



Press Release

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Seed Project International Workshop: the future of Northern Pakistan pass through the sustainable development of the “Central Karakorum National Park”

ISLAMABAD (Pakistan) - The SEED project “formula” for sustainable development and valorization of the mountain ecosystems is becoming a model in Pakistan, where a workshop promoted and organized by Ev-K2-Cnr Committee and Karakorum International University (KIU) is in progress. The aim of the meeting in Islamabad is evaluating results of the SEED project (the acronym stands for Social, Economic and Environmental Development), that aims at an integrative development of CKNP region supporting the implementation and management of the Central Karakorum National Park (CKNP), the biggest national park in Pakistan, with its 10,000 square kilometers of surface and a core mountain area that rises from 2500 and 8000 m a.s.l.

The participants of the SEED workshop in Islamabad are about a hundred, with a heavy presence of Italians: there are 21 academic teaching fellows, National Research Council and Ev-K2-Cnr Committee technical experts. Other participants are KIU researchers, representatives of local institutions and communities, project's stakeholders and the SEED' partners: CKNP Directorate, WWF Pakistan and Alpine Club Pakistan, AKRS, MGPO, PMD and IUCN.

Among others at the inauguration session, Ms Sadia Danish and Mr Aftab Haider, respectively Advisors for Tourism and for Forest of Gilgit and Baltistan Regional Department of the workshop have attended. During the opening remarks, Prof. Najma Najam, Vice Chancellor of the KIU, has remarked how methods and collaborations created through SEED' project among researchers coming from various institutions and nations, public bodies (for example Gilgit and Baltistan Regional Department) and private ones, international authorities and agencies, are considered a model of success to be followed both for research and sustainable development. Abid Ali director of CKNP, and Raffaele Del Cima, SEED director, have enumerated the research programs implemented in the framework of Seed, the most important international co-operation plan for the safeguard and sustainable development of Karakoram region. This area has one of the most valuable natural heritage of the world, but also one of the most fragile ecosystem. It must be protected in the interest of our planet and with the aim of contributing to the geopolitical and economic balance of Pakistan, that has a great strategic importance in the area included between Arab world and Asia. The conversion of Pakistan debt towards Italy has contributed to channel the better research's resources towards an intervention as wide and articulate as of extraordinary importance. During the four working days of the workshop, the speakers will explain results of the first two years of research and studies, and will approach themes like management and improvement of natural, water and forest resources, studies of

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biodiversity, climatic and environmental monitoring, improvement of hygienic and sanitary conditions and quality of life inside local communities, waste management and sustainable tourism.

Particularly interesting the study lead by research staff of physical and environmental geography at Milan University,, illustrated during the second working day. They have updated the glaciers' register in the Central Karakorum National Park, starting from a precedent mapping realized by ICIMOD. The staff of Milan University has estimated 38% of CKNP region is covered with glaciers, showing position and size of the 715 glaciers present in the area.

The detailed knowledge of glaciers' mass, capacity e movements is fundamental to guarantee their safeguard and conservation. In fact they represent the indispensable water reserve for hundreds million inhabitants. This is a sector of research correlated to climatic and environment studies conducted by Ev-K2-Cnr Committee in the Himalayas and Karakorum areas, first of all the SHARE project.

The results of the research programs carried out within the SEED Project will be an important tool to provide the technical information that will lead to the definition of a management plan for the Central Karakorum National Park. This information will be shared and discussed in the final day of the workshop, when the workshop will open to debate involving institutions, local communities, partners, stakeholders and international agencies such as UNEP, and will address other projects in the area, first of all Karakorum Trust II, which includes among its own goals the sustainable development of CKNP.

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