

Executives and investors in the Prototype Carbon Fund (PCF)  
Attn. Mr. Kenneth Newcombe  
Banco Mundial/The World Bank  
1818 H Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20433  
USA

23 May 2003

Dear PCF investors and executives,

This letter addresses some of the statements made in the letter you received from Plantar S/A on 11 April 2003, in which the corporation makes reference to a letter of Brazilian organizations and movements of 26 March 2003 that urged you not to approve, nor invest in the Plantar “*carbon sinks*” project that has been presented to the PCF.

First, it is important to make clear that the “*letter from FASE-ES*”, being the way Plantar refers to the letter of March 26th, does not exist. That letter, signed by 53 organizations/citizens, is a joint statement of all who endorsed the letter, and the same applies for the present letter. In this particular letter, all signatories have provided their emails and we encourage you to contact any of us to verify our genuine contribution and endorsement of the call urging you to refrain from buying Plantar sinks credits.

The former letter and the present civil society letter is signed by the Rural Workers Union of São Mateus/ES (Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais de São Mateus/ES). This trade union represents the rural workers and peasants of that region of Espírito Santo that also suffers, like the Curvelo region, from the impacts of large-scale eucalyptus plantations. In its letter on April 11th, Plantar suggests that this trade union is the same union as the Rural Trade Union of São Mateus (Sindicato Rural de São Mateus/ES), which represents the rural employers. However, it is well known in Brazil that the STRs represent different interests, sometimes even antagonistic compared with the rural employers trade unions. It is lamentable that Plantar, while making its suggestion, attempts to discredit all the signatories of the March 26th letter, that together represent thousands of people, inside and outside the State of Minas Gerais.

Plantar in its letter also suggests that they have the support of “*real and closer stakeholders*”. It is important to know that:

- Recently, Plantar has been seeking input from the local communities, a novelty, with the only aim of collecting signatures for documents in support of the ‘*carbon sink*’ project, failing however to explain the scope and context of the project. It has further been brought to our attention that the company suggested that without support for this project, Plantar would not be able to create jobs any more in the municipality. Plantar even organized a party on April 4th for local communities in the so-called “Núcleo”, a rural educational centre, in the middle of the Plantar plantations in the Curvelo regio. At the party, community members were encouraged to sign a motion in support of the company;

- Leaders of the communities that have experienced the impacts of the plantations declared that many of these “*stakeholders*” live in the urban region of Curvelo and therefore do not have knowledge of the suffering of the communities that is caused by the plantations of Plantar and other companies;
- The company distributed the local newspaper “*Folha de Curvelo*”, number 234 of April 16, 2003, among all their workers and sent some articles of it, translated to English, to the PCF. Reacting to the letter of 26 March, the newspaper makes various unfounded and untrue statements: Title – “*NGO’s from Espirito Santo and Uruguai work for increase in unemployment in Curvelo*” – Subtitle: “*protected by international interests, non-governmental organizations created a wrong report against Plantar S/A and try to stop financial resources that would be invested in the municipality*”.

Other allegations of the April 11th letter from Plantar that we would like to respond to include:

- FSC certifier SCS did not enter into dialogue with local communities during their field work in the period 1998-2001 while doing and evaluating the FSC-certification of Plantar. Only in the more recent evaluation process in October 2002, community leaders affirm that they have been consulted and that they raised various concerns. The report on this last evaluation process has not been published yet. For this reason, it is easy for Plantar to affirm that “*so far, non-approval comments have never been registered*”;
- In the March 26<sup>th</sup> letter the expulsion of Tupinikim and Guarani Indians was mentioned as a result of the expansion of the entire sector; it was not a specific reference to the Plantar company. Even so, it is a fact that the local population, inclusively composed of descendants of indigenous peoples, with an own culture and ways of living less predatory than the monocultures, were and still are being threatened by the expansion of the Plantar plantations.. According to information from local communities, a part of the rural population really sold their lands; but various people resisted after being completely isolated, suffering from contamination of their water with pesticides and not having sufficient water. They did not have any other option besides selling their lands. This happened, for instance, in the region of Paiol;
- The statement used in the March 26th letter regarding the size of Plantar plantations was published by SCS in its Public Summary in March 2001 on the FSC-certification of Plantar: “*the company possesses 16 rural properties with a total area of 280.000 hectares*”<sup>1</sup>. So who should we believe: Plantar or SCS?;
- Regarding the issue of ‘carbon sequestration’ the Plantar response to the letter of March 26th highlights the controversy surrounding the nature of the proposed CDM project. While Plantar and the PCF claim that the project is mainly a fuel substitution project, close examination of the project design document (the validation report issued by Det Norske Veritas (DNV) – the baseline study) suggest that the project truly is a carbon sequestration project. The project design documents indicate that the financial foundation of the Plantar project is the credits that will be claimed for carbon stored in the new plantations. Thus, the credits generated by the carbon sequestration component of the project appear to be crucial to ensuring financial viability for the remainder of the

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<sup>1</sup> SCS – Sumário Público 01 – Plantar S.A. Curvelo – Unise MG-02. Oakland (EUA), março de 2001: p.2

project, and consequently, without the carbon sequestration component there would be no CDM project. According to the line of argument in the project documents, without such additional carbon credit funding, plantation establishment would not be economically viable. It is from these facts, stated both in the Baseline study (page 2) and the DNV validation report (page 4) that the undersigned view the Plantar project as a carbon sink project. As Plantar states, if they do not get credits to subsidise plantation establishment, they will not replant, and will therefore not be able to supply enough charcoal for their pig iron production facilities, from which they claim the rest of the credits. Ultimately, then, the entire project is based on the sale of credits, which will result in no long-term benefit to the climate;

- We fully agree with Plantar that the ‘LULUCF issue’ is indeed very complex, and may we add, controversial. We consider allegations of “*incomprehensible criticism*” without any further indication of what precise statements are considered incomprehensible by the company an indignant response to concerns about carbon sinks that are shared widely within and beyond the environmental and social justice community. We will gladly provide you with any additional information regarding the carbon sequestration component of the Plantar project if you need further clarification on the concerns raised about the carbon sequestration component of the Plantar project ;
- Instead of stressing that we should recognize the “ *environmental benefits related to the* (read: ‘carbon sink’) *Project*”, we believe that in the first place Plantar should recognize the negative environmental impacts of their large-scale plantations activities that caused the suffering of local communities. These impacts are so destructive that they impressed the team of the World Rainforest Movement while visiting the area. This team made an evaluation study of the FSC-certification of the company in October 2002, and analysed locally the socio-environmental situation<sup>2</sup>;
- With sorrow, we read the claim of Plantar that the Brazilian forestry law would be one of the strictest in the world. The facts show that 70% of the “*cerrado*” and 92.8% of the “*mata atlântica*” have been deforested and the destruction of these two ecosystems continues. We need a Brazilian legislation that guarantees more protection, as well as reinforcement and control.<sup>3</sup> Another concern is the lack of enforcement of legislation: an independent and comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment on Plantar’s activities has never been made, although this is a requirement of Brazilian law (resolution CONAMA – national council for environment - 001/1986). Drawing on examples from local communities violated by Plantar in the Brazilian Forest Code, for example, cases of the non-existence or insufficiency of Permanent Preservation Areas around and along water resources within the Plantar lands. Unfortunately, the April 4, 2003 letter you received from the Secretary of Environment of the State of Minas Gerais, does not address these important issues;
- According to local communities from different regions in Minas Gerais and respected organisations like the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT), eucalyptus planting companies

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<sup>2</sup> see report WRM on the FSC-certification of Plantar and V&M Florestal;  
<http://www.wrm.org.uy/countries/Brazil/fsc.html>

<sup>3</sup> The absence of control by the authorities of the Minas Gerais State became clear on 28 March 2003 when toxic effluent from the “Indústria Cataguazes de Papel” pulp and paper company, stocked in a reservoir for over 15 years without any treatment (!), broke through a dam and polluted an immense area, killing biological life in the Pombal river and making water consumption impossible for about 1 million people. This ecological disaster is being considered one of the worst of Brazilian history.

occupied huge extensions of lands in the 60s and 70s, so-called “*devolutas*” lands – lands without registered land title – supported by fiscal incentives granted by the military dictatorship. To occupy these lands in a more “legal” way, many companies signed “renting” contracts with the state government which at least is not illegal but, at the same time, does not guarantee the land title. Only a comprehensive, profound and independent study, realized together with local communities, can definitely prove how many lands that are occupied today with eucalyptus, are actually “*devolutas*” lands. Therefore the lands should be given back to the rural people, and being indicated for the purpose of land reform and used for food production and reforestation of the “*cerrado*”, priorities for the Brazilian federal government;

- Plantar is also responsible for the destruction process of the “*cerrado*”, according to local communities. For instance, Plantar bought lands, covered with “*cerrado*”, in the Campo Alegre and Paiol communities where after having burnt the *cerrado*, eucalyptus was planted by the company. Recent clearing happened inside a Plantar area, at the river spring of the Pindaíba in december 2002. Today, native tree trunks can still be seen on this location;
- Indeed, local people confirm that they do not use the “*cerrado*” areas of Plantar for fruit collection, because these areas are very small, and do not offer many options for collecting. But local communities have suffered from the restrictions of Plantar related to their tradition of letting their cows graze freely on the lands in the neighbourhood, including the Plantar lands. Plantar reacted to this by either putting the cattle within a closed fence or taking it away to another area, without informing the owner, provoking cases of local people who lost cattle;
- Local people in the Plantar region reacted with indignation to the statements in the 11 of April letter from Plantar. They cited cases of eucalyptus planted at river springs, and that the little water that is still there is unreliable because of pesticide application killing animal life in the streams. They also declared that the situation became so critical that the communities of *Cobú* and *Paiol de Cima* were forced to make an artesian well to guarantee water for their communities. The communities of Canabrava and Boa Morte are now forced to do the same;
- According to the experience of local people, cattle ranching does not cause the same negative impacts on water resources as eucalyptus planting. They state that while eucalyptus only serves for charcoal making, cattle-raising means more importantly food production, meat and milk, and also produces leather, manure and other benefits, important for peasants subsistence production;
- On the detour created for the nursery operations on the road to *Canabrava* and *Paiol*, it highlights first of all how Plantar does not recognize its grave mistake in creating the detour without consulting the local communities that always depended on this road long before Plantar arrived in the region. Once again, community leaders declared that this project did not bring benefits for their communities, different from what Plantar affirms. The school buses – used by the communities – never had problems with passing by the old road. Besides, the same road improved only within the limits of the Plantar plantations and not within the community areas. The fact that Plantar paid the expenses of the road seems clear to us that the project is to their own benefit. Finally, the detour basically covered the Boa Morte stream, a rehabilitation project for the protected vegetation in the stream, legally necessary, is now being paralysed. The lack of concrete

pipes provoked the damming of the stream and diminished water flow and quality, harming people living downstream;

- Although Plantar claims that no irregularities were found regarding their operations by the Parliamentary Investigation Commission (CPI), related to the charcoal manufacturing conditions, the Regional Working Office (DRT) found 194 workers without any registration in the Plantar plantations in the Curvelo region during a field visit between the 11th and 23rd of March 2002 (Jornal Estado de Minas, 05/04/2002: page 13), and therefore fined the company. Plantar indeed signed an agreement with the DRT and Federal Attorney General for Workers Conditions, committing itself to manufacture charcoal with its own workforce, instead of dealing with contractors. But it is important to evaluate if this agreement is really improving working conditions of this category of workers, extremely weakened by a disastrous process of contracting out to other companies. These workers normally receive a minimum salary and a small benefit for extra hours worked, earning in general, a maximum of US \$100/month. As unemployment is a big problem, the workers are scared of denouncing any problem that occurs, including the concern of re-contracting workers of Plantar by means of new subcompanies with names like "Plantar Energética";
- Working conditions of charcoal-workers are precarious; these workers are continuously exposed to dangerous working conditions including the smoke of the ovens that contains toxic gasses that are hazardous and a health risk. Workers that deal daily with pesticides or charcoal, even with protection equipments at their disposal, have a high risk of suffering from diseases or accidents. In Espirito Santo, the Attorney General for Workers Conditions opened a confidential investigation in 2001 after the denunciation of the death of several ex-workers of Plantar. An example is the ex-Plantar worker, Aurino dos Santos Filho, who died with a pump filled with pesticides on his back while working on a eucalyptus plantation in Espirito Santo in 2001; he was only 34 years old. The medical services indicated a heart attack as the cause of death and up to now, Aurino's family has not received any compensation from the company. Plantar should recognize its part of responsibility in this and many other human tragedies, also in Curvelo, and make efforts to avoid health problems and accidents using other worker-friendly methods;
- Although Plantar affirms that it only occupies 4.5% of the municipality of Curvelo, it is worthwhile to remind that besides Plantar, other companies like V&M Florestal and Cossisa cultivate eucalyptus plantations in Curvelo; for instance, V&M Florestal occupies 46,147 hectares, of which 33,867 hectares are eucalyptus plantations. Within those communities, it does not change the impacts on the lives of people that are profound effected by living next to the plantations, to know the percentage of eucalyptus in the municipality;
- The affirmation that eucalyptus plantations create a lot of jobs, comparing the 20 workers of a cattle-raising farm, bought by Plantar, with the 300 workers that are working there now, is clearly meant to confuse you. First of all, local people complain that no locals within the municipality were contracted by Plantar, increasing the unemployment in Felixlândia. Even worse, local authorities indicated to IBAMA (federal environmental agency) the contamination of the local drinking water sources because of pesticides applied by Plantar that also caused massive deaths of emas, a large land bird related to an ostrich. Secondly, everybody with a little knowledge of agricultural practices knows that eucalyptus plantations basically give work during the

first two years (preparation of the land, planting, pesticides application, irrigation if necessary), so this might explain an initial number of 300 workers, mentioned by Plantar, in a farm of about 2,000 hectares. However, during the extra five years before cutting the trees, there is hardly any work at all in a eucalyptus tree plantation;

- We call for land reform and small-scale agriculture as the only way of creating a future in the Brazilian rural population. As you know, Brazil still has not implemented a serious land reform and is one of the countries with the most unequal distribution of land properties in the world. For this reason, tree plantations are socially not desirable because they worsen this situation. In Espirito Santo, for instance, several studies already showed that eucalyptus plantations expelled thousands and thousands of people into the poor neighbourhoods of urban centres, straight into an uncertain future. We think that the World Bank should invest in projects of small-scale agriculture and land reform, being also a priority of the Brazilian Federal Government. If we would plant the 23,100 hectares of the Plantar project with small-scale diversified and ecological agriculture, at least 23,100 much more human-friendly jobs could be easily created with a salary at least four times as much as the big majority of the Plantar workers, according to the concrete experience of the Movement of Small Peasants (Movimento dos Pequenos Agricultores), one of the signers of this letter. This movement is also developing an alternative reforestation project, not using eucalyptus as the plantation companies want them to use but those tree species that can guarantee multi-uses and improve the local environmental recuperation and preservation;
- FASE-ES was never formally invited by SCS to the public audiences about the FSC-certification of Plantar. But it is not this that worries us. What is more relevant is that several direct stakeholders in Minas Gerais were not consulted at all during the certification process<sup>4</sup>;

We can assure you that we will continue our struggle against the ‘*carbon sink*’ project that Plantar presented to the PCF. You should not invest in it and not in any other ‘*carbon sink*’ project that is based on large-scale tree monoculture plantations because of the negative impacts these plantations cause in the southern countries where they have been implemented.

The Plantar letter makes clear that the main interest of the company is getting a “financial injection” for its plantation operations. This becomes even more clear if we look at the climate of “fear” they create in local society, like if their future and that of local communities exclusively depends on the sale of carbon sink credits. It is sad to notice that workers are afraid to complain about any problem that is related to Plantar, being scared of losing their job, as is the case with workers of many other companies of the same sector in Brazil. Also, pressure is being put on local communities. It is therefore, and we hope that the World Bank and PCF-investors can fully understand this, that we do not mention names of local people who informed us about the local situation.

We also invite you kindly for a debate about the contents of this letter and are willing to organize a meeting between you and local communities so that you can hear for yourself about their feelings about the company and their eucalyptus plantations. Nothing is more

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<sup>4</sup> see report WRM on the FSC-certification of Plantar and V&M Florestal; [www.wrm.org.uy](http://www.wrm.org.uy)

concrete than observing closely the reality with its innumerable difficulties that local people are facing.

And finally, we should appreciate if the PCF showed some balance in Plantar-related documentation posted on its website: it is bewildering that the Plantar response and other documents in support of the project are posted on the webpage yet the reason for this Plantar response – a letter signed by over 50 respected Brazilian groups and citizens has not been made available on this site. We think showing both sides of the coin is part of a democratic attitude essential for a more comprehensive and transparent debate.

With kind regards,

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  - Sindicato dos Trabalhadores nas Indústrias da Extração do Ferro e Metais Básicos de Brumadinho
  - Sindicato dos Trabalhadores nas Indústrias da Extração da Madeira e da Lenha de Capelinha e Minas Novas

- Sindicato dos Trabalhadores nas Indústrias da Extração da Madeira e Lenha de Dionísio e São José do Goiabal
  - Sindicato dos Trabalhadores nas Indústrias Extrativas de Guanhanês e Região
  - Sindicato dos Trabalhadores nas Indústrias da Extração do Ferro e Metais Básicos de Itabira
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30. Federação Sindical e Democrática dos Trabalhadores nas Indústrias Metalúrgicas, Mecânicas e de Material Elétrico do Estado de Minas Gerais e, seus Sindicatos dos Trabalhadores Metalúrgicos filiados das cidades de (Trade Union and Democratic Federation of Workers in Metal, Mechanic and Electric materials Industries of the State of Minas Gerais and the metal trade unions that are member of this federations of the towns that follow/Minas Gerais/Brazil): Alfenas, Araxá, Betim, Belo Horizonte e Contagem, Caeté, Cambuí, Divinópolis, Extrema, Governador Valadares, Itajubá, Itaúna, João Monlevade, Juiz de Fora, Lavras, Ouro Preto, Patos de Minas, Pirapora, Pouso Alegre, Raul Soares, Sabará, Santa Luzia, Timóteo, Várzea da Palma, Vespasiano, Varginha, Três Marias, e São João Del Rei. – [fsdmg@pib.com.br](mailto:fsdmg@pib.com.br)
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