

**HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE**

**“Regional cooperation in mountains: from Rio to Rio and beyond”**

**20 June 2012, 14.00 – 15.00 hours**

**Auditorium, Mountain Pavilion, Athletes’ Park, Rio de Janeiro**


**PROGRAMME**

14.00 – 15.00	<b>ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION</b>
	<b>Chair:</b> Jan Dusik, Acting Director, UNEP ROE
	<b>Participants:</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- HE Wolfgang Waldner, <i>State Secretary, Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, Austria</i></li><li>- Maria Teresa Becerra, <i>General Secretariat of the Andean Community</i></li><li>- Marco Onida, <i>Secretary General, Alpine Convention</i></li><li>- David Molden, <i>Director General, ICIMOD tbc!</i></li><li>- Harald Egerer, <i>Head of the Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention</i></li></ul>

Organizing and supporting Partners:



with funding from

Austrian  
 Development Cooperation

## Background and Introduction

The international community recognized the importance of mountains at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992 through adoption of Chapter 13 in Agenda 21, the often referred to so-called “mountain agenda”. Chapter 13 underscored the role of mountains in global sustainable development. So far, the Alpine and the Carpathian Convention are the only two regional mountain Conventions worldwide.

Various experiences and practices can be drawn from existing regional approaches and initiatives that exist in mountain regions such as the Alps, Andes, Carpathians or the Hindu-Kush Himalayas (HKH). The typology in this respect is a very broad one, from “hard” legal instruments such as the Alpine and Carpathian Convention to “soft” instrument: programmes-projects orientated approaches such as ICIMOD.

The Alpine and Carpathian Convention follows for the structure the “framework protocol approach”: The framework provides the “umbrella” setting general objectives and provisions of a more general character, for substantive and procedural matters. The objectives and general provisions are further elaborated by subsequent Protocols, setting out specific obligations that are in conformity with the rules as set out in the Framework Convention.

The Alpine Convention<sup>1</sup> is an international treaty between Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, Liechtenstein, Monaco and Switzerland as well as the EU, aimed at promoting sustainable development in the Alpine area and at protecting the interests of the people living within it. It embraces the environmental, social, economic and cultural dimensions. It was open to signature in 1991 and entered into effect in 1995. It is the first international Treaty in the world dedicated to a transborder mountainous region and it encompasses eight legally binding thematic protocols on Spatial Planning, Mountain Farming, Forests, Energy, Tourism, Soil protection and Transport.

The Carpathian Convention<sup>2</sup> is an international treaty between Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic as well as Serbia and Ukraine provides the framework for cooperation and multi-sectoral policy coordination, a platform for joint strategies for sustainable development, and a forum for dialogue between all stakeholders involved. It was open to signature in 2003 and entered into effect in 2006. Now 3 thematic protocols on Biological and Landscape diversity, Sustainable forest management and Sustainable Tourism have been adopted by the parties. An agreement was signed in 2006 between the two Convention with the aim of, inter alia, join forces and work together at the international/global level. A Declaration, paving the way to a possible Convention, was signed in 2011 among the Countries of the Dinaric Arc involving Slovenia, Serbia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Albania, Montenegro, Macedonia and Kosovo. Both, the AC and the CC demonstrate that SMD can be achieved – or at least pursued –mainly through multilateral cooperation among the different states sharing one joint ecosystem. They further

---

<sup>1</sup> Visit [www.alpineconvention.org](http://www.alpineconvention.org) for further information

<sup>2</sup> Visit [www.carpathianconvention.org](http://www.carpathianconvention.org) for further information

demonstrate that regional development through conservation and valorization of shared natural assets is possible.

Whatever the precise merits of the different approaches are, caution has to be taken when approaches are chosen for other mountain regions. The given geopolitical situation on the ground, maybe characterized by armed conflicts and tensions, might favor the latter option. What is important to note is that regional agreements, even though having its scope on mountain regions can have an impact on the wider region, encompassing the lowlands as well as vice versa. This is of particular relevance in the light of the important upstream and downstream linkages that are given with respect to mountain ecosystem goods and services.

## **Description**

The High-level event follows the informative event organised in New York on 27 April 2012 during the Rio + 20 Preparatory Meeting on contributions of regional governance mechanisms for mountain regions to the Rio +20 process.

Concrete experiences of existing mountain-specific regional approaches, including Multilateral Environmental Agreements, which can be shared with other mountain regions of the world, and their implementation and impact in the territory under their scope, in particular in the fields of tourism, infrastructure, clean energy and land-use changes, will be presented by the Alpine and the Carpathian Conventions Secretariats representatives and high-level Country representatives. Representatives of the European Commission and the Andean Community will present the importance of regional cooperation in mountain areas and of mountain-specific MEAs from their perspective.

The concrete merits and contribution of regional cooperation in mountain areas and of mountain – specific MEAs in particular to the Rio + 20 process and topic investment in mountain regions will be discussed by the Conference participants.

Mountain Pavilion – key message

***“Cooperative action can be strengthened by establishing new or reinforcing existing regional agreements for sustainable mountain development”***

# MOUNTAIN PAVILION *presented by*



## Objectives

- Underline the importance of regional cooperation and in particular of mountain – specific MEAs for the governance of mountain areas and their relation and integration with other regional governance instruments
- Presentation and discussion of different types of regional approaches (legal “hard” instrument vs. soft instruments)
- Discussion of the opportunities and challenges regional cooperation – the post Rio dimension with a specific focus on investment in mountain regions

## Contact information

Mr. Matthias Jurek, Hub for Eastern Europe, MP Secretariat, UNEP Vienna – ISCC, EURAC expert,  
Email: [matthias.jurek@unvienna.org](mailto:matthias.jurek@unvienna.org) , Official Mobile: 0043 699 1459 7120