

11-19-1997

Illegal Cutting Claims 600,000 Hectares of Forest in Mexico Annually

LADB Staff

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/sourcemex>

Recommended Citation

LADB Staff. "Illegal Cutting Claims 600,000 Hectares of Forest in Mexico Annually." (1997). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/sourcemex/3827>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Latin America Digital Beat (LADB) at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in SourceMex by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu.

Illegal Cutting Claims 600,000 Hectares of Forest in Mexico Annually

by LADB Staff

Category/Department: Mexico

Published: 1997-11-19

According to Environment Secretary Julia Carabias Lillo, Mexico is losing about 600,000 ha of forest annually because of unregulated logging and intensive clearing of trees for agriculture. Speaking to reporters during a tour of Chiapas state, Carabias said the intensive cutting of trees has caused erosion in many areas of Mexico. Carabias cited estimates from the Secretaria del Medio Ambiente, Recursos Naturales y Pesca (SEMARNAP), which indicate that 80% of Mexican territory suffers from some type of erosion. Carabias said erosion has caused significant damage to almost one-third of Mexican territory, which is washing out topsoil needed for agriculture.

Government pushes massive reforestation plan

In an attempt to address the deforestation problem, SEMARNAP has developed a program of intensive reforestation. "We are attempting to restore about 500,000 ha of forest per year," said Carabias. "Our goal is to increase our total forest land to about 15 million ha by the year 2000." Carabias said the current policies attempt to address the policies of the 1970s and 1980s, when lack of forest-protection caused the disappearance of 340 million trees. "We are only now beginning to reverse this process," said Carabias.

Carabias said President Ernesto Zedillo's administration has allocated about 27 million pesos (US \$3.26 million) annually for preservation of forests and other natural resources at 30 reserves around the country. Nevertheless, Carabias said resources are still insufficient to reverse the unregulated cutting of trees. "We lack sufficient economic resources and personnel to monitor all the forests on a regular basis," he said.

Earlier this year, the administration pushed through legislation that promotes the development of forest plantations while establishing environmental guidelines for such developments (see SourceMex, 04/23/97). "At this moment, many developers of forest plantations are operating without any regulatory framework and without environmental guidelines to follow," Carabias said at the time when the legislation was proposed. But some environmental groups opposed the measure on grounds that the administration was placing the wrong emphasis in its forestry-management policies.

According to groups such as El Pacto de Grupo de Ecologistas and Maderas del Sureste, federal forestry legislation has created safeguards for commercial loggers while imposing strict logging restrictions on indigenous communities in southeastern Mexico. [Note: Peso-dollar conversions in this article are based on the Interbank rate in effect on Nov. 19, reported at 8.27 pesos per US\$1.00] (Sources: Notimex, 11/12/97, Excelsior, 11/13/97)

-- End --