

**Mangroves and Community Life**  
**The socio-environmental impacts of shrimp farming**  
21 - 24 August 2006  
Fortaleza-Ceará-Brazil

**LETTER OF FORTALEZA FROM THE PEOPLES OF THE SEA**

The fifteen Brazilian states represented by 166 participants at the seminar “Mangroves and Community Life: the socio-environmental impacts of shrimp farming,” together in Fortaleza, Ceara, from 21-24 August 2006, representing community grassroots organizations; riverine communities; quilombolas (communities descendent from escaped slaves); indigenous peoples; fishermen and fisherwomen; the national movement of fishers (MONAPE); social pastoral groups; fishing schools; local, state, national and international researchers and non-governmental organizations; declare:

1. **We affirm** that mangrove destruction in Brazil is occurring at an accelerating rate, and in a manner predominated by shrimp farming, the cultivation of shrimp in captivity, with unprecedented privatization of public waters and public and indigenous lands; expulsion of local populations; felling of mangroves; salinization of fresh water; pollution of rivers, tidal channels and estuaries; increasing reductions in fisheries (shellfish, crustaceans and fish); and impoverishment of the Peoples of the Waters. This destruction of mangroves and of other costal ecosystems continues advancing, and added to this is the systematic violation of human and environmental rights of the Peoples of the Sea, of the Mangroves, and of the Rivers;
2. **The activity of farming shrimp**, despite its historic trajectory of social and environmental destruction, continues to expand with impunity in our country, above all in the Northeast region;
3. **We denounce** that shrimp farming has manifested violence directed at local communities, leaders, and entities utilizing intimidation, compulsion and physical violence with the register of various murders (cases occurring in the states of Rio Grande do Norte, Bahia and Piaui), which configures itself as a violator of human rights and environmental rights.
4. **We call** to the state ombudsman to take action in order to avoid the recurring police (civil and military) action in the states, as they have assumed the role of private security on shrimp farms, including the use of state uniforms, police cars and ammunition and, without a doubt, acting with violence against local populations;
5. **We denounce** that our state laws are being revised in order to permit the expansion of shrimp farmers’ destructive activities in areas characterized by coastal ecosystems. We refuse any modification whatsoever in legal systems with the objective of diminishing the protection and permit the appropriation of coastal marine areas and their areas of influence.
6. **Public financial institutions** (Bank of the Northeast, Bank of Brazil, National Bank of Economic and Social Development) have financed the activity of shrimp farming, developed in an unsustainable manner, thereby exercising a decisive role in the expansion of shrimp cultivation and in the portrait of degradation and of poverty growing in the Coastal Zone and riverine area;
7. **We denounce** that an export-focused development model is emphasized in our country, oriented by agro-business and hydro-business and directed towards the production of goods for export (as in the case of shrimp farming) at the cost of our rich ecosystems and increasingly poor populations. The Sao Francisco River transposition project responds to the demands of the Brazilian business sector, including that of shrimp farming, and we find unacceptable its realization by the Brazilian state. We call for sustainable policies that satisfy the necessities of local populations and guarantee rights and access to natural resources (fisheries, water, land....);
8. **We call** upon the Regional Delegacies of Labor for effective action in order to halt the exploitation of workers on shrimp farms (irregular work contracts or absence of formal employment, lack of individual protection equipment, forced overtime, child labor, slave labor) and problems related to worker health (skin diseases, intoxication by sodium metabisulphite);
9. **We denounce** that state governments, especially, sustain and stimulate the expansion of shrimp farming in an unsustainable manner through the development of laws that open the doors for

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degradation of mangroves and coastal ecosystems. Incentives are provided for large impact activities (shrimp farming, tourism, industrial fisheries) that have no relation at all to the necessities of coastal and riverine populations, their quality of life and of health and the conservation of coastal and marine ecosystems;

10. **We denounce** that traditional activities are being substituted for new economic activities chosen by governments (state and federal) as alternatives to the current economic crisis. These alternatives continue concentrating wealth in the hands of the few while diminishing the quality of life of the great majority of the local population. We call for the elaboration of public policies that strengthen traditional productive activities of our Coastal Zone. These policies should guarantee sovereignty and the rights related to citizenship and life;
11. **We demand** preventative and corrective action from state and federal governments to determine that the recuperation of abandoned shrimp farms should occur by the actual causers of degradation and that there be a reversion of occupation and/or title of these areas in order for them to be integrated into the public patrimony;
12. **We observe** that some of the research and management activities of our ecosystems continue to be oriented to satisfy necessities contrary to those of our communities, thereby establishing the basis for the degradation of the ways of life and of culture of our peoples, through the expansion of destructive and unsustainable activities;
13. **We reaffirm** our constant and determined intension to resist the processes of privatization and destruction of the natural resources of the marine coastal zone in our states;
14. **We express** our solidarity and support to the People of the Sea of the South of the State of Bahia and request the immediate creation of the Extractivist Reserve Cassuruba by the federal government;
15. **We demand of the Justice Ministry and of the Special Secretary of Human Rights** the protection of residents in the communities of Cumbe, Porto do Céu, Cabreiro, Tabuleiro and Volta in Aracati, Ceara; São José e Buriti in Itapipoca, Ceara; Camondongo and Passagem Rasa in Itarema, Ceara; Salinas da Margarida, Canavieiras and Praia do Guaibim in Valença (Bahia); Logradouro in Porto do Mangue (Rio Grande do Norte); and Porto do Carão in Pendências (Rio Grande do Norte).

**Concluding:**

1. **We stand against the expansion of shrimp farming in Brazil at the same time that we demand the halt to the concession of new permits and financing of the activity of shrimp cultivation, as well as the embargo of installed farms and recuperation of degraded areas;**
2. **We demand a clear position from the Special Secretary for Aquiculture and Fisheries - SEAP, the Ministry of Environment - MMA, the Brazilian Environment Institute - IBAMA, National Foundation for Indigenous Affairs - FUNAI, Council for the Defense of Human Rights - CDDPH, Secretary of Federal Patrimony and Regional Manager of Federal Patrimony, financial Institutions, and state Governments concerning the scenario presented in this letter and a platform of action from these institutions in the face of the problem;**
3. **We call for the urgent establishment of public policies which guarantee that those responsible for this destruction (Institutions of credit; federal, state and municipal governments; industries; speculators, and shrimp farmers) recuperate the degraded ecosystems in the Brazilian coastal zone.**

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Signatories to the letter:

1. Povo Indígena Tremembé/CE
2. Associação de Moradores de Caetanos de Cima (Amontada/CE)
3. Associação de Moradores de Porto do Céu (Aracati/CE)
4. Associação de Catadores e Marisqueiras do Sítio Cumbe (Aracati/CE)
5. Associação de Moradores de Capim-Açu (Paraipaba/CE)
6. Associação de Pescadores e Marisqueiras de Curral Velho (Acaráú/CE)
7. Associação de Moradores de Tabuleiro de Cabresto/CE
8. Fórum dos Pescadores/as do Litoral Cearense/ FPPLC
9. Associação de Moradores da Prainha do Canto Verde (Beberibe/CE)
10. Associação de Pescadores da Vila da Volta (Aracati/CE)
11. Associação de Moradores de Aranaú (Acaráú/CE)
12. Fórum em Defesa da Zona Costeira Cearense/ FDZZC
13. Conselho Pastoral dos Pescadores-CPP/CE
14. Instituto Terramar/CE
15. JANUS/CE
16. Conselho Pastoral dos Pescadores-CPP/PA
17. MOPEPA/PA
18. ASPAJUB/PA
19. Quilombola/PA
20. COPEBI/MA
21. CAPPAM/MA
22. CEDRAL/MA
23. TAPECURU/MA
24. Sindicato dos Pescadores/MA
25. Reserva Extrativista de Cururupu/MA
26. Conselho Pastoral dos Pescadores-CPP/PE
27. Colônia Z-10/PE
28. Colônia Z-6/PE
29. Colônia Z-7/PE
30. Colônia Z-8/PE
31. Ilha de Deus/PE
32. AMUPESCA/PE
33. Colônia Z-5/PE
34. Colônia Z-17/PE
35. Colônia Z-11/PE
36. Tamandaré/PE
37. Porto do Mangue/RN
38. CJP/CPP/RN
39. PEDEMA/RN
40. Porto Carão/RN
41. Colônia Z-12/AL
42. Colônia Z-4/AL
43. FEPEAL/AL
44. Colônia Z-19/AL
45. Colônia Z-1/AL
46. Colônia Z-27/AL
47. Articulação das Mulheres/PB
48. Associação de Marisqueiras/PB
49. Colônia Z-2/PB
50. Associação de Marisqueiras de Acaú/PB
51. APAC/PB
52. Conselho Pastoral dos Pescadores-CPP São Francisco/SE
52. Colônia de Pescadores/SE
53. Reizinha/SE
54. Brejo Grande/SE
55. SINDIPESCA/PI

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56. Conselho Pastoral dos Pescadores-CPP Nacional/BA
57. Conselho Pastoral dos Pescadores-CPP/BA
58. CPP Nordeste/PE
59. Colônia Z-4 de Cabo Frio/RJ
60. APÉLT/ Colônia Z-10/RJ
61. CPP/SC
62. MPPA/RS
63. União dos Catadores de Caranguejo de Vitória/ES
64. Escola de Pesca/BA
65. Salinas da Margarida/BA
66. Resex de Canavieiras/BA
67. Maragogipe/BA
68. Ilha de Maré/BA
69. Acupe/BA
70. Movimento Cultural Arte Manha - Caravelas/BA
71. Pesqueira/BA
72. Conselho Pastoral dos Pescadores-CPP Juazeiro/BA
73. Sobradinho/BA
74. Valença/BA
75. Mangrove Action Project-MAP
76. Coalizão SOS Abrolhos
77. Associação Missão Tremembé
78. Conselho Pastoral da Terra-CPT