



**Water Center for the Humid Tropics of Latin America & the Caribbean**  
Science, Education and Policy for People: Putting Knowledge into Practice

Panama, August 6, 2008  
CA-367-08

Yvo de Boer  
Executive Secretary  
UNFCCC Secretariat  
Martin-Luther-King-Straße 8, 53175  
Bonn, Germany

Dear Dr. de Boer,

I am writing you on behalf of the Water Center for the Humid Tropics of Latin America and the Caribbean (CATHALAC), to make an action pledge in response to the recent Calls for Action related to:

- *Enhancing the use of climate information for adaptation to climate change impacts on agricultural production*
- *Improving guidance for adaptation planning at the national level*
- *Promoting and enhancing adaptation planning and practices at the water basin level*
- *Mapping vulnerability to climate change in urban areas*

This communication is also in follow-up to our earlier expression of interest in collaborating in the implementation of the Nairobi Work Programme (ref # CA-486/07).

We are hereby asking you to consider the capacities offered by the Regional Visualization & Monitoring System (SERVIR, in Spanish) as an initiative whose activities satisfy the proposed terms of the Call for Action. SERVIR is jointly implemented in Mesoamerica by CATHALAC, NASA, USAID, and other partner institutions (see [www.servir.net](http://www.servir.net)). The system was established in 2005 and provides the region with support in the areas of numerical weather forecasting, climate scenario development, disaster response, and monitoring of forest fires, land cover change, among others. SERVIR is recognized as a regional prototype for the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), and is currently being expanded to Africa.

Overall, SERVIR facilitates the Nairobi Work Programme objective “*to improve their understanding and assessment of impacts, vulnerability and adaptation.*” CATHALAC has, in fact, presented on the relevance of SERVIR to the Nairobi Work Programme at meetings of the UNFCCC’s SBSTA, most recently at the expert meeting on socio-economic information in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad in March 2008. Specifically, SERVIR addresses a number of the activities mentioned in the Call for Action, including:

- *Develop tools to downscale climate information from climate outlook forums*

- *Develop a monitoring system for vulnerable livelihoods and risk zones to provide the basis for developing location specific disaster preparedness strategies and adaptation programmes*

Recently, in this context CATHALAC has recently conducted an assessment utilizing downscaled climate data looking at vulnerable ecosystems (including cultivated systems) across Mexico, Central America and the Dominican Republic. The assessment, developed with the support of USAID, is publicly available at the following URL:

[http://maps.cathalac.org/downloads/documents/climate\\_biodiversity\\_cathalac\\_highres.pdf](http://maps.cathalac.org/downloads/documents/climate_biodiversity_cathalac_highres.pdf)

In addition to providing decision support products in the area of climate forecasting, a significant component of SERVIR's implementation has been capacity-building. In this context, a number of workshops and expert meetings have been held at the Mesoamerican regional level to increase understanding of the potential impacts of climate change. Almost three hundred (300) specialists from across Mesoamerica and the Caribbean have participated in SERVIR workshops and expert meetings since its inception, increasing the base of professionals with access to adaptation tools. CATHALAC is also developing a regional master's degree course in climate change studies.

Attached is an article on SERVIR published in the Full Picture publication ([http://earthobservations.org/documents/the\\_full\\_picture.pdf](http://earthobservations.org/documents/the_full_picture.pdf)) of the Group on Earth Observations. A short video on SERVIR is also available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V8MgF1awJrg>.

In summary and in light of the above, your consideration of the inclusion of SERVIR as a supporting initiative to the Nairobi Work Programme is therefore appreciated. If you any questions or clarifications please feel free to contact me directly at the phone number or email address listed below.

Warm regards,



**EMILIO SEMPRIS**  
Director

