

Press Release: Chinese NGOs' joint response to IPCC AR5 WGII

On March 31, 2014, the Working Group II (WGII) contribution to the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)—*Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, was published. In comparison with long-term mitigation actions led by governments, adaptation is closely related to people's livelihood that is more realistic and urgent, and therefore requires more joint effort from the society. In the recent years, a group of Chinese environmental NGOs have carried out a variety of works to combat climate change with the efforts ranging from disaster prevention, poverty alleviation, food security, ecological and water conservation to promotion of energy transition, low-carbon community and climate justice. Chinese NGOs have been gradually forming a common understanding and joint actions on climate protection. With regard to the latest findings of the IPCC WGII, China's Climate Policy Group which has been active in climate protection including Greenovation Hub, Oxfam, Shan Shui, Global Environmental Institute, TNC and WWF made the following joint statement:

"As the largest emitter of greenhouse gas in the world, China is one of those hit the most by climate change. Adaptation and mitigation are two footholds to tackle global warming. In the past few years, Chinese government has attached great importance to mitigation by issuing a series of low carbon development strategies, and increased its efforts in mitigation such as energy saving, industrial transition, technology innovation, low-carbon cities which has gained outstanding achievements. But, adaptation actions are slow in progress. Since 1990s, extreme weather events have caused China a direct loss of 200 billion yuan and 2,000 casualties every year. China will face increasing impacts of climate change on China's food security, eco-system, water, poverty reduction and the livelihood of the coastal area. In accelerating the process of new urbanization and industrialization, China must respond to multiple challenges in a short period of time, among which adaptation to climate change is particularly key.

"At the end of 2013, China issued the National Strategy of Climate Change Adaptation. This is China's first national adaptation strategy, signaling that China has increased its focus on adaptation and begun the top-level design of adaptation strategies. At present, adaptation in China is at the stage of theoretical study and mechanism design, and it still lacks specific implementation measures, adoption of key technologies and the synergy of the participating departments. Next step should focus on integrating adaptation strategies into the development planning of various regions and sectors."

"China's rural communities, especially poor communities, is the most vulnerable and is directly exposed to the impacts of climate change. Although poor regions are often not major food production areas, extreme weather events have a more direct impact on the crop production, the lives and the means of livelihood of the farmers in these areas. These problems demand more attention. In ecologically vulnerable regions, climate change and human influences aggravate ecological degradation and reduce the resilience capability of the eco-system and increase the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events and disasters. They need to defend the ecological redline, integrate industrial solutions and eco-solutions and carry out prevention planning against the risks of climate impacts and disaster. They also need to formulate disaster emergency

plans, strengthen disaster risk management and enhance the capacity building of urban and rural disaster risk prevention and adaptation. The impacts of the rising sea level on the coastal cities shall not be underrated. Presently, most cities don't have adaptation plans and measures except a few cities such as Shanghai and Shenzhen. In big cities, the problem of flood in the event of heavy rain and water scarcity in draughts reveals the weak infrastructure construction of cities in China and that ecological degradation weakens the protection and buffering effects of natural systems. In addition, in spite of the public financing in agricultural, water, ocean, health and weather sectors, the funding in adaptation is far less than that in mitigation, similar to the global situation of the adaptation funds deficit. As the investment in adaptation can hardly generate economic returns in the short term, the private sectors and social capital has less incentive to get engaged."

"The observation of climate change impacts, regional vulnerability analysis and risk projections by IPCC scientists raised the importance and urgency of the global efforts on adaptation. Adaptation is not passive self-adjustment in order to receive the negative impacts of climate change, but active improvement of the capability to prevent and reduce climate disasters based on predications in order to achieve the goal of sustainable development. The different sectors need to pay attention to the synergy of mitigation and adaptation and integrate climate change adaptation in the policy structure of China's "13th Five-Year Plan". In addition, China needs to speed up the pace of climate legislation and provide a legal basis for building a climate change adaptation mechanism including improving the scientific basis and capability of adaptation, formulating reasonable adaptation goals and other factors such as management systems and mechanism layout of adaptation, effective MRV mechanism and sufficient financial support.

Annex: China Climate Policy Group (CPG) consists of a group of international and local NGOs focusing on climate protection. Based on the respective focus, NGOs have made their statement as follows:

Greenovation Hub

Public finance has been allocated to the field of climate adaptation including agriculture, water, ocean and meteorology, but is far insufficient in comparison with that for mitigation and hasn't gained enough attention of private finance. As a national strategy, adaptation to climate change needs to be clearly reflected in the government functions and public financial management system. We recommend the central finance enrolls adaptation and mitigation into the subjects of national public expenditure budget and increases public finance support in adaptation. It should reduce the barriers for private capital in entering the climate adaptation field and encourage more investment in this field.



Oxfam Hong Kong

While the global food supply demand increase by 14 percent per decade, climate change will cause the loss of total global agricultural output by 2 percent per decade and further lead to the rise and fluctuation of food prices. Oxfam estimates that global crop price will double by 2030, half of whose increase is caused by climate change, which will reverse human's progress of combating hunger by decades of years. The 1.5 °C rise in global temperature will cause significant impacts on our food supply system. The latest IPCC report emphasizes that 3-4 °C increase in global temperature will make the food crisis out of control. If we don't take action, the situation will happen in the latter half of 21st century. We call for governments and businesses to take action now to stop the climate change from causing poverty or trapping people into poverty again. These actions include strengthening the adaptation capability and resilience of communities, setting more ambitious emission reduction goals and reaching a legally binding international treaty.



Beijing Shan Shui Conservation Center

Recommend that China's adaptation strategies should pay due attention to the conservation of fresh water resources and biodiversity, enhance the adaptation and resilience capacity to climate change and climate disasters. Reduce the risk of the species' extinction by protecting the eco-systems of forest and fresh water, and building the species corridors etc. Guarantee the fresh water supply to rural communities, improve the construction of drinking facilities for human beings and animals, and water-saving irrigation method, and enhance the capability of the water resources management and adaptation via the use of new technologies. Prevent the extreme weather events such as floods, droughts, water-logging, and landslides by means of ecological methods, and set up special funding for climate change disaster relief.



Global Environmental Institute (GEI)

Recommend that local governments should analyze and evaluate low-carbon development policies by using scientific, transparent and measurable analytical tools, and integrate both quantitative and qualitative ways to formulate more actionable and effective policies, so as to better achieve the double goals of economic prosperity and carbon intensity reduction.



The Nature Conservancy

Climate change poses great challenges to China in terms of biodiversity protection, agriculture, and disaster prevention and damage reduction, etc. as it affects the frequency and intensity of natural disasters such as floods and typhoons. Apart from the construction of necessary infrastructure, adaptation should also include the protection and restoration of natural eco-systems, in order to help human beings increase the capacity of coping with climate change's long-term impacts as well as extreme events. There is still much room for improvement for China in issues such as identifying adaptation goals, formulating adaptation action plans, setting up the working scheme for the synergy between adaptation and mitigation in the process of industrial upgrade and transition as well as urbanization, effectively integrating grey infrastructure and green infrastructure to be more resilient to climate change. This requires the concerted efforts among governments, academia, businesses and NGOs to carry out extensive and thorough collaboration and research domestic and abroad, and set up pilots and demonstration programs of innovative adaptation scheme and technologies in regions representing various situations.

World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF)

The risks of collective inaction are the greatest for developing countries. All countries are vulnerable but developing countries have a greater sensitivity, with more people living in poverty and fewer resources to respond to climate disasters. The world needs to put in place those measures that will slow down warming and put us on a fair and just transition to a sustainable world. WWF China recommends that in addition to strengthening the infrastructure construction, China should focus more on the conservation, restoration and management of eco-system, using natural eco-system as the green eco-shelter, defending against the catastrophic impacts of climate change and extreme weather events, which is more cost-effective way. At the same time, the energy restructure is the fundamental way to tackle climate change. Phasing out fossil fuel is feasible and China has a huge potential in renewable energy generation, which could solve the problem of energy security and air pollution by killing its main source.

