

The Ecologist

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**CAMPAIGNS
& UPDATES**

Brazilian Decree Threatens Indian Lands

Brazilian President Fernando Cardoso has issued a decree that will allow commercial interests to challenge the demarcation of Indian lands. It seriously undermines the constitutional rights of indigenous communities in Brazil and threatens to deprive them of control over their lands.

Under Decree 1775, issued on 8 January, the demarcation of new indigenous reserves is to be delayed for 90 days. This will allow ranchers, loggers, miners and local government agencies to stake claims to land within Indian areas not officially entered on the country's land registry.

The decree is likely to encourage groups illegally occupying indigenous lands, including gold miners and ranchers, to remain there in the belief that the state will not evict them. New encroachments onto Indian lands are also expected, especially in gold-rich areas such as the territory of the Yanomami people.

Many of the 210 formally-protected reserves are expected to receive legal challenges as well. For instance, ranching company Sattin Agropecuaria e Imoveis has challenged the demarcation of the land of the Guarani-Kaiowa Indians of Mato Grosso do Sul.

Indigenous groups view demarcation of land as vital to securing inalienable

rights to their ancestral lands and natural resources, as guaranteed under Brazil's 1988 constitution. In 1991, the government issued a decree requiring the demarcation of indigenous lands for which substantial funds were provided by the World Bank and G-7 countries. In 1992, a senior World Bank official promised NGOs attending the UNCED Earth Summit that all indigenous lands would be demarcated within four years.

The passing of the new decree thus represents a major set-back for indigenous communities, who fear that the Brazilian authorities will use the demarcation process to restrict indigenous territories. They are calling on the World Bank and G-7 countries for a temporary suspension of all funds for further demarcation.

Groups in Brazil have joined the CAPOIB, the council of indigenous peoples and organizations in Brazil, in calling for the decree to be revoked.

In the US, a coalition of 80 environmental and human rights groups has sent a strongly-worded protest to President Cardoso and copied it to multilateral agencies funding development projects in Brazil which may have an impact on Indian lands.

Coalition members intend to pressure these agencies to withhold funding for

projects in areas where protection for Indian lands cannot be guaranteed.

CONTACT: CAPOIB, Tel/Fax: +55-61 322 4133; Survival International, 11-15 Emerald Street, London WC1N 3QL Tel: 0171-242 1441; Fax: 0171 242 1771; e-mail: <survival@gn.apc.org>

- The World Bank has turned down a request of 25 Brazilian NGOs for an Inspection Panel review of the Planaflo project in Rondonia. The project, which included a commitment to demarcate Indian lands, was intended to rectify the social and environmental problems caused by Bank-funded programmes during the 1980s.

However, Bank President James D. Wolfensohn has committed the Bank to review the project in six months time, with the involvement of the Inspection Panel.

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Shell Imports Guns for Nigerian Police

Shell has admitted importing weapons into Nigeria to help arm the police. The company says the arms are to protect its oil installations in Ogoniland, but activists accuse Shell of putting guns into the hands of death squads who have been suppressing the Ogoni.

The revelations come just two months after the hanging of eight Ogoni activists, including writer Ken Saro-Wiwa (*The Ecologist*, Nov/Dec 1995). Nineteen other Ogoni, who face trial for the same

murders with which the executed Ogoni were charged, say they have little hope of a just hearing because the government is "settling an old score". In a letter smuggled out of prison, they urged a Commonwealth ministerial delegation to be set up in response to Saro-Wiwa's judicial murder to "come quickly to our aid and save our lives."

CONTACT: Ogoni Community Association, Suite 5, 3/4 Albion Place, Galena Rd, London W6 0LT, UK. Tel: +44 (0)181 563 8614

The Ecologist

CAMPAIGNS & UPDATES

Send news, campaigns and updates for inclusion in Campaigns & Updates to: The Ecologist (Campaigns), Agriculture House, Bath Road, Sturminster Newton, Dorset DT10 1DU, UK. E-mail: ecologist@gn.apc.org, Fax: +44- (0)1258 473748.

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Innu Oppose Mining Threat on Labrador

Nearly a third of the land on the Labrador Peninsular, Canada, has been "claimed" by multinational mining companies. This follows the announcement in November 1994 that the US mining company, Diamond Field Resources, had discovered an estimated \$20 billion worth of copper, cobalt and nickel in the Voisey Bay area. The mining is opposed by local Innu and Inuit communities.

The Bay area, known to the local Innu people as *Eimish*, is rich in wildlife, including waterfowl, arctic char, harp and ringed seals, and polar bears. It is also home to the George River Caribou herd which, at some 780,000 animals, is the largest herd of free-ranging ungulates in the world.

The land is being leased to mining companies by the Newfoundland government, despite the recognized claims that the Innu and Inuit have to Eimish and other areas currently being explored by mining companies.

The Innu fear that companies are seeking to circumvent a full-scale environmental review of the likely impact of mining the area by applying for planning permission on a project-by-project basis. Permission has already been sought by the Voisey Bay Nickel Company to build

a camp, dock, airstrip and 12 kilometre two-lane access road at Eimish. The Innu are demanding a comprehensive environmental review of mining the Voisey Bay area as a whole.

"Life as we know it will be gone forever once we see a lot of development in the area of Voisey Bay," says Katie Rich, chief of Davis Inlet. "We aren't able to control these things that are happening on our land. These companies are making a lot of money from our land and what do we get — nothing. Three or four jobs, that is."

WRITE to the Canadian Minister of the Environment, House of Commons 509-S, Ottawa ON, K1A 0A6, CANADA to ask that respect is shown to the Innu and Inuit and that a full environmental review is carried out by both the Federal and Provincial governments which should be observed by an independent body.

WRITE to Diamond Fields (1900, 355 Burrard Street, Vancouver BC, V6C 2G8, CANADA). Remind the company that it is exploiting Innu and Inuit land and that its presence at Voisey Bay is illegal under international law.

CONTACT: Friends of Nitassinan, PO Box 804, Burlington, Vermont 05402, USA. Tel/fax: +1 (802) 425-3820.

• **EarthWINS Daily has launched an e-mail newsletter, *Mining-Exchange on the social and environmental impacts of mining*. To subscribe, send an e-mail message to: <majordomo@igc.apc.org>**

Bhopal Justice

A coalition of 25 environment and human rights groups in the US is demanding that the US government take action to bring Union Carbide to trial in India on a charge of culpable homicide (see *The Ecologist*, Sept/Oct 1994). The US multinational's chemical plant at Bhopal in India exploded in December 1984, killing 6,000 people and maiming tens of thousands of others. More than a decade after the gas leak, over 200,000 people still suffer from gas poisoning.

Although criminal charges have been brought by the Indian authorities against Union Carbide and two Asian subsidiaries, the case has yet to come to court. Charges of culpable homicide and grievous harm are also outstanding against Warren Anderson, Union Carbide's Chief Executive Officer at the time of the disaster. Both Anderson and Union Carbide have refused to appear in court and have been declared "absconders from justice" by the Indian courts; an arrest warrant has been issued for Anderson.

"No corporation, no matter how large, should be above the law", says Ward Morehouse, President of the Council on International and Public Affairs and a long-time campaigner for justice in Bhopal.

The coalition, which includes Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth as well as grassroots groups campaigning against Union Carbide plants in their particular localities, is also demanding that the Attorney General of New York, where Union Carbide is incorporated, revoke the corporate charter under which the company is permitted to trade. Under New York's laws, charters can be withdrawn where companies cause great harm or flout the law.

WRITE in support of the Coalition's demands to Dennis C. Vacco, Attorney General, NY State Department of Law, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271, USA.

CONTACT: Council on International and Public Affairs, 777 United Nations Plaza, Suite 3C, New York, NY 10017, USA. Fax: +1 (212) 972 9878; e-mail: <cipany@igc.apc.org>

• **India's Public Interest Research Group has published a new booklet *TNCs and India: An Activists Guide to Research and Campaign on Transnational Corporations*. It is available from PIRG, 142 Maitri Apartments, Pot 28, IP Extension (Near Patparganj DTC Depot), Delhi 110092, INDIA.**

Indigenous Peoples Object to Hydrovia

Indigenous peoples whose homelands lie in South America's Mato Grosso Pantanal, the world's largest wetland, have written to the Inter-American Development Bank accusing the Bank of failing to consult with local people before supporting the Hydrovia industrial waterway, which will have major environmental and cultural impacts.

The \$400 million Hydrovia project aims to widen and deepen the the Paraguay and Paraná rivers to allow ocean-going ships access to the Brazilian port of Cáceres 2,100 miles upstream from the river's mouth near Buenos Aires and Montevideo. Construction may begin soon, even though engineering and economic feasibility, and environmental impact studies have not been completed.

As a result of the Hydrovia project, much of the Pantanal wetland is likely to dry out, destroying wildlife habitats and

disrupting the livelihoods of indigenous peoples. Land conflicts are also likely to increase as former wetlands are taken over for ranching and agriculture and Indians expelled from their homelands.

A letter to the Bank, drawn up at a meeting in January of the Guatos, Terena, Kaiowa, Bororo, Umutina, Pareci and Kinikinao, declares: "We were never consulted . . . We appeal to the Bank to be clear and transparent in its proposals, because our villages are worried. Why do they want to destroy the natural waterway? Who is going to benefit? Who is going to become rich with this? Is the [Bank] aware of the threat of destruction and impoverishment which the projects bring for our people?"

CONTACT: Rios Vivos, Campo Grande, BRAZIL. Tel: +55 67 724 3230; Fax: +55 67 724 9109; e-mail: <ecoabrmspan@ax.apc.org>; International Rivers Network, 1847 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, CA 94703. Fax: +1 (510) 848 1008; e-mail: <irn@irn.org>

Farmers Close Kentucky Fried Chicken

Professor Nanjundaswamy, a leading opponent of GATT and the entry of TNCs into India, has been charged with attempted murder and looting following the ransacking on 30 January of a Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) outlet in Bangalore, Karnataka, by some 100 farmers who demanded that the fast food chain leave India.

Although Professor Nanjundaswamy was not present during the incident, he has accepted moral responsibility for it because the farmers were members of the Karnataka Rajya Ryotha Sanga (KRRS), a statewide association of 10 million farmers, of which he is president. A KFC employee has admitted that no one was hurt during the protest, no equipment was damaged and no money was stolen.

KRRS activists have been picketing ofices and blockading roads in protest at Nanjundaswamy's arrest which has caused widespread international outcry. Arguing that the "consistent and complete disregard of people's concerns by KFC and the state government" left farmers no option but to take direct action, the Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) has condemned the arrest as "a clear violation of human rights".

The KRRS has led several campaigns over the past few years to oppose the threat to peasant food security posed by transnational corporations in India. It was at the forefront of efforts to prevent Cargill Seeds and Pepsico from operating in the country and is opposing the patenting of neem. KRRS plans to oppose the opening in India later this year of McDonald's.

WRITE to the President of India (fax: +91 11 3017290), The Prime Minister of India (fax: +91 11 301 9817), The Governor of Karnataka (fax: +91 80 225 8150), The Chief Minister of Karnataka (fax: +91 80 228 1021)

CONTACT: The Ecologist, Bath Road, Sturminster Newton, Dorset, DT10 1DU, UK.

• **BBC lawyers have been accused of censorship after they told Indian activist Vandana Shiva that a scheduled live radio interview in January on the social and impacts of TNCs in India could not go ahead for fear of possible libel writs.**

Shiva had offered not to name names in the interview, but the lawyers were not satisfied. The McLibel Support Campaign said, "This is an illustration of the insidious nature of the libel laws in Britain. Not only are they very harsh but lawyers steer a wide path around the law, preventing discussion on topics of paramount concern."

Protests at Racist "Fortress Europe"

Over 15,000 people — environmentalists, trade unionists and members of Third World solidarity, anti-racist and women's groups — took part in a mass demonstration in Madrid on 15 December 1995 against the 1993 Maastricht Treaty and "Europe of Capital". The protest coincided with the EU bi-annual Summit of Heads of State taking place in the Spanish capital.

A declaration issued by the "alternative summit" called for people in all European countries to unite against cuts in social welfare being imposed on EU countries so that a single currency can be introduced in 1999. It also demanded an EU-wide referendum on all aspects of the Maastricht Treaty, under which national governments will lose much of their sovereignty.

The declaration calls for the "strengthening of local economies against the aggressive globalization of the EU"; support for "multi-ethnic self-determination based on democratic respect and rights"; and opposition to efforts to create a "Fortress Europe". In particular, it calls for abolition of the 1992 Schengen Treaty, under which EU internal borders are to be scrapped whilst external borders are strengthened. The declaration accuses the Treaty of "officially legitimizing racism, more police control, immigrant and migrant laws and the destruction of humanitarian traditions giving asylum to people fighting for freedom."

FOR COPIES of the Treaty, contact Aedenat, c/ Campomanes 13, 28013 Madrid, SPAIN. Fax: +34 1 559 0334.

Decentralized ACTION DAY — 30 March 1996 — against Trans-European Networks (more than 140 new roads), and for sustainable transport. For details, contact ASEED, Fax: +31 (20) 665 0166; e-mail <aseedeur@antenna.nl>

Refreshing the Burmese Military

Dutch-based groups are calling on Heineken, the Dutch brewing multinational, to withdraw from Burma and its collaboration with the SLORC military dictatorship.

A joint venture company, the Union of Myanmar Economics Holdings Ltd. (UMEHL), in which Heineken has a 42.5% share is building a brewery in the Burmese capital, Rangoon, under the supervision of Heineken Technical Services. It is expected to be completed in September 1996.

UMEHL is 40% owned by the Directorate of Procurement of Burma's Ministry of Defence, responsible for buying military equipment. Senior army officers and regimental institutes are also shareholders.

"By investing in cooperation with the military, Heineken is an accomplice in the tragedy of the Burmese people", say ASEED and XminusY, two European NGOs which have launched a petition against Heineken's involvement. "We demand that Heineken stops its co-operation with the SLORC and pulls out of Burma."

TO SIGN the petition, contact ASEED Europe, PO Box 92066, 1090 AB Amsterdam, THE NETHERLANDS. Tel: +31 (20) 668 2236. Fax: +31 (20) 665 0166.

WRITE letters of concern to Chair of the Heineken Board, Mr. Vuursteen, and the Corporate Public Affairs Officer, Mr Verwey (+31-20-626 3503).

Dabhol Go Ahead

Despite massive opposition from social activist and environmental groups, the Indian state of Maharashtra has given the the Texas-based multinational, Enron, the go-ahead to build a 2,015 MW gas-powered plant at Dabhol in Western India.

This overturns an earlier decision to scrap the \$2.8 billion power plant deal (*The Ecologist* CAMPAIGNS, July/Aug 1995). Approval is conditional upon Enron reducing the plant's capital costs to \$2.5 billion and the price of the electricity. The Maharashtra state will take a 30% stake in the project. Enron currently holds 80% of the equity; General Electric, the US power group, and Bechtel, the US engineering and construction giant, together hold the remaining 20%.

More Evictions at Nam Theun 2 in Laos

The Australian-led consortium proposing to build the \$1.2 billion Nam Theun 2 dam in Laos has admitted that the dam will flood one-third more land than previously calculated. The number of people who would have to be evicted, originally estimated at 4,300, is thus greatly increased.

The consortium — Transfield of Australia, Électricité de France, three Thai companies and the Lao government — has also been charged with overestimating the electricity output of the dam. Rainfall data for only seven years are available for most of the Nam Theun basin which are "not sufficient to assess fully the dam's viability" states an independent review of the project, commissioned by the International Rivers Network (IRN). Despite the paucity of data, the consortium claims that the dam will have a plant factor of 81 per cent — twice the average plant factor for large dams.

"The project developers have persuaded the Lao government that this dam will earn millions of dollars from electricity exports," comments Patrick McCully of IRN. "More likely, the dam will leave Laos seriously indebted and ruin the live-

lihood of many of its people."

A Bank mission which visited Laos in late 1995 has insisted on the preparation of new studies on project alternatives, environmental and macroeconomic impacts and resettlement.

CONTACT: International Rivers Network, 1847 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, California CA 94703, USA. Tel: 510 848 1155; Fax: 510 848 1008; e-mail: <irn@irn.org>

• **At least 50,000 people are to be evicted in northern Vietnam to make way for a proposed \$3.5 billion hydroelectric power project in Son La and Lai Chau provinces.**

The proposed reservoir for the dam would flood thousands of hectares of forest and could affect the livelihoods of up to 110,000 people. The power project is expected to be completed by the year 2007 and is calculated to produce 17 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity a year, three times more than the largest existing power station in Vietnam.

A senior government official is quoted as saying that Son La Province "is prepared to suffer losses in the [reservoir] area for the sake of a brighter life in the future."

Another Dam on the Bio-Bio

ENDESA, the largest private company in Chile, intends to proceed with construction of the Ralco Dam, the largest of six hydroelectric dams planned for the Bio-Bio river. This is despite earlier assurances from the International Finance Corporation of the World Bank that the Pangué Dam, the first dam of the series which is now 70 per cent completed and was part-funded by the IFC, was the only dam planned for the area.

Such IFC assurances persuaded 10 European banks and the Swedish and Norwegian aid agencies to support Pangué. They also enabled it to go ahead without a full environmental impact of the cumulative effects of a series on dams on the Bio-Bio river.

The area of the proposed Ralco Dam is the homeland of the Pehuenche group of the Mapuche, the last group of the Mapuche who continue their traditional lifestyle. The dam would directly displace 600 people, including 400 Pehuenche.

In December, the World Bank rejected a claim brought by 400 Chilean citizens, including Pehuenche, for the IFC loan for Pangué to be investigated by the Bank's Inspection Panel on the grounds that it violated Bank policies on environment, indigenous peoples, wildlands, management of cultural property and involuntary resettlement.

However, World Bank President James D. Wolfensohn has promised to "undertake an impartial internal review of the environmental and social issues associated with the Pangué project."

WRITE to The President of the World Bank (Fax: +1 202-447 6658) demanding a rigorous investigation into the IFC's role in providing finance for Pangué.

WRITE to the President of Chile, Eduardo Frei, (Fax: +56 2 690 4020) supporting Chilean citizens' demands for a rigorous assessment of ENDESA's plans for the Bio-Bio.

CONTACT: Grupo de Accion por el Biobio, Ernesto Pinto Lagarrigue 112, Recoleta, Santiago de Chile. Fax: +56-2-777 6414; e-mail: <gabb@huelen.reuna.cl>

IN BRIEF ●●●●●●●●●●

HORMONES IN BEEF

The US is contesting the European Union's ban on hormone-treated beef under the new trade rules agreed in the Uruguay Round of GATT on the grounds that the ban is a trade barrier because it cannot be justified "scientifically".

PATENTS ON LIFE

The European Commission is again attempting to introduce a Directive to permit the patenting of parts of the human body, of human gene-therapy techniques, and of animals and plants. The Directive's first reading in the European Parliament is scheduled for November 1996.

BST AND CANCER

BST could be a potential risk factor in causing breast cancer and gastro-intestinal cancers, suggests a new report by Dr. Samuel Epstein of the University of Illinois. BST increases levels in milk of insulin-like growth factor (IGF-1) which is a powerful stimulator and regulator of cell growth and cell division in humans and cows. Absorbed into the blood, it exerts cancer-promoting effects on cells lining the colon and on breast cells.

NUCLEAR ACTIVIST ARRESTED

Alexander Nikitin, a retired Russian naval officer, has been arrested by the Russian Federal Security Services after working with the Bellona Foundation, a Norwegian environmental group, on a report about the dangers of military nuclear waste from Russia's Northern Fleet. Nikitin has been charged with treason and may face the death sentence.

NARMADA

A confidential study for the Gujarat government has revealed that the Sardar Sarovar Dam is "not a financially viable project". The report argues that projected revenues will not cover debt servicing and will lead Gujarat into serious financial difficulties. Meanwhile, the Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam Ltd., the state company building the dam, is seeking to raise Rs2,750 million through a bond issue.