

# Ocho Sur and Fulbright Join Forces to Promote Academic Exchange and Research on the Peruvian Amazon

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Ocho Sur and the Fulbright Commission in Peru signed an agreement to grant scholarships for Amazon-focused academic exchange between Peruvian and U.S. researchers, strengthening scientific knowledge and sustainability in Ucayali.

## A Partnership for Scientific and Educational Exchange

With the goal of fostering scientific knowledge on the challenges and opportunities of the Amazon, Ocho Sur, a palm-oil company based in Ucayali, has signed a cooperation agreement with the Fulbright Commission in Peru.

Through this alliance, Peruvian university professors and researchers specializing in Amazon studies will receive scholarships to conduct academic exchanges in the United States, while U.S. scholars focused on Amazon-related topics will be able to visit Peru for similar purposes.

The agreement allows participants to spend up to four months in the United States, where they can enhance their research, deliver lectures, and collaborate with North American academics.

## **Commitment to Sustainability and Knowledge**

The partnership was signed by Michael Spoor, Executive Director of Ocho Sur — a company committed to the sustainable production of palm-oil products in Ucayali — and Dr. Laura Balbuena González, Executive Director of the Fulbright Commission in Peru, a leading organization in educational and cultural exchange between Peru and the United States.

“We are strongly committed to the environmental and social sustainability of the Amazon and firmly believe that achieving this goal requires high-quality scientific research,”

said Michael Spoor, adding that *“true sustainability must be based on verified knowledge, not ideological assumptions.”*

## **Recognition from the U.S. Embassy**

During the signing ceremony, Kristin Stewart, Chair of the Fulbright Commission and Counselor for Press, Culture, and Education at the U.S. Embassy in Peru, presented a special recognition to Ocho Sur on behalf of the Embassy.

The distinction took place as part of the Bicentennial Celebration of U.S.-Peru Diplomatic Relations.

## **Research and Knowledge for the Amazon**

As part of the agreement, Dr. Miguel Pinedo-Vásquez, an internationally renowned Amazonian ecologist and two-time Fulbright Scholar, will continue his field research in Ucayali.

A native of the Peruvian Amazon, Dr. Pinedo-Vásquez has led interdisciplinary projects for more than three decades, integrating local experience with scientific research to analyze the socio-environmental impacts of land-use transitions, urban expansion, and climate change.

## **A Historic Milestone**

This agreement coincides with the 70th Anniversary of the Fulbright Commission’s presence in Peru, and the signing ceremony took place at Ocho Sur’s headquarters in Nueva Requena, Pucallpa — marking another step forward in strengthening scientific collaboration and sustainable development in the Amazon region.