

**SUMMARY OF THE UNDP - REGIONAL
BUREAU FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE
CARIBBEAN BIODIVERSITY INITIATIVE
CENTRAL AMERICAN CONSULTATION:
BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEMS: WHY THESE ARE
IMPORTANT FOR SUSTAINED GROWTH AND EQUITY
IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:
3-4 DECEMBER 2009**

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) held a consultation for Central America in Guatemala City, Guatemala on Thursday, 3 December and Friday, 4 December as part of a regional initiative entitled "Biodiversity and Ecosystems: Why these are Important for Sustained Growth and Equity in Latin America and the Caribbean" (the Initiative) to prepare a report on the role of biodiversity in wealth generation and support of wellbeing in the region. The first consultation was held in Mexico City from 13-14 August, the second in Lima, Peru from 24-25 September, the third in Caracas, Venezuela from 4-5 November, the fourth in Quito, Ecuador from 24-25 November, and the fifth in Bogota, Colombia from 30 November – 1 December. Others are scheduled for Brasilia, Brazil and Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago (for the Caribbean), in January 2010. Each seeks the inputs of national experts and stakeholders.

The Central American consultation included participants from Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama representing: government entities; regional organizations; conservation groups; the academic and indigenous communities; a bioproduct producer and a private sector ecotourism project. On Thursday, participants heard morning plenary presentations on the Initiative and the regional report, and in the afternoon they broke out into four working groups to discuss emblematic policies in Central American nations, identify key sectors for promoting investment in biodiversity and ecosystem services and any existing barriers to such investments. Deliberations resumed on Friday with participants convening in working groups to first discuss insights from case studies from Paraguay and Indonesia, and then to recommend inputs to the regional report on principal arguments to use, ways to convince decision-makers and dissemination strategies. In the final plenary participants recommended key messages and ways to enrich the regional Initiative.



View of Lake Atitlán

BRIEF HISTORY

The 2008-2011 UNDP Regional Programme for LAC has identified the Initiative as one of its regional strategic areas. Organized in partnership with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Initiative aims to convince policy- and decision-makers in the region to invest in and maintain biodiversity and ecosystem services.

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The Initiative's primary product will be a report examining a number of issues including: financial and economic benefits and costs to countries from sustainable ecosystem management; the contribution of biodiversity and ecosystems to sectoral production and outputs; their economic value; and the role of biodiversity and ecosystem services in promoting growth and equity. The report's production is supervised and guided by a Commission for Biodiversity, Ecosystems, Finance and Development composed of the region's political leaders, economists, businessmen and civil society representatives. The report's quality control will be overseen by a technical advisory committee of regional, finance and economic experts, while much of the report's actual preparation will be done by a central technical committee composed primarily of environmental economists. With a view to reflecting the diverse experiences and views of LAC nations, a series of consultations across the region was initiated in August 2009 to seek direct input from representatives of governments, civil society, indigenous communities, academia and the private sector. Participants in each consultation hold discussions on four themes: contributions of biodiversity and ecosystem services to LAC's development and equity; paradigmatic cases of biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services in the country/region concerned and their impact on development and equity; strategic areas and mechanisms to promote investment in biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services; and inputs to the regional report. The outputs of these meetings will be incorporated into the report.

The final report is intended not only to contribute to national policies, but also to global and regional key policy events that will be held in 2010, including the: tenth Conference of the Parties to CBD; the International Year of Biodiversity; Latin American, Ibero-American and European Union/Latin America and Caribbean summits; and post-Kyoto negotiations. The Initiative also will contribute to a global study being undertaken on Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity sponsored by the European Commission and the German Ministry of Environment.

MEXICO CONSULTATION: This consultation took place in Mexico City, Mexico on 13-14 August and was attended by representatives of government entities, conservation groups, indigenous communities, the academic community and the state hydrocarbons firm, Pemex. Key outputs were identification of many Mexican projects and programmes involving compensation for ecosystem services, and the lessons learned and key trouble issues identified, such as property rights and difficulties in arriving at decisions involving communal land. (For IISD RS coverage see: <http://www.iisd.ca/larc/pdf/larc0101e.pdf>)

PERU CONSULTATION: This consultation took place in Lima, Peru on 24-25 September and was attended by representatives of: government entities; conservation groups; the academic community; organizations representing Peru's regions; indigenous communities; and associations and companies in the forestry, finance, hydrocarbon, fishery and ecological product sectors. The opening plenary was addressed by Peru's Environment Minister, Antonio Brack Egg. Participants highlighted some unique cases and identified strategic areas as mining, hydrocarbons, agriculture, and water. They also identified key issues they felt the regional

report should address, including biofuels, trade barriers, lack of R&D in biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services, CO₂ capture, and the relationship of patents with traditional knowledge. (For IISD RS coverage see: <http://www.iisd.ca/larc/pdf/larc0102e.pdf>)

VENEZUELA CONSULTATION: This consultation took place in Caracas, Venezuela on 4-5 November and was attended by representatives of: government entities; conservation groups; the academic and scientific communities; and associations and companies representing the hydroelectric, hydrocarbons and fisheries sectors. Participants discussed several case studies and identified energy, tourism, forestry, protected areas, health, sustainable agriculture, fisheries, water and mining as strategic areas. They suggested the payment for environmental services concept would have to be modified before it would be accepted in Venezuela, and expressed preoccupation with ecosystems shared across national boundaries. (For IISD RS coverage see: <http://www.iisd.ca/larc/pdf/larc0103e.pdf>)

ECUADOR CONSULTATION: This consultation took place in Quito, Ecuador on 24-25 November and was attended by representatives of: government and international entities; environment and conservation groups; the academic community; and representatives from the Amazonian and highland regions of Ecuador. Participants discussed several case studies and identified the strategic sectors as agriculture, tourism, forestry, water, coastal and marine resources, and biocommerce/biotechnology. They also stressed spiritual values, ancestral knowledge and the need for a communications strategy that links biodiversity, daily life and culture.

COLOMBIA CONSULTATION: This consultation took place in Bogota, Colombia on 30 November – 1 December and was attended by representatives of: government entities; conservation groups; the academic and scientific communities; and a business association. Participants discussed several case studies and identified the strategic sectors as mining/energy, agriculture, tourism, fisheries, forestry and biocommerce. They emphasized that while Colombia has much of the environmental institutional structure and policy instruments needed to do more on biodiversity, it must give it higher priority, coordinate and integrate it with other policy areas, and stress a commercial-economic vision for sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems. (For IISD RS coverage see: <http://www.iisd.ca/larc/pdf/larc0104e.pdf>)

REPORT OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN CONSULTATION

OPENING PLENARY

Facilitated by Claudia Martinez, E3 Consulting (Colombia), the consultation opened on Monday, 30 November. Chisa Mikami, Adjunct Director, UN Development Programme (UNDP) Guatemala, noting that 2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity, said all relevant actors need to be made aware of their role *vis-à-vis* biodiversity.

Alex Pires, Programme Officer, UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), said that as environmental and economic issues converge biodiversity should play an important role as LAC has eight of the world's mega-biodiverse countries, the most species, and half of the world's tropical forests. He

explained the connection of the UNDP Regional Programme for LAC regional initiative on biodiversity and ecosystem services (the Initiative) with a global project, *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity* (TEEB).

Claudia Santizo, Executive Secretary, National Council on Protected Areas (CONAP), said since LAC plays such a large role in the world's biodiversity, it has to take the lead on the issue. She explained Guatemala's biodiversity strategies include conservation of its rich cultural diversity. She said pressure from citizens and local governments is needed to get all government institutions supportive of Guatemala's draft biodiversity policy. She expressed the hope that this regional Initiative would convince LAC's leaders of the economic importance of conserving biodiversity.

Marco Vinicio Cerezo, Advisor, Finance Ministry, Guatemala, said that capitalizing on the economic contribution of biodiversity requires building alliances with non-environmental actors, particularly communities, municipalities and the productive sector, and changing attitudes, thinking and approaches to the issue. He cautioned that at a time when governments are undergoing budget cuts, actors cannot come to governments demanding more public funding for biodiversity projects. He urged thinking instead of interesting ways to generate financial support, for example through: pollution taxes; a green sticker programme; a carbon tax on gasoline with a portion allocated for protected areas (PAs); royalties from various sectors; an ecotax on water use; a VAT on products that generate waste (such as plastic containers); an increase in the tourist departure tax; port taxes devoted to protecting coastal ecosystems; and differentiated land taxes.

FIRST SESSION: CONTRIBUTIONS OF BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES TO LAC'S DEVELOPMENT AND EQUITY

Maria José Baptista, Project Manager, UNDP Regional Bureau for LAC, explained the Initiative's origin, organization and principal objectives. She emphasized that as many of the region's recent emblematic cases are not documented or widely-known, the consultations are essential for gathering such information.

Oscar Hernández Vela, UNDP Consultant, discussed the report's three main messages: sustainable ecosystem management (MES) is important for economic growth; MES particularly benefits the poor who have the most to lose by following Business As Usual (BAU); and moving from "conventional use" of biodiversity to MES is economically viable. He explained the report will look at the contribution

of biodiversity and ecosystem services to the focus sectors of agriculture, forest management, fisheries, PAs and tourism to economic growth and social equity, and also will examine cross-cutting issues such as water, energy, health and climate change.

Presenting the national context for Costa Rica, UNDP Consultant Jaime Echeverría said too often biodiversity advocates focus arguments on protecting birds and animals, but in order to catch a minister's attention, they should instead talk of generating taxes, exports, and other economic benefits. He outlined the Eco-markets Project, which seeks to augment forest conservation and recuperate forest cover via developing markets for environmental services provided by forests. He related how an estimate showing that Costa Rica's national parks and biological reserves generated \$834.6 million in 2002 in services to tourism, electricity generation and others convinced the Treasury Minister to sign an international loan to improve three national parks. He explained the flow of financial resources for the National Fund for Forestry Financing (FONAFIO), which includes a fuel tax, the Eco-Markets Project, the German Development Bank (KfW) Project, company agreements, and sales of environmental service certificates. He also discussed: payments by hydroelectric generator Energía Global for water services; the adjustable environmental canon on water use; and the bioprospecting agreement between the National Biodiversity Institute (INBio) and pharmaceutical companies.

Discussing the Guatemala national context, Hernández said the case of marine turtles demonstrates the difference between BAU and MES, explaining that before Guatemala fostered turtle nurseries the only economic gain was selling the eggs, while after sustainable use was introduced the eggs are sold, tourists pay about US\$100,000/yr to see the turtles, employment is generated and the turtle population is growing. He said ecotourism may represent US\$319 million to Guatemala, more if it is fostered better. He discussed how forest concession and certification programs in Petén have helped increase forest cover, control fires and strengthened local organization, as well as the potential for sustainable harvesting of non-wood products in such concessions (currently around US\$11.49 million).

Margarita Salazar, Representative, Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD), outlined the Regional Strategic Programme for the Monitoring and Evaluation of Biodiversity (PROMEBIO) and current development of regional biodiversity indicators, databases and inventories. She described the vision for the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor, which seeks to sensitize decision-makers, communities and the public about the importance of PAs as instruments for socio-economic development in Central America.

SECOND SESSION: PARADIGMATIC CASES OF BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND THEIR IMPACT ON DEVELOPMENT AND EQUITY

During Thursday afternoon's first session, participants divided into four working groups to identify which Central American experiences and policies can be considered emblematic and should be mentioned in the regional report. Working group rapporteurs then reported the conclusions to plenary.



Maria José Baptista, Project Manager, UNDP LAC, explained the origins and objectives of the Regional Initiative

The groups identified the following emblematic Guatemalan cases: the National Strategy for the Management and Conservation of Natural Resources in Communal Lands; the private Corazón de Bosque ecological park in Santa Lucia; the La Guadalupeana Agricultural Association and Crafts for Development (AAADG); the Totonicapán Forests; the network of communities protecting the Chyal “birthplace of waters” in Tactic; the community management of environmental services in El Palín; United for Water community management in San Pablo; alternative craft production in Livingston, Izabal; payment for water services in the Cerro San Gil National Park; the Water Fund in the Motagua-Polochic system; the Lachua Project to create productive clusters; payment for environmental services (PES) in the National Policy on Marine Coasts; PES involving the Sipacapa River; the Forestry Incentives Program (PINFOR); and the efforts of Agua de Izabal and the Foundation for Eco-development and Conservation (Fundaeo) in Las Escobas Basin in Cerro San Gil.

The working groups identified the following cases in Costa Rica as emblematic: the turtle conservation project in Ostional; the Association for the Integral Development of BriBri Territory (AITIBRI) in Teamanca; the land titling programme in the Cordillera Central mountain range; the Friendship Producers Association (ASOPROLA); and tourism involving the Quetzal in Monteverde. Other cases in the region identified as emblematic included: the debt-nature swaps in Costa Rica and Guatemala; the Laguna El Jocotal duck project (El Salvador); the tri-national (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras) Plan Trifino to protect the shared Upper Lempa Basin; the Audubon sanctuary to protect tree wildlife (Belize); the micro-hydroelectric projects in the Atlantic Zone rural communities (Honduras); the Panama Atlantic Mesoamerican Biological Corridor (CBMAP) project supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF); and the Network of Private Wildlife Reserves (Nicaragua).

THIRD SESSION: STRATEGIC AREAS AND MECHANISMS TO PROMOTE INVESTMENT IN BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

During Thursday afternoon’s second session, the working groups were asked to identify: strategic sectors for biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services; opportunity costs and existing barriers to sustainable management; how best to provide incentives to invest in biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services; and innovative financing mechanisms toward these ends. After the group discussions, each working group rapporteur reported to the plenary.

The strategic sectors identified were:

- Belize: forestry, tourism and fisheries;
- Costa Rica: education, particularly about learning to live with biodiversity; marine coasts; agriculture, including food security, organic production, and quality; water; and energy;
- El Salvador: water resources, and the PAs system;
- Honduras: forestry; water; and ecotourism;
- Guatemala: agriculture/fisheries, including the production of ornamental flowers such as orchids; ecotourism; and energy;
- Nicaragua: tourism; agriculture/forestry; and energy, particularly as regards water use; and
- Panama: tourism, particularly its relation to the national system of PAs (SINAP); and education.

Regarding incentive actions and policies, the Guatemalan participants recommended modernizing the system of canons, royalties and fees, and committing part of the government budget to investing in civil society organizations and/or groupings committed to biodiversity and ecosystem services. The Costa Rican participants suggested: modifying academic curricula; generating a culture of paying taxes, and good management of tax revenues; revising and improving financial mechanisms for biodiversity conservation; reviewing all ways to generate income inside national parks; generating policies that cover the real cost of maintaining PAs; and empowering with appropriate policies those communities ready to conserve biodiversity. The participants from other Central American nations called for: national environmental accounts; strengthening valuation of environmental services; promoting corporate social responsibility (CSR) with the development of instruments to certify sourcing; reforming the water resources sector; promoting a culture of paying for water services; decentralizing paperwork and resources in a way that encourages local investment; and fomenting incentives for the sustainable use of biodiversity for distinct demand segments such as food, medicines and primary materials.

As for financial mechanisms, the Guatemalan participants suggested more debt-for-nature swaps, a carbon tax, and recycling. The Costa Rican participants recommended: modifying the national park tourist tariffs; concessions for non-essential services in national parks, with priority given to local organized communities so that they become allies in protecting the parks; using habitat banking/conservation banking; aligning economic and environmental incentives, for example by tying income tax breaks for tourism firms to environmental sustainability criteria; charging environmental tolls on highways that pass through national parks or areas with high biological value, with the revenues earmarked for investing in the local communities involved. Participants from the other Central American nations suggested: establishing norms, incentives, and objective tariffs for PES; and bonds for avoided deforestation in areas of global interest such as under Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) mechanisms, such as biosphere reserves.

FOURTH SESSION: DISCUSSION OF CASE STUDIES

On Friday morning in plenary, Facilitator Martínez summarized the prior day’s work. Pires then explained TEEB and presented two TEEB case studies, one on PES access in Paraguay, the other on motivating Indonesian authorities to adequately protect Leuser National Park in Aceh Province through studies of the economic losses. A group of Costa Rican participants and one of Guatemala participants were assigned the Indonesia case, while another group of Guatemalan participants and one of participants from other Central American nations were given the Paraguayan case. All were asked to ponder the lessons from these case studies and how they might relate to the situation in their countries.

The Costa Rican group handling the Indonesian case declared such environmental valuation exercises are very useful and recommended they should: involve the three levels of government (canton, provincial, national); involve the local communities affected; utilize conservative data; utilize information and methodology that is transparent and open to

public scrutiny; present both costs and benefits; utilize simple, factual language; and be accompanied by action proposals. The Guatemalan group examining the same case said that while the Indonesian approach is useful, it is not sufficient in that it does not take into account the quality of life, or the indigenous community's own view of the value of biodiversity. They stressed that any such valuation should start with local actors and take into account their economy, culture, social and political structure and governance, and use economic data that makes sense to the local communities while remaining useful to decision-makers.

The Guatemalan group discussing the Paraguayan case said there is a lack of economic valuation of goods in Guatemala, whereas there is often valuation in terms of survival or spiritual context. They cautioned that making a PES system work will depend on: transparency; clarity about the terms of distribution of resources and how they will be invested; and working out flexible ways to handle indigenous community problems regarding land titles and tenancy rights, loan guarantees and legal status.

The other group examining the Paraguayan case presented their views by country. The Panamanian participant, while noting his country has some PES cases regarding the Canal and the Perlas archipelago, cautioned PES is not a panacea, and that it should be: combined with social initiatives; clear in terminology and compensation terms; and take into account land rights questions. The Salvadoran participants, noting that their country has been discussing establishing PES policy for years, emphasized: including a social context; establishing equitable terms between small and large landowners; defining the flow of services; property titles; and ensuring readiness to pay for the services in question. The Nicaraguan participant noted that while PES is recognized in Nicaraguan law, there are no national regulations on the subject and experiences relate only to private agreements between local parties. The Honduran participants expressed interest in the concept, but cautioned that it would require time before it could be applied in their country. The participant from Belize said that there are no PES cases in his country because communities and citizens there tend to take the short-term view, and most of the areas suitable for ecosystem services lie within PA's under state control.

FIFTH SESSION: INPUTS TO THE REGIONAL REPORT

On Friday, the working groups met to reflect on several questions, in particular: what the principal arguments are for promoting biodiversity and ecosystem services as contributing to growth and equity; how best to convince decision-makers of the need to invest in biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services as cross-cutting foci in national development plans; and what actions should be undertaken to disseminate the regional report. The working group rapporteurs then reported to plenary.

On arguments to employ, the working groups suggested: creating a new development paradigm; accounting for biodiversity and ecosystems in the GDP; pointing to Cost Rica's economic model, which places greater value on natural capital; emphasizing the need for environmental security and

economic development based on the region's comparative advantages, namely its biodiversity, ecosystems and the Caribbean Sea; highlighting that conserving biodiversity is fundamental for both the production chains that depend directly on conserving the natural base, and for food security; noting that mitigating and adapting to climate change is more viable and less costly if we conserve biodiversity; citing Oscar Arias' "at peace with nature" call; pointing out the large inequities in the distribution of biodiversity's benefits and who bears the brunt of environmental deterioration; underscoring the role of ecosystems as the providers of water for agriculture, human consumption, energy production and recreation; and utilizing both economic arguments (use of statistics, demonstrations of the value of resources) and social arguments (improving quality of life, integrating traditional knowledge).

Regarding mechanisms for convincing decision-makers, the groups recommended: preparing a Central American inventory of successful and unsuccessful PES cases; demonstrating the benefits of environmental services to human development, quality of life and even survival; emphasizing the role biodiversity can play in addressing climate change; pushing for a regional convention on greenhouse gas emission reductions, including the roles of natural forests and plantations; convincing municipal governments and creating with them demonstration models that they can advocate for their dealings with the national government; organizing civil society awareness-raising campaigns to exert social pressure, foment advocacy and to lobby decision-makers; organizing communities to take specific, prioritized proposals to decision-makers; emphasizing the issues of water, forests, food security and energy; and showing the dependencies between rural and urban areas regarding the environmental services one provides the other.

As for actions to disseminate the report, the groups recommended: presenting the report to the CCAD Ministers and in other regional forums; conducting dialogues at diverse levels; elaborating press releases for the media; disseminating it to academia and organizations that work in the issue; ensuring that the information gets to community leaders, recognized local authorities, and local development organizations; holding regional and local workshops and meetings with ethnic communities; including the report in social events and presidential forums; and devoting a webpage to the report and associated events and actions.

CLOSING PLENARY

On Friday, in closing plenary, Facilitator Martinez presented a summary of the consultation's main ideas and conclusions. On emblematic experiences, she highlighted several including for:

- Guatemala: the National Strategy for the Management and Conservation of Natural Resources in Communal Lands; the Corazón de Bosque ecological park; the Totonicapan Forests; the network of communities protecting the Chyal "birthplace of waters"; the community management of environmental services in El Palin; United for Water community management in San Pablo; alternative craft production in Livingston; payment for water services in

the Cerro San Gil National Park; the Water Fund in the Motagua-Polochic system; the Lachua Project; and the Las Escobas Basin.

- Costa Rica: a turtle conservation project in Ostional; AITRIBI; and land titling in the Cordillera Central.
- Others: Laguna Jocotal duck project (El Salvador); debt-for-nature swaps in Costa Rica and Guatemala; the Trinfinio tri-national project; CBMAP (Panama); Audobon wildlife sanctuary (Belize); micro-hydroelectric projects with environmental services in rural communities (Honduras); and the network of private reserves (Nicaragua).

Regarding the sectors, opportunity costs, barriers and financing to discuss in the regional report, she noted recommendations on:

- strategic sectors for: Costa Rica - education, the marine coast, agriculture water and energy; Guatemala - agriculture and ecotourism; Belize - forestry, tourism and fisheries; El Salvador - water resources; Honduras - forestry, water and ecotourism; Panama - tourism and education; Nicaragua - tourism, agriculture/forestry and water used for generating energy.
- action and policies to: modify academic curricula; generate a culture of paying taxes and of assigning value to biodiversity; review and improve financial mechanisms; reflect the true cost of maintaining PAs; empower communities; increase both national budget resources and greater investment by civil society in biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services; and increase canons, royalties and tariffs.
- financial mechanisms: debt-nature swaps; carbon taxes; recycling; national environmental accounts; valuation of environmental services; REDD; CSR; water rates; incentives to local investment; environmental compensation; and eliminating perverse incentives.

On how best to reach and convince key decision-makers, she highlighted:

- emphasizing water as a thematic axis;
- underscoring the big ideas of “living in peace with nature” and environmental security;
- proposing questions particular to LAC that do not necessarily reflect international ones, such as the CBM;
- transforming Central American cases into model projects, with the help of the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (BCIE);
- preparing an inventory of successful PES cases;
- stressing the role of biodiversity in providing food security and addressing climate change;
- utilizing numbers and statistics to communicate;
- comparing the costs of mitigation versus the costs of repairing damages later;
- emphasizing the mutual dependency between rural and urban areas;
- creating a new development paradigm – the Green Economy;
- communicating the results of the regional report to community leaders and other local actors;
- stressing that biodiversity also includes marine biological and coastal resources;
- underscoring the need for equity in the benefits distribution;

- compiling the experiences and perspectives of all sectors, and not just those of academicians;
 - providing objective data; and
 - proposing a baseline and follow-up monitoring strategy.
- The consultation came to a close at 1:25 pm.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

UNDP - LAC BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEMS

CONSULTATIONS: The UN Development Programme – Latin America and the Caribbean region (LAC) Biodiversity and Ecosystems Consultations have been being convened across the region since August 2009. The first was held in Mexico City, Mexico, on 13-14 August, the second was held in Lima, Peru, on 25-26 September, the third in Caracas, Venezuela on 4-5 November, the fourth in Quito, Ecuador on 24-25 November, the fifth was held in Bogotá, Colombia on 30 November –1 December, and the sixth, as reported in this summary, was held in Guatemala City on 3-4 December. The Brazilian and the Caribbean consultations will take place in early 2010. For more information contact: María José Baptista, UNDP; tel: +1 212 906 54 18; fax: +1 212 906 6017; e-mail: maria.jose.baptista@undp.org

SIXTH EU-LAC SUMMIT: The sixth EU-LAC Summit will take place on 18 May 2010 in Madrid, preceded by a Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs on 17 May. The theme of the Summit will be: “Towards a new stage in the bi-regional partnership: Innovation and Technology for sustainable development and social inclusion.” The Madrid Summit aims to bring together not only Heads of State and Governments from LAC and Europe, but also important non-state actors. For more information see: http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/lac/index_en.htm

IBERO-AMERICAN SUMMIT: The Twentieth Ibero-American Summit, bringing together heads of state and government from Spain, Portugal and the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking nations of Latin America, will be held in Mar del Plata, Argentina on 11-12 November 2010. The subject of biodiversity is expected to be on the Summit agenda. For more information contact: Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB); tel: +34 91 590 19 80; fax: +34 91 590 19 81; Internet: <http://www.segib.org>

CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY WORKING GROUP ON ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING (ABS WG 9): ABS WG9 will take place in Colombia on 18-24 March 2010 at a venue to be determined. For more information contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@cbd.int; Internet: <http://www.cbd.int/meetings/>

CBD COP 10: The tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD (COP 10) will meet in Nagoya, Japan on 18-29 October 2010. COP 10 is expected to assess achievement of the 2010 target to reduce significantly the rate of biodiversity loss, adopt an international regime on ABS and celebrate the International Year of Biodiversity 2010. A High-level Segment will be held from 27-29 October 2010. For more information contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@cbd.int; Internet: <http://www.cbd.int/meetings/>