
[Open letter denouncing the FSC certification of Fibria Aracruz Celulose S.A.](#)

Civil society organizations are denouncing the FSC certification of Fibria Celulose SA monoculture tree plantations by IMAFLORA, a Brazilian certification body. The organization's demands are aimed at supporting the social and environmental battle carried out by the populations suffering the effects of cellulose plant projects, in this particular case, those by the firm Fibria (formerly Aracruz Celulose).

To: FSC

To: IMAFLORA

To: Consumers of FSC brand paper products

The undersigned, members of organizations, trade unions and activists from the States of Espírito Santo and Bahia – where the company Fibria Celulose S.A. is applying for its FSC certification – and also citizens of Brazil and the world, have decided to join forces to support the social and environmental battle carried out by the populations suffering the effects of cellulose plant projects, in this particular case, those by the firm Fibria (formerly Aracruz Celulose).

The purpose behind this open letter is to react against information released by certifying institute IMAFLORA, sent by e-mail to different organizations and individuals, stating that the FSC certification process regarding “*forest management*” by the company Fibria Celulose S.A. is under way. The IMAFLORA also announced that a survey and three public meetings in relation to the issue have been scheduled for the month of August, in Espírito Santo and in southern Bahia.

Fibria Celulose S.A. is a company that resulted from the merger, financed in 2009 with public funds from the BNDES (1), of the firms Votorantim Celulose e Papel and Aracruz Celulose S.A. At present, Fibria owns over 1 million hectares of land and has become the top exporter of cellulose from eucalyptus worldwide.

According to the IMFLORA, the area that Fibria intends to get certification for corresponds to the “Aracruz unit”, covering a total area of 355 thousand hectares. However, the institute provides no data as to the location or details of the area involved, like the number of hectares intended for eucalyptus, the specific location of such area, the communities affected, possible controversies over the land with traditional communities, or the existence of labor or socio-environmental conflicts. Civil society is not allowed the possibility of a fair and democratic participation in the certification process that affects such vast territory, for no signs of transparency have been detected and there is an evident lack of basic information.

Because it has failed to acknowledge the structural problems it suffered from the very start, we no longer trust the FSC. They continue to certify industrial areas for monoculture tree plantations where there is an intensive use of fertilizers and pesticides - including Roundup, made from the active ingredient Glifosato (2), and ant baits made of sulfloramid (3), whose risks are increasingly evident according to various scientific research studies.

The FSC also continues to deny the complexity of certifications in large-scale areas such as the one related to Fibria. This is happening in a country with one of the highest social inequity levels in the world, including the aspect of land occupation: 3.5% of land-owners control 56% of the land, while 40% of the whole universe of owners occupy less than 1% of the total area involved. Eucalyptus companies such as Fibria are clear examples of this model where land concentration is the rule. Moreover, the eucalyptus-cellulose business represents the sector of agribusiness determined to put an end to the agricultural land reform process which implies a reduction of the territorial rights of indigenous peoples, *Quilombolas*, and other traditional settlers, and the deconstruction of the forestry code.

Based on the above, we consider unacceptable that a company which puts in practice the model described obtains a certification to appear in the consumer market as a manufacturer of products derived from socially fair “management” procedures that claim to be environmentally and economically viable. The continued certification and consequent legitimization of the model restricts and delays the promotion of more viable, democratic, and humanized methods of agricultural production, based on food sovereignty and agroecology, that would prove beneficial to rural communities. Certifying companies like Fibria also implies postponing the introduction of an alternative paper production, decentralized and based on different fibers used as raw material, aimed at producing the amount of paper needed for society but without the need for large-scale monocultures aimed at objectives of cellulose companies that the FSC continues to support, i.e. the excessive and unlimited consumption of disposable paper.

Additionally, the area that Fibria intends to certify is apparently the same area of the aforementioned Aracruz Celulose, known for the social, economic, environmental and cultural violations it carried out throughout a period of four decades, with the approval of State authorities, all of which affected the rural, indigenous and *Quilombolas* communities. It was Aracruz Celulose (currently renamed Fibria) who was responsible for the demolition of houses, and even worship places, carried out with tractors in 2006 in two indigenous settlements of the indigenous Tupinikim and Guaraní. That same year, this company conceived and carried out a racist and discriminative campaign against the indigenous population, with consequences to be suffered by those communities for years to come. This company was also responsible, in 2009, for a persecution - organized in combination with a huge police deployment – and further attack on the *Quilombola* community of São Domingos, resulting in the arrest of 40 *Quilombola* community members who were accused of “stealing wood” from their own territory. The company also has a history of negligence towards former employees, which adds to other appalling behaviors by Fibria in the present, all of which have been well documented by the statements of local witnesses, as well as in books, videos, academic work and presentations, and photographic material covering a variety of discursive, academic, multi-disciplinary, technical, journalistic and artistic genres (4) . IMAFLORA must not underestimate the significance of such amount of written and empirical material evidencing the company’s bad reputation in relation to the local, regional and international societies. This is another dreadful example of how to obtain a mark identified as “green and sustainable”.

Despite the numerous studies identifying its territories made public in the past 7 or 8 years, Fibria continues to infringe the territorial rights of the *Quilombola* communities located in the north of Espírito Santo. The State (5)(and, unofficially, the company itself!) has already admitted the occupation, by Fibria, of state-owned lands (6) . Nonetheless, the legal actions by the company are still the main obstacle standing in the way of a proper and agile process towards the land ownership legalization procedures for *Quilombola* territories. The company has gone as far as supporting a racist campaign through its own allies, rural land-owners who have constituted a group called “*Movimento Paz no Campo*” (MPC – Rural Peace Movement), a sort of regional UDR (7) , to oppose

the demarcation of Quilombola territories. In the meantime, rivers and streams vanished and submerged amidst eucalyptus plantations drive communities towards a serious water crisis that directly affects food safety, as admitted by the Council for Food Safety, and the Committee on Human Rights relative to Adequate Nutrition.

The FSC denies the fact that the State has become Fibria's "hostage" as a result of the significant financing received by the political campaigns of Federal and State Governors, as has been the case in Espírito Santo and Bahia. This explains the behavior of environmental authorities at the State level and even by the State and Federal Public Ministry, who consent to the demands of organizations, despite having some of their officials seriously committed to social and environmental justice. In Espírito Santo, for example, Aracruz (presently known under the name Fibria) has been responsible, in past years, for violating environmental legislation in different ways, including the deviation of rivers and the manipulation of processes relative to environmental permits, in its pursuit for guaranteeing the outrageous water consumption of the cellulose factory complex. In Bahia, for example, there is a practice of implementing agreements, the so-called Behavior Adjustment Terms (Termo de Ajustamento de Conduta- TAC), like the one proposed in 2011 by the State and Federal Public Ministry (8) in Teixeira de Freitas, in association with Fibria and the firm Suzano. This agreement relieves companies from the penalties applied over the past few years by the state agencies responsible for environmental controls that were founded on environmental damage denounced at the time. The agreement also frees these companies from open processes on the basis of reported environmental degradation informed by NGOs and social movements. Those TACs are undoubtedly part of the strategy that will aid Fibria in obtaining its "green seal" from the FSC. As this takes place, traditional communities who have been unable to improve their production on their properties isolated by the eucalyptus plantations are still lacking the support of both the Federal and the State authorities and have no water available for production because natural brooks and lakes have all dried up.

We must point out that we do not feel in the least motivated to take part in the "public meetings" convoked by the IMAFLORA because we firmly believe that our participation will surely have no influence on the final outcome of the process. The Bahia experience – where the eucalyptus plantations of Veracel Celulose S.A., covering almost 100 thousand hectares, received the FSC certification in 2008 – proved highly emblematic. This company, 50% of which is owned by Fibria and the other 50% by the Swedish-Finnish multinational Stora Enso, obtained its certification regardless of the complications implied in the process and the various forms of impact it caused (9) . In spite of the fact that the FSC itself admitted the existing problems in an assessment, Veracel continues to be certified by the FSC today, while the FSC's advocates in those countries where the paper is being consumed, ignoring reality, tried to convince the world of a scenario where Veracel "solved" all its problems and where the FSC "is working fine". The only actual result was that, according to the FSC, Veracel's certifying company, SGS, decided not to grant other forestry management or plantation certifications in Brazil, for which reason Veracel also hired the IMAFLORA to guarantee the company's seal. It is worth recalling that Veracel is currently trying to duplicate the size of its plantations in a licensing process that has been judicially challenged due to its numerous irregularities (refer to the letter denouncing this at www.wrm.org.uy/paises/Brazil/ampliacao_da_Veracel.html, as well as the chapters on the cellulose sector in the new book by journalist Lúcio Vaz, entitled *Sanguessugas do Brasil* (Brazil's bloodsuckers) <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/livrariadafolha/1065017-geracao-editorial-anuncia-novo-livro-com-escandalos-de-corrupcao.shtml>).

The IMAFLORA is also involved in another certification process for Veracel relative to the extension of its certified areas, and an announcement has been made regarding an upcoming process to certify a group of farmers that produce eucalyptus for Veracel (10) . According to the IMAFLORA, the

21,000 hectares involved are to be certified in a field visit by the certifying authority that will take place in September 2012, despite all existing irregularities and illegalities like the absence of an environmental license and Legal Reserve in the areas to be certified (11) .

All this leads to a single conclusion: certifications advance because they seem to be a good deal, appealing to both companies from the cellulose sector and to the FSC as well. Without any commitment to social and environmental justice, they all seek to reassure their legitimacy and dominance in order to increase businesses based on the exploitation of nature, the poisoning of humans and the environment, and the lack of respect towards local communities and life on the Planet. They are determined to obtain greater benefits and profits regardless of the price implied!

Based on all that has been expressed above, we firmly oppose what the IMAFLORA and the FSC call Fibria's "forest management", and want to make clear that eucalyptus plantations are not forests, and that there is no "forest management" in the monoculture of eucalyptus! We hereby express our deep PROTEST and ANGER against yet another fraud on consumers and society in general with this "green make-up" promoted by the FSC and its business partners.

Signed:

Social Movements/Organizations:

ARES – Associação para o Resgate Social

Associação dos Professores Licenciados do Estado da Bahia – Delegacia de Eunápolis

Associação dos Advogados dos Trabalhadores Rurais – AATR

Associação dos Geógrafos Brasileiros GT Ambiente AGB

Bicuda Ecológica

CUT - Bahia - Regional Extremo Sul

Centro de Estudos e Ação Social - CEAS

CIMI

Cine Clube Deserto Verde

Centro de Desenvolvimento Agroecológico do Extremo Sul da Bahia – TERRA VIVA

CEPEDES

CETA - Movimento de Trabalhadores Assentados, Acampados e Quilombolas da Bahia

Comissão Quilombola Sapê do Norte

Coordenação Estadual de Quilombos do Estado do ES – Zacimba Gaba

CPT - Comissão Pastoral da Terra

Espaço Cultural da Paz

FUNPAJ – Fundação Padre José Koopmans

FASE

MLT – Movimento de Luta pela Terra

Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais de Itanhém

Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais de Ibirapuã

SINTOSTEB – Sindicato os Trabalhadores de Hotéis, Bares e restaurante do Extremo Sul

Sindicato dos Bancários do Extremo Sul da Bahia

WRM

Individual Signatures

Ricardo Salles de Sá – Cinegrafista

Marilda Telles Maracci – Geógrafa

João Batista da Silva

Maria Paula de Oliveira Bonatto - Fundação Oswaldo Cruz

Marina de Castro Schwab

1 - “Banco Nacional de Desarrollo Económico y Social” – National Bank for Economic and Social Development.

2 - HARDELL, Lennart; ERIKSSON, Miikael. A case-control study of non-Hodgkin lymphoma and exposure to pesticides. *Cancer*, Lund, N.º 85, p. 1353-1360, 15 March 1999.

<http://www.espacoacademico.com.br/051/51andrioli.htm>

3 - Documento Técnico Sobre los Impactos de la Sulfloramida y del Sulfonato de Perfluorooctano (PFOS) sobre la Salud Humana y Ambiental (Technical Document on the Impact of Sulflu-ramid and Perfluorooctane Sulfonate (PFOS) on Humans and the Environment) – Osvaldo Cruz Foundation.

<http://www2.camara.gov.br/atividade-legislativa/comissoes/comissoes-permanentes/capadr/audiencias-2009/rap140409zuleica.pdf>

4 - To the extent that history may be of significance to the FSC and to the IMAFLORA, abundant proof is available to hear and read in this regard, such as, for example, the study entitled “Estudo e Relatório de Impactos em Direitos Humanos de grandes projetos (EIDH/RIDH):” the case of large-scale eucalyptus monoculture in the northern region of the State of Espírito Santo, published in 2010 by the Movimento Nacional de Derechos Humanos (National Human Rights Movement) and the Centro de Defensa de los Derechos Humanos de Serra (Center for the Defense of Human Rights of Serra). Another recent publication is the book entitled “Aracruz Credo: 40 anos de violações y resistência no ES” (Aracruz Credo: 40 years of violations and resistance in ES), produced in 2011 by the networks Alert against the Green Desert and the Brazil Network about Multi-lateral Financial Institutions. On this matter, there is also Padre José Koopmans’ book “Além do Eucalipto: O papel do Extremo Sul”, published in 2005, and the bulletin “Dez Respostas a Dez Mentiras”, produced from a text by Ricardo Carrere (WRM-Uruguay) by the Fundação Padre José Koopmans Fund in 2010, all available in the website of CEPEDES, Eunápolis and FUNPAJ, in Teixeira de Freitas – Bahía. Also, there are two reports on the violation of economic, social, cultural and environmental rights in the publication “H2O para celulose, água para muitas línguas” by FASE and the Alert against the Green Desert Network, a report on the Quilombola Mission by the Committee on Human Rights relative to Adequate Nutrition related to the National Council for Food Safety. All this in addition to many other articles, Ph D. theses, and M.S. lectures produced at different academic centers, as well as post-graduate programmes available at different universities.

5 - Through the Instituto Nacional de Colonización y Reforma Agraria (INCRA – National Colonization and Agrarian Reform Institute) and the Instituto de Defensa Agropecuaria (IDAF – Agrarian Defense

Institute).

6 - Lands belonging to the State which cannot be owned by private enterprises.

7 - An ultra-conservative organization made up of large landowners reportedly resorting to violence against movements opposing the agrarian reform in Brazil.

8 - By the “Promotoría Regional Costa das Baleias”.

9 - Several examples of impact are described in the publication “Violações socioambientais promovidas pela Veracel Celulose, propriedade da Stora Enso e Aracruz Celulose (atual Fibria)”, produced by CEPEDES in 2008.

10 - These are people who plant eucalyptus on their own land for supplying the company pursuant to written agreements whereby they undertake the obligation of selling their trees to Veracel, in other words, it's about Veracel outsourced production.

11 - According to a study by the Environmental Secretary's Office for the State of Bahia, 60% of the area inspected in 2009 did not include any Legal Reserves, and 15% even lacked surface for such purpose. Evidence of such irregularities is the fact that one of the locations where the certification process will take place, Itabela, cancelled all environmental licenses in 2011 through a Municipal Decree-Law. There are also legal procedures against Veracel Celulose by those receiving funds, with decisions by 1st and 2nd grade courts contrary to the company.

