Biodiversity - Climate Interactions: Adaptation, Mitigation and Human Livelihoods

Summary of an international meeting held at the Royal Society
12-13 June 2007

Key messages and conclusions

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Key Messages

1. Climate, biodiversity, and human well-being are inextricably linked, and we know enough to identify some critically important components for immediate attention. New mechanisms will be needed to galvanise work in this area.

2. Significant climate change impacts on biodiversity have already been identified. The IPCC working group 2 summary report concludes that if temperature increases exceed 1.5-2℃, 20-30% of plant and animal species assessed will be at risk of extinction.

3. The continuing, accelerating loss of biodiversity will compromise the long-term ability of ecosystems to regulate the climate, may accelerate or amplify climate warming and could lead to additional, unforeseen, and potentially irreversible shifts in the earth system.

Key messages (contd.)

4. Mitigation and adaptation is urgently required if we are to reduce climate change and its impacts over coming decades. Many of the people most vulnerable to climate change and its impacts are also those that are most dependent on biodiversity.

5. New policies are needed to integrate options for meeting biodiversity, climate and sustainable development objectives at the international, national, and local levels.

6. Significant new research effort is required in several areas to improve understanding of biodiversity in the climate system, the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and human populations, and their inter-linkages and cross-scale effects.

Meeting outputs

- Recognised that such a broad range of issues across both the scientific and policy communities is a significant challenge.
- Solutions will need to be innovative, socially inclusive, and immediate. An unprecedented level of cooperation will be required from all policy and scientific communities to act on the combined threats of climate change, continued biodiversity loss, and human livelihoods.
- After this event, full report of the meeting to be launched in December 2007 at the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties in Bali, Indonesia

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Next steps

- Workshop was an initial start in drawing attention to the need for greater integration between the biodiversity, climate change, and human livelihoods research and political communities.

- We hope that it will lead to more proactive responses to these issues. Responsibility for this extends beyond the UK Global Biodiversity Sub-Committee (GBSC) and the Royal Society to the international and national research and decision making communities.

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