

WORLD FORESTRY CONGRESS

WOMEN'S DECLARATION ON THE IMPACTS OF THE EXPANSION OF MONOCULTURE TREE PLANTATIONS ON THE GRASSLANDS

We, the women from the countryside and the cities, on the occasion of the World Forestry Congress taking place in Buenos Aires, Argentina (18-25 October 2009), express our opposition to the expansion of monoculture tree plantations, pulp and paper projects, which have been especially destructive to grassland ecosystems (in Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina).

Lies and deceit have been used to promote the development of "forests" in the grasslands as an alternative that will generate employment and income, when what are actually being developed are thousands of hectares of monoculture plantations of exotic tree species (eucalyptus and pine). For us, the women, these are nothing other than green deserts, where the profits generated end up in the hands of a small number of companies, including agribusiness multinationals.

As women who have organized together, actively involved in resistance struggles in defence of an egalitarian society, where economic activity revolves around the sustainability of all living beings and not around the market and profits, we denounce the countless negative impacts, reported by women, on their own lives and the lives of their communities, which include the following:

- Enormous pressure is exerted on families to sell their land to pulp and paper companies. While contributing to the exodus from rural areas, this is also leading to the overcrowding of cities, with a resulting increase in unemployment, poverty and violence.
- Those who resist and remain on their land are strongly pressured to join the famous "forestry" promotion programmes that the companies offer in partnership with local governments.
- Agrarian reform processes have been curtailed, resulting in a lack of public incentives for the development of rural family farming and for families to continue living in the countryside.
- Tree plantations have created little employment for local communities, and in particular, a negligible number of jobs for women.
- Working conditions are precarious, with temporary contracts, minimal workers' protections, and exploitation of the workforce, especially the women employed in tree nurseries, in addition to the demonstrated threats to the health of male and female workers.
- Living conditions and daily survival are threatened by such difficulties as the contamination of the environment and animals due to the widespread use of agrochemicals on eucalyptus plantations, the poor condition of rural roads due to the traffic of heavy vehicles, shortages of water, the degradation of soils, and other impacts.
- In the name of earning profits, this model of development supported by the patriarchal capitalist system is destroying the lives of men and women, as well as other living creatures.
- Under this model, women have faced profound changes in the sexual division of labour and the roles that they play in the family and in the community, which have had the effect of even further increasing their subordination.
- Pulp and paper mills depend on our land, our water and our climate for their existence; they seek to buy the lives of people and transform the land into a disposable commodity, using it up

and then moving on to find new land to exploit.

- The expansion of pulp production leads to the further expansion of an unsustainable pattern of consumption that depends on the exploitation of natural resources in one region of the planet, the poor South, to maintain the standard of living in another, the wealthy North.
- Eucalyptus plantations in Brazil also supply the country's charcoal industry, which has been repeatedly denounced and sued for slave labour practices, and feed the ravenous smelters that demand the further exploitation of mines, contaminating springs and aquifers.
- For women, the expansion of monoculture eucalyptus plantations has sowed fear, violence and sexual harassment. Many women report that they are afraid to walk alone near the plantations, because of the large numbers of workers from outside their community. This means that women's right to free movement is curtailed, bringing about changes in their habits and routines. In addition, many have been the victims of sexual harassment by these workers. This has undoubtedly meant a step back for women's independence and autonomy, which contributes to greater disempowerment of women.
- Many other negative impacts could be taking place (for example, a rise in prostitution, the proliferation of sexually transmitted diseases, illicit drug use, changes in eating habits, the breakdown of the family structure, among others), which typically occur in different places following the arrival of large-scale projects like these. Unfortunately, these impacts are neither studied nor quantified by public agencies.

Because of all this, we the women will keep up our resistance and our struggle for as long as necessary, not only against the expansion of monoculture exotic tree plantations and pulp and paper industry megaprojects, but against all processes that entail the commodification of living beings and the disempowerment of women. We, the women, have the power to bring about something new, and we are doing it.

**LAND, WATER, SEEDS AND FOOD, THIS IS THE STRUGGLE
THAT OUR MOVEMENTS ARE WAGING!
CHANGE THE WORLD TO CHANGE THE LIVES OF WOMEN**

WORLD MARCH OF WOMEN- RS – BRAZIL
MOVIMENTO DE MULHERES CAMPONESAS - BRAZIL
FRIENDS OF THE EARTH - PORTO ALEGRE/RS - BRAZIL
CENTRO DE ESTUDOS AMBIENTAIS- PELOTAS/RS – BRAZIL
CENTRAL UNICA DOS TRABALHADORES (CUT) – BRAZIL
SEMPREVIVA ORGANIZAÇÃO FEMINISTA (SOF) – BRAZIL
REDES / FRIENDS OF THE EARTH – URUGUAY
GROUPS OF RURAL WOMEN NETWORK – URUGUAY
ASSOCIATION OF RURAL WOMEN - URUGUAY
GRAIN - ARGENTINA
WRM – WORLD RAINFOREST MOVEMENT