

INDIA TO WORK WITH CHINA, PAKISTAN TO GAUGE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Environmental Degradation - GHGs, Ozone Depletion and Climate Change

Natural impact: The HKH region spans Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China and India among other nations.

To better gauge the impact of climate change on the Hindu Kush mountains, which includes the Himalayas, and spruce up data-gathering, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) will collaborate with meteorological agencies in China and Pakistan, among others, to provide climate forecast services to countries in the region.

Earlier this month, the IMD organised a workshop to discuss ways to establish a regional climate centre that will provide forecasting services and climate analyses.

It will be under the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and take a few years to take shape, IMD Director-General M. Mohapatra told *The Hindu*.

“The Hindu-Kush-Himalayan (HKH) region is considered the Third Pole [after the North and South Poles], and has significant implications for climate. However, data-gathering here is sparse. We are discussing a system whereby countries can share data and improve forecasts and predictions. The WMO proposal was to have nodal centres in Islamabad, Delhi and Beijing,” he said.

The HKH region spans Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. It traverses about 5 million square kilometres and hosts a large and culturally diverse population. The Third Pole, which contains vast cryospheric zones, is also the world’s largest store of snow and ice outside the polar region.

Alongside forecasting weather over long periods, the regional centres would provide data services, training and capacity-building, research and development.

The meeting in Delhi earlier this week was meant “... to identify partnerships among relevant stakeholders, formulate research directions and needs for collaboration, identify user-groups and sectors and provide information on changes in hydrological extremes as part of climate change projections,” according to an official note.

A report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change last month highlighted the threat to the HKH region from global warming. Floods would become more frequent and severe in the mountainous and downstream areas of the Indus, Ganges and Brahmaputra river basins, because of an increase in extreme precipitation events. The severity of floods was expected to more than double towards the end of the century, it said.

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