



UNEP in Latin America and the Caribbean

NEWSLETTER

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Panama hosts the major groups and Tunza regional meetings

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Civil society of the region meets to discuss priority environmental issues

The UNEP [Regional Consultation Meeting of Major Groups and Stakeholders for Latin America and the Caribbean](#) was held from 18 to 19 November in Panama City.

Twenty-two representatives of the nine major groups, from various countries of the region, met to discuss, *inter alia*, the implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, the Sustainable Development Goals, the 10-Year Framework on Sustainable Consumption and Production and the strengthening of the participation of civil society organizations by adopting a new policy to encourage their involvement.

The conclusions of this regional meeting will help enrich discussions at the first Meeting of the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP and the 15th Session of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum.



Tunza youth representatives renew their commitment to conserving the environment

The Tunza [Regional Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean](#) was held in Panama City from 20 to 21 November.

The UNEP Tunza initiative aims to promote a global movement with the participation of adolescents and children from around the world in order to raise awareness on and influence policymaking in favour of the environment.

This meeting, which brought together twenty young representatives of environmental organizations in various countries of the region, sought to reinforce the youth network, review the Tunza strategy and regional action plan, increase youth support for the UNEP mission and facilitate dialogue and discussion on priority environmental issues.

The participants consolidated a declaration with key messages on the environmental issues that concern them.

First Latin American Forum on Sustainability and Environment in Higher Education

UNEP, the Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES), the Partnership of Ibero-American University Networks on Sustainability and Environment (ARIUSA) and the University of Valparaíso held the First Latin American Forum on Sustainability and Environment in Higher Education, in Viña del Mar, Chile, from 9 to 11 December.

The participants included representatives of forty-five universities, nineteen university environmental networks, three United Nations agencies and two university partnerships that work in the region. Altogether, 170 persons from 14 countries attended.

The forum sought to promote and disseminate the systematization of the environmental sustainability best practices of university networks and strengthen the links between national university networks and the ministries of the environment and education, through the focal points of the Environmental Training Network for Latin America and the Caribbean and UNESCO.



First workshop of REGATTA communities of practice

The first REGATTA communities of practice (CoPs) workshop was held on 7 and 8 November (www.pnuma.org/regatta). The moderators of the climate change mitigation and adaptation CoPs presented their implementation strategies and put forth proposals for the sustainability of the communities. In addition, the International Center for Tropical Agriculture, the City of Knowledge Foundation of Panama, UNEP and the IDB shared good knowledge management practices in the region.

The most recent REGATTA virtual seminars were as follows:

- ✓ **Andes CoP:** "Vulnerability and adaptation in Andean dryland rural communities" – 6 November
- ✓ **Agriculture CoP:** "Tools and systems applied in the region's agricultural sector" – 12 November
- ✓ **Andes CoP:** "Impacts of climate change on water resources in the Andes" – 19 November
- ✓ **Mesoamerica CoP:** "Agriculture insurance" – 20 November
- ✓ **Southern Cone and Gran Chaco CoP:** "Local experiences in water harvesting" – 26 November
- ✓ **Mesoamerica CoP:** "Genetic resources and their importance for adapting agriculture to climate change" – 12 December

Workshop analyses financing opportunities for climate change adaptation in Latin America

A workshop titled "Adaptation Measures and Projects in Latin America: Exploring Financing Opportunities" was held in Lima, Peru, from 23 to 25 October. This joint activity of the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF) and UNEP was attended by delegates from Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. Most of the delegations were composed of representatives of the ministries of the environment, planning and economy/finance. The objective of the workshop was to facilitate the integration of adaptation processes into the highest level of development planning agendas.

The countries learned of financing opportunities for adaptation available

from the leading cooperation agencies: CAF, the Inter-American Development Bank, the French Development Agency and the Regional Fund for Agricultural Technology (FONTAGRO). In addition, the financial institutions had an opportunity to obtain up-to-date information on the countries' adaptation priorities, agendas and needs.

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Central American ministers approve efficient lighting strategy



All of the energy ministers of Central America approved an efficient lighting strategy for the region on 6 December. The strategy includes phasing out inefficient incandescent lamps in the region by the end of 2016.

Under the strategy, technical regulations will be drawn up based on an integrated policy approach, which entails implementing minimum energy efficiency standards and activities to promote environmentally sound management, such as collection and recycling. In addition, a maximum mercury content limit for lamps will be established.

The project is being coordinated through the UNEP en.lighten initiative and the Mesoamerica Project in cooperation with the Regional Gateway for Technology Transfer and Climate Change Action in Latin America and the Caribbean (REGATTA), also of UNEP.

Further information

United Nations Industrial Development Organization reaffirms its commitment to inclusive and sustainable industrial development



The 15th General Conference of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), held on 2 December in the Peruvian capital, adopted the Declaration of Lima, setting the organization's priorities for the coming years with an emphasis on inclusive and sustainable industrial development.

The Regional Director of UNEP, Margarita Astrálaga, attended the conference and joined the Secretary-General during a visit to a project that is fighting the effects of climate change in Lima's district of El Agustino. Ban Ki-moon planted a tree of the tara (*Caesalpinia spinosa*) species as a gesture of support for the project, which plans to reforest 17,800 square meters of land.



In his opening address at the Conference, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, stressed that industry and the private sector in general will play an important role in efforts over the next two years to steer "the human family on a safer, more prosperous and sustainable path."

Integrated solid waste management project in Honduras presents its results

On 7 and 8 November, a workshop for the national and regional presentation of the results of the integrated solid waste management project in pilot municipalities of Honduras was held in San Pedro Sula, Honduras. The project has been driven by the International Environmental Technology Centre of UNEP, through the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, and executed by the National Cleaner Production Centre of Honduras in partnership with environmental authorities at the national (SERNA) and municipal (AMHON) levels in the country.

The Integrated Waste Management Plans (IWMPs) developed for the four pilot municipalities were presented at the workshop, and experiences were shared with local stakeholders and representatives from other Central American countries and the Dominican Republic. In addition, practical guides for formulating IWMPs and for characterizing and segregating waste were prepared. The guides will be available at www.unep.org/ietc.

Andean countries cooperate to prevent mercury use in artisanal gold mining

From 20 to 22 September, the first Andean Forum on Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining (ASGM) took place in Medellín, Colombia. The event was organised by UNEP in conjunction with UNIDO and the Natural Resources Defense Council, in the framework of the Global Mercury Partnership. Support was received from the Ministry of the Environment of Colombia, the municipal government of Antioquia and the governments of the United States, Norway and Spain.

Participants included sixty representatives from Andean countries (in which mercury use and pollution in the sector is high), experts from international agencies, NGOs and academia as well as mining leaders.

The main challenges in and opportunities for the sector in light of the new Minamata Convention were discussed. The countries shared experiences on policies to reduce the use of mercury, incorporate small-scale producers into the formal mining sector and develop inventories.



UNEP launches the Mexican Carbon Platform on Mexico's Stock Exchange



Mexico's Carbon Platform, "MEXICO₂", was launched on 26 November. This financial mechanism, designed by UNEP and supported by the Mexican Stock Exchange, the Embassy of the United Kingdom and Mexico's Secretariat of the Environment and Natural Resources, is in keeping with the Mexican government's policies to address climate change.

MEXICO₂ allows for the trading of carbon bonds for various markets and the financing of social and environmental responsibility projects. In addition, the new platform will allow companies to purchase carbon bonds to offset the carbon tax set to take effect in 2014.

Environmental sustainability and the green economy at UNDAF-Mexico

"Environmental sustainability and the green economy" is one of the areas included in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) which the United Nations established with the Government of Mexico in March 2013 (UNDAF 2014 -2019). UNEP held a workshop to identify inter-agency projects in this area of cooperation on 28 November. Eleven United Nations agencies and programmes participated, along with some 140 representatives of the public and private sector, academia, civil society and the media.



Environmental and climate change studies in Mexico



On 11 November, the Environment and Climate Change Outlook (ECCO) report for the Mexican city of Aguascalientes was presented. This ground-breaking socioenvironmental assessment of this city was the result of a two-year participatory process. More than 50 public and private sector, academic and civil society institutions and agencies were involved, while technical support was received from UNEP.

The report proposes a socioenvironmental action plan with ten strategic guidelines to influence environmental problem solving in this city of nearly one million that is home to much of the country's automotive industry.

In addition, UNEP, in cooperation with UN Habitat, held the Watersheds of Valle de Bravo ECCO Workshop on 19 and 20 November. This initiated the process of carrying out a study of this area, which is expected to conclude in 2014.

In late December, the GEO Health Poza Rica Study will be presented. The city of Poza Rica faces important environmental and health challenges resulting from the impacts of the gas and oil industry, vehicle emissions and river pollution.

Itinerant Film Festival: Another year promoting environmental conservation in Mexico through cinema

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This year's Itinerant Film Festival "FICMA: Cinema and environment" has captivated spectators in more than fifteen Mexican states. The initiative, organized by the International Environmental Film Festival (FICMA) and UNEP, began its tour of Mexico at the

National Cinemateque, the country's leading cinema venue. Over the final two months of 2013, six documentaries and four short films were shown in Monterrey, Guadalajara, Querétaro, Veracruz, Cancún, Mérida, Villahermosa, Zacatecas, Aguascalientes, Cuernavaca, Pachuca, Chetumal, Tulum and Playa del Carmen, among other locations.

For the UNEP Mexico office, the film festival has been the main tool for environmental education and for cooperation with local governments and civil society organisations throughout the country.

UNEP, the CONANP and Wetlands International launch the TEEB water and wetlands study in Mexico

The regional launch of the publication "The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity for Water and Wetlands" took place on 19 December at the common offices of the United Nations in Mexico.

Dolores Barrientos, UNEP representative in Mexico, delivered a presentation on the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) initiative. The head of the National Commission on Protected Natural Areas (CONANP), Luis Fueyo Mac

Donald, stressed the strategic vision of the water cycle and the high degree to which it depends on wetlands. Julio Montes de Oca, a development officer for the Wetlands International programme and one of the authors of the study, stressed the value of wetlands and the potential synergies from public policies relative to these areas. The event was attended by some one hundred experts from the public sector, academia and civil society and heads of Ramsar sites in Mexico.

Regional meeting on environmental indicators held in Panama City



On 13-15 November 2013, UNEP, through its Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, convened a meeting of officials responsible for environmental information and statistics from 22 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. These countries participate in the Working Group on Indicators of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC), adopted in 2002. Among other things, the meeting reviewed possible regional indicators for sustainable consumption and production (SCP), national and regional initiatives on environment and geographic information, the UNEP Live platform, and next steps for regional cooperation among Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS).



Workshop in Panama on ecosystem service valuation as a tool for conservation



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Protected-area ecosystems contribute numerous services, with benefits that reach beyond their specific territories. They provide food, water, medicine, protection from natural disasters, tourism opportunities, etc.

However, the conservation of many protected areas of Mesoamerica faces a series of challenges (including agriculture, livestock, hunting, fishing and population growth).

To find economic and financial

solutions to these challenges, twenty representatives of the ministries of finance, planning and environment and natural resources from nine countries between Colombia and Mexico, in addition to the Dominican Republic, met in Panama in early December.

The workshop, organised by UNEP under the LifeWeb project, with financing from the Government of Spain, focused on ecosystem service valuation as a tool to find mechanisms for ecosystem conservation.

Ecuador begins a TEEB national study with a UNEP exploratory mission



© Ministerio del Ambiente, Ecuador

On 4 and 5 December, UNEP carried out an exploratory mission on conducting the "Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity" (TEEB) study in Ecuador. The mission gathered information on the country's progress on environmental issues, in order to delimit the scope, approach and challenges of a national TEEB study. More than 15 bilateral meetings with national authorities, stakeholders and partners took place.

Ecuador is one of the five pilot countries for TEEB national studies in the framework of the "Reflecting the Value of Ecosystems and Biodiversity in Policymaking" project financed by the European Community. The study will be led by the Ministry of the Environment, under the guidance of Deputy Minister Mónica Hidalgo, and will receive

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