

Social Development in Megadiverse Countries

CÉSAR CANTU AYALA*, BEATRIZ RODRÍGUEZ, MILTON ARAGÓN

**Facultad de Ciencias Forestales, UANL*

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Abstract

Mexico belongs to the select elite of the 17 megadiverse countries of the world, which have, because their geographic position, environmental features, and history, an enormous amount of different kinds of organisms. These countries (Australia, Brazil, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Republic of Congo, South Africa, Venezuela, and USA) host between 60 and 70 % of the Earth's biodiversity. Unfortunately, most of them are considered undeveloped countries, whose inhabitants lack adequate food and shelter, education and health. This life conditions produce social conflicts which threat biological diversity, reducing, consequently, opportunities of social development. This study was conducted with the objective to compare human life conditions in the 17 megadiverse countries, analysing welfare indicators (Gross national product, population, life expectancy at birth, adult illiteracy, deforestation rate, nature reserves surface, etc.) information of the World Development Report 2000/2001 of the World Bank. We found, that 17 megadiverse countries have 3,231,000 people, and only USA and Australia with 9 % of this population, have an annual gross national product income > US\$ 9,266 per capita, belonging to group of high income countries. While India, Indonesia, Madagascar, Republic of Congo, and Kenya with 1,252,000 people (38.7 % of megadiverse countries) have an average income less than US\$ 755 per capita, belonging, on the contrary to the low income countries group. Finally, the group of middle income (US\$ 756-9,265 per capita) with, 1,687,000 people, includes, besides China, South Africa, and Malaysia, all 7 megadiverse countries of Latin America. Economic and social development and poverty eradication are the first and overriding priorities of developing countries, determined to conserve and sustainably use biological diversity for the benefit of present and future generations

Keywords: Biodiversity, megadiverse countries, sustainable use of biological diversity for the benefit of present and future generations