

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR:

HIGHLIGHTING THE NEED OF INVESTMENT ON ENVIRONMENT TO ENSURE THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILE

The importance of aligning economic growth and environmental care to move towards the sustainable development of the country was the main subject of the conference, which brought together citizens, professors and politicians, all of those participated in the keynote speeches and panels prepared to address –from different points of views – the need to advance into a sustainable development.

The seminar, carried out last March 30th in Santiago, was organized by the United Nations Development Programme UNDP Chile, in pursuance of its mission to promote the discussion of formulae with respect to the countries' challenges under a sustainable scheme. In the case of Chile, the consolidation of a sustainable management of ecosystems is crucial to strengthen a long-term human development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals; which was highlighted by the Resident Representative of the UNDP Chile, Silvia Rucks, who opened the seminar.

She stressed that “17.4% of the GDP and over 50% of Chilean exports directly depend on natural resources and biodiversity which are extremely vulnerable to climate change; so, providing the environmental point of view with prominence to shape and plan the development of Chile, besides being necessary, means to reinforce the future of the country and peoples' opportunities”.

Cristián Gutiérrez, Undersecretary of Environment, and Marcela Palominos, representative of the Ministry of Finance, spoke about the need to create transversal cooperation ways, which allow the integration of environmental themes in domestic finance and vice versa. In this context, they showed the improvements on public policies which were recently worked out by both entities, such as the act establishing the Right in Rem of Environmental Conservation, or Green Tax.

“As a Ministry, we firmly believe that economic growth can come along with environmental protection, and the solution of social and environmental problems of our country requires of joint efforts, strong public policies, companies commitment, academic work, and the cooperation of every citizen”, stated the environmental authority.

QUESTIONS FOR DEBATE

“How much longer can we argue that keeping our work positions requires environmental damage?” The question was posed by Dr. Diego Azqueta, the first lecturer of the meeting, who talked about some aspects of the new sustainability paradigms, including the economic value of natural assets, economic and ecologic valorization, and financing for biodiversity conservation.

“Why funding for environment?” was the question asked to address the debate in the political panel, integrated by the Deputy and member of the Commission for Environment of the Chamber of Deputies, Cristina Girardi; the Regional Advisor for the Region of Bío Bío, Tania Concha; the former Minister of Environment, María Ignacia Benítez; and the Chief of Environmental Economy and Information Division of the Ministry of Environment, Rodrigo Pizarro.

“Who could put a Price on the Darwin Range?” was the question asked by Dr. Eduard Muller to start his speech, titled “Economy and Biodiversity: Current Challenges for the Economy of the Future – Regenerative Development”. He talked about the ecologic crisis, the poor politics on impact minimization and the need of a regenerative development.

Afterwards, the results of recent studies performed by the UNDP and the Ministry of Environment to strengthen the environmental governance of the country were revealed; such as the costs of invasive species for the State and propositions to raise the cost-effectiveness of the national protected areas management. On the other hand, the Panel showed the methodologies allowing the calculation of Chile’s public expenditures on biodiversity during the last five years.

Why conservation of biodiversity and eco-systemic services are necessary for industrial development? That was the question answered by the Director of the Programme Wine, Climate Change and Biodiversity, Dr. Olga Barbosa. In her lecture, the professor showed the main aspects of this programme, which seeks for the development of an innovative model, based on the compatibility of biodiversity conservation and the development of the Chilean wine industry. This speech constituted part of the sustainable production panel, which included other three initiatives combining economic development and environmental protection. Key factors of these lectures were the indigenous world-view, fair trade and Private-State Alliances.

Within this framework, the President of the Federation of Artisan Fish-workers of the town of Navidad, Cecilia Masferrer, explained how the company Algueros de Navidad (algae collectors of Navidad) manages to export algae and to produce gourmet foodstuff from algae without depleting them and caring about sustainability in each manufacturing process. As well, Javier Ancapán, representative of the indigenous reservation network Mapu Lahual –75 thousand hectares of land– talked about their activities: sustainable management of resources, community-based tourism, and small-scale farming and agriculture. Finally, the Chief Executive of the Agency for Sustainability and Climate Change, Juan Ladrón de Guevara, described the implications of voluntary agreements subscribed by his institution with the private sector, from which he highlighted cases related to biodiversity.

The seminar finished with the speech of the Regional Coordinator for Biodiversity Finance (BIOFIN), Marlon Flores, along with the Environment and Energy Officer of the UNDP Chile, Paloma Toranzos, who stressed the importance of promoting public debate on Chile’s steps towards its sustainable development.

“We believe that, to contribute to this goal, it is absolutely suitable and rewarding to provide spaces for the different actors and sectors –with their own interests– to meet, exchange their views, and identify opportunities for joint efforts”, ended Paloma Toranzos.

Links:

<https://biofinchile.cl/2017/04/06/seminario-internacional-destacan-necesidad-de-invertir-en-medio-ambiente-para-asegurar-el-desarrollo-sostenible/>

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