

## *Razing the rainforest*

### **Fact Sheet**

#### **Lesson2: Razing the rainforest – are there any solutions?**

One billion of the world's population depend on forests for at least part of their livelihoods: forest management is therefore essential. Through the media and other communication resources, it is apparent that rainforests need managing in order to prevent further degradation and ultimately complete removal. In doing this there is also an opportunity for improving current climate change issues, by focusing on sustainable management through reforestation, afforestation and improving the quality of existing degraded forest. Securing land rights for indigenous communities and developing international trading systems of carbon credits are also ideas put forward as 'solutions'. However, just as there is no single cause of deforestation, there is no single solution.

In 2003, Brazil employed a number of strategies which, in the short term, had a positive effect of reducing deforestation in the Amazon basin. Land clearing was reduced, illegal activities targeted and in the last five years, 24 billion hectares have been set aside as conservation areas. While all these efforts saw a reduction in deforestation, these rates have now started to increase and Brazil now asks for a global response to this multilateral problem, with LEDCs and MEDCs coming together to form a partnership to protect global forests.

In this lesson, it is important that students devise action plans which are sustainable and by watching the clip concerning the link between land rights and reduced rates of deforestation, they should be aware of the importance of working with and involving indigenous communities into their strategies. At present it is estimated that 96% of people living in the Amazon have no legal tenure for their land. Lack of land ownership makes it increasingly possible for widespread deforestation to occur.

The lesson will also have a climate change element which mirrors growing global concern over the association between deforestation and greenhouse gases. The need to protect rainforests has gained increasing international significance in the last couple of years, with the realisation that deforestation is one of the major contributors to accelerating climate change. Rainforests are essential in reducing carbon emissions, but it must be recognised that climate change itself is going to have an impact on rainforests across the world, with parts of the Amazon and Congo expected to undergo major degradation within the next 40 years.

At present there is no single action plan to respond to the problems faced by rainforest across the world. Therefore it is the perfect time for students to put themselves in the situation facing many governments and suggest strategies to manage this increasingly global problem.