



Hub Notes

Regional Environmental Hub for Central America and The Caribbean

Regional Newsletter

Issue N° 22 - May/June 2008

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Conservation & Wildlife Protection

Earth Day celebrations in the Region

April 22. In 1962 Gaylord Nelson a Democratic Senator from Wisconsin focused his thinking on environmental issues. He organized a large demonstration to preserve the environment.

On April 22nd, 1970 more than 20 million Americans marched in their communities, universities and schools with this solemn goal. This event was named "Earth Day".

In celebration of Earth Day, the U.S. Embassy organized a tour onboard the Marcus Langseth (Columbia University) by 25 students from the University of Costa Rica School of Geology to learn about the vessel's contribution to geophysical research - on this particular mission, volcanic activity in Costa Rica.

Celebration in Costa Rica. Embassy Economic Officer Mark Kissel and Embassy staff noted that



Marcus Langseth Research Vessel

the visit touched upon many topics linked to broadening knowledge of Earth sciences U.S. Government support through the National Science Foundation for marine geophysical and bathymetric research; management of Langseth missions by Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University; close scientific collaboration between the University of Costa Rica (UCR) and US academics from a variety of US institutions; and, most significantly, the experiences of UCR students installing seismographs in Costa Rica for the mission and participating on the research expedition

The Embassy wishes to thank Jeff Rupert (Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory), Steven Holbrook (Wyoming University and Head scientist), Percy Denyer (University of Costa Rica School of Geology Director) and James O'Loughlin (Mission Captain) for making this opportunity possible.

Celebration in Guatemala. April 8. Hundreds of students from rural schools in Huehuetenango marched to demand natural resources conservation, water protection and a solution to pollution and deforestation.

Source - El Mundo (Spain)

Prensa Libre (Guatemala)

U.S. Embassy San José press release

Protected areas in Guatemala

April 3. Environmental authorities pointed out that between 60-70% of protected areas are endangered; the priority is to recover the invaded area.

According to official reports, those invasions are perpetrated by drug, weapon, wood or person smugglers. These invasions affect the habitat of large species, like jaguars, boars and tapirs.



The first action will try to move out families invaded areas in Petén, Izabal and Alta Verapaz, around a thousand families are living there.

Daniel Dominguez, from the Guatemalan army declares that once the invaders are out, the recuperation of that area will be achieved.

Source - Prensa Libre (Guatemala)

Environmental education in El Salvador

April 3. In the Third Meeting of the Caribbean Constituency of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Bahamas has committed to build political support and financial sustainability for protected national treasures in the region.

This commitment was made by Ronald Thompson, Ambassador for the Environment and permanent secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister, as he officially opened the GEF meeting.

"As your representative on the GEF council, The Bahamas would encourage all members of the constituency work to further our efforts to maximize our resources to achieve sustainable environment for generations to come," Thompson said.

Source - La Prensa Gráfica (El Salvador)

E-junk in Costa Rica

May 20. Costa Rica accumulates more than 13.000 tons of electronic junk (e-junk) that impact the environment. The country does not have special treatment centers for this kind of junk.

Photocopiers, monitors, scanners, filters, toners, batteries, cell phones are among the products that at the end of their lifespan are dumped like normal trash.

These gadgets have heavy metals like lead, mercury and cadmium, which can affect public health. The Ministries of Health and Environment (MINAE) are aware of this situation, but they are not working together to launch projects to avoid this pollution.

"There is neither recollection nor recycling programs," said Eugenio Androvetto from the Human Environment Protection Office.

The substances mentioned above are known carcinogenics or may affect organs such as brain, kidneys and liver.

Marco Chinchilla, from MINAE's Solid Waste Management Office said that the 13.000 tons were

calculated using the total electronic equipment imports between 1996 and 2006.

María Guzmán from MINAE said that they are working with the Ministry of Health developing a new system in which the e-junk products will receive treatment from the importers. "This decree will dictate the creation of environmental units that will be responsible to look after the importers on their imports," Guzmán added.

Importers will have to register their imports and keep track of the product at the end of its lifespan. Each environmental unit will be integrated by several importers which will seek the proper e-junk recollection, recycling and final disposition.

Source -La Nación (Costa Rica)

Energy

Atomic Energy in Dominican Republic

May 12. A \$300.000 fund in the Dominican Republic will support the development of alternative nuclear energy supplies, through a program that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Ramón Quiñones, Dominican Ambassador to Vienna, offered this information in a press release at the National Energy Commission (CNE).



The Cancer Institute will have the lead with advice from the IAEA and in coordination with Public Health, CNE and the private sector companies.

Source - Listín Diario (Dominican Republic)

Fossil fuels in El Salvador

May 21. Half of the energy is provided by thermic generators that work with bunker fuel. The other half of the energy demand in El Salvador is supplied with geothermic energy and hydro.

Due to the continuing increase of fossil fuels, today one megawatt produced by thermic energy costs more than \$170, one year ago was around \$112.

"Fifty percent of the energy is been generated using thermic technology. The hydro projects are supplying 23% and the other 27% is covered by geothermic," explained Federico Colorado president of ANEP and member of CEL's board.

"This situation will change during the rainy season, when the dams will retain lots of reservoir, and the generation capacity will be at its

maximum. But the dependence on fossil fuel is important." Colorado added.

Source - La Prensa Gráfica (El Salvador)

Energy

Coal-based energy plant in Guatemala

May 7. With a \$650 million investment and a 300 MW capacity, Jaguar Energy will install a coal based energy plant in Escuintla.

The company, who will supply Unión Fenosa, plans to begin the construction this year, and the plant will be operational on 2012 with a 15 year contract.

Carlos Colom, President of the National Electric Energy Commission (CNEE), said that with this investment, CNEE will save around \$50 million in bunker fuel.



The coal will be imported from Canada or the U.S.

Source -Prensa Libre (Guatemala)

St. Kitts will buy renewable energy from Nevis

April 18. The geothermic exploration project on Nevis received another boost, when Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance, Sustainable Development, Infrastructure and Technology in the Federal Government of St. Kitts and Nevis, Nigel Carty, told that St. Kitts stood ready to purchase renewable energy from Nevis.

"I am prepared to say that the government of St. Kitts and Nevis stands 100 percent behind this operation and stands ready to anytime, to become involved in any power purchase arrangement between West Indies Power and the Federal government of St. Kitts and Nevis," Carty said.

Source - caribbeanetnews.com

Nicaragua will increase energy production

April 15. Nicaragua plans to generate in four years 400 additional MW in renewable energy. This



initiative is supported by German, American, Spanish and Nicaraguan public funds.

One of the projects is led by a group of investors from the US and Germany, who invested \$90 million to generate the first 40 MW using wind power in the Rivas Department (south), announced the Minister of Energy and Mines, Emilio Rapaccioli.

There is another group (Spanish – German) that is working with hydro projects, investing around \$50 million. The Canadian company Polaris will develop a geothermic project (30 MW) between 2009 and 2010, Rapaccioli added.

Source - Prensa Libre (Guatemala)

Indian company to invest \$250 million in Suriname palm oil project

May 27. A large business group from India, Food, Fats and Fertilizers Ltd. (FFF), said it will invest up to \$250 million to develop a palm oil project in Suriname. FFF officials have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Surinamese government to establish a palm oil factory.



The documents were signed by Suriname's minister of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries, Kermechend Raghoebarsing, FFF vice-

president Sanjay Goenka and India's ambassador to Suriname Ashok Kumar Sharma. While the government will provide 40,000 hectares of land for the project, FFF said it will invest \$250 million.

Raghoebarsing noted that with the implementation of this project Suriname and India are not only strengthening bilateral cooperation but also economic cooperation.

The project is aiming at revitalizing Suriname's once thriving palm oil industry and boost export revenues for this Caricom member state. The investors are aiming at developing the project for a period of nearly 15 years before it is completed. FFF which is specialized in production of vegetable oils and fats has decades of expertise in this field.

Source - caribbeanetnews.com

Climate Change

Climate change issues in Nicaragua, Panama and St. Lucia

April 8. Reinforce the sanitary and ecological measures that avoid major changes in our planet was the message that several public institutions proclaimed on the World Health Day.

The World Health Organization (WHO) chooses that theme considering climate change a threat to the sanitary population. "Respiratory infections are related with climate change. The lack of rain turns soil into dust. If wind blows hard, it transports bacteria very easily," said Guillermo González, Minister of Health.

According to WHO, global warming and climatic variability risk to increase concentration of certain air pollutants, disease transmission by undrinkable water or contaminated food; and at the same time it intensifies the threats of meteorological phenomena.

In order to mitigate the effects of global warming, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARENA) developed a program to promote cleaner production. Minister Juana Argeñal explained that this will be used in companies as a value added for companies and it will help to generate a better air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The same activity was organized by WHO on the World Health Day in Panama and Santa Lucia.

Source - caribbeanetnews.com, La Prensa (Nicaragua) and Panama America (Panama)

Illnesses increase in Guatemala due to climate change

May 20. "Increase in temperatures is favorable for vector and other transmitter reproduction that affect the Guatemalans," said Luis Ferraté, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

"Change in temperatures set forth increases in vectors, specially the dengue and malaria vectors," Ferraté added during the Civil Society Regional Meeting on Climate Change.

Felix Mencos from the Ministry of Health agreed with Ferraté "diarrhea and respiratory infections increase between five and ten percent due to climate change."

Source - Prensa Libre (Guatemala)

UNDP donates \$900.000 to fight climate change in Costa Rica

April 8. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) donated around \$900.000 to Costa Rica to implement measures for a better adaptation to climate change.

"This initiative benefits the most to people who live in risk areas and with less human



development rates," said José Manuel Hermida, PNUD official in Costa Rica.

One of the main goals of this donation will be that Costa Ricans learn more about actual and future vulnerability of hydric resources with climate change threats.

Source - La Nación (Costa Rica)

Health

Guyana set for first local kidney transplant

May 19. Guyana's Health Minister Dr. Leslie Ramsammy said the first local kidney transplant surgery will be performed at the Georgetown Public Hospital on July 12, marking yet another milestone for the health sector.

According to Ramsammy, the surgery will be performed by a team of surgeons from New York, who will be aided by local medical staff.

The first patient will be a young person from Lusignan, East Coast Demerara, Region Four a short distance from Guyana's capital, Georgetown. The youth's mother is the donor for his transplant.

According to the Minister, this latest step forward will hopefully reduce people having to travel abroad to take care of renal (kidney) failure.

Source - caribbeanetnews.com

Cleft lip and palate brigade in Honduras

April 18. Scalpels and operation rooms are ready, such as the medical staff that will transform the smiles of hundreds of patients that will seek for an opportunity to receive a reconstructive procedure at the Escuela-Materno Infantil Hospital.



The brigade will begin the evaluation of the patients first, and then they will identify the candidates that will get the surgery, because they will need to comply some requirements such as good physical form. More than 1600 patients have been treated; per year around 100 procedures are made.

Source - *El Heraldo (Honduras)*

Trinidad with new HIV / AIDS legislation

April 1. A draft policy document on HIV / AIDS in the workplace is soon to be laid before the Trinidad and Tobago Paliament. This was confirmed by Labour Minister, Rennie Dumas while addressing a function in Port of Spain.

According to Dumas, the HIV / AIDS draft policy is expected to protect workers infected with the virus while at the workplace.

Over the last six years the government has spent millions of dollars on prevention and treatment of HIV / AIDS cases in the country. However, according to one report, stigma and discrimination against persons living with the disease still remain a major challenge.

Source - *caribbeannetnews.com*

Rabies vaccination in El Salvador

April 8. Ministry of Health began a vaccination campaign against rabies in canines and felines. The goal is to vaccinate one dogs and 342,000 cats. "We are not able to cover all animals, but we are asking people to let us vaccinate their pets," said Guillermo Maza, Health Minister.

Rabies is a disease caused by a virus transmitted through animal bites. The virus causes swollen brain and once it has manifested it can not be cured.

The vaccine is free and it is available in all Health Units. The Ministry will visit door by door to have a larger coverage.

Source - *La Prensa Grafica (El Salvador)*

Marine and Water Issues

Ship that spilled fuel to the sea is detained

May 16. Costa Rican authorities detained the ship Cala Pinar del Río (Antigua and Barbuda flag ship) that spilled 50 gallons of fuel into the Caribbean Sea Port Authorities (JAPDEVA) and the Environmental Tribunal gave the order.

The spill occurred when the fuel tank cap loosened. JAPDEVA placed special absorbent covers to prevent the spill from extending further into the ocean.

The Environmental Tribunal detained the boat while expert evaluate if a environmental damage was caused.

JAPDEVA requested a special Panamanian brigade to clean up the spill and assess the spill. According to JAPDEVA, the ship owners will have to deposit a security amount.

Source - *La Nación (Costa Rica)*

St. Lucia ratifies International Water Convention

May 27. St. Lucia recently ratified the Land-based Sources of Marine Pollution Protocol under the Cartagena Convention for the Protection and the Development of the Marine Environment of the wider Caribbean. Under the requirements of the Protocol, countries are required to develop recreational water quality standards.

The Sustainable Development and Environmental Section of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Economic Planning, Investment and Natural Development, through funding obtained under the Special Framework of Assistance (SFA), Natural Resources Management Project have contracted the Caribbean Environment and Health Institute (CEHI) to develop recreational water quality standards for St. Lucia.

As part of the work plan submitted to the Ministry, CEHI in association with the Sustainable Development and Environment Section hosted a consultation to discuss information on recreational water quality and land-based sources of pollution on May 26, 2008. Participants from the various sections of the Ministry of Agriculture and other stakeholders were in attendance at the half-day session.

Like most other Small-Island Developing States (SIDS), St. Lucia depends heavily on healthy marine environment for a number of economic and social activities including fishing, recreational and tourism.

Source - *caribbeannetnews.com*

Two artificial reefs were installed in Fonseca Gulf

May 7. Two artificial reefs were installed across Meanguera del Golfo Island. The reefs were donated by Yamaha Tokyo, a Japanese company.

With these reefs, the Ministry of Agriculture is looking forward to increase awareness on conservation and increasing the hydro-biological reservoirs of fish and mollusks that live near Fonseca Gulf.



Reefs donated by Yamaha Tokyo were brought from Japan. Yamaha invested around \$120,000. Artificial reefs were assembled in El Salvador.

Source - *La Prensa Grafica (El Salvador)*

Caribbean region warned of dangers of failure to manage and protect marine environment

April 12. Caribbean countries must adopt aggressive new strategies to achieve sustainable management and protection of their marine product, according to noted regional biologist.

Otherwise, the region risks losing precious natural resources, says James Azueta one of the region's foremost experts in the field.

Azueta, who serves as ecosystem management unit coordinator for Belize Fisheries Department, will present a special workshop on strategies for the management of marine sites and attractions during the 10th Annual Caribbean Conference on Sustainable Tourism in the Turks and Caicos Islands.

According to Azueta, the concept of protected areas is not new to the Caribbean region, with various categories such as nature preserves and national monuments having existed for more than 200 years. However, the management of such marine areas depends almost entirely on external financing. A relatively low management success rate can be attributed in part to neglect or



marine areas depends almost entirely on external financing. A relatively low management success rate can be attributed in part to neglect or reprioritizing of the marine environment by international environmental donor agency.

Source - *caribbeanmetnews.com*

Science and Technology

Laptops for Nicaraguan kids

April 3. César Zamora, President of the American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM) convinced Nicholas Negroponte, One Laptop per Child Director to include Nicaragua in his initiative.

Source - *La Prensa (Nicaragua)*

Canadian Company will produce smartphone in Costa Rica

April 7. Koolu Inc. plans to sell a new smartphone named WePhone in a few months.

Andrew Greig, Koolu's CEO said that his target is the population of developing countries and Costa Rica will be his Headquarters, launching his project in the region of Guanacaste.

Greig said that this project will generate around a hundred jobs for Costa Ricans.

Following "One Laptop per Child" philosophy, Koolu's idea is to give every person the informatics tools necessary to develop a business and increase developing countries income.

Source - *La Nación (Costa Rica)*

New potato cultivar tests in Nicaragua

April 7. U.S. National Potato Council is looking forward to register five different potato cultivars in Nicaragua.

The cultivars in evaluation are: Nancy, Golden Sunburst, Alegria, Red la Soda and Lachippeu.

Officials form the Potato Council along with producers from Colorado and North Dakota visited the Matagalpa and Jinotega evaluation fields. The evaluations will determine if these cultivars will adapt to the climate conditions in

that regions, plague and disease resistance and yields.

Source - *La Prensa (Nicaragua)*

Other Information

The Caribbean and Climate Change: The Costs of Inaction"

A study by Ramón Bueno, Cornelia Herzfeld, Elizabeth A. Stanton, and Frank Ackerman. Commissioned by Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), this is the first detailed analysis of the potential economic effects of continued climate change for the entire Caribbean region. The report compares two possibilities -- an optimistic rapid stabilization case and a pessimistic business-as-usual case - and focuses on three categories of effects: hurricane damages, loss of tourism revenue, and infrastructure damage due to sea-level rise.

The costs of inaction, or the difference between these two scenarios, are the potential savings from acting in time to prevent the worst economic consequences of climate change. The report points out that, although Caribbean nations have contributed little to the release of the greenhouse gases that drive climate change, they will pay a heavy price for global inaction in reducing emissions

Key findings of the report include:

The costs of inaction will amount to 22 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) for the Caribbean as a whole by 2100; The costs of inaction will reach an astonishing 75 percent or more of GDP by 2100 in Dominica, Grenada, Haiti, St. Kitts & Nevis and Turks & Caicos; The Caribbean's largest island, Cuba, faces a nearly 13 percent economic hit by mid-century, and a 27 percent loss by 2100, unless there is swift action to address climate change; Losses from inaction would be less severe but still significant in Puerto Rico, reaching nearly 3 percent by 2050 and 6 percent by the end of the century; The nation of Colombia, with its long Caribbean coastline, faces permanent flooding of 1,900 square miles in low-lying coastal areas, affecting 1.4 million people.

The executive summary and the full text of the report, in both English and Spanish, are available at SEI. and GDAE

[1] SEI is the Stockholm Environment Institute; GDAE is the Global Development and Environment Institute. Both are research institutes at Tufts University.

For more information:

<http://ase.tufts.edu/gdae/CaribbeanClimate.html>

Coastal Cities Summit: Values & Vulnerabilities

REGISTRATION & ABSTRACT SUBMISSION OPEN!!

JOIN US!!

IMPORTANT DATES

- * July 1, 2008: Authors will be informed on selection by e-mail
- * October 15, 2008: Deadline for Final Submissions
- * July 31, 2008: Deadline for early registration

The International Ocean Institute-USA and the city of St. Petersburg, FL, USA, are hosting a Coastal Cities Summit on November 17-20, 2008, to address the complex challenges that coastal city leaders face as populations increase, resources are depleted, and the impacts of climate change are felt. The Coastal Cities Summit intends to bring together 600-700 coastal city leaders, managers and academics to discuss environmental, social, economic, and public policy challenges and viable solutions.

Full details are available at www.coastalcities.org

The conference will focus on three themes: Climate Change, Risk and Vulnerability, and Sustainable Development. The planners are soliciting speakers on areas that are particularly relevant to coastal cities: freshwater, pollution, energy, infrastructure, and port security. All sessions are intended to give a long-needed voice to those who are on the front lines taking leadership on climate change, providing implementation and response plans and continuing to focus on protecting citizens from possible extreme events and human-induced degradation.

SPEAKERS:

- * Martin Parry - Co-Chair, IPCC 2nd Working Group
- * Leon Panetta - Panetta Institute for Public Policy
- * Jeremy Harris - former mayor of Honolulu
- * Roberto Rosselli - Venice Water Authority
- * John Ogden - Florida Institute of Oceanography
- * Paul Holthus - World Ocean Council
- * Richard Wainio - Tampa Port Director
- * Saskia Sassen - Professor of Sociology, Columbia University, author of UN-Habitat report
- * Victor Lu, Vice President, Hunt Power - alternative resources
- * Wayne Joseph - Global Water Partnership
- * Carlos Fernandez-Jauregui, Coordinator, United Nations Office to Support the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life, 2005-2015"

You may already be familiar with the International Ocean Institute (IOI) and its 26 operational centers around the world. IOI-USA is the newest center, established in St. Petersburg, FL in 2006 by



NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

We look forward to hearing your comments, questions and contributions. If you have news, projects, latest developments or other information that you would like included in the Hub Notes, please forward them to us. Also, if you know of other people or organizations that would like to receive the Hub Notes or, alternatively, if you would like to be removed from our mailing list – contact Diego Acosta acostad@state.gov. Please note that the information provided in the Hub Notes does not necessarily represent U.S. official policies. Instead, Hub Notes are an informal means to report and distribute information on events relevant to the U.S. and the region.

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agreement between IOI headquarters in Malta and the University of South Florida (USF). The mission of IOI-USA is to provide an international center of excellence in education, training, development, and

>capacity building, with particular interest in coastal and marine areas. The University of South Florida (USF), established in 1956 as a public university, is a comprehensive multi-campus research university serving more than 42,000 students. It is home to the Dr. Kiran C. Patel Center for Global Solutions, a center dedicated to promoting sustainable healthy communities around the world, and one of the co-organizers of the event. The resources and expertise of USF allow IOI-USA to offer an outstanding conference program that will attract attendees from around the world. Further information on the conference can be found at its website: www.coastalcities.org.

Background

Approximately 2.7 billion people--over 40% of the world's total population--currently live in coastal cities. In 1995 alone, an estimated 50 million people migrated to the coastal zones of the United States. Combined with increasing birth rate and life expectancy, as well as future climate change, the escalating strain on public resources means that coastal city managers face unprecedented challenges. Abstracts are invited for individual paper proposals, panel proposals, and round table proposals that address either I) Coastal City Challenges, II) Coastal City Practices, or III) Coastal City Solutions in one of the following broad thematic areas:

- Climate change
- Risk and Vulnerability
- Sustainable Development

Some suggested topics (but not limited to):

- Waste water management
- Coastal zone management
- Ocean governance
- Infrastructure - built environment
- Energy - traditional & alternative
- Population growth - urbanization
- Freshwater supplies & availability
- Land reclamation

- Coastal resiliency
- Natural coastal defenses
- Sea level rise
- Tourism
- Coastal hazards
- Pollution of coastal resources
- Port & Maritime security
- City planning
- Aquaculture
- Risk management
- Sustainable development
- Insurance
- Networks and system development
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Ocean resource use and planning
- International instruments and trans-boundary relations
- Human/animal impacts
- Ecological impacts of ocean acidification

- Technology
- Stakeholder involvement
- Indigenous issues
- Improving public knowledge
- Incorporating traditional and local knowledge into decision making
- Valuing ecosystem services
- Land-sea interface

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NGO and other Newsletters (click to display Web-page)

- [GLOBE Bulletin for Latin American and the Caribbean](#)
- [Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative](#)
- [CATHALAC – The Water Center for the Humid Tropics of Latin America and the Caribbean](#)
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- [Mesoamerican Biological Corridor](#)
- [Audubon Society](#)
- [Central American Commission on Environment and Development \(CCAD\) - Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles](#)

