Protection of natural resources: promotion of tropical forests, Community action

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The rapporteur, Mrs Van Putten, called on the Community to take any measures or initiatives within its power for the conservation and sustainable management of tropical forests and to encourage the efforts of developing countries, in cooperation with local authorities, to conserve their tropical forests in the context of the sustainable development of those regions. Sustainable forest management was understood as the planned utilisation of forests in a manner compatible with the conservation of forest eco-systems for present and future generations and without undesirable effects on the physical and social environment. She stressed participation by local populations and called for the creation of buffer zones to assist the conservation and regeneration of biological diversity in tropical forests. She called for a sustainable exploitation of timber and other forest products. With regard to the regulation of international trade, the rapporteur called on the Community: - with effect from 1995, to secure within the ITTO the limitation of trade to timber produced by sustainable means; if no decisions had been reached internationally, to introduce an eco-label for sustainably produced timber; - to support the developing countries during the process of switching to sustainable forest management by providing compensation for loss of revenue, providing financial and technical support, and by creating an eco-label for timber and timber products. She hoped for the creation within the Commission of a new Tropical Forest Unit and called for assistance to be given to activities which promoted the establishment of a worldwide convention on the protection of forests.