



Ref.: SCBD/SEL/ML/lb/67823

3 August 2009

Dear Madam/Sir,

We are pleased to inform you on an important regional initiative advanced by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD).

Entitled "*Biodiversity and Ecosystems: Why these are Important for Sustained Growth and Equity in Latin America and the Caribbean*", the initiative is one of the strategic areas of the 2008-2011 UNDP Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean. It will highlight the critical role of biodiversity and ecosystems in economic development by producing a high-quality report in order to inform and engage decision makers in Latin America and the Caribbean on the need to maintain, and invest in, biodiversity and ecosystem services. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) are important partners in the implementation of this initiative.

The report will benefit from, and contribute to, the major global study on the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB), which is currently being developed under the aegis of UNEP's Green Economy Initiative. You will recall that the last meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in decisions IX/6 and IX/11, welcomed this work and encouraged Parties to intensify efforts, as appropriate, to assess the economic costs of the loss of biodiversity and its associated ecosystem services.

Against this background, we believe that the UNDP initiative is very opportune and timely. We are certain that it will make a significant contribution to the International Year of Biodiversity and to the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in October 2010, as well as to a number of other key global and regional policy events.

Please refer to the annex for further information on the scope, structure, process and planned impact of the initiative. Please note in particular that stakeholder consultations are planned to take place in a number of countries in the region, and we would appreciate your support and participation in these consultations.

To: GRULAC Primary Focal Points and  
SBSTTA Focal Points

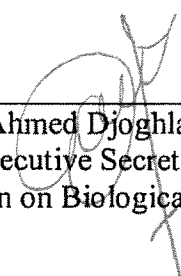


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We look forward to your collaboration in an initiative which we believe will make a unique contribution to the investment in the future of Latin American and Caribbean biodiversity. We hope that you will join us in making it a great success.


Yours sincerely,



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Ahmed Djoghla  
Executive Secretary

Convention on Biological Diversity



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Rebeca Grynspan

Assistant Administrator and Regional Director  
UNDP Regional Bureau for Latin America  
and the Caribbean  
Chair LAC Regional Directors Team

## ANNEX

### *Biodiversity and Ecosystems: Why these are Important for Sustained Growth and Equity in Latin America and the Caribbean*

A regional initiative of the United Nations Development Programme

#### I. Background and Scope

The innovative regional initiative "*Biodiversity and Ecosystems: Why these are Important for Sustained Growth and Equity in Latin America and the Caribbean*" (hereinafter the 'Initiative') is one of the strategic areas of the 2008-2011 UNDP Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Initiative will engage with key political and economic leaders of the region to inform policy and decision makers of the need to incorporate biodiversity and ecosystem services into national strategies, highlighting its role in development and equity.

The main goal of this Initiative is to produce a report with sufficiently valuable and robust data to inform policy and decision makers in Latin America and the Caribbean of the need to invest in and maintain biodiversity and ecosystem services.

The Initiative will also underpin and provide a conceptual framework for the next generation of valuation efforts for the entire Latin America and Caribbean region.

The report seeks to make a significant contribution to global and regional key policy events that will be held in 2010, including: CBD COP-10, the International Year of Biodiversity; Latin American, Ibero-American and EU/Latin America and Caribbean Summits; the High Level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on Biodiversity, as well as the post-Kyoto negotiations. It will also benefit from, and contribute to, the major global study being undertaken on the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB), sponsored by the European Commission and the German Ministry of Environment.

#### II. Structure and Process

The Initiative will be developed and executed through an institutional structure composed of:

- a. A Commission for Biodiversity, Ecosystems, Finance and Development, composed of distinguished political leaders, civil society leading figures, leading economists, and private investment fund managers, who will oversee and drive the initiative, including the preparation and dissemination of the report. The Commission has been convened by UNDP and its first meeting will be held next September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at UN Headquarters in New York.
- b. A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) consisting of leading economists and financial experts, mainly from the region, who will be responsible for the supervision of the quality of

the report. Committee members held a meeting in June 2009 to review and discuss the report's methodological approach, structure and the initial findings of the Report Preparation Team.

- c. A Report Preparation Team who will be in charge of the preparation of the report. The Report Preparation Team has been constituted and significant progress has been made in scoping the main areas of the report. UNDP is currently strengthening the team that will prepare the report taking into consideration the recommendations issued both by the Commission and the TAC. Additionally, important coordination of strategic partnerships is currently being carried out to provide data and case-studies information supporting the key messages of the report.

The entire process will be supported by a strong communications strategy to be developed specifically for the intended audiences of this initiative: policy makers, civil society and private sector leaders. The main goal is to disseminate the key messages of the report in a timely and significant manner.

### III. National Stakeholder Consultations

To ensure that the Initiative's report is informed by views and information provided by governments of the region, civil society members, private sector representatives, regional and/or local leading environmental and/or indigenous groups and individuals; a series of regional and national consultation processes with key stakeholders of the region will take place in July, August and September 2009. Feedback from this strategic group will facilitate a positive impact of the report amongst Latin American and Caribbean decision and policy makers.

Stakeholder Consultations have been proposed for Peru, Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Central America, and the Caribbean. The support and participation of relevant CBD National Focal Points in the national consultation will be of much importance for the successful outcome of the meeting. An invitation will be sent in due course by the UNDP country office with the corresponding material.