

Confidence Building Measures Urgently Needed in Cancun

Sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP16)

29 November - 10 December, 2010, Cancun, Mexico

Recommendations for COP16

IUCN calls for rapid and robust action by States, communities and individuals to take all possible steps to cut their emissions of all greenhouse gases immediately to ensure that the target agreed at Copenhagen, i.e. to limit the rise in global average temperature to **2°C** above pre-industrial levels can be achieved. This will require stronger **quantified emission reduction targets by developed countries** and enhanced **nationally appropriate mitigation action by those developing countries with emerging economies**.

While negotiations continue towards the ultimate objective of a global, legally binding agreement, it is vital that the COP takes **confidence building measures** in the form of a balanced package of decisions on REDD-plus, adaptation, technology transfer and capacity building.

IUCN also calls for a rapid advance in the development, testing and application of **ecosystem-based approaches for mitigation** in forests and other carbon rich ecosystems, and for **adaptation** in vulnerable ecosystems and dependent communities, and the inclusion of these strategies in the future global agreement and therefore in national adaptation strategies and action plans.

First and foremost, new and additional fast-track funding needs to be made available immediately, for both adaptation and mitigation, and donor Parties need to make tangible moves towards providing **long term funding**.

IUCN calls for

- ✓ the establishment of a strong and implementation oriented **Adaptation Framework** as part of a post-2012 regime
- ✓ the recognition of **sustainable management of natural resources** in building resilience of socio-economic and ecological systems
- ✓ the immediate disbursement of **new and additional financial means** to enable adaptation actions to be implemented on the ground
- ✓ all people, communities and Parties **to take such adaptation actions** as they can towards the goals of the envisioned Framework, and towards reducing the vulnerability and increasing the resilience of developing countries in particular

IUCN calls on Parties to ensure that **national REDD-plus frameworks** reflect the progress at Copenhagen and incorporate the following elements, consistent with the negotiating text before them in Cancun:

- ✓ Recognition of the full potential **scope** of REDD-plus actions consistent with the Bali Action Plan, as appropriate in the national context
- ✓ Social, environmental and governance **safeguards**

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- ✓ **Monitoring, verification and reporting systems, which comprehensively include safeguards and co-benefits**, such as impacts on and benefits for biodiversity, and that allow alignment with pilots and projects
- ✓ Full and effective **participation of stakeholders, including particularly women, indigenous peoples and local communities**, through **enhanced multi-stakeholder processes** to ensure that national REDD-plus strategies enjoy broad support and are therefore credible and implementable
- ✓ Respect the **knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and local communities**

IUCN also urges Parties to enhance action on the provision of **financial resources and investment** for early action. This should prioritize REDD-plus activities that:

- ✓ Are framed within the context of national REDD-plus strategies
- ✓ Provide for equitable and efficient distribution mechanisms
- ✓ Optimize biodiversity and mitigation benefits and promote the application of the safeguards, delivering multiple-benefits for sustainable livelihoods and biodiversity.

IUCN calls for

- ✓ **gender considerations** to be taken into account in the negotiation process and in the future climate regime wherever appropriate.
- ✓ development of a **gender plan of action** under the UNFCCC to ensure systematic incorporation of a gender perspective in climate change policies and instruments, as a gender strategy can enhance more effective, efficient, permanent, and sustainable implementation of the Convention.

IUCN emphasises

- ✓ the importance of **building capacity** for action at national and local level, both on adaptation and mitigation

The challenge posed by climate change is greater and more urgent than it has ever been

All over the world, and in particular in vulnerable countries, people are hoping that the UNFCCC's COP16 in Cancun will be a significant milestone securing effective international climate action.

Following last year's Copenhagen summit, progress towards establishing a global post-2012 climate change regime has proven painfully slow. There appears to be broad expectation that the adoption of a legally binding agreement may be postponed beyond December 2010.

However, the challenge posed **to humanity** by climate change is greater and more urgent than it has ever been. The impacts on people and biodiversity are already being felt in most parts of the world. This year has again seen a

number of devastating extreme events in many regions.

Other observed effects of increased human induced CO₂ concentrations in the atmosphere are causing concern. The oceans are and will continue to experience changes in their chemistry due to the ongoing absorption of large amounts of CO₂ from the atmosphere – a trend described as **ocean acidification**. These changes will likely negatively impact the growth and reproduction of certain marine species and disrupt structural and functional processes of certain ecosystems in the world's oceans, in particular coral reefs. These alterations have the potential to threaten food security, harm fishing industries, and increase the risk of flooding and erosion in low-lying areas, hence increasing the vulnerability of local livelihoods in the face of climate change. Reducing CO₂ emissions significantly and immediately at source will both combat ocean acidification and help address climate change.

The adverse effects of climate change also have a range of direct and indirect implications for the effective enjoyment of **human rights** and they will be felt most acutely by those segments of the population that are already vulnerable owing to geography, gender, age, indigenous or minority status and disability.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions is the only, long-term answer to restoring the global climate to stability. The emission reduction commitment and pledges made in the Copenhagen Accord by more than 130 countries are not sufficient to ensure the 2°C goal enshrined in the Accord; if implemented, they would deliver emission reductions of 12 to 19% on 1990 levels, whereas the IPCC concluded that 25% reduction is a minimum to avoid a 2°C rise in global temperatures. Stronger commitments and actions are needed now, to avert the consequences of a world beyond the 2°C threshold.

Parties left Copenhagen not only having agreed on the Copenhagen Accord, but having come close to agreement on a number of crucial issues: adaptation; reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (the REDD+ mechanism); technology transfer and capacity building. Since then, discussions on the governance of the promised new long-term climate finance have also progressed.

It is important that the Decisions taken by the COP at Cancun restore and boost confidence in the UNFCCC process and the eventual outcome of the negotiations. The COP should therefore finalise the issues on which most progress has been made and adopt a balanced package of Decisions. Action on each of them should follow immediately.

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- ✓ While negotiations continue towards the ultimate objective of a global, legally binding agreement, it is vital that the COP takes **confidence building measures** in the form of a balanced package of Decisions on REDD-plus, adaptation, technology transfer and capacity building.

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- ✓ First and foremost, new and additional **fast-track funding** needs to be made available immediately, for both adaptation and mitigation, and donor Parties need to make tangible moves towards providing **long term funding**.

Adaptation

The efforts to reduce global emissions to a level that will not cause dangerous climate change are still largely to be made, and past emissions will continue to influence the climate for years to come. As a result, measures to adapt to the inevitable impacts urgently need to be put in place. These impacts are especially affecting people in vulnerable developing countries. Urgent action on the ground is needed, underpinned by new and additional financial resources.

Action on adaptation is one of the achievements Cancun can deliver, as discussions on an **Adaptation Framework** are well advanced. The adoption and the implementation of the envisaged Adaptation Framework will establish a critical international mechanism for furthering and assisting **adaptation actions** already being undertaken at local, national and regional levels. Examples of adaptation actions already being undertaken include:

- **Bangladesh**, in collaboration with development partners, has invested over USD 10 billion over the last 35 years in reducing the country's vulnerability to climate change, including through community-based

disaster preparedness and developing climate resilient crops. It has developed a Climate Change Strategy, which encompasses adaptation focused pillars of food security, disaster management and infrastructure.¹

- **Colombia** is implementing its Integrated National Adaptation Plan, which makes use of ecosystem-based adaptation approaches and policy interventions in the Paramos and High Andean ecosystems. These ecosystems provide essential ecosystem services, for example 80% of Bogota's residents rely on water provided by the Chingaza Massif. Strategies have been developed for watershed management, soil restoration and land use planning.²
- In the Komadugu Yobe River Basin in **Nigeria**, multiple stakeholders (incl. national and local government) have agreed on a water resources management plan for restoring and managing the river basin, to address pressing development challenges and climatic vulnerabilities. Restoring the river's flow regime can reduce vulnerability to floods, regulate water availability and enhance the resilience of livelihoods needed for adaptation and poverty reduction.³

Ecosystem-based Adaptation actions are already being implemented in several countries. They build resilience of socio-economic and ecological systems to help people adapt to climate change through sustainable management, conservation, and restoration of ecosystems. They are adaptation actions that are readily available to the natural-resource dependent rural poor in particular, are proven, cost-effective, and scalable and can generate social, economic and cultural co-benefits. For example, effective management of both modified and natural ecosystems, including Protected Areas, can help strengthen and maintain the resilience of rural people's livelihoods by sustaining the ecosystem processes and functions upon which they depend.

¹ Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2009.

² Building Resilience to Climate Change, edited by Andrade Perez et al, IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management. 2010.

³ Environment as Infrastructure. Smith and Barchiesi, 2009. IUCN.

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REDD-plus

Solving the climate change problem requires deep cuts in fossil fuel emissions. However, we need to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases from all sources as quickly as possible and significant amounts of carbon dioxide are also released into the atmosphere from deforestation and forest degradation. Therefore, halting and reversing the loss and degradation of tropical forests makes a rapid and substantial contribution to reducing atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases and should be recognized as an important mitigation response that complements action taken to reduce fossil fuel emissions. **Progress on the REDD-plus mechanism** is therefore one of the most important developments in the past three years of negotiations.

A strong signal on REDD-plus in Cancun would be a clear, no regrets confidence building step towards success in the UNFCCC negotiations. High-level decisions within the UNFCCC process are needed to catalyze and guide pilot activities linked to robust national REDD-plus frameworks around the world.

The progress that has been made in countries and through bilateral and multilateral initiatives shows that Parties are ready to agree on decisions that will start putting into effect the Bali Action Plan. It is understood among REDD-plus countries and donors that the starting point for this is national REDD-plus strategies, which should provide the framework for the definition and location of REDD-plus activities, projects, initiatives and incentives.

At Cancun the COP should take a decision based on the consensus reached in the negotiations leading up to the Copenhagen COP and on elements of the Copenhagen Accord. Establishing the REDD-plus mechanism is urgent: there is not time to reopen issues on which agreement was so close.

IUCN calls on the Parties to ensure that national REDD-plus frameworks reflect the progress at Copenhagen and incorporate the following elements, consistent with the negotiating text before them in Cancun:

- ✓ Recognition of the full potential **scope** of REDD-plus actions consistent with the Bali Action Plan, as appropriate in the national context
- ✓ Social, environmental and governance **safeguards**
- ✓ **Monitoring, verification and reporting systems, which comprehensively include safeguards and co-benefits**, such as impacts on and benefits for biodiversity, and that allow alignment with pilots and projects
- ✓ Full and effective **participation of stakeholders, including particularly women, indigenous peoples and local communities**, through **enhanced multi-stakeholder processes** to ensure that national REDD-plus strategies enjoy broad support and are therefore credible and implementable
- ✓ Respect for the **traditional knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and local communities**.

Some examples of REDD-plus measures that could provide measurable mitigation functions are:

- **Conservation:** Establishing, expanding and effectively managing protected areas and connectivity corridors, for example in the Brazilian Amazon and in the Meso-American (Mexico plus Central America) Biological Corridor
- **Sustainable management of forests:** Independently certified production of timber or sustainable production of non-timber forest products, such as in the Miyun Reservoir, China, where restoration of Beijing's degraded watershed is enhancing local people's access to forest products and increasing household income

- **Enhancement of forest carbon stocks:** Natural regeneration, management of secondary forests or tree planting (preferably of native species) and sustainable agro-forestry systems, for example in Shinyanga, Tanzania, where approximately 500,000ha of woodlands were restored by farmers and 825 villages to provide a multiplicity of forest goods and services and increase the incomes of villagers.

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Gender

Gender equality is a prerequisite for sustainable development and poverty eradication, both key principles of the UNFCCC and the Bali Action Plan. Gender-based roles result in different climate change impacts for women and men. Women often carry the brunt of climate change impacts as they are often the managers of natural resources in developing rural communities. They have limited access to the resources needed to adapt to climate change - including land, credit, agricultural inputs, decision-making bodies, technology and training services. Empowering women can help reduce these impacts.

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Jordan's Ministry of Environment is mainstreaming gender in its climate change strategies, and is drawing up a *Gender Plan of Action in Climate Change*. As a result of this, gender considerations are expected to be included in Jordan's Third National Communication to UNFCCC. Similar gender and climate change strategies have been prepared by Mozambique and Central American countries.

Capacity Building

In most regions around the world, climate change action is being undertaken at both national and local levels. Countries, regions, municipalities and local communities are testing and demonstrating best practices, as well as effectively integrating multi-pathway communications on such experiences.

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- ✓ the importance of building capacity for action at national and local level, both on adaptation and mitigation.

Promoting Policy Coherence with other International Commitments

Climate change causes a wide spectrum of impacts: in addition to the adverse effects suffered by human populations, it affects biodiversity and wetlands; exacerbates desertification; endangers those World Heritage sites that derive their uniqueness from nature. There are therefore numerous synergies between action to prevent and combat climate change and other policies to protect vulnerable humans, biodiversity conservation and the protection of fragile ecosystems.

For maximum effectiveness, strategies to mitigate or adapt to climate change should capitalise and align with ongoing commitments and actions under the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the World Heritage Convention, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and other relevant international commitments.