

FINAL REPORT

MOUNTLENNIUM

Reaching Millennium Development Goals through Regional Mountain Governance

April 30, 2014

1. Abstract

The Mountlennium project analyzed regional mountain initiatives with the aim of assessing the contribution of regional governance architectures to the achievement of two Millennium Development Goals (MDGs – 7A: integration of sustainable development principles in national policies & 7B: reduction of biodiversity loss). The research showed that even though regional mountain initiatives have largely ignored MDGs as an *instrument*, they have clearly served as conduits for the implementation of sustainable development and biodiversity conservation, thus complementing conventional global and national approaches. The research further reveals extensive connections between these mountain initiatives, which further facilitate the diffusion of relevant experiences and approaches. While the global mountain agenda has served as a common frame of reference in these diffusion processes, however, the Alpine (or any other) experience has not become a single model for regional mountain governance elsewhere.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 Research Plan

The Mountlennium project – running from January 1, 2012, to April 30, 2014 – analyzed regional mountain initiatives with the aim of assessing their contribution to the achievement of two Millennium Development Goals (MDGs – 7A: integration of sustainable development principles in national policies & 7B: reduction of biodiversity loss). Regional mountain initiatives are defined as sustained, collaborative processes that foster collaboration among different types of actors seeking to define and implement shared public policy goals in a transboundary mountain range. While the project findings highlight the potential of the regional approach for achieving MDGs, policy makers have mostly focused on global and national approaches.

Mountain regions are recognized as critical human-environment systems on the world's environmental agenda and as laboratories for the implementation of sustainable development strategies. Mountain regions also represent an important empirical domain at the interface of rescaling and governance. Implementing sustainable development through regional initiatives entails processes of rescaling that impact governance, collective action, and identity formation. Since biodiversity conservation and sustainable development are the two most dominant objectives of mountain initiatives around the world, focusing our research on MDGs 7A and 7B maximizes the visibility and, hence, traceability of policy diffusion; sheds light on variation in the ways sustainable development and biodiversity conservation are adopted and