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MOUNTAINS and FORESTS

Mountains provide 60 percent of the world's freshwater resources despite covering only 12 percent of the Earth's surface. When forests are removed from mountains and land is left unprotected, runoff and soil erosion increase.

CITIES DEPEND ON MOUNTAIN WATER

Many cities depend heavily on mountain water — for example, 95 percent of Vienna's water is sourced from the mountain forests of Northern Alps, while 40 percent of the water for Tegucigalpa, Honduras, comes from the cloud forests of La Tigra National Park. In Kenya, water from Mount Kenya generates 97 percent of that country's hydro-electric power. In Asia, the Tibetan plateau acts as a water tower for around 3 billion people.

International Mountain Day 2011: Mountains and forests, "living together"



"Millions of people in the big cities are drinking water coming from these Central Asian mountains. And most of them, they don't know where the water is coming from."

Olman Serrano, Coordinator of the Mountain Partnership Secretariat, delivered his message on the occasion of International Mountain Day 2011, noting that this year, IMD coincides with the

International Year of Forests.

"A mountain without trees is like a house without electricity or without drinking water," he said, explaining: "Forests and mountains, they live together." The video message was recorded in the Rasht valley of Tajikistan, where pilot projects on solar power seek to avoid further deforestation.

Click on the image to watch the video.





International Mountain Day

Affected by climate change, water scarcity, loss of biodiversity and desertification, mountain forests also offer significant opportunities for solutions

UNEP: Why Mountains Matter 16/12/2011, Austria

The public event "Why we care about mountains – from the Alps and the Carpathians to the Hindu-Kush Himalaya region" marked the

Austrian contribution to the International Mountain Day.

EcoForum: Environmental Contest 9/12/2011, Uzbekistan

As part of the national environmental journalism contest a special "Sustainable development of mountain territories" category was introduced. The award ceremony saw the participation of about 100 members of the media, Parliament, State Committee of Uzbekistan for Nature Protection, NGOs and foreign Delegations.

UCA: Mountain Day 9/12/2011, Kyrgyzstan

The event was centered around an hour-long Mountain Stakeholder Gathering supported by the Photo exhibition "The Beast and Beauty of the Forests and Mountains".

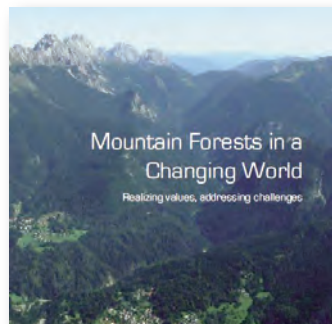
ICIMOD: Mountain Day 4/12/2011, South Africa

This was the first Mountain Day event, organized during the UNFCCC COP17 climate conference in Durban.

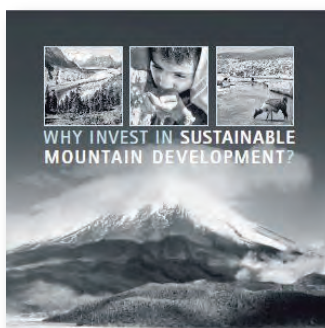
In order to ensure the link and contribution to the International Year of Forests, the theme for International Mountain Day 2011 is "Mountain Forests".

Mountain forests store a vast quantity of carbon and have an important role to play in climate change policies, warns a new FAO publication.

The integrity and resilience of mountain forests is under threat from increasing temperatures and wildfires, population growth and food and fuel

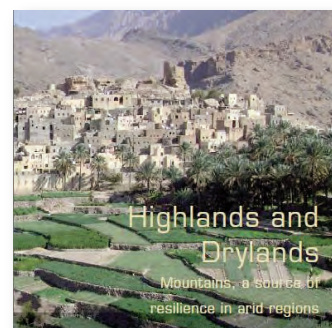


insecurity, warned *Mountain Forests in a Changing World*, a new FAO publication. The report, jointly produced by the FAO-hosted Mountain Partnership Secretariat and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, was published in the lead up to the UN International Mountain Day on 11 December.



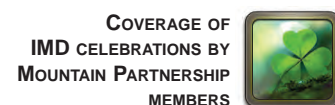
Population pressures and the expansion of intensive agriculture have forced smallholder farmers to move higher towards marginal areas and steep slopes, sparking a loss of forests, it also noted.

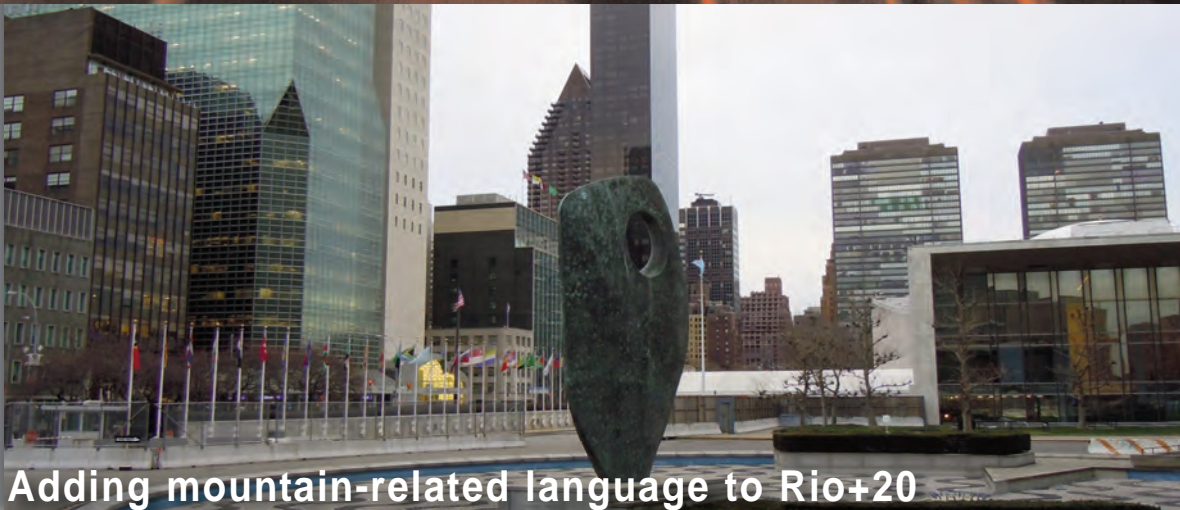
According to the publication, climate change is likely to facilitate more rapid expansion by pests and disease-causing organisms which may cause additional damage to mountain forests.



Mountain people — who are among the world's poorest and hungriest — are key to maintaining mountain ecosystems, adds FAO's report. They should have a say in the management of the local forestry resources upon which they depend, and share the benefits from forest use and conservation.

Together with the report on mountain forests, FAO also released two more publications focusing on the important role of mountain ecosystems for improving rural livelihoods and poverty alleviation: *Highlands and Drylands: Mountains, a Source of Resilience in Arid Regions*, and *Why Invest in Sustainable Mountain Development?*





Adding mountain-related language to Rio+20

Meetings of the Mountain Partnership Secretariat in New York sought to forge a common understanding on including mountain development in Rio+20



On 14 December 2011, the Rio+20 Secretariat in collaboration with the UN Office for Partnerships (UNOP) held a workshop on "Partnerships Best Practices and their Contribution to Rio+20." Approximately 60 representatives from Governments, CSD-registered Partnerships, research institutions, Major Groups and the UN system entities participated in the event, which focused on strengthening the consideration of partnerships at Rio+20. Speakers included Maurice Strong, Secretary General of the 1972 UN Conference on Human Environment and the 1992 Rio Earth Summit; and Elizabeth Thompson

(photo, *bottom left*), Executive Coordinator of the Rio+20 Secretariat. On the road to Rio+20, the Mountain Partnership Secretariat had launched a call for submissions to the compilation document, providing inputs directly related to mountains and sustainable mountain development. As a result, there were 2,728 occurrences of the word "mountain" in 71 submissions.

Also on 14 December a meeting of the Mountain Focus Group took place in the Italian Mission to the United Nations.

SUMMARIES OF THE DISCUSSIONS



Rio+20 and "the future we want": solar power improving people's lives in Tajik mountains



As part of **locally-specific climate adaptation measures** in Tajik villages, solar cells were introduced in a mountain hospital serving a community of 13,000. **Click** to watch the video.

GANDHI's EXAMPLE

Secretary general of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit
Maurice Strong

"In 1992, at the Earth Summit, governments agreed to a lot of things that they have not performed. Now it's about introducing some form of accountability and that's not easy. Governments do not want to be held accountable. That's why a people's movement must rise up and take possession of their future. A movement that will make it essential for governments to respond. Gandhi's example is of a totally peaceful mass movement."

PARTNERSHIPS HAVE THE POWER

Executive Coordinator of the UNCSO Secretariat
Elizabeth Thompson

"Over the course of the last few months, as I observed the Arab spring or the occupied Wall Street, I could not help but think that essentially those persons were asking for partnership. Partnerships with governments so that they had a greater say in the things that influence and shape their lives and in the benefits that they are able to get or in the things that prove detrimental to their quality of life and their long term aspirations and futures."

**EMMA training
(19-23 March 2012,
Kathmandu Nepal)**

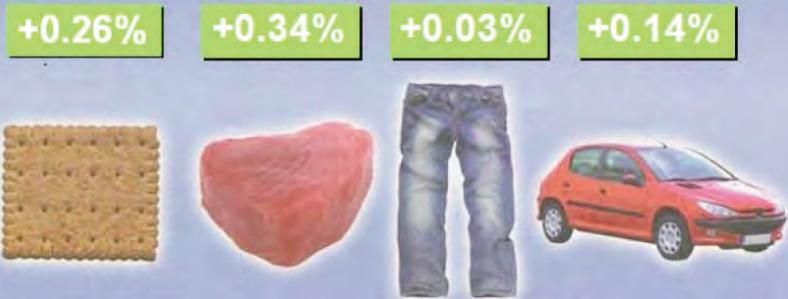
Practical Action Consulting is organizing a training on **Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis (EMMA) Toolkit**. The training will equip participants to understand, analyse and make better use of market system in emergency situations. **10% off any early bird registration until 31 January 2012.** Registration and enquiries: pacia-sia@practicalaction.org.np



Coping with the impact of transport in mountain areas through effective policy measures

According to the latest SWOMM proceedings, transport plays a key role in the economy and livelihood of mountain people. However, it entails unpleasant externalities affecting their delicate environment and society. These include the worsening of the air quality due to the emissions of air pollutants and noise and the loss of valuable ecosystem services.

The proceedings of the Scientific



A forecast of the Eurovignette III impact on prices for a Euro IV lorry travelling between Rotterdam and Köln for about 250 km. VAT is calculated at 20 percent.

Workshop on Mountain Mobility and Transport “SWOMM 2010 - Transport & Environment in Mountain Areas” were launched during the SWOMM 2011, on 13 December 2011. The SWOMM 2010 Workshop was held last year at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in the framework of the AlpCheck2 Project (Alpine Space Programme). The publication was

developed by the Ministry for Environment, Land and Sea of Italy with assistance from the Mountain Partnership Secretariat (FAO). It compiles contributions on transport impacts, environmental benefits and policy tools, aiming to serve as an input to build a diverse and comprehensive approach to mobility management in mountain areas.

[FIND THE PUBLICATION](#)



Postcard from the mountains



Share with us:



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MOUNTAIN PARTNERSHIP: WORKING TOGETHER TO MAKE MOUNTAINS SHINE
click on a **mountain peak** to discover key achievements for 2011

Climate change, Rio+20, knowledge sharing: these are just some of the landmarks that inspire us to continue working for sustainable mountain development. **Click on the image** to view particular moments of our work together this year.