**Mountain Environment**

A mountain environment is the change of climate as per the higher you. In mountains the higher one goes the cooler it becomes. A mountain can be defined as that which is steeper or higher than a hill. A mountainous environment consists of a series of projected landmasses above the surrounding areas. Mountains differ from hill in that they are higher in attitude and they consist of peaks. Mountainous areas are normally rocky with most of them having rivers that flow from them.

### Mountain Environment

Mountains occupy 24% of the global land surface area and are home to 12% of the world’s population, including a high proportion of economically vulnerable people. Mountains are characterized by fragile and marginal geomorphological features, highly variable climatic conditions, remoteness, and marginalized socio-economic conditions; they are also the repository of a rich and unique biodiversity and diverse culture and traditions. Mountains have ecological, aesthetic, and socioeconomic significance, not only for those living in the mountain areas, but also for people from beyond. About 10% of the world’s population depends directly upon mountain resources for their livelihoods and well-being, and an estimated 40% depend indirectly on them for water, hydroelectricity, timber, biodiversity and niche products, mineral resources, flood control, and recreation.

Mountains are among the most sensitive environments and are subject to a range of biophysical and socioeconomic drivers of change, including the currently much discussed condition of climate change. Being fragile, they are susceptible to accelerated soil erosion, landslides, glacier recession, earthquakes and flash floods. These drivers of change expose mountain communities to high physical and socioeconomic risks; and increasingly threaten or alter the capacity of the mountain environment to provide services of various kinds for both mountain communities and lowland populations. Increasing awareness of the prevailing impacts on fragile mountains has put them at the centre of the global environment agenda. [Chapter 13 in Agenda 21](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/agenda21/english/agenda21chapter13.htm)of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development ([UNCED](http://www.un.org/geninfo/bp/enviro.html)) in 1992 was dedicated to mountain issues, depicting the plight of mountain people and the degradation of the mountain environment. The [Millennium Ecosystem Assessment](http://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/About.aspx)  highlights the various services provided by mountains. Despite these global efforts and awareness, mountain environments still remain marginalised in global development agendas. Overextraction and inappropriate use of mountain resources continues. Mountain risks cannot be eliminated without support from downstream and urban decision makers, and raising awareness of mountain issues among plains populations remains an important task. Efforts should be focused on adapting development and welfare interventions to the imperatives of mountain conditions.  Local resources must be made accessible to mountain people for sustainable use and conservation. Livelihoods strategies and opportunities must take pressure away from the limited land resources.