



ICIMOD's Country Operational Planning Workshop for Projects in China held in Kunming

On 21 March 2008, ICIMOD held an Operational Planning Meeting for projects in China at the Kunming Institute of Botany, Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS). The meeting was held to determine the annual and mid-term project implementation plan, expand the impact and role of ICIMOD's projects in China, and develop long-term cooperation projects with China as one of ICIMOD's regional member countries. A seven-member delegation from ICIMOD, headed by Dr Madhav Karki, Deputy Director General of ICIMOD, attended the meeting. Dr Qiu Juliang, Deputy Director of the Bureau of International Cooperation, CAS, and Dr Li Dezhu, Director of the Kunming Institute of Botany, attended the opening ceremony and gave addresses. More than 20 representatives from related institutions in China attended the meeting.

Representatives of ICIMOD introduced the Centre's annual and medium-term plans in three core areas: integrated water and disaster management, environmental change and ecological services, and sustainable livelihoods and poverty reduction. The

participants put forward and discussed project proposals on behalf of their partners.

Ms Gong Haihua from the International Organizations Division of the Bureau of International Cooperation, CAS, and Professor Hu Pinghua, Head of the Secretariat of the Chinese Committee on ICIMOD (CNICIMOD), attended the meeting and gave addresses during the closing ceremony.

Consultation Workshop on Management of Flash Floods – Capacity Building and Awareness Raising held in Kathmandu

A Consultation Workshop on Management of Flash Floods-Capacity Building and Awareness Raising was held in Kathmandu from 27 to 28 March 2008. The workshop was also an inception meeting for the second phase of the project. Twenty-five representatives attended the workshop from six regional member countries, as well as representatives of the project sponsor, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and Professors Cui Peng and Hu Pinghua from the Chengdu Institute of Mountain Hazards and Environment, CAS.



Dr Schild, Director General of ICIMOD, addressed the opening ceremony. Dr Cui Peng, Dr Sher Kan, and Dr Arun B Shrestha gave an overview of the status of project implementation in Xichang in China, Chitral in Pakistan, and Poiqu/Bhote Kosi on the border between China and Nepal, respectively. Participants discussed the implementation plan for the second phase of the project.

After the workshop, representatives from China conferred with experts from the Integrated Water and Hazards Management (IWHM) Programme of ICIMOD on sites, trainees, and the plan co-organised by ICIMOD and the China National Disaster Reduction Centre, reaching an initial consensus. Professor Hu Pinghua, Head of the Secretariat of CNICIMOD, exchanged views on information dissemination and the newsletter with the Information and Knowledge Management Division of ICIMOD.

Bilateral high-level dialogue between China and ICIMOD held in Urumqi

On 27 April 2008, a high-level dialogue between China and ICIMOD was organised by ICIMOD, CNICIMOD, and the Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography, CAS, in Urumqi, China, led by Dr Andreas Schild, Director General of ICIMOD, and Dr Ding Zhongli, Vice President of CAS. The purpose of the dialogue was to develop cooperative partnerships and expand the scope of ICIMOD's regional cooperation towards a more meaningful role in mountain development and the protection of the environment in China. A five-member delegation from ICIMOD, led by Dr Andreas Schild, Director General of ICIMOD, attended the meeting, as well as 25 participants from the State Development and Reform Commission, the State Forestry Administration, the Ministry of Water Resources, the Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC), the Ministry of Agriculture, and various units of CAS.



Mr Wang Zhenyu, Head of the International Organization Division of the Bureau of International Cooperation, CAS, presided over the meeting, and Mr Feng Renguo, Deputy Director of the Bureau of Science and Technology for Resources and Environment, CAS, and Dr Zhang Xiaolei, Director of the Xinjiang Office of Science and Technology, gave addresses at the opening ceremony. Dr Schild, Director General of ICIMOD, Dr Chen Xi, Director of the Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography, Professor Xu Jianchu, chief representative of the International Agroforestry Centre in China, and Professor Hu Pinghua, Head of the Secretariat of CNICIMOD, presented theme reports at the meeting. Participants discussed the role of ICIMOD, the scope of work and content, and areas of cooperation with (potential) Chinese partners.

During the closing ceremony, Mr Feng Renguo put forward his proposals in relation to cooperation, content, and approach. Dr Schild expressed his gratitude for the contribution of the participants and highly appreciated the work done by CNICIMOD since its establishment. ICIMOD will strengthen its cooperation with CNICIMOD to further Himalayan mountain development. Dr Schild also expressed his heartfelt thanks for the meticulous organisation of the meeting.

NSFC will focus on pushing forward collaboration with ICIMOD

On 18 September 2008, Professor Chang Qing, Deputy Director General, and Dr Zhang Yongtao, Deputy Director of Division, Bureau of International Cooperation, National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC), visited the Chengdu Institute of Mountain Hazards and Environment to promote a project for multilateral cooperation between NSFC and ICIMOD. Mr Wang Zhenyu, Director of the International Organization Division, Bureau of International Cooperation, CAS, attended the workshop.



Professor Hu Pinghua, Head of the Secretariat of CNICIMOD reported on its activities and work plan. Dr Deng Wei, Secretary General of CNICIMOD, said in his speech that during the next stage CNICIMOD will focus on closer collaboration with ICIMOD at a higher level and lead to a breakthrough in aspects of cooperation. Mr Wang Zhenyu reviewed the history of cooperation between China and ICIMOD and pointed out that ICIMOD is in a growth and development stage and intends to expand its impact in Southeast and North Asia. China has a good foundation for cooperation with ICIMOD, and CNICIMOD must take full advantage of this platform to further expand the role and influence of China. Professor Chang Qing gave an introduction on the extent and manner of the major funding of the NSFC, as well as a summary of ICIMOD's recent partners in China. He expressed a wish to establish closer cooperation with ICIMOD in the future.

328th Session of the Xiangshan Science Conference Glacier change and regional ecology on the Tibetan Plateau

Over the past century, the Earth's climate has undergone a remarkable change. Global warming has brought about a significant rise in temperature on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. The Plateau is a unique geographic region and has the most developed cryosphere at middle and lower latitudes. In the past few decades, there has been widespread glacier retreat on the Plateau. A recent study found that the amount of glacier shrinkage in the past 30 years is equivalent to the sum of that in the past two centuries. The shrinkage of glaciers and permafrost (frozen soil) leads to ecosystem degeneration, water shortages, and more frequent mountain hazards, threatening socioeconomic development on the Plateau and its adjacent areas. With the sustained and steady momentum of warming, these issues will become worse in the foreseeable future. Thus it is imperative to assess the environmental changes that may take place in the near future and implement practical adaptive countermeasures.

The 328th Session of the Xiangshan Science Conferences was held from 25 to 27 September in Nyingchi, Tibet Autonomous Region, under the auspices of the Ministry of Science of China, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and the National Natural Science Foundation of China, to explore how to evaluate, and develop countermeasures for, the regional eco-environmental changes in glaciers and permafrost on the Tibetan Plateau. Discussions focused on the following issues: characteristics of the distribution of recent climate changes in time and space and their impacts



on glaciers and permafrost; changes in the water table in the region's water bodies and lakes as a result of the reduction in the cryosphere; areas at risk of mountain hazards caused by changes such as glacial lake outburst floods and mud and soil flows; thawing permafrost and its impact on the ecological functions of nearby wetlands, meadows, and the Plateau as a whole; and the overall trend of the changes during the next 50 years. The exchange of opinions and ideas among experts from related disciplines will facilitate an overall assessment of the Plateau's situation, the effect on the regional economy, and the necessary response to these changes. Based on this, adaptation and mitigation countermeasures will be developed for the region.

The symposium invited scholars in related fields to discuss the following topics: recent climate changes on the Plateau and their impacts on the Plateau's glaciers and permafrost; responses and adaptive strategies of the ecology and the environment to the changes; possible disasters caused by the degeneration of glaciers and permafrost; and the Plateau's traffic safety and reconstruction.

Executive co-chairs: Professor Sun Honglie, Professor Zheng Du, Professor Qin Dahe, Professor Duo Ji, Yao Tandong.

336th Session of the Xiangshan Science Conference Mountain Science System and Security of the Environment and Resources

The construction of mountain areas is a major part of the current drive to promote national development in China. As an academic discipline offering scientific support to the drive, mountain sciences should be strengthened.

The rapid economic and population growth in China have highlighted the increasingly acute contradiction between

the need for ever-intensifying exploration of resources (such as land, water, minerals, and forests) and the threat to the fragile ecological and environmental setting. The frequent mountain disasters have threatened key national engineering projects and endangered the country's economic and environmental security.

Mountain studies have become a hot topic and a new frontier for science. China is a mountainous country; it contains 65% of the world's mountains. In light of this, it is important for China to develop a system of mountain sciences. It would also be beneficial for China to play a lead role in the global Earth sciences community.



This would have a significant impact on China's development.

Under the auspices of the Xiangshan Science Conferences, a symposium was held from 17 to 19 November 2008 in Beijing. The main topics included environmental changes in mountainous areas and national ecological safety; the dynamic processes of mountain surfaces and disaster control; mechanisms for renewable resources development and their sustainable utilisation; and risk management in mountainous areas. On the basis of an analysis of the status of mountain science at home and abroad, the participants discussed a roadmap and framework for the development of such a discipline in China to provide guidance for its theoretical development and to promote studies relevant for sustainable development in mountainous areas.

Executive Co-chairs: Zheng Du, Lu Dadao, Cui Peng, Wang Zhaoyin.

A Conference on Mountain Development Strategies of China held in Beijing

A Conference on Mountain Development Strategies of China, jointly organised by CAS and the State Council Development Research Centre, was held in Beijing on 29 September 2008. Professor Fang Xin, member of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), presided over the meeting and read out a congratulatory letter from the Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of NPC, Lu Yongxiang, President of CAS. Zhang Yutai, Director of the State Council Development Research Center, and Ding Zhongli, Vice President of CAS, gave keynote speeches at the conference.

The overall goal is to develop a well-off society and accelerate economic development in mountain areas; to build a new countryside by employing a scientific approach to Chinese mountain development; and to explore the development approaches for modernisation in the mountains in order to develop a strategic direction for Chinese mountain development that will address the major scientific issues and socioeconomic problems affecting the development and progress of mountain communities. Towards this end, the Symposium assessed the current status of Chinese mountain development, explored the various development approaches to mountain modernisation, and looked at ways of accelerating economic development in mountain areas. The Symposium has great significance for strategic studies on Chinese mountain development and for the top-level strategic design and implementation of the scientific development concept and sustainable mountain development.

More than 80 experts and officials participated in the seminar including representatives from the State Council Development Research Center, National Natural Science Foundation Committee, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, Beijing Normal University, Chongqing University, Southwest University, Yunnan University, Forestry Department of Jiangxi Province, Forestry Department of Fujian Province, and Mountains Economic and Technological Development Office of Hebei Province.



The meeting was hosted by the Chengdu Institute of Mountain Hazards and Environment, the Ministry of Water Resources, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and CNICIMOD. The Symposium also received strong support and assistance from the Bureau of Planning and Strategy, Bureau of Science and Technology for Resources and Environment of the CAS, and the General Office of the State Council Development Research Center.

Enhancing cooperation in the field of mountain development between China and Japan

From 3 to 17 September 2008, Dr Deng Wei, Secretary General, and Professor Hu Pinghua, Head of the Secretariat of CNICIMOD visited various institutions in Japan at the invitation of the Public Works Research Institute, sponsored by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Sciences.

Dr Deng Wei and Professor Hu Pinghua visited the Public Works Research Institute; Civil Engineering Research Institute for Cold Regions; Hokkaido Development Bureau of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport; the Graduate School of Environmental Sciences of the University of Tsukuba; the Disaster Prevention Research Institute; and various other institutions, where they inspected work being conducted on volcanic debris flow control and the management of river floods.

Dr Deng Wei attended the 'Sediment Disaster Symposium after the Earthquake in Iwate, Miyagi in 2008' in Tokyo, hosted by the SABO Department of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport and Tourism. Dr Deng Wei was invited by Mr Nakano Yasuo, Director General of the SABO Department and gave a special presentation on 'Post-disaster reconstruction and development of mountain areas'. Dr Deng Wei and Professor Hu Pinghua enjoyed more extensive and in-depth exchanges with experts and officials from Japan during the Friendship Forum held after the Symposium, which they were invited by the organisers to address. Dr Hiroshi Ikeya, Director of the SABO Technical Center, said that China and Japan face the same problems and challenges and that geological disasters caused by earthquakes are a long-term problem with far-reaching effects. Experts in Japan have more experience in the prevention of geological disasters triggered by earthquakes and they hope to establish cooperation with Chinese colleagues. Dr Deng Wei looked forward to conducting further consultations at the meeting of the China-Japan Symposium on Seismic Disaster Prevention and Mitigation in October 2008 in Chengdu.



China-Japan Symposium on Earthquake Disaster Prevention and Mitigation held in Chengdu

The Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) jointly launched the 'China-Japan Symposium on Earthquake Disaster Prevention and Mitigation' from 8 to 12 October 2008 in Chengdu, Sichuan Province. The symposium was jointly hosted by the Bureau of International Cooperation, CAS, the independent administrative institution National Research Institute for Earth Science and Disaster Prevention of Sciences, Independent Corporate Administration, and the Japan Society for the Promotion of Sciences (JSPS). The symposium was organised by the Chengdu Institute of Mountain Hazards and Environment, CAS, and the Ministry of Water Resources.

On 9 October, participating experts and officials visited Dujiangyan, the Zipingpu dam, Hongkou, and other earthquake-stricken sites, as well as the famous Dujiangyan irrigation projects, where they listened to expert briefings.



More than 100 representatives from both China and Japan gathered at the Kehuayuan Hotel to attend the opening ceremony of the Symposium on the morning of 10 October. Ms Chang Xu, Deputy Director of the Bureau of Science and Technology for Resources and the Environment, CAS, presided over the meeting. Mr Qiu Huasheng, Deputy Director of the Bureau of International Cooperation, CAS; Mr Hiroshi Masuko, Director of the Earthquake and Disaster Reduction Research Division of the Research and Development Bureau, MEXT; Mr Zhou Menglin, Deputy Director of the Department of Science and Technology of Sichuan province; Mr Hiroshi Fukunishi, Director of Beijing Office, JSPS; and Dr Deng Wei, Director of Chengdu Institute of Mountain Hazards and Environment addressed the symposium.

The 26 presentations made by the representatives from the two countries centred around earthquake and disaster prevention; the earthquake mechanism and early warning; seismic associated/secondary disasters; disaster prevention and control mechanisms and technology; earthquake disaster emergency management mechanisms; and post-disaster reconstruction. After the presentations, in depth discussions were held.

The symposium provided a platform for cooperation and exchange in relation to earthquake disaster prevention and mitigation, and post-disaster reconstruction between China and Japan. This event will help to promote research and development in this field in China.

Preliminary Expedition on Geo-Hazards by Experts from China and Pakistan

From 17 to 28 September 2008, a joint expedition from the Chengdu Institute of Mountain Hazards and Environment (IMHE), CAS, and the China Institute of Science and Technology of the Ministry of Communications, and the National Centre of Excellence in Geology, conducted a preliminary investigation of the environment, ecology, safety, and geological hazards along the Karakoram Highway from Raikot to Khongjirap. Dr Zhu Yingyan, Ge Yonggang, and Pei Laizheng from IMHE and Assistant Professor Muhamad Waseem from Peshawar University collected a large amount of information on design and construction, and carried out a detailed survey of collapses, landslides, mudslides, avalanches, and other geological disasters along the highway.

The prevention of geological disasters in China and Pakistan has become a key constraint to the construction and future operation of the Kara Kunlun Highway/ Karakoram Highway. Disasters prevention and reduction research has become urgent. With the support of ICIMOD, Dr Cui Peng was invited by the National Centre of Excellence in Geology, Peshawar University to lead a delegation to conduct a united scientific expedition on Karakoram Highway disasters, during which a scientific research protocol was signed in Pakistan in October 2006, by which the parties agreed to continue to strengthen cooperation in related fields.

Chinese scientists bring to the partnership advanced experience in disaster prevention, while Pakistani scientists are familiar with the geological structure of the region. International cooperation will enable China and Pakistan to share their strengths in the research into geological disasters and their prevention on the Karakoram Highway (Pakistan section) and solve the problems in the expansion of the Karakoram Highway with regard to disaster reduction. At the same time, the research will also provide basic information, a scientific basis for planning, and technical support to the environmental protection and the prevention of geological disasters on the Karakoram Highway.



Fifth National Representative Committee of the China Society on Tibet Plateau (CSTP) held in Beijing

The Fifth National Representative Committee of the China Society on Tibet Plateau (CSTP) was held in Beijing from 23 to 24 December 2008, attracting over 140 CSTP members nationwide. Professor Zheng Du, Director General of the Fourth Council, presided over the opening ceremony, during which there were speeches by Dr Song Nanping, member of the CP Directorship of Chinese Association of Science and Technology; Wu Yingjie, Vice Chairman of Tibet Autonomous Region; Luosang Lingzhiduojie, Deputy Director of the People's Congress of Gansu Province; Deng Bentai, Vice Governor of Qinghai Province; and Professor Sun Honglie, Honorary Director General of CSTP.

During the session, several activity reports were presented to the participants, including the report by Professor Zheng Du on the achievements during the leadership of the Fourth Council, and the proposed revision of the CSTP membership rules by Professor Zhu Liping. Professor Zhu Liping also reported on profit and expenditure during the leadership of the

China considers ICIMOD as a valuable platform for increasing scientific exchange and regional cooperation among countries of the Himalaya

Fourth Council.

To further the development of the Society, a new council was formed during the session, which elected Professor Yao Tandong as the new Director General of the Fifth Council, with Professor Sun Honglie remaining Honorary Director General of the CSTP. Seven more scientists were elected as Deputy Director Generals: Professors Cheng Shengkui, Ge Le, Hou Zengqian, Ma Shengjie, Pan Baotian, Xie Yuan, and Zhang Renhe.

Professors Xu Xiwei, Qin Kezhang, Ding Yongjian, Zhao Xinquan, Luorongzhandui, and Long Ruijun presented academic reports during the session on popular scientific issues in the study of the Tibetan Plateau. The reports were 'Study of Wenchuan earthquake and its possible causes', 'Third porphyry copper deposit on the Tibetan Plateau', 'Reaction of cryospheric environment to climate change in China', 'Status quo of grassland degradation, its causes and sustainable development in the origin of Yangtze River, Yellow River, and Lancang River', 'Strengthening of soft power and its significance to Tibet stability and development', and 'Study of grassland agriculture on the Tibetan Plateau'.

Photos centre pages

Left

North West Yunnan, China – Xu Jianchu

Right

Gathering wood to take up the mountain, Hunan Province, China – Mark Graham

(Entry from the digital photo contest 'Mountains and People' organised by ICIMOD and APMN/Mountain Forum in 2008 www.icimod.org/photocontest2008)

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