

Joint Statement

CALLING THE WORLD'S ATTENTION TO CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND SNOW LEOPARDS IN THE THIRD POLE



On the 10th anniversary of the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program, we have come together at the 28th Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change. We, the leaders of Asia's countries that are home to the snow leopard, are committed to implementing the Bishkek Declarations of 2013 and 2017, aimed at conserving the species and its habitat in partnership with the local and indigenous communities. We issue this joint statement to draw global attention to Earth's rapidly warming Third Pole, which is not only home to the snow leopard and a wide range of mountain biodiversity, but also provides valuable ecosystem services to a third of the world's human population.

We:

Celebrate the spirit of cooperation that, in the last 10 years, has led to numerous initiatives for the conservation of snow leopards and their fragile habitat, involving resource mobilization, research and monitoring, and community-based partnerships.

Emphasize that while significant strides have been made towards snow leopard conservation and the welfare of local and indigenous communities by addressing traditional threats including retaliatory killing and illegal wildlife trade, there are new and emerging threats such as poorly planned infrastructure and intensified risk of infectious diseases.

Understand that the severe and escalating impacts of climate change pose an existential threat to the resilience of ecosystems and people within the snow leopard habitat.

Recognize the great urgency to act decisively and collaboratively in the face of climate change that has resulted in increased frequencies and intensities of extreme events, threatening the vulnerable local and indigenous communities, their livelihoods and Asia's mountain biodiversity.

Commit to making the snow leopard an inspiring symbol of conservation and climate adaptation in the Third Pole.

Draw attention to the fact that the Earth's Third Pole, often overlooked in discussions of climate change, must get immediate attention, as the melting glaciers and diminishing snow cover in this critical region pose a global threat, as the region serves as the source of vital freshwater for a significant portion of humanity.

Propose the prioritization of the Third Pole and its glaciers for comprehensive climate adaptation programs.

Urge the countries of the world, multilateral agencies and financial institutions to endorse the snow leopard as a symbol of climate resilience across the Third Pole—a testament to our dedication to safeguarding our planet and the livelihoods of those inhabiting these lands.

Call upon global leaders to promote dialogue on mountain and climate action, and take concrete actions towards sustainable mountain economies and protection of mountain ecosystems.

Together we unite in weaving a narrative of hope, resilience, and urgent collective action for the snow leopard, Asia's mountain biodiversity, and its rich mountain cultures and traditions.