# **President of Apex exposes deforestation in the Amazon to agribusiness giants in China**

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**Body**

The president of the Brazilian Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (Apex Brasil), Jorge Viana, defended in China that the government and the business community should recognize their environmental problems related to the ***deforestation*** of the ***Amazon*** instead of trying to hide them. Before a delegation composed mainly of agribusiness executives, who suffer external and internal pressure for investments in sustainability and even boycott campaigns against their products, he associated the ***deforestation*** of the forest with the advance of cattle raising.

"We Brazilians should stop saying outside Brazil that Brazil has no environmental problem. We do and have for a long time," said Jorge Viana, a Brazilian from the Workers Party (PT), former governor of the state of Acre and a forest engineer.

He spoke at a seminar organized by the Brazilian Center for International Relations (Cebri), held at the Center for China and Globalization (CCG). "If we recognize what has already been done wrong, we will be better able to defend the good things we are doing in the ***Amazon*** or are trying to do."

China is the main buyer market of national agribusiness products. And the Brazilian President was speaking in front of an audience of about 100 local government representatives, Chinese authorities, and executives from giant companies in the Brazilian market, such as Suzano, JBS and Vale.

In the audience were representatives from Syngenta, Cargill and Chinese think tanks, besides diplomats and specialists in international relations and members of the special advisory office of the Presidency of the Republic.

Agriculture Minister Carlos Favaro opened the seminar, but was not present for Viana's statement.

Viana cited a series of data to support his thesis. According to him, in the last 50 years, 21% of the ***Amazon*** has been deforested, an area of 84 million hectares. Another 79 percent of the ***Amazon*** remains preserved.

"I want to give very objective numbers. I said that 84 million hectares have been deforested. What are these areas being used for? 67 million hectares for cattle ranching; 6 million for grain agriculture. And 15 million (are) secondary forest", said the president of Apex.

He credited the data to institutions such as the Ministry of Agriculture, FAO, and satellite monitoring entities of ***deforestation***, such as Mapbiomas and Imazon. "Brazil recognizing the problems it has can come up with extraordinary solutions, and those solutions can be very strong in the sense of convincing our interlocutors."

According to Viana, ***deforestation*** was reduced in the FHC, Lula 1 and 2, and Dilma Rousseff governments, but doubled in the Jair Bolsonaro government. "We had problems with the past government. I recognize that the past government encouraged the occupation of indigenous lands and ***deforestation***," he said, pondering that the productive sector and civil society decided to confront ***deforestation***.

He also said that the Brazilian Forest Code has not yet been fully implemented. For the president of Apex, when the country is able to reverse this trend, still on the rise during the Lula government according to data from Deter, it should also be considered a victory for the productive sector. He proposed technological improvements in land use and forest restoration. He affirmed that Vale, Suzano and Marfrig will recover 4 million hectares of degraded area.

Viana said that Lula wants to visit Beijing as soon as possible, after postponing the trip due to health reasons, and defended the formalization of a mechanism for environmental cooperation between Brazil and China, the biggest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world, with emphasis on the carbon credit market.

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