

Colombia unveils early warnings showing 70% reduction in deforestation

- During January to September 2023, the deforestation trend showed an estimated 70% reduction in the Amazon, according to Ideam.
- Minister Muhamad sent a strong message to the communities: Conserving pays and next year the payment for this will be multiplied.
- The government is working with the communities in the territories through social conservation agreements, payments for environmental services and the consolidation of forestry development nuclei.

Bogotá. November 7, 2023. (@minambienteco). The Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Susana Muhamad, presented the early warnings of deforestation from January to September of this year in the Colombian Amazon, which show a 70% reduction compared to the same period last year, from 59,345 hectares deforested to 17,909 hectares, according to the Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Studies (Ideam).

"These figures indicate a trend, it is not the official data. As we promised, we want to show the country how deforestation is progressing. This is an encouraging figure, but we do not want to be triumphalist, nor communicate that we are already winning the battle against deforestation," said the Minister.

These early warnings, issued by Ideam every quarter, allow us to identify critical sites of forest loss in Colombia. These reports are useful to visualize the dynamics of deforestation while the annual figures are published.

Against this backdrop, the minister warned of two factors that could increase deforestation in the last quarter of the year, which is key to the annual figure: the dry season, which is increasing with the presence of the El Niño phenomenon, and the suspension of peace talks with the dissidents, which could generate greater vulnerability.

According to Ideam estimates, in the Amazon Arc, Caquetá presented an estimated reduction in deforestation of 79%, Meta of 87%, Putumayo of 54% and Guaviare of 39%.

"The last quarter is absolutely transcendental and can change the total figure. I am launching two alerts that seem to me key of the third quarter: it multiplied by 124% in Guaviare and also by 2% in Caquetá," he said.

Conservation Pays

The Minister sent a strong message to the communities: " Conservation Pays. If you want to enter the program, contact us and we will make sure that your conserved land has a concrete payment. But, if you burn your farm, it will not count for payment. Our main allies are the communities.

In addition, Muhamad reiterated that next year the payment will be multiplied significantly. The Government will begin to pay the conserved farms, which is why it is working with the community action boards in the agreements and identification of properties, farm by farm, especially in Caquetá and Guaviare.

In addition to this program, the Minister recalled that the Ministry is working on 11 forestry development nuclei with the communities, is advancing a call for royalty resources for indigenous reserves and is making progress in criminal investigation and social conservation agreements.

"We are already working in the field on the characterization of properties for the incentive to conserve and pay, in addition to the launching of 14 community forest fire brigades in the Amazon as part of the El Niño containment plan," she said.