

BRAZIL AND THE CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE IN COPENHAGEN

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The Brazilian elite are well aware of the importance of the UN climate debate. There is widespread anxiety that the world community (UN), under the leadership of the USA, could use the threat to the climate as a reason to place the Brazilian Amazon under international administration. In the same way as with the 2nd Iraq war or in Afghanistan, where violations of human rights and the alleged threat of weapons of mass destruction justified military action by the USA, with or without a UN mandate, a threat to the world's climate due to the reputed lack of adequate protection for the "green lung" in Brazil could justify such intervention. There is widespread awareness of this among the political and social elite, irrespective of the relevant political viewpoint, and it is fed, not least, by deep mistrust of interest-group politics in the USA. Of the seven most named priorities in foreign politics, four alone are currently concerned with the topics of climate, environment and energy. The 2008 values are considerably higher compared to the comparative study from 2001. Even the seventh priority level (bio fuel) was named by 50 percent of those questioned while "disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons" (35 percent) or "free trade agreements with the European Union" (33 percent) were named considerably less frequently.

Over the past number of years, Brazil has undertaken various measures for climate protection in its own country. To protect the Amazon rain forest, an action plan has been implemented since 2004. This is managed by a group of coordinators from eleven ministries and it has implementation capacities at federal and communal levels at its disposal. The plan has four main fields of action for the Brazilian state: management of land areas and land usage plans, monitoring and controlling forest clearance, promotion of sustainable agricultural production and modernisation in the fields of infrastructure, energy and transport. Around 80 percent of the forest areas are already designated as protected areas. Since 2009, following a five-year pilot phase, the action plan is now financed by means of a fund (Fundo Amazonia) to which international donor countries, such as Norway, contribute. The implementation of these laws is a great challenge because, on the one hand, constitutional legality in Brazil is very weak and the effect of the law is limited. On the other hand, monitoring this huge area is still very difficult in spite of the most modern technology. Thus, forest clearing is illegal in many cases today but it still cannot be prevented. Even the fact that the laws provide for heavy fines only leads to a slow-down (if at all) in forest clearances. Indeed, deforestation continues to increase although it must be clear that it must be stopped at all costs and preferably reversed.

Increased participation by Brazil in climate protection can be observed, above all since the 14th UN Climate Change Conference in Posen in December 2008. Previously, the Lula government published a "National Plan on Climate Change", the main objective of which was the progressive reduction of deforestation in the Amazon by 2017. Deforestation is first to be reduced, in quarterly steps, by 40 percent compared to the average for 1996-2005. This is to be followed in 2010–2013 and 2014–2017 by a further 30 percent compared with the respective previous average. In 2017, the annual deforestation should be only approx. 5,000 km². Along the way to this target, however, rain forest covering a further 70,000 km² would disappear. This equates approximately to the size of Bavaria. For 2009, this means a maximum goal for cleared rain forest of only 9,200 km². According to up to date information from the state research institute INPE (Instituto Nacional de Pesquisa), deforestation is calculated at 7,008 km² from August 2008 until July 2009 - the lowest value since recording began in 1988. Critics attribute this reduction primarily to reduced demand due to the financial and economic crisis. The fact that this plan raises climate protection politics to the status of state politics for the first time is a positive aspect. This means that decisions in important political areas must take account of climate protection, even if to a lesser degree than desirable.

While the Brazilian position in the past years concentrated primarily on demands on the industrial countries to reduce their emissions, Dilma Rousseff announced Brazil's new ambitious climate goals on 13th November 2009, just a few days before the start of the Copenhagen conference. Based on the programme from 2008, Brazil announced its commitment to reducing national greenhouse gas emissions by between 36.1 percent and 38.9 percent by 2020 compared with estimated emissions for that year. This is to be achieved primarily by reducing deforestation in the Amazon by 80 percent and in the Cerrado savanna by 40 percent. In addition, measures are provided for reductions in the fields of agriculture, energy and metal processing.

The Brazilian positions at the 15th UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December 2009 are to be viewed against this background and are inseparable from the general conditions relating to foreign and economic politics. Increased self-confidence leads to the Brazilian government under President Lula taking a position which can be described as follows, in general terms:

- a) For itself and for other threshold countries, Brazil claims the right to develop which is understood as industrialisation. Existing industrialised countries, the USA, Europe, and Japan are responsible for climate change. These countries should also bear the costs of climate change. Therefore, no new protocol or international treaty is required but rather, an extension of the Kyoto Protocol to also include the USA.

- b) Brazil is aware of its responsibility for the world climate and carries out a voluntary, dedicated, climate protection policy. It is prepared to deploy its own financial means for its own measures but sees the need for international support.
- c) Brazil sees itself as a speaker for the poor countries, which are most threatened by climate change.
- d) Brazil does not accept any limitations on its sovereignty by an international control regime.

The agreement finally acknowledged in Copenhagen will not affect climate protection in Brazil directly. From Brazil's viewpoint, the primary question for the government is whether the Kyoto Protocol with its obligations for the industrial countries (except the USA) will still apply after the failure in Copenhagen or whether all obligations will be dropped. Therefore, and also because of the election battle in the country itself, it can be expected that Brazil's government will first and foremost demand commitments from the "rich countries" on the way to the 16th UN Climate Change Conference in Mexico. The government representatives, from Lula and his preferred successor Dilma Rousseff to the Environment Minister, were very satisfied with Brazil's appearance in Copenhagen and now expect action from the other players. According to the Environment Minister Minc, Brazil will take its own measures in the form of the "Cerrado Fund" which, similar to the Amazon Fund, is intended to protect tree stocks in the Cerrado savanna in the North and North West of Brazil.

On 29th December, at the close of 2009, President Lula sanctioned the "Law for establishing the National Climate Change Policy". In essence, this law lays down the pledges by the Brazilian government which were agreed before the Copenhagen conference. Although this initiative is welcomed fundamentally by environmental associations such as Greenpeace, the implementation is understood rather as a "Declaration of good will". In particular the "voluntary nature" emphasised in the wording of the law is criticised by many sides. Greenpeace considers that Brazil may no longer merely offer nice words at the next conference in Mexico at the end of 2010, but instead must provide concrete figures and a feasible plan for implementation in order to bring about the definitive end to rain forest clearance.

In future too, the Brazilian position in the international climate dialogue will be characterised by great self-confidence, reinforced by the growing political and economic strength of the country, a high level of independence in terms of its energy supply and moral argumentation by virtue of previously being part of the community of developing countries. Germany and Europe should

therefore be aware of Brazil's interests to a greater extent than previously and include them in their own strategies in order to find and keep an important ally for enforcing their own ideas and interests. This can be achieved neither by enthusiasm without criticism nor by disrespect. Brazil must therefore be acknowledged and treated as an important partner with its own interests and potentials.

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