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NEWS AND NOTES

Why Did HimNet Close? A case for increased dialogue amongst Himalayan researchers

For many of us, Himalayan Network--HimNet--the ListServ for Himalayan scholars of all persuasions, was a wonderful resource, providing home delivery of late-breaking news about events, conferences, publications, questions--any and everything of interest. We deeply mourn its passing. HimNet's creator and attendant David Spencer explains why HimNet has ceased to exist as the Himalayanist's favorite spot in cyberspace.

After 31 issues and two years of postings, the Himalayan Network (HimNet) closed down on 20 July, 1996. Statistically, one could argue that the electronic experiment which aimed to bringing together Himalayan geologists, biologists, geographers, linguists, archeologists and Social Study researchers (to name a few!) can be considered a success. By the time of its closure, HimNet had reached a subscription of nearly 650 researchers and was sent to over 35 countries on 6 continents around the world. HimNet had generated over 650 individual E-Mail postings that were distributed in 120 E-Mail packages. In other words, a staggering total of nearly 60,000 'official' E-Mails were distributed from a single computer from 1994 to 1996! This number would perhaps increase by another 10,000+ if all the subscription, unsubscription, reference lists, correspondence, article postings and acknowledgements, as well as advertisements, were also taken into consideration. It is hard not to envisage HimNet as a success story that filled an electronic niche by distributing information on various topics ranging from conference announcements to Himalayan papers, books and news from the Himalayan regions. This was clear when 92% of those who responded to the 'Survey of Himalayan Resources' (Spencer and Sorkhabi, 1996) had noted that they have heard of the Himalayan Network. More importantly, a very high proportion of those surveyed read particular features of HimNet in every issue (e.g., latest Himalayan papers found was read by 91% of subscribers and the conference announcements were read by 82% of subscribers). HimNet therefore became a source of information for Himalayan researchers that was cheap (in fact free if you did not have to pay for your internet connection!), readily available (to those with E-Mail, ftp and WWW facilities) and regular. Most subscribers also seem to be very satisfied with HimNet, rating it either excellent

(61%), good (34%) or fair (5%) and nearly all of those subscribed (96%) thinking that HimNet is a valuable research tool.

Why then, did HimNet close this year? Is HimNet an isolated example of poor communication amongst scientists? Why did it become a medium for dialogue where you only read what others had to say? To understand the problems of having scientists willing to communicate ideas and discussions freely, it is necessary to put Himalayan research into its framework. Although research in this region has been going on for over 100 years, there has been a clear increase in the numbers of researchers within the last 10-15 years. This is due to many reasons - increased accessibility, decreased political turmoil, and perhaps more adventuresome attitudes that take researchers into new fields of popular study (e.g., climate change), so requiring new field areas that have never been thought about before. The consequence is, therefore, a rapid swelling in both researchers at all levels (typically at the masters, doctoral and post-doctoral grades, but also with numerous faculty level researchers). Does increasing the number of researchers in a particular area lead to better or less communication amongst researchers? Certainly, one could argue, judging by the almost exponential increase in the number of presentations made at the Himalaya-Karakorum-Tibet Workshops, that communication increases. Such events allow face-to-face contact with other workers who are pretty much put on-the-spot when you ask a question. Moreover, citable abstracts are a clear way of getting your work and ideas acknowledged. By contrast, mailing group discussion lists have relatively little value. One can participate at will, yet read what other people want to talk about. The information exchange is therefore

very one-sided, resulting in an alienation of topical opinions rather than an increased insurgence in them.

This is bad news for Himalayan researchers and leads to the question whether Himalayan geology will go the same way as Alpine geology. Although Alpine Geology has had a much longer tradition of research than Himalayan geology, there has been a clear decline in its research reputation over the last few decades (Schmid et al., 1996). Lack of funding for regional projects and the rise of process-oriented perceptions of research directions meant that trying to get your work funded, and then published, has become increasingly difficult. Moreover, since the peak of Alpine research in the 1960's and 1970's, Schmid et al. (1996) have noted that there has been a notable lack of dialogue amongst Alpine Research teams. To partly solve this problem, they began a series of Alpine Workshops, similar to those that have existed for Himalayan researchers, in 1993. Their biennial meetings proved a great success, with some 170 participants at the second workshop that was held in Basel (Switzerland) in 1995. The publication of a special volume of research papers was also produced with a year of the workshop (*Eclogae Geol. Helv.*, V. 89/1 [1996]). These changes in communication between Alpine researchers have led to an improvement of their general knowledge. Moreover, their community spirit increased in that they no longer feel isolated in their research. Subsequently, recent projects such as the seismic imaging of the deepstructure of the Alps "have brought together different disciplines of earth scientists from different countries into a closer dialogue, both across disciplines and across national boundaries". It is therefore perhaps a sad fact that after being the training ground for so many of today's current researchers, it needs to regain that attention that it once knew, and still certainly deserves in the future.

Geology is beguiled by fashions, or at least by current and trendy ideas. They promote a wave of research funding being directed into clearly labeled categories that effectively eliminate any true basic ground research. Very few funding agencies (the Swiss National Science Foundation, until recently, being a clear exception) would promote 'mapping projects' as front line research. The Himalaya has fortunately been able to jump on this bandwagon and open itself to researchers with the right ideas at the right time. Numerous multi-national large scale projects (INDEPTH and the Nanga Parbat teams, to name but a few) now receive thoroughly deserved first rate funding from numerous agencies, by applying process-oriented questions to specific geological problems. It is perhaps now, more than ever before, that the need for communications between these researchers and the rest of the scientific community is necessary. No doubt, lecture presentations and probably even whole conferences can be devoted to thematic subjects such as "Why is Nanga Parbat the highest rising metamorphic terrane in the world?" Yet, such meetings may only be

of interest to selective audiences - it is the community in general that has most to learn. Perhaps now it is the time when we need to communicate with other researchers more than ever.

HimNet appeared to be the correct medium for this to happen. However, although statistically appearing a success on paper, it failed in two main ways:

(1) Nearly two thirds of those subscribed (62%) to the network had never made a contribution to the HimNet, nor have made a private reply (66%) to a HimNet contributor. This clear lack of participation was one of the major causes of HimNet nearly being closed down in February 1995. HimNet, in contrast to other mailing lists, became a medium for information receiving, a sort of electronic newsletter. Only exceptionally was it noted that "increasing the number of contributions is a matter for the contributors rather than moderator." In fact, this is readily apparent when it is considered that of the 651 postings that were sent out in the 31 issues, 340 (52%) were sent out by the HimNet moderator! Very few other mailing lists have such input from the list owner. However, although the percentage of external (i.e., non Co-ordinator) contributions to HimNet were showing a trend of a steady increase with each newsletter produced, the time taken to produce each HimNet became inefficient.

(2) Although HimNet began as a personal mailing list to 40 Himalayan colleagues on the 17th August, 1994, it was made clear that in HimNet No.13 that the job of Co-ordinator should be passed on eventually. A rotation of the editorship would make HimNet a community service, allowing for incorporation of new ideas and development in different directions. No offers were received after one year of HimNet's existence and its moderation remained unchanged for another year. However, despite pleas for a new coordinator, no firm offers were received and HimNet closed after 2 years in 1996. Of course, not everyone wants to take over a mailing list, although increased user-friendly software takes out much of the strain in its daily running. Nevertheless, because HimNet was remaining too much of an electronic newsletter, it underwent the inevitable closure.

HimNet could, of course, begin again at any time. Most probably, it would take the form of a true ListServ mailing list, reducing even more the time that an individual coordinator needs to spend on it and allowing the development of discussions with the receipt of an individual E-Mail, rather than one batch of 20+ E-Mails every month. This was perhaps HimNet's biggest mistake in not allowing the discussion to begin due to its periodicity. However, when polled on turning to a ListServ option, there was a unanimous vote against HimNet going to ListServ.

Finally, HimNet was one of the few mediums that allowed scientists of all disciplines to join (and leave) without the need for any financial expenditure. Would

participation be greater if HimNet were a journal/magazine/newsletter on paper (like, for example, **Himalayan Notes**)? The answer is probably no. Even if the costs of such publications are low, it is surprising how few scientists would regularly subscribe to them. Paper submission for such publications also remains low, necessitating constant editorial encouragement. Yet by contrast, other high ranking journals (e.g., **Nature**, **Science** etc.) can be published every week and easily turn away submissions based on the slightest negative comment, safe in the fact that they are still going to have enough material for the next issue. The future therefore for many low ranking journals/magazines/newsletters could look bleak unless effort is taken to raise their profiles and encourage submissions. Clearly the mailing lists come even further below these type of publications in this ranking, even though they are by far one of the most accessible mediums for information exchange. Therefore, was the demise of HimNet inevitable? HimNet may well have reached the summit of its

success on the day that it was closed. Perhaps that was the best way for it to go.

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The Tour of Kanchenjanga II

'Life is short, and the Tour of Kanchenjanga is long'

Douglas Fresh field

In August of 1899, an ambitious expedition of two Englishmen and four Italians set out Marseilles, France, for Sikkim and Nepal. Led by the renewed British explorer and mountaineer Douglas Fresh field, they circumambulated the third -highest peak in the World, 28,169-foot Kanchenjanga. Their journey was a model of ambition and adaptation to high mountain travel conditions. Expedition Photographer Vittorio Sella created an exceptional visual record of these countries that has no parallel for its time. Notable for their technical precision and aesthetic content, the higher value of Sella's images may be in their detailing of places that have undergone considerable changes in the last century, and face more in the near future. Sella's portfolio is an unusually comprehensive record to document the changes these areas have undergone: Creating a contemporary record is the next step. A return visit to the Kanchenjanga area is proposed to trace the 1899 Freshfield/Sella route. The return expedition will follow the ambitious spirit of the original, and the integral involvement of local people will ensure an accurate portrayal of their cultures and

perceptions about the changes they may face in the future. The visual records will consist of a large-format, black and white recreation of Sella's work. From this, a comparative photographic exhibit will be produced. There will be a video of the trip, documenting not only the 1899 trip, but the current state of the areas visited. The timing of this trip provides an excellent opportunity to document a Himalayan country that is likely on the verge of great cultural change.

Progetto Sella and Tybach productions, both of Portland Oregon, are looking for any input that may assist us in our objective. If anyone has an interest in learning more about Sella's exceptional work, please contact us at:

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PO. Box 19928
Portland. OR 97280-0928

E-mail: tybach@teleport.com
Fax: 503-225-9948

Research Affiliations through the Research Division of Tribhuvan University at Kirtipur.

Information provided by Kathryn March, Cornell University Nepal Studies Program, September 1996

Beginning 6/18/95 Tribhuvan University began to impose significant fees and overhead for the non-tourist visas it can help students and scholars obtain to do research in Nepal. All undergraduate, masters, PhD, post-doctoral and non-degree scholars who pursue their visas through Tribhuvan University and the Ministry of Education are expected to respect these provisions.

Background: Although this is typically what people mean when they refer to a "research visa" or a "student visa," it is worth noting in passing that Nepal grants only tourist visas, business visas, diplomatic visas, and non-tourist visas. American scholars who come to Nepal under the Fulbright program are provided with diplomatic visas; other countries may also have official scholarly programs which qualify for diplomatic visas. All other scholars, spouses, and other extended residents of Nepal must apply for the general non-tourist visa. Those students who come to Nepal as part of an organized study or exchange program do not usually have to pursue their visas individually, but, if they are in Nepal for more than five or six months allowed by a tourist visa with extensions, their program must have an agreement with Tribhuvan University and pay the agreed-upon fees in order to get the appropriate non-tourist visa.

Procedures for individual scholars: If you are an individual student or scholar intending research in Nepal for more than five or six months, you will probably arrive in Nepal on a tourist visa (information & application materials available from the Nepali Embassy in Washington DC 202-667-4550). After you arrive in Nepal, you will apply for a non-tourist visa through the Research Division at Tribhuvan University in Kirtipur. To do this you must:

(1) have an affiliated/sponsor unit at the university (such as a department or institute) and get them to write a letter of sponsorship (of which you ultimately need eight copies total),

(2) complete and provide eight copies of the Tribhuvan University, Rector's Office, Research Division "Application form for research study in Nepal," (available at the Research Division, located in a building behind the bank near the entrance to the Kirtipur campus)

(3) provide eight copies of the research proposal, the grant award letter (or other proof of financial support),

and a letter of recommendation (often called a letter of "no objection") from your own country's embassy

(4) provide eight original passport photographs (NOT photocopies)

All these materials must be submitted to the Research Division and approved by the Rector, whose letter of recommendation will be transmitted to the Minister of Education, whose letter of recommendation in turn will authorize the Department of Immigration to issue the non-tourist visa.

The "Application form for research study in Nepal" stipulates that a "Nepalese co-researcher(s) is required for non-degree oriented research" and "optional" for degree-oriented research. All the expenses, including basic remuneration, field and other costs, for the co-researcher must be paid by the foreign researcher. The later documentation in the Research Division (the 6/18/95 directive) indicates that a "co-researcher is not needed, only 9% of the total budget."

"Tribhuvan Registration Fees" (approved 6/18/95) are assessed on each applicant as follows:

Undergraduates	10,000 NRs
MA students	12,000 NRs
PhD students	15,000 NRs
Non-degree students	10,000 NRs
Post-doctoral students	10,000 NRs

An "Overhead" of 15% (approved 6/18/95) is assessed on the project related expenses of research budgets of post-doctoral and non-degree researchers. For this reason, the documentation you provide on your research funding should provide a detailed break-down rather than just a total amount. "Total budget" for the assessment of co-researcher support as well as overhead seems typically to have been interpreted as the total direct project costs in the budget (excluding, for example, the salary/stipend paid the foreign research), although this is clearly up to the discretion of Tribhuvan University.

The fee for the non-tourist visa is presently \$20 per month. Trekking permits for any/all specific research areas must still be obtained through the regular channels and all relevant fees pertaining to those permits paid.

Nepal Studies Association News

ELECTION RESULTS

The Constitutional Amendments voted on by NSA members passed by a resounding margin; henceforth members of the NSA Council will be selected from a pool of volunteers and cooperating nominees. Four new members were identified at the October Members Meeting of the Nepal Studies Association, as recounted below; additional volunteers and nominees are sought immediately for impending vacancies on the council, to be selected at next year's NSA Council meeting (again scheduled to be held at the South Asia Conference in Madison).

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Naomi Bishop

Greetings! Our meeting in Madison this year was enjoyable as always. Everyone ate at least once at Himalachuli and Chautara - many of us several times - and there were films of Nepal as well as papers and discussion spanning the Himalaya from east to west and Tibet to India. Despite moving the meeting date into mid-October, we still had a little snow.

The Executive Council met to prepare for the General Membership meeting, which was held at its customary time from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Saturday (see minutes below). The big news was that the membership passed the constitutional amendment and we now have a selected, rather than elected, Executive Council. Four new members were selected to replace outgoing or resigning members. Mary Cameron, David Holmberg, Krishna Pradhan, and Richard Tucker complete their terms this year, while our new Council members are Mark Baker, Paul Benjamin, Arjun Guneratne, and Selma (Sam) Sontag. Next year, three more Council seats will be vacated, as will three more the following year. So, please do consider whether and when you will have the time and energy to give a four year commitment to this organization, and let me know. We are also hoping that some who were Council members in the distant past will reinvigorate us by signing up for a new term.

The Executive Council also selected a new President: John Metz, a professor of geography at Northern Kentucky University will serve as President of the Nepal Studies Association beginning with our meeting in the fall 1997. We are indeed fortunate that someone with John's tenacity, broad expertise in Nepal and the Himalaya, and intelligence and good sense is taking over the leadership of our group. I look forward to working with John and the Nepal Studies Association when my term ends this year.

MINUTES, NSA MEMBERS MEETING OCTOBER 1996

Bruce McCoy Owens, Secretary

Naomi Bishop, NSA president, opened the annual members' meeting by reaffirming the commitment of the Nepal Studies Association to scholars and scholarship concerning all of the Himalaya. Twenty-six members were present. She proceeded by enumerating the various benefits of Association membership, including the *Himalayan Research Bulletin*, the contents of which she then proceeded to describe. The President also indicated that the next issue of the Bulletin would be mailed out in the next few weeks. The membership list will be updated, and included in an upcoming issue.

The president then advised the Association members of the change to the NSA constitution voted in by members last spring, to the effect that executive council members are now selected by the Council. This change in procedure was initiated because of the logistical difficulties involved in membership participation by mail ballot. Nominations for Council posts will be solicited at this meeting and future meetings for positions that become vacant the following year.

The next issue of the Himalayan Research Bulletin will also solicit nominations from the entire membership. By next September the president will have called everybody nominated to ensure their willingness to serve.

The President stated that the council had its annual meeting the previous evening, and reviewed the status of current members of the Council and nominees for vacant and soon-to-be vacant Council positions. She announced that the following members have completed their terms as Council members: Richard Tucker, Mary Cameron, David Holmberg and Todd Lewis. New council members are: Mark Baker, Selma Sontag, Paul Benjamin, and Arjun Guneratne. The president reiterated that council members must agree to come to meetings at Madison for the four years following election, and must agree to serve on some committee and/or provide assistance in the production of HRB.

The President then solicited nominations for Council, and called for a report from the Treasurer and editor of *Himalayan Research Bulletin*, Barbara Brower.

The Treasurer reported that the organization is currently solvent, with cash reserves of \$10,000, noting that \$3,500 is required to produce each issue of the Bulletin. She further reported that membership includes about 250 active paid up members and 150 "deadbeats" or courtesy subscriptions. Treasurer Brower then spoke of a "looming crisis of a fiduciary nature," stating that one year from now we will have to replace the money provided by Portland State University for an editorial assistant. She suggested that the Association launch a membership recruiting drive, reminding members that anyone studying anything high and Asian counts as a potential member. Treasurer Brower also displayed a prototype of a poster that she had produced as a fund-raising source for the Association. Jim Fisher raised the question of how we could go about marketing such posters, and suggested that order forms be included in issues of HRB. It was also suggested that many members of the organization were likely to have photographs suitable for poster production. David Holmberg announced that he will try to establish the Association's status as a non profit organization in order to raise funds for an Association endowment. He recommended that on future membership forms there should be a box to check off to indicate that one is making a contribution to the Association.

Brower reminded the members that HRB relies on contributions, and that the Bulletin is looking for material, and she solicited contributions for inclusion in upcoming issues. She suggested that a future issue be devoted to graduate student work. She also reminded members to contact Todd Lewis concerning book reviews.

Todd Lewis then described books available for review and solicited potential reviewers.

The President then turned to new business, and announced that Arjun Guneratne had set up a web page for the Association, but as of yet, there was nothing in it. The address of this web page will be provided in the Bulletin. The President urged people to think of panels for next year. The Conference Committee, chaired by John Metz, emphasized the need for coordinating panel scheduling, and asked that people propose panel topics.

Barbara Brower reminded the meeting of earlier discussion about an annual round table discussion sponsored by NSA, and solicited ideas for same. John Metz suggested that people-mail him with topics for panels and roundtables at metz@nku.edu. There followed some discussion about whether panels should be Nepal-based, or whether panels should involve those working in other areas as well. The Secretary noted that an emphasis on Nepal panels was antithetical to the idea that this was a Himalayan studies group.

President Bishop then announced the presidency, effective October 1997, of John Metz, and stated that council members currently include: Bruce Owens, Naomi Bishop, Krishna Pradhan, Nanda Shrestha, and John Metz. The floor was then opened for Council Member nominations, and Gregory Grieves was nominated, as were Heather Hindman and Jim Fisher. Kathryn March suggested that members demonstrate their thanks for Naomi Bishop's extraordinary work as Nepal Studies Association President over the past several years, to which members responded with thunderous applause. After announcing that the membership meeting will take place on Saturday at the South Asia Studies Meetings in Madison, Wisconsin, next year, the meeting was adjourned.

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Mountain Forum

Mountain Forum has been introduced to those interested in the world's mountains by way of a variety of media. In case you missed it, Himalayan Research Bulletin reprints this information below:

Dear Colleagues,

It is our great pleasure to extend to you this invitation to join a newly formed, innovative and collaborative venture known as the Mountain Forum. Originating from activities preceding the 1992 Earth Summit, the Mountain Forum has gained significant momentum over the last four years. This initiative received baseline funding earlier this year from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation to provide the Forum's core electronic networking services and global governance functions. We are now in a position to move forward in creating this truly global linkage of individuals and organizations concerned with mountain cultures, environment and development, and invite your active participation.

The purpose of the Mountain Forum is to provide a forum for mutual support and for the exchange of ideas and experiences. This will empower participants to raise mountain issues on local, national, regional, and international agendas and to promote policies and actions for equitable and ecologically sustainable mountain development. The basic operational values of the Mountain Forum are to be open, democratic, decentralized, accessible, transparent, accountable, and flexible.

As an innovative and integrative bridge between diverse constituencies, the Mountain Forum is committed to having a completely open and broad membership. It includes mountain communities, non-governmental organizations, scholars, researchers and research initiatives, individuals, groups and institutions that specialize in mountain-related issues, private associations and organizations, and intergovernmental and governmental bodies.

The Mountain Forum provides the global mountain community with a common venue for exchange and mutual support. Instead of working in isolation, members will mutually benefit from reciprocal exchanges, resulting in increased capacity, strengthening and empowerment of organizations and individuals doing work in and for mountains. Attached is a preliminary list of activities for "Participation in the Mountain Forum", that recommends ways Forum members can become actively involved and make the

Forum a mutually beneficial endeavor for all participants.

There are no fees necessary to become a member of the Mountain forum. To become a member, simply complete and submit the attached Registration Form and Survey (via fax, mail or electronically) to your regional node (see below for regional contact points). Members will receive formal confirmation from their regional node, regular dissemination of internal publications and newsletters, announcements, updates on events, and the general opportunity for participation in all activities related to the Mountain Forum--electronically via the Mountain forum's electronic discussion list and traditionally via the regional networks.

All Mountain Forum members are welcome and strongly encouraged to join both the Internet based electronic discussion lists, and the various meetings and events occurring at multiple levels--local, national, regional, or international. The Mountain Forum's "Active Mountain Archive" (accessible via gopher), and World WideWeb page will soon be operational. In addition, many core documents will be available via auto-reply E-mail. Instructions on how-to subscribe to the Mountain Forum's Internet discussion list are attached. Active dissemination to and inclusion of people and organizations without electronic access is a shared responsibility of all Forum members.

The most fundamental expectation of membership is that members both give to and take from the Mountain Forum, as its success is highly dependent on the mutual support and relationships formed through this collaborative partnership. It is our hope that you are as excited by this opportunity as we are in extending this invitation. On behalf of the Interim Facilitating Committee of the Mountain Forum, we look forward to receiving your registration and your active participation in Mountain Forum activities.

Very Sincerely,

Egbert Pelinck, ICIMOD; Jane Pratt, TMI; Hubert Zandstra, CIP/CONDESAN

Instructions for Membership Registration and Survey

Please complete the attached registration form and survey information and return it to the appropriate contact for your region listed below:

ASIA/PACIFIC: Send registration/surveys to:

ICIMOD, Attn: Shahid Akhtar, MF Membership,
PO Box 3226, Kathmandu, Nepal;
Tel: +977-1-525-313; Fax: +977-1-524-509; Telex:
2439 ICIMOD NP;
E-Mail: mforum@icimod.org.np

[other regions are also included in Mountain Forum]

The Mountain Forum's Electronic Conference

The Mountain Forum e-conference consists of three initial discussion lists, with additional lists to be added as participation expands:

i. "mtn-forum" This is the common area of the Mountain forum. All who wish to subscribe are welcome and encouraged to participate in the open discussion. This list is moderated to promote discussion.

ii. "mf-intro" A list dedicated to introducing subscribers to one another. New subscribers are asked to post a few sentences describing themselves and their interest in the Mountain Forum discussion list. Just as in a face-to-face conference, we tend to feel more comfortable in the discussion as we begin to get to know each other.

iii. "mf-summary" A weekly read-only summary of the topics discussed in the open "mtn-forum" list. This summary is simply a list made up of the subject line of each posting in the last week, and a repeat posting of important announcements and information newly available on-line. As additional discussion lists are opened within the Mountain Forum, this weekly summary will help indicate when and where the active discussion is taking place. For those subscribers who do not wish to receive the full traffic of the open lists, this summary provides a concise way to stay in touch with what's happening in the Mountain Forum.

iv. Additional lists will be set up according to participants' interests and needs. Some examples might be discussion lists with a regional or thematic focus, or time-bound lists to plan for coming events or needs.

3) How To Subscribe to the E-conference

There are no fees required to subscribe to the electronic discussion list. To subscribe to the Mountain Forum's electronic discussion list please send all list management commands to the following e-mail address:

•majordomo@igc.org

Leave the subject line blank (it is ignored). As the first line of text in the body of your message, write your choice of commands:

subscribe mtn-forum (to subscribe to the open list);-intro (to subscribe to the introduction list);

•subscribe mf-summary (to subscribe to the summary);

•unsubscribe mtn-forum (to get off the open list);
unsubscribe mf-intro (to get off the introductions list);

•unsubscribe mf-summary (to get off the summary list).

If you or your colleagues are having trouble subscribing to the Mountain Forum discussion list, let us know. We will try our best to help you or direct you to local or regional support services. Contact: mfsupport@mtforum.org

How do I find out more about the Mountain Forum?

Background documents describing the work of the Mountain Forum are available through auto-reply e-mail. That is, you can simply send a blank e-mail message to the following addresses, and the relevant document will be sent to your e-mail address automatically.

Report of the Initial Organizing Committee of the Mountain Forum, September 1995.

•Part 1: (text) ioc95a-info@mtforum.org

•Part 2: (annexes) ioc95b-info@mtforum.org

•Part 3: (annexes) ioc95c-info@mtforum.org

•Index of available auto-reply documents (updated regularly): mfindex-info@mtforum.org

A hard copy of the Report of the Initial Organizing Committee of the Mountain Forum (September 1995) can also be obtained via postal mail. Just send a request for this report to your regional contact listed above.

Participation in the Mountain Forum

(Activities and how to become involved)

Through improved communications and information exchange, the Mountain Forum will empower and enrich all members; create and strengthen mechanism for critical dialogue; exchange both successful and unsuccessful experiences; provide a forum for discussing

emerging tools and technologies and their applications; exchange lessons on monitoring, evaluating and assessing impacts; and assist members in influencing regional mountain agendas at the local, national and intergovernmental levels. The following activities are some examples of how Mountain Forum members can actively foster mutual support:

- Share knowledge, information, experiences with the mountain community and interested parties, via the Information Server Node (ISN) and regional networks.

- Suggest and direct sources of information (documents, reports, materials) useful or relevant to the global mountain community. Alternatively, one may make requests for support, advice or information to Mountain Forum constituents.

- Support and respond to inquiries and requests made by other Mountain Forum participants. Support would include the sharing of relevant data and information on focused topics, or in response to other participants' research and activities.

- Work with the Information Server Node to develop and build an archive and other resources of knowledge. The archive will continually be updated. Forum participants are encouraged to inform the ISN of relevant information, or provide the resources directly to the ISN. For example, the on-going calendar of events is an important service of the ISN which all Mountain Forum participants are asked to regularly contribute.

- Assume personal responsibility for the dissemination of relevant and important information to Mountain Forum participants without Internet access. This responsibility likewise extends to the inclusion of input from participants without access to the Internet.

- Identify potential participants and members and involve them in Mountain Forum activities.

- Work with other members to form alliances, partnerships and joint research activities at the local, regional, and global levels.

Mountain Forum participants are encouraged to assume the shared responsibility to advocate the Mountain Agenda by promoting and raising the awareness of mountain issues at local, national, regional and global levels in order to guarantee that mountains are considered. Successful advocacy should result in raising mountain issues on the agendas of national decision makers, donor agencies and international organizations. Specific actions that participants can initiate relevant to advocacy include but are not limited to:

- facilitating dialogue and improved communications between mountain communities and national decision makers;

- convening local, national and regional workshops and task forces around relevant mountain issues;

- informing national decision makers via these workshops, briefings and media coverage;

- encouraging the formation of a mountain lobby which involves stakeholders and decision makers;

- attending and convening meetings to promote the Mountain Agenda;

- contributing directly to the review and implementation of UNCED document Agenda 21, Chapter 13 "Managing Fragile Ecosystems: Sustainable Mountain Development".

Mountain Forum Membership Registration and Survey

Membership in the Mountain Forum is free of charge. There are no annual, subscription, or other fees. If you have already sent in your registration and survey, please skip the rest of this message. If you have not yet filled it out, please take a moment to do so now. Please send it to the appropriate regional coordinator, as listed in section II. below.

If you do not wish to become a member of the Mountain Forum, you are still welcome and encouraged to participate in the electronic discussions. Please fill out sections III - VI of the survey to assist us in providing useful services to you and other participants. You may return it the appropriate regional coordinator, as listed in section II. below.

I. Contact Information

1. Mr. ___ Ms. ___ Dr. ___ Prof. ___ Other ___

2. First (given) name:

3. Middle name:

4. Last (family) name:

5. Position or Title (if applicable):

6. Organization/Affiliation (if applicable):

7. Mailing address:

City:

Province or state:

Postal Code:

8. Street address (if different):

9. Country:

10. Telephone, country code: city or area
code: fax number:

11. Fax, country code: city or area code:
fax number:

12. e-mail:

II. Regional Affiliation

13. Please mark your regional affiliation below, and send your membership registration and survey to the address for that region. This will insure your inclusion in regional networks and activities. Africa, Europe, and North America have not yet identified a regional node or members of their Regional facilitating Committees. Until these are identified, the Interim facilitating Committee Convener will maintain your membership.

Asia/Pacific, send to:

Attn: Shahid Akhtar, MF Membership ICIMOD
GPO Box 3226 Kathmandu, NEPAL
Fax: +9771-524-509 Telex: 2439 ICIMOD NP
E-mail: icimod@mos.com.np

[HRB editor's note: we include information about the regional affiliation likeliest to fit our readers; there are other mountain regions within Mountain Forum's purview]

III. Participant Background Information

For the rest of the questions in this survey, please circle (if replying on paper copy) as many answers as apply, and write out any responses or additions as you wish. If you are replying by e-mail, please indicate your choices by writing out the appropriate question number and letter(s) that apply, and filling in the blanks. All comments are welcome, and all answers are confidential. Survey results will be made available in summary form only.

14. On which mountain range(s) or massif(s) do you work?

15. How would you characterize the geographic extent of your work?

- a. mountains in general
- b. one mountain range or massif
- c. one particular mountain
- d. several mountain regions
- e. other (please describe)

16. Would you consider yourself as a:

- a. mountain inhabitant
- b. person interested in mountains
- c. professional working in mountains or on mountain issues
- d. visitor or user of mountains
- e. other (please describe)

17. How would you identify your principal type(s) of work?

- a. activism
- b. administration
- c. college or graduate studies
- d. policy development
- e. project implementation
- f. research
- g. teaching
- h. other (please describe)

18. Please list your subject specialization(s) or interests(s):

19. How would you describe your institutional affiliation?

- a. donor organization
- b. government
- c. intergovernmental organization
- d. no affiliation (private individual)
- e. non-governmental organization
- f. university or research institution
- g. other (please describe)

IV. Electronic access

Note: this information will help us to build a database of support resources for participants, especially those in remote areas.

20. Do you have access to:

- a. e-mail
- b. ftp (file transfer protocol)
- c. gopher
- d. world wide web
- e. other (please describe)

21. In addition to a monthly or hourly connection fee, do you have to pay to receive each e-mail message?

- a. no
- b. yes
- c. other (please describe)

22. Which e-mail software do you currently use? Please be specific by providing program name and version number.

23. If you know, who is your Internet service provider?

24. Have you participated in e-mail discussion lists before?

- a. no
- b. yes
- c. other (please describe)

25. If yes, which lists have you found useful or valuable and why?

V. Networking

26. How did you hear about the Mountain Forum?

- a. Internet
- b. printed material or publications
- c. professional colleague or friend
- d. world wide web
- e. other (please describe)

27. Would you consider yourself:

- a. familiar with the Mountain Forum
- b. new to the Mountain Forum
- c. other (please describe)

28. Would you consider your current network of colleagues to be:

- a. global
- b. local
- c. regional
- d. other (please describe)

29. When you need information on mountains, which resources do you usually go to?

- a. colleagues
- b. Internet or world wide web
- c. libraries
- d. other (please describe)

30. To which mountain related journals and newsletters do you subscribe already? Please list:

31. If you work in a grassroots community organization or in project implementation, do you feel that your experience and knowledge currently impact government or intergovernmental policy?

- a. no
- b. not applicable
- c. possibly
- d. yes
- e. other (please describe)

VI. How can the Mountain Forum best serve you?

32. Which of these Mountain Forum electronic services do you anticipate using:

- a. electronic magazine or e-mag (we do not have financial support for the electronic magazine yet, but we will seek support if sufficient demand exists)
- b. e-mail auto-reply document service
- c. e-mail discussion lists
- d. ftp archives (will be set up if sufficient demand exists)
- e. gopher archives (coming on-line in 1996)
- f. world wide web page (coming on-line in 1996)
- g. other (please describe)

33. What do you hope to gain from the e-mail discussion lists?

- a. access to mountain-specific information resources
- b. broader knowledge of mountain issues

- c. exposure to different viewpoints
- d. greater sense of community with other mountain peoples
- e. greater voice for your constituents or stakeholders
- f. impact on local, regional, and global policy formation
- g. participation in mountain conferences, publications, or other initiatives of the Mountain Forum
- h. specific knowledge of case studies and real-life experiences
- i. wider network of colleagues
- j. other (please describe)

34. What special discussion lists would you like to see set up?

We will set up "chat rooms" whenever there is sufficient interest:

- a. non-English language: which language?
- b. regional: which region?
- c. special groups (eg. women, community facilitators, students, etc.): which group?
- d. thematic (eg. cultural diversity, tourism, climate change, natural hazards, water resources, sustainable development, production systems, energy, biodiversity, water resources, sacred mountains, etc.): which theme?
- e. other (please describe)

35. Would you be interested in contributing to the electronic working services of the Mountain Forum through:

- a. assisting in database searches for participants with limited (eg. e-mail only) electronic access
- b. assisting in locating technical support for new participants in your local or regional area
- c. contributing case studies, documents, bibliographies, references, or reports to the electronic archives
- d. moderating or helping to moderate a discussion list
- e. other (please describe)

36. Do you have any other suggestions to make the Mountain Forum more responsive to your needs? Please list: