

Why is it important?

Life on Earth is possible because of the warmth of the sun. While some of this incoming solar radiation bounces back into space, a small portion of it is trapped by the delicate balance of gases that make up our atmosphere. Without this layer of insulation, Earth would simply be another frozen rock hurtling through space. Carbon dioxide (CO₂) is the most important gas in this layer of insulation.

Carbon is stored all over the planet — in plants, soil, the ocean, and even us. We release it into the atmosphere as carbon dioxide through activities such as burning fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas) and cutting down trees. As a result, today's atmosphere contains 32 per cent more carbon dioxide than it did at the start of the industrial era.

We have released so much carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases that our planet's atmosphere is now like a thick, heat-trapping blanket. By disrupting the atmospheric balance that keeps the climate stable, we are now seeing extreme effects around the globe. The result: the climate changes, and it gets warmer. Extreme weather events also become more common.

Global warming has already begun. Since 1900, the global average temperature has risen by 0.6 degrees Celsius, and the northern hemisphere is substantially warmer than at any point during the past 1,000 years.

Climate change is the defining human development challenge of the 21st Century. Failure to respond to that challenge will stall and then reverse international efforts to reduce poverty. The poorest countries and most vulnerable citizens will suffer the earliest and most damaging setbacks, even though they have contributed least to the problem. Looking to the future, no country—however wealthy or powerful—will be immune to the impact of global warming.

UNDP's Human Development Report 2007/8 shows that climate change is not just a future scenario. Increased exposure to droughts, floods and storms is already destroying opportunity and reinforcing inequality. Meanwhile, there is now overwhelming scientific evidence that the world is moving towards the point at which irreversible ecological catastrophe becomes unavoidable. Business-as-usual development activities points in a clear direction: unprecedented reversal in human development in our lifetime, and acute risks for our children and their grandchildren.

There is a window of opportunity for avoiding the most damaging climate change impacts, but that window is closing: Actions taken—or not taken—in the years ahead will have a profound bearing on the future course of human development. The world lacks neither the financial resources nor the technological capabilities to act. What is missing is a sense of urgency, human solidarity and collective interest.

What is our Goal?

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is an intergovernmental treaty developed to address the problem of climate change. The Convention, which sets out an agreed framework for dealing with the issue, was negotiated from February 1991 to May 1992 and opened for signature at the June 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) — also known as the Rio Earth Summit. The UNFCCC entered into force on 21 March 1994, ninety days after the 50th country's ratification had been received. By December 2007, it had been ratified by 192 countries.

Parties to the Convention continue to meet regularly to take stock of progress in implementing their obligations under the treaty, and to consider further actions to address the climate change threat. They have also negotiated a protocol to the Convention. The Kyoto Protocol (KP) was first agreed in December 1997 in Kyoto, Japan, although ongoing discussions were needed between 1998 and 2004 to finalize the “fine print” of the agreement. The Protocol obliges industrialized countries and countries of the former Soviet bloc (known collectively as “Annex I Parties”) to cut their emissions of greenhouse gases by an average of about 5% for the period 2008-2012 compared with 1990 levels. Although the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases, the United States, rejected the Kyoto Treaty in 2001, a majority of other Annex I Parties, including Canada, Japan, and the countries of the European Union ratified the treaty. In November 2004, with the Russian Federation also ratifying the Protocol, it entered into force as a legally-binding document on 16 February 2005. By December 2007, the

Protocol had been ratified by 177 countries, including Annex I parties representing 63.7% of Annex I greenhouse gas emissions in 1990.

Iran ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in July 1996 and on 16 October 1996 became a Non-Annex I Party to the Convention. Non-Annex I countries are mostly developing countries with non-binding obligations for cutting their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Iran also ratified the KP on 22 August 2005 and established the Designated National Authority (DNA) for CDM in October 2006.

UNDP and GEF support the efforts of Iran's Government to fulfill its reporting obligations to UNFCCC. Iran's Department of Environment (DOE) has been designated by the Government as the national focal point for implementation of the UNFCCC and KP. In this capacity, the DOE established the National Climate Change Office (NCCO) in 1998. Parties to the Convention must submit national reports or communications on implementation of the Convention to the Conference of the Parties (COP).

How will we reach it?

The required contents of national communications and the timetable for their submission are different for Annex I and non-Annex I Parties. This is in accordance with the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities" enshrined in the Convention. The core elements of the national communications for both Annex I and non-Annex I Parties are information on emissions and removals of GHGs and details of the activities a Party has undertaken to implement the Convention.

National communications contain information on national circumstances, vulnerability assessment, mitigation of GHGs, financial resources and transfer of technology, as well as education, training and public awareness;

Parties submit their national communications to the UNFCCC secretariat in Bonn, Germany, which makes them publicly available. Following a request from the COP, the secretariat synthesizes the most important information from submitted national communications in separate reports for Annex I and non-Annex I Parties, and in turn submits these reports to the Subsidiary Bodies and the COP for consideration.

The project also aspires to draft Iran's Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) Report as well as Iran's National Adaptation Plan (NAP), over and above Iran's fulfillment of its reporting obligations to the COP of UNFCCC. In addition, the Project Manager also acts as the Designated National Authority (DNA) for the processing and approval of Clean Development Mechanism of the KP. The project office also acts as the Secretariat for the National Committee for climate change Working Group (NCCC) as well as the National Committee for the CDM. It also backstops the participation and reporting of DoE's senior management in climate change-related international and inter-governmental meetings.

What have we achieved?

The project started implementation in January 2012. Project inception included preparation of an annual workplan, budget, procurement and

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. Several working groups were identified to work on “vulnerability and adaptation” (V&A), “GHG national inventory”, “national circumstances”, “GHG mitigation policies”, “climate change modeling”, “technological needs” and “global climate observation systems” as well as “Research and Education”. Terms of references have been drafted and contracts drawn up for the engagement of these working groups. The working group members were briefed and trained on new procedures and guidance by the COP in fulfilling their duties as well as their respective workplans and reporting formats. In 2012, the project office has also proactively supported the review and approval of CDM-related submissions. Capacity has been built on the preparation of Iran’s NAMA amongst NCCC members. Capacity has also been built on the decentralized compilation of GHG inventories and V&A. Education and awareness raising activities continued through updating the project website and publication of quarterly climate change newsletter. The project also submitted a request for an additional US \$ 352,000 of funding to GEF to enable Iran to prepare its First Biennial Update Report.