



A Special Report on Selected Side Events at the Cancún Climate Change Conference

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Events convened on Wednesday, 1 December 2010

Blue Carbon: Valuing Carbon Dioxide Mitigation by Coastal Marine Systems



Emily Pidgeon, CI, announced the launch of the Blue Carbon Initiative which will focus on coastal carbon sequestration, payment mechanisms, and mitigation policy.

Presented by Conservation International (CI)

This event discussed the potential for marine ecosystems to contribute to climate change mitigation. Emily Pidgeon, CI, said coastal management is essential for managing climate change and provides an effective, low cost mitigation tool. She said sea grasses, salt marshes, and mangroves store significant amounts of carbon in their sediments. She suggested that the estimated USD25 billion per year provided by coastal ecosystem services could form the basis for developing a REDD-like incentive agreement for coastal ecosystems.

Stephen Crooks, ESA PWA Consulting, said draining wetlands significantly decreases their climate sequestration capacity and can increase their carbon emissions. He said the net carbon sequestration per unit area is greater for tidal wetlands than tropical and temperate forests when sediment is included. He noted that more research is needed to fully understand wetland biochemistry, specifically, the amount of carbon absorbed and released into the water versus into the air.

Roger Ullman, Linden Trust for Conservation, presented preliminary research on the economic valuation of wetlands and blue carbon schemes. He said, assuming a price of carbon of USD20 per tonne and a discount rate of 10%, mangroves provide USD15-25,000 per hectare compared to approximately USD8,000 for tropical forests. He said this implies that wetland carbon credit schemes could be more valuable than shrimp farming.

Dorothee Herr, IUCN, emphasized that there are opportunities to link coastal wetland management to climate mitigation policy. She said REDD+ can apply to mangrove forests and that SBSTA's guidance on degradation drivers, methodologies, and monitoring, reporting and verification standards is applicable to these ecosystems. She proposed developing a REDD-like financial mechanism for soil-based carbon storage and sequestration that can synergize with REDD+. She also suggested: looking for opportunities in Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMA); including coastal management under Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF), if accounting rules are developed; and increasing support for coastal projects under the CDM.

Participants discussed, *inter alia*, REDD+ and the relationship between sequestration rates and sea level rise.

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Update on IPCC Activities

Presented by WMO and UNEP Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

R K Pachauri, IPCC, explained that this event would provide an update on the IPCC Special Reports currently under preparation, and on activities related to the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5). He updated on the InterAcademy Council review of the IPCC, explaining it aims to strengthen IPCC processes and procedures.

Chris Field, IPCC, reported on progress within Working Group (WG) II. He emphasized that AR5 must provide science that meets the highest standards and supports decision-making under uncertainty. He highlighted WG II's stronger emphasis in AR5 on seamless integration across WGs and on social issues, such as human security and poverty.

Ramon Pichs Madruga, IPCC, reported on progress within WG III and on the forthcoming "Special Report on Renewable Energy Sources and Climate Change Mitigation" (SRREN). He emphasized that SRREN aims to provide information on potential costs, barriers, and policy issues related to renewable technologies.

Jean-Pascal van Ypersele, IPCC, explained that AR5 will examine two clusters of cross-cutting issues related to methodologies and themes. On methodologies, he highlighted issues related to scenarios and communication of uncertainties and risks.

Thomas Stocker, reported on progress within WG I via a pre-recorded video address. He outlined the report and noted various climate impacts, including that sea level continues to rise at about 3.3 millimeters per year.

R K Pachauri, IPCC, discussed the forthcoming AR5 Synthesis Report, summarizing its approved outline and noting the Report's important characteristics, including its strong policy relevance.

Participants discussed, *inter alia*, how to translate scientific information to the public.



R K Pachauri, IPCC, announced that the USD 800,000 of prize money received by the IPCC for winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 2009 would be used to launch a fellowship program to increase climate research capacity in some countries.

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Gender into International Climate Policy: Climate and Gender Capacity Building for Women Scholars

Presented by GenderCC - Women for Climate Justice

This event discussed gender in climate policy and capacity building for women delegates and scholars. Gotelind Alber, GenderCC, emphasized that in 2008 there was no reference to gender in the climate policy process. She referenced the AWG-LCA draft text, which refers to "gender considerations" but noted that women are largely considered a "vulnerable sector" rather than having a significant role in or impact on policy. Alber stressed the importance of integrating women into mitigation and finance, and suggested drawing on the global fund framework.

Eunice Warue, GenderCC, highlighted that women's involvement in climate change differs from men's in terms of the impacts they feel, and their: contributions to the climate problem; contributions to policy; and reaction to the impacts. She also emphasized the importance of increasing the number of qualified women delegates.

Gillian Bowser, Colorado State University, and Betty Loiselle, University of Florida, spoke about the need to build academic capacity among women in the climate sciences. Loiselle highlighted the potential for new technologies to aid scientists in translating information into knowledge for policy-makers. Bowser highlighted the recent "Six Americas" report, which illuminates that 44% of the American public is "disengaged" in climate issues and the majority of these people are women and minorities.

Participants discussed several issues, including: how to use current development funding for gender work; how to involve local women in the process; advocacy; links to the Millennium Development Goals; and networks of female university scholars. One participant mentioned that 10-15% of heads of delegations and approximately 30% of all UNFCCC delegates are female.



Gotelind Alber, GenderCC, stressed the importance of incorporating gender considerations into the UNFCCC climate finance discussions.

More information:

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