

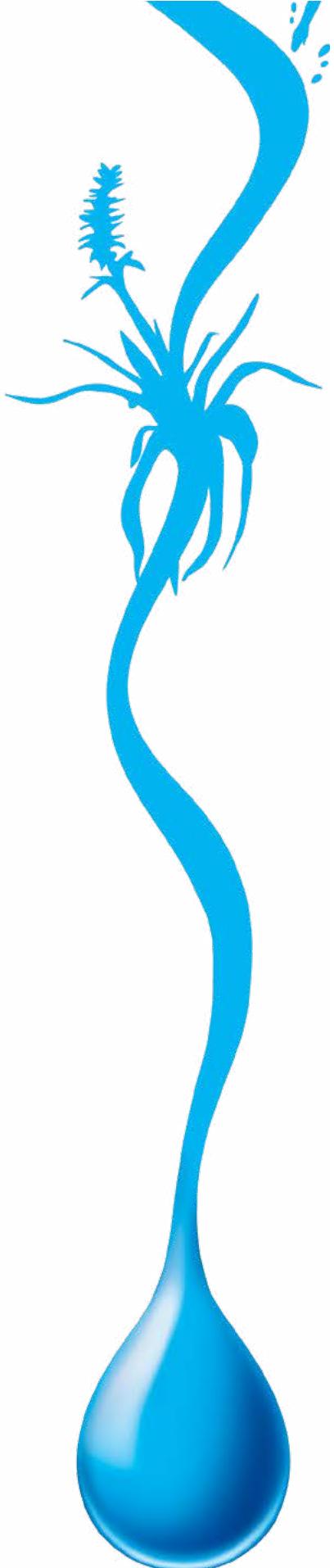
# GIVING A VOICE TO PEOPLE AND NATURE

**2014 Report**  
of the IUCN Regional Office for  
Mexico, Central America and the  
Caribbean (ORMACC)

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## VISION

A just world that values and conserves nature

## MISSION

To influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable



In a interview with IUCN Regional Director, PhD. Grethel Aguilar, she talks about the main achievements, challenges and goals of the Region.



## Introduction

### 2014: a year of great contributions and achievements for conservation

#### 1. 2014 was a year that brought good news to our region. What has been the most important?

2014 was certainly a year full of good news and much collaboration with governments, IUCN members, indigenous peoples and strategic allies. There are many achievements to highlight, such as the support for knowledge generation for rural communities in Guatemala to export premium cocoa, the construction of the first bio-protocol of consultation and free, prior and informed consent of the Mayangna people of Nicaragua, water services payment in more than 7,000 conserved acres in Mexico and the accreditation of IUCN as a GEF agency, giving more options to governments in the region to access GE funds. Mexico and Central America have been great allies in the efforts of forest landscape restoration. In the Caribbean, we have managed to open - hand in hand with our members- the Observatory for Protected Areas and trained professionals and technicians in this subject area. Together, Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, their governments and citizens continue building the stage for conservation.

#### 2. From our IUCN pillars, the membership and Commissions that have actively participated in projects, which determining aspects would you point out in our relationship with them?

From our IUCN pillars, the membership and Commissions that have actively participated in projects, which determining aspects would you point out in our relationship with them?

In implementing the IUCN work program, member participation is essential. The institution, worldwide, has more than 1,200 members and in the region we have over 100 of these members between NGOs and governments. In these organizations there is great ability, knowledge and permanent presence in the countries in which IUCN promotes its work program. IUCN members are the heart, the main driving force in favor of the conservation of natural resources.

In addition to these efforts are the the netowrk of volunteers that the IUCN Commissions has. The contributions of these experts are an important input for the implementation of the program. For example, in 2014 ORMACC -in a joint effort with the World Commission on Law Environment- performed an analysis of the legality of timber in Mesoamerica; with the Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Politics instruments were developed to strengthen environmental governance frameworks and to determine the dependence of local communities on natural resources; with the Commission on Protected Areas innovative instruments such as the Green List of Protected Areas were achieved. All this has been possible thanks to people who believe in the vision of a fair world that values and conserves nature, and the support of our many donors, including governments, foundations, international organizations and cooperation agencies.

#### 3. As an organization we had an important year having held the World Parks Congress. From this, what would you rescue in terms of contributions to the world protected areas?

Our World Congress of Protected Areas in Sydney was an important stage to show the region's efforts in conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. It became clear that it is essential to make a new balance in the relationship between humans and nature, recognizing that the natural resources are what sustain our existence, our spiritual and cultural identity, our economies and welfare. A key message that I would like to emphasize is the urgency of working with the "new generation", 1.800 million young people around the world that may well promote new ideas, in the hands of those who are the future of this planet.

From the Congress 150 recommendations were proposed which certainly set the tone of protected areas for the coming years. IUCN strongly promoted the concept of natural-based solutions, which puts ecosystems at the center of the search for options and answers for sustainable development. This concept is having a growing acceptance and in the Congress was well received among world leaders and authorities. Being a Congress that is held every 10 years, this was a propitious space to renew the commitment of the international community with nature and its protection.

#### 4. Finally, how do you see 2015 in terms of goals that started to be built during 2014?

2015 started full of energy and celebrating many of the good results achieved in 2014, and that will be a reality this year. This year our efforts will be particularly focused on carrying out the IUCN Regional Members Forum, to be held in Panama City with the support of the National Committee of Members of that country. It is in this forum where we will discuss the scope of the 2017-2020 work program and we can outline our ideas as a region towards the World Conservation Congress to be held in Hawaii in 2016. Our work in border basins, forests, protected areas, climate change adaptation, water, coastal systems and equitable distribution in hand with local communities, indigenous peoples, governments and private companies will be part of some scenarios this year. In addition, governments, civil society and together with our members, we hope to strengthen relations in our new role of GEF agency, seeing this as an opportunity to achieve conservation goals and sustainable development in this great region of the planet.



## Program Advances



### Progress of the IUCN program in Mesoamerica and the Caribbean - achievements in 2014: a reason to be global

At the end of 2014, the regional component of IUCN 2013-2016 program for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean has completed the first half of its implementation. The path of the current development program is based on three themes that define global and regional action framework of the IUCN:

- i) assessment and nature conservation,
- ii) effective governance and equitable use of nature,
- iii) boost nature-based solutions to face the climate, food and development challenges.

The overall program is the most ambitious that the IUCN has ever had and consequently their regional expression also involves goals and powerful results<sup>1</sup>.

#### Keeping regional score Product knowledge to serve conservation

##### IUCN Regional Objectives for 2013-2016 for the Mesoamerican and Caribbean Region

1. Application of tools, norms and standards for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity promotes better planning and more effective management to aid in the prevention or reduce the loss of biodiversity in the Region.
2. Good governance of natural resources – through the implementation of a rights based conservation approach - contributes to sharing fairer and more equitable benefits derived from nature in the region.
- 3.1 In the Region, knowledge and tools are applied and agreements are obtained which promote local nature-based solutions that address climate change, food security and socio-economic development.
- 3.2 In the Region, the public and private sectors recognize and incorporate nature-based activities to strengthen and address climate change, food security and socioeconomic development solutions.

<sup>1</sup> Unión Internacional para la Conservación de la Naturaleza (2012). 'Componente Regional de Programa 2013-2016 para Mesoamérica con la Iniciativa Caribe'. [PDF online]. <[http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/orma\\_ic\\_componente\\_de\\_programa\\_09\\_03\\_12\\_borrador\\_1\\_1.pdf](http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/orma_ic_componente_de_programa_09_03_12_borrador_1_1.pdf)>..

During 2014 several knowledge products were produced and reported and have served to strengthen capabilities in natural resources decision makers and key users , based on the application of scientific and technical knowledge, the creation of new tools to improve the assessment and management of natural resources and associated governance mechanisms. Some of these instruments will be of global application and their development has included preliminary or pilot efforts in our region. Among them are the Red List of Ecosystems, the governance framework for natural resources and the evaluation dependence framework of the local communities on natural resources, tools and information systems to strengthen the management of forest resources and management information and schemes of governance in transboundary basins, especially those related to adaptation to climate change. We have also completed a database of species suitable for forest restoration actions<sup>2</sup>.

Under the conservation rights based approach, in 2014 progress has been made in strengthening participatory and equitable governance schemes and influence in environmental policy. Those that stand out are the ones concerning indigenous peoples and their territories in the region, governance schemes of diverse social strata at a participatory watershed management level and the ones concerning forest governance that underpins sustainable management and a favorable business environment to manage forest resources.

#### Effective involvement of constituents

The set of actions for the implementation of the IUCN Program in this region certainly would not be possible without the contributions and commitment of its constituents, who, according to their skills and experience interact through projects and their own and/or shared initiatives that make it possible to achieve the 2013-2016 objectives, under the One Programme approach which has also received support and guidance of the membership governance structures, such as National Committees, Regional Committees, Regional Forum and the Experts Committees.

<sup>2</sup> Unión Internacional para la Conservación de la Naturaleza (2015). 'Especies para Restauración'. [sitio web]. <<http://www.especiesrestauracion-iucn.org>>.



1.

## Talking About Water

In binational basins, lands are cultivated and products are exchanged. They are transit routes, among other services. They also generate cooperation, result in water security concerns and are a source of vital ecosystem services to the livelihoods of local communities. Hence, it is important to encourage cooperation from the root organizations to national and multinational institutions and build platforms for dialogue on water governance and hydrodiplomacy.

In Mesoamerica the BRIDGE - Building Dialogue and Good Water Governance in Rivers – Project catalyzes cooperation processes in three basins: Coatán (located between Mexico and Guatemala), Goascorán (shared between Honduras and El Salvador) and Sixaola (shared between Costa Rica and Panama).

### Achievements

#### Goascorán River Basin (Honduras and El Salvador)

- Strengthening the Binational Management Group of the Goascorán River Basin.
- Draft of the Goascorán Binational River Basin Territorial Development Strategic Plan 2013-2018, involving associations, national environmental and planning authorities, other local actors.
- Contributed to the implementation of the Law on Water Resources of Honduras by supporting the establishment of the board of the Goascorán River, 2 sub-basin councils and 20 micro-basin committees, which bring together various groups and institutions of the civil society.

#### Sixaola River Basin (Costa Rica and Panama)

- Strengthening of the Binational Commission of the Sixaola River Basin, which includes institutional representatives, indigenous authorities and civil society.
- Drafting of the Action Plan of the Binational Commission of the Sixaola River Basin.
- Preparation of the Master Plan of the Binational Sixaola River Basin (CR-PA).

### Members and Committees

The Natural History Society of Soconusco in Mexico is an implementing partner of the project in the Coatán River basin, mainly on strengthening microbasin committees.

Also, the Honduran Foundation for Environment and Development Life in Honduras is the implementing partner of the project in the Goascorán River, especially in consolidating the Binational Basin Management Group (GGBCG, for its acronym in Spanish).

As beneficiaries of the project activities on training regarding water governance are the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of El Salvador, the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Oceans of Costa Rica and the National Environment Authority in Panama

### About the project

**BRIDGE, Building Dialogue and Good Water Governance in Rivers, is a project of global scope, aims to increase cooperation in basins located among countries through better governance and their sustainable management.**



## Communities adapt to climate change in the Cahoacán Basin in Mexico

Hurricanes Mitch (1998) and Stan (2005) and tropical storm Barbara (2007), led the Cahoacán River and its affluents to overflow, which caused great destruction in the border area between Mexico and Guatemala, and the loss of human lives. The effects were costly as major roads, electric power facilities, housing, shops, pasture and crop lands (corn, coffee, cocoa, vegetables), fishing areas, education and health infrastructure were destroyed.

The implementation of the Cahoacán Project Phase II, based on the restoration, protection and conservation of microbasins, could help reduce damage, control erosion and improve the capture, filtration and water supply for flow regulation through soil and water conservation works and practices, such as trenches and reforestation at water sources.

This process could be established permanently and in association with a compensation strategy for watershed services, ensuring medium- and long-term provision of water at the basin, disaster risk reduction and strengthening the values for a water culture.

Cahoacán Project Phase II is executed under the sponsorship of the Gonzalo Rio Arronte Foundation, which is a private, assistance institution founded in 2000.

### Achievements

- Nine participatory management experiences in the Cahoacán River basin, Mexico
- 4,900 hectares of cloud forests and jungles, and 2,350 ha of agroforestry systems preserved by the communities through environmental services payment mechanisms.
- Agreement between IUCN, the National Forestry Commission and the Ejidos (local authorities) to implement a Compensation Program for Environmental Water Services for the protection of 3963.91 hectares of forest in nine ejidos (common land).
- It was also possible to include 739 ha more of tree cover, as well as other soil and water conservation works, about 440 ha of trenches, 823 ha of hedgerows and 527 ha with living wall terraces, among others

### Members and Committees

The Secretariate of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) of Mexico works with the National Forestry Commission (CONAFOR) and the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP), which is supported by the Conservation Program for Sustainable Development (PROCODES) and the National Water Commission (CONAGUA).

The Natural History Society of Soconusco A.C., another one of our members-is a local initiative to create civil society participation in the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources



*"We have to see over the water, so that there is more water and it doesn't run out. We measure where the best water quality is, which is at the top," Florencio Salas, member of the Microbasin Committee of Buena Vista.*

### About the project

The Project's goal is to consolidate, promote and increase the planning capacities and participatory management of the local actors to restore, conserve and protect strategic micro-basins to improve the provision of ecosystem goods and services, and reduce the impact of hydro-climatic phenomena in the Cahoacán River basin.

**3.****Decoding the Trifinio Aquifer for future freshwater**

Increasingly, the world uses groundwater, the largest freshwater reserve of humanity, mainly for domestic use. However, little information concerning the aquifers exists, their hydraulic behavior, their level of vulnerability, their storage capacity and above all, its use and exploitation in a sustainable manner.

The Esquipulas-Ocotepeque-Citalá Aquifer Project - or simply Trifinio Aquifer - takes place in the area of the Trifinio Region between Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. In its first phase during 2014 we worked on the characterization and diagnosis of this aquifer through a multidisciplinary consulting team.

This project is one of three pilot aquifers that are being studied in the worldwide by UNESCO and its partners to develop a standard methodology for assessing shared aquifers, supported by the hydrodiplomacy initiative of the Swiss Cooperation. UNESCO International Hydrological Programme (IHP) executes worldwide the Groundwater Governance in Transborder Aquifers project funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)<sup>3</sup>.

**Achievements**

- A full inventory of available information: biophysical, hydrological, hydrogeological, institutional, legal, gender, environmental, etc. for the Trifinio Aquifer and some information gaps were also identified.
- Geographic information system (GIS) was implemented to support decision-making of the Trifinio Plan Trinational Committee (TCCT) regarding interventions and sustainable development policies that are being promoted in the region.
- This GIS was also linked to UNCESCOs global GIS, created by GGRERA (Groundwater Resources Governance in Transboundary Aquifers) initiative installed in IGRAC in Holland, in order to access technical and socio-environmental information from other aquifers in the world to support decision-making.
- A proposed methodology and their respective indicators for the implementation of the gender approach were defined

**Members and Committees**

The Trifinio Trinational Commission Plan, comprised of the Vice-Presidencies of the three nations (El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras), makes decisions and promotes necessary policies to give it operational capability.

<sup>3</sup>For more information refer to: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2009-2014). 'International Hydrological Programme'. [website].<<http://www.unesco.org/new/es/natural-sciences/environment/water/ihp/>>.

**About the project**

The project aims to improve sub-terrain water resource knowledge and recognition located among countries, promote dialogue and cooperation and stimulate reforms in governance directed towards improving livelihood, economic development and environmental sustainability.

**4.****More capacity in the Caribbean for conservation**

In the Caribbean, the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management Program (BIOPAMA) - which IUCN developed with funding from the European Union- supports the strengthening of protected areas systems.

One of the main challenges is to strengthen human and institutional capacity in the region, coupled with the need to consolidate the work on protected areas with a more informed, coordinated, complementary and multisectoral approach.

Through BIOPAMA, a plan has been developed for capacity building and regional cooperation for management of biodiversity conservation.

As a milestone for 2014, the official start was announced for the Regional Observatory for Protected Areas and Biodiversity ("the Observatory") in collaboration with the Center for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) of the University of the West Indies, an IUCN member . The Observatory will support the collection, management, analysis and application of data and information relevant to protected areas and biodiversity in the Caribbean.

**Achievements**

- In the Bahamas, eighteen people (six men, twelve women) from six agencies with responsibility for protected areas have strengthened their capacities related to IUCN management categories for protected areas. As a result, a comprehensive approach to managing these areas is being discussed.
- Professionals in protected areas management from six Caribbean countries have increased their understanding and knowledge on governance and strategies and mechanisms available for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in protected areas.
- Higher education centers and courses have included topics related to the conservation of biodiversity in formal careers.
- Representatives of the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and St. Lucia have expressed interest in conducting a review of its management categories in light of the IUCN categories

**Commissions and Members**

CERMES, an IUCN member, houses the Observatory and is developing with CANARI (Caribbean Natural Resources Institute) the design of new courses. The coordination for the training was done in this country together with the Bahamas National Trust.

The Commission on Ecosystem Management and World Commission on Protected Areas participated in the process through experts and regional vice presidents present at the training.





## The Mayangna people of Nicaragua strengthen their rights in conservation and development processes

In recent years, the majority of Central American countries have ratified international legal instruments, such as Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization (ILO) that recognizes the exercise to the Consultation and to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) as an inalienable right of indigenous peoples.

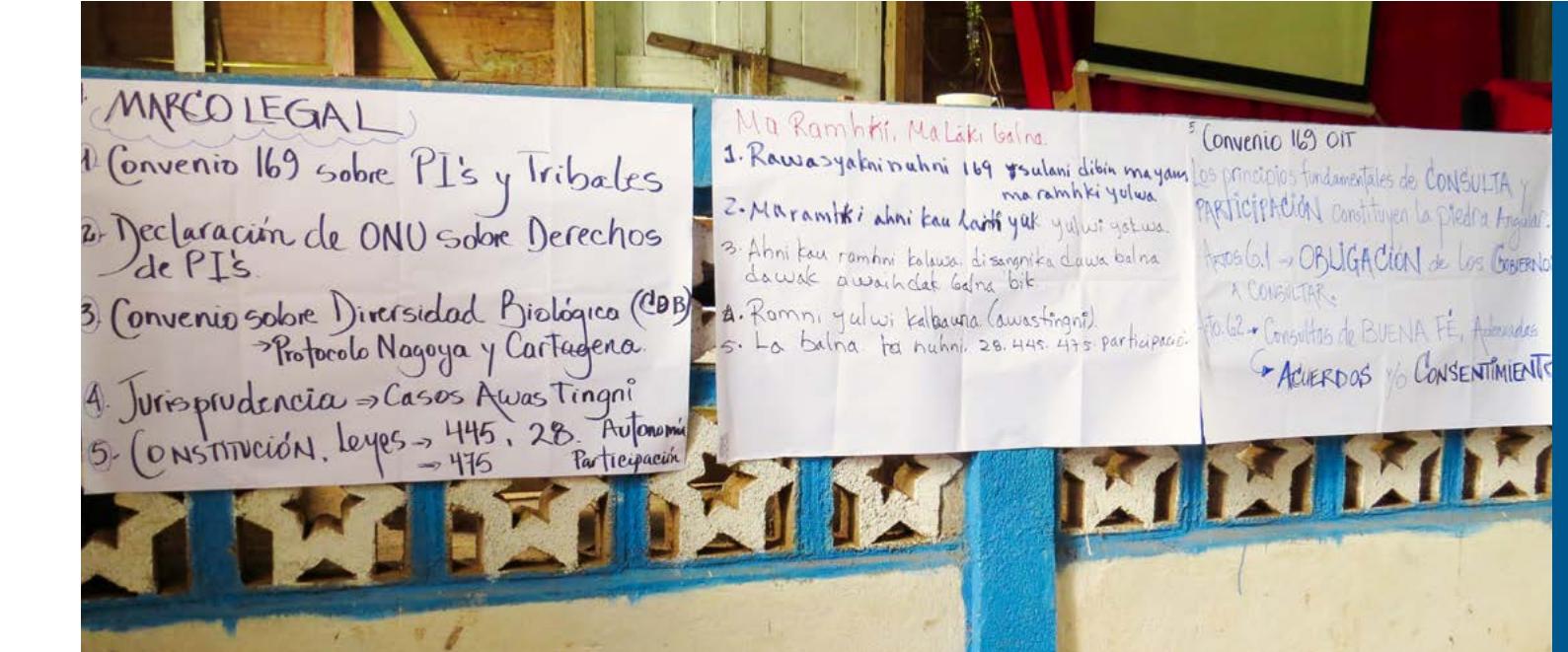
In Nicaragua, for the past 15 years there has been significant advances in the recognition and vindication of indigenous land rights through titling of territories. At the same time, territorial governments, business and indigenous peoples seek the best way to exercise the right of consultation and granting or not of free, prior and informed consent about actions, projects or programs that could have an impact on their territories.

Because of this and funded by the Regional Climate Change Programme (RCCP), the Consultation and Free, Prior and Informed Consent Bio-Protocol was developed in Nicaragua for the first time, for the Mayangna people, of the Matumbak territory, located in the Autonomous Region of the Northern Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua (RACCN, for its acronyms in Spanish). Thus, any plan, program, project or action which have or may have environmental, social and economic implications for the Mayangna people would have a way to have due process of consultation and obtaining (or not) of FPIC in their communities.

### What the people of Matumbak say

*"The Mayangna Sauni Arungka-Matumbak Territorial Government with its own autonomy negotiated with IUCN the creation of an instrument to be used as a guide for the management of the different development capitals with identity of the indigenous people of the community and the territorial government [...]. They were also including the youth and women of the territory, therefore this is a document with broad participation [...]."*

Prof. Francisco Miguel Castro, President of the Mayangna Sauni Arungka-Matumbak Territorial Government.



### Members and Committees

A consortium of organizations – Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE), an IUCN member, CARE, TERRA GLOBAL and DAI executes the Regional Climate Change Programme (RCCP), which works both mitigation and sustainable landscape issues to adaptation to climate change.

The IUCN, along with CARE, work in a complementary manner to ensure t within the RCCP the issue of implementation of rights, particularly for the implementation of consultation and FPIC, as well as social and environmental safeguards in REDD projects.

### About the project

The Regional climate Change Program for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) aims to reduce the vulnerability of human populations to climate change in Central America and the Dominican Republic, and to integrate decisions for developing geospatial observation and land monitoring technologies.

Also, hopes to reduce emissions by establishing and applying incentives to lower the deforestation and degradation of forests and other land uses and to support the implementation of the REDD + mechanism.

# 6.

## Knowledge and customary rights of indigenous peoples and local communities is the key for conservation

The Central American Protected Areas System (SICAP, for its acronym in Spanish) has 669 protected areas covering an area of approx 124,250 km<sup>2</sup>, 24% of the total area of Central America. From this total and according to a study by IUCN in 2006 , 21% of the total area of protected areas of Central America is managed under the concept of shared management. Studies indicate that this management model is the most effective and that the institutions of indigenous peoples, grounded in common property and the defense of ancestral lands, are factors that could contribute to the protection of forests and protected areas.

In this regard and in the context of the PROAMBIENTE Project, we have tried to strengthen the bargaining capacity of indigenous peoples and peasant communities in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua to reach shared management of protected areas with national environmental authorities, the visibility of the overlap of protected areas and indigenous peoples, and study how this type of management is being implemented in practice. This project is funded by the Danish cooperation DANIDA and is part of a broader program called ProDerechos.

### Achievements

- Three case studies were conducted in the Rio Platano Biosphere Reserve, La Moskitia, (Honduras), Cayos Miskitos Protected Area (Nicaragua) and the Q'eqchi (Izabal, Guatemala) Territory, which have served to systematize the practices of indigenous peoples and local communities in shared management of protected areas and their contribution to the successful management of these.
- The process of updating the map of indigenous people, protected areas and natural ecosystems of Central America and its overlap with indigenous territories has begun, these represent the position of the indigenous people cartographically and the major natural ecosystems of the region, as well as the relation indigenous people-conservation.. Through this process we were able to raise funds from National Geographic institution that cooperates technically with IUCN under the PROAMBIENTE Project framework for the publication and dissemination of the map.

### Members and Committees

Mopawi, an IUCN member, supports in the work of strengthening the Katainasta Territorial Council in the Honduran Mosquitia within the Honduras component of DANIDA-PROAMBIENTE.



### About the project

The PROAMBIENTE Project to Strengthen Rights as a Tool for Conservation and Fair and Equitable Use of Natural Resources in Indigenous Territories in Central America main goal is to strengthen environmental management and sustainable production in peasant and indigenous lands in Central America prioritizing respect and promotion of human rights practices of the indigenous peoples, peasants and women in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

**7.****REDD+ aims to contribute to poverty reduction in Mexico**

Internationally, the benefits of REDD+ refer to the results based on carbon sequestration. Its compensation is monetary and in-kind, with the concern that it also benefits the most vulnerable in rural areas.

In this context, the Mexican government is in the process of designing the mechanisms for REDD+ benefit sharing, for which IUCN has supported the design of a model that includes specific provisions for the neediest members of the community and defines ad hoc schemes for reducing poverty. It also aims to give women greater access to benefits, being land users and owners. Specific programs for health, food production, nutrition, education and production projects away from the land, aim to motivate women and improve their livelihoods.

During 2014, a base line was defined for measuring the impact of the project through a household survey in pilot communities and the implementation of the “Livelihood and Forests Analysis Tools” (Forest Poverty Toolkit) on the Peninsula Yucatan.

This Project is financed by the Federal Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection, Public Works and Nuclear Security of Germany (BMUB).

**Members and Committee**

There has been support by four IUCN members in the project implementation through cooperation agreements: National Commission for Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO, for its acronym in Spanish), the Mexican Center for Environmental Law (CEMDA, for its acronym in Spanish) PRONATURA and Reforestamos Mexico. They joined efforts with the IUCN Global Gender Programme to develop related field implementation and capacity building activities. In addition, they worked in coordination with the IUCN Environmental Law Centre, in Germany.

**About the project**

**The general objective is to support the design of the REDD+ benefits distribution mechanisms through the generation of contributions to ensure that these are inclusive, with a gender and equality perspective, taking into account the needs and dependencies of the forest communities and ensuring that those most vulnerable and people in poverty conditions are benefited. This in order to achieve reducing carbon emission by deforestation and forest degradation at the same time it supports sustainable rural development of forest communities.**

**8.****Giving value to the forests**

The countries of Central America carry out significant efforts to advance in the task of achieving efficient and effective forest management and conservation. It is estimated that Central America has a forest cover of 19.5 million hectares, which represents approximately 38% of its territory. Despite this, the region has one of the highest rates of deforestation in the world. Poverty, social inequality and lack of technical and legal instruments to meet the current needs are some of the underlying causes of deforestation and degradation of forests.

In order to improve the business climate for those seeking a sustainable management of the great forests of Mesoamerica, IUCN in 2014 began with a training process for different actors in the forestry sector, which aims to reduce the limiting factors affecting the social, economic and environmental performance of forest.

**Achievements**

- Dialogues in rural and indigenous governance structures, and titling of their territories, especially in Honduras and Nicaragua were provided.
- It was possible to support Forestry Law reforms in Guatemala on the topic of forest incentives, giving the owner more access to benefits.
- A monitoring and evaluation system of the Regional Strategic Program for Forest Ecosystems Management (PERFOR, for its acronym in Spanish), the Central American Commission on Environment and Development was created, which contains a set of indicators to measure the impact of these actions.

**Members and Committees**

The Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD, for their acronym in Spanish) has received support from the IUCN in the socialization of the PERFOR and the governments of Panama, Costa Rica and Guatemala are active members of IUCN.

**About the project**

**The Governance, Forests and Markets Project (DFID) aims to improve the business climate for local economic agents linked to the management, protection and restoration of the primary forests in the region, as the main strategy to fight the causing agents of deforestation. This effort is funded by the British Department for International Development (DFID).**



9.

## Lachuá cocoa crosses borders and promotes social development

The population which lives in the Lachuá Ecoregion in Guatemala, largely indigenous Q'eqchi', live in poverty and although they directly depend on agriculture, they have limitations in their business skills and agricultural production.

For this purpose, since 2012, a process of diversification began by cultivating cocoa to generate jobs and income, and strengthen the areas of ecological interconnectivity and ecosystem services in the area, which is a biological corridor. Limitations were identified and priority actions to improve the performance of the production chain through entrepreneurship training, innovation and technology transfer, and linking domestic and export markets were defined in a participatory manner. Also, there has been work with other actors in the chain, such as suppliers for technical, financial, and biological material and supplies and regulation services and certification.

The cocoa of the Lachuá region is increasingly recognized for its fine aroma and flavor among chocolate companies in the United States. That is why on September 2014, they signed trade agreements between FUNDALACHUA and ADIOEMAC indigenous community organizations and the US chocolate companies Lake Champlain Chocolates, Parliament Chocolates, Mast Brother Chocolates and Dandelion Chocolate, represented by Cocoa Verapaz in Guatemala.

These achievements have been possible through the support of the ARGIDIUS Foundation.



RESULTS

### Members and Committees

The government of Guatemala has supported these actions with the signing of an agreement to strengthen the promotion and development of the chain between the FUNDALACHUA community organization and the National Fund for the Revitalization and Modernization of Agricultural Activity (FONAGRO, for its acronym in Spanish).



### Achievements

- The development of the national strategy and the cocoa production chain competitiveness agreement began.
- 100 new hectares of high value cacao.
- 130 producers trained in field schools.
- 110 ha of crops have included a new technological management.
- The implementation of a regional cocoa agricultural chain round table was provided.
- The Lachuá Region managed to export about 11 metric tons of dry fermented high quality cocoa bean to the United States.
- US \$ 103.646 in revenue was generated by sales of farms served.
- 150 permanent jobs were created (more than 12,000 job wages were created).

### About the Project

**The Development of cocoa production chain to improve livelihoods and preserve biological corridors in the Lachua Ecoregion seeks to provide conditions for strengthening the cocoa production chain as a way to preserve the natural ecosystem composition. At the same time, it supports 50 rural communities, which are in condition of social vulnerability.**



## United by nature

A look at the membership of the region in 2014 reveals a significant amount of experience, knowledge and capabilities. This is a special area, different cultures and geographies notably within the environmental scenario of the world and where there is a strong joint commitment in addressing the major environmental challenges of the isthmus and island States. More than 100 members, including non-governmental organizations, government agencies, state agencies and affiliates are part of IUCN in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. During 2014, six new members joined the organization: Forever Costa Rica, Ak'Tenamit Association (Guatemala), Association of Private Nature Reserves of Guatemala, Foundation for the Development of the Central Volcanic Range (FUNDECOR) (Costa Rica) Environmental Advocacy Center (Panama) and BIOFUTURA A.C. (Mexico).

In preparation for the 2015 Regional Forum in Panama, meetings were held with the National Committees of Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama in September and October 2014 to share aspects of the organization of this activity.

The Mesoamerican Committee also held its annual meeting in August 2014 in order to address issues related to the Regional Forum, such as the place of business, the installation of the Organizing Committee and the selection of the Election Officer, among others.

One of the major milestones of 2014 in terms of the work of the Mesoamerican Committee and membership in the region has been the process of updating the statutes of the committee and regulations of the Regional Forum. For the first time and after much consensus and analysis, electronic voting in the region was implemented. Upgrading these instruments will allow the Regional Forum to work according to clear guidelines and adhere to the statutory provisions of the IUCN.

During 2014, the Regional Committee of IUCN Members in the Caribbean held two meetings, on January 24 and October 3, in which various matters relating to the governance of the Committee were discussed, as well as priority issues for the conservation of this region.

The process of election of the new Board of the Regional Committee, held in the week of February 24 to 28, 2014 stands out. Likewise and in order to reinforce the presence of IUCN in that region, under the framework of the BIOPAMA Project, a technical coordination team was established based at the UWI-CERMES headquarters in Barbados, an IUCN member, which also currently houses the Observatory for Protected Areas for the Caribbean.

In this period the active participation of members of the Caribbean at the World Parks Congress (Sydney 2014), which had the support of the BIOPAMA Project is highlighted. Members of the Caribbean contributed to the Regional Report on Protected Areas for this global event, where the establishment of a program on protected areas of the islands was proposed to be reinserted into the global agenda (SIDS, CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas and WCPA) and also, the development of a Regional Agenda for the Caribbean Protected Areas.

The Caribbean members are also participating in several key international processes, such as Principle 10, SIDS 2014, and Post 2015 SDGs, with the goal that their own experiences and lessons learned can contribute to the global environmental agenda.

## Regional Councillors in 2014

During 2014 the Regional Directors of Central America and the Caribbean have made fundamental contributions to the strengthening of the Union, from the various bodies of the IUCN Council, in which they actively participated.

Councillor Ramón Pérez-Gil Salcido, as a member of the Steering Committee on the Framework of Action for Strengthening the Union (UASF), helped boost the consultation to all members of the Union on this Framework action (which seeks to raise the profile, leadership and influence of the IUCN), has been part of the resolutions platform and coordinated the working group to follow up on the implementation of resolutions. Similarly, as a member of the Governance Committee and Constituency, also supports the preparations for the World Conservation Congress (Hawaii 2016), the reviews of the new accreditation procedures and motions, and consultations on mainstreaming Organizations of Indigenous peoples, as members of IUCN.

The Councillor for the Caribbean, Thomas Spencer, has done outstanding work -as recognized by the Council, as Chairman of the IUCN Finance and Audit Committee. This key committee is chaired by Mr. Thomas, who is responsible for counseling on financial operations and performance of the Union, reviews the major risks faced by IUCN and advises on measures to mitigate such risks. He also examines and advises on the investment policy of the Union, the reservation policy and political fundraising. During 2014 the Committee supported the need for further work on developing a compensation policy of biodiversity for IUCN, in accordance with Resolution WCC-2012-RES-110.

Also during 2014, Councillor Thomas contributed to key issues for IUCN, as were the IUCN Task Force on Climate Change, helping to develop positions on this issue and that resulted in inputs to guide the work of the Union under the United Nations Framework for Climate Change (UNFCCC), which included the preparation of the position paper of IUCN, which was introduced in the twentieth Conference of the Parties (COP 20) in December 2014 in Lima, Peru. Mr. Thomas is also a member of the Bureau, which acts on behalf of and under the authority of the Council between periods of Board meetings.

The councillors of the Latin American and Caribbean Region, Ramón Pérez-Gil, Thomas Spencer, Jenny Gruenberger and Miguel Pellerano work remarkably volunteer time providing an important service of the Union.



## Membership



Ramón Pérez Gil,  
Regional Councillor for  
Meso and South America



Spencer Thomas,  
Regional Councillor  
for the Caribbean



## Membership

### Outstanding actions of the membership

**BAHAMAS:** The Bahamas National Trust and The Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology Commission increased their capacities on management categories through workshops supported by BIOPAMA.

**BARBADOS:** The BIOPAMA project in 2014 officially announced the implementation of the Regional Centre for Biodiversity and Protected Areas ("the Observatory") in collaboration with the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies [CERMES] of the University of the West Indies. The Observatory supports the collection, management, analysis and application of data and information relevant to protected areas and biodiversity in the Caribbean, with a positive impact on 70,000 hectares, an area that represents 29% of the region.

**BONAIRE/DCNA:** Luigi Eybrecht a marine park ranger newly appointed by STINAPA Bonaire (National Parks Foundation) and volunteer commander of the Rookies Rangers won the Hope and Inspiration Award Ranger. Luigi was the winning candidate nominated among a hundred rangers worldwide.

**COSTA RICA:** The Costa Rican Institute of Biodiversity (INBio) received the 2014 Blue Planet Prize, awarded annually by the Asahi Glass Foundation of Japan to those people or institutions that have made outstanding contributions in the search for solutions to global environmental problems.

Among the reasons given by the jury to award the prize to the INBio stands out, the new system created for conducting biodiversity inventories, the development of computer systems for the dissemination of knowledge and the search for new ways of sustainable use of biodiversity.

**COSTA RICA:** A record number of shark species- including two hammerheads, three thresher sharks and silky shark - were listed in Appendix II of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) during the 11th Conference of the Parties (COP) in Quito, Ecuador. This was a 4 year process promoted by PRETOMA to protect hammerhead sharks especially within international conventions. The National Committee of IUCN Membership accompanied this undertaking by seeking government support for these initiatives.

Also, with SOS IUCN funds the training of officials began and workshops were held with various Costa Rican institutions involved in the protection, fishing and marketing of this species.



**EL SALVADOR:** UNES promoted awareness of food security in El Salvador as part of the "Plant Food Sovereignty in El Salvador," which was held with the participation of various community organizations, farmers, environmentalists, women, agro-ecology movement, solidarity economy networks, research organizations and non-governmental organizations closely linked to the small peasant production.

**GUATEMALA:** FUNDAECO promoted the development of the Women's Clinics Network in Protected Areas from the perspective of biodiversity conservation based on rights, which seeks to promote the right to health, medical care and a healthy environment. As a result, twenty spaces for clinics were established, twelve in the Atlantic region and eight in the northwestern area, all managed from a local approach, which created social fabric and strengthened community management entities.

**GUATEMALA:** The Center for Research and Development Planning Sotz'il Maya, along with ORMACC, has implemented the project focused on strengthening the Rights and Systems of Indigenous Conservation and Development in Central America, through local and national actions in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, with financial support from ICCO. In Guatemala it has had an impact on advocacy work from governments in terms of ancestral management of natural resources, such as CONAPs favorable pronouncement to the indigenous or community collective management bill in Guatemala.

**HAITI:** The Vice President of the Caribbean Committee for IUCN, Jean Wiener, won the Whitley Gold Award 2014. Wiener is also founder and director of the Fondation pour la Protection de la biodiversité Marinbe (FoProBiM, Foundation for the Protection of Marine Biodiversity) an environmental NGO based in Haiti and member of IUCN. FoProBiM was established in 1992 and is the only organization in Haiti committed to the management and protection of coastal and marine environment.

**HONDURAS:** In Goascorán River Basin the process of transboundary governance stands out. The active participation of Fundación Vida, with support for training topics and capacity building in regional, national and local levels, as a link between non-governmental organizations, foundations and international cooperation in field implementation and the formulation of the Strategic Plan of Territorial Development (PEDT) and the development of a building process for public policy for the transboundary management of the Goascorán River Binational Basin.

**HONDURAS:** ORMACC and the Agency for the Development of the Mosquitia (MOPAWI) collaborated on the development of binational and national dialogues that allowed progress in the construction of platforms and mechanisms to improve governance of natural resources in the territory of the Miskito indigenous people of Honduras and other countries in the region such as Nicaragua.



## Membership

**JAMAICA:** IUCN-ORMACC participated in the evaluation process in the field related to the nomination of Blue National Park and John Crow Mountains in Jamaica as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The field visit was accompanied and coordinated by various government agencies and NGOs in Jamaica, including the Ministry of Youth and Culture, National Environmental and Planning Agency (NEPA), Jamaica National Heritage Trust (JNHT) and the Maroon communities, among others. It also had the support of Dr. Susan Otuokon, Executive Director of Jamaica Conservation and Development Trust (IUCN member organization in Jamaica) as the technical coordinator of the field visit, accompanying every day of the tour.



**MEXICO:** The Fondo Mexicano para la Conservación de la Naturaleza, A.C., received the Recognition Award for Conservation 2014 awarded by the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas of Mexico. FMCN was declared the winner in the civil organizations category.



The Recognition for the Conservation of Nature awards the participation of various sectors, groups and individuals in the conservation of nature in Mexico, including protected areas, priority regions for conservation and areas of influence and species risk.

**MEXICO:** With the Mexican Center of Environmental Right (CEMDA) analytical and comparative studies were carried out to identify the needs and opportunities in adapting the legal and institutional framework for the implementation of schemes of REDD + benefit distribution in Mexico. Also, consultative processes to ensure clarity regarding the rights and land tenure, wood and carbon, including access and distribution of REDD+ benefits were supported.



**MEXICO:** With the National Commission for Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO) some socioeconomic assessments through surveys and livelihoods analysis tools and forest dependence were implemented to support the preparation of the baseline for the implementation of REDD + and analysis of the causes and agents of deforestation in the Yucatan Peninsula.



**MEXICO:** With Reforestemos Mexico, ORMACC supported the design processes of policies to promote the competitiveness of forestry in Mexico, through the development of forestry competitiveness indexes and analysis of the factors affecting the cost of access to the legality of forest products.



Jean Weiner

**NICARAGUA:** The Club of Young Environmentalists Association held the XIII National Earth Fair, which is used by the Association as their annual ongoing program in order to have a platform for advocacy and training activities and projection to finally close this event which brings together representatives of various social, environmental and political sectors of Nicaragua.



**PANAMA:** At the Metropolitan Natural Park a day of community outreach through activities such as walks and talks on health was held, for which it took as a basis for this initiative Resolution WWC-2012-RES-039-SP "Healthy Parks: Healthy People" at the World Conservation Congress, held in Jeju, South Korea in 2012.



**PANAMA:** With the support of the Panamanian Government and the impetus given by the National Committee of IUCN Members in Panama and other environmental organizations, the Panama Bay wetland was declared a protected area, by law, preventing construction in this area until a management plan is developed for this reserve. This area is important for its mangroves, which extend from Juan Diaz to Chimán.

The main threats of this site are illegal logging, fillers and real estate development. The Audubon Society of Panama, member of the Committee which has been the organization, within the timeline, that has been more involved in conservation actions in this area and which has led a process for several years.



**PANAMA:** The National Environmental Authority (ANAM) continued the process of technical and financial support to validate a proposed Forest Law in Panama that seeks to promote sustainable development of forests with the participation of rural and indigenous communities, as well as a system for verifying the reliable legality for the forestry sector in Panama.



**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC:** The Dominican Environmental Consortium promoted the creation of a new house for the thrush, The Thrush Private Reserve, in order to achieve recovery and habitat protection of a flagship species for this Caribbean country, the Migratory Thrush (*Catharus bicknelli*).

90% of the global population of the Migratory Thrush spends winters on the island, in the dense, moist broadleaf forests, which have been affected by deforestation. This plan had the support of a number of organizations and aid agencies such as Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Global Environmental Facility and UNDP-Reengineering of the National System of Protected Areas, among others.



## Joining forces: IUCN Commissions

The interaction with IUCN Commissions, one of our main pillars- was marked in 2014 by a series of efforts made under a single program to raise key solutions to major global environmental challenges.

Here are some examples of collaborative and group work: Well-managed protected areas are key to biodiversity conservation. That is the constant of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) that in 2014 played an important role in the Mesoamerican Congress on Protected Areas carried out in Costa Rica in March and also in the organization and implementation of the IUCN World Parks Congress, which had massive participation of key leaders and managers of protected areas around the world.

The Commission on Education and Communication (CEC), as part of its work plan 2013-2016 launched a global campaign called “It's about Nature: Love not Loss” (This is nature: It is love, not loss). In order to make this campaign as an example of a useful communication tool, representatives of the CEC held a workshop in the regions of Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean in August, in which besides the members of the Commission there was also an important group from ORMACC.

Moreover, the Species Survival Commission has monitored issues such as the Goat Islands transshipment port and the Portland Bight Protected Area. The latter is of great importance because it is the largest unbroken stretch of dry forest adjacent to the Caribbean and is critical to the survival of many endangered species, including several that are endemic to the region, such as the Jamaican Iguana (*Cyclura collei*). Similarly, there has been active coordination with our team members and IUCN in Mexico to monitor the issue of the vaquita conservation with the Presidency of the Mexican government.

The conclusion of Transboundary Basin Project of the IUCN Regional Office had the participation of the Commission on Ecosystem Management through a series of presentations made to disseminate the ecosystem-based approach.

Close contact and cooperation is maintained with the Commission on Environmental Law and the Environmental Law Centre on various topics and projects, such as the deliverance of the Water Law in Costa Rica to the members of the Commission in Mesoamerica for comments and inputs. In addition, it carried out the publication entitled “Transboundary Water Governance: Adaptation to Climate Change” in which members of the Commission contributed with some case studies.

Currently and in the framework of the Human Dependency on Nature project, coordinated with the Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP) is being coordinated to establish a pilot site in Costa Rica to apply methodologies that are under development.



## Knowledge Products



### Publications

*Analysis of international trade in wood products and administrative governance (Spanish and English).*

*Challenges in implementing REDD+ in Mexico through benefit sharing schemes in favor of poverty populations. (Spanish and English).*

*Regional Strategic Program for Forest Ecosystems Management (PERFOR), Central America and Dominican Republic Region.*

*Bio-Protocol for Consultation and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of the Mayangna People, Matumbak Territory, Nicaragua*

## The Region in Sydney

*"The complex link between conservation and sustainable development is not a new thought; but the 2014 World Parks Congress stressed the need to better demonstrate the value of protected areas as critical spaces that help sustain our economies, preserving cultures and promote wellness. The maintenance of ecosystem services, providing jobs, supporting the tourism industry and increasing resilience to climate change and natural disasters are some of the ways in which protected areas can contribute to the development agenda of the Caribbean," said Anna Cadiz, Senior Technical Officer of the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI).*



During the Plenary Session of the World Parks Congress in Sydney, Adele Catzim-Sánchez-CEO of the Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development of Belize and President Pro Témpore of the Council of Ministers of Environment of Central America and the Dominican Republic, shared the main agreements of the Declaration of San Jose (Costa Rica), signed on March 2014 during the IV Mesoamerican Congress on Protected Areas.

The document, entitled "From land to sea, linking populations and ecosystems", outlines the commitments seeking solutions, which can be summarized in four main points:

1. Planning within a framework of sustainable development
2. Integrated management of terrestrial and marine landscapes
3. Modernizing the management of protected areas
4. Implementation and strengthening legal frameworks to address the sustainable management and financing of the protected areas system

In this speech, the Belizean minister said her country is a natural bridge between Central America and the Caribbean Island States, facilitating the advance of a climate change agenda with commonalities that unite them.

From the Congress a document entitled "The Promise of Sydney" was extracted, which sets out an ambitious program to protect the natural resources of the planet and includes commitments from governments, international organizations, private sector, indigenous leaders, community groups and individuals; many more keep joining to those already registered.

The document highlights the need to increase global efforts to protect natural areas, including a large-scale protection of landscapes and oceans. It includes commitments to promote investment in nature-based solutions to halt the loss of biodiversity, address climate change, reduce the risk and impact of disasters, and improve food and water security and promote human health solutions. It also aims to encourage people around the world, of all generations and cultures, to experience the wonders of nature through protected areas.

In addition, on protected areas and the effects of climate change, the position of the Central American Integration System for COP Lima, Peru (December 2014) took into account the work on climate change developed and agreed to by the countries of the CARICOM. It is clear that climate change affects biodiversity, coastal and marine systems and terrestrial ecosystems of vulnerable countries, such as those located in the Caribbean and Central America, where adaptation measures are urgently needed.

## Finances



During 2014, twelve new projects amounting to \$5,800,000 were signed. We thank the donors who have believed in the work undertaken by IUCN, our members who have been partners in the implementation of projects in the field and commission experts that have strengthened the actions of IUCN in the region.

This year we have seen a renewed interest of international cooperation in the region, which undoubtedly is the result of efforts by civil society and governments to make visible the challenges they face and the potential to achieve lasting results impacting on the conservation of ecosystems for human well-being.

## The Office



## Responsibles at home

As a global organization, IUCN is committed to excellence, transparency and accountability in the delivery of our work. Our reputation and credibility stems from the quality of the work we do, the recognition and support of people with and for whom we work, and our members, donors, staff and the general public.

We recognize that to maintain our reputation we must demonstrate from the highest levels of the organization:

1. Integrity and ethical behavior
2. Commitment to fair competition
3. Fair, inclusive and transparent decision making
4. Clear responsibilities and obligations to achieve our mission, in response to stakeholders, personal care and conducting business with stakeholders and suppliers
5. Equality, inclusion and respect for the diversity of people
6. Environmental responsibility

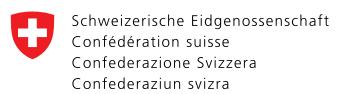
As part of the compliance with these principles, the organization has a number of procedural guidelines and policies we use in our daily work and permeates the essence of all our projects and actions.



Supported by:

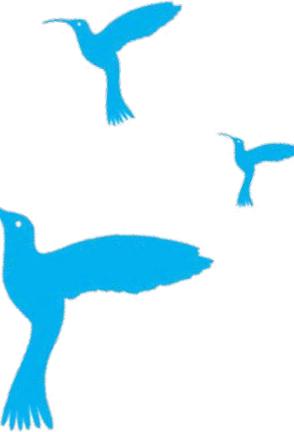


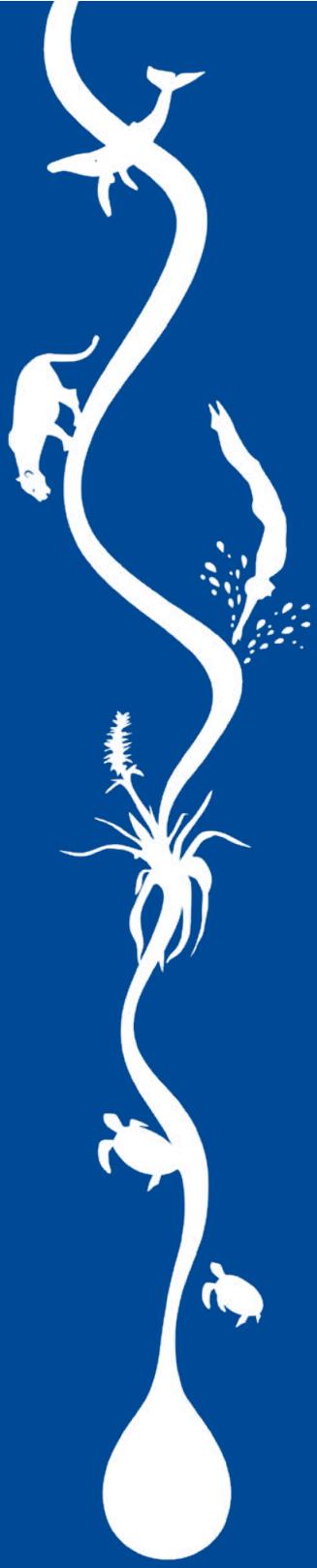
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**International Union for Conservation of Nature**

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