



Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense
Asociación Interamericana para la Defensa del Ambiente

Annual Report 2004



AIDA's Participating Organizations:

Centro de Derecho Ambiental y de los Recursos Naturales (CEDARENA) – Costa Rica

Centro de Derechos Humanos y Medio Ambiente (CEDHA) – Argentina

Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental (CEMDA) – México

Earthjustice – United States

Fiscalía del Medio Ambiente (FIMA) – Chile

Fundación para la Defensa del Interés Público (FUNDEPUBLICO) – Colombia

Justicia para la Naturaleza (JPN) – Costa Rica

Sierra Legal Defence Fund (SLDF) – Canada

Sociedad Peruana de Derecho Ambiental (SPDA) – Perú



Asociación Interamericana para la Defensa del Ambiente
Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense

Dear Friends,

We are pleased to share with you this brief summary of AIDA's main achievements and activities during our 2003-2004 fiscal year. More than just describing our efforts, we wanted to share with you the delight we have experienced in doing our work. Hopefully, you will enjoy this Annual Report as much as we did implementing each of these projects.

The achievements that you will be reading about are the result of hard work by an outstanding group of lawyers and professionals, dedicated to improving the environment and well-being in the Americas. As AIDA Directors, we have had the great pleasure to work with them, contributing to leveraging their efforts and coordinating regional strategies. To this group of partners, we are both grateful and committed as we continue to strive toward our shared goals.

Plenty remains to be done, with political and economic obstacles to environmental protection growing in many parts of our hemisphere. Nevertheless, we are confident that with persistence and by maintaining high standards for the legal and technical professional services we provide, the staff, participating organizations, and collaborators of AIDA will continue making a difference towards protecting the environment and human health in the Americas.

We look forward to the challenges that 2005 will bring!

Warmly,

Anna Cederstav
Program Director

Astrid Puentes
Legal Director

The Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense

AIDA is a non-profit international environmental law organization that works with partner groups throughout the Americas. Our mission is to empower citizens to protect human health and the environment by enforcing and developing national and international environmental laws and mechanisms for citizen participation. We aim to protect important biodiversity, shared resources, and human rights, and to ensure that international policies, laws and financial flows contribute to rather than compromise environmental protection. Our projects focus on international issues and strategies, with multinational AIDA teams collaborating to establish precedents that will have regional and long-term impacts. We provide legal and technical assistance free of charge to communities and local NGOs working to protect the environment.

Highlights 2003-2004

This year was exciting for AIDA in that we substantially increased our staff and solidified our program work. In November 2003, AIDA hired Ms. Astrid Puentes, a Colombian attorney, to fill the position of Legal Director. Ms. Puentes is based in the offices of CEMDA, AIDA's Mexican partner group, and is focusing on developing our Human Rights and Environment Program. At an AIDA meeting in Panama, two representatives from each of the nine AIDA participating organizations came together to discuss future directions and goals for AIDA's program work. We have identified efforts to protect fresh-water resources, additional case-work in situations where environmental destruction threatens human rights, and advocacy to improve the management of fisheries and the marine environment as current priorities for AIDA work in the hemisphere.

Biodiversity Program

Key Terrestrial Biodiversity and Ecosystems

In Southern Chile, development projects threaten vast expanses of native forests, pristine rivers, and lakes. AIDA and our partners in the international "No-Alumysa" campaign celebrated as Noranda, a Canadian mining company, suspended plans for an aluminum smelter that would destroy much of the region's natural wonders. Unfortunately, Noranda may still decide to reactivate the smelter project or turn the water rights over to energy companies seeking to dam the region's rivers. Lawsuits filed by AIDA's Chilean partner, FIMA, challenging the validity of Noranda's water rights in an effort to maintain the rivers and lakes as a public resource, are pending. AIDA also supported the Alliance of Chilean NGOs working to establish the international "Environmental Defense of Patagonia" campaign.

In Ecuador, AIDA has begun collaborating with lawyers and environmental law NGOs to advance strategic environmental litigation to protect important biodiversity in the Tropical Andes. As part of this work, we are promoting and supporting Ecuadorian efforts to include and strengthen the teaching of environmental law in the university curriculum.

Key Marine Biodiversity and Ecosystems

Responding to the crisis facing the oceans as marine species populations decline due to unsustainable fishing, AIDA this year added a fisheries management component to our marine conservation work, and formed a multinational legal working group to focus on this issue. The group aims to: 1) strengthen the capacity of Latin American environmental lawyers and civil society organizations to protect the marine environment and biodiversity; 2) promote progressive strategies for adequate marine management; and 3) establish and widely publicize administrative and legal precedents for marine biodiversity protection in Latin America. As a first step, AIDA staff and lawyers from six nations are collaborating to evaluate regulatory systems and fisheries policies across the Americas, and identify priorities for more effective management of fish stocks and ocean ecosystems. As a complementary effort, AIDA's Costa Rican partners, CEDARENA and JPN, are working to protect endangered marine turtles and shark species from destructive exploitation.



AIDA Fisheries Working Group in Mexico

Human Rights and Environment Program

The stark reality in many American nations is that environmental harm threatens the lives, health, and cultures of disadvantaged communities. Addressing these situations is essential. Moreover, in this setting, human rights arguments for environmental protection can be more effective than claims based on the inherent biodiversity value of animals and ecosystems. Thus, AIDA has decided to significantly increase the number of cases we handle using human rights and environment mechanisms.

Education initiatives

Last spring, AIDA co-organized workshops in Mexico and Peru to educate environmental lawyers in the use of human rights and environment strategies. The workshops focused on the link between environmental degradation and human rights violations; and on using the Inter-American System of Human Rights to address cases where such links exist. Lawyers from eight nations representing more than forty organizations attended. The workshops were a great success and generated numerous new requests for AIDA to assist with key case-work. Several organizations and lawyers have asked us to repeat these workshops in other countries of the Americas.

Plan Colombia – Environmental threats from aerial spraying

Our work around the “Plan Colombia” US-sponsored herbicide spraying continues. This effort aims to reduce the destruction of food crops, forced migration, and health impacts that stem from the aerial spraying of fields containing coca and poppy plants in rural communities throughout Colombia. As in the past, AIDA analyzed and critiqued the US State Department’s annual certification to Congress on Plan Colombia. This year, the State Department finally committed to providing the annual reports in Spanish, so that Colombian government authorities and civil society groups can verify the information provided. The Department also agreed to expand the period during which Colombian farmers may file complaints about crop destruction.

In March, AIDA's Legal Director traveled to Bogotá to meet with Colombian Senators, NGOs and media representatives. We generated significant radio and newspaper coverage about the problems associated with the aerial spraying, and contributed to a Colombian Government decision to impose an informal moratorium on the spraying in national parks. More recently, working with a Colombian lawyer, we challenged attempts by the Colombian Uribe administration to legalize spraying in the National Parks in contravention of environmental laws. Finally, via media work and conference participation, we have continued to increase public awareness of the environmental and human health impacts of US military activities in Colombia.

La Oroya – Human Rights violations caused by a US-owned metal smelter

AIDA remains dedicated to protecting the children of La Oroya, Peru. The Doe Run Corporation, headquartered in the Missouri lead-belt, operates a smelter in this Andean city. The complex is a tremendous source of heavy metal and sulfur dioxide emissions that harm the health of surrounding communities. In May, AIDA staff met with Doe Run's CEO and senior Peruvian management team, as well as with high-level Peruvian officials, to express concerns about the company's most recent proposed changes to the Environmental Management Plan. Doe Run has acknowledged the environmental problems in La Oroya, but refuses to fulfill its contractual obligations to significantly improve environmental quality by the year 2006, instead seeking to delay installation of major environmental controls until 2011. In the interim, thousands of children will continue to be harmed by lead poisoning.

This year, AIDA provided the Peruvian authorities with in-depth technical critiques of Doe Run's air quality modeling studies and environmental proposals, and helped establish links between US officials and Peruvian government authorities. As a result of such advocacy, a US Center for Disease Control team visited La Oroya and is preparing a report on the situation. AIDA's work in La Oroya is a collaborative effort with our Peruvian partners – the SPDA and other NGOs that participate in the Movement to Protect Health in La Oroya.

As AIDA moves forward to develop international legal strategies for current and new cases, we will draw on human rights and environment expertise from partner organizations, including CEDHA in Argentina and Earthjustice in the United States. Our work in this arena is only beginning, and we hope to address many important cases where vulnerable populations in the hemisphere need legal help to protect the environment on which their survival depends.

AIDA Board

With the coming of the new fiscal year, we have added two new members to the AIDA board. We welcome Daniel Taillant, (Executive Director, Center for Human Rights and Environment, Argentina) and Margot Venton (Staff Lawyer, Sierra Legal Defence Fund, Canada) who will both serve three-year terms on the Board. Margot and Daniel join current board members: Gustavo Alanís, (AIDA Secretary, President of the Mexican Environmental Law Center); Diego Bravo, (Executive Director, Fundepúblico, Colombia); Rolando Castro, (Attorney, The

Environmental and Natural Resources Law Center, Costa Rica); Fernando Dougnac, (AIDA Vice President and President of Fiscalía del Medio Ambiente, Chile); Rafael Gonzalez, (Law School Dean, University of Costa Rica); Manuel Pulgar-Vidal (AIDA President and President of the Peruvian Environmental Law Society); Amy Shannon, (Associate Director, Heartland Alliance, USA); and Martin Wagner, (AIDA Treasurer and Director of the Earthjustice International Program, USA).



AIDA Board and Staff, August 2004

Thanks!

This year's achievements would not have been possible without the contributions of our many dedicated volunteers, partners, and supporters. Special thanks are deserved by an outstanding team of professional and student volunteers including: Pauline Abadie, Bret Anderson, Phil Eager, Daniel Fromm, Candace Neufeld, Andrew Peterson, Shane Romig, and Marcela Villegas. We are also indebted to the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Conservation, Food & Health Foundation, the Oak Foundation, the Fund for Drug Policy Reform of the Tides Foundation and numerous other anonymous and private donors for the financial support that enables us to do our work.

Financial Statements

Statement of Activities (income and expenses for year)

FY 03-04 (ended July 31, 2004) with comparative totals for FY 02-03 (ended July 31, 2003)

	FY 03-04	FY 02-03
SUPPORT AND REVENUE		
Grants and Donations	204,252	54,000
Grants - No Alumysa Campaign	44,376	
Service Fees	1,138	
In-Kind Contributions	236,458	157,962
Merchandise		116
Interest	1,094	501
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE	\$487,317	\$212,578
EXPENSES		
Program Activities		
Salaries/Professional Services	241,590	122,344
Direct Costs	45,813	8,773
No-Alumysa Campaign	44,190	
Total Program Activities	\$331,593	\$131,116
Supporting Activities		
<i>Administrative</i>		
Administrative Costs	7,108	8,936
Salaries/Professional Services	49,859	40,516
<i>Fundraising</i>	3,164	1,834
Total Supporting Activities	\$60,131	\$51,287
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$391,724	\$182,403
NET INCOME (LOSS)*	\$95,593	\$30,175

**Includes funds restricted for project work in FY 2004-2005*

Statement of Financial Position

FY 03-04 (ended July 31, 2004) with comparative totals for FY 02-03 (ended July 31, 2003)

	FY 03-04	FY 02-03
ASSETS		
Current Assets	179,636	92,743
Fixed Assets	1,700	
TOTAL ASSETS	\$181,336	\$92,743
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		
Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	0	11,000
Accrued Vacation Time	859	0
Total Current Liabilities	\$859	\$11,000
Equity		
Retained Earnings	81,743	51,568
Net Income	99,593	30,175
Total Equity	\$181,336	\$81,743
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$180,478	\$70,743