

Deforestation Decreased Over the Past 10 Years



This is the VOA Special English Agriculture Report.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization says deforestation has decreased over the past ten years. But it still continues at a high rate in many countries. Deforestation is mainly caused by thedown of tropical forests to provide land for agriculture. The world's total forest area is just over four hectares. About thirteen million hectares of forest were cut down or lost through natural causes each year in the last ten years. This compares with about sixteen million hectares per year during the nineteen nineties.

The FAO study covers two hundred thirty-three countries and areas. The study found that and Indonesia have reduced their deforestation rates. The two countries had the highest loss of forests in the nineteen nineties. In addition, the study noted tree-planting programs in countries such as China, India, Vietnam and the United States. These programs, along with natural of forests in some areas, have added more than seven million hectares of new forests each year.

South America and Africa had the highest yearly loss of forests during the last ten years. South America lost four million hectares. Africa lost three and a half million hectares. However, Asia gained more than two million hectares a year in the last decade. In North America and Central America, the forest area remained about the same. In Europe, it continued to expand, but at arate than earlier.

Eduardo Rojas is assistant director-general of F.A.O.'s Forestry Department. He said for the first time, the rate of deforestation has decreased around the This is the result of efforts taken at local and international levels. Mister Rojas said countries have improved their forest policies and They have also provided forests for use by local communities and native peoples and for the | protection of biological diversity. He said this is a welcome message in 2010 – the International Year of Biodiversity.

However, Mister Rojas said the rate of deforestation is still very in many areas. He said countries must strengthen their efforts to betterand manage their forests.

And that's the VOA Special English Agriculture Report, written by Jerilyn Watson.

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