

Official Web Site of the International Year of Mountains (IYM)

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Official Web Site of the International Year of Mountains (IYM)



FAO, the Task Manager for the International Year of Mountains (IYM), has launched the official IYM web site. This site is accessible in 3 languages at the following addresses:

- English, www.mountains2002.org
- French, www.montagnes2002.org
- Spanish, www.montanas2002.org

The site currently contains basic background information such as the IYM Concept Paper prepared by the Task Manager, a description of the IYM's institutional structure and objectives, and an overview of various international resolutions and other key documents. Existing and potential partner organizations can consult the site's "Guided Tour" to the planning of events, in which they will find an introduction to the IYM's thematic setting (with an annex offering details of thematic clusters), important information on management and funding of IYM and post-2002 activities, and an overview of expected outputs at the global, regional, national, and local levels. Examples of basic building

blocks for the IYM, a list of key publications, and a list of current IYM partners round off the Guided Tour in its present form.

The site also features an attractive postcards section and an overview of new sections to be added in the coming months. These include IYM resources designed to help people; institutions and governments to prepare for the International Year; a mountain library with links to conservation and development databases; an introduction to mountain topics; profiles of mountains worldwide; descriptions of mountain cultures and a gallery of art, downloadable music, book reviews, and poetry; mountain recreation themes and debates; a mountain schoolroom with downloadable material; and regularly updated reports on successful mountain development initiatives worldwide. These features are planned as a lasting contribution to the long-term objective of sustainable mountain development.

An IYM logo has been created and can be viewed on the new web site. In the very near future, this

logo will be available in several formats for downloading from the site. Partners are welcome to use it for awareness raising and noncommercial promotion.

In addition, FAO has issued a press release on the IYM. This document is available at www.fao.org/WAICENT/OIS/PRESS_NE/PRESSENG/2000/pren0042.htm. Finally, as requested by the UN General Assembly Resolution 53/24 dated 10 November 1998, a report on the state of preparations for the IYM has been drawn up for the UN secretary-general; an advance, unedited version of this report can be viewed at www2.mtnforum.org/mtnforum/archives/reportspubs/library/iyemun00a.htm. The report will be presented at the 55th session of the UN General Assembly.

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The International Mountain Research Workshop: Mountain Regions—A Research Subject?

Grenoble, Pôle Européen Universitaire et Scientifique, 4–7 June 2000

Leading up to the World Mountain Forum meeting that took place this June in France, the scientific community from the Grenoble and Chambéry regions organized the International Mountain Research Workshop in Autrans and Grenoble. Among the participants were approximately 70 scientists from 5 continents, representing a diverse array of disciplines in the natural

and social sciences, 2 observers from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and other special guests. Facilitated by the outstanding hospitality of our hosts, the workshop ran for 3 very intense days, with discussions centering on the general but rarely addressed question of exactly what constitutes a mountain in terms of scientific research. These discussions focused on 3 main topics.

The specificity, unifying characteristics, and diversity of mountain regions

Everyone present seemed to agree that the issue that generated the most intense debate was the lack of a single satisfactory definition of a mountain region. (As R. Rajamani put it, "a mountain is like an elephant," referring to the blind man's description of a pillar, a snake, or a