

UNFCCC Climate Change Talks: Bangkok, 28 September – 9 October 2009**Harness Nature, Protect Against Climate Change**

LATEST: Nature can be a cost-effective way to protect communities from climate change and extreme weather events. Healthy ecosystems, such as forests and wetlands, are beneficial to local populations for the many livelihood benefits that they provide: firewood, clean water, fibres, medicines, shelter and food. They can also form physical barriers against some extreme weather events, such as storm surges.

QUOTE: “The poor in developing countries will be hardest hit by climate change. They are also those most dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods,” says IUCN’s Climate Change Coordinator, Ninni Ikkala. “Conserving and managing nature, or ecosystem-based adaptation, is a means of adaptation to climate change impacts that is readily available to the rural poor; it builds on existing practice and addresses many of the concerns and priorities identified by the most vulnerable countries and communities. It is by no means the only solution, but an important part of the puzzle that we should not forget.”

Key issues:

- Ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change should be included in the post-2012 adaptation framework. *“Managing and conserving nature can increase resilience and reduce the vulnerability of people to the impacts of climate change,” says IUCN’s Head of Ecosystem Management Programme, Neville Ash. “Governments should promote the inclusion of ecosystem-based adaptation in the Copenhagen agreement.”*
- Well-managed nature plays an important role in both climate change adaptation and mitigation. *“Nature can offer solutions that are available to the rural poor in particular, that are cost-effective and sustainable,” says IUCN’s Climate Change Coordinator, Ninni Ikkala. “The potential of forests in reducing emissions is well-known, whilst for example well-managed mangroves can reduce flood impacts in low-lying coastal areas.”*
- Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degredation (REDD) can be an immediate solution to reducing harmful emissions, and can also provide benefits to local people and biodiversity. *“We know how to use REDD, we don’t have to wait for the development of low carbon technologies,” says IUCN’s Director of Environment and Development, Stewart Maginnis. “New science shows it’s more urgent than ever to act now; we can’t wait to start reducing greenhouse gas emissions.”*

Spokespersons

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