Side Event at the 5th GEF Assembly

Title: Promoting finance instruments for biodiversity conservation though Biotrade in the Andean Region

Date, Time, Venue: Monday May 26, 17:45 – 19:15, Side Event Room 5

Contacts: Robert Erath robert.erath@unep.org +507 305 3171
René Gomez-Garcia Palao rgomez@CAF.com +51 (1)710-8530

Abstract: The Andean Biotrade Project is a multi-country initiative including Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru which aims to promote the sustainable use of biodiversity in the Andean region. The project began implementation in March 2010 and will be completed in December 2014 with a total funding of over $ 14 million, including GEF funds and counterparts. UNEP is the implementing agency and CAF - Development Bank of Latin America, is the executing agency at the regional level. This initiative provides a practical and innovative experience of multi-sectorial collaboration that includes multilateral, public, private and civil society bodies. So far, the results allow verifying that Biotrade in the Andean region is an important ally for biodiversity conservation.

Through the project, country lead organizations have engaged stakeholders in dynamic market development mechanisms, strengthening biotrade at different levels, from policy, to on the ground capacity development. In Colombia, the project's focus is on high value added sectors, with strong comparative advantages such as the natural cosmetics sector. In Ecuador, the project has been able to introduce the need of a Biotrade Policy framework within the National Strategic Development Plan for 2013-2017 "Living Well". In Peru, Biotrade has performed above GDP with 9% growth between 2012-2013. Through the project more than 34 thousand hectares have integrated sustainable management practices and equitable distribution of benefits related to native biodiversity.

Within the project, a special emphasis is given on the conservation of biodiversity through the generation of economic activities where sustainable management and equitable sharing of benefits prevails. In 2013, at least 4 % of world trade consisted of biotrade products and for 2030 the growth trend expected is that at least 33% of world trade will be biotrade related. Biotrade is therefore gaining relevance as a reliable strategy for the conservation of biodiversity and the transition to a green economy, where the natural capital of a country is taken into account.

One of the main achievements of the Andean Biotrade Project is in the component of Leveraging Financial Resources, in which funding for biotrade initiatives has significantly increased, compared to the baseline. Unlike before, financial institutions in the Andean region are more aware about biotrade economics and in better conditions to progressively develop financial solutions that better serve the biotrade sector.

The Andean Biotrade Project is a capacity building initiative that allows upscaling based on the systematization of approaches, tools, achievements and lessons learned through project implementation.

For all this, biotrade in the Andean Region is becoming an element of competitiveness and inclusion with strong impact at the base of the pyramid, alleviating poverty and creating innovative alternatives that pursue biodiversity conservation through the creation of shared value.