

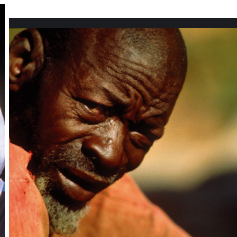
FAO/R. Faidutti



FAO/21211/A. Proto



FAO/R. Faidutti



FAO/Mali/I. Baldieri
FAO/21406/J.Spaul



FAO/R. Faidutti



FAO/A. Mihich

The Mountain Partnership

The International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions, or the 'Mountain Partnership', is a voluntary alliance of partners dedicated to improving the lives of mountain people and protecting mountain environments around the world.

Launched at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002, the Mountain Partnership taps the wealth and diversity of resources, knowledge and expertise of its members to support positive change in mountain areas.

By the beginning of 2005, some 115 members had joined the Mountain Partnership. The membership is comprised of countries and intergovernmental organizations but the majority of Mountain Partnership members come from 'major groups' – civil society, NGOs and the private sector. A Mountain Partnership Secretariat, with financial support from the governments of Italy and Switzerland, is hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and has the direct involvement of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Building on the mountain agenda

The Mountain Partnership builds on the global alliance of individuals and organizations involved in mountain issues that has grown since the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992. It captures the momentum created during the International Year of Mountains in 2002, when national committees were formed in 78 countries to raise awareness about mountain issues and initiated concrete activities to improve mountain livelihoods and environments.

The Mountain Partnership improves the impact and effectiveness of these joint efforts in mountain development. It breaks the challenges into smaller pieces and allows members to contribute what they have and do best. It brings people together – often for the first time – to bridge gaps in knowledge, skills and expertise, identify opportunities for collaboration and connect those who need assistance with those who can provide it.

Making the Mountain Partnership work

The dynamic core of the Mountain Partnership is action on the ground through the so-called 'Partnership Initiatives'. These are guided by the recommendations of the World Summit for Sustainable Development. Members have identified and launched specific Partnership Initiatives that cover thematic areas of action – like education, gender, policy and law, research, sustainable livelihoods, sustainable agriculture and rural development in mountains (SARD-M), watershed management – and cover different geographic areas such as the Andes, East Africa, Central America and the Caribbean, Central Asia, Europe and the Hindu Kush Himalaya. Linkages between these Partnership Initiatives are being encouraged at the local, national, regional and global levels. Other Partnership Initiatives will be developed by members, based on their priorities, needs and concerns.

Members of the Mountain Partnership have defined the governance and membership criteria of the alliance and are actively engaged in a wide range of collaborative Partnership Initiatives around the world. The Mountain Partnership Secretariat hosted at FAO supports members by facilitating their action, providing brokerage, delivering information, knowledge and communication services, and acting as a central point of reference for networking and liaison.



Why a Partnership for Mountains?

Like the earth's oceans and rainforests, mountains are crucial to life. Mountains are the source of freshwater for half of humanity. They are storehouses of genetic diversity that help feed the world. Yet, mountains are under threat from climate change, overexploitation and environmental degradation. Mountain people are among the world's poorest and hungriest: a disproportionate number of the world's over 840 million chronically undernourished people live in mountain areas.

The challenges facing mountain communities and ranges are not insurmountable. Yet, no one organization or group of organizations has the expertise, resources and capacity to do all that is needed to bring about change. Working together in partnership can help to improve the lives of mountain people, create fair policies and laws for their communities, protect mountain biodiversity, and put strategies in motion to support sustainable mountain development at all levels.



The Mountain Partnership

To find out more, visit www.mountainpartnership.org

Mountain Partnership Secretariat

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations
 Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
 00100 Rome, Italy
 E-mail: info@mountainpartnership.org

