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Inter-american Development Bank To Finance Environmental Conservation Programs In Honduras

by Barbara Khol

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On Oct. 1 in Tegucigalpa, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) representative Charles Greenwood said the IDB plans to finance several environmental conservation programs in Honduras beginning next year. One of the projects consists of managing land and water resources around the El Cajon hydro- electric complex. According to Greenwood, the eco-system near El Cajon needs urgent protection, and "we are prepared to collaborate, to help ensure that the natural resources of the area are adequately made available for agriculture and for tourist purposes." Another project involves the development of eco-tourism in the Bay Islands, off the Atlantic coast, where the coral reefs are considered to be world's most biologically rich, after the Australian Great Barrier Reef. The IDB's environmentalist projects fall within the framework of the special plan for economic cooperation with Central America (PEC), created in 1988 by governments in the region and the UN Development Programme (UNDP). The purpose of PEC is to evaluate Central America's priority requirements followed by raising and directing resources focused on enhancing peace and economic integration. According to a recent study by the Central American Environment and Development Commission (CCAD), deforestation in Honduras is taking place at a extremely high rate. A recent PEC report claims that 400,000 ha. of Central American forests are being cut down every year, result of inadequate local environmental protection policies. (Basic data from Inter Press Service, 10/01/91)

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