

A Pro-poor and People-centered Response to Climate Change

Consultation, Washington, DC, May 27, 2008

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

Contact Mauricio-Bedoya Gaitan
<http://cms.iucn.org/>

Work relates to Adaptation X Mitigation X

Activities and General Gaps

For IUCN, pro-poor and people-centered climate change issues are of direct relevance. IUCN's work in this respect is reflected through its initiatives in different ways. Special initiatives coordinate work across IUCN's 13 individual programmes on specific issues where justice and equity are key factors.

In terms of mitigation and the Climate Change Initiative, IUCN supports and promotes the concept of REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Ecosystem Degradation) through the Forest Conservation Programme. REDD aims to pay developing countries for the carbon value of their forests and conserve carbon in standing biomass within the framework of the post-2012 climate regime. As REDD could be a sustainable source of income for the poor in developing countries, IUCN, with other organizations, is working to promote the necessary mechanisms to ensure that local communities, as stewards of forests and carbon stocks, obtain the benefits of such a strategy. IUCN and its partners are developing specific activities related with REDD by means of 1) the Livelihoods and Landscapes Strategy towards an increased understanding of the value of forests for improving local livelihoods with a view to influencing policies that can reduce poverty and conserve forests; 2) the Mangroves for the Future Initiative, supporting local livelihoods and enhancing coastal ecosystem resilience by means of promoting investment in the conservation of these ecosystems and 3) the improvement of farming systems in drylands to exploit the high potential of dry soils for carbon storage, while also providing adaptation benefits and improving local livelihoods.

In terms of adaptation, IUCN's approach is community-based, participatory and built on traditional knowledge. Considering the great amount of people that climate change could displace where poor and vulnerable communities, including indigenous peoples and women who will be severely affected by increased and severity of droughts and floods, IUCN is undertaking several important activities: 1) mobilizing local knowledge and global action for sustainable water management; 2) promoting water and food security for rural communities through sound ecosystem management; 3) helping to meet the long-term development needs of coastal communities while securing their livelihoods against climate impacts, through the Mangroves for the Future Initiative, 4) building capacity of Governments and local communities to deal with extreme weather events and helping them prepare for potential climate change related natural disasters.

IUCN in collaboration with partners (International Institute for Sustainable Development, IISD; the Stockholm Environment Institute in Boston, SEI-US; and Intercooperation, the Forest Conservation Programme) has developed a Community-Based Risk Screening Tool-Adaptation and Livelihoods (CRiSTAL) to help people understand the links between local livelihoods and climate; assess a project's impact on community level adaptive capacity; and make adjustments to improve local adaptive capacity (capacity for what?). Based on the results from all field tests, CRiSTAL will be revised, and partners will seek additional funds to apply to the tool at various project sites, and move toward implementing adaptation activities into field activities. The tool was field-tested during 2004-2006 in Mali, Bangladesh, Tanzania, Nicaragua and Sri Lanka, before being applied for the first time in March-April 2007, as part of a Finland-funded Forest Conservation Programme climate change adaptation project in Zambia. IUCN

members and partners –IISD and CARE International – have organized CRiSTAL training workshops in Mozambique and Ghana in 2007.

From 2008-2010, CRiSTAL will be used as part of a broader Forest Conservation Programme climate change adaptation project in Zambia, Tanzania and Mozambique. The tool will also be used to mainstream climate change adaptation in other IUCN interventions across the globe, including the Livelihoods and Landscapes Strategy.

Given the fact that 70% of the world's poor are women, IUCN is working on influencing climate change mitigation and adaptation policies to include gender concerns at the local and global levels; mainstreaming gender equity and gender into all post-Kyoto climate-related policies (i.e. incorporating gender into financial mechanisms to ensure equitable access to resources and incentives); facilitating more equal participation of women in decision making for climate change mitigation and adaptation at the national, regional and international level; providing guidance to decision makers to implement adaptation measures which take into account gender; providing support and capacity building for women at risk to enhance their adaptive capacity (i.e. poverty alleviation projects, sharing information through networks of women in the South).

Among the issues we think should be highlighted for immediate consideration and development include:

In terms of mitigation, the identification of mechanisms for REDD based on an ecosystem approach that enhances natural processes for the sequestration and storage of carbon in existing forests and restored degraded forests; includes stakeholder participation at the local level as a key issue; reinforces ongoing forest governance reform processes towards the sustainable management of forests; and includes sufficient and diverse financial resources for countries to prepare for REDD activities related to capacity building for sustainable forest management and design of distributional mechanisms that contribute to poverty reduction and benefit local communities and indigenous peoples that depend on forest resources. The success of any mechanism such as REDD will ultimately depend on the effectiveness of its contribution to the development needs of poor communities that rely on forests.

With respect to adaptation to climate change, efforts should be put towards tackling the vulnerability of the poor to climate change. IUCN emphasizes the need to advance the sustainable management of forests and water as local natural resources poor communities depend upon. In order to achieve the sustainable use of these key resources from an ecosystem approach perspective, capacity building for ecosystem management in a sustainable way should be developed or increased. Considering that marginalized and poor communities rely on natural ecosystems for their survival and that these communities frequently live in areas that are highly vulnerable to climate change, it is urgent to understand how natural ecosystems will respond to climate change and what measures can be instituted to minimize potential negative impacts.