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**To:** Dr. Pierre-Michel Forget  
President Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation

**From:** Dr. Ernesto Medina  
Centro de Ecología. Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Científicas

**Ref.:** Letter of acceptance of the Honorary Fellow Award of the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation

With great joy I received the news of being appointed as an Honorary Fellow of the Association of Tropical Biology and Conservation. This award puts me within a group of scientists that I have in high regard, many of which have inspired my scientific career and oriented me in structuring a social rationale for conservation, and sustainable resource use. In accepting this award I thank ATBC with a deep sense of the responsibility involved for my present and future endeavors. It is also a recognition for all the students and colleagues with whom I had the opportunity to share intellectual and physical efforts throughout many years.

During the 45 years of its existence ATB has become an organization valued for their contribution in transforming what was known in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as “Tropical Science”, into a rigorous, diverse, and energetic field. The challenge was not an easy one, it required the improvement of scientific facilities in tropical countries, many of which lacked the indispensable human and financial resources, and also to convey to the scientific establishment in countries of the northern temperate belt, the need to maintain institutions, laboratories, and personnel dedicated to the study of tropical biology.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> Century we experienced the disappearance of many traditional institutions in Europe and the US, responsible for scientific research in tropical areas of the world. This process was, in my opinion, the result of the failure of leading science sponsoring bodies, to understand that the bridge for improvement was the insertion of

changing paradigms into the body of the research approach that characterized “natural science” at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, not its elimination.

The ecological and social changes brought about by the continuously accelerating processes of deforestation, atmospheric accumulation of greenhouse gases, and uncontrolled demand for fossil fuels, has led to rediscover the significance of conservation and ecological planning for maintaining stability and human life quality in the longterm. In this scenario the activities of ATB have acquired high levels of public awareness.

Current and future developments in tropical biology face many challenges, most of them related to the disappearance of natural tropical environments. Exponential human population growth, diminishing fossil energy sources, and extensive deterioration of the agricultural production bases, are all forces leading to further contractions of natural environments. This scenario calls for strengthening the efforts of the Association in pursuing its objectives, and establishing effective connections with bodies that have similar orientations throughout the world.



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