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**Cooperative and Coordinated Audit of Environmental Management, for the  
Amazon Region**

Dear Friends of EUROSAI and OLACEFS,

In the framework of the Seventh Meeting of the Environment Special Technical Commission held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, the proposal to carry out the Environmental Audit in cooperation to the Amazon Region was received.

In this virtue, the EUROSAI-OLACEFS Conference, which in its Sixth Edition held in Isla Margarita of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in May 2009, the Supreme Audit Institutions of Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela, undersigned the Memorandum of Understanding for the development of the Environmental Management Audit in cooperation, modality coordinated, for the Amazon Region.

After the planning and coordination activities, that had to be elaborated before the beginning of this activity of cooperation, several work meetings were held in Quito, Lima and Bogota, in order to harmonize the audit procedures, to share the outcomes obtained and in last instance, agree in the structure of the audit report.

The Comptroller General Office of the Republic of Ecuador, with the collaboration of who integrated this work of regional interest, it was in charge of editing, publishing and delivering in physical, the outcomes of this audit, that was also translated to English and is available in our Website [www.contraloria.gob.ec](http://www.contraloria.gob.ec) .

But this coordinated work, paid attention to the diametrical importance that means to the region and for the planet, the conservation of the Amazon Basin.

Amazon River rises in the Andean Mountains of Peru, in the Department of Arequipa, 5,170 above sea level.

It browses 7,000 km approximately, until arriving to the Pacific Ocean, after meander by the enormous green savanna and the life paradise and biodiversity that it supports.

It is almost six millions of square kilometers of influence, which support more than 10,000 known species of trees that absorbs 70,000 millions of tons of carbon of the 200,000 million tons that are captured by the forests of the whole planet.

At the Amazon Basin, there are 30% of all the land species of the planet. Additionally, it exist more than 50,000 known species of plants, 1,700 species of birds and between 500 and 700 kinds of amphibians, mammals and reptiles.

All this richness is being in danger by the destructive combination created by the Global Warming and Deforestation.

In the path worked by millennium by the Amazon River, identifies three sub regions that have its own characteristics of climate and relief, and whose delimitation could be established in function of levels of altitude.

Low Rainforest, from the flow until 500 meters above the see level, has warm and humid climate, with precipitations that fluctuates between 1,500 and 3,000 millimeters per year or more.

High Rainforest, until 1,000 meters above the sea level, also with warm humid climate, but, with temperature variations in the day and night, presents tight valleys of great length, the annual precipitations could exceed in some places, 5,000 millimeters per year.

Finally, Rainforest Mountain Range that could be presented until above the 3,000 meters above sea level, with predominance of a very sudden relief, with deep canons, valleys and torrential rivers; the climate is humid but contrasted.

In these diverse and varied ecological floors, a variety of recognized ecosystems work as the richest of the world, which are the home of indigenous people that have lived there since remote time. These groups are receiver of traditional knowledge on the characteristics and the use of the rich biological diversity.

By the heterogeneity, there is not a universal definition of the amazon area. There are different forms of sizing the region, according to the visit that someone has of it: as watershed it covers an extension of 7,352,112 km<sup>2</sup>; according the Cooperation Treaty

Organization (OTCA, in Spanish) has an extension of 7,590,083 km<sup>2</sup> and, according with the Indigenous Coordinator Organizations of the Amazon Basin – COICA (in Spanish) 10.268.471 km<sup>2</sup>.

The Amazon Basin is equivalent to 41% of the South American Continental space, in which participate Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, Venezuela and French Guiana, so that enables find a high number of thermic floors; hence, the diversity of endemic species of flora and fauna. In the Amazonia there are 1150 rivers of different magnitude that carry more than 20% of world's freshwater.

This singular importance of the Amazon Basin has motivated us in this joint effort, in which we established as objectives:

- Evaluate the management conducted by the governments of the countries of the Amazon Region, about meeting the goals and commitments established in the framework of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty, with the aim to elaborate a report that contributes to the conservation and sustainable use of the natural and cultural resources of the region.
- Evaluate the management developed by government agencies and entities responsible for the conservation, management of natural and cultural heritage of the Amazon region, aimed at finding sustainable development and social cohesion.

The obtained outcomes of the audit process were focused in the following important aspects:

1. The countries have not incorporated, as part of their policy and institutional strategy, conducting inventories of renewable natural resources and have not made efficient use of existing information, which allows to have instruments that help to control and evaluation of the existing resources en the Natural Protected Areas.
2. There are efforts to consolidate some biological border corridors within of which highlight the “Trinational Program” that has three projects aimed to strengthen the Corridor La Paya, Güeppi and Cuyabeno. The Trinational Program has progress project indicators, framed as indicators of the results.
3. The institutions responsible of the supervision and control of the protected areas do not have the technical and technological tools necessary to address these tasks in proportion to the size of the areas to be monitored; a fact that contributes to the development of human activities that increase pressure factors and represent a risk to their conservation.
4. The research process does not have sufficient staff to perform an study and monitoring of the zoological groups, such as mammals, reptiles, birds, fish, amphibians, macro invertebrates, arthropods, soil studies and research on the evolution of ecosystems including in the area of management, allowing to have an

updated information system on natural resources and their conservation in order to generate reliable values for the calculation of indicators. The lack of updated information difficult the establishment of indicators for monitoring and verification of sustainability, based on the ecological and biological representativeness.

5. As for ecotourism, the Amazon Cooperation Treaty, OTCA (in Spanish), created a Special Committee on Cetura Tourism in 1990, in order to establish appropriate mechanisms for the cooperation for the planning and the development of necessary infrastructure for the promotion of tourism in the Amazon Region.

Each of the Amazon countries has welcome the guideline, incorporating it into its policy in greater of lesser extent, establishing ecotourism as a line to be taken into consideration in the sustainable development of these areas; but in some cases, as in Colombia, it has been executed without proper regulation, which may involve risk for the conservation of natural resources of the protected areas in particular and the Amazon in general.

Audit teams made some recommendations that were also given to each of the Supreme Audit Institutions, for the pertinent management in the entities responsible of each one of the countries.

Those recommendations were raised as challenges, and I summarize below:

**Challenge No. 1**

Permanent National Commissions in each country should take a leading role and leadership for the governments to incorporate the component of Natural Protected Areas within their “government plans” in order to enable them to raise strategic planning, goals and indicators a medium and long term, identifying the entities responsible for such purpose.

**Challenge No. 2**

The governments of the Amazon countries must develop strategies for the implementation of coordination mechanisms and decision-making, for programs and projects that develop any initiative involving protected border natural areas, in order to ensure that commitments are met and the activities are coordinated quick, until the finalization of the projects, in order to stimulate the establishment of biological and cultural corridors, that enables the flow of species, as well as the exchange and presentation of traditional knowledge of the local populations.

**Challenge No. 3**

The information management must be optimized to increase the effectiveness of the management; dissemination of the goals and achievements framed in programs and projects to promote the formation of regional axis ; seek more contact and experience exchanges in handling techniques and initiatives establishment such as biological and cultural corridors, to allow replication of models to the particularities of our bioregions.

**Challenge No.4**

Establishment of permanent monitoring programs in protected areas of the Amazon, using the technical necessary indicators of sustainability. Likewise, exchange of information to know the population dynamics of the natural resources of the protected areas, incorporating this knowledge to planning and decision-making.

**Challenge No.5**

It is recommended that each of the Amazon countries strengthen the entities responsible for the control and surveillance, providing them with necessary and sufficient personal and technological tools to handle the ANP efficiently, taking into consideration the great size of areas, the work control, including management according to social conflicts and economics conditions of the same.

**Challenge No.6**

It should encourage national and international training, and exchange of experiences in the use of indicators, intended to prove and demonstrate that protected natural areas have biological and ecological representativeness, so that resources are sustainable, considering mainly technical staff participation assigned to the monitoring and control of protected areas.

**Challenge No.7**

The government of the Amazon countries should generate and implement mechanisms of monitoring compliance with the community management plans of the agreements signed, ecotourism projects, and of all the touristic activities to be developed in protected areas, the same that must be part of the monitoring and evaluation plan; and have verifiable indicators of progress. Additionally, insist, to retake and to generate initiatives with the aim to have the support of the Organization of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty, in sustainable ecotourism programs, that are planned to be developed.

**Challenge No.8**

The ANP linked to ecotourism need to be evaluated in the impact generated by this activity, otherwise, unique and fragile destinies could disappear due to the pressure they were printed.

**Challenge No.9**

Promote the protection of the natural resources based on the ITT initiative (Yasuni Natural Park), which is presented as an alternative to delay exploitation of biotic and abiotic resources, in order to conserve the hydric resources, biodiversity, and research of new energetic matrix, thereby looking at other forms of production, friendly with the environment, with the consent and active participation of the civil population.

Management problems presented in the Report of Coordinated Audit for the Amazon Region, provokes negative effects that put on risk to the Environment, generate social conflicts and in the mid-term, hinders sustainable development.

Consequently, the strategy to address those issues can only be implemented in a transversally way, i.e., from a holistic perspective and from the highest level.

Public policies related to the utilization of natural resources, market performance and application of science, technology and innovation for the sustainable development, are crucial for the Environmental future of the region, being necessary the strengthen environmental management in order to that, consistent and authoritative, collective solutions could be found within a sustainable development framework.

Thus, we managed to achieve this goal, which has left us many learned lessons and that has also led to the proliferation of this kind of experiences in the Latin American and the Caribbean Region, for example, coordinated audit Plan Agro 2003-2015, the audit of FMD in MERCOSUR, which is in execution and other actions, we are preparing for the coming years.

Thank you for your attention.