

## 2002 Tokyo declaration for the international year of mountains

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Following is the Declaration from the UNU International Symposium on Conservation of Mountain Ecosystems, held in Tokyo 1 February 2002.

We, the participants in the UNU International Symposium on the Conservation of Mountain Ecosystems, held in Tokyo (Japan) on 1 February 2002

1. Acknowledging with gratitude the United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/53/24 to declare the year 2002 as the International Year of Mountains, thus drawing the world's attention to the need to foster sustainable mountain development;
2. Recognizing that mountains are fragile ecosystems with unique natural and human resources as stipulated in Agenda 21, Chapter 13;
3. Noting with concern that human pressure on mountain resources from extraction of mineral resources, soil erosion, touristic exploitation, etc., continues to affect the mountain environment adversely, particularly with regard to endemic, rare and endangered species of wild fauna and flora in mountains and also depletes mineral resources;
4. Noting further with concern, that climate change can seriously affect water regimes in highlands as well as lowlands, which can pose problems with the quality and quantity of available freshwater resources for human consumption and agriculture and increase competition between different interest groups in which mountain dwellers are usually the disadvantaged members, leading to an increase in the potential vulnerability of mountain people;
5. Noting also that ca. 500 million people in mountains live below the poverty line (80% of the world's mountain population);
6. Recognizing that environmental management of mountains needs to take holistic approaches in conserving the environment, while at the same time providing sustainable incomes for mountain dwellers, including appropriate compensation for their services;
7. Affirming that scientific studies on mountain systems, management of natural resources and monitoring of mountain environments are essential for fostering sustainable development in line with conservation and development objectives;

8. Conscious that mountain dwellers, especially women, are the main stakeholders and often the true managers who ensure the sustainable development of mountain environments and participate in the utilization and management of mountain resources;
9. Conscious also that mountain dwellers safeguard important cultural diversity that needs to be maintained and allowed to evolve further in a world moving towards globalization;
10. Aware that there is a considerable gap in knowledge and perception of mountains between academia and the general public, for whom the mass media serve as the main source of information regarding mountains;
11. Aware also that mountains and areas under the influence of mountains accommodate and provide a livelihood not only for poor communities, as often perceived, but also for a significant proportion of the urban population of the world, whose resource consumption has a heavy impact on utilization and management of mountain resources; and
12. Realizing that mountains, including the human inhabitants and the natural environments in mountain areas, especially in developing countries, are highly susceptible to serious and increasing physical violence and destruction, for example from armed conflicts, due to their particular geographical features;

**Declare that:**

13. UNU should continue its work with mountain populations to appraise their situations, to identify gaps in knowledge, needs and constraints, and to help them work towards more sustainable development;
14. Every effort should be made to support mountain research and monitoring in the field of environmental conservation and sustainable mountain resource use;
15. Capacity-building and education targeted at all levels and segments of mountain populations and minorities traditionally dependent on mountain resources must be further strengthened so as to counteract the looming marginalization of mountain dwellers;
16. Cultural diversity in mountains needs to be maintained and developed, as it can be a powerful means for counteracting social, economic and environmental degradation in mountains;
17. Holistic and trans-disciplinary management schemes for environmental conservation and sustainable development be applied in mountain regions (as is the case in biosphere reserves);
18. More efforts should be made to disseminate proper and correct information to the public by working with the mass media as well as by improving the coordination of activities between researchers and practitioners;
19. Greater attention should be given to the urban aspect of mountains, through additional research and monitoring of highland-lowland interactions;

20. Empowerment of poor local communities, especially of women, should be supported in order to facilitate sustainable development of mountains in a self-supporting manner;
21. The issue of conflicts and resulting destruction of mountain ecosystems and livelihoods should receive more serious consideration from academia and policy-makers; and
22. The possibility of new approaches to mountain issues should be explored, for instance, by identifying hotspots and creating and discovering successful approaches applicable to different problems and contexts of sustainable mountain development.

We therefore call upon UNU, UNESCO, FAO, UNEP, UNDP and other concerned international and national organizations and NGOs to facilitate mountain research, monitoring, capacity-building, sustainable development, conservation of mountain ecosystems, and maintenance of cultural diversity in mountains so as to create linkages and synergies among mountain scientists, mountain communities, policy / decision-makers, practitioners and the general public.