

# Deforestation in the amazon rainforest and development in the rest of brazil

[Environment](#), [Global Warming](#)



Deforestation in the Amazon rainforest and development in the rest of Brazil had led to many conflicting interests in the Amazon region. This is a global issue and can affect many lives e. g by global warming and other factors. The Brazilian rainforest is being used for natural resources, which is in great demand. This leads to deforestation (clearance of forest land). The rainforest is so important to people because without it there would be loss of wildlife, loss of medicine, soil erosion, decrease in soil fertility and many other valued factors. This issue is clearly a very big impact on peoples lives, not just people who are living in the rainforest, but worldwide. Already 65% of the worlds rainforest had been deforested and Brazil had lost an area the size of Spain in the last 20 years. One third of the worlds remaining rainforests are in the Amazon region. Geologists predict that at once, vast forests covered approximately two-thirds of the Earths surface. Although this number has steadily decreased, it is now doing so at an alarming rate. I will research this by agreeing or disagreeing with the hypothesis, of which is: " Deforestation of the Amazon rainforest is a major global environmental issue that only the government can solve, do you agree?" I predict that my research for this essay will show that the first part of the hypothesis will be true " deforestation of the Amazon rainforest is a major global environmental issue." But I think that my research will tend to disagree with the second part of the hypothesis " that only the government can solve." The rainforests are being cleared for a number of reasons. New roads are being built to transport timber, cattle and crops to businesses. People have also settled on these roads. The longest road stretches 5300km (3300 miles). Iron, gold and copper have all been discovered in the rainforest. Mining companies have all

taken an affect on the Amazon rainforest by felling trees and building roads through the rainforest to reach these high-valued deposits. Huge areas of land have been flooded so they can construct hydro-electric power (HEP) plants in order to generate electricity by harnessing the power of the mighty Amazon River. Cattle-ranching causes large areas of the rainforest to be destroyed, this has been carried out by multi-national companies (MNC's). The beef from the cattle-ranchers is then cheaply sold to the United States and Europe to make more burgers. The profit which Brazil make (hardly anything) is then paid back to the MEDC's (more economically developed country), who they owe a massive amount of money to-(estimated 225 billion - SOURCE G). Exports of Brazilian beef grew 30% un 2001 to \$1bn. Another reason is to evenly spread the wealth, so the poor wouldn't be so poor and the rich wouldn't be so rich. The Brazilian government has allowed deforestation to take place in the Amazon rainforest. There are many reasons for this, but he main one being to bring the wealth to the country, (by developing Brazil), by using natural resources. Development seems to be ruining the lives of, but also making life better for some. As well as there being many down-sides to deforestation, there are also many seeking advantages. The most inciting argument for development is to make enough money to pay back Brazil's endless debt problem, which has recently decreased in 2001 to 225billion dollars. According to some, this is the only way out of Brazil's long-lasting debt problem, even if it means destroying the Amazon rainforest. SOURCE J shows that Brazil had a large debt problem. It states: 'Brazil has a large trade deficit'. This meaning; Brazil is spending more money on imports then exports; therefore they are losing out on

money, which leads to more DEBT! This source also says that 'In the year beginning 1999, Brazil needed to find about \$95bn to fund its debt obligations and to pay for its trade deficit.' Since 1999 to 2000, Brazil's debt problem decreased an estimated \$10bn. Since 2000 to 2001 it decreased approximately \$50bn. In total \$60bn is the decrease in debt. So by the year 2002, it should have gone down by much more, only if development plans continued without any problems arising. SOURCE J is very reliable, as it comes from the BBC (a well known authority) but the source is dated back to 1998 and information may have changed since then. Even so, SOURCE J conveniently links with SOURCE G, which shows the debt problem is \$225bn and in SOURCE J it suggested 'well over \$200bn in 2001, which is extremely reliable. SOURCE K is another source linked with SOURCE G. It presents Brazils currency is getting stronger. The exchange rate and trade balance is increasing, therefore Brazil are making more money. Exports had been the highest at 2001 at \$58223bn and imports have gone down, then back up and then back down again to \$55582 in 2001. Since 1997 to 2000 there has been more money made on imports than exports (trade deficit), but in 2001 there was \$58223bn been made on exports and \$55582 (trade surplus). So in 2001 Brazil had gained profit and their external debt also went down to \$226, 036bn dollars. This also links with SOURCE G regarding debt where it's estimated by my reading of \$225bn dollars. SOURCE K is definitely not bias but quite the opposite of being extremely reliable, as it matches with SOURCE G and is dated recently in 2001. SOURCE L is also for development. It states that a recent estimate suggested that out of 4million residents of the Amazon, 150, 000 (4%) are forcibly evicted from their land each year.

But this is just an estimate (a guess) and we don't know who said the statement. The government doesn't support legitimising land rights, therefore someone else should do something about it. The hypothesis says deforestation is a problem that only the government can solve, could this be true? Or could someone else or a group of people make a difference?

SOURCE L: " The habitat will never be the safe as long as the rural poor (landless people) are neglected." This is being said by Dougless Southgate; we don't know who he is or how important he is. Knowing this and considering that the source comes from an unknown man called Phil Camill, this source is not very reliable. There are many strong arguments against development in Brazil. One of the most brutal one is that Brazil's exports rely heavily on slavery, by illegal smuggling of mahogany. Many people are approached by someone, promising them a steady job, good pay, free housing and food. The people of Brazil accept this deal because they have no other way of making money and are desperate. What they don't realise is that they are heading for a life of slavery. They get into trucks that take them far from their homeland and begin to cut down trees. These people who are made into slaves are constantly near armed guards, making it extremely hard to escape. The workers who go to the police for help are helplessly ignored. This is a result of the police being bribed, they are corrupt. All of this resorts to the making of mahogany and cattle-ranching. Furniture companies deny this and say 'we cannot do the job of the Brazilian government' and 'we have to believe the certification and we have no reason to believe otherwise.' These companies only care about their own interests - making MONEY!, so they turn a blind eye to the slave labour. The Brazilian

government has estimated as much as 80% of Amazon timber comes from illegal sources. The USA is the main importer of Brazilian mahogany. MNC's (Multi-National Companies) buy raw materials such as mahogany, which in the back of their heads, know that they come from illegal areas, but just turn a blind eye on purpose. Logging has only been permitted in 13 designated areas (where it's legal). Greenpeace has listed nearly 100 companies it says deal in illegal mahogany to meet a growing demand from the American makers. SOURCE E is very reliable due to the fact that it is recent and comes from an outside perspective-New York. It has factual data and information, which you can't lie about. Science is very important to the world, simply because it explains how we live, die and survive in the world. SOURCE O shows that cutting down trees creates global warming (an increase in temperature). There are four main causes of this: Carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and CFC gasses. Trees take in carbon dioxide from the air. When they die they return it to the air. Across the world, deforestation is increasing by 2% each year. This means that the loss of trees means there are fewer trees to take in carbon dioxide, which leaves more carbon dioxide in the air for humans, which is not good for our body. Methane is mainly produced by agricultural activities. Nitrous oxide is produced by the burning of the rainforests. SOURCE O is extremely reliable as it is from the UN and it's not too out of date-1998. SOURCE P shows the population size and carbon dioxide emission of countries. America's population size of the world total is 4.7%, yet emits 25% of the world total carbon dioxide. This is the biggest percentage; the least is India with only 3.6%. America are very responsible for the carbon dioxide compared to their population size.

SOURCE O shows carbon dioxide causes approximately 50% of the greenhouse effect (creates global warming). This means that America are burning more and more fossil fuels (coal and oil mining are the biggest causes of deforestation). SOURCES O and P show the mass effects of deforestation and how it could change the way the whole world lives. Therefore these sources prove the first part of the hypothesis 'deforestation of the Amazon rainforest is a major global environmental issue.' It is definitely a major global issue. The American government signed a contract along with other governments of the world to reduce carbon dioxide, but then turned their back on it. SOURCES O and P are linked together which make them both powerfully reliable, also both are from the information conventions, UN 1998. The American government with other countries signed this contract to reduce carbon dioxide, possibly by cutting down deforestation. This goes against the second part of the hypothesis 'that only the government can solve' deforestation, as not only the Brazilian government could stop deforestation, but so could other powerful authorities. SOURCE F shows that within a year from August 1999, deforestation increased by 15%, but we don't know that this piece of information is reliable. Brazil's national institute for space research monitors deforestation via satellite. This showed the total deforested area equalled to 19, 836 square kilometres (4 million soccer fields), compared to 17, 259 square kilometres from August 1998 to August 1999; (a 13% increase). This clearly shows two sets of data-reliable. The space satellite photos are very reliable, as satellite photos cannot lie. SOURCE F also shows that scientific studies have taken place and showed that the 'Amazon soil is not suitable for

agriculture and cattle-ranching. The biological richness of the region lives only in the standing forest.' This statement has come from the scientific studies, which is reliable because science can't lie, although we don't know which scientific study it came from. If there are no plants in the rainforest, the soil will turn into muddy sliders because it rains every half an hour and this'll make a large desert. The title of this source is 'Greenpeace demands zero deforestation by 2010.' Greenpeace is a charity; therefore they don't have any real power. They can say statements, but they can't demand it. The UN has the power to demand it. Although SOURCE F was adapted from Greenpeace, May 2001 (a charity), it is still very reliable. Despite this information, in 2001 deforestation fell 3.4% when 1.57million hectares were destroyed compared with 1.82million hectares in 2000. \* The speed of deforestation has doubled in the last 20 years \* People predict that the Amazon rainforest will be gone in 20 years. \* One third of the worlds oxygen comes from the rainforest. This picture shows a satellite image of the Amazon rainforest being destroyed. This is a extremely reliable image, as satellite images cannot lie. Government actions The government is doing there bit to try and stop the destruction of the Amazon rainforest. SOURCE C: 'Government to protect 50m acres as environmental reserves' (national parks). It is to be protected by environmental laws, and to be preserved and protected for future generations. Before the government let MNC's get into the rainforest, so that they could make money from tax, but it got out of hand and the government could no longer control the multi-national companies. This new plan the government has seems as if it isn't going to work, even thought from this source, the government seems confident



enough. Maybe the government is feeling guilty, as they seemed to cause a lot of the problems arising of deforestation in the Amazon rainforest, by letting MNC's take over. SOURCE C is neither for or against, it is neutral for sustainable development. The government is building hydro-electric power schemes - an energy source that'll keep on running and the process will be cheap once it's up and running. There will be up to seventy-nine by the year 2010. Evaluation of sources used SOURCE C is reliable as it is neutral and it consistent. It points out information on what the government is doing to help the future generations. Some of the figures are slightly exaggerated. I found SOURCE E and extremely good source to use. It is against deforestation and points out the unknown factors of it-brutal slavery. I would say it is very reliable as it is dated back to last year-2002 and the source comes from an outside perspective-New York newspaper. This source was written to raise awareness and to make people stop and think about the furniture that they are buying. SOURCE F is also against deforestation. It is written in 2001 by a charity called Greenpeace, so their choice of words may be bias. But the information is definitely not. It has a satellite photo-which cannot lie and compares the total destruction of the Amazon rainforest to two sets of data. Overall this source is very reliable and has clear facts and data, raises awareness, which is what the charity group set out to do. SOURCE G is a bar graph of the external debt of Brazil. It shows that there was a decrease in debt from 2000 to 2001. It is extremely reliable as it was written 2001 (nearly 2002) and comes from the central bank of Brazil. It also links with SOURCE J AND K. SOURCE J (all are for development) states that the debt would be well over \$200bn in 2001 and this turns out to be correct according

the SOURCE G. it is written in 1998 by the BBC (a well known authority). Therefore it is reliable SOURCE K links with SOURCE G by which both their external debt between 1997-2001 are the same figures. This makes these sources very reliable indeed. SOURCE K was an interesting source to review, as if had some interesting facts and figures. Overall it showed, Brazils debt problem was gradually getting lower between 2000-2001 due to many points such as a trade surplus in 2001. SOURCE L shows that people are being forced out of their land in the rainforest. It is written by an unheard person call Phil Camill in 1999. Therefore it is not very reliable. SOURCE O explains what global warming is and the causes of it. It links with SOURCE P by showing the population size and carbon dioxide emissions of Europe and selected countries in 1996. SOURCES O and P are very reliable, by both being written by the UN, SOURCE O in 1998 and SOURCE P released the information in 1998 but the data was collected in 1996. These sources were probably written to create people's attention on the deforestation of the Amazon rainforest. Overall, I think my selection of sources were fairly reliable, with a few exceptions like SOURCE L and led me to find accurate and fascinating information. Conclusion My research has led me to believe that deforestation is a global environmental issue. This affects the whole world, like pollution in the air such as carbon dioxide being emitted into the air. But I don't fully agree with a second part of the hypothesis 'of which only the government can solve.' This is because Brazil can solve its debt problem in other ways such as charity organisations helping out and country's making allowances and cancelling out all un-payable debts. As many countries previously signed an agreement to cut down on carbon dioxide (but didn't

carry out due to America backing out), countries could sign another agreement to do with the deforestation of the rainforests. So my prediction of the outcome of this essay turned out to be true As I previously said that I don't fully agree with the second part of the hypothesis because the Brazilian government has to be involved and has to co-operate with all countries. Solutions to this problem may be to tax MNC's to reduce or replace the trees they are cutting down or the government to protect national parks. MEDC's should agree that all exports to LEDC's should be in low value, as the LEDC's are growing the raw materials. Brazil is trapped into a cycle of poverty; it now needs to invest in its own manufacturing company to make more money. Brazil needs to create sustainable development and in order to do this they need to cause minimum damage to the environment. My opinion on the deforestation of the Amazon rainforest is that we need furniture and trees make this for us. If we don't chop down trees what else can we do? But also the trees are dying and we need them to take in carbon dioxide. So I think that every time we chop a tree down, which we should only do if necessary, we should replant one or more trees. Sustainable development could only occur if we have the full co-operation of international countries.