
Brazilian forestry policy is not trustworthy

Brazilian NGOs FASE and IBASE, the National Commission for the Environment of CUT (Brazilian Workers Union), Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, addressed a letter to the Federal Government expressing their doubts about the promise made by President Fernando Henrique Cardoso during his visit to the UK last December, to guarantee the protection of 10% of the Brazilian forests until year 2000. The organizations demand effective measures to protect the Mata Atlantica and the Amazon.

Since reality shows that successive governments have proved completely incapable of enforcing the legislation that protects the forests, the official statement sounds as an attempt to diverge attention from the destructive processes that affect Brazilian forests: logging, burning, mining activities. In fact the Mata Atlantica, that covered 16 Brazilian States is nowadays reduced to 8% of its original area. Not to talk about the Amazon, that reduced its cover at a rate of 14,700 km²/year between 1992/93 and 1993/94, what means an increase of 30% if compared to the previous period. Last but not least, the 10% mentioned by the Government leads to confusion since the areas already protected by law (Forest Reserves, National Parks, etc.) already sum up 1,1 million square kilometres, which is by far more than 10% of the Brazilian territory.

Source: Lenine A. Carvalho, January 1998.