

Himalayan nations agree on climate adaptation plan

November 20 2011, By MUNEEZA NAQVI , Associated Press

(AP) -- Four Himalayan nations facing the threat of weather changes have agreed to collaborate on ways to adapt to climate change after a two-day summit in Bhutan.

India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan were part of the [Climate Summit](#) for a Living Himalayas held in Bhutan's capital Thimphu on Saturday. They agreed to cooperate on energy, water, food and biodiversity issues.

"The success of our initiative will not only have direct and immediate benefits for our own people, but we could be setting a worthy precedent for other countries that share similar conditions," Bhutan's Prime Minister Lyonchhoen Jigmi Y. Thinley said according to a press statement released late Saturday.

Pakistan, China and Afghanistan were absent from the summit but organizers downplayed that, saying that the summit was focused on securing ecosystems, endangered species, and food and water sources for only the Himalayas' eastern part.

The summit called for action amid the international community's inability to agree on limiting [greenhouse gas emissions](#) blamed for [global climate change](#). The next round of U.N. [climate talks](#) begin in Durban, South Africa Nov. 28, but the expectations of any breakthrough there are limited.

As part of the declaration the four nations agreed to work together to

increase access to "affordable and reliable" clean energy resources and technology through a regional knowledge sharing mechanism, a press statement from the [World Wildlife Fund](#) said.

The draft of the declaration was not immediately available Sunday.

The most contentious part of the talks dealt with [water security](#), according to the WWF release, but the four nations did agree to work together on ecosystem and [disaster management](#), sharing their knowledge in water use efficiency.

Regional tensions have long prevented Himalayan cooperation, including basic research in the world's largest block of glaciers outside the polar regions, and accounting for 40 percent of the world's fresh water.

There was also consensus on food security and securing livelihoods and the deal covers way to adapt and improve food production and help vulnerable communities get better access to nutritious food.

"These kinds of regional initiatives are really needed," said Liisa Rohweder, CEO of WWF Finland, adding the summit was a good lead to follow for the Durban meeting.

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