

METROPOLITAN COMMITTEE OF THE MOVEMENT XINGU ALIVE FOREVER
[XINGU VIVO PARA SEMPRE]

Belém, August 11, 2010

To
Secretary of Development, Science and Technology of the State of Pará

Mr. Secretary,

For over 20 years the indigenous communities, fishermen, farmers, extractivists, urban populations, quilombolas, riverine peoples and other social and economic groups have been fighting against the construction of the Belo Monte Hydroelectric Plant (UHE), on the Xingu River. Among the principal problems raised by residents of the region, renowned researchers, and diverse social organizations and movements, are: no energy generated by Belo Monte, if constructed, will be for Amazonian communities that still today have no electricity, nor will it reduce the rates for those who already have it; the promised energy of 11,000 MW, will only be supplied during three months of the year; the average power generated will not exceed 4,500 MW, which makes the project economically inviable, inevitably requiring the construction of new dams on the river above it, and more than 20,000 people will be compulsorily relocated, but to date there is no indication where those people will go; the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of Belo Monte presents a reservoir of 516² kilometers, but the bidding announcement states 668Km², 30% larger than considered in the study; the government says it will spend about R\$20 billion on the project, however the engineering companies state that construction costs will be at least R\$30 billion, again placing in doubt the cost-benefit effectiveness of the project; the government estimates that 100,000 people will migrate to the region, but the EIA says that at the peak of the construction there will only be generated approximately 40,000 jobs, both direct and indirect thereby elevating the local unemployment rate; the government confirms that 03 indigenous lands and areas will be affected, however it refused to conduct the indigenous hearings required by the Constitution; the construction of the dam will cause an area of 100 km of the Xingu River having its flow reduced to 30% of normal, affecting navigation and the life of the diverse communities that depend on the river. Even with all these questions, the state and federal governments prefer to ignore, disqualify or simply treat with disdain those who have submitted these issues for debate, not contributing in any way as regards the minimum security that Amazonian and Brazilian society, should have in relation to this project.

As secretary linked to the issue, you are aware that the development model implemented in the region has historically been guided in large vegetal, mineral, and water exploitation projects. This can be verified by the Hydroelectric Plants Tucuruí, state of Pará; Curuá-Una, Pará, Balbina in Amazonia, Samuel in Rondônia, in gold exploitation projects in Serra Pelada (Curionópolis); exploitation of iron in

Parauapebas; exploitation bauxite in Juruti; nickel exploitation in Ourilândia do Norte; exploitation of bauxite in Oriximiná; Copper exploitation in the Canaã dos Carajas; exploitation of bauxite in Paragominas, to cite only a few. The result of centuries of authoritarianism and exploitation of natural resources in the Amazon has demonstrated the unsustainability of the current model, and especially in its matrix for electric power generation, and the urgency that it be replaced by other proposals, forms of recourse that are guided by generating truly clean and renewable energy such as solar energy, wind power and energy from biomass residues, without extensive monocultures being developed for this, among other possibilities. But simply looking at the existing electrical system, the renewal of transmission lines, replacement of dilapidated equipment and re-powering of others, would restore an energy loss equivalent to twice what Belo Monte would generate on average, as indicated by several studies.

At this exact moment, indigenous groups and rural workers, and various social movements and organizations are meeting in Altamira, in the Indigenous and Popular Free Land Camp, which occurs between 09 and August 12, denouncing the many social and environmental, economic, political and cultural that construction of the Belo Monte hydroelectric would bring. But once again, as had occurred when the Solicitor-General of the Union (AGU) sued members of federal and state prosecutors who have positioned themselves against the licensing and construction process of Belo Monte hydroelectric, the present government shows its authoritarian face. At the same the time the Free Land Camp is taking place, the 23rd Forest Infantry Brigade decided to hold operations in the Xingu region, with 900 soldiers of the Brazilian army. The troops of the brigade are simulating occupations in urban areas, and training in preparation for defense against an "external enemy", this, of course, with the clear intention of intimidating activists who are attending the meeting in Altamira. Practices such as these could be expected in totalitarian and dictatorial regimes, but never in a truly democratic state and law.

Independent of any economic, political and now even military pressure, we affirm that we will continue struggling against the destruction of natural resources in the Amazon, advocating forms of development that conserve the natural wealth of the region without destroying the local fauna and flora or the expulsion of men and women who have inhabited the forest for centuries, strengthening the Amazonian biome and thereby the socio-environmental development of originary and traditional populations, in addition to the strengthening of family farmers who migrated to this region, but also benefiting residents of urban zones, and all other inhabitants of an space crucial to the survival of the planet Earth itself.

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