



Managing Mountains for Ecological Services and Environmental Security

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The Challenge

- **Control greenhouse gas emissions.**
- **Preserve functions we expect mountains to serve**
 - **water towers for**
 - downstream populations (irrigation, industry, hydropower, and freshwater)
 - lower elevation ecosystems
 - carbon sequestration and climate regulation, and
 - preserving biological diversity
- **What would it take to get serious focus, resources and attention?**

in the absence of a will for action

- ***issue a declaration***
- ***hold a conference***
- ***form a committee***

Problem is: there have been plenty of all of these.

Paved with Good Intentions: Existing Declarations, Resolutions, Statements, Organizations; Relevant Parts of Other Conventions

- UIAA (International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation) (**preserving** mountain environments)
 - General Assembly –Environmental Objectives and Guidelines (“**the enormous value of mountain areas** as reservoirs of biological diversity... spectacular natural phenomena associated with climate and geology..... often the source of products essential to humankind as a whole”)
 - Kathmandu Declaration, October 1982 (**urgent need** for effective protection of the mountain environment and landscape; The flora, fauna and natural resources of all kinds **need immediate attention, care and concern.**)
 - Declaration of Caceres, May 1995 (free mountain access to continue practicing sports activities in a responsible way, in keeping with UIAA guidelines)
 - Resolution on Climate Change, October 2006
 - General Assembly Mountain Ethics Declaration, October 2009 (“..practice our activities in an **environmentally sensitive way** ..be proactive in **preserving nature and the landscape.**”)
- Tyrol Declaration (Future of Mountain Sports Conference, September 2002) (“Protect the wild and natural character of mountains and cliffs; Support local communities and their **sustainable development.**”)
- Mountain Wilderness – (wilderness values include **promote environmental sensitivity** among young people, “foster naturally and culturally **respectful development of mountain regions**, ... ensure **sustainable future** for those who choose to live there.”)
 - Biella Thesis – influx of expeditions causing **degradation** of Alps and other ranges , **destabilizing** effect on traditional societies unprepared to deal with them.
- Statement by Group of Mountain Wilderness Guarantors – May 2009 (mountaineering safety)
- FEDME 2005 seminar: Contribution of Mountaineering to Sustainable Development in the Natural Environment
- Declaration of Gredos , Congress of Mountain Professionals working in Protected Natural Areas , May 2008 (climate change impacts: freshwater to half the world’s population, exposure to multiple risks; harbor threatened global biodiversity; home to people subject to food insecurity).
- UN Conference on Environment and Development, Chapter 13, Agenda 21, Rio, 1992: role of mountains in global sustainable development
- International Year of Mountains (2002) →Johannesburg Plan of Implementation & establishment of Mountain Forum and Mountain Partnership (references poverty, vulnerability and economic and social insecurity, and climate change)
- International Conference on Green Economy and Sustainable Mountain Development, Kathmandu, September 2011.
- Relevant parts of other conventions:
 - Convention to Combat Desertification
 - Convention on Biological Diversity
 - Framework Convention on Climate Change (references special vulnerability of “fragile mountain ecosystems.”)
 - 1972 World Heritage Convention
 - 1968 African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
 - Regionally specific agreements (Alpine Convention, draft agreements on Altai range, Caucasus, Carpathian.

Do We Need a Mountain Convention?

- Yes: global focus for global problem
- No:
 - long timetable for negotiation;
 - Inevitably, too many issues get joined;
 - likelihood of US ratification is remote;
 - negotiation process becomes a lightning rod
 - poor track record of actual change coming out of vast body of international environmental agreements

The Argument for Bottom Up, Looser Alliances and Experience Sharing

yes

- More nimble
- Smaller failures are not catastrophic
- Potential to build unlikely coalitions & alliances

No

- Belief in need for comprehensive solutions
- Funders tend to like “big”