



Editorial



On September 19th, an earthquake of 7.1 magnitude on Richter scale devastated central Mexico causing hundreds of deaths, and severe infrastructure damage, particularly at Mexico City and the states of Morelos and Puebla. Cuernavaca, the capital of the state of Morelos, 70 kilometers south of Mexico City, was one of the affected cities. The Institute of Biotechnology (IBt) of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) is located in Cuernavaca and suffered some damage in its infrastructure and equipment; but more importantly, the damages of the houses of some of the staff and students were very severe. Nearly, 7,000 houses in the state of Morelos will be demolished as a result of the earthquake.

IBt is certainly one of the most important biotechnology centers in Latin America, and quite probably the most productive in terms of basic and applied research, technology transfer and personal training in biotechnology. IBt, formerly Research Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (CIIGB), was founded in 1982 and moved from Mexico City to Cuernavaca in 1984. Development of IBt during these 35 years has been impressive. From a few researchers in 1982, at present there are close to 120 between senior and associate researchers, and close to 100 technicians, while infrastructure and

equipment grew at a sustained pace. Hundreds of graduate students are attended and develop their thesis in the IBt facilities under the guidance of IBt researchers.

IBt is a leading institution in Latin America that has gained worldwide recognition for their significant contributions to biotechnology. Much effort and resources will be necessary to rebuild the houses of those IBt staff and students affected by the earthquake. Electronic Journal of Biotechnology appeals to the solidarity of the international biotechnology community with IBt and particularly with its staff and students.

Colleagues of IBt researchers, in Mexico and outside the country, have opened options to receive donations for the IBt community and in general for the affected population in the state of Morelos (contact Dr. Lucia Perezgasga, lucia@ibt.unam.mx, for more information).

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