



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

INTERAMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE

A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR



This year we celebrated AIDA's 25th anniversary.

It's been 25 years since a group of attorneys joined forces to strengthen the defense of the environment and communities in Latin America with the help of international law.

Our team, as well as the impact of our work to protect the right to a healthy environment, have grown exponentially ever since.

Throughout 2023, we've analyzed all that we've achieved and looked forward to what is to come. Our vision for the future has climate and environmental justice at its core.

We are proud to be a robust, multidisciplinary organization that:

- Litigates strategically for replicable successes;
- Advocates for the just energy transition;
- Proposes solutions that place nature and people at their center;
- Works hand in hand with local communities.

As we close this year of celebrations, we pay tribute to the collaborative efforts that have brought us this far, and recognize the value of joining together and including diverse perspectives to build a better world.

-Thank you for being part of this milestone and of those to come.

Gladys Martinez
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AIDA

2023: AIDA BY THE NUMBERS



Advanced key legal protections for communities, ecosystems, and the climate across **12 Latin American countries**.



Actively supported and engaged in **33 alliances**, comprising more than **1,000 organizations** globally.



Championed the rights of **52** Indigenous, traditional, peasant, fishing, urban, and rural **communities**.



Advocated before **26 treaties**, conventions, international organizations, accountability mechanisms, and international financial institutions.



Directly contributed to the protection, preservation, and restoration of **25 vital ecosystems** across the continent.



Engaged in **27 legal proceedings**, providing support in local and higher courts across Latin America and before international tribunals.

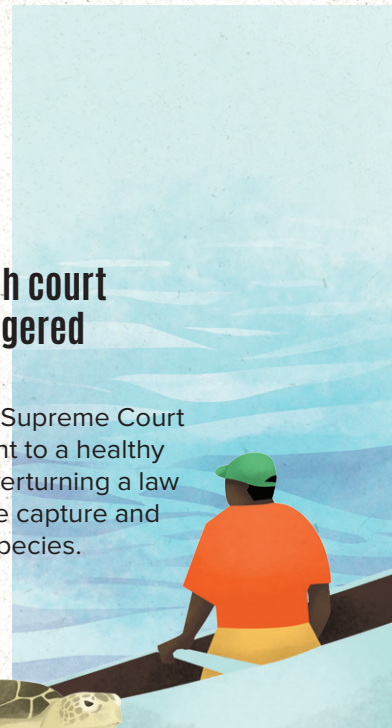
25 YEARS IN DEFENSE OF A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT



Costa Rican high court protects endangered green turtles

We supported the Supreme Court in affirming the right to a healthy environment by overturning a law that allowed for the capture and killing of this key species.

1999



Free trade agreement preserves native forests in Chile

By filing the first citizen petition under the Chile-Canada Free Trade Agreement, we stopped a wood-processing plant that would have clear-cut a vast Chilean forest.

2001

2002

A path to wetlands protection through the Ramsar Convention

By defending key wetlands in Costa Rica, we helped create a process to protect these ecosystems through enforcement of the international treaty.



Medical care for community affected by toxic pollution

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights called on Peru to provide adequate care and assessment to residents of La Oroya as a result of the case we filed.

2007

2010

Supporting the formation of the Green Climate Fund

We helped the global climate fund adopt socio-environmental safeguards to guide its decisions and formed a citizen's observatory to closely monitor its operations.

2011

Protective measures for dam-affected indigenous peoples in the Amazon

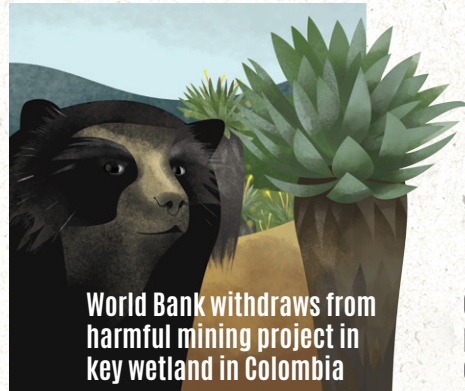
We convinced the Inter-American Commission to call on Brazil to protect the life, health, and integrity of those affected by the Belo Monte Dam.



Ancient reef safeguarded from large-scale development

We helped halt the construction of a mega-tourism complex in Baja California that threatened to degrade Cabo Pulmo, a 20,000-year-old reef off the coast of Mexico.

2012



World Bank withdraws from harmful mining project in key wetland in Colombia

After AIDA and allies filed a complaint, the bank withdrew its investment from the project seeking to build a gold mine in the Santurbán paramo.

2016

Costa Rica legally protects its vast coral ecosystem

We worked with the government to develop a precedent-setting decree for marine conservation, which incorporates climate solutions, restores reefs, and protects key species.

2019

Colombia affirms first judicial moratorium on fracking in Latin America

We litigated a case in which the State Council upheld the temporary nationwide suspension of fracking due to lack of certainty about the technique's inherent risks.



Victims of toxic pollution testify before Inter-American Court

Twenty years after we first presented their case, residents of La Oroya, Peru shared before judges the impacts a metal smelter has had on their lives, health and community.

2022



2015

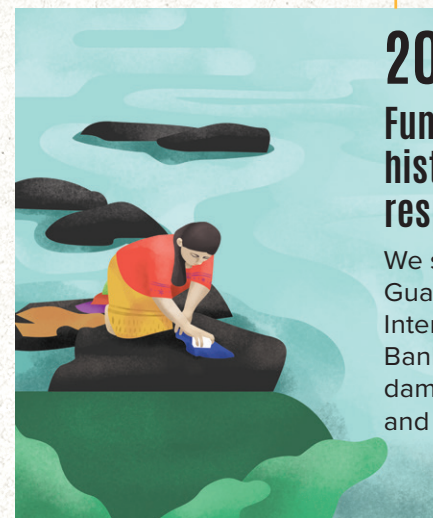
Panama's fresh water conserved from use in megaprojects

We supported the Supreme Court in overturning a resolution that would have allowed 90% of the nation's fresh water to be used in dams and other large infrastructure projects.

2018

Recognition of a healthy environment as fundamental for human existence

The Inter-American Court on Human Rights published an important advisory opinion, which incorporated many arguments we provided in written and oral testimony.



2022

Funding withdrawal spurs historic plan for responsible exit

We supported Mayan leaders in Guatemala in stopping Inter-American Development Bank funding to a series of large dams that threatened the health and safety of communities.

2023

Historic global agreement protects life in two-thirds of the ocean

We played a key role for the region in the negotiation of the UN High Seas Treaty, which will help preserve biodiversity and bring ocean governance into the 21st century.

THIS YEAR'S ADVANCES



ACHIEVING A VICTORY FOR THE CLIMATE

The causes and impacts of climate change cross borders. This is also true for coal. Forty-four percent of global carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels come from the use of coal. Regardless of where it occurs, the burning of this mineral to generate energy is a major cause of the global climate crisis.

However, burning is not an isolated activity, it is a link in a chain that starts, for example, in Colombia, the fifth largest thermal coal exporter in the world and the main exporter in Latin America.

In this country, the contributions of coal mining to the national economy have masked the sector's impact on ecosystems and entire populations. Under the guise of mining royalties, the Colombian government has for years avoided incorporating the impacts of the coal chain into its climate policies and international climate change commitments.

To fill these gaps, AIDA and the José Alvear Restrepo Lawyers Collective — as part of a large and diverse coalition — led litigation aimed at holding the government accountable, in compliance with existing laws, to incorporate coal impacts into its climate actions.

“Given the role of coal in the climate crisis, the goals of any country — and even more so a country where this sector is predominant — must include identifying, preventing, and managing the climate impacts of coal extraction, transportation, and combustion,” explains Rosa Peña, AIDA senior attorney.

As a response to the litigation, the State Council, a Colombian high court, ordered the government to adopt concrete mitigation and adaptation measures to address the climate crisis in the country.

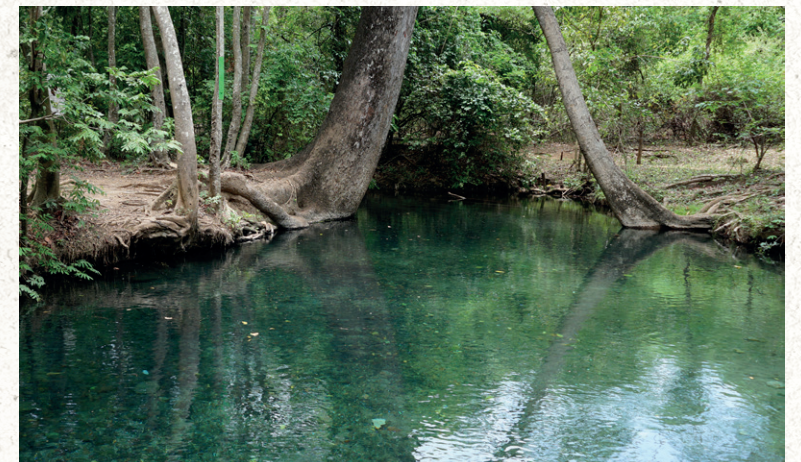
“By requiring concrete actions to meet climate commitments, the ruling is a climate victory, creating better climate justice scenarios for the continent, and a contribution to curbing the human rights violations associated with the coal chain.”

Rosa Peña, AIDA senior attorney

Moreover, this litigation is significant for being one of the first to highlight a State's historic failure to meet its obligations in the global fight against the climate crisis, and it has the potential to become a precedent for successful strategic climate litigation at the regional and global levels.



ANA MARÍA MEJIA / SHUTTER STOCK



JOSÉ DAVID CASTILLA / AIDA



PROTECTING HALF OF THE PLANET

After nearly 20 years of negotiations, and more than five years since the process was formalized, world leaders have finally reached a treaty to protect the biodiversity of the high seas. This zone, situated beyond national borders, encompasses nearly half the surface of our planet and two-thirds of the ocean.

Although the high seas are a critical ally — as a source of food and oxygen, a climate regulator, a mitigator of the impacts of the climate crisis, and provider of livelihoods for fishing and tourism communities — only 1.2 percent of these waters have had international protection until recently.

This changed on March 4, 2023, when governments at the United Nations agreed on the text of the groundbreaking High Seas Treaty, which was formally adopted on June 19.

This treaty represents a critical opportunity to improve the protection and sustainable use of our ocean.

“The agreement sets out a path for establishing large and effective protected areas in the high seas, as well as for the environmental impact assessment of projects and activities that could harm this vast area,” says Gladys Martínez de Lemos, executive director of AIDA, who participated for

years in the rounds of the treaty negotiations, including the last one.

For more than eight years, and as part of the High Seas Alliance, AIDA has co-lead Latin American civil society’s contribution to achieving a strong agreement.

“This new agreement is a concrete opportunity for us to unite as a global community and balance our relationship with nature. It is the first international treaty aimed at preserving marine life as a part of our global heritage.”

Gladys Martínez, AIDA Executive Director

In the face of climate and biodiversity loss crises, the High Seas Treaty arrives at a crucial time for ocean protection. For it to enter into force, it must be ratified by 60 countries, which the global community expects to happen by 2025.

International bodies have created a unique opportunity to change the fate of the ocean. Now is the time to ensure that Latin American countries adopt and implement the High Seas Treaty to help maintain a healthy and resilient ocean.



JUANMA CLEMENTE ALLOZA / UNSPLASH



TRACEY-JENNINGS / OCEAN IMAGE BANK

OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Latin America is key to the protection of biodiversity and the fight against the global climate crisis. The region's forests, wetlands, and marine ecosystems are among the most important carbon sinks on the planet, a service weakened by human activities such as the exploitation and use of fossil fuels.

We envision a region where the environment and communities, especially those in highly vulnerable situations, have lasting protections. To achieve this, we select precedent-setting cases that result in new, replicable tools and strategies that contribute to the protection of a healthy environment in the region.

In the coming years, we will continue our pursuit of environmental and climate justice through two interconnected initiatives, each with strategic and strategic and reinforcing lines of work.



Promotion of a Just Energy Transition

- Avoiding dependence on oil and gas.
- Halting the extraction and use of coal.
- Promoting renewable and sustainable energies.
- Advocating for human rights-based climate finance and governance.



Protection of Life-Sustaining Systems

- Protecting the ocean, from the coasts to the high seas.
- Preserving freshwater sources and traditional territories.
- Defending culture and traditional livelihoods.
- Improving air quality.



OUR TEAM

44

Team members

15

Interns

9

Board members

FINANCES

How does AIDA spend donations?



6.5%
ADMINISTRATION

2.6%
FUNDRAISING

65.3%
AIDA PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

25.6%
REGRANTING TO OTHER ORGANIZATIONS¹

1. This year AIDA received funds for regranting to aligned entities in the region. While this requires significant administrative work, it is critical to building capacity for Latin American organizations. Due to our regranting efforts—and given that many of these commitments are multiyear and restricted for use in future years—both current assets and grant income appear greater than in past years.

Statement of Financial Position

| | FY 2022 | FY 2023 |
|---|------------------|-------------------|
| ASSETS | | |
| Banks | 3,355,091 | 5,972,155 |
| Accounts Receivable | 417,687 | 4,590,701 |
| Prepaid Expenses | 8,049 | 29,548 |
| Fixed Assets | - | 6,766 |
| Others Assets | 8,049 | 1,729 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | 3,780,827 | 10,600,899 |
| LIABILITIES | | |
| Accounts Payable | 306,755 | 876,583 |
| Other Payables | 1,347 | 113,329 |
| Credit Cards Payable | 34,603 | 42,943 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES | 342,705 | 1,032,855 |
| NET ASSETS | | |
| Unrestricted Net Assets | 1,930,726 | 2,764,599 |
| Temporarily Restricted | 1,507,396 | 6,803,445 |
| TOTAL NET ASSETS | 3,438,122 | 9,568,044 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS | 3,780,827 | 10,600,899 |

Statement of Activities

| | FY 2022 | FY 2023 |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| REVENUES | | |
| Grants (Including for Granting) | 2,001,471 | 8,888,592 |
| Donations from Individuals | 187,834 | 317,975 |
| Investment Income | (7,359) | 15,355 |
| Program Service Revenue | 94,208 | 157,612 |
| Donated Services and Facilities ² | 394,084 | 592,016 |
| TOTAL REVENUES | 2,670,238 | 9,971,550 |
| EXPENSES | | |
| AIDA Program Activities | 1,489,293 | 1,979,051 |
| Fundraising Expenses | 58,958 | 99,579 |
| Administrative Expenses | 113,327 | 188,071 |
| Donated Services and Facilities ³ | 394,084 | 592,043 |
| Regranting to other NGOs in Region | | 981,367 |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | 2,055,662 | 3,840,111 |
| NET ORDINARY REVENUES | 614,576 | 6,131,439 |
| CHANGE IN NET ASSETS | 614,576 | 6,131,439 |

2. AIDA receives significant in-kind donations of professional time as well as office costs, materials, and equipment from AIDA partners, particularly Earthjustice. Numerous professional volunteers and interns also contribute time and resources to AIDA. These contributions are valued at fair market value and shown in the Financial Statements as “Donated Services and Facilities.”

3. Because AIDA receives multi-year grants, a positive change in net assets results from receipt of funds that are designated for use in future years.

* UNAUDITED financials that will be updated post-audit.

