

## ICIMOD Statement at GEO-XII Plenary, Mexico

The Hindu Kush Himalayan region is experiencing great changes in the recent past, with rapid population growth and high rates of out-migration, economic development, urbanization, and environment degradation. In particular, the Himalayan region have gained greater attention as hotspots of climate change. These changes pose challenges to sustainable development. At the same time, the mountains have been increasingly recognized for the ecosystem services they provide.

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development is a regional intergovernmental knowledge Centre serving the eight regional member countries of the Hindu Kush Himalayas (HKH) – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan.

Earth Observation (EO) has become critical in addressing mountain development challenges in the region. Through regional and international partnerships, ICIMOD continuously strives to serve as a regional center of excellence on earth observation and geospatial technologies for the Himalayan region.

ICIMOD is utilizing earth observation covering a wide range of issues – assessing impact of climate change on snow and glaciers, determining water availability scenarios in river basins, devising sustainable conservation strategy for transboundary landscapes, disaster response and recovery efforts, issuing timely flood early warning, agriculture monitoring for food security analysis, estimating carbon financing for communities to benefit from REDD+ mechanism, among others.

ICIMOD has become a participating organization of GEO in 2009 and actively participating and contributing to GEO's effort in the Himalayan region. ICIMOD closely interfaces with space agencies in our region, we host a SERVIR program supported by NASA and USAID, we are a node of JAXA, and a regional support office for UN SPIDER.

**ICIMOD wishes to announce a Himalayan GEO** to promote and utilize earth observation in the Himalayan region through active regional cooperation with its member states and partnerships with regional and international organizations. The focus:

- Foster regional cooperation to promote earth observation and allied technologies
- Assist with capacity development of the ICIMOD member countries
- Develop and implement innovative EO and geospatial application services of regional significance;
- A regional platform for mutual learning and sharing opportunities

ICIMOD congratulates GEO on its tremendous progress and next 10-year implementation framework, and looks forward to a continuing strong partnership. ICIMOD would also like to

thank Government of Mexico for hosting the Ministerial Summit and GEO Plenary and excellent hospitality. Thank you!