



## 2 Successful Years: A set of quick reflections and reviews in context to socio-economic and environment development in the Himalayan region towards ongoing climate debate, environment issues and development...

A Release On The Occasion Of World Environment Day 2012 And Pre-Rio+20 Preparations

## Understanding to action

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Since 2010, with a larger vision to serve as link between practice, science, policy and decision making towards climatic adaptation and sustainable mountain development Climate Himalaya's actions were focused towards climate consciousness and advocating for appropriate national and regional actions on knowledge sharing, networking and innovations in environment front. Our advocacy actions during

major global and national meets reflected upon the need of knowledge sharing and innovations towards adaptation measures, and considering Himalayan Mountains among the areas of importance and special attention. Access to information and important policy actions by agencies and governments, and considerate use of available resources within institutions in the Himalayan region and pooling such resources in

community outreach actions were areas of our major focus. Water resources, livelihood options, disaster management and ecosystem functions remained core areas of action. Our understanding is that there is still an urgent need to connect the research and scientific communities with policy makers in Himalayas, while the available knowledge and information should trickle down up to the people.



"present assessment of ecosystem services are largely based on an authoritative review paper published in ... 'Nature' ...by Robert Costanza, et al ..., who were clear in their assessment that should an attempt be made to replace the services of ecosystems, one would need to increase 'gross national product' as much as the assessed value,..."

<http://bit.ly/MbFkKY>

## Climate actions by governments

In our focus countries Bhutan, India, Nepal and Pakistan, it has been observed that the governments have shown their concerns about climatic changes in Himalayan regions. With its advocacy for national happiness index Bhutan is working on many of its glaciers and flood information systems. However, Bhutan's Climate Summit during 2011 was not a very productive attempt due to its non-inclusive nature and post conference

efforts. The Indian government's Himalayan Mission on Climate Change specifically focused on its 11 mountain states, which seems not moving further since 2008, the Shimla declaration has become null and void and state climate action plans are still in draft forms. The Nepal government started mountain initiative to international conference of mountain countries which lead to Kathmandu call for action, but due to

governance turmoil it needs additional sustaining follow-up actions and efforts. The flood in Pakistan in 2010 forced the government to think about its mountainous parts in terms of forest and water resources including GLOF linked threats. With the commencement of national plans the Pakistan government now focuses on Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral region for climate adaptation measures.

<http://bit.ly/MvXspl>



## Glaciers: climate indicators

One of the study published in Nature, states that fewer than 120 (0.075%) have had their mass balance (the sum of the annual mass gains and losses of the glacier) directly measured in Himalayan region, and for only 37 of these are there records extending beyond 30 years. Extrapolating this tiny sample of observations to all glaciers and ice caps is a challenging task that inevitably leads to large uncertainties.[...]. Similar is

the case with the study data of ICIMOD (2011) in which out of 54000+ glaciers in Himalayas, it studied 10 glaciers and concluded that the rate of ice loss had doubled since the 1980s. Dr. Koji Fujita a Glaciologist at Nagoya University Japan working in Bhutan says that if we take a look at the glacial case here, contribution of glacier melt water in total river water is "presumably" less significant. He says that I

tell it "presumably" because we don't know well about glaciers in the Bhutan Himalayas yet. How many glaciers are there? How much ice is there? How have the glaciers fluctuated? So, current status of glaciers in Bhutan is totally veiled. Another study in nature says that some glaciers in the Karakoram mountain range are growing, despite a warming global climate. <http://bit.ly/L7ORU1>

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## Leadership: recognizing mountains

It is said that with 20 percent of world's population mountain systems support half of the world's human population through its natural goods and services in the form of water, food, energy and bio-diversity. In this way they contribute to economic development by environment protection and human wellbeing. However, it seems that not many coordinated efforts have gone in highlighting

mountain issues and challenges, or our said leaders could not do so during major global forums on environment, climate change, bio-diversity and socioeconomic development. Our interaction with policy makers, researchers and practitioners revealed that there had not been adequate representation of efficient leaders in highlighting mountain agenda on such global forums. This they said is due

to lesser efforts in organizational / institutional networking, poor communication and coordinated actions at various levels on the concept of sustainable mountain development and climatic vulnerabilities in the region. Lack of awareness among politicians is another reason to such inactions. <http://bit.ly/JRD53Y>



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## Advocacy: awareness to action

CHI recently launched a multimedia communication series called 'Mountain Voice' to capture the experiences, thoughts and opinions of people, practitioners, policy makers and researchers on various climate linked issues in Himalaya. In this we interact

with people to understand the current situation on environment and development front in Himalayan region and the way forward by capturing their voices and making them available for viewers worldwide. The objective of 'Mountain Voice' is to

generate awareness about region at various levels, so that Himalayan Mountains are recognized among the important places, those need attention of the world leaders towards climate adaptation and sustainable development. <http://bit.ly/Lk8cE4>

## Financing: for a reason

There are set of local, national and regional agencies and institutions (actors) working upon various aspects of mountain development. Majority of the actions are targeted towards the security of human populace and environmental condition in Himalayas. During our interaction with various stakeholders in Himalayan region we asked about their views upon the role of such organizations and institutions in the overall socio-economic and environment development, the opinions didn't match with the financing trend and

claimed achievements. They were more skewed towards sustaining institutions or personal welfare. This trend can't be said good, when the people in most of the South Asian countries are voicing for a fair and just governance system at each level, starting from country to local governments. Therefore, it would be more appropriate that the national and international agencies financing any project or program in the region are more concerned about the outcomes of their funds through an appropriate monitoring and evaluation

mechanism, so that the targeted communities are benefited from such efforts in real sense. For example in an agriculture based research project while submitting the project to a government or donor, it clearly reflects that a particular community or group will be benefited, while, at the completion of the project the research findings or knowledge is not shared appropriately with the targeted communities, but, the ultimate focus become a national or international conferences or symposia, that adds to a staff promotion chance.



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## Climate action plans-significance

During CoP 17 of UNFCCC with the representation of over 20,000 delegates from about 200 countries, the world discussed three major issues of climate change i.e. commitment period of Kyoto protocol, the process of action on binding regime-as equity and, the future course of actions on Cancun and Bali action plans. As mountains are the early indicators of climate change, we observed that the issues of vulnerability and climate impact in the mountains as a collective and strong voice was missing at Durban. Through consistent efforts and common voices the

world leaders' call for climate adaptation and mitigation actions by the country governments, and this we could see through development of actions plans by countries. The plans in Himalayan region are aimed at reducing the vulnerabilities and make the communities more resilient to the impact of climate change. Let's take example of action plans developed by the state governments in 11 mountain states of India and the process they followed. The Indian government's guidelines say that each state government should develop a robust and

appropriate action plan through a process of vulnerability assessment and consultation for climate proofing. By going through the draft action plans available, the areas of major concerns are related to the processes followed in developing them like; cursory vulnerability mapping, subjective consultation processes, no public discussions on plans, poor thematic coordination and least priority given to these plans by the politicians and policy makers.  
<http://bit.ly/MbFkKY>

The State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCC) of Indian mountain states have been uploaded and opened for discussion by Climate Himalaya team for public at its discussion forum.  
Link: <http://bit.ly/MbFkKY>





There is knowledge gap and lack of understanding on various mountain and climate linked issues, while no adequate shared understanding and action plan are in place for the regional problems as a whole, and no map of potential risks..



Paying some incentives to communities for environmental services can provide an efficient mechanism for conservation, while also offering new sources of income to support rural livelihoods... by doing so, the rural communities ...will become stewards of the environment.. <http://bit.ly/JJcotI>

## Science-policy disconnect

It has been learned that in the Himalayan region there is a disconnected between science, policy and decision making. The region lacks coordinated and comprehensive research about the scale and extent of worsening changes, whereas the library of any such research on various aspects, wherever available, remains a great deal

academic, while policy implementations on various scientific and developmental fronts are largely disjointed. The situation aroused due to the research done in an uncoordinated manner while knowledge is not shared effectively in the region. There is sheer knowledge gap and lack of understanding on various mountain and climate linked

issues, while no adequate shared understanding and action plan are in place for the regional problems as a whole, and no map of potential risks. It is also evident that despite huge financial investment the results are deficient in making a difference due to inadequate planning, poor implementation and outreach actions.

<http://bit.ly/NCOBip>

## Discussion forum

The CHI team has been running a discussion forum that now has 5 major discussion topics of; Mountain Perspective, Government and Business partnership, Water resources and mountain communities- Business model, State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC) India and mountain bio-diversity and its protection.

On mountain perspective we got enriching comments, observations and questions like; On how many fronts mountains people are still 'remote'? Do we still have similar physical and biological fragility as we had 20 years back and what efforts have gone to overcome such situation? Do we still think that there is no need of fresh look in the

ongoing approach of mountain development and mountain perspective? If Einstein's theory can be subjected to scientific inquiry, there can be every reason to question the validity of 'mountain perspective'. Is there a replicable, scalable developmental model?

<http://bit.ly/LuJhvK>

## Green Economy: Shades

In CHI's Expert column our author writes that as the world braces to bring 'green economy' on the global agenda as an antidote to current climate negotiation imbroglio, mountain regions are being projected as a new growth opportunity with ecosystem valuation as the potential driver of change. Donor-funded projects are working overtime to amplify

the gains from small ecosystem services transactions into ambitious green pictures that are anything but unrealistic on the ground at this moment. Valuing 'natural capital' is fraught with dangerous uncertainties, something that its proponents have conveniently tried to overlook... putting price tag on natural services can open

a Pandora 's Box of conflicting situations. In the run up to the Rio+20 the world is likely to be painted green with optimism... should the developing world fall prey to the over-hyped but unsubstantiated gains from green economy projections is a billion-dollar question that must be asked! <http://bit.ly/MbFkKY>



## Mountain 2020 Campaign

The Climate Himalaya group observes an urgent need to highlight the voices of mountain people from Himalayan region and revisit the commitments made in chapter 13, agenda 21 of Rio 1992, to get it recognized and supported in all possible manner. Through this M-20 [Mountain 2011-2020], a policy advocacy campaign, we intend to develop a

compendium of people's voices, available knowledge, practices and rationale for much needed interventions towards climate vulnerabilities and adaptation. This ongoing long term campaign will highlight the need of mountain specific; research, planning, scientific communication, leadership development and developing models to build the

capacities of mountain people at local, national and regional level. The Youth Speak, Expert Speak and Guest Speak columns are the ongoing activities of under Climate Himalaya's M-20 campaign. As part of our Policy and Advocacy, a compilation of major outcome from these discussions will be sent to all focus country Government in the region.

<http://bit.ly/pAFJUA>



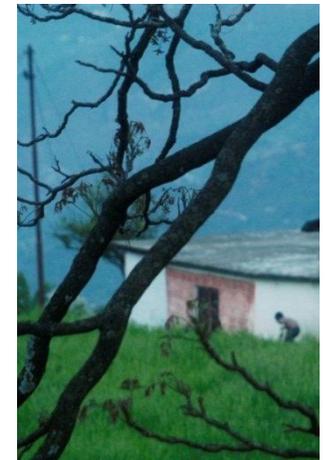
- Strengthen knowledge networking and sharing
- Working with potential leaders and youth groups towards awareness generation and policy advocacy
- Work on capacity development and community outreach actions
- Develop compendium of available best knowledge and networks

## Growing: disasters in mountains

At Youth speak column our authors write that disaster are far more dependent on the processes surrounding vulnerability, including deforestation, soil erosion, population growth, poor planning, coping capacities of population, climate, ... corruption to state a few. The flood in Pakistan proved that unless risk reduction

strategies are incorporated in the overall planning at the very grass root level, sustainable development would remain an elusive dream. <http://bit.ly/pp00Yx> When it becomes clear that the increasing risk of GLOFs is the outcome of a global trend in climate change and when it is known that the Hindu Kush Himalayan

Region has far too many retreating glaciers leaving far too many glacial lakes that may turn into GLOFs.. the most important aspect of risk reduction and mitigation measures becomes understanding of the scale and geophysics behind formation of GLOFs. <http://bit.ly/JJf5eI>



## Knowledge Platform

The Climate Himalaya team developed a knowledge sharing portal in year 2010, which by now it has over 4200 articles in 80 different categories and over 200 downloadable publications on climate change and mountain development issues, collected from various sources. The viewership of Climate Himalaya's (CHI) portal by now is over 2, 30,000, and it has a regular readership of

500+ per day mostly from South Asia and also from other parts of the world. Our readers mostly consist of internet users in Government, CSOs/NGOs, Research institutions, Universities, Donors, Bi-lateral and Multi-lateral organizations. The CHI portal is used mostly by individuals and agencies in planning, research, developing capacity building material among others. With

thematic areas like mountain ecosystem, water, forest and livelihood, the Climate Himalaya team innovates on knowledge sharing, capacity building and climate adaptation in its focus countries of Bhutan, India, Nepal and Pakistan. <http://bit.ly/KcPdJN>

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Fostering knowledge,  
innovation and adaptation in  
Himalayas

**Mountain Voice TV**

<http://bit.ly/KcPdJN>

**YouTube Channel**

<http://bit.ly/M3yOqg>

**Facebook**

<http://on.fb.me/M3z0G2>

## Re-writing mountain perspective

Discussions on the action plans for Rio+20 are underway, as in 1992 mountains were recognized in Chapter 13 in Agenda 21 that underscored the role of mountains in global sustainable development. There was a view called 'mountain perspective' defining mountains as 'fragile, remote and marginal', which

in present context needs to be re-visited and many arguments have been put forth by people at Climate Himalaya's discussion forum, which is ongoing. In his lead expression Dr. Sudhirendar Sharma says "If foregoing narration is any indication, it is time 'the mountain perspective' is rewritten because it has long been

'irrelevant'." "Had the mountain perspective been crafted around positive expressions, the approach to development would have definitely been different and it would have allowed people in the mountains to play to their strengths and set the agenda for their own 'development'.

<http://bit.ly/LuJhvK>

## About: Climate Himalaya

Recognizing the climatic changes and their impacts in Himalayan Mountains, Prakriti, a mountain environment group (est. 1997) based in Rudraprayag district of Uttarakhand, India founded a Pan-Himalayan initiative called 'Climate Himalaya' to divest its efforts in Climate Adaptation and Sustainable Mountain Development. The initiative was launched formally on June 5, at IIT Roorkee (Uttarakhand, India) on the occasion of World

Environment Day 2010 in partnership with Indian Water Resources Society (IWRS) and Times Foundation New Delhi, with the representation from Andes and Himalayan countries like Chile, India and Nepal. Started 2010, 'CHI' has become one important reference for governments, research institutions, civil society groups and international agencies having work and interest in the Himalayas.

With thematic areas like mountain ecosystem, water, forest and livelihood, the Climate Himalaya team innovates on knowledge sharing, capacity building and climate adaptation in its focus countries of Bhutan, India, Nepal and Pakistan. The vision of Climate Himalaya is to serve as a link between practice, science, policy and decision making towards climate change and sustainable mountain development.

**We're on the Web!**

See us at:

[www.chimalaya.org](http://www.chimalaya.org)

[www.climatehimalaya.net](http://www.climatehimalaya.net)

**Our Partners Network**