Statement on IPCC Wetlands Supplement – technical considerations

May 2017

The Blue Carbon Initiative, Conservation International, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) applaud the opportunity Parties had to submit their views and observations to the UNFCCC SBSTA 46 on:

> *… their experience in the use of the 2013 Supplement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories: Wetlands for reporting of annual greenhouse gas inventories for Parties included in Annex I to the Convention*.

Importance of Coastal Wetland Ecosystems.

Coastal wetlands have an important role for both climate mitigation and adaptation. Tidal salt marshes, seagrass meadows and mangrove forests are globally distributed and play a significant role in climate mitigation as a highly efficient carbon sinks. These coastal ecosystems, often referred to as blue carbon ecosystems, sequester and store carbon from the atmosphere and oceans at a rate up to 10 times higher per area than terrestrial forests. In addition to the carbon stored in the plants themselves, coastal wetlands transfer carbon into rich organic soils, where it is stored for hundreds to thousands of years.[1] When these systems are degraded or destroyed this carbon can be released back to the atmosphere and ocean within a matter of years.

IPCC Wetlands Supplement.

The *2013 Supplement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories: Wetlands* ("Wetlands Supplement") was created to provide GHG accounting methodologies for wetlands, inland and coastal, and hence to support the inclusion of emissions and removals from these ecosystems in national GHG inventories. The review of the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Inventories in 2019 provides the opportunity for the Wetlands Supplement to be fully incorporated into IPCC guidance. Integration of wetlands in National GHG Inventories will provide governments with the guidance to evaluate and monitor GHG emissions and removals from these ecosystems as needed to track progress towards the goals of the Paris Agreement.

We are very encouraged that Parties under the UNFCCC will discuss the methodologies on GHG reporting under the Convention at the upcoming SBSTA46 session, specifically on Agenda 8a: *Revision of the UNFCCC*

[1] US Environmental Protection Agency. Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator. Last updated on September 15, 2016. Accessed on October 14, 2016 https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator

reporting guidelines on annual inventories for Parties included in Annex I to the Convention. This is a first opportunity to share views on the implementation experience, and encourage the future use of the Wetland Supplement.

As the Wetlands Supplement has only been available since 2013, we are strongly encouraged that some Parties have already began to integrate coastal wetlands in their national GHG inventories by implementing the guidance and have started developing lessons to share. These observations, while identifying challenges, demonstrate the viability and practicality of including coastal wetlands in national GHG inventories and strongly suggest that other coastal and island countries can implement the Wetlands Supplement and include these ecosystems in their GHG inventories.

Coastal Ecosystems in NDCs for both Mitigation and Adaptation.

Coastal wetlands have an important role for both climate mitigation and adaptation, and 59 countries have included coastal wetlands in their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) for adaptation and 28 for mitigation.[2] In additional to their climate mitigation benefits, coastal wetlands are a natural solution for adaptation by providing natural barriers for storm surges, waves, and erosion. Coastal wetlands also provide critical food security by supporting fisheries and other food resources. If appropriately managed and protected, coastal wetlands can naturally adapt to moderate sea level rise and hence ensure their benefits, including carbon sequestration, are maintained into the future. We applaud the countries who have incorporated these ecosystems into their NDCs for mitigation or adaptation and encourage others to consider how to best utilize their coastal ecosystems as a natural climate solution.

Conclusion.

We encourage countries with these ecosystems to start applying the 2013 IPCC Wetlands Supplement to account for the mitigation potential from coastal wetlands in their national GHG inventories, and incorporating these ecosystems into their NDCs. Further, we suggest the UNFCCC and IPCC consider holding a technical workshop to further share experiences in applying the Wetlands Supplement, specifically in advance of the UNFCCC Global Stocktake and the 2019 Refinement to the IPCC Guidelines.

[2] Herr, D. and Landis, E. (2016). Coastal blue carbon ecosystems. Opportunities for Nationally Determined Contributions. Policy Brief. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN and Washington, DC, USA: TNC