

INTRODUCTION TO RIOCC AND PIACC

Climate change is not only one of the main threats to the global environment in our time. It also poses a problem to development, as its adverse effects are especially severe on the poorest countries whose economies are largely based on the primary sector. The population of the poorest countries is generally more vulnerable and has less capacity of adaptation; therefore they will be the ones who suffer most from the consequences of climate change. The effectiveness of the policies to tackle climate change and adaptation to its adverse effects will require especially tailored measures at a regional and global level.

Iberoamerican network between climate change offices (RIOCC)

The Iberoamerican Ministers of the Environment at its IV Forum Meeting, held in Cascais (Portugal, October 2004), decided to create the Iberoamerican Network of Climate Change Offices (RIOCC). Climate Change Offices of 21 countries belong to the RIOCC: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Spain, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela.

The members of the RIOCC meet in monographic annual meetings and during the meetings of the Parties to the UNFCCC. The RIOCC raises its recommendations to the Iberoamerican Forum of Ministers of the Environment, and they present to the Iberoamerican Summit the main conclusions of these meetings.

The **general aim** of the Network is to constitute an engagement tool between the Iberoamerican countries to integrate climate change considerations into the highest political dialogue, to promote strategies focused on sustainable development and low-carbon economies and to identify the common problems and solutions in the context of impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change.

The **specific objectives** of the Network are the following:

- To guaranty a constant and fluent dialogue which will allow a better knowledge of the priorities, difficulties and experiences of the Iberoamerican countries in climate change policies.
- To favour an effective implementation of the decisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in particular those regarding adaptation and mitigation.
- To promote capacity and knowledge building, including among other subjects, technology transfer, systematic observation and options for adaptation to climate change.
- To contribute to the rapprochement of the countries' positions in the international negotiation forums on climate change and sustainable development.
- To promote the integration of climate change within the strategies of official development aid, without undermining the already existing funds for cooperation under this criteria.
- To facilitate the relationship among the public and private sector in our countries, making possible to increase the benefits of the Clean Development Mechanism (CMD) projects, working jointly in the identification and elimination of barriers to CDM.
- To promote the competitiveness of the region and the access to the market, in a way that facilitates the identification and development of supply and demand within CDM.
- To favour the signing and application of memorandums of agreement.

The RIOCC carries out activities in the following **areas of work**:

- **Following of the international negotiation process** (UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol).
- **Systematic observation and climate and climate change research.** In this area it is pursued the strengthening of the existing regional observation systems by supporting the Regional Action Plans of the GCOS (Global Climate Observation System) and the identification and execution of regional research projects.
- **Framework for capacity building.** It seeks to carry out training activities for the technical experts, and to empower exchange knowledge and experiences in different aspects, mainly by holding technical meetings.

- **Adaptation.** the Iberoamerican Ministers of the Environment, during the meeting held in Montreal (Canada) in December 2005, backed the Iberoamerican Programme of Impacts assessment, vulnerability and adaptation to Climate Change (PIACC).
- **Clean Development Mechanism.**
- **Climate Change and help to development.** The impacts of climate change have a direct influence on achieving the Millennium Development Goals, as it is foreseen that climate change will have a negative effect on the living conditions in developing countries (health, water resources, housing, infrastructures, etc.), will reduce the economic growth, reducing the incomes, and will modify the regional food security. Thus, it is needed to adopt specific and urgent measures to reduce vulnerability and to increase the adaptation capacity of developing countries, and to integrate these measures within the national strategies for fighting poverty and sustainable development. This integration demands coordination across multiple levels among the actors and institutions related to climate change and to development.
- **Other activities.** Strengthening of institutional frameworks and education and awareness activities are also considered.

Iberoamerican Programme of Impacts assessment, vulnerability and adaptation to Climate Change (PIACC)

An Adaptation to Climate Change workshop took place during the RIOCC 2nd Annual Meeting, (October 2005 in Antigua, Guatemala). It was debated about the priorities in the region and about the state of the art within the Latin American Region in vulnerability and impact assessment and in the implementation of specific adaptation measures. As a result, a proposal to create the **Iberoamerican Programme of Impacts assessment, vulnerability and adaptation to Climate Change (PIACC)** came up.

The Program is supported by the Ministers of the Environment of the Iberoamerican Conference of States, who under the framework of the 11th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention (COP11) in Montréal (Canada) in December 2005, produced a declaration where it is expressed their support to the PIACC and the beginning of its activities.

The strong point of the Programme lays on the capacity of working together on those aspects identified as priorities for all or for different groups of countries, taking into account the distribution of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and existing challenges along the Latin American region.

The **global aim** of the PIACC is to strengthen the development and application of adaptation strategies in the region by making the most of the countries' strengths and interests, and to facilitate assistance to all the members of the RIOCC in the evaluation of impacts, vulnerability and the adaptation options to climate change.

The Programme is conceived as an instrument for exchanging knowledge and experiences within the RIOCC framework, which will facilitate North–South and South–South cooperation and will enhance adaptation capacity to climate change in the Latin American region. Along this, the Programme contributes to adaptation to climate change issues within the UNFCCC framework, due to the multiple connexions between adaptation initiatives carried out under both initiatives.

Among the **specific objectives** to be achieved in a continuous way are the following:

- Strengthening of the institutional frameworks
- Search for synergies with regional institutions and initiatives working on adaptation to climate change in Ibero America.
- Support climate and climate change research, and systematic observation.
- Empower exchange and availability of knowledge, experiences, methods and tools to evaluate Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change.
- Promote the development of participative projects on adaptation to climate change in priority sectors and systems, giving special importance to trans-frontier projects, trans-sectorial projects and/or pan-sectorial projects.
- Promote information and communication activities of the PIACC.

- Produce evaluation reports of work on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change in Ibero America.