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Op-Ed

Isaac Rojas: 2010 UN Biodiversity Year: Urgent Action Needed to Preserve Life

Published on Jan 11, 2010 - 8:23:08 AM



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By: Friends of the Earth International

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, Jan. 11, 2010 - Commenting on today's announcement by the United Nations that 2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity and that "the world is invited to take action to safeguard the variety of life on earth: biodiversity", Friends of the Earth International's coordinator of the Forest and Biodiversity Programme Isaac Rojas said:

"It is urgent to take immediate action to preserve biodiversity. We especially need to protect our forests, which host more than 70% of terrestrial biodiversity. Nearly half of the world's forests and around one-third of its species have been lost in the past three decades.

"The 193 countries known as Parties of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity so far failed to significantly reduce the rate at which biodiversity is being lost, despite their 2003 pledge to reduce these rates by 2010.

"Stopping destructive logging is particularly urgent as this outrageous practice is killing not only biodiversity but also livelihoods. One of the solutions that we promote is known as community forest management. It is much more than an alternative to destructive logging: it ensures the conservation of biodiversity but also provides sustainable livelihoods for forest-dependent people," he added.

As biodiversity disappears, people around the world are becoming more vulnerable to food shortages, health threats and loss of livelihoods.

1.6 billion people rely on forests, including 60 million indigenous people who are entirely dependent upon forests for their livelihoods, food, medicines and building materials.

"Another major threat to biodiversity is posed by monoculture tree plantations. They have grave social and environmental impacts and must be stopped. Plantations are not forests, they are just the same as deserts, only green," added Isaac Rojas.

"The current neoliberal economic system, which promotes privatization, exports and trade liberalization, is accelerating the decline of our planet's biodiversity," he warned.

For more information about the International Year of Biodiversity see www.cbd.int.



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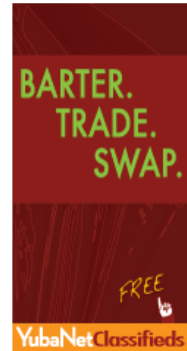
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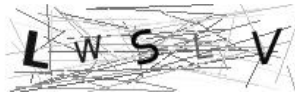
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