



UNEP in Latin America and the Caribbean

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2012

New regional meeting point on climate change



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Major Groups in the region focus on higher participation in UNEP processes

The 2012 Regional Consultation Meeting for Major Groups and Stakeholders was held in November in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The fact that it was held only months after the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) made it especially important.

The final document of Rio+20 highlighted the need to promote access to information, public participation, and civil society access to justice in environmental matters. This was, in fact, one of the main topics addressed in Port of Spain. In their declaration, the representatives of the Major Groups asked for progress on reviewing the guidelines for their participation in UNEP processes and on modifying the accreditation requirements.

The participants elected their regional representatives to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environmental Forum of UNEP, as well as their representatives to the meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean.

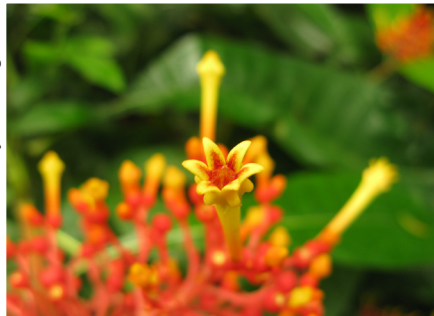
The final declaration can be found at:

http://www.pnuma.org/sociedad_civil/documents/reunion2012/20121120%20DOCUMENTO%20FINAL%20RCM%20ALC.pdf

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Protection of the ozone layer and GEO-5, under the scrutiny of journalists



In October, the Bahaman capital, Nassau, became a meeting place for journalists from different media outlets in the English-speaking Caribbean invited by UNEP. The reason for the meeting was the Caribbean Journalists Workshop: Challenges for the Environment and the Ozone Layer.

The event, supported by the Governments of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas and Antigua, was inaugurated by Lorraine Armbrister, permanent secretary of the Ministry of the Environment and Housing of Bahamas.

The Montreal Protocol, which has served to protect the ozone layer for 25 years, and the Global Environment Outlook GEO-5 report were the focus of the workshop, which was conducted with a participatory approach. Media professionals wrote news stories on different environmental issues that are especially relevant for the Caribbean, from the importance of mangrove swamps to the impact of mining.

Presentation of awards to young winners of Global Art and Environment Competition

Young artists from around the world were given awards at a special ceremony in connection with the twenty-first International Children's Painting Competition on 10 October, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Several children and young people won awards for their environmental artwork, having competed against more than 630,000 drawings in the annual contest, which is organized by UNEP. The award recipients at the ceremony included five of the six regional winners and the global second-place winner in the competition, Ka Mun Leong, age 14, from Malaysia.

"From climate change to endangered species, these young artists depict, with creativity and inspiration, key environmental challenges faced by their own communities as well as by other children around the world", said the UNEP Executive Director, Achim Steiner.

Further information is available at:

<http://www.pnuma.org/informacion/comunicados/2012/101012bis>



New Climate Change Gateway for Latin America and the Caribbean



UNEP, with the support of the Governments of Spain and Norway, launched on November 21st an Online Knowledge Platform to promote the fight against climate change. This platform is a component of the Regional Gateway for Technology Transfer and Action on Climate Change in Latin America and the Caribbean (REGATTA). The platform is available at: <http://www.climatechange-regatta.org/index.php/en/>.

REGATTA's main objective is to strengthen capacity and promote knowledge sharing of climate change technologies and experiences for both adaptation and mitigation in Latin America and the Caribbean. It is oriented to provide technical assistance, facilitate access to financing and exchange of information for the development and implementation of climate change action. REGATTA's three main components are: On-line Knowledge Platform; Key Institutions and Regional Centers of Knowledge and Technology; and specific assistance in mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

The Transition to Efficient Lighting Begins in en.lighten Latin American Partner Countries

The first inception workshops for the UNEP/GEF (Global Environment Facility) en.lighten initiative took place in Montevideo, Uruguay in August and in September in Santiago, Chile as a key component of the Global Partnership Programme, a voluntary initiative for countries to work with en.lighten and its partners to achieve a coordinated national or regional transition to efficient lighting. Support is provided for the development of policies, strategies and actions for the phase-out of inefficient lighting products. The target for a global phase-out of inefficient incandescent lamps is by the end of 2016.

The meetings introduced the comprises a National Efficient includes: minimum energy (MEPS) to ensure efficiency; mechanisms to help restrict lighting; monitoring, (MVE) which discourages the products; and, environmental sound disposal and recycling



integrated policy approach that Lighting Strategy. The approach performance standards supporting policies and the supply of inefficient verification and enforcement distribution of poor quality sustainability actions such as plans.

Additionally, in coordination and Project Mesoamerica, meeting was held in November in the Ministries of the Environment and Energy of Central American countries. The session was essential for establishing a coordinated effort to harmonize the development of a regional efficient lighting strategy. Colombia and Mexico, two countries who are at an advanced stage of progress, provided support and inspiration to the other countries in attendance.



Mainstreaming Adaptation into the Microfinance sector

During the month of November, Lima (Peru) and Bogota (Colombia), were the scenarios for the initiation workshops to launch the Microfinance for Ecosystem-based Adaptation (MEbA) project. This project, funded by Germany's Environment Ministry, aims to implement, at a local-community level, climate change adaptation measures identified by the vulnerability and impact assessments conducted through the REGATTA project. The MEbA project is an innovative strategy to implement priorities identified through REGATTA, in collaboration with public and private partners, in rural areas of Colombia and Peru, using microfinance instruments.

TEEB Workshop in Mexico City

For the first time, a workshop was held in Mexico on the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) approach. The event, which took place in Mexico City on 23-24 October, provided a space to discuss techniques for valuating natural capital in Mexico as well as identifying potential related projects. Different methodologies for measuring ecosystem services and analysing the state of natural capital were presented, and opportunities to develop TEEB studies at the national and subnational levels and in business spheres in Mexico were discussed.

Prominent speakers such as José Saruhkan, general coordinator of the National Commission for Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO); Christophe Aicher, a researcher at the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research in Germany; and Helena Boniatti Pavese, director of corporate relations for Conservation International in Brazil, took part in the workshop. The daily attendance was 120 persons from the public, private and academic sectors and civil society.



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Identifying carbon project opportunities in Mexico

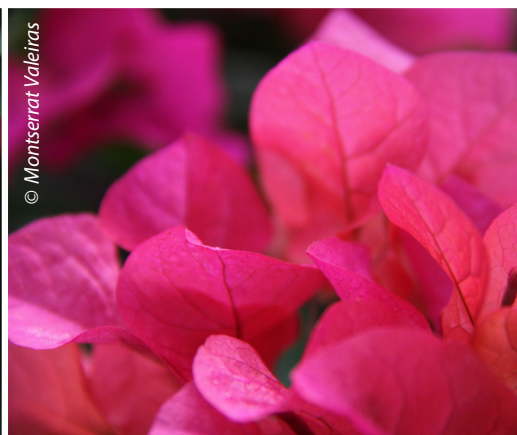
A Workshop to Identify Carbon Project Opportunities in the southeast region covered by the Agricultural Trust Funds (FIRA) was held in Mérida, Yucatán, on 4-5 October. Presentations were given on the basic principles of carbon projects along with an introduction on markets—mainly voluntary ones—for these projects, such as the Climate Action Reserve (CAR) in California. In addition, follow-up work was carried out on the identification of activities for the joint UNEP-FIRA Programme in 2013. The event was attended by 80 persons.



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Corporate social responsibility: the environmental commitments of Ferrero Rocher



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The Italian Embassy in Mexico together with chocolatier Ferrero Rocher organized on 13 November a forum named Corporate Social Responsibility: Ferrero and its Commitments to the Environment. The event was held at the Italian Institute of Culture in Mexico City. Dolores Barrientos, UNEP representative in Mexico, gave a presentation titled Green Economy: Opportunities for the Private Sector. Also on the discussion panel were the Ambassador of Italy to Mexico, Roberto Spinelli; Mexico's former secretary of Foreign Affairs, Rosario Green; and the prominent Mexican journalist Javier Solórzano.

How to prepare a GEO

The Division of Early Warning and Assessment of the UNEP Regional Office held a training workshop on the GEO methodology for developing integrated environmental assessment processes and drafting related reports in Panama from 11 to 14 December.

Representatives of Governments and of UNEP collaboration centres applied the analytical framework proposed in the methodology through exercises and simulations. They had received information on the impact and scope of these processes and their outcomes.

Through the GEO integrated environmental assessment methodology, proposed by UNEP, a large number of participatory processes on integrated environmental assessment have been carried out since 1999 in

Latin America and the Caribbean, on a regional, national and local scale. This methodology has evolved and now includes the most recent concepts from environmental research on the relationship between the environment and human well-being.



Geographic information, at the service of the environment

Thanks to collaboration between UNEP and the Technological University of Panama (UTP), the Geographic Information System Training Centre of the UTP was inaugurated on 14 November. In attendance were Marcela Paredes de Vázquez, president of the UTP, and Mara Murillo, Deputy Regional Director of UNEP.

The Centre, which has now trained more than 80 persons, was established as the result of a joint initiative of the UTP and the UNEP Regional Office, whose contributions to the effort include the donation of specialized software for managing geographic information.

UNEP is thus helping to strengthen educational institutions that provide quality information for environmental decision-making.

Further information is available at: <http://www.utp.ac.pa/inauguran-centro-de-capacitacion-en-sistemas-de-informacion-geografica>

GEO-5 spreads throughout the region

The UNEP Mexico office organized a presentation on 11 December titled GEO-5 Global Environmental Outlook: Elements of Public Policy for Mexico. Dolores Barrientos, UNEP representative in Mexico, and Arturo Flores, lead author of GEO-5 and director general of environmental statistics and information at the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT), submitted the main findings, at both the global and regional level, of the GEO-5 report.

Carlos Gay, coordinator of the Joint Programme on Climate Change of the National Autonomous University of Mexico and a member of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, gave a talk on climate change highlighting the need for public policies to bring about a comprehensive strategy to educate the population.

Specific conditions in Mexico and the public-policy responses implemented in recent years by different sectors were also emphasized.

Taking part in the roundtable discussion were representatives of the United Nations System in Mexico, subnational governments, donor agencies, the private sector, civil society and academia. More than 130 persons attended.

Other events in the region have included a component with contents from the GEO-5. In October, the conclusions of the GEO-5 were discussed at the journalists' workshop organized by UNEP in the Bahamas. In addition, presentations were given on the report at the UNEP Regional Consultation Meeting for Major Groups and Stakeholders in Trinidad and Tobago in November.





© <http://www.grida.no/photolib/>

Regional Association of Refrigeration Technicians of the Caribbean, one step from becoming a reality

The Workshop on Alternative Technology to Ozone Layer Depleting Substances for Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Technicians took place in Granada from 27 to 29 November. The gathering, sponsored by UNEP, provided an opportunity to discuss creating a regional association of refrigeration and air-conditioning technicians of the Caribbean.

Previous efforts to bring about a Caribbean association of technicians had made little progress. At the recent meeting, to ensure the success of the initiative, UNEP encouraged the technicians to request assistance from both the National Ozone Units and the Governments.

It is hoped that the attendees will soon hold virtual meetings to name a president and the holders of various executive positions. The association's main objective will be to gain the commitment of all States, both those of the English-speaking Caribbean as well as Haiti, to devise alternatives to ozone depleting substances.

Regional coordination of efforts to protect the ozone layer

In connection with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Montreal Protocol, UNEP and the Ministry of Health of Panama organized the Joint Annual Meeting of the Ozone Action Networks in Latin America and the Caribbean from 3 to 5 October 2012 in Panama City. Representatives from 33 countries took part.

The decisions and commitments of the Governments were reviewed, and a consensus-based statement was prepared for the Twenty-fourth Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol, held from 12 to 16 November in Geneva, Switzerland.

In addition, a technical session was attended by importers and technicians from the air-conditioning and refrigeration sector. Participants analysed alternatives to hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) in terms of energy efficiency, cost and safety.



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Coordination to eliminate HCFCs in Central America and the Dominican Republic

The Montreal Protocol Compliance Assistance Programme, of UNEP, and Nicaragua's Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources, held the first workshop for coordination and exchange of experiences between the National Ozone Units and the customs agencies of Central America and the Dominican Republic, from 4 to 5 December in Managua.

The aim of the workshop was to give the countries of the region tools, expertise and strategies with which to implement the schemes recently approved to eliminate hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), in the framework of South-South cooperation.

Speakers and experts from Argentina, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay and UNEP presented management tools and models to control ozone depleting substances (ODSs) that meet the needs of the region and that can contribute to the effectiveness of and compliance with the commitments assumed under the Montreal Protocol.

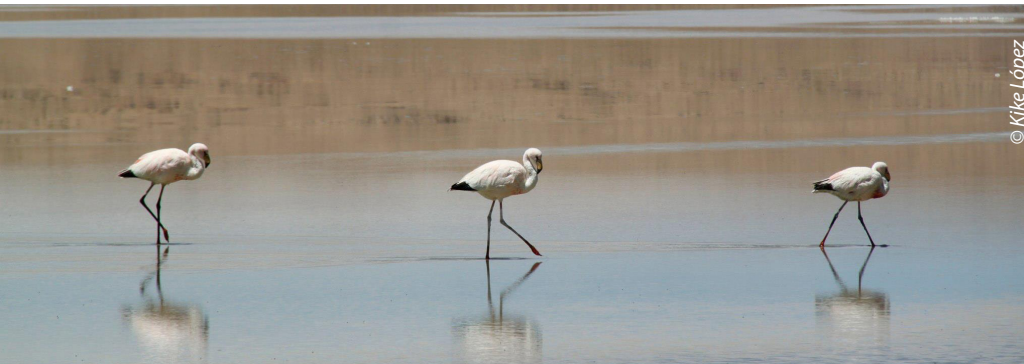


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Regional consultation on mercury

In connection with negotiations on an international convention on mercury, UNEP carried out a regional consultation for Latin America and the Caribbean in Bogota from 26 to 29 November, with support from the Government of Colombia.

The consultation was attended by officials from 23 countries of the region as well as representatives of international agencies, industry and NGOs. The attendees discussed the most salient aspects of the negotiations and worked to adopt common regional stances ahead of the upcoming meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC), to be held in Geneva on 13-18 January 2013.



Regional workshop on hazardous waste training

On 14-16 November, a workshop was held in Buenos Aires to submit and discuss the new version of the Training Resource Pack for Hazardous Waste Management in Developing Economies (TRP). This tool was developed in 2002 by the International Solid Waste Association (ISWA) in conjunction with UNEP. In 2012, it was updated as the TRP+ (www.trp-training.info).

The workshop offered an opportunity to begin revising the TRP and adapt it to the specific needs of Latin America and the Caribbean. Hence, it was attended by experts from different countries and sectors (universities, technical institutes, governments, industry and NGOs) who are now prepared to continue improving the tool throughout the coming year. In addition to ISWA and the International Environmental Technology Centre (IETC) of UNEP, the event was supported by ISWA-Argentina (ARS), the Basel Convention Regional Centre for South America and the Government of Argentina.



Moving towards a coordinated implementation of chemicals conventions in Ecuador



On 29 November, a workshop to promote the coordinated implementation of international chemicals conventions in Ecuador was held in Quito. The initiative arose as a result of a collaboration agreement between UNEP and the Ministry of the Environment of Ecuador under which an assessment has been carried out of the legal, institutional and operational framework in order to identify actions that may facilitate synergies between agreements.

Attending the consultation were various stakeholders who play a role in chemicals management in Ecuador and representatives of other countries of the region and of the secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions. The preliminary results of the assessment were discussed, and various proposals for improving synergies, such as the creation of an interagency coordination body, were put forth.



UNEP convened a regional workshop on legal and institutional aspects of REDD+

UNEP gathered nine of the countries in the REDD+ initiative, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Global Legislators Organization (GLOBE international) took part in a Regional Workshop on Legal and Institutional Aspects of REDD+ held on 12-13 December. Regulatory frameworks for developing the REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) system were discussed at the gathering.

Attendees examined the legal and institutional aspects of REDD+ in depth and from a practical standpoint in order to facilitate national implementation of the system, and they focused in particular on relevant topics for the region such as public participation, consent of indigenous communities and social and environmental safeguards.

REDD+ is a tool to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, avoiding deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries and supporting communities that sustainably manage their forests.

Forests, a priority topic for Panama



Second meeting of the REDD+ National Panel

Panama's National Environmental Authority (ANAM) is heading up a consultation process on developing a national strategy for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) in the country. In the framework of the Joint UN-REDD Programme, three United Nations agencies (including UNEP) and the Government of Panama are monitoring this process.



Three judges from the region to serve on the new International Advisory Committee of UNEP

As required by the Rio+20 Declaration on Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability, on 7 December UNEP created a High Level International Advisory Committee. The committee represents the legal community in international forums and will help develop and implement environmental law at all levels as well as disseminate and expand jurisprudence.

The committee will also offer strategic advice on providing information and on defining priority themes to assist the countries on matters related to environmental law.

Three of the nine members of this new body are from Latin America and the Caribbean: the chief justice of the Supreme Court of Argentina, Luis Ricardo Lorenzetti; a judge on the Superior Court of Justice of Brazil, Antonio Herman Benjamin; and a judge on the Caribbean Court of Justice, Winston Anderson.

Gerardo González, national director of Integrated Watershed Management for ANAM, kicked off the second workshop of the REDD+ Panama National Panel on 12 December, at which representatives of different government agencies, academic and research institutions, civil society, native peoples, the private sector and international agencies that focus on environmental policies took part.

It is hoped that the panel will contribute to developing a national strategy to reduce deforestation and forest degradation and to strengthening environmental management arrangements in Panama.

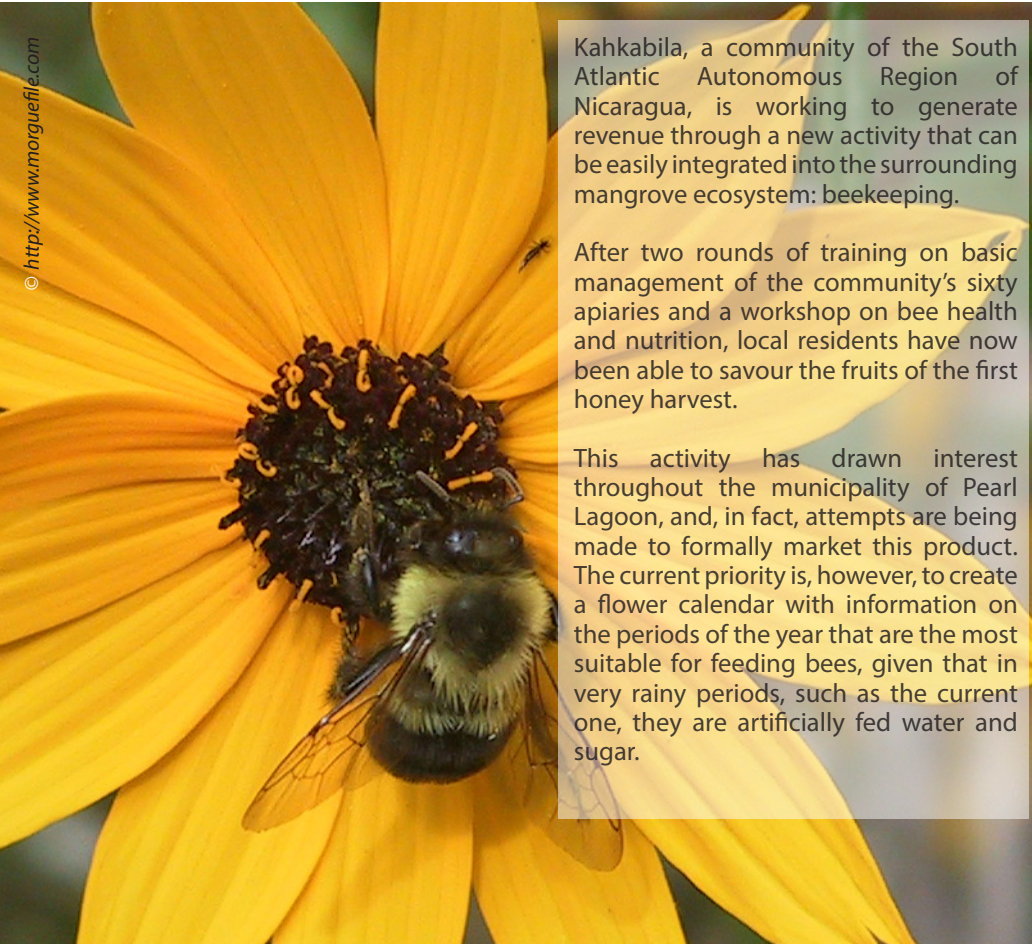
Enhancing low-carbon development by greening the economy in Uruguay

During the week of 5 to 9 November 2012, UNEP and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) jointly undertook a kick-off mission to Uruguay with the aim of starting planning activities under the project “Enhancing low-carbon development by greening the economy”.

During this mission, the team met with representatives from the Ministries of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (MVOTMA), Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries (MAGP), Economy and Finance (MEF) and Industry, Energy and Mining (MIEM), as well as with representatives of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the German Embassy, Research Institutions and the private sector.

Along with the bilateral consultations, two workshops were held in the context of the mission: (i) a workshop on the potential of a green economy for Uruguay, and a Strategic Planning Workshop. The aim was to present and discuss the project and strategic planning of the lines of action and major activities.

Mangrove Project: honey as an economic alternative in a community in Nicaragua



Kahkabila, a community of the South Atlantic Autonomous Region of Nicaragua, is working to generate revenue through a new activity that can be easily integrated into the surrounding mangrove ecosystem: beekeeping.

After two rounds of training on basic management of the community’s sixty apiaries and a workshop on bee health and nutrition, local residents have now been able to savour the fruits of the first honey harvest.

This activity has drawn interest throughout the municipality of Pearl Lagoon, and, in fact, attempts are being made to formally market this product. The current priority is, however, to create a flower calendar with information on the periods of the year that are the most suitable for feeding bees, given that in very rainy periods, such as the current one, they are artificially fed water and sugar.

Haiti reaffirms its commitment to environmental rehabilitation in the insular Caribbean



The Ministry of the Environment of Haiti in coordination with the Tri-National Office of the Caribbean Biological Corridor (CBC) held the first National Workshop on Visibility of the CBC, an initiative promoted by the Governments of Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Haiti in favour of biodiversity conservation and environmental rehabilitation in the insular Caribbean.

The workshop, which took place on 10 December, was a key element for promoting the regional initiative of the CBC in the country and for publicizing the progress made and challenges faced by the “Project for the Demarcation and Establishment of the Caribbean Biological Corridor: As a Framework for Biodiversity Conservation, Environmental Rehabilitation and Development of Livelihood Options in Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Cuba”, carried out by UNEP with European Union financing.

“It is true that we have many destroyed areas and we must work to rehabilitate them, but Haiti continues to have much natural wealth and we have to fight to not lose it”, stated Nobert Dechanel, an expert at the Tri-National Office.

Further information is available at:

<http://www.pnuma.org/informacion/comunicados/2012/20121210>

UNEP Representative in Brazil Joins Women Network for Sustainability

UNEP's Representative in Brazil, Denise Hamú, was designated to the Brazilian Women Network for Sustainability by the Brazilian Ministry of Environment.

The main goal of the Network is the promotion of sustainable development linked to the empowerment of women. Ms. Hamú became a member of the Consultative Council on 14 April, together with 21 women in leadership positions, mainly in the private sector and civil society. The Council will set guidelines for the working groups of the Network and will also approve the work plan based on recommendations of the Rio+20 Conference. It will also search and consolidate international partnerships to reinforce its objectives.

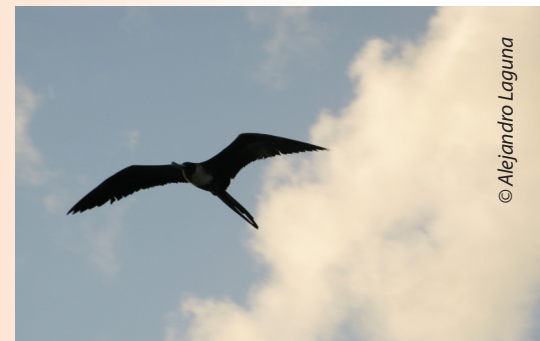
Another body of the Network is the Strategy Council, formed by 13 members, and presided over by Brazilian Minister of the Environment, Izabella Teixeira. Both councils will hold their next meeting in March 2013, when they will analyze the work plan.



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Development of Regional Action Plan on Air Pollution



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In January 2012, the Forum of Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean made a decision to continue work on the development of a Regional Action Plan on Air Pollution. Pursuant to this decision, the Intergovernmental Regional Network of Latin America and the Caribbean met in Bogota, Colombia, on 2 November.

To facilitate the debate, the UNEP Secretariat, with support from Mexico's National Institute on Ecology and Climate Change and the Clean Air Institute, prepared a document entitled "Elements for a Regional Action Plan on Air Pollution", taking into account the results of the Network's discussions. The meeting expressed its gratitude for the document and recognized the relevant work of the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, in particular with regard to the relation between air pollution and short-lived climate forcers. The Regional Action Plan is expected to be submitted to the next Forum of Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean in 2013.

GUPES: the environment is making inroads at universities in the region

On 3 December, the Latin America chapter of the Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES) was launched in Bogota. Margarita Astrálaga, director and regional representative of UNEP, participated in the kick-off ceremony.

GUPES is a UNEP initiative to promote the integration of environmental and sustainability considerations into teaching, research, community participation and university management, as well as to enhance and improve student participation in activities that aim to bring about sustainable development within and outside of universities.

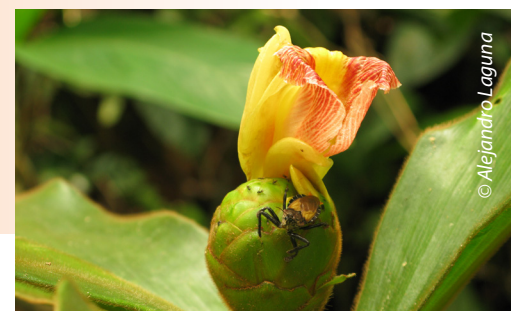
The event was attended by some forty persons, including representatives of UNEP, the Partnership of Ibero-American Networks of Universities for Sustainability and the Environment (ARIUSA), the University of Applied and Environmental Sciences of Colombia, the Colombian Environmental Training Network and the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development of Colombia, as well as professors and researchers from other Colombian universities.



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Upcoming events

1. Meeting for Climate Change Negotiators of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean countries (GRULAC). Ecuador. Date: To be confirmed.
2. Ministerial Meeting of the Caribbean Biological Corridor. Santiago de Cuba. Expected date: 16-18 January 2013.
3. Economic Valuation Workshop. Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Expected date: February 2013.
4. Workshop on Monitoring Carbon Capture in Mangrove Ecosystems. La Ceiba, Honduras Date: 19 - 22 January 2013.
5. Workshop for the Results of the Analysis of the Vulnerability of the Gran Chaco. Venue and date to be confirmed.
6. 3 Mini workshops for bridging gaps and information on the vulnerability analysis of Los Andes. To be held in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru (one in each country). Date: To be confirmed.
7. Workshop to Launch the Joint Initiative enlighten and REGATTA for the preparation of a regional strategy on efficient illumination in Central America. El Salvador. Date: To be confirmed.

