



High-Level SDG Action Event

Climate Change and the Sustainable Development Agenda

United Nations Headquarters, New York
23 March 2017

Statement by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen:

IUCN welcomes this High Level Action Event aimed at invigorating the global momentum on climate action, especially in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals.

We particularly welcome the emphasis on concrete solutions that yield cross-cutting dividends for both sustainable development and climate change.

We at IUCN – and our near 1,400 State and NGO Members that make up the global conservation community – have been focusing in particular on one dimension in this regard, that of nature-based solutions.

Nature is increasingly being impacted by climate change today. But its conservation, restoration and sustainable management – be it of forests, oceans or wetlands – provide us all with practical, cost-effective, no-regret solutions to climate change, while simultaneously benefiting human wellbeing and safeguarding biodiversity.

One practical example is the Bonn Challenge initiative– a global effort led by IUCN and its partners to restore 150 million hectares of the world’s deforested and degraded land by 2020, and 350 million hectares by 2030.

Achieving this restoration goal, which is in alignment also with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the SDGs, could generate net benefits of up to US\$ 170 billion/year, and sequester billions of tons of CO2 emissions per year . To date, restoration pledges of over 140 million hectares have been successfully secured under this initiative.

We are also pleased that a number of countries have incorporated these, and other ecosystem-based mitigation and adaptation measures, under their Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Climate Agreement.

We also welcome the increased recognition provided to the role of natural systems in the Global Climate Action process convened by the Climate Champions, and look forward to supporting them. We stand ready to support the Moroccan and Fijian COP Presidencies in their efforts to enhance levels of ambition and implementation in this regard.

Thank you Mr. President.