

WCC-2012-Res-058-EN

Ecosystem management for disaster risk reduction (DRR)

RECOGNIZING the United Nations Hyogo Action Framework and in particular its Priority Action 4 on *Reducing Underlying Risk Factors* as a guide for developing stronger environmentally related policies and practices for nature-based disaster risk reduction;

NOTING the protective functions of ecosystems such as coral reefs, mangroves, wetlands and mountain forests through, *inter alia*, flood mitigation, drought management, slope stabilization, wildfire control and that this is why they are referred to as “natural infrastructure” (the stock of ecosystems providing services needed for the operation of the economy and society that complement, augment or replace the services provided by engineered infrastructure);

RECALLING that the poor, women and children, in developing countries are disproportionately more vulnerable to natural disasters;

FURTHER CONCERNED that ecological degradation reduces the ability of ecosystems to sequester carbon, provide valuable resources such as food, medicinal plants, clean water, air and fuel, and thus further exacerbates the vulnerabilities to climate change and its related disasters;

CONVINCED that it is urgent to design strategies for adaptation to climate change that are based on environmental protection and restoration to reduce future impacts from disasters and other related adverse effects from climate change;

CONCERNED that disasters and the responses to them have a negative impact on biodiversity through the spread of invasive species, mass species mortality and loss of habitat, and that poorly planned post-disaster response and reconstruction work can further degrade ecosystems;

RECALLING that the frequency and severity of disasters, unless reduced through prevention or mitigation and preparedness measures, will only serve to undermine sustainable development initiatives;

AWARE that investing in natural barriers and in mainstreaming disaster risk and ecosystem management in development planning can be cost-efficient and may represent a no-regret solution that has potential to make a major contribution to the goal of achieving sustainable livelihoods for the poor;

EMPHASIZING that IUCN has experience and expertise in ecosystem management and is therefore a valuable resource in contributing to the understanding of underlying environmental risk factors and the way to reduce related social vulnerabilities; and

AFFIRMING that IUCN is uniquely positioned to integrate ecosystem management, livelihoods, community vulnerability, climate change adaptation and disaster management;

The World Conservation Congress, at its session in Jeju, Republic of Korea, 6–15 September 2012:

1. CALLS ON all of IUCN's State Members to develop and establish cross-sectoral policies among relevant sectors such as environment management, disaster risk reduction and climate change to provide a facilitating framework for a truly integrated approach to develop nature-based solutions for reducing community vulnerabilities and disseminate lessons learnt on best and worst practices;

2. URGES IUCN State and non-State Members to uphold the 2009 United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and IUCN joint publication *Making Disaster Risk Reduction Gender-Sensitive: Policy and Practical Guidelines* in relation to legislation, policies and programmes for sustainable development;
3. FURTHER CALLS ON State Members to commit to establishing innovative nature-based solutions in complementing engineered infrastructure with natural infrastructure for disaster risk reduction, as well as having post-disaster “green recovery” strategies in place;
4. URGES IUCN Member States to adopt a post “Hyogo Framework” that recognizes and capitalizes upon the role of ecosystem services for disaster risk reduction; and
5. REQUESTS the Director General to:
 - a. continue developing cross-sectoral partnerships, including through involvement with the Partnership for Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction (PEDRR) for integrating ecosystem- and nature-based disaster risk reduction into preventative and reactive responses to disasters;
 - b. continue promoting ecosystem- and nature-based disaster risk reduction at international fora, such as the United Nations Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction;
 - c. prioritize participatory initiatives for coastal, watershed, dryland and mountain ecosystem restoration for social-ecological resilience to disasters;
 - d. identify strategic links and facilitate collaboration between climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction communities for united action in sustainable environmental management;
 - e. further research and promote the economic case for ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction; and
 - f. develop guidelines to integrate disaster-risk reduction in green reconstruction and recovery initiatives.