

IUCN position on UNFCCC negotiations in 2015

Executive Summary

2015 is a key year for global action on climate change with governments expected to reach a new international agreement to address this pressing challenge at UNFCCC COP-21 in Paris.

Welcoming the progress made since COP-20 in Lima, **IUCN CALLS** on all Parties to:

- Continue their negotiations in a constructive manner and for the adoption of an ambitious, fair and balanced agreement in Paris that will progressively enable the increase in global average temperature to be held below 2°C or 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, maintaining the highest possible level of environmental integrity and respecting gender equality and human rights
- Ensure that the 2015 agreement is comprehensive in its coverage of GHG sources and sinks, includes all major economic sectors, prevents double counting of emission reductions, and clearly recognises and supports the current role and future potential of the land sector and all terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems as effective natural sinks and reservoirs of GHGs
- Ensure that the agreement facilitates global efforts to reduce the use of fossil fuels, decarbonize energy systems, enhance energy efficiency and conservation, and expand the use of renewable and other low-carbon sources of energy in a manner that improves human and ecosystem well-being
- Give fullest consideration to the appropriate integration of ecosystem-based approaches for climate change mitigation and adaptation within the 2015 agreement, and also within relevant national and subnational planning and implementation processes

IUCN HIGHLIGHTS that while biodiversity and ecosystems are threatened by climate change, their conservation, restoration and sustainable management generate significant and practical *nature-based solutions* to climate change that can simultaneously contribute towards both mitigation and adaptation objectives across multiple levels, while also yielding other important economic, social and environmental co-benefits.

IUCN URGES Parties to also consider incorporating specific and ambitious ecosystem-based mitigation and adaptation measures within their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) for the post-2020 period, and their pre-2020 actions and commitments. These could include, for example, *inter alia*:

- Joining international efforts to combat forest loss and degradation including those launched under the *New York Declaration on Forests* to halve global natural forest loss by 2020, and end it by 2030
- Contributing towards the restoration of 150 million hectares of degraded landscapes and forestlands by 2020 through the *Bonn Challenge*, and the restoration of an additional 200 million hectares by 2030
- Expanding the existing coverage of terrestrial, coastal and marine protected areas consistent with *Aichi Biodiversity Targets 11 and 15*
- Ensuring the conservation of other natural ecosystems and carbon reservoirs such as wetlands, when not already included within existing mechanisms

IUCN REITERATES its readiness to support Parties in the domestic preparation of their INDCs, particularly in relation to the options identified above, and **ALSO ENCOURAGES** Parties to take into account gender considerations, indigenous and traditional knowledge and the needs of the most vulnerable communities in this process.

IUCN's positions on the 2015 agreement, INDCs, pre-2020 action, selected SBSTA/SBI agenda items, and other issues framing the current climate negotiations are elaborated further in the sections that follow.

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I. IUCN position on the 2015 agreement

IUCN, WELCOMES the progress made by Parties since COP-20 in Lima in developing the negotiating text for the 2015 agreement.

CALLS on Parties to continue the negotiations in a constructive manner and for the adoption of an ambitious, fair and balanced 2015 agreement at COP-21 in Paris that will progressively enable the increase in global average temperature to be held below 2°C or 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, maintaining the highest possible level of environmental integrity and respecting gender equality and human rights.

CALLS on Parties to ensure that the 2015 agreement is comprehensive in its coverage of GHG sources and sinks, includes all major economic sectors, prevents double counting of emission reductions, and clearly recognises and supports the current role and future potential of the land sector and all terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems as effective natural sinks and reservoirs of GHGs.

ALSO URGES Parties to ensure that the 2015 agreement facilitates global efforts to reduce the use of fossil fuels, decarbonize energy systems, enhance energy efficiency and conservation, and expand the use of renewable and other low-carbon sources of energy in a manner that improves human and ecosystem well-being.

FURTHERMORE CALLS upon Parties to ensure that the 2015 agreement and associated decisions adopted at COP-21 suitably acknowledge and build upon existing UNFCCC mechanisms, processes and institutional arrangements so as to maintain coherence and continuity in the post-2020 period, including *inter alia* the work initiated under the Warsaw Framework for REDD-plus, the Nairobi Work Programme on Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation, the Lima Work Programme on Gender, and the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage.

WELCOMES the determination of Parties to strengthen adaptation action through the 2015 agreement, and their recognition that the process to formulate and implement National Adaptation Plans is fundamental for building adaptive capacity and reducing vulnerability to the impacts of climate change.

HIGHLIGHTS that while biodiversity and ecosystems are threatened by climate change, their conservation, restoration and sustainable management generate significant and practical *nature-based solutions* to climate change that can simultaneously contribute towards both mitigation and adaptation objectives across multiple levels, while also yielding other important economic, social and environmental co-benefits.

CALLS UPON Parties to give the fullest consideration to the appropriate integration of ecosystem-based approaches for climate change mitigation and adaptation within the 2015 agreement, and also within relevant national and subnational planning and implementation processes on climate change, including National Adaptation Plans.

ALSO URGES Parties to ensure that climate finance provisions agreed to under the 2015 agreement enable the enhanced uptake of all ecosystem-based mitigation and adaptation approaches across all levels.

II. IUCN position on Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs)

IUCN, WELCOMES the guidance provided at COP-20 on the information that Parties should provide while communicating their IND Cs.

PARTICULARLY WELCOMES the agreement that the INDC submitted by each Party will represent a *progression* beyond the current undertaking of that Party.

ALSO WELCOMES the invitation to Parties to consider including an adaptation component in their IND Cs.

WELCOMES the IND Cs that have been submitted to date, and URGES all Parties that have not done so yet to prepare and communicate their respective IND Cs at the earliest possible before COP-21.

RECOGNIZES the leadership of IUCN State Members Switzerland and Mexico as being the first Annex I and non-Annex I Parties respectively to submit their IND Cs.

EXPRESSES PARTICULAR APPRECIATION for the INDC submitted by Mexico, noting not only its unconditional commitment to reduce its GHG emissions by 2030 (below business-as-usual) and its cross-cutting recognition of gender and human rights, but its explicit

recognition of the role of *ecosystem-based adaptation* in assisting human communities to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change, and inclusion of specific actions on the same for the 2020-2030 period that also generate positive synergies for mitigation.

ENCOURAGES all Parties to be as comprehensive and accurate as possible in their coverage of GHG sources and sinks while preparing their INDCs, drawing on the latest available and accepted UNFCCC and IPCC guidelines and methodologies, and to fully take into account the role of ecosystems and biodiversity within both their mitigation and adaptation components.

URGES Parties to consider incorporating specific and ambitious ecosystem-based mitigation and adaptation measures within their INDCs, including options that could:

- i) contribute to the immediate slowing and eventual ending of natural forest loss globally by 2030 at the very latest, along with ongoing efforts to avoid and reduce forest degradation, especially in primary forests;
- ii) enable the restoration of at least 350 million hectares of degraded landscapes and forestlands by 2030, with appropriate ecological and social safeguards;
- iii) advance the conservation, sustainable use and restoration of other important natural carbon reservoirs, including but not limited to wetlands such as peatlands, mangroves, tidal marshes, seagrass meadows, etc., when not already included above;
- iv) continue the expansion of existing terrestrial, coastal and marine protected areas, including indigenous, privately owned and community conservation areas, in a manner that enhances the resilience of the overall landscape, as a proven means of stabilising and storing biotic carbon and providing adaptation and other co-benefits beyond 2020;
- v) reduce dependence on fossil fuels, enhance energy efficiency and conservation, and expand renewable energy options.

REMINDS Parties that inclusion of mitigation from the land use sector in INDCs is possible with existing guidance and methodologies, and to consider including the full set of land use activities within their INDCs without lowering their level of mitigation ambition and action in other sectors.

ALSO REMINDS Parties of the adoption by the IPCC of the *2013 Supplement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories: Wetlands*, and ENCOURAGES them to start using these guidelines in their national GHG accounting and INDC preparation, as appropriate.

ENCOURAGES Parties to take into account gender considerations, indigenous and traditional knowledge and the needs of the most vulnerable communities while preparing their INDCs.

REITERATES its readiness to support Parties in their domestic preparation of their INDCs, particularly in relation to the ecosystem-based options identified above.

LOOKS FORWARD TO the synthesis report of the aggregate effect of the INDCs prepared by the UNFCCC secretariat in November 2015, and to the further development of the review process.

III. IUCN position on pre-2020 climate action

IUCN, REMAINS GRAVELY CONCERNED at the significant gap between the aggregate effect of Parties' mitigation pledges in terms of global annual emissions of greenhouse gases by 2020 and aggregate emission pathways consistent with having a likely chance of holding the increase in global average temperature below 2 °C or 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels.

UNDERSCORES the need for enhancing ambition in the pre-2020 period in order to ensure the highest possible mitigation efforts under the Convention by all Parties.

WELCOMES the ongoing ratification by Parties of the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol, and ENCOURAGES all Parties to the Kyoto Protocol to ratify and implement the same at the earliest possible.

WELCOMES AND SUPPORTS the *Lima-Paris Action Agenda* launched by the Governments of Peru and France to catalyze action on climate change by various actors from across different sectors to further increase ambition before 2020, and to support the 2015 agreement and the *Agenda of Solutions* at COP-21, building on the UN Secretary General's Climate Summit in September 2014.

URGES Parties to consider the following options to enhance their pre-2020 mitigation ambition, noting that these high mitigation potential activities also have significant adaptation, sustainable development, biodiversity conservation and disaster risk-reduction co-benefits:

- i) Join ongoing international efforts to at least halve the rate of loss of natural forests globally by 2020 and to avoid and reduce forest degradation, especially in primary forests;
- ii) Contribute towards the restoration of 150 million hectares of degraded landscapes and forestlands by 2020 through the Bonn Challenge;
- iii) Adhere with the agreed Aichi biodiversity targets set under the Convention on Biological Diversity, particularly targets 5, 11 and 15;
- iv) Actively undertake other complementary measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the land use, energy and other sectors, as appropriate, especially those with high co-benefits.

ALSO ENCOURAGES Parties to incorporate the activities identified in the para above within their pre-2020 national and sub-national policies, plans and strategies, noting that these could potentially also be integrated within and contribute towards the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals.

FURTHERMORE URGES Parties to expedite and enhance provision of interim financial resources, investment and capacity building support to enable the early implementation of all ecosystem-based mitigation and adaptation measures in the pre-2020 period. This should prioritize those activities that:

- i) Are framed within the context of national REDD-plus strategies and national biodiversity strategy and action plans (NBSAPs);
- ii) Already developed and submitted as NAMAs seeking external support;
- iii) Provide for equitable and efficient distribution and benefit-sharing mechanisms;
- iv) Optimize mitigation, adaptation, livelihood, biodiversity and other co-benefits while promoting the application of agreed safeguards.

WELCOMES, in this regard, the start of the sixth GEF programming period (GEF-6), and OFFERS support to eligible Parties, as an

accredited GEF Project Agency, in the preparation and implementation of projects that particularly advance ecosystem-based mitigation and adaptation measures; ALSO WELCOMES the GEF Gender Equality Action Plan and expresses support for the implementation of its Gender Mainstreaming Policy.

WELCOMES, in the context of REDD-plus implementation, the submission of forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels proposals by Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Malaysia and Mexico and ENCOURAGES other Parties to voluntarily, when appropriate, submit their proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels for technical assessment in line with the agreed guidelines and procedures.

ALSO ENCOURAGES Parties, in this regard, to consider including disaggregated statistics on the full and effective engagement of stakeholders, including particularly women, indigenous peoples and local communities, in their national reports for providing information on how the designated safeguards are being both addressed and respected to ensure that national REDD-plus strategies enjoy broad support, and are therefore credible and implementable.

WELCOMES the decision by Parties to continue the technical examination of opportunities with high mitigation potential in the 2015-2020 period including through the organisation of technical expert meetings, and EXPRESSES its readiness to support this process in its areas of expertise.

IV. IUCN position on selected SBSTA/SBI agenda items

SBSTA agenda items

*6. Matters relating to science and review:
(a) Research and systematic observation*

IUCN, ENCOURAGES Parties to use the Seventh Meeting of the Research Dialogue at SBSTA-42 to discuss information gaps with respect to the role of the ocean in the climate system and climate change, including of ocean acidification, and to consider holding a SBSTA workshop to elaborate on ocean and climate change-related information needs for the implementation of the Convention.

ALSO ENCOURAGES Parties to revisit in future research dialogues the role of

ecosystems with high-carbon reservoirs, including primary forests, in both climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the steps that can be taken to ensure their better monitoring and conservation, building on the findings of the workshop held prior to SBSTA-39 and drawing on the latest science and research.

REMINDS Parties to use the opportunity to provide input towards the development of the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) status report to be presented at SBSTA-43, and the new implementation plan to be presented in 2016, especially regarding ocean observation and ocean acidification, as identified at SBSTA-41.

(b) The 2013–2015 review

WELCOMES the progress made in sessions of the Structured Expert Dialogue (SED) to date and LOOKS FORWARD to the outcome of the 2013-2015 review on the adequacy of the long-term 2°C global goal, and the possibility of strengthening it, including in relation to a global average temperature rise of 1.5°C.

SBI agenda items

7. National Adaptation Plans

WELCOMES the reiteration by Parties that the national adaptation plan process needs to be *inter alia* gender-sensitive and take into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems, and be based on and guided by the best available science and, as appropriate, traditional and indigenous knowledge, with a view to integrating adaptation into relevant social, economic and environmental policies and actions.

STRESSES that healthy, well-functioning ecosystems help reduce vulnerability and enhance natural resilience to the adverse effects of climate change, and that integrated ecosystem-based adaptation approaches can effectively help communities to address their climate adaptive deficits while contributing towards local economies and livelihoods, which are often significantly dependent on ecosystems in developing countries.

13. Gender and Climate Change

WELCOMES the Lima Work Programme on Gender adopted at COP-20 for promoting gender balance and achieving gender-responsive climate policy and ENCOURAGES

Parties to provide the necessary support, including to the secretariat, to enable its full implementation.

CALLS on Parties to fully implement the various COP decisions agreed to date to promote gender balance, gender equality and gender-responsive climate policy and action across all levels.

OFFERS to support Parties in the implementation of the above, through its Global Gender Office.

V. IUCN position on other issues framing the 2015 climate negotiations

IUCN, WELCOMES the capitalisation to date of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and CALLS for its further and early enhancement to enable the necessary provision of support to developing countries in their mitigation and adaptation efforts; ALSO WELCOMES the GCF's recent decision to accredit entities, including IUCN National NGO members from Senegal and Peru, that focus on biodiversity conservation, combating desertification, protected area management and coastal area protection; and, finally, WELCOMES the recent agreement on the GCF Gender Policy and Action Plan and expresses support for the provision of further guidelines and technical and financial resources required to ensure their implementation.

WELCOMES the approval of the two-year workplan of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage at COP-20 in Lima, particularly its invitation to constituted bodies under the Convention to consider making efforts to reduce and avert losses and damages among particularly vulnerable developing countries, vulnerable populations and the ecosystems upon which they depend.

FINALLY, CALLS on Parties, as they prepare for COP-21, to ensure greater synergies among the three Rio Conventions, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Sustainable Development Goals, and other relevant international agreements such as the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the World Heritage Convention and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to ensure maximum policy coherence between efforts to achieve sustainable development, address climate change, reduce disaster risks and protect fragile ecosystems, threatened species and vulnerable communities.