

## **SOUTH AMERICA ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY, AND HEALTH NEWSLETTER**

**NOTE: The South America ESTH Newsletter is now also available on the Intranet -**

<http://brasilia.state.gov/hub/default.htm>

Edition #119. The information contained was gathered from news sources from across the region, and the views expressed below do not necessarily reflect those of the Regional Environmental HUB Office or of our constituent posts. Addressees interested in sharing any ESTH-related events of USG interest are welcome to do so.

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### **Upcoming Events**

## **Agriculture**

### **Chile, India Link Up For Rural Development**

APRIL 02, 2009 - Chile and India will work together to promote agricultural innovation and explore the potential of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in improving rural livelihoods. The MS Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) signed an agreement on agricultural cooperation with Chile's Foundation for Agricultural Innovation (FIA) in Chennai in March. The two organizations will promote the diffusion and use of agricultural research; organize joint courses, seminars, training and field visits in agricultural innovation; and set up workshops to address food, nutrition and environmental concerns. MSSRF will train Chilean scientists in replicating its 'village knowledge centers' (VKCs) which use ICTs to provide farmers and fishermen with timely, local information on weather, market prices for crops, livestock and fish, and prevailing diseases. The two countries will also work together to improve digital connectivity in rural areas and train more rural people to use digital technologies. Another area of concern for the two countries is the impact of rising sea levels and salinity caused by climate change on agriculture. The foundation is also using biotechnology to develop crop varieties that can tolerate high salinity, and will soon set up a national resource centre for genes, which will house genetic material of crop varieties resistant to drought, heat, salt and floods.

*Source - SciDev*

## **Water Issues**

### **New Peruvian Water Law Raises Privatization Fears**

APRIL 2009 - Peruvian government officials say a water law approved by Congress in March will ensure better management and equitable distribution of water for drinking, industry and agriculture. Critics, however, worry that the controversial legislation will favor large corporate users and pave the way for privatization. The law sets up a national water-management system involving various government agencies, establishes the National Water Authority and calls for water-management plans designed by users in each watershed. Its passage comes as conflicts over water use—between rural farming communities and large mines, and between small farmers and export agribusinesses—are on the rise. “Peru has no watershed management plans,” says Abelardo De la Torre, who heads the new water authority. “That is the origin of the conflicts.” The law promotes access to drinking water, establishes the precautionary principle will prevail in case of threats to water quality and calls for sustainable, efficient use of water. The government can grant private concessions for infrastructure, such as dams, and water and sanitation services, but retains ownership of the water, according to De la Torre. The new water authority’s top priorities include designing equitable management plans, determining the real cost of water and establishing rate structures, he adds. Another goal is to improve efficiency, especially in agriculture, which accounts for 80% of water use, and where as much as one-third of the water is wasted, de la Torre says.

*Source - EcoAmericas*

### **Chile and Bolivia Reach Silala River Agreement**

APRIL 06, 2009 - Chile and Bolivia reached an historic agreement which may well end the ongoing dispute regarding rights to the Silala River, which flows along border of the two countries. Chile previously claimed the river was international property, while Bolivia has always claimed it as its own, and thus demanded that Chile pay to use it. Chile Deputy Foreign Minister Alberto van Klaveren and his Bolivian counterpart Hugo Fernández headed a

“technical meeting” on Saturday in Santiago and to establish an initial agreement which calls for Chilean businesses to pay Bolivia for 50 percent of the river’s water. Another bilateral meeting will be held in May for signing a binding agreement. Van Klaveren said the two principal businesses to pay for use of the waters will be state-owned copper mining company Codelco and Antofagasta Bolivia Railways. Bolivian Foreign Minister David Choquehuanca said last week that Chilean businesses using the Silala River would be paying US\$17,000 a day to Bolivia, a figure which Fernández described as “an estimate”. Bolivia claims compensation because the source of the river, a series of almost 100 springs, is found in the Uyuni salt plains in Bolivia. This agreement marks a radical change in Chilean policy, which previously refused any payment whatsoever for the Silala River water. Chile claimed the river was subject to international laws, rather than exclusively Bolivian regulation, as it runs along the border of both countries.

*Source – Santiago Times (no link)*

## **Forests**

### **Brazil: A Soya King’s Change Of Heart on the Rainforest**

APR. 16, 2009 - The governor of Mato Grosso state, Blairo Maggi’s family company is the world’s biggest soya producer. His state has a poor record on slowing deforestation. He is loathed by many NGOs and was depicted on a magazine cover as “Blairo Chainsaw-Hands”. But Mr Maggi seems to have had a change of heart. He recently hosted a conference on developing markets for ecosystem services, with the idea of paying stewards of the forest to keep the trees standing. After Mr Maggi became governor in 2003, Mato Grosso’s rate of deforestation accelerated markedly. Things have improved somewhat since, but Mr Maggi still takes a combative approach to being told what to do by greens. He has had rows with Brazil’s national space research institute, which monitors deforestation by satellite, contesting the figures it produced when he was accused of letting deforestation accelerate again last year. “We’re dancing with the bear,” said one of the participants in the conference. Mr Maggi says that only 8% of Mato Grosso’s territory is given over to commercial farming. Its high productivity means that the state is Brazil’s biggest producer of cotton and rice as well as soya. By contrast, about a quarter of its land is occupied by extensive cattle ranches that produce one cow per hectare per year. Make this land more productive, Mr Maggi argues, and there is no need to push into the forest to increase output. Larger producers are also more capable of sticking to agreements not to use recently deforested land, such as the one that currently exists between NGOs and soya producers, including Mr Maggi. Unfortunately the roaming cattle ranchers follow a different logic and will not be turned into agro-businessmen overnight.

*Source – The Economist*

### **Guyana Leader in Fight for Forest-Conservation Pay**

APRIL 2009 - Over the last two years, Guyana’s President Bharrat Jagdeo has seemed a human whirlwind as he has tried to earn his country money for protecting its vast natural forests. He has met Britain’s Prince Charles, addressed the UN Climate Change Conference and the World Economic Forum and penned agreements with Norway and the World Bank. In the process, Guyana has emerged as a leader in the push to reward nations financially for rainforest conservation in the fight against global warming. Debate over Guyana’s income-for-conservation strategy forms part of broader discussion of a new climate-change agreement that in 2013 is to supersede the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. If, as is currently proposed, reductions in deforestation rates are used as the reference point for forest-conservation payments, Guyana doesn’t have much room to show improvement. About three-quarters of the country still is

covered by forests, which include some of the world's most pristine and biodiverse woodlands. Guayana's annual deforestation rate, as estimated by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), is just 0.3%. With its tiny deforestation rate, Guyana cannot argue it must be paid to stop clear-cutting already underway. Instead, it contends it needs REDD money to make it worthwhile to resist future development involving deforestation.

*Source – EcoAmericas (please contact Larissa Stoner for complete article)*

### **Brazil Cracks Down On Illegal Loggers in Amazon**

APRIL 08, 2009 - Environmental police in Brazil seized the equivalent of 400 truckloads of wood in a major raid on illegal loggers, the latest effort to curb destruction of the Amazon rain forest. During the surprise raid in Nova Esperanca do Piria, 120 miles east of Belem city, police shut down 13 logging companies and sawmills, and seized tractors, guns, and ammunition, Environment Minister Carlos Minc said during a visit to the remote jungle site. The owners fled the area. The crackdown is the latest in a series of measures by the government to meet a new target of reducing destruction of the Amazon forest by 50 percent during the next decade. "We are determined to slash deforestation -- this operation is a warning to illegal loggers," Minc told Reuters. Brazil's government last year abandoned years of opposition to deforestation targets and is now under pressure to show the world community and critics at home that it can deliver, particularly ahead of a major climate change summit in Copenhagen in December. Minc aims to reduce deforestation to about 3,700 square miles (9,500 sq km) in the 12 months through July, the lowest on record and down from 4,600 square miles (11,900 sq km) the year earlier.

Source - Yahoo

### **World Economic Downturn Might Ease Forest Clearing**

APRIL 2009 - The global financial crisis could ease logging and agricultural pressure on the world's forests but could give rise to other woodland threats and crimp forest conservation efforts, says the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). "Reduced wood demand could have positive effects on forest resources, but the economic crisis could also reduce investment in sustainable forest management and favor illegal logging," the FAO says in "The State of the World's Forests 2009," a report it released on March 16. The report, with its mix of good and bad news for the environment, comes amid what economists say is the steepest global economic downturn since World War II. North American demand for wood fiber is expected to drop by more than 20 million tons this year. Though the report does not go into depth about Latin America, local observers say they see signs deforestation might be easing in some places because of the economic crisis and other factors, including improved environmental enforcement. But other deforestation pressures could increase as a result of the economic downturn, which has driven the average growth rate in Latin America from 5% annually over the last half decade to what is expected to be less than 2% this year.

*Source – EcoAmericas (please contact Larissa Stoner for complete article)*

## **Wildlife**

### **Global Animal-Trafficking Ring Uncovered In Brazil**

APRIL 2009 - When Brazilian federal police cracked down on an international wildlife trafficking network in March, they found fresh evidence of the organization, reach and environmental destructiveness of such rings. The Federal Police, whose role is similar to that of the U.S.

Federal Bureau of Investigation, sent 450 officers to nine states to arrest 73 alleged participants in the enterprise. The crackdown, called "Operation Oxossi" after an African god said to protect animals, produced the highest number of such arrests in a single day in Brazil. It also marked one of the largest confiscations of contraband animals—832—in a single day. Federal police suspect the network had sold as many as 500,000 animals a year, including some endangered species, and brought in at least R\$20 million (US\$8.5 million) annually. The animals came from nine states where the ring operated, in particular the eastern Amazon state of Pará; the western states of Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul, home of the Pantanal floodplain; and a portion of Brazil's Atlantic Rainforest. The Federal Police arrested one Rio de Janeiro resident from the Czech Republic whom it accuses of being a ringleader. It also issued arrest warrants for 20 other suspects in Brazil. And with the help of Interpol, authorities in Switzerland, Portugal and the Czech Republic, the three countries where most of the ring's wild animals were sent, are investigating five suspected ring members in those countries. The 73 people arrested during Operation Oxossi included hunters and smugglers, as well as officials with a transport company and five military policemen who allegedly facilitated the illegal movement and sale of the animals.

*Source – EcoAmericas (please contact Larissa Stoner for complete article)*

### **Fishing & Marine Conservation**

#### **Peru: Coastal Resources Need Relief amid Climate Change**

MAR. 2009 - The Punta San Juan Reserve, on the arid Peruvian coast 530 km (329 miles) south of Lima, is home to a colony of some 3,000 penguins and other wildlife sustained by the nutrient-rich Humboldt Current sweeping up the Pacific coastline. This upwelling gives Peru one of the world's major fisheries, mainly of anchoveta (*Engraulis ringens*), which is made into fish meal for export. It also supports a delicate web of coastal fauna, including Humboldt penguins, guanay cormorants, Peruvian boobies, and two sea lion species. But the same current that brings environmental riches also can change course, leaving disaster. When El Niño shifts the Humboldt Current away, as it did in 1997-98, the anchoveta disappear, devastating Peru's commercial fishery and causing seabird and sea lion populations to collapse. In 1998, Peruvian fishermen caught 1.2 million tons of anchoveta, compared to 6 million tons in 2008. With some climate models forecasting more frequent El Niño events, and with nearly half the people in South America's most populous countries living within 200 kilometers (124 miles) of the shore, scientists say there is an urgent need for action. They argue the region must devote more resources to initiatives such as fishing limits, coastal-protection zoning and targeted research.

*Source – EcoAmericas (Please contact Larissa Stoner for complete article)*

#### **Vietnam Targets Brazil and Chile as Seafood Markets**

APRIL 01, 2009 - Vietnamese businesses are looking to South America for new market opportunities for a range of competitive products, including seafood, trade officials said. Brazil has authorized 60 Vietnamese companies to export fish products to the country the Vietnam Trade Office in Brazil confirmed, reports Vietnam Net. So far, Brazil has imported Vietnamese seafood products via businessmen from third countries. However, Vietnam's Trade Counsellor in Brazil, Pham Ba Uong, said they first need to acquire information from trade offices in South America in order to understand the demands of the market. Trade between the two countries has increased by 60% per year between 2005 and 2008 reaching 534.5 million US dollars. The target for this year is 500 million and one billion USD by 2010. Chile is considered another promising market, with the Vietnamese trade office actively supporting businesses from back

home. Chilean importers have expressed a particular interest in ordering Vietnamese basa catfish (also known as panga).

Source – Mercopress <http://en.mercopress.com/2009/03/24/vietnam-targets-brazil-and-chile-as-seafood-markets>

## **Extractive Industries**

### **Expert Condemns Chilean Glacier Policy as 'Insufficient'**

APRIL 24, 2009 - German glacier expert Alexander Brenning labeled Chile's glacier protection policy as "not sufficient", highlighting the need for greater information to be provided to the public and businesses regarding the environmental impact of mining projects in Chile. On April 9 the National Environmental Commission (CONAMA) approved the National Glacier Policy, an agreement between the government, the National Mining Society, and the Mining Council, which represents 17 of the nation's largest mining companies. The policy requires environmental impact studies when projects are undertaken on or near glaciers. Brenning pointed out that up to two-thirds of general drinking water for Santiago's 5.3 million inhabitants comes from a single water shed in the high Andes, consisting of two small glaciers which are now retreating. He also pointed out that 20 million cubic meters of water in rock glaciers were either removed or affected at the División Andina and Los Bronces mines in the past 30 years and suggested that it might even eventually become necessary to avoid any type of work near or on rock glaciers.

Source – *Santiago Times* (please contact Larissa Stoner for complete article)

### **Peru Faces Water vs. Oil Dilemma**

APRIL 2009 - "Peru, a mining country" is a government slogan which can be seen emblazoned on official buildings and heard repeatedly on state media broadcasts. It is all part of an aggressive drive by the government of President Alan Garcia to attract private investment and boost the economy. But it is not just trying to attract mining companies, the country's traditional engine of economic growth. Companies looking for oil and gas are also welcome, particularly in Peru's huge Amazon region, which occupies more than half the country. "San Martin, Green Region" is the slogan of one of those Amazon provinces that takes a different view. It is the size of Costa Rica and an island of verdant, undulating tropical forest and open pasture land. "In a country as large and geographically diverse as Peru, there should be enough room for more than one vision," says lawyer Octavio Alvarado, who with his colleague Jaime Bustamante, came out as victors after opposing a government-backed plan for oil and gas exploration in a sensitive environmental area of San Martin. Last month, Peru's top court ruled that oil exploration should be halted in the protected Cordillera Escalera mountains while the government approves the regional development plan.

Source – BBC <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/7951182.stm>

## **Energy**

### **U.S-Brazil Biofuel Network Brings Researchers Together**

MAY 04, 2009 - A network in development between scientists and universities in the U.S. and Brazil should help forge partnerships and collaboration in biofuels-related research. Funded by the U.S. Department of State and coordinated by the Fulbright Commission, Brazil, the Brazil-U.S. Higher Education Network's Biofuel Network aims to promote awareness of research activities, improve communication, and develop and enhance scientific exchange between the

two countries in the biofuels field, according to Fulbright Brazil. The Biofuel Network's Web page ([www.brazil-usa-henetwork.org/biofuels](http://www.brazil-usa-henetwork.org/biofuels)), includes for its members a forum, a virtual library and database with educational and research background, and contact information for members divided by area of interest. When collaboration begins, information about joint research projects, published articles, products, patents and other topics will be updated in the network and on the Web page, according to Fulbright. Network participants also will meet periodically for workshops. The network advisory boards, one in each of the two countries and made up of researchers from academic, federal and private sector firms, are taking applications for membership and will base decisions on specific criteria including a doctoral degree and at least one article published in a scientific journal or a research project on biofuels in the works.

*Source - Yahoo*

### **Dirty Energy Threat to Green Brazil**

APRIL 14, 2009 - Brazil boasts of being one of the world's "greenest" energy suppliers, but recent policy initiatives could jeopardize its desire to be a big player in future climate change discussions. As its economy has expanded, so has its demand for energy, but even now, 46% of Brazil's energy production is from renewable sources. This compares with the global average of only 13%, making Brazil one of the greenest countries in the world. But despite a proud record as a green energy producer, it found that Brazil's environmental credentials are under threat. Much of Brazil's energy comes from hydro-electric plants, but the licensing of these is notoriously difficult. The result is a push towards thermoelectric plants, which are easier to get permission to build. Still, fossil fuel's share of Brazil's energy production is small, accounting for only 10% of the total. But the new thermoelectric plants should take that share up to nearly 17%.

*Source - BBC*

### **Chile: Low-Impact Dam, But Controversial Location**

APRIL 2009 - As hydropower alternatives go, small-scale run-of-river projects usually please green advocates thanks to their typically light environmental impact. But a Chilean Supreme Court decision in January to allow a run-of-river power station has drawn the sustained ire of environmental groups. The issue is the location: Puyehue National Park, in Chile's Lake District. The US\$20 million Palmar-Correntoso project, to be carried out by Hidroaustral, an affiliate of the Italian firm Idroenergia, is slated to begin work in earnest before the end of the year. It entails the construction in Puyehue of two run-of-the-river dams linked to a single power-generating station with an installed capacity of 13 megawatts. Seven Chilean senators and congressmen filed a lawsuit last year against the Regional Environmental Commission (Corema) for the Tenth Region, or Lakes Region, for that body's July approval of the project. The politicians argue that the Lakes Region's Corema approved the project for political reasons. They point out that Chilean law prohibits industrial activity in parks and protected areas.

*Source – EcoAmericas (contact Larissa Stoner for complete article)*

### **Waste Requirement Eased For Brazilian Nuclear Plant**

MARCH 2009 - When Brazilian authorities granted a preliminary license last September for construction of the country's third nuclear plant, a key question remained: Would Ibama,

Brazil's environmental permitting agency, stand by the strict waste-disposal condition it had placed on the project? That condition required the National Nuclear Energy Commission (CNEN), Brazil's nuclear regulatory agency, to draft a plan for the permanent disposal of high-level radioactive waste before the 1,400-megawatt, R\$7.2 billion (US\$3.1 billion) reactor could be put into service. Ibama all but answered that question this month, when it granted a construction license for the proposed plant, Angra 3. This time, the condition accompanying the permit was substantially less rigorous than the original one. It requires the development by September of a long-term—but not permanent—waste-disposal plan. As a result, work on Angra 3 now can begin. And once the plant is built, only an operating permit will be needed to put the reactor on line. By not insisting on a permanent storage scheme, Ibama appears to have given in to arguments made by Eletronuclear, the state-run company that will build Angra 3 and that runs Brazil's two existing nuclear power plants, Angra 1 and Angra 2.

*Source – EcoAmericas (please contact Larissa Stoner for complete article)*

### **Argentina-Brazil: Planned Dam above Famous Falls Draws Fire**

MAR. 30, 2009 - While a dispute between Argentina and Uruguay over a pulp mill simmers on, a new environmental conflict over a border river is taking shape, this time involving a hydroelectric dam between Argentina and Brazil. Argentine lawmaker Timoteo Llera, a former mayor of the northeastern city of Puerto Iguazú, submitted a request for information from the Foreign Ministry on the Brazilian dam that would be built 90 km north of the majestic Iguazú falls, which are shared by the two countries. "Brazil does whatever it wants with the Iguazú river, sharply altering the flow of water in a question of hours. But the Iguazú falls have been a world heritage site since 1984 and if they are left without water, an international dispute could arise," said the legislator, who has called on the tourism industry on both sides of the border to oppose the dam. The hydroelectric dam, which would be the sixth to operate on the Iguazú river, "will impact the volume of water at the falls and the biodiversity along the riverbank," said Llera. "We need an agreement on the shared use of the river, because this region depends on the tourists who visit the falls in Argentina and Brazil."

*Source – IPS News <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=46326>*

### **Chile: Hydro Project Approved Despite Environmental Objections**

MAR. 30, 2009 - After a two-year application process and months of heated public commentary, the controversial Alto Maipo hydroelectric project got the go-ahead last week from national environmental authorities. Construction could begin as early as June. Although the debate surrounding the project has been contentious, the project's environmental studies were approved by a wide margin, with 17 environmental commission members voting in favor and one against. Four members abstained from voting. Alto Maipo is a US\$700 million hydroelectric project proposed by AES Gener, a Chilean firm that already operates several hydroelectric facilities in the Cajón del Maipo region just outside Santiago. The envisioned design would capture water from three rivers in the area and divert part of their flow through underground tunnels, where they would power electric generators before being returned to the Río Maipo several miles downstream.

*Source- Santiago Times*

### **Mercury Pollution**

#### **Argentina Moves to Rid Its Hospitals of Mercury**

MAR. 2009 - Argentine hospitals and clinics can no longer buy thermometers and blood-pressure gauges containing mercury under an order signed by Health Minister Graciela Ocaña. The new policy, announced and implemented in February, puts Argentina in sync with recommendations made by the World Health Organization, which has warned that health facilities are a leading source of mercury contamination. Still unresolved by the minister's order is what the health industry will do with existing equipment containing mercury. The order calls for the creation of a professionals' group to address that issue and for training health professionals in the handling of mercury waste. "Mercury is a heavy metal with high potential for impact in ecosystems," Ocaña's order states. "The risks from exposure to heavy metals are considered among the most widely identified threats to infant health." Momentum for the mercury measure came from a campaign by health professionals working with Health Care Without Harm, an international coalition promoting environmental sustainability in the health care industry. The Latin American office of Health Care Without Harm, located in Buenos Aires, opened in 2006 with the goal of controlling mercury high on its list of priorities.

*Source - EcoAmericas*

### **Climate Change**

#### **Chilean Airline Will Reduce Its CO2 Emissions**

APRIL 06, 2009 - Chilean-based LAN Airlines recently announced it will reduce the consumption of combustible fuel by 16.6 million gallons each year with the installation of "winglets" on all 37 of its Boeing 767-300 aircrafts as part of the airline's endeavor to improve flight efficiency. The project will be completed by the end of next year and will cost around US\$70 million. The winglets, which are 3.5 meters high, are installed on the tip of the plane wings to reduce lift-induced drag and provide extra lift for a faster ascension. The winglets reduce the consumption of combustible fuel by 450,000 gallons each year per aircraft and will cut CO2 emission by 5 percent for each aircraft.

*Source – Santiago Times*

### **Antarctic**

#### **Antarctic Tours an Environmental Concern**

MAR. 2009 - The image of Antarctica as a frozen wilderness untouched by man is becoming a thing of the past. Today, hundreds of travel agencies worldwide promote trips to the vast, icy continent, currently resulting in over 60 cruise-ship visits a year—the vast majority using Argentina as a jumping-off point. With the visits, however, have come accidents and growing calls for restrictions on human access to a region designated by the international community as "a natural reserve devoted to peace and science." The last two November-to-March tourism seasons have seen four maritime accidents off the coast of Antarctica, the latest involving the small cruise vessel Ocean Nova, which ran aground last month near Argentina's San Martín research station. The vessel managed to get clear after two days and return to port under its own power. It did not spill any of its fuel. Such was not the case for the Nordkaap, a cruise ship that hit a rock in January 2007, spilling 500 to 750 liters of fuel. Its 300 passengers were rescued by the Chilean Navy, and the vessel got underway a week later. Another cruise ship, the Ushuaia, ran aground off Antarctica last December and was stuck for four days before being freed by a Chilean naval vessel. It also spilled a small amount of fuel.

*Source – EcoAmericas (please contact Larissa Stoner for complete article)*

### **Amazon**

### **Brazil Land Bill Would Cause 'Ecological Disaster'**

MAY 13, 2009 - Brazil's environment minister warned that a bill giving settlers title to millions of hectares of land illegally occupied in the Amazon before 2004 would be an "ecological disaster."

"Without environmental guarantees, the message we would be sending the world is that we are giving land titles away with one hand and a chainsaw with the other," Environment Minister Carlos Minc told reporters. "It would be a license to deforest." The bill before the Brazil's Chamber of Deputies would give a claimant title to up to 1,500 hectares (3,700 acres) of public land if it was occupied before 2004. The bill includes environmental requirements, such as an obligation to replant deforested areas, but a powerful bloc within the chamber called "ruralists" wants to eliminate them, Minc said. "That the state would turn over public patrimony to 300,000 families without requiring an environmental counterweight at a time when the whole world is discussing climate issues and the Amazon, would be an ecological disaster of great dimensions," he said. Minc recalled that in the past year Brazil has set goals for reducing the deforestation of the Amazon and opened an Amazon Fund for international donations to protect the region to which Norway has pledged one billion dollars.

*Source - Yahoo*

### **Brazil, Peru Vow to Quicken Pace of Integration**

APRIL 28, 2009 - Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Peruvian counterpart Alan Garcia pledged to bolster bilateral trade and give new impetus to programs aimed at cross-border integration. "Peru has always looked toward the Pacific and we, to our (Atlantic) coast, and we have left our border abandoned for centuries and centuries," Lula said after talks with Alan Garcia in the Brazilian Amazon city of Rio Branco, Acre. "We hope that from now on, Peruvians and Brazilians experience another relationship and don't look to the north, but rather to each other," Brazil's leader said. The most significant accord to come out of April 28th's brief summit was a memorandum of intent to build six hydroelectric plants on Peruvian soil to supply power to Brazil. That \$4 billion project, a joint effort of the respective state-owned utilities, Eletrobras and Electroperu, includes plans for a 600 MW transmission line to link the Brazilian and Peruvian power grids.

*Source – Yahoo*

**NOTE from HUB: Amazon conservation groups are concerned with plans for the Cruzeiro do Sul (Brazil) – Pucallpa (Peru) highway pledged as a priority by both presidents. The highway will cross the bi-national Serra do Divisor park as well as affect isolated indigenous groups.**

### **Environmentalists Oppose Amazon Road Proposal**

APR. 16, 2009 – Brazil's top environmental groups warned of serious damage to the Amazon rainforest if a proposal to allow unrestricted road paving is approved. The measure was quietly slipped into legislation aimed at stimulating economic growth that Brazil's Chamber of Deputies approved Monday. It still needs approval in the Senate and then the president's signature to become law. "Road paving is the largest vector of deforestation in the Amazonia," 30 environmental groups said in a joint statement. "Historically, 75 percent of the deforestation of the region happened along paved highways." The real goal of the measure, the groups say, is to pave a road between the Amazon river city of Manaus to Porto Velho, some 765 kilometers (475 miles) to the southwest in Rondonia state. "We consider the paving

of highway BR-319 unacceptable," the statement read. The road would "open the Amazon's most remote and preserved region to disorganized occupation." The measure "would drastically harm the Amazonia," former environmental minister Marina Silva told the daily O Globo. The legislators "are carrying out scorched earth politics with environmental legislation," she said.

*Source - Yahoo*

### **Settlers Ordered Out Of Brazilian Reserve**

APRIL 2009 - As expected, Brazil's Supreme Court ordered the removal of white settlers from one of the biggest indigenous reserves in the Amazon, a vast swath of rainforest larger than the U.S. state of Connecticut. The high court also issued 19 land-use conditions that will apply to all indigenous reserves. The most controversial of these prohibits the expansion of demarcated reserves, thus making it hard for a tribe to sustain itself as it grows in size and needs more land to feed its members, green groups say. The court, in a 10-to-1 decision, ruled that some 500 families of white settlers—six large rice-farmers and 23 cattle ranchers and their employees—had to leave the 4.2-million-acre (1.7-million-ha) Raposa Serra do Sol reserve. The ruling was anticipated after eight of the 11 justices had voted unanimously in December to expel the rice farmers, leaving the remaining three to cast their votes in March. March's ruling states that whites had settled in the reserve in the 1990s. By law, settlers cannot occupy indigenous reserves. Land for the Raposa Serra do Sol reserve was demarcated in 1988, and the reserve was formally created in 2005.

*Source – EcoAmericas (please contact Larissa Stoner for complete article)*

### **Contact with Amazon Tribes Inevitable, Says Brazilian Protection Agency**

APRIL 27, 2009 - Illegal loggers have put the survival of the last isolated indigenous groups increasingly at risk. The last isolated indigenous tribes, located deep in the Amazon rainforest, may need to be contacted for the first time to protect them from illegal loggers, according to Brazil's agency, Fundação Nacional do Índio (Funai). Funai official José Carlos Meirelles, who has been monitoring the groups along the border between Brazil and Peru for over 20 years, told the Guardian that he believes their survival is increasingly at risk. The decision to make contact with the tribes is not one to be taken lightly. The last time isolated groups were contacted in the Amazon was in 1996, but the Korubo in the Javari valley have since suffered epidemics of malaria and hepatitis, resulting in many deaths. Establishing contact, however, could be the only deterrent from the looming danger of loggers. If friendly contact were established, Funai would build a post inside their area to deter the loggers and offer healthcare, vaccinating tribe members against the many diseases that contact with the outside world inevitably brings. The risk comes not only from the loggers, but gold prospectors and coca planters who have also invaded the region, bringing disease and violence.

*Source – The Guardian*

### **Ignored Amazon Stewards Seek Land Rights**

APRIL 2009 - Picture a community in the Brazilian Amazon that uses rainforest resources sustainably to survive, keeping the surrounding environment intact. Most likely, the picture will feature Indians, who seem to be the only humans in this vast rainforest region capable of combining viable livelihoods with environmental stewardship. In fact, though, indigenous groups aren't the Amazon's only green-friendly residents. The category also includes scores of

communities established over a century ago by former Brazilian rubber tappers. These communities have attracted little attention, partly because of their low-key, unglamorous way of life and their remote locations. But recent research indicates they are just as skillful as neighboring indigenous groups at living in the rainforest without damaging the Amazon ecosystems. And as loggers and miners have moved ever farther into the Amazon, with settlers behind them, these non-indigenous communities have begun asserting their rights as a traditional people in the same way Indian communities have done. Specifically, they are insisting that under Brazil's progressive constitution, they have a collective right to the land they occupy.

*Source – EcoAmericas (please Larissa Stoner for complete article)*

### **Study Seeks To Plug Amazon Information Gaps**

MAR. 2009 - Amazonia—the world's largest river basin, covering nine countries and draining an area three-quarters the size of China—faces a dizzying array of threats. Among them are migration, agricultural expansion, deforestation, unplanned urban development, oil drilling, mining, biodiversity loss and climate change. Environmentalists and policy makers trying to assess the scope of these problems and design comprehensive policy solutions have been hampered by fragmented information gathered in ways that have not always been uniform from country to country. A new study by the United Nations Environment Program and the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), tries to fill that gap, providing data on topics including population, deforestation, hydroelectricity, hydrocarbons, protected areas, water resources, endangered species, land-use changes, carbon absorption and economics. The new study, called Environment Outlook in the Amazonia—GEO Amazonia, sketches future scenarios for the Amazon based on whether countries implement appropriate policies for resource use, the role of the market in the region's economy, and the use of science and technology. It also offers policy guidelines, recommending Amazonian countries develop a shared vision for the region, establish consistent policies, comprehensive environmental and risk-management plans, strengthen oversight agencies, share information, and promote environmental services.

*Source – EcoAmericas*

**NOTE from HUB: ACTO has a new director, Manuel Picasso – a Peruvian diplomat with experience in border conflicts between Peru and Ecuador.**

### **Conservation Funding**

#### **Big World Bank Loan to Brazil Stirs Debate**

MARCH 2009 - Granting its largest loan ever for Brazil, the World Bank this month extended a US\$1.3 billion credit to the country with the express objective of making environmental considerations a part of development initiatives. Called the "First Programmatic Development Policy Loan for Sustainable Environmental Management," the credit would on paper seem a welcome sight for environmental advocates. But that hasn't been the reality. Green groups and social-rights organizations have panned the loan, questioning the seriousness of bringing sustainability to large-scale dam construction and other projects that by definition damage the environment. The World Bank said in a written statement that the credit will "integrate sustainability concerns in the development agenda of key sectors such as forest management, water and renewable energy... and will integrate Brazil's climate change agenda across sectors." The funds will be delivered in two successive tranches—of \$800 million and \$500 million—following Brazilian Senate approval of the loan. In the fourth quarter of this year, the

bank plans to negotiate a \$700-million follow-up loan along the same lines as the first \$1.3 billion credit and approve it in 2010.

*Source – EcoAmericas (please contact Larissa Stoner for complete article)*

**Upcoming Events (newly added events in RED)**

**2nd International Workshop on Advances in Cleaner Production**

Sao Paulo, Brazil

May 20-22, 2009

<http://www.advancesincleanerproduction.net>

**IV International Roundtable on Responsible Soy**

Campinas, Brazil

May 26-27, 2009

<http://www.responsiblesoy.org/>

**Americas Energy and Climate Symposium**

Lima, Peru

June 15-16, 2009

<http://www.iamericas.org/energy/events/americas-energy-symposium.html>

**4th International Bioenergy Conference**

Curitiba, Brazil

June 16-19, 2009

<http://www.eventobioenergia.com.br/feira/en/index.php>

**International Innovation and Security Workshop**

Guanacaste, Costa Rica

June 16-18, 2009

*Contact HUB for more information*

**World Congress on High-Altitude Wetlands (Paramos)**

Loja, Ecuador

June 22-24

<http://www.paramo.org/paramundi/>

**The Future of Energy in the Americas: Adapting To the New Energy Reality**

Miami, FL

June 22-23 2009

*Institute of the Americas*

**First International Seminar on Environmental Issues in the Mining Industry**

Santiago, Chile

Sept. 30 – Oct. 02, 2009

[http://www.enviromine2009.com/evento\\_2009/](http://www.enviromine2009.com/evento_2009/)

**XIII World Forestry Congress**

Buenos Aires, Argentina

Oct. 18-25, 2009

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/37075/en/page.jsp>

**VI World Park Rangers Congress**

Santa Cruz, Bolivia

Nov. 2009

<http://www.guardaparque.org>