



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENT

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## GUEST EDITORIAL

### PEOPLE AND ENVIRONMENT IN OUR CHANGING WORLD

Human interactions with the environment always involve mixed motives and feelings. Realistically, our human tendency is to exploit locally and not think globally. Many ancient or traditional practices have helped to preserve natural resources locally, and to share their benefits, but such practices are not sufficient or may fail under modern circumstances of population increase, movement, and material expectations. Upland regions worldwide have been under pressure to accommodate more people, more industry, and more agricultural production. Nepal is not alone in the difficulties it faces, or the natural advantages it enjoys. In the modern world of rapid social and environmental change, a degree of isolation may not be a bad thing, if it allows people – including students and researchers – more space to contemplate the nature of the world and our role in it. Steep mountains are of course dangerous, and those of Himalaya especially so, but vertical topology also has some advantages over the plains of the world. Climate change is sure to happen, in the long term, and as it happens, the effects on countries without vertical topography promise to be more extreme than those with clear local gradients in temperature and rainfall. The world has much to learn from environmental research in Nepal, and from how the people of Nepal deal with their local environmental issues. I sincerely hope that Nepal's *International Journal of Environment* will serve as focus for learning and thinking in Nepal and globally.

As a suggestion for the editors, contributors and readers of this journal, I would like to suggest that at least some issues of the journal are produced with a specific theme in mind. This helps to bring focus to the thinking and discussion around each theme, and will encourage more interaction among the readers and contributors of each issue. Also, as the journal develops, it may be advantageous to select key reports and commentary from past issues and combine them into special issues in print form. This will require appropriate

attention to copyright issues, cooperation between authors and editors, and feedback from readers who should feel free to offer constructive criticism about the work they see published here. The real purpose of a scientific journal is to be a forum for the exchange of ideas, questions, and knowledge, and certainly not just a platform for self-promotion by authors. Authors who seek critical feedback from readers will help the journal by promoting their own work, and by archiving their own publications in open-access academic archives. To publish and forget is also to publish and be forgotten. With active engagement from all who are involved with the journal, an international community of interest can be built, with Nepal as a focus, but not an exclusive focus. I wish all contributors and readers the time and space needed for peaceful thinking about environmental questions of local and global importance.

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