



Former UN Volunteer Cristian Rojas Cifuentes served as an Information Analyst with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) in Colombia.

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UN Volunteers embody South-South cooperation on climate change in Latin America and the Caribbean

According to a report of the World Meteorological Organization (2021), Latin America and the Caribbean is the region most affected by climate change. Forest fires caused by droughts, extensive deforestation and above average sea-level rise in the Caribbean are only some of the consequences faced by people in the region.

The twenty seventh Conference of the Parties (COP27) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) convened in Egypt from 6 to 18 of November 2022. This is the most important annual meeting to discuss the implementation of international agreements, including the Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement. In the midst of the negotiations there are growing calls for urgent action, prioritizing those affected and increasing climate awareness among the people.

UN Volunteers are at the forefront of local efforts to address climate change mitigation and adaptation. In Latin America and the Caribbean, many serve with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and UN Development Programme (UNDP).

“ UN Volunteers bring abilities and technical knowledge in environmental issues. They also have a holistic and integral view on the work of the United Nations in different countries. --Juan Bello, Chief of the Project with UNEP in Colombia and focal point for Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru

In Ecuador, national UN Volunteer Mario Mejía contributes to advocate environment awareness through virtual methodologies. Mario is specialized in e-learning and serves with the PROAmazonía project of UNDP in Ecuador.

Delivering targeted trainings for environment specialists, technicians and a broader audience resulted in almost 2,300 users strengthening their capacities on environment protection and forest conservation.

“ We created virtual and hybrid training courses and trained trainers on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and the role of conservation in the sustainable management of forests in developing countries (REDD+). We also offered training on gender aspects of climate change. --Mario Mejía, UN Volunteer Specialist in Platforms and E-Learning with UNDP in Ecuador

"I worked closely with the Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition, as well as the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock," Mario continues. "We aimed at training indigenous communities in the Amazonía, empowering them as fundamental actors in the local transformation."

Gladys Seña Solano (Colombia) also contributes to UNDP's PROAmazonia project in Ecuador through the Online Volunteering service.

“ I map and verify interesting facts about the Amazonía project for publishing on social media. Collaborating with my on-site colleagues allows me to better understand and advocate our responsibility and ability to protect the Earth. --Gladys Seña Solano, Online Volunteer with UNDP

In Colombia, UN Volunteers offer technical and management support in international cooperation regarding the environment. Cristian Rojas Cifuentes is a former Expert UN Volunteer who served as Information Analyst with UNEP. He contributed to the design of cooperation frameworks for Colombia, Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador.

“ Often, we imagine volunteering as working in person in remote communities. Although this is often the case, Online Volunteers also support from behind a screen. With a computer, you can do a lot. --Cristian Rojas Cifuentes, former Expert UN Volunteer Information Analyst with UNEP in Colombia

Of the 2,400 UN Volunteers serving in the region, 91 per cent come from the Global South. Therefore, volunteering with the UN is an instrument of solidarity, promoting South-South cooperation in favour of people's environmental empowerment and collective independence.

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Latin America and the Caribbean

- COP • South-South cooperation

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