

## **Aracruz Celulose and the World Cup: propaganda and deforestation**

While the attention of millions of Brazilians is focused on the Brazilian football team, Aracruz Celulose has come up with a new nationwide publicity, which is being shown on television during the break of the football matches. The propaganda shows national celebrities, like former football player Pelé, playing a ball to each other, while a voice says: “Aracruz: fazendo um papel bonito lá fora”, meaning in English “Aracruz: playing a nice role abroad” (there’s a world play since in Portuguese the word “papel” has the double meaning of “role” and “paper”, the end product of the cellulose produced by Aracruz).

This is clearly a message that the company wants the public to believe, taking advantage of incredibly large audiences watching the world cup matches -in spite of all the violations that the company has committed over the past 30 years against indigenous, afrodescendant and peasant communities.

What the company definitely does not want the public to learn is what happened on Friday 16th in the Jacutinga community, municipality of Linhares, state of Espírito Santo. That day, besides being a Friday, was a day after a national holiday -which means that in Brazil only very few public institutions are functioning- and most people were watching the World Cup matches! It was exactly on that day that Aracruz Celulose gave orders to deforest a native forest area close to the riverside in this peasant community.

This forest area has been under preservation for 20 years and the local peasants, members of the Movement of Small Peasants (MPA), conserve the area in order to protect the water resources and biodiversity. Aracruz, according to community members, entered with 27 machines and deforested quickly an area of at least 3 hectares. They could not go further because the community mobilized itself and stopped the machines with their bodies; even a pregnant woman participated in the action. The police was called to “protect” the machines and the workers, but the community succeeded in stopping the deforestation. Yesterday, a team of the Federal Environmental Agency IBAMA confirmed on the spot that in fact Aracruz had deforested native forest, and ordered officially the immediate halt of deforestation activities, while it will analyze the 2001 permit, presented by Aracruz, that according to the company would justify the deforestation. However, it is important to stress that present legislation does not permit any intervention in this type of permanent preservation area.

**Alert against the Green Desert Movement - June 20th 2006**