

# **Drawing a “Red Line” for Ecological Protection to Mitigate and Adapt to Climate Change**

## **——Nature-Based Solution Initiative**

### **1. Title**

“Drawing a ‘Red Line’ for Ecological Protection to Mitigate and Adapt to Climate Change”

### **2. Background**

Ecological environment is the basis of sustainable economic development of human society, and a healthy natural ecosystem is one of the necessary conditions for human survival. While promoting the global social and economic development, the high-intensity exploitation and utilization of resources also has caused ecosystems destruction to various degrees, bringing a series of serious ecosystem degradation problems, such as the loss of forests, wetlands and biodiversity. As addressed in the IPBES report, the earth's natural environment is undergoing unprecedented deterioration. Climate change and biodiversity loss are the common challenges facing all mankind.

To solve these problems, it is necessary to adopt the "nature-based solution" approach, carry out land space

utilization planning on a global scale, enhance the carbon sink function of ecosystem, facilitate ecosystem recovery and mitigate climate change through land use management. A spatial planning with climate security, ecological security, and coordinated economic and society development should be formed to provide the long-term development of human society with an important material basis and natural environment support.

By setting a “red line” for ecological protection and adopting a "nature-based solution" approach, we will protect the most important and environmentally sensitive areas in China to improve the carbon sequestration function of the ecosystems, and support for the mitigation of climate change and the conservation of biodiversity. The red line of ecological protection is of great significance for a sustainable, healthy and beautiful earth and promoting the harmonious relationship between human and nature. Therefore, we propose our initiative of "Drawing a ‘Red Line’ for Ecological Protection to Mitigate and Adapt to Climate Change".

### **3. Initiative Overview**

The red line for ecological protection refers to the area that has special importance in ecological functions and must be strictly

protected by enforcement within the scope of ecological space. The red line is the bottom line and lifeline for safeguarding and maintaining national ecological security. It usually includes areas with important ecological functions such as water conservation, biodiversity protection, soil and water conservation, wind prevention and sand fixation, and coastal ecological stabilization, as well as areas with sensitive and fragile ecological environment such as soil erosion, land desertification and stony desertification. The goal is to improve the carbon sequestration function of ecosystems and support the mitigation of climate change and the conservation of biodiversity.

The initiative will call for active implementation of national spatial planning measures, based on scientific research and data, put forward a set of methodologies and guidelines for land use planning including the "ecological red lines", and promote the use.

The initiative will provide capacity-building and technical support for countries and regions planning to launch similar initiatives or to conduct pilot demonstrations, including the exchange of knowledge and information, field visits and seminars. Using practical experience, the initiative will

continuously improve the methodology and expand its application in different countries and regions to promote the formation of coordinated action in a global sense.

#### **4. How the initiative addresses climate change using natural systems**

The initiative will recognize and protect carbon sinks of important ecosystem, delimit protected areas, make reasonable layout of development and construction activities, repair the damaged ecological system, implement corresponding protection and management, strengthen the ecosystem monitoring and enforcement, protect, maintain and improve the integrity, stability, and resilience of the ecosystem, reduce the effect by land use change on ecosystem carbon sinks function, build green barrier to address climate change risks, mitigate and adapt to climate change and reduce climate disaster effect, and form the virtuous circle between ecosystem conservation and restoration and the climate change.

Existing practices have proved that the designation of protected areas by ecological red lines can achieve "greater carbon sequestration services provided by a smaller area" and contribute to the implementation of national self-determined commitments under the Paris Agreement. In China, for example,

the area within the initial drawing of the red line for ecological protection covers about 30 percent of the country's land area, but it can protect about 95 percent of rare and endangered species and their habitats. It also protects nearly 40 percent of the country's water conservation and flood regulation functions, about 32 percent of the country's windproof and sand-fixing functions, and the carbon sequestration of above-ground vegetation within the red line accounts for 45.48 percent of the country's total. By strictly observing the red line of ecological protection, it is conducive to achieving the utilization of nature system in response to climate change.

#### **5. How the initiative will support climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as other important social, economic and environmental goals in the coming years**

By calling on all parties to take action actively and delimiting the red line, the initiative will promote natural ecological protection, biodiversity conservation, control the loss of biodiversity, protect forest, grassland, wetland and other important ecological systems, improve ecosystem carbon sequestration capacity, promote the incorporation of nature-based solution related content into the post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, and make positive contributions to The

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development related targets and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

## **6. Implementation of the initiative and participation of countries, organizations and stakeholders**

The initiative will invite the parties of the UN Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector involved in biodiversity conservation. At the same time, great importance is attached to the participation of local communities, local governments and civil society organizations in the formulation and implementation of the initiative.

## **7. Stimulation to the work in other major areas**

The Initiative can support local communities and indigenous peoples to continue to protect their ecosystems and help women, children, the poor and other vulnerable groups cope with climate change and improve their livelihoods.

## **8. How the initiative relates to the existing initiatives based on the existing experience**

In 2018, The Republic of Egypt, as the President of the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP14), and the People's Republic of

China, as future host, together with the Secretariat of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity teamed up to launch the Action Agenda for Nature and People. The Action Agenda promotes nature-based solutions to counter the global challenges. The "red line for ecological protection" initiative is also China's contribution under the agenda. In addition, after several years of development practice, some countries adopting similar planning methods, including China, have formed preliminary planning methods and control plans, which can be analyzed and summarized as methodological guidance.

## **9. Financing Mechanism**

Invite multilateral development aid agencies, including the Climate Change Fund (GCF), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and countries with the ability to contribute foreign aid funds to support pilot projects, methodological development and capacity building activities. At the same time, welcome local and non-governmental organizations to provide financial support and carry out local pilot projects.

## **10. Management Methods and Monitoring Standards**

Work with multilateral development aid agencies and national foreign aid fund management frameworks, and promote the development of coordinated standards among relevant agencies and countries through a series of cooperation mechanisms and international conferences.

### **11. Publicity Strategy**

Utilize key multilateral mechanisms such as the annual UN General Assembly, the UN Convention on Climate Change and each conference of the parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity to promote the issue.

### **12. Contact Information of the Proposer**

Ministry of Ecology and Environment, the People's Republic of China