

The Nature of Paris: what the climate Agreement really says

BirdLife International welcomes the adoption of the Paris agreement on climate change.

These have been very long, tough and complex negotiations, with fundamental and intertwined issues of ambition, differentiation and finance proving the most challenging.

Patricia Zurita, CEO at BirdLife International, stated: *“Despite all difficulties now the international community has a global agreement, that applies to all countries and that aims at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and helping people and ecosystems to adapt. We’ve demonstrated we are willing to come together to defend our Planet, our future and that of our children. Much remains to be done, in particular when it comes to protect the poorest and most vulnerable. We remain optimistic that implementation will continue to demonstrate the crucial role protecting nature plays in managing the climate crisis. What we have before us is not perfect but does represent an historic step forward.”*

Melanie Heath, Director of Science, Policy and Information at BirdLife International stated: *“The overall goal agreed upon - that increases in temperature must be kept well below 2°C and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C - is clearly good. It is also good that carbon neutrality is a set goal in the second half of the century. Unfortunately these two important targets are weak when it comes to implementation: there is no set date for a peak in emissions, nor for the achievement of carbon neutrality. These targets are binding at global level but there is nothing binding for countries involved. Although there is an important “no-backsliding clause” that obliges all countries to do progressively better, the planned stocktake and reviews will be key to scale up ambition and commitments.”*

Edward Perry, Global Climate Change Policy Coordinator at BirdLife International stated: *“For the first time in history we have a global climate change agreement that recognises the critical role of forests, oceans and other ecosystems in combatting climate change and helping communities adapt. Importantly, the Agreement also stresses the need to ensure the integrity of ecosystems and the protection of biodiversity when taking action to address climate change. This is critical for safeguarding ecosystems and ensuring that climate change actions are truly sustainable”*

John Lanchbery, Principal Climate Change Adviser at RSPB, stated: *“Article 5 the Agreement stresses the need for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation and sustainable management of forests (REDD+). This should help to ensure that more money is available to conserve forests, especially tropical forests. This is very positive, because that’s where wildlife is.”*

The Agreement sends an important signal to governments back home and businesses alike that the world must act now and rapidly shift to a low-carbon climate-resilient development.

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BirdLife International is the world's largest nature conservation Partnership. Together we are 120 BirdLife Partners worldwide – one per country – and growing, with almost 13 million supporters, 7,000 local conservation groups and 7,400 staff.