



# IUCN UNFCCC Newsletter

Focus on: COP15 - Copenhagen, 7-18 December 2009



Dear reader,

This is the third issue of the newsletter showcasing IUCN's and its Members' contributions to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process.

It focuses on the 15th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, 7th – 18th December in Copenhagen, which will be in the spotlight of the world's attention during the next weeks. During the conference IUCN will promote and support nature-based solutions for climate change mitigation and adaptation, in particular REDD and Ecosystem-based Adaptation, which we have covered in the previous issues of this newsletter.

Please send us your feedback, comments, contributions, and inform us if there is any interesting activity, project or initiative you wish to showcase in these newsletters or on our website!



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> IUCN @ Copenhagen

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## Overall pre-COP 15 UNFCCC process update

The UNFCCC Talks in Barcelona were held from the 2nd to the 6th of November, as a continuation of the Bangkok sessions held in September - October. The negotiations did not significantly advance. Fundamental issues remain to be resolved with regards to developed country commitments to green house gas emissions reduction targets and financing, as well as with regards to mitigation actions by developing countries.

Following the meeting, UNFCCC executive secretary Yvo De Boer declared that a legally binding agreement in Copenhagen was no longer physically possible. Instead, his expectation is for a 'politically binding agreement', key to keep political leaders accountable, built as a package of non-legally binding decisions to bring clarity on key areas.

In the last couple of weeks, a number of developed countries (including the US) have put emissions reduction targets on the table and major developing countries have spoken of actions to reduce their emissions. The common intention for the COP 15, as expressed by the Danish Government, seems now to keep the Kyoto Protocol and to agree to adopt a mandate to complete negotiations of a legally binding instrument, which determines the form, the nature and the deadline for such an agreement. It remains to be seen what will finally be agreed upon in time at Copenhagen.



## Voices from the field: IIED and the COP15

Interview with Saleemul Huq

Senior Fellow

Climate Change Programme

International Institute for Environment  
and Development

> For more information

IIED

[www.iied.org](http://www.iied.org)

Development & Climate Days

[www.iied.org/climate-change/key-issues/climate-negotiations-capacity-building/cop15-development-and-climate-days](http://www.iied.org/climate-change/key-issues/climate-negotiations-capacity-building/cop15-development-and-climate-days)

What do you believe the main outcome of COP15 will be?

I firmly believe an ambitious and equitable agreement will be reached in Copenhagen. The deal shall include effective mitigation measures which will allow for the control of greenhouse gas concentrations below critical levels during the next century in order to avoid the most catastrophic effects of global warming, as well as the establishment of mechanisms for the transfer of substantial amounts of resources from developed countries to developing ones, to ensure the latter can adapt to unavoidable impacts of climate change and can structurally reform their economies, in order to develop in a socially and environmentally sustainable way.

What will be the main issues your organization will be focusing on during COP15?

IIED mainly acts as a counselor to countries that are vulnerable to climate change during the UNFCCC negotiations. It assists least developed countries, especially in Asia and Africa, with research, analysis and scientific and policy advice on two main issues: how to adapt to climate change impacts and how to fund adaptation activities.

IIED has contributed to the elaboration of the proposal for an International Air Travel Adaptation Levy (IATAL), which would charge a 5-10 \$ sum on every international airline ticket to finance the UNFCCC Adaptation Fund. By implementing this measure, which aims at directly charging rich consumers for an especially polluting activity, it is estimated that around US\$ 10-15 billion per year could be raised, many times what is granted by the current financing instrument (a 2% levy on Clean Development Mechanism transactions).

Are you organizing or contributing to any specific event during the conference?

IIED has traditionally organized "Development & Climate Days" parallel to the UNFCCC COPs, which usually span over a couple of days. In Copenhagen, considering the number of attendees, the event will be 4 days long, from Friday the 11th to Monday the 14th. It will be structured around 3 thematic sessions and one high level panel per day, which will grant plenty of time for lectures, networking, information and knowledge exchange.

We are also organizing a movie festival, with short films on relevant issues. We are planning for a series of Q&A fora with the filmmakers. And we will have a booth with our climate change publications. More information is to be found on our website.

How do you think the UNFCCC process will evolve after Copenhagen?

There's no time left to discuss the details of a comprehensive agreement before Copenhagen. At COP15, Heads of State will not be involved in technical negotiations, but will rather be signing a political decision which will shape future negotiations and constitute the framework of future agreements. Nonetheless, this political agreement should clearly identify mitigation targets for Annex 1 and significant mitigation actions for non-Annex 1 countries, as well as include pledges from the annex 1 countries on financing of mitigation and adaptation activities worldwide. With the commitment of the Heads of State of major emitters (most of all US and China), a political agreement will really be achievable.

The details of the treaty will then be discussed in 2010, and a definitive agreement will probably be reached by the end of next year, at COP16 in Mexico.

Do you have anything else to add?

I am just coming back from the Climate Vulnerable Forum, a 2-day meeting organized by the President of the Maldives, Mohamed Nasheed, where Presidents, Ministers and representatives of 11 Asian, African, Pacific and Mesoamerican countries, all especially exposed to adverse effects of climate change, committed to pursuing carbon neutrality for their countries' economies, strongly reducing their emissions, which are relatively negligible. This is a strong demonstration of how firmly the most vulnerable countries are prepared to take a proactive stance on climate change issues, and should be considered with interest by the more developed ones when signing the upcoming agreement.



## Voices from the field: IUCN and COP 15

Interview with Claire Parker

Senior Policy Consultant

Climate change

IUCN

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No time to lose, nature-based solutions:

[http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/iucn\\_position\\_paper\\_unfccc\\_cop\\_15.pdf](http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/iucn_position_paper_unfccc_cop_15.pdf)

Ecosystem-based Adaptation:

[http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/iucn\\_position\\_paper\\_eba\\_unfccc\\_cop\\_15.pdf](http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/iucn_position_paper_eba_unfccc_cop_15.pdf)

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What do you believe the main outcome of COP15 will be?

It looks like it will be possible to reach a political agreement in Copenhagen, which will probably describe the overall form of a new post-2012 regime. It should also include some decisions on key issues such as mitigation, technology transfer and capacity building, mitigation targets for developed countries and appropriate national actions for developing ones, which will record the progress achieved so far in the negotiations.

The agreement should also define the form of the new protocol. At this stage it is totally unclear if the Kyoto Protocol will be maintained, and completed by a new treaty, or if an agreement will be reached on a totally new proposal, which will define duties and actions to be taken by all the countries.

In any case the mitigation targets set so far by Annex 1 countries are insufficient to obtain the 40% reduction of greenhouse gas concentration by 2020, that IPCC envisages as necessary to avoid a global temperature rise beyond the 2°C threshold.

There has not been much dialogue on long-term perspectives and commitments. It is almost impossible, and probably not very useful, for political leaders to commit for a period so much longer than their mandate, considering the modification the international and national scene could undergo in the next decades. Long-term commitments can set a way forward, but 2020 is the time limit for concrete actions.

On top of this, a timetable should be set to finalise an agreement during the next negotiation rounds. The presence of high-level political figures in Copenhagen will be crucial in setting this timetable as a "politically binding" priority at the national level.

What will be the main issues your organization will be focusing on during COP15?

IUCN focuses on both the adaptation and mitigation aspects. With regards to the adaptation side, it is especially keen on making sure that Ecosystem-based adaptation is inscribed in the UNFCCC adaptation framework. This will allow developing countries to have access to the convention's financing mechanisms when implementing adaptation activities based on the conservation and management of ecosystems for the benefit of local livelihoods.

On the mitigation side, IUCN recognizes the imprescindible importance of activities to reduce greenhouse gas concentration, and is especially interested in supporting the definition of equitable financing mechanisms, and the recognition of the importance of forests as a mitigation tool. The definition of the REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation) or REDD+ regime will allow for the compensation of developing countries for their forest conservation efforts and provide meaningful benefits to local people and biodiversity.

Another important point for IUCN is to have Oceans more prominently recognized in future UNFCCC negotiations, for both their vulnerability to climate variations and their importance in regulating the global climate.

How do you think the UNFCCC process will evolve after Copenhagen?

The post-Copenhagen process will be strongly influenced by the structure of the timetable of the negotiations Parties will agree upon in Copenhagen. There are two possible ways forward. The first involves the definition of drafting groups, each focused on a specific aspect of the climate agreement. This could make the negotiation process quicker, but is considered unfavorably by developing countries, who fear a possible prioritization of the issues on the table according to the developed countries' priorities. The second would proceed through a series of negotiating meetings, such as the Climate Change Talks held so far, which would progressively define the whole text of the new agreement.

If a sufficiently detailed high-level agreement is reached in Copenhagen, allowing for the avoidance of any further debate on the procedure of the negotiations and the main characteristics of the new climate regime, significant progress will be achievable in a short time, and a definitive, binding agreement could be produced by mid 2010.



## IUCN at COP 15

IUCN is organizing a side event, **Biodiversity in trouble – Ways forward in a changing climate**, to highlight recent scientific findings and explore possible conservation solutions for predicted ecosystem declines caused by climate change. The list of speakers includes: Camille Parmesan, Guy Midgley, Brendan Mackey, Ove Hoegh-Guldberg, and Wendy Foden.

Tuesday, 15th December  
20:00 – 21:30  
Room 5  
Bella Conference Centre

IUCN is organizing a **social evening for its Members** at the Copenhagen Zoo. The evening will feature inputs from IUCN's President, DG, representatives from the Danish National Committee and the Zoo. A great opportunity for networking, accompanied by music and refreshments.

Wednesday, 16th December  
19:00 - 21:00  
Elephant House, Copenhagen Zoo  
Invitation only

For a full details on this event, please visit:  
[www.iucn.org/unfccc/events/copenhagen/participation/members](http://www.iucn.org/unfccc/events/copenhagen/participation/members)

An **high-level event on adaptation**, "Commitments to Adaptation: Building Resilient Communities and Ecosystems", will be co-organized by IUCN, TNC, World Vision, Italy, GLISPA and CISCO at the Mogens Dahl Koncertsal in Copenhagen. The objective is to bring together various stakeholders to make commitments to solving adaptation problems by building ecosystem and community resilience. The event will entail brief remarks by a Head of State and a keynote speaker, expressions of adaptation commitments from governments and organizations, and a cocktail reception.

Tuesday, 15th December  
18:15 - 19:45  
Mogens Dahl Koncertsal  
Invitation only

IUCN is contributing to the **high level event on gender**, "Investing in Women's Leadership for Climate Solutions", which will focus on the importance of gender equality as a driver for achieving mitigation and adaptation goals and enhancing the effectiveness and reach of climate change funds. The tentative speaker list includes Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator; Her Excellency Tarja Halonen, President of Finland; Michelle Obama, First Lady of the US; Kofi Annan, Former UN Secretary-General; Ana Lucy Bengochea; and Her Excellency Ulla Tørnæs, Minister of Development Cooperation of Denmark. A reception will follow.

Thursday, 17th December  
13:00 - 14:30  
Bella Conference Centre

For a full overview on the events IUCN is contributing to, please visit our website at:  
[www.iucn.org/unfccc/events/copenhagen/participation/agenda](http://www.iucn.org/unfccc/events/copenhagen/participation/agenda)



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