

Joint Statement of Uruguayan, Finnish, and International Environmental and Social Groups 5/8/19

UPM announced on July 23rd that it will install in Uruguay a second pulp mill which will be one of the largest in the world with a production capacity of about 2.33 million tons/year. This megaproject will produce significant environmental, social, and cultural damage. In the context of a global socio-environmental crisis, this project represents a step in the wrong direction.

UPM's new megaproject will contribute to environmental degradation. This megaproject will promote the expansion of monoculture tree plantations. UPM estimates that 180.000 – 220.000 hectares of plantations are already established and that an additional 60.000 – 90.000 will be required for a sustainable supply of wood for the mill. Most of these plantations were and will be established in Uruguay's natural grasslands¹. Eucalyptus plantations are less efficient as carbon sequestration than natural pastures and native forests which they displace². These tree plantations also have a negative impact on biodiversity, in particular reducing native grasslands, birds, and fish varieties in the natural prairie ecosystem and facilitating the reproduction of alien invasive species like wild boars. The worst environmental impact will be to an already compromised water system, since this type of plantation, which depends on synthetic fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides like glyphosate, erodes soils and contaminates rivers³. These impacts on water and soil characteristics compromise Uruguay's future capacity to cultivate food. UPM2 will also impact water availability. Water source reduction due to industrial eucalyptus plantations has been documented in Uruguay since 1999⁴. The new pulp mill's water intake and flow demands are equivalent, to give a simple image, to the daily water consumption of more than 53 million people, more than 15 times the population of Uruguay. The pulp mill will also affect water quality through its effluents adding to already high levels of nitrogen and phosphorus.

UPM's new megaproject will further economic inequality. The company will invest 2.4 billion dollars, while Uruguay will spend an estimated 4 billion dollars in upgrading infrastructure to satisfy the company's requirements. UPM will be exempt from paying several taxes, will be located in a free zone, and will sell its excess energy to Uruguay, which is obliged to buy it *even* if it is not needed. The company will use an estimated 137 million liters of water per day without paying for its use, while returning 107 million contaminated liters per day to the river that will require special monitoring from the Uruguayan state. The transnational company makes big profits by extracting natural goods, labor, and causing environmental damages at low costs, while the local community is left with the effects of a contaminated and eutrophic river and the impacts of the influx of a few thousand temporary workers. The jobs created during the construction process reproduce the sexual division of labor as well and do not provide a long-term unemployment solution to the communities where the plant is located. Construction jobs for men who tend to come from other parts of the country increase sexual labor and trafficking for local women. The jobs generated by the plant outside the two years of construction do not compensate for the jobs lost as a result of mechanized industrial tree plantations that displace small shopkeepers, rural producers and artisanal fishing and tourism workers in the territory.

UPM's new megaproject weakens community participation. This project does not have social license. The agreement between UPM and Uruguay was not approved by parliament, and citizens access to information and participation in the decision-making process were not respected. Several social organizations, local citizens' groups, and stakeholders have expressed their concerns about the ways in which the megaproject will affect their lives and their concerns have not been properly addressed by the public consultation process. The project will disrupt people's lives, with a diesel cargo train transporting highly toxic substances, dividing cities and towns in the countryside, and fragmenting working-class neighborhoods in the country's capital. Furthermore, the contract includes requirements for reduction of labor rights and influences in educational policy. The latest version of the contract allows UPM to withdraw by only giving only a one-year notice and without providing justification and without material consequences.

There is no planet B, we cannot afford to continue promoting economic projects and practices that consider environmental impacts, social justice, and human rights as secondary issues. We support collaborations among countries that result in good quality equitable jobs that serve to regenerate and protect our environment.

¹ https://www.dinama.gub.uy/oan/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/VAL_Planta-de-celulosa-Paso-de-los-Toros-.pdf, p34

² See Carrasco-Letelier et al., 2004; Rodríguez-Loinaz, et al., 2013, <http://www.guayubira.org.uy/plantaciones/prairies.pdf>

³ Products used include: NPK (nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium), glyphosate and fipronil among others. See: Informe Ambiental de UPM in DINAMA https://www.mvotma.gub.uy/participacion-ciudadana-ambiente/manifiestos-de-ambiente/item/download/11492_a797e6cb46b96f0ef653bd129de74875

⁴ See local testimonies collected by Guayubira <http://www.guayubira.org.uy/1999/10/tristezas-cerro-alegre/>, and Arrarte, 2007 <http://www.guayubira.org.uy/plantaciones/cicloagua.pdf>

ULOS UPM2! NO UPM2

Coordinación Nacional de Organizaciones Sociales Contra UPM2, Uruguay
Comisión Nacional en Defensa del Agua y de la Vida, Uruguay
REDES - Amigos de la Tierra Uruguay
Federación de Funcionarios de OSE (FFOSE), Uruguay
Federación Uruguaya de Cooperativas de Vivienda por Ayuda Mutua (FUCVAM)
Movimiento por un Uruguay Sustentable, MOVUS
Asociación de Trabajadores Civiles de los Diques del Estado (ATCDE), Uruguay
Plenario intersindical social María Romana - La Paloma Rocha, Uruguay
Asamblea por el Agua del río Santa Lucia, Uruguay
Comisión por un Canelones Libre de Soja Transgénica y en defensa del Agua, Uruguay
Coordinación contra Monsanto y el Agronegocio, Uruguay
No al tren de UPM, Uruguay
Colectivo Recreo, Uruguay
Comisión Laguna del Cisne, Uruguay
Maldonado por la Tierra y el Agua, Uruguay
Confederación de Pueblos Costeros, Uruguay
Cotidiano Mujer, Uruguay
Colectivo Ecofeminista Dafnias, Uruguay
Ecofeministas de Fray Bentos, Uruguay
Colectiva Feminista La Cuarta Ola, Uruguay
Mujeres en Alerta de Ciudad de la Costa, Uruguay
Integrantes de Por el Costado de la Vía, Uruguay
Centro de Estudiantes del Instituto de Profesores Artigas (CEIPA), Uruguay
Revista la bicicleta, Uruguay
Reactiva contenidos, Uruguay
Radio Espika FM, Santa Lucía, Uruguay
La Kandela FM, Tacuarembó, Uruguay
Frente de Lucha Ambiental Delia Villalba, Uruguay
Grupo Guayubira, Uruguay
Colectivo Nangapiré de San Gregorio de Polanco, Uruguay
La Campana Verde, La Paloma, Rocha, Uruguay
Mesa Nacional de Colonos, Uruguay
Movimiento por la Tierra, Uruguay
Asociación Uruguaya de Guardaparques
RAPAL-Uruguay
Movimiento de Protección Ambiental de Sarandí del Yi, Uruguay
Asociación Civil Nativos Punta Negra, Uruguay
Grupo Alas de Piriápolis, Uruguay
Asociación de Estudiantes y Egresados de Conservación de Arrayanes (AEECA), Uruguay
Conservación de Especies Nativas del Uruguay (COENDU)
Slow Food, Uruguay
Organización HUM de Maldonado, Uruguay
Red Ánimas, Uruguay
Asamblea del Callejón, Uruguay
Sociedad para la Conservación de la Biodiversidad de Maldonado, SOCOBIOMA, Uruguay
Our Voice, Uruguay
Asamblea Pachamama, Uruguay
Uni2 por Uruguay
Jugando en la Naturaleza (JULANA), Uruguay
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Fridays For Future Uruguay

Friends of the Earth International
European Water Movement
Friends of the Earth Finland
Friends of the Landless, Finland

Global Forest Coalition
World Rainforest Movement
Red Latinoamericana contra los Monocultivos de Árboles (RECOMA)
Global Justice Ecology Project, USA
The Wilderness Society
Earth Day Network
Ähtärinjärvi Nature Association, Finland
New Wind Association, Finland
Emmaus Aurinkotehdas ry, Finland
Katajamäki ry, Finland
Foro Italiano dei Movimenti per l'Acqua, Italia
Environmental Paper Network - Finance Working Group
Bank Track, The Neatherlands
Stand Earth, USA
Rainforest Relief
Dogwood Alliance, USA
Gaia Foundation, England
Mangrove Action Project, USA
Ambiente Desarrollo y Capacitación, Honduras
Forum Ökologie & Papier, Germany
Pro REGENWALD, Germany
Denkhausbremen, Germany
GE Free New Zealand in Food and Environment, New Zealand
Family Farm Defenders (members of La Via Campesina), North America
Asamblea Veracruzana de Iniciativas y Defensa Ambiental (LAVIDA - México)
Coordinadora Nacional Agua para Tod@s Agua para la Vida, México
Otros Mundos Chiapas, México/Amigos de La Tierra, México
Coalición de Organizaciones Mexicanas por el Derecho al Agua
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Amigos de la Tierra Argentina
Guardianes del Iberá, Argentina
Acción Ecológica, Ecuador
Red Ecuatoriana de Alternativas a la Palma Aceitera, Ecuador
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Boreal Action, Canada
Friends of the Siberian Forests, Russia
Biodiversity Conservation Center, Russia
Ecology and Pioneering AB, Sweden
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Federação Nacional dos Urbanitários – FNU, Brazil
Frente Nacional pelo Saneamento Ambiental – FNSA, Brazil
Abibiman Foundation, Ghana
Tanzania Alliance for Biodiversity (TABIO), Tanzania
CORD and National Adivasi Alliance, India
Observatorio Petrolero Sur, Argentina
Observatorio Latinoamericano de Conflictos Ambientales (OLCA), Chile
Ecumenical Water Network-World Council of Churches
Internacional de Servicios Públicos, ISP Americas
Amigos da Terra Brasil
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