



INT

2015

WWF AND THE UNFCCC

# ADAPTATION MATTERS

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### Mangroves For Coastal Resilience:

Mangrove forests act as a natural buffer during extreme weather events like storms and hurricanes. As important breeding areas for fish, they also contribute to the livelihoods of coastal fishing communities

### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

**Sandeep Chamling Rai**  
Senior Global Adaptation Policy Advisor  
WWF International  
Global Climate and Energy Initiative  
scrai@wwf.sg; Tel: +65 67308133

@climateWWF  
www.panda.org/climateandenergy

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# CLIMATE CHANGE IS HAPPENING : ADAPTATION IS ESSENTIAL

**AN EFFECTIVE UNFCCC:  
ADDRESSING MITIGATION  
AND ADAPTATION - IS  
CRUCIAL TO TACKLING  
CLIMATE CHANGE. WWF  
PLAYS A VITAL ROLE  
INFLUENCING GLOBAL  
ADAPTATION ISSUES TO  
BENEFIT PEOPLE  
AND NATURE.**

Evidence is clear that climate change is happening, already harming vulnerable people and endangering species (IPCC, 2014). It is damaging infrastructure, threatening coastal cities, depressing crop yields, changing our oceans and jeopardizing fish stocks. It has impacted every continent and all oceans. It poses severe risks to global economic stability. No one will escape impact, but those least responsible are affected first and worst.

To reduce the risks of runaway climate change, the best science demands that global emissions peak before 2020 and sharply decline thereafter. Whilst important progress is being made on mitigation so far, there is insufficient ambition and coordination to stay below 2°C.

There has been 0.85°C global average surface temperature warming between 1880 and 2012 and we are locked into further warming from current emissions. Adaptation to current climate variability and future climate change is essential now and into the future.

## UNFCCC IS THE GLOBAL POLICY PLATFORM ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is a global problem so we need an international agreement on how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help poorer countries adapt to the impacts of a changing climate.

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) provides the most significant lever for concerted and effective global action on climate change, for both mitigation and adaptation.

Even though adaptation needs have to be determined locally, commitments to support climate vulnerable developing countries must be agreed and met globally. For effective negotiations, the priorities of all member governments have to be addressed.

To this end, and recognising climate justice, adaptation must sit alongside mitigation as a core part of the Convention.

**“THERE IS NO  
ALTERNATIVE PATHWAY  
OR BODY [TO THE UNFCCC]  
AT THE INTERNATIONAL  
LEVEL THAT DEALS WITH  
THE ISSUE OF GLOBAL  
CLIMATE CHANGE,  
WHICH BRINGS ALL THE  
COUNTRIES TOGETHER  
AND AGREES ON GLOBAL  
ACTION”**

*Sandeep Chamling Rai*  
WWF

# WWF INFLUENCE AND IMPACT

Since 2008, WWF has been a key contributor to discussions at the UNFCCC, influencing adaptation ambition and outcomes - championing the voices of the poorest and most vulnerable people, places and ecosystems, leading policy discourse and holding governments to account.

Working effectively with other civil society organisations and climate change networks, **WWF plays a key role** in ensuring:

- Adaptation is addressed as a **core building block** of the Convention. Member governments affirmed in 2010 that ‘adaptation must be addressed with the same level of priority as mitigation’ providing the foundation for the Cancun Adaptation Framework that has since guided adaptation policy advancement and development.
- An **effective Adaptation Committee** promoting the implementation of enhanced action on adaptation in a coherent manner under the Convention.
- Robust **NAPs guidelines and processes**, including through bringing experience from national level engagement, linking policy and practice, to advise and inform the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG).
- The development of an **International Mechanism on Loss and Damage** associated with climate change impacts in vulnerable developing countries. Recognising limits to adaptation, WWF has led and championed this crucial new agenda.
- Developed countries commit to and provide adequate **adaptation finance, capacity building and technical support** to developing countries, noting that the less mitigation ambition realised, the more challenging and costly adaptation will be.
- An effective **Nairobi Work Programme** that contributes to and shares learning on the value and importance of the role of ecosystems in adaptation.

Significant progress has been made on all these key agendas, but there is still much to be done to ensure the Convention and its Parties (the UNFCCC has near universal membership) effectively address the urgent and growing climate change threat. Meeting the needs of climate vulnerable developing countries is a moral issue, but also vital for moving all negotiations forward within the UNFCCC.

“IF WWF WAS NOT THERE I AM NOT SURE ‘ECOSYSTEMS’ WOULD BE CONSIDERED IN UNFCCC AGREEMENTS. I THINK WWF’S REPUTATION MEANS WIDER-CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK-NGO MESSAGES GET HEARD TOO - WWF GIVES CREDIBILITY TO BROADER CAN LOBBYING”

*External NGO response to WWF effectiveness survey, 2012*



WWF and its partners CARE and Action Aid are recognised as global leaders in this critical new issue of loss and damage. Together, we have published influential reports on loss and damage, convened international workshops and coordinated effective advocacy.

Loss and damage is seen as the “third paradigm” in the UNFCCC process, necessary to respond to climate change beyond mitigation and adaptation.

Following two years of deliberations, COP19 (November 2013) established the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage, and COP20 (December 2014) finalised the organisation and governance of its Executive Committee and adopted an initial two year work plan.

These outcomes ensure that the Convention, and its Parties, consider mechanisms and actions necessary to plan for and address the losses and damage caused by climate change.

# WWF PRIORITIES : ROAD TO PARIS 2015 (COP 21)

The UNFCCC COP meeting in Paris in 2015 will be a key milestone in the efforts to address climate change, representing the most important global moment for progress on climate action since Copenhagen.

It provides a compelling opportunity for creating solidarity across all nations. It must respond to the wake-up call from the scientific community (including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 5th assessment report), align with clearly documented milestones for avoiding energy infrastructure lock-in, and limit the risks of exceeding 2°C.

In Paris, the nations of the world must generate momentum for clean energy investments and ambitious national climate policies by agreeing to a new legal framework that includes science and equity- based targets, climate finance, loss and damage, a global goal on adaptation and a process for increasing ambition over time.

## WWF’s priority issues for Paris:

- Closing the **gigatonne gap** (pre-2020) through renewable energy, energy efficiency and forests.
- Ensuring a **science and equity- based approach** for country commitments to finance and mitigation.
- **Building resilience** with a focus on loss and damage and a global adaptation goal. **Success in building resilience and climate finance requires effective and direct engagement on adaptation and loss and damage; progress on these priority issues can also help unlock mitigation issues.**

A bad outcome could lock in low international policy ambition on emission reduction, finance, adaptation and other key issues for the next decade, with potentially devastating consequences for people and planet.

## WWF VISION FOR PARIS COP21 OUTCOME

“GLOBAL AGREEMENTS ARE IN PLACE THAT INCREASE PRE-2020 AMBITION, GENERATE NEW POST-2020 COMMITMENTS FROM KEY COUNTRIES CONSISTENT WITH SCIENCE AND EQUITY, AND CREATE NEW MECHANISMS FOR RATCHETING UP AMBITION OVER TIME.”



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**Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) hit the Philippines in November 2013, claiming over 6200 lives and causing more than \$3.5 billion in economic damage.**

“Ours is the first generation that can end poverty and the last that can take steps to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.”

*UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon*

Extreme events like Typhoon Haiyan are projected to become more frequent and more extreme. These kinds of natural disasters, coupled with other "slow onset" shifts associated with climate change, are putting lives at risk, threatening the wellbeing of people and the resilience of ecosystems around the world



# ACTING NATIONALLY; LINKING GLOBALLY

Climate change affects us all; we all have a responsibility to help ensure a climate safe world.

WWF's approach includes:

- Working with communities and local stakeholders to relay stories of climate change risks and impact, and to empower poor and vulnerable communities to have a voice.
- Building and taking part in coalitions to increase pressure on governments towards creating a more ambitious and effective outcome in the international climate negotiations. Strong national commitments and action are vital for international success, and vice versa.



WWF supported the Global Climate March. In September 2014 more than half a million people across the globe took to the streets to tell world leaders that it was time to take climate change seriously

**”Our calls for climate justice are rattling windows from Delhi to London to Washington.”**

*Jamie Henn, 350.org*

# ADAPTATION PRIORITIES FOR COP21

**“I ENCOURAGE WWF TO CONTINUE PREPARING BRIEFING PAPERS AND WORKING WITH NEGOTIATORS ON POLICY POSITIONS. THE PROCESS NEEDS THE KIND OF MULTI-STAKEHOLDER VIEW THAT ORGANISATIONS LIKE WWF AND THEIR PARTNERS GIVE.”**

*Government response to WWF effectiveness survey, 2012*

A new international agreement on climate change must become effective by 2020. The text is currently under development by the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP), a subsidiary body of the UNFCCC, and will inform the Paris Agreement at COP21.

WWF's view is that the 2015 agreement requires political parity between the global effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and commitments on adaptation, finance, loss and damage. WWF's priorities for COP21 on adaptation include:

1. Inclusion of a **global goal on adaptation** in the Paris Agreement; this sends a clear message that Parties are committed to building resilience and helping those impacted by climate change.
2. Ensuring **Loss and Damage** is deeply anchored in the Paris Agreement, ideally as a clear stand alone element with legal force (mention in the preamble, which has no legal force, is not enough).
3. As well as mitigation commitments, **‘Intended nationally determined contributions’** (INDCs) are recognised and operationalised as an essential vehicle or vulnerable developing countries to present their adaptation needs, and for industrialised countries to set out their contributions (e.g. financial, technical) to

support developing countries.

4. **Adaptation finance**, specifically addressing how to scale up adaptation finance and how to distribute it fairly and equitably to vulnerable developing countries.
5. Ensuring the various **adaptation institutions**, such as the LDCs Expert Group and the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage, are effectively embedded in the new Agreement, and granted permanence, whilst given sufficient flexibility to adjust to evolving realities.



**"The increased severity and frequency of extreme events from climate change overwhelms infrastructure, support systems and capacity to respond. Yet loss and damage does not affect all countries equally. Indeed, poor countries and communities least responsible for the global climate crisis are in most instances the most vulnerable to its impacts, presenting potential for the perpetration of the biggest social injustice of our time."**

*From the report Tackling the Limits of Adaptation by CARE, Action Aid and WWF, released at COP18 held in Doha, Qatar, December 2012.*

# Adaptation Matters

## 400 PPM

In May 2013, for the first time in human history, a daily CO<sub>2</sub> value of 400 parts per million (ppm) was observed at Mauna Loa in Hawaii, the site of the longest continuous observational CO<sub>2</sub> record.

## 2014

has been ranked by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) as the hottest year on record, as part of a continuing trend.

## DECEMBER 2015

196 countries will meet in Paris for a UN Climate Change Conference to sign a new international climate agreement. This is vital for enabling nations to work together towards a low carbon, climate resilient future.

## 0.19 M

Over the period 1901 to 2010 global mean sea level rose by 0.19m. The rate of sea level rise since the mid 19th century has been larger than the mean rate during the previous 2 millennia.

## 26%

Since the beginning of the industrial era, oceanic uptake of CO<sub>2</sub> has resulted in acidification of the ocean – a 26% increase in ocean surface water acidity.

## 20 YRS

All three major global surface temperature reconstructions show that Earth has warmed since 1880. Most of this warming has occurred since the 1970s, with the 20 warmest years having occurred since 1981 and with all 10 of the warmest years occurring in the past 12 years.



### Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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