

# Floram under Discussion

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# Floram under Discussion<sup>\*</sup>

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Developed at IEA to be examined by all interested parties and offered to the Brazilian society, Floram should not be construed as an alternative to Brazil's forestry policy but rather as a possible addition to it. In fact, it was never thought of or presented as such from the outset. Floram may be a unique opportunity for a new look at the status of Brazilian forests, since it brings to the fore a set of concrete actions and variables to stir our forestry concerns away from the analytical and contemplative phase in which it has been for the past several years.

The key merit of Floram is its foundation of ecological, social and economic guidelines. Consistent and simultaneous results are essential and must be achieved in all three fields at each development step. To do so, there must be agreement on the possibility of achieving compatibility between environmental preservation, native forests, and restoration of ecological/scenic sites, on the one hand, and intensive forest breeding aimed at phytomass production for energy generation and industrial timber on the other.

As a result of the "tax incentive syndrome" (where only its perverse implications were stressed), citizens are somewhat surprised at a project proposing to replant 20 million hectares (2.3% of the Brazilian territory) over a 20-30-year period. A project of such magnitude brings to mind vast extensions of monocrop farming, rural exodus, encroachment of farmland, land ownership concentration, wildlife destruction, irreversible damage to biodiversity, soil sterilization, deserts, ... chaos!

There is certainly a need to separate myth from reality; on the former, facts must be examined in light of current knowledge; on the latter, no effort can be spared to eliminate or minimize the possibility of damage or mishaps. Brazilian society has evolved and learned how to exert pressure and control through political leaders and environmental groups.

Floram's coordinating work group proposes to discuss and clarify all such issues, and would welcome suggestions on proper preventive and corrective measures.

On the other hand, the project should really become a massive reforestation drive. Its chief purpose is neither to restore the financial "miracle" era nor to merely supply the

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<sup>\*</sup> This text has been extracted from the special issue of *Estudos Avançados* on Floram Project, published in English in 1995. The original version, in Portuguese, was published in no. 9, May-Aug. 1990.

basic needs of industry. Floram is more ambitious than that: "it intends to be a Brazilian initiative designed to foster an international drive to trap 115 billion tons of carbon now in suspension in the atmosphere," as stated in the documents published by the Institute for Advanced Studies. From this standpoint, its message has already gone beyond our borders.

Brazilian forestry science and technology are sufficiently equipped to confront this challenge with the data now available from universities, institutes, and private research centers. Focusing its efforts in a concerted and constructive manner depends only on political decisions hopefully free from past biases and prejudices.

Brazil is currently recognized internationally for its technology developed for fast-growing forests. In addition, the country is building up expertise in tropical forest management, forest farming, and reclamation of degraded sites and gallery forests.

The project is entering a crucial stage in which its proposals are being discussed by different segments of the scientific, political, and economic communities. Ample debate will surely help engage the people's support, while the expectation is that government agencies and private initiative alike will approach it from the ecological, social, and economic perspectives outlined above. The mission of the Institute for Advanced Studies and Floram's coordinating group will then be accomplished.