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“Solidarity in a competing world —
fair use of resources”

Sharing Benefits of Hindu Kush Himalayan Waters

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Abstract

The Hindu-Kush Himalayas (HKH), the water tower of Asia, serve directly and indirectly 1.5 people through 10 major river basins. However, mountains and their resources are under pressure from climate change and various other socio-ecological transformations rapidly taking place such as outmigration and increasing energy and food demands. For sustainable mountain development, a key question is how to obtain and share benefits from critical resources like water. For HKH waters this benefit sharing must take place at different scales, from community to the entire region. Six of the 10 great rivers of the HKH are transboundary in nature, and there is growing demand for the water for food and energy across countries, yet great uncertainty about future flows. Collaboration and knowledge sharing will help countries to share benefits. In addition, countries can also learn a lot from how communities manage to share water and its benefits, and how they derive local solutions. The paper will provide two cases, one of benefit sharing from local hydropower development, and a second case on how communities manage to maintain and share water from traditional water supplies in the Kathmandu valley. In doing so, this presentation will touch upon issues of equitable distribution of benefits and conflicts that emerge when these benefits are not fairly distributed among affected people. It will also discuss various mechanisms through which individuals and communities enter into negotiation with the state and private actors for a fair and equitable share of local water resources.

Keywords: Local water management