

## MEbA: MICROFINANCE FOR ECOSYSTEM-BASED ADAPTATION

This project improves ecosystem resilience and livelihoods of small scale rural farmers in collaboration with the microfinance sector. The project integrates ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation in the practices of microfinance institutions, to reduce the vulnerability of small-scale agricultural producers to the effects of climate change.



## REGATTA: REGIONAL GATEWAY FOR TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER ON CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION

In order to jointly address climate change adaptation and mitigation challenges, countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have been joining forces with a growing number of regional and sub-regional networks. REGATTA adds value through a virtual platform, Communities of Practice and in-person South-South knowledge sharing activities. REGATTA also offers targeted support to countries through a broad range of technical assistance and financing advisory services.



## MANGROVE PROJECT

The aim of UNEP ROLAC's Mangrove Project is to reduce vulnerability to climate change through an ecosystem based approach and integrated coastal management along the Caribbean coast of **Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua**, with emphasis on the conservation and sustainable development of mangrove forests.

The project has assisted in harmonizing conflicting legislation on mangrove ecosystems, undertaking an economic valuation study of a coastal lagoon and exploring possible financial instruments to ensure the protected area's sustainability, among other activities.



# United Nations Environment Programme

Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean







## WHO WE ARE

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) came to life in 1972. It was established by the United Nations General Assembly, following the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (also known as the Stockholm Conference).

UNEP was created with the mission to provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.

The United Nations Environment Programme has its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, and has six regional offices and various country offices.



The Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC) is located in Panama City, Panama. It works closely with the 33 countries of the region - including 16 Small Island Developing States (SIDS), with a total population of about 588 million people. The office works to serve the needs of the region and its activities are integrated into the programme of work approved by the UNEP Governing Council.

As part of a strategic presence policy, UNEP has country offices in Brazil and Mexico. The Wider Caribbean Sea, one of UNEP's Regional Seas Programmes, has an office in Jamaica. More recently, a programme office was established in Haiti.

This approach aims not only at strengthening UNEP's outreach but also at addressing emerging issues in the environmental area.

From its headquarters in the City of Knowledge, beside the Panama Canal, the staff of the Regional Office reaches out to Governments and stakeholders, seeking alliances and building support for a more sustainable future for the environment and the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, a region full of natural and cultural wealth.



Montserrat Valeiras



Alejandro Laguna

### GREEN ECONOMY IN MEXICO

Through its office in Mexico, UNEP has carried out a thorough work of dissemination of and training on the Green Economy Initiative, with a series of partners. As a result of this effort, Mexico became the first emerging economy to launch a Green Economy Study with a comprehensive analysis of its eight major economic sectors, including green jobs.



Alejandro Laguna



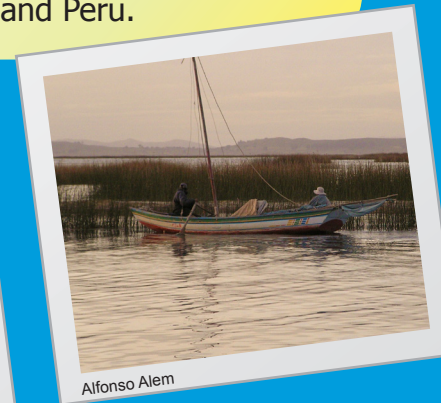
Montserrat Valeiras

### MDG FUND: JOINT PROGRAMMES

The Joint Programmes (JP) were implemented in Panama, Peru and Nicaragua, within the framework of the Environment and Climate Change Fund for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The agencies of the UN system worked closely with their national counterparts, civil society, local and traditional authorities. The JP helped mainstream climate change adaptation and mitigation in the Tabasará and Chucunaque river basins in Panama and in the High-Andean Micro Basin in Peru, and improved natural resources management in the Bosawas Biosphere, in Nicaragua. In 2011, the early warning and monitoring systems implemented by the JP prevented the loss of human lives during a major flood in the Chucunaque River (Panama).

### CATALYSING TRANSBOUNDARY COOPERATION: LAKE TITICACA

The uncontrolled dumping of sewage waste is causing widespread environmental damage in Lake Titicaca, the largest lake in South America and the highest commercially navigable lake in the world. UNEP has helped to assess and recover this critical lake straddling Bolivia and Peru, working with partners to improve the lake's water quality by identifying and rehabilitating water treatment facilities. This work has included running national training workshops and modernizing eleven local water quality laboratories in Bolivia and Peru.



Alfonso Alem



Proyecto Lifeweb

### LIFEWEB: PROTECTING THE PROTECTED AREAS

The Spain-UNEP Project in Support of the LifeWeb Initiative for "Effective Management of Mesoamerican Terrestrial Protected Areas" is implemented in the Volcán Barú National Park (Panama) and La Montaña Conservation Area (El Salvador). This project conducted a valuation of the biodiversity and the most relevant ecosystem services provided by both protected areas and estimated the costs of the loss or degradation of these ecosystems. These studies helped develop economic and legal mechanisms for the sustainability of the National Protected Areas.



# A GLIMPSE AT SOME OF OUR PROJECTS

## ENHANCING NATIONAL CAPACITY TO STRENGTHEN AND IMPLEMENT ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

UNEP has trained hundreds of government officers since 2004, through its Regional Training Programmes on Environmental Law and Policies, Environmental Governance of Coastal Marine Zones, Forest Management and Strategic Environmental Assessment. Other achievements include training judges and prosecutors and helping consolidate their networks, as well as providing technical assistance to PARLATINO.



## STRENGTHENING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACCESS TO GENETIC RESOURCES AND BENEFIT-SHARING REGIMES IN THE REGION

UNEP supports a number of countries in the region (Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Guyana, Panama and Peru) strengthen their capacities to develop, put in place and implement the provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) regarding access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization of those resources and of the associated traditional knowledge of indigenous and local communities.



## SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION IN BRAZIL

UNEP Brazil is involved in the "Sustainable Production and Consumption" project, whose aim is to foster a strong and continuous process of dissemination of actions aligned with the concept of sustainable consumption and production established by the Marrakech Process. Its priorities include increasing the recycling rate in Brazil, promoting education on sustainable consumption, strengthening the environmental agenda in public administrations and consolidating sustainable public procurement, sustainable consumption and green buildings.

## ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE OUTLOOKS IN MEXICAN CITIES

UNEP Mexico has consolidated its relationship with institutions at the sub-national level, signing six "Memoranda of Understanding" (MOUs) with state and municipal governments. The objective is to support them in strengthening their environmental agendas and structuring projects within UNEP's sub-programmes and initiatives. Thanks to this cooperation, four Environment and Climate Change Outlook (ECCO) reports were developed with Aguascalientes, Poza Rica, Tampico and Zihuatanejo.

# OUR REGION: LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

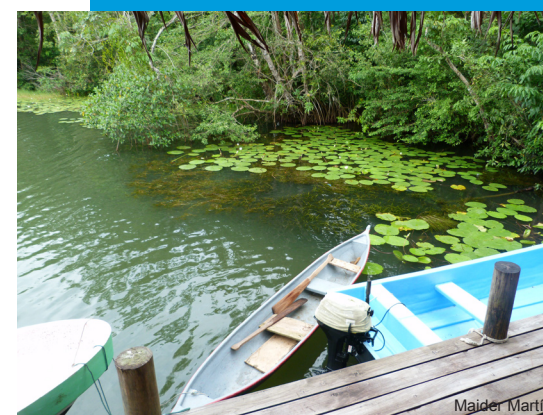
Mesoamerica, the Caribbean, the Andean Region and the Southern Cone make up a region – Latin America and the Caribbean - rich in diversity of environments, ecosystems, species and cultures, which includes 7 of the 17 megadiverse countries in the world. It is home to approximately 70 per cent of the world's species and holds 31 per cent of the world's freshwater resources. Furthermore, it contains 23 percent of the world's forests and 57 percent of the planet's primary forests.

One of the greatest challenges facing Latin America and the Caribbean is the sustainable management of its rich and socially,

At the national level, there has been progress in the development of environmental strategies, the creation of specialized agencies, the establishment of institutional and legal frameworks, and the ratification of international conventions. Progress is being made, for example, in stopping deforestation of the Amazon including monitoring alongside increasing coverage of protected areas.

There are also encouraging national experiences in generating green jobs: recycling in Brazil; organic agricultural production and energy-efficiency lighting in Mexico; small scale agriculture in, for example, Cuba; afforestation and reforestation, and payments for ecosystem services in Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica and Nicaragua.

However, the environment, and in particular those nature-based resources that cut across national boundaries, is yet to receive the priority it deserves as the world confronts



environmentally and economically-important natural resources.

The historical development model in Latin America and the Caribbean has been largely based upon the provision of food, raw materials and natural resources. This has generated economic growth but has undermined in many ways and in many places the social and environmental pillars of sustainable development.

multiple challenges, from poverty and climate change to food and natural resource scarcities.

Advancing towards a more prosperous and developed region is a task for all. Governments, civil society and NGOs at the national, local and international levels need to agree on a way forward to address the many environmental challenges facing Latin American and the Caribbean.





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UNEP ROLAC's mission is to serve the governments, organizations and peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, supporting them in addressing the undeferrable need to stop environmental degradation, and providing tools, information and good practices to improve environmental management at transboundary, national, regional and local levels. Its task is also to decisively apply UNEP's 40 years of knowledge and experience in order to continue supporting countries in generating the science and information on the environment and promoting its mainstreaming in the policy decision-making processes, including those related to national development. In line with "The Future We Want", adopted at Rio+20, UNEP will continue assisting the region in achieving sustainable development and poverty eradication. The promotion of Green Economy and the strengthening of Environmental Governance are at the core of UNEP's strategy.

ROLAC's work mirrors UNEP's six priority areas: **Climate Change, Disasters and Conflicts, Ecosystem Management, Environmental Governance, Harmful Substances and Resource Efficiency.**



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# OUR FOCUS AND AIMS

Due to its unparalleled convening power at the regional stage, ROLAC has a rich history of supporting countries in Latin America and the Caribbean meet their challenges through a comprehensive approach:

- **Sound science for decision-making:** ROLAC influences the regional environmental agenda by monitoring regional environmental trends and emerging issues, and bringing these scientific findings to policy forums. As UNEP is a science-based organization, ROLAC provides environmental data and information that is critical to crafting effective policy solutions.

- **Mainstreaming Environmental Sustainability:** ROLAC works with UN country teams as well as national governments, helping national and regional institutions place environmental sustainability at the heart of their development policies. UNEP's Regional Office also walks hand-in-hand with sub-national and local institutions and stakeholders on the path to sustainability.

- **Policy Setting and Assistance:** Due to UNEP's unique expertise in environmental policy and law, ROLAC assists parliaments, governments, and the judiciary of the LAC countries to further advance in the development and implementation of environmental law and institutions, thus

providing a sound basis for environmental governance.

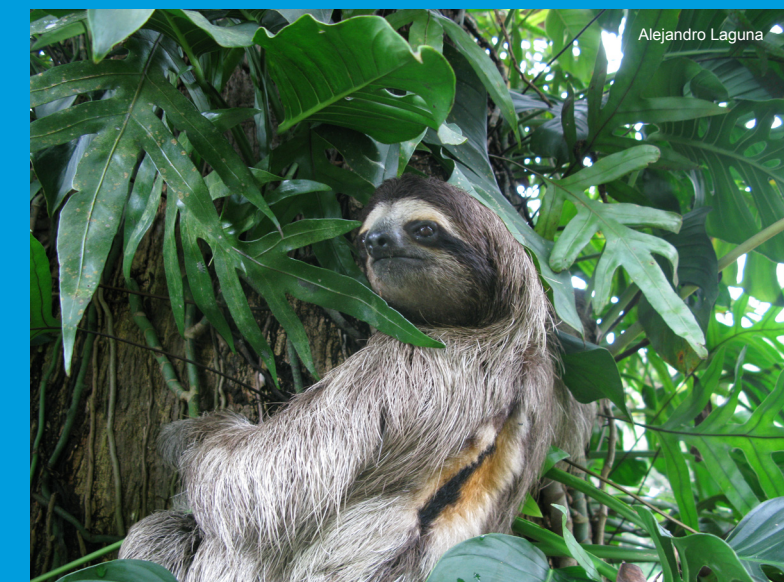
- **Capacity Building and Training:** ROLAC has excelled in the design and delivery of customized training programmes on key issues, such as environmental strategic assessment, environmental legislative drafting, methodologies for national studies on the economics of ecosystems and biodiversity, sustainable forest management, implementation of multilateral environmental agreements, Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation, Ozone Action and Integrated Water and Coastal Area Management, among others.

- **Stakeholder engagement and participation:** To enhance the quality and impact of this work, ROLAC actively engages in strategic partnerships with national governments, and relevant major groups and stakeholders, ranging from NGOs to businesses and civil society. ROLAC helps national governments use these partnerships to harness a participatory, results-oriented approach to addressing their environmental challenges.

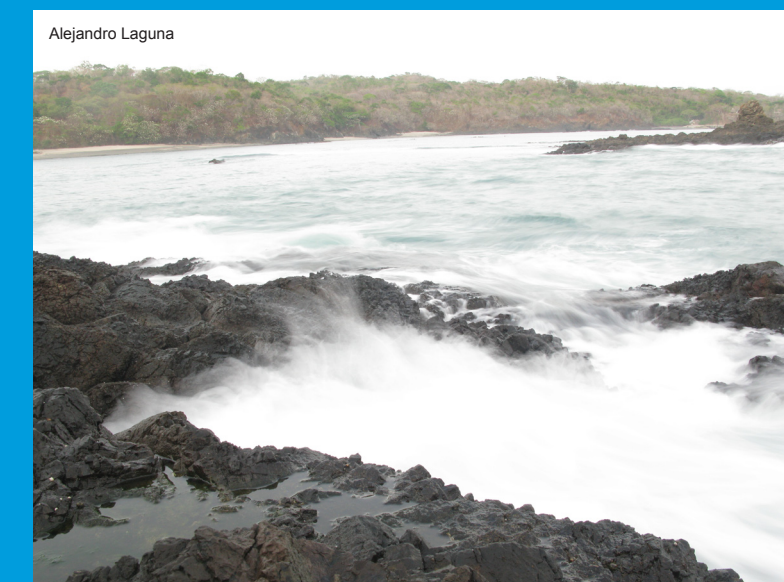
- **Communication:** Through targeted communications, UNEP contributes to increase awareness and understanding of decision makers and society as a whole on the importance of protecting the environment

to achieve development goals, and the need to address drivers of ecosystem degradation and loss of development potential.

- **South-South Cooperation:** South-South Cooperation is an essential crosscutting mechanism designed to enhance UNEP's ability to deliver environmental capacity building and technology-support activities among countries in the region.



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