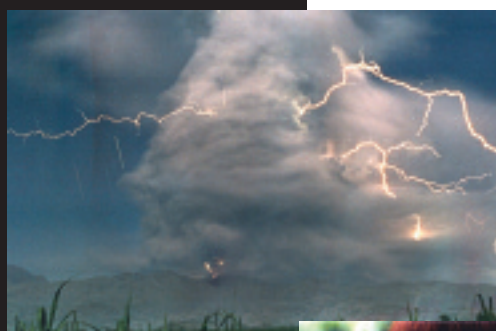


REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON THE LINKS BETWEEN BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Impacts, Adaptation and Mitigation



**REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON
THE LINKS BETWEEN BIODIVERSITY
AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

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Acknowledgements

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The authors would like to express their gratitude to Guy Midgley for his assistance in organizing the peer review of these reviews and to the anonymous peer reviewers. Thanks are due to the following for their contributions at an earlier stage: Pam Berry, Wendy Foden, Rhys Green, Zbig Karpowicz, John Lanchberry, Joanna Phillips, Deborah Procter, Bernardo Strassburg, Heikki Toivonen, Rachel Warren and Olly Watts. The authors are also grateful for all the comments provided by members of the CBD's second Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Biodiversity and Climate Change.

This work has been supported by the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Ministry of Environment, Finland.

Published by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

ISBN: 92-9225-136-8

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Citation

Campbell, A., Kapos, V., Scharlemann, J. P. W., Bubb, P., Chenery, A., Coad, L., Dickson, B., Doswald, N., Khan, M. S. I., Kershaw, F. and Rashid, M. (2009). Review of the Literature on the Links between Biodiversity and Climate Change: Impacts, Adaptation and Mitigation. Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Montreal. Technical Series No. 42, 124 pages.

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Cover photos (top to bottom): M. Spalding, T. Alipalo/UNEP, N. Burgess, M. Schneider/UNEP.

A Banson production, Cambridge, UK.
Printed in the UK by Lavenham Press

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| FORWARD | 5 |
| PREFACE | 6 |
| SECTION 1: IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON BIODIVERSITY | 8 |
| 1.1 Executive summary | 9 |
| 1.2 Introduction..... | 11 |
| 1.2.1 Purpose and scope of the review | 11 |
| 1.2.2 Dimensions of climate change..... | 11 |
| 1.3 Ecosystems | 12 |
| 1.3.1 Types of impacts on ecosystems | 13 |
| 1.3.2 Ecosystem types | 23 |
| 1.4 Species | 23 |
| 1.4.1 Changes in distribution | 24 |
| 1.4.2 Changes in population status..... | 24 |
| 1.4.3 Characteristics and factors contributing to vulnerability or resilience | 28 |
| 1.5 Genetic diversity | 28 |
| 1.6 Ecological interactions | 28 |
| 1.7 Feedbacks to climate..... | 29 |
| 1.8 Methodologies and tools..... | 30 |
| 1.9 Conclusion | 31 |
| 1.10 References..... | 33 |
| SECTION 2: THE LINKAGES BETWEEN BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION | 49 |
| 2.1 Executive summary | 51 |
| 2.2 Introduction..... | 53 |
| 2.2.1 Adaptation | 53 |
| 2.2.2 Biodiversity and adaptation..... | 53 |
| 2.3 The role of biodiversity in societal adaptation to climate change | 54 |
| 2.3.1 Coastal adaptation | 54 |
| 2.3.2 Adaptation in the water sector..... | 58 |
| 2.3.3 Adaptation in agriculture..... | 59 |
| 2.3.4 Forest adaptation | 62 |
| 2.3.5 Adaptation in the urban environment | 63 |
| 2.3.6 Health | 64 |
| 2.3.7 Integration across sectors | 64 |
| 2.4 Adaptation strategies and their impact on biodiversity | 64 |
| 2.4.1 Coastal defence | 64 |
| 2.4.2 Water management | 66 |
| 2.4.3 Agricultural practice | 66 |
| 2.4.4 Urban environment adaptation | 66 |
| 2.4.5 Health | 66 |
| 2.5 Adaptation in biodiversity conservation..... | 66 |
| 2.5.1 Autonomous adaptation..... | 67 |
| 2.5.2 Planned adaptation | 67 |
| 2.5.3 Implementation considerations | 72 |
| 2.6 Synergies and trade-offs between adaptation and mitigation | 73 |
| 2.7 Conclusion | 73 |
| 2.8 References..... | 75 |
| SECTION 3: THE LINKAGES BETWEEN BIODIVERSITY AND MITIGATION | 91 |
| 3.1 Executive summary | 91 |
| 3.2 Introduction..... | 93 |
| 3.3 Role of ecosystems in the carbon cycle | 93 |

| | | |
|-------|---|-----|
| 3.3.1 | Carbon storage..... | 93 |
| 3.3.2 | Carbon sequestration | 93 |
| 3.3.3 | Emissions from deforestation | 94 |
| 3.3.4 | Emissions from forest degradation | 94 |
| 3.3.5 | Emissions from general land-use change | 95 |
| 3.3.6 | Ecosystems as ‘sinks’ or ‘sources’ | 95 |
| 3.3.7 | Feedbacks to the climate system | 96 |
| 3.4 | The role of biodiversity in mitigation policies | 96 |
| 3.4.1 | Land-use activities under the UNFCCC | 98 |
| 3.4.2 | Issues with including ecosystems in mitigation policy | 98 |
| 3.4.3 | Potential for mitigation through forest activities..... | 98 |
| 3.4.4 | Potential for mitigation of other activities under the LULUCF | 99 |
| 3.4.5 | Geo-engineering techniques | 104 |
| 3.5 | Renewable energy..... | 108 |
| 3.5.1 | Biofuel production..... | 108 |
| 3.5.2 | Wind farms | 109 |
| 3.5.3 | Nuclear power | 110 |
| 3.5.4 | Hydropower | 110 |
| 3.5.5 | Solar power | 110 |
| 3.5.6 | Geothermal energy | 110 |
| 3.5.7 | Tidal energy | 111 |
| 3.6 | Options for multiple benefits through mitigation strategies | 111 |
| 3.7 | Conclusion | 111 |
| 3.8 | References..... | 113 |

FOREWORD



The achievement of the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) – the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources – is coming under threat from one of the world’s major environmental, social and economic challenges: climate change.

Climate change adds to the global challenge of biodiversity conservation. There is ample scientific evidence that climate change affects biodiversity. It is threatening individual species as well as entire ecosystems, with negative consequences for human well-being. However, the links between biodiversity and climate change flow both ways. Biodiversity, through the ecosystem services it supports, makes an important contribution to both climate change mitigation and adaptation. The interlinkages between biodiversity, climate change, and sustainable development, have been recognized within both the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as well as other international fora.

Healthy, intact ecosystems have long provided critical ecosystem services, providing people with food and shelter, protecting communities from drought and floods, and building the basis of much of our traditional knowledge, innovations and practices. As climate change threatens food security and increases exposure to natural disasters, these ecosystem services will become even more important and valued.

Where species and ecosystems are well protected and healthy, natural adaptation may take place, as long as the

rate of change is not too rapid and the scale of change is not too great. However, where climate change stacks as an additional threat upon other stresses such as pollution, overuse or invasive alien species, natural adaptive capacity may be exceeded. It is important, therefore, to ensure that biodiversity conservation and management considers the interplay of all human activities, including climate change.

The report of the Second *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Biodiversity and Climate Change, which has been published as CBD Technical Series No. 41, *Connecting Biodiversity and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation – Report of the Second Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biodiversity and Climate Change*, is the outcome of scientific and technical deliberations conducted by experts from 23 countries as well as United Nations organizations, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and representatives from indigenous communities. The present document provides a review of recent scientific literature on the links between biodiversity and climate change which was used for reference by the AHTEG.

I wish to thank the World Conservation Monitoring Centre of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP-WCMC) for preparing this important document.

Ahmed Djoghlaoui
Executive Secretary
Convention on Biological Diversity

PREFACE

These three literature reviews on the ‘Links between Biodiversity and Climate change: Impacts, Adaptation and Mitigation’ were produced by UNEP-WCMC. They were commissioned by the UK Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (with additional support from the Ministry of Environment, Finland) to provide background material for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Second *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Biodiversity and Climate Change. These reviews complement the CBD Technical Series No. 41 *Connecting Biodiversity and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation*. This work was reviewed at the meetings of the CBD second AHTEG on Biodiversity and Climate Change held in London in November 2008 and in Helsinki in April 2009. The reviews were subsequently peer reviewed.

The IPCC 4th Assessment Report (AR4; IPCC 2007) concluded that climate change will have significant impacts on many aspects of biological diversity; on ecosystems, species, genetic diversity within species, and on ecological interactions. The implications of these impacts are significant for the long-term stability of the natural world and for the many benefits and services that humans derive from it. Adaptation strategies will be needed to respond to these impacts. Countries are starting to develop and implement adaptation policies. These adaptation strategies tend to focus on technological, structural, social, and economic developments, and the linkages between biodiversity and adaptation are often overlooked. Nevertheless, biodiversity is linked to climate change adaptation, in its role in adaptation strategies and the impacts of adaptation strategies on it. Biodiversity is also important with regards to mitigation policies. Indeed, the IPCC AR4 provided growing

evidence of the importance of natural ecosystems in the carbon cycle and in mitigation policies. In addition, it was recognised that climate mitigation policies focussed on reducing carbon dioxide emissions can have impacts on biodiversity; both positive and negative.

Because of the importance of these impacts and of climate change itself, there has been a great deal of recent research on these three issues, though more for some than others. These three reviews focus on the scientific literature published after the AR4. The first part of this work reviews the literature on the impacts of climate change on biodiversity. The second section aims to provide a better understanding of the role of biodiversity in societal and in biodiversity conservation adaptation as well as the impacts of adaptation strategies on biodiversity. Finally the third section aims to highlight the developments in our understanding of the role of biodiversity in climate change mitigation, and the impacts of mitigation policies on biodiversity.

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SECTION 1

IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON BIODIVERSITY

A review of the recent scientific literature

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