacy in influencing public policy at all levels.

The themes have been proposed as:

- Water
- Mountain livelihoods
- Communities and forests

Under each of these themes, sub themes have been included and have been interlinked with each other. Climate change adaptation, in tune with Millennium Developmental goals (MDGs), technological intervention and innovations for achieving Clean Development mechanisms (CDMs) would be at the helm of all discussions and serve as crossing cutting themes.

The number and quality of participants need to be restricted so that serious discussions and outputs can emerge. Maximum number of participants from each state would be 10. A total of not more than 150 invitees and participants are being planned for. A good mix of field practitioners and academicians/scientists, individuals and organisations is envisaged to participate in the workshop for maintaining a balance between field realities and policies that govern them.

The main event would bring together the results of the different theme based workshop unto one common platform and move towards building upon it, leading to a consensus on the same. Competent moderators would facilitate the workings of each group and steer the discussions in each working group, towards a meaningful output.

A side event would be a photography competition depicting the Themes of the Summit. The prize money would be substantial to attract the best of the talent in the field.

(i) Desired outcomes of the Summit

1. Assimilation of diversity

Full and comprehensive appreciation of the **differences** in approach to mountain and hill development along the thematic subjects chosen for this summit. Differing perceptions and understanding of these approaches leading to sustainable development would be highlighted.

2. Theme-wise next steps

Highlighting the key issues that emerge and establishing thematic networks for addressing these issues and for keeping the discussion alive post summit. For example, cross cutting themes, like Climate Change Adaptation, will enable the formation of a group under the aegis of IMI to evaluate the State Action Plans under the Prime Minister's National Action Plan on Climate Change.

3. Policy inputs

A set of clear cut public policy outcomes which will feed into the Planning Commission and other policy and decision making bodies at the national and state level. These would emanate from the themes chosen for the summit enabling the plans to be made more conducive for proper implementation leading to better outcomes for the mountain people at large.

State-wise policy initiative would also be one of the outcomes for mountain specific issues. These should include the State Action Plan for Climate Change.

4. Praxis

Some key takeaways for participants in practical terms, especially from the innovations theme, which can be adopted immediately in their organizations, homes and places of stay.

5. Knowledge management and documentation

Learning from the field will be documented in the summit as post summit documentation. All these would be considered as public documents and would be put up in the website for general use. Wherever possible it would be critiqued from the academic knowledge already acquired about the learning. This would lead to more robust knowledge development.

6. Institutionalization of IMI: Appreciation of how to manage such a summit in a sustainable way using best practices of water and waste management including trying to make it carbon neutral.

(ii) Steering and executive committees

The event office will function out of the ECOSS office as it is the host for the summit.

The overall monitoring and control of IMI SMDS2 is being done by a **Steering Committee** comprising of:

1. Mr. P. D. Rai, MP (Lok Sabha) (Sikkim) – **Convener**
2. Dr. R. S. Tolia (Uttarakhand)
3. Mr. Sushil Ramola (Uttarakhand)
4. Mr. Toki Blah (Meghalaya)
5. Mr. Satyadeep S. Chhetri (Sikkim)
6. Mr. P. Ringu (Arunachal Pradesh)
7. Mrs. Fantry Jaswal (Arunachal Pradesh)
8. Mr. Neichute Doulo (Nagaland)
9. Mr. Amba Jamir (Nagaland/Assam)

An **Executive Committee** has been put in place to coordinate everything in the host state:

1. Mr. Rajendra P. Gurung (ECOSS, Sikkim) - **Coordinator**
2. Dr. Pushkin Phartiyal (CHEA, Uttarakhand)
3. Ms. Priyadarshini Shrestha (WWF, Sikkim Chapter)
4. Mr. Sonam Gyalsten (Echostream, Gangtok)
5. Mrs. Sarala Khaling (ATREE, Sikkim Chapter)
6. Dr. Rabin K. Chettri (Sikkim Govt. College, Gangtok)

7. Central Himalayan Environment Association (CHEA) : A profile

CHEA's Mission

To develop and provide integrated and innovative solutions, in cooperation with regional and international partners, that foster direct action and policy change for overcoming the environmental, economic and social vulnerability of the Mountain People.

Introduction

CHEA is a registered NGO and it operates out of Naintal, Uttarakhand. CHEA was founded on October 2, 1981, on a day which has special significance, being the birth-day of the Father of the Nation, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. The society was registered soon afterwards in May, 1982. CHEA is one of the earliest societies founded in Northern India which had ' *the environment and rural livelihoods in the Himalayas* ' as its core concern.

The Indian Himalayas have been witness to much distress, conflict, degradation, political restructuring and global revolutions and all of these have had major impacts on the Himalayas and its people. CHEA has supported many mountain causes, engaged itself actively in scores of action-research and livelihood-related projects and continues to champion the cause of mountains. It was at the *Rio Earth Summit in 1992* when the importance of mountain social-ecological systems was acknowledged for the first time on a global scale. However, CHEA had already been working on mountain issues for over a decade when Rio happened.

CHEA stresses the need for linking the impact of local activities on global issues, such as climate change. With three decades of experience designing and implementing innovative community based sustainable development programmes in the Central region of Kumaon, CHEA now aims to place greater emphasis on action orientated initiatives for conserving the mountains and their cultural heritage in addition to improving the livelihood opportunities of mountain people.

CHEA has consolidated its initiatives and interventions under the following four themes:

- I. Climate Change, with specific reference to Mountains and Adaptation Activities for Mountain regions;
- II. Rural Livelihood Initiatives in mountain regions for mitigating Rural Poverty;
- III. Art, Culture and Handicrafts promotion in mountains;
- IV. Documentation on the Regional Best Practices in Mountains for policy influencing.

CHEA is working on the following programmes on a sustained long term basis:

1. Indian Mountain Initiative

2. Strengthening of the Van Panchayats (Himalayan Community Forestry): This programme focuses on sustainable institutional building at the grassroots for efficient environmental governance and promotes the Green Economy.

8. ECOSS: A profile

The Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim (ECOSS) is a registered NGO and operates out of Gangtok, Sikkim. Founded in 2001 it prides itself in being a home grown initiative to understand and advocate proper Ecotourism practices. This is to ensure that there is responsible tourism from the stakeholders who would travel to natural areas in such a way that it conserves the environment and brings benefits to local people and communities.

It has dedicated members who believe in the concept of self reliance and have a mandate towards achieving the goals of sustainable development. ECOSS seeks to combine the strengths of rural communities with the experiences of national and international experts for process driven innovation and advocacy.

ECOSS believes in the conservation of biodiversity, local culture, promotion of sustainable livelihoods through community mobilisation and empowerment. It conceptualised and hosted the South Asian Regional Conference on Ecotourism (SARCE 2002) at Gangtok with TIES and MoT. ECOSS has successfully executed the Sikkim Himalayan Home stay Project funded by UNESCO under their Cultural & Ecotourism in Mountain Regions of Central and South Asia programme from 2004-2007 for promotion of community home stays in Yuksom, Dzongu, Kewzing and Pastanga through capacity building of ecotourism service providers .

ECOSS has been a key player in The Gangtok Water Supply and Sanitation Scheme Project funded by the Australian Government International Development Assistance (AUSAID) Programme under their Community Small Grants Scheme. It has been actively looking at the improvement of water supply, sanitation and solid waste management in Greater Gangtok area covering 55 various schemes and benefiting over 26,000 people. ECOSS has executed the Rural Tourism Cluster Project funded by NABARD for the promotion of community based home stays and ecotourism activities in the villages of Rey Mindu and Lingee Payong. ECOSS continues to conduct numerous awareness and capacity building trainings in the ecotourism sector both within Sikkim and in the North Eastern states.

In 2011 ECOSS has been instrumental in creating the Vision Document for Quality Elementary Education for the Human Resource Development Department, GoS. ECOSS is also currently engaged in the JICA funded Sikkim Biodiversity and Forest Management Project.

ECOSS has also partnered with GIZ in the Uttarakhand RED programme in the sector of Tourism.

ECOSS believes in forging partnerships and sharing of knowledge across networks.

9. Contact details of CHEA and ECOSS

CHEA's contact details:

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