

Chief Executives Meeting
April 24-26, 2003
Punta Cana Resort & Club
Dominican Republic

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE & SPONSORS

The conference is organized by The Center for Environmental Leadership in Business and the Center for Applied Biodiversity Science, divisions of Conservation International, the Center for Environmental Research and Conservation (CERC) at The Earth Institute at Columbia University, Punta Cana Resort and Club, and the Punta Cana Ecological Foundation. The conference is generously sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, ChevronTexaco, and ExxonMobil. Below please find more information on each organizing committee member and sponsor as well as a link to their website.

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

THE CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP IN BUSINESS (CELB)

www.celb.org

Solving the planet's most pressing environmental challenges requires the ingenuity and commitment of the private sector. As business acquires more influence worldwide and public support for conservation grows, companies face new incentives to demonstrate environmental leadership.

The Center for Environmental Leadership in Business provides a new forum for collaboration between the private sector and the environmental community. The Center promotes business practices that reduce industry's ecological footprint, contribute to conservation, and create value for the companies that adopt them. The result is a net benefit for the global environment and for participating companies.

The Center is catalyzing innovative solutions to the world's environmental issues. In collaboration with industry leaders, other environmental organizations, and academia, the Center develops and demonstrates innovative, replicable business practices that focus on three critical issues:

- **BIODIVERSITY** - transforming the impact that key industries have on critical ecosystems by reducing their contribution to habitat loss and pollution and by finding innovative ways for them to contribute positively to conservation.
- **WATER** - encouraging large industrial and agricultural water users to employ best practices and to promote public policies that conserve water, enhance water quality, and protect watersheds.
- **CLIMATE CHANGE** - engaging industry in limiting the build-up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere by reducing industry's own emissions and by offsetting emissions through forest conservation, renewable energy and energy efficient projects.

The Center engages those industries that have the greatest impact on critical ecosystems and those with the greatest potential to promote positive change. These include agriculture, fisheries, forestry, energy, mining, travel and leisure, transportation, manufacturing, and financial services.

Created in a partnership between Conservation International and Ford Motor Company, the Center operates as a division of CI and is governed by a distinct executive board of leaders from the business and environmental communities. While the Center's corporate partners represent a wide range of industries, all share the Center's commitment to environmental improvement, collaboration, and transparency.

THE CENTER FOR APPLIED BIODIVERSITY SCIENCE (CABS)

www.biodiversityscience.org

Conservation International's mission is to conserve the Earth's living heritage, our global biodiversity, and to demonstrate that human societies are able to live harmoniously with nature. Within this context, the mission of the Center for Applied Biodiversity Science (CABS), a division of Conservation International, is to provide the scientific underpinnings for conservation actions and solutions and in providing accurate data about species and ecosystems most at risk, to provide early warnings about the most critical conservation threats and the most pressing needs for conservation action.

In the Caribbean, CABS is working on expanding the conservation and scientific knowledge base for Caribbean biodiversity. The Caribbean Biodiversity Initiative (CBI) carries out two main activities in the Caribbean Basin, its islands, and adjacent waters:

- Conducting biodiversity research in the previously designated Hotspot and Critical Marine Area (both of which were designated as part of global analyses) that will produce fine-grained data at the level of the Hotspot and CME in order to complete their biological assessment and refine conservation priorities on a regional scale.
- Establishing CI's presence in the Hotspot by involving local players in the research above, disseminating scientific information to all users at no cost, and by establishing institutional links to a diverse set of local partners.

The Caribbean Basin is one of the geographically most complex regions of the world, consisting of a highly subdivided set of islands and near-shore environments. One consequence of this geography is a pattern of fine-grained biological diversification that adds up to one of the world's greatest concentrations of endemic species. But the geographic intricacies that resulted in high biological richness are also associated with social and political complexity. The Caribbean Basin comprises the world's greatest concentration of small countries representing all of the world's political systems, and each of these societies is trying to manage ecosystems that operate on a scale larger than the country itself. CABS' Caribbean Biodiversity Initiative is aimed at both the biological and social factors that must be harmonized to protect a maximum number of the region's species. Over the next year, CABS will finalize the components of and seek funding for Caribbean-wide strategy, which will include partnerships and outreach, biodiversity research, monitoring and a Caribbean fishes campaign.

CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION (CERC)

<http://cerc.columbia.edu/>

CERC is a consortium of Columbia University, the American Museum of Natural History, The New York Botanical Garden, Wildlife Conservation Society, and Wildlife Trust. Our multi-disciplinary efforts in Education, Research, Training, and Outreach bring together over 75 scientists with expertise in the natural and social sciences from these institutions in order to promote environmental conservation around the world. CERC is based at Columbia University, one of America's preeminent educational institutions. CERC scientists instruct, advise, and mentor undergraduate and graduate students in Columbia University's Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Environmental Biology (E3B). A member of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, CERC forms part of a broad consortium of institutions that are world-renowned in the study of environmental systems.

THE PUNTA CANA ECOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

www.puntacana.com/envir.html

The Foundation is a non-profit organization established in 1994. The mission of the Foundation is to protect and preserve the natural resources of the Punta Cana region while contributing to sustainable development on all levels: locally, regionally and nationally. The Ecological Foundation manages the Punta Cana Ecological Reserve, a treasure house of tropical flora and fauna extending over 2,000 acres. Trails meander through forest settings and beautifully maintained cultivated gardens where visitors will see unusual plants and rare and endangered animals. Living exhibitions display the wide web of biodiversity, showcasing bird and insect life, the native iguana and Dominican farm animals. Since 1999, the Foundation has maintained an important partnership with Cornell University through the creation of the Cornell Biodiversity Laboratory at Punta Cana. The Laboratory is singular in the Dominican Republic and functions as a research and education center where students and professors from Cornell and from Dominican Universities conduct research on the biodiversity of the Punta Cana area.

PUNTA CANA RESORT AND CLUB

www.puntacana.com

Accommodation and meeting facilities will be on the grounds of the exclusive, environmental award winning Punta Cana Resort and Club, owned and managed by Grupo Punta Cana (GPC). Thirty years ago, Grupo Punta Cana (GPC), a Dominican/ American partnership, purchased seventy-eight square kilometers of land on the undeveloped eastern coast of the Dominican Republic. They began developing an integrated tourism project by planting 2,000 coconut trees and building 8 villas.

The partnership joined a small local population which at that time burned trees to make charcoal and clear land for farming. GPC encouraged families to abandon charcoal production and began to provide alternative employment.

Today, GPC is a family of businesses:

- Punta Cana Resort and Club: 400 room luxury resort, marina, 18 hole golf course, 3 pools, 7 restaurants and conference facilities.
- Electric Corporation Punta Cana: 10-megawatt capacity.
- Punta Cana International Airport

- Punta Cana Foundation: primary school and community outreach.
- Punta Cana Ecological Foundation: 2,000-acre reserve, nurseries and Biodiversity Center.
- Punta Cana Construction: development and infrastructure improvements.

GPC has a commitment to sustainability that is exemplified by the Resort. The Resort was designed as a low-density development with 525 m² of land per guest. A Dominican architect deftly blended Dominican, Spanish and Arwark Indian designs, reflecting the past and present. Most GPC buildings are made with native coral, wood and Cana leaves and areas are designed to take advantage of cross ventilation and natural lighting. Villas were built around existing coconut trees.

The eastern coast is dry. For this reason, GPC implemented a policy requiring use of mostly native plants. A team of gardeners is responsible for the recuperation of endemic plants and trees which are harvested from areas of planned construction. Those trees that are not harvested are shredded in one of three industrial sized chippers and used for mulch in the gardens.

The golf course is seeded with the specially developed Pals Palma grass that requires 50% less watering than Bermuda grass. The course is watered with recycled water generated from a system of lagoons that collects grey water from the Resort operations.

In 1994 GPC created the Ecological Foundation with an endowment of 2,000 acres for a Nature Reserve. Flora and fauna inventories were first undertaken in collaboration with Dominican University, INTEC and the Santo Domingo Botanical Gardens. Today, the Reserve is home to the Punta Cana/ Cornell Biodiversity Center. The 5,000 square-foot Biodiversity laboratory performs research on local plants, animals, marine and microbial organisms that may offer promise as new medicines. Part of their scientific method includes ethno-medicine research, involving the collection of information from rural villages who use natural compounds as “home remedies”.

SPONSORS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

www.state.gov

One of the major new initiatives from the Department of State is “White Water to Blue Water,” a cooperative initiative that involves many partners from among the governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, universities and private sector of the Wider Caribbean region. The objectives of White Water to Blue Water are to promote the practice of integrated watershed and marine ecosystem management, and improve management capacity and cooperation on a national and regional level between the stakeholders of the Wider Caribbean. Beginning in 2003, the initiative will focus first in the Wider Caribbean Region, and may serve as a model for implementation in Africa and the South Pacific.

The U.S. government will host a kick-off White Water to Blue Water stakeholder conference for the Wider Caribbean Region November 2-10, 2003, in Miami, Florida. The conference is designed to provide a forum for the enhancement of existing partnerships and the development of new cooperative efforts to address integrated management needs in the Wider Caribbean. It will also identify “best practices” already underway in the region as well as gaps in integrated management coverage in the region, and seek to remove obstacles to ongoing partnerships. Participants will be offered short-course training in methodologies for improved integrated watershed management, as well as for

establishing and maintaining effective partnerships, including in the tourism industry. Further information on the White Water to Blue Water initiative and Miami conference can be found at the following website: www.state.gov/g/oes/sus/13029.htm.

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