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

Prepared for  
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## **REPORT ON NATIONAL EVENTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF BIODIVERSITY**

During March, the companies involved have responded to the call from the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB) in Colombia and have given their materials, documents, workshops, photographs etc, to be included as part of the efforts Colombia is making to meet the targets set for 2010, their projection into the future and the diffusion and involvement with the national community. The active participation of the academic community, that, searching for the improvement of the state of natural resources, also has joined and generated positive actions, must be highlighted.

Instituto Humboldt has maintained a leadership position promoting and meeting with different actors to increase participations on all levels of Colombian society and institutions.

This document reports the events that have taken place in Colombia during the IYB and their scope. Knowledge of the celebration of IYB has expanded during this month, as the number of interested parties, allies and events increased.

### **03 March 2010,**

#### **First Seminar of Biodiversity Monitoring in Silvopastoral Systems- Fundación Natura**

Fundación Natura presented methods used to monitor biodiversity in silvopastoral systems. They stressed the importance of maintaining native plantations in these areas for the permanence and stability of local flora and fauna, and the importance of plantations that provide shadow for coffee crops, amongst others. In one of the interventions, the speaker emphasized on environmental campaigns and educational programs for local populations, mainly farmers, considered as useful and necessary tools for the care and knowledge of local biodiversity.

Clara Solano, Assistant Director of Conservation and Research of Fundación Natura, ended the seminar, indicating that there are few financial resources, decision makers are quite impatient to provide these resources, but information is not being generated quickly and decisively enough for them to finance projects. *"The research process is complex because we are trying to understand how complex systems behave. These investigations should be made to make decisions in the territory to be included in the territorial approach to local development, so the information must be clear and convincing"*. She also highlighted that information should guide consumers to buy green products on the market, and so influence the way consumers behave, but this cannot be achieved if the producer has no information on green products. *"Eventually we hope to collect all the information that was generated during this event in a memoir to be disclosed to entities and stakeholders"*.

**10 March 2010**

**Presentation of the World Drawing Contest "Paint for your planet"  
Bayer - Colombia**

Through this contest, Bayer invited children from Colombia to reflect on the care of the environment through drawings to interpret biodiversity. During the opening event, students and teachers from the Instituto Técnico Industrial Francisco José de Caldas attended Bayer's call and participated actively, drawing for the welfare of their country and their planet.

The event opening was in charge of Ximena Bedoya, Bayer Social Responsibility Coordinator and Dr. Germán Fernandez, Andean Region Communications Manager. Ms Bedoya, said that this initiative is expected to spread to new generations so that they learn about Bayer's environmental purpose worldwide. She hopes to extend the invitation to many children around the globe so that they join this contest and work for a better life.

Dr. Fernandez said that Bayer as an international company gives great importance to the issue of environmental care as one of the most important commitments in the world. Bayer worldwide has associated with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) because this alliance can help Bayer increase its efforts. Part of the activities developed within this alliance is the children's painting contest, which has been created so that more children approach to environmental issues through aspects related to biodiversity, which is a relevant topic of public agenda.

The presentation also featured Dr. Carlos José Herrera, District Secretary of Education, who believes the "Paint for your planet" contest is a high impact event that should be supported. *"We are convinced that if a child is given a canvas, a piece of paper, paint and a brush maybe he or she will never hold a weapon. But if you also use the canvas and brush to try to send messages to teach how to stop climate change and to develop sustainable alternatives to the planet, the effort will be twice as important".*

The best drawings will be selected and children will receive their awards in April.

**17 March 2010**

**Launch of the "Avoided Deforestation, REDD Guide + Colombia" book and "The challenge of climate change adaptation" video**

The first presenter was Dr. Ken Yamashita, who announced the interest that national institutions in Colombia show in developing functional alternatives to mitigate the effects of climate change. For Colombia, the issue of climate change is relevant because it has effects on biodiversity balance, ecosystems and the stability of local communities because of the impact of this phenomenon. *"The purpose is to reduce deforestation and at the same*

*time to provide opportunity for communities to use land in a productive and sustainable way".*

The Executive Secretary of the REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries) workgroup, Mr. Oscar Bonilla, said that the REDD guide contains technical information and development projects focused on mitigating the effects of climate change. It reports inter-institutional actions and targets, and with its publication the establishment of policies and techniques framed in REDD are expected, together with institutions such as the IDEAM, USAID, INVEMAR, Conservation International, Fundación Natura, Patrimonio Natural, various international environmental NGOs. *"This first publication is a methodological technique that seeks to strengthen institutions and stakeholders in the concept of REDD."*

The event also included the participation of IDEAM director, Dr. Ricardo Lozano, who reaffirmed that scientific capacity to monitor deforestation should be strengthened in order to quantify this process and determine the content of carbon in forests. To this end, reliable data and products must be available. *"This is the basis of a national monitoring program of forests and carbon".*

As for the participation of Colombia in the mitigation of the effects caused by climate change, this country has worked on this issue since 2006; Dr. Lozano highlighted the support for the development of a group of specific adaptation programs to offset the effects of climate change in the country. *"Colombia is responding to global warming by joining forces to build a civic environmental culture from the perspective of environmental education."*

Dr. Carlos Costa, Minister of Environment, stated that REDD is a tool that recognizes the work that has been developed in the field of conservation, but cannot be regarded as the only instrument in the protection of forests. *"There is a big misunderstanding of what is REDD, that should be clarified in order to achieve the desired objectives".*

In the framework of the implementation of the strategy that has already taken its first steps, the involvement of people's work is expected. *"The key is the coordination with different sectors: public, private and international NGO's within the REDD initiative"*. Closing the event, Minister Costa congratulated the workgroup for developing foundations and encouraging the country to be in the best position to take advantage of REDD.

At the conclusion of the event, IDEAM, together with entities involved in the INAP project (Proyecto Piloto Nacional de Adaptación al Cambio Climático), presented the video *"The Challenge of Adaptation to Climate Change"*, which shows different testimonials from communities and residents of regions in the country, referred to the actions taking place to counteract the effects caused by climate change on ecosystems. It describes the activities that fall within the INAP project carried out to mitigate the effects caused by global warming in regions of the country. These specific activities are:

A. Formulation of adaptation programs. Production of information on the variability of climate change.

- B. Implementation of priority measures for the adaptation - High Mountain Ecosystems
- C. Monitoring and evaluation system - Continental and Insular Oceanic areas.
- D. Answers to tropical vector-borne diseases (malaria and dengue) induced by climate change - Human Health.

**18 March 2010 – Instituto Humboldt**

**Lecture “Visualizing Territory, Envisioning Landscape Transformations”, by Dr. Kellie B. Vaché - Biological and Ecological Engineering, Oregon State University**

Professor Vaché, presented **ENVISION**, a tool developed to address questions of environmental management in complex areas and in different landscapes. This tool seeks to provide an approach to future scenarios of landscapes, from the knowledge of factors within it.

Dr Vaché explained that possible alternatives in services that can be offered by an ecosystem. *“Initially, we must be aware of the type of landscape to be modeled in order to generate the actual modeling process; here, different socio-economic and socio-ecological aspects are involved”*. Among the most influential concepts in the modeling process is biological complexity, defined as a series of biological and ecological systems that make up the landscape.

Ecosystem services are modeled with the decision of actors; this aspect is essential for decision-making in the landscape. The goals of the landscape depend on the coordination of policies and actors, considering the policies as a plans or actions to fulfill a desired result. The challenge of using a modeling program as **ENVISION**, is to know how they can make the results obtained from the approach to the future operational.

Professor Vaché, explained the use of the program from two examples of landscape modeling in two areas of the U.S., showing the landscape changes; all decisions depend on the actors involved. The lecturer ended by stating that *“alternative future assessments depend on the customer”*. A key is to have knowledge of population growth, development of landscape, ecosystem services and their interaction, as included in the socio-ecological systems of the landscape.

Andrés Guhl, lecture commentator, said that the landscapes processes are complex and it is extremely difficult to create models to understand the behavior in time. *“Those who make the modeling of the landscape are capable people; programming these tools is extremely difficult because of all the elements of the landscape, it is turning something complex into something simple and it implies a great effort.”* For Guhl, within the landscape, there are clear boundaries but there are boundaries that are gradual, there are variables that can be very difficult to perceive or to define, *“this is one of the biggest challenges for people who have worked in modeling”*. Certainly the actors are autonomous and decide what they will do in its territory or plot, but the actors are somewhat independent and there are factors that influence their behavior.

Andrés Guhl exposed various comments and questions regarding the use of tools to visualize alternative futures in a landscape and approaches to the display of landscape in

Colombia, considering the cultural, social, environmental, and law policies of the country to indicate the difficulties that might be present in the visualization of a future landscape in the national territories.