

## **Belém Letter**

We are socio-environmental organizations and movements, male and female workers in family and peasant agriculture, agroextractivists, members of Quilombola (descendants of runaway slaves) communities, women's organizations, urban grassroots organizations, fishermen and women, students, traditional peoples and communities, and native peoples sharing the struggle against deforestation and for environmental justice in the Amazon and in Brazil at large. We gathered at the seminar "Climate and Forest - REDD and market-based mechanisms as a solution for the Amazon?," held in Belém, state of Pará, Brazil, on October 2-3, 2009, to analyze proposals for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) for the region in the light of our experiences with policies and programs implemented in the region in recent decades. In this letter, we are publicly calling on the Brazilian Government to reject the idea of using REDD as a carbon market-based mechanism and of accepting it as a means to compensate the emissions from Northern countries.

We reject the use of market-based mechanisms as tools to reduce carbon emissions based on the firm conviction that the market cannot be expected to take responsibility for life on the planet. The Conference of the Parties (COP) and its ensuing results showed that governments are not willing to take on consistent public commitments and that they tend to transfer the practical responsibility for achieving (notoriously insufficient) targets to the private initiative. As a result, public investments in and control of compliance with targets falter, while the expansion of a global CO<sub>2</sub> market is legitimized as a new form of financial capital investment and a means to ensure the survival of a failed production and consumption model.

The REDD proposals under discussion do not make any distinction between native forests and large-scale tree monoculture, and they allow economic actors – which have historically destroyed ecosystems and expelled populations from them – to resort to standing forest appreciation mechanisms to preserve and strengthen their economic and political power to the detriment of those populations. In addition, we run the risk of allowing industrialized countries not to reduce their fossil-fuel emissions drastically and to maintain an unsustainable production and consumption model. We need agreements to force Northern countries to recognize their climate debt and to assume the commitment to pay it off.

For Brazil, international climate negotiations should not be focused on discussing REDD and other market-based mechanisms, but rather on the transition to a new production, distribution and consumption model based on agroecology, on a solidarity-based economic approach, and on a diversified and decentralized energy matrix capable of ensuring food security and sovereignty.

The main challenge for addressing deforestation in the Amazon and in other biomes in Brazil lies in solving the serious land ownership problems facing the country, which are at the roots of its socio-environmental conflicts.

Deforestation - resulting from the advance of monoculture and of policies that favor agribusiness and a development model based on the predatory exploitation and export of natural resources - can only be avoided if the land issue is appropriately addressed through a Land Reform and sustainable territorial reorganization measures, and if territories occupied by traditional peoples and communities and by native peoples are legally recognized.

We have a different vision on what territory, development and economics are all about, which we are building over time, based on the sustainable use of forests and free use of biodiversity. A set of

public policies is necessary for ensuring recognition of and appreciation for traditional practices, on the basis of a balanced relationship between production and environmental preservation.

We are committed to keep on fighting for what we believe in the light of this vision and to make sure that any mechanism for reducing deforestation is based on a comprehensive set of public policies and public and voluntary funds that can ensure our rights and life in the Amazon and on the planet.

Belém, October 2-3, 2009

Signed by:

ANA – National Agroecology Articulation  
APACC – Association in Support of Poor Communities of the State of Pará  
APA-TO – Alternatives for Small-Scale Agriculture in the State of Tocantins  
BR 163 Forum  
Carajás Forum  
CEAPAC - Center in Support of Community Action Projects  
CEDENPA – Center for Studies and Defense of Black People of the State of Pará  
Cerrado Network  
COFRUTA – Fruit Growers’ Cooperative of Abaetetuba  
Coletivo Jovem Pará  
CONTAG – National Confederation of Agricultural Workers  
CUT – Single Workers’ Union  
DEMA FUND  
FASE – Solidarity and Education  
FAOC – West Amazon Forum  
FAOR – East Amazon Forum  
FEAB – Federation of Agronomy Students of Brazil  
FETAGRI – Federation of Agricultural Workers of the State of Pará  
FETRAF – National Federation of Family Agriculture Workers of Brazil  
FMAP – Forum of Women of the Amazon in the State of Pará  
FORMAD – Forum for Development and Environment of the State of Mato Grosso  
Friends of the Earth – Brazil  
GIAS – Sustainable Agriculture Exchange Group of the State of Mato Grosso  
GMB – Group of Brazilian women  
IAMAS – Instituto Amazônia Solidária e Sustentável (Solidarity-Based and Sustainable Amazon Institute)

MAB – Movement of People Affected by Dams  
Malungu – Coordination of Associations of Communities of Descendants of Runaway Slaves (Quilombos) of the State of Pará  
MAMEP – Women’s Movement of the State of Pará  
MMM – World Women’s March  
MMNEPA – Women’s Movement of the Northeast Region of the State of Pará  
MMTA-CC – Movement of Working Women of Altamira, state of Pará  
MST - Landless Movement  
Network Against Green Deserts  
RBJA – Brazilian Environmental Justice Network  
Brazil Network on Multilateral Financial Institutions  
REBRIP – Brazilian Network for the Integration of the Peoples  
RECID – Rede de Educação Cidadã (Citizenship Education Network)  
Sapê do Norte – State of Espírito Santo – Quilombola Committee  
SDDH – Society for the Defense of Human Rights of the State of Pará  
STTR - Rural Workers’ Union - Abaetetuba  
STTR – Rural Workers’ Union - Cametá  
STTR – Rural Workers’ Union - Lucas do Rio Verde – State of Mato Grosso  
STTR - Rural Workers’ Union – Santarém  
Tijupá Agroecological Association  
Terrazul Alternative Civil Association  
NGO Terra de Direitos (Land of Rights)  
Via Campesina Brazil  
UNIPOP – Popular University Institute  
Xingu Vivo para Sempre Movement

