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FOREWORD

Meaningful partnerships are the foundation for success in environmental progress. Since its inception, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) has fostered partnerships with the public, private and nonprofit sector to increase its impact in the developing world. Over time, we have found that one of the most robust alliances that can be achieved is with civil society and community based organizations (CSOs and CBOs) whose expertise in the field helps us to communicate more effectively with the communities and people we serve.

When it comes to biodiversity, CSOs and CBOs stimulate local action that makes a visible impact on global biodiversity. Through this manifold of small partnerships a global constituency to save biodiversity is engaged. Partnering with CSOs therefore is a critical step in funding any GEF project.

To date about 13 percent of our projects have been granted directly to CSOs translating into catalytic benefits, both globally and locally. Through the Small Grants Programme (SGP) we have supported over 12,000 projects in 122 participating countries since the inception of the programme. Thus, the GEF, together with its partners, has made a significant and visible difference to the environment and the quality of life of thousands of local communities while at the same time achieving global benefits and supporting the implementation of international agreements.

This publication is a part of that process. The region of Latin America and the Caribbean is pivotal for building the SGP's model of success. Six of the countries included in this catalog were the first to develop SGP projects. They began as pilot projects to expand on the notion that biodiversity conservation and human development are mutually attainable. Today, biodiversity conservation connected to sustainable livelihood is a working model for SGP projects around the world.

The biodiversity products featured here showcase our successes. Furthermore, they are a celebration of biodiversity. The multitude of productive landscapes, the abundance of ecosystems, the diversity of cultural expressions and the economic opportunities created are all part of biodiversity.

We encourage GEF stakeholders from all sectors, public, private and nonprofit, to read these pages and offer guidance to ensure the GEF stays on the right path. It is through the guidance and collaboration of many partners and constituencies that we will save biodiversity both locally and globally.



Monique Barbut
CEO and Chairperson
Global Environment Facility

PREFACE

Launched in 1992, SGP has implemented more than 12,500 projects at the community level to protect the global environment. This publication captures the experiences and results of the SGP's Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) portfolio of over 2,700 projects in the biodiversity focal area. Since its inception, the biodiversity focus of the SGP has stressed sustainable development through improved livelihoods. The sustainable use of biodiversity-based products and commodities are one example of UNDP's commitment to meeting communities' development needs whilst also guaranteeing the conservation goals for global biodiversity protection.

Biodiversity loss resulting from climate change, over exploitation, invasive species and habitat destruction is a major challenge for poverty reduction. Communities' reliance on biodiversity for income, as well as for basic needs like food, shelter, clean water and clothing, is often understated. One of the foundations for sustainable development is acknowledging biodiversity's value for communities. Improving the livelihoods for the poor requires a dual approach: firstly documenting the crucial sustaining services provided by biodiversity, and secondly in making an economic case for investing in these vital services.

This catalog publication documents the biodiversity vital to LAC communities for sustainable development. It is a step towards educating the public, private and civil society sectors about the realities on the ground for LAC communities. Most exciting is the vision to form alliances and partnerships with funders, retailers, researchers, governments, non-governmental organizations and small producer organizations to further improve LAC communities' livelihoods. Investing time, money and expertise, through these collaborations, will accelerate the path towards healthy, prosperous, sustainable communities throughout the region.

Each profile featured here documents what the local biodiversity product is and how it is sustainably produced - many of which are not well-known as globally traded commodities. The high quality photography of each product is a tremendous achievement and the first of its kind for a SGP regional publication. The catalog design itself was developed for the ease of reading and accessibility for multiple audiences. It can be read from front to back or by product categories depending on your interests. The wealth of information included is educational and provides a solid foundation to build deeper relationships across all sectors.

Steps are also already underway to make the profiles available on-line through an emerging partnership with key capacity-building organizations supporting the strengthening of supply chains of local producer organizations. UNDP hopes that this catalog marks the beginning of stronger partnerships for recognizing the role that biodiversity-based products and commodities play as a means for poverty reduction and sustainable development. The communities we serve and the biodiversity we all cherish are clear reasons for UNDP to renew its commitment to demonstrating the undeniable linkage between the sustainable use of biodiversity, community empowerment and poverty reduction.



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WORKING WITH BIODIVERSITY TO SAVE IT

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THE VALUE OF BIODIVERSITY

2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity. The United Nations is fostering collaboration across its many agencies to work with non-governmental organizations, the private sector and people everywhere to act to protect our biodiversity. Biodiversity is the natural wealth that exists in life on Earth. We rely on it to sustain us economically and for the health of the planet. It provides us food, fuel, medicine, and a cultural and spiritual connection to nature.

Habitat loss, over-exploitation, climate change, invasive species and pollution



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