

Climate Change

Confronting a global challenge



Answering a global warning



We have entered an era of dangerous climate disruption and it poses a fundamental threat to the vulnerable places, species and people WWF seeks to protect. The world is already facing an accelerated rate of habitat loss and species extinction. Climate change increases the pace of these losses even more.

Rising sea levels, changes in freshwater supply, and the frequency and severity of extreme weather such as drought and floods are already becoming part of our everyday lives. We have before us the opportunity and the challenge of preparing for the impacts while changing the ways we use energy and resources. In rising to the occasion and changing our direction over the next decade, we can avert catastrophic climate change.

WWF is leading the way by assessing the potential impacts of climate change and taking steps to reduce the vulnerabilities. We also are aggressively promoting efforts to reduce global emissions of greenhouse gases to limit the average global temperature increase to within 2°C compared to preindustrial times. A larger increase in temperature would greatly increase the risk of species extinctions and other irreversible damage to ecosystems.

Our vision: A world in which unique and vulnerable ecosystems can adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change, and governments and industry have reformed policies, improved practices and reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent from 1990 levels by 2050, in order to secure a future in which global warming is kept well below 2°C on average.

A leader in science and action

WWF is uniquely positioned to help the world tackle one of the biggest questions of our time – how to stop dangerous climate change. With a science-based knowledge of climate impacts, and an understanding of global climate politics and solutions, we have developed innovative guidelines, practices and partnerships that encourage individuals and communities, business and industry, and world leaders to transform markets, policies and behaviors.

Practicing fieldwork to benefit species, habitats and individuals

WWF takes into account the vulnerability of local communities to climate change, and the need to maintain the natural resources that support their livelihoods. We work to deliver cost-effective greenhouse gas emission reductions while promoting biodiversity conservation, sustainable land use and improvements in rural livelihoods to reduce poverty.

Transforming business practices

WWF continues to build successful partnerships with leading corporations and energy producers. With the WWF Climate Savers program, by 2010 we will collectively cut carbon emissions by some 14 million tons annually, the equivalent of taking more than a million homes off the electricity grid.

Convening leaders and shaping policy

Our track record in conservation demonstrates our ability to bring leaders together. We are the leading conservation organization that has a credible presence in all the key countries whose roles will be critical to achieving a new global agreement on climate change.



WWF delivers lasting results

Notable Accomplishments

1980s

Helped establish the Climate Action Network to influence climate policy at the national and international level

1990s

Supported the establishment of energy efficiency centers in Russia, China, Poland, Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Ukraine

Released the first comprehensive, popular reviewed report on the impacts of climate change on natural areas

Worked to strengthen commitments under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Policies and Measures to reduce CO₂ emissions in the United States

2000s

Created the Climate Savers program; by 2010 the companies in the program will collectively cut carbon emissions by more than 14 million tons annually

Launched the Gold Standard, an international program that established standards for designing and implementing carbon offset projects

Published *Climate Solutions: WWF's Vision for 2050*, showing how by 2050 the world's energy needs can be met while dramatically reducing greenhouse gas emissions

Sponsored Earth Hour 2008, the biggest (50 million people) voluntary power down in history, an inspiration to many people and businesses to change their energy habits, and an influence on government policy in some countries

Current Initiatives



Assessing impacts and building resilience

Challenge: Global climate change is already having far-reaching consequences for the world's economies, communities and ecosystems. These impacts will accelerate and worsen as

temperature and precipitation patterns, extreme events, and related conditions continue to change.

Action: WWF is producing new tools and methodologies for how we do our work. We are assessing climate impacts in some of the most valuable regions of the world to develop and implement conservation projects that will help vulnerable species, habitats and communities adapt to their changing environments. We are also building the capacity of local institutions around the world to understand the impacts of climate change; discovering and testing ways for ecosystems, species and communities to cope with these changes; and providing advice to government on policies and measures that should be implemented to prepare for climate change.



Driving policy change to ensure a worldwide commitment

Challenge: The world needs a global commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent by 2050. By doing so, scientists believe widespread

extinctions, dramatic changes in ecosystems, and large scale human suffering can be avoided.

Action: WWF is working to ensure that a new global climate treaty enters into force by 2013. Our 20 years of experience achieving real results in over 30 countries gives us detailed knowledge of both the impacts of climate change around the world, and the many solutions that are available to address this threat. We are using this knowledge and experience to devise and implement new policies that limit global emissions and strengthen the capacity of nature, people and institutions to deal with their changing environment. We are also helping to shape climate-friendly legislation within the U.S. that will help ensure U.S. compliance in a new global treaty on climate change.



Reducing carbon emissions from forests

Challenge: Roughly 20 percent of all global emissions come from the cutting down or degradation of forests. Brazil's Amazon, for example, contains 70 billion tons of

natural carbon, and activities such as the cutting and burning of forests are making Brazil one of the largest carbon dioxide emitters in the world.

Action: In the world's largest forests, WWF is building stronger conservation programs that will not only protect rich biodiversity but also reduce emissions from deforestation and provide financial incentives for developing countries to keep their forests standing. WWF is measuring the carbon storage potential in critical forests such as the Amazon in Peru to feed into national emissions reduction targets. This is done by combining the data generated by remote sensing technology and getting input from local communities. Through these efforts we support the policies and practices required to produce zero net greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation by 2020.



Transforming markets and business practices

Challenge: Every day, corporations around the world make decisions that affect not only their own greenhouse gas emissions but those of their business partners and

customers. Through leadership and innovation, these companies can reduce emissions while maintaining and even improving their bottom line.

Action: Today, in partnership with WWF, more companies are moving beyond business as usual and voluntarily reducing their carbon emissions. WWF is working with progressive corporations to transform markets and business practices and establish standards of environmental excellence to limit emissions in key sectors. Through operational and supply chain action plans, we work directly with companies on reducing their carbon emissions. We continue to build on our experience with our existing corporate partnerships in the U.S., Europe, and Japan while working toward further reductions by focusing on new markets, especially in emerging economies, as well as in many sectors with heavy carbon footprints.

“Climate change is transforming the world much more rapidly than people realize. We must act now to get us moving toward a world we want, not one we’ll regret leaving for our children and grandchildren.”

Richard Moss
Vice President for Climate Change



WWF builds strong partnerships

Partnerships are crucial to WWF's work to slow climate change, protect habitats and species, improve wildlife and marine resource management and engage communities in conservation efforts. We collaborate with local, regional and national governments as well as local communities, scientists, industry, nongovernmental organizations and universities. Working together, we strive to expand our reach, create innovative solutions and achieve lasting results.

Be part of our work

WWF is leading the most important and ambitious conservation effort the world has ever seen.

By 2020, we will conserve 19 of the world's most important natural places and significantly change global forces to protect the future of nature.

Together we can directly influence the course of conservation.

To learn more, visit worldwildlife.org/ClimateChange



Photo credits: Los Glaciares National Park, Patagonia, Argentina – © WWF-Canon / Michel Gunther; Heavy traffic in Bangkok, Thailand – © Martin Harvey / WWF-Canon; Namib Desert, Namibia – © Martin Harvey / WWF-Canon; Koba tribesman watching burning jungle, Sumatra, Indonesia – © WWF-Canon / Mark Edwards; Polar bear on the summer tundra, Churchill, Canada – © Steve Morello / WWF-US; A diver videos soft corals and fish, Fiji – © WWF-Canon / Cat Holloway; Tropical rain forest, Korup National Park, Cameroon – © WWF-Canon / Mauri Rautkari; Hatchling leatherback turtle, Panama – © WWF-Canon / Carlos Drews; Certified Amazonian rain forest – © WWF-Canon / Edward Parker; Wind turbines, Netherlands – © WWF-Canon / Michel Gunther; Earth Hour presentation, WWF Annual Conference 2008, Turkey – © Elma Okic / WWF-Canon; Richard Moss – © WWF-US / Jill Hatzai.

© 2008 WWF. All rights reserved by World Wildlife Fund, Inc. 09-08/2000

World Wildlife Fund

1250 24th Street, NW

Washington, DC 20037-1193

202-293-4800