



Editorial

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Dear Readers,

In September 2005 world leaders met in New York at the Millennium +5 Summit to evaluate progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. The UN Millennium Development Goals Report 2005 confirms that progress towards meeting the goals has been realized in recent years. But this progress has not occurred in all regions and in all the areas covered by the MDGs. Indeed, poverty gaps have increased in some places.

Are mountain people among those who have benefited so far, or are they among those left out? Hardly any disaggregated information is available to answer this question. There is a risk that remote areas, where achieving the MDGs is extremely challenging and cost-intensive, will become even more marginalized. To date, there has been very little discussion of how these internationally agreed upon goals influence development efforts in mountain areas. This issue of MRD makes an initial attempt to engage in such discussion.

In the opening article in the Development section, by Susanne Wymann et al, mountain countries are mirrored in selected MDG indicators, and elements of a strategy to better integrate the needs and challenges of mountain dwellers in MDG processes at the international and national levels are discussed. Next, Patrizio Warren describes how efforts at the local level are influenced by international agreement on the MDGs, and argues that poverty reduction requires long-term commitment and monitoring. Hector Li Pun et al present the strategy recently developed at the International Potato Centre (CIP) to help achieve the MDGs in the Andean Altiplano. The second MDG goal, focusing on universal primary education, is also a challenge for mountain areas. In Turkey, a major nation-wide campaign is underway to encourage and foster the education of girls, outlined in the article by Mehmet Somuncu. A very different educational approach adapted to the local needs of indigenous people in mountainous Mindanao is presented by Mucha-Shim Quiling Arquiza. One of the risks in pursuing the MDGs is the possibility that attempts to achieve them will focus on developing countries and poor people, to the exclusion of people living in industrialized countries. Marie Cirillo, a community-based actor, offers evidence in an interview of the struggles of mountain people in Appalachia, and shows that community-based efforts can bring some hope to marginalized people. In the MountainPlatform section, Martin Sommer of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation reflects on the position of Swiss development cooperation in light of the MDGs. Finally, the MountainNotes section contains a report on how the Mountain Partnership is using broadband technology to reduce the famous “digital divide” in an attempt to promote development in mountain areas.

As a journal committed to sustainable mountain development and as a member of the Mountain Partnership, Mountain Research and Development sincerely hopes that the focus on the MDGs presented here will stimulate a broader discussion of and additional innovative commitment to the MDGs, particularly in mountain areas – not only among our readers, but among a wider public as well.

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