



VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2
JUNE 2006

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER

I. EVENT

FIRST INTER-AMERICAN MEETING OF MINISTERS AND HIGH LEVEL AUTHORITIES ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The First Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High Level Authorities on Sustainable Development will be held in Bolivia on October 5-6, 2006. The ministerial meeting will address three issues: integrated water resources management, natural disaster risk reduction, and supporting local actions for sustainable agriculture, forestry and tourism. The "cross-cutting" themes to be addressed include good governance, meaningful public participation, the inclusion of indigenous and local communities, and gender equality. A series of preparatory meetings concludes in June 2006, and the background reports and recommendations will be available at www.oas.org/dsd.

To support public participation, in May 2006 the DSD launched a Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples Virtual Consultation Forum with the cooperation of the Summits of the Americas Department, the Development Gateway Foundation and the Government of Bolivia. The ongoing virtual consultation will remain open until September 30th, 2006, to:

- 1) Mobilize civil society and indigenous peoples support for the preparation of the Santa Cruz Declaration;
- 2) Build consensus positions and recommendations among civil society and indigenous peoples for follow-up activities on the themes to be analyzed during the meeting; and
- 3) Benefit from best practice efforts, including advocacy of civil society and indigenous peoples work on the themes to be analyzed during the meeting.

In May 2006, the DSD together with the Art Museum of the Americas held a contest for the design of a logo for the meeting. The OAS national offices were actively engaged in the outreach efforts for this contest which involved hundreds of universities and educational centers in the Hemisphere. From the many submissions received, the jury selected the logo designed by Ms. Nohora Patricia Rodriguez from Colombia.

II. DSD NEWS

PROGRAM ON NATURAL HAZARDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION LAUNCHED BY THE DSD

In May 2006, the DSD launched its "Natural Hazards and Climate Change Adaptation Program". The focus of the OAS in this area will be to reduce the risks associated with climate-related natural hazards by helping countries and communities to increase their resilience to natural disasters. The program includes promoting safer construction of public buildings; improving zoning, land use management and planning; supporting innovative financial mechanisms related to risk transfer; strengthening infrastructure management; and mainstreaming the economic and developmental rationale of risk reduction. The OAS/DSD also announced the establishment of the Inter-American Network for Disaster Mitigation (INDM), to improve collaboration among international and regional organizations in the field of natural disasters risk reduction, relief and recovery. The INDM is built on previous collaboration efforts with the International Monetary Fund, the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank and the Pan-American Health Organization. For further information visit the OAS/DSD website: <http://www.oas.org/dsd/Nat-Dis-Proj-Sum.htm>

SIDS SUSTAINABLE ENERGY EVENT AT CSD-14 HIGHLIGHTS DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY

The 14th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-14), held in New York on May 1-12 2006 was devoted mostly to the theme of sustainable energy. Within this framework, one day was designated to address the energy challenges faced by Small Island Developing States (SIDS), providing a forum to monitor the progress of policies and measures related to energy resources. The DSD organized and participated in several events related to these themes with representatives of OAS Member States, including a side event dedicated to the Global Sustainable Energy Island Initiative (GSEII), a partnership led by the DSD, the Climate Institute, and the Energy and Security Group. During this side event, the Ambassadors of Dominica and St. Kitts and Nevis to the OAS stressed the ongoing efforts to catalyze the development and use of renewables and energy efficiency through policy and regulatory reforms.

DSD TO ASSESS BIOMASS TO ENERGY POTENTIAL IN ST. KITTS AND NEVIS

After centuries of sugar production, in 2005 the industry ceased operations in St. Kitts and Nevis. In order to respond to the effects of the industry's absence, the

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DSD will engage in a comprehensive national assessment of the potential for converting biomass materials including sugarcane and other crops to energy through its Renewable Energy Initiative in the Americas (REIA). In the context of the growing global energy crisis, the analysis will consider a variety of existing and potential feed stocks for conversion to electricity and bio-fuels that could include ethanol and bio-diesel. The analysis will strive to identify the most cost-effective and socially-beneficial solution using one or more feed stocks to generate energy products. At the conclusion of the feasibility study, the OAS will work with St. Kitts and Nevis through its GSEII partnership to actively promote and secure investments for the development of this biomass strategy.

NATIONAL WORKSHOPS ON ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS OF FREE TRADE IN THE ANDEAN REGION

The DSD recently hosted national workshops in Peru and Colombia to discuss challenges and opportunities in trade and environment and to peer review with stakeholders from different sectors the preliminary results of the draft Environmental Assessments of Free Trade in the Andean Region. The workshops were conducted in collaboration with local counterparts and with support of USAID and USEPA. The assessments examine the extent to which domestic markets are likely to change as trade barriers are lifted and what environmental consequences can be anticipated from these economically driven effects. The model also examines regulatory effects and how legal and institutional frameworks can address these changes. The analysis is intended to provide member states with capacity-building and realistic policy options for sustainable trade. During the workshop in Colombia, Eduardo Muñoz, Colombia's Vice-minister of Foreign Trade, highlighted the importance of capacity-building efforts to address trade related challenges, including the enforcement of environmental laws. The preliminary results of the assessments are available at the DSD website: <http://www.oas.org/dsd/EnvironmentLaw/trade/environmentasses2.htm>

EXPERTS MEET IN CHILE TO DISCUSS REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF HIGH ANDEAN WETLANDS

Representatives from countries enclosing High Andean wetlands and related areas, together with experts from international and regional organizations, met for four days in Iquique, Chile, to formulate a "Regional Strategy for Conservation and Sustainable Use of High Andean Wetlands" within the framework of the Ramsar Convention. Richard Huber, Chief of the DSD Biodiversity and Land Management Division, stressed that this strategy is a guiding framework for regional cooperation among the countries involved for the next decade. "Its purpose is the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands and their complexes in páramos, jalca, puna, and other High Andean ecosystems defined as wetlands by the Ramsar Convention, located within the Andes, said Huber. The experts gathered in Chile prepared a proposal for funding by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) of a 5-year, US\$12 million project that will enable countries in the Andean Range to complete and implement the strategy that will significantly enhance conservation of the high Andean wetlands. The proposed project will also benefit a complex páramo ecosystem in Costa Rica.

III. PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FIELD

BIOCULTURAL CONSERVATION IN THE SURINAME-BRAZIL BORDER

Since 2004, the OAS/DSD, together with the Amazon Conservation Team (ACT), has been executing the Suriname Brazil Biocultural Conservation Project, a 3-year initiative funded by the OAS FEMCIDI fund. The project promotes conservation and enhancement of the physical and cultural environment (forests, rivers, and heritage), sustainable production of non-timber forest products, ethno-education, capacity

building for natural resource management, and healthcare security of the Trio and Wayana tribes populating the Southern Suriname/Brazil border region.

Marco Alcaráz, the project manager for this initiative, and Kevin De Cuba, a DSD Energy Specialist, recently visited Paramaribo, Kwamalasamutu (the Trio capital), and surrounding villages to:

- Assess the state of project implementation.
- Meet with project stakeholders and counterparts, including international organizations active in the region for coordination and implementation of a second phase of this project to be funded by the GEF.
- Perform an assessment of renewable energy options for the project site.

During their recent visit, the DSD experts undertook field work in Kwamalasamutu along the border, including a meeting with area residents to review general living conditions, the school, the main meeting hall, and the traditional health clinic, which was built and managed with support from the project. The DSD team provided assistance in mapping and land management techniques and will examine the potential to extend support in the area to:

- Build a larger clinic and a hospital with capabilities for diagnosis and patient hospitalization.
- Improve access and rights to land given population growth and the need to protect surrounding natural areas from external threats.
- Prevent damage of invasive species to agricultural produce, such as the leaf cutter ants attacking cassava crops.

During the mission, the team also joined the Trio in a cross-jungle expedition to recently discovered ancient petroglyphs at Werephai, a sacred Trio site being prospected for ecotourism potential. The team also visited the small village of Alalapadu, where the project is currently supporting a sustainable Brazil nut harvesting and processing operation that provides valuable income to the inhabitants.

IV. INTERVIEW – NOHORA PATRICIA RODRÍGUEZ

Rodriguez, a 26-year old Colombian, designed official logo for the Meeting of Ministers and High Level Authorities on Sustainable Development. She studied graphic design because of the power to communicate ideas and beliefs in areas such as sustainable development. For Rodríguez, sustainability is a balance in the use of elements just as in designing an image. She firmly believes even graphic designers can contribute to sustainable development: "Everyone should do their part in caring for the resources that will guarantee the survival of generations to follow our path in American soil."

V. MEET OUR STAFF – MARCO ALCARÁZ



Marco is a Biologist from the Universidad Autónoma de México (UNAM) with a master in Geography from Pennsylvania State University. Since 2002, Marco has been involved mainly with DSD climate change programs in the Caribbean, but also providing support to the REIA initiative and he is currently managing the Suriname and Brazil Bio-conservation Project and the Caribbean Sustainable Land Management Project. Before joining OAS/DSD, Marco worked in conservation and environmental planning with the Ecology Institute at UNAM and with the ICF Consulting, where he supported updating the annual US Greenhouse Gas Inventory. Marco says that from his experience working at the DSD he has gained better perspective of the meaning of development cooperation for poverty alleviation and sustainability in the Americas.



The Organization of American States (OAS) is the world's oldest regional organization, dating back to the First International Conference of American States, held in Washington, D.C., in 1889. The Charter of the OAS was signed in Bogotá in 1948. The OAS currently has 35 member States and has granted permanent observer status to over 48 states. The OAS is the region's premier forum for multilateral dialogue and concerted action, it brings together the countries of the Western Hemisphere to strengthen cooperation and advance common interests.

Through its Department of Sustainable Development (DSD), the General Secretariat of the OAS (GS/OAS) fulfills member States mandates by promoting the implementation of policies, technical cooperation projects and partnerships that translate sustainable development and environmental protection goals into concrete action. A key objective entails integrating environmental priorities set by OAS member States within mainstream development, poverty alleviation and good governance-related policies.

DSD Editorial Advisory Committee: Claudia de Windt, Beatriz Ferro-Santos, Juan Cruz Monticelli, Isis Marquez, Oscar Ceville, Michella Miletto, Jean Marc Racine.

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