

World resources institute recognizes Calculation error in Amazon burnings report:

By LIANA JOHN (Agencia Estado Writer)

The new 1991/92 World Resources Institute (WRI) report will show considerable changes in the figures concerning deforestation and carbon emissions in Brazil, said WRI director, Eric Ródenburg, in a telephone interview.

The new report, based on studies done by the Brazilian Institute of Spacial Research (INPE), shows the deforestation of 26,600 square kilometers of the Amazon annually, against 40,000 to 80,000 square kilometers printed in the 1990/91 report.

Former WRI numbers were based on old evaluations of amazon deforestation, and INPE's 1987 estimatives of the burnings. Both were rough projections.

In 1988/89, INPE made exhaustive calculations of the deforestation based on Landsat satellite images. This study showed a significant reduction on projected annual deforestation rates.

But even with deforestation rates corrected, Brazilian carbon emissions will remain unexact. "Carbon emission calculations based on forest burnings are uncertain because there are no real figures on these emissions," said INPE researcher Gylvan Meira.

According to Meira, the WRI report consisted in the multiplication of the total deforestation by an estimate of the emissions.

"If we admit this magical calculation using our 26,600 square kilometers, we get 250 million tons of carbon emissions, rather than the WRI 560 million," he said.

Meira also explained that in order to accurately calculate carbon emissions, besides using the correct annual rate, abandoned areas should be subtracted from the deforestation totals.



Landsat satellite image: used to calculate actual Amazon deforestation rates. Pink lines show roads and settlements in the state of Rondonia, one of the most devastated in the Brazilian Amazon.

INPE

EDITORIAL PAGE

An editorial by environmentalists, scientists, or politicians, available at the beginning of each month, together with the features. And, a weekly article on the Amazon by Lucio Flavio Pinto, an AE journalist and area specialist. Available on Wednesdays by 1700 GMT.



Rio Tietê — one of the most polluted rivers in the world.

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