



Brazil's Amazon deforestation rate falls to record low

BRASÍLIA (27 November 2012) Deforestation rates in the Brazilian Amazon declined 27 percent from August 2011 to July 2012, reaching the lowest rates ever recorded for the fourth consecutive year, the Brazilian Ministry of Environment announced in a press briefing today. According to data analyzed by Brazil's National Institute for Space Research (INPE), an estimated 4,656 square kilometers of forests were cleared in the 12-month period, compared to 6,418 square kilometers in the previous 12-month period. "I consider this fact one of the few positive environmental news stories the planet had this year," said Izabella Teixeira, Minister of Environment.

Minister Teixeira also reported that the figure represents a 76.27 percent deforestation reduction, closing in on Brazil's national voluntary commitment to reduce 80 percent of the deforestation in the Amazon region by 2020 set forth in Brazil's National Policy on Climate Change.

"This outcome shows the world how a developing country can achieve what it has committed to in terms of targets," she said. Referring to the climate change negotiations currently taking place at the 18th UN Conference on Climate Change in Doha (Qatar), she added, "I hope this can be viewed in Doha as an example because we need to act with urgency, as the global reports on climate change are showing that the situation is getting worse."

Of the nine states that make up the Brazilian Amazon, only three showed increased rates of deforestation. Tocantins increased by 33 percent, 29 percent in Amazonas and 10 percent in Acre.

The Brazilian Amazonian Forest Monitoring by Satellite (PRODES) survey begun in 1988 uses satellite images to show where complete removal of forest cover – clearcutting – has occurred. The estimate has a 10 percent margin of error and the final data will be released mid-2013.