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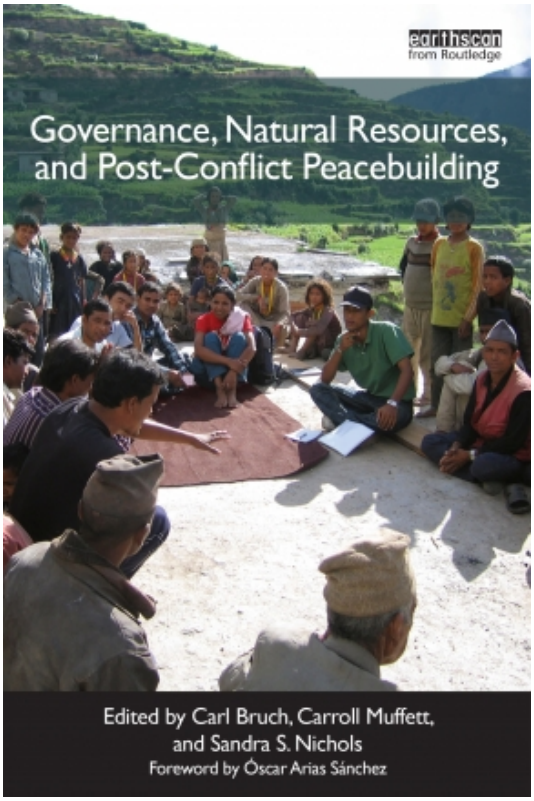

Environmental Governance and Peacebuilding in Post-Conflict Central America: Lessons from the Central American Commission for Environment and Development

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Environmental governance and peacebuilding in post-conflict Central America: Lessons from the Central American Commission for Environment and Development

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Apart from its human resources, natural resources are Central America's most valuable asset. The Central American territory is home to approximately 20,000 species of flora, 14 percent of which are unique to the region (Hernández 2002). Natural resources support both local livelihoods and regional exports. In countries whose economies are driven largely by commodity exports, environmental degradation—including the erosion of croplands and the depletion of water supplies, forests, and grasslands—undermines economic growth, and may even bring it to a halt. Thus, the loss of environmental security means the loss of livelihoods and sustenance—and may ultimately lead to civil unrest and political instability. Today, leaders throughout the world recognize the critical importance of environmental security; what is perhaps less well known is the crucial role that Central American states have played in collectively affirming that importance.

In the late 1980s, the Contadora Group—a coalition of Central American and Latin American countries concerned about the civil wars in the region—collaborated to bring peace to the tumultuous landscape.[1] In addition to supporting

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[1] Such collaboration was not new to Central America: after achieving independence from Mexico, in July 1823, the Central American states—which were then provinces—formed the United Provinces of Central America. However, provincial rivalries spurred two civil wars and ended the federation in 1842 (Foster 2007).

peace agreements, the Contadora Group was unique, at the time, in identifying improved environmental governance as a regional objective. In December 1989, the members of the Contadora Group created the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (Comisión Centroamericana de Ambiente y Desarrollo, or CCAD), a regional institution designed to advance unified environmental objectives in Central America. CCAD is a regional cooperative mechanism whose goal is to ensure optimal use of natural resources, pollution control, and the restoration of ecological equilibrium. It coordinates policies, programs, and environmental legislation and works toward economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

CCAD emerged at a time when it was likely to be overlooked. Central American governments were focused on liberalizing and restoring their economies and on building legitimate political institutions, which they did in partnership with international organizations such as the Inter-American Development Bank, the Organization of American States, the United Nations, and the World Bank. Nevertheless, CCAD held firmly to its mission, pressing forward with environmental governance initiatives. Since its inception, CCAD has successfully coordinated a range of actors to develop a vibrant and sustainable regional plan for environmental governance in Central America. To this end, CCAD has worked with Central American states, international agencies and nongovernmental organizations, bilateral and private donors, and domestic civil society groups.

This chapter provides an overview of CCAD's role in strengthening environmental governance in Central America. It is divided into five major sections: (1) a historical review of the relationships between conflict, environmental security, and peace in Central America; (2) a description of the creation and structure of CCAD; (3) a consideration of CCAD's role and achievements in environmental governance; (4) a reflection on the future of environmental governance in Central America; and (5) a brief conclusion.

CONFLICT, ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY, AND PEACE

Central American states have had a long history of internal conflict.[2] The civil wars in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua were driven primarily by economic inequality and the lack of legitimate political recourse, but in many cases natural resource and environmental security dimensions underpinned the economic and political dynamics. This section traces the role of natural resources in Central American conflicts, and the emergence of natural resources as a crucial element in the consolidation of peace in the region.

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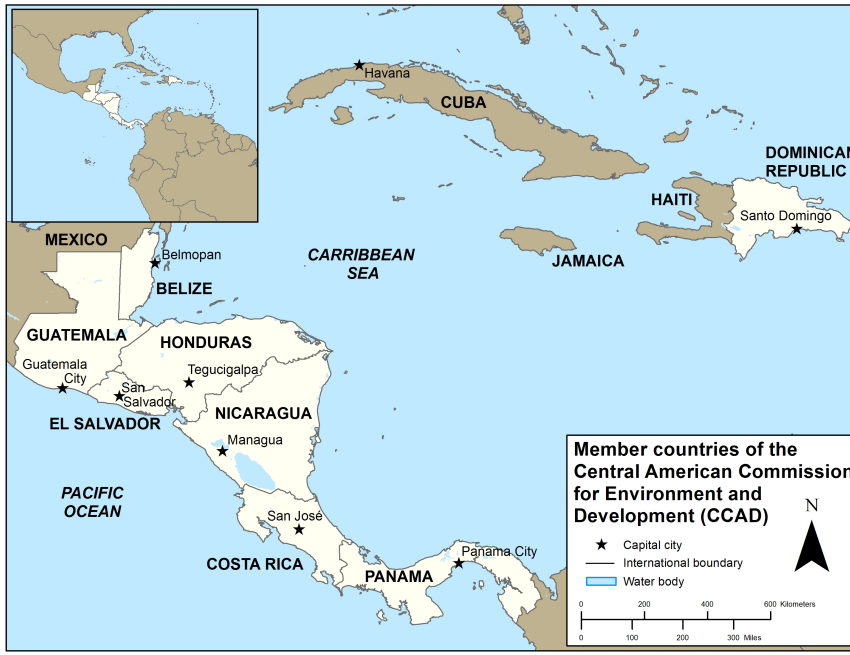
[2] Central America consists of the following countries: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama.



Dependence on natural resources

Central America relies on natural resources to meet its population's needs for food, water, and energy, as well as to support the region's economy. Given Central America's reliance on natural resources, environmental deterioration presents a real threat to regional security.

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, Central America was controlled by coffee and banana barons. The advent of liberal economic regimes that advocated economic modernization and capitalist reforms gave rise to so-called "banana republics," whose power structures were dominated by local and foreign elites. To further modernize their economies and to develop the necessary infrastructure for the export of coffee and bananas, Central American countries needed to attract foreign investment, which they often accomplished by selling productive land. Consequently, by 1911, U.S. and Canadian companies owned roughly 80 percent of the banana plantations in Central America; and between 1897 and 1914, U.S. investment capital increased from US$11.5 million to US$76.9 million. With the completion of the Panama Canal, in 1914, Central America became even more critical to U.S. economic interests, and U.S. influence increased correspondingly (Foster 2007).

After World War II, loans from the United States and new foreign capital propelled neoliberal reforms—specifically, market deregulation—as well as shifts

in agricultural practices, including the extensive use of pesticides and fertilizers (Foster 2007). As a result, the region rapidly diversified its agricultural exports and became home to widespread agro-industrial activity (ICCARD 1989).

By the late 1970s, Central America was the third-largest supplier of cotton in the world (Williams 1986); and by 1981, coffee, bananas, beef, cotton, and sugar made up 82 to 85 percent of all exports (Siddiqui 1998). But the same policies that had increased the diversity of exports and brought agro-industrialism to Central America also led to deteriorating labor conditions and increased pressure on natural resources: clear-cutting of land for agricultural development resulted in massive deforestation, and the development of aquaculture along the coasts led to the removal of mangrove forests (Boyer and Pell 1999). Between 1950 and 1987, half of Central America's moist and dry forests were cleared, leaving only approximately 200,000 square kilometers (Myers and Tucker 1987). In El Salvador and Guatemala, government-sponsored deforestation accelerated desertification and led to the massive displacement of local populations. Agricultural demands for water also placed enormous pressure on hydropower, which is a significant source of energy in Central America.

Conflict over land distribution

Inequality, with respect to both landownership and general economic welfare, is deeply rooted in Central American history. Since the early twentieth century, the most productive natural resources in Central America, including land, have been controlled either by domestic elites or foreign (particularly U.S.) corporations. Over the decades, as land became more profitable, large landowners physically dispossessed small farmers (Siddiqui 1998): by the early 1960s, roughly 86 percent of farmers owned little or no land. Moreover, because agricultural lands were primarily devoted to export crops,[3] as farmers lost land, they also lost the ability to feed themselves and their families, since few could afford the cost of imported food and other goods (Foster 2007).

Dispossessed farmers migrated to the hillsides, to frontier lands, and to urban centers. Migration to the hillsides and to frontier lands drove deforestation, as farmers cleared the land for agricultural use. And because the new migrants lacked knowledge of local conditions, they were unable to engage in sustainable management—a factor that intensified environmental degradation (Shriar 2011). Finally, increased agricultural activity led to greater use of fertilizers, pesticides, and other chemicals; as these substances contaminated water and soil, even more land became unusable.

By the 1980s, half of all Central Americans lived in urban centers, but these areas lacked the capacity and infrastructure to handle the population inflow.

[3] In Nicaragua, for example, during the 1960s, only 11 percent of harvested crops were purchased within the country (Foster 2007).

Moreover, because urban job creation lagged behind economic growth, many of those who migrated to urban areas remained unemployed. Forced to live without running water or electricity (Foster 2007), these populations depended on adjacent forests for food and firewood; as a consequence, forests were cleared, and barren lands encroached on urban centers (Siddiqui 1998).

In Central America, disputes over access to land—typically between powerful landed interests and a dispossessed peasantry—have often led to violence; the overall scarcity of arable land has also led to conflict (Maguire and Brown 1986). In 1969, the conflict between El Salvador and Honduras (known as the Soccer War)[4] dramatically highlighted the link between environmental degradation and conflict. In El Salvador, militarization had led to lawlessness, uncontrolled deforestation, and impoverishment; the resulting migration of Salvadorans into Honduras caused tensions that ultimately led to war. Eventually, unequal land distribution and the scarcity of arable land sparked civil wars in El Salvador (1980–1992), Guatemala (1960–1996), and Nicaragua (1974–1990), leading to the deaths of more than 300,000 Central Americans (Maguire and Brown 1986).

Population displacement and natural resources

As a result of the conflicts in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua, over 2 million people fled to Belize, Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama, and the United States (Foster 2007), and hundreds of thousands more were internally displaced (Williams 1986).[5] Although Costa Rica and Honduras were not engaged in civil war, both countries were affected by the regional instability. Honduras suffered from political fragility, which was intensified by the U.S. military presence; and in Costa Rica, investor uncertainty—aggravated by the violence in neighboring countries—led to an economic recession (Foster 2007).

As a consequence of its civil war, El Salvador suffered US$30 million in damage to its infrastructure and roughly US$90 million in economic losses. A half-million Salvadorans sought refuge in other countries; of the additional half-million who were internally displaced, many fled to urban areas where basic services were inadequate. In 1982, for example, in the capital city of San Salvador, approximately 70 percent of households lacked drinking water, 78 percent lacked sanitary services, and 34 percent lacked electricity (Sollis 1992). Moreover, preoccupied by internal strife, the government largely ignored unsustainable agricultural practices in the Lempa River watershed, where increased sedimentation from agricultural water use slowed the flow of the river and decreased the availability of hydroelectric power from the two hydroelectric dams on the river (Murray 1997).

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[4] The conflict was called the Soccer War because fighting began after the two countries had engaged in three contentious soccer matches to qualify for the World Cup.

[5] An estimated 650,000 to 1.5 million Central Americans were internally displaced in the late 1980s (USCR 1989).

In Guatemala, civil war and poverty caused further environmental damage, particularly in the Petén Basin, which contains the largest remaining forest habitat in Central America. During the civil war, hundreds of thousands of people migrated to the basin, in search of land and jobs (Beletsky 1999). But as forests were cleared for timber or for agriculture, the Petén habitat suffered degradation.

The Contadora Group

As it became clear that existing development models were not only failing to improve living standards, but were also devastating the environment, some of the leaders in Central America and elsewhere in Latin America realized that the definition of security needed to be expanded to include environmental, as well as political, economic, and humanitarian concerns (Arias and Nations 1992). In September 1983, in an attempt to find a peaceful solution to Central America's problems, representatives from Colombia, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela met on the Panamanian island of Contadora (Romero 1998), where they formed the Contadora Group and drew up the Act for Peace and Cooperation in Central America (Muñoz and Tulchin 1996). The act called for commitments to promote peace, democracy, regional security, and economic cooperation in Central America (Costello 1997).[6] The work of the Contadora Group became the basis for a wider coalition, known as the Contadora Support Group, that included Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and Uruguay, in addition to the members of the Contadora Group (EC 2002).

The Arias Plan

The efforts of the Contadora Group established the foundation for the Esquipulas peace process—also known as the Arias Plan—and for the eventual cessation, in the 1990s, of the conflicts in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. The Arias Plan, initiated and negotiated in 1986 by Óscar Arias Sánchez, the president of Costa Rica, called for regional security and the reduction of local conflict (Romero 1998).

Arias had been elected earlier in 1986. Through determination and diplomacy—and with the support of the United Nations Security Council, the United

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[6] Despite broad international support, the work of the Contadora Group was ultimately undermined by the United States, which opposed the group's backing of the Nicaraguan Contras. (The Contras were rebel groups who were opposed to the Sandinista National Liberation Front [Woodward 1999], a socialist party that had overthrown the dictator Anastasio Somoza in 1979.) Although the Reagan administration initially supported the Contras (Hayward 2009), out of the belief that they had the capacity to remove the Sandinistas from power (Weinberg 1991), in l985, after years of congressional disapproval of Reagan's agenda in Central America, the U.S. Congress cut off all aid to the Contras (Arnson 1993).

Nations General Assembly, and other international and regional organizations—he was able to persuade the governments of Central America to agree to ceasefires; engage in dialogue with opposition movements; prohibit territory from being used as a base for violent conflict; and cease and prohibit aid to irregular forces (Muñoz and Tulchin 1996). In August 1987, the process initiated by Arias culminated in the signing of the Esquipulas II Accord, in which the presidents of five Central American nations agreed to free elections and democratization. As described by Thomas E. Skidmore and Peter H. Smith, the agreement was "a Central American solution to a Central American problem" (Skidmore and Smith 2005, 332).[7]

The environmental movement in Central America

In 1987, in Managua, Nicaragua, before the Esquipulas II Accord had been signed, a number of newly created Central American NGOs held the First Central American Conference on Environmental Action. One result of the conference was the creation of the Regional Network of Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations for Sustainable Development in Central America (Red Regional de Organizaciones Ambientales No Gubernamentales para el Desarrollo Sostenido de Centroamérica) (Weinberg 1991).

While the regional peace process was under way, the Central American environmental movement was gaining strength: by the end of the 1980s, the movement had begun to consolidate, and to develop strong links among like-minded organizations both within and outside the region. For example, environmental advocates formed alliances (and engaged in campaigns) with those who were struggling for redress of long-standing grievances in the realms of human rights and labor practices. By the early 1990s, there was growing consensus among Central American governments that peace and stability in Central America depended on the development of environmental policies and institutional frameworks that would directly address historical conflicts over how natural resources should be used (Arias and Nations 1992).

THE CREATION AND STRUCTURE OF CCAD

Central America's civil wars had ended by late 1996, but many obstacles to stability remained. Population displacement was widespread throughout the region,

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[7] Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua signed the Esquipulas II Accord. Although Panama was instrumental in developing the agreement, it did not become a signatory until 1991 (when Belize signed as well). Despite having signed the agreement, Guatemala continued to be subject to internal conflict; it was not until December 4, 1996, that the Guatemalan government and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca) party signed the Guatemala Peace Treaty, ending the last civil war in the region.

national economies were in shambles, and an already degraded environment faced increasing threats from overuse. Finally, although the governments were demilitarizing, the persistence of social inequality continued to threaten public order (Foster 2007).

After the adoption of the Esquipulas II Accord, the signatories met regularly to track progress and address implementation issues. There was growing recognition of three factors:

- The deep interdependence of the countries in the region.
- The need to create regional bodies capable of collaboratively restoring the region's environment.
- The link between environmental security and lasting peace.

In addition, the signatories and others realized that the development model in which landowning elites were free to exploit natural resources was no longer sustainable (Arias and Nations 1992).

In February 1989, the presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua attended a presidential summit in San Isidro de Coronado, Costa Rica, where the framework for the Articles of Agreement of the CCAD was outlined (Page and Schwarz 1996). By December 1989, the same five countries had signed the agreement, creating CCAD.[8] The goals of the convention were to promote biodiversity, pollution control, and the sustainable use of natural resources by strengthening regional coordination of environmental policies, programs, and legislation; and CCAD was the mechanism established to achieve those goals (Hernández 2002).

CCAD consists of the Council of Ministers, the president pro tempore, the executive secretariat, and various technical committees. The Council of Ministers, the highest authority in the organization, is made up of representatives from the environmental and natural resource authorities of the member states. The council defines general policy and develops the organization's strategic plans, including the Environmental Plan for the Central American Region (Plan Ambiental de la Región Centroamericana, or PARCA). The post of president pro tempore rotates every six months among member countries. The president's role is to represent the commission, call meetings, and delegate tasks to the executive secretariat (Hernández 2002).

The executive secretariat is made up of eighteen officials, and additional outside consultants (CCAD n.d.). Its functions are (1) to carry out the decisions of the Council of Ministers; (2) to plan, manage, and monitor regional projects and the general activity of the commission; and (3) to foster international

[8] Convenio Constitutivo de la Comisión Centroamericana de Ambiente y Desarrollo, 1989. www.csj.gob.sv/AMBIENTE/LEYES/ACUERDOS/CONVENIOS/CONVENIO_CONSTITUTIVO_COMISION_CENTROAMERICANA_AMBI.pdf.

cooperation. Overall, the actions of the executive secretariat are guided by PARCA (Hernández 2002).

Finally, technical committees (roughly fourteen in total, depending upon need) advise the president and the Council of Ministers on specific environmental issues. The committees also seek to implement and enforce multilateral environmental agreements. Each technical committee includes representatives from all member states (UNEP 2006).

As of this writing, the technical committees were focused on the following issues: the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, protected areas, biodiversity, forests, climate change, hazardous waste, environmental impact assessment, gender, environmental management, environmental law, desertification and drought, the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, environmental information systems, and wetlands (CCAD n.d.).

PAVING THE WAY: THE ROLE OF CCAD IN ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE AND PEACEBUILDING

CCAD has been instrumental in the development of regional strategies to promote environmentally sustainable development in Central America. Since the 1990s, CCAD's regional programs have focused on three major themes: (1) the sustainable use of natural resources; (2) pollution prevention and control; and (3) strengthening the commission, as an institution, through the work of the member states. CCAD has provided a forum for representatives of governments, NGOs, civil society, and international institutions to exchange information and discuss the coordination of environmental policies. CCAD is also directly involved in planning for regional development, and for addressing the environmental issues raised by such development (UNEP 1997).

This section of the chapter examines the role of CCAD in four areas: (1) supporting the ratification and implementation of multilateral environmental agreements, (2) coordinating regional environmental action, (3) strengthening civil society, and (4) catalyzing financial support.[9]

Supporting the ratification and implementation of multilateral environmental agreements

To prepare for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), CCAD coordinated the development of the Central American Agenda for Environment and Development, which was presented at the conference. The region's unified approach to UNCED strengthened CCAD's

[9] Although CCAD has positioned itself to effectively manage and direct regional approaches to environmental security, it is important to note that outside economic influences, which will be discussed later in the chapter, may create a potential obstacle to its efforts.

credibility, both within Central America and internationally, paving the way for CCAD to play a critical role in the establishment and implementation of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).

Since UNCED, CCAD has successfully promoted the signing and ratification of twenty-two international agreements and eight regional conventions (see table 1 and table 2); each of the regional conventions reinforces the region's commitment to the international agreements. Once the agreements have been ratified, CCAD is responsible for directing and administering the implementation of the conventions to achieve their specified objectives. CCAD technical committees also meet periodically to ensure compliance with both international agreements and regional conventions.

In addition to participating in regional dialogues about MEAs, CCAD drafts model legislation and promotes the adoption of domestic legislation to support environmental protection and MEA compliance (UNEP 2006). Ties established through CCAD-related dialogue played a critical role in the creation of the Central American Integration System (Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana, or

Table 1. International agreements signed by a majority of CCAD member states

International agreement	*Year adopted*
International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling	1946
Antarctic Treaty	1959
Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention)	1971
Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage	1972
Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter and 1996 Protocol Thereto	1972; 1996
Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES)	1973
International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL)	1973
United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)	1982
International Tropical Timber Agreement	1983; 1994
Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer	1985
Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer	1987
Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal	1989
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	1992
Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	1997
Convention on Biological Diversity	1992
Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity	2000
United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification	1994
Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade	1998
Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants	2001
Minamata Convention on Mercury	2013

Table 2. Regional conventions signed by a majority of CCAD member states

Regional convention	*Year adopted*
Articles of Agreement of the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (Comisión Centroamericana de Ambiente y Desarrollo, or CCAD)	1989
Protocol to the Articles of Agreement of the CCAD	1991
Regional Agreement on Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes	1992
Regional Convention on Climate Change	1993
Regional Convention for the Management and Conservation of Natural Forest Ecosystems and the Development of Forest Plantations	1993
Cooperation Agreement for the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Coastal and Marine Zones of the Pacific Northeast	2002
Regional Protocol on Access to Genetic and Biochemical Resources and to Associated Traditional Knowledge	2002
Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northeast Pacific (Antigua Convention)	2002

SICA), which was established in 1991 through the Tegucigalpa Protocol (Robinson 2003).[10] SICA, in turn, gave rise to the Central American Parliament (Parlamento Centroamericano, or PARLACEN), which serves as the organ for political and democratic representation within SICA. As consensus is reached through PARLACEN, representatives from CCAD member states urge the ratification of international conventions and the passage of environmental policy reforms in national congresses (UNEP 1997). Member state support for MEAs and other international environmental initiatives demonstrates CCAD's ability to achieve consensus on issues of regional importance (CCAD and USAID/G-CAP 1998).[11]

Like other nonstate actors, CCAD has no voting power in intergovernmental forums. Because of the legitimacy it has acquired, however, CCAD can voice a position on the part of the entire region. Because of its international reputation, CCAD is an official observer at meetings of the UN Economic and Social Council.

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[10] Although CCAD was originally an independent body, the CCAD executive secretariat has served as the environmental branch of SICA since 1991. CCAD has taken the lead in facilitating environmental cooperation both within and outside the region, but a number of other institutions within SICA have made significant contributions to peace and stability, including the regional Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (Centro de Coordinación para la Prevención de los Desastres Naturales en América Central, or CEPREDENAC) and the Regional Committee of Hydraulic Resources (Comisión Regional de Recursos Hidràulicos, or CRRH).

[11] For example, CCAD member states actively contribute to global initiatives such as the Global Water Partnership, which advocates for integrated water resources management, and the *Global Environment Outlook*, which helps inform environmental decision making.

Coordinating regional environmental action

One of CCAD's most important contributions is to have successfully brought together Central American organizations to address environmental challenges and formulate a consensus-based regional agenda; as a result of such efforts, institutions and policies are now in place that are designed to secure political stability through environmental governance. The next three sections describe CCAD's coordinating efforts in three realms: (1) developing a regional environmental agenda, (2) harmonizing environmental legislation, and (3) establishing regional bodies to address emerging environmental issues.

Developing a regional environmental agenda

In the early 1990s, CCAD convened member states to identify issues that had not been resolved by international agreements, and to address the difficulties associated with the coordination and financing of natural resource management projects. In 1994, the presidents of all seven nations in Central America established the Alliance for Sustainable Development (Alianza para el Desarrollo Sostenible, or ALIDES), to address political, moral, economic, social, and environmental issues unresolved by international agreements. ALIDES established principles, policies, and procedures designed to promote sustainable development and to link environmental concerns to other regional initiatives being pursued by the nations' ministries.[12] The alliance also facilitated discussion among stakeholders on environmental priorities, and on how those priorities related to the fundamental objectives of ALIDES. For example, in 1995, over one hundred representatives from government, the private sector, NGOs, academic institutions, and civil society gathered in Panama to agree on how best to implement the commitments to forestry, biodiversity, and environmental law that had been made by ALIDES signatories (UNEP 1997). Through this and other gatherings held to support the objectives outlined by ALIDES, stakeholders have cooperated to create a number of protected areas, including biosphere reserves and national parks.[13]

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[12] The goals of ALIDES are to promote respect for life in all its manifestations, to improve quality of life, to support sustainable management of natural resources, to promote peace and democracy, to promote respect for multiculturalism and ethnic diversity, to increase the economic integration of Central America with the rest of the world, and to promote intergenerational responsibility for sustainable development (Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America, adopted at the Central American Summit Meeting for Sustainable Development, Managua, Nicaragua, October 12–13, 1994; www2.ohchr.org/english/law/compilation_democracy/alliance.htm).

[13] *Biosphere reserves* refer to "areas of terrestrial and coastal ecosystems promoting solutions to reconcile the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use" (UNESCO n.d., 1).

As Central American governments began to establish new environmental policies, CCAD recognized the need for a regional plan; this recognition ultimately led to the development of PARCA, a five-year plan for addressing four mid- to long-term environmental challenges: forests and biodiversity, water supply and management, clean production,[14] and institutional capacity building for environmental management (CCAD 2009; Rivera and Midré 2005). PARCA was also designed to fulfill the mandates identified by ALIDES, with respect to both environmental issues and international commitments.

In addition to taking the lead in convening the meetings that led to the creation of PARCA and formulating the first published plan, CCAD developed operating procedures to help ensure that PARCA would achieve its stated goals. The first PARCA, which was published in 1999, provided guidelines designed to enable CCAD to meet its medium- and long-term objectives; the plan was also designed to build capacity to address the region's environmental challenges. Financing for PARCA originates in SICA's multiyear plans, which facilitate investment in sustainable development and greater inclusion of environmental criteria in development projects.

Harmonizing environmental legislation

During and after conflict in the region, Central American states began to create environmental laws and institutions—including ministries, commissions, institutes, and national programs—to address environmental issues.[15] But because such

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[14] The United Nations Environment Programme defines *clean production* (also known as "cleaner production") as "the continuous application of an integrated environmental strategy to processes, products and services to increase efficiency and reduce risks to humans and the environment" (UNEP n.d.).

[15] In Belize, the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (established in 1989) administers the Environmental Protection Law (1992). In Costa Rica, the Ministry of Environment and Energy (established in 1995) administers the Environmental Act No. 7554 (Ley Organica del Ambiente No. 7554) (1995). In El Salvador, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (established in 1997) administers the Environmental Law (Ley de Medio Ambiente) (1998). In Guatemala, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources administers the Law for Protection and Improvement of the Environment (amended by the Law of Executing Agency) (Ley de Protección y de Mejoramiento del medio Ambiente [reformada por la Ley del Organismo Ejecutivo]) (enacted in 1986 and revised in 2000). In Honduras, the Secretary of Natural Resources and Environment (established in 1996) administers the Environmental Act (Ley Organica del Ambiente). In Nicaragua, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (established in 1979) administers the General Law on the Environment and Natural Resources (Ley General de Medio Ambiente y los Recursos Naturales) (1996). In Panama, the National Environment Authority of the Republic of Panama (established in 1998) administers the General Law on the Environment (Ley General del Ambiente) (1998) (Rivera and Midré 2005).

initiatives were being pursued in isolation, they were characterized by high costs, duplication of effort, and failure to leverage resources.

To pave the way for collaborative efforts (including legal reform) across the region, CCAD helped to create regional bodies that could bridge the gaps between governmental units and civil society. In addition, CCAD encouraged member states to pass environmental legislation and provided them with model legislation on which their own laws and regulations could be based.[16]

Such efforts were not always successful, however. In El Salvador, for example, after the government had signed the Chapultepec Peace Accords, CCAD failed, in 1992, to gain political support for the model law. CCAD representatives returned two years later, to undertake a thorough public participation process, which included consultations with public, private, and government stakeholders in all fourteen Salvadoran departments (World Bank 2006).[17] In 1998, after a few minor amendments, the CCAD model legislation finally passed, as the Law on Environment (Ley de Medio Ambiente).

More often than not, environmental legislation adopted by CCAD member states is based on standards, such as model laws and regulations, prepared by CCAD; these models, in turn, are developed by the Commission for Programs on Environmental Legislation (Programa de Legislación Ambiental, or PROLEGIS), a component of the Central American Regional Environmental Program (Programa Ambiental Regional para Centroamérica, or PROARCA).[18]

As of this writing, it is too early to determine how large the gap is between legislation and implementation; thus, the impact of the model environmental legislation developed by CCAD remains unclear. There is no question, however, that CCAD's efforts to coordinate, streamline, and improve environmental legislation laid the foundation for greater environmental security in Central America.

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[16] For a detailed discussion, see Sandra S. Nichols and Mishkat Al Moumin, "The Role of Environmental Law in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding," in this book.

[17] Salvadoran departments are similar to states or provinces.

[18] Established in 1996, PROARCA was the first five-year phase of an environmental program designed to consolidate Central America's system of protected areas, in order to fulfill U.S. commitments under the Central America–United States of America Joint Declaration (Declaración Conjunta Centroamerica–USA).

In addition to developing model laws and regulations that Central American states can adapt to suit their circumstances, PROLEGIS has three other goals: (1) increasing capacity; (2) effectively implementing key international agreements; and (3) harmonizing environmental audits. To meet these goals, PROLEGIS facilitated the creation of regional networks to ensure compliance with, and support enforcement of, environmental legislation. It also established a regional scheme to oversee environmental audits, a voluntary compliance registry, and a certification system for environmental auditors.

Through Environmental Systems Management (Sistemas de Gestión Ambiental), another component of PROARCA, member states can also request information and technical assistance from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, to assist in the continued strengthening of environmental laws (Richmond 2007).

Establishing regional bodies to address environmental issues

Despite numerous conventions and an agreed-upon agenda to address environmental concerns, gaps in the environmental laws and policies of Central American states still exist, and CCAD has played an essential role in identifying and addressing such gaps. In the wake of Hurricane Mitch, for example, which hit Central America in 1998, CCAD coordinated with the Central American Regional Committee of Water Resources (Comité Regional de Recursos Hidráulicos) to undertake multilateral water projects in transboundary basins, including those of the Rio Paz (in Guatemala and El Salvador), the Rio Lempa (in Guatemala and Honduras), the Rio Coco (shared by Nicaragua and Honduras), the Rio Sixaola (shared by Costa Rica and Panama), and the Gulf of Fonseca (shared by Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador) (Rucks 2003).

The creation of PARCA enabled CCAD to take the lead in regional conservation efforts. For example, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) gave CCAD responsibility for implementing the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor (MBC) (Corredor Biologico Mesoamericano)—an initiative that had emerged, in April 1997, from the Paseo Pantera project, which the Caribbean Conservation Corporation had developed in 1990. The aim of the MBC was to unite conservation programs and sustainable development goals throughout the region. At the MBC donor meetings held in Paris, in December 2002, CCAD presented an overarching business plan for the corridor. The plan, which was developed through a democratic process, is the guiding framework for all MBC projects (World Bank 2004).

Under the leadership of CCAD, bilateral and multilateral donors and foreign agencies support domestic and regionwide efforts to (1) monitor and manage the environmental resources of the MBC and (2) promote education and participatory processes that help communities within the corridor better understand the importance of its natural resources. CCAD has played a critical role in a number of MBC projects, including the establishment of peace parks; protected areas; the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System; and, in transboundary regions, the designation of wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention (including the Gulf of Fonseca, shared by El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, and the San Juan River, which is shared by Costa Rica and Nicaragua).[19]

In addition to having emerged as a developer and manager of environmental projects, CCAD has successfully led international dialogues on environmental issues, particularly in Latin America. For example, CCAD was instrumental in the Puembo process, which was created in 2002, by Ecuador's Ministry for

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[19] CCAD has succeeded in achieving regional cooperation on many environmental issues, but the implementation of transboundary natural resource management arrangements is often a challenge—particularly when agreements to comanage natural resources are used as political tools, rather than as the foundation for viable, integrated natural resource management programs. In the Gulf of Fonseca, for example, national territorial claims regularly supersede agreements to comanage natural resources such as fisheries (King 2009).

Environment, to provide a forum for Latin American countries to coordinate and implement international forest-related agreements. In November 2005, CCAD collaborated with the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, the Southern Cone Subregional Group, and the Dutch Ministry for Foreign Affairs to launch the second phase of the Puembo process (Thies, Rodríguez, and von Pfeil 2006).[20]

CCAD has also worked with institutions and national commissions to promote the inclusion of environmental considerations in economic integration efforts. In 2003, CCAD was given authority to conduct environmental impact assessments before the implementation of Plan Puebla-Panama—a twenty-five-year plan established in 2001 by Mexico and the Central American states, which is intended to improve regional economic development, wealth distribution, education, and sustainable use of natural resources (Rivera and Midré 2005). CCAD also supported and implemented a number of projects called for in the plan, including the Mesoamerican Initiative for Sustainable Development (Iniciativa Mesoamericana de Desarrollo Sostenible, or IMDS) (UN Millennium Project 2005).[21]

Strengthening civil society

The power of civil society in Central America has increased since the late 1980s, and CCAD has played a significant role in strengthening its influence. Because economic and social change often increase instability and political conflict, continued peace depends on extending prosperity and ending disenfranchisement (Wynia 1978). Cooperation among all stakeholders, particularly in relation to natural resources, remains vital to a democratic future in post-conflict Central America.

Recognizing that a stronger civil society strengthens local roots to the environment and respect for local cultures, CCAD created platforms for democratic participation and established better dialogue between Central American states and civil society (Rivera and Midré 2005). In 1999, for example, to obtain aid for the countries that had been affected by Hurricane Mitch, CCAD brought together governments and civil society to develop a unified and official Central American position on overcoming environmental and social vulnerability, which was submitted at the Stockholm meeting of the Consultative Group for the

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[20] The Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization is an international body established to promote the coordinated development of the Amazon Basin (Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, and Venezuela). The Southern Cone Subregional Group is made up of representatives from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay.

[21] As part of IMDS, Mesoamerican governments collaboratively promote environmental sustainability initiatives that parallel existing programs, including the MBC and Environmental Systems Management (Sistemas de Gestión Ambiental). CCAD leads, monitors, and implements IMDS activities and programs (Memorandum of Understanding for the Coordination of the Mesoamerican Sustainable Development Initiative [IMDS] of the Plan Puebla-Panama, June 2, 2003).

Reconstruction and Transformation of Central America (Consultative Group).[22] Similarly, after the earthquake in El Salvador on January 13, 2001, CCAD again enabled governments and civil society to present a unified message at the Madrid meeting of the Consultative Group (Hernández 2002).[23]

Later in 2001, CCAD established the Central American Civil Society Forum on Environment and Development (Foro Social Centroamericano de Ambiente y Desarrollo, or FOSCAD), a permanent mechanism for consultation between government, the private sector, and civil society. Through FOSCAD, participants discuss and make joint decisions about the regional environmental policies that are integrated into PARCA (Hernández 2002).

In addition to creating platforms for democratic participation, CCAD has strengthened civil society by empowering previously marginalized communities. Because rural citizens are widely dispersed and live far from the centers of power, it was difficult for CCAD to develop policies and legislation that were relevant to immediate livelihood issues. To address this problem, CCAD implemented the Integrated Ecosystem Management in Indigenous Communities project, with support from the GEF, through which CCAD has collaborated with the Central America Indigenous and Peasant Coordination Association for Community Agroforestry, a community-based organization that facilitates collaboration among agroforestry stakeholders in 550 communities in Central America, with the goal of establishing sustainable land management programs (Kessler 2005).

Catalyzing financial support

By continuously seeking new funding sources, CCAD strengthens environmental security in Central America. As of this writing, more than thirty donor organizations were supporting environmental management initiatives, including forest management, conservation of protected areas, payment for environmental services, and environmental impact assessment. In addition to financing, many states and members of the international donor community provide technical assistance. Finally, CCAD has obtained contributions from Central American governments and from environmental services firms located in the region (Hernández 2002). The level of financial support reflects donors' confidence in CCAD's effectiveness. (See table 3 for a list of CCAD projects receiving international support between 1998 and 2007.)

CCAD's success as a coordinating body is largely attributable to two factors. First, the organization's track record has established it as a reputable institution within the region's environmental and political arenas. As a consequence, its initiatives are endorsed by a wide variety of stakeholders, further bolstering its

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[22] The 1999 Consultative Group was chaired by the Inter-American Development Bank and sponsored by Sweden.

[23] The 2001 Consultative Group was chaired by the Inter-American Development Bank and sponsored by Spain. The 2001 earthquake killed more than seven hundred people in El Salvador and displaced hundreds of thousands from their homes (IDB 2001).

Table 3. International support for Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD) projects (1998–2007)

Project	*Donor*	*Amount donated (in millions of US$)*	*Implementation period*
Environmental Legislation Program (Programa de Armonización y Aplicación de Legislación)	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (Agencia Suiza para el Desarrollo y la Cooperación, or COSUDE)	0.78	November 1998–October 2001
Monitoring the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor: A NASA/CCAD Cooperative Research Project	U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)	12.00	January 1999–January 2002
Environmental Management in Small and Medium Industry in Central America (Gestión Ambiental para la Pequeña y Mediana Industria de América Central, or GESTA)	German Organisation for Technical Cooperation (GTZ)	1.00	January 1999–December 2001
Consolidation of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), GTZ, and World Bank Global Environment Facility (GEF)	16.60	March 1999–February 2006
Conservation of the Coastal Ecosystems in the Gulf of Fonseca, Nicaragua-Honduras-Salvador (Proyecto de Conservación de los Ecosistemas Costeros del Golfo de Fonseca, Nicaragua-Honduras-El Salvador, or PROGOLFO)	Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA)	2.63	March 1999–December 2002
Effective Management of Transnational Watersheds (Lempa River)	Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Centre (Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza, or CATIE), USAID, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)	2.00	January 2000–December 2001
Central American Programme for the Modernization of Environmental Management Systems (Programa de Sistemas Integrados de Gestión Ambiental, or PROSIGA)	Netherlands Embassy, San José, Costa Rica	3.00	January 1999–2003

Support for the Modernization of Regulatory Frameworks in the Central American Region	Inter-American Development Bank	0.28	January 2001–September 2002
Regional Project for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System	GEF	1.09	January 2000–December 2000
Support for CCAD Executive Secretariat	UNDP and United Nations Environment Programme	2.46	September 2000–August 2003
Trade and environment	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and UNDP (Capacity 21 Programme)	0.42	April 2001–July 2002
Institutional strengthening to improve capacity to provide training in environmental policy and management, to increase the ability to efficiently and effectively enforce environmental legislation	COSUDE	0.89	2003–2006
Strengthening Environmental Impact Assessment in Central America	International Union for Conservation of Nature–Mesoamerica	0.52	April 2001–April 2003
Central American Alliance for Sustainable Development (Alianza para el desarrollo sostenible, or ALIDES): Water Policy Formulation Component	USAID	45.76	October 2001–October 2007
Technical assistance for the Central American Integration System (Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana, or SICA)	Autonomous Organisation for National Parks—Spain (Organismo Autónomo Parques Nacionales, or OAPN)	3.00	January 2002–December 2004
Forests and climate change	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Netherlands	0.50	September 2001–December 2002
Capacity Building for Public Communication and Education on the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor	World Bank	0.45	May 2002–June 2003
Energy and Environment Partnership with Central America	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland	3.30	June 2002–June 2005
Increasing the Participation Of Afro-Descendants in Bank-Funded Projects in Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama	World Bank	0.46	June 2003–August 2005
Total		**97.15**	

Source: Expanded and updated from Salazar (2003).

legitimacy and strengthening its coordinating efforts (Page and Schwarz 1996). Second, over time, CCAD has developed an increasingly clear sense of the geographic, economic, budgetary, and planning criteria (for example, the criteria for a GEF block B or C grant) that must be met if a regional project is to succeed; in other words, it has come to understand that a regional approach is more than simply combining the projects of its member states (Hernández 2002). CCAD's clear vision and sophisticated understanding of project needs strengthen donor confidence.

Humanitarian agreements with the United States

The United States has played a key role in CCAD's success in attracting international donors—a role that differs starkly from U.S. involvement in Central America during the Cold War. After the end of President Ronald Reagan's administration, the United States shifted its attention away from its controversial Central American policy that had focused on the prevention of communist infiltration in the region, and focused on the Latin American debt crisis. One result of this shift was a request, on the part of the administration of President George H. W. Bush, for humanitarian (rather than military) aid for the region (Moreno 1990).

In 1994, during the Summit of the Americas, which the United States had organized to promote democracy, development, and prosperity in the region, the United States signed the nonbinding Central America-United States of America Joint Declaration (Declaración Conjunta Centroamerica–USA, or CONCAUSA). CONCAUSA established a partnership for sustainable development, under which the participating nations agreed to (1) establish a cooperative regional interinstitutional network to facilitate compliance with environmental law (Holley 2001), and (2) provide funding to support four areas of action: conservation of biodiversity, sound use of energy, environmental legislation, and sustainable economic development (Lopez 1994). Participation in CONCAUSA solidified U.S. commitment to, and involvement in, Central America's efforts to integrate its environmental plans and programs.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has provided financial support for ALIDES since 1995, specifically to further strengthen the role of CCAD as the regional leader on development and the environment. In 1995, in an effort that was jointly endorsed by both CCAD and the United States, and supported by US$25 million in USAID funding,[24] CCAD catalyzed the establishment of the Central American Regional Environmental Program for Coastal Zone Management (Programa Ambiental Regional para Centroamérica/Costas, or PROARCA/COSTAS) and its land-based counterpart, the Central American Regional Environmental Project/Central America Protected Area System (Programa Ambiental Regional para Centroamérica/Sistema Centroamericano de Áreas

[24] The funding was contributed to ALIDES over a five-year period beginning in 1995 (CCAD and USAID/G-CAP 1998).

Protegidas, or PROARCA/CAPAS). Through USAID funding for PROARCA, CCAD received technical assistance to support the regional coordination of legislation and strengthen the administrative and financial functions of the CCAD executive secretariat (CCAD and USAID/G-CAP 1998).

Since CCAD was first established, U.S. officials have referred regional donor organizations interested in Central American environmental issues to CCAD and have assisted CCAD staff in approaching donor organizations and national governments in the region. As a result, CCAD has effectively leveraged USAID support to obtain funding from other donors (Page and Schwarz 1996).

Leveraging financial assistance through the CCAD Donors Forum

As part of FOSCAD, CCAD established the CCAD Donors Forum, a financial mechanism that supports the implementation of environmental policies and strategies that are beyond the jurisdiction of any one state. Through the forum, CCAD member states secured over US$100 million in funding from international organizations between 1998 and 2003 (CABAL Group 2008).

CCAD has also worked through the forum to successfully obtain funding from the Swedish International Development Agency (more than US$2 million between 1998 and 2003), which complements USAID funding for initiatives such as PROARCA and has enabled CCAD to broaden and strengthen its operational and administrative financial base.

Under a self-imposed mandate that dates to 2001, the CCAD executive secretariat coordinates FOSCAD's activities by working with its director and its board, which is made up of representatives from both the private sector and civil society. Because FOSCAD's board includes the private sector, the secretariat's mandate has (1) provided Central American countries with opportunities to leverage additional financial resources to achieve regional goals, and (2) helped to ensure that environmental programs take into account the views of the private sector.

THE FUTURE OF ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Before the founding of CCAD, whatever domestic environmental protection legislation was in place in Central America was rarely enforced, and was in some cases entirely ignored by both the government and the private sector. But by failing to protect the environment and the local livelihoods that depend on it, Central American states exacerbated civil unrest. Development, environmental protection, and peace and stability thus depended on strengthening democracy, environmental governance, and the rule of law.

Since the early 1980s, democratization has expanded individual freedom in Central America and created democratic space in which dialogue can occur. In addition, Central American states have given greater priority to environmental

governance by enacting new environmental legislation and by enforcing both new and existing legislation. Nevertheless, the unequal distribution of the benefits of export-led growth has the potential to undermine such advances, especially where economic development has taken precedence over other goals, including environmental protection. For example, although most of the funds awarded to CCAD and SICA were intended to address environmental protection and development initiatives, development generally receives greater emphasis than the environment.

Since the 1980s, with the encouragement of the United States, the nations of Central America have embraced free-market capitalism, implemented tight fiscal policies, and privatized public services. And, despite the threats that such actions have posed to both social programs and state sovereignty, Central American states have implemented structural adjustment programs through the International Monetary Fund (Foster 2007).

Although CCAD has succeeded in standardizing and improving environmental management throughout the region, particularly with respect to legislation, its achievements have depended entirely on funding from outside Central America (Utting 1994). This extraordinary dependence on international donors—the United States in particular—has the potential to constrain CCAD's institutional goals and prevent the commission from being as responsive to members' demands as it might otherwise be (Wilburn et al. 2007). In short, CCAD's influence is limited by wider geopolitical interests in the region, creating a potential for setbacks in the realm of environmental governance. Nevertheless, it is likely that the environmental protections now in place will continue to be enforced.

The global environmental conventions adopted since 1992 prompted important institutional changes (including the establishment of commissions, institutes, and national programs) and the development of innovative cooperative mechanisms to address regional environmental issues. Nations in Central America, donors, and lending institutions have also supported policies and implementation plans designed to assign priority to the environment in key economic sectors, including water, forestry, tourism, and energy. There is also little doubt that Hurricane Mitch, which hit Central America in 1998, generated sufficient political will to allow several pieces of legislation to be pushed rapidly through the national congresses in the countries that were most heavily affected—namely, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua. The legislation in question addressed intergovernmental aspects of both environmental conservation and neoliberal economic reform.

Environmental initiatives have also been incorporated into regional economic integration agreements. The Guatemala Protocol, for example, which amended the General Treaty of Central American Economic Integration, stipulates that—in regard to natural resources and environmental issues—member states agree to develop common strategies with the objective of strengthening the capacity to value and to protect the natural patrimony of the region as well as to adopt sustainable development approaches in order to use the natural resources of the area in an optimum and rational manner. Additionally, the protocol focuses on

controlling pollution and reestablishing the ecological balance through the improvement and harmonization of national environmental laws, at a regional level, as well as financing and carrying out conservation projects for the environment.[25]

The United States and other international donors will continue to support CCAD and to play a pivotal role in Central American trade. Through the Environmental Cooperation Agreement, a component of the Dominican Republic–Central America–United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR), the U.S. Congress has agreed to provide approximately US$40 million annually for activities related to the environment and labor (USAID 2008). In considering how best to use these funds, one option is to further strengthen the coordinating role of CCAD.

The success of CCAD demonstrates that the nations of Central America have the political will to achieve peace and stability through environmental cooperation. Relying on the foundation laid by CCAD, civil society will continue to play a critical role in ensuring that the people of Central America press forward in their efforts to achieve environmental protection.

CONCLUSION

Despite increasing democratization in Central America, weaknesses persist, and peace and security are not guaranteed (Wijkman 1998). Nevertheless, by developing and strengthening a unified Central American approach to environmental governance, CCAD has succeeded in achieving four goals: (1) supporting the implementation of MEAs, (2) coordinating regional environmental action, (3) strengthening civil society, and (4) catalyzing financial support. Among CCAD's specific accomplishments are the following:

- Gaining the support of member states for twenty-two international conventions and eight regional conventions.
- Advocating for and coordinating the creation of PARCA, a regional plan that addresses environmental challenges in four areas: forests and biodiversity, water supply and management, clean production, and institutional capacity building for environmental management.
- Advancing the harmonization of domestic environmental laws by developing model legislation and presenting it directly to stakeholders.
- Creating new spaces for dialogue between the state, the private sector, and civil society, and thereby placing the public in a better position to negotiate the use, management, and conservation of the environment and natural resources.
- Sustaining and leveraging financial support by inspiring donors' confidence.

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[25] Protocol to the General Treaty of the Central American Economic Integration (Guatemalan Protocol), October 29, 1993. www.sice.oas.org/Trade/sica/PDF/Prot.Guatemala93.pdf.

Each of CCAD's successes gives evidence of its ability to foster greater dialogue and participation among stakeholders. Through such dialogue, the roots that connect stakeholders to the protection of the natural environment have grown and strengthened. Equally important, under ALIDES and PARCA, a set of guiding principles and a plan have been developed to move the region forward during the coming years. The foundation laid by CCAD and its member states has demonstrated the potential to build peace through environmental cooperation.

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