

Italy creates eco-station on Mount Everest

February 7 2006

Italy has built a laboratory on top of Mount Everest to better analyze the Earth's atmosphere.

Project leader Agostino Da Polenza said the station will be a key instrument for measuring the huge industrial clouds of smoke blowing from the fast-proliferating factories of China and India, Italy's ANSA news agency reported Tuesday.

"This places us right at the forefront of international research," Da Polenza told a jubilant group of atmospheric scientists over a satellite phone link to Rome. "It's been hard going over the past week with 150 kph (93 mph) winds and temperatures down as far as 15 degrees below zero," he said.

About 18 tons of equipment had to be transported to the new station and, since the measuring devices were so sensitive, they all had to be carried by hand, ANSA said.

"Now we plan to get straight down to work on the United Nations' Atmospheric Brown Clouds program, gauging the spread and effect of the industrial emissions billowing out of China and India," said DaPolenza.

The new station is located at approximately the 16,600-foot level on the world's highest mountain.

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