

# SAGARMATHA SAMBAD: GEOGRAPHY

**NEWS:** Union Minister Shri Bhupender Yadav outlines a 'Five-point call for Global Action' to Protect Fragile Mountain Ecosystems at the 1st Sagarmatha Sambaad in Kathmandu, Nepal

## WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

At the 1st Sagarmatha Sambaad in Nepal, India proposed a five-point global action plan to protect fragile mountain ecosystems, emphasizing climate resilience, community empowerment, and scientific collaboration.

The initiative highlights India's leadership in addressing Himalayan challenges through sustainable development and transboundary cooperation.

### Context:

- The Union Environment Minister of India addressed the 1st Sagarmatha Sambaad held in Nepal.
- The Sambaad (meaning dialogue) is named after Mt. Sagarmatha (Mount Everest), symbolizing the ecological and strategic importance of the Himalayas.
- The focus was on protecting fragile mountain ecosystems, particularly the Himalayas, and proposing global cooperative actions.

### Key Highlights of the Address:

- **Shared Regional Heritage:**  
Emphasized the ecological and cultural interdependence among Himalayan nations like India, Nepal, Bhutan, and others.
- **Climate Inequity:**  
South Asia, housing 25% of the world's population, contributes only 4% of historical CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, yet suffers disproportionately from climate change impacts.
- **Climate Finance Gap:**  
Criticized developed nations for failing to meet commitments on climate finance, technology transfer, and capacity building under the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement.
- **Call for Transboundary Cooperation:**  
Advocated joint conservation under initiatives like the International Big Cats Alliance (IBCA) for species such as snow leopards, tigers, and Himalayan biodiversity.

## India's Five-Point Global Action Plan for Mountains:

### 1. Enhanced Scientific Cooperation:

- Strengthen cross-border climate research.
- Monitor cryospheric changes, glacier melt, hydrological cycles, and mountain biodiversity.
- Establish data-sharing mechanisms among Himalayan countries.

### 2. Building Climate Resilience:

- Invest in climate adaptation strategies tailored for mountain ecosystems.
- Deploy early warning systems for disasters like Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) and avalanches.
- Promote climate-resilient infrastructure in vulnerable mountain settlements.

### 3. Empowering Mountain Communities:

- Center policymaking on the livelihood, aspirations, and rights of mountain communities.
- Promote sustainable tourism, eco-livelihoods, and green jobs.
- Recognize and integrate traditional knowledge systems into formal conservation and adaptation strategies.

### 4. Providing Green Finance:

- Push for adequate, predictable, and accessible climate finance from developed countries.
- Emphasize that funding must flow to adaptation and mitigation initiatives in mountain nations.
- Strengthen public-private partnerships and climate resilience funds.

### 5. Recognizing Mountain Perspectives Globally:

- Advocate for mountain ecosystems to be explicitly acknowledged in international climate negotiations.
- Ensure the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reflect the needs and vulnerabilities of mountain regions.

## Importance of the Himalayan Ecosystem:

- **Climate Regulator:**  
Acts as a natural barrier influencing Indian monsoon, blocking cold winds from Central Asia.
- **Water Security Source:**  
Origin of major rivers – Ganga, Indus, Brahmaputra – which support agriculture, drinking water, and energy for over a billion people.
- **Biodiversity Hotspot:**  
Home to numerous endangered species like the snow leopard, red panda, and Himalayan monal.
- **Cultural & Religious Significance:**  
Sacred sites like Badrinath, Kedarnath, Kailash Mansarovar, and Amarnath make the Himalayas spiritually significant in Hinduism and Buddhism.
- **Strategic and Geopolitical Significance:**  
Serves as India's natural frontier with China, Nepal, and Bhutan, impacting border security and military logistics.

## Key Indian Initiatives for Himalayan Conservation:

- **National Mission on Sustaining Himalayan Ecosystem (NMSHE):**
  - Part of National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC).
  - Focus on glacier studies, ecosystem conservation, traditional knowledge, and sustainable development in the Himalayas.
- **Project Snow Leopard:**
  - Launched in five Himalayan states.
  - Integrates scientific research with community-based conservation to protect the elusive snow leopard and its habitat.
- **Secure Himalaya Project:**
  - Supported by UNDP and GEF, focuses on high-altitude biodiversity, sustainable livelihoods, and anti-poaching measures.
  - Implemented in Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Sikkim.
- **International Big Cats Alliance (IBCA):**

- India-led alliance to foster global cooperation on the protection of seven big cat species, including transboundary mountain species like snow leopards.

### Conclusion:

- The Sagarmatha Sambaad and India's proactive engagement reflect the urgent need for global collaboration to protect fragile mountain ecosystems.
- India's five-point action plan aligns with its broader commitment to climate justice, mountain sustainability, and regional cooperation.
- Himalayan preservation is not just an ecological necessity, but a geopolitical and cultural imperative, requiring science-based policy, inclusive development, and global solidarity.

Source:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2129059#:~:text=Union%20Minister%20Shri%20Bhupender%20Yadav,Sagarmatha%20Sambaad%20in%20Kathmandu%2C%20Nepal>