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Environment

**Forests are disappearing at a rapid pace, despite the establishment of forest policies and laws supporting sustainable forest management in many countries.** The largest net loss of forests has occurred in South America –around 3.6 million hectares per year from 2005 to 2010. Deforestation is not only a serious threat to achieving sustainability, but also to progress towards hunger and poverty reduction and sustainable livelihoods, as forests provide food, water, wood, fuel and other services used by millions of the world's poorest people.

**Marine fish stocks globally are now below the level at which they can produce maximum sustainable yields.** More stocks have become overfished due to continuing expansion of the fishing industry in many countries.

**The [Montreal Protocol](#) has led to a 98 per cent reduction in the consumption of ozone-depleting substances since 1986.** Because most of these substances are greenhouse gases, the Protocol contributes to the protection of the global climate system. The success of the Montreal Protocol has set a precedent for effective action against climate change.

**Global carbon dioxide emissions have increased by more than 46 per cent since 1990, with a five per cent increase between 2009 and 2010.** Growth in global emissions has accelerated, rising 33 per cent from 2000 to 2010. Containing this growth demands bold, coordinated national and international action. The goal is to complete negotiations on a new international agreement by 2015 and begin implementation in 2020, thereby taking decisive steps towards averting irreversible changes in the global climate system.

## **WHAT'S WORKING?**

**Brazil: Shifting from coal to crops promotes agro-ecology.**

The north-east of Brazil is the most densely populated semi-arid region in the world. Scant rainfall and cyclic drought force many of its 22 million residents to resort to illegal charcoal production, stripping the region of its forests. A project by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to promote agro-ecology is showing farmers how to make a living from the land while conserving the environment.

**Panama: Safe water saves lives.** A joint programme between three UN agencies, Panama's Ministry of Health and Ministry of Economy and Finance, and traditional communities in the Ngöbe-Buglé indigenous territory has brought safe water to nine indigenous communities in Panama. People in each community have participated in the design and construction of water infrastructure, and water management committees have been strengthened, trained and provided with technical equipment to maintain and ensure the sustainability of the system's infrastructure.

**Vietnam: Largest lagoon gets a sustainable future.**

The largest lagoon ecosystem in South-East Asia was in biological, social and economic disarray in 2005,