



## MOUNTAIN PEOPLE OF THE WORLD, UNITE!

**T**he WMPA is now in its third year of existence.

We have come a long way since the World Mountain Forum in Chambéry in 2000 where, in their enthusiasm at finally being assembled together, representatives of more than 70 mountain countries around the world decided to remain in touch and to work together!

Several months later, the World Mountain People Association was officially born. Since then, we have laid the foundations for a real community of mountain people from all countries. We are organising our solidarity on a daily basis so that we carry weight with all those involved in mountains, in all centres of national and international power where, too often, decisions are taken without us.

Allowing mountain people to speak in this time of globalisation firstly requires global representation. This must be based on solid local and national organisations. We know that we can count on the ANEM ([www.anem.org](http://www.anem.org)) in France, UNCEM ([www.uncem.it](http://www.uncem.it)) in Italy, the Foundation for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions in Switzerland, AEM ([www.promonte-aem.org](http://www.promonte-aem.org)) for Europe, and many others in Latin America, Asia, and Africa.

In 2002, we met in Quito, Ecuador, to draw up the terms of our common commitment and combat. The Charter for mountain people was drafted. This represents the most successful expression of the conscience of the mountain people ever on this scale. It is now our reference for moving towards equitable development for populations and sustainable development for territories through our actions.

On the ground, our regional organisations are becoming established in the Andes and in the Himalayas, in Africa and in Europe. Supported by the actions of NGOs and different bodies involved in our work, we are becoming a major negotiator. The vital role of interface, networking, facilitation of dialogue between elected officials, populations, NGOs and socio-professional organisations, was not played by anyone



until now. We intend to take on this role in order to strengthen the identity of each of our interlocutors. At institutional level, we have already formed a partnership with several international organisations, including the FAO, to lead an international working group on mountain policies and legislation around the world. Finally,

we are committed to having an internal organisation and a real means of communication, with the aim of making our website ([www.mountainpeople.org](http://www.mountainpeople.org)) a centre for resources and exchanges for the world mountain people.

For this great and wonderful adventure, we need the support of everyone, elected officials and decision-makers, activist associations, NGOs, professionals, entrepreneurs, scientists and researchers, activist citizen, so that all mountain people whether by birth, by spirit or by adoption, can unite and make their voices heard in the globalisation debate.

By supporting the action of the WMPA and taking part in its work, you will be helping to create a support network. This will give us confidence, control over our destiny and recognition of our identity.

Together we will create an organisation as recognised in the most remote and disinherited regions as in the highest decision-making spheres around the world.

Yours sincerely

Jean Lassalle  
Chairman of the WMPA  
Deputy of the French  
National Assembly

Valerio Prignachi  
Secretary General of the  
WMPA  
Vice-President of UNCEM



World  
Mountain  
People  
Association

## THE MAJOR DATES OF THE WMPA

- **June 2000:** World Mountain Forum (1st meeting of the world's mountain people): Unesco (Paris) and Chambéry (Savoie)
- **April 2001:** Drafting of the statutes of the WMPA, which is divided into 3 bodies
- **1<sup>st</sup> half 2002:** Himalayan regional meeting of mountain people - Yuksam - India
- **August 2002:** Andean regional meeting of mountain people - Achocalla - Bolivia, organised by CICDA Bolivia and the WMPA
- **August 2002:** participation in the preparation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development - Johannesburg - South Africa
- **September 2002:** 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the world's mountain people and 1st constitutive general assembly of the WMPA - Quito - Ecuador: creation of an international Board made up of representatives from all continents; joint drafting of the Charter of world mountain people (downloadable from [www.mountainpeople.org](http://www.mountainpeople.org))
- **November 2002:** participation in the Global Mountain Summit organised by the UN within the framework of the International Year of Mountains - Bichkek - Kirghizstan
- **September 2003:** International Board meeting in Ispoure - Basque country - France: adoption of the Charter of World Mountain People
- **December 2004:** International Board meeting in Turin - Piémont region - Italy: proposal for an inter-ministerial conference on mountains

## THE WMPA IN 5 QU

### 1. HOW WAS THE WMPA BORN?

The WMPA was born out of the World Mountain Forum held at UNESCO (Paris) and in Chambéry (Savoie - Alps) in June 2000 on the initiative of the National Association of Elected Officials of the Mountains (ANEM) and the town of Chambéry. As a result of the Forum, which brought together 70 countries and 900 participants, 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.

### 2. WHO ARE WE?

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 South-East Asia.

So that it can better represent all the lifeblood of the mountains, the WMPA is made up of three bodies:

- 1<sup>st</sup> body: elected officials, representatives of groups or communities, and other forms of local institutions in the mountain countries
- 2<sup>nd</sup> body: NGOs, associations arising from civil society, socio-professional groups, small-scale or industrial enterprises, etc.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> body: qualified persons (scientists, researchers

## ACTION PROGRAMME FO

The WMPA has launched several pilot projects, monitored by working groups within the association which include representatives of public authorities and qualified persons.

### "POLICIES AND LAWS INITIATIVE"

Within the framework of the "Mountain Partnership" launched in 2002 during the International Year of Mountains and co-ordinated by the FAO, the WMPA set itself several objectives:

- to identify the needs and priorities of populations in the different mountain regions
- to list and analyse the traditional forms of governance which have proved their efficiency
- to list and analyse the specific laws which involve mountain policies around the world
- to organise exchange and training sessions for governments, officials and local decision-makers, on the basis of experiences of equitable and sustainable development.

To complete these missions, the WMPA will co-ordinate the compilation of the laws, particularly at European level, and during the period 2005-2006 will organise a working session in each of the six major mountain regions of the world: Andean America, North America, Africa, Central Asia, Himalayas, South-East Asia.

A partnership between the WMPA, UNCEM (Italian association of elected representatives of the mountains) and EURAC (European Academy) will lead the project, whose secretariat will be provided by the FAO.

### GLOBAL LABEL FOR MOUNTAIN PRODUCE

The WMPA is working to create an international label for mountain produce, which will make it possible to recognise and describe the "know-how", for all types of production of goods and services from the world's mountain regions, with the two-fold aim of improving the economies of these regions and of promoting their identity and culture.

This global label of "produce of the world's mountain people" will be proposed as an "umbrella brand" for labels which are more specific to a particular mountain region or a particular mountain product. It will be created within the framework of a broad partnership with existing international organisations and with national and regional representations of the WMPA, which will start the process.

### CO-OPERATION BETWEEN MOUNTAIN TERRITORIES

The WMPA wants to promote decentralised co-operation between mountain territories in order to develop exchanges of initiatives and know-how (agriculture, management of water and natural resources, transport, ecotourism, etc.). It intends in particular to develop relationships between the Andes and the Himalayas.

There have already been contacts between Andean towns and Alpine towns on the concerted management of water resources. Agreements are also underway between mountain groups in Cameroon and associations of elected officials in Europe.

These experiences should lead to the creation of a network of mountain towns, which will be co-ordinated at international level by the WMPA. The project will make it possible to share problems and solutions regarding town planning and management in a more constricting and more costly mountain context than for other towns.

### TRADITIONAL CULTURES AND MOUNTAINS

It is in mountain territories that people grow the plants (coca, opium, hashish) from used to produce the hard

# QUESTIONS:

or experts working alongside mountain populations] and any other person who wants to be involved in the mountains on an individual basis.

The Executive Board is made up of officials and representatives of the continents. It is responsible for co-ordinating the action carried out in the field and that managed by the working groups at international level. It defines and implements WMPA strategies and ensures its network becomes established.

The administrative team, based in Paris, is made up of a Director General who is assisted by a small team.

### 3. WHAT ARE THE AIMS OF THE ASSOCIATION?

The work of the WMPA is motivated by three major objectives:

- to make mountains understood in an international arena and at the level of each country and continent
- to organise North-South and South-South exchange and co-operation between mountain territories and populations, in order to share knowledge, means and experiences
- to support and develop the local initiatives of the association's members and partners

### 4. WHAT POSITIONS DOES THE WMPA DEFEND IN THE WORLD?

The WMPA is fighting for equitable and sustainable development, to ensure the continuity of the mountain

identity. It intends to achieve this aim by implementing the Charter of world mountain people. This Charter proposes:

- harmonious development based on the controlled operation of their resources by populations
- the recognition of the rights of mountain populations in the local governance of their territories, with the aim of improving their living conditions and promoting their development
- fair access to social goods, services and equipment
- the respecting and valuing of the identities, cultures and specific characteristics of the mountain.

### 5. HOW IS THE WMPA FINANCED?

The WMPA operates largely thanks to the voluntary involvement of its members, institutional partners and NGOs. For the first three years of its existence, the WMPA has been financed by ANEM, the French authorities, the Swiss government, territorial groups, foundations and certain private partners. The year 2005 is a year of transition as we wait for more durable financing solutions to be set up. We plan to organise the participation of members (groups, associations and organisations, individuals) to meet the costs of operating our international structure. The WMPA is planning to create a World Mountain Foundation, which will allow WMPA action programmes to be financed with the involvement of private partners.

## FOR 2003-2006

drugs consumed primarily in Western countries. That is certainly the most sensitive problem on the planet, as are pure water resources and biodiversity. The populations in question defend their right to continue the traditional and cultural uses of these types of agriculture. They would like viable and acceptable alternatives for global economic development, which would allow them to escape from the illicit use of these products, which help them to survive. It is in this spirit that the WMPA has taken over the original action of Bolivian coca producers located on the mountain with the European Parliament. It plans to extend this thinking and action to the territories and populations of other regions where this type of farming is practised: Morocco, Afghanistan, etc.

### MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON MOUNTAINS

The WMPA proposed to the French government to take the initiative in organising the first international ministerial conference on mountains in Paris, with the aim of opening a real dialogue between governments and representatives of mountain people. This action is guided by the desire to make governments directly aware of the challenges of the mountains and

to research together solutions which could be implemented at a national, continental or international level. This Conference will bring together for the first time the States, relevant international organisations, professional organisations and representatives of the mountains (elected officials, communities, NGOs, associations, researchers and simple citizens) represented by the WMPA.

The Conference should conclude with a common declaration by the States. It would also define the action programmes of the international community with regard to these territories. It would thus lay the political foundations for the equitable and sustainable development of mountains, whose signatories would commit to its implementation.

### INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN OBSERVATORY

It is necessary to monitor the situation of the mountain territories at the different levels (geopolitical, environmental, cultural etc.) in order to learn and understand developments and implement the appropriate policy. The planned creation of an "International mountain observatory" would make it possible to centralise information and to influence thinking. It would use the

WMPA network as a means of collecting information as close to the ground as possible. It would also use international organisations, competent administrations and scientific establishments.

#### EVENTS PLANNED FOR 2005-2006:

- **April 2005:**  
Himalayan regional meeting in Tripuradevi - India
- **May 2005:**  
Executive Board meeting in Martigny - Switzerland
- **June 2005:**  
Visit to France of a delegation from the town of Quito: partnership of Andean towns and Alpine towns
- **September 2005:**  
Andean regional meeting in La Paz - Bolivia: "Territories, autonomies and the State"
- **October 2005:**  
Regional WMPA meetings in France: Alps, Massif Central, Pyrenees
- **1<sup>st</sup> half 2006:**  
2<sup>nd</sup> WMPA General Assembly and International Ministerial Conference on Mountains - Paris - France

*Information on the organisation of these events is available on the WMPA website:*  
[www.mountainpeople.org](http://www.mountainpeople.org)

# MOUNTAIN PEOPLE IN THE WORLD

**Mountain territories represent 35% of the surface of continents (120 countries) and 15% of the world's population (or almost a billion people).**

The development of mountains is therefore a major challenge for the planet, particularly as these territories have a primary strategic role in many areas:

- at the identity and cultural levels: handing down of traditions, knowledge, know-how, incomparable knowledge of the natural environment and its equilibrium, social organisation based on the values of effort and solidarity,
- at the environmental level: principal supplier and reservoir of soft water; the largest reserve of biological diversity after the oceans, essential role, particularly as regards the forests, in the carbon cycle, support and management of space and countryside,
- at the economic level: high quality and high specificity agro-alimentary produce, ores, hydroelectricity, small-scale produce, ecotourism, etc.

Around the world, mountains are under threat from several mortal dangers: ageing populations, migration, exodus and packing into inhumane and poverty-stricken peri-urban zones, rapid destruction of societies or communities, increasingly intensive use of natural resources, search for costly solutions to trading competition which these territories cannot support, recourse to dangerous production, etc.

This development entails more and more conflicts for the appropriation of resources or territories, for the control of production, for the preservation of identities and autonomies, for access to the same fundamental rights, etc.

Finally, because mountain territories are often border zones between states, they are often the scene of many wars or guerrilla warfare. Thus, 80% of the world's conflicts are played out in mountain regions.

In order to preserve these global public goods, to retain populations on these territories, where their presence is indispensable, and to avoid them coming to cram into the megapolises, national and international officials should be persuaded of the need to create and implement appropriate policies and programmes.

This message will be even more widely heard when the mountain populations are organised and conscious of their role.

**We invite you to support the action of the WMPA through your membership either individually or as a group, organisation or enterprise, or within the framework of a partnership to be determined together.**



**To contact us:  
WMPA World Mountain People Association  
50, boulevard Malesherbes  
75008 Paris – FRANCE  
Tel. +33 (0)1 42 93 86 60 • Fax.+ 33 (0)1 45 22 28 18  
email : [apmm@apmm-wmpa.org](mailto:apmm@apmm-wmpa.org) • [www.mountainpeople.org](http://www.mountainpeople.org)**