

Adaptation Policy Brief

Necessary elements for “Enhanced action on adaptation and its associated means of implementation”

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The UNFCCC must develop a strong, overarching adaptation action framework and robust financial mechanisms that provide predictable, adequate and sustained support for vulnerable regions, countries and communities to adapt to climate change. The framework should:

- **Hold all parties accountable for meeting their adaptation-related commitments** under the Convention and the Bali Action Plan, in particular the provision of financial support by developed countries to enhance developing countries’ adaptive capacities;
- **Allocate specific and adequate funds from the developed world for adaptation in the developing world** in line with commitments under the Convention and separate from mitigation funding through the provision of sustainable funding that is new and additional to existing Official Development Assistance (ODA) targets so as to not compromise Millennium Development Goals and poverty reduction;
- **Acknowledge and reference the importance of an integrated approach to adaptation that includes natural ecosystems**, their needs and the services they provide, placing a high priority on ecosystem based approaches, drawing on Article 2 of the Convention;
 - **Recognize and incorporate the need to build and maintain natural ecosystem resilience.** Acknowledge the use of ecosystems and their services as part of overall adaptation strategies to help people adapt to the adverse effects of climate change (this approach is often termed Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA)), and facilitate building of knowledge on the relationship between ecosystem health and human resilience to climate change.
- **Acknowledge and reference the importance of an integrated approach to adaptation that includes local communities**, placing a high priority on community-based adaptation and the value of traditional knowledge, drawing on Article 2;
 - **Ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in program and project development and implementation.** This includes respect for the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and members of local communities, by taking into account international obligations, national circumstances and laws, and noting the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- **Support and articulate the commitment of developing countries to prepare and pursue robust and comprehensive adaptation programs** that protect vulnerable communities and the natural ecosystems on which they rely.

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Introduction

Adaptation efforts help human and natural communities adjust to the impacts of climate change that have already been set in motion and prepared for, thus reducing, future impacts. These activities include conducting climate vulnerability assessments, supporting alternative livelihoods, developing early warning systems and protecting/restoring ecosystems so that they can provide the fresh water, storm protection and other services that make us more resilient to a changing climate.

Immediate and substantial adaptation efforts are needed to ensure that human societies and the natural ecosystems that sustain them are able to adapt in a rapidly changing climate. Rising temperatures and sea level along with impacts to the chemistry of the ocean due to increased greenhouse gases will continue for decades even if emissions are stabilized today.ⁱ The resulting impacts of climate change on people and nations, biodiversity and ecosystems, will persist for centuries. Impacts to natural ecosystems will undermine the vital services they provide, including the freshwater, food and income needs of many of the world's most vulnerable communities. Therefore, it is imperative that the international community begin adaptation action now, to protect vulnerable people and ecosystems.

Conservation International's experience in building understanding of ecosystems and biodiversity together with our experience in working with governments, indigenous peoples and local communities to develop effective approaches to the conservation and sustainable use of critical ecosystems around the world, enables and compels us to support a socially and environmentally sound international climate adaptation policy process.

Adaptation in the UNFCCC: Supporting natural solutions:

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has the stated goal of stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations at a level that allows for "ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner." A legally-binding agreement that results in global action and specifies national commitments in key areas such as adaptation, mitigation, financing and capacity building is therefore necessary in order to achieve this goal within a timeframe that ensures the continued healthy functioning of natural ecosystems and the ability of people to better cope with changes.

The UNFCCC's first principle states that developed countries should take the lead in combating the adverse effects of climate change. Yet, over a decade later, negative impacts on communities and natural ecosystems worldwide are increasing; the efforts of developed countries to mitigate emissions and support adaptation efforts in the most vulnerable countries remain insufficient. Substantial effort and resources are urgently needed to confront the climate change challenge. A recent World Bank report on the economics of adaptation to climate change estimated the cost of adaptation to climate impacts as US 70\$ - 100\$ billion per year.ⁱⁱ Yet only a fraction of that is currently being invested in adaptation.

Adaptation efforts must address the inherent interconnectedness of biological diversity, ecosystems and people. Protection of the páramo watershed feeding Bogota, Colombia, community-based resource management of fisheries in Verde Islands, Philippines and many other similar local and regional efforts support climate resilience. Stewardship of ecosystems and their services will be critical in order to people and nature from the impacts of changing climate.

What is needed in Cancun:

COP16 in Cancun must keep us on track to establish comprehensive, legally binding agreement(s). For this reason, it is essential that Parties make as much progress as possible in Cancun on both the LCA and KP tracks. To the extent possible, this progress should be captured in decisions. Parties should also decide on a timeline towards achieving a comprehensive climate agreement before 2012.

On Adaptation:

- Parties should make significant progress on an adaptation framework under the LCA as part of a balanced package of decisions to be adopted by the COP-MOP.
- Public funding from developed countries in support of developing countries that is new and additional to ODA targets should be the primary source of support for adaptation.
- Developed country funding commitments should be transparent and separate from mitigation funding.
- The framework should acknowledge and reference the importance of an integrated approach to adaptation that includes natural ecosystems, with a high priority on ecosystem-based approaches;
- The framework should recognize and incorporate the need to build and maintain natural ecosystem resilience, and refer to the direct use of ecosystems and their services as part of an overall adaptation strategy to help people adapt to the adverse effects of climate change, often termed Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA);
- The framework should acknowledge and reference the importance of an adaptation approach that includes local communities, with a high priority on community-based adaptation and local knowledge;
- The framework should ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in program and project development and implementation;
- The framework should ensure support and commitment to the development of robust and comprehensive adaptation plans for developing countries that align with national strategy; and
- The framework should ensure appropriate environmental and social safeguards for adaptation action.

Incorporating Ecosystems and Local Communities in FCCC/AWGLCA/2010/14 and INF doc

Text Recommendations:

Chapter 1, A. Shared Vision, Paragraph 6: This paragraph, originally pulled from Chapter 2 (Adaptation), highlights the need for many elements that are critical for a successful adaptation framework including the need to follow “a country-driven, gender-sensitive, *participatory and transparent approach*, taking into consideration *vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems...*” and should not be altered or removed to ensure that vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems are prioritized in adaptation action. If the Shared Vision becomes a standalone decision, this paragraph will be especially important as it will not necessarily be backed up by Chapter 2 (Adaptation).

Chapter 2, Paragraph 3: This paragraph highlights the need for many elements that are critical for a successful adaptation framework including the need to follow “a country-driven, gender-sensitive, *participatory and transparent approach*, taking into consideration *vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems...*” and should not be altered or removed to ensure that vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems are prioritized and valued in adaptation action.

Chapter 2, Paragraph 4a: This bullet highlights areas to be prioritized in adaptation action and includes a footnote that references several critical areas including water resources, terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems and coastal zones. These are critical, but it is unclear what the legal implications are of these bullets being in a footnote. This issue needs to be resolved or the footnote needs to be brought into the body of the text.

Chapter 2, Paragraph 4b: The “social and environmental evaluation of adaptation options” should remain in the text to avoid maladaptation.

Chapter 2, Paragraph 4d: The phrase “building resilience of ecological systems” should remain in the text.

ⁱIPCC, 2007: Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Core Writing Team, Pachauri, R.K and Reisinger, A. (eds.)]. IPCC, Geneva, Switzerland.

ⁱⁱ World Bank Group, August 2010. *The Economics of Adaptation to Climate Change: A Synthesis Report. Final consultation draft.* http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTCC/Resources/EACC_FinalSynthesisReport0803_2010.pdf