

Peak to Peak

The Mountain Partnership Newsletter

April / May 2006

'Peak to Peak' is an opportunity to keep you up-to-date with the latest news, activities and events related to the Mountain Partnership. This monthly newsletter, prepared by the Mountain Partnership Secretariat, is sent by e-mail to all members and other interested partners and can be read on-line at www.mountainpartnership.org. Help us share news, information and features with members by sending a message to: info@mountainpartnership.org.

Membership

As of April 2006, there are 136 members of the Mountain Partnership: 47 countries, 14 intergovernmental organizations and 75 major group organizations. This figure includes three new country members, Ecuador, Guinea and Macedonia, and two new members in the 'major group' category, Huayhuash Peru and the Alpine Convention.

Huayhuash Peru, a Peruvian NGO, aims to improve the well-being and livelihoods of the poor and chronically impoverished mountain communities living in the Huayhuash region of the Andean Cordillera, through promoting sustainable development and protecting the environment. The organization's areas of work include: education, tourism, health, biodiversity conservation and agricultural production. (Contact: Clérigos Alberto Villanueva Salvador, Coordinator. E-mail: onghuayhuashperu@hotmail.com. *No Web site*)

The **Alpine Convention** is a treaty under international law between Austria, Switzerland, Germany, France, the Principality of Liechtenstein, Italy, the Principality of Monaco, Slovenia and the European Community. It strives for an integrated sustainable development of the Alps, a very densely populated mountain region with more than 13 millions inhabitants. During recent years, the Convention has decided to share its experiences and has begun collaborative activities with the mountain regions of the Carpathians, the Caucasus and Central Asia (Tianshan/Pamir). (Contact: Ruggero Schleicher-Tappeser, Acting Secretary General of the [Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention](http://www.alpconv.org). E-mail: ruggero.schleicher@alpconv.org, Web site: www.alpconv.org).

UPDATE ON PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES

Microfinance

The microfinance informal interest group formed by members has identified thematic areas that should soon evolve into ideas for concerted action on the ground. The areas of focus include: microfinance and tourism in the Andes region, microfinance instruments for Central Asia mountain communities, and microfinance and indigenous communities in the Philippines. During May-June 2006, Mountain Partnership member Soluciones Prácticas (ITDG) will carry out a financial needs assessment analysis for coffee and cheese producers in the mountain areas of Cajamarca, Peru. In the meantime, Soluciones Prácticas (ITDG) is working with the Mountain Partnership Secretariat on putting together the local team of experts who will carry out the interviews with the producers' associations.

In the coming weeks, a short working paper on microfinance instruments utilized in mountain areas will be shared with members on Discussion on-line. In this open space, one can also find recently published results of the questionnaires on microfinance sent to members and take part in a current discussion on [microfinance services adapted to renewable energy projects](#). Visit the [Discussion On-line](#) section of the Mountain Partnership Web site here:

An important event to flag to all members interested in inclusive financial services and value chain analysis is the first ever international seminar in Latin America on Agricultural Value Chain Finance' (*'Financiamiento de las Cadenas Agrícolas de Valor'*, Costa Rica, 16-18 May). The growing market integration and resulting importance of value chains and inter-linked services and markets is an important phenomenon. Value chains also represent an important opportunity for the use of innovative financing approaches between producers, suppliers and processors and with financial service providers, which can reduce costs and risks. The objective of this seminar, co-sponsored by the Regional Unit for Technical Assistance (RUTA) and the Inter-American Development Bank and organized by FAO and the Academia de Centroamérica, is to engage industry leaders and recipients to provide a comprehensive look at this important area in order to improve the access and cost efficiency of provision of financial services to agriculture and agribusiness and the rural sector in Latin America. For more information, click [here](#).

For further information about the Mountain Partnership microfinance activity, please contact Paola Bellotti by [e-mail](#) or by phone: +39 06 5705-5521.

Mountain Products

One of the key challenges for sustainable development in mountain regions is to provide the organization, market linkages, technology and know-how that will enable poor farmers to participate in markets for high-quality, high value mountain products in the rapidly expanding urban centers in developing countries and for export to more industrialized countries. This entails building on the comparative advantages of mountain regions, their unique natural resources and traditional know-how, in order to produce and market high-quality products and services for accessing niche markets and obtaining premium prices. These issues are at the core, and provide the justification for, the FAO Mountain Products Programme (MPP) which is a key component of the Sustainable Livelihoods Initiative of the Mountain Partnership.

The FAO Mountain Products Programme was launched in 2003 with funding from the Government of France. The first phase (2003 - 2004) involved carrying out a global survey (covering North America, Latin America, Europe, Africa and Asia) in collaboration with partners, including Mountain Partnership member Mountain Forum, to achieve a broad understanding of economic, environmental, institutional and technological issues related to the promotion of high-quality, high-value mountain products. One inter-regional case study and five regional cases studies were also developed. During this phase a number of critical success factors for promoting high-value mountain products were identified, ranging from the willingness and capacity of farmers to organize for collective action to consistent and supportive policies to create development and

promotion of high-value mountain products and the ability to identify risk and develop measures to mitigate impact. During the second phase (2004-2005), research was focused on the following regions: North Africa and the Middle East, the Andes, East Africa and the Hindu Kush-Himalaya. In each region, FAO worked with institutional partners such as Mountain Partnership members Soluciones Practicas and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) to select and analyse promising mountain products. In its third (current) phase (2006-2007), the FAO Mountain Products Programme is building on the information collected in the first two phases to develop Regional Information/Knowledge Centres on high-quality, high-value mountain products. The Programme will also formulate and implement field projects in pilot countries for support to specific, promising mountain products. For further details on the regional activities and partners involved in this innovative Programme, visit the new Mountain Products Programme Portal on the Mountain Partnership Web site at: www.mountainpartnership.org/mpp.

Communication Survey

How do you prefer to communicate with other Mountain Partnership members? How do you rate the Partnership Web site? Would you be interested in improving your skills in communication technologies or in taking the lead in moderating on-line dialogue with members? The Mountain Partnership Secretariat has recently sent out a communications survey to members in order to better understand the specific information and communication services and tools that members want, use and need, and better target future communication activities to ensure up-to-date, reliable and relevant support for members' joint activities. The deadline for submissions is Thursday, 20 April. Should any member wish a Word version of the survey or require further information about the survey's contents, please contact: info@mountainpartnership.org.

NEW ON THE MOUNTAIN PARTNERSHIP WEB SITE

Member profiles

The Mountain Partnership Secretariat has introduced new member profiles on the Mountain Partnership Web site to give you a clearer picture of who members are, where they work and how to contact them. For more details on individual members, visit the new, improved Members page at: http://www.mountainpartnership.org/members/members_en.asp. Click on a member's name to view their pop-up card, with information on the member's region, focal point/s, contact details, Web site and official language of communication within the Mountain Partnership. This pop-up also provides a checklist of the member's participation in the Partnership Initiatives. We hope that this new on-line resource on membership will help you better communicate with other members. Check your member profile and let us know of any changes, suggestions and recommendations to this service by contacting: info@mountainpartnership.org.

MOUNTAIN FORUM

The **Mountain Forum Online Library**, which stores a rich collection of material on sustainable mountain development has been re-vamped. New features include a new keyword system for efficient searching, full-text documents formatted and available for downloading in MS Word format and abstracts of full-text documents where available. To search or contribute material, visit the Mountain Forum Online Library at: <http://www.mtnforum.org/rs/ol.cfm>.

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Stockholm Challenge recognizes ICT innovations of two Mountain Partnership members

The Stockholm Challenge has been a well established global networking program for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) entrepreneurs for over ten years and it continues to be a leader in demonstrating how information technology can improve living conditions and increase economic growth in all parts of the world. One of the main features of the Stockholm Challenge is the annual Stockholm Challenge Award for the most innovative ICT projects for development.

We congratulate two Mountain Partnership members -- the African Conservation Foundation (ACF) and Mountain Forum -- who have been shortlisted as finalists in the prestigious Stockholm Challenge Award 2006.

The Mountain Forum project 'Dialogue with the Grassroots' (a finalist in the Public Administration category) facilitates a two-way communication between a global online community (Mountain Forum) and local rural mountain communities of the Nepal Himalaya through a mix of radio and internet technologies. Over 2004-2005, Mountain Forum Secretariat and Asia-Pacific Mountain Network collaborated with [Radio Sagarmatha](#), the oldest community FM radio station in South Asia, in a pilot project to bring the voices of mountain and hill people residing in the Nepal Himalaya to Mountain Forum and the world at large. As online communities already exist across the world, so do community radio stations and networks. As the concept and the implementation of the Mountain Forum radio pilot project is quite simple, it can very easily be replicated in other areas. Indeed, Mountain Forum aims to carry out this project in other regions of the world in the future. Read more about the [Mountain Forum project](#).

African Conservation Foundation's project, 'African Conservation Network' (a finalist in the Environment category) has set up an African information network that utilizes ICT to preserve Africa's wild heritage by supporting and linking conservation initiatives throughout the continent and building local capacity for conservation. The project, a partnership between ACF and local partner organizations in Kenya, Cameroon, Somalia and Zambia, provides a methodology for an innovative Web-based environmental information system which has demonstration values and will be useful for future implementation of similar projects. It is expected that the project methods and applications can be implemented elsewhere in the world with low set-up and maintenance costs.

Representatives of both Mountain Partnership member organizations have been in contact to explore potential feasibility of collaboration in the future. To learn more about the Mountain Forum and ACF projects, and other projects shortlisted for the Stockholm Challenge 2006 from around the world, visit the [Award Web site](#).

Signing of the Apennines Convention

The Italian Apennine mountain range has been endowed with a new protection and management instrument following the signing of the Apennines Convention at the political level. The Convention was signed in the city of L'Aquila last month by representatives of the Ministry of the Environment, the 15 regions concerned, local authorities including Mountain Partnership member Unione Nazionale Comuni Comunità Enti Montani (UNCCEM), the Italian Association of Nature Parks, and the Legambiente environmental organization. According to its initiators, the Apennines Convention is the first convention worldwide to focus fully on the role of protected areas. Read the Apennines Convention (*in Italian*) [here](#). To learn more about parks and protected areas in Italy, visit the ['Parks.it' Web site](#) (in Italian, English, French and German).

UN set to launch year-long reconstruction stage after Pakistani quake

Six months after Pakistan was devastated by an earthquake which killed more than 73,000 people, injured nearly 70,000 and left millions homeless, the emergency aid phase is nearing its end and the United Nations is set to formally launch a year-long recovery and reconstruction stage. It will cover a one year period starting in April 2006 and has been prepared in close collaboration with Pakistani military and civil authorities. UN Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator Jamie McGoldrick has praised the role of the Pakistani Government and the disciplined efforts of the humanitarian community, especially civil society, for the success of the relief phase. However, he warns that there will be a continued risk of landslides as the snow starts to melt in the spring and even more so later in the year when the monsoon season sets in. Issues such as food assistance, camp closures, provision of health care, utilities, education, land ownership, rubble removal, urban/rural planning, special support to vulnerable groups and consistent provision of information about the returns process are being discussed with Pakistani authorities and partner organizations. The United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA) leads the gender taskforce which has produced a *Gender Checklist for Emergency Situations* to ensure that gender concerns are integrated at the recovery phase of aid operations. For further information, visit the [UN in Pakistan Web site](#).

PAST EVENTS

The Eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) - COP 8 (Curitiba, Brazil on 21-31 March 2006), including a side event on mountain biodiversity, '*From Paradise to the Roof of the World*'

As reported in the March issue of 'Peak to Peak', the special side event on mountains during COP 8, '*From Paradise to the Roof of the World: mountain biodiversity - partnership for implementing the CBD*', aimed to demonstrate the importance of sub-regional partnerships and conventions for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). These alliances were indeed

strengthened during the side event in Curitiba. The co-organizers, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), the European Academy (EURAC) and UNEP-Vienna asserted that more sharing of experience between Asian mountains and European mountains within the context of the Mountain Partnership would benefit both continents.

Although the principal area of ICIMOD's focus is on the Hindu Kush-Himalaya, the organization has regularly shared lessons and experiences with other mountain systems in the world, most notably during the International Year of Mountains (2002) and more recently at the meeting, 'Sharing the experiences - Capacity Building on Legal Instruments for the Protection and Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions in South Eastern Europe' (Bolzano, 12-13 December 2005). Since the Curitiba side event, ICIMOD has expressed the wish to engage with EURAC and UNEP in a 'sharing the experience' process between the Hindu Kush-Himalaya and European mountains, building particularly on the lessons learnt of the Alpine-Carpathian experience. A related project proposal will shortly be developed jointly by the three partners.

FUTURE EVENTS

Twenty-fifth Session of the European Forestry Commission's (EFC) Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds (Salzburg, Austria, 24-26 April 2006)

Whether watersheds are draining into reservoirs, located in erosion and torrent catchment areas or seen in terms of guaranteeing the quality of our drinking water, the state and development of watershed areas has a crucial role to play in the development of mountain regions. A key part of FAO's mountain programme is the promotion of cooperation in watershed management and sustainable mountain development. One of the mechanisms through which FAO fosters collaboration between stakeholders in Europe is through the FAO/EFC Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds. Later this month, FAO will convene the 25th session of the FAO/EFC Working Party, in close collaboration with host country Austria, with the theme 'Watershed Management - an Integrated Approach to Environment Protection'. The European Observatory of Mountain Forests (EOMF), a Mountain Partnership member, is heavily involved in the preparations for the meeting, notably in authoring the background paper. As at all its regular biannual sessions, the FAO/EFC Working Party will discuss environmental problems in mountain watershed areas in general and themes of contemporary relevance in the areas of protection against natural hazards in the Alpine region. A core part of the meeting will focus on national reports on recent progress and experiences in watershed management. The Working Party will also explore ongoing opportunities for contact between professionals working in these areas and exchange information and experiences regarding the institutional and national aspects of watershed management. For further information about this event and to receive documentation on the FAO/EFC Working Party and FAO's work in watershed management in general, visit the [FAO mountain development and watershed management Web site](#).

International Conference on Conservation in Conflict (Kathmandu, Nepal, April 25-29, 2006)

Armed conflicts wreak suffering and cause loss of human life, but also cause devastating harm on the environment and damage biodiversity. The forthcoming international Conference on Conservation in Conflict, organized by the Wildlife Watch Group (WWG), the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Nepal Programme, The World Conservation Union (IUCN)-Nepal and The Mountain Institute (TMI), amongst others, seeks to identify and raise awareness about the negative impacts of armed conflict on the environment, and to develop strategies to mitigate impacts during and after these catastrophic events. The Conference is expected to attract some 50 participants representing about 25 countries in South Asia, Central Asia, the Mekong region, Balkans, Central and South America, Arabia and Africa, and representing international organizations that are Mountain Partnership members, such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). To learn more, visit the [Wildlife Watch Group Web site](#).

Partnerships Fair, Commission on Sustainable Development - CSD-14 (UN Headquarters, New York, 1-9 May 2006)

Part of the official programme of the 14th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-14) is the Partnerships Fair, a venue for partnerships for sustainable development to build and strengthen alliances, identify and create linkages between partners and learn from each other's experiences and best practices. In particular, this year's Partnerships Fair will focus on interactive discussions on practical issues and lessons learned from partnerships working in the thematic clusters of Energy for Sustainable Development, Industrial Development, Air pollution/Atmosphere, and Climate Change, and will feature information desks. As the Mountain Partnership is a registered CSD Partnership, the Secretariat has been provided with an information desk which will highlight the progress and activities of the Mountain Partnership and distribute key communication materials and membership lists. Details of the outcome of this event will be made available to members in the next issue 'Peak to Peak'. Visit the [CSD-14 Partnerships Fair Web site](#). Browse the [CSD Partnerships Database](#) to find out the status, composition and activities of over 300 CSD Partnerships, including the Mountain Partnership. Read the UN Secretary General's Report on [Partnerships for Sustainable Development](#).

Roundtable on 'Microfinance and the Environment: Setting the Policy and Research Agenda' (University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 5-6 May 2006)

Can microfinance address environmental problems? Can it therefore contribute to environmental sustainability, the 7th Millennium Development Goal? These are the overarching themes of the roundtable event, "Microfinance and the Environment: Setting the Policy and Research Agenda", organized by the Green Microfinance and the Environmental Management Program of the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. The roundtable will gather 25 experts in the fields of microfinance and the environment and is the first in a series of global multi-stakeholder dialogues which will set the research and policy agenda on specific issues within the scope of strategic environmental management, sustainable business practices and corporate social responsibility. Roundtable participants will include representatives from [USAID](#), the [International Fund for Agricultural Development \(IFAD\)](#), [Women's World Banking](#) and [The Consultative Group to Assist the Poor \(CGAP\)](#), among others. For more information, visit the [Green Microfinance Web site](#).

The 7th International Workshop on Resource Mobilization - IWRM (Bangkok, Thailand 5-7 May 2006)

The Resource Alliance is an international network working to build the capacity of not-for-profit organisations to mobilize funds and local resources for their causes. It does this through training, knowledge sharing and networking activities worldwide. The 7th International Workshop on Resource Mobilisation (IWRM) -- billed as 'the world's leading workshop for the global South' -- offers a lively programme of plenaries, forums and workshop sessions to provide practical skills and techniques in resource mobilization. The programme is carefully planned and put together by an international advisory committee with the objective of providing best practice training from the leading experts and practitioners in local resource mobilisation around the world. This is the second such flagship event organized by Resource Alliance and is growing in size each year -- the 6th IWRM attracted 375 attendees from over 40 countries worldwide. To find out more about participation in the Conference, visit the [Resource Alliance Web site](#). For those unable to attend the Conference, the Web site offers valuable information on resource mobilization techniques, news, case studies, useful contacts and links.

For more information on future mountain-related events around the world, browse the [Mountain Calendar](#) managed by the Mountain Forum.

PUBLICATIONS

World Economic Forum. Global Information Technology Report 2005-2006

The latest edition of the World Economic Forum's annual Global Information Technology Report assesses and ranks the competitiveness of a record 115 economies. The study is used widely by governments, academics and business leaders as a valuable tool for shaping economic policy and guiding investment decisions. It is based on the latest national statistics as well as results of the Executive Opinion Survey, which captures the perceptions of over 10,000 top business leaders around the world. Since it was first launched in 2001, The Global Information Technology Report has become a valuable and unique benchmarking tool to determine national ICT strengths and weaknesses, and to evaluate progress. The Report, published by Palgrave Macmillan, can be ordered [on-line](#). For more information about the World Economic Forum, visit the [Web site](#).

The Mountain Research Initiative (MRI). Global change research in the mountains of the Russian Federation

Mountain Biosphere Reserves occupy more than 50% of the territory in the Russian Federation. In 2004 the MAB-6 Centre at the Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences, in cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Natural Resources in Moscow, initiated a long-term National Global Change Research Programme in Mountain Biosphere Reserves (NGCRPinMBR). The development of this innovative Programme, its links to other global change research mechanisms and future strategic directions and considerations are outlined in the latest newsletter by The Mountain Research Initiative (MRI), '[Global change research in the mountains of the Russian Federation](#)', which has been co-authored by Dr. Yuri Badenkov, from the MAB-6 Centre and Claudia Drexler from MRI. For further information about the MAB-6 Centre and the mountains of the Russian Federation, contact Yuri Badenkov, Leader of the Mountain Group (Institute of Geography, Russian Academy of Sciences) and Coordinator of the UNESCO MAB Project 6 'Human Influence on high altitude ecosystems in Russia' at: yubaden@mail.ru.

Forest Landscape Restoration list serve

Forest landscape restoration brings people together to identify and put in place a mix of land use practices that will help restore the functions of forests across a whole landscape, such as a water catchment. The aim of this approach is to benefit both communities and the natural world. The Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration and IUCN - The World Conservation Union has now created a new discussion forum on forest landscape restoration to encourage policy-makers, local practitioners and academics share experiences and resources, seek advice and test ideas with colleagues working on similar issues. The list serve is also a place to inform others of new and current FLR events, issues, activities and practices. To join the Forest Landscape Restoration list serve, send an email to: flr-join@indaba.iucn.org. Put your email address on the first line of the message (no spaces) and 'Join FLR List serve' in the subject line. For further information, contact administrator Dena Cator at d.cator@gmail.com. Visit the [Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration Web site](#) and the [IUCN Forest Conservation Programme Web site](#).

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The Earth System Science Partnership (ESSP) Global Environmental Change Open Science Conference - ESSP OSC (Beijing, China, 9-12 November 2006)

The ESSP symposium, jointly organized by the Global Mountain Biodiversity Assessment (GMBA, Diversitas) and the Mountain Research Initiative (MRI), aims to highlight the key roles that mountains play within the earth system and the impacts of global change on mountain environments and ecology worldwide. The symposium will bring together experts on mountain biota, landuse, tourism, high-altitude ecosystem goods and services and their current threats and trends. The organizers have now launched a call for contributions. Scientists, policy makers, practitioners, scholars, members of the private sector and journalists are invited to participate in the ESSP Open Science Conference and to submit abstracts (parallel session or poster presentations). The deadline for submissions is 1 May 2006. For further information, visit the [ESSP Web site](#).