

Section 2 : Conservation and Management of Resources for Development

Chapter 13 : Managing fragile ecosystems: sustainable mountain development

Mountains are an important source of water, energy and biological diversity. Furthermore, they are a source of such key resources as minerals, forest products and agricultural products and of recreation. As a major ecosystem representing the complex and interrelated ecology of our planet, mountain environments are essential to the survival of the global ecosystem. Mountain ecosystems are, however, rapidly changing. They are susceptible to accelerated soil erosion, landslides and rapid loss of habitat and genetic diversity.

A. Strengthening knowledge about the ecology and sustainable development of mountain ecosystems

Activities

Governments should:

- undertake surveys of different forms of soils, forest, water use, crop, plant and animal resources to facilitate the integrated management and environmental assessment of mountain ecosystems
- strengthen institutions to generate a multidisciplinary land/water ecological knowledge based on mountain ecosystems
- promote the use of environmentally friendly technologies, farming practices and conservation measures by local people
- exchange information about technologies and agricultural and conservation practices in the mountain regions of the world
- encourage policies to provide incentives to farmers and local people to undertake conservation and regenerative measures
- diversify mountain economies by promoting sustainable tourism
- establish natural reserves in appropriate sites and areas.

B. Integrated Watershed Management

Activities

Governments should:

- develop appropriate landuse planning and management in watershed areas to prevent soil erosion and maintain the ecological balance
- promote sustainable income generating activities and alternative livelihoods
- enhance popular participation in the management of local resources

- provide incentives for conservation measures by local communities.