



WWF POSITION PAPER

Adaptation in the INDCs

October 2014

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this paper is to describe the context for and WWF's current position on, the debate on whether climate change adaptation measures should be part of countries' Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) to be submitted in 2015 under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

SUMMARY OF WWF'S POSITION ON ADAPTATION IN INDCs

- 1. WWF supports the inclusion of adaptation in INDCs and we encourage all countries to submit their adaptation measures as part of their broader intended contributions.*
- 2. Those countries with greater capability and responsibility must assist developing countries with less capability and responsibility with financial, technology and capacity-building support to identify and implement adaptation and resilience-building measures. Countries with greater capability and responsibility should therefore set out in their INDCs how they will support adaptation efforts beyond their own borders.*
- 3. Developing countries should indicate which portion of their intended adaptation measures they will be undertaking fully with domestic resources and how much international support will be needed for the portion of adaptation responses that they cannot implement without assistance.*
- 4. Adaptation measures in INDCs should not be legally binding, but rather Parties should commit to adopting domestic legislation on adaptation actions. However the provision of support for adaptation in INDCs from developed countries should be legally binding.*
- 5. Adaptation efforts cannot be a substitute for mitigation in a country's INDC. INDCs on Adaptation should be additional to INDCs on Mitigation.*
- 6. The information requirements for adaptation measures in INDCs need to be adopted by COP 20 to ensure that parties can include these in their 2015 INDC submissions.*
- 7. Parties should submit their intended adaptation measures (including means of implementation where appropriate) with their full INDC submissions by March 2015 (for countries with high responsibility and capability), and absolutely no later than May 2015 (for countries with less responsibility and capability).*

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT FOR THIS POSITION PAPER

WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment states that climate change is one of the most important drivers of biodiversity loss.

Global temperatures have already risen by more than 0.85°C¹. If we do not take action to reduce carbon emissions, global temperatures could rise by 2.6-4.8°C by the end of the Century². The IPCC 5th Assessment Report (AR5) "Climate Change 2014: *Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability*" highlights that the effects of climate change are already being observed on all continents and across the oceans. We are seeing evidence of impacts on agriculture, human health, ecosystems (plant and animal species are moving and changing in abundance and behaviour; increased tree mortality; the physical and chemical properties of oceans have changed significantly; coral reefs have experienced increased mass bleaching and mortality), water supplies, and people's livelihoods. If temperatures rise by 2°C, there will be further impacts on people and ecosystems.

Human and natural systems are interconnected, therefore, as ecosystems become more vulnerable and less resilient to the effects of climate change (and other stressors), so too will society. In addition, human systems are not equally prepared to deal with the impacts of climate change. Some are more vulnerable and exposed than others due to "non-climate factors and inequalities produced by uneven development process". The IPCC emphasizes that the risks of climate change will vary across regions and populations, through space and time, and dependent on a myriad of factors, including the extent of *both* mitigation and adaptation³.

INDCs

Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) are negotiating an international agreement for the post-2020 period, to be adopted by 2015, that aims to limit the rise of the global average temperature to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels (the "2015 Agreement"). During the UNFCCC Warsaw COP in 2013, and in the context of building towards a comprehensive agreement in 2015, Parties decided to "*initiate or intensify domestic preparations for their intended nationally determined contributions (INDCs)*" towards that agreement, and to communicate them "*well in advance of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties (by the first quarter of 2015 by those Parties ready to do so) in a manner that facilitates the clarity, transparency and understanding of the intended contribution, without prejudice to the legal nature of the Contributions*".⁴

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change⁵ acknowledges the vulnerability of all countries to the effects of climate change and calls for special efforts to ease the consequences, especially in developing countries which lack the resources to do so on their own. When the IPCC's Third Assessment Report was released in 2001, discussions on adaptation to the impacts of climate change gained much more traction. Parties agreed on a

¹ IPCC Fifth Assessment Report, [WG1 SPM](#), 2013.

² [IPCC Fifth Assessment Report, 2014](#).

³ The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines adaptation as "*The process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects. In human systems, adaptation seeks to moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. In natural systems, human intervention may facilitate adjustment to expected climate and its effects*". Various types of adaptation can be distinguished, including transformational, incremental and autonomous adaptation (IPCC AR5 *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability*)

⁴ [Warsaw COP Decision 1/CP.19 \(2b\)](#)

⁵ [UNFCCC Convention objective](#)

process to address adverse effects of climate change and to establish funding arrangements for adaptation. Though much has been achieved in setting up international Adaptation institutions more needs to be done to ensure that adequate finance and other means of implementation is provided and that countries have plans and strategies in place to deal with climate change impacts which are increasingly inevitable as mitigation action is delayed.

INDCs ON ADAPTATION IN THE UNFCCC NEGOTIATIONS

During the UNFCCC intercessional meeting in Bonn in June 2014, Parties had mixed views on whether adaptation should be considered as part of INDCs. The main arguments for, and against, including adaptation in INDCs are summarised in the table below:

Table 1: Advantages and Disadvantages of including adaptation in countries' INDCs

INDCs on Adaptation	
Advantages	Disadvantages
➤ Raises the profile of adaptation at national and international levels.	➤ Difficulties associated with monitoring and reporting
➤ Creates space and clarity at national level to enhance action on adaptation.	➤ Risk of diluting focus on mitigation
➤ Facilitates exchange of ideas, which could inspire and promote enhanced action and learning for example through engaging different sectors including the private sector.	➤ Contributions that are designed to deliver co-benefits on adaptation and mitigation might lead to double counting.
➤ Enhances understanding of adaptation needs (Finance, technology and capacity) for countries on implementation.	➤ Negotiation time might be lost as Parties debate the inclusion of Adaptation in the INDCs.
➤ Generates more knowledge and action on climate adaptation at local and national level.	➤ Including Adaptation in the INDCs could create a window for response measures to occupy more space in the negotiation process.
➤ Adaptation planning and action are determined nationally.	

WWF POSITION ON INDCs FOR ADAPTATION

WWF believes that the advantages of including adaptation information requirements for Parties' INDC submissions outweigh the disadvantages. The drawbacks that have been raised by Parties, summarized in the Table 1 above, can be managed if Parties agree to consider Adaptation at the same level of engagement as mitigation.

Adaptation is part of the collective responsibility of the global community to address climate change. However the imbalances in historical responsibility for causing climate change as well as in the capacity to respond to the challenge means that ***those countries with greater capability and responsibility must assist developing countries with less capability and responsibility through providing financial, technology and capacity-building support for***

implementation of adaptation and resilience-building measures. This support must be set out in the INDCs of the countries with a responsibility to provide such support, since it is part of the necessary global response to climate change. This is especially true since vulnerable communities will increasingly bear the brunt of others' inaction on their mitigation responsibilities

Adaptation is not just a priority for developing countries, IPCC AR5 concluded that all countries are vulnerable and in the Cancun Adaptation Framework (CAF) all Parties agreed to "...plan, prioritize and implement adaptation actions". Furthermore, in the CAF, Parties affirmed that adaptation must be addressed with the same level of priority as mitigation. To give substance to these agreements it is now time to see countries come forward with their intended actions to fulfill the Cancun decisions.

When compiling both their mitigation and adaptation INDCs, Parties should indicate why they believe that their contributions are equitable and sufficiently ambitious given the latest IPCC and other scientific findings on projected climate impacts.

COP20 in Lima is where Parties must agree on the information that will be reflected in Parties' individual INDCs. WWF proposes that the following information requirements could be used as a foundation for the development of adaptation INDCs:

A. Assessment:

- Types of adaptation contribution
- National vision on adaptation and climate resilience.
- National policies and frameworks for adaptation.
- Analysis of vulnerable sectors: People, ecosystems, institutions,
- Identification of adaptation gaps and needs (financial, technology and capacity) for effective implementation of adaptation

B. Readiness:

- Adaptation framework for implementation for various sector and regions and the natural environment.
- Strategy to address failures due to extreme slow onset events (displacement, migration, irreversible loss and damage of biodiversity and habitat etc.)
- National and local adaptation institutions for effective adaptation implementation.

C. Actions:

- Programmes and projects per sector, including those as identified by NAPA and NAPs
- Lists of adaptation actions that countries will do on their own resource and what additional actions could be implemented with international support.
- Details of developed countries contribution towards adaptation support for developing countries.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OF INDCs ON ADAPTATION

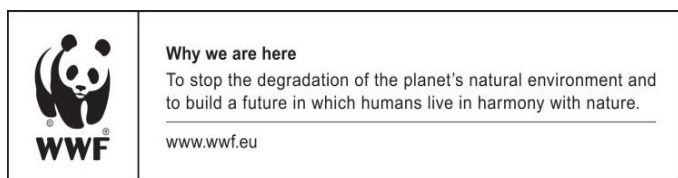
Including Adaptation in the information requirements for INDCs raises difficult legal questions about the bindingness of internationally tabled actions on issues that largely have national implications. However, these concerns could be addressed through:

1. Setting up instruments and decisions that clearly distinguish between binding and voluntary commitments to differentiate between adaptation and mitigation actions.
2. Following clear precedent from other international treaties that combine legally binding and non-binding commitments through clear legal provisions and to differentiate the type of commitments or contributions to avoid confusion.
3. Creating space in COP decisions for more flexibility in the adaptation measures from countries in the LDCs, SIDS and Africa.

The Lima decisions on information requirements for INDCs should make it clear that Parties cannot table INDCs on adaptation as a substitute for mitigation contributions. Adaptation action has to be additional to each country's mitigation efforts.

REFERENCES

1. Ecofys discussion paper "[Intended Nationally Determined Contributions under the UNFCCC](#)"
2. [Warsaw COP 19 Decision](#)
3. South Africa [Submission](#) 6th June 2014
4. UNFCCC Convention [Documents](#)
5. Discussion summary of breakout session on Adaptation in INDCs working group during WWF, CARE, ActionAid and Germanwatch Side event on "Adaptation in ADP" organized during UNFCCC SBs session on 13th June 2014 at Bonn, Germany.
6. Legal Response Initiative (LRI) response to question put forward by WWF Team on 16th June 2014.
7. [IPCC Fifth Assessment Report](#), 2014.



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For further information:

Tasneem Essop
WWF International
Head of Delegation: UNFCCC
Tel: +27 83 998 6290
Email: tessop@wwf.org.za

Jaco du Toit
Programme Coordinator: Low Carbon Frameworks
WWF International Global Climate and Energy
Initiative
Tel: +27 82 765 9461
Email: jdutoit@wwf.org.za