

Changes in MRD's Team of Editors-in-Chief

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Changes in MRD's Team of Editors-in-Chief

Dear Readers,

Mountain peoples and regions have evolved dynamically, responding to new opportunities and adapting to local and global changes. In so doing, mountain communities have worked to achieve sustainable livelihoods, prospects for younger generations, and conservation of the ecosystems in which they live. In a similar way, MRD's editorial team and our strategies are constantly evolving to make the most of new developments. This attitude was inspired by Prof Jack Ives, who, together with a small group of colleagues, launched MRD in 1981. Their aim was to "provide a means of focusing worldwide attention on mountain environmental problems and an international forum for communication and collaboration" (Ives 1981:3). Jack served close to 20 years as editor-in-chief and laid the strong foundations on which we build today. We thank him for his visionary endeavors and his unceasing and passionate commitment—but even more importantly, we warmly congratulate him on his 90th birthday, celebrated on 15 October. We wish Jack good health and much happiness.

At the same time, we express our deep gratitude to Dr David Molden, who retired as editor-in-chief of MRD this summer, following his retirement as director general of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in Kathmandu, Nepal, in fall 2020. Another farsighted mountain scholar, David has been instrumental in strategically guiding MRD over the last 9 years. David's extensive mountain knowledge, diplomacy, and expert thematic inputs have been essential to MRD's development and have shaped our new strategy (Wymann von Dach et al 2021). Under his coleadership with Thomas Breu, MRD has published 3 special issues, 13 focus issues, and 21 open issues, containing 328 peer-reviewed articles. These have increased global knowledge about the diverse realities, dynamic processes, and manifold opportunities and challenges in mountain regions. We sincerely thank David and wish him all the best for his retirement.

In August of this year, David handed over his role as editor-in-chief to Dr Pema Gyamtsho, his successor at ICIMOD. At the same time, Prof Yanfen Wang, Executive Vice President of the University of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (UCAS) in Beijing, China, joined Thomas and Pema in MRD's team of editors-in-chief. With Yanfen and Pema, 2 renowned experts in sustainable mountain development have joined the editorial team. Yanfen is a prominent ecologist, specializing in sustainable development of grasslands under climate change. Her roles as vice chair of China's Ecological Society and Society of Natural Resources and, in particular, as executive vice president of UCAS have afforded her far-reaching experience in science policy and administration. Pema has a background in agricultural science, focusing on sustainable management of high-elevation grasslands in the Hindu Kush Himalayan region. He has extensive experience in planning, policymaking, and legislation, drawing on nearly 15 years of involvement in Bhutan's national politics, including as Minister of Agriculture and Forest from 2008–2013. We are delighted to welcome them to our team. Their expertise and experience will undoubtedly strengthen MRD's mission to bridge science, policy, and practice.

Articles in this issue are examples of such bridges. In their *MountainAgenda* article, Graham McDowell and colleagues emphasize the need to increase the quantity and quality of adaptation action in mountains. Based on 2 major literature reviews, they highlight the need to close the adaptation gap. This will require deeply collaborative efforts that are rooted in local needs, aspirations, and ways of knowing and are supported by capacity building and implementation resources.

In the *MountainDevelopment* section, Bryan Foster presents a comprehensive voluntary environmental program (VEP) scheme for large ski resorts based on experiences in a resort in Wyoming, USA. The scheme aims to improve existing industry-specific VEPs and empower employees to directly mitigate the environmental impacts of their resort, including greenhouse gas emissions.

The article by Emily J. Wilkins and colleagues in the *MountainResearch* section also addresses issues related to climate change and the ski industry. The authors show that ski resorts in Utah, USA, are already being affected and that many of them are acting to adapt to shorter and shifting ski seasons. However, ski resort managers report barriers to adaptation that include financial costs and insufficient water for snowmaking. Water availability in the context of climate and socioeconomic changes is also a concern in the Upper Indus Basin. Nisha Wagle and colleagues present findings from a scoping review of irrigation systems, which are often rooted in centuries-old practices. The authors explore coping mechanisms and shortcomings of water provision in 4 valleys of the basin.

The remaining 2 *MountainResearch* papers in this issue deal with other aspects of sustainable development in mountains. Rannveig Ólafsdóttir and colleagues investigate environmental attitudes and perceptions of local and international runners competing in an ultramarathon in a wilderness area in the highlands of Iceland. Insights into the environmental values of participants can inform the planning of sports events in natural settings to improve their sustainability. The paper by Jincheng Kang and colleagues focuses on the poorly understood shear strength of purple topsoil—an indicator of the resistance of surface land to erosion—in the Three Gorges Reservoir Area, China. The authors conclude that among the 5 investigated land use types, the topsoil in orchards has relatively high shear strength and is beneficial for soil conservation. Therefore, orchards should be favored in land use planning for the area.

In its *MountainPlatform* article, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations highlights how the Mountain Partnership alliance is working to improve opportunities for mountain peoples in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of leaving no one behind. Such efforts are even more pressing in light of the COVID-19 crisis that has exacerbated the already-difficult situation in mountains. The issue closes with the *MountainMedia* section, which contains 3 reviews of books on topics relevant to sustainable development in mountains.

The editorial team is looking forward to promoting MRD's long-term vision and defining the journal's strategic orientation, under the overall guidance of the International Mountain Society, in months to come.

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