

Statement at the resumed high-level segment at UNFCCC COP26 – 10 Nov 2021, Glasgow
Dr Pema Gyamtsho, Director General, ICIMOD

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen!

Today, I am here to deliver three key messages to world leaders, scientists, and the business community on behalf of ICIMOD, which works for the Hindu Kush Himalayan region as knowledge, learning and sharing centre.

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The Hindu Kush Himalaya, which is spread across Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan is often referred to as the third pole, since it contains the largest ice mass outside of the two polar regions. It is the water tower of Asia and contains the headwaters of 10 major Asian rivers. What happens in this region affects the livelihoods of 240 million people living in the mountains, and another 1.65 billion people living downstream. Together, the HKH provides essential resources, especially water and ecosystem services, to close to 3 billion people – or one-third of humanity.

The HKH region is also a climate hotspot. Even a 1.5 degree Celsius world is going to be too hot for this region.

Therefore, our collective messages here at COP26 are:

1. There is a need to recognize and protect the HKH region as the **Pulse of the Planet** – a region most vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change.
2. We call on the global community to take note of the **'Mountains of Opportunity'** investment framework that we have developed together with our regional member countries to scale up investment in mountain-specific climate priorities, and
3. Our eight regional member countries have come together to take climate actions nationally and regionally using our **Power of 8** and call upon the international community to support us with financial investments and technology transfer

We are happy to report that we have received tremendous support and confidence in taking forward the 'Mountains of Opportunity' investment framework. We look forward to the support of all parties for this framework.

Let me conclude by calling on all of you to note that the 'Race to resilience' and 'Leave no one behind' calls must resonate with the nearly 2 billion people living within the mountains, hills and river valleys of the Hindu Kush Himalaya.

Let us all feel and protect the **pulse of the planet!**