

IUCN Nepal *Newsletter*

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IYM Nepal opener

The first major IYM event in Nepal was the International Seminar on Mountains organised by the Royal Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (RONAST) in March 2002, which was inaugurated by His Majesty King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev. Here, Their Majesties meet organisers at the inaugural function. Dr. Mahesh Banskota, Country Representative, IUCN Nepal, is at extreme right.

The United Nations has declared 2002 as the International Year of Mountains. IYM is meant to be a celebration of mountain life, and a time for drawing world attention for action to enhance the well-being of mountain environments and communities dependent on them.



next major IYM event in the region

Celebrating Mountain Women a global meeting in the International Year of Mountains 2002

1-4 October 2002, Thimphu, Bhutan

The Celebrating Mountain Women (CMW) conference will bring together indigenous women, donors, policy-makers and planners, entrepreneurs, and researchers to share the problems and progress of mountain women. Such interaction, it is hoped, will facilitate dynamic solutions and an action programme that will help overcome neglect and poverty that plague many mountain areas of the world. The conference aims to give mountain women a forum to articulate their concerns and share experiences and ideas about the future of mountain livelihoods and cultures. Such a gathering is expected to enable mountain women's networks to grow and strengthen as agents of change and also make significant contributions to policies and practices for empowering mountain women and communities.

This event is being organised by ICIMOD and the Mountain Forum. It is sponsored by FAO, ICIMOD, IFAD, the Mountain Forum and UNIFEM Regional Office for South Asia.

for details log on to: <http://www.icimod.org/iym2002/cmw> or <http://www.mtnforum.org/women>



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Poverty and inequality in Asia's mountains

– Dr. Mahesh Banskota*



mountains and plateaus. These range from cold-dry, cold-wet, hot-dry, to hot and humid mountain areas; volcanic mountains, desert-mountains and island-mountains; mountains in developed, developing and landlocked countries; in small and large countries. The countries with significant geographical area under mountains are: Turkey, Iran and Yemen in West Asia; Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, parts of South East and East Russia in Central Asia; Japan, parts of China, South and North Korea in North Asia; Philippines, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Vietnam, Laos, Malaysia and Thailand and parts of China in South East Asia; Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka in South Asia.

The World Bank and others have classified countries on the basis of income and this is a reasonable way of looking at mountain areas when the focus is on poverty. There are high (per capita) income and low-income countries with significant mountain areas. According to the World Bank's World Development Report 2001, Japan (>\$9361) is a high income country with mountain areas; Thailand (\$760-3031) is a lower-middle income country; China and India (\$760<) are large countries with low incomes having sizeable mountain areas; Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Bhutan and Laos are landlocked mountainous countries; and then there is the special case of island highlands in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and the Philippines.

Japan, highly developed and mountainous, has had a long history of people living in the mountains. Relative poverty in the hilly rural areas of Japan has fallen due to economic growth in the past decades. However, the pace of change is slower in mountain areas than elsewhere and this has increased the gap between urban and rural areas and also between mountain areas and plains. In hill-mountain areas there has been widespread depopulation, up to 75 percent in some rural prefectures in the mountains. This is caused by strong push factors but also by even stronger pull factors (from the plains and urban areas) that have also been seen in other mountain areas of the world.

The mountainous northern parts of Thailand cover almost a fifth of the country's total area. Population pressures are relatively low but growing. Although poverty has declined dramatically over the past three decades, the decline in rural areas and uplands is less than in urban areas—almost a fifth of upland household are considered poor. These poor upland households are larger, and more dependent on agriculture. They are also marginalised in terms of opportunities—the first to be hit in a crisis are upland

The mountain areas of the Asian continent are highly visible but their peoples remain largely invisible. There is little data on these remote, inaccessible and marginal areas. Development in these mountain areas remains quite an uphill task. There is always the potential risk for soil, forests, water, people and capital to 'run' downhill. Given the slow pace of change, the high cost of interventions and the damage already done to mountain environments in the name of development, will mountain development ever be sustainable? Will mountain societies be able to find the resources, skills and innovations needed to overcome the prevailing conditions of poverty, inequality and deterioration of the environment in mountain areas?

These questions can be partly addressed by examining the mountainous regions within Asia. About 75 percent of the Asian continent's total surface area consists of

*Dr. Banskota is Country Representative, IUCN Nepal. This article contains highlights from the paper 'Poverty and Inequality in Mountain Areas', presented at the Asia High Summit, April 2002, Kathmandu.

people, who are usually the last to be hired and the first to be fired, as in the recent Asian crisis. Overall, Thailand exhibits high growth but also growing disparities.

The Philippines, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea are all island states that are predominantly mountainous. The Philippines has a population of 15.8 million people in its uplands and rapid growth is leading to problems of lowland-upland migration, rapid deforestation, soil loss, falling productivity, flooding and sedimentation. Poverty is widespread, with rural poverty at about 53 percent and much of this in upland areas. There is widespread underemployment and low productivity. Women and poverty linkages are however weaker. Papua New Guinea is another significantly mountainous country, with high population densities in its uplands; as a result, upland agriculture is under a lot of pressure. Indonesia too is characterised by widespread poverty in its upland areas.

China and India represent large countries in Asia with significant mountain areas and populations. China has about 15 million poor people in its uplands. The economic changes and development that are seen in other areas are less visible in the mountains. These areas are characterised by adverse conditions, particularly poor human resource development. India has about 51 million people in its hill and mountain states and the incidence of poverty varies from 25 to 41 percent. Literacy in mountain states appears to be better than average, although gender and health indicators are lower than the national average.

Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan and Lao PDR are not only almost wholly mountainous but also landlocked. These countries have lower average income levels and lower economic growth than their neighbours in the Region. Landlocked mountain states are also smaller than their neighbours in terms of population, surface area and economy, and this has important implications in terms of economies of scale for markets, infrastructure and industries. Smaller nations tend to not only have higher costs per unit of an activity but also limited number of activities. Smaller nations are also more dependent on trade and therefore more vulnerable to outside economic fluctuations.

Comparisons of landlocked mountain states with their larger neighbours tend to indicate that inequality remains quite varied. Mountain states do not reveal a consistently higher level of inequality than their larger neighbours, they are about the same. In general, the percentage of people below the poverty line appears to be similar for rural areas in landlocked mountain states and in neighbouring states. This could mean that living in the mountains is just about the same in both landlocked countries and countries that are not landlocked. Relative access conditions and associated problems are about the same. Landlocked mountain states have a lower percentage of people living below the poverty line in urban areas compared to neighbouring states, the only exception being China. If one looks at poverty on an international basis, the gaps between South Asian countries and others emerges fairly clearly. Absolute levels of income are much lower in South Asia, including in landlocked mountain states, than in China or Central Asia. The GDI rank is significantly lower for landlocked mountain states than for neighbouring states.

Females have lower life expectancy at birth and the difference between males and females is greater. Adult literacy both for females and males is significantly lower in landlocked mountain states than in the neighbouring states, although the gross enrolment ratio does not reveal a very clear pattern. Another interesting aspect is the estimated earned income (EEI) for females and males. Landlocked mountain states have lower EEI for females. Mountain women do not uniformly fare that badly across the region, although the relative position of South Asian women, particularly in health related aspects, is quite worrying.

There are major information gaps and so a comparison is not easy. Poverty is greater in mountain areas with higher populations that are agriculturally dependent, and these are a part of the weaker national economies. There are also variations in income levels of mountain people—a reflection of the broader economic systems with which they are linked. However, relative income levels are lower in all mountain areas, and inequality levels, both in terms of income and access to services, are higher for mountain people. There are also serious gaps in HRD components of mountain people and this has placed them at a severe disadvantage vis-à-vis other groups. The fact that mountain people are relatively poor in large countries, smaller countries, on islands and in landlocked countries indicates that mountain areas in general tend to be neglected. These areas continue to be remote and inadequately served with different facilities. There is a great need to increase external linkages and promote micro dynamism to promote and sustain mountain development.



GIRIDHAR AMATA/UCN NEPAL

WETLANDS DAY CELEBRATION

The theme for World Wetlands Day 2002 was "Wetlands: Water, Life and Culture". To raise public awareness about the importance of wetland ecosystems for biodiversity conservation and the well-being of human societies, IUCN Nepal in collaboration with DNPWC (the Ramsar National Administrative Authority in Nepal) celebrated World Wetlands Day on 2 February 2002 with two radio interaction programmes broadcast on Radio Sagarmatha FM, publication of a poster on wetlands, a documentary on Ghodaghodi Lake telecast on Nepal Television, and an exhibition of books and educational materials on wetlands.



Mr. Paras Mani Acharya (centre), Wetland Ecologist in the IUCN Wetlands Team, and Dr. Roshan Shrestha (right), Director, ENPHO at the radio interaction programme on Sagarmatha FM

CONSULTATION WORKSHOP

IUCN Nepal assisted the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) in revising and finalising the Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve Management Plan. The final draft of management plan has been prepared and submitted to the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) for its final endorsement from the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MoFSC).

DNPWC and IUCN Nepal also jointly organised a one day national consultation workshop on the Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve (a Ramsar Site) and Parsa Wildlife Reserve Management Plans on 26 February 2002. Approximately 32 participants from government and non-government institutions attended, including representatives from the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Ministry of Population and Environment, DNPWC, Department of Soil Conservation and Watershed Management, Department of Plant Resources, Wardens of KTWR and PWR, IUCN Nepal, WWF, NEFEJ, KMTNC, PCP/Landscape Project, APEC and individual experts. The workshop was facilitated by Shyam Bajimaya, chief ecologist, DNPWC. After the presentations, a general discussion was held on the KTWR and PWR management plans. Group work was presented in the plenary session chaired by Dr. Damodar Parajuli, Joint Secretary of MoFSC.

PROJECT INCEPTION SEMINAR

The Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wetlands in Nepal (CoSuWeN) project team organised a project inception seminar on "Challenges and Opportunities for Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wetlands in the Nepal Terai" on 1 March 2002 at Lalitpur.

The seminar was held to inform key stakeholders about the objectives and activities of the project, learn about baseline work being conducted by other organisations, and to explore ideas on collaboration and cooperation in the field of Terai wetland conservation for the future. The seminar, attended by over 43 participants, was chaired by Dr. Damodar Parajuli (MoFSC), chairperson of the Project Steering Committee.



Participants at the wetlands project inception seminar in Lalitpur

IYM CELEBRATIONS

IUCN Nepal participated in the exhibition of the Nepal Development Forum (NDF) held in Kathmandu 5-8 March 2002. IUCN also supported RONAST in organising the International Seminar on Mountains in early March 2002 at Kathmandu. The event was co-sponsored by a host of other conservation partners, and attended by over 70 national and international delegates from over 20 countries. Professionals from IUCN presented four papers on Environmental Law, Mountain Ecosystems and the Role of Sustainable Harvesting of NTFPs in Poverty Alleviation, Prospects for Restoration of Critical Siwalik Ecosystem, and Evolving Mountain Agricultural Systems and Livelihood Strategies in the TMJ area.



Visitors at the IYM pavilion, Nepal Education and Book Fair, 2002

CBD SUPPORT

IUCN Nepal collaborated with the National Biodiversity Unit/ Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation in preparing the Second National Status Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). A 15-member committee was formed by the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation to look after preparation of the 2nd National Report. As a Contracting Party to the CBD, Nepal has submitted a National Status Report to the CBD Secretariat.

STRENGTHENING PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

IUCN has taken steps to improve its Monitoring and Assessment (M&A) system to include outcome and impact monitoring. Initial steps have focused on discussing what this means for programme units and projects. Two major outcomes that demonstrate the use of outputs have been defined—changes in attitude (acceptance of new ideas) and changes in behaviour (application of skills/knowledge). While specific outcome statements and indicators have yet to be developed, programme and project staff are applying the "So What" question to examine the effectiveness of their ongoing work at this higher level of expected change, as well as in making new workplans and projects.

As part of this initiative, a three-day meeting was held in Dharan in February where participants from the two eastern field projects were invited (including community groups and field office staff). A similar exercise was organised in the Seti Project area. Participatory resource mapping, focus group discussion and informal discussion were tools used to gather information where the existing monitoring system was providing limited information (on the reach of project benefits, for example). It also promoted discussion among project partners and beneficiaries so that they are more directly involved in identifying follow-up action.

HARI PRADHAN/IUCN NEPAL



A participatory resource mapping exercise in the Seti Project area

SDC REVIEW MISSION

In March 2002, Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) conducted an external evaluation of IUCN's 2000-2002 Programme. The evaluation team consisted of Mr. Peter Hilaire, independent consultant, Switzerland, Dr. Lekh Nath Belbase, independent consultant, and Ms. Dibya Gurung, Programme Officer, SDC Coordination Office, Kathmandu. The purpose of the external evaluation was to review progress and suggest reorientation for future programming. The evaluation included an analysis of both sub-projects and of IUCN as an institution in Nepal, and included a visit to the field where the team met with CBO, CFUG, local government and government representatives. The evaluation focused primarily on the SDC contribution to the IUCN programme, although it included an objective assessment of IUCN Nepal's relationship with other (HMG/donor) main partners as well. The evaluation report also made suggestions regarding the scope for future collaboration between SDC and IUCN in Nepal.

The Evaluation Team (ET) noted that IUCN Nepal had successfully negotiated the shift from a policy to field emphasis, and was of the view that it should now embark on a period of consolidation rather than make substantial new changes. It suggested consolidation of the emerging role of the Programme Development Unit (PDU) as the focus for learning within the organisation and maintaining the culture of openness and cooperation amongst the IUCN operational units. It recommended that IUCN reaffirm knowledge as the central concept of the Programme, with the focus on Nepali conservation needs, since this was recognised as an area of comparative advantage. The candidate areas recommended for the knowledge focus include legal and regulatory options promoting security

of access to natural resources and livelihood benefits; participatory biodiversity monitoring; environmental governance and climate change; trade and environment; and, environment and security.

The ET, in field-level recommendations, suggested that IUCN accept long-term commitment to achieve tangible results and learning. It was suggested that a minimum of five years was needed to learn about the validity of planning and monitoring approaches, the impacts of training and awareness building on local capacities, and the impacts of solutions proposed on natural resources and livelihoods. It was also suggested that IUCN maintain its strategy of working through partners, with its role primarily to reinforce the capacity of these partners to achieve conservation and livelihood results. It also suggested that IUCN continue to act as facilitator in support of community groups and local government, and continue to develop participatory progress and impact assessment tools. It pointed out that the IUCN approach to local communities has been effective and that it was necessary to develop a similar involvement with local government institutions.

DEEPENDRA RAJBHANDARI/IUCN NEPAL



The SDC Evaluation Team interacting with CFUG and CBO representatives at a meeting in Damak, Jhapa

Pasture and rangeland studies



Yaks make their way up a trail in the TMJ area

Activities initiated under the Himal Strategy last year continued into the first quarter of this year. A research team, now working in the upper reaches of the TMJ area, is involved in identifying native grassland species (palatable and unpalatable) and their phenotypes; stock density and carrying capacity of grasslands in the area; estimates of livestock populations; yield; existing pastureland and rangeland management practices; and, identification of weed species that are invading the pasturelands. Methods for deweeding pastureland weed species are also being tested in the field. Also being studied are aspects of changing land use and the various livelihood strategies that people in the eastern mountains are adopting for their survival. Work under the Himal Strategy complements the work being carried out in the TMJ demonstration project site.

"It is our own resource"

The monitoring report from the Seti zone makes note of some positive changes in communities in the area, particularly the strong ownership of local conservation efforts. This is what Shiva Oli, a participant in one of the programmes, had to say: "In the beginning the community had a negative attitude towards the IUCN presence. We used to think that IUCN staff were here for their own employment. But all this changed once IUCN established the plant nursery, trained people to conserve medicinal plants and formed women's groups. People are now conserving seeds for future plantations and have developed a feeling of ownership over resources. They are united. Now we believe that we can develop on our own. Earlier we had questions about these NTFPs. Like, we wondered where *Taj* (local term for *Tejpat*, or cinnamonum leaf) came from. But after training we realised that we could produce it on our own lands. It is now with us. It is our own resource."



Waiting to sell Tejpat (*Cinnamomum tamala*) to traders at the roadhead

NTFP conservation and use



Amala (*Phyllanthus emblica*) is an important NTFP in the Seti area

Before IUCN facilitated the formation of NTFP groups in the Seti Project area, contractors were allowed to harvest *Amala* (gooseberry) and other NTFPs in any manner they chose. The contractors cornered most of the profits and their harvesting practices were unscientific and destructive. Now that communities are aware of the benefits of conservation and sustainable use, they have put an end to such destructive harvesting to a large extent. Recently, the groups in Gadsera VDC declared a conservation area that they have named Nimoune Conservation Area, where they have planted saplings of *Amala*. They plan to use seeds from this area for raising other plantations in future. The micro-enterprise training that IUCN facilitated in the area has also helped people in value addition of NTFPs. Recent monitoring reports show that a man from Gadsera is now making bamboo products for the local market; one Harka Bahadur Malla now manufactures and sells pickles made from citrus fruits grown locally; and, one Dan Bahadur Saud makes beehive sets for beekeepers in the area.

Tourism in the East

Last year, IUCN organised a visit for small hoteliers and entrepreneurs of the TMJ area to successful ecotourism sites in Sirubari and the ACAP area. Participants of that exposure visit now report that it was useful to them in developing appropriate strategies for the TMJ area. In the first quarter of 2002, IUCN supported the restoration of some wetland sites of cultural and biodiversity value in the TMJ area. The Project has assisted local communities in restoring Guphapokhari, one of the high altitude wetland sites, by building a protective stone wall around the site. The Project has also supported renovation of the trail to Pathibhara temple and the development of camp sites along the trail. Important trails beyond Guphapokhari that lead to Sabhapokhari are being upgraded through community participation. These areas attract a sizeable number of domestic religious tourists, and researchers, nature tourists and trekkers who come to see the rhododendron in bloom and for spectacular views of the Himalayas.



Guphapokhari (2,900masl) in the TMJ area



Dark monsoon clouds roll over the lower Churia. Heavy rains and flash floods cause extensive damage to riverbanks and valuable farmland each year

"We are now more knowledgeable..."

The Assessment Report highlights some of the HRD impacts in the demonstration project site in the Ilam Siwaliks. People say they now have a better understanding of several issues. They understand that the resource degradation and poverty in the area are the result of human activity, and that combating it calls for collective action. As one person put it: "We are now far more knowledgeable than we were before. We know the relationship between river floods and the felling of trees in the hills. We have understood that spurs are insufficient in preventing floods. We need to grow *kans* and other plants on spur protected riverbanks. We had a difficult time convincing our neighbours who were not ready to contribute labour to conservation work. They wanted all the work to be done by those who lived or farmed near the river. They presumed that their lands and houses would be affected only after lands and houses near the river were damaged. After a series of discussions we were able to convince them."

The Bukuwa model

The women of Chulachuli VDC, Ward No 8, Ilam District, were initially indifferent to the IUCN conservation project in the Ilam Siwaliks. The women's apex body (which heads a coalition of 52 women's groups) that would interact with the community forestry beneficiaries on a regular basis, found them a critical audience. After several visits by the apex body the women were slowly drawn to the idea of planting trees. Unfortunately, their interest was not matched by practical support from their husbands. Undeterred, the women decided to take matters into their own hands. They refused to cook lunch for their husbands until they prepared the land for plantations. The strategy worked. Today this CFUG has substantial blocks of plantations. Says Krishna Maya Poudel, member of the Bukuwa Community Forestry User Group: "We have pledged to protect the forest through rotational monitoring. We have also been successful in controlling grazing and more people have taken to stall-feeding their cattle." Call this the Bukuwa model.



A view of the Bukuwa CF in the Ilam Siwaliks

"IUCN Nepal is well positioned to handle challenges"



Ms. Aban Marker Kabraji was appointed IUCN Regional Director, Asia, in January 2000. As the Regional Director, Aban is primarily responsible for overall coordination and management of eight country and five regional programmes at the strategic, political and financial levels. She also develops donor relations throughout the region, and represents IUCN at various inter-governmental, governmental, and civil society fora.

Aban's record at IUCN extends from her founding the Pakistan programme in 1988. She began her career as a biological quality control manager. In 1980, she moved into the emerging nature conservation movement in Pakistan, working with the Marine Turtle Conservation Project for five years. From 1985 to 1987, Aban was one of the key actors in pushing the Pakistan National Conservation Strategy (NCS) process in partnership with the Government of Pakistan, while at the same time acting as Regional Director for WWF Pakistan, implementing their education programme in the Karachi region.

From 1988, Aban took on full-time responsibility as Country Representative of IUCN Pakistan. During this period, Aban was instrumental in overseeing the expansion of IUCN as an organisation, which grew from a handful of staff to a strength of 270 in 1999. The programme expanded from one Karachi office to its current strength of five programme offices and five separate project offices. Aban's dynamism and dedication have not only played their role in the development of IUCN, but also in raising awareness about conservation in Pakistan. Over the past fifteen years, Aban has served on the board and in an advisory capacity of numerous organisations. During this period, conservation has come to be viewed in broader terms—from merely preserving wildlife to the concept of sustainable development and its political economy.

As Regional Director of IUCN Asia, what do you see as the biggest challenge facing the region?

We live in a time of great challenges, challenges that we find hard to accept but which may even have a bearing on the very survival of humankind. The challenges are generally environmental degradation, rising population, and, above all, the unsustainable use of natural resources. The problems vary in nature from one part of the region to another.

The sub-continent enters the new century with the strong awareness among a growing number of people that the security of our future is very much linked to the state of our environment. The environmental challenge cannot be met by disparate and ad hoc efforts. A concerted effort is needed to ensure peace, security and the well-being of all, especially the well-being of deprived communities.

What role does the Asia Regional Directorate envisage for itself in tackling these problems?

Over the next decade or so, poverty and the requirements of urban settlements will continue to weigh heavily upon natural resources. Similarly, pockets of affluence and the globalisation of the marketplace will exert pressures that are equally significant. In this context, an institution like IUCN, rooted as it is in the technical and scientific knowledge of species and ecosystems, can make a significant contribution.

IUCN is a member-driven organisation, and to some extent our role is dictated by the wishes of our members. In that context, the most important members are government and non-government institutions. IUCN, with its network of state, government agency, NGO and commission members, is ideally placed to coordinate shared efforts. IUCN and its members in Asia can provide the platform for building consensus, creating a common understanding and reinforcing commitment in the region.

What does the Asia Regional Office (ARO) see as priorities for the region as a whole? A word also on the country offices, constituency and regional office relationships.

The Asia Regional Office in a sense works closely with members. In South East Asia, our programmes and priorities are defined by members of the region. For example, in the Mekong area we are looking at the enormous impact of the Mekong river itself. And our priorities are defined by looking at the whole issue of river basin management and the ecosystem. But equally, South East Asia is also very much one of the last refuges of rich biodiversity, and so another priority is to make sure that the pristine biodiversity is conserved. In short, our priorities are to continue to support the work of our members, and continue to assist with restoration, capacity building, leadership and constituency development by bringing in global thinking and best practices from all over the world. As for country offices, their constituencies, and regional office relationships, I would say we have a very productive synergy between country offices and the Asia Regional Office.

"The sub-continent enters the new century with strong awareness among a growing number of people that the security of our future is very much linked to the state of our environment"

Apart from the ongoing programmes, how has the ARD focused attention on supporting initiatives emanating from the region?

IUCN's role in Asia has changed. The pace of change has accelerated to a rate that makes it difficult to take stock in any comprehensive way. Again, there is no such thing as a stand-alone IUCN project. Everything we do is in alliance and association with our members and partners who in turn are an essential part of the global IUCN family.

Well, again it all depends on what the new initiatives are. These don't just emanate from the region. Very often, there is a correlation between global thinking and what regional demands are. With the instability in the region, there is a lot of emphasis on issues like environmental security and international environmental governance, particularly in terms of consumption and how they are being implemented within the Asian context. There are also discussions on climate change and water issues. We are responding to all of them.

IUCN is considered a member-driven organisation. What strategy has the ARD adopted to support and strengthen its institutional and commission members?

One of the most important achievements of the IUCN Asia Programme in 2001 is the establishment of a Regional Constituency Development and Coordination Programme. This programme is entirely aimed at strengthening IUCN constituency for conserving nature and natural resources of Asia. IUCN already has a strong base in Asia with 139 institutional members, including 11 states, 23 government agencies, and 101 non-governmental organisations and 4 affiliated members. Further, there are about 1000 Commission members spread across 23 countries in the region.

IUCN is amongst a handful of platforms in which members regularly interact and meet in each country, every two years or as often as is possible regionally, and every four years globally, to discuss environmental and conservation concerns and issues; debate on policy and developments at the global and regional levels; exchange information and experience; take an informed position; and, advise IUCN on its programmes.

IUCN is also very unique in the sense that its membership includes several states and government agencies and many NGOs. We have a mixture of NGOs—some are very large and many are small local-level NGOs with very limited capacities and resources. In their sphere of activities, these small NGOs are also as important as the large ones and play a vital role in influencing conservation practices at the local level. It is very important to build capacities, particularly of these small organisations, and empower them to function more effectively at the local level.

"With growing instability in the region, there is a lot of emphasis on issues like environmental security and international environmental governance"

What is your assessment of the IUCN Nepal Country Programme and its ongoing projects?

I would say we all have several reasons to be pleased with what has been achieved. At the same time we must be aware that the future presents grave challenges. More importantly, the work of natural resource management and sustainable development is not easy. It is hard to imagine anything being conserved without the active participation of all stakeholders. Taking all of them along will inevitably be difficult and slow. At times, this presents seemingly insurmountable problems.

With a restructuring of the programme and an emphasis on long-term field based activities, I am confident that IUCN Nepal is well positioned to handle these challenges.

What lessons can IUCN Nepal learn from your experience and your extensive involvement in managing IUCN Asia?

I don't know whether IUCN Nepal can learn anything from my experience. I would like to see what I can learn from IUCN Nepal and see how that experience can be managed to the overall experience of the staff within the region. It is because of team effort; teams have worked indefatigably to address needs and so that they learn from each other, and so that the sum of one and one don't just make two but make four.

IUCN Nepal has great potential to collaborate and work with a broader array of members, partners and civil society at large to ensure that nature is conserved, that biodiversity and the environment are protected and that natural resources are used in an equitable and sustainable manner.

Finally, any message to our valued readers?

At this momentous time, my message is that we must keep the faith—faith in our environmental ethic of living in harmony with nature, faith in development that is sustainable, and faith in our ideals of a just and equitable society. My message to the readers is that we should try and continue the work in as safe and as risk-free an environment as possible. Because, ultimately crises will continue, the security situation will change, but the country remains, the management remains and the people must continue to live within the system.

DNPWC

Dr. Amatya is new DG



Dr. SM Amatya

Dr. Swoyambhu Man Amatya joined the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) as Director General on 1 May 2002. Prior to his transfer to the DNPWC, Dr. Amatya served as Director General of the Department of Forestry Research and Survey under the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation.

Dr. Amatya holds a Master's Degree in Forestry Sciences from Oxford University. He also has an M. A. in Economics from Nepal's Tribhuvan University and pursued doctoral research in forestry sciences before obtaining a Ph. D. from the same university. He has carried out extensive research work and studies on the conservation of forest resources, their utility, and productivity. Apart from serving as a community forestry specialist in Bhutan from 1981-1983 under a UNDP project, he contributed significantly to preparing the forestry handbook of existing forests in Nepal. In recognition of his notable contribution in forestry, Dr. Amatya has been awarded the King Birendra Academic Award for Science and Technology by the Royal Nepal Academy of Science and Technology and, the National Talent Award by HMG/Nepal, Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation.

NEFEJ

Aankhijhyal, 250 episodes

Aankhijhyal, the country's most popular TV programme on environment and social issues, recently completed its 250th episode. The half-hour programme series has been produced regularly since May 1994 by the Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists (NEFEJ). Initially a fortnightly, the programme's consistently high ratings and public appeal prompted the broadcaster, Nepal Television, to allocate it a weekly slot in 1999.

Aankhijhyal is the centrepiece of the audio visual department of NEFEJ, and has been widely acclaimed for its investigative approach to sustainable development and social justice issues.

YAEF

Eco-radio

The Youth Awareness Environmental Forum (YAEF) has been granted permission from the Ministry of Information and Communications to broadcast health and education

related programmes under the newly formed Environment Cycle Radio FM. The radio station has received a sum of Rs. 500,000 from the Lalitpur Sub-Metropolitan City. The Environment Cycle Radio FM will air twelve hours of programmes each day and will not broadcast any commercials.

Leader of the opposition in Parliament Mr. Madhav Kumar Nepal laid the foundation stone of the station on 16 May 2002 at the Environmental Library at Bade Gaon, Godawari, Lalitpur. Speaking at the inauguration, Mr. Raghuji Panta, MP, expressed the hope that the radio station would motivate citizens, foster a sense of community and remind people of their duties and responsibilities.

HWEPC

Since its inception in 1991, the Human Welfare and Environment Protection Centre (HWEPC) has been implementing programmes addressing various social, economic, educational and environmental issues. The Dang-based NGO has conducted various community level activities targeted at marginalised groups. Work in the first quarter of 2002 has focused on coordination and networking with several organisations to strategise and carry out its planned activities effectively.

NHS

Nepal Heritage Society has organised a number of programmes in the first quarter. Amongst these are interaction programmes on In-situ Conservation of Agricultural Biodiversity; the Inter-relationship between Sanskrit and Nepali languages; Buddhist Heritage of Bhaktapur and Samyak Mahadan; Traditional Musical Instruments Festival; a programme on the Cultural Tradition of Machchhindranath; and, the second Winter Charya Dance Training. NHS also organised a press conference to draw the attention of concerned agencies to the restoration of the 140-year old historic *Turture Dhara* (stone waterspout) of Putali Sadak, Kathmandu. The spout, constructed by Dilli Shamsher JB Rana, has been turned into a garbage dump over the past two decades.

ECCA

ECCA has been conducting awareness raising activities at the community level. During the first quarter, 2002, ECCA nature clubs of the project areas conducted several awareness raising activities. A survey was also conducted in Rasuwa district to launch conservation education and community development activities with support from Nepal Relief Association, Germany.

Over the same period, ECCA also organised a camp for school children, a CTC for local youths, permaculture training, and several meetings with local counsellors, teachers and principals in Lalitpur. Mr. Binod Shrestha, Director, ECCA, participated in the GLOBE International



IUCN members meet at the Country Office before the SDC review mission

training workshop as a back-up trainer in soil science. The workshop was held in January 2002 in New Delhi.

WE

Women in Environment (WE) has been active in community development activities in the rural areas of Nepal by delivering suitable health and hygiene benefits to rural communities through improvements in water supply and sanitation; improving rural incomes by assisting women and identifying ways to raise incomes from time saved in collecting water; and, improving government and non-governmental capacity to undertake and sustain these efforts. During the first quarter of 2002, WE has focused on community mobilization and institutional strengthening, non-formal education, women's technical support services, and integrating gender concerns into the community development activities.

APEC

Association for Protection of Environment and Culture (APEC) has been working to generate conservation education and awareness in the proposed buffer zone of the Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve. APEC has developed teaching materials for wetland conservation education for students. Similarly, pamphlets and booklets have also been prepared to reach poor and disadvantaged groups who are traditionally dependent on wetland resources. Cultural and audio-visual shows, debates, essay writing and poetry writing competitions and street dramas are organized regularly to raise awareness in the Reserve. APEC is also involved in blackbuck conservation in the Khairapur area of Gulariya municipality, Bardia district.

Green Camp Nepal

Green Camp Nepal conducted various environment related activities in the first quarter. Green Camp installed several green bins for waste collection in the Patan Multiple Campus complex, Lalitpur. Green Camp Nepal has also been active in Kanchanjunga Conservation Area. With the support of Nature Conservation Society and Hokkaido University, Green Camp Nepal has conducted four major activities this year—initiation of an eco-tourism project, establishment of a tourism information centre, support to organise the Kanchanjunga Fair, and support to conduct research in wetlands.

KMTNC

KMTNC's activities spread from the tropical plains of Chitwan and Bardia in the lowland to the Annapurna and Manaslu regions of the High Himalayas, including the trans-Himalayan region of Upper Mustang and Manang.

During March 2002, KMTNC provided technical and scientific expertise for the translocation of 10 one-horned



DEEPA JOSHI/ICCN, NEPAL

KMTNC is involved in the Rhino-Tiger Corridor Project in the area surrounding the Beeshazaar Tal, a major wetland now nominated for listing as a Ramsar site

rhinoceros from Royal Chitwan National Park to Royal Bardia National Park. The translocation was a joint undertaking of the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC), the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) and the World Wildlife Fund Nepal (WWF).

ICIMOD

ICIMOD's activities in 2002 include the Asia High Summit and a meeting on rangelands. The High Summit 2002 took place from 6-10 May in Asia, Africa, Europe, and South America in four different cities amidst the world's highest mountain ranges—Kathmandu, Nairobi, Milan and Mendoza—to discuss mountain development issues. ICIMOD organised the Asia High Summit (AHS) with over 100 participants from 20 countries, 14 from the Asia Pacific Region.

ICIMOD and The Tibetan Academy of Agriculture and Animal Sciences (TAAS) organised a workshop in Lhasa 12-19 May 2002 on "The Changing Face of Pastoralism in HKH-Tibetan Plateau Highlands". The meeting focused on pastoral production systems research, the resource tenure policies and impacts, alternative livelihoods for pastoralists, the successful participatory approaches for pastoral development and conservation of rangelands, social services, and institutional and policy models for co-management of rangelands.

ICIMOD



ICIMOD Director General Dr. Gabriel Campbell addressing delegates at the Asia High Summit in Kathmandu

Countdown to Johannesburg



IUCN DG Achim Steiner

With less than 150 days left before the World Summit on Sustainable Development opens in Johannesburg, we are faced with a tremendous challenge. In the face of much frustration, discontent, and growing conflict, we can sit back and allow the Summit to fail. Alternatively, we can take ownership of the public agenda and ensure that the shortcomings of the inter-governmental process do not overshadow the extraordinary efforts and successes of the past 10 years—largely accomplished at the local and national level, and often inspired by individual and community leadership.

A meeting place of members and partners

IUCN has much to contribute to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and I have suggested Migue Araujo, our new Director of Corporate Strategies, Partnerships and Communications, to work with all components of our Union to create a visible IUCN presence and platform of interaction in Johannesburg. We would like to provide our members and partners with space to meet, negotiate, and celebrate the work of our community, but also to reflect with others as to what has not been achieved since Rio. We will provide you with the details of our strategy—and an invitation to join us in Johannesburg—in due course.

Focus on ecosystem approach, financing regimes

IUCN's input to the Summit is firmly rooted in its Programme, and will focus on the promotion of an ecosystem approach and financing regimes, which are central to future progress on the sustainable development agenda. We have contributed to the official preparatory process in many fora in addition to actively participating in major international events such as the Global Ministerial Environment forum recently held in Cartagena. IUCN's President Yolanda Kakabadse contributed to the UN Secretary General's Advisory Panel and helped to bring together more than 60 women leaders from all over the world for an unprecedented Meeting of Women Leaders on the Environment in Helsinki (see story below). At the same time, IUCN's South Africa Country Office is acting as a focal point to support the host country and will be coordinating a GEF project to ensure that the organisation and impact of the Summit reflect the principles of sustainable development being discussed at the Summit. IUCN - SA is collaborating with the Gauteng Provincial Administration, the Johannesburg World Summit Company (JOWSCO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to assess the ecological footprint of the Summit in areas such as water, waste, energy, transport and consumable goods.

A great opportunity

The World Summit on Sustainable Development presents us with an enormous opportunity to assess our progress, reconfirm our commitment and join our efforts for a sustainable society. We look forward to welcoming you at the IUCN stand in Johannesburg—your "home away from home".

– Achim Steiner
IUCN Director General

news in brief

Women environment leaders meet

On 7-8 March, IUCN President Yolanda Kakabadse attended an unprecedented meeting of 60 women environment ministers and other women leaders engaged in sustainable development. The Meeting of Women Leaders on the Environment, held in Helsinki, Finland drafted an environmental position for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) on globalisation, and on poverty in relation to the environment and gender. The meeting was organised by the Finnish Ministry of the Environment, the Council of Women World Leaders (Harvard University), and IUCN.

United Nations Global Compact

In January, IUCN representatives took part in the first meeting of the UN Global Compact Advisory Council, an effort launched by the UN Secretary General to strengthen relationships between markets and society in the context of globalisation. "Kofi Annan recognised the need of facilitating a new understanding of how business can not only profit from development, but also in achieving a more sustainable development path," said IUCN Director General

Achim Steiner. "The Global Compact offers us an opportunity to test how close or how far we are from achieving a new consensus."

GBF gets a million

A medium-sized grant (\$996,500) was recently approved by the Global Environment Facility to fund the next phase of the Global Biodiversity Forum. The funding matches current financial commitments in the order of US\$860,000 by the consortium that instituted the GBF in 1993—IUCN, World Resources Institute and the United Nations Environment Programme.

DG addresses Cartagena forum

In February 2002 IUCN Director General Achim Steiner took part in the Seventh Global Ministerial Environment Forum held in Cartagena, Colombia. Discussions centred on key issues for the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) such as the future format for international environmental governance.

www.iucn.org

impressions

Support, friendship, action!

The growth of the IUCN Nepal Country Office has helped to broaden its impact and relevance to today's conservation issues. It has tried its best to maintain coherence between IUCN regional/ global policies and priorities and successfully integrate field-policy reality.

– Alejandro Imbach
Programme Coordinator
IUCN Asia Regional Office

Finding our own way

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of IUCN, and part of what makes it unique, is that each of the regional and country offices is allowed to discover its own character. As a state member, we have joined hands with IUCN for conservation. As a constituency focal point, I have been gratified by our good relations with our member friends and their satisfaction with IUCN. Indeed, there has been a wonderful atmosphere of teamwork mainly because we have such a good team.

– Mr. Narayan Poudel
Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation
Chairperson, ad-hoc Nepal National Committee - IUCN Nepal

Discovering the Union

Looking at IUCN through NGO eyes, I was not aware of the complex reality of the organisation. I saw it as a rather simple collection of members. But over the years, particularly the last five years, I have begun to see it as a hydra-headed being. As soon as one head become clearly visible, another appears just behind it.

Perhaps my greatest revelation came when the many layers and dimensions of IUCN were revealed through the range and diversity of issues being discussed, the amazing richness of the discourse, the infinite hair-splitting, the thoroughly upsetting politics. I saw how an apparently simple solid object like an elephant's tusk can symbolize many different things to many different people.

It has been a journey of continual discovery.

Medini Bhandari
Chairperson, Association for Protection of Environment and
Culture (APEC)
IUCN Nepal member

staff



IUCN Nepal staff with the Regional Director Ms. Aban Marker Kabraji, 28 March 2002



earth day

Earth Day 2002 was celebrated at the IUCN Country Office on 22 April with over 200 participating students from eight Kathmandu Valley schools. There were songs, poetry, dances, and skits to highlight the theme for this year's Earth Day—"Protect Our Home". An exhibition was also organised on the occasion.

Earth Day has become an annual event in many countries across the world. It is a great opportunity to bring people together, rekindle public commitment and involve participation from across social sectors.



Advanced Course on Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) Modeling and the Environment

The Advanced Course on Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) Modeling and the Environment was finally held at the AIT Centre in Bangkok from February 23 to March 6 2002 after several rounds of rescheduling. Twenty-four individuals from South Asia, Africa and South America participated in the course. The Abdus Salam Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) in Trieste, Italy was the main sponsor of the workshop, which was jointly organized by the Beijer International Institute of Ecological Economics at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences and SANDEE.

SANDEE Research Grants

The Technical Advisory Committee of SANDEE has agreed to fund six new research proposals. This was decided at the SANDEE biannual research and training workshop, which was held from March 6-12, 2002 at Bangkok, Thailand.

Three SANDEE researchers are to receive grants to attend the World Congress in Environment and Resource Economics in Monterey, California. Bhim Adhikari of Nepal, Himayatullah Khan of Pakistan and S. Madheshwaran of India will all receive support from the organizers of the Congress.

First Regional Course on Environmental and Resource Economics at Dhaka

SANDEE also organised a three-week basic course in Environmental and Natural Resource Economics at Dhaka from April 29 - May 16, 2002. This regional workshop was a joint venture between SANDEE, the Bangladesh Economy,

Environment and Poverty Programme and the World Bank Institute. Twenty-six university teachers and researchers from Pakistan, India, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh received approximately a semester's worth of training in natural resource and environmental economics.



Prof. Karl-Goran Maler with participants of the CGE model course in Bangkok

The course was designed to strengthen the participants' theoretical and empirical understanding of issues such as green income accounts, optimal use of renewable and non-renewable resources, environmental externalities, valuation of non-market goods, and policy instruments for correcting environmental problems.

For more information on SANDEE, contact Manik Duggar, Program Manager, SANDEE at info@sandeeonline.org or visit SANDEE's website at www.sandeeonline.org.

visits/travel

- ▶ Ms. Aban Marker Kabraji, Regional Director, visited IUCN Nepal from 27-29 March 2002. Her visit coincided with the SDC external review and provided an opportunity to interact with staff at the Country Office, and with partners and members.
- ▶ Regional Programme Development Coordinator, Mr. Alejandro Imbach visited IUCN Nepal during the initial phase of the SDC review. His visit provided an opportunity to interact with SDC representatives and members of the external evaluation team.
- ▶ Mr. Nande Palihakkara, Finance Director, IUCN Asia Region, visited IUCN Nepal 17-19 February to interview candidates for the post of Finance Manager for the Nepal Country Office.
- ▶ Mr. Peter Rezel, HR Head, IUCN Asia Region, visited IUCN Nepal from 29 April to 3 May 2002, to appraise, maintain and monitor IUCN HRM and personnel policies, systems and procedures.
- ▶ Dr. Mohan Siwakoti, Wetland Specialist, visited Tehran, Iran, to participate in the Ramsar Asian sub-regional meeting from 3-5 February 2002. The meeting was attended by delegates from 8 Contracting Parties (Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, India, Iran, Nepal, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan), 3 Non-Contracting parties (Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Turkmenistan), and other partner organisations.
- ▶ Ms. Julia Robinson attended the Asia Regional Directorate meeting in Dhaka from 10-14 February.
- ▶ Mr. Sagendra Tiwari, Natural Resource Management Coordinator, participated in the "Regional Training Programme on Species Issues: Red listing, Biological Indicators and Assessments" in Colombo, Sri Lanka, early February, 2002. The objective of the workshop was to build capacity of biodiversity focal points in South and South East Asia IUCN country offices on species issues.

The Red Book The Extinction Crisis Face-to-Face

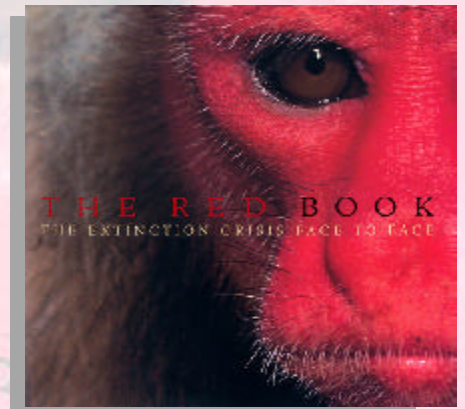
Published by CEMEX, in collaboration with the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Agrupación Sierra Madre

ISBN 968-6397-64-7, 2001

286 x 305mm, 310pp., 256 colour photographs

£45, US\$65, Order no. B1122

Proceeds from the sale of this publication will be used to endow the Peter Scott Fund to further the SSC work in conservation. <http://iucn.org/themes/ssc/publications.htm>



It is surprising but true that the conservation status of only a minute proportion of the world's species has yet been assessed. The Species Survival Commission of IUCN, in association with several other organizations, has been developing the *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* as one of the tools to assess and monitor the status of the earth's biodiversity. The List is

considered the world's most comprehensive, objective and authoritative inventory of species at risk of extinction.

The Red Book: The Extinction Crisis Face-to-Face is an awe-inspiring collection of very high quality pictures, interspersed, very non-intrusively, with scientific and factual accounts by leading conservation experts. It describes the extinction process, its causes, and the measures needed to reverse it in terms accessible to everyone. It is arguably one of the finest coffee table books about our natural world, ever; a memorable pictorial journey through our imperiled natural world. The publication is a joint effort of CEMEX, the SSC and Sierra Madre.

Mountains of the World Community development between Subsidy, Subsidiarity and Sustainability

Proceedings of the World Mountain Symposium (WMS2001) in Preparation for IYM 2002. CD ROM available from the Natural Resources and Environment Division of SDC, Switzerland. www.sdc.admin.ch/iym2002

This CD ROM contains the proceedings of the World Mountain Symposium 2001 held at Interlaken from 30 September to 4 October 2001. The aim of the Symposium was to come up with concrete proposals for sustainable development of mountain regions that can be used by local, national and international decision-makers. The four-day Symposium constituted an input to be used in preparation for the International Year of Mountains (IYM2002), with a particular focus on the ways and means needed to enhance development in mountain regions in the industrialised, developing and transition countries of the world.



High Stakes The Future for Mountain Societies

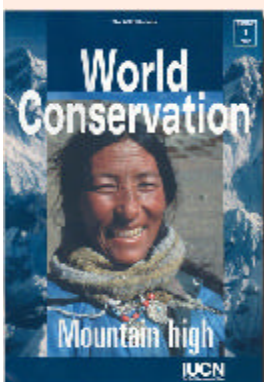
Panos, London 2002, ISBN 18-7067-057-4, available from Panos, London, www.panos.org.uk

This report highlights through anecdotal detail and analysis the reasons mountain people are often at the margins of their societies and argues that mountain people must have a stronger voice and role in the development of their regions. It talks about the threats to forests, water supplies and the biodiversity of mountain ecosystems; the "vertical gradient of poverty" that puts over 80 percent of them below the poverty line; and, the insufficient opportunities that mountain people have to speak out for themselves.

Mountain High

Special Issue of *World Conservation: The IUCN Bulletin*, IUCN Gland #1, 2002, available from the World Conservation Bookstore <http://iucn.org/bookstore>

This special issue of *World Conservation* is dedicated to mountains and mountain peoples. Its collection of articles, penned by leading scientists, activists, development professionals and policy-makers, covers very comprehensively the issues of mountain areas the world over. The issue is organised under four sections—Mountain Values, Under Siege, Taking Action and Key Players—and raises some of the most pertinent issues related to mountain people, mountain ecosystems and livelihoods, and sustainable development.





A close-up of Rajbrikchha (*Cassia Fistula*) in bloom. The fruit pulp, root and leaves of the tree are used in traditional medicine

IUCN - The World Conservation Union was founded in 1948. It brings together states, government agencies, and a diverse range of non-governmental organizations in a unique world partnership: over 980 members in all, spread across some 140 countries. The World Conservation Union builds on strengths of its members, networks and partners to enhance their capacity and to support global alliances to safeguard natural resources at local, regional and global levels.

As a Union, IUCN seeks to influence, encourage, and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.

IUCN - The World Conservation Union officially launched the Nepal Country Office on 23 February 1995 with the Ministry of Finance, His Majesty's Government as the government partner. IUCN Nepal has been developing partnerships with various government line agencies as well as non-governmental organizations to carry forward its activities to conserve Nepal's natural resources and ecological processes.

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