

## Water and Climate Coalition

### Proposals for the Climate Change Negotiations, at COP 17, 28 November – 9 December 2011

*The Water and Climate Coalition (WCC) brings together stakeholders from the global water and climate community to promote progressive and integrated international water and climate change policy. WCC currently consists of 14 members and 2 collaborative partners<sup>[1]</sup>*

#### Climate Change is Water Change

**Climate change is to a great extent water change. The IPCC states that water is the primary medium through which climate change impacts will be felt by humans and the environment<sup>1</sup>. Water is also critical for climate change mitigation, as many efforts to sustainably reduce carbon emissions rely on water availability for their long-term success.**

**Recognising the increasing prominence of water in relation to the climate change agenda, the Water and Climate Coalition calls on Parties to consider the following policy recommendations in their discussions:**

#### **There is a need for a consolidated approach to address the pivotal role of water in UNFCCC programmes and mechanisms**

Water resource management is a key element to the ability to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Moreover, it demonstrates the linkages between adaptation and mitigation. Management of water resources is not a sectoral issue but affects almost all aspects of society and economy – including notably health, food and energy security, industrial development and growth. When viewing various aspects of long term resilience to climate change through the water lens, cross-sectoral integration benefits become apparent.

Addressing water in both adaptation and mitigation measures will have a pivotal role in successful implementation of programmes and measures. Water related principles need to be established and applied through local-to-global collaboration among sectoral, multisectoral and multidisciplinary

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<sup>[1]</sup> *Members:* Cap-Net, Chartered Institute for Water and Environmental Management, Green Cross International, Freshwater Action Network, IUCN, Instituto Ipanema, International Water Association (IWA), Progressio, Stakeholder Forum, Stockholm International Water Institute, University of North Carolina, The Nature Conservancy, World Wide Foundation (WWF). *Collaborative partners:* Global Water Partnership (GWP), Cooperative Programme on Water and Climate (CPWC) and CONAGUA  
<sup>1</sup> IPCC Technical Paper on Climate Change and Water, <http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/technical-papers/climate-change-water-en.pdf>

institutions. Existing expertise and knowledge needs to be readily available to enhance the efforts of Parties addressing climate change and water change in a sustainable manner.

In order to respond to this demand, water needs a consolidated approach. Facilitating the integration and application of water knowledge as part of adaptation and mitigation strategies and measures is necessary. Given the centrality of water change to climate change, the various UNFCCC bodies need to specifically address the role of water.

## **Secure the role and knowledge of water management guiding the work of the UNFCCC Adaptation Committee**

The Cancun Adaptation Framework recognises that *the planning, prioritization and implementation of adaptation actions should include projects and programmes in the area of water resources*<sup>2</sup>.

Given the functions of the Adaptation Committee, there is a need for placing special emphasis on the expertise of the Adaptation Committee members and the mechanisms for interacting with relevant organisations on global, regional and national level. Many parties have in negotiations and submissions to the UNFCCC Secretariat emphasized the importance of having sufficient technical, policy, legal, social and financial experience, knowledge and expertise in the impacts of, and vulnerability and adaptation to, climate change. Given the pivotal role of water management in adaptation to climate change, it will be critical to secure the role and knowledge of water management in guiding the work of the UNFCCC Adaptation Committee.

Therefore, qualified water resource management knowledge should be represented amongst the members of the Adaptation Committee. In addition, establishing a formal link between the Adaptation Committee and an expert group dealing with broad water resource knowledge and management would ensure covering the spectrum of water resource issues.

## **Develop a thematic focus initiative on water resources under the Nairobi Work Programme**

Since the NWP serves as a platform for the dissemination of scientific and technical knowledge through which adaptation implementation is supported, the cross cutting nature of water and climate change truly warrants specific attention. To address this comprehensively, the Water and Climate Coalition suggests that a specific thematic focus initiative on water resources is developed under the NWP. The initiative should address the 9 areas of work under the NWP, aiming at providing an interface for integrating water expertise into the different areas. In addition, the focus initiative should become a vehicle for integrating water resources management into adaptive strategies for key priority sectors, like agriculture, energy, water services and health.

## **Organize a technical workshop on “Increasing the role of water management and water resource use in building climate resilience” at the 36th session of SBSTA**

In order to facilitate dialogue and integration, the Coalition suggests that a workshop on the role of water management in building climate resilience and adapting to climate change is organized by the UNFCCC secretariat at the 36<sup>th</sup> session of SBSTA. The aim would be to bring together water expertise and Parties to discuss how implementing adaptive water resource management strengthens climate

<sup>2</sup>

See Cancun Agreement AWG LCA, p 4

<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=2>

change resilience and is therefore a key plank of adaptation. The technical workshop could identify how adaptation activities under the UNFCCC could best support activities relevant to developing:

- the partnerships and strengthened institutional and stakeholder capacities for water management that are vital for building the social dimensions of climate resilience
- planning and sustainable management of water infrastructure, including ecosystem services from natural infrastructure, that are vital for building the ecological dimensions of climate resilience
- strategies for bridging gaps between local knowledge and national policy, and between the roles of national and local institutions in implementation
- mechanisms whereby application of water resource management to reducing climate risks is integrated into relevant plans, policies and strategies, including development planning and poverty reduction programmes
- strategies for financing effective implementation of water management for climate resilience

The workshop should build on the NWP Knowledge Product on Freshwater and the Technical paper on water and climate change impacts, requested by SBSTA at its 34<sup>th</sup> session. It should be set up as an interactive dialogue between country representatives, water practitioners, academia and NGOs that aims to provide clear recommendations to UNFCCC and Parties on how to build climate resilience through implementation of adaptive water management.

### **Water as a cross-cutting benchmark in the NWP, supporting the work carried out under the SBI**

As already stated above, the Water and Climate Coalition considers it of vital importance that the work of SBSTA and SBI are carried forward in a coordinated manner, so that intelligence captured and discussed under SBSTA can inform the processes of the SBI. The Coalition suggests that water resources management provides useful examples in the requested joint SBSTA/SBI in session workshop to consider the outcome of the Nairobi work programme, to highlight the scientific, technical and socio-economic aspects of impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change most relevant to the SBI (FCCC/SBSTA/2011/L.13-7d).

In the future work of the NWP, the Coalition suggests that the secretariat sets up a specific focus area for facilitating the development of partnerships and capacity of institutions and stakeholders for long term integration of water resources management in climate adaptation schemes and plans.

### **Sustainable water resources management – a prerequisite for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation**

In order to achieve effective climate change solutions at the necessary scale, government policies must prevent further destruction of ecosystems and provide incentives for their protection while promoting ecosystem restoration. The carbon storage potential of forests is influenced by the availability of water. Without sustaining the long term availability of water resources, the efforts of any REDD+ programme to permanently reduce emissions, increase removals and conserve carbon stocks will fall short. Conversely, REDD+ can contribute to the protection of ecosystem services such as water regulation.

It is vital that water management knowledge and experiences inform upcoming decisions on REDD+. Water resources, as a major ecosystem service, are included in the REDD+ safeguards referred to in appendix I to decision 1/CP.16. As such, water should be specifically addressed in the informative systems on safeguards and national REDD+ plans.

## Establish water as a priority under the Green Climate Fund

The Green Climate Fund was established in Cancun to deliver financial resources to developing countries for climate change adaptation and mitigation. The terms and structure have been elaborated since and the expectations for an equitable and useful design are extensive.

The Cancun Agreement calls for the GCF 'to support projects, programmes, policies and other activities in developing country Parties using thematic funding windows'. Criteria governing the Green Climate Fund should support and facilitate the mainstreaming of water management into climate adaptation and mitigation measures, and facilitate institutional coordination.

The Water and Climate Coalition considers it particularly purposeful to develop a thematic facility focusing on water projects and infrastructure which engage the private sector. The aim should be building capacity in water management to address adaptation and mitigation measures while strengthening the local and regional private sectors in developing countries.

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### Members and collaborative partners of the Water and Climate Coalition:

