

UNEP Newsletter

Latin America and the Caribbean



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Mexico. Voters from Mexico's ruling conservative party (PAN) elected their first female presidential candidate, Josefina Vázquez Mota, ahead of the 1 July general elections.



Jamaica. Robert Pickersgill was appointed minister of Housing, Environment, Water and and Climate Change.



Guatemala. Newly-elected President Perez Molina appointed Roxana Sobenes García as Minister of the Environment and Natural Resources.



Guyana. Robert Persaud was appointed minister of Natural Resources and the Environment.



Nicaragua. Daniel Ortega was sworn in for a third presidential term following his victory (more than 60 % of the vote) in November's polls.



Ecuador. The Government of Rafael Correa issued a decree describing the mission and responsibilities of the Under Secretariat for Climate Change. The decree creates the National Climate Change Adaptation Directorate and the National Climate Change Mitigation Directorate.



Brazil. Brazil has overtaken the UK as the world's sixth largest economy according to the Centre for Economics and Business Research, CEBR.



Bolivia. As part of a cabinet reshuffle, Bolivian president Evo Morales appointed Felipe Quispe as new Minister for Environment and Water.



Rio+20: Latin America and the Caribbean support the sustainable development goals

Margarita Astrálaga: “The countries of the region left Quito rowing together in the same direction”

Hours of intense negotiation, which lasted well into the night, were required to bring the Quito Declaration to fruition. The desire for agreement ultimately prevailed, and the 31 representatives of the environment that attended the regional meeting signed the document this past February 3rd.

This brought to a conclusion a week of meetings, debates and decisions that started with the Meeting of High-Level Experts, followed by the Eighteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Forum, with its 27-year history, has sought to adapt to new times, new challenges, and the new political consensus in the region.

The meeting was organized by the Ministry of the Environment of Ecuador,

in collaboration with the Coordinating Ministry of Natural and Cultural Heritage. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) served as the secretariat.

With only a few months until the Rio+20 Conference, the countries of the region showed their “commitment to the success” of the Conference, “with the objective of fostering sustainable development, focusing on eradicating poverty and enhancing social inclusion”.

In the framework of the Rio Conference, the ministers of the environment requested a definition of the issues involved in the Sustainable Development Goals, using the Millennium Development Goals as a point of reference. The ministers also indicated their desire to discuss, at Rio+20, a universal declaration of the rights of

Nature as an instrument for achieving the good life.

“The countries of the region left Quito rowing together in the same direction”

In the opinion of Margarita Astrálaga, Director and Regional Representative of UNEP, “the countries of the region left Quito rowing together in the same direction, with their course set towards Rio+20. They were able to untie the mooring lines of their differences and navigate, with a shared vision, towards one of the most important events, to date, on sustainable development. Moreover, they did this with concrete proposals, which they will present to the rest of the world”.

The governments of the region joined together to guide efforts “to build a new, more just, equitable and inclusive international economic order to replace the current worn out, discredited and limited development model”.

They also expressed support for strengthening the environmental pillar of sustainable development, “through an institutional framework that guarantees universal membership and with the technical, scientific and financial capacities needed to catalyze international cooperation on issues concerning the environment and sustainable development”.

The decisions of Quito

In Quito, the ministers of the environment approved a series of decisions regarding various environmental issues and policies.

In the field of environmental education for sustainable development, the Forum





Photo: Ministry of the Environment of Ecuador

decided to continue and strengthen the activities of the Environmental Training Network for Latin America and the Caribbean, encourage environmental education through virtual and non-virtual media in various languages, and request that UNEP promote the participation of the region's universities in the Global University Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES).



The ministers of the environment agreed to move towards monitoring and evaluating the effects of atmospheric pollution on the countries of the region, strengthen initiatives to promote public transportation and non-motorized forms of transportation, and encourage the production and use of cleaner, more efficient vehicles and fuels.

A decision was also taken to continue supporting UNEP in carrying out comprehensive environmental evaluations at the international level. In addition, there was agreement on promoting the incorporation of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Goals, and on designing and executing government policies, while reaffirming the resolve to establish effective policies for rational environmental management of chemical substances and waste.

The Forum recognized the

fact that certain areas, such as the Gran Chaco Americano, the Amazon and coastal areas, as well as landlocked territories, small island states and less developed countries, are particularly vulnerable to environmental impacts.

The Quito Declaration and related decisions constitute the calling card of the Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean at other international meetings: the Governing Council of UNEP / Global Ministerial Environment Forum, held at the end of February of this year in Kenya, and the Rio+20 Summit, which is set to take place in Brazil in June. The ministers of the environment will hold their next regional meeting in Colombia. The results of these events will depend on the willingness of world leaders to move forward without delay in meeting the goal of sustainable development.

In the current round, the meeting of the Forum hosted the First Meeting of Ministers of the Environment of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), in response to the Caracas Action Plan, adopted in December 2011. That document called for a meeting of ministers of the environment prior to the Rio+20 Summit.

Cecilia Iglesias, of Argentina, Pedro Aranha, of Brazil, and Víctor Campos, of Nicaragua, represented the major groups within the region, conveying their message at the Eighteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, underscoring the importance of making the Forum a venue for "increasingly broad, effective and representative" social participation.

With regard to the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development, the participants highlighted "the need to strengthen the environmental pillar of sustainable development, including its institutions, at the various levels (global, regional, national and local)". They emphasized that at the global level, "UNEP must be strengthened", and that "it is impossible to be the voice of the environment within the United Nations system when the underlying approaches are fragmented and unconnected. This strengthening must also translate into additional and predictable financial resources that make it possible to carry out the task". The representatives from civil society urged that the ministers be ambitious, that they bring to the Rio+20 Conference a unified set of positions, and that they bear in mind that they were facing "the opportunity to build the international architecture required for sustainable development".

In terms of the other major theme of Rio+20 –the green economy– it was acknowledged that there was a certain "reticence" on the part of civil society sectors, and the participants asked that the debate be expanded so that "Latin America and the Caribbean can arrive at a clear, shared vision of what they desire".

Their final message was devoted to environmental education, which they described as "a key strategy for building sustainable, globally responsible societies".

The voice of civil society at the Forum

"UNEP must be strengthened"



Leila Mead / IISD



Achim Steiner: ‘The Forum of Latin American Ministers has assisted in building the foundation for the sustainable development of this region’

The Executive Director of UNEP, Achim Steiner, addressed the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, focusing on the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, or Rio+20. He recalled the words of United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, emphasizing that the Forum was taking place a mere five months before “a once-in-a-generation opportunity”.

UNEP’s Executive Director pointed out that, throughout its 27-year history, the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean had assisted in “building the foundation for the sustainable development of the region”.

Since 1992, according to Steiner, “environmental legislation and institutions have been strengthened and sustainable development has been introduced in public policies and national programmes”.

At the same time, however, challenges to the region have emerged: “natural

disasters, for example, have increased in terms of frequency and strength; large drought periods are being faced by countries in the region, negatively impacting food security and poverty and hunger rates. Overall deforestation rates in the region are unsustainable, and biodiversity is threatened by expanding agricultural and urban frontiers and economic growth”.

How can we make economies grow, lift people out of poverty and generate decent jobs without increasing the ecological footprint?

Achim Steiner posed the following question: “How can we make economies grow, lift people out of poverty, and generate decent jobs, and do all this without pushing humanity’s footprint beyond planetary boundaries?”

“This is the challenge”, said UNEP’s Executive Director, “and the opportunity of Rio+20 under its twin themes of a Green Economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and an institutional



framework for sustainable development”.

Steiner emphasized that the value of nature must “be recognized in terms of its spiritual and cultural dimensions, as well as its social benefits”, while at the same time, “its economic value should also be recognized in order to enhance the likelihood of its survival in a world of competing interests”. “The Green Economy”, he continued, “is not an alternative to sustainable development but a means to implement the aspirations, and agreements of Rio 1992”.

In citing the other topic of the Rio+20 Conference —the institutional framework for sustainable development— Achim Steiner acknowledged that many proposals presented to the United Nations were “supporting the strengthening of UNEP, perhaps into an organization, in its 40th anniversary year”.



For the first time, the effects of environmental degradation on health are examined in a GEO City study

GEO City for Poza Rica, Mexico

On February 8, 9 and 10, a workshop was held to launch the GEO (Global Environmental Outlook) City for Poza Rica, in Mexico. The workshop presented the methodological foundations for carrying out the comprehensive urban environmental evaluation study, to which a new component, focusing on the effects of environmental degradation on health, has been added.

The course was given by Ana Rosa Moreno, Health and Environmental

Specialist at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, with presentations by experts from UNEP: Andrea Salinas, Regional Coordinator for the Division of Early Warning and Assessment, and UNEP consultants Patricia Miranda and Laura Vallejo.

The workshop drew on the participation of more than 70 individuals, including local authorities and representatives from the productive and academic sectors and from civil society, all of whom expressed their commitment to carrying out the study as a step towards improving the environmental situation in Poza Rica.

This community is in urgent need of measures to deal with the environment. It is located near the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, an area of intense oil extraction activity. The mayor, Alfredo Gándara, who attended the workshop's opening event, pointed out that, in addition to oil-related activities, there are other factors that are affecting the environment and public health in the region, such as the



growing number of vehicles and the lack of adequate urban waste management.

The representatives from UNEP emphasized the importance of the study, not only for analyzing the challenges, but also for proposing environmental and public health solutions for the city of Poza Rica and increasing public awareness and co-responsibility among the various stakeholders, through a process of participatory evaluation and proposed solutions.

Mexico makes strides towards a green economy

The country launches a Green Economy Scoping Study

Mexico is changing. In moving towards sustainable development, the country has undertaken initiatives on the environment and on climate change, placing it in the forefront of efforts to transition to a green economy.

As part of this process of change, the Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources, Juan Rafael Elvira, signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Green Economy in September 2011, during the visit by Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP and Under Secretary General of the United Nations, to Mexico.

In this framework of cooperation, January 11th of this year saw the launch of the Green Economy Scoping Study for Mexico (M-GESS). The purpose of the study is to identify the public policy instruments needed to advance towards a low-carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive economy.

Expected to emerge from this effort is a series of documents that outline the needs and priorities of the public and private sectors, as well as of civil society, serving as a roadmap to a green

economy. This process will also seek to encourage dialogue between decision-makers and all interested stakeholders.

The study will be overseen by a multisectoral executive committee composed of representatives of the government, the legislature, and a range of civil society groups, including members of academia, the private sector and non-governmental organizations, thus ensuring that the undertaking meets the highest standards of quality and consistency, and that it follows the roadmap that has been established.





Dialogue between Mexican legislators and businesspeople on the ‘General Law on Climate Change Initiative’

After more than three years of arduous legislative work to formulate the General Law on Climate Change Initiative in Mexico, a meeting between legislators and the private sector took place on February 16th of this year to analyze the bill, which is aimed at establishing the regulatory and institutional framework needed to implement national public policies on climate change. Also participating were representatives from academia, civil society and international organizations.

During the event, convened by the organization GLOBE and the UNEP office in Mexico, leading representatives of the country’s business community engaged in an open and constructive dialogue with the group of legislators leading the effort to enact the bill, voicing their concerns

about the adoption of the General Law on Climate Change. The legislators, for their part, assuaged the concerns that were raised and demonstrated their commitment to provide support for businesses in transitioning to a green economy.

The event’s inaugural session was led by Dolores Barrientos, UNEP representative in Mexico, and included a presentation of the General Law on Climate Change by Deputy José Ignacio Pichardo Lechuga, President of GLOBE México. Afterwards, Rodrigo Gallegos, Director of Climate Change and Technology at the Mexican Institute for Competitiveness (IMCO, the main group representing the private sector), offered a cost-benefit analysis of the adoption of clean technologies in the private sector.

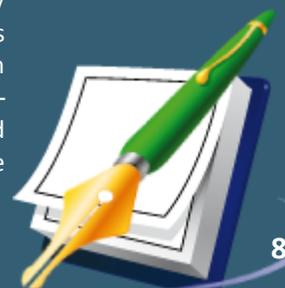
Key points for journalists on the green economy

On February 10th, the “First Seminar for Journalists on the Green Economy” was held. The seminar was organized by the International Institute for Sustainable Development of the Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey, in collaboration with UNEP. Its objective was to offer journalists an overview of the significance and implications of the green economy at the international level and, more particularly, for Mexico.

Participating in the seminar were a variety of experts from UNEP, including Dolores Barrientos, UNEP representative in Mexico, who delivered a lecture on the green economy; Graciela Metternicht, regional coordinator of Early Warning and Assessment, who addressed the environmental challenges at the global and regional levels; and Andrea Brusco, regional coordinator of Environmental Law, who provided a historical perspective on sustainable development.

The session also included presentations by various representatives from the public sector. The Secretary of Finance and Public Credit set forth the government’s views on the green economy, while representatives from the Energy Regulatory Commission (CRE) and the National Commission on Efficient Energy Use (CONUEE) discussed low carbon growth. The National Strategy for Sustainable Production and Consumption was detailed by the Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT). An official from the National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO) focused on the importance of natural capital, while a representative from the National Commission for Protected Natural Areas (CONANP) offered a presentation on the importance of these areas.

More than forty representatives from Mexico’s main media outlets – television, radio and print media – were in attendance.





UNEP hosts Norwegian delegation in Haiti

Platform for a deeper understanding of green growth in Mexico

This past January witnessed the launch of the Green Growth Knowledge Platform (GGKP), designed to promote the development of economic policies at the local, national and international levels and provide for a rigorous and thorough analysis of the various synergies between environment and economy. This will complement other efforts reflected in current policy instruments that place priority on local environmental benefits while stimulating growth, offering governments an attractive set of alternatives.

The Green Growth Knowledge Platform was set in motion through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank, the Global Green Growth Institute of Korea (GGGI) and UNEP.

The opening event of the conference "Green Growth: Addressing the Knowledge Gaps", held on 12 and 13 January of this year and attended by more than 120 distinguished academics and professionals from the world's most prestigious universities and institutions, coincided with the event which served as the occasion for introducing the Platform. Both events were organized in collaboration with the four signatory institutions and the Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources, through the National Institute of Ecology.

Officials from Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited Haiti in early February to review initial progress with the visionary Côte Sud Initiative (CSI), for which the Government of Norway is the principal donor.

The CSI is a 20-year sustainable development initiative which covers all 18 communes in Haiti's South Department. Its goal is to achieve large-scale lasting change and lift local populations out of poverty by addressing environmental degradation, improving access to social services and pursuing diversified agriculture, tourism and other development opportunities.

Espen Rikter-Svendsen, Ambassador/Special Envoy to Haiti, led the Norwegian delegation who joined staff from UNEP, Columbia University and the UN Office for Project Services, as well as the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Haiti,

Nigel Fisher, and local government officials, for briefings and tours of project sites.

Launched in January 2011, the CSI is being implemented by a partnership of 11 organizations coordinated by the Government of Haiti and UNEP, through its Disasters and Conflicts Sub-programme.

The South Department is highly vulnerable to disasters and was affected by floods in late 2011. Espen Rikter-Svendsen Ambassador/Special Envoy to Haiti thanked everyone who had contributed to the flood recovery effort.



Caring for water at the border

UNOPS and UNEP collaborate on a basin between Nicaragua and Honduras

The project "Strengthening Local Capacities for Managing Water Resources in the Cross-Border Coco River Basin in the Department of Nueva Segovia, Nicaragua, and the Department of El Paraíso, Honduras", reached a successful conclusion in February, with an event entitled "Agua y Cuenca", which was held in Managua, Nicaragua.

The work carried out in the Coco River was implemented by UNOPS (a United Nations programme that provides assistance in designing and executing

complex projects), in collaboration with UNEP. In 2011, these United Nations agencies launched a cooperative effort with the National Water Authority of Nicaragua (known by its Spanish acronym ANA) and the Association of Municipalities of Nueva Segovia (AMUNSE), to develop technical assistance activities as part of the project. Special attention was given to river basin planning and management, creation of a methodological guide on the functioning of the Micro Basin Committees, and support for formulating new Micro Basin Plans.

The event, which marked the culmination of the Coco River project, provided an opportunity to share practices, experiences and lessons learned, as well as to compare and align the perspectives of participating stakeholders.



Colombian student takes the first ‘YOUTH AND GREEN ECONOMY’ regional award, thanks to the fruit of ‘eternal youth’

Also awarded were a project to promote an ecological community in Guatemala and an ecotourism initiative in a Peruvian forest

It may not give eternal youth —despite what some may believe—, but the chachafruto (*Erythrina edulis*) has given Rafael Iván Riveros Barragán the opportunity to see the fulfilment of a much more tangible dream: the sustainable development of his community. With this project, the Colombian student of agricultural engineering won first prize in the regional “Youth and Green Economy” contest, organized by UNEP, with financial support from the Bayer company. The prize will go towards helping the winner implement his project, aimed at promoting the transition to a green economy.

The winner is part of a group of young researchers working in the micro basins of El Gallinazo and La Peñoza, in Colombia. Together they created the Association of Farmers and Chachafrutero Growers (known by its Spanish acronym AGROCHAC), whose aim is to establish an agribusiness plant for processing fried “chachafritas” and flour for human and animal consumption derived from chachafruto (*Erythrina-Edulis*). The project will help revive the biodiversity of micro basin forests, generate jobs, improve the purchasing power and quality of life of the community and, through marketing of its population’s products, bring long-term sustainability to the project.

Second place: Ecological Community in Guatemala

The second-place prize was awarded for the project submitted by Pablo Víctor Toc Sic. This young Guatemalan belongs to the organization Xeiprojuve, which promotes the creation of an ecological community in the canton of Paxtocá, while caring for and maximizing the use of natural resources to foster community development through ecological microenterprises. His initiative operates on four fronts: integral management of solid waste; integral management of woodlands; production and consumption of organic products; and ecological tourist facilities (e.g., a park for ecotourism).

Third place: Ecotourism in the Jananí Forest

This project, which received the third-place prize, was submitted by the young Peruvian, Rita Patricia Casaverde Fortón. The project focuses on the Polylepis relict forest, an ecosystem endemic to the Andes that hosts a wide diversity of flora and fauna.

Located in one of these forests, known as Jananí, in the mountains around Lima, is the Carampoma community. The winning initiative seeks to encourage the community’s young people and adults to enhance their incomes and quality of life through ecotourism and sustainable forest management, including the adoption of conservation measures.



Pablo Víctor Toc Sic receives the second prize from Mauricio Ramírez, UNDP Director in Guatemala

The struggle of Volcán Barú against fire



In mid-February of this year, a number of fires, which proved difficult to control due to the strong winds, occurred in the areas around Volcán Barú (the highest mountain in Panama). These fires destroyed 500 hectares of grassland. Taking every possible measure to prevent the recurrence of such an event is one of the missions of the project, “Support for the protected areas of Mesoamerica: Developing economic and legal instruments and mechanisms to improve the management of protected areas, including sustainable agricultural practices such as a strategy to prevent wildfires”. This project is part of the UNEP-Spain Partnership for protected

areas, in support of the LifeWeb Initiative.

The “Forest-Firefighter Course”, attended by 25 participants, was held from 13 to 18 February in the municipality of Boquerón. After successfully passing the evaluation process, attendees received certification from the International Higher Academy of Firefighters of Panamá. The participants thus became part of the community of volunteer firefighters, as well as members of the permanent guard, in the effort to prevent and control wildfires in the protected areas of Volcán Barú National Park and La Amistad International Park.



New stage in combating climate change in Panama

The end of a project marks the beginning of a long road

The visit marking the conclusion of the Joint Programme “Integration of Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Measures in the Management of Natural Resources in the Four Priority Watersheds of Panama” (PCCC) occurred from 15 to 17 January of this year. Its objective was to evaluate some of the activities that had been carried out.

The Programme took place in the most important watersheds of Panama –Chucunaque and Tabasará – with the participation of four United Nations agencies: the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). Also participating were four institutions of the Panamanian State: the National Environmental Authority (ANAM), the Ministry of Agricultural Development (MIDA), the Ministry of Health (MINSa), and the National Civil Protection System (SINAPROC).



Visit to Chucunaque

Leaving behind the province of Panama City, we entered Darién. The Pan American highway becomes difficult at this point, but it was the best portion of the route. Fortunately, it was summer, so the dirt roads were dry and the level of the Chucunaque River was low. The hours of waiting, and of navigating the river, were well rewarded: the beauty of Darién –its landscape and its people– is unparalleled.

It is hard to believe that, just a year ago, in this same area, the countryside looked completely different. There was a huge flood. Many communities, particularly in the Darién region, had to be evacuated. People lost all of their belongings, their houses, their farm animals and their crops, and whatever else served as their means of subsistence. Moreover, for the first time in 21 years, the Panama Canal was closed for a number of hours, due to excessively high water levels in two of its lakes, caused by strong rains. The supply of drinking water was also affected, and some rivers overflowed their banks.

The effects could have been worse. The community of El Salto, currently being

relocated and rebuilt, highlighted the key role of the early warning and monitoring systems. Particularly notable were the scales for measuring river levels and the radio communication equipment provided by the Joint Programme.

During the cresting of the river, the radio equipment made it possible to keep the communities within the watershed informed, thus facilitating the evacuation process and preventing loss of human life. During the evacuation, members of the indigenous population returned to retrieve special items of value. In the words of one of their leaders, “We couldn’t leave behind what was key to saving our lives”.

The Chucunaque River basin is one of Panama’s largest, with one of the greatest volumes of water. It is also one of the country’s poorest areas, and one that is among the most vulnerable to climate change, especially with regard to the effects of drought and flooding. Paradoxically, it is an area rich in natural wealth, distinguished by its great biological and cultural diversity and by the abundance of water (though 40.8% of





Map of Chucunaque

its inhabitants are without drinking water).

We first encounter Metetí, then, later, El Salto, a community within the Emberá Wounaan indigenous region. Along the river, one also finds the Guna de Wargandi region, as well as populations of settlers and Afro-descendants. All are stakeholders and beneficiaries of the

programme, and have worked together to enhance and strengthen the climate change mitigation and adaptation, natural resource conservation, and poverty reduction measures and actions.

Despite the long distances they have had to travel –many having to sleep during their journey– all of the facilitators and radio broadcasters who have been summoned arrive at their destination, Metetí, to share their experiences with the evaluators. In the Chucunaque basin, 37 environmental facilitators were trained; 14 of these were also trained as radio broadcasters.

What is of particular importance is that these people have acquired the theoretical and technical knowledge needed to continue disseminating in their communities –in their respective local languages and based on their individual views of the world– the information needed to provide a heightened response to climate change, and to reduce their vulnerability. Their task now is to expand local knowledge, experimental learning, information exchange, and active participation by civil society, local and traditional authorities, and other

stakeholders responsible for decision-making.

They and many others are beginning to see the fruits of the recently concluded Joint Programme for Climate Change. During these past years, UNEP has been part of this common effort, which has contributed to making this mosaic of lights, colours, sounds, people and rhythms, a better place to live.



Map of Tabasará



The role of radio in dealing with the challenges of climate change in the High Andes communities of Peru

For families in Peru’s High Andes communities of Cuzco and Apurímac, radio is the only source of information and one of the main sources of entertainment.

The United Nations Joint Programme on Climate Change, part of an information and awareness-building strategy, took to the airwaves in February 2010, with the radio programme “Pachamamanchista Munakusun” debuting in four districts in the regions of Cuzco and Apurímac.

“I’m on the air live every morning from 7 a.m. to 8 a.m., speaking in both Quechua and Spanish. People like to hear news that have to do with agriculture, since it is their –our– livelihood. I say “ours” because my parents and I are also farmers, and we see that now it rains in months when it never used to rain, we see how the rivers and creeks are drying up...” So says rural radio presenter Alicia Escalante, of Tambobamba-Apurímac.

Every morning, the voices of rural radio personalities, responsible for broadcasting radio programs, encourage families and campesino leaders to identify local problems and propose ways of adapting to the new conditions, as part of an annual agricultural campaign.

“When I was young, that hill over there had snow the whole year, but it has been disappearing over time. This means that we will have less water for our crops and our animals. For many, it is a hill; for us, it is the “apu-protector” (protector god), though the new generations have lost respect for Mother Earth or “Pachamama.” Young people and adults need to begin to reflect on what we see in our environment. We need to ask ourselves why it is hotter than before,



why it rains in months when it didn’t used to rain...” These are the words of Valentín Cahuana, leader of the Ccacacancha-Apurímac community.

Voices such as those of Alicia and Valentín can be heard on local radio. These programmes discuss overall indicators of climate change, based on the observations of farmers, and address issues such as reductions in the amount of water available for dry crops. They also allow neighbouring communities to share their successful experiences in adapting to the new conditions –measures such as diversifying crops to reduce the risk of a poor harvest.

“Through the radio, we discover that in other communities our campesino brothers are planting trees as a live fence to prevent the frost from damaging the crops and to prevent soil erosion. If they can do it, so can we,” says Emperatriz Monje, of the Ccochapata-Cuzco community.



These radio programmes have captured the attention of listeners, motivating them to implement adaptation measures that have proven to have positive effects, such as developing and capturing water sources, reforestation with native species in catchment basins, protection of biodiversity, and prevention of forest fires and overgrazing.



Peru: University’s Efforts to Combat Climate Change

On 17 February 2012, the ceremony to present diplomas and certificates to the 45 students in the first and second round of the Degree Program in Climate Change Science and Management at the National University of San Antonio Abad de Cuzco (UNSAAC) took place. Attending the event were members of the UNSAAC administration, as well as local and United Nations officials, including Cinthia Soto, representing UNEP.

Graduates of the programme included professors from Peru’s main universities, as well as from universities in Switzerland, Panama, and other countries. The success of the initiative, as well as the wide interest it generated, led UNEP –a co-sponsor of the degree program and a counterpart in the United Nations Joint Programme on Climate Change– in collaboration with other key partners, to work towards establishing a Masters Degree Programme in Climate Change and Sustainable Development in 2013, also at UNSAAC.

Upcoming Events

Analysis of Costs and Options for REDD Workshop.

Date and venue: 6 - 8 March, Panama City, Panama.

International Workshop of the Green Customs Initiative.

Date and venue: 6 - 8 March, Mexico City, Federal District, Mexico.

GEF Expanded Constituency Workshop for Central America.

Date and venue: 6 - 8 March, San José, Costa Rica.

Inception Workshop for the "Economic Valuation of Ecosystem Services provided by the Jeannette Kawas National Park, Bahia de Tela, Honduras" study.

Date and venue: 7 March, La Ceiba Honduras.

Training of trainers workshop on the development of value chains for providing alternative livelihoods to small-scale producers.

Date and venue: 26 - 30 March, Managua, Nicaragua.

REDD Policy Board Meeting.

Date and venue: 26 - 30 March, Asuncion Paraguay.

Caribbean Sub-regional Ozone Officers Network Meeting.

Date and venue: 27 - 29 March, Roseau, Commonwealth of Dominica.

Workshop for the discussion and analysis of legal and economic mechanisms or instruments to promote the sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems with local partners and environmental authorities of Panama and El Salvador.

Date and venue: March, Panama City, Panama.

Inception workshop for the design of a "Coastal development plan for the municipality of Laguna de Perlas, Nicaragua".

Date and venue: 11 April, Laguna de Perlas, Nicaragua.

Second Preparatory Meeting for the World Congress on Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability.

Date and venue: 23 - 24 April, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Global Environment Monitoring System (GEMS) Water Regional Meeting.

<http://www.gemswater.org/index.html>

Date and venue: 24 - 26 April, Panama City, Panama.