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**Press Release**

For Immediate Release  
29 September 2009

**Clearing of river reserve and steep slopes**

The Department of the Environment, Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment, is hereby advising the general public that it is critically important for persons to respect the 66feet buffer reserve along all water bodies. Land owners conducting clearing of vegetation are hereby reminded to maintain the buffer reserves in order to minimize or avoid pollution from sedimentation due to soil erosion, as well as pollution from agrochemical runoff. Respecting the buffer reserves along water bodies, particularly inland, will also help to prevent unnecessary damage to public and private infrastructure such as bridges, in the event of heavy rains that could result in flooding of rivers carrying large debris such as tree trunks downstream.

The Department of the Environment would also like to bring to the attention of the general public concerns with the increase in the clearance of steep slopes/hillsides with a gradient greater than 25° for agricultural purposes throughout the country, especially along the Hummingbird Highway. The potential negative impacts that could result from such activities are many and could lead to the endangerment and possible loss of life. The clearing of vegetation which stabilizes these hillsides and steep slopes can result in landslides, both during periods of drought and periods of heavy rainfall, as well as pollution.

Both of these activities could lead to irreparable damages to the environment, personal properties and the general public on a whole.

With the above in mind, anyone presently clearing or intending to clear riverbanks or these hillsides/steep slopes are asked to cease all such actions for the safety of all.

Should anyone have any comment, question or would like to report such activities, please feel free to contact the Department of the Environment.

**HELP US PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT AND OUR LIVES!**

For further information please contact:

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