

## Summary of the Sixth Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership: 27-29 September 2022

Mountains cover about 27 percent of the Earth’s land area and provide ecosystem services, such as stabilizing slopes, regulating the climate and hydrological cycles, and supporting livelihoods, to billions of people. They host about half of the world’s biodiversity hotspots and 30 percent of all key biodiversity areas, as well as vital genetic resources for locally adapted crops and livestock. Mountain destinations attract about 15-20 percent of global tourism, which can play a key role in valuing and protecting the natural and spiritual heritage of mountains. Mountains also play an important role in providing renewable energy, especially through hydropower, and solar and wind power. Investing in the building of sustainable infrastructure, including roads and trains, is critical for sustainable mountain development.

However, climate change is negatively impacting food security, agriculture, and the provision of ecosystem services across many different mountainous regions worldwide. Climate-related hazards, such as flash floods, wildfires, and landslides, have contributed to an increase in disasters, affecting a growing number of people in mountain regions and further downstream. One out of two rural mountain people in developing countries is vulnerable to food insecurity. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions adopted by countries to respond to it have amplified existing vulnerabilities of mountain communities, whose livelihoods rely mostly on agriculture, tourism, and remittances. Thus, action to respond to these critical issues and challenges facing mountain peoples and ecosystems is critical.

To further address some of the challenges facing mountain ecosystems and communities, the Sixth Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership convened under the overarching theme, “Mountains Matter: Ideas to Action/Building Alliances for Resilient Mountains.” With the overall objective of promoting sustainable mountain development, the meeting discussed the agenda for the Mountain Partnership going forward, advocating for bringing mountain-related issues to the fore and the core of relevant international processes, as well as for action on the ground.

The meeting was organized around plenary sessions that included panel discussions and special presentations, while



Buffalo Child, member of the Cree and Nakota Nations, conducts a blessing ceremony.

numerous side events ran in the afternoon. The meeting elected a new Steering Committee for the Mountain Partnership, updated several of the Mountain Partnership’s strategy documents, and endorsed the Aspen Declaration.

The meeting took place from 27-29 September 2022, in Aspen, Colorado, United States, with over 200 participants attending. It

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Torre, Mayor of Aspen

was the main event of the United Nations International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development 2022 (IYSMD). The meeting was organized and hosted by the Aspen International Mountain Foundation (AIMF), and co-hosted by the State of Colorado, the City of Aspen, and the Aspen Institute.

### A Brief History of Sustainable Mountain Development

**UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), Rio+20, and the SDGs:** The first major international decision to address the issue of mountains and mountain regions was at UNCED, also known as the Earth Summit, held in June 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Chapter 13 of the main UNCED outcome, Agenda 21, is dedicated to mountains and recognizes the important ecological, economic, and social functions of, and services provided by, mountain regions. Chapter 13 also makes several recommendations, including: promoting erosion control; promoting alternative livelihoods; developing early warning systems and disaster-response teams for hazardous areas; and building expertise on mountain ecosystems.

In June 2012, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, also known as Rio+20, adopted the outcome document, [The Future We Want](#), which includes specific references to mountains.

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15 (life on land), adopted in 2015, addresses the need to “Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.” The first target under SDG 15 explicitly mentions mountains among the ecosystems to be conserved, restored, and sustainably used in line with international agreements.

**The Mountain Partnership:** The Mountain Partnership, founded by the Governments of Italy and Switzerland, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), was launched in 2002 at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The first Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership, held in Merano, Italy, from 5-6 October 2003, identified common needs, priorities, and concerns among mountain countries, and explored key issues related to the structure, membership, and governance of the Partnership.

The second Global Meeting took place in Cusco, Peru, from 28-29 October 2004. It reviewed progress and charted the future

course of the Mountain Partnership and its dynamic core, the “Partnership Initiatives.” Participants endorsed the governance of the Partnership set out in the Partnership’s Organization Membership and Governance document and affirmed their collective commitment to the goals of sustainable mountain development.

The third Global Meeting convened in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on Tuesday, 19 June 2012, on the sidelines of the Rio+20 Summit, and shared lessons and best practices from joint action over the past ten years. The meeting also considered future cooperative efforts of the Mountain Partnership on a synergistic, inclusive, and committed foundation.

The fourth Global Meeting took place in Erzurum, Turkey from 17-19 October 2013. Participants addressed: the new Mountain Partnership Strategy and Governance; mountains in the 2030 agenda for sustainable development; the Mountain Forum knowledge platform for sustainable mountain development; regional coordination mechanisms; and selection of the Steering Committee.

The fifth Global Meeting convened in Rome, Italy, from 11-13 December 2017, on the 15th anniversary of the Mountain Partnership. Discussions highlighted challenges to be addressed in the Partnership’s Framework for Action, including: the relationship between mountains and climate change; disaster risk management; food and water provisioning; mountain goods and services; mountain communities and migration; and links to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**World Mountain Forum (WMF):** The first WMF took place under the overall framework of the Mountain Partnership, during the Lucerne World Mountain Conference, held from 11-12 October 2011 in Lucerne, Switzerland. Delegates adopted a plan of action to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable mountain development.

The second WMF took place from 22-24 May 2014 in Cusco, Peru. The Forum showcased available local, regional, and global experiences in mountain development, and identified opportunities and challenges for global sustainable mountain development, with a focus on water and food security, sustainable investment, and climate change adaptation.

The third WMF convened from 17-20 October 2016 in Mbale, Uganda, under the theme, “Mountains for our Future,” and was preceded by the Special Africa Mountains Event that highlighted key issues affecting mountain ecosystems and communities in Africa. The Forum adopted the Mbale Call for Scaling Up Action, themed, “Don’t leave the mountains behind,” aimed at galvanizing work on the ground and guiding mountain-related interventions in relevant international policy processes, including the Paris Agreement on climate change and mountain-related targets under the SDGs.

The fourth WMF took place from 23-26 October 2018, in Bishkek, the Kyrgyz Republic, and addressed the overarching theme, “Mountains in a Changing World: Strengthening Partnerships and Pathways Towards a Thriving Mountain Future.” Discussions focused on three overarching topics: current trends and dynamics; pathways towards a sustainable mountain future; and partnerships and alliances to advance sustainable mountain development. Delegates adopted the conference outcome document titled “A Call for Mountains.”



Rosalaura Romeo, Mountain Partnership Secretariat

## Report of the Sixth Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership

On Tuesday morning, Rosalaura Romeo, Programme Coordinator, Mountain Partnership Secretariat, welcomed delegates to the Sixth Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership, stressing its role in shaping the agenda for the next four years.

Noting his city is the first to host this global meeting in North America, Torre, Mayor of Aspen, explained that protecting mountain environments is key to ensuring his city's identity.

The meeting then officially opened with a blessing ceremony by Buffalo Child, member of the Cree and Nakota Nations. Arjun Gupta, Mountain Partnership Goodwill Ambassador, underscored the sacred mission delegates have to protect mountain environments.

Jared Polis, Governor of Colorado, stressed the importance of protecting mountain environments and highlighted Colorado's commitment to renewable energy, efforts in water conservation, and the protection of public lands. He identified the need for partnerships across public and private sectors to preserve mountain environments and the communities they support.

Rick Miranda, Interim President, Colorado State University, emphasized the role of children and youth as the future custodians of mountains, and the importance of empowering the next generation to address climate change and other issues faced by mountain communities.



Jake Norton, President of MountainWorld Productions, Mountain Partnership Goodwill Ambassador

## High-Level Opening Statements

Jake Norton, Mountain Partnership Goodwill Ambassador, moderated this session and presented the official video of the Sixth Meeting of the Mountain Partnership.

Silvia Calvó Armengol, Minister of Environment, Agriculture and Sustainability, Andorra, stressed the role of mountains as centers of biodiversity and welcomed the work of the Mountain Partnership in carrying this message about the importance of mountains to the international level.

Richard James Randriamandrato, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Madagascar, expressed his commitment to the Mountain Partnership and the UN's work on ecosystem restoration, noting issues with erosion and deforestation in mountain areas.

Sam Mangusho Cheptoris, Minister of Water and Environment, Uganda, noted mountains are often transboundary and can contribute to food security and employment creation. He urged increased use of Indigenous knowledge to preserve mountains. He and others thanked the Kyrgyz Republic for presenting the resolution to have 2022 declared the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development (IYSMD).

Igli Hasani, Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), explained that mountain regions often suffer from the impacts of conflicts with many security implications connected to them. He urged effective management of the respective ecosystems and international solidarity.

Pem Narayan Kandel, Secretary, Ministry of Forests and Environment, Nepal, called for stepping up international action to protect mountains, which are increasingly affected by natural disasters causing huge losses to ecosystems.

Recognizing that 27 September is World Tourism Day, Zoritsa Urošević, Executive Director, World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), said tourism can be a driver of wealth creation in mountain areas and help build resilience.

Livio Spadavecchia, Counselor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Italy, highlighted the benefits mountains can provide for sustainable development. He appreciated the role of this global meeting in fostering dialogue, building cooperation, and strengthening local communities to attract investors.

François Pythoud, Special Envoy for International Sustainable Agriculture, Switzerland, emphasized his country's commitment to promoting sustainable mountain development at all levels to improve living conditions, the resilience of mountain populations, and the sustainability of ecosystems services. He emphasized the need for a multi-stakeholder platform to initiate action for the sustainable development of mountain regions that leaves no one behind.

Doreen Robinson, Head of Biodiversity and Land, UNEP, noted mountains account for many of the world's biodiversity centers, and are key to solving the biodiversity crisis. She underscored overconsumption, pollution, and environmental degradation as key problems facing mountain communities.

Thomas Hofer, Senior Forestry Officer, FAO, urged participants to build on existing work. He emphasised the need



**Nurlan Aitmurzaev**, Special Envoy of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic on Mountain Issues

to promote gender equality, social justice, and the livelihoods of mountain communities.

In a presentation on the agenda and on the Aspen Declaration, Rosalaura Romeo, Mountain Partnership Secretariat, described the process for developing the Declaration, and underscored the importance of the framework for guiding action over the next four years.

### ***Celebration of IYSMD 2022***

In a statement, Dinara Kutmanova, Minister of Natural Resources, Environment and Technical Supervision, Kyrgyz Republic, stressed mountain ecosystems are important sources of water, energy and mineral resources, and biological diversity in addition to places for recreation and tourism. The statement underscored the global meeting as an opportunity to discuss national and collective approaches to preserving mountain ecosystems.

Nurlan Aitmurzaev, Special Envoy of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic on Mountain Issues, stated that a main goal during the IYSMD is to declare 2023-2027 as the “Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions.” He said that among the proposed initiatives during these years is: implementation of a development fund for mountain countries; development of special programmes in such areas as preservation of mountain forests and preventing disaster risks in mountain regions; and establishing a global mountain university.

### ***Stepping Up the Mountain Agenda: Priorities and Challenges***

Four panel discussions took place on this issue on Tuesday. The panels addressed climate action, ecosystem restoration and protection, building sustainable mountain food systems and resilient livelihoods, and financing opportunities.

**Climate Action:** This panel was moderated by Morgan Saeg, Global Mountains Director, International Cryosphere Climate Initiative, who noted the acute impacts of climate change on mountain areas, how it negatively effects many people, and the need to step up adaptation.

Minister Randriamandrato, Madagascar, pointed to the increasing frequency of disasters, said several countries carry a

greater responsibility for climate change, and urged support for local action to address specific issues and sharing best practices.

Marc Rossell Soler, Secretary of State for Agriculture and Sustainability, Andorra, said as a micro-state, Andorra is only responsible for 0.01% of global emissions, yet is still very vulnerable to climate change, which has motivated them to take action at the national and international levels.

OSCE Coordinator Hasani explained: how regional cooperation is at the heart of addressing climate change and adaptation; how they work together to gain a joint understanding of the connections between climate change and security; and how to identify regional cooperation activities.

Basanta Raj Shrestha, Director of Strategic Cooperation, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, talked about his organization’s work in the Hindu Kush, which brings together agencies through a river basin-based approach to transboundary cooperation. He said access to water is a fundamental challenge with many springs drying out and called for urgent action in this regard.

Ana Vukoje, Associate Programme Officer, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), identified entry points for raising the profile of mountains in the UNFCCC negotiations, such as through the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change, which addresses knowledge gaps, and through expert groups, which can influence thematic foci.

**Ecosystem Restoration and Protection:** This session was moderated by Thomas Hofer, FAO. Adriana Vidal, Senior Policy Officer, International Union for Conservation of Nature, noted mountain ecosystems are home to some of the most marginalized peoples on Earth and that ecosystem restoration is highly related to the development of local communities and people.

Julia Vicioso, Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to FAO, said her country’s efforts, including public-private partnerships, to incentivize the production and certification of organic products helps protect local ecosystems, promote sustainable livelihoods for farmers, and support ecotourism in the region.



**Sam Mangusho Cheptoris**, Minister of Water and Environment, Uganda



Building sustainable mountain food systems and resilient livelihoods with (L-R): moderator **Giorgio Grussu**, Mountain Partnership Secretariat; **Patricia Breuer Moreno**, Mujeres a la Cumbre and Mountain Women of the World Network; **François Pythoud**, Special Envoy for International Sustainable Agriculture, Switzerland; and **Federico Mattei**, Slow Food.

Minister Cheptoris, Uganda, outlined his country's policy and legal frameworks related to ecosystem restoration and protection, explaining that natural resources are protected as citizen assets in Uganda's constitution.

Doreen Robinson, UNEP, drew attention to the unique characteristics of mountain environments making ecosystem restoration and protection difficult, including altitude, upward movement of species, heavy use of resources, and their role in the hydrological cycle. She urged the continual exchange of ideas and best practices and the mobilization of more resources to scale up impact.

**Building Sustainable Mountain Food Systems and Resilient Livelihoods:** This panel was moderated by Giorgio Grussu, Mountain Partnership Secretariat, who announced the launch of the policy brief on [Inclusive and resilient mountain food systems: Opportunities and best practices](#). Special Envoy Pythoud pointed to the potential for productivity improvement in mountain agriculture, supporting small-scale framers and small- and medium-sized enterprises in mountains.

Michel Julian, Senior Officer, Tourism Market Intelligence and Competitiveness, UNWTO, said communities will be at the center of the transformation of tourism into a more resilient sector and that it can be an important economic source for mountain areas, especially for youth and women. He noted tourism is looking for authentic experiences and can help preserve traditional heritage and biodiversity.

Patricia Breuer Moreno, Co-Founder, Mujeres a la Cumbre, said her organization, based in Argentina, is a social enterprise bringing women to mountains, where the learning experiences are co-designed with local women. She said their work has empowered women in mountain areas to become leaders and certified guides.

Federico Mattei, Project Development Manager, Slow Food, stressed the importance of taking into account the complexity of multi-stakeholder platforms without making it too complicated and taking simple actions on the ground.

Participants then posed questions and commented on: the importance of maintaining traditional means of production and keeping the next generations in mountain areas through diversified activities; challenges from climate change and pollution; the need to consider the uses of Indigenous Peoples living in protected areas; focusing on organic agriculture not mass production; and sharing best practices.

**Financing Opportunities:** This session was moderated by Yoko Watanabe, Global Manager, Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Paola Agostini, Lead Natural Resources Management Specialist, World Bank, said mountains are paying a very high price for climate change and the cost of inaction in certain regions is over 10%, almost double the cost in the lowlands. She noted the gap in financing mountain and ecosystem restoration is related to policy issues and subsidies that go against sustainable mountain development. She also emphasized financing is a long-term process, often starting with initiative funds and, finally, payment for results.

Gloria Schoch, Senior Director of Global Impact, VF Foundation and Corporation, a global leader in the apparel market, pointed to the power of collaboration with the private sector, including to promote standards for regenerative agriculture and support for local communities.

Giorgio Grussu, Mountain Partnership Secretariat, reported on its [Mountain Partnership Products Initiative](#), which provides certification and fair trade. He also talked about initiatives with fashion designers, the coffee coalition, the business incubator, and work to create a network of mountain hubs for innovation.

Wende Valentine, Executive Director, dZi Foundation, reported on her organization's work around the world and in Nepal with local communities to overcome barriers, including accessing funding that is centrally administered by governments. She urged co-investment and financing where private funding can kick-start projects, attracting more funds as a result.



**Wolfgang Mayrhofer**, Deputy Secretary-General, Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention

### ***Mountain Partnership Looks Ahead: Pathways for Accelerating Action in the Next Four Years***

Four panels convened on Wednesday morning to discuss this topic, delving into the themes of: transboundary cooperation; alliances, advocacy, processes and UN conventions; science and knowledge for policy; and innovation, infrastructure, and digital connectivity.

**Transboundary Cooperation:** Moderated by Matthias Jurek, Programme Manager, UNEP, this panel addressed approaches and opportunities for managing transboundary mountain regions.

Wolfgang Mayrhofer, Deputy Secretary-General, Permanent Secretariat, Alpine Convention, shared insights about international cooperation under the legally-binding Alpine Convention, stressing the cross-sectorial nature of the work. He noted that while having a legally-binding document is helpful, the presence of institutional frameworks is equally necessary to ensure collaborative and joint efforts.

Veronica Taran Baciu, General Director, National Agency of the Mountain Area, Romania, provided information on the operation of the Carpathian Convention and its utility for Romania. She detailed projects promoting economic development, preserving cultural heritage, and educating future generations in the region.

Carlos Jaime Montoya Montero, Counselor, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Peru, discussed the impacts of the voluntary Andean Mountain Initiative, spanning seven countries in the region. He pointed to advantages of using a voluntary approach, including: flexible adaptation of policies; the ability to establish working groups on specific areas, including on finance and knowledge; and the opportunity to engage with a broad network of stakeholders.

María Rosa Cárdenas Tomažič, Associate Programme Specialist, Man and the Biosphere Programme, UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, highlighted the role of transboundary networks to ensure biodiversity and cultural conservation. She discussed how networks organized around similar thematic environmental issues allow for governments and decision makers, as well as public and private partners, researchers, and bio-reserve managers, to collaborate and share best practices for preservation and restoration.



**Sílvia Calvo Armengol**, Minister of Environment, Agriculture and Sustainability, Andorra

### **Alliances, Advocacy, Processes and United Nations**

**Conventions:** This panel was moderated by Rosalaura Romeo, Mountain Partnership Secretariat. Minister Sílvia Calvo Armengol, Andorra, reported on her country's work related to climate change, including engaging the scientific community and private sector. She proposed creating a flexible international coalition, which brings together countries that share concerns regarding mountains at international processes under UN conventions.

Malik Amin Aslam Khan, Climate Expert and Former Minister for Climate Change, Pakistan, described the Hindu Kush and Himalayas as the water tower of the world, with one third of humanity living under it, but noted how the area is under threat because of biodiversity loss and climate change. He reported on the coalition created in the region to work together on these issues and raise them at the international level and suggested putting the value of mountains in economic terms.

Secretary Narayan Kandel, Nepal, reported on his country's efforts to promote the IYSMD and the advocacy summit Nepal organized demonstrating how mountains are relevant for addressing climate change. He urged mainstreaming the international discourse about mountains into the UN system and institutionalizing it.

Special Envoy Pythoud, Switzerland, advocated for a new way of working that focuses on having mountains included in international decisions and strategic documents, like the post-2020 global biodiversity framework currently being negotiated under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). He pointed to the central role the Mountain Partnership can play in pushing the mountain agenda at the international level, for example, by preparing documents that members can sign on to, promote, and refer to in their statements.

**Science and Knowledge for Policy:** This panel was moderated by Björn Alftan, Principle Expert, Polar and Climate Programme, GRID-Arendal. Carolina Adler, Executive Director, Mountain Research Initiative, stressed the need to advocate for mountains globally, as mountain relevant issues affect numerous ecosystems and policies across regions should be aligned.



**Alexandra Mackey**, Project Manager, Zoë Environment Network, and **Lawrence Ignace**, Vice Chair, Board of Directors, Canadian Mountain Network



**Lizette Huezo**, Department Head, Entrepreneurship Department of the Western Region, Tecnológico de Monterrey

Paola Fontanella Pisa, Researcher, Center for Global Mountain Safeguard Research, emphasized that while the data to act exists, a better understanding on how to integrate knowledge into decision making is required. She also noted that further efforts are required to integrate other forms of information, such as observations, feelings, and perceptions of local communities, into scientific perspectives.

Alexandra Mackey, Project Manager, Zoï Environment Network, discussed the need to communicate complex research information to the proper audiences so it is understandable and usable for evidence-based decision making. She outlined communities of practice as a means to bridge the gap between knowledge and action.

Lawrence Ignace, Vice Chair, Board of Directors, Canadian Mountain Network, shared his networks' efforts to support the resiliency of Canadian mountains through Indigenous and Western ways of learning that inform decision making and action. He underscored: the importance of reconciliation through research; the need to reposition research to be more equitable and balanced; and how Indigenous-led research can shift power relationships and promote self-determination.

**Innovation, Infrastructure and Digital Connectivity:** This panel was moderated by Goodwill Ambassador Gupta, who pointed to ways the private sector and research can contribute to sustainability. Marc Pons, Executive Director, Andorra Research and Innovation, described their efforts on ecological transition through innovation and proposed building an international alliance of innovation ecosystems related to work being undertaken in mountains.

Natalia Bayona, Director of Innovation, UNWTO, said innovation is one of the UNWTO's strongest pillars and should be integrated across all subsectors. She said joining efforts between the public and private sectors can help achieve the SDGs.

Lizette Huezo, Department Head, Entrepreneurship Department of the Western Region, Tecnológico de Monterrey, explained how her university's teaching includes digitalization and innovation, urging that its social impacts, specifically regarding women and remote villages in mountains, be considered.

Onno Ruhl, General Manager, Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH), warned that climate change is happening faster than policy changes and must be addressed through a multi-

stakeholder effort. He gave the example of AKAH's work on avalanche predictions, using technology developed in ski resorts, to reduce casualty rates in Himalayan villages. He urged using urban planning skills in the mountains.

### **Endorsement of Mountain Partnership Strategy Documents**

On Wednesday, Rosalaura Romeo, Mountain Partnership Secretariat, guided the session on the presentation and endorsement of the revised Mountain Partnership strategy documents, explaining that each member has one vote. She described past processes and said these documents were last updated and approved in 2017. She detailed the current process for their review, enabling members to make comments, which in turn had been integrated.

Members approved the revisions to the Advocacy Strategy, including: the creation of a table that indicates advocacy actions for Mountain Partnership members, the Secretariat, and the Steering Committee; inclusion of reference to additional relevant international processes; and support for members' relevant calls and petitions.

Members also approved the Communication Strategy, which had been updated to include new messaging and a general reference encouraging members to keep up to date with new communication platforms.

The Governance Paper was subject to an extensive review process with several substantive proposals considered.

First, regarding the revised streamlined vision of the Mountain Partnership, members asked to add references to: climate change, biodiversity loss and ecosystem restoration, although some suggested this was included in conservation; and to well-being, not just social and economic livelihoods. The revised vision was endorsed with these amendments.

Second, the proposed creation of a scientific advisory body was welcomed by many delegates. One delegate asked to also refer to economic advice, urging economic valuation of the contribution of mountains. Others opposed the specific reference, suggesting it is captured under scientific advice but, if necessary, a sub-group on the issue could be set up once the larger body is established. Members agreed to instead refer to the creation of an independent advisory body (rather than scientific), with the understanding that sub-groups could be created under it.



**Onno Ruhl**, General Manager, Aga Khan Agency for Habitat

Third, regarding the proposed redefinition of the role and functions of the Steering Committee Chair, the proponent explained the intention was to empower the Steering Committee Chair to take on more of a coordinating function, and to potentially become the Mountain Partnership Chair at a later time. Delegates discussed whether such an expanded position required funding, noting that current Steering Committee members serve as volunteers. Members decided to refer this to the Steering Committee to see how they can empower the next chair and to revisit the issue at the next global meeting of the Mountain Partnership.

Fourth, regarding the hosting arrangement of the Mountain Partnership by FAO, Rosalaura Romeo, Mountain Partnership Secretariat, recalled it started as a project under FAO and was set up accordingly. She further explained they had now received information from the FAO Legal Office on how a hosting arrangement can be formalized. Delegates asked to consider the hosting arrangement at the next meeting and a FAO representative expressed their commitment to concluding the process. One suggestion was to negotiate with the Steering Committee and the resulting hosting agreement could then be appended to the Governance Paper. One delegate insisted this be brought to the next meeting of the Mountain Partnership. Another delegate asked to also address the relationship with FAO country offices in the Partnership agreement, noting that as local FAO representatives change, they might not be immediately aware of the Partnership, while others asked that they be briefed. Delegates agreed that once FAO makes a proposal for the Partnership agreement, it will be reviewed by the Steering Committee and then at the next Mountain Partnership meeting. Delegates endorsed the governance strategy subject to those revisions.

### ***Steering Committee Election***

On Thursday, Giorgio Grussu, Mountain Partnership Secretariat, provided an update on the training workshop, that took place from 26-28 September, on “Estimating land degradation in mountain regions.” During the three-day workshop, participants from eight countries were trained on the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) methodology to assess degraded land to determine the proportion of degraded land over total land area (SDG 15.3.1).

Counselor Spadavecchia, Italy, reflected on the week’s meetings and hoped they would shape activities going forward. He urged delegates to act on the ideas presented and to transform these ideas into projects. He stressed that projects attract investors, lead to publications, and draw new members to the partnership.

The election of the Steering Committee members was overseen by Counselor Spadavecchia, Steering Committee Chair, and Rosalaura Romeo. They explained the nomination period for the Steering Committee had opened July 14, 2022, when the Mountain Partnership Secretariat distributed the call for nominations. The deadline for nominations was 26 August, one month before the Sixth Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership convened.



**Elliot Gerson**, Executive Vice President, Aspen Institute

Members proceeded to break into groups based on the Mountain Partnership Steering Committee regions to vote for representatives.

For the Asia and Pacific region, the government representative is Nepal and the major group representative is Karnali Integrated Rural Development and Research Center, with Pan Himalayan Grassroots as an alternate.

For Central Asia, the government representative is Kyrgyzstan and the major group representative is the Tajik Social Ecological Union, with the Rural Development Foundation Kyrgyzstan as an alternate.

For Europe, the government representative is Andorra and the major group representative is EUROMANTANA, with the Albanian Alps Alliance as an alternate.

For the Near East and North Africa, the government representative is Yemen and the major group representative is the Coalition Civile pour la Montagne, Morocco, with MEPS as an alternate.

For the North and Central America and Caribbean region, the government representative is the Dominican Republic, with Guatemala as an alternate, and the major group representative is AIMF, with the Grassroots Institute as an alternate.

For South America, the government representative is Peru, with Argentina as an alternate. The major group representative is Centro de Estudio de Alta Montana, with Crescente Fertil as an alternate.

For Sub-Saharan Africa, the government representative is Malawi, with Uganda as an alternate, and the major



**Zenia Tata**, former XPRIZE Chief Impact Officer, and **Jon Creyts**, Chief Program and Strategy Officer, RMI





**Lynn Kiesling**, Research Professor and Co-Director, Denver Institute for Regulatory Law and Economics

group representative is the Foundation for Environment and Development, with Cross River State, International Centre for Environmental Education and Community Development, and Tengeneza Generation as potential alternates to be selected by a later vote.

For the Donor representative, delegates elected Italy. For the Global Civil Society Organization representative, they elected GRID-Arendal, with AKAH as an alternate. For the Intergovernmental Organization representative, they elected UNEP with United Nations University and UNDP as potential alternates to be selected by a later vote.

### ***Aspen Institute Forum on Climate Change***

Taking place on Thursday, the Hurst Lecture, organized by the Aspen Institute, focused on “Building Alliances for Resilient Mountains: Changing the Way We Think About Climate Change.”

Elliot Gerson, Executive Vice President, Aspen Institute, moderated the panel, stressing: the importance of protecting and sustaining cherished mountain communities; the need to focus on ideas and technologies with the greatest promise to fight climate change and its toll; opportunities for inspiring and incentivizing innovation; and ensuring vulnerable and marginalized communities do not bear the cost of addressing climate change.

Jon Creyts, Chief Program and Strategy Officer, RMI, referred to the potential of alternative energy, including increased battery capabilities and electrification for both vehicles and buildings. He gave an example of their work with the Chinese Energy Research Institute, the highest-level national think tank, to affect peaking of their emissions by 2030 or before, opening the way for taking on commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in international agreements. Despite the climate challenges facing the world, he emphasized that now is the time to unite globally around hope, not fear, as engagement with 100 percent of the population is required if we are to achieve climate targets.

Lynn Kiesling, Co-Director, Denver Institute for Regulatory Law and Economics, University of Colorado, talked about how transactive energy can help transform the electric grid by connecting it to data networks where the price is set according to supply and demand, taking into account consumer



**Nikki Pitre**, Executive Director, Aspen Institute Center for Native American Youth

preferences and allowing for decentralized management. She pointed to the possibility of having price and demand reduce overall resource use and environmental impact. She further emphasized the need to digitize, decarbonize, democratize, and decentralize energy and technology to empower communities with agency, autonomy, and self-determination in energy choices.

Zenia Tata, former XPRIZE Chief Impact Officer, advocated for addressing massive problems in an exponential way through: convergence of exponential technologies; use of artificial intelligence; and data collection. She articulated how a prize-based model can incentivize innovation, but also noted that, in addition to new technologies, we should be looking to the Earth and biomimicry for solutions. She also emphasized the need for all solutions to be considered within an ethical framework and to acknowledge that, without addressing poverty, we cannot achieve climate justice.

Nikki Pitre, Executive Director, Aspen Institute Center for Native American Youth, urged bringing Indigenous voices to all spaces, to see the Earth relationally, and to be in a good relationship with her. She further underscored the need to decolonize approaches to climate change, stating her community does not consider themselves poor given their rich culture and history. She emphasized that approaches informed by Indigenous ways of knowing can dismantle the systems designed to oppress marginalized groups.

In the ensuing discussion, members of the audience posed questions to the panel on: acknowledging privilege and Global North perspectives when discussing technology; financial models for retrofit development; the tension between living smaller and demand for new technologies; managing the role of private capital to ensure equitable access to technology and energy; and greenwashing within the energy sector.

### ***Appointment of Goodwill Ambassadors and Adoption of the Aspen Declaration***

Delegates observed a moment of silence for local Colorado mountaineer Hilaree Nelson who recently died skiing down from the summit of Mount Manaslu, Nepal, and local guides who had



**Klaus Obermeyer**, Founder, Sport Obermeyer, and **Karinjo DeVore**, President, Aspen International Mountain Foundation

died in the region following the destabilization of slopes from monsoon rains.

Goodwill Ambassador Norton welcomed two new Goodwill Ambassadors: Nikki Pitre, member of the Coeur d'Alene tribe, recognized for her work with Indigenous youth and on inclusion of traditional knowledge; and Luis Benitez, established mountaineer and Vice President for Government Affairs and Global Impact, VF Corporation.

Goodwill Ambassador Pitre recalled how her auntie had told her that the government placed her people on reservations in the mountains thinking they could not survive there, when in fact they had a deep connection to the mountains and the mountains protected them. She promised to show up as her true self for this work as an Indigenous woman, mother, and vessel of her ancestors, to steward the mountains.

Recognizing the multi-billion dollar outdoor apparel industry often uses the mountains as a backdrop, Goodwill Ambassador Benitez stressed the importance of using their influence to give support, voice, and gravity to the momentum for action on mountains. He pledged his full heart to the effort of bringing more awareness to this work.

Mayor Torre expressed his appreciation for the work at the meeting and urged translating ideas into action. He said Aspen had declared this the Week of the Mountain Partnership and expressed appreciation that the Aspen Declaration has been named after his city. He explained that the draft declaration sets out the intention of members to support sustainable mountain development building on previous work. Delegates then officially endorsed the Aspen Declaration by a show of hands.

**Aspen Declaration:** The Aspen Declaration sets out the essential role mountain ecosystems play in providing essential goods and services, such as water, food, and diversity to the planet, as well as being home to 1.1 billion people, while highlighting the vulnerability of mountain ecosystems and the need for ways to protect them. It also speaks to the work of the Mountain Partnership and how it relates to other relevant international processes, such as: the UNFCCC and the special vulnerability of mountains to climate change; the CBD, which is currently in the process of finalizing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework; and the UNCCD and work related to the SDGs. It urges further moving the mountain agenda to the core of these processes. It proposes to include making “2023-

2027 the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions” an outcome of the UN General Assembly resolution on the IYSMD. The Declaration also includes commitments of Mountain Partnership members to the above work and requests support from the Mountain Partnership Secretariat in this regard.

### **Closing**

In closing, Rosalaura Romeo, Mountain Partnership Secretariat, thanked sponsors, her team, the Aspen Institute, local organizers, translators, and the Earth Negotiations Bulletin for their work on the meeting.

Minister Calvo welcomed Andorra’s election to the Steering Committee, noting mountains can be a common driver for their work and, along with others, thanked the Secretariat for their efforts. Counselor Spadavecchia, Italy, recognized the special significance of work on mountains and the related awareness of nature. Special Envoy Pythoud recognized the quality of the presentations and work at the meeting.

FAO Senior Forestry Officer Hofer pointed to work on the mountain agenda since the UNCED in 1992 and especially over the last 20 years, noting now is the moment to integrate the issue of mountains into such international processes as the CBD, the UNFCCC, and others related to the SDGs.

Eric Smith, Vice-President, AIMF, recommended building a bold mountain plan, noting the mountain agenda is immense, ranging from addressing climate change and disasters, to developing baseline data and positive change.

Karinjo DeVore, President, AIMF, thanked everyone for being here and the volunteers who made everyone welcome in Aspen. She introduced Klaus Obermeyer, Founder, Sport Obermeyer, aged 102, who came to Aspen in 1947 as a ski instructor and innovated the sport and apparel. He recalled his experiences enjoying the skiing and making it safer over the last 75 years. He said yodeling comes from Switzerland where the mountains are so beautiful there are no words for it and closed the meeting with a traditional yodel.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

**2nd Global Mountain Sustainability Forum:** The second edition of the Global Mountain Sustainability Forum (GMS Forum 2022) will explore sustainable and resilient human-mountain relations in light of current societal and environmental challenges facing humanity. In doing so, the conference aims to provide a platform for multi- and interdisciplinary discussion while shedding light on the lessons to be learned from mountains and mountain communities in relation to the sustainable reorganization of modern societies. A special focus will be placed on the dynamics between highlands and lowlands. **dates:** 3-4 October 2022 **location:** virtual **www:** [gms-forum.eurac.edu/](https://gms-forum.eurac.edu/)

**CFS 50:** The plenary of the 50th session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) will: feature a full-day ministerial segment on coordinating policy responses to the global food crisis – the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022; endorse newly agreed policy recommendations on promoting youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems for food security and nutrition; and focus on boosting responsible investment in sustainable agriculture and food systems through a global thematic event on the CFS

Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems. **dates:** 10-13 October 2022 **location:** Rome, Italy **www:** [fao.org/cfs/plenary/cfs50/en/](http://fao.org/cfs/plenary/cfs50/en/)

**UN Climate Change Conference:** The 27th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 27) to the UNFCCC, the 17th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 17), and the fourth meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 4) will begin work on the Global Stocktake, among other matters. **dates:** 6-18 November 2022 **location:** Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt **www:** [unfccc.int/cop27](http://unfccc.int/cop27)

**FAO Council:** The 171st regular session of the Council will meet to address the world food and agriculture situation and related matters, and current and prospective FAO activities, including its programme of work and budget, administrative matters, and financial management. **dates:** 5-9 December 2022 **location:** Rome, Italy **www:** [fao.org/about/meetings/council/cl171/documents/en/](http://fao.org/about/meetings/council/cl171/documents/en/)

**UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP 15):** This meeting includes the 15th meeting of the COP to the CBD, the 10th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and the 4th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing. The meetings will be preceded by the fifth meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework from 3-5 December 2022. The meetings are scheduled to take place to review the achievement and delivery of the CBD's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. It is also expected to take a final decision on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, as well as decisions on related topics, including capacity building and resource mobilization. **dates:** 7-19 December 2022 **location:** Montreal, Canada **www:** [cbd.int/conferences/2021-2022](http://cbd.int/conferences/2021-2022)

**International Mountain Day:** International Mountain Day 2022 is an opportunity raise awareness about the need to empower mountain women so they can participate more effectively in decision-making processes and have more control over productive resources. By sharing excellence, opportunities, and capacity development in mountains, the Day can promote gender equality and, therefore, contribute to improved social justice, livelihoods, and resilience. **dates:** 11 December 2022 **location:** global **www:** [fao.org/international-mountain-day/theme/en/](http://fao.org/international-mountain-day/theme/en/)



Group photo of the Sixth Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership

**Global Symposium on Farmers Rights:** This Symposium is tentatively scheduled for the first half of 2023, hosted by the Government of India. **dates:** TBC 2023 **location:** TBC **www:** [fao.org/plant-treaty](http://fao.org/plant-treaty)

**UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development:** The 2023 session of the HLPF will take place on the theme “Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels.” It will include an in-depth review of SDGs 6 (clean water and sanitation), 7 (affordable and clean energy), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), 11 (sustainable cities and communities), and 17 (partnership for the Goals). **dates:** 10-19 July 2023 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York, US **www:** [hlpf.un.org/2023](http://hlpf.un.org/2023)

**SDG Summit:** The SDG Summit is the quadrennial meeting of the HLPF under the auspices of the UNGA. The 2023 Summit will be the second since the Goals' adoption, and take place at the midpoint of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Leaders are expected to comprehensively review progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, provide political guidance for the way forward, and consider new science-based solutions for accelerating the full implementation of the SDGs in the remaining years towards 2030. **dates:** 20-21 September 2023 [tentative] **location:** UN Headquarters, New York, US **www:** [hlpf.un.org/](http://hlpf.un.org/)

For additional upcoming events, see [sdg.iisd.org/](http://sdg.iisd.org/)

## Glossary

AKAH	Aga Khan Agency for Habitat
AIMF	Aspen International Mountain Foundation
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
IYSMD	International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNWTO	UN World Tourism Organization
WMF	World Mountain Forum