

## THE VIEW OF ROSALÍA ARTEAGA

Secretary-General of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization ACTO

# BioTrade will drive sustainability

The Amazon: a mythical, beautiful place, but also a place of woe. The world's attention is increasingly fixed on this ecosystem; not only as the biggest forest reserve of the tropical humid belt, but sadly because of the constant barrage of challenges and dangers it faces as it strives to maintain its own and the world's sustainability.

Endowed with more than twelve per cent of the Earth's freshwater reserves, the Amazon is home to the greatest and most extraordinary biodiversity, acting as one of the most important global climate regulators. Yet, this awe-inspiring forest is so seriously threatened by illegal activities, commercial ambition and greed, that its rich and vulnerable territories are now in peril.

The Amazon is shared by eight countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Suriname, Peru and Venezuela, all of which are members of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO). This region shelters extraordinary biodiversity, and has been a source of knowledge, medicine and a means of survival for mankind through the ages. This has sparked the

interest of the Amazon countries to use this resource sustainably as a step towards regional sustainable development. Discovering and harnessing the Amazon's riches is no easy task. Classical approaches need to be challenged as traditional indigenous knowledge is combined with modern science and technology to discover the full potential of the Amazon's wealth. Giving local populations access to their biological and genetic resources is something that ACTO considers imperative for sustainable development and the realisation of the equitable sharing of benefits generated from the use and commercialisation of biodiversity.

**PRIORITY** The creation of a regional BioTrade strategy will drive sustainability in the Amazon, giving it the chance to provide some extraordinary services world-wide. But

the first priority is to improve living standards for its inhabitants, decisively fighting poverty and promoting sustainable and integral development in countries holding sovereign rights over this region.

The BioTrade Regional Amazon Programme, conducted by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the ACTO-Permanent Secretariat, is expected to tackle difficulties encountered in promoting the sustainable use of biodiversity at regional level, which cannot be properly dealt with through isolated initiatives. Within this context, the ACTO-Permanent Secretariat, as promoter of regional political dialogue, commits itself to bringing harmonisation to policies related to the facilitation and promotion of BioTrade. Furthermore, the Permanent Secretariat is convinced that BioTrade



## Giving local populations access to their biological and genetic resources is something that ACTO considers imperative for sustainable development.

could be one of the ways towards achieving development in the Amazon Basin. It has committed itself to enable an effective participation of Member States in international negotiations for the adoption of common positions, such as intellectual property rights and bio-piracy issues. This ensures the sovereignty of Amazon countries and is primarily related to the management and use of their natural resources.

**CONNECTION** This book promotes this concept by linking relevant actors in BioTrade, showcasing the Amazon's ecological and social diversity. By making that all-important connection between sustainable use and responsible trade practices, it promotes the conservation of this amazing biological, cultural and ethnic diversity. I am convinced that this book will be a useful tool to guide the present generation to discover and understand the value of the Amazon's riches in calling the reader's attention to the urgent need for its conservation, management and sustainable use. The Amazon is not only an aesthetic source of inspiration, but a treasure-trove of potential for human development.

## Better market access under fairer conditions

**Regional Amazon Programme ACTO-DGIS-GTZ**  
The regional programme "Conservation and Sustainable Use of Forests and Biodiversity in the Amazon Region" acts within a tripartite cooperation between the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), the Netherlands Directorate General for International Cooperation (DGIS) and the German Development Cooperation (BMZ and GTZ). The programme's objective is the institutional strengthening of ACTO in order to facilitate the formulation and implementation of regional policies for sustainable use of natural resources in the Amazon region.

**Approach**  
The programme works within the scope of ACTO's Strategic Plan 2004 – 2012 agreed upon at the Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of ACTO member states in September 2004 in Manaus. Within this innovative programme for bilateral cooperation, Germany and the Netherlands join efforts for a mid-term regional initiative, that will strengthen ACTO's position as an important actor for sustainable use of natural resources in the Amazon. The thematic approach focuses on conservation and sustainable management of natural resources in the Amazon, regional integration and competitiveness, knowledge management and exchange of technology, as well as the institutional development of ACTO itself and related regional organisations. These aspects are managed at international, regional, national and local level. International agreements provide ACTO's political framework, aiming at a proactive participation in international negotiations. At regional and national level the aim is to enhance coherence of member states' national policies and, at local level, to gain experiences with strategies and specific activities,



whose results should improve the regional and global political dialogue.

**CBD**  
The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is one of the international agreements that has been ratified by the Amazon countries. Although the Convention reflects the world's interest in conservation and valorization of the planet's biodiversity, in practice the convention has not yet been implemented systematically. One of the projects to be implemented within the framework of the regional programme supports precisely the implementation of the CBD, in issues related to fair benefit sharing among actors of a value chain. The challenge lies in the fact that a consensus on rules and procedures does not yet exist within the countries of the region for sharing benefit coming from the sustainable use of biodiversity in the Amazon basin. Brazil is one of the few countries that have a temporary regulation for equal sharing of benefit among producers of raw materials within the value chain. Through intraregional trade promotion and enhancement of the value chain of Amazonian biodiversity products, the sustainable use of biodiversity and the dissemination of existing benefit sharing models in the Amazon countries are strengthened.

One of the projects of the regional programme seeks to achieve a better market access under fairer conditions, jointly planned with different enterprises and communities in the region. This will be achieved through a better relationship between enterprises and communities, suitable models for benefit sharing, exhibition of sustainable Amazonian products at various international fairs and through a mid-term appropriate regulatory legal framework for the implementation of benefit-sharing models within the value chain..

### SUSTAINABLE FORESTMANAGEMENT

As another example of disseminating good practices and formulating coherent policies, the Regional Amazon Programme supports an initiative of the Amazon Forest Service Foundation (SFA) in Ecuador. It supports the sustainable management of natural forests within a large indigenous Shuar territory, and aims at optimizing the timber value chain. In order to achieve this goal, the initiative is mainly based on the development of technical capacities for legal timber production, as well as on measures to support the commercialisation of forest products, linking producers with the domestic market. The implementation of this model leads to an enhancement of the value chain of legal timber. It also provides input for discussions on forest law enforcement and implementation of forest control in the Amazon region.

Source: Regional Amazon Programme ACTO-DGIS-GTZ