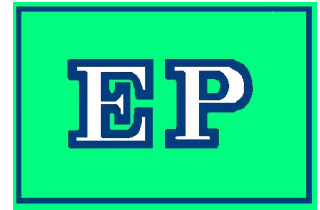




**United Nations
Environment
Programme**



Twelfth Forum of Ministers of the Environment
of Latin America and the Caribbean

Bridgetown, Barbados
2nd to 7th March 2000

A. Preparatory Meeting of Experts
2nd to 3rd March 2000

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Final Report of the Fourth Meeting of the Inter-Sessional Committee of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean

- Lima, Peru. 2 October 1999 -

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Background

1. Pursuant to the decisions adopted by the Eleventh Meeting of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (from 10 to 13 March 1998, Lima, Peru) and the recommendations and decisions of the First Special Meeting of the Inter-Sessional Committee of the Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (19 September 1998, New York, USA), and in consultation with the the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) —in its capacity as Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean and Coordinator of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee— the Chair of the Inter-Sessional Committee of Ministers, Mr. Gonzalo Galdos, convened the Fourth Meeting of the Inter-Sessional Committee of Ministers (IC), in the city of Lima, Peru, on 2 October 1999.

2. The objectives of the Meeting were:

- a) To examine the progress and achievements of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee (ITC) since the New York Meeting;
- b) To examine the progress of the Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers in compliance with the mandates of the Forum and the resolutions of the twentieth session of the Governing Council of UNEP (Nairobi, Kenya, from 1 to 5 February 1999);
- c) To present a report by the ITC agencies on the activities that support the priority subject areas in the Regional Action Plan;
- d) To determine the date for the Twelfth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in March 2000, to adopt the agenda for the meeting and to conclude final arrangements for holding the ministerial consultation on bioregional planning; and
- e) To promote dialogue on negotiations regarding the Biosafety Protocol and its implications for the region.

Participation

3. Ten governmental delegations of Latin America and the Caribbean participated in this Fourth Meeting of the Inter-Sessional Committee, including the Environment Ministers of Colombia, Chile, El Salvador, Mexico and Peru. Argentina, Brazil, Cuba and Honduras were represented by Vice-Ministers and other high-level authorities. The organizations that form the Inter-Agency Technical Committee (the United Nations Environment Programme, UNEP, as coordinator; the United Nations Development Programme, UNDP; the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC; the Inter-American Development Bank, IDB; and the World Bank) were also represented. The List of Participants appears as Annex II to this document.

Agenda Item 1. Opening of the Meeting

4. Mr. Gonzalo Galdos, President of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, initiated the work of the Fourth Meeting of the Inter-Sessional Committee at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, 2 October 1999.

Agenda Item 2: Organization of the Meeting

5. The Fourth Meeting of the Inter-Sessional Committee was presided over by Peru (Mr. Gonzalo Galdos), and Mexico served as the Rapporteur (Mr. José Luis Samaniego).

6. In accordance with past practices, the Meeting adopted, *mutatis mutandis*, the rules of procedure of the Governing Council of UNEP for its discussions. The Meeting also adopted the Provisional Agenda (UNEP/LAC-IC.4/1) and the Provisional Annotated Agenda (UNEP/LAC-IC.4/2/Rev.1) proposed by the Secretariat without modifications.

7. The delegates accepted the proposal of the Secretariat to prepare a preliminary draft of the Final Report of the Fourth Meeting of the Inter-Sessional Committee by 27 October 1999, and the Final Report, incorporating the comments of the participants, by 12 November 1999.

8. Mr. Shafqat Kakakhel, Deputy Executive Director of UNEP, welcomed the participants and underscored the importance that UNEP assigns to the Forum of Ministers and its associated mechanisms, as well as the role played by the UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean as their secretariats. Mr. Kakakhel noted that the Forum of Ministers and its Inter-Agency Technical Committee are being used as models in other regions. He also referred to the ongoing strengthening of the Regional Office of UNEP in response to the requests of the Governments at various sessions of the Governing Council. Finally, he thanked the delegations for having participated in the presentation of the UNEP publication "Global Environment Outlook 2000" prior to the present meeting.

Agenda Item 3: Report of the Inter-Agency Technical Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment to the Inter-Sessional Committee

9. Under this agenda item, Mr. Ricardo Sánchez Sosa, in his capacity as Coordinator of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee, reported on the progress and state of the activities being conducted by the agencies that form the Inter-Agency Technical Committee to support the decisions of the Forum of Ministers and particularly the priority subject areas in the Regional Environmental Action Plan, including:

- a) Assistance to the countries of Central America affected by Hurricane Mitch;
- b) Mobilization of financial resources for the priority subject areas of the Regional Action Plan approved by the Eleventh Meeting of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (Lima, 1998);
- c) Development of the projects presented at the First Special Meeting of the Inter-Sessional Committee (New York, 1998), namely: the Project for the Conservation of Biodiversity in Protected Areas of Shared Priority Ecoregions in Latin America and the Caribbean, the UNDP Regional Project on Environment and Development, the Inter-Agency Regional Project on Environmental Education and Training, and the Tierramérica environmental supplement;
- d) Development of the strategy for environmental management information and a report on bioregional planning, in response to decision 8 in the Final Report of the New York Meeting, as well as the ministerial consultation on bioregional planning;

- e) Efforts to address the subject area of water resources management, in response to decision 9 in the Final Report of the New York Meeting.
- f) The Inter-Agency Technical Committee (ITC) coordination mechanism and the incorporation of other international agencies into the ITC, such as ECLAC and the World Bank, in response to decision 10 in the Final Report of the New York Meeting.

10. The participants in the Meeting recognized the importance of the work being conducted by the Inter-Agency Technical Committee to support the decisions of the Forum of Ministers and requested more time to make comments and suggestions on the Report of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee, including its annexes. It was agreed to make 15 October 1999 the deadline for receiving their comments and suggestions.

11. The delegations expressed the need to continue supporting the strengthening of the Regional Office of UNEP to enable it efficiently to carry out its functions as Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers.

12. In that regard and as an example, the delegates referred to the delay in the implementation of the project proposal for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in Protected Areas of Shared Priority Ecoregions in Latin America and the Caribbean, which dates back two years and could lose impetus.

13. In response, Mr. Ricardo Sánchez Sosa clarified that the proposal is taking into account the recommendations of the implementing agencies of the GEF, in the sense that the project was too broad and complex, and that it should therefore be divided in smaller projects of subregional scope, in order to make implementation of the proposed activities more manageable. This project has been reformulated in the light of the different biological diversity conservation initiatives being conducted in the region, as well as the observations made at the First Extraordinary Meeting of the Inter-Sessional Committee, 19 September 1998, New York, and it has been aimed at covering the subregions of Meso-America, the Islands of the Caribbean, the Andean Region and the American Gran Chaco.

14. Some delegations expressed the need to strengthen the Inter-Agency Technical Committee and to develop mechanisms to follow up on and assess its activities, in order to achieve better results in the implementation of activities to meet the environmental priorities of the Forum of Ministers, including support for regional meetings to help identify regional positions in relation to the international environmental agenda and the promotion of private sector participation in environmental protection.

15. The members of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee reaffirmed their institutional commitment to continue supporting implementation of the decisions of the Forum of Ministers and, in particular, the priority subject areas established in the Regional Environmental Action Plan.

16. The delegation of Mexico noted that, in order to obtain concrete results, the regional agenda should focus (through the common action of the Forum of Ministers) on the development of the priority subject areas of the Regional Environmental Action Plan and particularly on the implementation of specific cross-sectional projects, such as natural disaster prevention and conservation and management of tropical forest. As per the implementation of the agenda, Mexico underlined the need to advance more in natural protected areas and bioregional planning.

17. The Chair of the Inter-Sessional Committee noted that not all the lines of action should necessarily end up being projects; and that, consequently, it would be necessary to fine-tune the priority areas suggested by the Ministers and to define an operational

format that would include, among other items, the parties to be responsible for implementation, management indicators, a timetable and the outputs expected in the short term, as well as associated resources.

Agenda Item 4: Report of the Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment on fulfilment of the mandates of the Forum of Ministers and of the twentieth session of the Governing Council of UNEP

18. Under this agenda item, the Secretariat reported on follow-up on the implementation of the decisions adopted during the Eleventh Meeting of Ministers and the First Special Meeting of the Inter-Sessional Committee. The participants in the Meeting took note of the progress achieved and, in particular, of the assistance given to the Central American countries affected by Hurricane Mitch and the development of activities to support the priority subject areas of the Regional Environmental Action Plan.

19. The delegation of Brazil asked the Secretariat for additional information on several of the projects that are being conducted, in order to update the new environment authorities of its Government.

Agenda Item 5: Report of the Agencies of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee on support for the priority subject areas in the Regional Environmental Action Plan

20. Under this agenda item, the representatives of the agencies that form the Inter-Agency Technical Committee, Mr. Pablo Mandeville of UNDP, Mr. Walter Arensberg of IDB, Ms. Alicia Bárcena of ECLAC and Mr. Arsenio Rodríguez of the World Bank, reported on the activities they are carrying out in their respective institutions to support the priorities established by the Forum of Ministers.

Agenda Item 6: Organization of the Twelfth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean and of the Ministerial Consultation on Bioregional Planning

21. Under this agenda item, the delegates discussed various matters regarding the format and topics to be included on the agenda for the Twelfth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers, to be held in Barbados in March 2000, and they agreed on a proposal with three main topics for the ministerial sub-segments of the XII Forum: (a) Politics and policy, (b) Treatment of the international conventions, and (c) Programmatic.

- a) Politics and policy:** this agenda item would establish an opportunity for the Ministers to reflect on management experiences in their respective countries, including aspects linked to budgets and inter-sectoral relations, such as the incorporation of the environmental dimension in national management. This item is also expected to provide an opportunity for commenting on the environmental agendas of the countries of the region and of the ITC agencies, with a view to facilitating and coordinating inter-agency and bilateral collaboration in the context of the lines of action defined by the Ministers.

The expected output, as a conclusion of this segment of the meeting, would be a politically oriented message that could be called "The Barbados Declaration for the New Millennium". The Secretary of the Environment, Natural Resources and Fisheries of Mexico, Ms. Julia Carabias, proposed to prepare a first draft of the declaration. The delegates of the countries and the representatives of the ITC

agencies agreed to provide texts that could facilitate the preparation of the draft declaration prior to the meeting in Barbados.

- b) Treatment of the international conventions:** in this point, topics like the international environmental agenda regarding the Commission on Sustainable Development, climate change, biosafety and the forthcoming session of the Governing Council of UNEP, could be included.
- c) Programmatic:** for this sub-segment, the Delegates suggested the preparation of a progress report on the lines of work of the Inter-Agency Committee to support the agenda of the Forum of Ministers, including the set of projects that form the agenda of the Forum of Ministers, quantitative indicators, timetables, expected outputs and parties responsible for implementing the projects, in order to identify the progress made.

With regard to the projects, attention will be given to the presentation of the contents of the project on Bioregional Planning (See Agenda Item 7) because of its importance to the region.

22. The delegates agreed to indicate two work areas that will – through the development of projects – allow the integration of knowledge, instruments and policies that the Form of Ministers has developed and that are extremely promising in terms of generating synergies between international environmental instruments such as the Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity. These two areas are natural disaster prevention and assistance, and the conservation of the forest cover in the humid tropics.

- a)** In the framework of **natural disaster prevention and assistance**, cooperation with Central America, matters related to reconstruction and environmental factors linked to the prevention and mitigation of damage caused by destructive natural phenomena will be closely examined.
- b)** In the area of **forest cover in the humid tropics**, factors such as the synergy between conventions and forest cover, deforestation rates, forest fires, early warning systems, agricultural practices, monitoring and alternatives for the valuation of tropical forests will be examined.

The delegates suggested that the topics under this agenda item should also be discussed with directors of the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank, through specific negotiations that would allow those financial institutions to incorporate: natural disaster risk analysis in their project portfolios; the impact of their rural development projects on the environmental services of tropical forests and the consequences of agricultural practices that may lead to deforestation and forest fires.

23. Organizational aspects of the Twelfth Forum of Ministers. In relation to this matter, the delegates agreed that the Ministerial segment of the meeting should last no fewer than two days, owing to the numerous developments expected and the in-depth presentations that will be made in relation to several of the projects. The delegates also agreed that the meeting could be divided in three segments: (a) an Expert segment to analyse and prepare topics that will be discussed and agreed upon during the Ministerial segment; (b) a Specialised segment, for the Ministers to discuss concrete themes such as the integrating projects; and (c) a Ministerial segment.

24. For the item on **Politics and policy**, the countries should prepare the specific topics of interest to them. With regard to the preparation of documents for the other items on the agenda, the following agreements were reached:

- a) UNEP and ECLAC will prepare a document on biosafety and hold a previous meeting with experts to review the draft document presented to the delegates (see Agenda Item 7). The meeting would take place at CEPAL, in Santiago, in November 1999.
- b) Ms. Julia Carabias will develop a preliminary support document for the "Millennium Declaration", which will be sent to the Governments and other agencies for comments and changes.
- c) UNDP, through its consultant, Dr. René Castro, will prepare a document for the directors of the ITC agencies presenting the integrating projects (mentioned above in this report).
- d) SEMARNAP of Mexico and UNEP will prepare a document regarding the protection of the forest cover in the humid tropics, with the participation of UNDP and the World Bank.
- e) ECLAC-Santiago will coordinate the preparation of a document on natural disasters, with the participation of UNEP and UNDP.
- f) ECLAC-Santiago, together with CONAMA of Chile, will prepare a document on the development and application of economic instruments for environmental management.

25. The Ministers and delegates expressed their concern at not having had an opportunity to discuss topics related to the preparation of the agenda for the Twelfth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment with the delegation of Barbados at this Fourth Meeting of the Inter-Sessional Committee.

Agenda Item 7: Dialogue on biosafety: progress made in the negotiations for the Biosafety Protocol and the challenges that management of biotechnological safety poses for Latin America and the Caribbean

26. Mr. Juan Mayr, the Environment Minister of Colombia, briefly explained the results achieved during the Fourth Meeting of the Open-ended Working Group (to prepare the draft Biosafety Protocol) and during the First Special Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Cartagena, Colombia, from 12 to 22 February 1999). These meetings were not successful in achieving the preparation and adoption of the text of the Biosafety Protocol, since there were differences among various interest groups. Mr. Mayr reported on a forthcoming Summary Session of the First Extraordinary Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Biological Diversity Convention, to be held in Montreal, Canada, from 24 to 28 January 2000. The Summary Session will be preceded by informal regional and interregional meetings, on 20-22 January. For that reason, Minister Mayr indicated how important it was for the Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean to participate in that meeting to ensure its success.

27. In that context, Ms. Alicia Bárcena, ECLAC representative, referred to the technical report on biotechnological policy, law and management in Latin America and the Caribbean, which ECLAC and UNEP are developing. As part of this item, the organization of a seminar was proposed dealing with institutional capacity of countries in the region to

conduct biotechnology risk analysis within the framework of a biosecurity protocol. The seminar will be held at the end of 1999.

28. To review the preliminary draft report (which was delivered to the participants at the Fourth Meeting of the Inter-Sessional Committee), it was proposed that a technical workshop be held next November (date pending) at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago, Chile. The experts that will be invited to this workshop would attend in their individual capacity. Ms. Bárcena also requested the Delegates to send in their comments on the preliminary draft report no later than October 20th through the Secretariat. The delegates and representatives of the agencies expressed their support for the work carried out by UNEP and ECLAC and asked that the results of the workshop be included on the agenda of the Twelfth Ministerial Meeting.

29. The Delegates debated the role of the Development Banks as well as their links with the Forum of Ministers. Some delegations proposed preparing a document ahead of Barbados detailing the needs and vision of the LAC Environment Ministers. Mexico will take the lead in the preparation of such a document, which can be discussed in Barbados and then form the basis of a meeting with the Banks.

Agenda Item 8: Other Matters

30. Ms. Julio Carabias Lillo, Secretary of Environment, Natural Resources and Fisheries of Mexico, proposed that means be explored to include the topic of environment on the agenda of the forthcoming Ibero-American Summit of Presidents and Heads of State, to be held in Havana, Cuba, in November 1999.

31. Mr. Enrique Provencio of the Mexican delegation reported on the UNDP/European Union initiative on environment and poverty and the recent meeting held in New York on the topic. He commented that the document developed for the above meeting, which contains practical recommendations to combating poverty and protecting the environment, is currently being re-drafted and will be distributed to delegates in due course. He also reported on the Ibero-American Summit in November 1999, in Cuba, and the need to look for ways of inserting environmental issues into the agenda and final declaration, through each country's respective Foreign Minister.

32. Peru informed on the fifth Desertification meeting, which has taken place in Lima shortly before, and the need expressed by participants of that meeting for technical assistance at the national level for the completion of desertification reports.

33. The delegation of Brazil reported on the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification, which will be held from 15 to 26 November 1999, and requested the participation of the Ministries of the Environment, at the highest level, to this important event, so as to help with the implementation of the Convention.

34. The delegate of Bolivia reported on the work of the Group of Ministers on Environment and Forest (Amazon region) and the three meetings that had taken place in this regard. The document produced by this group will be circulated to participants for their comments. Amongst the contents of the report is a call for the countries of the region to sign the Kyoto Protocol.

35. The delegates endorsed the comment made by Mr. René Castro, former Environment Minister of Costa Rica, regarding the excellent performance of Mr. Gonzalo Galdos as President of the Forum of Ministers and Chair of the Inter-Sessional Committee.

Agenda Item 9: Approval of the Final Report of the Meeting

36. The Rapporteur presented an oral summary of the items dealt with during the Fourth Meeting of the Inter-Sessional Committee, and the President reiterated the vote of confidence expressed by the delegates for the Secretariat and the Rapporteur to prepare the Final Report of the Meeting, in accordance with the time periods mentioned in Item 2, paragraph 7, of this report. The delegates, in turn, agreed to send the Secretariat their comments and suggestions on the various reports being prepared (the report on the Fourth Meeting of the Inter-Sessional Committee, the technical report on biosafety and the report of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee and its annexes), in accordance with the dates approved.

37. The comments received by the Secretariat were incorporated into the final version of the Report, which was sent to the delegates on Monday, 15 November 1999.

Agenda Item 10: Closing of the Meeting

38. The Inter-Sessional Committee concluded its work at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, 2 October 1999. Mr. Shafqat Kakakhel, Deputy Executive Director of UNEP, made farewell comments on behalf of Mr. Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of UNEP. Subsequently, Mr. Gonzalo Galdos, President of the National Environment Council of Peru and President of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, reiterated his gratitude to the Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers and to the members of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee for their arduous work to achieve the objectives of the meeting, and he declared the Fourth Regular Meeting of the Inter-Sessional Committee of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean officially closed.



Annex I

List of Participants

I. GOVERNMENTAL DELEGATIONS

Argentina

Sr. Mario Maini
Director Nacional de Fortalecimiento Institucional
Secretaría de Recursos Naturales y Desarrollo
Sustentable
Presidencia de la República
San Martín No. 459, Segundo Piso
1004 Buenos Aires, Argentina
Phones: (+54-11) 348-8448/46/44/50
Fax: (+54-11) 348-8443/8449
E-mail: mmaini@sernah.gov.ar
Web Site: www.sernah.gov.ar

Sra. Andrea Brusco
Asesora
Secretaría de Recursos Naturales y Desarrollo
Sustentable
Presidencia de la República
San Martín No. 459, Segundo Piso
1004 Buenos Aires, Argentina
Phones: (+54-11) 4348-8456
Fax: (+54-11) 4348-8443
E-mail: abrusco@sernah.gov.ar
Web Site: www.sernah.gov.ar

Sr. José García-Ghirelli
Director Medio Ambiente
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
Buenos Aires, Argentina
Phones: (+54-11) 4819-7000
Fax: (+54-11) 4819-7507

Bolivia

Sr. Sergio Jáuregui Ocampo
Asesor General
Despacho del Sr. Ministro
Ministerio del Desarrollo Sostenible y Planificación
Av. Arce 2147
La Paz, Bolivia
Phones: (+591-2) 363-331/372-063
Fax: (+591-2) 392-892 / 391-071
E-mail: sjauregui@coord.rds.org.bo

Brazil

Sr. Marden de Melo Barboza
Gestor Governamental
Ministério do Meio Ambiente
Assessoria Internacional
Esplanada dos Ministérios, Bloco B, 5º. Andar, Sala
535
CP 70068900 Brasilia, D.F., Brasil
Phones: (+55-61) 317-1236, 317-1146
Fax: (+55-61) 322-8690
E-mail: marden.barboza@mma.gov.br

Sr. Joaquim Arnaldo de Paiva Oliveira
Consejero
Embajada de Brasil en Perú
Av. José Pardo 850
Miraflores, Lima 18
Perú
Phones: (+51-1) 421-5660
Fax: (+51-1) 445-2421
E-mail: braslim@telematic.edu.pe

Chile

Sr. Sergio Galilea Ocón
Ministro de Bienes Nacionales
Ministerio de Bienes Nacionales
Juan Antonio Ríos No. 6
Santiago, Chile

Phones: (+56-2) 633-68-94
Fax: (+56-2) 633-6521
E-mail: sgalileao@mbienes.cl

Sr. Carlos Piña Riquelme
Jefe de la Unidad de Coordinación Internacional
Comisión Nacional del Medio Ambiente (CONAMA)
Obispo Donoso 6
Providencia
Santiago, Chile

Phones: (+56-2) 240-5600
Fax: (+56-2) 244-1262
E-mail: cpina@conama.cl

Colombia

Sr. Juan Mayr Maldonado
Ministro
Ministerio del Medio Ambiente
Calle 37 No. 8-40, 4º piso
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Phones: (+57-1) 288-9897, 340-6289, (Conmutador) 288-6877
Fax: (+57-1) 288-9892, 288-9860
E-mail: j_mayr_m@hotmail.com

Cuba

Sr. Fabio Juan Fajardo Moros
Viceministro
Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología y Medio Ambiente
Industria y San José,
Capitolio Nacional
10200 - La Habana, Cuba

Phones: (+53-7) 57-0621
Fax: (+53-7) 57-0600
E-mail: fabio@ceniai.inf.cu

El Salvador

Sra. Ana María Majano
Ministra
Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales
(MARN)
Alameda Roosevelt y 55 Av. Norte
Torre El Salvador
Edif. IPSFA 3er. Nivel
San Salvador, El Salvador

Phones: (+503) 260-8875, 260-8876
Fax: (+503) 260-3092
E-mail: ministro@marn.gob.sv

Sr. Jorge Ernesto Quezada Díaz
Unidad de Patrimonio Natural
Especialista en Biodiversidad
Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales
(MARN)
Alameda Roosevelt y 55 Av. Norte
Torre El Salvador, Edificio IPSFA, 4º Nivel
San Salvador, El Salvador

Phones: (+503) 260-8900
Fax: (+503) 260-3114
E-mail: patrimonio@marn.gob.sv ó
pepe@ejje.com

Honduras

Ing. Ernesto Bondy Reyes
Sub-Secretario de Recursos Naturales y Energía
Secretaría de Recursos Naturales y Ambiente
Blvd. Centroamérica, Ave. F.A.O
Edificio Principal: Despacho de Recursos
Frente a la Cámara de Comercio
Tegucigalpa, M.D.C., Honduras, CA

Phones: (+504) 231-1918
Fax: (+504) 232-7848
E-mail: direner@sdnhon.org.hn

Mexico

M. en C. Julia Carabias Lillo
Secretaria
Secretaría de Medio Ambiente, Recursos Naturales y
Pesca (SEMARNAP)
Anillo Periférico Sur No. 4209
Fracc. Jardines en la Montaña
CP 14210 – México, D.F., México

Phones: (+52) 5628-0604 / 06
Fax: (+52) 5628-0643 / 44
E-mail: jcarabias@semarnap.gob.mx

Sr. Enrique Provencio
Presidente
Instituto Nacional de Ecología (SEMARNAP)
Av. Revolución 1425, Nivel 38
Col. Tlacopac, San Angel
CP 01040 – México, D.F., México

Phones: (+52) 5624-3400 al 03
Fax: (+52) 5624-3588
E-mail: eproven@ine.gob.mx

Lic. José Luis Samaniego
Coordinador / Coordinación de Asuntos Internacionales
Secretaría de Medio Ambiente, Recursos Naturales y
Pesca (SEMARNAP)
Anillo Periférico Sur No. 4209 – 6º piso
Fraccionamiento Jardines en la Montaña
CP 14210 – México, D.F., México

Phones: (+52) 5628-0650, 5628-0651
Fax: (+52-5) 628-0653
E-mail:
jsamanierno@buzon.semarnap.gob.mx

Peru

Ing. Gonzalo Galdos Jiménez
Presidente
Consejo Nacional del Ambiente (CONAM)
Av. San Borja Norte No. 226, San Borja
Lima 41, Perú

Phones: (+51-1) 225-5370
Fax: (+51-1) 225-5369
E-mail: ggaldos@conam.gob.pe

Sr. Paul Remy Oyague
Secretario Ejecutivo
Consejo Nacional del Ambiente (CONAM)
Av. San Borja Norte No. 226, San Borja
Lima 41, Perú

Phones: (+51-1) 225-5370
Fax: (+51-1) 225-5369
E-mail: premy@conam.gob.pe

Sr. Mariano Castro Sánchez Moreno
Director de Gestión Transectorial y Territorial
Consejo Nacional del Ambiente (CONAM)
Av. San Borja Norte No. 226, San Borja
Lima 41, Perú

Phones: (+51-1) 225-5370
Fax: (+51-1) 225-5369
E-mail: mariano@conam.gob.pe
Web Site: www.conam.gob.pe

Sr. Eduardo Pérez del Solar Marcenaro
Primer Secretario
Dpto. de Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
Jr. Lampa 535-545
Lima 1, Perú

Phones: (+51-1) 428-5751
Fax: (+51-1) 428-5751
E-mail: dma05@rree.gob.pe

II. UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION

A. Agencies

The World Bank (WB)

Sr. Arsenio Rodríguez Mercado
Manager UNEP-World Bank Co-operative Program
Sector Management Unit
Environmentally and Socially Sustainable
Development
Latin America and the Caribbean Region
1818 H. Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. – 20433 -U. S. A.

Phones: (+202) 458-7699
Fax: (+202) 676-9373
E-mail: arodriguez1@worldbank.org

United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)

Sr. Norman Bellino
Representante de la FAO en Perú
Manuel Almenara 328
Urbanización Aurora, Miraflores
Lima 18, Perú

Phones: 4472641/6690, 4462985
Fax: 4472640
E-mail: FOA-PER@field.fao.org
Web Site: www.fao.org ó
www.ric.fao.org

B. Programmes

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Sra. Kim Bolduc
Coordinadora Residente del Sistema de las
Naciones Unidas en Perú
Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el
Desarrollo
Av. Carnaval y Moreyra 590
Lima 27 – Perú

Phones: (51+1) 440-4758
Fax: (51+1) 440-4166
E-mail: kbolduc@pnudpe.org.pe

Sr. Pablo Mandeville
Asesor Principal
Grupo de Políticas y Programas Regionales
One United Nations Plaza – DC 1, Room 2282
New York, N.Y. – 10017 U. S. A.

Phones: (+212) 906-5412
Fax: (+212) 906-5363
E-mail: pmandevi@undp.org

Sr. René Castro
Consultor
Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo
11 Chilton Street
Cambridge, MA 02138, USA

Phones: (+617) 576-0767
Fax: (+52) 5-250-2524
E-mail: castro_rene@hotmail.com
ó
castro_rene@alumni.ksg.harvard.edu

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Sr. Shafqat Kakakhel
Director Ejecutivo Adjunto
Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio
Ambiente
Oficina del Director Ejecutivo Adjunto
P.O. Box 30552
Nairobi, Kenya

Phones: (+254-2) 62-3714, 62-
3774
Fax: (+254-2) 62-3070
E-mail:
shafqat.kakakhel@unep.org

C. Commissions and Secretaries

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Sra. Alicia Bárcena
Directora
División de Medio Ambiente y Asentamientos Humanos
Av. Dag Hammarskjold s/n, Vitacura
Casilla 179-D
Santiago, Chile

Phones: (+56-2) 210-2291
Fax: (+56-2) 208-0484, 208-
1946
E-mail: abarcena@eclac.cl

Sr. Roberto P. Guimaraes
Oficial de Asuntos Ambientales
División de Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo
Av. Dag Hammarskjold s/n, Vitacura
Casilla 179-D
Santiago, Chile

Phones: (+56-2) 210-2154/ 210-
2000
Fax: (+56-2) 208-0252, 208-
1946
E-mail: rguimaraes@eclac.cl

III. INTER-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

Sr. Walter W. Arensberg
Jefe
División de Medio Ambiente
1300 New York Ave. N.W.
Washington, D.C. – 20577 U. S. A.

Phones: (+202) 623-1795
Fax: (+202) 623-1786
E-mail: waltera@iadb.org

