

## **Text: Halting the destruction of the forests**

The tropical forests of the world have been over exploited and are being destroyed by people seeking land for food production (large areas have been farmed more intensively than they could sustained.) so more and more forest lands are being cleared for agriculture. The firewood crisis has exacerbated the situation and hastened the deforestation. The result is that forest resources are fast disappearing.

There have been numerous warnings about the consequences of forest destruction but comparatively very little notice has been taken. World attention has now been caught due to severe drought in the Sahelien region and other parts and other parts of Africa. It must be re-emphasized that no amount of aid can help the people to be self-sufficient in food production when they continue to degrade the land that produces food. As the forest disappears, there is real danger of the land once covered, being eroded and perhaps desertified.

“We cannot afford land degradation” said Raoul Duda of UN/FAO, “the lands we have are in practical terms, for the next generation, a non-renewable resource- whatever we lose may consider lost forever “. Indeed, we do not have to pass on degraded land to the next generation. Forests are renewable resources handed to our generation by the past generation to be passed on to the next intact, if not improved.

What is needed today is a new international commitment to safeguard, conserve and possibly improve the environment. This should be accepted as a basic historical obligation towards future generation. In most countries, especially China, Korea, Japan, desertification is being attacked and overcome by country’s diligent and inexhaustible man power. In South Korea for instance, about 2,5 million people celebrated 1983 Arbor Day by planting over 27 million of saplings on 18,000 hectare.

This fight does not require huge investment. It simply needs the political will of governments and mobilization of agents and the understanding of people.

### **I. Comprehension questions**

1. Why do people over-exploit the tropical forests?
2. What can be the consequences of the forest deforestation?
3. How can the problem of deforestation be solved by nations?
4. What did people in South Korea do on the Arbor Day?
5. What are Raoul Duda’s words for the forest degradation?

### **II. Translation: translate into French the first paragraph**

### **III. Essay: tell in few lines what is the importance of forests for a country?**