

Time for Action on Adaptation

Seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP17)

28 November - 9 December 2011, Durban, South Africa

Recommendations for COP17

IUCN calls for:

- ✓ **Urgent enhanced action on adaptation** by all Parties, that is country-driven, gender-sensitive, participatory, equitable and conflict sensitive and takes into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems, and is integrated and mainstreamed across sectors
- ✓ **A decision on** the mandate, composition, procedures and linkages of the **Adaptation Committee** to be adopted by Parties at COP 17
- ✓ The Adaptation Committee to foster **linkages** between Parties, intergovernmental, international, regional and national organizations and networks, and local communities
- ✓ The attendance of accredited **observer organizations** in the meetings of the Adaptation Committee
- ✓ Parties to ensure a **gender balance** in accordance with decision 36/CP.7, in the selection of members to the Adaptation Committee
- ✓ The immediate disbursement of **new and additional finance** to enable adaptation actions to be implemented on the ground, including for the sustainable management of natural resources
- ✓ A process to formulate and implement **national adaptation plans** that builds on existing plans, policies and practice; promotes harmonization and cross-sectoral approaches to adaptation at national and local levels, including at ecosystem scale; , mainstreams gender, and addresses equity
- ✓ Parties to **build synergies** between national adaptation and mitigation plans, **National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans under the CBD, National Action Programmes under the UNCCD and commitments under other international environmental agreements**
- ✓ Parties to build **resilience of socio-economic and ecological systems** through sustainable management of natural resources

IUCN calls for a **second phase** of the Nairobi Work Programme which focuses on information relevant for **implementation of adaptation** actions on the ground.

IUCN calls for **strengthening activities** on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation in **water, food security and ecosystems** in a second phase of the Nairobi Work Programme, with due consideration to both **sector-specific and cross-sectoral** approach

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Operationalizing the Cancun Adaptation Framework to support implementation

Adaptation actions are urgently needed across the world to adapt to the climate change impacts that are already being felt and to build resilience. Developing countries are particularly vulnerable and need adequate support to undertake adaptation and disaster risk reduction actions. IUCN welcomes the adoption of the **Cancun Adaptation Framework** at COP 16 as a means to enhance action on adaptation and foster international cooperation and support. The Framework needs to be actively implemented, and will require institutional arrangements, plans and means of implementation, including new and additional finance, so as to result in the actions so urgently needed by all levels of government and stakeholders across ecosystems and sectors.

A decision on the mandate, composition, procedures and linkages of the **Adaptation Committee** should be adopted in Durban, as to advise the Conference of the Parties on adaptation and push for the implementation of immediate and enhanced adaptation actions. Several countries are already undertaking actions on adaptation, often building on existing coping strategies, including those around the sustainable management of natural resources. However, further support is needed, and the Adaptation Committee can play a key role in providing technical support and enhancing sharing of information and best practices. Synergies and linkages between Parties, intergovernmental, international, regional and national organizations, networks and centers are essential, if we are to build on and use existing adaptation expertise and best practices, for example with respect to local knowledge, such as the Ecosystems and Livelihoods Adaptation Network (ELAN) are already bridging policy, practice and science on adaptation¹. Creating opportunities to hear and include the voices of local communities and indigenous people will be critical for ensuring adaptation does not compromise the rights, values and priorities of these people. IUCN stands ready to offer advice, provide information, tools and best practices, as needed, to the Adaptation Committee including on matters relating to ecosystem-

¹ For more information, please visit <http://www.elanadapt.net/>

based approaches to adaptation² and implementing rights based approaches, developing conflict-sensitive adaptation, and gender mainstreaming.

The Cancun Adaptation Framework further decided to establish a process to enable LDC Parties to formulate and implement **national adaptation plans**, and invited other developing country Parties to employ these modalities in the elaboration of their own planning. IUCN welcomes the establishment of national adaptation plans as a means to strategically plan for medium- and long-term adaptation in developing countries. These plans should complement and build on existing plans and policies, and be targeted to support adaptation planning and implementation on the ground. National adaptation plans should promote harmonization with existing development and climate change policies, as well as promote cross-sectoral approaches to adaptation at national level and local level, including at ecosystem scale. They should also seek to build synergies with existing commitments under the UNFCCC, such as Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions, and commitments under other multi-lateral environmental agreements, such as National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, and National Action Programmes under the UNCCD. Gender should be mainstreamed throughout the design and implementation of the national adaptation plans.

Several countries have prioritized the **implementation of actions** around the conservation, sustainable management and restoration of ecosystems to help people, particularly rural and coastal communities dependent on natural resources, to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Such approaches improve outcomes for nature conservation while reducing social vulnerability, and thereby constitute a promising option for sustainable and efficient adaptation to climate change. Ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation should build on adequate vulnerability and impact assessments, thereby showing the value-

² Ecosystem-based approaches for adaptation recognize that **ecosystems can be managed** to limit climate change impacts on biodiversity and **to help people adapt** ... may include **sustainable management, conservation and restoration of ecosystems, as part of an overall adaptation strategy** that takes into account the multiple social, economic and cultural co-benefits for local communities." Decision X/33, Para 8, CBD.

added of such actions for adaptation. Such ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation have been included in several NAPAs, as well as in other climate change and adaptation plans and policies as well as in development planning. Adaptation should also respond to the social, economic and political realities including high levels of inequity, weak governance and conflict in many countries. These factors interact with effective ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation. Traditional and indigenous knowledge, including on natural resources and ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation, should be promoted. Adaptation actions are already being implemented on the ground, however these require further financial, technical and capacity support.

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- Parties to **build synergies** between national adaptation and mitigation plans,

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Second Phase of the Nairobi Work Programme to support implementation

The **Nairobi Work Programme (NWP)** on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change under the SBSTA has provided a unique platform for sharing information and lessons learnt on adaptation between governments, organizations and the private sector. IUCN continues to be an active partner of the NWP, including through implementing its action pledge³ and providing expertise on ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation. IUCN welcomes the continuation of interim activities under the Nairobi Work Programme, in particular the compilation of information on ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation, as well as the technical paper on water and climate change impacts and adaptation strategies.

A second phase of the NWP should seek to provide information that reaches beyond policy makers to adaptation practitioners and communities at local level where actions are being implemented. With regards to potential future activities under the NWP, IUCN welcomes proposals on strengthening sector-specific and cross-sectoral activities including on water, food security and ecosystems. Addressing governance including equity, rights and conflict dimensions is essential for effective and sustainable adaptation activities. Whilst ecosystems are often treated as a sector, delivery of ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation requires cross-sectoral approaches especially at local and ecosystem scale that include social dimensions. For example, approaches such as integrated water resource management would be relevant for all proposed sectors of water, food security, ecosystems and infrastructure. Watersheds can be managed to regulate floods; provide water for agriculture;

³ The IUCN Action Pledge to NWP is available at http://unfccc.int/files/adaptation/sbsta_agenda_item_adaptation/application/pdf/iucn_pledge_may09_final.pdf

ecosystems can be conserved on river banks to reduce siltation; and small-scale hydropower infrastructure can enhance energy provision in a changing climate. IUCN remains committed to the Nairobi Work Programme and looks forward to further engagement in improving understanding and supporting decisions on practical adaptation measures that are informed by sound scientific, technical and socio-economic knowledge.

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- **Strengthening activities** on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation in **water, food security and ecosystems** in a second phase of the Nairobi Work Programme, with due consideration to both **sector-specific and cross-sectoral** approaches