



Comisión Nacional para el Conocimiento y  
Uso de la Biodiversidad

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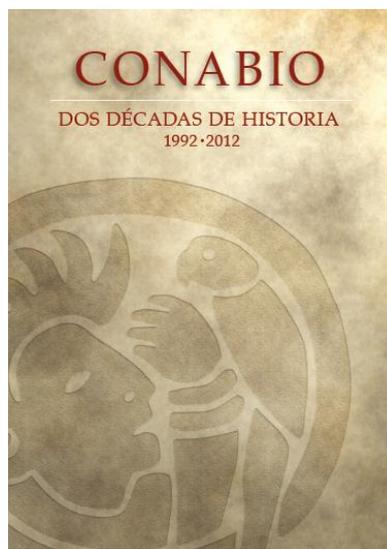
Liga Periférico-Insurgentes Sur 4903  
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14010 México, D.F.

## Press release

9th of March 2012

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Mexico City, D. F.

# CONABIO TWO DECADES OF HISTORY



MEXICO CITY.- In two decades of work, CONABIO has integrated information and knowledge on the natural wealth of Mexico in a manner almost unmatched globally. Because of its work, the National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO, by its Spanish acronym) is a point of reference worldwide for the creation of similar institutions. Its twenty years of activity will be celebrated in the National Museum of Anthropology on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> of March with a program of plenary lectures on the global panorama of biodiversity and an evaluation of the institution.

The event will be held in the Jaime Torres Bodet Auditorium of the National Museum of Anthropology (Paseo de la Reforma and Gandhi, in Chapultepec). It will begin at 10 am with lectures from Dr. Cristian Samper, Director of the Natural History Museum of the Smithsonian Institute; and Dr. Holger Kreft, of the University of Göttingen, in Germany. In the afternoon, the lectures will begin with Dr. Russell F. Smith III, of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association of the United States; followed by Dr. Robert Watson, of the University of East Anglia and Scientific Advisor to the UK Government. To close the program, Dr. Peter Raven, President Emeritus of the Missouri Botanic Garden, will report on the evaluation of CONABIO. The event of Friday the 16<sup>th</sup> of March will finish at 5pm (Entry is free and simultaneous translation will be available for each lecture).



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Several centuries of study, as well as a rich historical and cultural tradition of pleasure and interest in knowing our biodiversity, demonstrate the importance of the natural wealth of Mexico. It was for this reason that, only two decades ago, the National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO) was established in Mexico. Its mission: *To promote coordinate, support and perform activities directed towards knowledge of the biological diversity of Mexico as well as its conservation and sustainable use.* From its creation, Dr. José Sarukhán Kermez has directed the development of the institution.

A high proportion of all the natural richness that exists on the planet is concentrated in only 17 countries worldwide, which are therefore known as megadiverse. The megadiverse country of Mexico is found within the top five of these countries. This position confers upon us a great honor, but also a huge responsibility before the world: As a country, we occupy second place in terms of number of reptiles (804 species), third place for mammals (535 species), fifth place both for amphibians (361 species) and vascular plants (23,424 species) and eighth place for birds (1,096 species). We possess the greatest diversity in the world for many groups of plants including pines, oaks, magueys and cacti, as well as a huge diversity of snakes, bats, whales, salamanders, birds of prey and sea turtles.

Enormous databases safeguard the information compiled and systemized by CONABIO over two decades of history, all of which is available to the general public. To date, most requests for information from this Commission have come from the governmental sector, although a large number of requests are received from all sectors. CONABIO has served as a bridge between science and society, and between the knowledge and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Without exception, all the inhabitants of the planet: human beings, plants, animals, fungi and microorganisms form part of, and depend upon, biological diversity or biodiversity. Celebrate with us the first twenty years of the development of CONABIO.

To obtain a program of the event please visit the portal [Biodiversidad Mexicana / www.biodiversidad.gob.mx/Difusion/eventos.html](http://www.biodiversidad.gob.mx/Difusion/eventos.html).

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#### Note to the editors:

**The National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO)** is a permanent inter-ministerial Commission; its purpose is to generate the required knowledge on which to base Mexican public policy and the decisions of society regarding biodiversity. For this reason, it is primarily dedicated to the shaping and updating of the National Biodiversity Information System (SNIB, by its Spanish acronym), supporting projects and studies on the knowledge and use of biodiversity, providing advice to governmental agencies and to other sectors, conducting special projects, disseminating information regarding biological wealth, monitoring adherence to international conventions and providing services to the public. The Commission was created by Presidential decree on March 16<sup>th</sup> of 1992.

[www.conabio.gob.mx](http://www.conabio.gob.mx)

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