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CLASS OF 2020

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# REPORT ON DEFORESTATION

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# What Deforestation is Doing to Our World

## Causes for Deforestation



In this report I shall be focusing on the deforestation happening in the Amazon rain forest. It is located in the Equator, right over Brazil, and it is a thriving ecosystem filled to the brim with life. It is packed with valuable resources that are precious to many people around the world. It is being cut down at an alarmingly fast rate, with about 3 football fields of the Amazon trees being cut down every minute. I will be talking about three main causes for this deforestation as well as the economic, social, and environmental consequences of deforestation. There are actions that can be taken to look after the generations today as well as the future generations and I will be looking at two sustainable solutions that could be used by you in the future as a government.

### CAUSES FOR DEFORESTATION

Mining is one of the main causes for deforestation. There is such high demand for things such as gold and various precious metals that can be found in the rain-forest. The methods to extract these materials is extremely damaging to the forest itself, as it is needed to cut down many trees and clear out land to begin to dig. This causes problems for natives living close by such as the Jacuna Indians as the process damages the ecosystem set in place for the rain forest which they thrive on.

Cash Crops are also another main cause. Cash Crops are produced for their commercial value rather than for the use for the grower. Although some of these are important and should be grown at an acceptable amount, excess farming of these crops can be extremely damaging to forests and rainforests around the globe. Cash Crops are a big factor for the deforestation happening today. Again, the reason for this is the huge demand for these products, and many large corporate companies pounce on this demand and make more of these crops, such as palm oil and earn more money in the process. To grow these, however, they need space, therefore leading to the mass amounts of trees being cut down to make space for the orderly lines of Cash Crops. Logging is also one of the main reasons for the deforestation of the rainforest. There is high demand for the wood that these trees can provide, and many of its uses can be used for medicinal purposes, beauty products, and so on. This makes the forest literal money trees for big companies, which in the end causes so much of the deforestation happening in our rainforests. The rainforest is also a carbon sink, which means it helps to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. With the extreme deforestation, it has been estimated that 20% of the Amazon rainforest has disappeared in the last 50 years, which has already led to devastating effects to climate change and biodiversity.

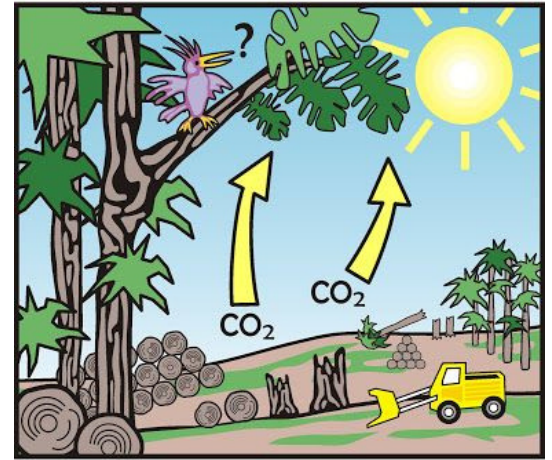


# What Are The Consequences of This?

## Environmental Consequences

There are extremely huge environmental consequences that result from the act of deforestation. By cutting down trees, we take away a huge factor which helps us with battling the climate change that is steadily destroying the fragile system set in place on earth. Trees convert  $\text{CO}_2$  into oxygen, which is an extremely helpful tool for us. By cutting them down, we are only adding fuel to climate change. But the risks from deforestation go even wider. Trees also absorb and store carbon dioxide. If forests are cleared, or even disturbed, they release carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. Forest loss and damage is the cause of around 10% of global warming. Apart from this, the loss of trees and other vegetation can cause desertification (which is the process of land turning into desert) soil erosion, fewer crops, flooding, increased greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, and many problems for indigenous people and animals which depend solely on the intricate system and biodiversity of the rainforest.

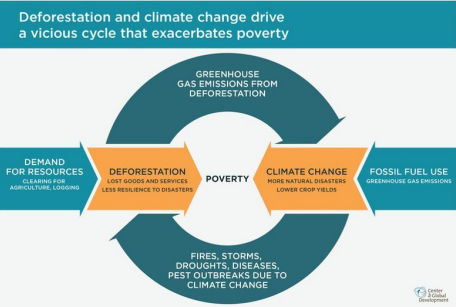
A-Z of Global Warming - DEFORESTATION © S.Rosser 2007



Rainforests are destroyed for a variety of reasons, including logging, cattle ranching and commercial agriculture. Rainforests once covered around 12% of Earth's land surface. As a result of deforestation rainforest cover has reduced to about 5%.

## Social Consequences

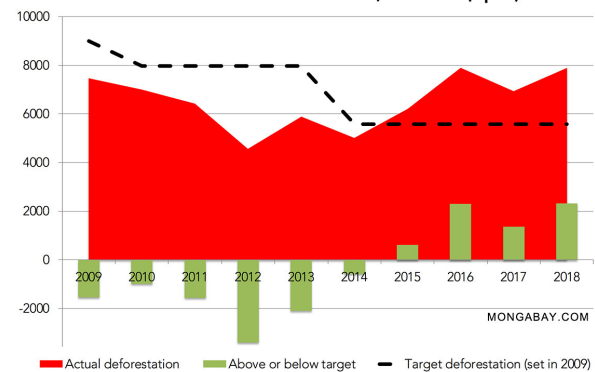
The deforestation happening in the rainforest also has devastating social effects on the local tribes and indigenous people that have their home there. Communities rely on the forest's resources for all of its nutritional and medicinal purposes. Deforestation destroys the essential ecosystem services such as the provision of clean water and fertile soils, which leads to the loss of farming and other livelihood opportunities, like fishing and hunting for food. An example of one of these communities are the Jacuna Indians. Their whole livelihood is based around the rich biodiversity around them, using logs as canoes and forest fruits and vegetation as food, and spare wood for spearheads to catch fish. It is all a delicate system, and with it being quickly cut down and damaged, the lives of these indigenous people are being disrupted and hurt. Deforestation also reduces the access to land for future generations dependant on that land. Another thing that is damaged by the deforestation is the tribe's health, for example the water pollution due to the over use of fertilisers and pesticides on plantations which can affect the quality of drinking water, which leads to serious illnesses that these tribes are not prepared or equipped to cope with.



## Economic Consequences

The economic consequences of deforestation are also severe, especially for the communities in which the deforestation is happening, in this case Brazil. Deforestation can rob a country of valuable potential renewable resources and replace them with useless grassland. Tropical forests provide important renewable resources that can significantly contribute to national economic growth on a continuing basis, and by cutting it down it significantly decreases the chance for these countries to improve. They cut down their forests and rainforests to sell to the major buyers, such as Europe and USA, because of the huge demand for the resources. It's the only way that they can earn their money, and at least try to struggle forward in the game of business. But, in my opinion, it is just as much the buyers than sellers that contribute to this problem. There is a much better way to use these resources to the best of their abilities without destroying the ecosystem that is set in place. There are solutions to escape the vicious cycle of selling to popular demand, because the outcomes of this are devastating for the communities in these countries trying to improve their living standard.

Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon, 2009-2017 (sq km)





# Some Sustainable Solutions

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It is unrealistic for Brazil to stop using the resources that the rainforest can offer completely, because it is a vital tool to help them improve their country. The overuse and exploitation of these lands are extremely damaging and can cause things such as soil erosion, flooding and climate change. The sustainable use of the forest, therefore, is an essential thing to proceed forward with. The following are some good ideas for this to happen.



**Agro Forestry** - This is the growing of trees and crops at the same time. By doing this it prevents the erosion of soil and crops thrive from the nutrients of the dead organic matter.

**Selective Logging** - There is a system of which trees are cut depending on their height. This guarantees young trees to grow and develop to their best ability, and eventually the forest would gain full maturity.

**Education** - By teaching kids and adults alike about the consequences of the actions happening now, it gives them a wider understanding of everything and a newer appreciation of the valuable resources.

**Afforestation** - This is basically the opposite of deforestation - Make organisations and parties that focus solely on the planting of trees in large areas to begin to make up for the loss of other trees that have fallen.

**Forest Reserves** - For areas to be completely protected from the deforestation.

**Monitoring** - For government and public services to use tools such as satellites to help them monitor from space the activities going on in Earth and to determine if their are legal and sustainable.