

# #23

## Amazonian Cities

Peer learning about  
the sustainable use  
of terrestrial ecosystems

UCLG peer learning  
Riberalta · Bolivia, April 2018

Learning  
UCLG

## **Credits**

### **Coordination**

Latin American Federation of Cities, Municipalities and National Associations of Local Governments (FLACMA)

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United Cities and Local Governments (CGLU)

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# Introduction

**FLACMA, the Latin American Federation of Cities, Municipalities and Local Government Associations, as part of the umbrella organization United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), acts as the voice of numerous small and intermediary cities who wish to ensure that the opinions of local governments are taken into consideration and represented in global agendas. One of FLACMA's goals is that all members are strengthened through city to city exchanges. In this way, the management at technical and political level is improved, and societal well-being enhanced.**

The continent of Latin America has an overwhelmingly urban-dwelling population, with around 85% of its inhabitants living in cities. Urban growth has taken place at such speed in many of these cities that nature finds itself with no say in any debates that affect it, even though Latin America is a continent with unique natural resources.

To speak about Amazonia is to speak about a space of worldwide scale and importance, the so-called 'lungs of the earth'. It is to speak about nature in its purest state, ecosystems, ecology, biodiversity, cultural diversity, a transnational region. Amazonia is also home to nearly 40 million people who live in cities of varying size, rural settlements,<sup>1</sup> and indigenous villages.

It is no coincidence that the first celebration of the International Conference on Peer Learning and Cooperation between Amazonian Cities took place in Bolivia, a country which has taken significant legislative strides to protect the environment,<sup>2</sup> promote integrated sustainable development and recognize nature as a subject of law.<sup>3</sup> The city of Riberalta is an intermediary city, where the rivers Beni and Madre de Dios come together, one of the most historically symbolic and important river ports of the region and today a major exporter of the Brazil nut.

Thanks to the vision and talent of Mayor Omar Nuñez and his work team, as well as the Association of Bolivian Municipalities (ABM), Riberalta accepted

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'vereda' in the original Spanish, is used in Columbia as a geopolitical division that refers to a small agrarian community.

<sup>2</sup> Environmental Act 1333 (1992) Art. 1 Purpose: "...the protection and preservation of the environment and natural resources, regulating the actions of mankind in its relationship with nature and fostering sustainable development for the purpose of enhancing the quality of life of the population".

<sup>3</sup> Framework Act 300 on Mother Earth and Comprehensive Development of the 'Living Well' Concept (2012) Art 1. Purpose: "...to establish the vision and bases for integrated development in harmony and balance with Mother Earth for 'Living Well', guaranteeing the continued capacity for regeneration of the living components and systems of Mother Earth, recovering and strengthening local knowledge and ancestral wisdom within the framework of the complementarity of rights, obligations and duties".

the role of regional leadership of this event in collaboration with the Military School of Engineering at a decisive moment for the region. Extractive and hydroelectric activities, high levels of deforestation, the growth in cattle-rearing and agricultural activities, the scarcity of drinking water, the contamination of rivers, the spreading urban sprawl, etc., are all contributing to an unprecedented impact on the natural environment. This is leaving indigenous peoples unprotected and endangering the preservation of one of the most important ecosystems in the world. It is time to coordinate actions and policies that aim to reverse the negative impact of the above. In promoting the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, as proposed in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15 (Life on land) of the 2030 Agenda of the UN, the Amazonian municipalities play a crucial role.

A total of 60 local authorities attended the event, including 40 mayors and mayoresses. With the support of their national associations, they came by land, air and river to a meeting that lasted three days. In addition to the UCLG and FLACMA, the meeting was also supported by the International Labor Organization (ILO), the Andalusian Fund of Municipalities for International Solidarity (FAMSI), the government of Bolivia and, in particular, its Vice-Ministry of Autonomy.

In the sessions of peer learning, dialogue and experience-sharing, the leaders acknowledged the existence of common challenges and designed a roadmap that reflects their commitment to the sustainable development of the Amazonian territory. The specific actions to be undertaken have been set out in the Riberalta Declaration, the result of a historic event which points the way to a new pathway for the region to follow.

As President of FLACMA and Mayor of Sucre, the constitutional Capital of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and an intermediate city considered Amazonian due to its many important River Amazon sources, I hereby join forces with my colleagues and sign the commitments that will ensure, through FLACMA, the implementation of networked actions that will benefit our communities and territories.



**Iván Arciénega**

Chairman of FLACMA, Mayor  
of Sucre, Bolivia

## The results of the three days of working and learning together are summarized in the Riberalta Declaration

In 2018, in the city of Riberalta, Beni Department, Bolivia, an international event, “Peer Learning and Cooperation between Cities – Policies and Projects for Small- and Medium-sized Cities in Amazonia” was held from April 16-18. This event was attended by representatives of local and regional governments and national associations of municipalities from Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

The event was headed by FLACMA, co-organized by the Vice-Ministry of Autonomy of the Bolivian Government, the Association of Municipalities in Bolivia (AMB), ILO and UCLG, and hosted by the Autonomous Municipal Government of Riberalta. Its celebration underlines the extensive south-south and inter-city cooperation which aims to consolidate interaction among small- and medium-sized municipalities in Amazonia.



## Riberalta Declaration

Riberalta, April 18, 2018

We, the local representatives of Amazonia meeting together for the first time to speak about the challenges we face and the opportunities that present themselves before us, hereby acknowledge that we are: jointly responsible as politicians for the protection of Amazonia, an area of worldwide importance that is essential for the sustainability of the planet; key players in the management of our territories, sharing the idea of Amazonia as a natural and cultural heritage; and the prime movers of public policies which respond to the need to find sustainable alternatives to the exploitation of the resources which our territory has made available to us.

In this context, we hereby declare:

**Amazonia is a natural and human environment of enormous wealth**, which must be protected and should be seen as a model for the harmonic relationship between different peoples on the basis of respect for diversity.

**Our local and regional governments must work together** in a joint vision of our Amazon region which allows territorial and leadership coordination to confront the challenges we face in common.

We therefore ask national, regional and international organizations:

**To generate a scenario which fosters multi-governance** and enables all levels of government to be active players in the construction of a shared future.

**To promote funding management models** to keep the geographical, territorial and social conditions of the region and attending to its real needs and requirements.

**To review legislative frameworks at national level** and adapt them to the reality of the challenges and requirements of the region.

To acknowledge the role played by municipalities in the associative management of Amazonia and their **participation in a process whose goal is sustainable**

**territorial management** with special emphasis on strategic planning, territorial legal codes, economic diversification, gainful and ecologically sustainable employment, etc.

And we hereby express our commitment:

**To support the Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda of the UN. In particular: SDG 5 (Gender Equality) SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 15 (Life on Land).

**To align with FLACMA in the integration of coordinated efforts** aimed at meeting the needs of the cities of Amazonia.

**To create a permanent space for joint evaluation with all participants in the planning**, coordination and monitoring of the sustainable territorial development of Amazonia.

To work towards the creation of a set of good practices and **to foster the development of the skills and abilities of local leaders of the region**, with special emphasis on increasing the participation of young people and women in the decision-making processes.

To accept the challenge of a change in focus in terms of economic development to one which **facilitates coordinated territorial conservation and the sustainable management of natural resources** through ecotourism, ethno-tourism, green employment, the generation of added value, etc.

**To motive our citizens to actively participate as main actors** in the protection and promotion of the Amazonian territory.

**To work together on reviewing and approving** the documentation that we will begin to generate **under the leadership of FLACMA** and on the basis of the ideas and opinions generated by the roundtables.



# Context

**Amazonia is spread over nine South American countries: Bolivia, Brazil (which has the largest area), Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, French Guiana, Surinam, Peru and Venezuela.**

With a total surface area of around 8 million km<sup>2</sup>, Amazonia integrates political-administrative boundaries, environmental characteristics connected to the extension of the Amazon rainforest, and the geographical configuration of the Amazon river basin.

And yet Amazonia is also a region of numerous cities. The Brazilian city of Manaus is the most important in the region, with a population of over 2 million. Like many other cities in Amazonia, its origins can be found in the exploitation and colonization of the region as a fortification in the control of the flow of goods.

Other cities have arisen from indigenous settlements which grew over time into rural centres before becoming cities which integrate into the territory eventually as a set of city systems with different hierarchies according to their territorial condition. These can include intermediary cities, twin cities, border cities, rural centers in forest reservations, indigenous territories, etc. Many of them have transnational and/or multinational characteristics.

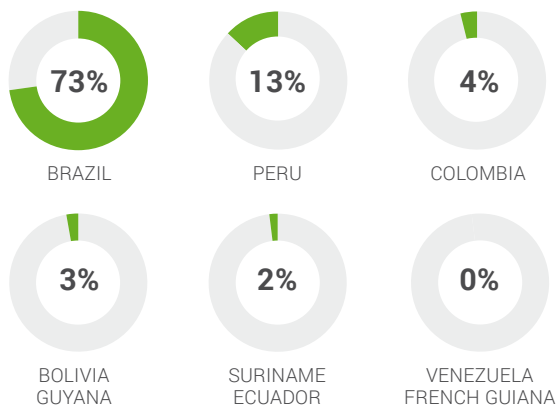
As the economy diversifies, the population grows and establishes nodes of varying importance in the territory, thereby generating a hierarchical system which is reflected in the cities. The so-called intermediary<sup>4</sup> cities are especially important as articulation hubs in the rendering of services and as agents of development which consolidate their role as intermediary cities able to revitalize the territory.

There are numerous intermediary cities in Amazonia. An intermediary city can be defined as a city whose essence and economy are based on the surrounding territory. It generates proximity to its surroundings and tries to be competitive by diversifying its economic foundations, connecting with markets and communicating in a more open and direct way with other governmental bodies to ensure a quality of life for its citizens which creates identity, solidarity and togetherness.

<sup>4</sup> "Intermediary cities are urban sites which create important bridges for the connection of rural and urban areas [...] As a result of their 'intermediary' position, they also constitute, for the majority of the population, a focal point of transition to overcome rural poverty [...] the relationships that they generate with large urban centers allow them to complement each other and operate as a set of cities" (Translated into English from the original version in Spanish) (Llop, JM. Construyendo una nueva agenda urbana para las ciudades intermedias. UCLG, 2015).

## Percentage of population by countries in the Amazon Region

Source: Own elaboration based on data obtained from Geo Amazonía.  
Perspectivas del medio ambiente en la Amazonía. PNUMA, OTCA, CIUP. Lima, 2009



## The importance of Amazonia in political agreements

An important precedent for joint action in Amazonia was the signing of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty (ACT) in 1978. Eight out of nine countries in Amazonia (the only absentee being French Guiana) signed an agreement whose goal was to foster sustainable development in Amazonia through joint actions which took into consideration preservation of the environment and the rational use of natural resources.<sup>5</sup> This can be considered a first step which demonstrates the interest and need for integration of these countries for sustainable management of the region, the balanced exploitation of its natural resources and the generation of joint policies of comprehensive development.

Another important step in addressing the need for joint action was the Paris Agreement of 2016 on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through the mitigation, adaptation and resilience of ecosystems for a progressive decrease in climate change. In this Agreement, Amazonia was identified as one of the last 'lungs' of the planet.

<sup>5</sup> Amazonian Institute of Scientific Research, SINCHI (2016). Perfiles urbanos en la Amazonía Colombiana 2015. Publishing house: Scripto S.A.S. Bogotá.

In 2009, during the Amazon Region Local Government Summit, local leaders declared their commitment to sustainable development in the “Manaus Charter” and identified the need to strengthen local skills in the formulation and elaboration of environmental service compensatory projects and/or programs for the management and care of forest cover. Another important issue that was identified at the summit was the need to foster the implementation of policies and measures that encourage the adoption of, for example, clean technologies, renewable energy sources and environmental education.

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015), world leaders accepted the challenge of the universal application of 17 SDGs for the benefit of the planet and the people that inhabit it. Subsequently, in October of 2016, the New Urban Agenda was adopted, recognizing for the first time the crucial role played by cities and local and regional governments in the attainment of sustainable development.



**At this event, UCLG brought local governments together for the first time to speak about SDG 15: Life on Land. In line with the global agenda,** local actions are to be pursued which reflect the awareness, importance, responsibility and urgency of the need to construct comprehensive policies in harmony with traditional indigenous wisdom and the conservation of the biodiversity of Amazonia. The demands of the population are given a voice, and mutual support is ensured, through the exchange of local experiences in the effort to meet these new challenges.

*“The last lung of our planet is in our hands”*

**Cicero Noronha**

Mayor of Guajar-Mirim, Brazil

# The Amazon rainforest, a worldwide symbol of biodiversity and exploitation

The Amazon rainforest is one of the most biodiverse-rich territories of the planet, hence its crucial ecological role in the functioning of the planetary ecosystem. It is also one of the few regions in the world which have not been fully explored, and there remains a myriad number of tales, stories and legends which speak about a unique, fantasy-like territory which appears to belong neither to this planet nor this age.

The enormous expanse of Amazonia and its complex accessibility have enabled the continued existence and development of many Amazon aboriginal communities who have thus far coexisted in relative harmony with nature. These communities have contributed to the region becoming an ethno-cultural patrimonial sanctuary of worldwide importance.

Having the Amazon rainforest as your home means a very different way of life, one in which frontiers appear not to exist, boundaries are infinite, the landscape is a living blur of different hues of green and moving is synonymous with river and the economics of flora and fauna. Living in Amazonia from one day to the next has shaped a singular cultural identity, which in reality is the sum of many identities which imbibe the same sap.

*“Biodiversity unites us, we are the brothers and sisters of the Amazonian sap”*

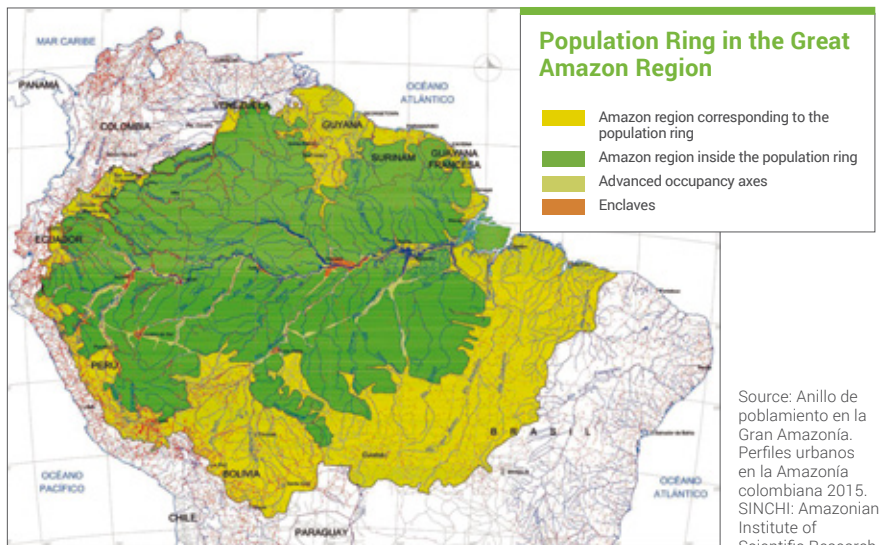
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**Liliana Cuellar**  
Mayor of El Paujil, Colombia

The growing economic impact of the resource-rich Amazonian territory is negatively affecting the enormous richness of its biodiversity at an ever increasing rate. In 2016, the National Institute for Space Research (Portuguese initials: INPE) of Brazil reported that 7989 km<sup>2</sup> had been lost to deforestation -an increase of 29% compared to the previous report- to free up primary forestland for soybean production and cattle-rearing. Despite multiple protests and the withdrawal in many cases of international cooperation, deforestation continues at an alarming speed. Throughout Amazonia, ecosystems are suffering constant threats from agro-industrial, mining and hydroelectric activities, as well as cattle-rearing and drug trafficking.

## Cultural diversity, as a fundamental value of the region

Humankind's occupation of the Amazonian territory has principally taken place along the minor and major tributaries of the River Amazon, creating a population ring of more than 38 million inhabitants, concentrated primarily to the south in the Brazilian Amazon, in the Peruvian Amazon to the west, and along the axis of the river with the principal nodes of Iquitos in Peru, the triple Brazil-Colombia-Peru frontier and the cities of Manaus and Belém in Brazil.



Source: Anillo de poblamiento en la Gran Amazonía. Perfiles urbanos en la Amazonía colombiana 2015. SINCHI: Amazonian Institute of Scientific Research

More than 350 ethnic groups<sup>6</sup> with their own language and cultural identity can be found in the huge transnational Amazonian region. This major cultural diversity is the time-transcending historic legacy and patrimonial heritage of Amazonia.

Many Amazonian cultures live off the forest and its rivers in territories overlapped by forestry reservations, protected areas and biosphere spaces. They are the habitat of ancestral communities whose worldview is centered on the forces of nature in the forest and who recognize Mother Earth as the giver of life.

One of the most pressing challenges today in Amazonia is the **acceleration in urban and economic development processes**. Such factors have once again exacerbated the problems of governmental instability, as well as resulting in more deforestation, the higher consumption and exploitation of non-renewable natural resources, further extractive activities, a rise in drug trafficking violence, and the generation of ever-growing quantities of waste and rubbish which end up contaminating the Amazonian ecosystem. Faced with these challenges, nature needs to be recognized as a subject of law on the basis of a city culture. A violence-free life project should be proposed for its inhabitants, fostering dialogue with these communities and enhancing the social care of the more vulnerable ones.

<sup>6</sup> Source: Environment Outlook in Amazonia. Geo Amazonia (2009). United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)

*“A citizenship culture is now being constructed; an environmental conscience is being learned in childhood”*



**Andrés Mauricio Perdomo**  
Mayor of Florencia, Colombia

## Prevention of teenage pregnancies in Florencia, Colombia

One of the most worrying social problems in the Amazonian region is the number of teenage pregnancies. Under the slogan “I believe in Florencia”, Florencia City Hall is striving to create a city whose inhabitants are aware that the future is in their hands, and that what each and every one of them does has a direct effect on the community as a whole.

With this conviction, a proposal has been made to reduce teenage pregnancies and thereby break one of the structural parts of the vicious circle that generates poverty in the region. A program has been set up called “Baby, think about it carefully” which involves handing over to young teenagers a ‘robot baby’ for 24 hours. The ‘robot baby’ displays all the behaviors of a real baby, but keeps a record of everything; of how long it was allowed to cry, whether it was fed when hungry, if its nappy was changed when it should have been, etc. The aim is to generate an awareness in young people of the responsibilities that having a baby entails and of the potential effects on their lives, impressing on them the importance of only starting a family when they have at least attained some degree of emotional stability. The ultimate goal is to reduce the rising informal economy and the number of young people who drop out of school.

A total of 11 schools participated in the first stage of the program. A robot baby was ‘looked after’ by 280 students. The number of teenage pregnancies at the schools fell to zero, thus reducing the number of baby sons and daughters of teenagers in the city.



## The territory as the basis of the economy and employment

**Amazonia is a territory that has traditionally been inhabited in widely scattered areas by indigenous groups of varying ethnicities. It is an active source for the production and supply of foodstuffs, for consumption both by the indigenous populations, particularly in rural areas, and by nearby cities.**

The particular isolated nature of Amazonia has meant interesting and attractive entrepreneurial opportunities for inhabitants of other areas who, while initially ‘colonizing lands’, are also searching for ways to add added value to the rich raw materials and natural resources of the rainforest.

Property-related legislation in Amazonia favors those who own vast swathes of land, manage extensive forest territories and free up land by cutting down trees. However, this land clearing creates an imbalance in terms of the generation of new employment opportunities.

In Amazonia, the consolidation of cities is reflected in the type of employment that is available. Whether in mining, timber extraction or a variety of agro-industries, the jobs that are created are generally of low quality, and are still performed manually in harsh working conditions which tend to be unstable, temporary and with limited workers’ rights.

According to figures published by the ILO in 2016, there were 24.9 million people working in forced labor conditions, 64% of whom were being exploited in the private sector, in domestic, construction or farming work. One sixth of these were children.<sup>7</sup>

The outlook in Amazonia is worsening. High rates of inequality are being generated, with the indigenous communities tending to be the most affected. These communities are becoming more and more dependent on their women finding jobs as domestic workers, as the work available for the men is concentrated in temporary jobs with unstable wages in the mining or agricultural industries.

Nonetheless, during this time of city growth, growth can also be seen of the service sector GDP in Amazonia in general. In Colombia, for example, agricultural, cattle-raising and fishing activities represented 66% of regional GDP in 1990. This figure had fallen to just 10% in 2011, with a significant increase in the percentage of GDP generated by social, communal and personal services. This included a significant input from public and

<sup>7</sup> Source: Global estimates of modern slavery: Forced labor and forced marriage. Prepared jointly by the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the Walk Free Foundation, in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Geneva, 2017

<sup>8</sup> Source: Miesel A., Bonilla, L. and Sánchez A. Documentos de trabajo sobre Economía Regional. Geografía Económica de la Amazonia Colombiana. No. 193. Banco de la República, Centro de Estudios Regionales Económicos. Cartagena, 2013.





defense administrations as well as other sectors including construction, financial establishments, real estate activities, transport, storage and communications.<sup>8</sup>

The challenge generated by this greater dependency of the economy on the service sector is to have a better educated and higher skilled population. This, in turn, requires **improved educational and vocational training of the population** in different service-based areas to respond to the growing regional demand for work of this type.

*"For the government of Bolivia, Amazonia is past, present and, above all, future. Infrastructures help connect its cities, but the rights, particularly of the indigenous population, help to co-govern and nourish our vision of Mother Earth"*

**Hugo Siles**

Vice-Minister of Autonomy, Bolivia

## Value-added chain of the Brazil nut in Riberalta, Bolivia – a labor intensive green economy product



Riberalta is one of the most important cities in the world in the Brazil nut export industry. A total of 22 companies are based in the city center, offering work to more than 5,000 families during the harvest period and another 8.500 in the peeling and toasting processes and generating 75% of the income of the northern Amazonian region.

According to the Centre for Research and Promotion of Farmers (Spanish initials: CIPCA), the Brazil nut

productive chain generates up to 50% of the annual income of farmers and indigenous workers who participate in the different production stages: pickers, harvesters, storage owners, agents, drivers, manufacturers, salespeople and exporters. However, production of this commodity is endangered by the declining health of the woods and forests, deforestation and water scarcity. These factors have seen falls of up to 70% in production volumes in the areas where the nut commonly grows, forcing pickers and indigenous populations to move deeper into the forest as they search for new areas where the trees grow. In addition, a growing contraband activity sees this commodity being picked from Bolivian woods and taken to Peru or Brazil, causing serious harm to Bolivian producers.

Bolivia is the world's biggest Brazil nut exporter, producing more than 27,000 tons in 2016. According to the Chamber of Northern Exporters (Spanish initials: CADEXNOR), the country accounts for 80% of world production, with 99.9% of national production exported abroad. The challenge that such numbers generate for this industry is the increasing need for skilled and trained personnel.

The Brazil nut industry is based on the exploitation of a natural resource which is grown in a sustainable manner. While there is much room for improvement and high potential for further development in the region, the jobs it generates, though vulnerable for the present, are quintessentially green.

# The challenges posed by Amazonia

## Understanding the ecoregion and the Amazonian territory

The Greater Amazon Region comprises three overlapping territories with different focuses: the Amazonian river basin, the Amazonian jungle, and the politico-administrative Amazonia.

This enormous expanse of territory is interconnected principally by a series of waterways; rivers which enabled the exploration of Amazonia and which even today constitute the only means of access to some communities who live deep in its interior. The huge distances involved and the thick jungle covering have kept this territory in a condition of isolation from the inland areas of each corresponding country as well as from country to country. Hence, one of the major challenges that needs to be dealt with is **connectivity**.

Where there is a river, there is an important source of natural riches. The flora and fauna of the River Amazon area has been and continues to be the basis of the sustenance economy of practically all the Amazonian communities. The commercialization of fishing, timber, rubber, cocoa, the Brazil nut, etc., and now the petrol and mining industries, have generated commercialization

*“Amazonia has no limits, it belongs to all who dwell there and care for it”*

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**Isabel Guzmán Ríos de Vaca**

Councilor of Pando and President of ACOBOL

routes and key border hubs, as with the triple border between Colombia, Brazil and Peru. However, there are numerous other smaller hubs all along the River Amazon, which are not subject to any type of control and which are essentially free corridors for the contraband trafficking of animals, plants and other Amazonian produce, not to mention the drug trafficking which is spreading quickly concealed by the lush jungle vegetation.

So, another important challenge that needs to be faced is **border awareness and control of economic flow** in key areas, through the incorporation of export pathways as part of international corridors which cover the region and allow all who live in Amazonia a fair opportunity to participate.

The municipalities of the Amazonian region form part of the national political and regulatory system of each corresponding country, but their historical legacy often results in limited attention being paid to them by the State in national strategies, including education, internationalization, connectivity, risk management, etc. Consequently, city growth in the Amazon region has taken place in an uncontrolled and unplanned manner. Thanks to the open border problem of the Amazon region, new areas of colonization have thus been generated which also raise the challenge of how to protect the ethnocultural wealth of the region. These new areas of colonization constitute a population ring which is encroaching into areas of conservation and ecological niches. An encroachment which moreover is growing at an alarming rate due to the influence of the petrol industry and coca plant growers.

In this respect, the challenge that is posed is the strengthening and **development of city systems through urban vocations**, consolidating the spaces of urban occupation, protecting the areas of production and **safeguarding regional ecosystem connectivity**. This forms part of the major role at a worldwide scale of the sustainable development strategy of Amazonia, in its conversion from an extractive industry-based economy to a service-based one.

*“Resilience is also economy related”*



**Antonio José Rodríguez**  
Mayor of Cazorla, Spain

This new dynamic will see the generation of new urban jobs that require technological knowledge and understanding of the Amazonian region. This will lead to the development of new clusters of high added value in the region and foster the incorporation of universities and other types of higher education institutions.



Identifying the different types of urban profile, through hierarchical territorial classification, will also enable the identification of strategic hubs headed by intermediary cities as the driving force behind regional development. This will guarantee a **more sustainable use of the territory** by balancing use of the land between the urban, the productive and protected jungle.

A special mention should be made of twin cities or border cities. Such places have to deal with the strong migratory and contraband dynamics that are generated in their territories by proposing strategies for the **creation of gainful employment connected to the green economy**. This will also contribute in the eradication of poverty.

The Amazonian city systems will have to face the major challenges that our planet is generating. Becoming the global hub of the green economy will undoubtedly require taking advantage of the opportunities that such an important task represents.

## Santa Rosa Youth Project, Beni, Bolivia



The aim of the project is to improve the educational possibilities for the 15-29 age group who have not finished or have no access to technical-vocational training after their schooling has finished. The project came into being as a private initiative based on corporative social responsibility. Its aim is to train young people in social, cultural and

technical activities through dance, theatre and social entrepreneurship as strategies for the social reintegration and reincorporation of young people in the labor market.

*“Our cities, for its high groundwater level, are exposed to disasters, but also to budget overruns, as water management and waste management require particular solutions. Central governments should support us, to enable us to provide basic services and solutions that are considerate with our territories”*

**Daisy Heidinger**

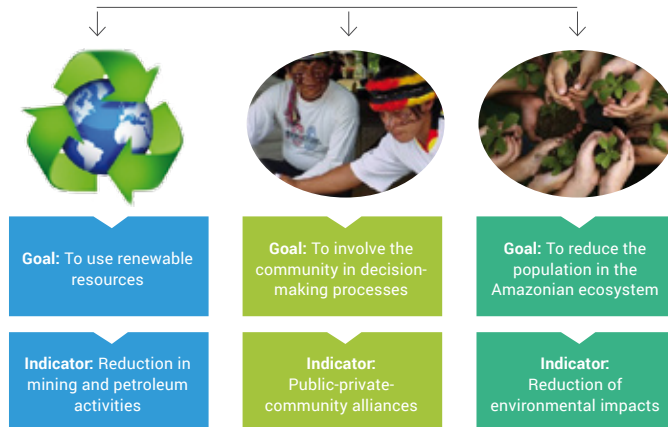
Mayor of Puerto Inca, Perú

## Closed mining season green bonds in Morona Santiago Province, Ecuador

Headed by the Prefecture of Morona Santiago province, the “Sapap-Entsa” (Care for Life) project aims to reduce or halt mining and petroleum activities in the territory through the issue of green bonds, one of the commitments of the Paris Agreement of 2016.

The project has been made possible thanks to a tripartite public-private-community alliance which is committed to halting the exploitation of non-renewable resources and reducing negative environmental impacts in the region. Everybody benefits from the compensatory nature and benefits of green bonds for Amazonian environmental services, redirecting the economy of the region towards ethno-eco-tourism and environmental-friendly mining by recovering and rescuing the ancestral know-how of local indigenous communities for the extraction of gold without the need to use any toxic elements.

### SAPAP-ENTSA initiative



*“Urban development must be guided by the city project we desire, by the right to the city that we would like to see”*

**Anita Carolina Rivas.** Mayor of Orellana, Ecuador

## Creating the management network of the Amazonian region

We are living in the era of cities. Around 70% of the world’s population live in cities, and about one third of them in what are known as intermediary cities as they connect urban areas with rural ones and, because of their size, offer a high quality of life. For this reason, they have become the new destination of country-to-city migration.

The problems of managing such a vast territory, the complexity of the Amazonian ecosystem, its tremendous cultural diversity, and its natural wealth as the basic economic resource of the population, mean that attaining integrated development in harmony with nature is a difficult challenge indeed. In such a context, the implementation of **cooperation between different levels of government** (local, regional, national and international) is required for the integration of development policies, strategic planning and key project proposals for the sustainable development of the Amazonian region.

The possibility of coordinating the work that is required through a network<sup>9</sup> is extremely beneficial for the region. Such a network fosters city-city and south-south cooperation so that, via the exchange of experiences and good practices, integrated development strategies are generated which are appropriate for the territory and the Amazonian way of life. Working in such a way makes it easier, in the different stages at international level, to understand the challenges and needs of the region. This, in turn, allows the promotion of economic resource management strategies which are closely tied to the protection of Amazonia. Such a network is based on cooperation and peer learning in accordance with the commitments made by world leaders to attain the SDGs of the UN.

**It is important to know international experiences related to the establishment of multi-level relationship networks, especially those of intermediary cities. Many lessons can be learnt from previous experiences for the correct operation of such networks, as in the case of the ex-Mayoress of Terrassa, Pere Navarro.**

<sup>9</sup> A study is recommended of the management experiences of the Amazonian Region of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, Amazonian Cities Forum, FLACMA.



## The Barcelona Metropolitan Arch city network. Terrassa, Spain

The heavy waves of migration in the direction of the city of Barcelona have generated a dynamic of highly accelerated metropolization in the territory. This is seen in the oil-stain growth of the central city, resulting in a series of conurbations along the Mediterranean coastline and an increase in the movement of, principally, the working classes to cities in the valleys beyond the Collserola mountain.

The seven cities of Terrassa, Sabadell, Mataró, Vilanova i la Geltrú, Granollers, Vilafranca del Penedés and Martorell together comprise a powerful demographic, economic, industrial and technological reality. With over 730,000 inhabitants, the equivalent of 15% of the metropolitan region, and a growth rate in the wage-earning population of 59.1% between 2001 and 2004, a new territorial role has been proposed for these cities which resulted in the 2005 Declaration of Vilafranca del Penedés and the creation of the Barcelona Metropolitan Arch city network.

The seven cities decided to collaborate as fundamental components in the construction of the metropolitan region, creating an important counterweight to the capital city of Barcelona in the effort to ensure territorial, economic and political equilibrium, and showing how cities working together as part of a network can generate substantial changes in regional dynamics.



## Diversified local economy and the generation of green employment

The great riches of the Amazonian region are reflected in the ages of economic boom which saw the establishment of some of the most important Amazonian cities and commercialization routes which were, in one way or another, the source of sustenance of the local population. From the rubber boom and the exportation of the Brazil nut to mining and oil exploitation, the products of Amazonia have determined the basis of the local economy, but the problem of gambling on an extractive economy based on non-renewable natural resources has led to periods of both boom and bust throughout the history of Amazonia.

The major challenge of the local Amazonian economy is to secure **diversification of the sustenance economy** of the inhabitants of the region to a service economy in harmony with the environment and the **creation of green jobs**

related to the integrated sustainable management of Amazonia. It is also crucial to remember that agriculture should be considered an essential part of this sustenance economy, as it is this industry which provides the food for the region. Sometimes, however, to avoid land-levelling, agriculture is sacrificed, and food is imported from other regions with all the costs that this entails.

*“Research is an opportunity for the promotion and attainment of greater recognition of the environmental services provided from Amazonia”*

**Carlos Ariel Salazar**

SINCHI Institute, Colombia

The management of a territory with an ecosystem of worldwide importance implies the challenge of protecting that territory, but at the same time guaranteeing the development of the region and the quality of life of

its inhabitants. For this purpose, it is essential **to rethink the modes of production, the supply of services and industrialization** from the perspectives of entrepreneurship, biotechnology and various specialist skills, taking into account the extensive variety of the natural riches and products of Amazonia which could be incorporated into the local economy.

Another challenge for the region is to ensure **access to technical training and gainful employment**. An economy based on the extraction of raw materials has led to the creation of a society accustomed to seasonal work, with long

workdays, low salaries and job insecurity. Only improved vocational, university and research training and education will allow an acceleration of industrialization processes and the better provision of services in Amazonia.

## Promotion and reinforcement of local production in Peruvian Amazonia

The municipalities of Peruvian Amazonia, through the establishment of agrarian cooperatives, are working towards social empowerment and improving the technical skills and know-how of more than 510 collaborating partners who grow, produce, market and export different products from the Amazonian region.



The results of these initiatives are made known through the Expo Amazonia platform, a space for the promotion of local produce from the region at the highest level, integrating the factor of competitiveness associated with the territory as a guarantee of quality.

Expo Amazonia moves from place to place, creating opportunities for improved infrastructure, services and skills in the city where it is being held. It consists of technical talks, exhibitions, gastronomic festivals, cultural presentations, and business and tourism roundtables to promote the whole of Peruvian Amazonia.

Expo Amazonia 2017 generated an economic turnover of over 71 million Peruvian soles, with 69,000 people attending the event which included more than 400 stands. Business agreements which amounted to more than 55 million soles were entered into, with the business roundtables contributing 5.6 million soles worth of deals and the tourism roundtables around 2 million soles.

# Shared Learning Outcomes

The peer learning spirit that prevailed in the Riberalta event facilitated a joint reflection on the reality of the Amazonian region. The results are summarized below:

## 1 What is our legacy?

An immense territory that requires protection, a biodiverse-rich territory of enormous environmental importance which offers us tremendous opportunities for development in the responsibility of its care.

By learning from the past, the goal is to combat the culture of colonization and recognize the value of the People-Customs-Nature triangle with a view to achieving harmonic development with Amazonia.

## 2 What do we want our project to be?

Recognition of nature as a subject of law throughout the Amazonian region.

The establishment of a network of multi-level governance which will enable integrated sustainable development policies.

An integrated Amazonia Region through an agreed-upon Territorial Ordinance Plan.

The sustainable exploitation of Amazonian resources.

## 3 Is it possible to combine poverty eradication strategies with environmental protection strategies?

Yes, by diversifying the economy from the perspectives of innovation, creativity and multi-sector strategic alliances, striving for the generation of new professions and services, and increasing the value of Amazonian products through the use of new technologies.

#### 4 How can the population participate in the goals of the economic model and contribute to making it sustainable?

By understanding their crucial role in achieving the transformation of the economic model, integrating the organizational skills of civil society with decision making through clear and specific declarations. Being an active counterparty will help the population to learn skills, undertake research and embark on business ventures to improve their living conditions.

#### 5 How can the transition process to a green economy be incorporated in a city project?

The planning and legislation associated with a city project must regulate the sustainable exploitation of the territory, provide incentives for a green economy, promote mainstream environmental education and use fiscal resources to strengthen the project.

#### 6 How can the economy in the city improve the transition to a green economy?

By strengthening production, companies and local industry. This will lead to the creation of jobs related to the Protected Designation of Origin (DOP)<sup>10</sup> green economy, combatting informality and working on quality.

#### 7 In the transition to a green economy, what aspects of city management may be affected?

The multi-level collaborative management model; as the challenge is faced of generating extensive coordination among all managerial units - institutional, territorial, environmental, educational, health, socio-economic, productive, etc. - which will also note an impact on the transformation of their skillset.

<sup>10</sup>. A Protected Designation of Origin is the name of a region or specific place used as a designation for an agricultural product or foodstuff which comes from that region. The product must meet the following requirements: it must come from that region; it must have qualities or properties which are significantly or exclusively determined by the geographical environment, including natural and human factors; its production, processing and preparation must take place entirely within the specific geographical area.

## Shared Learning Outcomes

- 8** What is the relationship between the so-called proximity and circular economies and the green economy?

These are economies which entail integration between cities and the surrounding territory; they generate relationships of proximity between producers and consumers; they save time, energy and the production of waste materials; they are socially and environmentally sustainable.
- 9** How do territorial cooperation networks impact on the transition processes towards a green economy?

The networks will be primarily influential in the construction of a common agenda which will integrate shared policies, projects and regulatory instruments. Technology will play a fundamental role in the challenge of integrated Internet-based distance communication.
- 10** Is the green economy a real developmental alternative in our territories?

Sustainable development must integrate clear policies, citizen participation and green technologies. In this way, a new generation will be created headed by the children and youth of today, but who will tomorrow be the managers of a protected territory thanks to innovation and creativity.
- 11** How can technology advance the benefits of the green economy in our territories?

The implementation of technological processes requires first and foremost connection of the Amazonian region to the Internet. This will accelerate and enhance the benefits of the implementation of a green economy in the region.

**12** What is the role of political leaders and citizens in carrying out a successful transition to sustainable economy/green economy models in our territories?

The political leaders must be able to oversee citizens in their execution and implementation of integrated policies, to articulate local with global policies, to transmit information directly to the citizens, and to ensure the rules and regulations are in place that will guarantee good political management.

**The citizens must empower themselves and participate in the construction and implementation of the city and territorial project, supporting decisions and raising awareness where necessary, promoting cultural exchanges to strengthen the Amazonian identity, and working for eradication of the subculture of poverty and discrimination.**



## **Roadmap**

### **Actions to be taken to enhance acquired know-how**

**The reflections on the challenges posed to us by the Amazonian region and the peer learning that took place led the delegates at the Riberalta event to propose a roadmap which would facilitate progress in the construction of this long-term vision of the sustainable and integrated development of Amazonia. The commitments undertaken by the local and regional governments and national associations of municipalities who attended the event are shown below, listed by country:**

#### **Brazil**

- To create and support a group of Amazonian cities and municipalities who will work on identifying the profile of Amazonian cities, on integrating different governmental levels which presently impact on the same areas, and on improving prefecture management and municipal autonomy.
- To work towards creating employment policies which meet the challenges of the economic boom and bust cycles of products such as gold, the Brazil nut, timber, etc.
- To work on legislation for the Amazonian territory which will transform the international market in favor of sustainable development.
- To work on fiscal questions from the perspective of associativism.

#### **Ecuador**

- To take advantage of the contacts that have been made and the knowledge acquired in the peer-learning sessions for the construction of a communication network whose goal is to socialize and empower citizens as they face the challenges and threats faced by the Amazonian region.
- To work towards the establishment of an Amazonian Council to manage the strategies that will be proposed with a view to achieving the implementation of a green economy and integrated sustainable development in the Amazonian region.
- To work towards the creation of jobs and new opportunities for young people in the territory to enter the job market.



- To work on territorial and legislative coordination of the urban and the rural, so that the rural is no longer considered ‘the other’ and discriminated against in terms of normalization and protection.

## **Colombia**

- To work on the struggle for the conservation of Amazonia, a land that belongs to all and yet to nobody in its entirety, by understanding the immensity of its territorial spread and that the resource found there are not inexhaustible. Preserving the possibility of reversing the extractive processes that have taken place must be reflected in a political will to manage the sustainable development of the region in its entirety.
- To work towards changing ways of living by promoting the joint responsibility of each individual in the construction of a new city culture.

## **Peru**

- To work towards improving the management practices of municipal governments who have been called upon to work for the benefit of the Amazonian region by implementing public policies, plans and projects which generate development, improve accessibility and attract committed investors to the region.
- To work on the institutionalization of citizen participation as part of the sustainable development management of the region.

## **Bolivia**

- To work towards understanding the role of Amazonia in the planetary ecosystem and its importance in the fight against climate change as the last natural paradise on earth.
- To work with FLACMA and the municipal governments so that their efforts are translated into specific public policies and so that the exchange of know-how and experiences can enrich knowledge about the region.
- To work on a gender approach, considering women as the executive managers of the development of the region.
- To work for the Riberalta Declaration to be considered a platform for the proposal of integrated actions in the region, in accordance with the concept of sustainable development. In addition, based on the conclusions and commitments accepted, the Riberalta Declaration should be considered the basis for a future meeting to demonstrate and discuss the results of a joint management concept that was conceived in Riberalta.

## **Global**

The ILO reaffirms its commitment to the region and will offer its support to the network of cities that will be created as a result of this meeting in the coordination of projects of south-south cooperation, in particular those related to the fostering of green employment and gainful employment, the promotion of communal environmental services and of many of the other initiatives that will be set in motion as a consequence of this event.



*“If one part of Amazonia is affected,  
we will all be grieving”*

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**Omar Nuñez Vela**  
Mayor of Riberalta, Bolivia

