

# CATALYZING ADAPTATION

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Key Outcomes from the  
Global Commission on Adaptation

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GLOBAL  
COMMISSION ON  
ADAPTATION



## CONTENTS

Letter from WRI Leadership .....	3
Commissioners and Convening Countries .....	4
Donors .....	7
The Progress of the Global Commission on Adaptation.....	8
Adapt Now: A Global Call for Leadership on Climate Resilience .....	10
Communications and Outreach: Elevating Adaptation on the Global Agenda.....	12
Year of Action.....	15
Finance.....	16
Locally Led Adaptation.....	18
Agriculture and Food Security.....	20
Resilient Cities.....	22
Nature-based Solutions.....	24
The Road Ahead: Advancing Adaptation Worldwide .....	27
Partners .....	28

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## ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This document provides a summary of World Resources Institute's contributions to the Global Commission on Adaptation from October 2018–January 2021. It is not a comprehensive report on the Commission's outcomes and does not necessarily reflect all the work and activities by the Commissioners and partners.

World Resources Institute served as co-managing partner of the Global Commission on Adaptation, and former WRI CEO Andrew Steer served as one of 35 Commissioners. In total, more than 25 WRI staff members were involved in the Commission.

# FOREWORD

The past year has been one like no other. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us that we are all vulnerable and that we are all inextricably connected. Meanwhile, the climate crisis wreaked havoc on communities, as storms, droughts, heat waves and wildfires continue to become more frequent and more severe.

Together these crises have upended the lives of people worldwide, but they are especially devastating for vulnerable communities in developing countries.

The past year has also shown that we can adapt, and often much more rapidly than we thought. We are resourceful and can overcome great challenges. But people often need support from governments and institutions. We need them to step up.

Now is the time for global solidarity. We cannot have a recovery where some countries and privileged groups bounce back, while others are left behind. This is not only a moral imperative; it is also in everyone's interest.

The decisions that our governments and institutions make today will determine what kind of values define us. Will we enter an Age of Resilience, where we have the policies and tools to withstand global shocks, where we support the most vulnerable and create new economic opportunities? Or will we return to a society that is unequal and unprepared for the risks we know are coming?

The choice is clear. We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to redesign our society to be more resilient, more equitable and healthier. This aim is deeply intertwined with the mission the Global Commission on Adaptation laid out when it was launched in 2018: To catalyze a new mindset and bold action on climate adaptation. A mission made even more urgent over the past year.

Now, as the Commission has concluded, and we look to the road ahead, we are delighted to share some of the Commission's key achievements and how World Resources Institute will continue advancing adaptation action.

WRI had the honor to serve as the managing partner of the Global Commission on Adaptation, along with the Global Center on Adaptation. The Commission was initiated by the Government of the Netherlands and co-chaired by

Ban Ki-moon, Kristalina Georgieva and Bill Gates. We led the research and writing of the Commission's landmark report, *Adapt Now: A Global Call for Leadership on Climate Resilience*, and advanced numerous initiatives as part of the Commission's Year of Action. These efforts raised the political profile of adaptation and catalyzed adaptation action around the world.

Fundamental to the Commission's success was the deep engagement by the 35 Commissioners who guided the Commission and offered invaluable leadership, as well as our collaboration with over 170 partners during the Year of Action.

Our work with partners is far from over. We have only begun to put into action the bold agenda and recommendations articulated in *Adapt Now*. Going forward, World Resources Institute remains deeply committed to advancing this agenda through critical initiatives and partnerships on finance, locally led adaptation, agriculture, cities and nature-based solutions, building off the work of the Commission, its partners and others who have long been working on adaptation.

This report describes progress achieved over the course of the Commission, while also recognizing that greater action is needed. Governments and institutions must do more on adaptation, shifting their policies and investments to help vulnerable communities thrive in a changing climate. The G7, G20, UNGA and COP26 present critical opportunities for countries to act.

Together, we can accelerate climate adaptation efforts around the globe, creating a safer, fairer, more equitable and climate-resilient future.

Sincerely,

**Manish Bapna**

*Interim President and CEO,  
World Resources Institute*

**Christina Chan**

*Former Director, Climate Resilience Practice,  
World Resources Institute*

*Former Co-Director,  
Global Commission on Adaptation*





# COMMISSIONERS

Led by Ban Ki-moon, Kristalina Georgieva and Bill Gates, the Global Commission on Adaptation comprised more than 35 Commissioners from nearly every sector. Over the course of three years, the Commissioners served in their personal capacity, contributing to the success of the Commission, based on their individual expertise.

## Co-Chairs:

**Ban Ki-moon**, 8th Secretary-General of the United Nations

**Bill Gates**, Co-chair, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

**Kristalina Georgieva**, Managing Director, International Monetary Fund

## COMMISSIONERS:

**Akinwumi Adesina**, President, African Development Bank

**Inger Andersen**, Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme

**Michelle Bachelet**, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

**Winnie Byanyima**, Executive Director, UNAIDS

**Jagan Chapagain**, Secretary General, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

**Peter Damgaard Jensen**, Former CEO, PKA Ltd.

**Patricia Espinosa**, Executive Secretary, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

**Christiana Figueres**, Former Executive Secretary, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; Founding Partner, Global Optimism

**Li Ganjie**, Former Minister of Ecology and Environment, China

**Hilda Heine**, Former President, Marshall Islands

**Anne Hidalgo**, Mayor, City of Paris

**Emma Howard Boyd**, Chair of the Environment Agency, United Kingdom

**Naoko Ishii**, Former CEO and Chairperson, Global Environment Facility

**Agnes Kalibata**, President, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa

**Loren Legarda**, Deputy Speaker and Antique Congresswoman, Philippines

**Strive Masiyiwa**, Founder and Executive Chairman, Econet Wireless

**Catherine McKenna**, Former Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Canada; Current Minister of Infrastructure, Canada

**José Antonio Meade**, Former Finance Minister, Mexico

**C.K. Mishra**, Former Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, India

**Keith Mitchell**, Prime Minister, Grenada

**Gerd Müller**, Federal Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany

**Muhammad Musa**, Executive Director, BRAC International

**Cora van Nieuwenhuizen**, Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management, Netherlands

**Mari Pangestu**, Managing Director of Development Policy and Partnerships, World Bank

**Sheela Patel**, Founder and Director, Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) India; Former Chair, Slum Dwellers International

**Carlos Manuel Rodriguez**, CEO and Chairperson, Global Environment Facility

**Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum**, Attorney General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications, Fiji

**Feike Sijbesma**, Former CEO and Chairman, Royal DSM

**Andrew Steer**, President and CEO, World Resources Institute

**Achim Steiner**, Administrator, United Nations Development Programme

**Francis Suarez**, Mayor, City of Miami

**Elhadj As Sy**, Former Secretary General, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

**Petteri Taalas**, Secretary-General, World Meteorological Organization

**Axel van Trotsenburg**, Managing Director of Operations, World Bank

**Shemara Wikramanayake**, CEO, Macquarie Group Ltd.

**Jonathan Wilkinson**, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Canada

## CONVENING COUNTRIES:

The Commission was established by the Government of the Netherlands and co-convened by 23 countries. This growing movement of countries supported the Commission in its mission to forge a bold strategic vision for accelerating adaptation and catalyze adaptation solutions around the world.

Argentina

Bangladesh

Canada

Chile

China

Costa Rica

Denmark

Ethiopia

Germany

Grenada

India

Indonesia

Marshall Islands

Mexico

Netherlands

Peru

Republic of Korea

Senegal

South Africa

United Arab Emirates

United Kingdom

Uzbekistan

Vietnam







A photograph of a person in a field, bent over and planting rice seedlings in a flooded area. The sky is overcast and grey. The person is wearing a light-colored shirt and dark pants. The rice plants are green and growing in the water.

# THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

World Resources Institute is grateful for the generous support of the governments and organizations that provided funding for the Global Commission on Adaptation, including:

- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Government of Canada
- Government of Denmark
- Government of Germany
- Government of the Netherlands
- Government of the United Kingdom



# PROGRESS

## The Progress of the Global Commission on Adaptation

The impacts of climate change are here and getting more severe, particularly for the world's most vulnerable people. Many countries and communities have already begun adapting—but the world has not yet grasped the scale of transformation required for adaptation.

Facing this challenge, in 2018, the Government of the Netherlands established the Global Commission on Adaptation. Co-managed by World Resources Institute and the Global Center on Adaptation, the Commission served to raise the visibility of climate adaptation on the global agenda and advance concrete solutions.

The Commission had two key phases: (1) Developing a flagship report to make the case for adaptation, and (2) Launching a Year of Action to implement recommendations from the report. Here we highlight what the Commission achieved.

### LAYING OUT A BOLD VISION AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON ADAPTATION

The Commission developed a flagship report, *Adapt Now: A Global Call for Leadership on Climate Resilience*, laying out a bold agenda to build a more climate resilient world. The report presented new economic analysis that showed the high returns on investment of adaptation solutions, which has since been widely cited in news stories, speeches and reports.

#### Every \$1 invested in climate adaptation can create \$2-\$10 in net economic benefits.

The report has shifted understanding about adaptation and started to inspire action among government decision-makers, international leaders, business executives, investors, community members and more.

WRI led the development of the report, with significant input from Commissioners and partners. The report was informed by over 30 background papers on various adaptation topics produced on behalf of the Commission.

*Adapt Now* was published in September 2019, alongside a global communications campaign coordinated by WRI, just ahead of the United Nations Climate Action Summit. The campaign led to 9 in-person launch events, over 150 news articles and the single biggest moment of online engagement on adaptation, reaching potentially 269 million people.



*“2021 is a ‘make it or break it moment’ for the world to take the level of climate action that we now need. To help forge a clear pathway forward, global leaders, the private sector and other key partners need to provide enhanced support to local communities to adapt to the many effects of climate change — particularly when it comes to boosting food and water security.”*

– Achim Steiner, Administrator, UN Development Programme

## CATALYZING ACTION AND COMMITMENTS ON ADAPTATION

In 2019, at the UN Climate Action Summit, the Commission launched a Year of Action to implement the recommendations from *Adapt Now* and accelerate the necessary transitions for change. While these transitions will take time to fully implement, the Year of Action catalyzed significant new actions and commitments and mobilized many new coalitions and partnerships.

The Commission mobilized more than **170 partners** across eight action tracks. Specifically, the Commission and its partners made progress in mainstreaming adaptation in **agriculture** and in **financial decision-making**, jumpstarted adaptation action in **cities**, elevated city and country **nature-based solution leaders** and built a growing movement around **locally led adaptation**.

### Mobilizing \$790 Million to Support Small-Scale Food Producers

- The Global Commission on Adaptation helped catalyze new financial commitments of over \$790 million to enhance resilience of more than **300 million small-scale food producers**.
- Announced at the 2019 UN Climate Action Summit, financial support was led by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, World Bank, European Commission and the governments of the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and Germany.
- The financial resources, in part, support CGIAR, the world’s largest global agricultural innovation network, in developing innovations to support small-scale food producers.



Photo by: M. Yousuf Tushar, WorldFish

In January 2021, the Global Commission on Adaptation formally sunset at the Climate Adaptation Summit, hosted by the Dutch government. The Summit marked the first time world leaders gathered at a global event focused solely on adaptation and resilience. It significantly raised the political profile of adaptation and led to several important outcomes, commitments and initiatives.

Governments and institutions have only begun to put into action the bold agenda and recommendations from the *Adapt Now* report. Through research, partnerships and initiatives on adaptation, World Resources Institute will continue advancing critical efforts catalyzed by the Commission.

Read on for more about the Commission’s outcomes in these areas and how WRI will continue accelerating action.

*“The IMF is ramping up support for the policies, investment plans and skills countries need to strengthen their response to climate change.”*

– Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director, International Monetary Fund



Photo by: Neil Palmer/CIAT

# ADAPT NOW

## Adapt Now: A Global Call for Leadership on Climate Resilience

In September 2019, the Global Commission on Adaptation launched its landmark report, *Adapt Now: A Global Call for Leadership on Climate Resilience*. The report's findings have since been cited in hundreds of news publications, speeches and reports by governments and international institutions.

### THE IMPERATIVES FOR ACCELERATING ADAPTATION

The report argues that accelerating adaptation is a human, environmental and economic imperative.

**The human imperative.** Climate change disproportionately affects people who are politically, economically and socially marginalized, including women and girls and people living in poverty, many of whom live in vulnerable countries. Solutions to these climate-related inequities must address underlying power structures and dynamics.

132 million people **within developing countries could be pushed into** extreme poverty **by 2030 due to climate change**, according to the World Bank.

**The environmental imperative.** The natural environment is humanity's first line of defense against floods, droughts, heat waves and hurricanes. Yet, human activity and climate change are accelerating the loss of nature everywhere. We still have time to protect and work with nature to build resilience, but the window is quickly closing.

**The economic imperative.** Adapting now is in our economic self-interest. The report presents new economic analysis, finding that investing in adaptation has benefit-cost ratios ranging from 2:1 to 10:1. Specifically, the research finds that investing \$1.8 trillion globally in five areas — early warning systems, climate-resilient infrastructure, dryland agriculture, mangrove protection and water systems — from 2020 to 2030 could yield \$71 trillion in total net benefits.



## THREE REVOLUTIONS FOR A BETTER FUTURE

Despite these imperatives, adaptation is not happening at the pace or scale required. The report calls for revolutions in three areas:

- **A Revolution in Understanding** to ensure that the risks societies and economies face, along with solutions, are fully understood and reflected in the decisions that public and private actors make.
- **A Revolution in Planning** to improve how we make policy and investment decisions and how we implement solutions. Devolving planning and financial decision-making to people at the local level is critical.
- **A Revolution in Finance** to mobilize the funds and resources necessary to accelerate adaptation, which requires expanding dedicated funds, integrating climate risks into all investment decisions and increasing international financial support for adaptation for developing countries.

***“The private and public sectors must work together to build climate adaptation into planning and investment decisions in infrastructure, energy provision and agriculture.”***

– Shemara Wikramanayake, CEO, Macquarie Group

## ACCELERATING ADAPTATION IN KEY SYSTEMS

The world must apply these revolutions to the key systems affected by climate change. The report provides specific insights and recommendations for these systems: food security, the natural environment, water, cities and urban areas, infrastructure, disaster risk management and finance.

Taken together, these recommendations can lead to better growth and development, while saving lives, protecting nature and reducing inequalities.

***“In the case of small states, tragedy has taught us that economic development and climate resilience must be one and the same.”***

– Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Fiji



Photo by: UN Women





Photo by: Fiji Adapt Now

# COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

## Communications and Outreach: Elevating Adaptation on the Global Agenda

The Global Commission on Adaptation helped raise the political visibility of adaptation to an all-time high. Our communications and engagement efforts were essential to accomplishing this goal, bringing together Commissioners and a broad network of partners and working in tandem with our research and Action Track initiatives to elevate adaptation on the global agenda.

### CREATING A GLOBAL MOMENT ON ADAPTATION

Ahead of the 2019 report launch, WRI organized a multi-faceted media, digital and messaging campaign. The campaign, called “Follow the Sun,” was carried out over weeks and built up to a day-long series of events and online activity. This campaign led to the single largest moment of online engagement on adaptation. WRI and the Global Center on Adaptation organized the campaign around a unifying theme: **#AdaptOurWorld**.

Over 60 organizations, including nearly every Commissioner, participated in the launch, through videos, media interviews, social media, op-eds and more. Thanks to new foundational and economic messages produced by the Commission, the launch also provided decision-makers and advocates with a new, more effective way to talk about adaptation.

#### #AdaptOurWorld Campaign Highlights

- **9 in-person launch events** around the world, including in China, Ethiopia, Fiji, India, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States
- **150 news articles** in major international news outlets and top regional newspapers
- **74,000 social media posts** on adaptation in one month — the single largest social media moment on adaptation in history — with a potential reach of 269 million people
- **20+** videos from Commissioners and partners



## RAISING THE IMPORTANCE OF A RESILIENT RECOVERY TO COVID-19

In July 2020, the Global Commission on Adaptation issued a **call to action on the COVID-19 recovery**, signed by 29 Commissioners and senior representatives. The statement served to inspire world leaders to incorporate climate resilience into economic recovery plans and made recommendations for doing so.

In December 2020, WRI hosted its first **Adaptation Week**, a digital campaign to further elevate the importance of a resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Over two weeks, the campaign gained widespread traction online, bringing together over 60 partners, who shared 5,000 social media posts and over 30 videos, and hosting seven virtual events.

## BUILDING A CONSISTENT DRUMBEAT ON ADAPTATION

The Commission's research has been cited in hundreds of news publications and reports, including in The New York Times, Financial Times, The Guardian, BBC News, Bloomberg, South China Morning Post and UNEP's Adaptation Gap Report 2020.

Over two years, the Commission **hosted or co-hosted more than 60 events** and **published dozens of op-eds, blogs and podcasts**. Keeping people at the forefront of our operations, events and communications efforts, the Commission also used its platform to elevate the voices of the vulnerable, poor and Indigenous peoples on the frontlines of climate change.

As we approach COP26 and other key milestones, the drumbeat on adaptation must continue.



Photo by: Global Commission on Adaptation





Photo by: UN Women, Ryan Brown





# YEAR OF ACTION

In September 2019, at the UN Climate Action Summit, the Commission launched a Year of Action to implement the recommendations from *Adapt Now*. The Commission drove forward a set of Action Tracks to jump-start the necessary transitions, working with over 200 partners, including governments, institutions, civil society organizations, grassroots groups and private sector actors.

The Action Tracks included finance, locally led adaptation, agriculture and food security, resilient cities, nature-based solutions, infrastructure and risk-informed early action. (WRI co-led these Action Tracks, with exception of infrastructure and risk-informed early action.)

The Commission and its partners championed key outcomes from the Action Tracks at the Climate Adaptation Summit, hosted by the Netherlands in January 2021.

Through these Action Tracks, the Commission mobilized scaled-up action and new partnerships that will continue beyond the lifetime of the Commission, helping advance adaptation over the next decade.

# Finance

The economic case for investing in climate adaptation is strong: Every dollar invested in adaptation can generate up to \$10 in net economic benefits, according to research by WRI on behalf of the Global Commission on Adaptation. Yet, given the size and scale of the climate crisis, money for climate adaptation is not flowing at the rate needed.

This is a big problem for all countries, though it is especially challenging for developing countries that are highly vulnerable to climate change but lack the resources to build resilience.

Many governments, multilateral institutions and businesses are not yet adequately factoring climate risks into decisions. Nor are many donor governments meeting their Paris Agreement commitments to achieve a balance between adaptation and mitigation financing: Globally, adaptation only accounts for 20 percent of climate finance flows from developed to developing countries.

And in the fallout of COVID-19, few countries have sought to use recovery packages to protect against future climate risks, a lost opportunity given that countries invested more than \$13 trillion in recovery packages in 2020 alone.

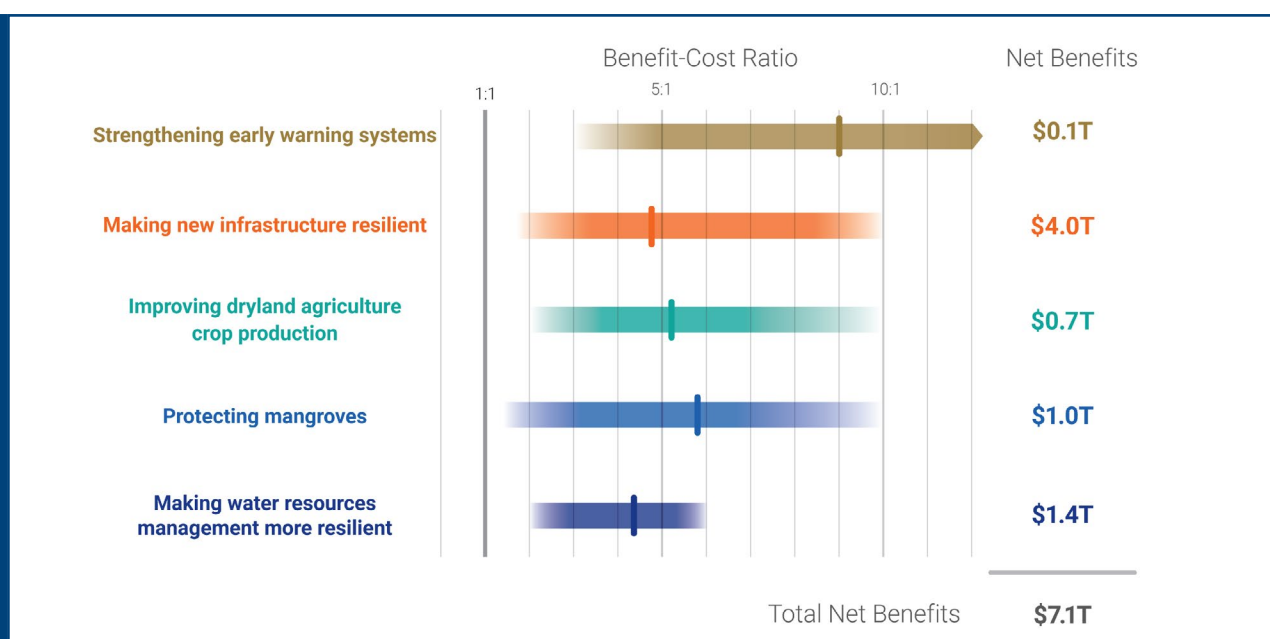
The Global Commission on Adaptation, in *Adapt Now*, made key recommendations to revolutionize finance and mobilize the funds necessary for climate adaptation.

As a managing partner of the Global Commission on Adaptation, WRI led important initiatives during the Year of Action to advance these recommendations and transform public and private sector finance.

## Climate Adaptation Mainstreaming Program in Vulnerable Countries

WRI has developed a long-term climate adaptation mainstreaming program to support some of the world's most vulnerable countries (the 48 countries of the V20 and across Africa) in mainstreaming climate adaptation. The program will support countries' economic, finance and planning ministries as they integrate climate risks and adaptation into their macro-fiscal, planning, budgeting and procurement policies. This program will also help governments integrate climate risks into IMF Article IV surveillance, debt sustainability analysis and financial sector risk assessment — all components of the IMF's regular comprehensive review of a country's economic and financial policies.

As an integral part of this program, WRI is also supporting university curriculum development, teaching and research of climate risks, with the aim to create a teaching network across both developed and developing countries that can better train students, government officials and the private sector.







WRI also supported the Coalition of Finance Ministers in integrating climate adaptation across its working groups and co-authored the flagship coalition paper on greening COVID-19 recovery plans.

## Scaling Private Sector Finance

WRI co-founded the private sector-led Coalition for Climate Resilient Investment (CCRI), now with 83 members including institutional investors, banks and insurance and rating agencies that represent over \$11 trillion assets under management. CCRI is supporting major private and public institutions in integrating physical climate risks into investment decision-making, primarily in infrastructure.

## Tracking Resilience in Countries' COVID-19 Recovery Plans

WRI analyzed COVID-19 recovery plans of 66 countries and how they are incorporating climate resilience. Only about one in four countries are using stimulus spending to build resilience to climate change, as of November 2020. The analysis underscores the importance of central ministries in understanding climate risks and offers opportunities for decision-makers to do more in future policies and investments.

## Looking Ahead

Scaling up finance for adaptation will be critical in the next decade. WRI will continue its work in key areas, including:

- Implementing the climate adaptation mainstreaming program to support vulnerable countries' central ministries in incorporating climate risks into decision-making

### Global Commission on Adaptation Recommendations

- Shift how investment decisions get made
  - Scale up and deploy public finance more effectively
  - Scale contingent finance and insurance
  - Harness private capital for resilience
- Piloting systemic risk assessments in several countries, as part of CCRI, which will help inform their fiscal and budgetary policy decisions and facilitate private sector investment in infrastructure investments; these efforts will lead to a planned multi-industry commitment at COP26 in the form of a League of Investment Funds for Resilience
  - Supporting university curriculum development, teaching and research in V20 and African countries
  - Partnering with the IMF, World Bank and Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action to develop tools for addressing climate change in macro-fiscal, debt, finance, risk metrics and NDC-related issues

To make people and economies more resilient to climate impacts, WRI will continue to advocate for more finance and increased investments in adaptation for vulnerable countries.

***"We need finance to join a global economic race to raise the trillions needed to restore nature and prepare for climate shocks."***

– Emma Howard Boyd, Chair, Environment Agency, United Kingdom

# Locally Led Adaptation

While communities are on the frontlines of climate change impacts, they rarely have a voice in the actions that most affect them. International climate and development funding often fails to reach the local level. This dual lack of agency and funding is especially harmful for people living in poverty.

Local institutions and communities have the experience and knowledge to inform the solutions that will enable them to develop and thrive in the face of climate change.

The Global Commission on Adaptation, in *Adapt Now*, made recommendations to address the imbalance facing local actors.

During the Year of Action, WRI worked with partners to elevate the need to shift the quantity and quality of finance reaching local levels for adaptation and help prioritize locally led adaptation for dozens of donors, intermediaries, development banks and governments.

## Global Commission on Adaptation Recommendations

- Include diverse groups in decision making at all levels, such as the design and implementation of adaptation activities
- Use local knowledge and building local capacities
- Devolve decision making to the lowest appropriate level
- Make significant increases in the volume of devolved and decentralized funding available to local governments, community-based organizations and others working at the local level

## Principles for Locally Led Adaptation

In support of the Global Commission on Adaptation's Locally Led Action Track, WRI, the International Institution for Environment and Development (IIED) and other partners developed a set of principles for locally led adaptation. These principles are intended to catalyze a shift toward adaptation programs, funding and practices that are increasingly owned by local actors. As of early 2021, over 40 governments, international institutions and organizations endorsed the Principles for Locally Led Adaptation, marking a first step that could lead to immense change in adaptation practices.

## New Locally Led Adaptation Initiatives

WRI supported partners as they developed new programs and guidelines to advance locally led adaptation:

- BRAC, SDI and ICCCAD, with support from WRI and others, launched an initiative to set up Climate Bridge Funds to support locally led adaptation in 10 Least Developed Countries, building from the experience of BRAC in Bangladesh. The funds are estimated to be €10 million each, for a total of €100 million.
- UNDP launched a \$5 million Adaptation Innovation Platform and grant program — funded by Adaptation Fund, the GEF and bilateral donors — to support incubation of local innovators for adaptation, focusing on social enterprises, nongovernmental organizations/civil society organizations and small enterprises. WRI is a partner.

***“Through the Principles for Locally Led Adaptation, those who give the finance and those who receive it will work together to design, deliver and monitor their adaptation work.”***

– Sheela Patel, Founder and Director, Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) India; Former Chair, Slum Dwellers International





- With input coordinated by WRI, the Green Climate Fund (GCF) developed new guidelines for access to funding through Enhanced Direct Access (EDA), a \$200 million fund to implement projects that devolve decision-making to local actors.
- The UN Capital Development Fund launched LoCAL 2030, an expansion of its \$100 million U.S. fund that provides local governments with performance-based grants to support local adaptation. WRI created an assessment framework to measure impact for the program.

## Looking Ahead

In the next decade, the world must see action on these commitments, with more money reaching the local level, more flexible adaptation programs and more recognition of local knowledge and expertise. We also need more research, learning and accountability to ensure local actors are in the drivers' seat and building resilience.

***"At BRAC, we are excitedly adopting the Principles [for Locally Led Adaptation] into our program design, implementation, monitoring, as well as holding ourselves accountable to promote locally owned climate change programming.***

– Muhammad Musa, Executive Director, BRAC International

Alongside partners, WRI will continue supporting governments and organizations in moving toward more effective, equitable locally led adaptation. Specifically, WRI will:

- Nurture and grow a community of practice for locally led adaptation to support peer learning in partnership with IIED, SDI, BRAC, ICCCAD and others
- Engage with more organizations around the Principles for Locally Led Adaptation, with a goal of increasing the number of endorsing organizations and supporting the deepening the practice of those who have endorsed
- Support organizations in putting the Principles into practice by establishing metrics and mechanisms for accountability and tracking progress toward locally led adaptation objectives
- Continue to develop and test new approaches and initiatives that support the devolution of finance and decision-making power



# Agriculture and Food Security

As climate impacts continue to grow more severe, millions of small-scale food producers in developing countries will struggle most. These producers have the least access to resources — two-thirds of adults working in poverty make a living in part through agriculture — and are often most exposed to climate impacts. The COVID-19 crisis further exposed the fragility of food and agriculture systems globally by limiting the availability of and access to nutritious food.

***“Investing in adaptation is...an opportunity to build a greener, more sustainable approach to food production.”***

– Rodger Voorhies, President, Global Growth & Opportunity Division, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Adapting to climate change while feeding a growing population will require systemic changes to the global food system. The Global Commission on Adaptation, in its *Adapt Now* report, made recommendations for governments, development agencies and the private sector to help small-scale food producers adapt to a changing climate and improve their livelihoods.

To advance these recommendations, WRI, as a managing partner of the Global Commission on Adaptation, focused on catalyzing change in two key areas during the Year of Action:

## Catalyzing a Demand-driven Agenda for Research and Innovation

WRI worked with CGIAR, the world's largest agricultural research institution, to inform the development of CGIAR's new proposed flagship climate adaptation program, the Two Degree Initiative. The 10-year initiative will help 200 million small-scale agricultural producers worldwide build resilience to climate impacts, while putting food systems on a low-emissions pathway. To better understand the perspectives, needs and priorities of small-scale producers, WRI and CGIAR held over 50 listening sessions, engaging nearly 1,500 stakeholders in 60 countries. The sessions led to key findings such as strengthening the co-creation of agricultural research and development so that a broader range of stakeholders receive solutions that will benefit them, and promoting more inclusive, climate-informed and risk-tolerant innovation systems.

### Global Commission on Adaptation Recommendations

- Improve small-scale producers' productivity
- Help small-scale producers manage risks from increased variability and climate shocks
- Address the challenges of the most climate-affected and vulnerable
- Achieve policy coherence by making agriculture interventions climate smart







*Photo by: UNDP Thailand*

## Scaling Digital Climate-informed Advisory Services

WRI and partners co-created a blueprint to facilitate investment in digital climate-informed advisory services (DCAS) for 300 million small-scale producers. Through weather forecasts and adaptation recommendations, DCAS can help farmers identify and react to climate-related threats, as well as provide access to markets, inputs, finance and insurance. The blueprint lays out how much investment is needed to reach these producers; the economic case for governments and institutions to invest in DCAS; and six core principles for development and delivery. It was developed in partnership with the World Food Programme, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, International Research Institute for Climate and Society at Columbia University and the Global Center on Adaptation.

## Looking Ahead

Going forward, WRI will continue advancing climate resilient agriculture by:

- Supporting initiatives like the Two Degree Initiative to address the adaptation needs of diverse stakeholders. We will continue ensuring that local perspectives are integrated in the global agricultural research agenda and, in collaboration with local stakeholders, identify the best actions to build the climate resilience of small-scale food producers.
- Engaging with governments, private sector investors and other donors to mobilize investment in digital climate advisory services, alongside partners. We seek to develop a prototype model for digital services for governments and entrepreneurs, along with metrics, standards and impact indicators.



# Resilient Cities

Climate change is bringing more damage, stresses and suffering to the world's cities, which are home to half the world's population and produce 80 percent of global GDP.

Investing in adaptation solutions and policies can put cities on a stronger, safer path that offers economic opportunities and higher quality of life for residents. Done right, adaptation can be transformative, tackling persistent issues like poverty and social inequality.

The Global Commission on Adaptation, in *Adapt Now*, offered recommendations to make cities more inclusive and climate resilient.

## Global Commission on Adaptation Recommendations

- Mainstream information on climate risks in the planning and delivery of urban services, while strengthening local capacity
- Harness the power of nature to respond to both water and heat risks
- Build climate resilience by upgrading living conditions in vulnerable communities and informal settlements, drawing on community knowledge
- Increase climate-resilient investments and capture value from adaptation benefits

During the Year of Action, WRI worked alongside partners to catalyze critical action on adaptation in cities. Key outcomes include:

## Accelerating Adaptation in 1,000 Cities

WRI and key partners launched the 1,000 Cities Adapt Now program, which aims to accelerate adaptation in 1,000 cities by 2030. The program helps cities implement adaptation measures — including through investments in nature-based solutions, urban water resilience and capacity building — with a focus on vulnerable communities. Core partners include the Global Center on Adaptation, UN-Habitat and Resilient Cities Network.

## Building Urban Water Resilience

To increase access to safe, affordable and reliable water and sanitation services in cities, WRI and partners launched two urban water initiatives. The Africa Urban Water Resilience Initiative builds a pan-Africa coalition to develop and implement water resilience action across six cities in three years, with the aim to scale to 18 cities. The India Accelerated Access Coalition improves access to climate-resilient, affordable water and sanitation solutions and healthy space strategies for urban poor communities.



Photo by: Scott Hadfield



## Advancing City-led Nature-based Solutions

WRI helped accelerate planning, design, investment and implementation of city-led nature-based solutions (NbS) in 65 cities through a NbS-focused cities network, Cities4Forests. To advance innovative finance and governance strategies, WRI helped establish a NbS-focused Project Preparation Facility, set to launch at COP26. Additionally, WRI and partners developed a NbS toolkit for cities, an urban forest learning guide and a social equity learning guide. With support from the governments of Canada and Mexico, WRI and partners recruited a group of 16 cities at the vanguard of planning and implementing large-scale NBS adaptation and are working with them to scale up commitments.

## Creating a Knowledge Platform for Inclusive Climate Adaptation

WRI worked with partners to convene a consortium of 40 universities, a network of 100 cities and a federation of urban poor communities. Through the initiative, university students will learn about urban resilience and launch community-led urban resilience projects, backed by a curriculum focused on informal settlements, the urban poor and other marginalized

communities. Partners include the Collaborative for Urban Resilience Effectiveness, Global Network for Advanced Management, Least Developed Countries Universities Consortium on Climate Change, International Centre for Climate Change and Development and Resilient Cities Network.

## Looking Ahead

How cities respond to climate impacts is fundamental to human health and economic productivity. Governments must step up and increase funding for cities to adapt, and cities must make every effort to prepare for a warming world. WRI will continue advancing adaptation in cities by:

- Implementing the 1,000 Cities Adapt Now program to accelerate adaptation in cities worldwide
- Building urban water resilience in cities through the African Urban Water Resilience and the India Accelerated Access Coalition
- Assembling a coalition of national governments, financial institutions and corporate leaders to join cities in launching a call to scale nature-based solutions in cities by COP26



Photo by: Global Commission on Adaptation

# Nature-Based Solutions

Healthy ecosystems underpin economies and societies: They provide food and fuel, deliver economic gains, support livelihoods, fight climate change and protect against natural disasters.

Despite the powerful case for working with nature to reduce climate risks, the world has barely realized the potential of nature-based solutions (NbS). Nature-based solutions include restoring wetlands and mangroves that brunt the impact of storms, conserving forests that stabilize soil and slow water runoff and protecting watersheds that provide clean water.

There is still time to work with nature, not against it, but the window of opportunity is closing quickly.

The Global Commission on Adaptation, in *Adapt Now*, made three recommendations to scale up nature-based solutions for adaptation:

## Global Commission on Adaptation Recommendations

- Raise understanding of the value of nature for climate adaptation
- Embed nature-based solutions into adaptation planning and policy
- Increase investment in nature-based solutions

Through the Commission's Nature-Based Solutions Action Track, WRI and partners brought much-needed attention to nature's largely untapped role in adaptation. The Action Track was co-led by the governments of Canada and Mexico, in close partnership with the Global Environment Facility, UN Environment Programme, World Resources Institute and Global Center on Adaptation.

## Identifying Financial Opportunities to Support Nature-based Solutions

WRI and Climate Finance Advisors developed the first assessment of the landscape of public international funding for nature-based solutions for adaptation. The assessment finds that as little as 1.5% of all public international climate finance supports nature-based solutions for adaptation. The paper seeks to help donor and developing countries better understand the current state of funding and provides recommendations to address key financial barriers. These findings are especially important as countries and multilateral institutions look to understand how nature-based solutions can be better used to help meet their financial and other commitments in ahead of COP26.

***"Nature-based solutions are cost-effective and they provide multiple co-benefits for economies, communities, culture, health and nature."***

– Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Environment, Canada



Photo by: UNEP Kadir van Lohuizen



## Profiling and Advancing Action on Nature-based Solutions in Cities and Countries

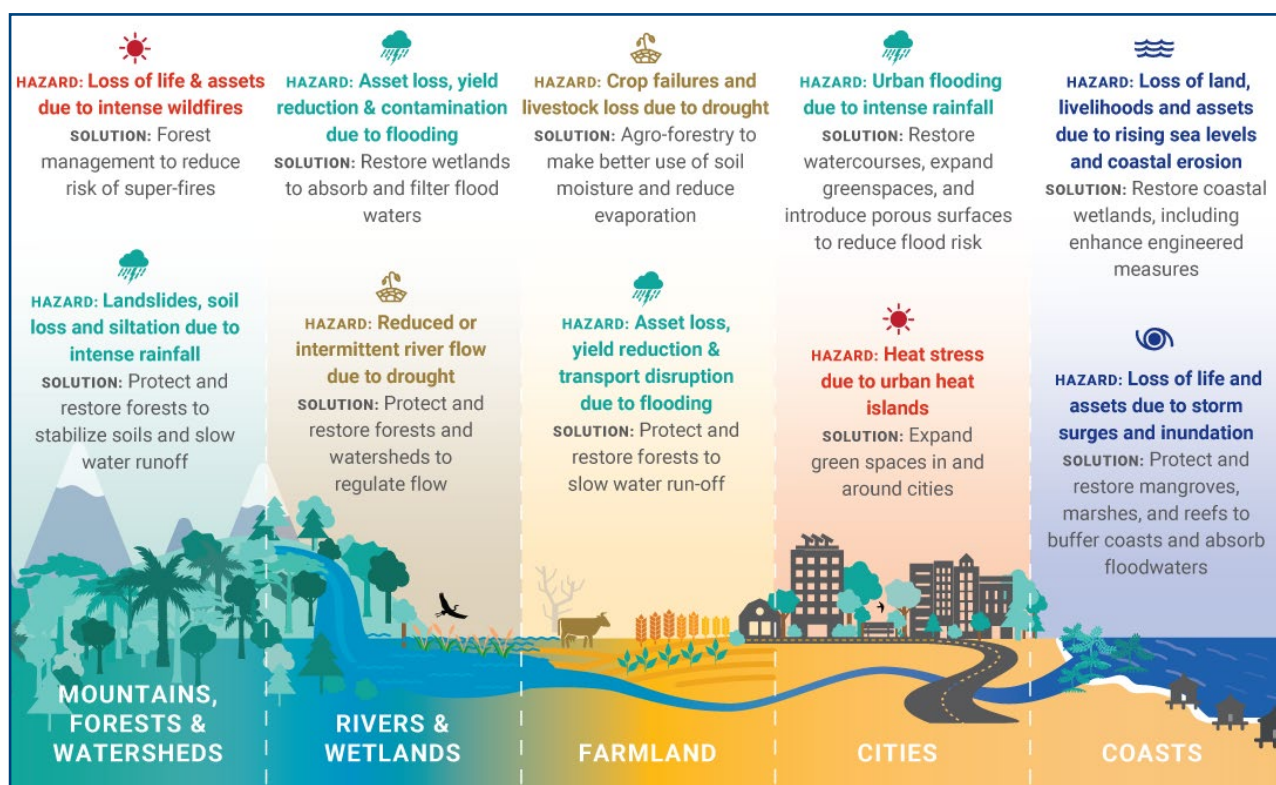
WRI recruited a vanguard group of cities that are supporting large-scale NbS action for climate adaptation. WRI and partners have worked with these cities to garner commitments to action, which will be showcased at COP26 to inspire other cities to act.

The Action Track partners also established a vanguard group of five countries to demonstrate the significant potential of NbS for adaptation and to inspire other countries to invest in NbS. Through virtual events, Canada, Ethiopia, Mexico, the Netherlands and Peru profiled their experiences with implementing NbS for adaptation to more than 2,000 stakeholders from the public and private sector, academia and civil society. WRI helped plan, promote and execute many of these events.

## Looking Ahead

Going forward, WRI will continue working with partners to scale up investment in nature-based solutions for adaptation. WRI is carrying out several key activities:

- Assessing how existing nature-based solutions platforms and initiatives have addressed adaptation and contributed to adaptation outcomes, while also identifying new opportunities to scale up NbS for adaptation for countries and cities
- Engaging with governments and funding institutions to identify pathways for donors to increase investment in NbS for adaptation; and developing NbS metrics and standards, alongside partners, to ensure those investments are effective and sustainable
- Collaborating with cities to help them implement their NbS adaptation commitments









# THE ROAD AHEAD



## The Road Ahead: Advancing Adaptation Worldwide

Climate adaptation is already happening around the world. Many communities on the frontlines of climate change have begun building resilience to climate impacts, and civil society organizations and other groups have been working on adaptation for years. The Global Commission on Adaptation has built off these efforts, helping raise the global profile of adaptation and jump-start action in key areas.

Our work is far from over. The climate crisis is getting more intense, and poverty, inequity and injustice remain systemic issues that will only worsen if not addressed.

We need more urgency, innovation and scale. In 2021, national governments and international organizations should focus on making three key shifts to support the most vulnerable people: Scale up climate finance for developing countries; integrate climate risks into policy, investment and budget decisions; and advance policies, programs and funding that support locally led adaptation.

Following the Climate Adaptation Summit, many key upcoming moments in 2021 can accelerate action on adaptation, including the G7 Summit in June, the G20 Summit in October and COP26 in November. The next COP, COP27, will take place in Africa, and adaptation will remain a priority.

World Resources Institute will continue to work closely with partners to support these ongoing efforts and use the upcoming opportunities to advance adaptation.

***“We intend to double [our] investment in locally led climate action so that communities are better prepared and have access to resources to manage forecasted weather-related disasters ahead of their impact.”***

– Jagan Chapagain, Secretary General, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



# Thank You

## Thank you to our Partners

World Resources Institute is immensely thankful to the partners, listed below, who joined us during the Year of Action to help catalyze action on climate adaptation. We look forward to continuing our work with many of these partners.

### FINANCE ACTION TRACK

- African Adaptation Initiative
- African Development Bank
- Collaborative Africa Budget Reform Initiative (CABRI)
- Climate Bonds Initiative
- Climate Finance Advisors
- Climate Policy Initiative
- Coalition for Climate Resilient Investment
- Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action
- E3G
- European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)
- Global Center on Adaptation
- Global Resilience Partnership
- Government of Bangladesh
- Government of Fiji
- Government of France
- Government of Mexico
- Government of the Philippines
- Government of Sweden
- Government of Uganda
- Government of the United Kingdom
- Green Finance Institute (UK)
- Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, London School of Economics
- Imperial College London
- Insurance Bureau of Canada
- InsuResilience Partnership
- Inter-American Development Bank
- International Center for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD)
- International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)
- International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- Lightsmith Group/GARI
- London School of Economics
- Macquarie
- McKinsey
- NDC Partnership
- Overseas Development Institute (ODI)





- Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI)
- SOAS University of London
- SwissRe US
- UNEP-Finance Initiative
- Vulnerable Twenty (V20) Group of Ministers of Finance of the Climate Vulnerable Forum
- University of Maryland
- Willis Towers Watson
- World Bank
- World Economic Forum

## LOCALLY LED ACTION TRACK

- ACT Alliance
- Act Church of Sweden
- Adaptation Fund
- Asian Development Bank
- BRAC International
- BRAC USA
- CADRE National NGO (DRC)
- CARE Denmark
- Care International, Climate Change & Resilience Platform (CCRP)
- Center for Sustainable Climate Solutions
- Climate Action Network South Asia
- Climate Change Commission, The Philippines
- Climate Investment Funds
- Climate Justice Resilience Fund
- Climate Wise Women
- Concern Wildlife

- DanChurchAid
- Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, United Kingdom (FCDO)
- Friendship
- Gaia Foundation
- German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ)
- Ghana Climate Innovation Centre
- Global Center on Adaptation
- Global Environment Facility (GEF)
- Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction
- Global Resilience Partnership
- Government of the Philippines
- Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, London School of Economics
- Green Climate Fund
- GSMA
- Helvetas
- Hivos
- Huairou Commission
- Il'laramatak Community Concerns in Kenya
- Institute for Social and Environmental Transition (ISET) International
- InterAction
- International Center for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD)
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
- International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)
- International Research Institute for Climate and Society, Columbia University
- IrishAid
- Islamic Relief Worldwide
- Least Developed Countries Universities Consortium for Climate Change (LUCCC)
- Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility (LoCAL), hosted by the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)
- London School of Economics
- Media Awareness and Justice Initiative (MAJI)
- Mennonite Central Committee U.S.
- Mercy Corps
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands
- Ministry of Infrastructure and Water, Netherlands
- Mutual Trust Bank of Bangladesh
- Nature Conservation Advocates for Climate Initiative (Nigeria)
- New School
- NIRAS Africa

- Oxfam
- Oxfam Novib
- Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA)
- Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA)
- Power for All
- Practical Action
- Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre
- Save the Children International
- Slum Dwellers International (SDI)
- Slum Dwellers International Nigeria
- Sophoi
- South South North
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)
- Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs
- Tebtebba
- UN Capital Development Fund
- UN Development Programme
- UN Environment
- University of California, Davis
- USAID
- WaterAid
- Wetlands International
- Women's Climate Centers International
- Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)
- Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO)
- World Bank
- World Wildlife Fund (WWF) International
- Youth4Biodiversity Uganda
- Z Zurich Foundation
- Zurich Insurance

## AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY ACTION TRACK

- Adaptation of African Agriculture Initiative (AAA Initiative)
- Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)
- African Development Bank
- Agence Française de Développement
- The Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)
- Agroclimate DSS
- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- BRAC International
- CAB International (CABI)

- CGIAR
- Cropin
- The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Ghana
- DSM
- Esoko
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- Global Center on Adaptation
- Global Environment Facility
- Government of Jamaica
- GSMA
- InsuResilience Global Partnership
- Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany
- Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), United Kingdom
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI), Columbia University
- Jagrata Juba Shangha
- Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology
- Kenya Agricultural Observatory Platform (KAOP)
- Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
- Liquid Telecom
- Makerere University (Uganda)
- Met Office, UK
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands
- NORAD
- Norwegian Refugee Council
- PICSA, University of Reading
- RIMES
- Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU)
- Space Office, Netherlands
- Stockholm Environment Institute
- Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA)
- Tetrattech
- United Nations Development Programme
- University of South Queensland
- Varysian
- World Bank
- World Business Council for Sustainable Development
- World Food Programme
- World Meteorological Organization



## RESILIENT CITIES ACTION TRACK

- 1000 Cities Adapt Now City Partners (Accra, Antwerp, Athens, Beira, Christchurch, The Hague, Greater Manchester, Groningen, Istanbul, Jakarta, Khulna, Miami, Miami Beach, Miami-Dade County, Milan, Paris, Rotterdam, Surat, Tirana)
- AECOM
- Arcadis
- Arup
- Blue21
- C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group
- Centre for Resilience
- Cities4Forests
- Cities Alliance
- City of Miami
- City of Paris
- City of Rotterdam
- Collaborative for Urban Resilience Effectiveness (CURE)
- Conservation International
- Deltares
- Earth Economics
- European Commission
- Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany (BMZ)
- Geo-Adaptive
- Global Center on Adaptation
- Global Covenant of Mayors
- Global Environment Facility
- Global Network for Advanced Management (GNAM)
- Government of Brazil
- Government of Kenya
- ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability
- IHE Delft Institute for Water Education
- International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)
- International Centre for Climate Change & Development (ICCCAD)
- International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP)
- Least Developed Countries Universities Consortium on Climate Change (LUCCC)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands
- Ministry of Infrastructure and Water, Netherlands
- Ministry of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, South Africa
- The Nature Conservancy
- Planners for Climate Action (P4CA)

- The Resilience Shift
- Resilient Cities Network
- Rockefeller Foundation
- Rotary International
- Slum Dwellers International (SDI)
- SouthBridge Group
- Urban Climate Change Research Network (UCCRN)
- UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
- UN Development Programme
- UN-Habitat
- University of Twente – Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (ITC)
- U.S. Conference of Mayors
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- World Bank
- World Pop Project

## NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS ACTION TRACK

- Government of Canada
- Government of Mexico
- Government of Peru
- Global Center on Adaptation
- Global Environment Facility
- UN Environment Programme / World
- Conservation Monitoring Centre
- University of Michigan

