



2010 Año Internacional de la Diversidad Biológica

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**REPORT ON NATIONAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE
INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF BIODIVERSITY
COLOMBIA**

**Prepared for
Instituto Alexander von Humboldt**



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REPORT ON NATIONAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE
INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF BIODIVERSITY

The call by Colombia and other countries that celebrate the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB) for people to participate in this initiative, has transcended favorably, achieving the active participation of civil society, willing to include in their actions key steps to benefit the environment, natural resources and biodiversity.

The participation of students within the academic calendar events of Humboldt Institute, as well as events at IYB partner entities, has increased over the year. During April, there was a significant participation of college students, indigenous people, and other groups not necessarily related to biological, conservation and environmental sciences. These communities were able to acquire knowledge and tools to raise awareness on the proper use of natural resources, biodiversity and the services ecosystems provide, knowing in advance how these resources and services can be accessed.

IYB Academic Calendar – Instituto de Investigación de Recursos Naturales Alexander von Humboldt

8 April 2010,

“Cooperation and Competition in the Economics of the Biodiversity”,

Juan Camilo Cárdenas. Professor, Faculty of Economics - CEDE. Universidad de los Andes – Colombia

PhD Environmental and Resource Economics – University of Massachusetts Amherst

Dr. Cárdenas initially thanked the entities that supported him to conduct his research, specially at the Humboldt Institute, that funded much of the proposals focused on rural communities about biodiversity and economy. A special acknowledgment was given to the Institute, because it supported the academic community and took the risk to finance the implementation of this project, although 10 years ago it was not well known. He also thanked the Faculty of Economics at the Universidad Javeriana and the Studies Center of Arizona.

Cárdenas tried to explain why we must think of cooperation in Colombia, as a way to solve the dilemma of biodiversity conservation. This proposal should be examined from different points of view: *"cooperation is necessary, not enough but necessary"*.

The most important points discussed during the conference were:

Why cooperation evolves and why it is important to understand its evolution?

Cooperation in Colombia:

Threats to the possibilities of cooperation:

- War and armed conflict in Colombia.
- Loss of interpersonal trust
- Loss of inter-institutional system

- Markets: *e.g.* prices and market of fossil fuels determining prices of biofuels, mining and food.

Protected areas as collective lands.

Cárdenas said that in the world there are approximately 100,000 protected areas. The entire planet is dedicated to establish protected areas with the main objective of protecting biodiversity.

There are currently four types of collective lands:

- National Parks
- State Reserves, or civil society reserves
- Maritime Areas
- “Resguardos”

Legal frameworks defining such spaces have significant potential but also significant limitations.

Approach to the problem of lack of cooperation

- The need for models that fit in the country's collective reality.
- Best models of human behavior
- Best model for analysis and institutional design.

Cost-benefit analysis

- The group effort of resource use is the sum of individual efforts of resource extraction in a territory.
- The benefits then tend to become zero; any further efforts will not produce anything for society.
- The cost will increase with the efforts
- Where costs and benefits are equal there is an equal distribution of income from natural resource exploitation.

Tragedy of the Commons:

- Society has free will to take and use natural resources.
- Local Optimal: The social optimum maximizes local benefits.
- Global Optimal Negotiation between local and global.
- Optimal level of mining: welfare for all

Institutional system

- National Environmental System: commands and controls the local users on how to intervene.
- National and international NGO's: they are control entities in some levels of the environmental hierarchy.

Of the many challenges organizations face, one is the complexity of monitoring and control capability, because there is not enough money. On the other hand NGO's have a limited capacity of control, especially in areas where they have possessions.

22 April 2010,

Special Event Earth Day

Environmentalism and Biodiversity: 50 years of activism in Colombia.

On the Earth Day, the Humboldt Institute, invited five of the major environment representatives in Colombia, so they tell the audience, the history of environmentalism from their different experiences and points of view.

Panel participants: Gonzalo Palomino, Universidad del Tolima. Rafael Colmenares, Ecofondo. Alegría Fonseca, Fundación Alma. Néstor Ocampo, Fundación Cosmos. Julio Carrizosa, Academia Colombiana de Ciencias Exactas, Físicas y Naturales.

Eugenia Ponce de León, Director of the Humboldt Institute, began acknowledging the guests for having responded to the call from the Institute in the framework of the International Year of Biodiversity. She stressed the importance of having events to commemorate the actions of those who have paved the way to what currently exists. *"Those of us who have some kind of belief in environmental issues, feel quite honored to have today these five guests, to thank them for everything they have made and the path they have opened and we are grateful that they are still working with us. "*

The stories they told, showed the different scenarios in which each one has played, the way they have succeeded in different scenarios in the struggle for the environment and how they have fought for including environmental issues in political discussions.

IYB events in Colombia

07 April 2010,

Selection of winning drawings for World Children's Painting Competition

"Paint for your planet" BAYER - Colombia

Hundreds of drawings covered the halls of Bayer offices, conveying a message of biodiversity conservation to all members of the company, from the perspective of Colombian children.

The response was positive, children from different places in Colombia joined the initiative and painted by their country. Winners were chosen by Bayer Communications Manager, Andean Region, Dr. German Fernandez, Angela Aldana and Adriana Mosquera of Consumer Care - Bayer, Alma Guevara, Specialist of the Bogotá Secretary of Education and Natalia Rincón, Assistant to the International Year of Biodiversity of the Organization for Education and Environmental Protection (OpEPA). Each one of them had the opportunity to choose four drawings, and they reached an unanimous decision about the five winning drawings.

The brand Redoxitos gave the awards to the winners: a trip to the Amazonas for the first position, Xbox consoles for the second and third places and mountain bikes for places fourth and fifth.

09 April 2010,

Sea Museum Reopening – Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano

After a long period of adaptation and technology implementation to improve the conditions of the Sea Museum, it opened its doors to the students and all those interested in learning more about the biodiversity of ecosystems, species and life that characterizes Colombia's marine realm.

Dr. Elvira María Alvarado, Director of the Sea Museum, thanked the participants, students and all the people who supported and participated in its adaptation. She especially thanked the industrial design students who developed innovative attractions for the Museum that will enable visitors, especially children and young students to get closer to Colombia's biodiversity.

She extended the invitation for stakeholders to participate in a tour of the museum and to spread the news to Colombia's academic environment.

13 and 14 April 2010,

Wednesday of The Museum

Experiences in Studies in Biological diversity in Venezuela, from La Salle Foundation

Natural History Museum at the Universidad La Salle, opened a space to discuss issues relating to biodiversity, conservation and environmental issues, which included the participation of different national and international personalities, who discussed subjects of scientific and collective interest. In this first meeting, the Museum invited Dr. Josefa Celsa Señaris, who spoke about the experience she has had as director of La Salle Natural History Museum of La Salle in Caracas Venezuela.

Josefa Celsa Señaris has many years of experience working in conservation biology, the study of natural resources and has also made a great contribution to the field of museum work.

Dr. Señaris made a complete and specific description of the history of biological collections in La Salle Museum in Caracas - Venezuela. She also included technical aspects of collections management, limitations and successes that have been achieved over many years of collecting and researching. She made different comparisons with the biological components of Colombia and showed how, in an organized and articulated work can achieve valuable and accessible information to avoid restrictions and unnecessary paperwork. She also remarked the value of biological collections as part of the natural and cultural heritage of nations and emphasized the importance of properly keeping them.

During the second session, Dr. Señaris discussed about rapid ecological assessments, community assessments of ecosystems in specific places, with the study of certain indicator groups. Dr. Señaris, explained her position and personal experiences about the places where it has been possible to make such assessments in Venezuela.

22 April 2010,

Forum: After Copenhagen

¿How are we in terms of climate change?

Within the framework of the celebration of International Earth Day, the magazine ECOGUIA, together with Universidad del Rosario and the support of Universidad de Los Andes, organized this event which was aimed at knowing the prospects of Colombia in the next climate change summit. Also, an analysis was made on the results obtained in Copenhagen, assessing the shortcomings and benefits that resulted.

The most important points that were discussed during the forum were:

1. Statement by Dr. Gabriel Silgado, Dean of University Environment at Universidad del Rosario

"We've met today to talk about the inclusion of the global climate issue on the political agenda of the world". During the event, he proposed a review of what happened in Copenhagen Climate Summit last December. "We intend to do so from the dual perspective of institutional negotiation of the United Nations COP 15 and the participation of civil society, represented in Copenhagen by more than 500 organizations that met in the parallel summit "Climate Forum 09".

2. Presentation of the book "La Generación del Cambio Climático" of researcher Manuel Guzmán Hennessey.

Professor Guzmán developed his reflection asking himself and humanity ¿how is reality, what is reality, and how we see human beings? *"I think that the main sin of positive science and the main sin of logical positivism have been to teach a different form of reality."*

Nature always moves in Order – Chaos cycles. If we understand these cycles, we can approach the climate change problem from the perspective of science.

The book comprises three chapters; order, chaos I and chaos II. *"The first chaos cycle represents the natural movement of cycles, the second chaos cycle is an artificial cycle created by man, which is hard to start to walk and this is the cycle where the climate change generation will have to act."*

3. Statement by Dr. Angela Andrade, senior president of Ecosystem Management Committee and Coordinator of International Conservation Policy for Colombia, and member of the delegation of Colombia to the COP 15 and Fabio Arjona, Executive Director of Conservation International – Colombia.

Dr. Andrade spoke about articulation between biodiversity agreements and climate change as a new challenge. She approached the concept of adaptation to climate change and how this issue is of paramount importance in society, particularly in terms of actions due to the changes that have occurred in ecosystems.

Fabio Arjona talked about Colombia's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and its performance that we must achieve in the next climate change summit. ¿How is Colombia preparing to go to Mexico? *"Colombia may not be the first country to have projects of climate change mitigation, in part because we are not amongst the more polluting countries, but neither we are the last country. We are currently developing some mitigation projects that have taught us how to respond to the effects of climate change".*

Meetings and Activities

The Humboldt Institute initiative as leading entity in the celebration of International Year of Biodiversity in Colombia included, among others, presentations in several institutions on the intention of the IYB, as well the involvement of civil society actions

on the benefit of biodiversity and natural resources conservation. Thus, the Institute has offered opportunities for participation, where it has been possible to convey the IYB message and also to create opportunities for the development and support of projects aimed at building information and developing strategies that benefit ecosystems and biodiversity in Colombia.

Flashmob

On Monday, March 26, a meeting with Alejandro Calderon, manager of the Clearing House Mechanism of Alexander von Humboldt Institute, was held in OpEPA (IYB associate). During the meeting, the need to create a participation space was raised, where civil society has the opportunity to present its views on the subject of biodiversity and how biodiversity benefits humankind and life on earth.

Based on the initiative, two main proposals were raised. The first one is to open a space where people who are interested express their thoughts about the benefits that biodiversity provides to them, by recording short videos in which each person shows their face and talks about what biodiversity means to them.

On the other hand, it is expected to open a call in order to generate a "Flashmob" social movement alluding to the International Year of Biodiversity. This proposal intends to gather people to coordinate the building figure made of humans, in this case the official logo of the 2010 IYB, which can be formed in a public and busy place in Bogotá. This initiative aims to discover the intention of IYB to society, the meaning of the celebration and how everyone can act protecting the planet's biodiversity.