

Abby Lodge  
Environmental Policies

Between 1982 and 1990, birth control policies were put into effect in both urban and rural areas in Ecuador. Before these policies, the birth rates were 2.7 percent (from 1974 to 1982). The policies were shown to be effective because the birth rates decreased to 2.2 percent during that period. However, the lower growth rate in rural areas could also be explained by migration to urban areas. This means that the cities, while showing a decline in their natural increase, actually kept growing at a significant rate: an average of 3.7 percent for the period 1982-1990.

Ecuador has a delicate and diverse environment, and to protect this, an extensive system of national parks, scientific stations, and protected areas were established. In 1993, Ecuador was one of the first countries to ratify the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change, which called for responding to global warming by reducing the world's production of carbon dioxide. The Basic Environmental Policies of Ecuador were established by an Executive Decree in 1994. These policies clearly state the obligations of each person and entity in regard to the preservation of the environment.

Then in 1996 Ecuador created the Ministry of Environment to coordinate environmental policies, programs and projects. The 1999 Law of Environmental Management established the principles and guidelines of environmental policies, determined the obligations, responsibilities, level of public and private participation on environmental management, and set the permissible limits, controls and sanctions. The law also promotes waste management, sustainable alternative technologies, and respect for native cultures and traditional practices.

In October of 2007, President Correa was seeking to increase state control over the energy sector. He issued a decree that increased the Ecuadorian state's share of windfall oil revenues from 50% to 99% - unless companies were willing to switch from production sharing agreements to new service contracts controlled by Petroecuador. President Correa also supported the prior government's 2006 termination of its contract with the U.S. firm, Occidental Petroleum (Oxy), over an alleged breach of contract. In November 2007, the Ecuadorian government initiated new legal proceedings against Occidental and City Oriente, another U.S.-owned oil company, for allegedly failing to pay their windfall oil taxes.