

NEWSLETTER

SWEDEN'S REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR
LATIN AMERICA

MAY 2023

Karin Metell Cueva - Head of regional cooperation Latin America



This is already the third edition of the Newsletter on Swedish regional development cooperation with Latin America. The Swedish Strategy for regional cooperation with Latin America has now been in place for almost two years. With a change of government in Sweden and a war in Ukraine it is not surprising that priorities have shifted, perhaps away from a region that is far away from the heat of the global turmoil. However, during the Swedish Presidency of the European Council, we have been reminded of the importance of Latin America for Europe and the World as a strategic ally to stand up for democracy and human rights as well as a champion for the environment, for biodiversity and for climate change. We have also seen a renewed interest in the region by parliamentarians in Sweden with no less than four visits only in 2023 and are happy to see this manifested in a newly created network for Latin America in the Swedish Parliament (see page 4)

Latin America and the Caribbean has not been forgotten by the EU. On July 17-18 the III EU-CELAC Summit will take place in Brussels as a reminder of the importance of regional collaboration. The Summit will gather heads of states from both regions and will put the spotlight on Latin America and the Caribbean as a region that is crucial in so many aspects for the transitions that we all aspire.

The EU is committed to deliver on a Green, Just and Digital transition for Latin America and the Caribbean. We are doing so through a number of regional so called Team Europe Initiatives that visualizes what we as individual member states can achieve jointly in collaboration with a diversity of partners in the region, many of them also from the private sector. Among priority areas for the EU and for Sweden are the Amazon Basin and the 5 Great Forests of Mesoamerica, vast areas that are key for biodiversity, for carbon capture and the home of millions of people, many of them indigenous communities, striving to achieve a sustainable livelihood on their own territories. Sweden is proud to take the lead in a delegated partnership with the European Union to enhance protection and collaboration among environmental right defenders in Mesoamerica.

The region is coming together with a growing sense of urgency and ownership when it comes to the need to protect joint natural resources such as the Amazon. The Amazon Summit, which will be held in Pará Brazil in August is yet another clear sign of that enhanced regional agenda.

Strategy for Sweden's regional development cooperation with Latin America 2021–2025

Over the period of 2021–2025, the strategy will contribute to the following objectives:



Human rights, democracy, the rule of law and gender equality

- Improved conditions for democracy and increased respect for human rights and the rule of law.
- Strengthened prospects for a gender-equal society and women's economic
- Increased access to and respect for sexual and reproductive health and rights. empowerment



Environment, climate and sustainable use of natural resources

- Improved conditions for sustainable use and management of cross border natural resources.
- Reduced climate impact and enhanced resilience to climate change.
- Improved conditions for preservation and restoration of biodiversity and its ecosystem services.



Migration and development

- Improved capacity to deal with migration in a way that safeguards the rights of refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants and contributes to development.
- Improved opportunities for productive employment with decent working conditions, particularly for migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM PARTNERS

Human rights, democracy, and gender equality

Our new Agreements

Promoting Human Rights in Latin America - Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

A new regional collaboration was initiated with OHCHR focusing on three main areas:

- Enhance civic space and protect human rights defenders and journalists in the LAC region;
- Promote and protect the human rights of migrants in vulnerable situations;
- Encourage the adoption of environmental and climate policies and plans in line with human rights standards, including that those affected, as well as environmental human rights defenders, can access information, decision-making, public participation and remedies.

The agreement will be coordinated from the two regional offices; in Panama and Chile.



Photo credits: OHCHR

Institutional Strengthening of the Inter American Court of Human Rights (IACHR)



Photo credits: Paola Perez

A new cooperation agreement was recently signed between Sweden and the Inter American Court of Human Rights.

The aim of the project is to increase the number of sessions of the Court, to strengthen information technology and human rights training capacities, and to increase access to information about the Court's decisions.

Pablo Saavedra Alessandri, Executive Secretary of the IACHR and Helena Storm, Ambassador of Sweden to Colombia, signed the new agreement on May 12 in Bogota.

Human rights, democracy, and gender equality

Increased responsibility and sustainability in Latin American mining



Photo credits: Nataly Bernal

An agreement was signed in January 2023 with the International Council of Swedish Industry (NIR), the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) and Centro Vincular of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso. This consortium is working together to contribute with their own expertise to promote responsible mining practices to protect local environment and human rights.

To monitor the development of this initiative, a follow-up field visit was made to the Lithium Provinces in Argentina (Jujuy, Salta and Catamarca) in May 8-12, to accompany meetings with stakeholders with different views at the national and local level to understand their concerns and perspective on the relevance of this initiative.

Swedish parliamentarians visit to Ecuador

In April, members of the External Affairs Committee of the Swedish Parliament participated in a study tour to Ecuador, organized by UNDP. The purpose of the visit was to get a comprehensive view of the national and regional challenges faced by a middle-income country such as Ecuador and how the Swedish core funding to UNDP makes a difference in those contexts.

During five days the Committee was able to meet with a wide range of UNDP partners working with very diverse topics such as conservation and bioeconomy in the Amazon, migrant and socio-economic inclusion of the Venezuelan diaspora, governance challenges related to justice and organized crime among others. The head of the regional cooperation team at the Embassy in Colombia was invited to accompany the mission. Earlier this year parliamentarians have also visited Colombia and Guatemala. Partly as a result of these visits a parliamentary network for Latin America has been established



Photo credits: UNDP



Environment, climate, and sustainable use of natural resources

Our new Agreements

Promoting the mobilization of Green Finance in Latin America & the Caribbean to accelerate the implementation of NDCs as a pathway for regional environmental sustainability and resilience (UNDP)



Photo credits: Nataly Bernal

Together with the Regional Hub of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Sweden will contribute to leverage transformational change for the mobilization of climate and green finance in the region through common approaches.

Focused on supporting governments to make public financing more efficient, as to unlock finance and investments, including private financial flows, that can be used to fund sustainable development initiatives, ranging from climate change mitigation and adaptation, communities' resilience to ecosystem regeneration strategies.

Regional Team Europe Initiative (TEI) Five Great Forest of Mesoamerica

The regional team together with its partners **IUCN-CATIE-WWF** are currently working on a proposal for a multi-country action promoted by the EU Delegation in Costa Rica on the Five Great Forests of Mesoamerica, in which Sweden through its partners will be in charge of implementing a process to ensure a safe and supportive environment for environmental, territorial and human rights defenders.



Photo credits: Eric Ecker/ IUCN



Environment, climate, and sustainable use of natural resources

50th anniversary of the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE)

Romina Pourmokhtari, Minister of Climate and Environment of Sweden, participated in May in the EU-LAC environmental ministerial meeting in Costa Rica. During the visit the minister and her team, accompanied by Ambassador Hans Magnusson, had the opportunity to visit the campus of CATIE. She learned about CATIE's work, the existing cooperation with Sweden and the research being carried out to promote Inclusive Green Development.



Photo credits: CATIE

Migration & Development

Field visit with ACT Church of Sweden and the Jesuit Migration Network



The Mural in Comitancillo commemorates victims of the Mexican massacre

On May 21- 23 the regional team visited the village Comitancillo in Guatemala together with ACT Church of Sweden and the Jesuit Migration Network.

In January 2022 a group of 19 migrants on their way from Comitancillo to the U.S were killed in a massacre in Mexico. Twelve Mexican police officers are being charged a purpose of the visit was to accompany the families of the victims as they participate virtually in the trial.

A regional project to support the work of the Jesuit Migration Network and ACT is planned.

MEET OUR NEW PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR



Recently incorporated as the Program Administrator for the Regional Development Cooperation team at the Swedish Embassy in Bogotá, Antonella supports and contributes to the quality assurance and internal controls of Sida operations.

Antonella holds a bachelor degree in Business Administration, with a 13-year experience in financing, operations, projects and audits. Her most recent experience was as a Programming and Training Assistant at Peace Corps - Embassy of the United States, supporting the planning, development, implementation and administration of projects: Teaching English as a Foreign Language and Community Economic Development, in Colombia's rural areas.

Antonella Cianci

We are happy to welcome Antonella to our team!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS



The Pan-Amazon Conference on Bioeconomy, June 21-22 in Belém, Pará, Brazil.

21-22
June

The conference will address critical opportunities and challenges for the bioeconomy in the Amazon with government representatives, public policymakers, Indigenous peoples and local communities, academia, companies, the financial sector, NGOs, communities, and social movements from the nine Amazonian countries.

The International Forum on Social Movements and Territories, Fortaleza, Brazil

29
June-1
July

This Forum is part of the Platforms for Social Dialogue (PDS) of CLACSO and aims to exchange, dialogue, disseminate knowledge and generate advocacy around social movements and activism.

III EU-CELAC Summit 2023, Brussels, Belgium

17-18
July

The regional summit between the EU and the Community of Latin America and Caribbean states (CELAC) bring together European, Latin American and Caribbean leaders to strengthen relations between both regions and is main forums for dialogue and cooperation between Europe, and Latin American and Caribbean states.

Amazon Summit, Belém, Brazil

8-9
Aug

Brazil is organizing a regional summit in 8-9 August to renew the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), bringing together countries containing parts of the Amazon rainforest.