
[Chile: The debate about tree plantations heats up](#)

In order to revamp its deteriorated image, the Chilean forestry sector launched in August the multimillion-dollar campaign "Forests for Chile", consisting of propaganda in mass media aimed at convincing public opinion about the benefits of what it calls "forests" and which are in fact monoculture tree plantations (see WRM Bulletin 39).

Local NGOs, which have been campaigning for years against this destructive forestry model immediately launched a counter campaign, which forced the forestry sector to react. In an angry letter published in the nationwide newspaper "El Mercurio", Mr Juan Correa Bulnes, Executive Vice President of the powerful pulp and paper industry's organization CORMA, harshly criticised an article by Malú Sierra from the NGO "Defensores del Bosque Chileno" (Defenders of the Chilean Forests). According to him, her assertion that plantations are not forests "is a token of extreme ideology, which induces to say things that lack any scientific backing and even logic."

In her response, Malú Sierra stresses that instead of insisting that plantations are forests and on spending millions of dollars to improve its image, the industry should invest that money in carrying out scientific ecological studies to prove what everyone already knows: that tree monocultures have negative impacts. "Everyone knows that plantations are not forests and even a child can see the difference. Reality can be manipulated with the use of suggestive images created by the minds of public relations experts, but a forest is a forest and a plantation is a plantation.", she ends up saying. In a nutshell.

Article based on information from: Voces del Bosque, Defensores del Bosque Chileno, Primavera de 2000.