



OAS Activities

The General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) has declared 2011 the International Year of Forests. With the motto “Celebrating the International Year of Forests: Sustainable Forest Management for the Peoples of the Americas,” the Organization of American States (OAS) is pleased to join these efforts to increase awareness about the importance of forests as an integral part of the sustainable development of the planet and about the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental benefits that forests provide.

International action in this area will encourage an exchange of information about practical strategies for sustainable forest management and for reversing deforestation and the degradation of forests. At the same time, in commemorative activities all over the world, governments will be encouraged to establish national committees and centers of coordination and to join the efforts of regional and international organizations and civil society.

Because of the urgent need to address issues such as climate change, forests, and the sustainable use of biodiversity

within the context of the development needs of Latin America and Caribbean countries, OAS member states emphasized in the 2010 Declaration of Santo Domingo the need to “continue strengthening cooperation between member states on matters relating to the sustainable and comprehensive management of forests, emphasizing, among others, enhanced action under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.”

The Declaration of Santa Cruz + 10 gave the issue a prominent position, recognizing the “importance of developing and implementing national forest programs, policies and strategies, as appropriate, that strengthen the capacity of countries to address illegal practices in the forest sector, through the promotion of forest law, enforcement and governance at the national and, sub-national level, and regional and sub-regional levels as appropriate.”

In response to these mandates, the OAS Department of Sustainable Development (DSD) has been developing a number of initiatives to build a sustainable forest agenda over a solid base of both technical and political knowledge in member states. Initiatives include the regional exchange of

information, experiences, and lessons learned to strengthen efforts to protect ecosystems, and the incorporation of sustainable systems of agriculture and forest management at the national level. Activities will also include the generation of data about protected areas, species and specimens, ecosystems, pollinators, and invasive and migratory species of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Between commemorative activities for the International Year of Forests, the DSD will continue to strengthen and promote these initiatives in the hemisphere. It will also hold a series of panel discussions on forest management in the context of activities to prepare for the Rio + 20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development that will take place in Rio de Janeiro in 2012.



**INTERNATIONAL YEAR
OF FORESTS • 2011**