



MEDIA ADVISORY

For immediate release

Latin America bankers fast-track transition to sustainability with new partnership with the United Nations

Region opening to sustainability with landmark UN conference approaching

Bogotá/Geneva, 14 July 2011 – Latin America’s largest banking association, FELABAN, joined forces with the United Nations this Thursday as it unveiled a first-of-its-kind partnership that will plant the seeds for improved financial sustainability across the region.

The announcement of a formal collaboration between the Latin American Federation of Banks (FELABAN) – which represents over 500 banks in 19 countries in South and Central America – and the United Nations Environmental Programme’s Finance Initiative (UNEP FI) signals a renewed commitment by Latin American bankers to the fast-tracking of sustainability in their industry, both institutions stressed.

“By being the first regional banking association to move into sustainable finance we are emitting a clear signal as to Latin America’s seriousness in giving its banking sector an edge over competitors in other parts of the globe,” said FELABAN’s President Oscar Rivera.

“UNEP FI, with its nearly 20 years of experience and its authoritative voice, makes for the ideal linchpin into the fast-moving world of financial sustainability,” said Rivera.

The agreement breaks new ground in the field of sustainable banking as the first instance of a regional banking association joining forces with a global organization dedicated to financial sustainability. It tops years of UNEP FI working with national banking associations across the region, including Mexico, Argentina and Colombia, to name but a few.

The push – qualified as “decisive” by FELABAN’s President –, should be reflected during a first instance in a surge of membership UNEP FI membership among Latin American banks over the coming years.

Increased capacity-building of banking practitioners across the continent should follow as both organizations pool their resources and know-how. Training has proved to be a

natural arena for collaboration between UNEP FI and the region's banking associations for years now.

“This alliance sends a strong message, just as the Latin American region is getting ready to host the landmark United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 (also known as Rio+20), that banks in the region are aware of the importance of adapting existing business models to new risks and opportunities in a world where environmental and financial stability are increasingly interconnected,” said UNEP FI's head Paul Clements-Hunt.

FELABAN counts 19 banking associations in Latin America, while 139 of UNEP FI's 200 member financial institutions are banks.

UNEP FI membership in the region has surged over the last years, with 10 Latin American banks joining the partnership since 2010.

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About FELABAN

The Federación Latinoamericana de Bancos (FELABAN) is a non-profit entity that represents the general interests of its banking associations and other agencies from 19 countries, encompassing over 500 regional banks to promote and facilitate the relations between the financial organizations of Latin America, irrespective of the internal political issues of each country. FELABAN aims to contribute by its technical services to the coordination of criteria and the unification of general banking and financial usage and practices to obtain the best development of the Latin-American banking system and contribute to the economic growth of the different countries in the region.

www.felaban.com

About the United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP FI)

UNEP FI is a unique global partnership between the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the global financial sector. UNEP FI works closely with nearly 200 financial institutions who are Signatories to the UNEP FI Statements, and a range of partner

organisations to develop and promote linkages between sustainability and financial performance. Through peer-to-peer networks, research and training, UNEP FI carries out its mission to identify, promote, and realise the adoption of best environmental and sustainability practice at all levels of financial institution operations.
www.unepfi.org