



**NOTE OF REPUDIATION FROM BRAZILIAN SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES TO
THE DISMANTLING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES IN BRAZIL**

The **Brazilian Society for the Advancement of Science (SBPC), Brazilian Association of Limnology (ABLimno), Brazilian Association of Ecological Science and Conservation (ABECO), Brazilian Society of Ornithology (SBO), Brazilian Society of Genetic Resources (SBRG), Brazilian Society of Botany (SBB), Brazilian Association for Plant Tissue Culture (ABCTP), Brazilian Society of Ecotoxicology (Ecotox), Brazilian Society for Immunology (SBI), Brazilian Society for the History of Science (SBHC), Brazilian Association of Mutagenesis and Environmental Genomics (IMutaGen), National Association for Graduation and Research in Geography (ANPEGE), Brazilian Astronomical Society (SAB), Brazilian Society of Ichthyology (SBI), Brazilian Society of Genetics (SBG), Brazilian Society of Biophysics (SBBf), Brazilian Institute of Underground Studies, Brazilian Society of Genetics (SBG), Brazilian Society of Automatics (SBA), Brazilian Society of Electromagnetism (SBMAG), Brazilian Society of Archaeology (SAB), Brazilian Society of Ecological Economics (ECOECO), National History Association (ANPUH), Brazilian Telecommunications Society (SBrT), and Brazilian Mathematical Society (SBM), Brazilian Society of Classical Studies (SBEC), Brazilian Virology society (SBV), Brazilian Society of Medicinal Plants (SBPM), Brazilian society of Geology (SBG), Brazilian Chemical Society (SBQ), Brazilian Political Science Association (ABCP), National Association of Graduate Studies and Research in Letters and Linguistics (ANPOLL), Brazilian Association of Oceanography (AOCEANO), Brazilian Society of Carcinology (SBC), Brazilian**



Society of Entomology (SBE), Brazilian Society of Ethology (SBEt), Brazilian Society of Malacology (SBMa), Brazilian Society of Mastozoology (SBMz), Brazilian Society of Primatology (SBPR), Brazilian Society of Herpetology (SBHerpeto), Brazilian Society for the Study of Elasmobranchs (SBEEL), Brazilian Society for the Study of Chiropterans (SBEQ), Entomological Society of Brazil (SEB), Brazilian Association of Social Studies in Science and Technology (ESOCITE) express their repudiation against the weakening and dismantling of environmental conservation policies in Brazil since the beginning of 2019, increasing human pressure on Brazilian ecosystems and on Biodiversity.

As a consequence, medium and long-term effects on habitat and species loss are expected, with major damage to Brazilian biodiversity, and therefore, to ecosystem functioning. This is one of the consequences of the decrease in legal inspection devices, the dismantling of environmental inspection and control agencies, and the reduction of popular participation mechanisms in agencies such as CONAMA (1).

The recent announcement by the current Environment Minister Ricardo Salles, which had worldwide repercussions, is a major indicator of the absence of environmental policies focused on the conservation and sustainability of the country's natural resources, as well as a serious attack against the Ministry that he should represent. Declaring that "the government should take advantage of the moment when society focusses on combating the COVID-19 to simplify rules and standards", the minister sets a serious precedent for the devastation of the Brazilian environmental conservation system, showing actions against national interests in the management of natural resources, which are part of his own portfolio. These declarations should be seriously

questioned and be subjected to a rigorous assessment process, with appropriate legal measures applied.

The lack of commitment to environmental conservation of the current government exposes the failure to comply with the principles set out in Article 225 of the Brazilian Constitution, which clearly describes the role of the Union and the community in environmental defence and preservation.

The idea of dismantling dates back to the time of elections, when the then candidate considered the extinction of the Environmental portfolio as a Ministry. However, the existence of this Ministry was not a guarantee to maintain environmental conservation policies, climate agreements and combat deforestation, since the Brazilian Forest Service was transferred to the Agriculture Ministry and the National Water Agency (ANA) to the Ministry of Regional Development.

-Deforestation in the Amazon had the highest percentage increase in the last 10 years since 2019, with a peak in last April in the State of Pará, according to data provided by the Deforestation Alert System (SAD) (2). Besides the irreparable biodiversity loss, deforestation progress has serious consequences on a global scale, such as a higher incidence of droughts and climate extremes, and increased CO₂ release (1,3,4).

-In the last year, the steep decrease in the number of fines imposed by IBAMA throughout the country (5) but especially in the North, and the frequent negative statements by Minister Ricardo Salles and the government itself regarding the regulatory framework that defines the critical role of control agencies, exposed the country's environmental heritage to an unprecedented increase in deforestation and other crimes of a predatory nature.

-Exoneration of specialists who were holding key positions in the inspection and maintenance of environmental conservation strategies and policies, such as ICMBio (6). Created by law 11,516 of August 28, 2007, the ICMBio's mission is to implement measures that comply with the provisions of the SNUC (National System of Conservation Units), including the inspection of Conservation Units (UCs) introduced by the law. Another measure of the current government was the review of the UCs, claiming illegalities in their creation, with the consequent possibility to relax the levels of environmental protection that were established by specialized technicians through careful environmental analyses and management plans. These measures along with others of the same nature expose the UCs to high vulnerability and risks, as they include highly relevant areas for conservation, rare and endemic species as well as unique habitats and critically endangered species.

-Since the beginning of the current government, approximately 551 pesticides have been released, of which 30 to 35% are considered potentially carcinogenic by international regulatory agencies and prohibited by the European Union. Besides the obvious risks to human health, the increase in the release of pesticides with high toxicity represents a setback in the national environmental policies with consequent and serious risks to human health and natural ecosystems (7) due to increasing concentrations and accumulation of harmful substances in soil and water bodies.

-The gradual weakening of the Risk Management and Response to Natural Disasters system and the lack of investments in this sector over the years, increase the vulnerability of ecosystems, biodiversity and human population to factors that can be avoided through governmental commitment to preventive monitoring, containment of several accidents involving, for example, the spill of toxic substances and the rupture of dams. Constant failures in the coordination and management of environmental crises, as

well as steep investment reductions, were evidenced during the episode of the oil spill that contaminated the Brazilian coast in 2019. In this case, even with the occurrence of high contamination levels in the continental platform and associated ecosystems, the Contingency Plan for Oil Pollution Incidents was not activated, although it was provided for by law (Decree No. 8,127 of October 22, 2013).

-The reduction of popular participation and of sectors of the civil society in agencies such as the National Environment Council (Conama). The participation of civil society is a milestone in the environmental monitoring role, in terms of the conservation, use, and management of natural resources. Therefore, the reduction of the society participation in these processes is reflected in the weakening of an important democratic framework in the decision-making process.

-In addition to the issues of national scope mentioned above, the Brazil's non-adherence and withdraw from the discussions associated with international policies to combat climate change and Global Warming is a setback. The drastic budget cuts and the erratic and denial speeches about the relevance of the measures to be taken in this direction are indicators of the present government's lack of commitment to international policies, including the decrease in greenhouse gas emissions, at a time when the increase in these gases released by the deforestation crisis and fires in the Amazon received major international repercussions.

In the light of this scenario, the present Brazilian Scientific Associations and Societies in the area of Biodiversity express their repudiation and request measures by the responsible agencies to prevent and inhibit the current environmental policy of dismantling. Environmental heritage is a key component for the development and maintenance of the life quality of current and future generations and, therefore, must be safeguarded from predatory measures. Brazil's future depends on its nature!



Brazilian Society for the Advancement of Science

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