



EMS-SEMA



“Adaptability and vulnerability: The two sides of a coin to face the new challenges in integrated environmental management”

June 5, World Environment Day, invites us to reflect about the state of seas and oceans. We invite you to look upon environmental events from the viewpoint of the [vulnerability](#) and adaptation capacity of systems, both natural (rivers, basins, estuaries and bio-geographical areas), and human (communities, municipalities, states). A system's capacity to adapt is determined by a set of factors that range from the ecological, the economic, the social and institutional, to even the technological. It is their combination that ultimately determines the capacity to adapt to changes. Of all these changes, apparently the most evident one is the climate change.

To adjust this focus, I suggest we look into a sad example of how this combination of factors worked in the recent tragedy on the Caribbean island of La Española, that hosts both Haiti and Dominican Republic. There, after heavy rainfalls, floods and landslides occurred with serious ecological consequences, economic losses and, in particular, human losses, that totalled 3.500 people. Haiti, in particular, known because of its fragility and levels of poverty affecting 80% of its population, forest degradation covering 90% of its territory, economic stagnation and institutional weakness suffered the consequence that could be termed: a catastrophe. An ancient deforestation, that keeps growing due to the needs of 8.000.000 inhabitants, 80% of whom use coal as fuel in their homes. Deforestation that is also clear in the absence of tree roots to stabilize the soil and that facilitates water and mud landslides causing death, loss of crops, increased soil degradation and intensification of the socio-economic drama.

Adaptability and vulnerability, when trying to minimize negative effects, are essential parts of a whole that determines the resilience¹ of systems when facing certain changes.

In these small islands, the level of adaptability to face the climate change seems to be still precarious. Dr. Robert Brakenridge² points out that “the disaster was predictable and could have been avoided, but due to the prevailing economic circumstances in Haiti and Dominican Republic, the population might even go back and settle again in the same places”. We remind you that in recent months there were appeals to the [international community](#) to support the preparation of prevention and emergency plans in the small Caribbean islands. (See Info-EMS January 2004 issue).

The novelty of this phenomenon calls for the generation of new conceptual and methodological approaches in environmental management. At the Central American scale, CEPIS-PAHO and ERID organized a Workshop in Managua, Nicaragua, to analyse the reduction of Vulnerability in the Potable Water Systems (see article in this issue). On the other hand, new multi-sector agreements are being promoted to face such changes, at the level of the recent meeting of the Sustainable Development Committee of the United Nations held in New York. They evaluated the evolution of individual cases of multi-sector partnerships, especially in the water and sanitation sector of developing countries. (See article in this issue).

In the face of this new reality, the EMS together with other partners and donors will, in the years to come, continue deploying efforts towards institutional capacity building through research and systematisation of knowledge, by strengthening international networks in the field of environmental policy updating. Among other things, it will try to incorporate adaptability, vulnerability and resilience in its integrated environmental management programmes. Simultaneously, some progress will be made in monitoring policies with the preparation of sustainable development indicators in solid waste and energy, water and sanitation and adaptation to new technologies, in the framework of new forms of institutional coordination to improve sustainable environmental management.

Walter Ubal Giordano, EMS Executive Director

¹Resilience: The degree with which a system recovers or regains its former condition when exposed to a stimulus. http://www.grida.no/climate/ipcc_tar/wg2/650.htm

² Robert Brakenridge: Director, Floods Observatory, University of Dartmouth <http://www.dartmouth.edu/floods>

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EMS SPECIAL: CSD 12

Børge Brende, President of CMDS advocated for “The Implementation Decade”



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Between April 19 and 30, the twelfth session of the UN Commission for Sustainable Development was held in New York. This meeting was the first to evaluate publicly the implementation of Agenda 21 and the progress of objectives agreed upon by the world leaders during the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in 2002. In particular, it analysed the implementation and lessons learnt relative to experiences developed in type II public-private partnerships in terms of: water, sanitation and human settlements.

Parallel to the technical sessions, the Multi-sector Partnerships Fair was held. On April 20, --and within this framework that coincided with the technical sessions on water and sanitation--IDRC presented its fruitful programmatic experiences in this field, achieved in Jordan, Palestine and Lebanon. Jointly with this activity, the Environmental Millennium magazine was distributed together with the CD on “Incubating Local Partnerships in the Sustainable Management of Water in Municipal Areas” produced by the EMS. During the plenary session of the national presentations, IDRC representing Canada

through its Cities Feeding People Programme illustrated progress made with programmes on waste water re-use in agriculture, implemented in Middle East countries.

This meeting ratified that the great challenges have to do with improving the levels of access to potable water, insisting on good management and



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definition of conditions for investment in that sector. In the field of sanitation it was requested that this issue be included in national agendas as core aspect to combat poverty. In this regard, specific importance was placed on the help that industrialized countries can provide in terms of technology transfer. In the session for Latin America and the Caribbean on April 26, the interventions of the official representatives focused on the question of rapid urbanization and growing inequity, as stated by Erminia Maricato, Vice-Minister of Brazilian Cities. The agencies of the United Nations Organization system referred to legal and institutional aspects of water management. José Luis Samaniego, new Director of the ECLAC Division on Sustainable Development and the Environment closed the session underlining the need to address water, sanitation and urban settlement issues in a balanced and integrated way.

The final message by the President of the Commission, Minister Brende, was eloquent when he described the enormous challenge of the CMDS. Brende closed the session stating that "for many years we were immersed in inaction. It's time we made a difference. Let us launch a new decade of implementation."

EMS AGENDA AT A GLANCE

Results of the EMS Call

The EMS Small Funds Programme for Municipal Research received around 90 research proposals for its recent call. The proposals focused on the issue of Multi-sector Partnerships for Sustainable Management of Water in cities.

After a long evaluation process conducted jointly with a panel of international evaluators from specialized United Nations agencies (UNEP, UN-HABITAT, UNESCO and UNDP), 10 projects were selected for support. For further information: <http://www.ems-sema.org/convoca2003/>

- Environmental Knowledge Networks. Development of an information and communications system to promote a Clearing House Mechanism (CHM).

- Institutional capacity building and technical training at the Municipal level. Training workshops on SIGA (Integrated Municipal Environmental Management System) focused on vulnerability in the case of natural disasters affecting municipal areas.

Minutes of the meeting, agenda and list of participants: www.ems-sema.org/ag/

Conference call of the EMS Advisory Technical Group



As a follow-up to the meeting held in Montevideo in September 2003, the first conference call of the EMS Advisory Technical Group was held on May 27. The majority of the members participated along with other special guests who represented municipalities, academia, civil society and agencies of the multi-lateral system.

This conference proved an excellent occasion for discussion and dialogue among the participants and it allowed them to learn from and provide opinions on the three fundamental subject areas of the Secretariat:

- Research Funds programme for Sustainable Municipal Development. Results of the 2003-2004 Call for Proposals on Multi-sector Partnerships for Sustainable Management of Water in cities of LAC and incorporation of technological innovation.

First Congress of Cities and Local Governments

The EMS was present during the First Congress of Cities and Local Governments: America Experience, organized by FLACMA, Latin-

American Federation of Cities, Municipalities and Associations of Local Governments, and it was held in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, on April 18-21, 2004. As part of the technical instances of the Congress, and during the panel on Municipalities towards Sustainable Development, the EMS presented its experiences on "Multi-sector partnerships in urban environmental management in Latin America and the Caribbean".



Around 800 people attended the congress; among them mayors representing local governments of Latin America and the Caribbean, cities networks, associations of municipalities, representatives from international agencies, etc. This important group of local authorities from the region got together to participate in the new Latin American organization of municipalities and cities, FLACMA, that resulted from a negotiation and agreement process between the Latin American Chapter of the former International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), the Latin American representative of the former World Federation of United Cities, the Federation of Municipalities of the Central American Isthmus (FEMICA), Mercocities, Andean Cities Network, Union of Ibero-American Capital Cities. One of the most relevant documents resulting from this congress is the Declaration of Santa Cruz de la Sierra.

For further information: <http://www.flacma.org/>

NEW UNDERTAKINGS

Municipal Knowledge Networks for the Sustainable Development of LAC

Both the Mercocities Network and FEMICA are devoted to the creation of a mechanism to exchange knowledge and experiences of their cities in the field of urban environmental management.

These initiatives will be carried out through the creation -- in the Mercocities and FEMICA portals-- of a module on sustainable urban development and environment. This instance, nurtured by the network cities themselves aims at helping disseminate and exchange experiences to contribute to the improvement of environmental services in cities of each region and, therefore, to improve the living quality of their inhabitants.

Given the role of the new information and communications technologies in enhancing mutual knowledge and strengthening the social, political and cultural fabric of cities, we hope that these instances --designed to make horizontal communication easier and interactive-- become an extra contribution for Mercocities and FEMICA to fulfil their role and to make integration among cities in both regions a reality.

Both activities are developed in the framework of the agreement signed by FEMICA, MERCOCITIES and the EMS, at the end of 2002.

<http://www.ems-sema.org/mous/sema-femica-merco.pdf>



ONGOING INITIATIVES

Project: Integrated Environmental Management for the Sustainable Development of Valle de Palajunoj

Municipality of Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, Central America

The Palajunoj valley comprises the urban-rural interface of the Quetzaltenango city, an area inhabited by a 64% of rural population. The Municipality of Quetzaltenango has a population of around 120.000 inhabitants, that makes it into Guatemala's second city.

The project is a joint initiative of IDRC with the support of two corporate programmes: Cities Feeding People and Eco-Health, under the coordination of the Environmental Management Secretariat (EMS).

The objective of this pilot project was to study the preliminary conditions to draw a plan on integrated and sustainable development of the Valle de Palajunoj, through research in environmental, social and economic-productive health. It is geared to institutional capacity-building so as to prepare proposals that allow an improvement in the people's quality of living.

For the purpose of this analysis four functional subject areas were defined:

- i. Community organization and participation
- ii. Human and environmental health
- iii. Economic and productive area
- iv. Institutional capacity-building

The conduction of research in each one of the above-mentioned areas was the responsibility of the following four local, non-governmental organizations, respectively: i. Instituto Muni-k'at, ii. PIES de Occidente, iii. ECAO, iv. SERJUS, under the administrative coordination of Muni-k'at. The technical coordination of the project was in the hands of Engineer Alain Mejía. These organizations are part of the Municipal Coordination for Municipality Development Organizations.

The methodological framework applied is participatory research developed jointly with the communities and some of their leaders; they analysed and validated some of the basic quantitative and qualitative analyses conducted by the respective groups of researchers. Workshops and permanent surveys were also conducted to this end. A final open workshop allows for the dissemination of final results and invites other organizations and donors that are interested in this issue. Results obtained in the intermediate phase already reveal a substantial improvement in institutional capacity building at the level of the Municipal Coordinator, and integration of issues by the groups involved. In particular, more knowledge resulted from: diagnoses referred to mother-child health in the population of the valley, relation between indigenous and western medical services, water management and finally, it was possible to draw a preliminary outline of different sustainable productive alternatives in the valley.

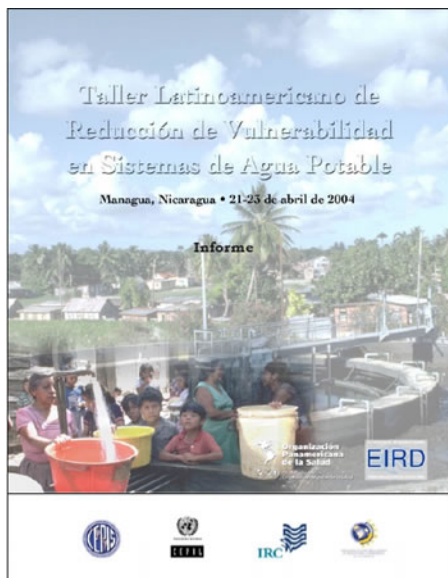
Convention on Climate Change: Canada-Uruguay Cooperation

by Chemical Engineer Luis Santos (MVOTMA, Uruguay)

The cooperation in terms of Climate Change between Uruguay and Canada has been mostly managed between the Climate Change Unit (UCC) of the Dirección Nacional de Medio Ambiente (National Environment Bureau) of the MVOTMA (Ministry of Housing, Land Management and Environment of Uruguay) and the Canadian CDM Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, through a series of activities geared at institutional capacity building in Uruguay in order to apply the Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol. The participation in such mechanism allows the country to receive investment from developed countries to implement projects oriented to the reduction of GEI emissions, with clean technology transfers and promotion of sustainable development in exchange of certificates issued to the developed countries indicating the reduction of emissions resulting from these activities.

As an example, we mention the Montevideo Workshop in December 2001, with the participation of representatives from the Canadian private sector and the Canadian CDM Office. Later on, in 2002, UCC conducted a study to evaluate the potential reduction of greenhouse effect gases emissions in the framework of CDM, with the assistance of the IDRC. Later on, in 2003, the UCC conducted the National Strategy Study to apply CDM in Uruguay in the framework of the World Bank Programme on National Strategy Study, with the support of the Government of Canada through its Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Environmental Management Secretariat (EMS). This study takes into consideration a series of institutional aspects highly relevant to the implementation of the mechanism in the country and identifies a portfolio of CDM projects.

To complete the list of aforementioned activities and in order to secure the continuity of activities that promote and implement CDM in our country and help develop potential alleviation projects in Uruguay, last May, a Memorandum of Understanding in the area of Climate Change, including CDM, was signed between the Governments of Canada and Uruguay. The Minister of Housing, Land Management and the Environment of Uruguay, Mr. Saúl Irureta, and the Ambassador of Canada to Uruguay, Mrs. Susan Harper, were present as representatives of the signatory governments.



Latin American Workshop on Reduction of Vulnerability in the Potable Water and Sanitation Systems

Nicaragua, April 21-23, 2004

Following an invitation by CEPIS, the Pan-American Centre for Sanitary Engineering and Environmental Sciences, the EMS participated in the Latin American Workshop on Reduction of Vulnerability in the Potable Water and Sanitation Systems, convened by the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) and the United Nations International Strategy for the Reduction of Disasters, held in Managua, Nicaragua from April 21 to 23, 2004. During the session on "Basic measures to reduce vulnerability in the potable water systems", the EMS presented the Integrated Municipal Environmental Management System.

Over 50 representatives from institutions in the potable water and sanitation sector participated in the Workshop; this included institutions that manage or control as well as companies that provide these services.

For further information on the workshop visit <http://www.disaster-info.net/vulnerabilidad/>

CITY PRESS

PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- ✦ UNITED NATIONS
Environmental Advisor (China)
Programme Officer (Dept. Social Affairs)
- ✦ UN-HABITAT
Chief Water Sanitation and Infrastructure Branch
- ✦ UN-HABITAT
Associate Programme Officer
- ✦ UNCHS (Nairobi, Kenya)
Human Settlements Officer
- ✦ UNCHS (Nairobi, Kenya)
Senior Human Settlements Officer
- ✦ UNEP (Nairobi)
Programme Officer
- ✦ UNEP
Associate Liaison Officer (Brussels)
- ✦ UNDP (Dakar)
GEF - Associate Regional Coordinator on Biodiversity for Western Africa
- ✦ WWF
Programme Manager for Freshwater
- ✦ RBF Consulting (USA)
Environmental Planning Project Manager
Project Manager Water / Wastewater (USA)
- ✦ IGES (Japan)
Researchers for Forest Conservation Project

COMING EVENTS

- ✦ Municipal Forum for Local Economic Development
- ✦ Conference
Water and Wastewater Management for Developing Countries
- ✦ Interamerican Seminar
Vulnerability and Safety of Water and Sanitary Systems facing Intentional Attacks
- ✦ International Seminar
Earth Observation Systems for Disaster Management
- ✦ International Conference
Global Waters Assessment and Integrated Waters Management
- ✦ World Urban Forum
- ✦ World Water Congress
- ✦ Interamerican Conference
Transport Of Hazardous Products

TRAINING

- ✦ Distance Course Solid Wastes Integrated Management
- ✦ Course (Brasil) Geographic Information Systems
- ✦ Certificate (Colombia) Formulation And Management of Complex Environmental Project

- Master Integrated Management of Basins
- ✦ Distance Master Water Resources
- ✦ Environmental Impact Specialization Course
- ✦ Distance Learning Course SIG-GIS / Arc View
- ✦ International Course Groundwater And Environment (Ciamsa)
- ✦ Distance Course 1st. International Post-Graduate Course "Assessment Of Environmental Impact"
- ✦ Third Doctorate on Urban Sustainable Development
- ✦ International Course on Urban Ecology
- ✦ International Environmental Right Course
- ✦ Local Sustainable Development Management Course
- ✦ I Master on Biology of Conservation
- ✦ IAI Institute on Urbanization and Global Environmental Change in Latin America
- ✦ Course for Southern Cone Young Women Leaders on Democratic Gobernability (FELLOWSHIPS available)

AWARDS / FELLOWSHIPS

- ✦ 5th Competition: "CEMPREndimientos para el reciclaje"
- ✦ The Reuters – IUCN Environmental Media Awards

Disseminate your activities through our website by filling out an on-line form: www.ems-sema.org/english/noticias/city_press.htm
or send an e-mail: info@ems-sema.org

The mission of the Secretariat is to foster a correct environmental management in Latin America and the Caribbean, by providing support in decision-making (policy formulation and implementation) in relation to the environmental effects of the different human activities, through a more dynamic relation between research, horizontal cooperation and a growing availability of relevant information.

" The EMS-SEMA has the support of IDRC, IADB, Environment Canada, UNEP and the Ministry of Housing, Land Management and the Environment of Uruguay (MVOTMA).

It is an International Secretariat managed by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC-Canada – www.idrc.ca)"

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