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## Povos Indígenas no Brasil

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### Brazil considers tactics to appease environmental lobby

By Ivo Dawney in Rio de Janeiro

THE WAVE of outrage, at the murder by gunmen last month of ecologist Francisco "Chico" Mendes has forced Brazil's foreign ministry to consider new tactics to appease and counter-balance the growing influence of environmental and human rights lobbies overseas.

Officials are concerned that mounting world criticism and the growth of the green lobby is out-performing the ministry's own diplomatic efforts in securing foreign governments' support for loans from international agencies like the World Bank.

One example came recently when the West German Green Party forced a debate in the Bundestag over the need for tougher enforcement of environmental provisions in a long-delayed \$500m (£277m) power sector loan for Brazil.

Yesterday, the Itamarati - as the foreign ministry is universally known - denied a local newspaper report that it has decided to create a new Ecology and Human Rights Division aimed at both answering and countering the attacks.

The report quoted an official spokesman arguing that the new division was an "obvious necessity" in the light of recent foreign demonstrations and

complaints. Later, another official insisted it remained "only an idea".

While many in the Brazilian government deeply resent foreign criticism, worldwide clamour over forest destruction in the Amazon and Indian rights continues to increase.

Evidence of this emerged in the sheer scale of foreign protests that greeted the shooting of Mr Mendes - honoured by the UN for his efforts on behalf of the Amazon and its traditional rubber-tapping communities.

Brazil has taken several steps to counter these attacks, launching a national ecological awareness campaign and applying to the UN to host an ecology conference scheduled for 1992.

However, many civil servants feel that the lack of available resources and the sheer lawlessness of the country's Far West is almost beyond its control.

That appeared confirmed. Dr Eva de Araújo, the judge sitting in the Mendes case, said she had received anonymous death threats. "Tell Dr Eva not to go to the court today," her daughter was told, "because her head could roll, just like Chico Mendes's did."