



## **Latin America: Offering Real, Sustainable Solutions for Critical Environmental Issues**

***The Latin America Conservation Council (LACC) celebrates results from three years of work  
on Water Security, Sustainable Food Security and Smart Infrastructure***

**Cali, Colombia. November 10, 2014** — Sharing a common vision to solve Latin America’s most pressing environmental challenges through science-based tools and broad-based public-private participation, the Latin America Conservation Council held (LACC) its 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in Cali, 6-8 November. Water Security, Food Security and Smart Infrastructure are the critical environmental issues the group is working on, proposing innovative solutions, together with The Nature Conservancy, for development that benefits both people and nature.

**According to Henry M. Paulson, Jr. – LACC Founder and Co-Chair:**

“The commitment of Council members, and the ideas and resources they bring to bear, are delivering tangible results for conservation and sustainability across Latin America. Members are helping farmers and ranchers boost food production with no new habitat loss, helping cities protect watersheds by investing in nature, and building our capacity to design infrastructure projects with fewer impacts on natural ecosystems. These are just a few examples of the caliber of work promoted by the Council. Partnering with The Nature Conservancy enables us to match these resources with world-class science to come up with solutions that we can share and scale in 2015 and beyond.”

**According to Luis Alberto Moreno – LACC Member & President, Inter-America Development Bank:**

“Perhaps the most significant accomplishments of the LACC are the bridges we are building between public and private sector leaders, financial institutions, NGOs and communities across Latin America; that’s the smartest kind of infrastructure we can build. We are identifying and testing solutions for policymakers to consider investing in. If governments can create incentives to promote sustainable agriculture and ranching, for instance, Latin America is poised to become a breadbasket for the world’s growing population. Smarter systems for regulating development projects can attract more and better types of investment. The Council has ambitious goals, but Latin America has every right to be ambitious in building a sustainable future.”

**According to Roberto Hernandez Ramírez – LACC Co-Chair & Honorary Chairman, Banco Nacional de México:**

“We are seeing a shift in values in Latin America and abroad, due to common challenges like water shortages, a lack of food security, and insufficient infrastructure. These all threaten continued economic growth and the well-being of our people. We have a great opportunity with the LACC to build a legacy for our children and grandchildren if we work together with governments, corporations, communities, environmentalists and others to use science and make nature a full partner in the development of Latin America.”

**According to Mark Tercek – President & CEO, The Nature Conservancy:**

“As the world’s leading environmental organization, The Nature Conservancy is very proud to work with the LACC. Business and government leaders are rethinking their priorities over common challenges like climate change, water scarcity and soil degradation. In this context, development and conservation become two sides of the same coin, forcing us to balance the opportunities and risks of economic growth and development. The

Council’s influence has contributed to this transformation, and we can see this transformation taking hold in Latin America as a model for others to follow. That is very exciting.”

As Latin America grows, nature becomes the most valuable asset to guarantee a long-lasting prosperity for its people, particularly in the areas of Water Security, Food Security and Smart Infrastructure.

#### **Water Security:**

The LACC calls for ***using nature to secure clean water for 25 of the most at-risk cities in Latin America***. LACC organizations —such as FEMSA, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Coca-Cola, AmBev, Odebrecht, and others — are supporting and creating Water Funds, investing in watershed protection upstream for more reliable water quantity and quality for cities and businesses downstream, including Medellín, Guatemala, Monterrey, Santiago, and Sao Paulo. A new study identifies the 25 largest cities in the region with the highest potential return on investment for protecting upstream watersheds. And large water users are forming a new coalition to increase their water use efficiencies, offsetting use by committing an initial \$10.9 M for conservation actions in eight countries in 2015. An expert in water funds, The Nature Conservancy and the Latin America Water Funds Partnership have catalyzed \$78M to conserve almost 230,000 hectares and over 7 million cubic meters of water across the region, benefitting up to 50 M people.

#### **Food Security:**

Agriculture and livestock are important drivers of deforestation in Latin American countries, and food production is increasing with population growth in the region and the world. The LACC believes that Latin America is poised to become a global breadbasket of sustainable harvests and calls for using changing current practices so as to ***double food production with no new habitat loss***. LACC organizations —such as Banamex, Bimbo, Bunge, Cargill, Dow, IBM, Grupo Lala, and the Santo Domingo Foundation — are supporting TNC and partners to map “Go” and “No Go” areas that balance intensified production and conservation to reach our ambitious goal. A science-based approach to production and land-use monitoring is helping producers, traders, buyers, and public agencies to sustainably produce and responsibly supply cattle and soy in countries like Brazil, Colombia and Mexico, while protecting invaluable forests and natural systems in the Amazon and the Mayan Forest of Mexico. Over 40 million hectares of land could be protected if both small and big producers take part in protecting the region’s forests while providing the world with sustainable food.

#### **Smart Infrastructure:**

Latin American countries would have to invest the equivalent of 5% of regional GDP in infrastructure over the coming years to meet the demand of growing economies and populations. The scale of this challenge will bring significant social and environmental risks, affecting massive tracts of largely undeveloped landscapes. In response, the LACC calls for ***designing Latin America’s major energy, mining and transportation to have no net impact on natural capital***. LACC organizations —such as CAF, Caterpillar, IDB, Odebrecht, and the Paulson Institute— are working with TNC and other partners to develop scientific and financial tools to strengthen the capacity of the planning, implementation and compensation systems involved. From the Magdalena Basin in Colombia to the Tapajós in Brazil, governments, companies and communities are accessing technical assistance that promotes a common, science-based approach to balancing the needs of people and nature in the short and long term. For example, in an unprecedented collaboration with Mexico’s Federal Electricity Commission (CFE) in 2014, TNC and partners helped to develop a hydropower plan for the Coatzacoalcos Basin that will produce sufficient energy while preserving large tracts of intact river ecosystems.



Since the founding of the Council in September of 2011, the LACC has worked with TNC to take on Latin America's biggest challenges by developing and promoting sustainable solutions and frameworks against the region's most pressing environmental challenges. Through their business savvy and political acumen, the council's 35 members uphold conservation actions throughout the region with the support of The Nature Conservancy. Previous annual meetings were held in Mexico, Brazil and Colombia.

To learn more about the LACC, visit: <http://www.nature.org/LACC>

---

---

#### **About The Nature Conservancy (TNC)**

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is an organization that is a global leader in the conservation of biodiversity whose mission is to preserve the plants, animals, and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the land and waters they need to survive. Currently the TNC and its more than one million members have managed to protect more than 50 million acres in Latin America, Asia, the Caribbean, and the Pacific. Visit us online at [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org)

**Contacts for the Press:** [prensa@tnc.org](mailto:prensa@tnc.org)

#### **Nadia Peimbert**

Tel. (55) 5661-1153 x 30119

Fax. (55) 5661-2157

[npeimbert@tnc.org](mailto:npeimbert@tnc.org)

#### **Geraldine Henrich-Koenis**

Tel. (1) 703-841-3939

Fax (1) 703-841-1283

[ghenrich-koenis@tnc.org](mailto:ghenrich-koenis@tnc.org)

###

<http://nature.org>

Facebook: [thenatureconservancy](https://www.facebook.com/thenatureconservancy)

Twitter: [@nature\\_org](https://twitter.com/nature_org)

[prensa@tnc.org](mailto:prensa@tnc.org)