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CONCEPT NOTE  
UNFCCC COP29 SIDE  
EVENT / HIGH LEVEL  
PLENARY SESSION:

# Resource Mobilization for Climate Adaptation in Asia's High Mountains

**Location: Pavilion of  
Kyrgyzstan (F8), COP29  
Blue Zone, Baku city,  
Azerbaijan**

## Background:

The snow leopard, a charismatic and iconic species, represents the fragile ecosystems of Asia's high mountains. These mountains, warming twice as rapidly as the rest of the northern hemisphere, are critical for billions of people who rely on them for multiple ecosystem services, including water. Climate change threatens the livelihoods, well-being, and tolerance of local communities living in the snow leopard habitat.

While the Samarkand Resolution recognized the snow leopard as a mascot of climate adaptation, there remains a significant lack of resources for climate adaptation programs in the region. The existing funding mechanisms often face challenges in addressing trans-boundary issues, which are prevalent in the snow leopard range.

DATE:

**21 November  
2024**

TIME:

**10.00-11.30 a.m.  
(local time)**

## Background

According to the Report of the UN Secretary-General, mountain ecosystems are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change like extreme weather events, temperature rise and natural disasters, as well as to deforestation, land degradation, and pollution. One of the most visible impacts of climate change on mountains is the rapid melting of glaciers, which not only threatens local biodiversity but also impacts security and stability of rural communities but also residents of big cities across the region depending on fresh water and other natural resources. Mountains not only support livelihoods in upstream countries but also benefit communities living downstream. In Kyrgyzstan and other mountainous Central Asian countries, glaciers, a key source of water, are melting at an alarming rate. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), more than 50% of glaciers in Central Asia could disappear by 2050, threatening water and food security for more than 64 million people in the region.



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Most recently, the high exposure and sensitivity of mountain regions to climate change, combined with their fragility and underrepresentation, have been recognized in the UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/77/172, titled 'Sustainable Mountain Development.' This resolution declared 2023-2027 as the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions.

## Key Elements

1. Snow leopard represents the mountains of Asia that are warming twice as rapidly as the rest of the northern hemisphere
2. Billions of people rely on these Mountains for multiple ecosystem services including water
3. Impact of climate change will impact livelihoods, well-being, and tolerance of local communities living in the snow leopard habitat towards biodiversity, especially an apex predator and other species that use the same natural resources such as pastures and water
4. While countries came together to endorse Samarkand Resolution that identifies the species as a mascot of climate adaptation, there is little resourcing for climate adaptation programs in the region.
5. Biggest challenge is the complexities and rigidity of the existing modality within which GCF provides funding making it difficult to tackle trans-boundary issues which are a norm at least in the snow leopard range because nature knows no borders (UN Resolution) and because many of the ecosystem services and threats are shared between countries.
6. Need to create a framework for financing climate adaptation that is focused on diversifying livelihoods, understanding disease emergence and spread, and minimizing economic losses due to the more frequent extreme events that are occurring with greater intensity due to climate change.
7. Inter-governmental alliances such as GSLEP can help coordinate or facilitate these given their experience of helping develop climate smart management plans for many snow leopard range countries, including India, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Bhutan, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Mongolia.
8. The side meeting resolves to the leaders of the world and international donor community to decentralize and simplify financing for climate adaptation especially in those countries that have inter-governmental alliances such as the GSLEP.

## Side Event's Objectives:

1. To highlight the urgent need for increased resource mobilization to support climate adaptation in Asia's high mountains.
2. To discuss the challenges and opportunities for financing climate adaptation in the region, particularly for trans-boundary issues.
3. To explore innovative financing mechanisms and partnerships that can address the specific needs of high mountain ecosystems and their communities.
4. To advocate for a more decentralized and simplified approach to financing climate adaptation, especially for countries with inter-governmental alliances like the Global Snow Leopard Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP).



## Key Discussion Points:

- The critical role of high mountain ecosystems in providing ecosystem services, particularly water, to billions of people.
- The impacts of climate change on high mountain ecosystems and the communities that depend on them.
- The challenges and opportunities for financing climate adaptation in the region, including the limitations of existing funding mechanisms.
- The potential of inter-governmental alliances such as GSLEP to coordinate and facilitate climate adaptation efforts.
- The need for a more decentralized and simplified approach to financing climate adaptation, especially for countries with inter-governmental alliances.

## Participants:

- Government representatives from snow leopard range countries
- Representatives from international organizations and donor agencies
- Experts in climate change, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable development
- Representatives from local communities and civil society organizations

## Expected Outcomes:

- A clear call to action for increased resource mobilization to support climate adaptation in Asia's high mountains.
- A shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities for financing climate adaptation in the region.
- Identification of innovative financing mechanisms and partnerships such as regional Trust Funds.
- A commitment from governments, international organizations, and donors to support a more decentralized and simplified approach to financing climate adaptation.

## Call to Action:

The side meeting will call upon the leaders of the world and international donor community to:

- Facilitate funding for climate adaptation in Asia's high mountains.
- Decentralize and simplify financing mechanisms to make them more accessible to countries that are already part of inter-governmental alliances such as GSLEP and SCO.
- Support innovative financing approaches that address the specific needs of high mountain ecosystems and their communities.

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