



Mountain Partnership Steering Committee meeting

26 September 2024

15.00-16.30 CEST

Agenda

15.00 – 15.05 Opening and adoption of agenda

15.05 – 15.25 Update on the Mountain Partnership Secretariat's work in 2024 (for information)

- Update on recent and upcoming advocacy events in 2024
- Update on International Mountain Day 2024 preparations
- Update on the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation 2025
- Discussion

15.25 – 15.45 Preliminary discussion on International Mountain Day 2025 theme and plans (for discussion)

15.45 – 16.05 Preliminary discussion on the process to identify the location of the Seventh Mountain Partnership Global Meeting in 2026 (for discussion)

16.05 – 16.20 Reports from constituencies by Steering Committee members (for information and discussion)

16.20 – 16.30 Other matters, discussion and conclusions

Opening

Francesco Serpi, Mountain Partnership (MP) focal point of the Government of Italy and Chair of the MP Steering Committee (SC) opened the meeting and welcomed the participants to the SC meeting (see the participant list in Annex 1).

The agenda was adopted without changes.

Update on the Mountain Partnership Secretariat's work in 2024

Recent and Upcoming Advocacy Events, including COPs

Fabio Parisi, Mountain Partnership Secretariat (MPS), provided an update on the Secretariat's main activities, focusing on recent and upcoming advocacy events tied to the United Nations Rio Conventions:

- **CBD COP 16 (Cali, Colombia)**
 - 23 October 2024: Event "[Global Mountain Governance: Importance for Building Synergies between Biodiversity Conservation and Climate Change Adaptation](#)", organized by the Government of Colombia and the Andean Mountain Initiative.
 - 25 October 2024: Regional event presenting the Andean Mountain Initiative's Mountain Ecosystems Declaration.
- **UNFCCC COP 29 (Baku, Azerbaijan)**
 - An agenda item on "Facilitating dialogues on mountains and climate change" requested by the Government of Kyrgyzstan has been approved in the provisional agenda of COP 29.
 - 20 November 2024: Side event "Accelerating Climate Action for Mountains and Mountain People", co-organized by the Governments of Kyrgyzstan, Andorra and Bhutan as well as Karnali Integrated Rural Development and Research Centre and OIKOS Association.
 - 20 November 2024: Side event "Human Mobility and Climate Change in Mountain Areas", co-organized by International Organization of Migration (IOM) and the MPS.
- **UNCCD COP 16 (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia)**
 - 4 December 2024: Side event titled "Resilience of Mountain ecosystems in dryland areas and beyond" during the COP Land Day.

Discussion

- Maheshwar Dhakal, Government of Nepal, emphasized the importance of inviting a wide audience to upcoming COP events to enhance awareness and support mountain agenda issues, highlighting the significance of COP 30 in Brazil next year.
- Hugo Mantilla-Meluk, Centro de Estudios de Alta Montaña – CEAM, Colombia, advocated for unifying biodiversity and climate agendas to strengthen the impact of mountain-related issues, particularly in South America. This is an opportunity to restructure the global frameworks, prioritizing mountain systems, which have already been designated as strategic systems.
- Dinara Kemelova, Government of Kyrgyzstan, confirmed Kyrgyzstan's participation at CBD COP 16 and outlined plans to strengthen the focus on mountains at UNFCCC COP 29 with a high-level mountain event, a national pavilion dedicated to sustainable mountain development, and a Mountain Day in the pavilion. She highlighted the importance of parties joining the UNFCCC negotiating group “Group of Mountain Partnership”, which was formed last year ahead of UNFCCC COP 28. She also mentioned that Kyrgyzstan will propose turning the Expert Dialogue on Mountains and Climate Change into an annual event at the upcoming COP. Furthermore, they have shared the Declaration on Mountains with all FAO Member States and the United Nations Group of Friends of Mountains, which will be presented at COP 29. Kyrgyzstan invites all interested parties to sign the declaration ahead of COP 29.
- Francesco Serpi confirmed Italy's participation at the upcoming UNFCCC COP 29 and mentioned that the Italian government will have a pavilion.

Update on International Mountain Day 2024

Stefania Corrado, MPS, provided an update on the preparations for International Mountain Day (IMD) 2024, themed "Mountain Solutions for a Sustainable Future". Key updates included:

- The key message social media cards are being finalized in 6 UN languages.
- The preparations for the IMD 2024 publication, focusing on climate adaptation solutions in mountain regions, are underway.
- Preparations are in progress for a press release, an editorial and a short video on the ethical fashion project in Guatemala.
- Mountain Future Award: over 45 submissions have been received so far, and the event will recognize three winners, each receiving seed funding of USD 5 000 and project incubation support.
- IMD event at FAO Headquarters: the event will feature dynamic activities including a mountain product food tasting in collaboration with Slow Food (Montagna Madre) and the Mountain Future Award ceremony.

Discussion

- Mohamed Ddich, Coalition Civile pour la Montagne, Morocco, suggested incorporating climate finance into IMD 2024 to align with COP 29's theme on financial justice.

The Secretariat highlighted that the IMD theme is always a suggestion, and that countries, communities and organizations are welcome to celebrate IMD through a theme that is more relevant to them.

Update on the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation 2025

Sara Manuelli, MPS, provided an update on the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation (IYGP) 2025 as lead of the Task Force 1 for the Global Campaign for the Year. Key updates included:

- The outreach and communication strategy has been finalized.
- Key messages for the IYGP 2025 website are currently under review.
- A knowledge repository of scientific and educational materials is being developed.
- Names of potential Goodwill Ambassadors and youth champions are being collected.

Key events planned for 2025:

- 21 March: World Day for Glaciers
- 22 March: World Water Day
- May 2025: An international conference in Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Next Steps

The MPS will share the finalized key messages for IYGP 2025 with SC members once available.

Any SC member interested in joining an IYGP Task Force can send an email to Sara.Manuelli@fao.org and fill out this [Expression of Interest](#).

Discussion

- Hugo Mantilla-Meluk, CEAM, emphasized the need to raise awareness of glaciers' global significance and their connection to global water systems.
- Anvar J. Buzurukov, Tajik Social and Ecological Union, invited international scientists to join Tajikistan's glacier research expeditions.
- Francisco Magliano, Dirección de Asuntos Ambientales (DIGMA), Government of Argentina, requested to receive more information on the work of Task Force 1.

Preliminary discussion on International Mountain Day 2025 theme and plans

Sara Manuelli, MPS, presented past IMD themes and highlighted significant upcoming UN events, in particular IYGP 2025. After a discussion, the SC decided that the theme for IMD 2025 would focus on glaciers as a contribution to the IYGP 2025, recognizing their importance as indicators of climate change, providers of water resources and for their role in cultural heritage.

Discussion

- Hugo Mantilla-Meluk, CEAM, suggested broadening the theme to ensure it resonates with countries that do not have glaciers. He underlined how glaciers should not be understood as isolated entities, but rather as sensor systems that reflect global issues related to water regulation. Therefore, the main message to be conveyed is that the responsibility for their conservation is global.
- Maheshwar Dhakal, Nepal, supported the decision while emphasizing the importance of inclusivity in the messaging.

Preliminary discussion on the process to identify the location of the Seventh Mountain Partnership Global Meeting in 2026

Rosalaura Romeo, MPS, outlined the process for selecting the host country for the 7th Mountain Partnership Global Meeting, expected to take place in the fall of 2026. Key steps include:

- The message inviting the MP members to express their interest to host the next MP Global Meeting will be shared with MP members, with a deadline of 30 November 2024 for replying.
- The received proposals will be presented to the SC in February 2025.
- The final decision will be made by the SC in April or May 2025.

Key considerations for hosting include:

- proximity to an international airport;
- involvement of the host country in receiving high-level participants and logistical needs;
- availability of meeting facilities for about 300 people; and
- in-kind and cash contributions to cover travel and on-site costs.

Next Steps

The MPS will open a call for the expressions of interest with all MP members. The application deadline will be 30 November 2024.

Discussion

- MPS clarified that the financial responsibility of the Global Meeting mainly falls on the host country and/or organization.
- Juan Carlos Vasquez Murillo, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), proposed the Global South, particularly Africa or Southeast Asia, as a potential region and suggested aligning the meeting with the 2027 Bishkek Mountain Summit.
- Karinjo DeVore, Aspen International Mountain Foundation (AIMF), mentioned that the Government of Bhutan may be interested in hosting the Global Meeting.

Reports from constituencies by SC members

- Juan Carlos Vasquez Murillo, UNEP, announced the first global workshop on plastic waste in mountains scheduled for November 2024
- Karinjo DeVore, AIMF, highlighted that she was present with the Secretariat at the Third High-level International Conference on the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028" which included a high-level event on the IYGP 2025 as well as an event held by IOM in cooperation with the Tajik Agency for Hydrometeorology of the Committee for Environmental Protection on "Human mobility in the context of climate change in mountainous areas – facts, gaps and priorities".
- Anvar J. Buzurukov, Tajik Social and Ecological Union, provided an update on a project with the National Glacier Center and Tajik Geographical Society to establish an International Glacial Polygon. He announced that next year they will conduct an International Youth Expedition and invited people from around the world to contact him if they want to participate.
- Francisco Magliano, Argentina, reported on the Andean Mountain Initiative's goal to improve access to international funding.

Other matters, discussion, and conclusions

In conclusion, Francesco Serpi thanked the MPS and the SC. The Secretariat was tasked with preparing the summary of the SC meeting summary and then sharing the call for Expressions of Interest for the next MP Global Meeting.

Annex 1: Participants' list

Steering Committee members

Donor Organizations to the Mountain Partnership Secretariat (MPS)

Francesco Serpi, Italy (**Chair**)

Governments

Asia and the Pacific – Maheshwar Dhakal, Nepal

Central Asia – Dinara Kemelova, Kyrgyzstan

Europe – Silvia Ferrer, Andorra

Near East & North Africa – Farooq Taleb Ali Nasser, Yemen

North & Central America and the Caribbean – Julia Vicioso, Dominican Republic (**Vice Chair**)

South America – Geanlu Walter Reyes Vera, Peru; Francisco Luis Javier Magliano, Argentina (alternate)

Sub-Saharan Africa – Macpherson Nthara and Boniface Chimwaza, Malawi; Maureen Anino, Uganda (alternate)

Host Institution of the MPS

Ewald Rametsteiner, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Intergovernmental Organizations

Juan Vasquez and Matthias Jurek, United Nations Environment Programme

Major Group Organizations

Asia and the Pacific – Gobinda Bahadur Shahi, Karnali Integrated Rural Development and Research Centre (**Vice Chair**)

Central Asia – Anvar J Buzurukov, Tajik Social and Ecological Union

Europe – Simão Pedro Pinho, Euromontana/Centro de Investigação de Montanha

Global Civil Society Organizations – Laurent Fouinat, GRID-Arendal

Near East and North Africa – Mohamed Ddich, Coalition Civile pour la Montagne

North & Central America and the Caribbean – Karinjo Devore, Aspen International Mountain Foundation

South America – Hugo Mantilla-Meluk, Centro de Estudios de Alta Montaña

Absent Steering Committee members

Major Group Organizations

Sub-Saharan Africa – Foundation for Environment and Development

Observers

Alpine Convention

Raphaël Lelouvier

Aspen International Mountain Foundation

Margi Levitt

Mountain Partnership Secretariat

Valeria Barchiesi

Arianna Bartolozzi

Stefania Corrado

Giorgio Grussu

Sara Manuelli

Fabio Parisi

Cristina Raniolo

Rosalaura Romeo

Laura Russo

Antonella Sorrentino

Charlotte Wayaffe