



MESSAGE FROM MR. BRAULIO F. DE SOUZA DIAS

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

On the occasion of

INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN DAY 2012

CELEBRATING MOUNTAIN LIFE

Mountain environments support a great diversity of habitat types and species, many of which are endemic. Spectacular mountain landscapes are home to charismatic species including mountain gorilla, llama, big horn sheep, snow leopard and Bengal tiger, and staple food crops including rice and potatoes, and crop wild relatives including mustard, cardamom and pumpkin. Mountain ecosystems cover about 27 percent of the world's land surface, and provide key resources and services to 22 per cent of the world's population living in mountain and lowland ecosystems. These resources and services include timber, food products and medicinal plants, and recreation. Further, more than half of mankind benefits from the fresh water filtered by mountains. Today on International Mountain Day 2012, we celebrate the wonderful complexity, and the vital necessity of mountain life.

Conservation and sustainable use of the biodiversity of mountain ecosystems is essential to maintain the ecosystem services on which mountain communities and others rely. For example, the loss of mountain plant diversity can be economically devastating resulting in loss of livelihoods, damage to access corridors, and degradation of water quality. Mountain biodiversity suffers from threats such as the effects of climate change, poverty, commercial mining, logging and poaching. The strongest guardians against the threats to mountain ecosystems are often the indigenous and local communities who inhabit them and who depend most directly on the resources they provide. These peoples nurture and pass on rich cultural heritage and management practices allowing them to continue to use resources sustainably by maintaining a balance between the needs of communities and what ecosystems can provide. As such, they are key allies in the quest to conserve biodiversity.

Within the CBD programme of work on mountain biological diversity, Parties have committed to promoting sustainable land-use practices, techniques and technologies, including those of indigenous and local communities and community-based management systems, for the conservation and sustainable use (including pastoralism, hunting and fishing) of mountain biodiversity including agro-biodiversity. Parties also committed to supporting the activities of indigenous and local communities involved in the use of traditional mountain-related knowledge, in particular concerning sustainable management of biodiversity, soil, water resources and slope and to promote partnerships between all stakeholders, including indigenous and local communities, involved in the sustainable use of mountain biodiversity. These actions, if



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implemented, would greatly contribute to Parties' efforts toward achieving multiple Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

This December 11, International Mountain Day 2012, let us join together and celebrate the richness of life in mountain ecosystems and pledge to work together toward the conservation, sustainable use and equitable sharing of the benefits of its biodiversity.

The CBD Programme of Work on Mountain Biological Diversity aims to conserve, sustainably use and equitably share the benefits of mountain biological diversity and its effective implementation is of paramount importance for sustainable development in mountain ecosystems. More information is available on the CBD website <http://www.cbd.int/mountain/>.

In 2003 the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 11 December as "International Mountain Day" (IMD) and mandated the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) as the lead agency to observe IMD. In this capacity, FAO has developed information and communication material to celebrate IMD. This material is available for downloading at the special website dedicated to IMD at http://www.fao.org/mnts/intl_mountain_day_en.asp.