

## "We need water; nothing else will do"

David Brooks 2002.

We are pleased to present you this new issue of the EMS bulletin celebrating the International Environment Day, June 5, 2003.

On this occasion we are also pleased to present an interview with Claudio Langone, newly appointed Executive Secretary of the Brazilian Ministry of Environment.

In recent months, we were greatly pleased by two remarkable achievements. In the first place, UNICEF and WHO awarded a prize to the Brazilian city of Sao Bernardo do Campo for the outstanding social results obtained with the "Waste and Citizenship" program, developed by the POLIS Institute and the Secretary of Environment of that city. One of the remarkable outcomes of the program comes from the Integrated Management of Urban solid waste research project, granted by IDRC through the Small Research Grants mechanism administered by the EMS.

The second achievement took place in Canada, at the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, with the participation of IDRC. A proposal was presented to include in the next Federal budget six new formal statistics indicators for sustainable development: i. forest cover, ii. freshwater quality, iii. air quality, iv. greenhouse emissions, v. extent of wetlands, vi. educational achievement. These indicators would complement other more familiar economic data - such as the consumer price index (CPI) and the GDP. The EMS is championing this new approach among Ministers of Environment of LAC countries to start a round of comments on this initiative.

Unfortunately, in the same period many LAC cities were devastated by heavy rainfall causing landslides in the Bolivian small mining town of Chima and floods in the Province of Santa Fe, Argentina. Both events resulted in human loss and economic devastation in the region. Simultaneously, industrial chemical spills in the Brazilian central rivers caused serious damage to natural fresh water resources. The 2002 report of the International Red Cross declares: The EMS, in an effort to tackle municipal constraints to manage environmental emergencies, is developing a new instrument called SIGA, for the prevention of natural disasters. A summarised description of this instrument is illustrated in the section on EMS New Findings for Policymakers.

It is a well-known fact that South America is one of the richest groundwater reservoirs of our planet. Despite their extensive use, knowledge on the subject tends to be limited. In May, a specific project funded by GEF was presented. It aims to build capacity on the integrated groundwater management of the Guaraní Aquifer system, by Mercosur member countries. The EMS, linking this last initiative to the conclusion of the recent Global Water Forum held in Japan, launches its new Small Research Grant Call attempting to join efforts to institutionalize the sustainable use of fresh water among local stakeholders in LAC cities. The terms of this call will be released soon. We hope that most of you are able to participate.

Once again, our deep appreciation to those of you who contributed to this very special issue.

Walter Ubal Giordano  
EMS Executive Director



## THE ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGE OF THE NEW BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT

*Dr. Claudio Langone*  
Executive Secretary – Brazilian Ministry of Environment and Member of the EMS Technical Advisory Committee

**Several years after the Rio 92 Conference and right after the Johannesburg 2002 Summit, what is your view about the whole process?**

We are lagging behind with reference to the implementation of a sustainability agenda at the international level. The World Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio+10, in South Africa) was affected by two important defeats. One was a political defeat, given that no significant advances were obtained and most resolutions and final documents are tied up to international trade agreements, which is a back step if compared to Rio 92. The other defeat was structural; therefore, it is clear that the role of the United Nations needs to be reconsidered, together with the way these mega events should be conducted in order to produce concrete results. I believe that the role of countries such as Brazil, under the guidance of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's government and Minister Marina Silva, is to make alliances in the international arena, breaking the polarity of the G8 x G77 and being able to reassume the implementation process of the sustainability agenda, isolating delayed positions. Therefore, Brazil will have to be consistent with its position at the global level through the effective implementation of its proposals in the internal sphere. This is a challenge to Lula's government.

**The implementation of Local Agenda 21 in Latin America has shown uneven results. What is your vision on this, and what initiatives is the Brazilian Ministry of Environment pursuing for its implementation?**

In connection with Agenda 21, we need to face the great task of moving from the discourse to the implementation phase. Rio+10 could not meet this objective. We believe in "bottom-up" processes that are framed within local logics. We have identified many positive sustainability initiatives at the local level, especially in developing countries, that have shown creativity to devise and implement alternatives that bring along social inclusion and environmental protection. With reference to the national Agenda 21--already approved and consolidated--, we will promote local and regional instances to build local sustainability agendas. One of the instruments to reach that goal will be the 1st National Conference on Environment, to be held by the end of November 2003, in Brasilia (DF).

**What is the Brazilian Ministry of Environment proposing to tackle the problem of environmental vulnerability and risk prevention in low-income populations?**

This subject is extremely important given that it links environmental protection with environmental justice. We need mechanisms to reduce inequality in the access to natural resources. We have the problem of natural disasters, affecting more intensively the less favoured populations, in peripheral regions, mountain slopes and similar areas. In addition, we have also considered the problem of environmental accidents, highlighting those caused by chemicals and oil by products. Brazil is working together with the Ministry of the Cities in order to create a program to

prevent risks from natural accidents and to consolidate a national prevention system for environmental emergencies related to pollution.

### What is the new Brazilian Environmental Policy proposing to articulate legislation at the local, provincial and national levels, in particular regarding the relationship between your Ministry and the new Ministry of Cities?

We understand that the Brazilian legal model is very interesting. Brazil is a federative country, with specific responsibilities and great autonomy among the different government levels. We will work to strengthen those processes through a shared and decentralized environmental management mechanism, where part of the responsibilities will be carried out through the partnership of different government spheres. The other part will be decentralized and will require a clear definition of competences. For that purpose, we will continue with local training, in order to implement a national program for local management improvement. At the same time, the cities will be encouraged to take on more responsibilities in the environmental area, working in coordination with the new Ministry of the Cities -- a great improvement of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's government--, with the specific goal of dealing with urban problems.

### The Brazilian government is promoting a new dialogue between South American and North American and European countries regarding trade issues. What initiatives will Brazil pursue in order to establish similar negotiations on environmental issues?

Brazil cannot refuse to play a leading role in the articulation of a sustainability agenda at the international level. We will take advantage of the position of Minister Marina da Silva as President of the Latin-American Forum of Ministries of the Environment. We are actively participating in the discussions around FTAA with a critical vision, because the inclusion of Brazil and developing countries in the international context must take place in a way that guarantees their sovereignty and interests. Brazil has great power of articulation with mega-diverse countries. Working together we can put pressure on other governments and institutions in order to move forward towards a

real sustainability agenda. In that sense, strengthening of United Nations-related agencies becomes necessary in order to reassure the world dialogue on a different basis. Global interests on sustainability must be placed above trade interests, and not the other way round.

### Would Brazil be willing to participate in a regional meeting to discuss the main issues to be included on an agenda leading to the establishment of regional environmental policies and legislations?

Certainly. Brazil has a very advanced model in terms of environmental legislation as well as in the organization of management systems. We want to set up cooperation mechanisms, especially with countries in Latin America, not only to support their capacity-building processes, but also to learn from more updated specific policies that are in place in other countries. Our active participation in Mercosur relies on our understanding of the need to strengthen the bloc. It is a high priority of the current government to strengthen our alliances between Latin America and developing countries.

### EMS-IDRC is exploring with Ministries of Environment and Development of the region, the establishment of round tables to discuss the inclusion of sustainable development indicators in their respective national budgets, to monitor the state of the country. Would it be feasible to implement this proposal in Brazil?

We are discussing this subject thoroughly, building up on the accumulation consolidated in Brazil. The Ministry of Environment is preparing a specific seminar on that subject with national and international experts. In the second semester of this year, we will launch an initiative called Dialogues for Sustainability, with the participation of well-known individuals such as Fritjof Capra, Vandana Silva and others. The subject of indicators will be a high-priority topic during the discussions at the 1<sup>st</sup> National Conference on Environment, which will be preceded by a wide national mobilization, with pre-conference instances in all States.

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## EMS AGENDA AT A GLANCE



In the last issue of INFO-EMS, this section illustrated the general contents of the 2003 EMS agenda. We were then presenting our vision on new emerging environmental issues affecting urban areas of LAC. Now, we are presenting urban stakeholders, LAC local governments, civil society, research centers, private and public enterprises, with a detail of future activities on Sustainable Development, promoted by the EMS, and we invite them all to participate.

The first item in our agenda refers to Small Competitive Grants for applied research geared to municipal governments. After a long round of consultation with our partners and EMS constituents we concluded on its contents and focus on the proposed subject. For the 2003 call we defined "Multi-sectoral Alliances for the Sustainable Management of Water in Cities of Latin America and the Caribbean" as the uppermost topic of interest for local policy makers. We propose that research conducted on this issue be focused from a specific perspective: that of **institutionalizing** multi-stakeholder participatory local practices to build up long-term policies. We invite all municipal governments interested in taking part, to download and fill in the electronic form so that we can forward them details on the terms of the call.

[http://www.ems-sema.org/encs/ech/enc\\_eng.htm](http://www.ems-sema.org/encs/ech/enc_eng.htm)

In July, the EMS will be present at the International Fair and Congress of Cities URBIS 2003, following a special invitation of the Sao Paulo City Government.

The second point of our agenda refers to a regional workshop to develop a set of environmental indicators for the effective evaluation of the state of the environment. A country from Latin America and the Caribbean will be taken as case study to validate it in the regional and international context. A local environmental indicators expert from Environment Canada will direct this workshop. We invite local municipalities wishing to participate to download the following form: [www.ems-sema.org/encs/formind/](http://www.ems-sema.org/encs/formind/)

Indicators are key elements in management, apart from being effective instruments that provide transparency in policy decision-making and urban environmental risk assessment. Latin America and the Caribbean experience some gaps in this regard. Although risk prevention ranks high in the agendas of insurance companies operating in LAC, the development of urban environmental prevention systems by municipalities, to face natural or man-made disasters, is

less developed. This factor became evident during the recent disasters caused by landslides in Chima, floods in Argentina, etc..

The closing point of the agenda will precisely tackle this issue of environmental disasters in vulnerable urban areas and the applicability of different prevention systems, in a forum featuring SIGA. To this end, the EMS together with the Mining Policy Research Initiative (IIPM-MPRI) of IDRC is studying the possibility of applying SIGA as a prevention system in the case of small mining activities. This will allow for the consolidation of the thematic approach proposed by Cristina Echavarría (MPRI) and Roberto Villas-Boas (CYTED XIII), during their participation in Geneva in the course of the meeting on the APELL Programme and Mining of the UNEP.

Photo: Francisco Lara de CYTED XIII  
Landslide in Chima, Bolivia



[www.uneptie.org/pc/apell/events/miningworkshop.html](http://www.uneptie.org/pc/apell/events/miningworkshop.html)

This technical forum organized by the EMS will gather regional and international experts and will promote a holistic approach to face environmental risks through integrated systems that could be incorporated by regional municipal authorities. We invite all stakeholders; municipal technical experts in particular, research centers and researchers to send their requests to participate in this event.

[www.ems-sema.org/encs/formSIGA/](http://www.ems-sema.org/encs/formSIGA/)



## ONGOING INITIATIVES

Within the context of national activities leading to the application of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto Protocol, and with support of the Government of Canada and EMS-IDRC, the Climate Change Unit of the Ministry of Housing, Land Management and Environment of



Course Workshop on Clean Development Mechanism  
Photo: MVOTMA

Uruguay, held a series of studies on institutional conditions and capacities for the application of the mechanism.

The results of the studies, as well as the portfolio of potential CDM projects in Uruguay, were presented and discussed at a workshop called by the Climate Change Unit, on 24-25 April 2003. More information: [www.cambioclimatico.gub.uy](http://www.cambioclimatico.gub.uy)

Initiating the activities of the project on Management of Environmental Risk in Low Income Human Settlements in Urban Areas in Central America, coordinated by EMS-IDRC and IADB and executed by FEMICA, Engineer Victor Manuel González Vásquez was recently appointed as Project Coordinator.

More info: [www.femica.org/Noticias/noti\\_proyecto sema.htm](http://www.femica.org/Noticias/noti_proyecto sema.htm)

On April 7, 2003, on the occasion of the Brazilian celebrations of World Health Day 2003, UNICEF and the President of Brazil handed the WHO award to Mr. William Dib, Mayor of Sao Bernardo do Campo, State of Sao Paulo, for the outstanding results of the "Waste and Citizenship" program.

Send us your comments and disseminate your activities through our website: [www.ems-sema.org](http://www.ems-sema.org) - [info@ems-sema.org](mailto:info@ems-sema.org)

Remarkable outcomes of the program result from the "Integrated Management of Urban Solid Waste Impact and Potential" research project granted by the EMS-IDRC <http://www.ems-sema.org/english/act/0619sanbernardo.html>

Last March, EMS research officer Alicia Iglesias Peralata, participated at the Colloquium on Strategies for Local Action 21 in Latin America and the Caribbean called by ICLEI and GTZ in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The colloquium focused on strategies to accelerate implementation of Local Action 21 in the region. Its participants were representatives from international agencies and municipal authorities (mayors) of cities of the region. Among them, the Mayor of Ñuñoa presented the "Carta de Ñuñoa".

[www3.iclei.org/lasc/carta\\_municipalidades\\_latinoamericanas.htm](http://www3.iclei.org/lasc/carta_municipalidades_latinoamericanas.htm)

Mr. Shaun Bona, Regional Controller of the IDRC LAC Regional Office, during his Evaluation tour in Central America visited IDRC corporate project on Sustainable Development and Participatory Ecosystem Management in the Valley of Palajunoj in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. He produced a very satisfactory assessment of the institutional and technical settlement of the project.

In April, on the occasion of his visit to Brasilia, Walter Ubal, EMS Executive Director, presented the 2003 Agenda of the Secretariat to Mr. Claudio Langone, Executive Secretary of the Brazilian Ministry of Environment. He also met the Minister, Mrs. Marina Silva, on the occasion of the Brazilian Climate Change Forum 2003 held in Brasilia. Both authorities expressed optimism to implement a Memorandum of Understanding between both institutions.

## EMS NEW FINDINGS FOR POLICY MAKERS

### SIGA: Integrated Environmental Management System for Vulnerable Areas in Latin America and the Caribbean



Within the framework of its activities supporting municipal management in Latin America and the Caribbean, the EMS (Environmental Management Secretariat) is in the process of preparing a Manual for the Environmental Management of Vulnerable Areas based on the application of what we have called the Integrated Environmental Management System (in Spanish SIGA). The manual was created by consultants Eng. Álvaro González Gervasio and Geographer Gabriela Fernández (School of Science, UDELAR).

The Latin American continent is becoming a frequent scenario of environmental risk and disasters of different origin and intensity that often occur in succession. Although some situations draw more attention due to their intensity (earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tropical cyclones) and the damage and loss they cause, there is a whole range of threats and vulnerability situations that affect our continent and occur due to slower and, therefore, less perceptible processes. In any case, these phenomena are felt by and have an impact on the urban areas and affect society as a whole and, in particular, those sectors that form the so-called "vulnerable populations" due to a combination of political, economic, social, cultural and geographical factors.

At the same time, the rapid and unplanned pattern of growth of the Latin American cities, with its consequent environmental and social problems, contributes to reinforce the fact that local governments are not prepared to effectively face these disasters on their own. In particular, we would like to stress the need of those municipalities located in areas of high environmental risk, and repeatedly hit by natural disasters, to obtain technical support and attention from regional as well as international organizations.

The SIGA constitutes a guide for municipal technical experts as it enables them to design their own tools based on the systematization, processing and combination of different types of territorial information from different sources: the physical and natural environment, ecological, socio-economic information, etc. It is an instrument of support for municipal management, suitable for territorial analysis, as well as for environmental planning focused on prevention and reduction of risks in vulnerable areas..

[www.ems-sema.org/castellano/act/siga.html](http://www.ems-sema.org/castellano/act/siga.html)

### Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in environmental management by municipalities of the Mercocities

Information and Communication Technologies constitute a strategic component in Sustainable Urban Management. Access to Environmental Information is a citizen's right and an essential condition to promote and guarantee effective and genuine participation in the decision-making processes regarding environmental policies. Within the framework of the agreement between the Mercocities Network and the EMS signed in 2001, a research study was carried out on the use of ICTs for environmental management by the Municipalities in the network. The study identified interesting aspects of the use of these technologies in the analysis, monitoring and management of environmental issues. Although municipal governments have initiated IT processes for administration and accounting purposes, most of the municipalities of the network are committed to assuming a proactive role in spreading ICTs and accessibility to the Internet among the poorer sectors, thus becoming fundamental actors in the struggle to reduce the digital divide. The main findings show that although 76% of the municipalities have a Web page, only 46% have a page dedicated exclusively to disseminating information of their Environment Division and, at the same time, the quality and depth of the information, channels and services offered are very different in each case. There are four large groups of pages: first, the basic *institutional pages*, second, sites which can be called *reference centres*, publishing information on local environment, documents, statements, environmental laws and codes, third, the *Information Systems* publishing up-dated information on environmental monitoring, Environmental Atlases, geo-referenced mapping, etc. and finally, the *Participation and Services Platforms* with an environmental profile.

This study was conducted by B.A. Alén Pérez Casas, within the framework of an agreement signed between the Mercocities Network and EMS, with the support of the Municipality of Montevideo.

[www.ems-sema.org/mc/](http://www.ems-sema.org/mc/)

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## NEW UNDERTAKINGS

### V Specialized Meeting of Mercosur Municipalities and Town Halls

The V Specialized Meeting of Mercosur Municipalities and Town Halls (REMI – Reunión Especializada de Municipios e Intendencias) took place on May 20, 2003 in Asunción, Paraguay, with the presence of delegations from Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Bolivia.

Among the resolutions adopted at the meeting, it was decided to create a Technical Office in Montevideo, in response to the need to strengthen and improve REMI's work. Given that the Standing Technical Secretariat of the Mercocieties Network (STPM) is located in Montevideo, its Council offered to house the Technical Office for REMI in the same city, providing the support and experience of the STPM. [www.mercociudades.org](http://www.mercociudades.org)

### Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development of the Guaraní Aquifer System

The governments of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, launched the Guaraní Aquifer System Project at a technical seminar held in Montevideo, at the end of May 2003.

The 27 million dollars project, jointly supported by Global Environment Facility, the World Bank and the Organization of American States, will assist Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay to work together in the elaboration and implementation of a common legal, institutional and technical framework for the management and preservation of the Guaraní Aquifer System, within the framework of sustainable development principles.

This trans-boundary aquifer system underlies the four countries, has a total surface extension of 1.2 million square kilometers, constituting a strategic fresh water resource in the southern cone. In the long term, this project is expected to benefit the 15 million people living in the aquifer region by helping maintain a sustainable supply of safe water for humans; high-quality water for industry; a sustainable supply of thermal water for tourism, industrial, and municipal uses; and reduce conflict potential resulting from the use of the Aquifer waters in trans-boundary areas.

[www.sg-guarani.org](http://www.sg-guarani.org)



### Early Warning Hemispheric Plan for Latin America, the Caribbean, the United States of America and Canada

Around one hundred experts from the United States, Canada and other countries from Latin America and the Caribbean met in Antigua, Guatemala, on June 3 to 5, to define a hemispheric position in preparation of the Second International Early Warning Conference, to be held in October 2003 in Bonn, Germany.

The Regional Consultation on Early Warning studies an initiative on alert systems based on public policies applied throughout the Americas. The objective is to have guidelines and examples that could be presented as a hemispheric contribution to the Bonn conference.

[www.eird.org](http://www.eird.org)

## CITY PRESS

### EVENTS – PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES – COURSES

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[www.ems-sema.org/english/noticias/city\\_press.htm](http://www.ems-sema.org/english/noticias/city_press.htm) or send an e-mail: [info@ems-sema.org](mailto:info@ems-sema.org)

#### PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Chief, Water Resources, Development and Management Service

FAO - Rome, Italy - Deadline: 19/06/2003

Forestry Officer

FAO - Rome, Italy - Deadline: 23/06/2003

Environment Officer

FAO - Bangkok, Thailand - Deadline: 03/07/2003

Environmental Affairs Officer

UN CITES - Geneva, Switzerland - Deadline: 08/07/2003

Regional Coordinator West Asia

UNEP - Deadline: 08/07/2003

Senior Program Officer - Environmental Conventions

UNEP - Nairobi, Kenya - Deadline: 22/07/2003

Associate Programme Management Officer

UN - Nairobi, Kenya - Deadline: 26/07/2003

#### CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

LATINAMERICAN SUMMIT ON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AND DESCENTRALIZATION

9-12/06/2003. Arequipa, Peru

III LATINAMERICAN CONGRESS ON MANAGEMENT OF HYDROGRAPHIC BASINS

9-13/06/2003. Arequipa, Peru

V INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR/WORKSHOP: WATER, ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND COMMUNICATIONS

18/06/2003. Santiago de Chile, Chile

V INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON WATER

23-27/06/2003. Cannes, France

IX INTERAMERICAN CONFERENCE OF MAYORS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

24-26/06/2003. Miami, Fl, U.S.A.

AMAZONIA, CITIES AND WATER GEOPOLITICS

25-27/06/2003. Belém, Brazil

#### CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

ENVIRONMENTAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES ECONOMISTS LAC CONGRESS

9-11/07/2003. Cartagena de Indias, Colombia

INTERNATIONAL FAIR AND CONGRESS OF CITIES - URBIS 2003

22-25/07/2003. San Pablo, Brazil

III INTERAMERICAN CONGRESS ON AIR QUALITY

23-25/07/2003. Canoas, RS - Brazil

#### COURSES

COURSE ON PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

14/07/2003 - 08/08/2003. Washington DC, USA

POSTGRADUATE COURSE ON ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

05/08/2003 - 9/12/2003. Buenos Aires, Argentina

10th ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL COURSE ON WETLAND MANAGEMENT

19/08/2003 - 01/10/2003. Lelystad, The Netherlands

More Professional Opportunities, Events and Courses: [www.ems-sema.org/english/evts/](http://www.ems-sema.org/english/evts/)

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

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

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