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AFRICA/MADAGASCAR - Food-for-work: plan to keep the forests and help the people

Amboasary (Agenzia Fides) - One of the best ecosystems in the world is the one that includes the dry forests of southern Madagascar. Unfortunately, these are increasingly at risk as the inhabitants of the region, aggravated by drought and food insecurity are deforesting the entire area. In fact, they cut down trees to make room for the cultivation and production of firewood. To limit this rapid deforestation and to meet chronic food insecurity, the World Food Programme (WFP), together with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), is taking steps to planting 1,000 acres of trees through a project called " food-for-work " where 60 000 people will benefit from. The inhabitants of some small towns have welcomed this proposal, knowing that once the trees are cut it would take another 15 years for them to grow with no benefit to the environment and food security.
According to the WFP statistics, since November 2012, 676,000 Malagasy are at risk. The project launched offers 2.4 kg of corn and beans in exchange for five hours of reforestation work. All those who have joined are planting a type of tree which is useful for the construction and for the production of coal. In the village of Anjanahasoa, near the Andohahela National Park, residents have organized themselves to replanting the forest which was destroyed by a fire. Each family will plant 30 trees per year. Because of deforestation, the region has become drier and the soil less fertile. Although it will be difficult to stop the phenomenon, the WFP project tends to slow it down and protect livelihoods threatened by it. Before the political crisis of 2009, which damaged the economy in Madagascar, many farmers in the region moved to cities in search of work. Unfortunately there are still many unemployed (AP) (Agenzia Fides 16/01/2013)

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