



**Asian Centre for Environment Management and Sustainable Development (AEMS)**

**and**

**International Institute for Environment and Development**

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Nepal: Vice-President and top singer launch report that signals steps to sustainable development**

The Vice-President of Nepal -- His Excellency Parmanand Jha-- will today (13 May) host the launch of a new report that details how the country can benefit from bringing its environment and development policies into harmony.

The report, by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and the Kathmandu-based Asian Centre for Environment Management and Sustainable Development (AEMS), recommends ways for Nepal to bring the environment into the business of government – from sustainable public procurement and planning to ensuring that the ‘environmental rights’ of people are enshrined in the new constitution of Nepal.

“The evidence presented by IIED and AEMS in this extremely valuable report makes a compelling case for change and underpins a number of recommendations which will help us all to change the way we perceive the environment, decide on how we manage it, and plan for the future,” says Vice-President Parmanand Jha.

The aim of the book is to “capture the nation’s existing experience in integrating environment into planning and development decision-making, examine what is driving the need to take environmental issues seriously and the challenges to doing so, and to draw up recommendations for action” says Professor Ram Khadka, Chairman of AEMS.

The country’s natural resource base is degrading rapidly, contributing to the spread of poverty among Nepalese people as they find it more and more difficult to meet their basic resource needs in a sustainable manner. “Despite many efforts over the past 30 years to address environmental concerns, environmental indicators for Nepal are not improving,” says Mr Ajay Mathema from AEMS. “We urgently need to find ways to mainstream environment in development”.

The report urges Nepal to reactivate the dormant Sustainable Development Commission, integrate the environment into new and existing policies, and develop an organised knowledge base on environment-development linkages, initiatives and lessons.

“Environmental mainstreaming and innovation will only take root when local institutions and communities recognise it as both a need and a benefit and accept it as a regular part of community activities and institutional programmes,” says Barry Dalal-Clayton of IIED, one of the authors. “We also recommend that Nepal acts to enhance environmental education and training, and that the media and artists play a more proactive role in championing environmental issues.”

In a rare example of an innovative way to communicate research, one of Nepal’s top singers – Komal Oli – has recorded a new song, “***Let’s Safeguard Our Future***”, drawing key messages from the report. It aims to help share the report’s findings with radio listeners across the country. She will perform it in public for the first time at the report’s launch. “The future of my country’s environment is an issue that is dear to my heart. We must do all we can to safeguard the environment to guarantee the future of our children and their children” said Ms Oli.

To nurture the talent needed to set Nepal on a path to sustainability, the report urges the government to create an ‘environment service group’ within the Public Service Commission system for environmental graduates to further their careers in government agencies.

Another recommendation from the report concerns the need to use strategic environmental assessment (SEA) as a key tool to mainstream environment in policies, plans and programmes.

IIED is now working with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation to design a three year programme of SEAs of the main protected areas and conservation areas in Nepal to learn lessons about the environmental, social and economic impacts of the varying management regimes in these areas. This will help the department to revise its Protected Areas Policy, which has been in place unchanged since 1973.

The report notes that: *“Nepal has abundant natural assets which underpin the economy and a very diverse ethnic and cultural heritage. These provide a strong platform for sustainable development. But the country suffers from the pervasive degradation of its environment and there is widespread poverty. As Nepal emerges from a period of conflict, the opportunity has emerged to safeguard and manage the environment wisely and build the future on a sustainable basis, and in this way secure a transition to a green economy.”*

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**NOTES TO EDITORS**

Financial support was provided by IIED through its donor framework agreements, and the Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI-Nepal).

**International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)**

Founded in 1971, the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) - [www.iied.org](http://www.iied.org/) - has become one of the world’s top policy research organisations working in environment and development. Its mission is to build a fairer, more sustainable world, using evidence, action and influence in partnership with others. IIED operates through several key Groups covering climate change, natural resources, human settlements, sustainable markets, with governance (including planning and environmental assessment) as a cross-cutting theme

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***The Asian Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (AEMS)***, based in Nepal, works on environmental management with governments, educational institutions, private sector companies, NGOs and civil society organizations, bringing together regional expertise, institutions and knowledge to address urgent, common environmental and sustainable development challenges. AEMS undertakes research,, undertakes consultancy services, cooperates with national and international educational institutions, and is establishing a resource centre providing information on environmental and development programmes and projects. Focus themes are: resource assessment and management, biodiversity, environmental mainstreaming and sustainable development, environmental assessment, climate change, risk assessment and disaster management, and environmental information management, training and capacity-building.

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