

Editorial N° 02/2023

# Challenges and struggles in recovering Brazil's socio-environmental agenda

Irivaldo Alves da Silva <sup>I</sup>  
Pedro Roberto Jacobi <sup>II</sup>

Lira Luz Benites Lazaro <sup>III</sup>  
Zenaida Luisa Lauda-Rodriguez <sup>IV</sup>

São Paulo. Vol. 26, 2023

*Editorial*

<sup>I</sup> Federal University of Campina Grande, Campina Grande, PB, Brazil

<sup>II</sup> University of São Paulo, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

<sup>III</sup> University of São Paulo, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

<sup>IV</sup> University of São Paulo, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/1809-4422asoceditorialENG2023L3ED>

We have reached a stage on the planet where urgent action is required. There is no turning back. However, we must proceed with concrete and assertive action as a civilizational choice. Studies indicate the need for short-term and high-impact action (Rogelj et al., 2023). Research by Rogelj et al. (2023) assessed the climate targets of the G20 economies and 18 other countries, representing 82% of total global anthropogenic emissions. The results show that nine out of ten announced commitments have low credibility, preventing us from achieving a climate future that is considered safe by the scientific community. In the face of this evidence, we have great hope and support for the urgent need for a change of direction in national environmental policy.

This means there should be a national public policy that chooses life, as enshrined in Article 5 of the Brazilian Constitution, as the supreme value, explicitly pointing to a shift at the core of government action. Pragmatically, this means placing the environment at the center of decisions, including economic ones. This seems evident in the fears of many who have opted for a change in the nation's concept. This transformational behavior and paradigm shift directly impacts policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation.

After four years of setbacks, dismantling, violence, multiple forms of denial, and neglect, 2023 began with a fresh start, brought about by the inauguration of President-elect Luís Inácio Lula da Silva and his team. In contrast to the previous federal governments of the Workers' Party (PT), environmental issues were given a more prominent, central, and cross-cutting role. The new administration indicated that the climate emergency would be a key factor in Brazil's actions over the next four years, permeating government practice beyond the Ministry of the Environment. It would also be central to Brazil's transformation agenda as a leader in transitioning to a low-carbon economy, in line with the genuine socio-environmental practices of social movements, traditional populations, and Brazil's indigenous peoples.

This commitment was evident in the announcements of the new government structure, with the creation of new ministries that represent a much more realistic picture of Brazil's social diversity. We refer to the creation of the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples and the reinstatement of the Ministry of the Environment.

Those who have supported and continue to support the return of a clear environmental policy understand that there needs to be a definitive shift in the country's public agenda, where the environment takes precedence and influences other agendas, such as the economy, rather than the other way around. The world is waiting and yearning for this. However, international aspirations do not resonate in national politics, as they do not sensitize and mobilize the political class. There is a consensus on the urgent need for environmental protection and policies to preserve life. However, more than paradoxical contradictions can be observed when actions are examined.

In the National Congress, insensitivity to environmental needs essential to the survival of the human species was evident, as political party differences took precedence over non-negotiable values. Since the first editorial of Volume 26 of this journal in 2023, many political movements have occurred. It is naive to assume that sectors opposed to promoting the environmental agenda over other public issues of the nation would remain

inactive without expressing dissent. For a long time, certain blocs, such as the ruralists, have consistently worked in an organized way to obstruct the progress of a pro-life planetary agenda. The events of the first half of 2023 underline this reality.

First of all, it is important to understand the ideological profile of the National Congress at the moment. If there have been difficulties in the recent past in making substantive changes to the development model, the problem is exacerbated by a strongly conservative Congress. This would be a challenging endeavor in any case. Imagine being at a crossroads where the goal, in this case, is to change models in favor of life on the planet, and there is a formidable "Goliath" to be overcome, represented by all the forces that contribute to a model that no longer addresses the socio-environmental severe issues that make this scenario deeply worrying.

At the beginning of President Lula's administration, there was a clash between Congress and the federal government over the creation of ministries, which affected the management powers of the Ministry of the Environment but still depended on the final decision of Congress. This reflects the reality of a nation still deeply divided after the election, as President Lula's election represents a counterpoint to dismantling environmental management under the Bolsonaro administration. The socio-environmental demands are urgent: record levels of deforestation and greenhouse gas emissions, increased invasions of indigenous lands, and the suspension of the Amazon Fund.

It is important to emphasize that the Bolsonaro government is over. However, through the ruralist bloc and their political mediators in Congress, the agribusiness sectors continue their agenda of dismantling environmental policies and countering the resurgence of post-Bolsonaro environmental policies. In the case of the Lula administration, which is based on a broad coalition, decision-making involves the participation of different parties, as the government does not have a majority in parliament. This creates difficulties, as decisions reflect the interests of well-structured groups represented in Congress, such as the Agribusiness Parliamentary Front, which has significant coordination and influence in national politics and directly affects the environmental agenda, with severe implications for different biomes.

One thing is our aspiration, and another is the harsh reality of actual policy. Despite the government's clear international agenda of shifting towards environmental values and commitment to climate agreements, domestic politics is struggling with forces that have organized themselves over time within the national political scene and are determined to fight and thwart any change of direction toward a country that respects environmental legislation and international climate commitments. It is essential to continue to defend this socio-environmental agenda, understanding that the academic world, a significant part of it, and social movements have made significant efforts over time to gather more and more individuals through systematic persuasion based on data and scientific findings that have long warned the authorities. In this context, *Ambiente & Sociedade* Journal has fulfilled its role by informing and discussing issues relevant to the socio-environmental agenda.

We invite everyone to explore the latest articles that make up Volume 2023. We also express our sincere gratitude to the editorial team of *Ambiente & Sociedade*, whose

essential contributions ensure the continued publication of this valuable resource.

This volume opens with the article **“Management of the Tapajós-Arapuins Extractive Reserve: Limits and Possibilities from the Perspective of its Counsellors”** by Anne Gabriella Salgado dos Santos Mota, Maria da Luz Farias, Andrea Araújo da Silva, Thiago Almeida Vieira, Helionora da Silva Alves, and Alanna do Socorro Lima da Silva explores Conservation Units (CUs) as strategic spaces for the conservation of socio-biodiversity and sustainable development, mainly through the empowerment of traditional communities. The research focuses on the Tapajós-Arapuins Extractive Reserve and its co-management.

The article **“Sustainable Development Goals: The Impact of Major Representatives of Brazilian Construction”** by Tamiris Capellaro Ferreira, Adriana Cristina Ferreira Caldana, André Cavalcante da Silva Batalhão, Marlon Fernandes Rodrigues Alves and José Carlos Paliari examines the Brazilian construction sector by assessing sustainability reports based on the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) framework. The research found that most of the Sustainable Development Goals are influenced by material aspects of the construction sector, suggesting the need for regulatory and corporate management measures to mitigate them.

In the article **“Three experiences of planned environmental education in rural sectors of southern Chile,”** authors Andrés Muñoz-Pedrerros, Jorge Pantoja, Ximena Morandé, Patricia Möller, and Jorge Morales present three experiences of planned environmental education since 1991, covering different ecosystems and involving different social actors. Environmental education has developed gradually in Chile since the 1970s but without effective links between three key actors: the government, universities, and non-governmental organizations.

Authors Ariadne Dall'acqua Ayres, Lia Maris Orth Ritter Antikeira, and Fernanda da Rocha Brando, in the article **“Perception of Kaingang Indigenous People about Environmental Policy in 21st Century Brazil”**, discuss the need for a thoughtful approach to environmental issues and their impact on indigenous communities in Brazil. Through interviews with members of the Kaingang indigenous community, they explore indigenous leaders' accounts of increased media coverage of environmental degradation, coupled with discussions of changes in Brazil's socio-environmental policies.

In the article entitled **“Climate Ethics, (In)justices, and Limitations of Environmental Payment for Services in Brazil,”** authors Frederico Salmi, Moara Almeida Canova, and Maíra C. G. Padgurschi emphasize climate ethics within environmental payment for services (EPS) policies. They highlight the need for ethical climate policies that address social and climate inequalities, considering local perspectives and timelines aligned with global multilateral agreements.

The article **“The Ocean as an Interdisciplinary Theme in Brazilian Basic Education,”** authored by Natalia P. Ghilardi-Lopes, Marcelo Motokane, Juliana Imenis Barradas, Luciana Yokoyama Xavier, Elisa van Sluys Menck, Ana Clara Gomes Franco, and Alexander Turra emphasizes the potential of the ocean as an integrative theme and the need for educator training and pedagogical planning that includes ocean-related

topics. It also highlights the lack of connection between scientific knowledge and public understanding of this environment.

Highlighting the importance of addressing not only the physical aspects but also the social aspects related to landslides and floods, the article titled **“Diagnosis and Discussion on Municipal Risk Reduction Plans in Brazil,”** by Marcos Barreto de Mendonça, Leandro Torres Di Gregorio, and Christine de Oliveira Silva Alfradique, analyzed 33 Municipal Risk Reduction Plans (PMRRs). The study underscores the need to enhance PMRRs for a more balanced and comprehensive approach considering the physical and social aspects of these disasters.

The article **“Development of a Questionnaire to Assess Positions Regarding Sustainable Societies Based on Related Concepts”** by Leandro F. A. Santos, Luís Gustavo Arruda, Marilua Damasceno, Beatriz Sinelli Laham, and Alessandra B. Costa-Pinto describe the Composite Socio-Environmental Conceptions Index (ICCSA) process. This index underwent two internal consistency and validity analysis phases with expert input. The final questionnaire includes 43 statements in six dimensions, demonstrating internal reliability, content validity, and discriminability. The proposed instrument is a valuable tool for assessing attitudes towards sustainability.

The article **“Environmental Impacts of Telecouplings in Urban Consumption of Organic Foods,”** authored by Schmitz, Jordan, and Gadda, examined the greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), energy footprint, and carbon footprint associated with organic foods sold at CEASA/PR, Curitiba. The authors highlight a reduced environmental impact due to the prevalence of organic foods from nearby regions. This consumption pattern underscores the importance of promoting local, healthy, and safe foods while highlighting the need for awareness of the environmental impact of transportation distances.

To demonstrate the relationship between forest transitions and international trade in agricultural commodities such as soy and palm oil, the article **“Are Forest Transitions Associated with International Trade in Agricultural Commodities?”** by Camila Espezio de Oliveira, Leandro Reverberi Tambosi, Adriane Calaboni, Paulo Antônio de Almeida Sinisgalli, Helene Mariko Ueno, and Alexandre Toshiro Igari analyzes export and import data for these commodities in key countries involved in the market and compares them with changes in forest cover from 1990 to 2020. The results indicate a significant link between exporting regions and importing countries undergoing forest transitions.

The authors Eugenia Aumond Kuhn, Geisa Zanini Rorato, Bruno Cesar Euphrasio de Mello, and Carolina Cristofoli Falcão, in their article **“Overview of Laws for Urban Agriculture in Brazil: Relationship with Urban Planning”** examined urban agriculture (UA) laws in Brazil and their relationship with urban planning (UP). Although there has been an increase in the number of laws related to UA, the research identified significant gaps: the lack of a coordinated national policy, laws that generically address different food production strategies under the term UA, a vague approach to the links between UA and UP, and the absence of an objective approach to the territorial challenges faced by UA.

The article entitled **“Perception about Urban Forest and its Influence on well-being in Workplaces”** by Barbie Vieira Lima, Raquel Dias de Aguiar Moraes Amaral,

Caroline Almeida Souza, and Mariana Hortelani Carneseca Longo examines the perceptions of employees at the Technological Research Institute regarding the urban forest and its role in supporting management processes. The online questionnaire reveals the urban forest's positive and negative effects on the daily life of the local community in the workplace.

In **“Sacrifice Zones and Socio-Environmental Recovery in Chile: Failures and Opportunities of Environmental Policy,”** authors Alexander Panez Pinto, Paola Bolados García, Luis Espinoza Almonacid, and Bárbara Jerez Henríquez explore the challenges of transforming areas affected by intensified extractive activities, particularly mining and energy. They show how deficiencies in state environmental policies are linked to separating environmental and social concerns, with social aspects being marginalized. They also discuss the utilitarian perception of participation as a bureaucratic tool for state objectives and the tensions arising from a neoliberal model of environmental governance.

In the article **“ISO 37120 Sustainable Development Indicators: The Case of Rio de Janeiro and the Latin American Perspective,”** Elisa de Almeida Couto, Leandro Torres Di Gregorio, Glauco Valle, and Assed Naked Haddad, along with Carlos Alberto Pereira Soares, evaluated the implementation of the ISO 37120 standard in Rio de Janeiro. This analysis of the standard revealed challenges in data collection for the city and allowed for identifying strengths and weaknesses in Rio de Janeiro compared to other Latin American cities that have also adopted this standard.

To assess sustainable logistics aimed at recovering value from residual printed circuit boards (RPCBs) in developing countries, authors Marianna Ottoni, Emilio Lèbre La Rovere, Amaro Olimpio Pereira Junior, and Lúcia Helena Xavier proposed a methodology in the article **“Sustainability Assessment for the Allocation of Residual Printed Circuit Board Processing Units: The Brazilian Case”** to identify the most suitable locations for the establishment of RPCB recycling facilities in Brazil. They identified the state of São Paulo as the primary RPCB processing hub in the country based on 11 indicators that include sustainability dimensions, logistical criteria, and geoprocessing.

In the article **“Sociobiodiversity Products: Sustainable Agro-extraction Potential in Mato Grosso do Sul,”** authors Raquel Pires Campos, Ieda Maria Bortolotto, Rosane Juraci Bastos Gomes, Luis Alejandro Lasso Gutierrez, Tercio Jacques Fehlaue, and Sílvia Helena Galvão de Miranda evaluated the primary agro-extraction initiatives in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, which encompasses the Cerrado and Pantanal biomes. They examined the products, market/consumption prospects, and institutional environment landscape. The use of 15 native species in 12 communities underscores the potential of these food systems, with recognition of indigenous peoples, quilombolas, traditional communities, and family farmers.

The article **“Environmental Licensing Reform in Brazil: Discourse Analysis at the National Council for the Environment”** by Rossana Borioni and Luis Enrique Sánchez, which examines the records and meeting minutes of the National Council for the Environment instances from 1984 to 2021. The discourses focused mainly on the screening phase and the environmental impact assessment. The predominant discourse

revolved around the efficiency of the administration, the lack of recognition of the objectives of this environmental policy tool, and the challenges associated with improving its effectiveness.

The authors Thiago José Arruda de Oliveira, Letícia Antunes Nogueira, and Waldecy Rodrigues, in the article **“Within the bounds of sustainability: the extended producer responsibility in the management of agrochemical packaging,”** analyze the limitations of promoting sustainability in the collection of empty agrochemical containers. The results show that collecting agrochemical residues favors large rural producers, while small producers are marginalized within this network. Although this approach allows for high collection rates, its impact on family farming is a significant shortcoming.

In an attempt to identify the main factors that can contribute to effective risk communication, the authors Uilians Vieira de Oliveira, Rosangela Calado da Costa, and Juliana Gardenalli de Freitas, in the article **“What makes risk communication effective? The perspective of those involved,”** through a methodology for studying people's points of view and subjectivities, applied to 24 people, identified five factors that represent the opinions of the research subjects: 1 - Trust; 2 - Secure communication; 3 - Dialogue; 4 - Associations; and 5 - Health. Concern for the health of those affected was the most critical factor for most respondents.

This issue concludes with a review of the book **“Transforming Universities in the Midst of Global Crisis: A University for the Common Good,”** written by Richard Hil, Kristen Lyons, and Fern Thompsett and analyzed by Steven Ratuva. This book is considered essential reading for anyone with a direct or indirect connection to the world of academia, in other words, for all of us. It addresses the current crisis in a precise, critical, and courageous way, touching on various aspects: the crisis of the market, health care, inequality, racism, climate change, the subjugation of indigenous peoples, and the general crisis of humanity, and how universities are related to these issues. In addition, the book offers a message of hope, hope for the potential transformation of universities, and hope for a more humane society and planet.

We wish everyone a rewarding read!

## References

ROGELJ, J.; FRANSEN, T.; ELZEN, M.G.J.D.; LAMBOLL, R.D.; SCHUMER, C.; KURAMOCHI, T.; HANS, F.; MOOLDIJK, S.; PORTUGAL-PEREIRA, J. Credibility gap in net-zero climate targets leaves world at high risk. *Science* **380**, 1014-1016 (2023). DOI: 10.1126/science.adg6248

**Irivaldo Alves da Silva**

2023;26:e00003

✉ jose.irivaldo@professor.ufcg.edu.br

ORCID:

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0022-3090>

**Pedro Roberto Jacobi**

✉ prjacobi@gmail.com

ORCID:

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6143-3019>

**Lira Luz Benites Lazaro**

✉ lbenites@usp.br

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6587-1497>

**Zenaida Luisa Lauda-Rodriguez**

✉ zeni.lauda.rodriguez@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2432-0255>