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Brazil To Present Amazon Recovery Plan At G-7 Meeting In London

by Barbara Khol
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The Brazilian government plans to present an Amazon recovery plan at the G-7 meeting in London scheduled for mid-July. G-7 member-nations are the globe's seven most wealthy capitalist industrialized countries. Assuming receptivity by the governments of the seven nations, most of the funding for the $1.25 billion six-year program will derive from the European Community, World Bank, and G-7. Brasilia would need $250 million to put the program into motion over the next two years. According to experts participating in a weekend meeting organized by the Luxembourg Environmental and Foreign Relations ministries, the plan represents the "last chance" for "saving the Amazon jungle." Luxembourg is the headquarters of the European Community council of ministers. The program was designed to protect the environment while also achieving "balanced economic development," to benefit Amazon inhabitants and the rest of the world. Over the past 20 years, at least 10% of the Amazon jungle has been destroyed. Among other things, spending in the first two years is aimed at setting up an environmental protection organization to monitor regional economic development, and establishing mechanisms for the exploitation of renewable natural resources. Brasilia has been criticized by environment defense organizations for excluding such groups and Amazon inhabitants from program administration. Industrialized nations have been criticized for declaring the Amazon crucial for the survival of humanity, while simultaneously failing to assume the implied costs. Financial resources are in scarce supply, result of the war against Iraq, German reunification and Eastern European problems. Despite its role in elaborating the program for Amazon protection and recovery, the EEC is expected to contribute only $15 million in the first two years. However, the 12 member-nations could decide at the next summit scheduled for late June in Luxembourg to make a special contribution, a mechanism already used for aid to the Soviet Union and the Kurdish people. Another potential financing mechanism would be writing off portions of Brazil's enormous foreign debt. In this event, Brasilia itself could take on a larger share of the costs. (Basic data from EFE, 06/09/91)

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