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CAN CAQUETÁ BECOME A GLOBAL EXAMPLE OF LOW-CARBON AND DEFORESTATION-FREE AGRICULTURE?

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Photo by Karina Fernanda Monroy

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Climate change and its daily impacts are getting attention from regional governments and institutions in Caquetá. The fight against deforestation and biodiversity loss demands coordinated action, not just good intentions. Governments and institutions are now directing the formulation of their public policies to ensure a balance between the economy and forest conservation.

Despite Colombia's international commitments to reduce deforestation in the last decade, deforestation continues to be an important source of emissions for the country. Actions must be taken to reduce the destruction.

The government of Caquetá has laid the groundwork for action in recent years by creating a *Low Carbon Rural Development Strategy*, which aims to reduce deforestation and improve the livelihood of the local rural population.

Amazonia Connect, a partnership between USAID, Solidaridad Network, Earth Innovation Institute, National Wildlife Federation, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, is helping the Department of Caquetá in its efforts to implement the Department's *Low Carbon Rural Development Strategy*, with a particular focus on the adoption of low carbon agriculture and the sustainable production of agro-commodities such as coffee, milk, and meat.

Together with local stakeholders and the departmental government, an Action Plan to implement Caquetá *Low Emissions Rural Development Strategy (EDRBE)* was approved. This was done with support from the Amazonia Connect initiative and under the local leadership of the Caquetá Climate Change Sub-Node, a governance platform represented by multiple local sectors. The Action Plan prioritizes goals such as having 3,000 hectares under conservation and sustainable production schemes by 2030.

The Action Plan also redefines the ***Monitoring System*** for tracking progress towards implementing the Strategy. This is made public through the Caquetá Sustentable platform, which was also strengthened with support from the Amazon Connect program.

Today, with a Departmental Strategy, a multi-sector overseeing Body, an Action Plan, and a public online platform for measuring progress, Caquetá is well-positioned to become a low-carbon agricultural and deforestation-free Department. We are very confident and optimistic that the new government of Caquetá will continue the implementation of Caqueta's Low Emissions Development Strategy Action Plan, promoting forest conservation initiatives in association with the improvement of rural production in the Department.

Amazonia Connect is an initiative of USAID, Solidaridad, Earth Innovation Institute, National Wildlife Federation, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison In collaboration with the Regional Environmental Program for the Amazon, producers, companies, local governments and financial institutions, Amazon Connect will promote and scale the adoption of low-carbon agriculture and sustainable commodity production in Brazil, Colombia and Peru.

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