#NAIDERCOP21 (FOURTH DAY): THE ROLE OF FOREST CONSERVATION IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

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FOURTH DAY OF COP21.

In an article published last week in Nature, Richard A. Houghton and Alexander Nassikas (Woods Hole Research Center) and Brett Byers (Rainforest Trust and Million Acre Pledge) make the case for the key role that protecting forests will play in achieving climate change mitigation goals. The preservation of existing forests, through the prevention of emissions originating from their destruction (deforestation is one of the largest sources of greenhouse gases, through the release of carbon contained in plants and soil) and Through the accumulating role of CO2 from other emissions, it could contribute 50% of the mitigation of emissions necessary to achieve the objective of maintaining temperatures below 2ºC by 2050.

Of this, 20% of the mitigation would come from the prevention of the release of carbon contained in the plants, and the remaining 80% from the sequestration of carbon from other emissions. This could be achieved through three key actions:

- Reduce deforestation and forest degradation
- Allow the recovery of forests degraded by logging activities and agriculture
- Reforest areas that have already been cleared

To this, we should add the synergistic effects that could be derived from the sustainable and integrated management of the intervention territories, including agriculture, comprehensive planning, and the protection of pastures and wetlands.

Full article reference: R. A. Houghton, Brett Byers & Alexander A. Nassikas. A role for tropical forests in stabilizing atmospheric CO2. Nature Climate Change 5, 1022–1023 (2015) doi:10.1038/nclimate2869. Published online on November 25, 2015.

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