



UNEP in Latin America and the Caribbean

NEWSLETTER

MARCH-APRIL 2013



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Education for sustainable development in Latin America

The subregional consultation of Latin America on planning the programme framework of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) took place from 16 to 17 April in San José, Costa Rica. This is one of the monitoring activities related to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014).

The meeting was organized by UNESCO, UNEP and the Costa Rican Commission on Cooperation, and was attended, *inter alia*, by representatives of Ministries of Education and of the Environment, NGOs, universities and youth organizations. UNEP gave a presentation on its contributions to the Decade in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The purpose of the subregional consultation was to help ensure a transparent and participatory preparatory process for the post-2014 ESD programme framework that takes into account the interests, needs and lessons learned of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. The subregional consultation for the English-speaking Caribbean took place in Kingston, Jamaica, from 3 to 4 April.

<http://www.orealc.cl/educaciondesarrollosostenible/educacion-para-el-desarrollo-sostenible/?lang=en>

Caribbean Biological Corridor promoting socioeconomic studies in Haiti

In March, in connection with the Project for the Demarcation and Establishment of the Caribbean Biological Corridor (CBC UNEP/EU), socioeconomic studies were carried out at two of the pilot sites in Haiti: Bassin Bleu and Fort Drouet.

Sixty families at each site were interviewed on various topics: health, income, eating habits, occupation, educational level and reasons for school absenteeism.

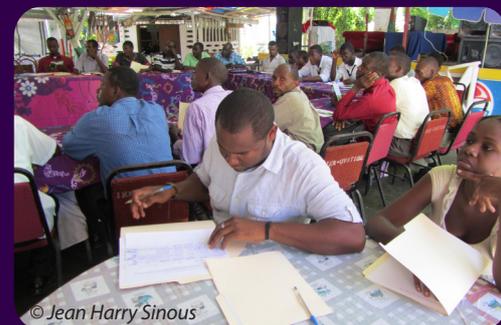
The objective of the UNEP/EU CBC



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Meeting of the focal points of the Environmental Training Network for Latin America and the Caribbean

The Regional meeting of the focal points of the Environmental Training Network for Latin America and the Caribbean was held on 18 April in San José, Costa Rica. The meeting had been convened by the UNEP Regional Office.

The purpose of the meeting, which was attended by 17 representatives of Ministries of the Environment of the region, was to draw up a work plan of the Environmental Training Network. This was one of the activities agreed on at the 2011 meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean. The Environmental Training Network coordinates, promotes and supports

environmental education activities in the region.

The meeting was held one day after the Regional Meeting Preparatory to the Global Conference on the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, organized by UNESCO and UNEP, allowing for a dialogue among the Ministries of Education and Environment in order to define the thematic priorities in the field of environmental education for sustainable development in the region.

Further information is available at: <http://www.pnuma.org/educamb/reuniones.php>

project, which receives UNEP assistance and European Union funding, is to conserve biodiversity and the ecosystems and alleviate poverty in the communities of the Caribbean Biological Corridor, which encompasses Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Haiti. The studies provide information on inhabitants' specific needs and help guide the concrete actions taken through the project.

Further information is available at: <http://cbcinfo.wordpress.com/>





Workshop in Havana on access to the region's genetic resources

The Cuban capital was the setting, from 18 to 22 March, of the Workshop of the Regional Project for Latin America and the Caribbean on Access to Genetic Resources, which focused on negotiating access and benefit-sharing (ABS) contracts. More than 60 representatives of several countries and from the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and guests from subregional agencies participated.

Since 2010, the Nagoya Protocol has served as an international legal

framework for implementing ABS agreements. Although the Protocol has not yet taken effect, the GEF LAC ABS project, implemented by UNEP and executed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and (IUCN), is helping eight countries of the region develop related legal frameworks so as to ensure that the rights and interests of the countries as suppliers and users of genetic resources are respected and the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples is protected.

Regional workshop for climate change negotiators in Ecuador

The regional workshop for climate change negotiators from the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Guayaquil, Ecuador, on 18-19 April, with the participation of 17 countries of the region. The workshop was organized by UNEP with the support of the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in order to facilitate regional dialogue on the topics of the global agenda on climate change.

The workshop offered an opportunity for the region to construct a common position ahead of the November meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP19). The participants determined that one of the major challenges of the region is to find financing for initiatives to tackle climate change.

Further information is available at:

<http://www.pnuma.org/informacion/comunicados/2013/20130419bis/index.php>

Youth environmental congress in the Dominican Republic



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The First National Congress on "Youth and the Environment" was held on 15 March at the Universidad Pedro Henríquez Ureña in the Dominican Republic. The event was organized by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, the Ministry of Youth of the Dominican Republic and the Catholic Church's Youth Ministry.

UNEP was also represented at the congress, which approved the Declaration of Santo Domingo, in which young Dominicans expressed their responsibility as protagonists in the "The future that we want". They demanded that institutions and government leaders commit to implementing concrete actions and policies that ensure a transition to a green, resource-efficient economy, with responsible production and consumption, with active involvement, and with truthful and timely information, in order to achieve sustainable development for current and future generations.

<http://www.medioambiente.gov.do/Noticias/Paginas/Ministro-de-Medio-Ambiente-encabeza-clausura-del-primer-Congreso-Nacional-de-Juventud-y-Medio-Ambiente.aspx>



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Margarita Astrálagua: “Healthy ecosystems are essential for adaptation to climate change”



From 23 to 25 April, the Regional workshop for sharing experiences analyzing vulnerability and adaptation to climate change in Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Panama. The meeting—organized by UNEP and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)—was carried out in connection with the Regional Gateway for Technology Transfer and Climate Change Action in Latin America and the Caribbean (REGATTA) project, which is being implemented by UNEP with the support of the Government of Spain.

The close to 50 participants—from

governments, institutions and civil society—gathered in Panama to share experiences, methodological approaches and results of analyses of vulnerability and adaptation to climate change. “Healthy ecosystems are essential for adaptation to climate change”, said Margarita Astrálagua, director and regional representative of UNEP, in a statement she delivered to open the event.

Further information is available at: <http://www.pnuma.org/informacion/comunicados/2013/20130424bis2/index.php>

Identification of adaptation measures based on ecosystems in Peru and Colombia

The project Microfinance for ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change (MEbA), being implemented by UNEP and the UNEP Frankfurt School Collaborating Centre in rural areas of Peru and Colombia, is conducting an initial identification of nearly 35 ecosystem-based adaptation measures.

Small loans can help many people pull themselves out of poverty by allowing them to finance initiatives and work projects. MEbA promotes creating new microcredit products to support rural populations that are vulnerable to the effects of climate change. It receives support from local associated entities, such as Fondesurco and Edyficar in Peru and Crezcamos, BancaMia and Contactar in Colombia.

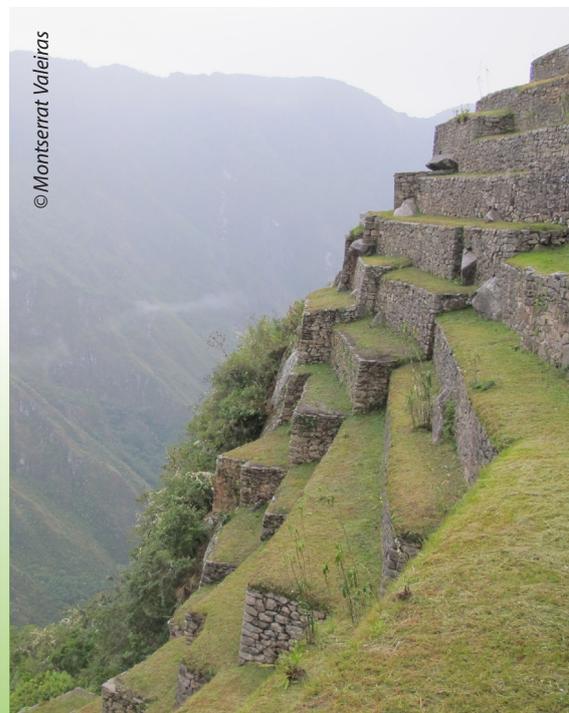
Its innovative approach allows the project to continue increasing its presence in the rural areas of both countries, opening a new chapter in adaptation management in our region.

Intersessional Meeting of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum of Latin America and the Caribbean

The Intersessional Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Quito, Ecuador, on 2-3 April, with the participation of representatives of 16 countries, four agencies of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee (UNEP, UNDP, ECLAC and the World Bank), the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization and the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific.

The participants discussed ways to strengthen the Forum in light of developments in the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the update of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative. Similarly, the outcome of Rio+20 was examined and the principal areas to be included in the post-2015 agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals were discussed, with an emphasis on the importance of promoting structural change in the economy as well as sustainable consumption and production patterns.

For more information, see: <http://www.pnuma.org/forodeministros/19-reunion%20intersesional/documentos.htm>



Learning to quantify carbon in mangrove swamps in Central America

The training course on quantifying carbon budgets in mangrove swamp forests was given in Honduras from 8 to 13 April. It was organized by the Mangrove Project of Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, and is being implemented by the ministries of the environment of the three countries and UNEP, with the support of the Government of Spain.

The purpose of the course, which was intended for foresters and coastal marine specialists from the academic, government and non-government sectors of the three countries, was to develop Central American capacities in quantifying carbon in mangrove ecosystems. It also addressed mitigating climate change and the impact of land-use changes. The course is a first step for carrying out a field-level quantification of the carbon stocks of the mangrove



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swamps and establishing future carbon credit arrangements. These arrangements offer much potential to generate financing for protected coastal areas, given that one hectare of mangrove can store between three and five times more carbon than can a hectare of tropical rainforest.

Mangrove Project closes with the designation of two new Ramsar sites in Honduras

The Mangrove Project—executed by UNEP with the Ministries of the Environment and Natural Resources of Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, and with financial support from the Government of Spain—is winding down its activities, which include the designation of two new Ramsar sites in Honduras: the Isla de Utila Wetlands System and the Cuyamel-Omoa Wetlands System.

The project team and other special guests, including representatives of the governments of the neighbouring countries and cooperation agencies, met on 12-13 April 2013, in La Ceiba, Honduras, to publicize the accomplishments, experiences and lessons learned, as well as the challenges encountered during implementation.

Further information is available at: <http://www.pnuma.org/manglares/>



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New steps of REDD+ in Panama

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From 3 to 5 April, the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD) in Panama held a workshop to analyse the progress in estimating the opportunity costs of implementation a REDD+ strategy in the country.

In addition to the national programme's technical staff, the meetings were attended by representatives of the Tropical Agricultural Research and Training Centre (CATIE), the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) and the World Conservation Monitoring Center (WCMC).

The participants gave a presentation on the progress of the different processes underway, and drafted a work plan for the upcoming months, with specific results for June 2013: estimation of the advance of deforestation over time (1992-2008); carbon baseline (2008-2028); and definition of parameters for estimating alternative development scenarios (2008-2028).

English Speaking Caribbean and Haiti Ozone Officers Regional Network Meeting

able to share experiences and lessons learnt. The meeting was attended by National Ozone Officers from English speaking Caribbean countries and Haiti. Also in attendance were representatives from the Ozone Secretariat in Nairobi, UNDP and national stakeholders.



Alternative technologies training for refrigeration and air conditioning technicians

From 18 to 20 March 2013, the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis hosted the English Speaking Caribbean and Haiti Ozone Officers Regional Network Meeting. The event was formally opened by Prime Minister and Minister of Sustainable Development Denzil L. Douglas.

Over two and a half days participants discussed issues of particular importance to the region, including: certification and licensing of refrigeration and air conditioning technicians; development of a University of the West Indies course on the Management Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS); classification of ODS, refrigerants and risk management; destruction of unwanted ODS; and implementation of HCFC Phase out Management Plans. Participants were

The National Training of Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Technicians on Alternative Technologies to Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) was held from 20 to 21 March 2013. The purpose of the training was to build capacity and skills among refrigeration and air conditioning technicians in St. Kitts and Nevis and the rest of the region on alternative refrigerants to ODS and handling those refrigerants. One of the technologies examined was hydrocarbons, which are not only ODS, but have low to no global warming potential and result in energy benefits. The safety aspects regarding hydrocarbons were stressed. The training was attended by 33 technicians from Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and host country St. Kitts and Nevis.

Central American workshop on electronic waste

A new regional agenda to turn waste into opportunities

From 19 to 21 March the Central American workshop for the environmentally responsible management of waste from electrical and electronic equipment (RAEE) was held in El Salvador. The workshop was organized by UNEP/Secretariat of the Basel Convention and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), with the support of various regional and national entities as well as the private sector.

Waste from electronic devices may contain up to 60 chemical elements. Unless properly managed, this waste can have a detrimental effect on the environment and human health. In addition, it represents a loss of potentially valuable and recyclable resources.

The close to 90 representatives of governments of Central America, private companies, universities and NGOs agreed on a 20-point agenda to move forward in managing electric and electronic waste in the region. The document stresses the need to identify and apply business models that will increase recycling activities as well as create new jobs. The agenda also calls for greater collaboration and urges international and regional agencies to provide support for drafting policies and regulations through training and technical-cooperation initiatives.

For more information: www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/climatechange/201303/Pages/default.aspx





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SiBBr : Biodiversity and ecosystem data integration in Brazil



The Brazilian Biodiversity Information System – SiBBr – launched an online survey on data on biodiversity and ecosystems held by more than 200 institutions in Brazil. The survey will also assess the informatics infrastructure of potential partners, including universities, research centres, private biological collections and other scientific bodies.

Supported by UNEP and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), SiBBr is a project of the Brazilian Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MCTI) that aims to integrate biodiversity and ecosystem data from diverse sources and make them available for research and policy formulation. The online platform will gather information from herbaria and biological, zoological and micro-organism collections, as well as from environmental and ecosystem databases.

The research consists of two questionnaires, one directed at collection curators and other at IT experts. The survey is available at the website www.sibbr.gov.br for those institutions interested in joining the system.

Commemoration of World Water Day in Mexico

Together with FAO and the National Water Commission (CONAGUA), UNEP organized a discussion panel entitled “Water, the current challenge”, to commemorate World Water Day on 22 March.

The challenges to integrated water resource management in Mexico were analyzed in terms of not only the investments required in infrastructure but also efficiency in the use of this resource, subsidies, collection schemes, upgrading irrigation technology,

ecosystem investments, water stress and food security, among other issues.

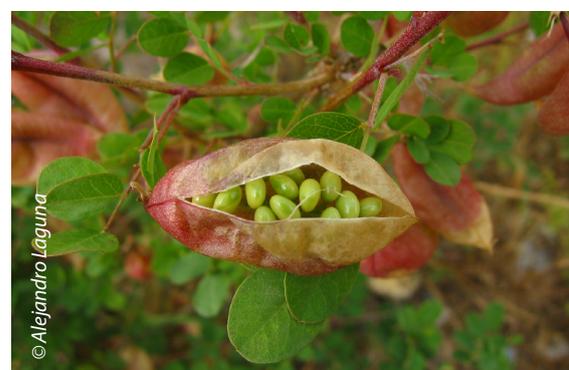
The UNEP representative in Mexico, Dolores Barrientos, gave a lecture on “Green Economy and Water”. There were also presentations on water in terms of food security, payment for environmental services and the challenges facing Mexico in this area. The event was attended by more than 120 public-and private-sector, academic, civil society and international agency participants.

Environmental sustainability and the green economy in the new United Nations-Mexico cooperation framework

On 13 March the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Mexico was signed for the 2014-2019 period.

One of the six areas of cooperation established in accordance with Mexico’s priorities is environmental sustainability and green economy. Mexico is one of the first countries to incorporate the green economy into its UNDAF process, which will have a strong influence on the 2013-2018 National Development Plan of the country’s new administration.

Within the United Nations System (UNS), UNEP was in charge of developing the area of environmental sustainability and green economy. UNEP coordinated two workshops and two public consultations, which were attended by approximately 200 participants, including members of the UNS and of the public, private and academic sectors and civil society, whose important contributions were incorporated into the UNDAF.



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1. Fourth Meeting of the Ministerial Policy Trinational Steering Committee of the Caribbean Biological Corridor Project and Fourth Meeting of its Technical Advisory Group. **Date:** Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group, 21-22 May, and Meeting of the Ministerial Policy Tri National Steering Committee, 23 May. **Venue for both meetings:** Santiago de Cuba.

2. Launch of the Spanish version of the GEO-5. **Date:** 30 May (TBC). **Venue:** Panama City, Panama.

3. Meeting of the Ozone Action Networks in Mexico, Central America, South America and the Spanish Speaking Caribbean. **Date:** 11-14 June. **Venue:** Bogota, Colombia.

4. Regional meeting of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns. **Date:** 24-25 de junio. **Venue:** Lima, Peru.

5. Training on the use of the eco-innovation guide. **Date:** 25-26 June. **Venue:** Lima, Peru.

6. Workshop on consumer information through eco-labelling. **Date:** 26 June. **Venue:** Lima, Peru.

7. UNIDO-UNEP Inaugural Meeting of the Regional Chapter of Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production Network (RECPnet) for Latin America and the Caribbean. **Date:** 25-26 June. **Venue:** Lima, Peru.

