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**BRAZIL AND THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF FORESTS**

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Proclaimed by General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) on 20 December 2006, by recognizing that the biomes and their sustainable management can contribute greatly to sustainable development, the eradication of poverty and to achieve the Millennium development goals, the year 2011 was elected by the UN as the international year of forests.

Activities in support to date have focused on the promotion of sustainable management, conservation and development of forests worldwide and awareness of the crucial role that forests play in sustainable global development. The international year of forests will help the world community mobilization to join and work with Governments, international organizations and civic groups to ensure that forests are managed sustainably for current and future generations. The international year of forests was officially launched at a ceremony at the UN headquarters in New York, on 02 February 2011.

Preserving vegetation is synonymous with protecting life. Biomes are being threatened worldwide by uncontrolled degradation, for having their use diverted to growing needs of the human being himself and by the lack of a proper environmental management. Forests are the richest ecosystems in plant and animal species. Their destruction causes soil erosion, degradation of watersheds, losses in animal life (when their habitat is destroyed, the animals die) and loss of biodiversity.

The Brazil has two great reasons to join in this celebration. First because it can be considered as the greatest nature reserve on the planet, there are 516 million hectares under forested areas, approximately 60% of national territory. The Country is part of the select group of those with great biodiversity. Although House the greatest biodiversity on the planet, is still very short on knowledge of its native flora. According to the Index Herbariorum, Brazil has cataloged about 6.000.000 dehydrated samples of plants, this represents less than 10% of that has catalogued in the United States.

The second should be the year in which the Brazilian Congress could promote changes in the Brazilian Forest Code. Originally dating from 1965, has since been amended by ordinances, resolutions, decrees, normative statements and provisional measures without an effective participation in society and the National Congress. The showdown on such changes is posted. Environmental NGOs and the press, on the other hand, are in franca mobilization trying to explicitly prevent change this legal instrument that, say, already is anachronistic. On the other hand, entities related to agriculture in turn also attempt to mobilise in order to avoid that the Decree on the subject, signed by President Lula to materialise in 2009.

Riparian forest, slopes, top of hill, biodiversity, legal reserve and their influences are integrated concepts, deep and affecting directly the day of agrisilvipastoral production, and also of the population. Thus, the quest for balance cannot be found only by pressure, either under the optics ideological or economic. In this respect the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, which is the Integrative Convention, made a series of suggestions for those responsible for taking decisions and opinion formers on what to do to not further degrade ecosystems and retrieve them. The noble goal of this vision is to continue improving the lives of people in at least five aspects of the right of access of the same: 1) basic materials-food, housing, energy, water; health-absence of disease, healthy environment; 2) healthy environment 3) good social relations-cohesion, respect, democracy; 4) personal safety, protection against natural and man-made disasters; 5) freedom of choice.

So, for this right of access is achieved, the ecosystem services that support them have equal valuation: one is not better than another, because in the end, all contribute to the goal that is the quality of life of humanity. Therefore, biodiversity is not more important than food production, which is not more important than regulating climate, which in turn is not more important than water production, and so forth.

Currently, the Brazilian Forest Code interferes in the countryside in conflicting relationships that give on the same physical space-rural property-where live private production for the market and the production of ecosystem services that are public, and that would be valued and remunerated. Treat adequately these concepts is the challenge for those who want the new Forestry Code from reaching their goals for environmental, social and economical.

In any environmental assessment, the basic unit is the ecosystem and the most fundamental principle, the maintenance of diversity. Each ecosystem deserves specific treatment. In each case the technical project with basins and biomes as outbreaks of

examination, shall be the instrument par excellence of the law, including, payment for ecosystem services provided to society.

The legislation ensures that less than 10% of the country's territorial surface dedicated to agriculture are preserved and improved, because the world will need food, fiber, energy, water and other ecosystem services in increasing quantities. Agriculture can expand on areas of low productivity or without use, through innovations that allows you to increase productivity and preserve the environment. This is done by taking into consideration that the size of areas should always be made depending on the functionality and not just in inflexible indexes indicators. You must also ensure that the conservation of large tracts of ecosystems can pay their owners braking the devastation. This is one of the dilemmas of Amazon.

Another is its position in the environmental issue. Relates to one of the last reserves of the world's tropical forests, covering nearly six million km<sup>2</sup>, of which Brazil has 60%, constituting the largest reservoir of biodiversity on Earth, with approximately 21 to 80 thousand species of flowering plants only. This capability with various applications – food, agriculture, industry, medicine and other purposes – can be a basis for rational exploitation and consequent development of the country. Current example is the research project sponsored by the Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo (Fapesp) and the Companhia Vale is seeking to identify microorganisms of the Amazon rainforest can assist in cellulose degradation in order to make the second-generation ethanol-extracted from the crushed sugar-cane – guided by the example of own forest, i.e. in the presence of specific microorganisms that are the natural degradation of large quantities of biomass continuously. Obtaining will enable increased productivity without changing the area planted. These potential – biodiversity and economy – require that Brazil organize his holding in accordance with the larger goal of the international year of forests, that is, its sustainability, but that it also to form an alliance with the Sustainable Economic Development.

But to do so you must know this biodiversity. In this aspect the Amazon situation is worrying since, given the immense forest, has few Herbaria, which stand out the three largest: INPA, IAN, MG – in Manaus and Belém, respectively, with a total of 574 thousand exsiccates which correspond approximately 20 thousand species. Considering the estimate that the Amazon rainforest is home to about 60 to 100 thousand plant species, knows-if only a third or a fifth of this vegetation.

The Brazil has two important reasons already mentioned earlier, to participate actively in the international year of forests. It is expected that their participation present as deliverables: a) conservation of biodiversity; b) knowledge of such biodiversity; c) awareness of the population about the crucial role of forests for people's quality of life;

d) eliminate contention preservation versus production as they were enemy forces; e) continue to fall in the rate of deforestation; f) demonstrate interest in the protection of forests as a strategy for climate change mitigation by Reducing Emissions by Deforestation and Degradation (REDD); g) update the Forest Code as the document that can help in achieving these assumptions.