

ICSU-LAC/076/10-30/08/10

Regional workshop “Facilitating the dialogue among national, regional and international data bases on biodiversity”

August 16th to 18th, 2010 - Buenos Aires, Argentina

Executive Report

The Regional workshop “Facilitating the dialogue among national, regional and international data bases on biodiversity” took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from August 16th to 18th 2010, at the *Museo Argentino de Ciencias Naturales “Bernardino Rivadavia”*.

A joint initiative of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the International Council for Science, CONICET Argentina and BIOTA FAPESP, it had as its main objective to bring together specialists and/or representatives of different biodiversity institutes of Latin America and the Caribbean to develop a regional undertaking for facilitating the dialogue among national, regional and international data bases on biodiversity. The workshop aimed at starting a dialogue leading to a consensus and to the identification of joint initiatives in a regional framework.

The workshop built upon two previous initiatives of ICSU-LAC. The first is the science plan in biodiversity that will be published later this year under the title *Biodiversity Knowledge, Research Scope and Priority Areas: An Assessment for Latin America and the Caribbean* (<http://www.icsu-lac.org/icsuzone/priorityareas.html>). The second is the *Policy Brief Biodiversity and human well-being in Latin America and the Caribbean. A multi-sectoral contribution to the science-policy interface*, which is the result of an extensive multi-sectoral consultation on the relationship between biodiversity and human well-being in Latin America and the Caribbean, which gathered the perspectives of different social actors. (<http://www.icsu-lac.org/diversitas/diversitas.html>).

The decisions of this regional workshop will be forwarded to the International Conference “Getting Post 2010 Biodiversity Targets Right” organized by Biota FAPESP, to be held from 11 to 15 December 2010 in Campos de Jordão, Brazil, where similar issues will be discussed at the Symposium I – National and International Interoperability among Biodiversity Information Systems. They will also be sent to all ICSU-LAC National Members and forwarded to other high level regional meetings.

The meeting was opened by the Director of the Argentine Museum of Natural Sciences “Benardino Rivadavia”, Edgardo Romero, followed by short presentations of Jorge Tezón, from CONICET Argentina and Alice Abreu, Director of ICSU-LAC introducing the main issues and the objectives of the meeting.

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Regional Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean: José Antonio de la Peña (Mexico) (Chair), Tara Dasgupta (Jamaica), Patricio Felmer (Chile), Mahabir Gupta (Panama), Enrique P. Lessa (Uruguay), Arturo Martinez (Argentina), Carmen Samayoa (Guatemala), Elena Vigil (Cuba). *Ex Officio:* Jerson Lima Silva (Brazilian Academy of Sciences), Sérgio Pastrana (ICSU Executive Board), Patricia Ocampo-Thomason (ICSU Secretariat), Alice Abreu (ICSU-LAC).



They were followed by Carlos Joly, presenting the BIOTA FAPESP experience in the last ten years and showing the importance of this data base for policy makers of the State of São Paulo.

The afternoon session, chaired by Arturo Martinez of CONICET, Argentina, was dedicated to the presentations of the different national information systems and/or data bases in biodiversity, and included the following presenters: Martín Ramirez, chair of the *Sistema Nacional de Datos Biológicos* (National System of Biological Data) of Argentina; Francisco Squeo, from the *Instituto de Ecología y Biodiversidad de Chile* (Institute of Ecology and Biodiversity of Chile); Patricia Kolleff, of CONABIO Mexico; Monica Vera of the Alexandre Humboldt Institute of Colombia; Francisco Cejas of CENBIO Cuba and David Oren, chair of Biodiversity Dept. of the Ministry of Science and Technology of Brazil. Enrique Lessa from the Universidad de la Republica of Uruguay and Mahabir Gupta, from Panama, informed about the efforts related to biodiversity collections and data bases in their respective countries. Finally Alba Puig and Esteban Jobbagy presented the experience of two important international initiatives, respectively, the IABIN, the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network and the IAI, the Inter American Institute of Global Change Research, in the area of biodiversity.

The second day of the meeting was dedicated to a lively and substantive discussion of the achievements, challenges and necessary actions related to the use and management of biodiversity information systems and biodiversity data bases in Latin America and the Caribbean. Among others, the participants discussed issues related to how to promote the generation and management of information related to ecosystems, genes and microorganisms, which are still very scarce but very necessary for all countries of the region. Another issue discussed was how to potentiate the production and compilation of information on wild populations and develop the implementation of ecological observatories that would allow regional analyses.

A consensus was then reached regarding the main recommendations of the workshop.

Recommendations

1. The participants of the workshop agreed on the importance of a regional initiative in Latin America and the Caribbean that enlarges and strengthens the existing information on biodiversity and contributes to the definition of priorities for the region.
2. The participants recognized the existence of important international initiatives to which the regional initiative should contribute to complement and enhance;
3. The need of a harmonious development of the exchange of information in the region. To achieve this there should be the promotion of cooperation with those countries with larger needs in this issue.

4. The following actions were identified:

- In spite of the efforts of many countries in the region to digitalize their biological collections, it is important to continue with this activities and it was recommended that the governments should defined a target to be adopted by the countries of the region;
- Stimulate and strengthen the scientific interchange and capacity building to contribute to the participation of the scientists of the region in regional and international networks. As well as to facilitate the use and analysis of the biodiversity information systems for the generation of new knowledge and for the development of human well-being.
- To promote the convergent and complementary use of the existing biodiversity information in the region. To achieve this, researchers should be encouraged to use the existing national and multilateral instruments, and new stimulus should be generated.
- Taking into account that the information on biodiversity of the region is often found outside the region, repatriation programs of biodiversity information should be created and stimulated.
- To enlarge and strengthen the information on marine biodiversity of Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Stimulate a better understanding of the shared ecosystem services in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Buenos Aires, August 18th, 2010



Alice Abreu
Director

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