

Submission to

**Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice
(SBSTA)**

On

**Reducing emissions from deforestation in developing
countries:
Policy Approaches to Stimulate Action**

Submitted by

**Vitae Civilis Institute for Development, Environment and Peace
(¹)**

On behalf of

**The Brazilian Forum of NGOs and Social Movements
for Environment and Development - FBOMS (²)
Working Group on Climate Change and Working Group on
Forests**

¹ Vitae Civilis Institute for Development, Environment and Peace, is a not-for-profit non-governmental organization that, since its creation in 1989 in São Paulo, Brazil, has been working to contribute to the construction of sustainable societies – an expression that covers at least five basic pillars: social justice, environmental conservation and integrity, diversity (cultural, ethnic, religious, etc.), democracy and economic viability. It has been actively engaged in the emerging global climate change regime since negotiations began in 1990. Contact : www.vitaecivilis.org.br or clima@vitaecivilis.org.br Tel. + 55 (11) 4686-1814. Address: Praça 10 de Agosto n. 51 – São Lourenço da Serra – SP – Brazil – 06890-000

² The Brazilian Forum of NGOs and Social Movements for Environment and Development (**FBOMS**) is a coalition founded in 1990 to facilitate the participation of Brazilian civil society groups throughout the Rio-92 (UNCED) process. Since then, FBOMS is the umbrella network of around 500 member groups, including NGOs, networks and federations of environmentalists, labour unions, grass-roots associations, rubber-tappers, and women's, youth and consumer groups dedicated to engaging with global, national and local policies and actions for sustainability and the environment. Within FBOMS, the Climate Change Working Group has since 1992 facilitated and organized its members for participation, monitoring and analysis of national and international climate change policies. It also serves as the national node of the international Climate Action Network (CAN). Contact: www.fboms.org.br or coordenação@fboms.org.br – Address: SCS, Quadra 08, Bloco B-50 – Ed. Venâncio 2000, 1º. andar CEP 70333-900 - Brasília - DF. BRASIL – Tel. (61) 3033-5535

Introduction

We welcome this opportunity to once again express our views on the topic of reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries. We strongly support efforts through this process under SBSTA to identify effective policy measures to reduce emissions from tropical deforestation.

Goals of SBSTA Process:

In our view, any mechanism developed and implemented through this process must be aimed at contributing to two overriding goals:

1. Significantly strengthen efforts to protect tropical forests and reduce emissions from deforestation, by providing an international framework and resources that can complement and strengthen existing and future national efforts and policies;
 - There is a wide range of estimates (~9-35%) of the contribution of tropical deforestation to global greenhouse gas emissions, but even the low end of this range involves huge emissions, especially compared to other key sectors such as transport, for example. These emissions must be addressed if we are to stabilize and reduce global emissions in time to prevent severe climatic disruptions;
 - Reducing emissions from tropical deforestation can be a very cost-effective means of achieving dramatic emissions reductions, while addressing a range of other environmental and social problems. Such reductions will help countries meet their obligations under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and contribute to achieving a transition to sustainable development, and result in greater climate benefits than possible by focusing only on fossil fuel and industrial emissions.
2. Contribute to current negotiation processes aimed at strengthening the international climate change regime under the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol in the post-2012 period, in order to limit global emissions and greenhouse gas concentrations to levels that ensure global average temperature increase stays below 2°C above pre-industrial levels.
 - Recent Brazilian climate modeling studies have confirmed that climate change itself poses a clear danger to tropical forests in Brazil, which means the only way to protect these tropical forests in the medium and long term is to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions from industrial sources and tropical deforestation to

levels that limit global average warming to less than 2°C above pre-industrial temperatures;

- There is an urgent need to move without delay to strengthen the global climate regime under the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol in the post-2012 period, through introducing appropriate measures to ensure emissions limitations and reductions from countries and emissions sources not now effectively included;
- An appropriately designed mechanism can ensure that industrialized countries fulfill their responsibilities to take the lead in reducing their own emissions, while also supporting efforts of developing countries to reduce their emissions.

Proposal from Brazil

Since one of the few concrete proposals by parties for potential mechanisms in this process was presented by the Brazilian government, we would like to take this opportunity to comment on that proposal.

First, we congratulate the Brazilian Ministry of Environment on its renewed efforts in recent years to create an effective national framework to control deforestation, and we acknowledge that these efforts contributed to the significant and encouraging reductions in emissions over the last two years, reported to be as much as 50%. However, there are significant grounds for concern that without substantially expanded measures to control land use and reduce deforestation, these gains will be eroded or reversed in coming years, driven by a recovery of agricultural commodity prices, infrastructure programs and other pressures to expand the agricultural frontier deeper into forested areas.

Secondly, we strongly support the initiative of the Brazilian government in bringing forward some concrete ideas for actions and mechanisms under the UNFCCC and the multilateral climate regime. This initiative represents a significant advance for Brazil in recognizing the global impacts and responsibilities that derive from the exercise of its undisputable sovereignty over its territory, including land use practices in the Amazon region.

The proposal presented by Brazil contains several useful ideas and positive contributions to the discussion under way. We share the concern expressed by Brazil and others that any mechanism for addressing deforestation must be additional to, and not a substitute for, the achievement of substantial emissions reductions within industrialized countries. We recommend that SBSTA investigate the scale of resources required by any such mechanism, whether market-based or financed through a fund, commensurate with the incremental cost of measures of forest conservation and resulting emissions

reductions, as well as net opportunity costs from foregone economic activities.

However, as a contribution to SBSTA's deliberations, we would like to stress the following points in regards to the proposal from Brazil and the role of tropical deforestation in the climate regime generally:

- we do not support the argument that any mechanisms for dealing with deforestation be characterized as entirely voluntary. Achieving the objectives of the UNFCCC will require new and differentiated contributions and commitments from a range of countries, and tropical deforestation provides a key opportunity for new mechanisms that can support sustainable development, biodiversity and environmental protection, and climate protection goals. Rewards based on past action to reduce emissions from deforestation must be linked to mechanisms that ensure the permanence of those reductions;
- the carbon markets created under the Kyoto Protocol, while not perfect, have proven effective in mobilizing resources to support emissions reductions. We see opportunities for appropriately designed market mechanisms to support emissions reductions from deforestation;
- appropriately designed market mechanisms can ensure that reducing emissions from deforestation is truly additional, and will not permit the wealthy industrialized countries to escape their responsibility to take the lead in reducing their own emissions. For example, EU is currently considering commitments to 30% emissions reductions by 2020, and deeper reductions thereafter, which we feel is a reasonable step as part of a reduction pathway for Annex 1 country domestic emissions compatible with global emissions pathways that can keep warming below 2oC. Developing countries must take measures to limit and reduce their own industrial and deforestation emissions, and to support this efforts, should insist that Annex 1 (or Annex 2) countries take on additional reductions commitments that can be met through the carbon markets with reductions in developing countries, thus providing a source of financial support for expanded emissions reductions activities in non-Annex 1 countries.
- any mechanism must avoid "tropical hot air" resulting from inappropriate establishment of baselines, as well as leakage between countries or between different biomes within the same country, and its architecture must ensure permanence³;

³ See document INTERNATIONAL SUBMISSION TO UNFCCC/SBSTA, REDUCING EMISSIONS FROM DEFORESTATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, from Vitae Civilis Institute for Development, Environment and Peace, on behalf of the Brazilian Forum of NGOs and Social Movements for the Environment and Development and The Climate Observatory, March, 2006.
http://unfccc.int/essential_background/library/items/3599.php?rec=j&preref=500003424

But no matter what mechanism is created under the international climate regime, it will be no substitute for sound national policies and effective governance for deforestation and land use. Decisions are being made now in many developing countries regarding infrastructure investments, legal frameworks and national development strategies that have profound implications for the future of their greenhouse gas emissions, including from tropical forests, and such decisions need to fully and urgently incorporate the need to protect these forests. All governments that have not yet done so, and here we include Brazil, should create a clear national climate change policy, that addresses limitations and reductions of all significant sources of greenhouse gases, including from deforestation and forest degradation.

The current discussion under SBSTA offers an excellent opportunity to create synergy between such national decision-making processes and global regimes and concerns.