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Ethiopia Grapples with Alarming Tree Cover Loss; Latest Fire Incident Raises Concerns

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Ethiopia has experienced a significant decline in tree cover over the past two decades, with a net loss of approximately 738,331 hectares, marking a 3.61% decrease in tree cover. The country's total area spans over 112.95 million hectares, with tree cover initially extending over 12.04 million hectares. However, recent trends indicate a troubling trajectory of deforestation.

The primary driver of tree cover loss in Ethiopia has been shifting agriculture, accounting for the vast majority of the decline. Other contributing factors include urbanization, forestry practices, and wildfires, though their impact is considerably less than that of agriculture.

In the latest incident, a fire alert was reported on January 16, 2025, in the Somali region of Ethiopia. This single alert underscores the ongoing challenge Ethiopia faces with wildfires, which have contributed to the country's overall tree cover loss.

The loss of tree cover carries significant implications for the environment and the local communities that depend on these ecosystems. Trees are vital for soil conservation, water cycle regulation, and providing habitat for biodiversity. The decline also has broader implications for climate change, as forests play a crucial role in carbon sequestration.

As Ethiopia continues to confront these environmental challenges, the latest fire incident serves as a reminder of the importance of sustainable land management and the need for concerted efforts to protect and restore the country's forests.



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