



"The Billion Tree Campaign is delighted to partner with Yachay Wasi. This initiative will assist in conserving the health of vast fresh water lakes which support communities and wildlife alike. The economic and environmental imperative to restore lost and damaged ecosystems from forests and freshwater to mangroves and wetlands can no longer be ignored if we want growth through job generation and poverty alleviation, all of which are so needed to deliver sustainability in the 21st century."

Achim Steiner, United Nations Under-Secretary-General,
and Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)



During the International Year of Biodiversity: **Sacred Sites:**

Biodiversity and Andean Spirituality

9 thru 11 August 2010

Raqchi, Province of Canchis, Dept of Cuzco, Peru

A Conference Organized by Yachay Wasi

The Second local Conference on **SACRED SITES: BIODIVERSITY AND ANDEAN SPIRITUALITY** took place in the Andean village of Raqchi, Province of Canchis, Department of Cuzco, Peru.

Two hours drive from Cuzco, Raqchi is located at an altitude of 3,450 meters (11,319 feet). Residents of this Indigenous community speak Quechua and some Spanish.

The August 9 International Day of World's Indigenous Peoples was commemorated on the first day of the Conference. Ongoing Yachay Wasi Water and Sanitation project and Campaign of Planting native trees in Circuit of Four Lakes were discussed.

The first local Conference focusing on Sacred Sites: Biodiversity and Andean Spirituality organized by Yachay Wasi took place in the Andean village of Acopia, Peru in April 2009.

This Conference aimed to reinforce the importance of Indigenous Sacred sites, symbolic representations of the harmony of spirituality and biodiversity, and their relevance to today's society dilemmas such as climate change and loss of biodiversity. It also informed remote Quechua speaking Andean communities of the work of the United Nations on their behalf, including the recently adopted Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples/ Attending Indigenous representatives from remote Andean villages requested follow-up conferences to be held in their respective villages.

This Conference was followed by a Side event hosted by UNEP NY Office at UN Hqrs in NYC during the 9th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in April 2010 and subsequent funded invitation from the Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) to Luis Delgado Hurtado, President of Yachay Wasi, to address the June 2010 Conference on Biodiversity and Cultural Diversity in Montreal, Canada, organized by CBD and UNESCO.

Luis Delgado Hurtado was also approved for funding by CBD to travel to Nagoya, Japan and speak on the same subject during the Tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 10), 18 thru 29 October 2010. *Contact: Marie-Danielle Samuel, yachaywasi@nyc.rr.com*