

Deforestation in cuba essay sample



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Centuries prior to the ruling of the Castro government, in the 16th century precisely, 90 percent of Cuba was covered with forests. Agriculture Ministry officials in Cuba revealed that the Castro government, in the last for decades, had sown 1. 24 million acres of trees, of which were mainly derived from the mountainous zones of the Sierra Maestra, Escambray, and Sierra de los Organos. This reduced Cuba's forest cover to 53 percent and by 1960 it was down by 13. 5 percent. Ultimately, mining, farming, sugar planting, supplying timber and setting up cattle ranches, demolished Cuba's forests over the centuries. Deforestation, in any case, is both detrimental to the environment and to the economy of Cuba. Forest products are extremely important to the economical well-being of Cuba because they play a primary role in the production of tobacco, sugar, and citrus fruits, a few of the island's main exports, as well as in construction and electrical and telephone services.

Above all, forests play a crucial role in the protection and conservation of Cuba's natural resources and their contribution to improving the environment as a whole. In Cuba, there are approximately 40, 000 persons who are employed in the forest sector, which includes 1, 200 professionals, 2, 000 technicians, and 70 researchers, to name a few. Since forests are a source of long-term employment, particularly in rural communities, many people who work in the forest sector, who rely on forests as their main source of income, find themselves facing the possibility of unemployment with the onset of deforestation. Currently, several initiatives are being undertaken to improve the issue of deforestation. Current initiatives include a joint initiative of the Cuban and Canadian governments as part of their

cooperation program called the Institutional Strengthening of the Cuban Forest Service Project.

The organizations involved in the implementation of this project are the Canadian Executing Agency (CEA) and the National Department of Forests (Dirección Nacional Forestal - DNF). The long-term purpose of this project is to contribute to the development of forest resources in Cuba for the benefit of both the general public and the rural population whose income and survival is dependent on forest products. The short-term goal of this initiative is to strengthen the institutional ability of the forest service in the planning, coordination, supervision, implementation, and control of forest-related activities and the capacity to involve and engage civil society, which includes the private sector, farmers, and rural communities, in the responsible management of forest resources. A new law enacted in 1998 by the Cuban government, the Forest Law, was also implemented in order to protect and preserve the island's remaining forests and promote responsible and sustainable use of natural resources.

The law states that Cubans who want to cut down trees must get government permission first, in order to prevent the overuse and misuse of Cuba's forests. The Foundation for Nature and Humanity (La Fundación de la Naturaleza y el Hombre) describes itself as a cultural and scientific institution, with a civil and non-governmental character, dedicated to research promotion of projects and programs for the environmental protection on "its relation with culture and society." This particular organization provides the people of Cuba with extensive training on

environmental issues, including deforestation and pollution, in attempt to “harmonize the relationship between society and its environment.”

Sources:

COSG Website - Organizations in Cuba: <http://www.cosg.org.uk/fundacion.htm>

CIA Website - The World Factbook: <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/cu.html>

Forests.org Website:

<http://forests.org/archive/samerica/cubadefo.htm> and <http://forests.org/archive/samerica/cubarise.htm>