
The reasons why Veracel cannot be certified, seen from the standpoint of society

Once again, Stora Enso and Aracruz are using their economic power to mislead and wheedle. In addition to misleading and wheedling the Brazilian people, they are now misleading and wheedling Northern society with the aim of increasing the price of their products, increasing their sales and therefore, their profits! With this purpose, the Veracel pulp company presented itself voluntarily to FSC certification and resorted to SGS ICS, with headquarters in Sao Paulo, as certifying body. It set up the scenery for a theatrical event, in which the actors belong to the company and the public comprises financed partners to show that no conflicts exist. Once more, society was left out. Once again the story is told in a way that is advantageous to the companies, by people who have no commitments or responsibilities towards the environment, the future of forthcoming generations and the planet. Faced by this, society reacts and argues:

The reasons why Veracel cannot receive certification:

In one of the speeches at the Sixth Assembly of the Pataxo Front for Resistance and Struggle, held on 17, 18 and 19 August, in tears Marlene Pataxo from the village of Meio da Mata spoke of the difficulties her people are undergoing. "Veracel says that it has a society with the Pataxo Indians, this is a lie. That company invaded our territory and planted eucalyptus trees. This cost our people a very high price, they are now cornered and frightened because the company has private security services in the eucalyptus plantation to prevent the Indians from exercising their right to come and go freely according to our culture, our habits. Our springs and our rivers are contaminated by the poison used in the plantation. I am the mother of 14 children; I need to ensure their rights and their sustenance. Therefore, I implore the authorities to determine the end of the eucalyptus plantation on our lands under the dominion of Veracel Celulose, which continues to attack our environment. A company that acts in this way and that causes the death of my people can never receive certification."

The Movement of Landless Rural Workers –MST – defends the granting of Brazilian land to Brazilian workers and not to companies such as Veracel that take over our natural resources, exploit our work force and send their profits outside Brazil. "We need to plant food to feed our people," says Cabacinha, a member of the MST. For him it is shameful that a region such as this, with so much natural wealth and with a climate suited to agriculture, has so many people going hungry. "The advance of eucalyptus plantations is evicting small farmers because of the pressure of agribusiness or because of isolation in the middle of the green desert," says Evanildo Costa, a member of the state board of directors of MST.

Eliezer Lucas Tavares Leite, an agronomist and a farmer, affirms that certification of Veracel means people will continue to be killed and condemned to death. "We used to be the greatest fruit-growers in the world. The number of jobs generated annually for the population amounted to 28,497. We can in no way compare this with the ridiculous number of 741 jobs generated by the company. Many families are going hungry, violence increases every day. With certification in their power, the company will surely increase the plantation of eucalyptus, further compromising our sustenance."

Melquíades Spínola, an environmentalist and member of CEPEDES, emphasizes that we are facing a 'green hell' because nothing survives this destruction. "Nature and people are agonizing. There is a lack of work, a lack of food, a lack of scenic beauty, to which we have a right. Here in the region of the extreme south, after the plantation of eucalyptus, a violent reduction in biodiversity took place, with the extermination of fauna and flora, reduction of water courses, soil and water contamination due to an excessive use of poisons. Various rivers and streams are drying up. They are planting eucalyptus in the cities, in the graveyards and in Permanent Preservation zones, which is banned by law. They respect neither the living nor the dead. People have lost their land, their culture and are losing their dignity." He adds: "The only perfect thing in Veracel is the fertile minds and intellectual capacity of the company's directors and officials in inventing so many lies, so much deception, and their skill in concealing the truth. It is a crime against humanity to grant certification to a company such as Veracel."

The rate of progress of eucalyptus plantations in the southern region of Bahia by Veracel Celulose, is causing a lot of concern, affirm the representatives of CIMI, southern region, the Land Pastoral Commission, the Centre for Studies and Social Action, the Movement of Landless Workers, the Cedula de la Tierra - Sur, Peasant Youth and Tupinamba Indians. It has been observed that the "plague" has already reached some villages in the southern region, damaging the sustenance of rural workers. "The land reform is being invalidated due to the lack of land in the extreme south and also in the southern region of Bahia," we are told by Jairson, a member of the Farm Workers Federation (Fetag/Ba) and of the Rural Workers Trade Union.

Organizations from the south and extreme south of Bahia have met in search for a regional undertaking in which rural and urban societies play the leading role and in which activities not only use economic rationality but also environmental and human rationality, compatible with the culture of the local population and social and environmental sustainability.

For all these reasons, society is taking a very firm position: tree plantations are not FORESTS and should not be certified for the above mentioned reasons and because they directly and indirectly evict people from rural areas, mainly small farmers, causing a lack of food and an increase in the price of foodstuffs, they concentrate land in the hands of a few, leaving most of the people without an opportunity to gain their sustenance, they increase unemployment in rural areas, increase the number of unemployed families in belts surrounding the cities, increase violence and prostitution, that is to say, that plantations result in profound social, environmental and economic impacts.

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