

THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

International Conference in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
15th-18th November 2005

Organised by the Alliance of Central Asian Mountain Communities (AGOCA)

RESOLUTION

On future exchange and collaboration within the framework of the Mountain Partnership

RECOMMENDATIONS

On strengthening the role of local governance through the exchange of experience among mountain regions

We, the participants of the International Conference on “The Role of Local Governance in Sustainable Development” - representatives of mountain villages from Central Asia, the Alps, the Caucasus, the Carpathians, the Altai and the Mongolian mountain regions; representatives of governmental, non-governmental, international and scientific organisations,

noting the important role of local governance in sustainable development, and different activities at village level

supporting the objectives and missions and recognising the experience of the Mountain Partnership, the Alpine Convention, the Carpathian Convention, the Local Agenda 21, the networks of communities in the Alps and in Central Asia and the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps (CIPRA),

being ready to contribute to long-term cooperation and exchange of experience between communities and sustainable development of mountain regions,

considering that it is time for sustainable development in mountain regions the innovative ideas should be transferred at community level and strengthen networks of communities at international level,

encouraging non-governmental and governmental organisations, international and donor organisations and local communities towards activities for the sustainable development of mountain regions,

recognising the new framework that the Mountain Partnership is providing to sustainable mountain development,

having discussed and exchanged experience about the potentials, good practices and defined factors of success of addressing problems and using the potentials of local governance in sustainable development,

Have come up with the following

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the governments of all mountainous countries, the United Nations organisations, the contracting parties of the Alpine Convention, civil society, international organisations, the Mountain Partnership and its members and other bodies involved in the sustainable development of mountain regions

On the importance of partnership, exchange and cooperation between different mountain regions concerning the following issues:

General Recommendations

- The transfer of positive experience among different mountain regions should be strengthened. The Mountain Partnership is requested to promote an initiative for increasing cooperation and exchange between mountain villages, starting with Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries.
- Civic education and education in all fields of sustainable development should be promoted as a precondition for active participation in social and political life, conflict resolution, local economic development and the sustainable use of natural resources.
- Scientific research and transfer of technologies and approaches on mountain regions and mountain issues should be further promoted

On decentralisation as a condition for local (self-) governance in the field of sustainable development

- Legal training of the population to raise awareness and increase initiative.
- Establishing community organizations, public hearings to control the activities of the local (self-) governance bodies and the reimbursement of expenditures paid to the village deputies during session work are important features of functioning decentralization and therefore should be promoted
- Financial means and competence at local governance level should be promoted as they are the basis for local development and an incentive for action.

On the importance of tolerance, cooperation and reliable dialogue structures in sustainable development

- Local governance bodies should be involved in dialogue in conflict situations.
- Projects in the field of developing mountain communities need to be accompanied by an analysis of conflict issues in order to prevent possible negative consequences, which could reduce the level of tolerance and cooperation.
- Mechanisms of dialogue and collaboration between local and central governance bodies and other relevant stakeholders should be established to sustain communities' response to the conflicts endangering sustainable development.

On the role of local (self-) governance in sustainable socio-economic development

- Promoting mountain products and socially and ecologically sustainable tourism can bring financial opportunities in the development of mountain regions.
- An insurance system and/or subsidies can support and promote farming in mountain regions

On the role of local (self-) governance in the management of natural resources

It is necessary

- To support and implement inter-regional initiatives.
- To support and implement local initiatives on strengthening cooperation between users of pastures and other natural resources, through the creation of associations, initiative groups etc., as well as mechanisms for their collaboration with other partners.
- To include local plans and initiatives into the process of state planning and promote the participation of local governance bodies in the development and implementation of strategies for the sustainable management of natural resources, and in the development of a legislative base for the use of natural resources.
- To use and disseminate soil-, water- and nature conservation technologies and approaches.

On the importance of information for local communities

- It is necessary to develop the ability of the mountain population to precisely define information needs and to use available information to find locally adapted solutions.
- Information centres are needed for local communities.

On the role of women in sustainable development

It is necessary

- To support women's initiatives.
- To raise women's knowledge of economic issues through conducting educational programmes.
- To encourage the exchange of women's experiences from different regions

On the role of alliances/conventions in the political process

- Conventions and alliances can be useful instruments for cooperation, if they are developed in a 'bottom-up' process involving all the stakeholders.
- Political awareness is a condition for successful 'bottom-up' processes. This requires civic education.

We express our gratitude for the organisation of, and financial support to, the conference to:

- The Permanent Committee and Secretariat of the Alpine Convention
- The German Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Protection and Nuclear Safety
- The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
- The Alpine Alliance
- The International Commission for the Protection of the Alps (CIPRA)
- The Alliance of Central Asian Mountain Communities (AGOCA)
- The Central Asian Mountain Partnership (CAMP)
- The Centre for Development and Environment (University of Bern, Switzerland) (CDE)
- The Mountain Partnership

Annex:

Concrete Recommendations Elaborated in the Section Work During the Conference

On decentralisation as a condition for local (self-) governance in the field of sustainable development

- Social mobilization has to be enhanced through establishing village organizations
- The knowledge of citizens about their own rights has to be improved
- Initial capital should be given to local (self-) governance bodies (e.g. for the creation of a local development fund) as an impetus for action
- Transparency in the use of funds at all levels of governance has to be increased
- The legal culture has to be improved through legal training of the population (e.g. about citizens' rights and responsibilities) in order to raise awareness and increase initiative
- Public hearings to control the activity of local (self-) governance bodies have to be undertaken
- Expenditures paid out by deputies during sessions have to be reimbursed

On the importance of tolerance, cooperation and reliable dialogue structures in sustainable development

- Educational programmes, including methodological publications, on the analysis and resolution of conflict situations at local level have to be initiated and supported (mediation, negation process, maintenance of procedures for conflict resolution etc.)
- International organizations should involve local governance bodies in the initiatives to construct a dialogue in conflict situations as a priority factor for sustainable development
- Structures for timely intervention in and resolution of conflict situations and building cooperation have to be promoted and supported
- Assistance in the transfer of positive experience of managing conflict situations between different countries and regions at different levels (local, regional, national) is necessary
- Local governance bodies and public authorities should consider interethnic and clan factors in the development of local communities, including issues of the poly ethnic composition of local governance

On the role of local (self-) governance in sustainable socio-economic development

- Local communities have to be informed about legislation
- Information about the recreational potential of mountain regions has to be disseminated and nature has to be conserved in order to use this potential
- Tourism has to be developed and promoted
- A media organ about and for mountain regions is necessary
- The population and local (self-) governance bodies have to learn from the negative experience of others
- Partnerships between regions and between villages of one region, as well as learning of the experience of other mountain communities have to be promoted
- Donors have to be invited to invest directly on local level and to the local governance
- Mountain products have to be promoted
- Special privileges, e.g. an insurance system, for agriculture in high mountain regions are necessary
- Specific laws about the development of mountain regions have to be developed
- Scientific research on mountain regions is necessary
- Special structures to support local governance have to be created

On the role of local (self-) governance in the management of natural resources

- The support of initiatives for the conservation of the agro-biodiversity is necessary
- Local initiatives for the control of the use of natural resources have to be promoted and supported
- Mechanisms for local monitoring and evaluating the impact of management of natural resources on the environment with the involvement of local communities have to be supported

On the role of women in sustainable development

- The level of transparency and accountability of all development programmes has to be increased in order to motivate the participation of locals
- Policies and programmes aimed at the empowerment of women have to be promoted
- Educational programmes should be launched to enable women to fully utilize their energies in managing of their economies
- Income-generating projects have to be organised, women's initiatives supported and self-employment encouraged
- Micro-credit systems for women are necessary
- The local potential has to be included in both planning and implementation processes of development programmes
- Local awareness about the important role of women in promoting sustainable development has to be generated
- Regional and international alliances between sectors have to be fostered and the possibilities to share experience with women from various regions promoted

On the role of alliances/conventions in the political process

- Conventions and alliances can be helpful instruments of cooperation, if they respond to the needs of the local populations
- Conventions and alliances cannot be imposed on the population in a top down process, but they have to be developed in a process in which the stakeholders (civil society, regional and local authorities, science, economy etc) are involved
- Political consciousness is a condition for the involvement of stakeholders and for successful bottom up processes. It requires political education.
- Guarantees for the respect of the needs and interests of the population need strong political lobbying by the stakeholders
- The process of the development of conventions and alliances needs financial resources