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Ministerial Declaration on the HKH Call to Action

We, the Ministers of the eight Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) countries, recognise that urgent steps are required to sustain mountain environments and improve livelihoods in the HKH. Extending 3,500 km over eight countries, from Afghanistan in the west to Myanmar in the east and crossing Pakistan, India, China, Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh, the HKH is one of the world's greatest mountain systems: home to the world's highest peaks, unique cultures, diverse flora and fauna, and a vast reserve of natural resources. The HKH directly supports the livelihoods of over 240 million people living in its hills and mountains, and it yields many benefits to the nearly two billion people living in the mountains and downstream. The HKH is a vital regional lifeline, but human drivers, climate change and presently the COVID-19 pandemic pose grave and immediate threats to livelihoods, biodiversity, energy, food and water security, and ultimately sustainability.

In support of the recent United Nations General Assembly resolution on Sustainable Mountain Development, which recognises the importance and multidimensional contributions of mountains for sustainable development.

We appreciate the efforts of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), an intergovernmental organization of the eight HKH countries, for its service to the mountains and people of the HKH over the past 36 years.

We welcome the publication of the first *HKH Assessment*, which assesses the state of the HKH and its future prospects. The report was produced by the Hindu Kush Himalaya Monitoring and Assessment Programme (HIMAP), a long-term, integrated science–policy initiative coordinated by ICIMOD, and engaged over 350 leading researchers, practitioners, and policy specialists working on the HKH.

Guided by the country consultations on the *HKH Assessment* and the HKH Call to Action, which serves as a roadmap for the future of the HKH, and the decision taken at the meeting of the ICIMOD Board of Governors on 17 September 2019 in Gangtok, Sikkim, India to explore the possibilities of organizing an HKH Ministerial Mountain Summit.

We recognize and support both the vision of the HKH Call to Action – which calls for a prosperous, peaceful and poverty-free region that is food, energy and water secure, and climate and disaster resilient communities in the mountains, downstream and beyond – and the ICIMOD policy paper “COVID-19 impact and policy responses in the Hindu Kush Himalaya” which calls for a resilient recovery from the pandemic.

We appreciate that the HKH Call to Action highlights the urgent local, national, regional, and global actions needed to sustain this global asset, through substantially increased investments from business and government

and more robust regional cooperation for sustaining mountain environments, raising awareness across multiple stakeholders, improving livelihoods, taking concerted actions as per the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to well below 2 °C and pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5 °C by 2100, and achieving the SDGs.

We, the Ministers, agree:

- to hold a biennial HKH Ministerial Mountain Summit to take joint actions for strengthening regional cooperation in the HKH and to review and discuss emerging issues;
- to promote a united voice for the HKH at regional, global and UN platforms;
- to hold a multi-stakeholder HKH Science-Policy Forum on a regular basis in order to enhance the uptake of scientific evidence for improving policies in the region focusing on mountain environments and livelihoods;
- to constitute a Task Force with high-level representation from the eight HKH countries to assess the feasibility of establishing a regional institutional mechanism. The Task Force should assess similar regional collaborative platforms/institutions from different parts of the world and recommend a feasible configuration for the HKH region in a report to be submitted to the next HKH Ministerial Summit. The Task Force would also monitor the progress of the “HKH Call to Action”.

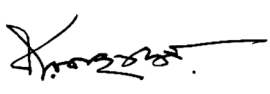
We, the Ministers of the HKH, agree that ICIMOD will serve as the Secretariat to the HKH Ministerial Mountain Summit, the HKH Science-Policy Forum and the Task Force, and coordinate HKH-level monitoring and assessments on a regular basis.

Signed and endorsed on 15 October 2020 by Ministers of eight Hindu Kush Himalayan countries:



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Penjor**
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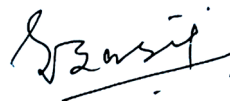
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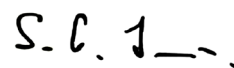
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