

Declaration of COP29 on Climate Change, Mountains, and Glaciers

We, the heads of states and governments, representatives of the participating countries at the 29th United Nations Conference on Climate Change (COP-29), expressing deep concern about the growing negative impacts of climate change on mountain ecosystems and glaciers, emphasize the importance of addressing these impacts within the framework of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement as the main international intergovernmental forums for global responses to climate change in mountain regions.

Recognizing that mountains are invaluable natural resources, home to approximately 20% of the world's population, with a diversity of languages, cultures, and traditions, as well as habitats for numerous species of flora and fauna, we highlight the critical role of mountains in ensuring food and energy security, livelihoods, and freshwater for both mountain populations and vast lowland regions.

Acknowledging UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/77/172, which declared the period from 2023 to 2027 as the "Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions" and recognizing the efforts of the Mountain Partnership members, we welcome the inclusion of the theme "Mountains and Climate Change" in the first global stocktake document of COP28 UNFCCC. We also note the successful historic expert dialogue held at SB60 in Bonn on June 5, 2024, which focused on forward-looking actions related to knowledge exchange between regions for resilience building, research, adaptation, loss and damage reduction, mitigation strategies, as well as means of implementation and support.

Reaffirming the principles and goals of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, including limiting global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius, we note the call by heads of state at COP26 in Glasgow to support sustainable development in mountain regions and address priority tasks to overcome poverty in mountain and developing countries.

Recalling that the mountains the Himalayas, Tien Shan, Pamir-Alay, Caucasus, Altai, Alps, Andes, Eastern Arc Mountains, Pyrenees and other regions serve as sources of spiritual culture, traditions, and knowledge of ancient civilizations, and are sacred places of worship for many peoples, we recognize the need for their preservation and revitalization.

Acknowledging that the inaccessibility of mountain regions is an obstacle to sustainable development, leading to high levels of external debt and poverty in many mountain countries, we emphasize the need for targeted actions and funding to address these challenges.

Recognizing that the mountain cryosphere impacts surrounding lowland areas, even far from the mountains, and that large-scale changes in the cryosphere affect physical, biological, and human systems in both mountain and surrounding lowland areas, with consequences evident even in the oceans, we underscore the interconnectedness of these systems.

Deeply concerned about the accelerating retreat of glaciers and the disappearance of snow cover in mountain regions, with serious consequences for water, energy, and food security in both mountain territories and lowland countries, we call for immediate and coordinated actions to mitigate these impacts.

Noting with concern that mountain ecosystems are highly vulnerable to climate change, extreme weather events with increased precipitation intensity and frequency of natural disasters, and land degradation, from which they recover slowly, we emphasize the importance of protecting this fragile environment.

Considering the urgent need for ambitious actions to combat climate change and its impacts on mountain ecosystems and communities, we emphasize the importance of integrating mountain issues into the UNFCCC agenda. We also highlight the importance of the role of indigenous peoples and local communities in managing mountain ecosystems and using traditional knowledge in nature-based solutions for climate adaptation.

To enhance the integration of sustainable mountain development into climate policies and ensure better outcomes for mountain communities and ecosystems, we intend to pursue the following common goals:

- Integrate sustainable mountain development into global and national climate policies, adaptation strategies, and development planning processes.
- Improve monitoring and assessment of climate change impacts on mountain ecosystems, glaciers, and water resources, and develop and implement appropriate adaptation measures considering the geographical, natural, and other national characteristics of countries to reduce socio-economic vulnerability to disasters, including political, technical, social, and economic activities.
- Support the participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in decision-making processes, and recognize and respect their traditional knowledge and practices.
- Promote sustainable land and water resource management and ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation and resilience building in mountain regions, including the conservation and restoration of forests, wetlands, and other natural habitats.
- Develop and implement measures to reduce disaster risks and the vulnerability of mountain ecosystems to climate change, extreme weather events, deforestation, land degradation, pollution, and natural disasters.
- Strengthen global and regional cooperation in cryosphere research, slow-onset processes, and ensure the availability of scientific data to stakeholders for informed public policies and programs.
- Promote international cooperation for the development and implementation of strategies to preserve glaciers, including monitoring and reducing glacier retreat rates.
- Enhance scientific research, the development of new technologies, and capacity-building measures to improve understanding of the impacts of slow-onset hazards and climate change threats on mountain ecosystems and communities.

- Raise awareness of the importance of mountains for sustainable development and climate adaptation, and promote initiatives for knowledge exchange and capacity building.

- Continue the dialogue and consultations on mainstreaming the mountain agenda within UNFCCC.

To achieve these goals, in accordance with our national circumstances, we commit to better integrating mountain issues and glacier conservation into our climate policy processes, disaster risk reduction, and sustainable development agendas. We will regularly convene with various stakeholders to create synergy and strengthen cooperation in climate change and sustainable mountain development.

We will review our collective progress at future UN Climate Change Conferences and other global meetings, ensuring that the voices of communities dependent on mountains and glaciers are heard, and their needs are considered in the global response to climate change, including the direction and distribution of international climate finance flows.

Endorsements:

1. Principality of Andorra
2. Republic of Austria
3. Republic of Azerbaijan
4. Republic of Belarus
5. Kingdom of Bhutan
6. Burkina Faso
7. Republic of Colombia
8. Georgia
9. Hungary
10. Italian Republic
11. Republic of Kazakhstan
12. Kyrgyz Republic
13. Kingdom of Lesotho
14. Principality of Liechtenstein
15. Mongolia
16. Republic of Nicaragua
17. Republic of Peru
18. Russian Federation
19. Republic of Slovenia
20. Swiss Confederation
21. Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela