



**Name of Event: [Roundtable] Mountains of Risk**

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**Panellists:**

- Mr. Andreas Schild, Director General, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, Nepal (Chair)
- Mr. Minjur Dorji, Honorable Minister of Home and Cultural Affairs, Bhutan
- Ms. María del Pilar Cornejo, Minister, National Secretariat for Risk Management, Ecuador
- Mr. Vicente Nuñez, National Emergency Office, Chile
- Mr. Thomas Probst Scientific Advisor, Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland

**1) Outline**

Retrieving glaciers, changes in water discharge and availability both for human consumption, and extreme weather events are among the key challenges of mountain regions. Moreover about 20500 glacial lakes have formed recently in the Hindukush- Karakorum-Himalaya increasing the risks of glacier lakes outburst floods GLOFs. However, it appears that the largest number of people at risk is to be found among those living downstream, in particular in mountain foothills. In the HKH water influences the life of 1.5 million people (i.e. one-quarters of human population) fed by the ten rivers. It is thus crucial to understand and acknowledge the interlinkages of highlands and lowlands: mountains matter for entire humankind!

**2) Key messages, outcomes, recommendations**

- Mountain goods and ecosystem services play a key role for lowland and urban population and industry (e.g. water, energy)
- Climate change is already affecting mountain ecosystems e.g. through changes in glacier water discharge, extreme events, or GLOFs

- The negative impacts of Climate Change affect not only mountain areas but also their adjacent lowlands impacting on a larger number of people
- Need for cross border cooperation and recognition / inclusion of traditional knowledge on adaptation to change and risks
- Negative impacts of Climate Change don't distinguish between mountain areas of poor and rich countries

### **3) Conclusions**

- Water is a strategic good for humanity and mountains play a key role as water towers for more than one-quarter of humanity.
- Hazard impacts are only one of the challenges for mountains and lowlands: out-migration and the feminization of agriculture in mountains are also impacting on people's livelihoods and traditional land use systems.
- There is a lack of information regarding high altitude areas for a better understanding of processes and change.
- The exchange of information and mutual / common learning e.g. via a platform such as PLANALP in the Alps would be needed to improve cross-border cooperation.
- The multi-risk approach for DRR needs to be included in the frame of sustainable (mountain) development S(M)D as part of broader global processes such as the Global Sustainability Panel, Rio 2012, and CSD 20/21.