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Photographers Capture the World's Beauty, And Its **Problems**

Katrin Figge | April 25, 2012

A winning shot from the FORCLIME photo contest, currently on exhibition at the Goethe-Institut. The objective of the contest is to raise public awareness about the importance of Indonesia's forests. (Photo courtesy of FORCLIME)

A winning shot from the FORCLIME photo contest, currently on exhibition at the Goethe-Institut. The objective of the contest is to raise public awareness about the importance of Indonesia's forests. (Photo courtesy of FORCLIME)

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"The death of the forest is the end of our life," environmental activist Dorothy Stang once remarked.

Forests play a significant role in the planet's natural balance of oxygen and carbon dioxide, a function that becomes more vital as the earth's climate changes.

What's more, thousands of species of flora and fauna are vanishing as the forests around them disappear. And millions of people — including many traditional cultures — depend on the forest for sustenance and a livelihood.

"Over the past 50 years, about half the world's original forest cover has been lost, the most significant cause for that being humans beings' unsystematic use of its resources," according to the World Wildlife Fund Web site.

"When we take away the forest, it is not just the trees that go. The entire ecosystem begins to fall apart, with dire consequences for all of us."

Indonesia's tropical forests have been destroyed at an alarming rate in recent years, mostly due to illegal logging and clearing space for palm oil plantations.

In an effort to raise awareness about the importance of forests and the threats they face, a photo competition has been created to celebrate the profound beauty of the world's timberlands, and to document the tragedies taking place.

After the United Nations declared 2011 as "The International Year of Forests," the Forests and Climate Change Program (FORCLIME) and the German International Cooperation (GIZ) collaborated with the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry and the Goethe-Institut for a photo campaign.

"The theme for the International Year of Forests was 'Forests for People,' which underlines the interdependence between mankind and forests, and our responsibility for ensuring the conservation and sustainable management of forests for the benefit of present and future generations," said Rolf Krezdorn, program director of FORCLIME.

"The objective of the FORCLIME photo contest was to raise public awareness of the importance of Indonesia's rich forest resources for the livelihood of people and sustainable development," he explained. "With this in mind, interested people were

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