



The Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation

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THE UBERLÂNDIA DECLARATION

THE CRITICAL NEED TO SLOW THE PACE OF AMAZON DEFORESTATION

WHEREAS, the forests of Amazonia are of critical importance as an unparalleled refuge for biological diversity, as an enormous heat-engine that helps to maintain regional and global precipitation patterns, and as a massive stock of terrestrial carbon that slows the rapid build-up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere; and

WHEREAS, Amazonian forests also provide the livelihoods of diverse local and indigenous peoples; and

WHEREAS, two-thirds of the forests of Amazonia are contained within Brazil; and

WHEREAS, the pace of forest destruction has accelerated sharply over the past 15 years in Brazilian Amazonia, where vast expanses of forest are now being destroyed and degraded each year; and

WHEREAS, the Amazonian Protected Area Program (ARPA) has made a significant contribution to conservation by delimiting a number of important Protected Areas; and

WHEREAS, initiatives by past and current Brazilian governments to slow deforestation do not address one of the most critical root causes of forest destruction, the rapid expansion of highways, roads, and other transportation infrastructure in Amazonia that greatly increases access to large, intact forest tracts for ranchers, loggers, slash-and-burn farmers, and land speculators; and

WHEREAS, decisions to construct and improve transportation infrastructure in Amazonia are typically being made without first assessing the real environmental and social impacts of those projects; and

WHEREAS, greatly increased enforcement is needed to prevent the rapid proliferation of illegal roads and illicit logging, mining, farming, and settlement in Amazonia; and

WHEREAS, continuing subdivision of the Amazon by large-scale infrastructure projects is likely to fragment the basin's forests on a massive spatial scale, creating isolated forest remnants that are far more vulnerable than intact forests to predatory logging, wildfires, and encroachment by illegal miners; and

WHEREAS, Amazonian nations already bear a disproportionately large amount of the direct expense and lost-opportunity costs for Amazonian conservation initiatives; and

WHEREAS, inadequate funding and infrastructure for environmental protection is one of the key reasons for predatory exploitation of the Amazon; and

WHEREAS, funding from international lenders, such as the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank, and from commercial lenders has in some cases contributed to the rapid loss of Amazonian forests;

THEREFORE, be it declared, at its Uberlândia, Brazil meeting in July 2005, that the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation:

- 1) commends the Brazilian government for its commitment to the ARPA program, and requests that ARPA facilitate the rapid transfer of critical resources for park protection and management;
- 2) urges the Brazilian federal government to delay planned Amazonian infrastructure projects identified by the Inter-Ministerial Working Group to Reduce Amazon Deforestation as being most likely to cause large-scale environmental damage, especially the BR-319 Highway (Porto Velho–Manaus), BR-163 Highway (Cuiabá–Santarém), BR-230 Highway (Lábrea–Humaitá), Madeira River Hydroelectric Projects (Santo Antônio and Jirau), and Urucu–Porto Velho Gasline; this delay would allow far more rigorous measures to be implemented to reduce the environmental and social impacts of these projects;
- 3) requests that the Brazilian government make significant efforts to reduce the rapid proliferation of illegal access roads and other infrastructure throughout the Brazilian Legal Amazon;
- 4) insists that international and commercial lenders uphold the most stringent environmental criteria to ensure that future loans and projects do not promote or increase Amazonian deforestation;

- 5) urges the Brazilian government to enforce existing environmental regulations, including those applying to spontaneous roads, licensing of government infrastructure, Legal Reserves, and Areas of Permanent Protection within private properties; and
- 6) urges the international community, especially that of major economies such as the U.S., Canada, Japan, and European Union, to markedly increase direct support for Brazil's Amazonian conservation initiatives, in order to bear a fairer share of the true economic burden of forest preservation.

**PROJECTS IDENTIFIED BY THE INTER-MINISTERIAL WORKING GROUP
AS BEING LIKELY TO CONTRIBUTE TO AMAZON DEFORESTATION:**

1. Obras que podem abrir novas frentes de ocupação em regiões vulneráveis:

- BR 319 - Porto Velho – Manaus (RO-AM)
- BR 230 - Lábrea – Humaitá (AM)
- Hidrelétricas do Rio Madeira: Santo Antônio e Jirau (RO)
- Gasoduto Urucu – Porto Velho (AM-RO)

2. Obra que atrai novas frentes em região já ocupada, mas com precária infraestrutura social, ausência de investimentos públicos e populações vulneráveis:

- Hidrelétrica de Belo Monte (PA)

3. Obras que geram desflorestamento localizado:

- BR 156 – Ferreira Gomes – Oiapoque (AP)
- BR 364 - Sena Madureira – Riozinho (AC)
- BR 401 - Bonfim – Normandia (RR)
- Gasoduto Coari – Manaus (AM)
- LT Tucuruí – Manaus – Amapá (PA/AM/AP)

4. Obras que contribuem para consolidar processos históricos de ocupação:

- BR 230 - Marabá – Altamira (PA)
- LT Vilhena – Ji-Paraná – Jauru (RO/MT)

5. Rodovia que potencializa a expansão de novas frentes de desflorestamento:

- BR 317 - Rio Branco - Boca do Acre (AC/AM)

6. Rodovia que potencializam novas frentes de expansão da fronteira:

- BR 163 – Cuiabá – Santarém (MT-PA)