

Climate Summit for a Living Himalayas

The Himalayas – often referred to as “the roof of the world” or “the third pole water tower of the world” – are noticeably impacted by climate change. Increasing temperatures – the rate of warming over the Himalayan region is over five times faster than the global average – retreating glaciers, erratic and unpredictable weather and rain fall patterns have profound implications for downstream water resources.



The water resources play a crucial role for rainfed and irrigated agriculture, hydropower generation, and 4 of the world’s 34 global biodiversity hotspots. The consequences for the livelihoods of downstream populations in terms of supply of water, food, energy and natural resources, as well as in relation to the increased occurrence of climate-related health hazards and natural disasters, are therefore a major concern in the Himalayan region.

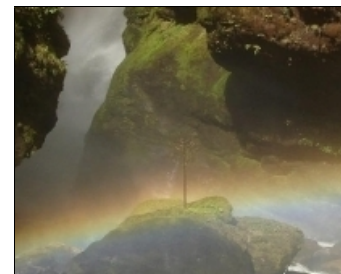
Determining the diversity of impacts of climate change is a challenge. In order to mitigate the impacts and adapt to the inevitable changes, research, information sharing and strengthening of knowledge, innovation and practices across countries are needed to address the current lack of information and data.

Project objective and expected impact

It is in this light that four countries of the southern slopes of the Eastern Himalayas - Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal - with support from international organisations and non-governmental organisations, have decided to come together to develop and agree on a sub-regional road map for climate change adaptation. The objective is to adopt a 10-year regional road map addressing emerging climate related challenges to ensure food, water and energy security while maintaining biodiversity and eco-system services in the Eastern Himalayas. Cross-cutting issues such as health and disaster risks related to climate change will also be integrated in the roadmap.

The roadmap will be presented and adopted at the *Climate Summit for a Living Himalayas*, hosted by the Royal Government of Bhutan on 14 October 2011. Along with the roadmap, the initiative aims to ensure further political commitment for cooperation within the sub region, create and operationalize regional expert groups to advice governments in implementing the road map, and secure pledges from partner countries and institutions to fund and collaborate in the implementation of the road map.

The initiative is the first important step towards an emerging regional position for climate change. The Climate Summit is expected to leave a legacy allowing governments and partners to better address the impacts of climate change on the economies, people and their livelihoods, and the environment. The initiative will, in addition, build capacities of the countries involved to formulate National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs), requirements to access funding and technological resources under the UNFCCC Cancun Agreement. The initiative will in this way provide governments as well as partners with a stronger foundation for sound decision making, prioritization and cooperation to address the common challenges and generate social and economic benefits for the countries and people of the Eastern Himalayas.



Activities and timeline

Launched in August 2010 with political commitment from all four countries, the initiative has established country-specific working groups and country-led regional expert groups involving all four countries, who are working to identify challenges, priorities, information gaps, synergies and transboundary dependencies. Each country is leading the process for one thematic area, with technical support from FAO, ICIMOD, UNDP and WWF, in order to identify sub-regional climate change needs under the four topics to be addressed by the road map:



1. Securing natural freshwater systems
2. Ensuring food security and securing livelihoods
3. Ensuring energy security and enhancing alternate technologies
4. Securing biodiversity and ensuring its sustainable use

<i>Country-lead</i>	<i>Support</i>
Bangladesh	ICIMOD
India	FAO
Nepal	UNDP
Bhutan	WWF

Preparatory work started at the country level in all four countries from August 2010, and is expected to be completed by April 2011. The national road maps of the four countries will be consolidated into one regional road map. In this regard, a regional consultation meeting was held in January 2011, while regional meetings are planned in each of the four countries for the thematic areas in July 2011 to consolidate the country-specific findings. The consolidated draft roadmap will be discussed and finalized at a ministerial meeting in Bhutan in August 2011, before adoption at the Climate Summit on 14th October 2011 in Thimphu, Bhutan.

Budget requirements

The Bhutan Climate Summit is funded jointly by the Royal Government of Bhutan, FAO, ICIMOD, IFAD, the McArthur Foundation, UNDP and WWF. Governments of the four countries involved, as well as the technical partners ICIMOD, FAO, UNDP and WWF, are also providing in-kind and technical assistance. The total budget estimate is US\$ 1.5 million including technical preparatory meetings in each of the four countries, consultations at the regional level, high-level consultations, organization of the Climate Summit, and publication of the Summit proceedings. UNDP is providing financial support worth US\$ 100,000 as well as technical assistance.

The initiative face a budget shortfall of US\$ 100,000 needed to conduct regional expert consultations, organize the Climate Summit and disseminate the Summit proceedings. UNDP is supporting the Conference Secretariat to mobilize further resources for this important initiative through donors in the region committed to support the climate change agenda.

Implementation arrangements

The Bhutan Climate Summit is convened by the Ugyen Wangchuck Institute for Conservation and Environment and implemented jointly by the governments of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal. The countries are assisted by a Conference Secretariat established in the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Royal Government of Bhutan, and the technical partners ICIMOD, FAO, UNDP and WWF.

Donor cost-sharing contributions will be implemented by UNDP in accordance with UNDP's standard regulations and rules as well as the specific terms that may have been negotiated between UNDP and the donor government. Within these standard provisions, UNDP will ensure, inter alia, due monitoring and oversight of project implementation as part of its assurance activities, the transparent and accountable use of financial resources, due visibility of donor support in various communications and public relations, and substantive and financial reporting to the donor.

Contact

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