

Appeal to the international community, governments,
scientific, public organizations and business

RECOGNIZE THE VALUE AND ROLE OF NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS FOR CLIMATE CHANGE!

Terrestrial and marine **natural ecosystems are the basis for preservation of biological life on Earth**. They have existed almost unchanged for millions of years and all this time have supported climate stability, biochemical flows, global water circulation and many other processes, irreplaceable and essential for preservation of life on our planet. Undisturbed natural ecosystems maintain the Earth's temperature, suitable for human life.

The laws of nature are the basis of life on Earth, and all the laws of human society that regulate economic, political, social and cultural relations are secondary to them and **must take into account the biosphere's operating principles and man's place in it**.

However, over the past decades, human activities aimed at meeting the needs for food, energy and water have caused unprecedented changes in ecosystems, including land degradation and deforestation. These changes have helped improve the lives of billions of people, but at the same time, they have **destroyed nature's ability to regulate the environment and maintain the climate**. According to current estimates, more than 75% of natural ecosystems are subject to degradation and loss of their functions, which undermines all efforts to preserve the climate and threatens achievement of SDGs, including hunger, disease and poverty eradication.

Humanity is standing on the edge of a precipice. Over-threshold disturbance of ecosystems leads to irreversible loss of the gene pool, up to complete disappearance of ecosystems. In the face of growing efforts and understanding of the threat of climate change, it is now necessary to recognize and support the unique role of natural ecosystems in preserving the climate and a vital environment. International climate policy adjustments and fundamental changes in national development strategies are required.

We call to wake up and recognize the fundamental and irreplaceable value of natural ecosystems and for strong and urgent action, including:

1. To recognize the goal of preserving natural ecosystems **as humanity's highest priority** and stop their further destruction through adopting a **global moratorium** on any further development of territories still untouched by human activities, with international support mechanisms, including funding.
2. Promotion of large-scale natural reforestation is an urgent task. Climate-regulating functions of forests, associated with the ability to retain soil moisture and maintain continental water transfer, are their main value, which are orders of magnitude higher than the cost of wood. Undisturbed forests **should be completely removed from economic activity** by law and allocated to a separate category with the maximum degree of protection.
3. At all levels, from international to regional, national and local, it is necessary **to review ongoing development strategies and take urgent measures to protect natural ecosystems and wildlife**. It is necessary to adjust all sectoral policies, including agricultural practices, in order not only to meet the demand for food, but also to minimize the burden on natural ecosystems.
4. A transition from conventional sectoral management to **basin and ecosystem management is required, including raising the status of nature conservation goals**. Water resources management

should **ensure that natural ecosystems are guaranteed priority in water supply** that is necessary for their conservation, as well as protection and restoration of aquatic and other ecosystems - from mountains and glaciers to deltas and reservoirs.

5. Measures aimed at preserving natural ecosystems also require a review of existing incentives and tools and creation of new ones, so that ecosystem services are no longer perceived as free and unlimited, and their management takes into account the interests and roles of the **populations and local communities** which directly depend on them and are their custodians.

International Socio-Ecological Union, Eco-Forum (of 54 public organizations) of Kazakhstan, Association (non-governmental organizations) «For Sustainable Human Development of Armenia», Eco-Forum (independent non-governmental organizations) of Uzbekistan, as well as professional and non-governmental organizations of Armenia, Moldova, Russia, USA and others