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Amazon Forest - Future

## THE FUTURE OF THE AMAZON RAIN FOREST

In its issue of the 19th of January this year a study on the future of the Brazilian Amazon was published by the American Association for the Advancement of Science. This study has been partially reproduced in the information contained in it is not new and is the object of considerable controversy among the scientific community.

With respect to some of the data and information quoted in the study, it is important to note that:

1. According to information provided by INPE (National Institute for Space Research) which ensures the monitoring of the Amazon by satellite, the deforestation rate from 1995 to 1996 = 1.8 million ha  
1996 to 1997 = 1.3 million ha  
1997 to 1998 = 1.7 million ha  
1998 to 1999 = 1.7 million ha  
These figures are available at the INPE site: [www.grid.inpe.br](http://www.grid.inpe.br)

2. The deforestation of 1.7 million ha. and not 2 million ha as mentioned in the article corresponds to the same rate of deforestation continues for the next 20 years, which is highly unlikely, taking into account the fact that to protect the forest, the loss would amount to 8%.

3. The projection by Professor Laurance does not seem to have a sound basis since it takes into account the fact that when none of the different policies now adopted was in place.

4. It is also important to keep in mind that since the discovery of Brazil, the destruction of the rain forest has been decreasing. In 1994-95 for instance, the deforestation rate had reached 2.9 million ha. It is important programmes of international cooperation, such as the PPC7 ( Pilot Program to Protect the Forest) and to very strict measures adopted by the Brazilian Government.

5. A projection by the Ministry for Science and Technology, adding the overall deforestation of 340 thousand square kilometres to the worst-case scenario of deforestation in the next 20 years of 340 thousand square kilometres and overall deforestation rate of 25%, a totally unlikely scenario and quite below the hypothetical scenario mentioned in the study, it is worth noting that the deforestation of the Amazon from 2000 to 2007 amounts to some \$12 billion, not \$40 billion. Furthermore, the deforestation of the Amazon is not a linear process.

6. With reference to Avanço Brasil, the development programme mentioned in the study, it is worth noting that the deforestation of the Amazon from 2000 to 2007 amounts to some \$12 billion, not \$40 billion. Furthermore, the deforestation of the Amazon is not a linear process.

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sectors such as social development, information and environment. The preservation of the environment is a priority for Avana Brasil. Infrastructure accounts for no more than US\$ 8 billion. The paving of roads is a small amount. That is to say, nothing comparable to the \$40 billion referred to in the article.

[Sustainable Development in the Amazon](#)


7. In the area of infrastructure, no new road is planned, only the paving of existing roads, such as BR-163. Information on Avana Brasil is available on [www.abrasil.gov.br](http://www.abrasil.gov.br)

8. It is important to remember that there are about 17 million people living in the Amazon region. Access to clean water, sanitation and telecommunications is a priority.

9. With reference to the carbon off-setting funds foreseen in the Kyoto Protocol – another topic frequently discussed in this country in the development of demonstration projects in this area, despite the fact that the Clean Development Mechanism is fully regulated in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Brazil has a good understanding with British partners for that purpose. Brazil accepts the inclusion of reforestation activities in the Clean Development Mechanism, but not of native forests, because such an inclusion might frustrate the purpose of the Protocol: to reduce gas emissions. A similar approach is adopted by the European Union.

The necessary revision of the data and facts mentioned in the Science Magazine article does not mean that the Amazon region is not a serious matter to be carefully considered. In this respect, the Ministry of Environment is conducting a thorough review of the impact of Avana Brasil projects on the environment.

6th February 2001

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