



FOUNDATION FOR HUMAN PROGRESS

WORLD MOUNTAIN PEOPLE ASSOCIATION

## PROGRAMME

COMMUNITIES, TERRITORIES AND  
MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

2010

**WMPA (World Mountain People Association)**  
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# FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE FOR THE EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES

The WMPA was born out of the World Mountain Forum held at UNESCO (Paris) and in Chambéry (France) in June 2000. It was decided to create the World Mountain People Association to make the voice of the mountain people and the expression of their desires heard. Today, the WMPA is present in more than 70 countries on four continents. It is organised into regional or national organisations, according to the major mountain regions of the world: Europe, Andean America, Central and Eastern Africa, Central Asia, Himalayas and Southeast Asia.

In 2002, hundreds of representatives of Mountain Territories from throughout the world met in Quito (Equator) on the initiative of the WMPA to answer a central question: Can mountain people share a common view of the mountain which allows them to build a collective project of fair and sustainable development? And how can they act together for its realization? The outcome of this meeting was the adoption, in 2003, of the Charter for World Mountain People, which reflects the major principles of their living together, as well as the demands and commitments of the participants<sup>1</sup>.

## TERRITORIES AND MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES: IN THE HEART OF THE MOUNTAIN IDENTITY.

Mountains have always been a harsh environment (altitude, slope, climate) in which populations have been able to take advantage of it, have exchanged with the other territories and environments and have created original cultures. Through the history of the humanity, mountains have often become the refuge of the oppressed populations –which, actually, have surmounted all these constraints. They have managed to transmit to the world the diversity of their way of life and culture, based on the management of their territories and resources by means of their own traditions and practices.

Nowadays, they are threatened with social, cultural and economic destruction due to the fact that their territories show to be extraordinary reserves of resources for economic stakes and social powers that are utterly strange to them. The natural resources race caused by the economic globalization, the growing demand for raw materials and the depletion of natural resources prevent from setting up the national and international mechanisms which would allow the populations to decide how they could introduce these activities in the management of their territory in an equitable way and in accordance with their vision of the world and of their future.

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<sup>1</sup>You can find the Charter in our website: <http://www.mountainpeople.org/fr/histoire/charte.php>

These pressures very often experienced as aggressions and dispossessions, give place to the loss of sovereignty on the management of territories and to a deterioration of the living conditions. The communities claim the conservation of the control of their resources: lands, water, mineral resources, forests, etc. The survival of the natural balance of the mountain is threatened by the overexploitation of the resources, to which it is necessary to add the phenomena caused by the climate change. The global warming causes imbalances in the ecosystems (such as the fast, widespread melting of the glaciers and the disappearance of the springs), mainly affecting the availability of the water resources throughout all areas supplied by the water of the mountains. These phenomena, along with the mankind's treatment of the planet, give place to a deep disorganization of the traditional activities and mountain populations.

From a political point of view, the mountain people have been rarely recognized in their capacity to control and to manage in a responsible way the natural resources of their territories. It is nevertheless them who have emphasized and participated in the preservation of these resources thanks to their work and their sustainable ways of management of the resources. Indeed, these populations have developed a know-how, soft skills and practices which have allowed them to live in these harsh environments while preserving the harmony between the mankind's actions and the natural dynamics. At present, the mobilization of the populations to defend their traditional ways of management are more and more repressed by public authorities in zeal to promote the access of the international companies to the resources markets and to solve the problems with electric and water supplies in the megalopolis. The implementation of megaprojects in the territories may leave the populations marginalized and outside the law, while they are just trying to successfully carry out the processes of conserving or recovering control over the activities undertaken in their territories.

From these data, it is expected to find an answer to the following question:

**"Under what conditions can the exploitation of the natural resources allow mountain people to preserve the human and natural balance and guarantee the basic conditions to achieve sustainable and equitable development in their territories?"**

In order to do that, you are invited to share your experiences in the following subjects:

- Mining.
- Water.
- Protected areas.
- Forests.
- Climate change.

Knowing that the stakes in the control and management of natural resources in mountain areas multiply the situations of conflict (central State, local powers, multinationals, international organizations), the question on the legal structures of land and resources ownership, and on the ways of governance rises.

With the aim of making the voice of the mountain people heard and matter, the WMPA organizes regional workshops in Africa and in Latin America –forums in which the Asian experiences will be referred and wide processes of consultation will be held. A vast network of field actors is invited to take part in it and to share their experiences. These workshops allow to emphasize the diverse existing conflicts and the actions undertaken at a local level by the populations to guarantee a better control, a more sustainable utilization and a more equitable redistribution of the resources of their territories. The WMPA expects to create spaces in which mountain people could talk and think together about the principles of management and the ways of mobilization and action concerning these questions.

### **EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCIES: YIELDING THE FLOOR TO THE MOUNTAIN PEOPLE.**

In 2010, the APMM will organize and take part in thematic workshops that will allow to collect the experiences related to the chosen subject matters. The workshops will take place in Morocco, Colombia and Bolivia. Nevertheless, we want to yield the floor to all the mountain people who want to share their experiences in these fields.

You are invited to take part in this exchange of experiences on management of natural resources in mountain territories. In order to guarantee a minimum of harmonization among the different studies that we will receive, we suggest you to adjust –in outline– to the scheme (detailed later in this document). Our aim consists of summarizing the case studies, as well as of presenting them in all their singularity, to emphasize the complexity and the special features of the local dynamics.

### **SEPTEMBER 2010 WORLD MEETING AT OLORON: TOWARDS A WORLD CHARTER.**

This long process of consultation, regional meetings and forums peaks in September 2010 on the occasion of the Third World Meeting of Mountain People at Oloron-Sainte-Marie (Pyrenees, France) organized by the APMM. The topic of the meeting is “Mountain territories, people and management of natural resources”. Following the example of the meeting of Quito, the APMM proposes to establish a World Charter on Natural Resources and Territories, which could be the fruit of the exchange of experiences and the collective reflection among world mountain people.

## **EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES: GUIDELINE**

1. **Presentation of your territory or of your organization.**
2. **The major query is:**

With the help of your case study, it is expected to find an answer to the following question:

**"Under what conditions can the exploitation of natural resources allow mountain people to preserve the human and natural balance and guarantee the basic conditions to achieve sustainable and equitable development in their territories?"**

If you wish to develop the questioning, that is up to you!

3. **What is your project about? Which are the transverse dimensions?**

- Mining:
  - Environmental impact: waste disposal, release of effluents, pollution of surface and groundwater, deforestation.
  - Health impact: sources of water for drinking, emissions of greenhouse gases, genetic malformations; animal health impact; phytosanitary impact.
  - Impact on the land: land seized; reduction in the size of areas suitable for agriculture and grazing; local and national consultation before starting mining processes.
  - Social impact: socio-political and cultural destabilization of the communities; corruption; new and additional financial resources (to which social group?).
  - Infrastructure and economic impact: local consequences; links with the territory.
  - Etc.
- Water: to whom and what for?
  - Utilization: National legislation on water; ways of access to water; ways of access to the irrigation water; water ownership.
  - Dams: whose responsibility is it to decide about dam construction? Types of consultation; dam utilization.
  - Distribution policy: Whose responsibility is it to control water consumption of the users: mining, hydroelectric, industrial and farm companies, cities, etc.? Who makes the rules on water supply? How are the decisions taken?
  - Etc.
- Protected areas: by whom? what for?
  - National legislation on protected areas.
  - Your protected area: protecting the environment or species. Does it play a positive or a negative role regarding your interests? Are there any conflicts with protected area

authorities?

- Whose responsibility is it to protect them? Who controls them? Who finances them? How are they financed? What is the role played by conservation pressure groups?
- Access: possible ways of utilization by communities and foreigners; notices of patents; new bans on access to resources of the territory.
- Etc.

- Utilization of forests:

- Who owns them?: the community, individuals, forest companies; State property or lease?
- Sort of exploitation: selective cutting or clear-cutting? Reforestation, real or theoretical? With what kind of species?
- Forests: local utilization and processing; export.
- Have local populations something to say about it? Consequences on local economy and infrastructure.
- Etc.

- Climate change: incidents and reflections.

- Impacts of glacier melt: on the access to water; on everyday life; on water supply; on low water level; on water scarcity.
- Impacts on mountain economies: tourism, field crops, animal husbandry.
- Etc.

*Please indicate in any of the listed subject matters: actors' proposals for thinking local, acting global; i.e. global actions that could be undertaken to make the voice of the populations heard.*

**4. In which geographical area does your project focus on?**

- - Continent, country, country town, town.

**5. What actors do take part in it?**

- Corporations, associations, ONGs, trade unions, States, church(s), others.

**6. Context and problems.**

- Which are the main challenges that the situation faces?
- National, regional and local political context. Does it have international support?

**7. Is the community affected by a conflict? If so, what has caused the conflict in the case situation?**

- Which have been the factors or the event that have triggered the conflict?
- Set out the main stages of the conflict and an assessment of the situation.
- State the main negative impacts on the population, environment, animal species, etc.

**8. Main obstacles to the mobilization.**

**9. Which are the potential or real determining legal factors?**

- - Customary law, acts or other legal texts, regional and international regulations.

**10. Set out the possible ways of thought, mobilization, and action.**

**11. In your view, which are the essential principles to enhance the management of natural resources, while protecting the natural and human balance of the mountain territories?**

## **SOME TIPS FOR PREPARING THE DOCUMENT**

- Thanks to this common work, it is expected to make the voice of mountain people heard and taken into account at the international level. Please, use direct speech –as far as possible– when reporting mountain people’s testimonies.
- In order to be able to exploit the full potential of your documents, it is suggested to write down a synthetic document, of approximately fifteen pages.
- Please, attach any pictures illustrating your case study (e.g., actors working in the field). We want to make the voice of the mountain people to be heard, but also to put a face on the people engaged with the processes of conserving and recovering control over the management of the natural resources.
- Please, attach any videotape recordings illustrating your case study, so that they can be broadcast during the 2010 World Meeting of Mountain People.

**If you have any query or you are interested in our initiative, please contact us here:  
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