

Title

Urgent political action is needed at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Durban, South Africa, to commit the world's governments to the deep and fair greenhouse gas emissions reductions needed to limit dangerous climate change to a level that gives people and ecosystems a fighting chance to adapt. The Durban Conference includes the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 17). COP 16, which took place in Cancun, Mexico last year, resulted in a set of significant decisions to address the challenge of climate change, known as the Cancun Agreements. "Building on the Cancun Agreements, COP 17 must lay the groundwork for a fair, ambitious and legally binding global climate change regime", said Melanie Heath, BirdLife's Head of Policy. "Parties to the Convention should secure a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, and thus preserve the only legally binding instrument with emission reduction targets and timetables." Time is running out. The scale and pace of climate change are far faster than the background rate of change to which most species -and human communities- are able to adapt naturally. Above a 2°C average global temperature increase, we would enter a new environment that may no longer support much of life on Earth as we know it today. Recent research shows that to keep global temperature rise below 2°C, global emissions must peak around 2016 and reduce by 3% annually thereafter. For there to be any possibility of achieving this, Parties to the UNFCCC need to agree a mandate for a legally binding instrument on longterm cooperative action to be adopted no later than 2015. "There is a profound mismatch between the level of action demanded by our best scientific knowledge and the current level of ambition of the world's governments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions", Melanie Heath explained. "We are currently on a path towards 3°C to 5°C of climate change in this century, with likely disastrous consequences for many of the world's inhabitants and ecosystems". As well as action to reduce emissions and mitigate climate change, COP-17 must establish negotiating pathways to provide adequate finance and technical support to enable developing countries to adapt to unavoidable climate change. "COP-17 is taking place in Africa, and needs to listen to the voices of Africa and deliver for its people", Melanie Heath asserted. "We need measures and finance in place to help the poorest and most vulnerable adapt. Ecosystem-based adaptation is one piece of the jigsaw. Healthy ecosystems and biodiversity support human lives and livelihoods. They play important roles in sequestering carbon and helping society adapt to climate change."

BirdLife's 6 key asks for the Durban Conference:

- 1. Secure a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, and secure a mandate to negotiate a legally binding instrument to be adopted no later than 2015;**
- 2. Agree modalities and guidance for halting emissions from deforestation and degradation by 2020, whilst safeguarding biodiversity and livelihoods;**
- 3. Agree robust and transparent rules for accounting for emissions from the land use, land use change and forestry sector that reflect emissions actually released to the atmosphere;**
- 4. Account fully for emissions from bioenergy;**
- 5. Agree modalities for national adaptation planning that deliver to vulnerable groups and ecosystems;**
- 6. Establish a pathway to deliver adequate finance to the new Green Climate Fund from 2013.**

For more detail on BirdLife's 6 asks?, [click here for the BirdLife Policy Briefing](#)