

Meeting of the Mountain Forum Node Managers in Barcelona, Spain, 23–27 October 2000

Authors: Ponce, Ana Maria, and Paune, Ferran

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In response to the kind invitation of the European Mountain Forum, the Mountain Forum Node Managers' Meeting was held in Catalunya, Spain, from 23 to 27 October 2000. The meeting was hosted by Fundació Territori i Paisatge (FTP), a nonprofit nongovernmental organization (NGO) established in Barcelona by Caixa Catalunya, which operates as a subnode of the European Mountain Forum.

Participants

A total of 10 participants included the coordinators of the regional nodes of 5 Mountain Forum regions as well as the Global Node and staff from the recently formed MF Secretariat. The European Mountain Forum (EMF) was represented by Françoise Mees (France), Laure Soubrier (France), and Delfi Roca (Andorra), the Asia-Pacific Mountain Forum Node by Ujol Sherchan (ICIMOD, Nepal), the Latin American Mountain Forum Node by Ana Maria Ponce (CONDESAN/InfoAndina, Perú), the MF Global Node (GISN) by Elizabeth Byers, Jason Espie, and Douglas Wandersee (TMI, USA), and the Mountain Forum Secretariat by its first Executive Secretary, Alejandro Camino, and C.P. Jayalakshmi (Nepal).

Venue

On the afternoon of 23 October, the group met in a famous Antonio Gaudi building, La Pedrera, where the Fundació Territori i Paisatge has its headquarters. From there, the group was transported by our local hosts, Miguel Rafa and Ferrán Paune, to the Centre d'Art i Natura, an international center for artistic and environmental research at Farrera, located 300 km from Barcelona.

The Centre d'Art i Natura de Farrera in the region of Pallars Sobirà in the Catalan Pyrenees

(Spain) is the setting for a contemporary experiment in finding common ground between the arts and the natural and social sciences. It is a residence and workplace for artists with a specific interest in mountains and their ecology, but it also welcomes geologists, botanists, and other experts to work on art and science-related projects. The village of Farrera is a harmonious cluster of houses and barns, built with local stone and slate, grouped around the 17th century church of Sant Roc. Situated on a south-facing bluff at an altitude of 1365 m, it is one of the highest inhabited villages in Catalonia and its views of the surrounding mountains are breathtaking. The Centre is managed by Lluís Llobet, Director (artinatura@farrera.ddl.net), and his wife Cesca, who provided the MF node managers with an ideal atmosphere to concentrate and work 12 hours every day from Tuesday to Friday.

Agenda

During the meeting, the node managers covered an exhaustive agenda. Progress reports were presented by all node managers, the GISN, and the Secretariat. The presentations were followed by discussions of present and future services for the global MF members, such as the on-line library, the events calendar, the brochure, materials for the press, the directory and the MF Newsletter, the Web pages, the regional and global e-conferences, and the moderated e-mail discussion lists. Some new alternatives for disseminating the MF Bulletin were suggested, including an insert in the journal *Mountain Research and Development*, an e-mail electronic format, and a shorter version of the printed format.

Working groups were formed to discuss the definition, organization, and motivation of membership and

fundraising. Alejandro Camino also presented several innovative ideas from the Secretariat for sustainability of the Mountain Forum. Some of these ideas were endorsed by the group, providing inputs for the next MF Board meeting held in November 2000 in Switzerland.

A session on fundraising issues was also scheduled, where the group discussed their respective financial situations. All agreed on the need for coordination with the MF Secretariat in fund-raising efforts, especially in the case of interregional proposals submitted by more than one node. The role of the private sector, in-kind contributions, and other funding alternatives were also discussed.

A special session was dedicated to discussing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Mountain Forum Secretariat and the nodes, which was drafted by Robert Auger, the consultant who conducted a study of the legal status of the Mountain Forum in 1999. With the understanding that only the Mountain Forum Board of Directors can approve such a memorandum, the group assembled a series of suggestions based on their practical experience in running the network for 5 years.

International Year of Mountains 2002

A brainstorming session dedicated to issues relating to the International Year of Mountains 2002 (IYM) was also scheduled, where each node described ideas about how the network coordinators could best work with members and the FAO to help make the IYM a success. Various meetings and events to be supported by the MF at the regional level were noted. The ideas and exchange of information served as input for an IYM questionnaire provided by FAO for their next ad hoc

interagency working group on Agenda 21, Chapter 13 ("Managing Fragile Ecosystems: Sustainable Mountain Development"), also held in Gland, Switzerland, in November 2000.

Visit to the Center for Nature and Sustainable Development of the Pyrenees

During the week of the meeting, the group had a chance to visit the environmental education and nature conservation center at the heart of the Pyrenees built by Fundació Territori i Paisatge with the support of Caixa Catalunya.

The building is designed to be a reference center for sustainability and bioclimatic architecture. Known as *Les Planes de Son, Centre de Natura i Desenvolupament Sostenible dels Pirineus* (Center for Nature and Sustainable Development of the Pyrenees), the center's aim is to promote global awareness through environmental education and training, to support projects concerned with sustainable development, and

to support conservation and research in mountain areas. Facilities will eventually accommodate up to 98 people and will include classrooms and labs, a documentation center, an auditorium, a planetarium and astronomical observatory, and a Center for Pyrenean Fauna. In the near future, it will host the Mediterranean Mountains Node of the European Mountain Forum (EMF).

Interaction with local Pyrenean representatives

On 26 October, the local Pyrenean representatives were offered a presentation in Spanish and English by the MF Executive Secretary, Dr Alejandro Camino, about traditional Andean agricultural systems and the contemporary challenges they are facing. This well-received presentation was followed by a Catalan dinner. On 27 October, the group organized a party with the participation of local people, during which the node managers presented dances from different

mountain regions of the world, including India and South and North America. Finally, on the morning of 28 October, the group returned to Barcelona after a week of very productive work, heading back to their respective countries, motivated and full of renewed energy to continue their committed work with the Mountain Forum. To find out more about the Mountain Forum, please visit www.mtnforum.org.

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Ana María Ponce

Manager of the Latin American Node of the Mountain Forum, CONDESAN/InfoAndina, International Potato Center, PO Box 1558, Lima, Peru.
InfoAndina@cgiar.org

Ferran Pauné

Fundació Territori i Paisatge (Territory and Landscape Foundation), C/Provença, 261, 2on, 08008 Barcelona, Spain.
fpaune@fundtip.com

The Seventh Meeting of the Inter-Agency Group on Mountains: A Milestone in the Preparations for the International Year of Mountains



The 7th ad hoc meeting of the Inter-Agency Group on Mountains was held from 13 to 15 November 2000 at the UN European Headquarters, the Palais des Nations, in Geneva. The meeting was convened by FAO as the Lead Agency for the International Year of Mountains (IYM) and was cohosted by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

The meeting was an important operational event in the preparations for the IYM. The objectives of the meeting were as follows:

- To identify common visions and priorities for the IYM.
- To get an overview of planned or ongoing IYM-related initiatives, their timing, and their budgetary requirements.
- To identify important thematic and geographic gaps based on this overview.
- To define institutional responsibilities.
- To discuss the overall financial strategy to be followed for the IYM.
- To discuss the follow-up activities in preparations for the IYM.

The meeting was very well attended: 58 participants from around 40 institutions with mountain expertise were present, includ-

ing UN organizations, NGOs, governments, national IYM committees, donor institutions, research institutions, etc. For the first time, the Inter-Agency Meeting was open to a significant number of new participants. This brought new perspectives and expertise to the group. A professional facilitator assisted throughout the meeting and helped ensure that the work was focused and output-oriented.

The following are some highlights and main outcomes of the meeting:

- Participating institutions showed an overwhelming degree of enthusiasm and commitment to