

Plantar S.A. CDM project: Global warming continues unabated

To the members of the CDM Executive Board:

We, a group of individuals, organizations, movements and networks representing Brazilian society, together with international supporters from the North and South, vehemently oppose the approval of the project presented by Plantar S.A. to the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) Executive Board, entitled “Cultivated Biomass as a Renewable Source of Energy for Pig Iron Production”.

In 2004, the World Bank Prototype Carbon Fund (PCF) selected Plantar S.A. for the world’s first financial operation structured as a carbon credit transaction: 1.5 million CERs, valued at approximately USD 25 million. Presented as a carbon sink proposal based on “the planting of forests”, the Plantar CDM project failed to gain the approval of this Executive Board. The arguments put forward by the company were blatantly false and verged on blackmail. The company claimed that the forested area in the state of Minas Gerais was rapidly shrinking, and that without the capital provided through carbon credits, it would be unable to replant on the land where trees had been harvested for industrial use. In fact, however, there are close to two million hectares of eucalyptus plantations in Minas Gerais, of which over 180,000 hectares are owned by Plantar. Moreover, thanks to large government subsidies, Plantar has always planted and replanted trees on a massive scale. The company subsequently reformulated the project, once again requesting carbon credits and threatening to burn coal if it was not able to (re)plant 23,100 hectares of eucalyptus in Minas Gerais for the production of charcoal.

In June 2004, numerous organizations, individuals and networks in Brazil sent an open letter to the CDM Executive Board to voice their opposition to the Plantar project. As demonstrated through various publications, videos, technical reports, open letters, legal documents and congressional investigations, Plantar has accumulated an enormous environmental, social and climate debt with the environment and the population living in the vicinity of its vast landholdings in Minas Gerais. In other states of Brazil as well, Plantar is directly responsible for managing over 590,000 hectares of rapid-growth eucalyptus plantations, providing planting, replanting, and herbicide, fungicide and insecticide spraying services to companies such as, for example, Aracruz Celulose/Fybria in the state of Espírito Santo and Veracel in Bahia.

Now, in 2009, a new reworking of the Plantar CDM project promises to set aside eucalyptus plantations on the company’s own land for the production of vegetable coal, under the false claim of producing “renewable biomass”. The company is attempting to obtain carbon credits for trees it has already been planting since 2000, which proves that it is not “adding” anything to its usual activities. Although classified as “carbon neutral”, Plantar’s operations will do nothing to neutralize the carbon dioxide emissions produced through its transportation and logistical operations and above all the burning of its own wood in charcoal ovens, not to mention the contamination caused by the pig iron industry and the production and use of automobiles, to which the bulk of production is devoted.

As far as we are concerned, Plantar S.A.'s large-scale, chemical-intensive plantations of fast-growing eucalyptus trees and their subsequent burning can in no way be considered a mechanism for climate justice.

On the contrary: the contamination and disappearance of rivers and streams; the forced displacement of peasant farmers, indigenous forest-dwelling communities and *geraiszeiros* (inhabitants of the Cerrado savannah ecosystem); the land disputes over agrarian reform measures and with *quilombola* (Afro-Brazilian) communities fighting to recover their ancestral territory (as is currently the case in Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo); the destruction of native forest in the Cerrado and Atlantic Forest regions and its replacement with plantations of a single, exotic tree species; the repression, criminalization and intimidation of local community leaders and resistance movements; the threat to food security in areas around eucalyptus plantations; outsourcing, precarious work conditions and high rates of work-related accidents and disease (as amply documented by many sources) – all of these are essential elements that should be taken into consideration and lead the CDM Executive Board to reject Plantar S.A.'s project proposal once again.

This would send a clear and unequivocal message that a “clean development” mechanism cannot, in itself, through the granting of carbon credits, promote the kind of environmental contamination and social injustices caused by Plantar S.A.'s large-scale industrial use of eucalyptus.

Sincerely,

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Amigos de la Tierra/Argentina
APTA - Espírito Santo
Articulação Nacional de Agroecologia (ANA/Brasil)
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Carbon Trade Watch - Transnational Institute.
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CARITAS DIOCESANA DE JANUÁRIA - MG - BRASIL
CDDH Extremo Sul da Bahia
Centro de Documentação Eloy Ferreira da Silva - CEDEFES/ Minas Gerais
CEPEDES - Bahia
COMISSÃO PASTORAL DA TERRA - MG - BRASIL
Convergencia de Movimientos de los Pueblos de las Américas
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Friends of the Earth International
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Isis International, Philippines
Jubileo Sur México
Labour, Health and Human Rights Development Centre, Nigeria
Maison de l'Enfant et de la Femme Pygmees (MEFP), Republique
Centrafricaine
Movement Generation: Justice and Ecology Project, USA
Movimiento Mexicano de Afectados por las Presas y en Defensa de los
Ríos (MAPDER).
National Forum of Forest People and Forest Workers, India
Otros Mundos AC/México
Peace Child International, UK
RECOMA - Rede Latino Americana contra Monocultivos de Árvores
Red Mexicana de Afectados por la Minería (REMA)
REDE BRASIL SOBRE INSTITUIÇÕES FINANCEIRAS MULTILATERAIS - BRASILIA
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The Corner House, UK
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