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**UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSITY**

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UNU to Host Symposium on “The Challenge of Mountains”

- Event:** International Symposium on “The Challenge of Mountains”
Date/Time: 27 June 2007 (Wednesday), 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM
Venue: U Thant International Conference Hall, UN House, Tokyo
Organizers: United Nations University (UNU) and “The Challenge of Mountains” Symposium Steering Committee
Co-organizers: Ministry of the Environment of Japan; Faculty of Environmental Earth Science, Hokkaido University; College of Humanities and Sciences, Nihon University; Institute of Mountain Science, Shinshu University; Yama-Net Japan
Supporter: Japan Society of Fujiology

Background information

- Mountains provide resources that are vital for human survival and serve as repositories of cultural heritage and ecological diversity. In 2002, the UN International Year of Mountains (IYM), the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit focused attention on the critical need to better understand the challenges of living in and living with mountains, and to empower and support mountain communities in their quest for improved lives without compromising the value of mountain ecosystems.
- One outcome of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg was the Mountain Partnership, an alliance dedicated to improving the well-being, livelihoods and opportunities of mountain dwellers and to the protection and stewardship of the world’s mountain environments. Over the past five years, UNU and a consortium of research, NGO and government agencies in Japan, led by the Secretariat of the Japanese IYM Committee, have played a key role in driving forward the Mountain Partnership Agenda and implementing it in Japan and Asia.
- The mountains of Central Asia are priority areas of concern. Japan has taken leadership in fostering the regional dialogue vital for ensuring a collaborative political climate, while UNU and its partners have undertaken targeted mountain research and development initiatives in the region.

About the event

- The symposium will bring together leading Japanese and international scientists and policy makers working on mountain issues in Central Asia.
- After opening remarks by UNU Rector Hans van Ginkel and a representative from the Ministry of the Environment of Japan, there will be presentations on the outcomes from the International Year of Mountains and the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit and discussion of the needs and opportunities for future action.
- Three panel discussions will follow:
 - The Challenge: Mountain Environments and People
 - Engaging the Challenge: Understanding Local Needs, Capacities and Potential Solutions
 - Fostering Sustainable Mountain Development: The Case of Central Asian Mountain Environments
- Simultaneous English-Japanese interpretation will be provided. Simultaneous Russian-Japanese will also be arranged for the session 3 only

Media representatives are cordially invited to attend this international symposium. For more information, or to confirm your attendance, please contact Naoko Yano, UNU Office of Communications (tel: 03-5467-1311; e-mail: media@unu.edu).