

ON THIS ISSUE

EDITORIAL	1
by Walter Ubal, Program Manager, SEMA/UPE/IDRC	
EMS FEATURE ON WORLD ENVIRONMENTAL DAY	1
Paolo Soprano, Ministry for the Environment and Territory of Italy	
EMS AGENDA AT A GLANCE	2
- Visits to the EMS: Paolo Soprano and Naser Faruqi	
- Mercocities Meeting and Seminar	
EMS NEW FINDINGS FOR POLICY MAKERS	2
Small Research Fund Grants Projects: Municipality of Heredia, Costa Rica and South Ahuachapán Microregion	
ONGOING INITIATIVES	3
- Project: "A Public-private partnership for initiating integrated water management in Pergamino: towards an early-warning system"	
NEW UNDERTAKINGS	4
- Environment and Sustainable Development Modules Under Way	
- Milenio Ambiental N° 2	
- Municipal Training Program	
CITY PRESS	4
Events – Professional Opportunities	

EMS FEATURE ON WORLD ENVIRONMENTAL DAY: OUR PARTNERS' VIEWS

"Moving from the brown to the green agenda"

Paolo Soprano, Director, Division 1, Department of Environmental Research and Development, Ministry for the Environment and Territory of Italy

Sustainable development means improving the quality of life of a population within the capacity of Earth's finite resources. In cities the goal of sustainability has been increasingly highlighted over the past few decades, as problems and issues arise from unsustainable practices and developments.

In 1900, 14 percent of the world's population lived in cities, increasing to over 50 percent by 2000. Over the next 30 years, the world's urban population is expected to double to more than five billion, with virtually all the growth taking place in less economically developed countries.

As stated in the European Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment «planning for a high level of environmental protection is one of the key elements to achieving the sustainable development of cities and to providing a high quality of life for urban citizens¹». In the long-term, active and integrated management of environmental issues for the whole urban area is the only way to achieve a high quality and healthy urban environment. Within the framework of the Strategy itself, the Italian Ministry for the Environment and Territory has taken part in the definition of explicit environmental targets, actions and monitoring programmes, linking environment policies to economic and social policies. These goals are derived from the Aalborg Commitments, which not only provide the mechanism to guarantee the correct level of flexibility, but can be also viewed as a fundamental tool to help local governments set clear qualitative and quantitative targets for practical work to implement urban sustainability principles.

¹ Communication from the European Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – COM(2004)60 final.

Green cities: Planning for the planet! - www.wed2005.org

To mark World Environment Day, this year the United Nations has called on Mayors of all countries to join in a world initiative under the slogan "Green cities: Planning for the planet!" We are pleased that cities are at the heart of the environmental agenda, as they no doubt need to be. And planning is imperative, as it has been preconised ever since the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, when the Local Agenda 21 was launched.

In this issue of INFO-EMS we share with you the view of Mr Paolo Soprano, from the Ministry for the Environment and Territory of Italy, who proposes – within the environmental agenda – prioritising sustainable urban development, and encouraging the taking of specific collaboration actions that will set in motion concrete improvements through the integration of the different resources that will facilitate broader participation by the parties. (See "EMS Feature").

In Latin America and the Caribbean, urban topics are a priority. This region has the highest urbanisation percentages on the planet: 75% of its population lives in cities. Even though in the 1990s growth in big cities declined, the problem moved to medium-sized cities (UNEP, 2001). In this regard, it is noteworthy that while central governments delegate much of the provision of environmental services to the cities, access to such services is not homogeneous. This, in turn, worsens the differences among their inhabitants, and, in addition, makes their administration by the local authorities more complex. In Latin America two realities may exist side by side in the same city; healthy, well-planned residential areas, with a good sanitation service, and poor, overpopulated, underserved peri-urban areas. This dilemma, addressed by G. McGranahan and D. Satterthwaite (2000) in "Environmental health or ecological sustainability: reconciling the brown and green agendas in urban development", remains a problem to be solved (see IIED, 2001). This coexistence of problems in the same city may also be the source of social violence. Thus, the very cities that were designed to provide security to their inhabitants and supply them with affordable services are finding it extremely difficult to play their original role.

Within this framework of defining priorities, the approach to urban environmental management has proved to be one of the dilemmas for local administrators and one of the most serious challenges facing national authorities, at the political administrative-financial as well as the social and environmental levels. Such a contradiction illustrated at the local geographical level, when projected to the national level, is expressed in many different ways. To give an example: the same country has overpopulated cities and uninhabited provincial areas

At the same time, the cost of urban services is on the rise, and in the case of water and sanitation it is now recognised that the goal of recovering its total cost is very hard to achieve. On the one hand there is the reality that shows the difficulty for low-income sectors to meet the costs, and on the other hand, the weakness of governments of poor countries in subsidising services for these sectors. This new challenge imposes the need to look into the development of innovative instruments that will promote a new and efficient consensus, in the first place between the stakeholders in the urban system themselves and their rural universe, then the industrial system, and also beyond them. The dimension of the problem requires an effort that must go beyond the national and regional level. Starting at the local level is a priority.

Aiming precisely to "contribute with research to relieving the environmental afflictions of poor sectors in the cities of developing countries...", Canada's IDRC has created the Urban Poverty and Environment Programme, which the EMS fully joins in compliance with its mandates in Latin America and the Caribbean. (*Executive Summary and Prospectus*)

Walter Ubal Giordano, SEMA/UPE/IDRC Program Manager

Yet urgent specific actions are required, and aware of the importance of joint actions as a condition for spreading the tools for sustainability at urban level, the Ministry for the Environment and Territory of Italy signed in 2004 a Memorandum of Understanding with IDRC – EMS to support the promotion of partnership programmes, with the common aim of achieving local sustainability through the improvement of the conditions for human life in cities, suburbs and rural areas in Latin America and the Caribbean. This is because partnerships may well represent an important tool in supporting the urban sustainable development in developing countries, introducing a transparent and solid process of bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

In this perspective Italy, among other initiatives, has developed a programme for environmental protection in China. This Sino-Italian Cooperation Programme is implementing a large variety of projects, aiming at reducing ambient air pollution in urban areas, promoting and developing cleaner and more efficient energy sources and technologies, with special attention to

renewable energies and energy efficiency, and promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development.

As stated during the thirteenth session of the CSD, held in New York on April 2005, in order to bring forward the improvement of the urban environment, it is necessary to adopt new methodological processes leading to the integration of the different resources available with the participation of a wide range of parties. In the field of water and sanitation, which still represent an urgent need in many developing countries, it is necessary to develop and transfer low-cost technologies for safe water supply and waste water treatment, and to ensure effective capacity for building operating and maintaining sanitation and sewerage systems.

All these actions must be regarded as a level of priority, so as to step forward the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

EMS AGENDA AT A GLANCE

VISITS TO THE EMS

Paolo Soprano, Director, Ministry for the Environment and Territory of Italy

Within the framework of the agreement signed last year by IDRC and the Ministry for the Environment and Territory of Italy (IMET) to support EMS activities, a Technical Co-ordination Meeting was held, attended by Mr Paolo Soprano, Director of the Sustainable Development Division of the said ministry, and his adviser, Mr Pierluigi Manzoni. At this meeting, held in the city of Montevideo between March 30 and April 2, the details were finalised of the workplan that had been approved by EMS's Steering Committee in October 2004 in Rome, and future activities to be developed were also co-ordinated.



Naser Faruqi, Team Leader of the Urban Poverty and Environment Program

On May 2-5 Mr Naser Faruqi, recent Team Leader of IDRC's Urban Poverty and Environment (UPE) Programme Initiative visited IDRC's regional office in Montevideo. During that week, as well as working hard with the EMS team to ensure full integration of the Secretariat with the UPE, he attended the First Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants held on May 2-6, 2005 in Punta del Este, Uruguay (for further information on this meeting: www.nip.gub.uy). Within this framework, he had a meeting –

among others – with Federica Fricano, Head of the Italian Delegation to the Conference and official representative of the Ministry for the Environment and Territory of Italy; Architect Mariano Arana, Uruguay's Housing, Territorial Management and Environment Minister; Mrs Patricia Fuller, Canada's Ambassador to Uruguay; Karen Kraft Sloane, Canada's Environment Ambassador, and Barry Stemshorn, from Canada's Environment Ministry. His agenda also included a visit to two EMS-funded projects in Buenos Aires, within the framework of its Small Competitive Research Grants Programme encompassed by the subjects of public-private partnerships for urban environmental management.

Meeting of the Environment and Sustainable Development Thematic Unit of the Mercociudades Network and International Seminar



On Wednesday 27 April EMS/UPE/IDRC participated in the Meeting of the Environment and Sustainable Development Thematic Unit of the Mercociudades Network held in

Montevideo, Uruguay. Its aims were to bring together and analyse the activities developed by each of the Thematic Unit's member cities and outline a Strategic Workplan around the axes and topics previously raised. It was attended by the cities of Montevideo (Uruguay, charged with the coordination of the Thematic Unit), Río Cuarto (Argentina, sub-coordinator), Asunción (Paraguay), Buenos Aires (Argentina), Morón (Argentina), Recife (Brazil), Rosario (Argentina), Santo André (Brazil) and Sao Paulo (Brazil).

At the same time as the meeting, an International Seminar was held on "Environmental Policies, Social Inclusion and Citizens' Participation" on April 27-28, organised by the Thematic Unit, with the participation of outstanding specialists in the region.

Within the framework of these activities, the Environment and Sustainable Development module was presented within the Mercociudades portal (more information in the NEW UNDERTAKINGS section) www.mercociudades.org

EMS NEW FINDINGS FOR POLICY MAKERS

In the framework of its Small Research Fund Grants, the EMS/IDRC supports applied research proposals at the municipal level. Through a public call system, proposals are jointly formulated by local governments, research centers, the private sector and civil society. Thus, the EMS/IDRC has been supporting over forty projects in questions of critical importance in terms of urban environmental management: handling of solid waste, sustainable management of water, sanitation and public-private partnerships in municipalities of Latin America and the Caribbean. During its last call for proposals, two were as follows:

Project: "Integrated Management of Underground Water Resources in Terms of Drinking Water Supply and Protection", Costa Rica.

Project Partners: Empresa de Servicios Públicos de Heredia S.A. and Instituto de Políticas para la Sostenibilidad (IPS)

Objectives: To evaluate technically and financially the alternative of harnessing underground water to help ensure the flow (supply) of water all year round to the populations served by ESPH, particularly San Rafael and neighbouring communities, for the purpose of eliminating the rationing of drinking water in the dry season.

Project: "Enforcement of local Legislation related to the protection and management of water resources and its impact on the administration of community urban water supply services in the South Ahuachapán Microregion". South Ahuachapán Microregion Association, made up of the municipalities of: Jujutla, San Pedro Puxtla, Guaymango and San Francisco Menéndez, Department of Ahuachapán, El Salvador.

Project Partner: El Salvador's Ecological Foundation SalvaNATURA.

Objectives: To lay the groundwork for the Institutionalisation, within local governments, of participatory planning and formulation of regional public policies to allow articulated multisectorial involvement, for sustainable water management in the South Ahuachapán Microregion.

ONGOING INITIATIVES

Project: "A Public-private partnership for initiating integrated water management in Pergamino: towards an early-warning system"

Pergamino is a medium-sized city (100,000 inhabitants) located in the north of the Province of Buenos Aires, in one of the main farming regions world-wide. The Pergamino and Chu-Chú streams, onto whose flood valleys the city has spread, run through it.

The city is hit by recurrent floods –112 of them since 1913 – whose impact has increased over time as a result of a process of environmental degradation and increasing vulnerability.

Every time these disasters strike, the flooded area is liable to pollution from substances of diverse origin (household effluents, solid waste, deposits of agrochemicals, etc) swept by the waters. In addition, 25% of houses are not connected to the water supply system and 40% are not connected to the sewerage system. In these cases, floods cause the pollution of drinking water with sewage.

The monitoring of water quality, the extension of coverage by water and sewerage services and the reduction of the risk of floods – through the implementation of a warning system – are priority issues of the current municipal administration; some of these issues are part of our project.

City of Pergamino



Chu-chú stream mouth into Pergamino stream

Local society shows a consolidated, active organisational fabric. After the 1984 and 1995 floods, flood victims' commissions were set up, developing strategies to raise people's awareness of the danger posed by these disasters, provide diagnosis and a development plan to tackle the situation, and, above all, generate fluent communication mechanisms between local residents and the municipality.

This project aims to strengthen the local government's management capacity to implement multisectorial, participatory public policies designed to reduce the social and environmental vulnerabilities associated with freshwater management, particularly that associated with water excesses in the city of Pergamino. Despite the uncertainty as to the synergetic effects of floods and pollution, the goal of taking preventive action will be pursued².

More specifically:

- Concrete, feasible proposals will be elaborated for local actions related to the reduction of the risk of floods and the monitoring of water pollution during flooding.
- A multistakeholder articulation process will be developed to enable the institutionalisation of spaces for participatory management in decision-making regarding water management.

This problem is defined as a priority by the Municipality and local society. Furthermore, there is a previous experience of the institutions involved in collaboration and/or shared project actions, which will be consolidated and broadened.

The process will aim to facilitate and strengthen the links among different stakeholders, maximising their organizational capacities, as well as the autonomy and flexibility levels of the local administration in the decision-making process.

The counterparts in this project are the Municipality of Pergamino, Comisión de Seguimiento de Obras Pluviales de Pergamino (COSOPER)(Pergamino's

Commission for the Monitoring of Rainwater Drainage Works), CENTRO estudios sociales y ambientales (Social and Environmental Study Centre) and the Instituto Nacional del Agua (National Water Institute).

The methodological proposal seeks to strengthen local institutions and organisations, and generate public/private partnership mechanisms to initiate the sustainable management of water in the city. The mechanisms developed can be replicated.

The direct beneficiaries are the inhabitants living in flood-risk areas, the Municipality, and the flood victims' commissions. Indirectly, the population at large, who will see their quality of life improve, will also be benefited.

The expected outcomes include a number of diagnoses to help make a start on the designing of actions:

- Characterisation and location of houses with no connection to drinking water or sewerage systems.
- Systematisation of risk factors, identification of the risk of pollution during flooding as a necessary step to characterise risk scenarios (map of sources of pollution in flood-risk areas)
- An analytical matrix of hydrometeorological data that can feed the hydrometeorological warning system
- A georeferenced digital plan of the city of Pergamino
- Outline of an Early-Warning System (EWS)
- Outline of a Geographic Information System (GIS)

The devising of the associative, participatory management mechanisms will make it possible to:

- Define actions aimed at developing multisectorial water management mechanisms (technical meetings, training workshops, and workshops to reach consensus).

- Systematise the multisectorial and participatory management experience
- Generate management mechanisms involving public and private stakeholders
- Identifying contingency, prevention, and mitigation actions to be developed in the future

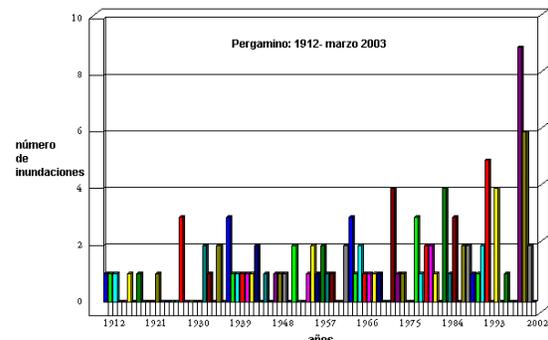
In this process, management support instruments will be devised to help make a start on the building of the conditions for the planning of the sustainable use of water in both medium-term and long-term policies.

The strength of this project lies in the fact that these instruments are generated through a multistakeholder, associative process that enables the institutionalisation of participatory management mechanisms that are critical to sustaining the planning of these policies.

Now, we have held the first project workshop, which involved all the counterparts. This meeting made it possible to start identifying the many data sources available, agree the ways to systematise them, start thinking of how to integrate them into a GIS and an EWS, and identify the information gaps that it will be necessary to fill in the future.

Furthermore, we are working on articulation among counterparts, facilitating dialogue among stakeholders.

CENTRO estudios sociales y ambientales



² Cf Local Agenda 21, precautionary approach.

MILENIO AMBIENTAL N° 2



Milenio ambiental is the EMS/UPE/IDRC magazine edited with the collaboration of IPS-Inter Press Service. The target readership of Milenio Ambiental is mainly municipal technicians and decision-makers, Environment Ministries, researchers; co-operation agencies, at the national and international level, international bodies involved in the topics of Environmental Management and Sustainable Development in the cities. It is a magazine for the analysis, information and dissemination of subjects relevant to urban environmental management in LAC countries.

On this occasion, the topic of managing urban solid waste as a source of energy is addressed.

www.ems-sema.org/milenioambiental/

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT MODULES UNDER WAY

As announced in previous issues the projects for the building of environment and sustainable development modules in the FEMICA (Federation of Municipalities of the Central American Isthmus) and Mercociudades portals are under way. An EMS/UPE/IDRC-promoted conference call among those responsible for each network made it possible to define the kind of technical co-ordination to be used.

The environmental module represents a contribution by EMS/UPE/IDRC to the promotion of knowledge networks among cities. Thus, a common workplan emerged, which –among other activities- seeks to cover two large regions of the Latin American continent regarding the subject of the urban environment, through the constant generation, compilation and/or dissemination of environmental products and services.

Among the common topics that came up, the following stand out: treatment of urban solid waste, treatment of urban water resources, planning and conservation of green spaces, experiences in urban agriculture, vulnerability to natural disasters.

www.mercociudades.org - www.femica.org

MUNICIPAL TRAINING PROGRAMME - Training Modules



Successful practices of environmental service management for vulnerable populations in Central American cities

The SIG-SIGA Training Workshops are set within the framework of the activities of the Municipal Training Programme of

the Environmental Service Management for Vulnerable Populations in Central American Cities Project, which is executed by the Federation of Municipalities of the Central American Isthmus FEMICA- with the financial help of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and the Environmental Management Secretariat, EMS, of the International Development Research Centre, IDRC. Within this framework, the first two modules of these workshops were held, one in the city of Estelí, Republic of Nicaragua, between 18 and 23 April, and the other in the city of Siguatepeque, Honduras, on April 25-29, 2005. They were attended by 16 municipal technicians, representatives of municipalities of the Republics of Cuba, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador. The goals of these workshops were to present the Municipal Integrated Environmental Management System (SIGA) methodology as a tool, basic support platform, for the environmental planning of the territory, in particular for integrated risk management in vulnerable urban and peri-urban areas, for introducing municipal technicians to the use of the SIGA methodology as a tool to generate disaster mitigation and prevention plans and strategies in their municipalities, training municipal technicians in the use of Geographic Information Systems (ArcView 3.3), and generating or updating risk and critical-area data bases and maps of the municipalities benefiting from the Training Programme to strengthen the decision-making of local authorities regarding the topics of risk, threat, and vulnerability in the following categories: geological faults, earthquakes, floods, landslides, and management of pollution from vectors related to solid and liquid waste.

www.femica.org/areas/griesgo.php

CITY PRESS – JUNE / JULY 2005

Disseminate events, calls, fellowships and professional opportunities: www.ems-sema.org/english/evts/ - info@ems-sema.org

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

- 2nd Annual Conference on Latin America Sustainable Development
- V International Conference on Environment and Development
- VI Latinamerican Symposium on Research and Extension in Agricultural Systems "Environmental Goods and Services Valoration and their Role in Poverty Reduction, from a Systemic Approach"
- 2005 Children's World Summit For The Environment
- Environmental Management Conference

MORE INFORMATION:

www.ems-sema.org/english/evts/ - info@ems-sema.org

PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES / CALLS

Second Call for Proposals UNDP – PPPUE - Deadline: 30/06/2005

UNDP's Bureau for Development Policy is launching the second call for concept notes for the Public-Private Partnerships for the Urban Environment (PPPUE).

II Latin American Digital Cities Award - Deadline: 01/07/2005

The Latin American Awards Programme for Digital Cities was created by ICA and AHCJET to reward the development of e-government initiatives and to stimulate the modernization of Latin American municipalities.

ZAYED INTERNATIONAL PRIZE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT - Deadline: 01/07/2005

The Zayed International Prize for the Environment, worth US\$ 1 million, is now considered the largest and most valuable environmental prize in the world.

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.

EMS JOINS UPE

Since April 1st 2005 the EMS joins the Urban Poverty and Environment (UPE) Program Initiative of the IDRC. This initiative would allow IDRC and its partners to joint efforts to guarantee a stronger urban platform in delivering their programs in Latin America and the Caribbean.

"UPE will take an integrated approach to environment and natural resources issues in cities, working within the themes of urban agriculture, urban water and sanitation, waste management, and vulnerabilities to natural disasters, with land tenure as a crosscutting issue." www.idrc.ca/upe

The EMS has the support of the International Development Research Centre, the Ministry for the Environment and Territory of Italy, the Interamerican Development Bank, Environment Canada, United Nations Environment Program, and the Ministry of Housing, Land Management and the Environment of Uruguay. It is managed by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC, Canada - www.idrc.ca)

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