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# **Rainforest —**

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# **Memorandum**

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## MEMORANDUM ON

# THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF TROPICAL RAINFORESTS AND HER OBLIGATION TO TAKE ACTION FOR THEIR PROTECTION

## DEDICATION

On the 22nd of December 1988, Francisco Mendes was murdered in Xapuri, in the Amazon region of Brazil. As a representative of the rubber tappers, who for generations have earned their livelihood while preserving the rainforests, he led a desperate struggle against big landowners who are destroying these forests. In 1988 he was awarded the United Nations GLOBAL 500 award for his untiring efforts to protect the natural environment.

We dedicate this memorandum to Francisco Mendes and the thousands of people around the world who in recent years have lost their lives struggling to prevent the devastation of nature.

## PREAMBLE

Most of the native societies of the rainforest have already disappeared (1,2). In Brazil alone, 87 Indian tribes were wiped out in the first half of this century (3). Clearing and fragmentation of the rainforests in South America, as in Africa and Asia, threatens to deprive the remaining rainforest peoples of their existence. If such developments continue, none of these cultures, which are often thousands of years old, will survive the next 30 years (4).

This ethno— and genocide is one of the greatest and least noticed tragedies of our time.

More than a thousand rainforest tribes still exist. Nearly everywhere they are in conflict with the development strategies of the dominant social classes and international development agencies, who consistently ignore the basic rights and often even the very existence of these peoples (5,6). This also applies to the activities of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), which has financed and co—financed development projects that have led and are leading to ethnocide through the destruction of the natural environments of native peoples (7,8).

All political strategies for the use and conservation of tropical rainforests must first and foremost respect the rights of the traditional owners of these lands. Guaranteeing the rights of tribal peoples is synonymous with high quality conservation of tropical rainforests.

## I. THE RAINFOREST ECOCIDE

The extinction crisis is *"a threat to civilization second only to the threat of thermonuclear war."* (9)

Club of Earth

an association of some of the most distinguished American biologists on the destruction of tropical rainforests, 1986

### I.1. The Dimension of the Problem

Over half of the Earth's tropical rainforests have already been destroyed or irreversibly damaged (10). No one can say with any degree of accuracy how many species have been lost, but there is no doubt that contemporary rainforest destruction is the most extensive ecocide ever perpetrated by humans and is leading to an unprecedented mass extinction of species (11,12).

This situation makes the protection of the remaining tropical rainforests all the more urgent. According to recent scientific estimates, these forests are home to between 50 and 90 per cent of all plant and animal species (13,14). These centres of biological diversity contain the critical mass of our planet's genetic heritage. Their destruction is not only causing the loss of individual life forms, but is leading to the alteration and annihilation of entire evolutionary processes (15,16). The basis for the development of new life forms is being depleted so seriously that population geneticists refer to the current ecocide as not only meaning the death of species, but also an end to their birth (17).

## I.2. The Time Scale of Concern

The global loss of tropical forests has been conservatively calculated at 11 million hectares annually (18), but satellite images revealed that in 1987 some 20 million hectares were destroyed in the Brazilian Amazon alone. A loss of over 25 million hectares has been estimated for Brazil in 1988 (19). There are indications that the rate of tropical forest loss in other countries is also significantly greater than has been estimated up to the present (20,21).

Irrespective of the efforts of individual countries and the action programmes envisaged in multilateral agreements, the ecocide of the tropical rainforests is gaining momentum. Practically all international programmes designed to stop rainforest destruction have up until now produced negligible results (22). In spite of this, many political statements recommend precautionary measures, failing to acknowledge that the dimension of contemporary rainforest destruction makes an emergency programme for their protection an absolute and immediate necessity.

Effective environmental policies have usually only developed in response to visible and tangible catastrophes. Many of the governments witnessing rainforest destruction in their own countries are still playing down the current biological holocaust. This, and the distance of the tropical forests from the industrial countries, who carry much of the responsibility for their destruction, may well mean that the critical time span for effective political decisions and action will pass by unused.

Nobody knows how much primary or secondary rainforest must be preserved to ensure the continuity of their characteristic climatic cycles. Current changes in the weather patterns of the Ivory Coast and the once forested coastal areas of South-East Brazil suggest that we are heading towards a climatic catastrophe faster than had been expected (23,24).

All available evidence and scientific forecasts lead to one conclusion: fundamental and consistent remedial action for the protection of the remaining tropical rainforests is urgently required.

### I.3. The Limits of Reserve Strategies

The idea that the loss of rainforest flora and fauna can be drastically reduced by creating nature reserves is part of every political programme concerned with the issue.

In the last decades the creation of nature reserves has been much too successful to question it as a strategy in principle. A significant proportion of tropical biodiversity would already be lost if nature reserves, often initiated by private conservation organizations, had not been established. Nevertheless, criticism must be brought forward where indigenous peoples, living harmoniously with their environment, have been expelled from these protected areas or subjected to controls that have led to the disintegration of their cultures (25,26).

It is, however, a misconception to believe that nature reserves, based on the European model, can conserve the greater proportion of the genetic diversity of tropical rainforests. The pattern of species distribution in tropical rainforests differs fundamentally from that of forests in the temperate zones. Whereas in our latitudes there are relatively few species with large numbers of individuals over extensive areas, in the rainforests species distribution areas are usually relatively small. The number of individuals in each species per area unit are low, but the total number of species is enormous (27). Ten hectares of lowland tropical rainforest may contain more tree species than the whole of Northern America (28). Inevitably a single large-scale hydroelectric or agricultural project can extinguish thousands of animal and plant species.

Only by providing the widest possible protection for the remaining primary rainforests will it be possible to save the greater part of the Earth's biological diversity from extinction.

Strictly protected nature reserves can only be a supportive measure in an overall concept for the protection of rainforest ecosystems. The creation of nature reserves must not be used as an alibi for the destructive exploitation of unprotected rainforest areas.

#### I.4. "Sustainable Yield": Myths and Prospects

Nearly every political statement of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany on the protection of tropical forests emphasizes the necessity of supporting sustainable timber extraction and forestry practices. These statements are based on the assumption that rainforests can be managed and used as an industrial resource base just like temperate forests. But the propagation of such a strategy is unsound, and indeed dangerous, because of the lack of empirical scientific evidence regarding sustainable exploitation of these ecosystems (29).

All projects attempting to produce a sustainable timber yield from tropical rainforests are still in an experimental stage. Even the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO) has had to acknowledge that serious attempts at sustainable management of tropical rainforests for timber production are being conducted on less than one million hectares, that is less than 0.125 per cent of the world's rainforest area (30).

In contrast, there is ample evidence that where tropical rainforests have been exploited with the support of industrialized countries to produce timber for export, degradation of the forest has almost always been the result (31,32,33). Even when disregarding the loss of ecosystem functions of the rainforests (climate regulation, soil protection and water cycle maintenance), the economic profits that result from the destructive exploitation of these forests are completely outweighed by other costs:

1. Intact primary rainforests have considerable and lasting economic potential as a storehouse of high value drugs useful in modern medicine (34). Only the lack of adequate scientific knowledge and global political insight has prevented this potential capital from being calculated in comparison to the timber value of the forests. The economic benefits from rainforest genetic material are excluded from the cost/benefit analysis of development projects affecting rainforest areas. Although, the extinction of a single plant species with genes that could be used in an agricultural crop may well represent a loss of billions of dollars (35).
2. The value of rainforest goods and services to local populations is usually ignored in the economic analysis that development deci-

sions are based on. Rainforests are an essential and a renewable source of fruits, fibres, oils, firewood, animal products, building material and other useful products if extraction is well managed. In many tropical countries large sections of the population depend directly on intact rainforests for their daily needs (36). The people of Papua New Guinea, for instance, obtain 60 per cent of their animal protein from rainforests (37). In large regions of West Africa, until recently people met 70 per cent of their animal protein needs from rainforests. The situation changed as their forests were destroyed by the establishment of plantations and an export timber industry (38).

3. Although the careful management of non-timber forest products offers considerable economic potential for the supraregional market, this resource is being lost through the ongoing destruction of the tropical forests (39). The governments of most tropical countries do not even gather information on the sustainable economic potential of non-timber rainforest products (40). In the Amazon basin the livelihood of over two million people is based on the collection of rubber, Brazil nuts and other "minor" forest products. The rubber tappers and Brazil nut gatherers conserve the biological integrity and genetic wealth of these ecosystems (41). Recent studies have shown that the economic value of rainforests as "extractive reserves" is much higher than for other forms of exploitation (42).

However, the possibilities for the sustainable exploitation of non-timber forest products for a supraregional or international market are limited. The over-exploitation of rattan stocks in some parts of South-East Asia shows that even extractive forms of usage can lead to loss of biodiversity and degradation of the forest if short term profit is the only criterion (43). Assessment of the potential of non-timber forest products to provide for the market beyond a regional level must include careful ecological auditing in every single case.

Available knowledge suggests that the specific ecological characteristics and the soil and microclimate conditions of tropical rainforests limit the possibilities for sustainable exploitation to a much greater degree than in Central European ecosystems (44). The eco-

gy of rainforest regions is to a large extent incompatible with intensive industrial agriculture and forestry practices (45). Consequently, the use of rainforest resources should primarily be oriented towards a sustainable subsistence economy.

The effects and long term prospects of different useage forms make the complete protection of the remaining primary rainforests imperative, from an economic as well as an ecological point of view. Exceptions should only be allowed for traditionally established sustainable methods of utilisation or for uses which empirical scientific studies have proved beyond doubt to be ecologically sound. These options exclude widespread forestry practices, selective logging and other forms of extensive exploitation (46).

### I.5. Critique of the Tropical Forestry Action Plan

The government of the FRG is among those who rate the Tropical Forestry Action Plan (TFAP) as an effective instrument for the protection of tropical rainforests. This plan is based on a proposal by the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Resources Institute (WRI). The TFAP envisages the investment of 8 billion dollars in tropical forest projects over the next 5 years. Half the capital is to be provided by the World Bank and development assistance agencies and the other half by the recipient countries.

The TFAP has been strongly criticized by national and international environmental organisations and also rejected by many of these groups (47,48,49). A study commissioned by the Federal Chancellery itself, concluded that the aims of the TFAP "are not compatible with the need to protect intact tropical forests, their ecology and species diversity." (50).

While speaking at a press conference in Berlin on September 24th, 1988, even the Director of the World Bank's Environmental Department, Kenneth Piddington, described the plan as insufficient to protect tropical forests (51).

From an ecological view, some of the most important points of criticism of the Plan are:

- a) Only 10 per cent of the envisaged budget is allocated for the protection of forest ecosystems (52). As regional and country plans for the TFAP are prepared, it has become clear that even this inadequate proportion of funds for conservation is being reduced drastically. The regional plan for Latin America, for instance, envisages only 1.5 per cent of the planned expenditure for conservation (53). A United Nations Development Programme study of the first ten country plans discovered that conservation concerns hardly feature in any of them (54).
- b) The plan takes the form of loans to countries that are already heavily indebted. The projects are designed to produce a quick economic return in hard currency in order to guarantee the necessary repayments. These projects inevitably focus on massive investments in industrial forest management instead of meeting the needs of local populations and protecting the environment. The ecological problems that accompany the establishment of huge industrial plantations are not considered (55,56,57).
- c) The plan ignores the rights of indigenous peoples. It does not consider the existence and land rights of forest dwelling tribal peoples in any way. The TFAP was planned from "top to bottom" and does not guarantee the participation of local peoples or non-governmental organizations in the planning and implementation of projects.

## I.6. Pressure from Human Settlement and its Causes

In nearly every official statement on rainforests, the Federal Government and its constituent parties have argued that population pressure is the major factor in rainforest destruction.

Nobody can deny the serious global problem of population growth. However, the belief that this is generally the main cause of rainforest degradation is used by many governments and businesses to absolve themselves from responsibility and to imply that there is

little or nothing they can do to address the problem of rainforest destruction.

An examination of forest destruction on a regional basis reveals the dangerous simplification of such generalized statements.

- In South—East Asia huge areas of dipterocarp rainforests have been severely degraded by logging and without any pressure from local populations (58).
- In Central America 40 per cent of the rainforests have been cleared or burned down for cattle pasture (59).
- Millions of hectares of rainforest in South America are being flooded for large—scale hydroelectric projects, which are economically and ecologically devastating (60).
- In West Africa and South—East Brazil, millions of people are shifting to rainforest areas not because of population pressure, but because they have been deprived of their land, often through the influence of foreign companies (61). In many cases they are moved to the rainforests as part of ill conceived government resettlement programmes or they follow in the wake of industrial logging and mining.

On a global level the tropical timber industry has been shown to be the main immediate factor responsible for the colonization of primary rainforest areas (62).

A major cause of the population pressure on rainforests is the ongoing consolidation of land ownership by powerful elites which displace landless poor into rainforest areas. Latin American environment groups have cited skewed land distribution as the most important factor frustrating the conservation and sustainable use of rainforest areas (63). Land reform would not only provide for the needs of the poorest sections of these countries, but would also halt the conversion of new areas of primary rainforest into unsustainable agricultural lands. In spite of this, the problem of wealth and resource distribution is still a taboo topic in the context of development co—operation.

A critical analysis of the reasons for the overexploitation of tropical ecosystems by a population without land or employment, reveals the many links with the economic interests of the industrial countries. If this insight were to become the foundation of our trade and our bilateral and multilateral aid policies, a large proportion of the current rainforest ecocide could be prevented, even in the face of growing populations in the Third World.

### I.7. The Debt Burden

The nations of the Third World have a collective debt in excess of US\$ 1,300 billion (64). Debt servicing in 1987 reached \$ 123.4 billion. A decrease in the loans taken up by the Third World resulted in a net capital flow to the First World of \$ 30 billion (65).

The debt crisis has exacerbated environmental destruction in the Third World to an alarming extent. There is a multiple connection between indebtedness and environmental destruction. In many cases loans are used to finance nature—destroying projects, while natural resources have to be further exploited in order to repay the loans (66).

The five countries with the largest rainforest areas are also among the world's most heavily indebted countries. The pressure to make capital from cutting down rainforests is therefore almost unavoidable (67). The conditions imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) often force heavily indebted countries to sell their natural resources far in excess of sustainable exploitation (68).

As the two major churches in the Federal Republic pointed out in their memoranda published in May 1988, in many Third World countries there will be no chance to stop pauperization and the destruction of nature without a solution of the debt crisis. An evaluation of the discussions that took place at the IMF/World Bank Annual Meeting in Berlin in 1988, leads to the depressing conclusion that the appeal from nature conservation organizations, human rights groups and church bodies for a massive debt cancellation failed to change the handling of this crisis by most of the creditor countries and institutions.

## II. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY FOR RAINFOREST DESTRUCTION

"Nothing will change in the Third World if changes do not take place in the industrialized countries." (69)

Jose Lutzenberger, member of the Brazilian environmental protection organisation AGAPAN, winner of the Alternative Nobel Prize in 1988

The following are the factors usually cited as the main causes of rainforest destruction:

- a) uncontrolled burning of rainforest lands to provide land for cultivation
- b) felling of timber for fuel
- c) commercial logging
- d) large-scale agricultural and forestry projects
- e) extraction and processing of mineral resources
- f) large-scale hydroelectric projects

The last four factors (c to f) are usually capital-intensive operations. They frequently lead to uncontrolled burning of forests (a) by depriving local populations of essential resources which land and forest areas provide. The felling of trees for fuel (b) has not been a significant factor as regards the degrading of primary rainforest (70,71). Fuel wood collection is, however, a major threat to dry tropical forests. Forest clearance by burning to provide land for cultivation and fuelwood collection are largely unplanned activities which are difficult to influence directly.

The Federal Government of Germany is directly responsible for four of the six causes of destruction (c to f).

## II.1. Commercial Logging

Next to clearing for agriculture, commercial timber extraction is the most important activity leading to rainforest destruction (72). International timber traders emphasize that the quantities of tropical timber exported are relatively small (5–7 per cent), but a regional survey shows that the proportion exported by the seven largest tropical timber producing countries is 19 per cent (73). In Africa, where we obtain 90 per cent of our logs (74), only one or two trees per hectare are extracted (75). Large areas of primary rainforest are opened up in order to obtain these relatively small quantities of timber. Commercial logging is only selective in the sense that it mostly affects primary rainforests, which in ecological terms are the most valuable and vulnerable.

The damage which commercial logging operations cause in tropical rainforests is not at all selective. Roding, loading areas and log extraction paths can leave as much as 40 per cent of the soil exposed in a logging area. In many cases, the logging roads allow access for landless poor, who slash and burn the forest for one or two seasons before being forced to move on. Each year 600,000 hectares of primary rainforest are opened up by the timber industry in Africa. 78 per cent of the total rainforest area lost in Africa each year has previously been exploited for timber (76, 77).

According to the World Bank, commercial timber felling is responsible for the destruction of five million hectares of tropical rainforest annually (78).

German firms are heavily involved in this process in several African countries. The four largest companies — Feldmeyer, Holimex, Introp Tropenholz, and especially Danzer — account for a considerable proportion of the timber exported from the Congo, Cameroon, Zaire and the Ivory Coast (79). The latter, once the biggest timber exporting country in Africa, is set to become a net importer of timber in the next decade. In the meantime Danzer, which is largely responsible for logging out the rainforests of the Ivory Coast, has moved its operations to Zaire, where its subsidiary, Siforzal, dominates the timber market.

The Federal Government is supporting this destruction through its own development company DEG, which has a DM 22 million holding in Siforzal's sawmill in Zaire. The DEG also finances the activities of other German timber firms in the Tropics (80).

In West Africa, the main source region of tropical round timber for the West German market, 85 per cent of the total tropical forest area had been destroyed by 1985 (81). Every year the Federal Republic imports about two million cubic metres of tropical timber (82), which provides ten per cent of our massive timber use. These imports come almost exclusively from primary rainforests, only a tiny proportion is derived from plantations (83).

Although our domestic consumption of tropical timber has resulted in the destruction of affected rainforest areas, and the ecological and social damages far outweigh any economic gain to the exporting countries, the Federal Government has refused to ban the import of tropical timber. On the contrary, it is setting a bad example in its own sphere of influence. In 1987 the Federal Railways used over 6,000 cubic metres of tropical timber for railway sleepers.

## II.2. Large-scale Agricultural and Forestry Projects

Until recently the German firm, Volkswagen, had the dubious acclaim of being responsible for the largest intentional fire ever set in the rainforest (84). The fire destroyed a vast area of the Amazon rainforest as part of a cattle ranching project for which Volkswagen received enormous tax concessions. Such projects were supposed to make Brazil the largest exporter of beef in the world. "VW do Brazil" cleared an area for cattle ranching as large as the West German city-states of Bremen, Hamburg and Berlin put together (85).

Like many other West German investors, it sold its business after ten years, when the tax concessions ended. Such speculation activities have left behind huge wastelands, which are unfit for agriculture of any kind (86).

The social and ecological destruction caused by large-scale agricultural projects in the Tropics can be clearly seen in the European—

Brazilian soya trade. Today Brazil is the largest exporter of rough-ground soy beans. According to FAO estimates, about 30 million Brazilians are starving, yet the country exports millions of tons of soya as feedstuff. Over 50 per cent go to the European Community (87). Brazil is one of 50 countries that export feedstuffs to Europe for the livestock industry. In statistical terms, every fourth cow, pig and chicken in the European Community lives on imported feed, well over half of it from Third World countries (88,89).

The direct and indirect connection of the soya trade with rainforest destruction is indisputable. To become the second biggest exporter of soya, several Brazilian States had to change their agricultural practices completely. This process started in the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul which is about the same size as West Germany. 30 years ago, over 30 per cent of the state was covered with rainforest, a higher proportion of forest cover than in the FRG. Today primary rainforest accounts for only 1.8 per cent of the State's land area and consists mainly of fragments between the soy bean fields, which dominate the landscape (90).

The following facts are also part of the picture:

- In 1982, following almost complete deforestation, the South-Eastern states of Brazil experienced the worst floods in their history. 500 human lives were lost and over 300,000 people were made homeless. Damage was estimated at over \$ five billion. A major cause was the loss of forest cover in watershed areas (91).
- Only 20 years ago millions of small farmers and farm workers lived in South-East Brazil, which was the most fertile part of the country. They were self-sufficient in food through labour intensive cultivation. But the soya boom put nearly 4 million people out of work. Many were forced into newly accessible rainforests, which they burnt to establish farmland. The poor tropical soils were quickly degraded, forcing people to move on once again. Inevitably, huge areas of rainforest were destroyed (92,93).

This development was fueled by the growing world market for animal feedstuffs. Millions of tons of meat and dairy products in the European Community — and particularly in the North German livestock strongholds — were raised on Brazilian soya, producing mountains of meat and cheese for which there was never any demand.

### II.3. The Extraction and Processing of Minerals — the Grande Carajás Project —

"Grande Carajás" in North-East Brazil, is the largest development project in the world (94). A region the size of England and France together is being converted into a gigantic industrial zone. Millions of hectares of rainforest have been destroyed and several Indian communities of the area have already been severely disrupted (95). The centre-piece of the project is the Carajás iron ore mine which produces up to 35 million tonnes of iron ore each year for export. The project also includes a 900 km railway and a sea port.

The European Community lent \$ 600 million for these projects. The loan agreements were signed in 1982, together with supply contracts guaranteeing one third of the annual production of iron ore for export to Europe for 15 years at 1982 prices (96). The further "development" of the region through the Grande Carajás project was one of the conditions for the loan (97).

Other lenders were the World Bank (\$ 304 million), the German Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (\$ 130 million) and German banks (\$ 30 million) (98). The FRG is one of the main buyers of the ore (99). The Thyssen group alone ordered 8 million tons in 1982 (100).

Before the agreement was signed, the general assembly of European non-governmental organizations emphasized the massive repercussions which the project would have on the environment and traditional cultures of the region. It called on the European Community (EC) not to participate in the financing of the Carajás project. But the NGO assembly was ignored and the loan-agreement was signed in September 1982. The EC also disregarded appeals by NGO's in later years to investigate into violations of human rights and envi-

ronmental destruction that had been reported by anthropologists and ecologists working in the region (101). Instead, the EC relied on information supplied by the Brazilian Government and the World Bank, which had tied its loans to specific social and environmental conditions.

In the meantime, tens of thousands of peasants and Indians were driven from their lands, not infrequently with brute force (102). In contravention of the agreement with the World Bank, 1.5 million hectares of rainforest are being cut down each year to produce charcoal for the smelting of the iron ore (103).

Through bilateral, European, and World Bank loans, the FRG has helped to make the Carajás debacle possible and thus it bears part of the responsibility for the disaster that has ensued. The FRG failed to consider the social and ecological repercussions of the project and did not even take suitable action, when the World Bank's conditions to the loans were not met. Ecological groups from around the world have demanded that Brazil be denied any further loans until it abandons the practice of cutting down rainforests to make charcoal (104). Until today the Government of the FRG has ignored this demand.

#### II.4. Large-scale Hydroelectric Projects — The Power Sector Loan to Brazil —

In spite of objections from numerous environmental and human rights organizations, the World Bank granted an initial power sector loan of \$ 500 million to Brazil in 1986. Criticism also came from among the Bank's own directors. But nonetheless, the loan was pushed through with the help of the Federal Republic's vote.

Hugh Foster, the then U.S. alternate executive director to the World Bank, opposed the loan on the following grounds: "We have serious concerns about the potential environmental impact of several of the projects to be financed by this loan. ... We find instead a proposal which includes financing of the Ji-Paraná Dam in Rondônia where there has been virtually no planning to address the needs of the Amerindian population or the need for protection of the environment in the immediate area of the dam. Furthermore, the dam will flood

a portion of an Indian reserve which previous Bank financing helped establish. This is pure folly. ... To try to excuse this series of totally unacceptable investments, the proposal includes a Master Plan for environmental assessment for future investments in the power sector. This is a useful step, but how much confidence can we have that it will be carried out conscientiously when the same institutions will be implementing a series of environmental disasters at the very same time?" (105)

As predicted, the environmental consequences of the dam projects that were financed by the first power sector loan are catastrophic. In the Balbina reservoir an area of rainforest the size of the Saar-land (a West German State) was drowned. The vegetation is slowly rotting, making the water highly acidic. Malarial mosquitos and bilharziosis carriers are thriving in the shallow water. The rampant growth of aquatic plants is controlled by chemical agents, some of which contain dioxin, posing a toxic danger to the people and life of the district for many years to come (106).

The conditions concerning environmental protection attached to the first loan have been ignored. Despite this, Brazil is seeking funding for the support of the power-sector programmes implemented by its public electricity company, Eletrobrás. This firm has plans for the construction of 136 dams in Brazil by the year 2010 (107). If these dams are built about 25 million hectares of tropical forest will be flooded and half a million tribal people will be expelled from their traditional lands (108). The effects of the projects on the Indian population have not been investigated in detail, but experts estimate that 60% of the projects will affect Indian territory (109).

At the same time a World Bank study points out that an investment of \$ 10 billion in energy efficiency and conservation measures would protect the environment and render superfluous the plan for \$ 44 billion of investments in new dams (110).

The environmentally harmful and capital intensive large-scale hydroelectric projects in the Amazon Basin would not have been possible without foreign loans. As the FRG has given support for such loans and plays an important role within the World Bank (the FRG has the third largest number of votes) it bears a special responsibility for the impact of all World Bank projects.

## II.5. Summary

Environmental organizations in the Third World are constantly pointing out the decisive role of industrial countries in rainforest destruction.

The foregoing examples show to what large extent the Federal Republic of Germany is causing, exacerbating and tolerating destructive processes, which it could help to prevent.

The activities of West German corporations have been responsible for the deforestation and degradation of huge areas in the Tropics. Our consumption of timber, minerals and agro-industrial products from rainforests is a major factor contributing to the progressive destruction of tropical ecosystems. Through its bilateral and multilateral development activities and its involvement in international financial organizations, the FRG is responsible for naturedestroying mega-projects, which have replaced rainforests with industrial areas, dams, plantations and agricultural wastelands. These projects have sacrificed long term ecological and economic values for the sake of quick profits. They have been implemented in spite of fierce opposition from local peoples and ecological and civil rights groups.

Through its development activities in the Tropics, the FRG is probably already responsible for the extinction of more plant and animal species than even exist in our own country.

The destructive projects outlined above are not isolated cases. Unfortunately, they represent the general picture of economic and development co-operation with Third World countries. These projects are the outflow of a development model which is insensitive to local and ecological needs. They are part of a development policy whose principal aim is to ensure that large proportions of the loans or gifts provided, flow back to the donor countries or further their economic or political interests (111,112). It is not without reason that the director of the German Institute for Development Assistance stated that, with few exceptions, successful development processes in the Third World have not been the result of development aid (113).

Instead of limiting its development assistance to projects that are geared to the needs of local communities and the environment, the FRG continues to base its development policy on the support of projects that promise quick economic return. In this context the environmental compatibility test introduced by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation will have little more than a cosmetic effect, at its best modifying some of the worst development damage (114).

It appeared impressive when the FRG, prior to the meeting of the World Bank and the IMF in Berlin in 1988, demonstratively wrote off DM 3.3 million of debts owed to it by the poorest developing countries and earmarked DM 150 million for the Tropical Forestry Action Plan (TFAP).

But the cancellation was an inevitable waiver of debts, which would have never been collected anyway. Such symbolic gestures by the government do not address the root of the international environmental, development and debt crisis. Debt cancellation can only be conducive to environmental protection and social justice, if it is linked with radical changes in development policy and the conditions attached to development assistance.

Further financial contributions to the TFAP will no doubt help to speed up its implementation. But in practice, the plan serves least of all the aim which the Federal Government, judging by its declarations on this subject, has most at heart: the protection of genetic and natural resources.

Measures such as those mentioned above are especially wanting in one essential element: the readiness to realize that we carry a far-reaching responsibility for the present situation and that we need to make fundamental changes in our political and economic behaviour towards the Third World. This criticism is not solely directed at the Federal Government, but at all parties that have carried government responsibility.

### III. REORIENTATION OF POLICY: DEMANDS ON THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF GERMANY AND THE POLITICAL PARTIES

"If there is to be even a small chance to relax the pressures on tropical biota, fundamental changes in the World Trade system and the basic relationships between rich and poor nations must take place" (115).

Anne and Paul Ehrlich, two of the founders of a "Conservation Biology", 1988

Considering the growing awareness of the responsibility of Western nations for the environmental and nature conservation problems in the Third World, and considering the moral obligation of the FRG ensuing from that responsibility, the undersigned organizations and associations make the following demands:

1. The West German Parliament should adopt a binding set of rules governing all decisions relating to tropical rainforests based on the following three principles:
  - a) the inviolability of the the right to cultural survival for all tribal peoples and active support of all efforts to safeguard their rights;
  - b) absolute protection for remaining primary rainforests against all human incursions, with the exception of traditional and proven ecologically benign activities.
  - c) a ban on the import of all goods which either directly or indirectly contribute to the further destruction of primary rainforests.

2. The West German Parliament is called upon to redefine the basic principles of its bilateral and multilateral development policy as well as the guidelines for its participation in the activities of multilateral organizations by:
  - a) issuing directives for development assistance that are in keeping with the rules referred to in paragraph 1;
  - b) recognizing the representatives of indigenous peoples as equal partners in the planning and implementation of development projects and withholding financial assistance from any projects that do not have the approval of local peoples;
  - c) adopting a decision-making procedure which will ensure that priority is given to projects which;
    - ensure the longterm conservation of the remaining natural environment in its climax state, taking into account the traditional rights of indigenous peoples;
    - restore and regenerate former primary or secondary forest areas with the goal of using them in a sustainable and ecologically sound way giving special consideration to traditional usage forms;
    - use land in ways that will protect nature and provide the local human population with foodstuffs, fuels and other subsistence needs;
    - explore by empirical methods sustainable primary and secondary rainforest uses, giving special consideration to the traditional methods of local forest users.
3. The Federal Government should immediately stop financing ecologically destructive development projects.
4. The Federal Government is furthermore called upon to appoint an independent committee of experts to assess the social and ecological compatibility of development projects at all levels of planning and implementation. One third of its members should

be representatives of nature users (eg. agriculture and forestry representatives), one third representatives of nature conservation groups, and one third ethnologists and sociologists. The committee should be entitled to call in other experts such as ecologists, economists as well as representatives of local NGOs and indigenous peoples.

In this context, all planning and examination procedures should be open to public scrutiny. At regular intervals the FRG should also give an account of its activities in the World Bank and other international organizations concerned with economic and development cooperation.

5. Where debt—servicing and repayment are obviously the cause of the destruction or overexploitation of natural resources, the FRG should exert all its influence to secure the immediate cancellation of such debts. In addition to this initial step, she should call for the immediate convening of a debt conference as proposed by the churches of the FRG. In the framework of a debt remission scheme the conference should chart new avenues of financial assistance that are consistent with the needs of the environment and the human populations of aid—receiving countries.
6. The FRG should call for an emergency meeting of the United Nations on tropical forests with the goal of establishing effective and co—operative strategies for the protection of the remaining tropical rainforests on an international level. The FRG should demonstratively propagate its new code of conduct on rainforest conservation at this meeting.
7. In view of the fact that the destruction of rainforests is largely the result of economic pressures and can be reduced by financial compensation already in the short term, the FRG should seek support for an international fund for compensatory payments to countries who refrain from degrading and destroying primary rainforests. The developed countries should pay contributions to the fund commensurate with their gross national product so that these ecosystems can be preserved as the heritage of the world.

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 World Society for the Protection of Animals, Deutsche Sektion  
 World Wood Rescue Fund, Bonn  
 Zoologische Gesellschaft für Arten – und Populationsschutz, München  
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