



natural
solutions
to **climate
change**

climate change: a defining challenge of our time

Science indicates that our planet faces dramatic and lasting changes due to warming of our global surface temperature.

Unless we take significant actions today to reverse greenhouse gas emissions trends and to enhance climate resilience, we risk irreversible damage to our planet.





According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), we need immediate and aggressive solutions. Without them, natural ecosystems—and the services they provide to all of humanity—are at risk of dangerous impacts, such as:

- rising sea levels
- melting glaciers and ice caps
- increasingly frequent instances of drought
- heavy precipitation causing flooding
- changes in timing of wet/dry seasons (seasonality)
- intense tropical cyclone activity
- changes to the lakes, rivers, streams and hydrological systems that supply fresh water
- shifts in species habitat ranges
- alterations and disturbances to agriculture
- heat-related mortality
- increased outbreaks of infectious diseases

Given the magnitude of this threat, we must urgently deploy all available measures—and nature provides many of the most immediate.

nature's role in fighting climate change

Conserving the planet's natural systems is an essential response to the climate crisis. Halting the destruction of tropical forests is a cost-effective and necessary way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions now.

The burning and clearing of tropical forests alone accounts for approximately 16 percent of global carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions—more than all the world's cars, trucks, airplanes and ships combined.

Unsustainable agriculture contributes another 14 percent of CO₂ emissions. If we fail to halt emissions from forests and unsustainable agriculture use, and do not conserve natural ecosystems, we will fail to resolve the climate challenge.





Mitigating climate change will also require reducing CO₂ emissions by increasing energy efficiency and developing carbon-free energy sources — a shift away from fossil fuels that will take decades to achieve. Similarly, efforts to help people and species adapt to climate change will include technologies and infrastructure such as sea walls, levees and irrigation works.

These “hard engineering” solutions, while essential, must be complemented by investments in preserving healthy terrestrial and marine ecosystems. In fact, the IPCC estimates that up to 25 percent of all emissions reductions needed by 2050 could be achieved by protecting and restoring forests and other natural ecosystems. Such nature-based solutions are immediate and cost-effective ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance resilience to climate change—they are our bridge to a climate-secure, low-carbon future.

Protecting nature provides significant opportunities now — opportunities to cut emissions dramatically, preserve our planet’s ability to support life, and sustain communities in the face of those climatic changes which cannot be avoided. A healthy natural world is our most important asset in meeting the greatest challenge of our time.

climate security: five global solutions

Conservation International (CI) is focusing its expertise and resources on this vital part of the climate challenge: harnessing nature itself to mitigate climate change and adapt to its impacts from the local to global scale. We are leveraging nearly 25 years of experience in science, policy, markets, finance and field activities to advance five critical climate change solutions:

REDD+¹

Support global progress towards zero deforestation by demonstrating that REDD+ is achievable in practice.

Ecosystem-based adaptation

Demonstrate how intact ecosystems allow people and natural communities to better survive environmental shocks and adapt to climate change.

Climate policy

Advance a global climate agreement that sets ambitious emission reduction targets and provides a robust framework and committed financing for mitigation and adaptation.

Climate-friendly land use

Enhance carbon stores on land—above and below ground—by promoting the adoption of agricultural practices that contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Blue carbon

Leverage “blue carbon”—the carbon stored in coastal and marine ecosystems—to enhance climate change mitigation efforts and secure the conservation of marine ecosystems.



¹ Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation plus conservation, the sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.



CONSERVATION
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At Conservation International we are committed to restoring and maintaining the world's natural systems. Through scientific rigor, creative thinking and aggressive action, we are proving that species can be saved, landscapes can be protected and people can thrive.

our vision

We imagine a healthy, prosperous world in which societies are forever committed to caring for and valuing nature, our global biodiversity, 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, our global biodiversity, for the well-being of humanity.

