

## Brazil Gets Help to Save Little Left of Atlantic Rain Forest

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Brazil's Atlantic Rain Forest is the most critical ecosystem on the planet. This affirmation was made by the national coordinator of the Network of Atlantic Rain Forest Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Pedro Aranha.

According to Aranha, updated information indicates that only 7% of the original Atlantic Rain Forest that covered 17 Brazilian states remains standing at present.

He recalled that the states with the best conservation of remnants of the original forest are Rio de Janeiro and Santa Catarina, which, even so, are not free of constant threats.

In Rio de Janeiro the chief problem is property speculation, and, in Santa Catarina, timber extraction, despite its prohibition.

To contain the devastation, Aranha informed that joint actions have been developed by the federal government and the Network of Atlantic Rain Forest NGOs.

One of these measures is the liberation of nearly 16 million euros in financial resources from the German KfW Bank, in a partnership with the Brazilian government.

According to Aranha, the NGOs interested in lines of credit have until June 31 to submit their projects for participatory management in conservation units and the creation and implementation of new conservation units, including parks, biological reserves, and private natural patrimony reserves.

"For the Atlantic Rain Forest, this is fundamental, because 70% of Atlantic Rain Forest lands are still in private hands. Thus, the creation of private natural patrimony reserves is important," he explained.

Aranha also underscored the inauguration of the Atlantic Rain Forest Program, scheduled for October. The project, which is being elaborated by the federal government, will integrate non-governmental organizations and municipal and state governments.

He alerted to the fact that the Amazon is being transformed into a new Atlantic Rain Forest, in terms of devastation, for economic reasons.

"All Brazil's economic cycles occurred in the Atlantic Rain Forest, beginning with brazilwood and ending with industry. The same thing is happening in the Amazon. It started with industry, and now it is soybeans."

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