

## **Engaging with the Nature-Based Solutions coalition for the Climate Action Summit**

### **i. Title/Heading:**

Protected Areas and Resilient Landscapes – Project Finance for Permanence in Colombia, Perú and Bhutan.

### **ii. Context and rationale:**

Healthy, well-managed protected areas are critical to the 2015 Paris Agreement's ambitions of creating a low-carbon global economy and a climate-resilient world. The role of forests and other natural systems in sequestering carbon has been well-documented. Similarly, protected areas provide a suite of ecosystem services that help vulnerable communities during extreme weather events. These include protection from soil erosion due to heavy rainfall, coastal storm surge and wave attenuation, and flooding. National governments would benefit from acknowledging the benefits that nature provides by placing protected and other conserved areas at the center of their commitments to addressing climate-related challenges.

### **iii. An overview of the contribution:**

Protected areas and other conserved areas, such as indigenous and community conserved lands and sacred natural areas, have played a critical role in biodiversity conservation for the past century. Beyond providing a haven for species, these areas also provide vital ecosystem services that sustain livelihoods, connect landscapes, capture and store carbon, and inspire people to value the natural world. Governments, protected area managers and conservation groups alike often neglect the increasing risk that climate change poses to protected areas and the ecosystem services they provide. Most planners and managers of the world's protected areas do not consider climate risks, instead relying on traditional approaches to conservation that are rapidly becoming obsolete with increased warming and climate variability. WWF believes that a viable future for people and nature mandates that conservation efforts and strategies—including the management of protected and other conserved areas—are continuously updated to account for unavoidable climate change risks to biodiversity, ecosystems and ecosystem services. National governments have a vested interest in doing so to ensure that protected areas continue to deliver on commitments to their citizens and to the UNFCCC, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This contribution will focus on guiding Parties to centrally incorporate these ideas into revised NDCs for 2020.

### **iv. How the contribution leverages living natural systems as a solution to avert climate change?**

Managing socio-ecological landscapes as natural carbon sinks and resources for adaptation is increasingly recognized as a necessary, efficient and relatively cost-effective strategy. Protected areas store 15 per cent of terrestrial carbon and supply ecosystem services for disaster reduction, water supply, food and public health, all of which enable community-based adaptation. Many natural and managed ecosystems can help reduce climate change impacts. But protected areas have advantages over other approaches to natural ecosystem management in terms of legal and governance clarity, capacity and effectiveness. In many cases protection is the only way of keeping carbon locked in and ecosystem services running smoothly.

Without the investment made in protected areas systems worldwide, the situation would be even worse. Increasing investment through a partnership of governments, communities, indigenous peoples, non-governmental organizations and the private sector would ensure greater protection of these essential services. But these co-benefits for climate, biodiversity and society are often missed or ignored. As we enter an unprecedented scale of negotiations about climate and biodiversity it is important that these messages reach policy makers loud and clear and are translated into effective policies and funding mechanisms.

**v. How might the contribution support both climate, mitigation and adaptation as well as other important co-benefits and social, economic and environmental outcomes in coming years.**

They include:

- a. Enhancing and maintaining natural carbon stocks
- b. Reduction in carbon emissions through reduced deforestation, reduced degradation, natural re-growth and reforestation.
- c. Increasing climate resilience, related to the ecosystem services provided in landscapes, that will be maintained through adaptive land use management strategies and resilience building actions that maintain, for example, key water regulation services
- d. Social impact to local communities that participate in local adaptation strategies, each of which will explicitly account for risks and impacts of climate change.
- e. Net economic impact – This is yet to be fully calculated.
- f. Minimising species extinction and ecological losses and fostering an increase of biodiversity

**vi. Which countries and organisations are involved in the contribution?**

*Core WWF implementing partners include WWF Colombia, WWF Peru, WWF Bhutan, WWF Brasil, WWF United States*

*Other possible implementing and/or funding partners include The German government, The Green Climate Fund and GEF*

**vii. How have stakeholders (for example local communities, youth and indigenous peoples, where applicable) been consulted in developing the contribution?**

For all countries that started the full proposal development ( Peru, Colombia), or are starting the program's implementation ( Bhutan), a full consultation of local communities and indigenous people has been carried out .

**viii. Where can the contribution be put into action?**

*Bhutan, Peru, Colombia.*

**ix. How the contribution will be delivered? How will different stakeholders be engaged in its implementation? What are the potential transformational impacts?**

To increase ambition and highlight the role of protected areas while inspiring others to action, WWF is developing a list of recommendations for Parties as they work to revise their NDCs for 2020 or in 5-year cycles as agreed in the 2015 Paris Agreement.

1. Acknowledge the role that protected and other conserved areas can play in achieving climate change adaptation and mitigation goals and include them in NDCs and related climate change policies.
2. Increase coverage of protected and conserved areas and set specific, measurable and time-bound targets.
3. Clearly articulate the role of protected and conserved areas in helping people adapt to climate change and link specific climate hazards and vulnerable populations with the appropriate ecosystem services needed for adaptation.

4. Integrate the carbon sequestration benefits of protected and other conserved areas into climate change mitigation targets.

5. Commit to managing protected and other conserved areas for current and anticipated climate risks to ecosystems and biodiversity while calling attention to the need for increased technical and financial support to improve protected area management in the face of rapid change.

- x. **Is this initiative contributing to other Climate Action Summit workstreams (industry transition; energy transition; climate finance and carbon pricing; infrastructure, cities and local action; resilience and adaptation; youth and citizen mobilization; social and political drivers; mitigation strategy)?**

*Yes: Social and political Drivers, Resilience and adaptation; mitigation strategies*

- xi. **How does this contribution build upon examples of experience to date? How does the contribution link with different ongoing initiatives?**

The Project Finance for Permanence (PFP) model has been successfully implemented in other countries, such as Brazil (ARPA for Life), Costa Rica (Costa Rica Forever), Bhutan (Bhutan for Life), Peru (Peru's Natural Legacy), and Canada (Great Bear). HECO is part of WWF's *Earth for Life* initiative, which aims to expand the PFP model across the globe.

- xii. **What are the mechanisms for funding (with specific emphasis on potential for partnerships)?**

A central goal of the initiative is to ensure the sustainable long-term financing of protected areas. The PFP approach uses an innovative financial strategy based on a public-private partnership where resources from international cooperation, private sector, civil society, philanthropy are combined to close the assessed funding gap over a defined period of time, while the government is supported to find and develop new sources of sustainable funding for PAs (such as payment for environmental services, compensation and the application of carbon neutrality), so that the long-term management of the protected areas system is fully self-sustaining by the end of the program( see below figure) <sup>1</sup>. An example of this new financing sources has been the Government's decision to provide Heritage Colombia with the 5% of the recently created carbon tax for the implementation of this program.

- xiii. **What is the communication strategy?**

The communication strategy is supported by a Policy Incidence Strategy, whose objective is to ensure the commitment of the Governments , public and private donors .

- xiv. **What are the details of proponents (indicating the degree of commitment among the countries and organizations that are named).**

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<sup>1</sup> The PFP approach has been successfully implemented by other countries, such as "Costa Rica forever" in Costa Rica and "ARPA for Life" in Brazil. It is also a central piece of the GCF recently approved "Bhutan for Life" (FP050)

*WWF implementing partners include WWF Bhutan WWF Peru, WWF Colombia and WWF United States*

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