

THE INTERCIENCIA ASSOCIATION AND THE FUTURE OF THE AMAZON

In 1974, the Associations for the Advancement of Science of Brazil, the USA and Venezuela, together with the CONACYT from Mexico, decided to launch the Interciencia Association with the fundamental aim of uniting the scientific communities of the Americas, so that they could better serve the development of the nations and the welfare of their people.

Ever since that moment, the group of promoters took upon themselves the implementation of the two principal initiatives that were envisaged. On the one hand *Interciencia*, a multidisciplinary trilingual journal, was founded as a means to disseminate the scientific activities in the region, to be a forum for discussion of the problems of its scientific communities, and also as a window to show the world the advancements achieved by their members. On the other hand, meetings of researchers and science and technology authorities were organized in the region to deal in depth with the large and current problems that concerned society, and the participation in regional forums, representing the scientific communities of the member countries, was promoted. For more than a lustrum, and thanks to the support offered by the member association from Canada, the Interciencia Awards in Life Sciences, and in Ecology and Environment, have been granted.

Since those initial times the uninterrupted publication of *Interciencia*, already in its thirty sixth annual volume, the active participation in different regional forums, and the materialization of over fifty meetings and symposia on themes of current interest have been taking place. In the last decade, these meetings for scientific exchange have taken place on the occasion of the statutory annual meeting of the Association, which every year is organized by a different member country, with the participation of the Member Associations.

At the thirty sixth Annual Meeting of the Interciencia Association, held last October in the city of Manaus, Brazil, attended by delegates from the associations for the advancement of science from eleven countries of the Americas and the Caribbean, the host association, the Brazilian Society for the Progress of Science (SBPC), organized a symposium dedicated to the study of the problems faced in the Amazon region. During the two day meeting, entitled 'The Future of the Amazon', renowned experts presented lectures covering aspects of climate and atmospheric transport of nutrients, the evaluation of forestry and mining activities, the genetic resources and biodiversity of the region, their utilization, the existing research and technological infrastructure, bio-innovation and the use of biotechnology, up to the social, educational, health and economic problems faced by the population of the region, as well as the current perspectives and future needs.

As a corollary from the abundant interventions and discussions carried out, as well as from the diverse worries expressed by the attendants, the meeting concluded with the joint elaboration of the Declaration of Manaus, which establishes a clear continuity with other declarations made in previous meetings of the Interciencia Association, in Panama and in Cochabamba. They have all been directed to the governments in the region and, particularly, to the responsible authorities in the areas of education, science and technology. In these pronouncements, the fundamental recommendations that arise from the discussions held are decanted, with the purpose of making aware those to whom it corresponds to establish the course of the progress of our peoples and to put in effect the actions required in order to overcome the problems that trouble them.

Thus are the reasons why in the following pages the Manaus Declaration is published, in the four national languages of the participants at the October 2010 meeting.

MIGUEL LAUFER
Editor