BONN CHALLENGE LATIN AMERICA

Bonn Challenge Latin America, 2015, REPORT
San Salvador, August 20, 2015
REPORT:

BONN CHALLENGE LATIN AMERICA
Contents

I. Introduction
II. Background
III. About the Bonn Challenge Initiative
IV. Bonn Challenge Latin America, 2015
   Event program:
   - Discussion panel 1: Regional Capacity-Building for Restoration Actions
   - Discussion panel 2: Investment in Restoration
V. Commitments by participating delegations
VI. Conclusions
VII. Annexes
   - Bonn Challenge Latin America 2015 commemorative postage stamps
   - Bonn Challenge Latin America 2015 commemorative coin
   - Participants information
Introduction

The Federal Republic of Germany has a long standing commitment to promote restoration of forest landscapes. As part of these efforts, the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety seeks to maintain close and strong relationships with countries committed to the Bonn Challenge initiative which further restoration efforts world-wide. In the Bonn Challenge conference held in March 2015 Germany, El Salvador underpinned its commitment to the restoration initiative by inviting the Bonn Challenge conference and to become the first host country of the Bonn Challenge in Latin America.

El Salvador is a country where landscape restoration meets corresponding demands and conditions. On one side the fragmented landscape of tree groups, small woodlots, agriculture and animal husbandry, and on the other the political and institutional will, arrangements and commitments for a change. One example of these institutional arrangements is the establishment of the Cabinet on Sustainability and Environmental Vulnerability, an effort led by the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (MARN), but supported by the government overall and put at the service of restoration efforts. This report highlights relevant extracts from the achievements and commitments of the Bonn Challenge conference held in El Salvador on August 20th 2015. The results should serve to improve the environmental and productive conditions in the region and to further promote this initiative.

Dr. Horst Freiberg
German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB)

Dr. Laszlo Pancel
Landscape and Resource Management to Increase Carbon Reserves in Central America Program (REDD+ Landscape / CCAD)
Background

The Bonn Challenge is the largest restoration initiative in the world, seeking to restore 150 million hectares of degraded and deforested land by the year 2020. This initiative began in the year 2011, and the first Bonn Challenge event in Latin America was held on August 20, 2015, as a means to carry forward the restoration commitments and to include more countries in these efforts.

Latin America and the Caribbean are among the regions which are and will be affected by climate change. The regional deforestation, degradation and land uses changes are contributing to the worldwide increase in emissions and vulnerability of renewable natural resources.

Some of the topics discussed during the Bonn Challenge Latin America 2015 meeting have been recorded and analyzed in this report, particularly the elements related to regional capacity building and investment for restoration actions. Additionally, the report discusses certain problems and reflections that can help to illustrate countries’ commitments to join this global initiative.
**About the Bonn Challenge Initiative**

The Bonn Challenge is the largest restoration initiative in the world, and it has set the target of restoring 150 million hectares of degraded and deforested land by the year 2020.

The Bonn Challenge was launched in September 2011, in a ministerial-level event organized by the Federal Republic of Germany and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), with support from the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration (GPFLR).

This initiative was designed as a means to implement several existing international commitments, particularly the REDD+ objectives under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and Aichi Target 15 from the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), along with other instruments related to issues of soil degradation.

Additionally, the New York Declaration of Forests, shared at the 2014 Climate Summit, has pushed forward the global agenda on restoration. This declaration was signed by over one hundred governments, along with diverse civil society organizations, indigenous peoples, and private companies. The New York Declaration included the Bonn Challenge target among its stated ambitions and, recognizing the urgent need for progress in this field, it expanded the target to 200 million hectares by the year 2030.

Thus far, the Bonn Challenge has been translated into commitments by various countries to restore over 50 million hectares of degraded land. These countries include the United States, Rwanda, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Guatemala, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Colombia, and Ethiopia. Important restoration pacts have also been reached, such as Mata Atlántica in Brazil. Additional restoration commitments are still being confirmed in Mexico, Peru, Ecuador, and Chile, as well as the Regional Patagonia Conservation Program, to include 10 to 13 million hectares more in the initiative.

With these commitments, the Bonn Challenge is well on its way toward reaching the restoration target. Nonetheless, ambition and success should not be measured by commitments, rather by implementation in the field. The Bonn Challenge will accelerate restoration actions with support and commitments provided by member countries.
Bonn Challenge Latin America, 2015

The objective of Bonn Challenge Latin America 2015 is to promote restoration efforts in countries in the region and encourage them to join the initiative by establishing local commitments that generate a regional impact, engaging across an international platform for dialogue that deals with capacity-building, cooperation systems, and financing mechanisms linked to restoration actions.

The conference was inaugurated by the President of the Republic of El Salvador, Salvador Sánchez Cerén. The State Secretary of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, Jochen Flasbarth, the Minister of the Environment of Natural Resources of El Salvador, Lina Pohl, and the Head of the Business Department at the Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway in Guatemala, Evelyn Hoen. Using the technical input and the knowledge shared from initiatives around the world, participating delegations were able to share experiences, identify local challenges, and formulate commitments for restoration in the region.

"For El Salvador, it is an enormous commitment to host the first Latin American meeting of the Bonn Challenge, the largest global initiative for reforestation of degraded and deforested land."

President of the Republic of El Salvador, Salvador Sánchez Cerén

In the event's opening ceremonies, the President of the Republic of El Salvador officially presented special edition stamps and a silver coin to the Secretary of State of the German Federal Ministry of the Environment, Jochen Flasbarth, and to each participant. Both gifts are commemorative editions for the Bonn Challenge Latin America, 2015, on behalf of the host country. (See annex).
This conference brought together high-level representatives from the Ministries of the Environment, Agriculture, and Forestry in Latin America, and officials working on issues of deforestation reduction and the promotion of ecosystem and landscape restoration. Leaders from institutions in different environmental fields also participated, including the World Resources Institute (WRI), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), and the Tropical Agronomy Center for Research and Education (CATIE), along with financial institutions that presented investment proposals in the region, including the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (BCIE) and the World Bank. Delegations from the Ministries of the Environment from countries in Africa and Asia also joined the Bonn Challenge Latin America.

A video produced by the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CDB), Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias was presented as a preamble to the event, highlighting the importance of the Bonn Challenge Latin America 2015 as an international platform for dialogue to generate regional commitments and contributions for the restoration of degraded ecosystems to meet the 2020 targets.

"... I wish to extend my thanks to our host, the Government of El Salvador, for taking these steps to foster a Latin American alliance for ecosystem restoration."

Braulio Dias - Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity
Prior to the discussion panels, an introductory presentation was given on "Restoration in the International Context", by Dr. Horst Freiberg, Head of the International Division for Nature Conservation at the German Ministry of the Environment. Dr. Freiberg's presentation discussed the environmental problems that countries around the world face, the international policy responses that offer possible solutions, basic concepts of restoration and a landscape approach, and the efforts that pioneering countries are taking in restoration initiatives to demonstrate the feasibility of this approach.

Additionally, one of the ally institutions led an intervention on the "20 x 20 Initiative - A country effort to restore 20 million hectares in Latin America by the year 2020 in support of the Bonn Challenge". Walter Vergara, a climate specialist at the World Resources Institute (WRI), gave this presentation. The presentation discussed the background and context for soil restoration, including examples of landscape mosaics, the importance of restoring degraded land, the activities included in the 20 x 20 Initiative, the current commitments in the region, and financial objectives to support the initiative.

"58% of the annual greenhouse gas emissions in Latin America and the Caribbean come from soil use and land use."

Walter Vergara - Climate Specialist, World Resources Institute

After these presentations, the country representatives set commitments for the region. In the context of the Bonn Challenge Latin America 2015, discussion panels were held under the title of "Dialogue on Implementation Mechanisms", including capacity building and financing. These panels were conducted in two stages:
**Discussion panel 1: Regional Capacity-Building for Restoration Actions**

This panel discussed knowledge management and establishment of the regional network for forest landscape restoration; channels to promote South-South cooperation; lessons learned to face challenges and obstacles for the implementation of restoration activities; monitoring systems; forest landscape restoration in climate change adaptation and resilience-building planning. The panel also covered issues of integration of restoration plans in the national sustainable development agenda.

The most relevant points include:

- Promoting capacity building through South-South cooperation in the form of specialized knowledge and assistance, development of learning networks and technical tools, and building on experiences from the countries of the region as well as from Africa and Asia.
- Supporting and promoting experience exchange through dialogue platforms that prioritize monitoring systems, germplasm management, financial analysis, identification of techniques, and restoration opportunities.
- Providing sustainable and long-term assistance for national restoration efforts, promoting self-financed initiatives that demonstrate short-term impacts.
- Implementing restoration initiatives that include the transfer of technologies and "know-how" to ensure effective performance.
- Analyzing the restoration targets while considering the impacts of climate change. This perspective demands a holistic approach for landscape recovery, integrated ecosystem management, improving local livelihoods and environmental services, and linking research and implementation efforts with appropriate technologies.

**Discussion panel 2: Investment in Restoration**

This panel discussed resource mobilization strategies; the search for new and innovative financial mechanisms; discussion on existing funding sources and means to support restoration initiatives, and; means and ways to increase private sector participation.

The following key steps for increasing investment in restoration were highlighted:

1. Leadership and political commitment can help inspire confidence for investors, especially when there is openness and transparency in decision-making that enables a broader participation.
2. Provide clear business model experiences to investors can stimulate an environment of success.
3. Offering different investment formats (short- and long-term) can help to adjust to the investors capacities and simultaneously consider the appropriate restoration needs.
4. Mitigating the risks associated with investment through measures that offer guarantees for risk reduction, regulatory and policy stability, and opportunities for co-investment.
5. Reviewing investment experiences to identify strengths and weaknesses in attracting capital for restoration projects.

The most relevant points included:

- On financing: Long-term investments are important, but returns can also be generated in the short-term; these formats have higher risk and there are no specific financial products oriented toward restoration projects. Building evidence on business models through monitoring particular cases is key for awareness-raising and restoration promotion.

- On innovative financing mechanisms: In Latin America and with special reference to Central America, the average plot size is small and territories are generally in the hands of vulnerable population groups with low levels of education and a lack of legal certainty in terms of land ownership. The challenge: What can be done to help those investments reach these population groups? Subsidy mechanisms are needed, with more agile and flexible support mechanisms, which consider specific needs.

- What should be done? Establish a dialogue between the Central American Integration System (SICA), and the banking sector to generate appropriate financial mechanisms for the region, and design resource mobilization strategies to create seed funds.
Commitments by participating delegations

Following the introductory presentations, a dialogue space was given for the presentation on the environmental problems that countries face. The participating countries also used this space to state their commitments regarding forest landscape restoration:

Within the National Restoration Plan, **Colombia** expects to rebuild ecosystems sustainably through incentive programs for agroforestry services. Additionally, the country is working in 91,000 hectares for restoration of water catchment zones. A total of **300,000 hectares are planned for restoration**.

**Costa Rica** has committed to rehabilitate **1 million hectares** of ecosystem over the next 10 years. Of this forest, rehabilitation will account for 675,000 hectares. The rest (325,000 ha) are referring to the agro-environmental agenda known as the Productive and Inclusive Landscape Management Project.

**Ecuador** is working on a National Incentive System known as the Forest Partnership Program; the program is a payment system for forest owners in return for conservation efforts. There are other incentives for bio-trade and for forest management systems, alongside alliances with universities to improve the supply of native species seedlings through trainings and research. Ecuador has committed to **restore 500,000 hectares** in this initiative.

**El Salvador’s** commitment is to reach the goal to **restore 1 million hectares** of degraded and deforested land, which accounts for half of the territory of the country.

**Guatemala** will enhance its effort to pass a Forestry Law. Additionally, the country will commit to **restore 1.5 million hectares** by the year 2020.

**Honduras** will work in three main formats. The first format will be through restoration projects to recover forest ecosystems. Actions will include recovery of 500,000 hectares under a community agroforestry approach, limiting illegal logging, and through the National Strategy to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, which seeks to improve quality of life for indigenous peoples and the general population of Honduras that depends on forests. The second format includes the implementation of a forest promotion fund that provides access to credits for forest projects; the third format is a strategy for agroforestry development that ensures food security. Honduras’ overall restoration commitment totals to **1 million hectares**.

**Indonesia** offers its cooperation for capacity building through knowledge-exchange with Latin America.

**Liberia** has set a goal of **1.5 million hectares** for forest restoration. This is a joint effort with the private sector, the government, and the communities.
Although Nicaragua is not a country party incorporated in the Bonn Challenge Restoration Initiative, it will join these efforts and has proposed a goal to restore 2.8 million hectares of degraded forests.

Two important initiatives are underway in Panama. The first initiative is related to water supply, and the second is an Alliance for One Million Hectares, in which the government has committed to restore 1 million hectares of forest ecosystems. Furthermore, Panama has invited the Bonn Challenge conference to Panama on 20 August 2016:

"I would like to propose that next year's Regional Meeting take place in Panama (...) we will do our best to meet the high bar that El Salvador has set this year."

Emilio Sempris - Vice-Minister of Panama

The Dominican Republic will work to raise awareness among key decision-makers to combat deforestation with a comprehensive approach. Additionally, the country is working toward a National Development Strategy through 2030 for sustainable environmental management and climate change adaptation, with an emphasis on ecosystem restoration, including the preservation of native and endemic species.

The discussion panel was held with well-argued participations from the countries of the region, and interventions from other institutions that offered their assistance and experience for the countries of the region. Some of the proposals and commitments extended by the institutions include:
The Central American Bank for Economic Integration (BCIE) is interested in supporting national and regional environmental initiatives. As part of this interest, the BCIE could provide favorable financial conditions for this kind of initiatives.

CIFOR will develop certain key products such as a synthesis of the state of the art on forest monitoring with participatory approaches, and a comparative analysis of the impact of restoration initiatives in countries of the region, focusing on the effectiveness of the measures undertaken in order to understand what has worked, and what did not.

The IUCN will begin a cost-benefit assessment for restoration in Latin American countries in order to build evidence on different business models. It is important to consider risk reduction mechanisms not only for the private sector, but for communities and small landowners as well.

The World Bank is open to linking its projects to the Bonn Challenge and the 20 x 20 Initiative.
Conclusions

At the end of the event, the Minister of the Environment and Natural Resources of El Salvador, Lina Pohl, presented a summary of the topics discussed and the general conclusions from the meeting:

- All of the participating countries are implementing programs or strategies for forest ecosystem restoration. The goals and commitments taken on by these countries amount to nearly 10 million hectares; 21.4 million hectares in Latin America are currently slated for the 20 x 20 Initiative.

- While the countries need long-term assistance to implement their restoration strategies and efforts, it is also important to demonstrate results in the short and medium term to promote and motivate needed sources of support.

- Internal resources along with support must drive Restoration in the region from the international community. In this sense, it is important to design and implement novel financing mechanisms to undertake forest initiatives.

- Communities facing high monetary poverty hold a large part of the degraded lands; rehabilitation of these ecosystems alone is not enough unless programs to provide more holistic aid accompany it. Given this context, it is important to transform restoration initiatives into economic development alternatives for local communities, and develop incentive and compensation mechanisms that are not linked to property ownership. Restoration should contribute to the development of economically depressed regions.

- Building synergy and coordination among different sectors and efforts is a key in providing solutions on a national and international level.

- Transfer of technical, scientific, and traditional knowledge among countries is essential in order to advance on issues of restoration, and to ensure that countries have similar capacities to replicate or resolve problems in the future.

- The major challenges that restoration actions face are to reduce transaction costs and accelerate the learning curve through experience exchanges in order to implement more efficient and timely restoration processes.
Annexes

Bonn Challenge Latin America 2015 commemorative postage stamps

Prior to the Bonn Challenge Latin America Conference, the Government of the Republic of El Salvador, through the El Salvador Postal Service, launched a new stamp portfolio in honor of the event.

"It is an honor for the El Salvador Postal Service to contribute to such an important global initiative (...) by issuing these postage stamps we ratify our country's commitments and the efforts of our government to rescue our ecosystems."

Elsa Margarita Quintanar, General Director of the El Salvador Postal Service.

These postage stamps were issued on August 19 at the Art Museum of El Salvador (MARTE), releasing 100,000 units in honor of the initiative and promoting the global goal of restoring 150 million hectares of ecosystems degraded by climate change, loss of biodiversity, desertification, and drought.

The release of these stamps was broadcast to the 192 member countries of the Universal Postal Union, to which El Salvador is a party. This launch highlights the country's commitment to the environment, reducing deforestation, and promoting ecosystem restoration.
Bonn Challenge Latin America 2015 commemorative coin

The President of the Republic of El Salvador, through the Minister of the Environment and Natural Resources, Lina Pohl, presented a double-sided silver commemorative coin. The first side of the coin bears the logo for the "Bonn Challenge" global restoration initiative, while the reverse side bears a turquoise-browed motmot (*Eumomota superciliosa*), the National Bird of El Salvador (known locally as the *torogoz*), which can be found across Central America and represents friendship and unity among countries.

More than just a gift for the participants in the regional meeting, the silver coin also symbolizes investment in ecosystems through Central American production.
Participants

Mr. Salvador Sánchez Cerén, President of the Republic of El Salvador

President Sánchez Cerén received his teaching degree in El Salvador and served for many years as an educator for children and youth, leading him and other colleagues to found the National Association of Salvadoran Educators, in 1965. Sánchez Cerén was elected to the Legislative Assembly of El Salvador in the year 2000. Where he served until 2009 when he was chosen as Vice-President of the Republic. In 2014, Salvador Sánchez Cerén was elected President of El Salvador.

Lina Pohl

Lina Pohl was named the Minister of the Environment and Natural Resources of El Salvador in the year 2014. She holds a master's in Social Sciences, with a specialization in social movements with alternative development models in Latin America, along with a master's degree in Social Economics. She is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in Sociology from the Autonomous University of Mexico. Prior to her term as Minister, Ms. Pohl directed the Heinrich Böll Foundation in El Salvador. Lina Pohl has many years of experience in the fields of human rights, democracy, and sustainable development.

Jochen Flasbarth

In December, 2013, Jochen Flasbarth became the State Secretary of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Public Works, and Nuclear Security. Previously, he served as President of the Federal Environmental Agency, in 2009. Flasbarth studied Economics, Political Science, and Philosophy at Münster and Bonn, where he graduated with a degree in Economics. He has participated ad honorem at the former German Society for the Preservation of Birds, in the Union for the Conservation of Nature and Biodiversity, and in the German League for Nature and the Environment.
**Paola Agostini**

Dr. Paola Agostini is the Lead Environmental Economist at the World Bank's Environment and Natural Resources Global Practice. She is currently the global lead for resilient landscapes at the World Bank. Paola Agostini also coordinates TerrAfrica, a regional partnership program that promotes Sustainable Land and Water Management. She is involved with the multisectorial REDD+ Program in Africa, and coordinates the GEF Program in Latin America and Africa, overseeing a portfolio of projects dealing with Climate Change, Biodiversity, Land Degradation, Chemicals and International Waters.

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**Grethel Aguilar**

Grethel Aguilar has led the work of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean as the Regional Director since 2005. Previously, she worked as a consultant for the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD), the Ramsar Convention for the Governments of the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Mexico, and others. From her current post as IUCN Regional Director, Aguilar oversees implementation of projects related to sustainable development, climate change, poverty, and environmental protection.

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**Peter Besseau**

Peter Besseau is the Director of International Affairs for the Canadian Forest Service of Natural Resource Canada since 2003; he has also led, as Executive Director, the International Model Forest Network Secretariat (IMFNS). In December, 2013, Mr. Besseau was also elected Co-Chair of the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration (GPFLR) a role that allows him to draw on his rich and varied experience in landscape approaches, particularly from a governance perspective, to support the objectives of the GPFLR. He has worked on international forest and forest policy issues for over 20 years including in Russia, Asia, Latin America, and Africa.
Gilda Bolt

Ambassador Gilda Bolt has served since 2014 as the Presidential Commissioner from Nicaragua to the Mesoamerica Project. She is currently the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs and Nicaraguan Ambassador to El Salvador. She holds a bachelor's degree in Social Sciences, with graduate studies in project writing and financial management. Bolt also holds a master's degree in Upper Management of Public Administration.

Anisorc Brito

Dr. Brito is a Water and Environmental Specialist at the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (BCIE), and she has broad experience in monitoring and evaluation of environmental, social, and development issues in multilateral organizations and research centers in Mexico and Central America. Brito holds a doctorate in Economic Sciences from the Autonomous University of Baja California, in Mexico, along with two master's degrees: one in Environmental Policy and Sustainability from the University of California, San Diego, USA, and the other in Economics from the Autonomous University of Baja California.

José Joaquín Campos

Joaquin Campos has served as the General Director of the Tropical Agronomy Center for Research and Education (CATIE) since 2008. Previously, he served as the General Deputy Director at CATIE, the Director of the Natural Resource and Environment Division, the Director of the Forestry Department, and the Director of the Latin American School for Forest Landscape Management. He has also worked for the Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency, and international NGOs on integrated conservation and development projects. Campos has been a member of the board of CIFOR, IUFRO, the International Model Forest Network, and the SRIBM.
**Carla Cárdenas**

Carla Cárdenas is a lawyer with a master's degree in Community Natural Resource Management from the Catholic Pontifical University, and an additional degree in Bioethics and Law from the University of Barcelona. She has served as the Coordinator of the Latin American Network on Forestry Law, the Country Director of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), and the Forestry and Environmental Law Association in Ecuador. Cárdenas has worked for the IDB, GIZ, European Union, and other international organizations.

**Christa Castro**

Christa Castro is the Executive Secretary of the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD). Castro is Honduran and holds an Engineering degree in Environmental Sciences from the Catholic University of Honduras, as well as a master's degree in Sanitary and Environmental Engineering from the University of Cantabria, Spain. Castro served as the Deputy Director for Environmental Management at the Secretariat for Natural Resources and the Environment (SERNA) in Honduras. She collaborated in the Department for Special Projects at the Honduran Fund for Social Investment, and served as an advisor for planning, evaluation, and program and project investment for the Municipal Government of the Central District of Honduras.

**Horst Freiberg**

Dr. Horst Freiberg has served as the Head of the Division for Conservation and Sustainable Forest Management, Biological Diversity and Climate Change at the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Public Works, and Nuclear Security in Bonn, Germany, since 2009. Previously, Dr. Freiberg worked for the Bavarian Forest Service and in development cooperation projects in Latin America on forest regeneration and restoration, as well as forest education and capacity-building. Dr. Freiberg has worked extensively under the Convention on Biological Diversity, at the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation in Bonn.
José Antonio Galdámes

Mr. José Galdames is the Minister of Energy, Natural Resources, Environment and Mining in Honduras. He has worked in the public sector for 17 years, and coordinated international cooperation projects through different ministries, including the Ministry of Development and Forest Conservation, Protected Areas, and Wildlife (ICF), where he served as the Vice-Minister for Protected Areas and Wildlife Conservation. Mr. Galdames is a Forest Engineer and holds a master's degree in Gender and Education; he currently serves as the President of the Board of the National Electric Energy Company.

María Claudia García

Dr. García currently leads the Department of Forests and Ecosystems at the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development in Colombia. She holds a master's in Environmental Economics and Natural Resources from the University of the Andes. Dr. García has broad experience in design, implementation, and evaluation of economic and financial instruments as the advisor for the Economic Analysis Office at the Ministry of the Environment, the Environmental Administration Department of Bogota, and as a consultant for the Special Administrative Unit for the National Parks System and the CAR.

Manuel Guariguata

Since the year 2006, Dr. Manuel Guariguata has been the lead researcher and regional coordinator for Latin America at the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR). A trained biologist with a master's in Ecology from the University of Florida and a doctorate in Forestry Sciences (Yale University), Dr. Guariguata has over 25 years of experience in tropical forest management for the production of multiple goods and services, with dozens of publications on these topics. He was a professor and researcher at CATIE, and the Program Officer on Forests and Biodiversity at the Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity.
**Edgar Gutiérrez Espeleta**

Dr. Edgar Gutiérrez Espeleta has served as the Minister of the Environment, Energy, and Telecommunications in Costa Rica since the year 2014. He holds a doctorate in Forestry Science, and has worked since the year 1994 as a professor at the University of Costa Rica. Dr. Gutiérrez Espeleta has experience as a consultant for international organizations such as the PNUD, UNEP, and the Inter-American Development Bank (BID).

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**Evelyn Hoen**

Evelyn Hoen holds a bachelor’s degree in Sociology and Journalism, and a master's degree in Rural Sociology. She has worked in the media in Norway, Sweden, and Bolivia, as well as in civil society organizations. Since 1985, she has held different positions within the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway. She is currently the Head of Business at the Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway in Guatemala.

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**Agus Justianto**

Dr. Justianto has dedicated 29 years of his professional life as an employee at the Ministry of the Environment and Forests of Indonesia. Since 2015, Dr. Justianto has served as the Lead Advisor for the Minister of the Economy and Natural Resources, at the Ministry of the Environment and Forests in Indonesia. Dr. Justianto began his work as a Forest Inventory Specialist in 1986. Before holding his post as Lead Advisor, he was named Director of the Department of Creation and Marketing of Forest Products. He holds a doctorate in Agricultural Economics, and a master's degree in Natural Resources.
Óscar Medinilla

Mr. Medinilla has extensive experience in the field, including a stint as the Executive Director of Budget Advocacy and Environmental Profiles in Guatemala; as the Executive Undersecretary of the National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP), as an Assistant in Environmental Mitigation at the Cooperative Housing Foundation, and a Coordinator of Forest Landscape Restoration at IUCN, among others. He holds an engineering degree in Agronomics and Renewable Natural Resources, along with a master's degree in Policy and Communications from the Pan-American University of Guatemala.

Stefano Pettinato

Stefano Pettinato has served as the Deputy Resident Representative for the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) for El Salvador and Belize since 2012. Prior to his current post, he served as the Regional Advisor for Poverty Reduction and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) at the UNDP Regional Center for Latin America and the Caribbean, with its headquarters in Panama, where he covered topics of Poverty Reduction, the Millennium Development Goals, and Human Rights. Prior to that, Mr. Pettinato served as the Policy Advisor for the Office of the UNDP Human Development Report. Before the UNDP, he worked at the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Brookings Institution, and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Dominga Polanco

Dominga Polanco is currently the Director of the Inter-institutional Technical Group at the Vice-Ministry of Soils and Water of the Dominican Republic. Polanco holds a master's degree in Environmental Engineering from the Pedro Henríquez Ureña National University (UNPHU). Within her broad experience, she has served as the Undersecretary for Natural Resources at the Ministry of Agriculture, and as the Head of Municipal Environmental Management and Projects at the Vice-Ministry of Management, among other important posts. Her areas of interest are Public Policy, Environmental Management, and Biosecurity.
Lawrence J. Sacks

Lawrence Sacks has served as the Director of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in El Salvador since March, 2015. He has experience in the fields of international development and diplomacy, and has advised foreign governments and civil society groups on issues of citizen security, judicial reforms, violence prevention, human rights, and other issues of democracy. Mr. Sacks has served as the Director of the Office on Justice and Citizen Security at USAID/Mexico, and as the Deputy Director of the Office for Democratic Initiatives at USAID/Peru. He received the Global USAID Prize for Leadership for Development. Sacks holds a master's degree in International Affairs from the School of Public and International Affairs at Columbia University, New York.

Emilio Sempris

Emilio Sempris has served as a consultant for the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to support the establishment of the National Program on Climate Change in Panama; he has also worked at the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the European Center of the World Health Organization (WHO-ECEH) as a reviewer of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) for Panama. His areas of interest include Climate Change and Sustainable Development, Integrated Watershed Management, Multilateral Environmental Negotiations, Earth Observation, Environmental Analysis, and Risk Modeling and Management.

Nigel Sizer

Nigel Sizer is the Global Forest Program Director at the World Resources Institute (WRI). He holds a doctorate in Natural Science and Tropical Forest Ecology. Prior to working for WRI, Mr. Sizer worked with UNEP in Nairobi, and established the Asia-Pacific Forestry Program at The Nature Conservancy. He has sat on numerous boards, including for the Rainforest Foundation, the Amazon Alliance, the World Forest Foundation, and the Andean Center for Sustainable Development. He also founded and co-chaired the Forest Dialogue, and helped to establish and lead the Asian Forest Association.
Before Darlington Tuagben assumed his current role as the Deputy General Director of Operations for the National Forest Authority of Liberia, he served as a Specialist in Natural Resources Management at the USAID office in Liberia. He holds a master's degree in conservation Biology from the University of Capetown, South Africa. Mr. Tuagben has over nine years of practical experience in the fields of Biodiversity, Environment, and Natural Resource Management, particularly in the management of protected areas and community participation.
## Participants List

### Germany

**Jochen Flasbarth**, State Secretary of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Public Works, and Nuclear Security  

**Melanie Klussman**, advisor of the State Secretary of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Public Works, and Nuclear Security  

**Horst Freiberg**, Head of the International Division for Nature Conservation at the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Public Works, and Nuclear Security

### Belize

**Dorita Pacheco**, administrative delegate from the Ministry of Silviculture, Fisheries, and Sustainable Development of Belize

### Colombia

**María Claudia García**, Vice-Minister of the Environment and Sustainable Development of Colombia

### Costa Rica

**Edgar Gutiérrez Espeleta**, Minister of the Environment and Energy of Costa Rica  

**Gilbert Canet**, National Forest Director at the Ministry of the Environment and Energy of Costa Rica

### Ecuador

**Carla Cárdenas**, Advisor to the Office of the Minister of the Environment of Ecuador  

**José Naula**, Delegate from the Department of International Management at the Ministry of the Environment of Ecuador

### El Salvador

**Lina Pohl**, Minister of the Environment and Natural Resources of El Salvador  

**Jorge Quezada**, Advisor to the Office of the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources of El Salvador

### Guatemala

**Óscar Medinilla**, Minister of the Environment and Natural Resources of Guatemala  

**Amauri Molina**, Deputy Manager of the National Forest Institute (INAB) of Guatemala

### Honduras

**José Antonio Galdames**, Minister of the Secretariat of Natural Resources and the Environment, Honduras  

**Roberto Portillo**, REDD+ technical project coordinator from the Secretariat of Natural Resources and the Environment, Honduras

### Indonesia

**Agus Justianto**, Advisor to the Office of the Minister of the Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia  

**Yetti Rusli**, Executive Director of the Indonesian Consulting Council at the Secretariat on Climate Change

### Liberia

**Darlington Tuagben**, Deputy General Director of Operations for the National Forest Authority of Liberia  

**Saah David Jr.**, REDD Project Regional Coordinator at the REDD Implementation Unit under the Department of Forest Development of Liberia
Nicaragua

Gilda Bolt, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs and Ambassador of Nicaragua in El Salvador

Jaime Hermida, Alternate permanent resident from Nicaragua to the United Nations

Norway

Evelyn Hoen, Head of Business at the Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway in Guatemala

Panama

Emilio Sempris, Vice-Minister of the Environment of Panama

Rosilena Lindo, Head of the Climate Change Unit at the National Environmental Authority of Panama

Dominican Republic

Dominga Polanco, Director of the Inter-institutional Technical Group (GTI) at the Vice-Ministry of Soils and Water of the Dominican Republic

BCIE

Anisorc Brito, Specialist on water and the environment at the Central American Integration Bank (BCIE)

CATIE

José Joaquín Campos, General Director of the Tropical Agronomy Center for Research and Education (CATIE)

CIFOR

Manuel Guariguata, Lead Researcher and Regional Coordinator for Latin America for the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)

GPFLR

Peter Besseau, Director of International Affairs for the Canadian Forest Service of Natural Resource Canada

CCAD - SICA

Christa Castro, Executive Secretary of the Central American Commission on the Environment and Development (CCAD) at the Central American Integration System (SICA)

UNDP

Stefano Pettinato, Deputy Resident Representative for the United Nations Development Program (UNPD)

IUCN

Grethel Aguilar, Regional Director for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) for Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean

German Obando, Coordinator of the Department of Economics and Forest Governance at the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

USAID

Lawrence Sacks, Director of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in El Salvador

WRI

Nigel Sizer, Global Forest Program Director at the World Resources Institute (WRI)

Walter Vergara, Climate and Forest Specialist for the Global Restoration Initiative in Latin America, World Resources Institute

World Bank

Paola Agostini, Lead Environmental Economist, World Bank Environment and Natural Resources Global Practice