

The need for urgent climate action in the Hindu Kush Himalaya

1.5 degrees is too hot for the mountains, people, and ecosystems of the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH)

Did you know?



Mountains occupy 22% of the Earth's landmass and **act as a barometer of the planet's health**. Being at the top of the world, mountains, and in particular the HKH, are **bearing the brunt of the climate crisis**.



The HKH mountains host **four biodiversity hotspots** and serve as water sources for **10 major Asian rivers**, sustaining **240 million people** in the region and **1.9 billion** downstream.



The HKH region holds the **largest ice reserves outside the poles**, and the melting of snow and ice in the mountains contributes to sea level rise and triggers cascading impacts like floods, landslides, and glacial lake outburst floods.



Glaciers in the HKH are rapidly retreating, with a **24% decrease in total glacier area** from 1977 to 2010. At the current emission rate, **65% of HKH glaciers may disappear** by the century's end.



Air pollution in the HKH **exacerbates climate change**, causing higher temperatures, accelerated glacier melt, disrupted monsoons, and altered rainfall patterns across Asia.

Recommendations to the global stocktake

Given the global importance of the HKH region, ICIMOD presents the following recommendations to the first global stocktake of the Paris Agreement:

- Incorporate technical discussions at COP28 to address rapid changes in mountain regions and include an agenda for sustainable mountain development in the upcoming COP28 plenary
- Include a discussion on the impacts of air pollution in the HKH, along with mitigation and adaptation measures, to contribute to the Global Goal on Adaptation
- Recognise transboundary climate risks and loss and damage as crucial factors for effective adaptation and include in the discussions and findings to the technical assessment processes
- Improve Paris Agreement mechanisms to address the cascading impacts of climate change and promote bilateral and regional cooperation for adaptation

Global partnerships must prioritise mountain regions, recognising their significant challenges and global implications. To secure our future, we must address climate and other changes in the vulnerable, high-impact regions of the world.



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