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MANIFESTO TO THE POPULATION

PREDATORY LOGGING THREATENS AMAZONIA

1. This year marks the five hundredth anniversary of Europeans coming to the Americas. This is the right time for a deep and critical evaluation of the course followed by the societies that devolved from European contact with the peoples and nature of this region. Regarding the relationship of Brazilian society with the environment, the evaluation of these centuries can be defined as a real tragedy. During this period cycles of predatory exploitation of natural resources took place aimed at meeting foreign needs and markets. The consequences of these cycles have been always the same: environmental destruction and social impoverishment.

2. In Brazil the exploitation of Pau Brasil, a red timber and dye, was the first mark of this cruel process. Its consequences are well-known: the disorderly occupation of the territory, the cultural disintegration of indigenous populations, the destruction of forest ecosystems, the extinction of species and the dilapidation of natural resources. This took place for the benefit of a selfish elite and their international partners. (Pau Brasil became commercially extinct in the first century of colonization).

3. Today, five centuries later, we can realize how much this pattern of exploitation, referred to as development, is still present. The Amazon region provides many examples of this pattern of development and is still submitted to a irrational process of devastation and disorderly occupation. Already 415 thousand square kilometres of the Brazilian Amazon have been deforested, about equivalent in size to Germany. The fruits of this devastation are more than questionable: the destruction of tens of indigenous cultures, huge unproductive farms generating very few jobs, illegal and highly polluting gold mining projects, colonists with abysmal living conditions and the advance of prostitution and drug dealing.

Instead of recognizing these mistakes and taking up ecologically viable projects in the areas already deforested (such as agrarian reform, ecological agriculture and forest restoration) the agricultural frontier continues to push into primary forest areas reproducing the same mistakes of the past. As affirmed by the signatories to this Manifesto, colonists prefer to settle in the vast areas already cleared from the forest and do not wish to be pushed into the jungle where living conditions are much harder. It makes no sense to destroy more virgin forest when the result of the deforestation promoted so far are totally absurd in terms of ecological and economic aspects.

4. It is ironic that one of the major economic forces that continues this destructive and disordered penetration of the Amazon forest is very similar to the activity that extinguished Pau Brasil in the beginning of the colonization of Brazil. Today, the logging industry, and especially Mahogany logging, seriously threatens the future of much of the Amazon forest.

5. Mahogany is the most valuable Brazilian timber sold on the international market. The species is found over a huge area of the southern Amazon covering much of the states of Para, Amazonas, Mato Grosso, Rondonia and Acre. The big sawmill owners who pay for the search and extraction of this "green gold" do not consider how their industry leads to the degradation and eventual complete destruction of primary forest areas. Mahogany is a rare tree and its exploitation requires loggers to move into more and more remote forest areas each year. More than 3,000 kilometres of major roads and tens of thousands of kilometres of secondary roads have been illegally pushed in the southern Amazon in the last ten years to extract Mahogany. After cutting out all marketable Mahogany in a given area the logging companies move on,

leaving their access roads for colonists, gold miners and displaced poor who consolidate the destruction of the forest. The exploitation of timber in general and the cutting of Mahogany in particular is the driving force leading to forest destruction in the southern Amazon today.

6. Most of the Mahogany extracted in Brazil is taken from the territories of indigenous peoples. There are numerous reports of Mahogany trees being cut down and removed from indigenous lands despite resistance of indian communities against this usurpation of their territory. At the same time, strong pressure and the allurements of indian leaders - sometimes with the assistance Funai employees - has led some indigenous communities to sign contracts allowing the extraction of Mahogany on their lands. These agreements, however, have not been approved by the relevant government authorities and are legally invalid. Such timber deals have often led to the political fragmentation and cultural degradation of indian groups. These communities learn by example that ecological destruction through over-exploitation of the forest is the only alternative that can allow them access to outside assistance and consumer goods.

In the last ten years the number of indigenous communities that have become victims of the Mahogany boom has more than doubled. The problem is bound to get worse as almost all the remaining stands of Mahogany are located inside indigenous territories. The lack of enforcement from Funai and IBAMA, the federal environment agency, has encouraged the illegal exploitation of Mahogany from indigenous land from logging companies. Over the last two years in the state of Para, the bulk of all Mahogany produced from come from trees illegally extracted from indigenous lands.

7. The ecological impacts of the Mahogany industry are equally serious. Areas of protected forest such as the Biological Reserve of Guapor in Rondonia and the Extractive Reserve Chico Mendes in Acre have been systematically invaded by Mahogany loggers. National Parks throughout the region have also been violated. Due to intense exploitation, the Amazonian Mahogany species, *Sweitenia macrophylla* King was added in the official list of Brazilian species threatened with extinction in 1992. There is some debate regarding how close the species is to extinction but the fact remains that if left unchecked, the current pattern of exploitation of Mahogany will drive the species to extinction in the Amazon in a few short years.

Wherever the Mahogany exploitation frontier has passed, the species has become practically extinct. In the 'sixties Mahogany was extracted in the Araguaia region of Para. After the commercial extinction of the species in this region, the loggers moved forward along the highway PA 150. During the 'eighties this same predatory pattern moved into the occidental part of Amazonia towards the Xingu River. Today the Mahogany loggers have already crossed the Xingu and keep advancing.

In addition to the role that logging roads play in opening up primary forest to other destructive influences, Mahogany logging itself causes considerable ecological damage. Studies show that for each cut tree around 28 other trees are killed and some 1450 square meters of forest are damaged. The few attempts at growing the species in plantations in the Amazon are still in their early stages and only occupy a small area when compared with the amount of forest damaged by the industry each year. To date none of the plantations have demonstrated the ability to overcome attacks of the moth (*Hypsipella grandella*) common in commercial Mahogany plantations. Such plantations are often used to justify the continuation of the Mahogany industry in natural forests rather than a real search for concrete alternatives to forest destruction.

8. Despite all the problems mentioned above there are people and companies who still defend the exploitation of Mahogany as a source of economic development for the Brazilian Amazon. Even this argument must be contested. The Mahogany industry is made up of an extensive chain of informal actors and middle-men who are controlled by a small elite group of sawmills and exporters. The industry generates relatively few jobs and the bulk of the profits are made in the importing countries or in the southeast of Brazil. The Mahogany sawmills belong to business groups who moved to Amazonia after exhausting the timber resources in the Atlantic

Coast Rainforests and the Araucaria forests in the South of Brazil.

In addition to the impunity with which Mahogany loggers still operate in nature reserves and on indigenous lands, there are strong indications that the industry includes a substantial number of companies engaging in tax fraud through concealing information regarding the source and the correct volume of extracted logs.

9. Given the seriousness of the economic, ecological and social impact of the industry and the clear evidence that Mahogany extraction is perpetuating and intensifying the chaotic model of occupation in Amazonia to the detriment of Brazilian society, the following groups, many of whom deal directly with this problem, have formulated the following demands:

10. A) That the Brazilian government through its competent institutions must face up to this problem by prohibiting all cutting and trade of Mahogany in the Amazon region until it has evaluated the extent of damage caused by the industry to date, and defined through an wide debate among all interested parties, legal measures necessary to halt this chaotic process.

This measure is necessary to achieve the following objectives:

- a) Mahogany loggers do not built illegal and inadequate roads into primary forest areas, and that existing logging roads are used appropriately or closed.
- b) all exploitation of Mahogany trees in areas designated for ecological preservation is halted.
- c) all exploitation of Mahogany in indigenous areas and extractive reserves is halted and at the same time the government concretly supports the efforts of the forest peoples and communities to find economic and non-predatory alternatives for their survival and development.
- d) the dynamic of predatory logging leading to the extinction of species in areas reached by Mahogany exploitation is stopped.

B) That the solution of the problems caused by the Mahogany industry must be seen as the first step in the implementation of policies and programmes to end all forms of predatory logging in Amazonia. This policy on Mahogany should serve as a guide to transform all logging activities throughout the region; including restricting the areas where logging is allowed, defining rigidly the technical conditions acceptable for logging operations, halting the violation of protected areas and indigenous territories, and enforcing prohibitions on the cutting of species forbidden by law such as the Brazil-nut tree.

NGOs signing the Manifesto of the "Coalition against Predatory Logging in the Amazon" (November 12):

- Acao Ecologica Vale do Guapore: ECOPORE (Rondonia)
- Associacao de Protecao Ambiental e Recuperacao de Areas Indigenas: APARAI (Rondonia)
- Associacao Profissional dos Engenheiros Florestais do Rio de Janeiro: APEFERJ (Rio de Janeiro)
- AWARU: Organizaao de Apoio ao Povo Nambikwara (Rondonia)
- Casa da Cultura de Maraba (Para)
- Centro Agroambiental do Tocantins: CAT (Para)
- Centro Ecumenico de Documentacao e Informacao: CEDI (Sao Paulo)
- Centro de Educacao, Pesquisa e Assessoria Popular: CEPASP (Para)
- Centro de Trabalho Indigenista: CTI (Sao Paulo)
- Conselho Nacional dos Seringueiros (Acre e Para)
- Centro Mari de Educacao Indigena: CMEI (Sao Paulo)
- Centro de Defesa dos Direitos Humanos (Amazonas)
- Centro Ecumenico de Estudos Biblicos: CEBI (Amazonas)
- Centro dos Trabalhadores da Amazonia: CTI (Acre)
- Centro de Defesa dos Direitos Humanos e Educacao Popular: CDDHEP (Acre)
- Comitê Chico Mendes (Acre)

- Comissao pela Criacao do Parque Yanomami: CCPY (Sao Paulo)
- Comissao Pro-Indio do Acre (Acre)
- Comissao Pro-Indio de Sao Paulo: CPI/SP (Sao Paulo)
- Comissao Pastoral da Terra do Acre: CPT/AC (Acre)
- Comissao Pastoral da Terra de Rondonia: CPT/RO (Rondonia)
- Comissao Pastoral da Terra do Amazonas: CPT/AM (Amazonas)
- Comissao Pastoral da Terra do Para e Amapa: CPT/PA (Para)
- Conselho Indigenista Missionario Nacional: CIMI/Nac (Brasilia)
- Conselho Indigenista Missionario do Norte I: CIMI/Norte I (Para)
- Conselho Indigenista Missionario do Norte II: CIMI/Norte II (Amazonas)
- Conselho Indigenista Missionario: Regional Rondonia
- Conselho de Missao entre os Indios da Igreja de Confissao Luterana do Brasil (Rio Grande do Sul)
- Coordenacao das Organizacoes Indigenas da Amazonia Brasileira: COIAB (Amazonas)
- Central Unica dos Trabalhadores do Sudeste do Para (Para)
- Delegacia dos Urbanitarios de Maraba (Para)
- Ecoforca (Sao Paulo)
- Forum das Organizacoes Nao-Governamentais que Atuam em Rondonia (Rondonia)
- Fundacao de Apoio a Vida nos Tropicis
- ECOTROPICA (Mato Grosso)
- Fundacao Serra das Andorinhas (Para)
- Fundacao Mata Virgem (Brasilia)
- Fundacao SOS Amazonia (Acre)
- Greenpeace Brasil, Campanha de Florestas (Rio de Janeiro)
- Grupo de Trabalho Missionario Evangelico: GTME (Mato Grosso)
- Instituto de Antropologia e Meio Ambiente: IAMA (Sao Paulo)
- Instituto de Estudos Amazonicos: IEA (Brasilia)
- Instituto de Estudos Socio-Economicos: INESC (Brasilia)
- Instituto de Pesquisa em Defesa da Identidade Amazonica: INDIA (Rondonia)
- Movimento Nacional de Artistas pela Natureza (Brasilia)
- Movimento de Educacao de Base (Para)
- Movimento de Apoio a Resistencia Waimiri-Atroari: MAREWA (Amazonas)
- Nucleo de Direitos Indigenas: NDI (Brasilia)
- Operacao Anchieta: OPAN (Mato Grosso)
- Pastoral Indigenista de Manaus (Amazonas)
- Pastoral Indigenista do Alto Solimoes (Amazonas)
- Protecao Ambiental Cacoalense: PACA (Rondonia)
- Programa de Estudo sobre Terras Indigenas no Brasil: PETI (Rio de Janeiro)
- Sindicato de Pequenos Agricultores e Assalariados Rurais de Rio Branco: SINPASA (Acre)
- Sindicato dos Professores Particulares do Para (Para)
- Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais de Brajo Grande (Para)
- Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais de Breu Branco (Para)
- Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais de Eldorado (Para)
- Sindicato dos Trbalhadores Rurais de Itupiranga (Para)
- Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais de Maraba (Para)
- Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais de Novo Repartimento (Para)
- Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais de Parauapebas (Para)
- Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais de Sao Joao (Para)
- Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais de Tucuruí (Para)
- Sindicato dos Trabalhadores em Educacao Publica de Maraba (Para)
- Sociedade Paraense de Defesa dos Direitos Humanos: SDDH (Para)
- Uniao das Nacoes Indigenas do Acre: UNI/AC (Acre)

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