




2011-12

ANNUAL REPORT

Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense



The Xinghu River in Brazil is threatened by dam development. ©Christian Poirier, Amazon Watch <<

OUR MISSION

Since 1998, AIDA has helped people and communities throughout the Americas protect their environment through the development, implementation, and enforcement of national and international laws. Our work is results-oriented in that we address specific cases and causes, while focusing on empowering citizens, NGOs, communities, and policy-makers. We use legal strategies and public participation to expose flawed policies and initiate reform. We work closely with scientists to ensure that our work has sound basis. And we provide these services free of charge.

With board membership and participating organizations broadly representing the Americas, we seek to establish precedents of international significance and protect key environmental resources, vulnerable communities and biodiversity treasures in the hemisphere.

AIDA projects focus on five strategic themes:

- 1) **Human Rights and the Environment** Establishing the link between human rights violations and environmental degradation while protecting disadvantaged communities.
- 2) **Marine Biodiversity and Coastal Protection** Advancing sustainable use of marine resources and protection of critical coastal ecosystems and endangered marine species.
- 3) **Freshwater** Protecting the right to water and ensuring adequate freshwater supplies in the Americas.
- 4) **Environmental Governance and Public Participation** Mentoring lawyers and educating decision makers to promote legal advocacy for environmental protection.
- 5) **Climate Change** Reducing factors that aggravate climate change, and advocating for environmentally sound initiatives for mitigation and adaptation.


RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The impact of our work during the past two years has been significant. Our achievements have included:

- **Ensuring Consideration of Human Rights and Environmental Protection in Development of a Mega-Dam** To address the potentially grave consequences of the Belo Monte dam, which will be the third largest in the world, AIDA is leading a case before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). If built, the dam would flood an area of rainforest as large as Chicago and destroy the ways of life for more than 20,000 indigenous and rural people. In a case that has generated significant media and political attention, AIDA's intervention has brought international scrutiny to the actions of the Brazilian government and financial institutions. The IACHR called on Brazil to halt the project and initiate an improved process with local communities—the first time this body has requested suspension of a project this size. Nevertheless, Brazil is moving forward with Belo Monte. Most recently, we filed a petition before the IACHR requesting reparations for human rights violations and calling for comprehensive enforcement of national and international norms that apply to the project.
- **Assuring Appropriate Assessment of Environmental Impacts in Panama** In collaboration with partner organization CIAM, we fought Panama's Law 30 which would have allowed ambiguous "best practices" to be substituted for formal environmental impact assessments (EIAs). Without EIAs, Panamanians would have no way of predicting the environ-



Indigenous communities in Brazil are opposed to the Belo Monte Dam. <<
©Marcelo Salazar, Instituto Socioambiental



“ NESTLED AT THE SOUTHERN TIP OF BAJA CALIFORNIA SUR, THE CABO PULMO CORAL REEF IS AN ECOLOGICAL TREASURE. ”

mental effects of new mines, dams or widespread coastal development. The proposed law would also have weakened the authorities' power to investigate police officers for discharging firearms, and curtailed labor unions' right to strike and bargain collectively. Although the law was revoked, the government continues trying to weaken the EIA process, so AIDA's work continues.

- **Halting Resort Development in Baja California Sur** The Cabo Pulmo reef is a national park in Mexico that hosts more than 800 species of marine animals. Yet this precious ecosystem is threatened by plans for three large resorts that would pollute area waters, bleach coral, decimate biodiversity, and impair the local economies of small communities that depend on the reef. AIDA worked with local communities and organizations in Baja California Sur to file a request with the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention—an international conservation treaty—asking for a formal review of the proposed projects and recommendations for conservation management measures. In a significant victory in June 2012, Mexico's government withdrew the permit for the largest project. Unfortunately, a new development has since been proposed, requiring AIDA's continued engagement in the case.

>> *Protecting key marine ecosystems like the Cabo Pulmo reef promotes recovery of marine populations and local economies.*
©Octavio Aburto, Centro para la Biodiversidad Marina y la Conservación

- **Highlighting the Need for Integration of Human Rights Into the Climate Change Dialogue** AIDA has brought attention to the human rights impacts of climate change, engaging commissioners of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), delegates to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in South Africa, and governments and organizations throughout the Americas. An AIDA report demonstrates how marginalized populations in developing countries will suffer the most as a result of climate change despite their minimal contribution to climate change. AIDA calls on nations to meet international human rights obligations and incorporate human rights concerns into energy and climate change plans and agreements.
- **Illustrating Harms Caused by Large Dams** An AIDA study demonstrated the significant harm caused by large dams in the Americas and documented affiliated human right and environmental violations. Working before international authorities and at meetings such as the World Water Week in Sweden or Rivers for Life in Mexico, we advocated for the need to conduct long-range impact studies that include climate change considerations, to appropriately consider truly sustainable renewable energy sources and improved efficiency as potential solutions.
- **Advocating for Legislation to Protect Coral Reefs** AIDA is working to motivate reforms and provide a blueprint for conservation of coral reefs throughout Latin America. An initial AIDA report focused on Costa Rica discusses the threat to coral reefs from destructive fishing practices, irresponsible tourism, reckless boaters, water acidification, and polluted runoff. We are calling on Costa Rica to enact coral-protecting

>> *Andres Pirazzoli of AIDA speaks with Brazil's former environment minister Marina Silva. ©AIDA*





Colombia's paramo wetlands provide freshwater for millions of people, yet are threatened by escalating mining activity. ©Humboldt Institute

legislation that mandates more careful coastal zoning, strict regulation of destructive fishing practices, and effective coordination among regulatory authorities.

■ **Preventing Licensing of the Angostura Mine in Colombia**

Proposed for the Santurban paramo, a critical high altitude ecosystem in the Andes, this mine would have threatened the freshwater supplies for two million people. AIDA worked with local organizations and provided the authorities with international law arguments that were used by the Ministry of the Environment to reject the mining permit in May 2011.

■ **Advocating for Global Action on Climate Change**

AIDA participated and worked for meaningful progress at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change negotiations. We focused our advocacy on human rights, the role of international development banks, and the transition to a “low-carbon” economy. We helped draft documents and language to advance adoption of a fair climate fund and recognition of the link between human rights and climate change—both of which delegates ultimately agreed to.

■ **Protecting the Rights of Indigenous Populations Threatened by Resource Extraction Projects**

Along with the Colombian Network for Environmental Justice, AIDA helped create and uphold an historic ruling protecting the right of indigenous populations to consultation and participation. The Colombian Constitutional Court decision to halt the Mandé Norte mine, a huge copper and gold mine that threatened biodiverse forests and human rights, marked the first time a Latin American national court recognized the need for environmental impact assessments prior to community consultation.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS & AFFILIATIONS

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Director, International Program, Earthjustice / CFO, AIDA



Part of the AIDA team meeting in Costa Rica (left to right): Florencia Ortúzar, Chile; Héctor Herrera, Colombia; Astrid Puentes, Colombia; Maria José Veramendi, Peru; Anna Cederstav, USA; Tania Paz, Nicaragua; Paulo Bacca, Colombia; Gladys Martínez, Costa Rica; Andrea Rodríguez, Bolivia; Joelson Cavalcante, Brazil; Sandra Moguel, Mexico. ©Jacob Kopas, AIDA





PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

AIDA works in close collaboration with environmental law organizations throughout the hemisphere that participate in AIDA by nominating candidates for the AIDA board and contributing ideas for projects of hemispheric importance. The current AIDA participating organizations are:

Argentina – CEDHA (Centro de Derechos Humanos y Medio Ambiente, Center for Human Rights and Environment)

Canada – Ecojustice Canada

Chile – FIMA (Fiscalía del Medio Ambiente)

Costa Rica – CEDARENA (Centro de Derecho Ambiental y de los Recursos Naturales, the Environmental and Natural Resources Law Center)

Costa Rica – JPN (Justicia para la Naturaleza, Justice for Nature)

Ecuador – ECOLEX (Corporación de Gestión y Derecho Ambiental, Organization for Environmental Law and Management)

Mexico – CEMDA (Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental, the Mexican Environmental Law Center)

Panama – CIAM (Centro de Incidencia Ambiental, the Environmental Advocacy Center)

Peru – SPDA (Sociedad Peruana de Derecho Ambiental, the Peruvian Society for Environmental Law)

United States – Earthjustice

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Aug '10 - Jul'11	Aug '11 - Jul'12
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
Grants	334,000.00	456,695.55
Donations	7,880.81	6,172.06
Investment Income	1,281.31	870.14
Donated Services and Facilities	287,137.82	308,036.30
Total Income	<u>\$ 630,299.94</u>	<u>\$ 771,774.05</u>
Expense		
General Administrative	30,953.57	37,897.85
Fundraising	14,937.46	32,517.15
Program	320,629.10	335,396.49
Donated Services and Facilities	287,137.82	308,036.30
Total Expense	<u>\$ 653,657.95</u>	<u>\$ 713,847.79</u>
Net Ordinary Income	-23,358.01	57,926.26
Total Other Income	<u>78.44</u>	<u>2,731.58</u>
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Net Income	<u><u>\$ (23,279.57)</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 60,657.84</u></u>

Notes:

- 1) AIDA receives significant in-kind donations of professional time as well as office costs, materials, and equipment from AIDA participating organizations, particularly Earthjustice. We also have numerous professional volunteers and interns that contribute their time to AIDA. These contributions are valued at fair market value and shown in the Financial Statements as "Donated Services and Facilities."
- 2) Because of substantial donated services, AIDA is able to use more than 80% of funds raised for programmatic efforts.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	Jul 31, 2011	Jul 31, 2012
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Checking/Savings	480,433.62	555,721.92
Grants receivable	139,500.00	128,668.00
Other Current Assets	4,380.47	9,732.54
Total Current Assets	<u>624,314.09</u>	<u>694,122.46</u>
Fixed Assets	<u>2,579.12</u>	<u>2,579.12</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u><u>626,893.21</u></u>	<u><u>696,701.58</u></u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	28,797.60	36,896.56
Credit Cards	25.00	6,480.76
Other Current Liabilities	2,604.63	0.00
Total Current Liabilities	<u>31,427.23</u>	<u>43,377.32</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>31,427.23</u>	<u>43,377.32</u>
Equity		
Equity	396,003.90	344,954.56
Temporarily Restricted Funds	<u>199,462.08</u>	<u>308,369.70</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u><u>626,893.21</u></u>	<u><u>696,701.58</u></u>



Asociación Interamericana para la Defensa del Ambiente

A I D A - A M E R I C A S . O R G

FRONT: THE KUNA INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN PANAMA WILL NEED TO RELOCATE AS SEA LEVELS RISE DUE TO CLIMATE CHANGE. © ANGELA RUTHERFORD

BACK: PRISTINE BEACH N COASTA RICA ©MATT TILGHMAN / ISTOCK