

New regional United Nations report:

## **REGION ADVANCES IN ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS, BUT DEFORESTATION AND CO<sub>2</sub> EMISSIONS KEEP RISING**

**Latin America and the Caribbean has progressed in extending protected areas, reducing consumption of ozone-depleting substances and increasing coverage of water and basic sanitation services.**

**(17 February 2010)** Despite significant progress in some areas, the constant reduction of forest areas and the sustained increase of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the region are impeding compliance with the seventh Millennium Development Goal (MDG7) on environmental sustainability, according to a report of United Nations organizations and agencies in Latin America and the Caribbean launched today in Mexico.

The study **“Millennium Development Goals: Advances in Environmentally Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean”** monitors the advances and difficulties in attaining the targets of the seventh MDG in the region.

These targets are: integrating the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes, reversing the loss of environmental resources, reducing biodiversity loss, increasing the population’s sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation and significantly improving the lives of slum dwellers.

According to the report, from 1990-2005, the total surface of protected areas grew 120%, consumption of ozone-depleting substances diminished by 85% and coverage of drinking water and basic sanitation rose by 10% and 17%, respectively, although with enormous differences according to geographical areas and income levels in each country. The urban population living in slums has decreased by 31%, but there are still 100 million people living in unacceptable conditions in the region, says the study.

There is no precise and comparable data available to be able to conclude any trend in other indicators, such as the fish stocks within safe biological limits, total water resources used and species threatened with extinction. In these cases, the report stresses the urgent need to systematically collect information in order to have a more accurate assessment of the regional situation.

Where there has been no progress is in the surface area covered by forests and carbon dioxide emissions. The rate of deforestation in Latin America and the Caribbean doubles the world average, notes the study. Between 1990 and 2005, the region’s forest cover shrunk by 7%, losing nearly 69 million hectares of forest.

Of the total loss of forest, 86% took place in South America, particularly in the Amazon. Although some countries, like Chile and Uruguay, have increased their forest areas through large-scale industrial planting, they cannot replace the ecological and biodiversity functions of the natural forests that have

been eliminated, asserts the report.

CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from fossil-fuel burning and cement production have increased in absolute terms. From 1990 to 2005, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions rose nearly 41%, although the ratio of these to GDP fell slightly. Even with the increase, total and regional per capita emissions are only a small fraction of those in developed countries.

However, these figures do not include emissions produced by changes in land use and deforestation, and so the indicator understates the region's real emissions. Latin America and the Caribbean are estimated to generate more than 48% of all global emissions caused by land-use change, states the report.

Only five years from the deadline for attaining the Millennium Development Goals (2015), the report calls for stepping up efforts to advance in environmentally sustainable development in the region, adopting a proactive approach in light of the new challenges posed by climate change, and adapting current development models towards new frontiers of growth with greater value added and innovation.

The report was coordinated by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (**ECLAC**) and prepared in close collaboration with the regional offices of other United Nations organizations, in particular with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).



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Table IV.2  
**LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: OFFICIAL INDICATORS FOR  
MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL 7,  
CUMULATIVE VARIATION FOR 1990-2005<sup>a</sup>**  
*(Percentages)*

Indicator for Goal 7	Title of indicator <sup>b</sup>	South America	The Caribbean	Meso America	Latin America and the Caribbean
7.1	Proportion of land area covered by forest	- 6.71	13.23	-10.35	-6.97
7.2 a	CO <sub>2</sub> emissions, total	55.70	41.14	19.06	40.82
7.2 b	CO <sub>2</sub> emissions, per capita	22.33	18.18	-7.85	10.66
7.2 c	CO <sub>2</sub> emissions per dollar GDP <sup>c</sup>	-5.47	-8.87	-27.94	-14.29
7.3	Consumption of ozone-depleting substances	-89.41	-87.76	-93.55	-84.56
7.6	Proportion of terrestrial and marine areas protected	121.73	39.34	127.19	119.95
7.8	Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source	9.93	8.86	16.01	9.94
7.9	Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility	11.58	-3.16	37.89	16.53
7.10	Proportion of urban population living in slums	-31.06	-32.43	-32.42	-31.27

**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

a Each cell records the cumulative variation of the value of each indicator over the period between 1990 and the latest year for which data are available.

b There are no statistics from which indicators 7.4, 7.5 and 7.7 can be evaluated quantitatively and accurately.

c GDP at constant 2000 prices.

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