



Trees for the Future
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 21, 2010

PRESS RELEASE

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Trees for the Future Warns Forest Reconstruction and Protection in Haiti is at Major Risk
Organization advises long-term, sustainable agricultural practices be put into place

Silver Spring, Md. - Trees for the Future, a 501 (c) (3) organization helping communities worldwide plant fruit and forest trees through seed distribution and agroforestry training, cautions any progress made over the last few decades with forest reconstruction and protection in Haiti is at major risk in light of the recent earthquake. Because Trees is one of the few organizations that's been working directly with rural Haitian farmers over the years, it has a deep understanding of Haiti's ecological frailty and how the earthquake aftermath could jeopardize the country's remaining natural resources.

"Given the earthquake's devastation, there is now a mass exodus of people to rural areas, but these areas cannot even support the current population much less the hundreds of thousands of people migrating there," says Ethan Budiansky, Africa & Caribbean programs officer for Trees for the Future, who regularly travels to Haiti to work on agroforestry initiatives. "Land will become even more impoverished and the few remaining trees will be cut down unless strict measures are put into place."

The current situation adds a new sense of urgency and Trees hopes to continue expanding its work with farmers throughout the Arcadine coast. It recently teamed up with the Yele Foundation to develop its program up north into Gonaives focusing on agriculture and food security. Trees says it hopes to also continue working on soil and water retention projects to prevent landslides and mitigate future destruction caused by natural disasters such as flooding from the hurricanes that devastated much of the rural Haitian population in 2004 and 2008.

Since 2002, Trees has been working in Haiti with local farmers and groups in tree-planting initiatives throughout the country to reforest degraded hillsides, produce sustainable charcoal and fuel wood, produce biodiesel, and establish intensive hillside farming practices. In 2008, the organization began working in Leogane, the epicenter of the recent quake, to plant over 250,000 fruit and multi-purpose, fast-growing trees. Further, Trees recently helped farmers in 13 communities along the Arcadine coast (around Cabaret, Arcahaie and St. Marc) plant over one million trees and established an agroforestry training and resource center in Arcahaie to serve Haitian farmers.

"There is an even more desperate need to develop long-term, sustainable agriculture practices that will not only serve as adequate food sources, but also help protect the areas being reconstructed in Haiti that promise a brighter future," adds Budiansky. "Unless there are measures to protect and improve arable land, things could get much worse before they get better."

Trees will be reassessing its programs in Haiti for 2010 to expand tree-planting activities in rural communities hardest hit in the earthquake aftermath.

About Trees for the Future: Since 1989, Trees for the Future has been helping communities around the world plant trees. Through seed distribution, agroforestry training, and country programs, its empowered rural groups to restore tree cover to their lands, protect the environment and help to preserve traditional livelihoods and cultures for generations. To learn more, visit <http://www.treesftf.org>.

Watch the Trees new documentary video! <http://www.treesftf.org/resources/tftfvideo.htm>