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## Tenth Forestry Congress

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# Eco-fascists hit a small snag in Paris

by Emmanuel Grenier

Plans to set up a global environment police at next year's Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro met with some balking by Third World countries at the Tenth World Forestry Congress in Paris, although Malaysia's threat to boycott the Rio affair was unfortunately not followed up in Paris.

The final statement of the congress, "Declaration of Paris," was addressed to the world officials who will meet in Rio, and it partially reflects growing alarm in Third World countries over what many see as a colonialist resource grab in green disguise. After the Montreal Protocol banning chlorofluorocarbons, and the London Treaty of June 1990 with its even more radical measures, the Third World is leery of a "world forests instrument," a kind of "green police" which had been touted before the Congress. So the declaration was limited to "defining the principles, not legally binding, but authoritative, of management, conservation, and enhancement of all the world's forests."

By saying that "the true challenge consists in reconciling the economic use of natural resources and protection of the environment by an integrated and sustained development process," the statement may throw a spanner in the wheels of the plans for Rio, where the trend is to give conservation absolute priority over development. The three conventions which were slated to be signed or at least finalized in Rio (forests, bio-diversity, and climatic change) are stalled due to the North-South standoff.

### The problem is energy from biomass

The congress opened with the painful announcement that 17 million hectares of forests vanish each year; during the ten days of the congress 500,000 hectares of forests would be destroyed. As noted by Edouard Saouma, director general of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), this is not occurring in the developed countries of the North. In France, for example, the wooded surface has doubled in the past two centuries.

The actual tragedy is occurring in the tropical countries, in the rain forests. The debate centers on the causes of this accelerating deforestation. Forestry experts and the countries of the South are blaming poverty, resource deficiencies, fragile soils, inadequate technological and financial means devot-

ed to forest management, debt, and—in a potentially fatal concession to their enemies—population growth. The malthusian lobbies (mainly based in the North) and their agents among diplomats and ecologists point the finger at "overpopulation" as the sole culprit of deforestation.

The fact is, half of the world's woodcutting is done to supply fuel in poor countries, where people burn biomass to survive. This shows the extent to which the solution to deforestation must be found outside forest exploitation, by developing better sources of energy production in the Third World, especially in Africa and India. Even today, gas can compete very well with wood to use in home stoves for heating or cooking in urban settings, as shown in a French cooperative effort in Mali. All it would take is to subsidize the development of a network of gas distribution in the villages.

As FAO director Saouma said in his keynote speech, "If the world community wants to really preserve the patrimony of forests, it must allow the investment of funds at the level of its ambitions, on the necessary scale and over the necessary time period."

### Even the FAO must go, say greens

But even the FAO, a creature of the one-worldist oligarchy, may be getting in the way of the ecological-fascist new world order. At the fringe of the forestry congress, green fanatics led by Susan George, Edward Goldsmith (Ecoropa, editor in chief of *The Ecologist*), and Marcus Colchester, representing the European branch of the World Rain Forest Movement, demanded the shutdown of FAO and called upon members to cease contributing to it. They said they were convinced that the "policies currently promoted by the FAO are a major cause of famine in the world, of ecological destruction, and of social alienation."

Goldsmith blasted mechanization, the use of inputs like fertilizer, and modern intensive farming, as the alleged source of all evils suffered by Third World peasants. He even demanded a halt to all development policy, to keep what remains of the forests intact "while there is still time." He said that we must "go back 10,000 years" to an autarkic stage of production organized by bio-regions and ethnic groups.

Jacques Delors, chairman of the European Community, griped that a project to help preserve the Amazon rain forest, adopted at the last Group of 7 meeting in London, has still not gotten EC funding. This \$250 million program, "earmarked for finding a realistic alternative to the destruction of the primeval forest," provides for training technicians in modern farming and forestry techniques, and pilot projects in agriculture and the planting and harvesting of woodlands. Delors said he was "shocked that in a domain so vital for everyone, some people are so behind in keeping their commitments." Since the project was proposed in the context of a supranational grab by G-7 bankers for the Amazon, against Brazilian sovereignty, maybe this penury will turn out to be a boon.