

15th Session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development

Ecosystems and Livelihoods in CSD15

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Mr. chairman,

This CSD focuses on *Policy options and possible actions to expedite implementation in energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution / atmosphere and climate change*. IUCN recognises the importance of all four topics, and the inter-linkages between them, but focuses on energy for sustainable development. Decisions made today on how to produce, distribute and consume energy will have long-lasting implications for ecosystems and the livelihoods of people that depend on them. As the 4th Assessment Report of the IPCC's Working Group II has made clear, unmitigated climate change will have severe consequences for ecosystems and livelihoods. Biodiversity is also affected by energy choices through direct impacts like habitat loss and fragmentation from energy infrastructure, and species losses through pollution and collision.

On the other hand, healthy ecosystems provide vital services such as water flows, nutrient cycling and biomass production which underpin energy systems. As ecosystems become degraded, their capacities to deliver such services are undermined and the associated energy infrastructure rendered ineffective. Furthermore, healthy ecosystems buffer against extreme weather events such as hurricanes and floods, protecting energy-related infrastructure such as refineries and ports. These capabilities are undermined as ecosystems are degraded - in part as a result of the direct and indirect impacts of energy systems I mentioned before. The relationships between energy and ecosystems are dynamic as energy patterns shift and ecosystems evolve. Every energy option we consider has associated consequences for ecosystems and livelihoods and the resilience of ecosystems has significant bearing on what energy options are viable in the future.

IUCN encourages the CSD to recognise the inter-linkages between energy, ecosystems and livelihoods. More specifically, the CSD should consider how energy options will affect ecosystems and livelihoods and how ecosystems provide services such as water flows and biomass production which underpin energy systems. Integrated management approaches are needed to ensure that energy policies are a driver rather than a constraint for sustainable development and for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

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Specifically:

- IUCN encourages strategic and project level assessments of energy policies, projects and technologies
- When calling for enhanced investment in the development of the resource base including fossil fuels, biofuels, renewable energy and other sources of energy IUCN recommends that ecosystems and the services they provide should be considered as part of energy infrastructure and therefore energy policies and strategies should include investment in maintaining them. Furthermore, given that fossil fuels are non-renewable resources, IUCN questions the call for the development of this resource base.
- IUCN asks that the CSD consider how improved standards of biodiversity management in the context of fossil fuel developments can be achieved.
- IUCN encourages the CSD to call for the development of a globally relevant set of environmental and social sustainability principles for biofuels IUCN encourages
- IUCN asks the CSD to urgently pursue efficiency measures to reduce pressures on ecosystems from energy.
- IUCN also encourages the CSD to recognize the value of natural systems to improving energy efficiency

Regarding air pollution / atmosphere, air pollution is a major threat to human health and the environment and encourages it to be addressed in an integrated manner at the national, regional and international levels. Indoor air pollution can be address through fuel switching (e.g. wood/charcoal to kerosene), but IUCN encourages the CSD to also consider addressing indoor air pollution through technologies which burn biomass more cleanly and efficiently. The CSD papers call for the impacts of air pollution from sand storms to be addressed through early warning systems. IUCN calls for the root causes of such pollution to be addressed by preventing and reversing desertification. Furthermore, forest fires as a cause of air pollution are not mentioned in the CSD documents. IUCN calls for these to be addressed through better forest and landscape management processes.

On Climate change, IUCN recommends that the first sentence of Paragraph 51 in the Statement should be updated as follows: *We recognize that climate change is a serious and long-term challenge already affecting many parts of the globe and soon to affect all.* IUCN also urges countries to reduce greenhouse emissions and to move rapidly to negotiating post 2012 commitments to achieve the ultimate objective of the UN Climate Change Framework Convention in order to keep open the long term options for attenuating the pace and impacts of climate change. Furthermore, IUCN recommends limiting greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture and managed natural resources through a landscape approach to land resource management practices as emissions from these sources will form a progressively larger proportion of total emissions. IUCN further recommends adaptation measures to safeguard agricultural productivity and water supplies, and conservation measures that reduce the vulnerability of ecosystems and the livelihoods of people who depend on them. IUCN further recommends due consideration to these measures in the global discussions on climate change. If global warming passes critical, but unknown, thresholds, then emissions from unmanaged ecosystems (especially boreal forests, permafrost soils, tropical forests, peat wetlands and coastal wetlands) have the potential to outweigh the net gain from even the most ambitious mitigation efforts for managed ecosystems and fossil fuels. Taking into account the severe foreseen impacts of global warming on species and ecosystems and implications on human livelihoods, IUCN places the highest priority on stabilizing global temperatures at 2°C above pre-industrial levels.

In relation to gender IUCN is concerned that the Chair's text does not strongly enough reflect the need for mainstreaming of gender issues into energy policy formulation, planning, and decision-making processes. Useful tools for mainstreaming gender include: strategic investments in capacity building, technical and business training, scientific education and enterprise development for women; gender budgets, audits and gender disaggregated data to inform national energy and development policy and implementation strategies; and innovative measures that enhance women's access to financing for energy-related equipment and enterprises.

Finally, on the cross-cutting issues of financing, capacity building and technology transfer, IUCN urges the CSD to go further than the removal of harmful subsidies in energy markets, by identifying ways of internalizing negative externalities of energy production, distribution and consumption in the price of energy options. IUCN supports the recommendations in the Chairman's document for technology transfers which address energy access issues, and encourages that the ecosystem and livelihood consequences of such transfers be identified and addressed.

Created in 1948, the World Conservation Union (IUCN) brings together 82 States, 111 Government agencies, 800 plus NGO's, and some 10,000 scientists and experts from 181 countries in a unique worldwide partnership.

IUCN's mission is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.

IUCN is the world's largest environmental knowledge network and has helped over 75 countries to prepare and implement national conservation and biodiversity strategies. IUCN is a multicultural, multilingual organization with 1,000 staff located in 62 countries.