

Achievements from COP15 side-event:

The Mountain Futures Action Plan

For Future Mountains in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

Vision

As one of the most important terrestrial ecosystems, the health of mountains is connected to the health and future well-being of all people. Recognizing that the most important factors affecting mountain biological and cultural diversity are conservation and development policies and the expansion of regional, national, and international markets, the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, together with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Mountain Partnership, the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) launched the Mountain Future Initiative in 2016. Mountain Futures ought to offer strong support to indigenous peoples and local communities as they strive to use, nurture, and sustain diverse mountain landscapes in which they live and on which they depend. It promotes indigenous people and landscapes by enhancing the diversity, stability, and sustainability of mountain ecosystems, and providing sustainable solutions for mountain dwellers to build a shared future for all life on Earth.

Building on the UN Agenda 21 actions for managing mountain ecosystems, Mountain Futures supports the theme of “Ecological Civilization: Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth” and the “Kunming Declaration”, the vision of the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Mountain Futures delegates participated in the COP15 Montreal side event “Future Mountains in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework”. Participants recognized that the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) presents a good opportunity to promote innovative actions for biodiversity conservation and rural revitalization in mountain communities. The delegates discussed and unanimously agreed on a Mountain Futures Action Plan with a vision, principles, and a set of actions to improve ecological protection and green

development in mountain communities.

This Mountain Futures Action Plan focuses on five principles, four action areas, and 15 actions all linked to the “Kunming Declaration” including: the sustainable use of biodiversity (Item 6); ecological health and ecological restoration (Item 10); full and effective participation of indigenous peoples, local communities, and other relevant stakeholders (Item 15); and public education, economic transformation, and sustainable lifeways change (Item 16).

Principles

1. The principle of precautionary development: This basic principle means that no activity should be undertaken that may have negative impacts on indigenous and local communities. Joint ethnoecology research by scientists and indigenous peoples should be encouraged.
2. The principle of holistic thinking: There is an inextricable link between biological and cultural diversity. Respect for indigenous ecological civilization and holistic thinking, representing “Harmony among the heaven, earth and mankind” is recognized.
3. The principle of secured rights: The health of mountain ecosystems is inextricably linked to the development rights of indigenous communities. Their rights to a clean, safe, and healthy environment, traditional knowledge of genetic resources, and mechanisms for access and benefit-sharing should be protected.
4. The principle of co-innovation: Mountain farming systems are the cornerstone to building ecological civilization. Indigenous and local communities must be assisted to develop multi-functional products based on traditional farming systems. Urban-rural innovation links across cultures and regions should be established, and the self-development capacity of local communities must be supported.
5. The principle of green and low-carbon development: There is a strong synergy between biodiversity and green, low carbon development. Biodiversity mainstreaming and urban consumer behaviors are critical to conserve biological diversity in global mountains. Based on values of indigenous people, everything is interconnected, and cross-generation cultural heritage and cross-cultural cooperation and exchanges should be strengthened to support a green and carbon-neutral community of shared life.

Actions

Scientific exploration: Use an ecosystem-based approach and transdisciplinary research to explore mountain futures

1. **COLLECT** data related to biological and cultural diversity in mountain ecosystems to fill gaps between local project design/needs and national/GBF targets.
2. **EVALUATE** impacts of global change (including climate change) on endemic, endangered species, and economic plants, and connect local monitoring to national/GBF quantitative measures.
3. **DEFINE** the keystone role of fungi in global mountains to develop soil solutions and create holistic conservation strategies that address climate change, biodiversity loss and food security.
4. **EMPLOY** ecosystem-based management to emphasize interconnections of multiple species, and the role of microbes in ecosystem functioning and human health such as COVID and SARs.

Ecological restoration: Use landscape approach and agroforestry systems for ecological restoration

5. **IDENTIFY** critical areas from global mountains including tropical savannah, high altitude lakes and wetlands, tropical mountains, degraded karst landscapes and mining sites. The International Centre for Mountain Futures will be established in partnership with the Belt and Road Green Development International Alliance.
6. **DESIGN** using a landscape approach and agroforestry systems for restoration around protected areas with corridors that maintain local agricultural and other practices and highlighting projects that protect waters.
7. **LINK** carbon sequestration and biodiversity enhancement to identify where multiple wins are located while protecting local agriculture/biodiversity/waters/carbon sequestration.
8. **EXPLORE** innovative biotechnology for biodegradation of plastics and accelerated restoration.

Indigenous wisdom: Apply ethnobiological approach for developing culture and community-based solutions

9. **STRENGTHEN** research on medicinal ethnobotany, establish the Traditional Medicinal Botanical Gardens such as Himalaya Tibetan Medicine Botanic Garden, and carry out cross-cultural exchanges and cooperation for integrated One Health or EcoHealth.

10. **CONDUCT** ethnoecological surveys based on traditional ecological knowledge, that help define what local OECMs might look like following the GBF definition, and (in China) **ENCOURAGE** scientific and traditional knowledge development to support implementation of the Ecological Red Line system.
11. **PROTECT** cultural landscapes and Globally Important Agricultural/Natural Heritage Systems. Based on existing heritage systems such as the Honghe Hani Rice Terraces, foster exchange and cooperation to strengthen eco-circular agriculture.
12. **SUPPORT** participatory technology development for biological conservation and livelihood development including biological-based local handicrafts and intangible cultural heritage.

Future living: Use public engagement to encourage behavior change for interconnections for all lifes?

13. **PROMOTE** integration of biodiversity-centered science, arts and culture, intercultural communication, and south-south collaboration.
14. **ESTABLISH** an International Center of Savannah Natural Fiber, support the China model of ecological poverty alleviation, develop indicators and certification (ethical trade, low carbon, biodiversity, quality of life) for mountain products using green supply chains.
15. **DEVELOP** local circular agricultural systems and promote regional projects that demonstrate a biomass-based circular economy and reduced petroleum-based plastic pollution while protecting high-plateau lakes, mountain watersheds and river systems.