

INTERCIENCIA, THE JOURNAL OF THE REGION'S SCIENTIFIC GLADIATORS

I am pleased to begin these words with a cordial greeting to the INTERCIENCIA family, a congregation of academics, researchers, science managers and authors who, with unwavering generosity, disseminate their criteria and advances. For almost half a century, this platform has been a witness and a means of disseminating the adaptability and resilience of Latin American science in the face of an ever-changing and often turbulent reality.

In a continent characterized by economic challenges, growing social disparities and a relentless pursuit of technological advances driven by so-called "developed" nations, publications such as INTERCIENCIA take on an unusual relevance. They are more than just journals, they are bastions of multidisciplinary rigour in peer review and, above all, editorial integrity. It is admirable to observe how journals such as these are sustained and thrive without relying on financial support from governmental or non-governmental entities, with the permanent support of the authors.

Science, in difficult times, transcends being a simple instrument of discovery; it becomes a bridge to equity and well-being. But, in our region, the pressure is palpable for scientists to align themselves with issues of global resonance, often leaving regional research of vital importance to our communities in the background.

In this scenario, Latin American scientific journals stand as guardians of our authenticity and needs, challenging the notion that only what is "global" is valuable and reasserting the essence and relevance of the local and contextual.

It is regrettable and discouraging to observe how, on numerous occasions, our contributions are undervalued by entities that should be their main supporters, hiding behind the supposed superiority of highly indexed journals. They do not understand that the real and lasting impact lies in how science directly benefits our societies.

I vividly remember the year 1990 when INTERCIENCIA launched a special issue on large rivers, a landmark issue in the study of watersheds that received worldwide recognition and numerous citations. This reaffirms that relevance is not exclusive to publications from predominant nations.

In an era full of challenges, from health crises to political and socio-economic tensions, science must be intimately

linked to the realities of our people. It is increasingly evident that we are not absolute masters of nature, but merely temporary custodians of a legacy that belongs to future generations. It is imperative then to strongly support regional research, where rivers and wetlands become not only a reflection of our environmental stewardship, but also a sensor of regional and global change. Rivers, as Sioli perceived them, are the arteries of the landscape, of a landscape in which several countries have installed their civilizations, and share the benefits of water and the waterway. They are intermediaries between the water of the clouds and the sea, they are young water accessible to all human activities.

With more than three million square kilometers of wetlands still preserved, Ibero-America has a unique responsibility in the field of environmental sciences. The mission is clear: to find and implement strategies for sustainable development in harmony with nature. This implies recognising that human societies are an active part of the biosphere, the one with the greatest capacity for transformation, and therefore, the objective should not be to dominate nature, but to understand it, to know the limits for different forms of utilization, to design productive systems contemplating extreme situations such as prolonged droughts and floods, to design the use of fisheries without falling into overfishing, to generate environmental education based on different spatial and temporal scales. Researchers must assume their role as socio-environmental referents, also contributing through the mass media, in addition to their contributions in specialized journals.

I celebrate INTERCIENCIA and other good Latin American scientific journals. In turbulent times, they are the voice and soul of a community that seeks not only understanding, but real and transformative solutions in harmony with the environment.

Reading successive issues of this five-decade series leaves the image that our researchers are gladiators in a scientific world with many difficulties, with the commitment and eagerness to share knowledge and criteria that will lead us to a better world.

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