International Webinar of RCEs of Asia-Pacific Region

Celebrating **“International Mountain Day” (IMD) 2020** (SDGs 1, 2, 13, 15)

Theme: Mountain Biodiversity

Friday, 11th December 2020 10:30-12:30 hrs Indian Standard Time

05:00 hrs United Kingdom | 10:00 hrs Pakistan | 10:30 hrs India | 10:45 hrs Nepal | 11:00 hrs Bangladesh and Kyrgyzstan |12:00 hrs Cambodia, Jakarta and Thailand | 13:00 hrs Balikpapan, China, Malaysia and Philippines | 14:00 hrs Japan & Korea |16:00 hrs Sydney | 18:00 hrs New

Zoom Link: <https://bit.ly/RCENKCH>

Meeting ID: 878 4067 4436| Password not required

**SDGs** **1, 2, 13, 15**

#### Climate, Hunger, Gender and Poverty addressed through mountain events

#### SDG 15 (Life on Land); SDG 13 (Climate Action); SDG 1 (No poverty); SDG 2 (Zero hunger)

**Some Background Reading Material (a compilation)**

**History of International Mountain Day**

On 11 December 2001, the United Nations declared the year 2002 as the “International Year of Mountains” for the awareness and importance of mountains. On 20 December 2002, the UN declared 11 December as “International Mountain Day” for the awareness of mountain development and urged upon the international community to hold events relating to sustainable mountain development on this date. The [Food and Agriculture Organization](http://www.fao.org/nutrition/en/) (FAO) was appointed as the coordinating organization of the UN about this mission. The first International Mountain Day was observed on 11 December 2003. Each year UN allocates a theme for this day. Theme of IMD 2020 is ‘Mountain Biodiversity’.

Its roots date back to 1992, when the document [“Managing Fragile Ecosystems: Sustainable Mountain Development”](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/mountain_partnership/docs/Agenda21.pdf) (called Chapter 13), was adopted as part of the action plan [Agenda 21](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/outcomedocuments/agenda21) of the Conference on Environment and Development.

International Mountain Day 2020 is on Friday 11, December 2020. The United Nations’ General Assembly nominated 11 December as “International Mountain Day” in 2002 and this day was first observed in 2003.

The basic purpose of this day is to create awareness about the importance of mountains and mountain people and to provoke the governments to launch urgent policies to alleviate the harsh living conditions of mountain people.

**Mountain Day Holiday in Japan**

International Mountain Day is the UN’s observance and holiday in Japan. Japan is the only country that has the holiday of Mountain Day on 11 August since 2016. The purpose of the holiday is to know the importance and blessing of mountains.

**Mountains are Natural jewels we should treasure**

Mountains are home to 15% of the world´s population and host about half of the world's biodiversity hotspots. They provide freshwater for everyday life to half of humanity. Their conservation is a key factor for sustainable development and is part of SDG 15.

Mountains are under threat from [climate change](https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/) and overexploitation. As the global climate continues to warm, mountain people, some of the world’s poorest, face even greater struggles to survive. The rising temperatures also mean that mountain glaciers are melting at unprecedented rates, affecting freshwater supplies downstream for millions of people. This problem affects us all. We must reduce our carbon footprint and take care of these natural treasures.

**‘Mountain Biodiversity’ is the theme of IMD 2020:**

Mountain biodiversity is the theme of this year’s International Mountain Day, so let's celebrate their rich biodiversity, as well as address the threats they face.

Mountains loom large in some of the world’s most spectacular landscapes. Their unique topography, compressed climatic zones and isolation have created the conditions for a wide spectrum of life forms.

Biodiversity encompasses the variety of ecosystems, species and genetic resources, and mountains have many endemic varieties. The differentiated topography in terms of altitude, slope and exposure in mountains offers opportunities to grow a variety of high-value crops, horticulture, livestock and forest species.

For example, mountain pastoralists in Pakistan have a highly treasured livestock genetic resource pool with special traits bred into animals, such as disease resilience, which can help adaption to changing climate. Nearly 70% of mountain land is used for grazing and provides manure that enhances soil fertility. Livestock not only produces food items such as milk, butter and meat, but also valuable by-products, such as some of the most precious yarns, like cashmere wool.

However, climate change, unsustainable farming practices, commercial mining, logging, and poaching all exact a heavy toll on mountain biodiversity. In addition, land use and land cover change, and natural disasters, accelerate biodiversity loss and contribute to creating a fragile environment for mountain communities. Ecosystem degradation, loss of livelihoods and migration in mountains can lead to the abandonment of cultural practices and ancient traditions that have sustained biodiversity for generations.

The sustainable management of mountain biodiversity has been increasingly recognized as a global priority. Sustainable Development Goal 15, target four, is dedicated to the conservation of mountains’ biodiversity in consideration of its global relevance. Biodiversity in all ecosystems is in focus, as the United Nations has declared 2021 to 2030 the [UN ‘Decade on Ecosystem Restoration’](https://www.decadeonrestoration.org/)and governments prepare to negotiate the post-2020 global biodiversity framework for adoption this year at the [15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)](https://www.cbd.int/cop/).

* Mountains host about half of the world’s biodiversity hotspots and 30% of all Key Biodiversity Areas."
* Of the 20 plant species that supply 80% of the world's food, six originated and have been diversified in mountains: maize, potatoes, barley, sorghum, tomatoes, and apples.
* More than half of humanity relies on mountain freshwater for everyday life.
In the coming months, we will prepare communication materials in all six UN languages, which will be available on our website. Hard copies will be available upon request.
* While mountain biodiversity is the suggested theme for 2020, countries, communities and organizations are welcome to celebrate International Mountain Day through a theme that is more relevant to their situation.

**What can we do to celebrate IMD?**

* Raise awareness of mountains on 11 December by organizing forums, hands-on activities, presentations, student debates, photo and art competitions, hikes and events targeted to specific age groups – especially youth.
* Write to us about the International Mountain Day event you are planning at info-IMD@fao.org so we can publish it on the International Mountain Day website.
* Join the conversation on social media using the hashtag #MountainsMatter. Pass on some of the key messages or share about the biodiversity in the mountains near you. Post a photo of your favourite mountain moment and share it with us and your friends.
* Access our tool kit to help share your story.

**Key Messages**

**Mountain biodiversity**

Mountain biodiversity is the theme of this year’s International Mountain Day.

Mountains loom large in some of the world’s most spectacular landscapes. Their unique topography, compressed climatic zones and isolation have created the conditions for a wide spectrum of life forms.

Half of the world’s biodiversity hotspots are in mountains.

Mountains are home to more than 85 percent of the world’s species of amphibians, birds and mammals. These include increasingly rare animals such as gorillas, mountain lions and the majestic tahr.

**Mountains**

Covering around 27 percent of the earth's land surface, mountains play a critical role in moving the world towards sustainable economic growth.

Mountains not only provide sustenance and well-being to 1.1 billion mountain people around the world but also indirectly benefit billions more living downstream.

Mountains provide freshwater, energy and food - resources that will be increasingly scarce in coming decades.

**Mountain peoples**

Mountains are home to 15 percent of the world’s population.

Ninety percent of the world’s mountain dwellers live in developing countries, where a vast majority live below the poverty line and 1 out of 2 faces the threat of food insecurity.

Mountains are places of tourism and cultural trails. Mountain tourism accounts for about 15–20 percent the global tourism industry.

Indigenous and local populations in mountains have unique and valuable local knowledge, traditions and cultural practices that can contribute to effective land management strategies.

**Mountain products**

Mountain products and services have great potential to improve livelihoods and boost local economies.

Worldwide demand is on the rise for quality, high-value foods and beverages produced in mountain areas, such as coffee, honey, herbs and spices, as well as handicrafts, cosmetics and medicines.

To fully tap the potential of mountain products, small producers would benefit from targeted support in adequate value chains and marketing strategy, which would allow them to obtain fair compensation for their specific quality products as well as provide added value to the customers.

**Mountains and water**

Mountains provide 60-80 percent of the world's freshwater - without which sustainable development that aims to eliminate poverty and hunger would not be possible.

Fresh water from mountains is fundamental for achieving global food security, as it is used by farmers to irrigate crops in many lowland agricultural regions.

Some of the world's largest cities, including New York, Rio de Janeiro, Nairobi, Tokyo and Melbourne, are dependent on freshwater from mountains.

**Mountains and energy**

Mountains have a key role to play in providing renewable energy, especially through hydropower, solar power, wind power and biogas.

Hydropower currently provides around a fifth of all electricity worldwide, and some countries rely almost exclusively on mountain regions for hydropower generation.

Mountains in regions with a dry or tropical climate hold particular potential for the generation of solar energy.

**Mountains and food**

Mountains contribute to food and nutrition security by providing land for crops, grazing for livestock, watercourses for inland fisheries, and non-wood forest products such as berries, mushrooms and honey.

Mountain farming has been a model for sustainable development for centuries and is inherently "green" thanks to its small-scale character and low-carbon footprint.

Of the 20 plant species that supply 80 percent of the world's food, six originated and have been diversified in mountains: maize, potatoes, barley, sorghum, tomatoes and apples.

**Mountain family farming**

Mountain farming is largely family farming as mountain areas, with their dispersed patches of usable land at different elevations and slope conditions, are more efficiently managed by small scale farming.

Most of the production of mountain farming is for family consumption, playing a key role in ensuring household food security.

The production and marketing of high-value mountain products can boost local mountain economies.

Mountain livelihoods tend to be highly diversified and this has proven to be a key to resilience. Some family members may work in agriculture (farming, forestry, aquaculture or animal husbandry) and may be employed on a regular or seasonal basis or even abroad.

**What are the Mountains?**

A mountain is made from rock and earth. There surface is rugged and hard to climb. Mountains are filled with forests and animals.

Mountains may have ice, snow or glacier that is hard to climb or cross.

A group of mountains is called mountain range, for instance, Himalayan and the Rocky are mountain ranges. One-tenth of the world’s people live in these mountains.

**Types of Mountains**

**Fold Mountains**

These mountains are formed by the collision of two plates of earth’s crust by heads. The Himalaya, the Alps. the Andes, the Rockies, and the Urals are the Fold Mountains.

**Fault-Block Mountains**

These mountains are formed when earth’s crust forces some blocks of rocks upwards The Sierra Nevada Mountains in North America and the Harz Mountains in Germany are Fault-Block mountains.

**Dome Mountains**

These mountains are formed when the magma (melted rock) under the earth’s crust pushes up overlying layers of rocks.

**Volcanic Mountains**

The formation of these mountains happens when magma or lava piles upon the surface of the earth, on freezing this lava build a cone of rock.

**Plateau Mountains or Erosion Mountains**

These mountains are the result of erosion, the mountains in New Zealand are called Plateau Mountains.

**Well Known Mountain Ranges of the World**

[**The Himalayas**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Himalayas)**,** the highest mountain range of the world is situated in Asia. The world’s highest peak Nanga Parbat is also located in this range.

[**The Alps**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alps) is an extensive and highest mountain range of the world, lying in Europe.

[**The Andes**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andes) is the longest mountain range in the world, situated in America.

[**The Rocky**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rocky) mountains are extended from Western-North America to Canada. This is a vast mountain system.

[**The Karakoram**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karakoram)is also a great mountain range in Asia.

**Logo of International Mountain Day**



The logo of [International Mountain Day](https://internationaleventday.com/?p=413&preview=true) is the combination of three equilateral triangles with a stripe under these. These triangles are the symbol of mountains. The first left triangle has a rhombus shape the top, which is the sign of ice at the mountain top. The central triangle having an orange circle inside it is the sign of minerals and resources inside the mountain. The triangle on the right side has its lower right corner green that is the symbol of forests and crops in mountains.

The black stripe under these triangles has the words of 11 December in white colour. Under this stripe, the words of “International Mountain Day” are written in two rows. The upper row has the words “International” in blue colour while the lower row has the words of “Mountain Day” in light blue colour.

**Note:**

The above information has been compiled picking up contents from following websites.

* [www.un.org/en/observances/mountain-day](http://www.un.org/en/observances/mountain-day)
* <https://internationaleventday.com/event/mountain-day-2020/>
* [www.fao.org/international-mountain-day/2020-themeen/en](http://www.fao.org/international-mountain-day/2020-themeen/en)
* http://sdg.iisd.org/events/international-mountain-day-2020/

**Compilation:** RCE Srinagar