

UNEP's Bulletin

Latin America and the Caribbean

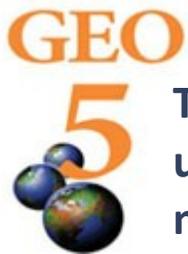
July - August 2011



GEO Titicaca

Final outcomes of the *Project to Support Integrated and Participatory Water Management in the Titicaca Basin*

Government of Spain funding for the initiative

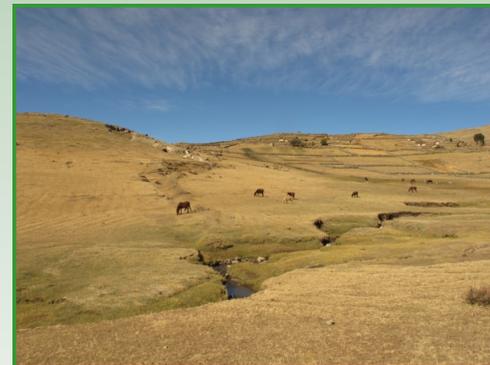


The planet, under a magnifying glass

Analysis of the first draft of the report in Panama

“ECCO Trujillo was our starting point and it will be part of our history”

César Acuña, mayor of Trujillo



Field visit to Ccsacancha (Cotabambas, Apurímac).

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Workshops

- . Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+)
- . Radiowaves for responding to climate change in Panama
- . Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-Sharing among local communities
- . Training course on drafting environmental legislation
- . Sustainable public procurement



Mexico - The European Commission and the Mexican Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources held high-level talks in July on Environment and Climate Change. The aim was to follow up on bilateral work on green economy, climate change, biodiversity, among other environmental issues.

Caribbean - The Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) and the European Union (EU) signed an agreement which includes an allocation of 8 million Euros to support several CARIFORUM countries in meeting the challenges of climate change.

Caricom - The New secretary-general of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Ambassador Irwin LaRocque, assumed duties on Monday 15 August.

Guatemala - Luis Zurita Tablada became Guatemala's new Environment Minister. He had served as Vice Minister of Environment from 2008. Guatemala's general elections will take place on September 11th.

Antigua and Barbuda - Antigua and Barbuda has become the tenth signatory of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing in the region, joining Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Peru and Uruguay.

Suriname - Suriname's President, Desi Bouterse, installed the Climate Compatible Development Agency (CCDA), which will be tasked with formulating Government's climate change policies and with leading the execution of the country's Climate Compatible Development Strategy.

Panama - Panama Vice-President, Juan Carlos Varela, announced that Panama would host the preparatory meetings for the UN climate change conference in South Africa at the end of the year. The meetings in Panama City will take place during the first week of October.

Peru - After defeating Keiko Fujimori in June's second electoral round, Ollanta Humala was sworn in as new Peruvian president in July, vowing to eradicate poverty in one of the fastest growing economies in Latin America. Physicist Ricardo Giesecke, was appointed Environment Minister.

Brazil - The wind power generation in Brazil will increase by 600 percent over the next three years, from the current 1,000 megawatts to 7,000 megawatts by 2014, driven among other factors by the arrival of the largest foreign

Chile - Peaceful student protests demanding reform of the Chilean government's education system, turned violent as school and university students clashed with police. Protesters called for an end to for-profit educational institutions, lower interest rates for student loans, among other measures.

Venezuela - Venezuela's crude oil proven reserves surpassed those of Saudi Arabia in 2010, according to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. According to OPEC, Venezuela's proven crude oil reserves had reached 296.5 billion barrels in 2010, higher than Saudi Arabia's 264.5 billion barrels.



Panama readies itself for Rio+20

UNEP holds first informational workshop on Rio+20 process

The date of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development 2012 is fast approaching. With **Rio+20** less than a year away, the different countries are preparing for this global meeting that will take place in June 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Panama held its first Informational Workshop on the **Rio+20** process in late July, ahead of the national consultation in preparation for its country report. The workshop also provided a forum for examining the participation of Panama in the Regional Preparatory Meeting of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, scheduled for 7, 8 and 9 September, at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), in Santiago, Chile.



The Director General of International Agencies and Conferences, Tomás Guardia, inaugurated the workshop, at which the following persons took part as speakers: Margarita Astráлага, Director and Regional Representative of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); Silvano Vergara, General Deputy Administrator of the National Environmental Authority (ANAM) of Panama; Mara Murillo, Deputy Regional Director; as well as Gisele Didier, National

Programme Officer of the United National Development Programme (UNDP) in Panama and official in charge of issues related to sustainable development and the environment.

The meeting, held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was also attended by officials from several other ministries and government agencies that take part in the design and implementation of development policies for Panama.



Green economy in the Brazilian Senate

The UNEP Brazil office took part in a public hearing on green economy promoted by the Brazilian Senate's Standing Subcommittee to Support Rio+20.

The hearing was chaired by Senator Cristovam Buarque, president of the Subcommittee. Participants included Maria Amélia Enriquez, of the Brazilian Society for an Ecological Economy; Donald Sawyer, professor at the Centre for Sustainable Development of the University of Brasilia; and Elisa Tonda, head of the UNEP Brazil office.

She stressed that positive, concrete results could be obtained by reallocating an investment equivalent to only 2% of global gross domestic product to a low-carbon, resource-efficient economy.

The participants also addressed issues related to the increasing pressure on natural resources, population growth and the importance of moving from unsustainable patterns of production and consumption to a scenario for more sustainable economic growth.

At the end of the session, Senator Buarque thanked UNEP for its participation in the public hearing and stressed his willingness to continue working with this UN program in the run-up to Rio+20.



Senator Buarque opened the discussion by stressing that, in his opinion, green economy was one of the most complex issues of Rio+20. Elisa Tonda referred to the issue of green economy in line with the contents of the UNEP Report on Green Economy.



New challenges for the sacred lake of the Incas

Final outcomes of the Project to Support Integrated and Participatory Water Management in the Titicaca Basin

Legend has it that Lake Titicaca was born of the tears shed by the Sun, the god of the Incas, over the death of its children. From its vantage point in the central Andes, at between 3,600 and 6,500 metres above sea level, this sacred place has marked the life of the countless inhabitants and cultures that have been blessed by the fertility of its waters. These same waters are now afflicted by pollution, from various sources, and the spread of invasive species.

The need to preserve this unique environment, with its great wealth and diversity of flora and fauna, led to the creation of the "Project to Support Integrated and Participatory Water Management in the Titicaca-Desaguadero-Poopó-Salar de Coipasa (TDPS) Water System" of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Government of Spain funding for the initiative

The Government of Spain's Ministry of the Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs has contributed US\$1.6 million to finance this initiative. UNEP has encouraged the Governments of Bolivia and Peru, which share the basin, and the Lake Titicaca Binational Authority, to join forces.

The city of La Paz hosted the presentation of the final outcomes of the project at a binational meeting held on 7 and 8 July. The event was attended by more than 70 representatives of national, regional and local authorities from Peru and Bolivia, of the Lake Titicaca Binational Authority and of other organizations and institutions.





Activities conducted by far exceed initial expectations

The activities that were conducted by far exceeded initial expectations. The most significant actions were focused on improving water quality in the basin through the creation of a monitoring network with more than two hundred points, identifying polluting sources, improving the efficiency of wastewater treatment plants and modernizing the basin's thirteen laboratories, etc.

The tools this project leaves in the hands of decision makers include the Titicaca Global Environment Outlook (GEO). The report, prepared by UNEP with the participation of some fifty scientists and experts from Bolivia and Peru, analyses

the problems in the area and proposes concrete remediation measures.

GEO Titicaca stresses the inalienable responsibility of the three million inhabitants of the basin to preserve the local environment, which was home to a responsibility that has already been shouldered by the Wankarani, Chiripa, Uru, Tiwanaku, Pukara, Aymara and Inca cultures, among others. With the decisive effort of all, the environment herethis unique place will be enjoyed by many peoples that have as yet to arrive here.



GEO 5: The planet, under a magnifying glass



Antonio Perera

Analysis of the first draft of the report in Panama

One of the most ambitious projects for analysing the environment just gained momentum in our region, in the run-up to the Rio+20 international meeting. We are referring to the fifth Global Environment Outlook report, or GEO 5.

These GEO reports, coordinated by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), are published every five years. The next one will be presented in February 2012, ahead of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, better known as Rio+20.

The purpose is none other than to assess the environmental challenges facing the different regions of the planet and to provide decision makers with a range of solutions and alternatives for returning to a path to sustainable development and a green economy that respects the environment while and for making progress on eradicating poverty.

GEO 5 is being drafted with a participatory methodology, drawing on contributions from different social sectors and domains, ranging from government leaders and the scientific world to the private sector. It consists of a compilation of [relevant scientific data] for each region—in our case, for Latin America and the Caribbean—making it possible to explore the interaction between the environment, the economy and human well-being.

Priorities for the region: climate change, biodiversity, environmental governance, seas and oceans, freshwater and land use.

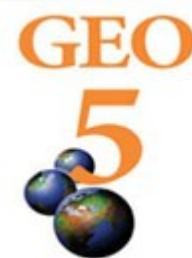
A September 2010 consultation with the main regional stakeholders (including civil society) allowed the six environmental priorities for the region to be identified: climate change, biodiversity, environmental governance, seas and oceans, freshwater and land use.

Status of the GEO

The first draft of GEO-5 was completed in July and underwent an extensive consultation process with governments and civil society. The group of lead authors of the regional chapter on Latin America and the Caribbean—some 15 experts—met in Panama City from 8 to 10 August to discuss and agree on changes to the preliminary document, and thus address the comments and observations received in the consultation process.

The second draft of GEO-5 will go through a consultation process involving policy experts and scientists. Around mid-November, UNEP hopes to produce the third and final draft of the report, with which the main findings will be extracted to prepare the Summary for Decision Makers, which is intended to be used especially by policymakers.

Finally, in February 2012, a few months before the Rio+20 conference, we will have one of the most complete tools for protecting our planet, the GEO 5.



GEO 5, beyond the assessment

Ernesto Guhl

The participants in the meeting of lead authors of the regional chapter included Ernesto Guhl, former Deputy Minister of the Environment in Colombia and currently director of the Quinaxi Institute for Sustainable Development. Guhl stressed that, whereas previous GEOs “were very much focused on the assessment”, GEO-5 “has focused much more on submitting policy options in order for actions to be taken in a much more concrete and clear manner”. Guhl said that the new GEO contributes “experiences with policies related to different topics that have been discussed in different forums and by different countries, and makes them available to decision makers throughout the region, to see if they can be utilized, through replication and adaptation to the different needs of the different countries”.



Antonio Perera

Effort of developed countries

Keith Nichols

Keith Nichols, head of the Environment and Sustainable Development Unit of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, said that he is hopeful that GEO-5 would make it possible to change people's way of thinking, to “establish a new paradigm, a new trend of thought, especially in countries that have the influence to decide who receives what and how much we receive, to help the world recover from the effects of climate change”. Indeed, Nichols asked that the developed countries that have contributed the most to climate change step up their efforts in support of less-developed nations, such as the islands of the Caribbean, which cannot cope with the devastating effects of a phenomenon to which they have barely contributed because they are countries with low pollution emissions.



Antonio Perera

Sustainable enterprises

Ligia Castro de Doens

But the goal is not merely to get government officials involved. Companies also have an important role to play in the field of environmental responsibility, as was stressed by another coauthor of the GEO report in Latin America and the Caribbean, Ligia Castro de Doens,



Antonio Perera

former Administrator General of the National Environment Authority of Panama and currently the environmental director of the Development Bank of Latin America. According to Castro, “there are very good examples of companies that are now doing this

successfully, which has allowed them to be more efficient, more competitive, [companies] that are doing things right and that have good environmental management. These are the experiences that we are trying to recover for GEO 5, as case studies, but in addition we also have set out to continue to highlight them in upcoming activities, such as at the Rio+20 summit”. The successful small, medium and large enterprises whose experiences Castro pointed to include “poultry, pig or beef cattle [farms], breweries and cement factories, that have developed a more efficient production model that at the same time is more environmentally friendly and makes it possible to recover the initial investment and reap significant profits”.

Interview with the mayor of Trujillo (Peru)

Interview with César Acuña, mayor of Trujillo, after the presentation in August of the UNEP report Outlooks for the Environment Environment and Climate Change Outlook in the Urban Environment: Ecco Trujillo. The report examines the environmental and climate change challenges faced by the city and puts forth solutions for moving towards sustainable development.

In your opinion, what makes the city of Trujillo so special, particularly in environmental terms?

Its climate, which gives it its reputation as the city of eternal spring; even amid changing climate patterns, when we compare it to other cities, this means that it has a benign and pleasant climate. In addition, its public green areas, its river and its stately houses, and beyond this we have its history and its gastronomy.

Why did the [city's] institutions decide to embark on this project? What did they expect to achieve through ECCO Trujillo?

For the city's management, it is important to have a baseline against which to manage its development, constructed in a participatory manner with its own local actors. It was expected that this would provide reliable information for decision-making with a common view of the future.



“ECCO Trujillo was our starting point and it will be part of our history”

César Acuña, Mayor of Trujillo

Now that you have received the report, are you satisfied?

Yes, because this is first document produced in my term [and] the institutions took part by contributing and discussing, and it has allowed us to understand the aspects that we must improve. It therefore gives us the possibility of moving forward, and this motivates us to continue analyzing and evaluating... constructing new baselines.

What information and what data do you believe will be especially useful for the sustainable management of the city?

The information on water management and the vulnerability of this resource for Trujillo is useful in order to make a priority of establishing strategies for adapting to climate change. The data on the growth of the fleet of vehicles and their age, the use of water for public green areas, the growth of solid waste, among others, are also particularly useful..

What are the greatest environmental challenges faced by Trujillo, and what steps do you plan to take to meet them?

- Having proper solid-waste disposal. We don't have a sanitary landfill;
- Proper management of water resources and water treatment;
- Efficient use of public transportation, thereby improving air quality;
- Having a province-wide strategy for adapting to climate change and mitigating its impacts.

Do you believe that civil society is sufficiently aware of the need to move forward towards a sustainable Trujillo?

Trujillo has made progress in public awareness-raising; however, we must work hard on education, especially because the city faces very high immigration and this is difficult to change in the short term. We are taking up the challenge.

What do you believe Trujillo will be like in twenty years?

We trust that Trujillo will have laid the foundations for sustainable development, governance will have been strengthened, public transport will make the transition to mass transport and we citizens will be more responsible. Young people with fresh ideas will lead the city. A big step will have been taken, and we will have a clear idea on the path for constructing this common future.

When future residents of Trujillo look back, do you believe they will value the impulse given by ECCO Trujillo to environmental issues?

I think they will; this was our starting point and it will be part of our history...



REPORTAJE >>> TRUJILLOS TUVIERON MIEDO DE QUE NUEVAMENTE LA CIUDAD SE ENLAGUNE

Otra vez esa lluvia que malogra pistas y viviendas

TANISTAS APROVECHARON MALESTAR DE LA GENTE QUE NO QUERÍA MOJARSE CON EL AGUA SUJA QUE LES SALPICABA DE LOS CHARCOS. PRECIOS SUBIERON HASTA 50%

LOS AUTOS PADECERON. En algunas intersecciones las pistas ya no aguantan ni una gota de lluvia.

Barridos Pasa la vida
Los propietarios de viviendas en el barrio de San Juan, para protegerse de las inundaciones, se han visto obligados a trasladarse a una tienda que opera en un sector de la ciudad, para así evitar que el agua se acumule en sus hogares.

EMPAPADAS. Las pobres señoras no se salvaron de mojar sus prendas.

TERRIBLE. Los calles una vez más dan pena.

GRAN CHARCO. El tráfico se paró a esperar.

INSUAL. Pasa en el verano. 50% de aumento.

NADE SE SALVA. La lluvia en 2011, según se dice.

El clima está presentando un aspecto muy variado en toda la ciudad. Los periodistas efectuaron un viaje de la zona de La Libertad, zona de Pisco y al centro del país, informó Pisco.

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Fighting climate change in the Peruvian Andes



Montserrat Valeiras

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is participating in a joint programme in two Andean microbasins

From 27 June to 1 July 2011, a field visit was conducted of the Joint Programme named "Integrated and Adaptive Environmental Resource Management to Minimize Vulnerabilities to Climate Change in Microbasins of the Andean Highlands - Peru". The purpose of the field visit was to supervise communication activities in the intervention area.

The programme is being carried out in two microbasins of the Andean highlands, Santo Tomás (province of Chumbivilcas, in the region of Cusco) and Challhuahuacho (province of Cotabambas, in the region of Apurímac), with a mostly rural population of some 85,000 residents. Four United Nations agencies (FAO, PAHO/WHO, UNDP and UNEP) are taking part, along with the Ministry of the Environment, as the national counterpart.

Within the programme, the specific mission of UNEP is to better enable local, provincial and regional governments to design and implement decentralized environmental management systems as well as to raise awareness among families and the general population on the effects of climate change. The communication activities and the field visit described in the following personal narrative focus on the latter objective.

Field visit to Ccsacancha (Cotabambas, Apurímac).

Montserrat Valeiras

It is a sun-drenched dawn in Peru. The sky is clear, so clear that the clouds draw eccentric shapes against a blue canvas. The golden colours of these Andean highlands extend endlessly in all directions. I gaze in search of the greenness of fertile land, but I can see nothing but dry pasture.

Blue and yellow are the hues of Ccsacancha, 4,500 metres above sea level.

I come from other altitudes and I am short on oxygen, but for the dwellers of this community altitude is not a problem; as they tell me, they face other problems: poverty, lack of sanitation, access to water for drinking or farming, and all of these problems are exacerbated by climate change.

One farmer explains to us that extreme climate phenomena, such as frosts or droughts, are increasingly frequent. Temperature changes have become unpredictable, and at times extreme, even within a single day.

"Even the snow, the main nutrient of the glaciers, appears to have forgotten these mountains"

It is summertime, which is the dry period, but the rain patterns have changed and it is more and more difficult to differentiate the seasons. The dry season is getting longer, and even the snow, the main nutrient of the glaciers, appears to have forgotten these mountains.

Water, the engine of life, is becoming scarce. Many springs are dry and the volume of the rivers diminishes irreversibly. The lack of water affects human consumption, but it is also detrimental to agricultural production as well as livestock. The land and crops need water to grow, and so do we.

The Andes is the area of Peru most affected by climate change, and, at times, its inhabitants' poor practices hinder adaptation to changing conditions. Overgrazing, deforestation, water pollution and poor agricultural and mining techniques have increased the negative impact on the soil, pasture and fauna, triggering a process of accelerated soil degradation and desertification. Many people have had to move elsewhere in search of better living conditions.

Not so in Ccsacancha. The residents of this rural town participate in a joint and coordinated manner in integrated and sustainable natural resource management. This society has become a reference point, a pilot and model community for the Joint Programme. >>

Radio: a tool for awareness-raising

The main —in fact, the only— form of mass media in the area is radio. Thanks to the different awareness-raising programmes that the Joint Programme — led by UNEP and UNDP— has promoted, including for radio airtime in Quechua, residents can better understand the threats of climate change and begin to take actions to adapt to it. The population —indigenous Inca communities— has succeeded in recovering ancient land management practices and in making the most of the technical, financial and methodological support offered by the Joint Programme.

I wander across the land, which at first I find arid, but I discover that it is hardly sterile. I am surrounded by potatoes, whose names I can barely remember, because the varieties seem endless, and I have a hard time understanding the differences among them. I try to keep up with the athletic pace of these stockbreeders and crop growers, and the effort is worth making: I discover areas reforested with native species and large swaths of wetlands that have been protected. This is their struggle—to rescue the species and the knowledge that already existed in these lands.

“All of a sudden, the landscape changes before my eyes, and I understand the incredible work that this community is doing”

In the distance, I observe the channels and the entire rainwater retention and storage system. All of a sudden, the landscape changes before my eyes, and I understand the incredible work that this community is doing. The creation of the different ecological strata, infiltration trenches to feed the springs, slow-forming terraces and many other experiments have been brought to life thanks to their desire and effort and the consultancy work of the Joint Programme's experts.

After a long walk at this altitude, and despite visibly lacking oxygen, I am pleased. The inhabitants of Ccsacancha want better economic and social opportunities.

They think of themselves, but also of the future well-being of their children — "what are we going to leave them?", they ask. And I think, "Is that not what we all ask?"

The Joint Programme is not able, nor does it attempt, to solve all of the problems that beset these communities, but it is gratifying to see how, in a common effort in which UNEP is taking part, we have been able see residents here receive the technical consultancy — the tools of knowledge that are generating a positive, tangible change, contributing to transform these Andean villages into better places to live.



Montserrat Valeiras



Montserrat Valeiras

Apurímac Regional Strategy on Climate Change



Peru's Apurímac region is continuing to take steps to acquire a fundamental tool for mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change. On 16 August 2011, the presentation of the Apurímac Regional Strategy on Climate Change was given at the seat of the Apurímac regional government, with the participation of public and private institutions and civil society representatives.

The strategy's sponsors include the Apurímac regional government, the Climate Change Adaptation Programme and UNEP, through the Peru Joint Programme. The latter programme has also sponsored the Cusco Regional Strategy on Climate Change.

Once the Apurímac strategy has been approved through a regional ordinance, the roadmap for its on-the-ground implementation will be drawn up. Implementation will begin in the districts of the province of Cotabambas, in the subbasin of the Río Santo Tomás, benefitting 44,000 residents.

Community leaders take a stance on climate change

First Provincial Forum on Climate Change in Chumbivilcas, Peru

More than 250 representatives and leaders of Andean highland communities in the province of Chumbivilcas, department of Cusco, examined the potential effects of climate change on human health and on agricultural activity during the First Provincial Forum on Climate Change, held on 28 July.

These rural community leaders stressed the urgent need for the population and the authorities to address the challenges posed by climate change in the Andean highland communities, where poverty, high malnutrition levels and widespread soil erosion leave families more vulnerable.

The event was organized by the Technical Panel on the Environment, composed of different public and private institutions, including the Chumbivilcas Province Municipality and the United Nations Joint Programme on Climate Change.



The Joint Program is headed by the Ministry of the Environment of Peru and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Health Organization/ Pan American Health Organization (WHO/PAHO).



Green Economy, in Mexico

Visit by Pavan Sukhdev

Pavan Sukhdev, UNEP advisor and study leader of the report on “The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity” (TEEB), arrived in Mexico on 22 August for a two-day visit and with an agenda that was more than full. In addition to meeting with authorities of the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources and the country's leading media outlets, he also found time to take part in several presentations and dialogues on the TEEB

program and the Green Economy Initiative, with representatives of the political, academic and financial world as well as with international donors and NGOs.

The public, private and academic sectors showed much interest in launching a “Green Economy Scoping Study” in Mexico.

Green carpet rolled out in Mexico

Opening of FICMA-UNEP Film Festival, Mexico 2011

The Barcelona International Environmental Film Festival, with the support of UNEP, has just burst onto the scene in Mexico. The first of the 15 projections planned for throughout the country took place in the city of Aguascalientes. Some 700 people saw the documentaries that make up the festival and which address a broad range of environmental issues.

The inauguration was attended by Carlos Lozano de la Torre, governor of the State of Aguascalientes; Lorena Martínez, mayor of the city of Aguascalientes; Mario Andrade, director of the University of Aguascalientes; and Dolores Barrientos, UNEP representative in Mexico.

During the festival, the authorities and UNEP began talks on the possibility of drafting an Environment and Climate Change Outlook (ECCO) report for Aguascalientes. They also examined the possibility of conducting a technology transfer project for the manufacture of solar water heaters, with UNEP collaboration.

In addition to Mexico, the FICMA documentaries will also be shown soon in Bolivia and other countries of the región.

Measures to avoid deforestation in the Yucatán peninsula



Introductory workshop on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+)

The Yucatán peninsula and the State of Chiapas account for 60% of all deforestation and degradation in Mexico. At a global level, deforestation and forest degradation, whether from the conversion of forests into pasture or agricultural land, the building of infrastructure or uncontrolled logging, account for 20% of greenhouse gas emissions.

To promote a reduction of deforestation and degradation, UNEP, in collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank, Mexico's National Forest Commission (CONAFOR) and the Yucatán State government, held an Introductory Workshop on REDD+, in the city of Mérida, from 10-12 August.

The purpose of the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) programme is to assign a financial value to the carbon stored in forests, offering incentives for developing countries to avoid deforestation. REDD+ goes one step further, by also addressing sustainable forest management.

The workshop provided authorities, members of the academic sector and non-governmental organizations with the expertise and tools needed to design and execute a REDD+ mechanism in the Yucatán peninsula.





Radiowaves for responding to climate change in Panama

From community leaders to communicators

Information is vital for coping with the effects of climate change. But equally important is the flow of that information and ensuring that it be received by all inhabitants, no matter how isolated they are, and that it be delivered in the language that they speak.

Ensuring the effective dissemination of relevant messages is one objective of the Joint Programme "Inclusion of Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Measures in Natural Resource Management in Two Priority Watersheds in Panama". In addition to UNEP, other United Nations agencies (FAO, UNDP, PAHO/WHO) are also participating in the Joint Programme along with various Panamanian institutions, including the National Environmental Authority.

Thanks to this programme, a novel experiment has been underway since the

last week of July in the Chucunaque and Tabasará river basins, in Panama. First, from among community promoters in the area—who previously received training through the Joint Programme in Human Development, Environmental Legislation and Climate Change—a group of community leaders of the Guna, Emberá, Ngäbe, Buglé and Wounaan ethnic groups was selected, in addition to campesinos farmers and local residents.

These persons have been taking part in promoter training workshops in order to become communicators and produce radio materials in their respective local languages, and to allow them so that, from the perspective of their own worldview, they can share the expertise they have acquired in the workshops with the members of their communities.



In early September, at the end of the eight planned workshops, participants will have prepared eight radio spots and four radio journals on issues related to adapting to and mitigating climate change. All of these products will be recorded in five indigenous languages in addition to Spanish. More importantly, however, these persons will have acquired the theoretical and technological expertise to continue disseminating, over the radio, the information that will allow their communities to better respond to climate change.



José Bacorizo: Community promoter and radio announcer in the Chucunaque river basin in Panama

"I have always considered radio a magical invention", says José Bacorizo, Wounaan on his father's side and Emberá on his mother's side and born 52 years ago in Arimae, province of Darién, Panama. José recalls that the sound of the radio, always present in his childhood, was shrouded in mystery.

"Indigenous peoples, by being aware of their ancestral values and preserving their natural wealth, will make the future possible"

José is one of the 40 community promoters in the Chucunaque river basin trained by the UNEP. The case of José would be not be unusual if it were not for the fact that, in addition to being a promoter, he is also an avowed environmentalist with his own radio show. "Dadji drua" (Our land/Our territory) is the programme in the Emberá language that for the last 18 years he has hosted every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, from 17:30 to 18:00, on the "Voice without Borders" radio station. The programme examines issues related to preserving indigenous peoples' cultural and natural heritage.

On the basis of his experience, José Bacorizo has been able to act as a facilitator and to train some of his fellow promoters in the Community Communicator Training Workshops of the UNEP. For José, the value of indigenous-language radio recordings is that "native language gives strength and value to a people; if the language is lost, rights are lost: culture, identity, heritage and territory disappear. Indigenous peoples, by being aware of their ancestral values and preserving their natural wealth, will make the future possible".



Joint Programme to finance small climate change adaptation projects in Panama

Within the framework of the Joint Programme on Climate Change, carried out by the United Nations (FAO, UNDP, UNEP and PAHO), together with the Government of Panama, the "Fund to Finance Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Projects in the Tabasará River Watershed" has been launched. The fund aims to reduce vulnerability to climate change in the area.

The small projects to be financed will be classified into different areas: management and recovery of degraded areas; education to reduce vulnerability to climate change; natural resource management; and local risk management, among others.

Selection criteria will be based on projects' contribution to the environment, participation of vulnerable groups, gender equality, etc.

The minimum amount of funding to be received by the projects will be US\$3,000.00 and the maximum will be US\$15,000.00, and they must be executed and completed within six months.

The genes of nature: shared wealth

Kick-off in Panama of a regional workshop on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-Sharing among local communities

The adoption of the Nagoya Protocol, in the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), poses considerable challenges for countries that have already signed it (including 10 in Latin America and the Caribbean) and for those that plan to ratify it.

“Strengthening the Implementation of Regimes on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) in Latin America and the Caribbean” is a regional project that has emerged in response to some of these challenges. It is being implemented by UNEP and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), with the support of the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

The project seeks to provide the different countries with expertise and skills for negotiating contracts and agreements on ABS, so as to allow the providers of genetic resources to reap the benefits derived from the use of those resources.



Traditional fishermen returning to port in the Arcadins Islands, Haiti

Photo: Antonio Pereira

As a first activity towards that goal, a Regional Induction Workshop for the project, with 20 participants, including national authorities and regional experts, was held from 30 August to 2 September.

The regional encounter represented a unique occasion to address crucial issues: how is the great wealth of genetic resources in our region to be valued and protected? What challenges and opportunities does bioprospecting entail? How is the traditional knowledge of our local communities and indigenous peoples being respected and applied?



Dendrobates Auratus, (green and black poisonous frog) in the Panama Canal forest

Photo: Laurencio Martínez



Laurencio Martínez



Laurencio Martínez

Extending the benefits of a course, virtually

Virtual sessions for following up on courses on TEEB and Forest

In response to requests from the countries, UNEP has promoted follow-up activities in order to apply the knowledge acquired and to prolong the benefits of two of its courses. Virtual sessions held in July and August have made it possible to follow up on and prolong the exchange of experiences with the participants of two on-site capacity-building workshops that had been held previously.

Representatives of nine institutions in Latin America participated in the virtual sessions of the third Regional Course on Forests. The course promotes training, as well as the exchange of experiences and knowledge, on management and conservation strategies related to forest resources and biodiversity, hydrological-forest restoration, the fight against erosion-desertification and torrential flooding. The initiative is being funded by Spain's Ministry of the Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs.

Eleven institutions in the Caribbean were represented at the virtual sessions of a course titled The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB), intended to train environmental economists from the Caribbean. The training focused, for the most part, on methodologies to estimate the economic benefits of biodiversity and the costs of a loss of biodiversity. It is hoped that the training will be implemented at the country level. The initiative received European Union and UNEP funding.

What is the value of a volcano, a mountain or a protected area?

Agreements signed for the execution of the UNEP-Spain Lifeweb project in El Salvador and Panama

There are many ways to protect biodiversity. UNEP and the Government of Spain have joined forces to bet on one of those ways—one that offers benefits not only for biological diversity but also for local communities and indigenous populations linked to protected areas.

That is the philosophy that provides the base for the “Project to Support the Protected Areas of Mesoamerica: Development of Legal and Economic Mechanisms and Instruments to Improve Protected Area Management, including Sustainable Agricultural Practices as a Fire Prevention Strategy”.

The project is being carried out on a pilot-project basis in Volcano Barú National Park, in Panama, and the La Montañona Conservation Area, in El Salvador. For the execution of the project, in July, UNEP signed agreements with three non-governmental organizations: in Panama, with Ancón and Fundiccep, and in El Salvador, with Prisma.

Through a participatory process, based on a valuation of each area's ecosystem services, the intention is to lay the foundations for the development of legal or financial instruments, policies and mechanisms that will factor in the economic and social value of the services provided by biodiversity. These instruments should contribute to the management and conservation of the protected areas and to the sustainable development of local populations. The project also attempts to promote better fire prevention and agricultural practices as a strategy to preserve the biodiversity and the ecosystems of the pilot protected areas and raise the income of local communities.

The UNEP-Spain Lifeweb global partnership supports creating new protected areas and expanding current ones, as well establishing and implementing management plans and disseminating knowledge based on lessons learned.



Carmen Schoeeder



Alex Pires



Buying responsibly... with everyone's money

Regional Workshop on Sustainable Public Procurement

Given that government spending on average accounts for 8%-30% of a country's gross domestic product, it is easy to conclude that purchases by public institutions are enormously important, and not only for the economy. Each purchase is an opportunity to push markets towards innovation and sustainability. Through sustainable public procurement (SPP), governments can lead with their example and attain key political objectives.

What is sustainable public procurement? Sustainable public procurement is the process by which institutions meet their needs for goods, works and services, including those provided by public utilities, so as to attain high social and environmental performance during the entire life cycle. This translates into benefits not only for the institution but also for society and the economy, reducing the harm to the environment.

The workshop

The "Regional workshop on sustainable public procurement" was held between 11 and 13 July, in Panama City, as the conclusion of the first stage of the project "Strengthening Capacities for Sustainable Public Procurement", led by the UNEP and financed by the European Union, the Government of Switzerland and the International Organization of the Francophonie.

The workshop was sponsored by and coordinated with the Organization of American States (OAS), and was thus consistent with the agenda of the Inter-American Government Procurement Network (IGPN). Professionals and experts from the UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC) and from the Paris-based Division of Technology, Industry and Economics collaborated to ensure the success of this event. The National Environmental Authority (ANAM) of Panama also participated, as the host entity.

Methodology of the Marrakech Task Force

UNEP has been actively promoting sustainable public procurement through an initiative to support pilot projects in the application of the methodology of the Marrakech Task Force (MTF).

The work methodology is composed of a sequence of steps that include: evaluating the current status, analysing the legal framework and analysing market preparation, framing the reference policy and the related implementation plan as well as developing national capacities for its application.

The methodology was implemented and validated through the global project in Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Lebanon, Mauritius, Tunisia and Uruguay.

In addition to representatives of the countries that carried out the pilot projects in Latin America, representatives of institutions from other countries of the region interested in the initiative also participated in the workshop (Argentina, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and Peru).

Future actions

The workshop made it possible to assess the progress of pilot project implementation and to share the lessons learned as well as to begin discussing the scope of a second phase of the project, from 2011-2015, so as to support sustainable public procurement in the region. Starting this year, the UNEP, rather than the Marrakech Task Force, will lead the programme.

In 2012, UNEP plans to expand the scope of the project, giving support to 20 countries worldwide in implementing SPP. It is hoped that Latin America will continue to play a leading role, with at least four more countries participating.

The purpose of this effort is to ensure that more and more institutions consider not only short-term savings, but also the long-term reduction of their environmental and social impacts, when making purchases.



Legislating green in the Caribbean

This may be one of the workshops with greatest potential for having a practical impact and with the greatest transcendence in the regulatory work of UNEP in the region, given the importance of laws to regulate all social processes and activities. The workshop in question is the Intensive training course on drafting environmental legislation with a specific emphasis on multilateral environmental agreements for the member states of CARIFORUM.

The course was given in Georgetown, Guyana, from 2 to 5 August, with 17 participants (14 women and 3 men) from ten countries of the Caribbean. Participants were selected from among persons in charge of drafting regulations and legal-affairs officials of environmental entities.



The noteworthy achievements of the workshop, co-funded by UNEP and the European Union, include establishing, for the first time, a space for lawyers who work for environmental departments and those who focus on legal writing ("legal drafters") to learn from each other; the clarification of concepts related to the application of environmental law in civil-law countries (Cuba and Haiti) and in common-law countries; and the writing of a draft law, as an initial contribution to a process of drafting model legislation.

The participants, who indicated an interest in taking part in new workshops, found the legal-drafting practical exercises particularly valuable as well as UNEP's presentations on multilateral environmental agreements and their scope of transformation in national legislation.

The ambassador of the European Union to Guyana, Geert Heikens, attended the workshop's closing ceremony and expressed his satisfaction with the initiative.



Environmental sustainability: a crosscutting principle of United Nations programming

Regional Training Workshop on Mainstreaming of Environmental Sustainability, Climate Change and the Reduction of the Risk of Disasters in the UNDAF-Panama, 11-15 July 2011

Every four or five years, the United Nations Organization agrees with the governments of developing nations on its

framework for action in those countries. This agreement takes the form of a document, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

A workshop was held in Panama from 11 to 15 July for representatives of different United Nations agencies working in several countries of the region that will be developing UNDAFs in 2011 and 2012. Support was provided to the attendees in the task of transversalizing one of the five programming principles: environmental sustainability. The idea is for environmental sustainability to be included in the different steps of drafting the UNDAFs.

Participants received technical training on the UNDAF and the tools for effective mainstreaming, and they acquired basic knowledge on multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), sources of environmental information and the Rio+20 process, among other topics. The workshop examined the challenges posed by climate change and measures to

reduce the risk of disasters caused by it.

There were 34 participants from the ten countries of the region, in addition to a representative of Equatorial Guinea as well as members of the UNDAF Processes Regional Support Group. The benefits of incorporating the topics of environmental sustainability into the efforts of the United Nations and the governments in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and other national development goals were shared with everyone.

The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Task Team on Environmental Sustainability, Climate Change and Rio+20, in collaboration with the United National System Staff College (UNSSC) and the Capacity for Disaster Risk Reduction Initiative (CADRI) oversaw the organization of this regional workshop. The activity was made possible through the support and funding received from CADRI, UNDP, UNITAR, ISDR, UNSSC, UNESCO and UNEP.



Coming soon

Regional Consultation Meeting in preparation for the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF), Santiago, Chile, 5 September 2011, and training session on the topics of the Sustainable Development Conference, 6 September.

UN-REDD
PROGRAMME

Kickoff Workshop on REDD+ Costs and Options Analysis in Panama City, 1-2 September, Holiday Inn City of Knowledge.

Consultation, interchange and learning meeting for University Leaders on the Environment for Sustainability of the Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES), Universidad Andrés Bello, Santiago, Chile, 5-6 September 2011.

Regional Workshop of the Biosafety Clearing Housing Project (BCH), at which training will be offered on accessing and using the BCH, Universidad Tecnológica de Panamá, Panama City, 5-9 September 2011.

Workshop for Journalists: "Environmental journalism on integrated water and coastal area management", Panama City, 14-16 September 2011.

Regional consultation for Latin America and the Caribbean ahead of the third session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to prepare a Global Legally Binding Instrument on Mercury, Panama City, 19-23 September 2011.

Workshop on Socio-Environmental Conflicts, organized by PRODIALOGO. Activity 1.4.6 of the Joint Programme on Millennium Development Goals-F PERU: "Integrated and Adaptive Environmental Resource Management to Minimize Climate Change Vulnerabilities in Andean Highland Microbasins", Cuzco, Peru, 12-16 September 2011.

Ministerial Meeting on short-life climate forcers, Mexico, 12-13 September 2011.

Third Training Workshop and presentation of results of pilot projects consistent with the "Sustainable Resource Management Capacity Development" regional project, Santa Fe, Argentina, 14-15 September 2011.

Fourth International Congress on Sustainable Development, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 26-30 September 2011.

<http://www.sustentavel.org.br/?lang=en>

First Meeting of the Advisory Committee of the “Integrated Management of Coastal Areas and Mangrove Swamps in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua” project, Bluefields, Nicaragua, 22 September 2011.

Second Meeting of the Advisory Committee of the “Integrated Management of Coastal Areas and Mangrove Swamps in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua” project, Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 27 September 2011.

Latin American Carbon Forum, San José, Costa Rica, 27-29 September, 2011. www.latincarbon.com.

Meeting with the IDB on the 2014 World Cup in Manaus, Brazil, 28-29 September 2011.

Third REDD Partnership Meeting and Workshop, Panama City, 28-30 September 2011.

United Nations Climate Change Conference, Panama City, 1-7 October 2011.

Intersessional Meeting of the Forum of Environmental Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean, Panama City, 6 October 2011.

Tenth International Meeting on Environmental Law, organized by the Global League of Environmental Lawyers, Asuncion, Paraguay, 5-7 October 2011.

Third Meeting of Magistrates of the Andean Community and MERCOSUR, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 4-6 October 2011.

