

# Mountain Futures conference

## Nurturing seeds for change in the Anthropocene

1 to 4 March 2016 – Kunming, China



### Call for 'seeds'

The term Anthropocene recognizes that humans have become the dominant agents of environmental change. In keeping with the tendency to focus on the negative effects of human activities, the Anthropocene is generally viewed as an epoch of environmental destruction and degradation as consequences of human meddling. This view should not blind us to the positive potential of human transformations.

Discussion of the Anthropocene has so far been more global than local. The role of specific environments including mountains has not often been considered, nor has there been adequate dialogue on regional and local environmental and social implications. This inhibits our ability to think of positive opportunities for mountains and the people who live in them.

There are persuasive reasons for taking a special look at mountains in the Anthropocene. The highlands are home to twelve percent of the world's population and half the global biodiversity hotspots. They are the sources of vital waters and important crops. They provide refuge for endangered species and cultures. They are hotspots of global environmental change, with adverse but also potential positive consequences. Mountains are areas of environmental and cultural diversity; they may serve as repositories of global learning and testing grounds for adaptations to global change.

This conference invites anyone with an interest in the mountains to register their 'seeds of change': grass-root practices and ideas that show the positive potential of human activity in the environment. Together we will nurture these seeds to seedlings and eventually to robust trees.

Register your seed now on [www.mountainfutures.org](http://www.mountainfutures.org)

# Themes



## Global Assessment of Climate Change

Mountains provide 22 different ecosystems to the lowlands. They are, however, susceptible to climate change and play an important role as global early warning systems: glaciers and permafrost are melting, plants and animals are shifting, treelines and ecosystems are changing and natural resources are being exploited for local economies and industries. Natural disasters are increasing and intensifying. A global assessment of how climate change has impacted and will impact mountains in the future needs to be explored by collecting cases of positive adaptations to the Anthropocene from across the mountainous regions in Asia and rest of the world. Future scenario planning may help spread these good practices.

## Mainstreaming the Marginalized

Mountains are home to a tremendous set of marginalized traditions: in knowledge, language, belief systems, settlement patterns, livelihoods and land use practices. Yet, traditional ways of coping with environmental conditions are proving inadequate in the face of intensifying environmental and social change. In the Anthropocene, intercultural communication will become more important with people playing key roles in environmental protection and social and economic development. How can we reduce barriers for the disadvantaged: women (and men), ethnic minorities, the elderly, children?

## Dynamic Sustainability

Whether positive or negative, anthropogenic drivers dominate today's mountain regions. But how do culturally diverse mountain people adapt? What are the important natural and social patterns for climate, water, goods, energy, settlement, livelihoods and land use? Defeatist visions about the future of mountains forecast increasing risks, poverty and degradation. But they shroud the opportunities and inspiration that compel people to take adaptive action. We want to explore alternatives that will make a positive difference in local livelihoods. Combining scientific research and civic knowledge to develop a hybrid and dynamic methodology can ensure long-term sustainability.

## Water Governance

Climate change is destabilizing upstream water supplies and increasing downstream water demands are causing conflicts. Water is increasingly becoming a political resource triggering transboundary conflicts and governance issues. Instead of sharing water, sharing benefits from socioeconomic development alongside efficient and effective participation and access to open information need to build a foundation for good water governance.

# Impact



The Conference aims to explore and assess the role of mountains in the Anthropocene, and to develop plausible visions for mountains in a future where unintended or unforeseen consequences of human activities may dominate natural processes. We want to solicit, explore and develop **visions of mountain futures that are socially and ecologically desirable, just, and sustainable** in the Anthropocene.

We want to build awareness of impacts of global change on mountains. By collecting seeds of “Good Anthropocene” practices from montane communities, assessing policy and institutional barriers, and considering the anthropogenic impacts of global change on local communities, we want to **share knowledge** that leads to future solutions. We want to **facilitate dialogue** on adaptation to global change among multiple montane stakeholders. Disasters are on the rise and the livelihoods of the people living with them are at risk. We intend to **bridge the gap**

between scientific research and development on ground and establish **partnerships for regional cooperation** in adaptation, water governance, and risk management in mountain regions. Finally, in the post-MDGs scenario and the recent progress on the SDGs, we want to stress the importance of mountains and the people living in them. The conference may provide guidance to develop indicators for the implementation SDGs, related to water, biosphere and other mountain related components.

# Why attend?

**Meet.** Get an opportunity to meet over 200 participants from all over the world, including researchers, stakeholders and globally renowned experts on mountain environments.

**Grow.** Bring your ‘seeds of change’ for a good Anthropocene to the conference and bring them to fruition.

**Present.** Keynote speakers and a number of selected scientists and practitioners will have the chance to present and discuss their work.

**Early-career scientists:** Get noticed! We strongly encourage creative presentations (such as, but not limited to, visual art and documentaries). The best will be allowed to present.

**Share.** Whether you’re a young scientist or an expert, all conference proceedings and scientific papers will be made public via journals, web and visual media will be made available online.

**Meet.  
Grow.  
Present.  
Get noticed.  
Share.**

# Practical info

## For whom

We welcome scientists and stakeholders from all over the world with an interest in mountains. Young scientists in particular are encouraged to participate and present their work in a creative way, such as but not limited to, visual art and documentaries. Travel and lodging expenses will be covered for selected keynote speakers. Financial support can be made available at our own discretion for particularly high quality seeds posted on our website.

## Deadlines

Individual seeds can be registered on [www.mountainfutures.org](http://www.mountainfutures.org) until 31 DEC 2015.

We call for special sessions along the four conference themes until 30 NOV 2015.

Participation confirmation: 31 OCT 2015–31 JAN 2016

## When & where

The conference will be held from 1–4 March 2016 in Kunming, the capital of China's mountainous Yunnan province. Participants should ensure that they are eligible for a Chinese visa and apply in time. Invitations from the Chinese Academy of Sciences can be arranged if necessary.

## Confirmation

Confirm your attendance at <http://mountainfutures.org/signup/>, and contact Sander Van de Moortel at [sander@mountainfutures.org](mailto:sander@mountainfutures.org) for any questions.

## Price structure (includes welcome dinner, transportation)

	Developed countries			Developing countries		
	Oct–Nov	Dec	Later	Oct–Nov	Dec	Later
Standard	\$400	\$450	\$500	\$300	\$350	\$400
Student	\$200	\$250	\$250	\$150	\$200	\$200



International Development Research Centre  
Centre de recherches pour le développement international

