

UNEP Newsletter

Latin America and the Caribbean

March - April 2012

IPBES: The next step in science-based policy making **5**

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Mexico.

- Mexico's Senate approved the Climate Change General Law, which establishes guidelines to reduce Green House Gas emissions and includes public policies towards the sustainable development of the country.

- The National Chamber of Transformation Industries (CANACINTRA, by its Spanish acronym) officially launched a Green Economy Sector. CANACINTRA represents some 50,000 entrepreneurs.



Cuba. As part of a cabinet reshuffle, Elba Rosa Perez Montoya was appointed as new minister of Science, Technology and Environment.



St.Vincent and the Grenadines.

Clayton Burgin was appointed Minister of Health, Wellness and the Environment.



Brazil.

- Brazil's lower house of Congress approved the Forest Code, a bill that environmental activists say will lead to increased deforestation in the Amazon and other areas.

- Brazilian Defence Minister Celso Amorim announced that his country would increase its military presence in the Amazon region to protect its natural resources.



Chile.

Chile's Supreme Court removed the last legal obstacle to the construction of a hydroelectric complex in the Patagonian region, despite calls by environmentalists to block it. The plan envisages the flooding of 6,000 hectares.

Achim Steiner visits Brazil ahead of Rio+20

On 14 April, UNEP Executive Director, Achim Steiner, participated in the seminar “Towards Rio+20: Debate on Environmental Governance”. A group of high-level experts took part as panellists in the event, organized by the Ministry of the Environment of Brazil. Achim Steiner was invited by the Minister of the Environment, Izabella Teixeira, to participate as the keynote speaker.

The following day, the UNEP Executive Director and UNEP’s Representative in Brazil, Denise Hamu, visited the Instituto Doe Seu Lixo. Mr. Steiner and his delegation were received by the founder of the Institute (Brazilian actress Isabel Fillardis), by its Secretary-General and by the president of Socityx.

In 2003, the Socityx Cooperativa, a cooperative of recyclable material collectors, was incubated by the Instituto Doe Seu Lixo (“Give Away your Waste



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Janeiro. The cooperative is also responsible for the operation of the first Sorting and Recycling Plant of Rio de Janeiro (Usina de Triagem e Reciclagem/ UTR-RJ), a center of excellence in sorting recyclable solid waste.

Coca-Cola Brazil is one of the greatest supporters of these cooperatives through the programme “Reciclou, Ganhou”, which started in 1968. In partnership with FIRJAN —the Federation of Industries of the State of Rio de Janeiro— Coca-Cola Brazil came up with the idea of promoting technical courses for waste collectors, operated by the Instituto Doe Seu Lixo. Those courses have already trained more than 200 collectors as environmental agents and approximately 20 supervisors with the basic training for managers. The collectors are building up a basic knowledge to initiate, develop and establish themselves in the management of cooperatives, thus generating jobs and income for the region dwellers.

Achim Steiner stated that their work was a perfect example of Green Economy being implemented at a local level.

Preparations for Rio+20

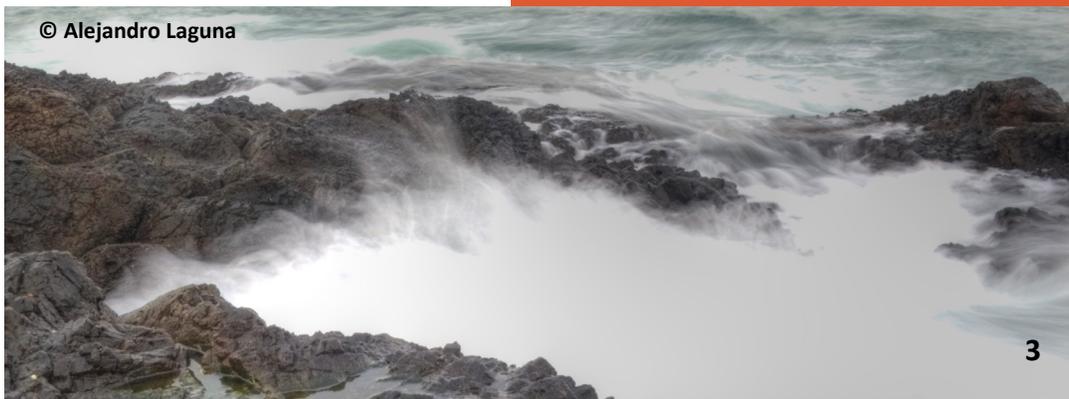
Denise Hamu, UNEP’s Representative in Brazil, met with the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and Secretary-General of Rio+20. Sha Zukang’s visit to Brazil aimed to make sure that the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development were progressing at an adequate rate. One of his priorities was to accelerate the negotiations on the host-country agreement, which was signed later, on 5 April, in New York.

Sha Zukang underlined that sustainable development is the only way forward and that he sees the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) as a potential and significant outcome of Rio+20 and a complement to the Millennium Development Goals after 2015. He added that other relevant and possible outcomes would be the roadmap to achieving a Green Economy and the strengthening of UNEP.



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Institute”) to work into achieving administrative, financial and operational efficiency of the recycling business by providing the members of the cooperative with better working conditions and incomes. Throughout the years, the Instituto has developed management methodologies for the whole productive process of the cooperative. It has invested in high technology, such as a satellite tracking system of the collected waste, and has built capacity among collectors involved in the process, thus making Socityx a pioneer in efficiency and participation in reverse-logistics in the State of Rio de



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Dialogue on Green Economy

A Dialogue on Green Economy was organized in Rio de Janeiro in the context of a visit by European Union Environment Commissioner, Janez Potočnik. Also in attendance were UNEP's Representative in Brazil; Ambassadors Figueiredo and

Andre Correia do Lago, from the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Relations; economists and key Brazilian opinion makers, as well as respected environmental journalists. The event was hosted by Minister of the Environment, Izabella Teixeira.



Bruno Maia © Naturezafotos.org

Sustainable Public Procurement and Green Economy

On April 26th, Margarita Astrálaga, Director and Representative of UNEP's Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, delivered a speech in the opening of the event "Sustainable Public Procurement: delivering sustainable development and enabling the transition to a green economy", which took place in Brasilia. The workshop was promoted by UNEP and the Ministry of the Environment, aiming at bringing together representatives from governments, local authorities, the business sector and civil society interested in promoting the supply and demand of sustainable products through Sustainable Public



Procurement (SPP).

Since 2005, UNEP and the Swiss-led Marrakech Task Force on SPP, together with a number of partners, have been actively developing and rolling out a methodology to implement sustainable public procurement at the national level.

Farid Yaker, UNEP Programme Officer from the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE), analyzed the lessons to be drawn from worldwide SPP experiences.

Uruguay, advancing in the Rio+20 agenda

In March, the capital of Uruguay, Montevideo, was the site of a governmental workshop held in the framework of the strategy to build a country vision for Rio+20. The Ministry of Housing, Land Use and Environment (MVOTMA) organized the event with support of UNEP and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

UNEP and UNDP have been supporting the preparation of a government agenda for Rio+20 by assessing the progress made in the 20 years since the Rio Summit and producing a report on future challenges. The preparation process includes supporting civil society actors in their process of agenda development, and involving the different government entities in the production of a final report that will serve as input for the "zero draft", and later for Uruguay's country document for Rio+20.

The workshop centred on issues of energy, waste, social policy, natural resources and the productive sector. Participating in the event were 25 representatives of various ministries and other government entities.

The conclusions from the workshop were presented to the Ministry of Foreign Relations as a contribution to the broader discussion being coordinated by that Ministry.

Also noteworthy is the consensus that was arrived at on the need to continue the process beyond Rio+20, so that government and civil society can identify and address the points together and resolve differences with regard to the country's vision for sustainable development.



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IPBES: The next step in science-based policy making



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New intergovernmental platform established to accelerate global response towards sustainable management of world's biodiversity and ecosystems

After several years of international negotiations, the final operational design of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) was agreed in a meeting held in Panama City at the end of April.

The German city of Bonn, which hosts the secretariats of treaties such as the Convention on Migratory Species and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), won the bid to host the secretariat of the new independent body. South Korea, Kenya, France and India had also put forward proposals to host the secretariat.

IPBES aims to tackle head-on the accelerating worldwide loss of

biodiversity and degradation of ecosystem service by bridging the gap between accurate, impartial and up to date science and policy-making.

The governments attending the meeting requested UNEP to continue to facilitate the platform on an interim basis, in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). One or more of these UN bodies will administer the IPBES Secretariat, once it is finally established.

Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary General and UNEP Executive Director, said, *"Years of often complex debate and political negotiations have today reached a positive conclusion and a milestone in terms of humanity's future response to reversing biodiversity loss and the degradation of ecosystems from forests to freshwaters"*.

"I would like to congratulate Germany for having been voted the host of the Secretariat of this new science-policy platform. UNEP looks forward to working with partners within and outside the UN system to make this new body the success"



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The core functions of IPBES will encompass the following areas:

- To identify and prioritise key scientific information needed for policymakers and to catalyse efforts to generate new knowledge;
- To perform regular and timely assessments of knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services and their interlinkages;
- To support policy formulation and implementation by identifying policy-relevant tools and methodologies.
- To prioritise key capacity-building needs to improve the science-policy interface, and to provide and call for financial and other support for the highest-priority needs related directly to its activities.



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IPBES: Various Bodies Welcome New Institutional Arrangements

Representatives from the scientific community, non-governmental organizations, indigenous peoples and the business sector met in Panama prior to the intergovernmental meeting to debate the modalities needed for the establishment of the new body.

The group of stakeholders conveyed a joint statement to the government representatives on the first day of the meeting. They reaffirmed their “strong interest in IPBES, both as contributors of knowledge and end users of IPBES products”. The stakeholders also recommended that “procedures be established for the independent review and evaluation of the platform’s efficiency, effectiveness and impact on a periodic basis and act on its recommendations”. The participants stressed “the importance of building capacities at international, regional, sub-regional, national, sub-national and local levels for the knowledge generation, assessments and policy support functions of the platform”.

Barbados charts its path to a green economy

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The Prime Minister of Barbados unveiled a new study in March with the aim of accelerating the country’s transition to a green economy, and challenged other Caribbean Small Island Developing States to work together on creating a socially inclusive, low-carbon, resource-efficient region.

At the opening of the two-day Caribbean Green Economy Forum hosted by the government, Prime Minister Freundel Stuart said the new study by experts from government, the University of West Indies-Cave Hill Campus and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) highlights elements for developing a roadmap to further Barbados’ pursuit of building a green economy.

The Green Economy Scoping Study – Barbados Synthesis Report examines alternatives in order to strengthen the country’s policies and to harness its investments, while enhancing its social equity and environmental protection.

More specifically, it analyzes five key economic sectors –agriculture, fisheries, building, transport and tourism—, as well as four cross-cutting issues —waste, water, energy and land.

Margarita Astrálaga, Director of UNEP’s Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, said that “Barbados’ actions serve as a beacon for the international community, which is set to discuss the issue of a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication at the upcoming UNCS D Conference, or Rio+20, this June. UNEP applauds the Government of Barbados for its courage, determination and leadership. This report is a critical step on the road to a sustainable and green Barbados, and the Caribbean as a whole”.

To download a copy of the Green Economy Scoping Study – Barbados Synthesis Report, visit: www.unep.org/greeneconomy/

In quest of a formula for the sustainability of cities

Seminar on Sustainable Cities organized by the Global Institute for Sustainability of the Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico

Last 5 March, in Mexico City, the UNEP Representative in Mexico, Dolores Barrientos, participated as a panellist in the international seminar “Sustainable Cities: What are they, and how do we achieve them?”, which was organized by the Global Institute for Sustainability of the Tecnológico de Monterrey.

The objective of the meeting was to explore the factors that define a city as sustainable: reduced disaster risk, adaptation to climate change, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, integral urban development, citizen security and harmony, access to water and sanitation as well as waste management, urban planning, transportation systems, energy efficiency and fiscal sustainability. The seminar served as an opportunity to share experiences and success stories from various cities, as well as to analyse impediments to formulating and funding plans and sustainable practices.

The event enjoyed the participation of representatives of the World Bank, the Siemens company, the National Center for Atmospheric Research, the Clinton Foundation and the Mexican office of Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), among other institutions.

Sustainable Development Centre: Seeking green economic growth in Mexico

The Sustainable Development Centre (Centro Desarrollo Sustentable A.C.), a foundation that seeks to restore sustainability in the world —that is, a balance among economic, social and environmental considerations— was inaugurated on 23 March by Mexican President Felipe Calderón, who was accompanied by the chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and other authorities.

The creation of the Centre was supported by UNEP, which, in collaboration with the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) and in coordination with the Government of Denmark and the Climate Works Foundation, helped to frame its strategic plan. UNEP will promote South-South and

triangular cooperation as fundamental pillars for furthering the implementation of the work programme.

At the inauguration ceremony, President Calderón stressed that the Centro is a public-private agency that works to make steady progress towards a new type of economic growth, compatible with environmental conservation and, therefore, vital for Mexico's transition towards a green economy.

Mexico's progress in environmental matters was recognized, and President Calderón was given the Sustainable Development Leadership award, created by the Energy and Resources Institute (TERI).

Cinema and debate on World Water Day



UNEP, along with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Mexican Cinema Institute (IMCINE) and the National Cinemateque, held a cinema-round table discussion on 22 March, in commemoration of World Water Day. The event, which was open to the public, featured a showing of *Cuates de Australia*, directed by Everardo González, which won the award for Best Full-Length Mexican Documentary at the 18th

International Film Festival in Guadalajara in 2012. The film deals with the constant struggle of a Mexican village against draught.

Afterwards, the topic of water and food security was analysed by Dolores Barrientos, UNEP representative in Mexico; Nuria Urquía, representative of FAO; Martha Orozco, the producer of *Cuates de Australia*; Marta Luisa López, director of Environmental Culture of the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT); Luis Rendón, irrigation district manager for the National Water Commission (CONAGUA); and Rafael Val of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). Subsequently, the floor was opened to public discussion.



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Mexico makes progress in the fight against illicit traffic in ozone depleting substances



Workshop on the Green Customs Initiative

Fifty experts from Latin America and the Caribbean participated in a workshop held in Mexico in early March to update and harmonize information on ozone depleting substances (ODS). The meeting was organized by Mexico's Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT), UNEP and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

The workshop also addressed the quest for mechanisms to strengthen links between the Mexican customs authority and the other institutions involved in transborder movements of substances

controlled under environmental agreements.

The opening session featured remarks by Ana María Contreras, Director General of Air Quality Management at SEMARNAT; Kai Bethke, UNIDO Representative; Troels Vester, Regional Crime Prevention Advisor from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); Enrique Herón Jiménez Ramírez, Administrator of Customs Regulations at the Tax Administration Service of the Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit; and Dolores Barrientos and Artie Dubrie of UNEP.



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Water, a priority for the region

The "Monitoring Water Quality in Latin America and the Caribbean: Challenges and Opportunities" Workshop

UNEP and the Water Program of the Global Environment Monitoring System (GEMS/Water), with the support of Canadian government agency Canada Environment, held a workshop in late April for agencies from Spanish-speaking countries of the region involved in monitoring water quality. The aim of the workshop was to exchange opinions, ideas, points of view and recommendations for meeting common challenges, in both technical and policy matters related to water quality.

Over the years, environmental assessments and reports have stressed the need to make fresh water quantity and quality in Latin America and the Caribbean a priority. One of the GEMS/

Water Programme's objectives is to have up-to-date information and data on water availability and quality, which is needed for the integrated management of aquatic ecosystems and for national and regional decision-making.

Accordingly, the workshop helped identify the most important obstacles to the acquisition and transfer of water quality data at the national level, as well as options for overcoming these obstacles. Emphasis was placed on the need to improve the global coverage and the accuracy of water quality data, facilitate users' access to data, contribute to global evaluations and enhance countries' capacity to monitor water quality.

The workshop gave participants a better

understanding of the benefits and requirements of the GEMS/Water Global Network and database and allowed national and regional agencies to renew their commitment to specific, novel participation actions.

One participant, Mauricio Rosales Estupiñán, undersecretary of Potable Water, Sanitation and Solid Waste of Ecuador, noted: "This has been a great opportunity to learn of new developments in water-quality information systems, and I believe that it is our duty to receive training and to disseminate this information in order to raise the community's awareness of the current situation in terms of water quality at the local, regional and global level".

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Panama on the green path

“Analysis of options and cost of REDD+”

As a part of work to define the national REDD+ strategy for Panama, the second “Analysis of options and cost of REDD+” was held from 6 to 8 March in the Panamanian capital.

REDD+ goes beyond Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, in that it includes the conservation and sustainable management of forests, and an increase in the forest-based carbon reserve.

This workshop cleared up questions about the different magnitudes of economic, environmental and social benefits generated by applying a REDD+ strategy in the country. Thus, the UN-REDD program for Panama seeks to

provide the information needed to decide what REDD+ designs are most appropriate for the country.

Participating in the workshop were members of the technical team of the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC), who have substantial experience in defining the crucial issues that need to be addressed in creating REDD strategies in the Region. Also present were members of the national team of the UN-REDD programme in Panama, representatives of UNEP, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Organization for Food and Agriculture of the United Nations (FAO), as well as international institutions such as the Water Centre for the Humid Tropics of Latin America and the Caribbean (CATHALAC), the Centre for Tropical Agricultural Research and Teaching (CATIE) and the World Agroforestry Centre/Alternatives for Slash-and-Burn (ICRAF/ASB).



The Parlantino sets its sights on Rio+20

Last 22 and 23 March, the Environment and Tourism Commission of the Latin American Parliament (Parlatino) and UNEP experts, met in Panama City to discuss the main themes of the Rio+20 Conference.

Margarita Astrálaga, Director and Representative of UNEP’s Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, was

invited to deliver a presentation on Green Economy and the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development, which constituted an important input for the deliberations and for the adoption of the declaration of the meeting. Through this declaration, the Commission agreed that the main outcome of the Rio +20 conference should be to maintain the concept of sustainable development. In this sense, the concept of “Green Economy” is a dimension that should be

The Caribbean explores the possibilities of a Green Economy

During the 39th Session of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) on Environment and Sustainable Development, which took place in Georgetown, Guyana, 17-20 April, Ministers of Environment of the Caribbean countries agreed to establish an Open-Ended Working Group to facilitate inputs and revise, as appropriate, based on contributions from national governments, the development of the full project proposal for the project entitled “Advancing Caribbean States’ Sustainable Development Agenda through Green Economy Policies: A Concept Note for a Green Economy Initiative in the Caribbean Region (ACSSD-GE)”. They also agreed that UNEP should take the lead in further developing the ACSSD-GE project proposal in close collaboration with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat and the Open-Ended Working Group.



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subsumed under the “Sustainable Development”, as the latter also includes the dimensions of social development of the people and the care and protection of the environment.

“Contributing from the New World to the creation of a new world”



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Discussion Group: “Panama in the Context of Rio+20”

The entire planet today has its hopes pinned on Rio+20, which provides a unique opportunity to “contribute from the New World to the creation of a new world” and to “define the course of future conflicts”, in the words of Guillermo Castro. As Academic Director of Panama’s City of Knowledge, he was one of the presenters at the “Panama in the Context of Rio+20” discussion group, held on 22 March at the City of Knowledge.

The event was the first in a series of seven such, entitled “Panama on the Road to Sustainable Development” organized by UNEP, the City of Knowledge Foundation and the Panama Canal Authority (PCA). “Panama is a special country” and has the ability to “define what future it wants for its inhabitants”, according to speaker Margarita Astráлага, UNEP Representative and Director of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Also present at the opening of the event, which took place on World Water Day, were Esteban Sáenz, Executive Vice-President of the Department of Environment, Water and Energy of the

Panama Canal Authority, and Jorge Arosemena, Executive Director of the Ciudad del Saber Foundation.

Panama reflects change, and approaches Rio+20 from a situation unique in its history, according to Guillermo Castro, who stressed that for the first time Panama is a fully sovereign State responsible for its actions, achievements and mistakes. “Participating in a huge global debate will enrich the country’s vision, and is a unique opportunity to enrich the re-founding of the country that we are”, the City of Knowledge Academic Director stated.

Ángel Ureña, an expert at the Panama Canal Authority, spoke in similar terms, explaining that the country had changed enormously since the Canal was made a part of the domestic economy, where it contributes 70% of the country’s GDP. He also underlined the importance of the integrated management of the Canal’s basin, and the effort to make it the “world’s maritime greenway”, reducing CO2 emissions while helping to protect and regenerate the basin’s forests.

UNEP Officer Andrea Brusco reminded the gathering that many hopes and expectations went into the agreements that made the Rio de Janeiro event of 20 years ago an historic landmark. The 1992 United Nations Conference on

Environment and Development put the then new concept of “sustainable development” on the table of international discussion.

Since then, environmental legislation and institutions have become progressively stronger, and sustainable development has been included in national policies and programs. But according to Andrea Brusco, the level of implementation is generally low. Rio+20 is a point of inflexion, and “must be a conference of action”.

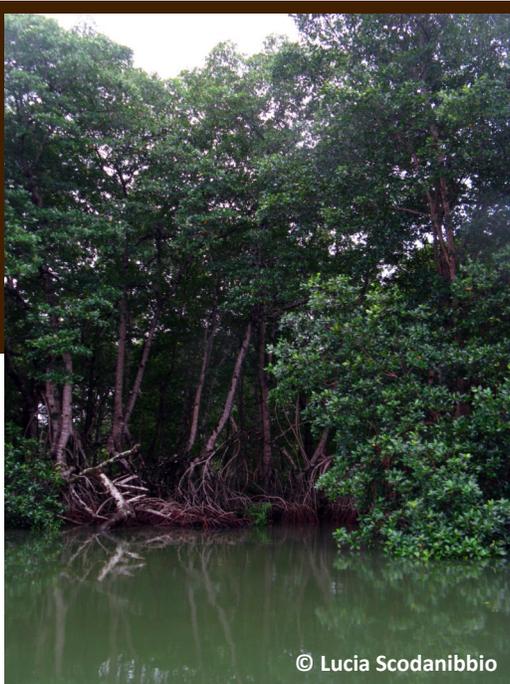
Those attending the event participated with questions and comments that featured words such as “collective”, “cooperation”, “interconnection”, “balance” and “solidarity”, central points in the discussion leading to the conference, which is scheduled for June 20th in Rio de Janeiro. As Andrea Brusco stated, “We do not live alone, we do not save ourselves alone, we do not succeed alone, and we do not die alone”.

Guillermo Castro summarized the event in saying that “it is not a question of choosing among advantages, but of choosing among problems” – among the problems, that is, with which we are disposed to live. The most important task, he said, is to imagine the differences between the society that we have – an unsustainable one – and the one that we desire, which must be based on human development and sustainability.

Placing economic value on a national park in Honduras for its conservation

One of the most significant activities of the Mangrove Conservation Project in Honduras, implemented on the Caribbean coast by UNEP with the collaboration of the national government, is a study of the economic value of the Jeannette Kawas National Park (PNJK), in Tela Bay.

The study, which is designed to evaluate the wealth of the PFJK and translate its value to the nation into monetary terms, began last 5 March with an initial workshop to elicit the opinions and interests of the main actors who will take part in the work: the Secretariat of Natural and Environmental Resources of



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Honduras (SERNA); the Foundation for the Protection of Punta Sal, Lancetilla and Texiguat (PROLANSATE), which is the NGO in charge of administering the park; and various national, local and academic institutions; as well as NGOs and

representatives of international cooperation agencies.

These workshops included visiting the area under study, identifying the best place to begin the research, and listening to workers and leaders from the area expressing their concerns about the threats to the PNJK's ecosystems: development speculation, expansion of areas devoted to cattle raising and African Palm cultivation, disorderly growth of tourism, and the danger that illicit activities represent.

The consulting team for this study, scheduled to conclude in October, will assess the park's most significant ecosystem services, and will analyze a series of economic instruments that could contribute to its financial, ecological and social sustainability, in order to promote its long-term management and protection.

The book on environmentally sustainable traditions and customs



© Johanna von Braun

The Biocultural Community Protocol (BCP) of Alto San Juan, Colombia, which was presented in late March, compiles traditional community practices that encourage the maintenance of biodiversity and describes the main challenges facing the area. The publication also reflects the community's expectations regarding development projects that affect its territory. In addition, it proposes mechanisms to facilitate dialogue between the community government and public and private institutional stakeholders, in order to coordinate a development process that will be in line with the priorities of Afro-descendant communities of the upper basin of the San Juan River and take into account their rights.

Contributions to this document were made by the Alto San Juan Peasant Association (ASOCASAN), with the support of UNEP, the NGO Natural Justice (NJ) and the Pacific Institute for Environmental Research (IIAP).

The initiative is part of the global work of UNEP to support new proposals for Biocultural Community Protocols, in

order to give exposure to local communities' contributions to biodiversity conservation.

CBPs are envisioned in the "Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization" as part of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Nagoya Protocol was approved in Nagoya in 2010.

The concept of Community Bicultural Protocols is a recently created tool that has found an increasingly broad acceptance, especially among indigenous communities and peoples. It is an instrument that gives written expression to the interests, expectations and desires of peoples and communities regarding how, and under what conditions, they should tap and use both the natural resources (including biodiversity and its components) that are in their territories and the traditional knowledge associated with those resources.

The Community Biocultural Protocol of Alto San Juan is available at the following link on the UNEP webpage: <http://www.pnuma.org/publicaciones.php>.



Working for more sustainable agricultural production in Panama

Workshops to publicize the new national regulations on the use of pesticides in two pilot areas.

March marked the beginning of the workshops taking place in the context of the project entitled “Promotion of the new regulations on the land use of pesticides in Volcán and Cerro Punta to foster implementation”. The project is being conducted by the Ministry of Farm Development (MIDA) with support from UNEP and coordination with two other international agencies: the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), as well as Panamanian health and environment authorities.

This work is a response to needs identified in the country analysis that led to the new UNDAF 2012-2015 (United Nations Development Assistance Framework). The proliferating use of agrochemicals, with the concomitant threats to the population’s welfare, is one of the problems analysed in the GEO Panama 2009 environment report. According to data from the year 2000,

each Panamanian uses some six pounds of agrochemicals a year, six times the Central American average.

This project to disseminate knowledge and orientation on the new regulations attempts to provide training to the relevant sectors regarding the scope, limitations and restrictions applying to pesticide use, which will go into effect in 2015 in order to reduce harm to health and environment.

Two of the country’s principal farming areas have been chosen for the project, and approximately 20 training sessions will be held there for around 500 individuals, including producers, technical people from the country’s public farm sector, and distributors and sellers of agrochemicals. The distribution of copies of the new regulations has also begun, as have distributions of three-fold brochures and pamphlets. Finally, with support from the University of Panama, the project also plans to conduct specialised training on the issue of pesticides for a group of professionals from the fields of agriculture, health and the environment.

UNEP assists Suriname in phasing out HCFCs

The National Institute for Environment and Development (NIMOS), in cooperation with UNEP and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), launched Suriname's national plan to gradually eliminate the use of Hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), chemicals that deplete the ozone layer and that continue to be used, for example, in the refrigeration sector. It is the first joint UNEP-UNIDO mission to implement HCFC Phase-out Management Plan (HPMP) in the English-speaking Caribbean sub-region.

While UNEP is the lead agency, UNIDO, as the cooperating agency, is responsible for the investment component of the HPMP. The current stage 1 of the HPMP will assist Suriname in meeting the following two targets: freeze at the baseline by 1 January 2013, and 10% reduction against the same baseline by 1 January 2015. The baseline is determined as the average annual consumption of HCFCs in 2009 and 2010. An implementation plan has been prepared by NIMOS with guidance from UNEP and UNIDO.

Different activities will take place in the coming months. These include training workshops for refrigeration servicing technicians and customs officers, as well as technical and policy support for the recently established Air-conditioning, Refrigeration, and Venting Association of Suriname (ARVAS), and the National technical Institute (NATIN). Within the same implementation plan and in cooperation with other Caribbean nations, a technology exposition on alternatives to HCFCs is envisaged for the English-speaking Caribbean subregion.

On the road to Rio+20: Workshop to Solidify Concepts on the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development

Barely two months remain before the Rio+20 Sustainable Development Conference. One of its themes will be the

institutional framework for sustainable development. In order to solidify concepts and knowledge on this issue, UNEP held a workshop on Strengthening the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development through the Environmental Pillar, on April 16th in Guyana for the English-speaking Caribbean countries, and on the 19th and 20th of that month in Chile for the rest of the countries of the region.

The workshops served as an opportunity to explore the characteristics and implications of the different options that are being negotiated in the preparatory



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process for Rio+20 regarding the future institutional framework for sustainable development.

UNEP and the Supreme Audit Institutions work side by side for good governance

A meeting organized by the Office of the Comptroller General of Panama as Technical Secretariat of the Latin American Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (OLACEFS, by its initials in Spanish) was held at the end of March. The German cooperation agency (GIZ) supported the meeting in the context of a programme to strengthen OLACEFS while contributing to the development of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) are key institutions for national governance, since they help to strengthen the democratic system, increase society's confidence in its organizations, reduce the opportunities for corruption and



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warn of possible problems in the management of public funds.

That is why it is important to work with the SAIs in creating an institutional support network that helps strengthen their capacities in areas relevant to their oversight functions. One of these areas is the environment, and UNEP therefore was invited to participate in the network in collaboration with the OLECEFS Technical Commission on the Environment.

The two-day meeting identified five areas on which cooperation efforts should focus: access to important environmental information, technical assistance and advice for conducting environmental audits, training in environmental law, valuing environmental goods and services, green purchasing, and good practice guidelines, as well as promotion of participation by civil society.

Countries draw nearer to consensus on environmental justice and law

Environmental justice is placed on the Ibero-American Judicial Summit agenda for the first time

On the 23rd and 24th of April, Argentina’s capital city of Buenos Aires hosted the Second Preparatory Meeting of the World Congress on Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability, organized by UNEP. More than 100 people were in attendance, including members of the Supreme Court, as well as Certified Public Accountants and prosecutors from around the world. UNEP was represented by Bakary Kante, Director of the organization’s Division of Environmental Law and Conventions.

The meeting used the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, developed at the First Preparatory Meeting held in the Malay capital, as its point of reference. The main objective of the April meeting was to gain greater consensus on key issues of social justice, governance and environmental law, in order to prepare a draft document for the World Congress on Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability, to be held on 18-19 June. The document will subsequently be presented at the Rio +20 Conference.

This second preparatory meeting was held in the days immediately preceding the Ibero-American Judicial Summit, which took place on 25-27 April and at which UNEP participated in an observer capacity. That summit established close cooperation and collaboration among the judicial branches of the twenty-three countries of the Ibero-American Community of Nations, bringing together in a single forum the most senior government officials and legal institutions from the various Ibero-American judicial systems. For the first time, environmental justice was included in the summit’s agenda. The progress achieved reflected the leadership role being assumed by the region’s judiciaries on the issue of environmental justice, as well as the commitment to ensure the right of citizens to a healthy environment and to exercise those rights through the legal systems in their respective jurisdictions.

Schools in leadership role in campaign to create awareness on climate change

In the Cusco and Apurímac regions of Peru, children and young people are thoughtful citizens with numerous concerns and proposals, and are capable of participating actively in the society in which they live – and capable, too, of changing it.

During the awareness campaigns conducted by the municipalities in the district of the Santo Tomás River sub-basin, as part of the United Nations’ joint programme on climate change, the children and young people of the area showed that they have a very important role in addressing and taking decisions on environmental and climate change issues. Their activities in their localities demonstrated notable enthusiasm, imagination and energy.

These young actors took advantage of their communicational abilities to capture the attention of the public, provoke reflection on the potential effects of climate change, and promote adaptation and mitigation measures. Through theatre, information events, radio shows and film festivals in public plazas, among other activities, they created awareness among children and adults.

“I am very glad, because I realized that it is important to promote opportunities for participation so that children and adolescents can encourage awareness and articulate their perceptions of climate change, and above all their ideas and proposals to protect our environment and thus mitigate climate change”, commented José Ramírez, head of the Environmental Management Unit at the Municipality of Haquira-Apurímac.

“To the adults, I say think about the future of your children”



“I am the drop of water. When I speak in public, I tell them all that we must care for the water, the rivers, the springs and everything that Mother Earth gives us”, said Edgar Bolívar Astete, a 12-year-old student at the Centro Educativo Mixto Agropecuario (Coeducational Farming Educational Centre) in the district of Mara-Apurímac. “To the adults, I say think about the future of your children. What will happen if the earth continues getting sick?”

The schools of the Santo Tomás sub-basin are important venues for working on issues related to climate change, because the children are the first to offer and commit their time and efforts to participate in concrete action, such as reforestation, or measures to save energy and water at school and at home.



The Inter regional Workshop on Broad-scale Marine Spatial Planning of Mammal Corridors.
Date and venue: 21-24 May 2012 in Panama City

GEF Expanded Constituency Workshop for South America.
Date and venue: 22-24 May 2012, Lima, Peru.

Workshop for the preparation of the “Coastal Development Plan for the Laguna de Perlas Municipality”.
Date and venue: 24 May 2012, Nicaragua.

First technical strengthening workshop “Training of trainers workshop on the Integrated Management of Mangrove Ecosystems-Caribbean Coast”.
Date and venue: 4-8 June 2012, Caribbean Coast, Guatemala.

World Congress on Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability.
Date and venue: 17-20 June 2012. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

“Training of trainers workshop on the restoration of mangrove ecosystems”.
Date and venue: 26-30 June 2012, La Ceiba, Honduras.

Meeting of the Ozone Action Networks for Mexico, Central America, South America and the Spanish Speaking Caribbean.
Date and venue: date to be confirmed, Chile.

Inauguration of the Propagation Centre in Haiti, in the framework of the Caribbean Biological Corridor.
Date and venue: To be confirmed June/July, place to be confirmed.

Launch of the “Your Change for a Better Environment” Campaign in countries of the Caribbean.
Date and venue: to be confirmed.

Validation Workshops of the Results of Estimating Costs, Prices and Trends of Land Use Change in Areas of Interest for UN REDD Panama Programme.
Date and venue: During May and June in the cities of Darien, Veraguas, Bocas del Toro and Colón in Panama.