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## **Floresta Names Burundi the Nation Most Impacted by Environmental Degradation and Resulting Poverty**

**Global charity will begin restoring land to help poor in Burundi. Never has Floresta mission been so critical**

**San Diego, CA** - The global charity [Floresta](#) that works to end poverty by halting deforestation on several continents has named Burundi as the nation most impacted by environmental degradation as judged by its dwindling forests, severely poor soil, fuel consumption from firewood and people living on less than \$1 per day.

"For more than two decades, we have watched the poor struggle to stay afloat while their forests were cut down for fuel and income with nothing being done to improve the land for farming and to protect hillsides from erosion. The vicious cycle of poverty caused by deforestation is growing exponentially so never has our mission been so critical," said Scott Sabin, executive director of Floresta. "We have been working in the developing world since 1984 and have established a track record of very effective work through local leadership in Mexico, Tanzania, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Thailand and Kenya." Floresta is expanding its services into Burundi in 2009, bringing to seven the number of countries that have benefited from its programs to plant trees, start farms, teach animal husbandry and make small business loans that empower the poor to take control of their environment.

The group based in San Diego, Calif., used data on poverty and deforestation rates from a wide variety of sources to identify the following top seven nations most in need of protecting or restoring the environment: Burundi, Haiti, Ethiopia, Togo, Nigeria, Niger and Cambodia. Sabin said Floresta drew up its environmental degradation ranking system to bring attention to the intersection of poverty and deforestation that exponentially increases human misery. "We want it to end," he stressed.

"We are drawn to work in countries that will benefit the most from our unique expertise in promoting the growth of new forests and farms while helping the poor realize their potential to build a better future," explained Doug Satre, Floresta's director of outreach and development. "Now, more than ever, it is clear that poverty and the environment should be addressed together," he added.

Floresta has seen a 37 percent increase in support from donors this past year, with more than \$1 million raised from July through October. "We're both humbled and inspired when we can surpass our fundraising goals in tough economic times," said Sabin. "With the help of individual donors and grants, we will achieve our 2008 goal of planting 500,000 trees and making 1,500 small business loans."

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**About Floresta**

An international Christian charity that works in areas where poverty is caused by deforestation, [Floresta](#) restores the environment and empowers the poor. For 24 years, Floresta has provided solutions to meet the complex economic, environmental and spiritual needs of impoverished farmers in developing countries by planting 3.9 million trees, revitalizing thousands of small farms, and making over 5,600 small business loans.