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It is encouraging to be here with so many people who share the MacArthur Foundation's commitment to protecting the diversity of life on our planet and safeguarding our legacy to future generations.

The panel has given us important insights, eloquently and passionately expressed. I am glad to have the opportunity to add to them, and to share how MacArthur is responding to the gravest ecological challenge of our day: climate change and its consequences for biodiversity. I will briefly review how our thinking about conservation has evolved, outline our grantmaking strategy, and share our plans for the future.

MacArthur is one of the ten largest American foundations, with assets of \$6.3 billion. Based in Chicago, we work in 60 countries and have offices in Russia, Nigeria, India, Mexico, and soon China. Almost half of our annual \$260 million in grant-making is international, to work on population, human rights and international justice, peace and security, human migration, and conservation.

Our conservation efforts began in 1982, with a grant of \$15 million to help establish the World Resources Institute. In 1987, MacArthur became the first

private foundation to make conserving biodiversity a core strategic goal. Our approach has two central objectives: to conserve large land- and seascapes and building capacity. We support university research centers, civil society organizations, and government agencies concerned with the environment. We have 240 active grants in 34 countries and work in 20 more through the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund.

We take climate change very seriously. It threatens the very core of our conservation strategy. Changing weather patterns are likely to make places we are preserving inhospitable to animals and plants we seek to protect. Already we see our oceans becoming more acidic and species changing their migratory routes, going further toward the poles earlier in the spring.

We, like many funders, have long been concerned with mitigating the effects of climate change. Since 2000 we have made 234 grants worth \$65 million in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, with the goal of preserving native forests that capture carbon.

At present, the Foundation focuses in eight hotspots – places with high numbers of endemic species under extreme threat: the Lower Mekong, Eastern Himalayas, Melanesia, Madagascar, the Albertine Rift, the Insular Caribbean, and the southern and northern Andes. We have concentrated on reducing deforestation, training conservation professionals, strengthening key

organizations, and conducting scientific inventories of species – in places such as Cordillera Azul National Park in Peru, the Seima Biodiversity Conservation Area (SBCA) in Cambodia, and the Antongil Landscape in north-east Madagascar. The erosion of the world's forests accounts for nearly 20 percent of greenhouse emissions, and curbing the loss of trees is a simple and cost-effective way of carbon sequestration.

Mitigation is a necessary but insufficient response to the threat of climate change. Coral reefs are dying, animals – like the toucan populations that are nesting further and further upslope – are seeking higher altitudes as we speak. It is time to face the reality of adaptation. We can not afford to dismiss adaptation as giving in or worry that it will lower incentives for going after root causes.

So two years ago, MacArthur began to commission studies of how climate change would affect its 8 hot spots. Our grantees, such as the InterAmerican Institute for Global Change Research, Bishop Museum, and World Wildlife Fund, are examining the impact on biodiversity in the Andes, marine life in Melanesia, freshwater and forest ecosystems in the Lower Mekong. In all, we have 13 studies assessing climate change under way.

These studies are beginning to confirm what we suspected. Our place-based strategy is at risk if we do not change course.

We are using the occasion of this conference – and this session – to announce a 50 million dollar commitment to climate change adaptation.

Our initiative has five parts.

- 1) The first is underway: the 13 assessments which will bring the best science to bear on estimating the impact of climate change in places where we work and on species we seek to preserve.
- 2) The next phase is to pilot interventions, for example, in Madagascar, to restore and protect riverine corridors, develop alternative sources for products now derived from natural forests, and identify and protect climate-change resilient marine zones.
- 3) The third and most important stage is to learn from the pilots and take the ideas that work to scale. That goes beyond the commitment I just announced and will require funds from other public and private donors.
- 4) Fourth: MacArthur is also investing in new tools that will help monitor climate change and its impact on biodiversity. We gave a grant to the Carnegie Airborne Laboratory to develop rapid assessment techniques that will detect where forests are resilient to climate change and where they are vulnerable. The Carnegie team has just completed its first

fieldwork in Peru and collected more than 65,000 specimens from 453 canopy species. We hope that the Encyclopedia of Life, a project we fund that is developing a webpage for every known species, will link to climate change impact databases so that we can determine how a species has been affected by climatic or land-use changes.

- 5) The fifth and final dimension of our strategy is just taking shape. We have made a grant to the IUCN and WWF to explore the feasibility of a Global Climate Change Adaptation Center.

The two organizations have consulted more than 200 conservation scientists and climate experts in Africa, Asia, and Latin America as well as in the Global North. No doubt they talked to many of you. Discussions on the design of the Center will continue here in Barcelona this week.

The Center would operate as an information hub, allowing researchers and practitioners to share their most recent research and experience, transmitting successful ideas or practical measures rapidly around the world, and building alliances between groups that do related work.

The Center would help connect organizations that work at the global scale with those which concentrate on particular regions, improving communication, co-operation, and the best use of resources targeted at the most vulnerable species. Some have shared in our discussions and are prepared to take part: we are

encouraged that regional organizations, such as the Center for International Forestry Research in Indonesia and the South Africa National Biodiversity Institute, are interested. And that international groups, such as the UNEP Global Climate Change Adaptation Network and the International Institute for Environment and Development, welcome the new Center.

This is an ambitious vision, a plan still in the making. Assuming the Center is well designed and commands broad support from people in this room and beyond, MacArthur will provide seed money to get it started.

MacArthur is encouraged by the early progress of our climate change initiative. But the scale and urgency of the problem demands that the international conservation community step up its efforts. It is clear that, for conservation to succeed in the face of climate change, there must be shared science, coordinated action, the capacity for rapid response, backed up with increased financial resources.

You can count on MacArthur to play a leadership role in building an international movement to adapt conservation to the reality of climate change. We want to work with other private and public agencies that share our commitment. We will do more; we ask you to do more. This is work that cannot wait. As those who care about life on earth, we must act boldly, together, and now. Together, we can make a difference.

