



CONSERVATION  
INTERNATIONAL

# climate change adaptation policy position

Immediate and substantial adaptation efforts are needed for human societies and the natural ecosystems that sustain them to adapt in a rapidly changing environment. Rising temperatures due to climate change will continue for decades even if greenhouse gas emissions are stabilized today.<sup>1</sup> The resulting impacts of climate change on people and nations, ecosystems and biodiversity, could persist for centuries. Impacts to natural ecosystems risk undermining the vital services they provide and thus the fulfillment of many basic needs, including fresh water, food and income, of many of the world's most vulnerable communities.



11/09

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has the stated goal of stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations to a level and within a time frame 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.”

The UNFCCC entered into force in 1994. Its first principle states that developed countries should take the lead in combating the adverse effects of climate change. Yet, over a decade later, impacts on local communities and natural ecosystems are occurring, while developed world efforts to mitigate these impacts and support adaptation efforts remain inadequate. Meaningful developed-country efforts are essential and urgently needed to confront the climate change challenge. Adaptation efforts must address the inherent connectedness of biological diversity, ecosystems and people. To be effective, we must adopt an integrated approach that values mainstream science and traditional knowledge systems and also incorporates fundamental linkages between human communities and ecosystem services. Conservation International’s experience in understanding ecosystems and biodiversity—their vulnerabilities to climate change, and their value to communities—along with our experience working on effective community-based projects around the world, provides an important contribution to the international climate adaptation policy process.

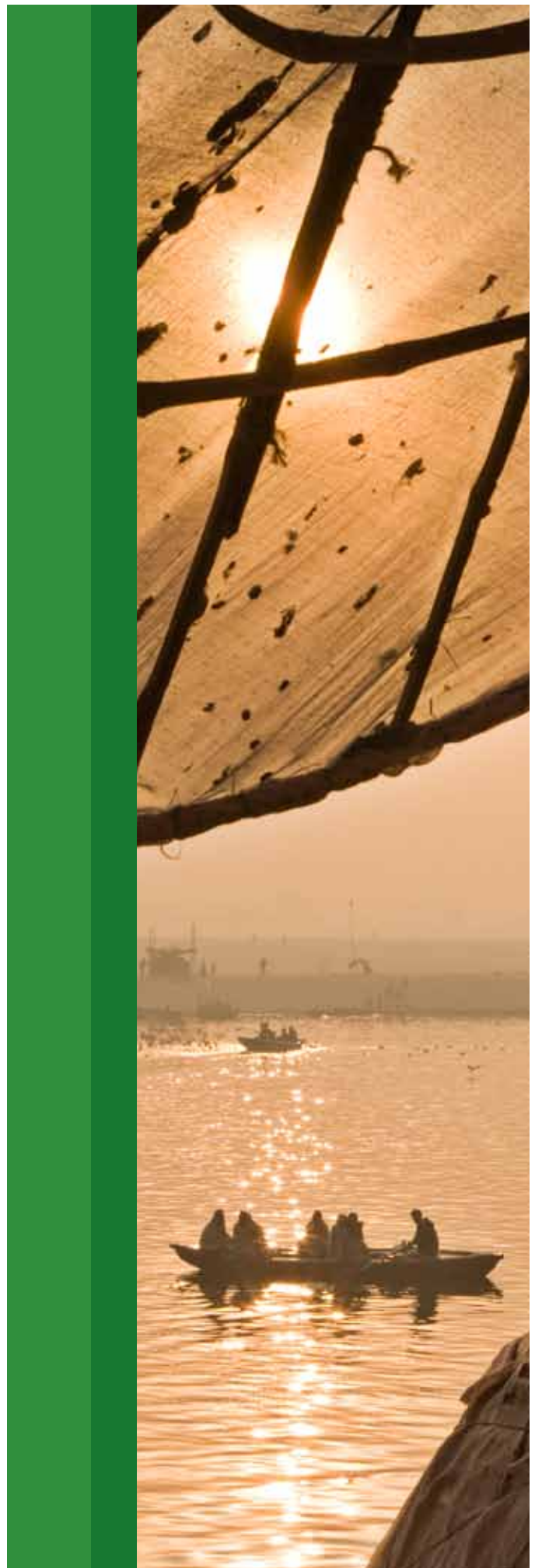


# what is needed in copenhagen:

**A renewed global agreement reflecting current conditions, the objective of the Convention and the Bali decision and the findings of the IPCC<sup>2</sup> is urgently needed. Developed countries must take the lead in committing to support a robust adaptation framework.**

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 support developing countries;
- **Require the allocation of specific and adequate funds from the developed world** for adaptation in line with commitments under the Convention and separate from mitigation funding. These funds should be additional to or reflect a specific increase in a country's Official Development Assistance (ODA) targets so as to not compromise Millennium Development Goals and poverty reduction goals;
- **Acknowledge and reference the importance of an integrated approach to adaptation that includes local communities and natural ecosystems**, their needs and the services they provide, placing a high priority on ecosystem based approaches, community-based adaptation and the value of traditional knowledge, drawing on Article 2 of the UNFCCC in national adaptation strategies and action plans, including National Adaptation Plans;



- **Recognize and incorporate the need to build and maintain natural ecosystem resilience.** Appropriately refer to the direct use of ecosystems, their functions and 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), and help to facilitate building of knowledge on the relationship between ecosystem health and human resilience to climate change;
- **Ensure the full and effective participation of local communities and indigenous peoples,** as appropriate, in program and project development and implementation;
- **Require developing countries to commit to preparing and pursuing robust and comprehensive adaptation programs** that protect vulnerable communities and the natural ecosystems they rely on;
- **Support the well-being of vulnerable regions, countries and communities** and recognize the key role, contribution and needs of natural ecosystems, their services and biodiversity;
- **Include incentives and innovative financial mechanisms for safeguarding natural ecosystems** and their services, recognizing their contribution to sustainable development, humanitarian efforts to protect human well-being, cultural diversity and biodiversity; and
- **Strengthen international activities to facilitate adaptation planning and implementation,** and exchange of knowledge and experience among all Parties.

1 IPCC, 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, 104 pp. (3.2.3)

2 Id.

## OUR VISION

We imagine a healthy prosperous world in which societies are forever committed to caring for and valuing nature for the long-term benefit of people and all life on Earth.

## OUR MISSION

Building upon a strong foundation of science, partnership and field demonstration, CI empowers societies to responsibly and sustainably care for nature for the well-being of humanity.



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