



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**

**Eugenia Ponce de Leon Chaux
Directora General - IAvH**



Prepared by

**By Martha Natalia Rincón Díaz
2010 Colombia Assistant**

**Sergio Andrés Llano Consuegra
Operations Manager**

**Luis Alberto Camargo
Executive Director**



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International Day of Biological Diversity

Biodiversity, Development and Poverty Alleviation

Although efforts that have been made for the recovery of ecosystems and to decrease species loss, for the Organization of the United Nations it is necessary to implement new visions that address environmental issues and the biodiversity crisis. A first step is to enhance the importance of participation by world leaders in the achievement of negotiations and agreements, in order to reduce species loss, and to frame the intention of the International Year of Biodiversity.

Colombia, as one of the megadiverse countries in the world, has considered the importance of conserving its ecosystems that are a source of environmental goods and services for rural populations, which include a high percentage of the total national population.

As part of the Celebration of the International Day of Biological Diversity, May 22, 2010, the recognition of the value of biodiversity for human well-being has been the key issue, highlighting the importance of biodiversity conservation as a means to eradicate hunger, poverty and stimulate human development in all global sectors.

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

06 May 2010

Ecosystem-based adaptation: Links between biodiversity and climate change.

New challenges.

Angela Andrade. (Deputy Chairman of the Commission on Ecosystem Management, IUCN and Policy Coordinator, Conservation International.)

Dr. Angela Andrade noted that ecosystem-based adaptation is essential to conceive the relationship of climate change with biodiversity. On one hand, climate change is seriously affecting populations, communities and society in general, and on the other hand, ecosystems have a significant impact on the magnitude of climate change.

Likewise, if climate change is not controlled, it is difficult to mitigate biodiversity loss and, if ecosystems and associated species are not protected it will be very difficult to meet the goal of reducing emissions consistent with this scenario. Failure to comply with both purposes, will lead to efforts being lost in the fight against poverty and hunger in the world.

It is pertinent to consider the use of biodiversity and ecosystem services as a basis for adaptation and to do this we must reduce ecosystem vulnerability and increase ecosystem resilience, taking into account:

- Implementation of ecosystem management actions.
- Consolidation of Protected Areas System, requiring the responsible institutions to redefine the role of protected areas.
- Diversification of agricultural systems
- Joint participation: Involving different sectors

The concepts on the National Climate Change Policy, were approached by Dr. Giampiero Renzoni, who said that this document provides an institutional framework, which associated with the assembly of a National Climate Change document, that defines actors and financing mechanisms, allowing to articulate the different strategic lines.

A proper management can generate best-preserved ecosystems to provide services efficiently and thus reduce the vulnerability attributable to climate change impacts. The central hypothesis of ecosystem-based adaptation, says that it should focus numerous efforts into the public policy on ecosystem management.

20 May 2010

Health and biodiversity: The silent link

Celebrating the International Day of Biodiversity

Aaron Bernstein, M.D., M.P.H. Coauthor of the book “Sustaining life” (with Eric Chivian, recipient of the Nobel prize). Professor of Human Health and Global Change. Harvard Medical School

In his speech, Dr. Bernstein, ratified the importance of including health within the issues of biodiversity and stated that health depends directly and indirectly of biodiversity and natural resources.

To identify some reasons why biodiversity is key to the welfare of human health, Dr. Bernstein referred some examples where species have become key elements for human welfare.

In addition to the services biodiversity can provide to humans, the balance of biodiversity within an ecosystem, allows it to be developed efficiently; however, when there is loss of biodiversity and species and habitat destruction, failure to provide ecosystem services affect human health.

Statement by Dr. Silvia Ziller PhD. Latin American Representative. Global Invasive Species Programme - GISP.

Countries that signed the Convention of Biology Diversity are committed to preventing the introduction of alien species and to control and eradicate invasive species that may affect habitats or species.

Some exotic species can become useful to humans; many are profitable as ornamental species and other play a role as species for reforestation or are a source of food. *"The challenge is to understand precisely which species is useful and which can be used but in balance with nature in order to cause no harm."*

One of the strongest impacts caused by invasive species is the reduction of ecosystems resilience, considered as the ability of environments to experience a disturbance, and then return to balance. Once invasive species dominate an environment, they create a disturbance in it. Systems alone do not have the ability to remake and restore, making human intervention necessary.

Statement of Dr. Clara Ocampo PhD. Coordinator of Medical Entomology Program CIDEIM

For Dr. Ocampo, linking health and biodiversity is a challenge, mainly because human beings have learned to separate them, but it is really necessary to understand this link. Saving biodiversity is essential, because forests are natural defenses against disease. The more chemical controls are generated, either to eradicate pests or vectors, the more pests will have the ability to develop resistance to insecticides. Biodiversity could be used to identify new drugs and insecticides to control these diseases.

Statement of Dr. Salua Osorio. Coordinator of Health Component in the National Pilot Project Integrated to Climate Change Adaptation - INAP.

Dr. Salua Osorio defined the concept of the connection between biodiversity and health, describing the way that the health sector has become increasingly involved in this issue. To understand the different situations of disease transmission, one must consider the issues and implications within a global perspective to address the problem, and propose integrated solutions. The health sector can generate simple steps to achieve the reduction in vulnerability. Among the actions to do this are the strengthening of primary education and public health, the improvement of surveillance systems, immunization programs, health conditions and the increase of research to reduce uncertainty.

In the integrated public health plan, they have tried to integrate data from other systems that can better explain the design of disease control strategies, using tools as statistical modeling and dynamic modeling, where all transmission vectors are involved in order to understand what is happening, and to predict future situations.

Statement of Dr. Teofilo Monteiro PhD. Environmental Health and Healthy Environments Advisor. Pan-American Health Organization - Colombia.

There is increasing human pressure on the environment, including the effects caused by climate change, ecosystem change, deforestation, and change in vegetation cover, loss of biodiversity, pollution of water bodies and changes in coastal systems.

Significant direct impacts on health:

1. Heat waves
2. Floods
3. Water scarcity
4. Soil erosion
5. Increasing exposure to ultraviolet radiation
6. Exposure to pollutants

Health impacts related to ecosystems:

1. Infectious diseases
2. Food Production
3. Malnutrition
4. Depletion of natural medicines
5. Mental Health

6. Impoverishment

Indirect impacts on health:

1. Population movements
2. Formation of slum areas

Cycle of conferences of the Banco de la República's Library Network and Humboldt Institute.

Monday May 3

Conference: Biological invasions as a cause of biodiversity loss in Colombia, its effects and possible actions

By: Maria Piedad Baptiste

Biologist. Research Assistant Conservation Biology Program and Use of Biodiversity of the Humboldt Institute.

Thursday May 6

Potential habitat for the jaguar: a tool for biodiversity conservation

By: Angelica Benitez

Biology of the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana (PUJ) and MSc in Management and Conservation of Tropical Forests and Biodiversity of the CATIE (Costa Rica)

Monday May 10

Conference: Stories of "bocon": social vulnerability, popular environmentalism and lessons for biodiversity management in the Colombian-Venezuelan Orinoco

By: Sebastian Restrepo-Calle

Manager of Environmental and Natural Resources and MSc in Environmental Management. Program Assistant Researcher, Socio-economic Dimensions of Use and Biodiversity Conservation, Humboldt Institute.

Monday May 24

Conference: Biodiversity and Human Welfare: An institutional vision

By: Felipe Quevedo

Economist, specialist in negotiation and international relations and MSc in Political Science. Fellow Program Policy, Legislation and supporting decision making of the Humboldt Institute.

Thursday May 27

Conference: Socioecological Modeling to support decision making

By: Carlos Sarmiento

Geographer. Associate Researcher at the Biodiversity Information System (SIB) of the Humboldt Institute.

Monday May 31

Conference: Páramo: conservation and management of disputed territories

By: Carlos Tapia

Sociologist at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, MSc in Sustainable Farming Systems Development at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana (PUJ) and PhD Candidate in Geography at the University of Georgia, USA Andean Páramo Project Coordinator of the Institute Humboldt.

IYB events in Colombia

12 May 2010

**Seminar on wildlife trafficking
A threat to Colombian Biodiversity**

National Strategy against Trafficking of Wild Fauna and Flora. Statement by Dr. Miriam P. Salazar. Ecosystem Management. Ministry of Environment, Housing and Territorial Development

Among the great pressures on natural ecosystems in Colombia, is the extraction of wild species for illegal activities. The Ministry of Environment, Housing and Territorial Development has been implementing the National Strategy document for the Prevention and Control of Trade of Endangered Species, a program released in 2000.

The document seeks to estimate the trafficking problem and to identify the most sensitive taxonomic groups. In the years 1992 -2004, they found that the most threatened group was birds, followed by reptiles.

The National Strategy for Prevention and Control of Trade of Endangered Species provides various courses of action where the Ministry of Environment has become involved with authorities and civil society:

1. Monitoring and control: prevention, monitoring and control of wildlife trafficking.
2. Promotion of productive alternatives: viability of the species for commercial use in sustainable activities.
3. Management and disposal of confiscated specimens: arrest / seizure protocols, for both fauna and flora.

Environmental and economic costs of the activity of illegal wildlife trafficking. Intervention by Juan Ricardo Gomez. Professor, Ecology and Planning Department, Faculty of Environmental and Rural Studies. Pontificia Universidad Javeriana

When it comes to trafficking, the issue is complex for a number of reasons; the first is the profitability that characterizes this activity. Illegal trafficking is one of the most profitable illegal economies in the world. There is a demand that is addictive, variable and is not exclusive. There is also a high mortality rate in catching, handling and captivity, due to the high levels of stress of the animals.

Colombia also receives traffic from other places, but in general, is an exporting country. Professor Gomez said that in Colombia internal traffic is underestimated because people do not have a deep knowledge about inter- or intra-city traffic.

May 12 2010

Wednesday of the Museum

Forum: Cultural and Biological Diversity

Intervention of Mariluz Lopez. Food Engineer. Food Engineering Educational Program at the University of La Salle

In the celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity, food security becomes an important issue in biological and cultural diversity. Ensuring food security is paramount to all the people in action. According to the FAO, in the World Food Summit in 1996, food security exists when all people at all times have physical and economic access to

sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences in order to lead a healthy and active life.

Intervention of Leonardo Arias Bernal. Veterinarian. Professor University of La Salle. Director of Jaime Duque Zoo.

Colombia has one of the largest percentages of endemism of the world. For this reason, effects such as fragmentation of ecosystems, human settlements, pollution, environmental changes, grazing activities and emerging diseases, among others, represent a serious threat to wildlife.

These are challenges that conservation medicine face, which is a discipline that seeks to combine biology, anthropology, veterinary science and human medicine in order to create healthy environments; this is ecosystem health, animal and human welfare, resulting in a welfare state, in which all living things have intrinsic value.

Meetings and Activities

The Humboldt Institute is developing a massive campaign, which may be made available through pictures, shapes and logos alluding to the AIB, the concept of biodiversity and its importance for human survival and the key role that society plays in protecting natural resources. A proposal was sent to Valtec Marketing Director, Mr. Álvaro Pachón, in order to arrange a meeting to consider the option of including such a campaign within the images that are continuously exposed in the Transmilenio and Eucoles system in Bogotá. This meeting will take place on the second week of June.

The Humboldt Institute, also included in its activities for the year the linking of different institutions and stakeholders to make part of the FlashMob movement (<http://www.humboldt.org.co/chmcolombia/boletin.html>), which aims to raise awareness in civil society about the importance of biodiversity conservation and natural resources for human welfare and life on Earth.

Some results have been received, where institutions have taken the decision to act in favor of sending the message of conservation. As a response to the FlashMob initiative, health workers from Rafael Uribe Uribe Hospital who have sent their messages have used their creativity and ingenuity by creating human figures and sending messages to society about the importance of biodiversity to health and human welfare .