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Author: Kohler, Thomas

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"Community development between subsidy, subsidiarity and sustainability" was the theme of the World Mountain Symposium held in Interlaken from 30 September to 4 October 2001 to inaugurate the UN Year of Mountains (IYM2002). About 150 mountain experts from every part of the world working in the fields of science, development cooperation and policy-making took part in the Symposium. The Centre for Development and Environment (CDE) at the Institute of Geography, University of Berne, organized and ran the Symposium under a mandate from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The aim of the Symposium was to come up with concrete proposals for sustainable development of mountain regions that can be used by local, national and international decision-makers.

The five-day Symposium produced outcomes that are part of the official proceedings of the conference now available as a CD-ROM (address see below). These outcomes fall into three major categories: instruments and tools for mountain and community development; statements from the plenary discussion; and issues, visions and agendas for action.

The main instruments for promoting mountain and community development proposed at the Symposium were: knowledge generation, planning and information sharing; awareness and advocacy initiatives; education and training for capacity strengthening; policy streamlining and initiatives for institutional collaboration; financial compensation mechanisms; communication and information management and networks; development programs and projects; and global to regional conventions and action plans.

The keynote speakers addressed the need for putting ideas into action, discussed the link between technology transfer and conservation, advocated measurement of long-term impacts and monitoring of sustainable development, expressed concern that policies should mitigate conflict, and declared that cooperation for development requires sensitivity in order to avoid patronising.

An executive version of the proceedings of the World Mountain Symposium is now available in PDF format and may be downloaded from the following web site: www.wms2001.ch, or ordered free of charge from CDE. This document may be very useful in preparations for the pending High Summit. Hence SDC and CDE invite anyone interested to make use of this executive version and circulate it freely to others who have an interest in making use of it.

Thomas Kohler
CDE Coordinator for WMS 2001, Centre for Development and Environment, Steigerhubelstrasse 3, 3008 Berne, Switzerland.
Tel: +41 31 631 88 22
Fax: +41 31 631 85 44
E-mail: cde@giub.unibe.ch
Web site: www.wms2001.ch

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