

***Keynote Speech: The Economy of Ecosystems and Biodiversity,  
Ecuadorian Case - TEEB Country Study***

**PROYECTO DE INTERVENCIÓN DEL SR. WALTER GARCÍA MINISTRO DEL AMBIENTE  
DEL ECUADOR**

*Distinguished delegates and guests*

Environment and development are key elements that depend on each other and correlate when attempting to achieve sustainable social construction, and coherent economic systems.

Public policy making, beyond being a tool of governance, must be in tune with the local level, the people, and above all, it should consider the interactions between human beings and their environment. Since 2008, in Ecuador, these requirements are met in our Constitution that is articulated in a National Plan for Good Living, which in its seventh objective do guarantee the rights of nature and promote environmental, territorial and global sustainability, the challenge is to institutionalize and operate efficient mechanisms for the construction of public policy.

In this context, the Ministry of the Environment of Ecuador works to highlight the value of environmental services and their contribution to a well-functioning society and the model of development around the most adequate productive and energy matrices.

Valuing environmental services does not imply generating markets or putting a price label on nature, is to remove them from invisibility, to maintain the sustainable use of natural ecosystems and to foresee their perseverance in time for the enjoyment of future generations, to consolidate conservation as an profitable alternative way of living with a co-responsible society of free access common goods , which are fragile and whose maintenance implies costs that are rarely internalized by the public and private sectors that nevertheless use them as the fuel of their activities.

Right now the TEEB (The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity) initiative of the UNEP (United Nations Environment Program) in Ecuador, within the last year, has focused actions in relating the biophysical changes of ecosystems and their services, with variables dependent on the decisions that we take as managers of the Natural capital of our countries, generating possible scenarios that help us to focus on the actions in the future that we really want and must seek.

Recognizing, demonstrating and capturing the value of ecosystems and their biodiversity to support the change of paradigms of productive and energy matrices by maintaining and strengthening our own initiatives as Socio Bosque is one of the most important contributions of this scientific exercise that compiles the experience of our Academy and The daily work of the Ministry of the Environment in search of constructing criteria that allow the effectiveness of the investment in the natural heritage.

Finally, I would like to highlight the efforts of several countries joining this Initiative and take the opportunity to invite them this morning to share the experiences that this process has generated in the different countries.. In Ecuador we want to be inspired by the experiences in Bhutan on the ecosystem service assessments related to hydropower. Also in Ecuador we are informing the change of energy mix. Furthermore, we would want to explore the lessons learned from Tanzania on the assessment of land use changes that relate to agriculture and water projects. This links to the transformation of the productive matrix. Finally, I am convinced we can learn a lot from other countries how they address key implementation challenges, such as bringing multiple actors to the same table.

Finally I would like to thank the European Commission for the continued support to the Country, particularly in the area of biodiversity conservation through this TEEB process. The institutionalization of ecosystem service valuation is happening within the Ministry of Environment, and we would welcome continued support to mainstream this in intersectorial processes as well.

Thank you so much,