

PRESS RELEASE

Government of Finland announces international support for sustaining biodiversity in association with the LifeWeb initiative

Montreal, 25 May 2010. The government of Finland announced on 22 May in Helsinki that they will support Peru under the LifeWeb Initiative. This support to Peru—the result of cooperation between Finland’s Ministries of Environment and of Foreign Trade and Development—marks the second project that Finland will contribute to as a partner in the LifeWeb Initiative. Consistent with the Finnish Forest Biodiversity Programme (METSO), the LifeWeb Initiative facilitates voluntary support for biodiversity priorities.

The project in Peru, with the active participation of the Atiquipa Rural Community, focuses on conservation, restoration and sustainable use of the Atiquipa lomas. The Atiquipa lomas, unique and endangered ecosystems located in the Caravelí province, Arequipa region, are the most important and best preserved in Peru and contain the only remaining patch of lomas forest in the world.

The project is fully aligned with national priorities for *in situ* biodiversity conservation, and has been identified as one of the most important areas for conservation in the last gap analysis study done during the update process of the protected areas master plan. The project will contribute to the consolidation of the positive results obtained by previous successful initiatives developed by the Atiquipa Rural Community (CCA), with technical support of different institutions such as, the Region Institute of Environmental Science of the National University of San Agustín, Arequipa (IRECA), which included reforestation of the lomas, restoration and improvement fog-water catchment facilities, ecosystem and water resources management and improvement of income levels through better production practices.

Antonio Brack Egg, Peruvian Minister of the Environment, relayed the follow message of gratitude to Finland.

“Without a doubt this project will contribute to the consolidation of initiatives in the conservation community, in partnership with institutions and organizations committed in their efforts to conserve Peru’s natural heritage.

Finland, so far from Peru, but so close to us in the conservation of the Amazon and our biological diversity.”

Through the LifeWeb initiative, the amount of €249 992 will be provided by the Government of Finland, with the balance coming from The Nature Conservancy (€ 22,365), the Region Institute of Environmental Science of the National University of San Agustín, Arequipa (€37,275), and Atiquipa Rural Community (€23,359) in counterpart funding for this project.

The LifeWeb Initiative is a partnership platform to strengthen financing for protected areas to conserve biodiversity, secure livelihoods and address climate change, through implementation of the programme of work on protected areas under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The Finnish Minister of Environment, Paula Lehtomäki, pledged at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Bonn in 2008 that Finland would support the LifeWeb initiative, and the Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Paavo Väyrynen has approved associated funding. Ms Lehtomäki declared that: “The LifeWeb initiative will have a crucial impact worldwide. Losing biological diversity is a threat comparable to climate change and we must fight against it. Biologically diverse forests form a crucial piece of the solution in the battle against climate change and natural disasters. Preserving biological diversity is also a lifeline for local communities.”

Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity congratulated Finland and Peru for their partnership in the LifeWeb initiative. “Protected areas are cornerstones for biodiversity conservation and powerful tools for addressing climate change and providing sustainable economic development. Implementation of the programme of work on protected areas, reinforced through the LifeWeb initiative, is one of the brightest hopes we have for the future of our planet and humankind,” he said.

Note to Editors:

About the LifeWeb Initiative

The LifeWeb Initiative was launched in May 2008 at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Bonn. LifeWeb adds value to donors and recipients by providing a user-friendly clearing house for countries to profile their financial priorities and invite international support; facilitating funding matches, coordinating counterpart financing among donors, as well as recognising donor support and innovation for natural solutions. The Government of Germany has supported projects with more than 80 million euros within the framework of its International Climate Initiative and bilateral development cooperation. Germany is also significantly increasing its support in the coming years. The Government of Spain has committed 5 million euros to protected areas projects through LifeWeb and a number of other public and private donors are also increasingly considering support to financial priorities profiled on the LifeWeb clearing-house. To date, 49 expressions of interest have been registered on the LifeWeb clearing-house, with a total value of US\$ 148 million. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity further invites developing countries to submit their funding needs through the LifeWeb clearing-house and invites donors to consider these priorities, as consistent with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

For further information on LifeWeb, please visit www.cbd.int/lifeweb/ or contact Jason Spensley on +1.514.287.8704 or at jason.spensley@cbd.int.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and entering into force in December 1993, the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international treaty for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. With 193 Parties, the Convention has near universal participation among countries. The Convention seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, through scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, youth, NGOs, women and the business community. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, a supplementary treaty to the Convention, seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 156 countries and the European Union are party to the Protocol. The Secretariat of the Convention and its Cartagena Protocol is located in Montreal.

For more information visit www.cbd.int www.cbd.int/2010

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