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**COP16: The New York Botanical Garden and CAF Join Forces to Restore Biodiversity in Latin America and the Caribbean**

*In an unprecedented effort to conserve and restore biodiversity in Latin America and the Caribbean, the New York Botanical Garden and CAF—Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean—signed an agreement to develop research on biodiversity, including bio-based development, and to promote restoration strategies to improve the connectivity of natural vegetation in the region. This is the first agreement CAF has signed with a botanical garden.*

The New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) and CAF signed an alliance at COP16 in Cali to promote urban sustainability through an ecosystem-based approach, supporting countries in the region in the restoration of flora following catastrophic events such as hurricanes.

The agreement also includes the development of biological databases and shared data resources to deepen knowledge of biodiversity in Latin America and the Caribbean, the strengthening of CAF's BiodiverCities Network to integrate sustainability into urban development, the promotion of reforestation and ecological restoration in strategic areas like the Caribbean and Amazon, and advancement of restoration strategies to enhance the connectivity of natural vegetation while fostering the growth of green urban areas in sustainable environments.

“The New York Botanical Garden is a world leader in advancing plant science and research, which are fundamental to preserving biodiversity,” said Jennifer Bernstein, CEO and The William C. Steere Sr. President of The New York Botanical Garden. “Accordingly, we believe that it’s important for institutions like ours to collaborate with innovative, forward-looking partners like CAF that focus on biodiversity. Botanical gardens have a vital role to play in global efforts to combat the dual climate and biodiversity crises and can contribute meaningfully to potential solutions.”

“This signing marks an important milestone in our collective journey towards a more resilient and sustainable future,” emphasized CAF's Executive President, Sergio Díaz-Granados. “We are joining hands to collectively sow our commitment to transformative projects that promote scientific work on our biodiversity and foster sustainable practices that benefit our communities throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. CAF recognizes the considerable potential of this alliance with NYBG to bridge the significant gaps between knowledge of our biodiversity and conservation practices.”

“The scientists at The New York Botanical Garden look to plants for the answers in advancing real-world solutions around conservation, restoration, land use, regenerative agriculture, and plants, people and culture,” said Mauricio Diazgranados, Ph.D., Chief Science Officer and Dean of Science at The New York

Botanical Garden. “The New York Botanical Garden has been a leader in plant research in Latin America and the Caribbean since its founding in 1891, including training generations of Latin American scientists. Our collaboration with CAF is an exciting new chapter in this long tradition.”

Botanical gardens play a crucial role in the preservation of endemic and endangered species, conserving plants that may disappear in their natural habitats. They are also educational spaces that raise public awareness of the importance of nature, biodiversity, and climate change, functioning as research centers in botany, pharmacology, and environmental sciences. Research conducted in botanical gardens contributes to the discovery of medicinal plants and new species, and to studying their adaptation to climate change.

This alliance marks a step forward in knowledge exchange, and represents a unique opportunity for Latin American and Caribbean countries to strengthen their conservation and restoration policies, moving toward a more sustainable and resilient model of urban and natural development. Collaboration between countries and organizations will help consolidate a regional approach to addressing biodiversity and environmental challenges, marking a significant step toward a greener future for Latin America and the Caribbean.

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