



Adaptation to Climate Change

UNFCCC AWG- LCA Agenda item 3 (c) and (e)
UNFCCC SBSTA Agenda item 3
COP14 Agenda Item 5 (e) (i)

Fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP14), Poznan, Poland, 1-12 December 2008

Recommendations

IUCN recommends that COP 14:

- √ **Urges** Parties to include ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation as a priority in the Nairobi Work Programme, in its possible successor as well as in a post 2012 UNFCCC regime ;
- √ **Urges** States to provide for appropriate funding for ecosystem-based adaptation, including projects, research and capacity building ;
- √ **Urges** States to establish a framework within which vulnerability and needs assessments are essential precursors of adaptation plans and strategies and are carried out as a matter of urgency and to organize, as appropriate, the necessary resources to carry these out ;
- √ **Calls** for States to mainstream ecosystem-based adaptation as an integral element of overall climate change adaptation in poverty reduction strategies and development planning ;
- √ **Calls** for States to establish appropriate linkages between disaster risk reduction initiatives under the Hyogo Framework for Action and adaptation plans and strategies at all levels ;
- √ **Urges** Parties to the UNFCCC to consider the analysis requested by the UN Council on Human Rights on the inter-linkages between human rights and climate change, in the process of defining the post 2012 regime, in particular, in respect to adaptation to climate change ;
- √ **Calls** on Parties to mobilize new and innovative resources that go beyond the current funding mechanisms under the Convention and the Protocol ;
- √ **Calls** on Parties to prioritize, in the allocation of the resources, most vulnerable developing countries or regions, on the basis of vulnerability and needs assessments and in line with national development plans and strategies.

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Introduction

As we witness inevitable and precipitous climate changes, measures for adapting to those changes become imperative. Adaptation to climate change should now be a central element of climate change policy at local, national, regional and international level.

At the international level, a clear and common understanding of what adaptation entails is lacking with a variety of perspectives being expressed, ranging from a narrow perspective that supports construction of physical infrastructure, to a broader view that pairs adaptation with different aspects of development.

Without a common understanding among States of the essential elements for adaptation or objective criteria by which to define it, negotiations will not move forward resulting in delay to implement urgent adaptation actions.

IUCN would like to present here a few elements that should constitute part of that common understanding and could be included among criteria or core elements to be discussed under adaptation.

Ecosystem-based adaptation

Ecosystem services underpin human well being and are critical for regulating our climate. Ecosystem management, therefore, has a crucial role in managing the impacts of climate change. Ecosystem-based adaptation contributes to helping communities adapt to climate change by building resilience, enhancing adaptive capacity and generating additional economic benefits. This approach includes making use of “natural infrastructure” such as managed wetlands for protection from flooding, as well as forests for protection from storms, or as a diverse source of livelihoods. Ecosystem based adaptation can also enable nature to adapt to climate change; for example, connectivity allows species affected by climate change to move to new ranges within a network of connected protected areas.

Ecosystem-based community adaptation can also build the adaptive capacity of the most vulnerable groups, including indigenous peoples and can address gender equity. To enhance learning and improved effectiveness of ecosystem-based adaptation, research activities, capacity building, and information exchange should be included in projects and programmes following this approach. In

addition, this approach requires practical and participatory collaboration of all affected stakeholders (government, private sector, civil society, academia, among others.)

IUCN recommends that COP14:

- √ **Urges** Parties to include ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation as a priority in the Nairobi Work Programme, in its possible successor as well as in a post 2012 UNFCCC regime ;
- √ **Urges** States to provide for appropriate funding for ecosystem-based adaptation, including projects, research and capacity building.

Need for vulnerability and needs assessments

Adaptation to climate change requires international cooperation for local implementation. In order for adaptation planning and implementation to be effective, appropriate assessment of the level of vulnerability to changes and the level of capacity to adapt to those changes is imperative. Assessments should include geophysical, political, social and cultural aspects, and take into account that each region, country or area has its specificity and that those specificities also vary over time.

Vulnerability and needs assessments should examine the social and political factors, including rights, entitlements and governance structures, which have the potential to aggravate vulnerability and enlarge the equity gaps.

IUCN recommends that COP14:

- √ **Urges** States to establish a framework within which vulnerability and needs assessments are essential precursors of adaptation plans and strategies and are carried out as a matter of urgency and to organize, as appropriate, the necessary resources to carry these out.

Adaptation and poverty reduction

The inevitable changes to climate patterns that we are facing will undermine the services ecosystems provide thereby threatening peoples' livelihoods. The increase in sea levels, violent storms, glaciers melting, droughts and floods caused by global warming will result in

millions of people losing their homes and find themselves without food and drinking water.

Climate change will affect the world's poorest communities hardest. Rural communities, which are often most dependent on local natural resources, will be hardest hit, especially those in the most vulnerable ecosystems, such as on low lying islands, or in dryland areas. The impacts of climate change will put poverty reduction strategies at risk and undermine efforts made to achieve the full range of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Therefore, given the particular vulnerability of the poor to climate change and the important role of ecosystem-based adaptation in managing the ability to cope with impacts of climate change, poverty reduction strategies and development planning should mainstream ecosystem based adaptation as an integral element of overall climate change adaptation.

IUCN recommends that COP14:

- √ **Calls** for States to mainstream ecosystem-based adaptation as an integral element of overall climate change adaptation in poverty reduction strategies and development planning.

Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction

Adaptation and disaster risk reduction are complementary elements. Through the *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters* countries have committed to integrate climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction through the identification of climate-related disaster risks, the design of specific risk reduction measures, and the improved and routine use of climate risk information by planners, engineers and other decision makers. States negotiating at the UNFCCC should take into consideration the work carried out under the Hyogo Framework of Action when designing and implementing adaptation plans and strategies.

IUCN recommends that COP14:

- √ **Calls** for States to establish appropriate linkages between disaster risk reduction initiatives under the Hyogo Framework for Action and adaptation plans and strategies at all levels.

Climate change and human rights

The Stockholm Declaration (1972) stated that “[M]an has the fundamental right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of a quality that permits a life of dignity and well-being”. The impacts of climate change will put at risk many of the basic elements that support those ‘adequate conditions of life’ and therefore will affect people’s rights. In addition, any actions taken in terms of adaptation should include consideration of human rights as an essential element.

In recognition of this, the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted in March 2008 a resolution requesting the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to carry out a detailed analysis of the relationship between climate change and human rights. At the 4th World Conservation Congress in Barcelona in October 2008, IUCN’s members supported this resolution and called for contributions of information for this analysis.

IUCN recommends that COP14:

- √ **Urges** Parties to the UNFCCC to consider the analysis requested by the UN Council on Human Rights on the inter-linkages between human rights and climate change, in the process of defining the post 2012 regime, in particular, in respect to adaptation to climate change.

Adaptation finance

IUCN takes note of general consensus among Parties of the importance of adaptation to climate change. However, the funding currently available is not proportionate to adaptation needs.

IUCN recommends that COP14:

- √ **Calls** on Parties to mobilize new and innovative resources that go beyond the current funding mechanisms under the Convention and the Protocol ;
- √ **Calls** on Parties to prioritize, in the allocation of the resources, most vulnerable developing countries or regions, on the basis of vulnerability and needs assessments and in line with national development plans and strategies.