

Look Before You Log



**The Use of Logging Moratoria to Support
Ancient Forest Conservation and
Sustainable Use**

GREENPEACE

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Moratoria on forest development provide a valuable policy instrument for Governments to promote responsible forest management. Governments have used moratoria to help address forest degradation resulting from both planned and unplanned activities, and from both legal and illegal exploitation. Moratoria provide a break from ongoing activity during which government, civil society, scientists and industry can reassess the values and services of forests, and plan development that can best maintain those values and services.

Experiences from the seven countries documented in this report show that the use of logging moratoria, applied to particular ancient forest areas or species, for between two and six years, can generate a range of regional and national benefits. The seven case studies are taken from both developed and developing countries. Events that triggered the use of moratoria ranged from the collapse of ecosystem functions, and the loss of habitat for endangered species, to widespread corruption and illegal activities in the forest sector, or the wish to better address the needs and aspirations of forest-dependent peoples and communities.

During the period that the moratoria in this report were in place, governments studied the goods and services which ancient forests provide, and reviewed development plans in consultation with interested parties. In most cases, logging and industrial development resumed in parts of the forest after the moratoria ended, while some sections of ancient forest were put off limits to logging and large-scale development. During the 'breathing space' created by the logging moratoria, many parts of civil society were able to share their skills and resources in forest management. As a result, biodiversity values that were at risk were retained, and more diverse, forest based economies were created.

Many people and agencies react negatively to the idea of moratoria on forest use. It is often assumed that moratoria are "anti-development" and hinder progress. In a time where businesses and governments strive for economic growth, moratoria can seem backwards. Nevertheless, moratoria are a widely used mechanism for regulating resource use, and as the following case studies show, they can help societies to achieve sustainable development goals.

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BACKGROUND TO THE CASE STUDIES

Humanity's role in forest destruction began with the emergence of agriculture, ten thousand years ago. However, forest degradation and loss have accelerated rapidly in recent decades, with most of the damage taking place in the last century. Urgent action is needed now if large areas of primary – or ancient forests are to survive into the future.

The world's ancient forests are a legacy of hundreds of millions of years of evolution. They are home to most of the plant and animal species that live on land: from lichens and ferns, amphibians and reptiles, to flowering plants, insects and mammals. All these families of life have their greatest diversity in ancient forests. Likewise, a large proportion of human cultural diversity is found in and adjacent to ancient forest areas. However, current trends of industrial logging and forest conversion will see the majority of the remaining ancient forests fragmented, degraded or destroyed in the early part of this century. Compared to their great age, these ancient forests are threatened with disintegration in what amounts to the blink of an eye.

Most remaining ancient forest areas in the world have already been concessioned out or sold to logging companies. Relying on 'business as usual' will inevitably lead to the fragmentation and loss of ancient forests.

Experience around the world has shown that by placing moratoria on industrial development in ancient forest areas, governments allow time for a re-assessment of development priorities, and give time for studies to evaluate the status and health of ancient forest ecosystems. Moratoria allow governments and societies to consider what is at stake if industrial exploitation continues without constraint, and to make planning decisions that reflect the wide range of values and benefits that these forests hold.

In other words, moratoria provide time to overcome a lack of knowledge. Sustainable development requires wise planning decisions which balance ecological (conservation), economic and social needs based on sufficient knowledge of all these values. Without moratoria uncontrolled and unsustainable development that ignores conservation will continue. This disregard has already led to the loss or degradation of the majority of the world's original forests. Failure to take the steps to thoroughly review forest based development will inevitably lead to damage to environmental services, impoverishment of forest dependent communities, and the extinction of species, limiting the options for future generations.

There are many reasons why governments adopted the moratoria reviewed in this report: in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Cambodia it was in response to environmental damage and illegal logging along with pressure from civil society and donors. In Brazil the government responded to pressure from NGOs working with local communities and indigenous peoples affected by forest destruction. In Russia and Canada, logging companies became advocates of moratoria. In China, the economic damage of flooding linked to forest damage was the prime motivation. In all cases civil society, alarmed at forest loss, became an active partner with government in calling for moratoria and in reviewing forest use decisions. Studies and planning during the period of the moratorium involved a much wider set of experts, and more diverse input from civil society, than normally takes place in forestry planning.

Defending and maintaining forest health and diversity is not a once-off activity. Threats to forests come from many different directions and actors, and new threats to ancient forests, such as climate change and invasive species, emerge every year. The approaches to forest management most likely to maintain healthy forests in the long term are those that draw on the strengths and interests of all parts of society. Moratoria on logging and industrial development in ancient forest areas help create the conditions where the widest range of interests and actors can consider together how to maintain healthy forests, and how to share the benefits and costs of that maintenance. In today's interlinked world, this group of interested parties spans the range from forest peoples and local communities, through the levels of government within a nation, and the range of non-governmental groups with skills, expertise and funds to help forest conservation and

sustainable development. And, of course, it also includes other governments and intergovernmental bodies, who can provide expertise and financial support for forest protection and maintenance.

DEFINITIONS

Moratoria

Moratorium, *n.* (pl. **moratoriums** or **moratoria**) temporary prohibition of an activity.

– ORIGIN C19: mod. L., (used as n.) of late L. *moratorius* 'delaying', from L. *morat-*, *morari* 'delay'.

There have been many kinds of moratoria on forest development. The following case studies all relate to moratoria on forestry activities. Most of the case studies refer to government moratoria, although the case from western Russia concerns a voluntary initiative by logging companies. The case study from Indonesia covers several types of moratoria – national moratoria on new logging concessions and new permits for forest clearance, and provincial level moratoria on existing logging operations.

Ancient Forests

Ancient forests, also called primary or old growth forests, are forests that have been largely shaped by nature rather than human impact. They are a natural heritage and a common concern of humankind¹. Ancient forest areas which have not been fragmented by roads or other infrastructure, and are large enough to sustain all native species including far ranging animals, offer a unique opportunity to address conservation needs before these values are lost. These areas must be priority for conservation in land use planning.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Where Are The Moratoria Needed?

Moratoria are needed in ancient forest regions larger than 500 km², where little ancient forest has been protected and industrial development is rapidly expanding. The threshold size of 500 km² is a compromise, in that it covers only the largest ancient forest areas surviving today. Greenpeace proposes that ancient forest fragments smaller than 500 km² with evidence of key conservation values² and all ancient forests in regions where they have become scarce³, be put under moratoria, with the goal of converting them into protected areas.

How Long Should Moratoria Last?

Greenpeace suggests that moratoria be kept enforced until forest conservation and other values have been thoroughly assessed, zoning of these areas into protected areas and sustainable use

¹ Cf. Preamble, Text of the Convention on Biological Diversity

² For example, forest biodiversity hotspots identified by Conservation International or forest eco-regions identified by World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

³ For example, Europe, Atlantic rainforest in Brazil, or intact valleys of the Great Bear rainforest on Canada's Pacific coast).

areas has been completed and resulting new protected areas have been established and are sufficiently equipped. Completing these steps takes time, often at least five years. Zoning should consider the range of goods, services and values that ancient forests provide, and must be based on consultation and the informed consent of indigenous peoples and other traditional forest dwelling communities. Where necessary, economic losses to communities and businesses during and after the moratoria should be compensated by an international fund. (see M for Money briefing at www.greenpeace.org/saveordelete).

What Is Allowed And Prohibited Within Moratoria Areas?

Not all human activities need to be stopped inside a forest area under moratorium. Small-scale activities with a low impact on the forest ecosystem and which do not cause fragmentation can continue to take place. Industrial scale activities such as logging, dam building, land clearance and burning, the construction of roads, railways, pipelines or power lines should be subject to the moratorium.

Moratoria are an essential step towards the long-term conservation of ancient forests. They are necessary to secure the livelihoods of traditional forest dwellers, the survival of plant and animal species and the sustainable planning of forest areas. In establishing development moratoria in ancient forest regions, Governments will show at the start of the 21st Century, the leadership, vision and commitment to conserve the remaining ancient forests for centuries and generations to come.

CASE STUDIES

Canada: Coastal Temperate Rainforest Logging Moratorium

In 2001, the Government of British Columbia placed a two-year moratorium on logging in 68 large temperate rainforest valleys covering about one million hectares of the Great Bear Rainforest. These areas on the central and north coasts of the Province (British Columbia is the westernmost Province of Canada) were scheduled to be logged in the coming decade. At the same time, the Government also agreed to protect roughly 600,000 hectares of rainforest in the same region that was to have been logged in the coming decade.

The moratorium was requested by environment groups and the major logging companies in the area, following pressure from their markets and investors, and was also supported by some indigenous peoples, forest workers, and rural communities. The moratorium on new road construction and logging covers the majority of the large unprotected coastal rainforest valleys remaining in British Columbia.

Intensive studies are now underway to determine which areas under the moratorium will be needed for conservation purposes - as habitat for rare and endangered species. The coastal rainforest is home to wild salmon runs, wolves, Grizzly bears and the Kermode, or Spirit, bear - a rare white sub-species of black bear that is found nowhere else on earth.

Utilizing this research, a network of new protected areas will be established that provides adequate habitat to maintain these species, and hundreds of others that depend on the ancient rainforests. In areas that fall outside the areas designated as the core protected network, low-impact logging methods will be developed and implemented, based on the recommendations of a team of independent scientists.

Over half of British Columbia's coastal rainforests have already been clearcut - a logging method that removes all trees from an area. For many indigenous peoples, or First Nations, introducing

less destructive methods of logging is critical. The region is home to more than a dozen First Nations, many of whom have seen their salmon streams and forest-based livelihoods damaged or destroyed by intensive logging over the past few decades. The studies now underway will be integrated with First Nations' own land-use planning, benefiting from traditional ecological and community knowledge. This stands in sharp contrast to the practices and policies of the past.

Representatives from the logging companies in the area are also supporting the new conservation-based planning, and have welcomed the resulting reduction of criticism from international customers. In the late 1990s, many customers of the B.C. logging industry cancelled or refused to renew contracts with logging companies they believed to be damaging the health of the rainforest. Agreeing to a moratorium and committing to develop new, more responsible ways of logging has alleviated the concerns many international customers had about the coastal logging industry in British Columbia.

A great deal of work remains to be done, and two years is probably too short a timeframe to allow for the depth and breadth of scientific research, economic and cultural studies that are needed. However, the moratorium is an enormous step forward towards the goal of healthy forests, vibrant communities and sustainable economies on the central and north coasts of British Columbia.

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Brazil: Mahogany Logging Moratorium

Big leafed Mahogany grows throughout a vast region of Amazon rainforest south of the Amazon River, from the Eastern Amazon in Brazil to Bolivia and Peru in the west, an area of more than 100 million hectares. However, the tree is not common in these forests, and widespread mahogany logging has caused significant environmental and social damage.

In 1994, a coalition of 80 groups from the Brazilian Amazon called on the Brazilian Government to place a moratorium on mahogany logging, due to its severe social and environmental impacts. The Coalition against Predatory Logging identified Mahogany logging as the leading cause of forest degradation and loss, south of the Amazon River. The Coalition included environment groups, indigenous peoples associations, peasants unions, and rubber-tappers unions. Following protests, petitions to the Government, and boycotts of Mahogany wood by NGOs and wood consumers in Europe and the US, the Brazilian government placed a two year moratorium on the granting of new mahogany logging concessions in 1996. In 1998 and again in 2000 the moratorium was extended for two more years.

The aim of the moratorium was to stop the expansion of forest destruction and send a wakeup call to the existing Mahogany logging industry that their illegal and destructive operations were being scrutinized, and that business as usual was over. Despite the moratorium, illegal and destructive Mahogany logging continued, as did human rights abuses against peasants, ecologists and indigenous people trying to stop illegal mahogany logging. In 2001, a review by the Brazilian Government and Greenpeace found illegal mahogany logging rampant. As a result of these findings, the Brazilian Government suspended all Mahogany logging and trade, except for those operations that become certified by an independent assessor. This is effectively a moratorium on Mahogany logging until producers can meet the standards of an independent forestry standards body. The current Mahogany logging ban will force all Mahogany logging companies to seek independent certification of their operations or else abandon business.

The ban was welcomed by environment groups, indigenous peoples' associations and some logging companies as a necessary step towards creating a responsible mahogany logging industry, and addressing ancient forests conservation in the Brazilian Amazon.

See website: <http://www.greenpeace.org/~forests/>

Russia – Oldgrowth Logging Moratoria in Western Russia

In 1996, a coalition of Russian environment and social groups called for a moratorium on logging in large oldgrowth forest areas in the border region of western Russia. Of particular concern to them was the expansion by Finnish and Swedish logging companies into the last large oldgrowth forest areas along the border of Russia and Finland. Oldgrowth forests have largely been eliminated in Scandinavia, and as a result more than one thousand species of plants and animals dependent on old forests are threatened with extinction in Norway, Sweden and Finland. In western Russia, some large areas of oldgrowth forests still exist, and these contain viable populations of many of the species under threat in the countries further west. Large-scale logging of these remaining oldgrowth forests areas would condemn hundreds of species of plants and animals to extinction.

Russian national and local governments were unwilling to consider adopting a moratorium on logging in oldgrowth areas, so the environmental coalition turned to the logging companies directly, including contacting their customer base. Initially two large Scandinavian companies – Enso and UPM Kymmene – agreed to a moratorium on logging in ancient forest areas close to the Finnish – Russian border. Today about ten companies, including several Russian State-owned businesses, have joined the moratorium which now includes all the large ancient forest areas in north Western Russia – totaling some ten million hectares, out of a forest land base of some 100 million hectares.

Of these companies, the Svetogorsk pulp and paper mill, and Ikea, the Swedish furniture company, have a procurement policy requiring all Russian wood to be “ancient forest free”. Negotiations are ongoing with Stora-Enso and UPM Kymmene to get them to agree to the wider oldgrowth-logging moratorium. For most of the companies, the moratorium will last for five years, and some companies are assisting with conservation planning for further protected areas.

In total, the companies agreeing to the oldgrowth-logging moratorium consume about 25% of the industrial wood extracted from European Russia’s forests each year, (equal to 15% of the industrial wood cut annually from all Russia.). The moratorium has bought time for conservation studies and the expansion of conservation areas. Several of the ancient forest areas that were scheduled to be logged have now been nominated for World Heritage Listing. Over the next several years, groups hope to expand the oldgrowth logging moratoria to all of Russia’s remaining oldgrowth forests, and to keep them in place until adequate, representative and comprehensive oldgrowth forest reserves have been established.

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China – Logging Ban in Critical Forest Watersheds

In 1998, China suffered severe floods of the Yangtse and Yellow Rivers, which displaced tens of millions of people, killed thousands, and caused about US\$20 billion in damage. The flooding was linked to destructive logging in the river watersheds, and the government responded by banning logging in forests on the upper Yangtse River, and the middle and upper Yellow River. Over the next two years, most of China’s natural forests were put off limits to logging (about 40 million hectares), while forestry workers were redeployed establishing plantations, and protecting the remaining natural forests.

In part, China was able to ban logging in most of its natural forests due to its establishment of 34 million hectares of plantations over the last 20 years. The ban has, however, required a major shift to imported timber to meet the shortfall in requirements. The logging ban will lead to a decrease in timber harvesting from the natural forests from 32 million cubic meters before 1998 to

an expected level of 12 million cubic meters in 2003. The shortfall has been made up from plantations and by major increases in wood imports. China is set to become the largest buyer of wood from many Pacific rim countries, overtaking Japan as the major wood importer in the region.

Like the logging bans in Thailand and the Philippines, some argue that China has merely exported the problem of forest overexploitation to other countries. The counter argument is that China is actively seeking to be self sufficient in wood and to that end is establishing more than two million hectares of plantations each year. When the Chinese Government announced the logging bans, it indicated its concern about the environmental impact of increased imports. Hopefully this initial concern will turn into action to closely regulate the millions of cubic meters of wood arriving in China each year from ancient forest regions around the world.

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Indonesia – Moratoria on New Logging and Conversion Permits

Industrial logging in Indonesia is out of control. The annual allowable cut set by the forest department is 22 million cubic meters, while about 80 million cubic meters of wood are cut each year. A joint study by the British and Indonesian Governments found that up to 70 per cent of the natural forest logging in the country was illegal.

In response to international criticism, in 1998 the Government of Indonesia imposed a moratorium on the issuing of new logging concessions, and on new forest clearance permits. However, as most of the forests have already been concessioned out to logging companies, and permits already approved for millions of hectares of forest clearing, the above measures did little to stem the tide of forest destruction. Illegal logging has continued unabated. In 2000 the Government of Indonesia banned the export of logs, as millions of cubic meters of logs were being illegally cut and exported each year. This measure reduced the price of logs in Indonesia, and the lower prices stopped some of the illegal logging, but much more effort is needed if Indonesia's forests are to survive into the second half of this century.

Walhi, the Indonesian Forum for Environment, a coalition of some 400 local environment groups, is calling for a moratorium on all industrial logging in Indonesia. In the last year, two out of Indonesia's 32 provinces (Aceh and West Java) have adopted an industrial logging moratorium as a way to start to address illegal logging, forest destruction, and associated floods and landslides. Civil society is now working closely with these provincial governments to find ways to establish forestry activities that do not lead to forest destruction.

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Papua New Guinea: Moratorium on New Logging Concessions

In 1999, the Government of Papua New Guinea adopted a moratorium on the granting of new logging concessions, following pressure from PNG landowners, and environment and social groups in PNG and abroad. Study after study had shown that the logging industry in PNG brought few benefits and many costs to the forests and communities of PNG. The moratorium on new concessions was in place for two years while detailed studies were made of the proposed new concessions.

The moratorium applied to the roughly half of PNG's 33 million hectares of forests that have not already been granted as logging concessions. The moratorium was lifted in late 2001, following

pressure from the logging industry, members of parliament and local government who sought profits from expanded logging operations.

While many communities and non-government groups in PNG were disappointed that the moratorium was lifted before existing logging concessions were also reviewed, they found themselves in a stronger position than before the moratorium was imposed. The review of proposed new concessions conducted during the moratorium detailed many illegal and improper practices that had taken place in the attempt to secure new concessions. With this information, efforts to stop illegal concessions from commencing operations will be able to be more effective. In the mean time, small-scale community-based logging operations, which conserve the forest and bring employment into the village, are spreading rapidly through the country.

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Cambodia – Suspension of Logging Operations in Natural Forests

Faced with mounting domestic and international criticism about the destruction of Cambodia's forests, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen announced the suspension of all logging operations, effective from 1st January 2002.

International and national non-governmental organisations had been calling for suspension and cancellation of logging concessions in Cambodia since the mid 1990's, when mounting evidence showed that these companies were responsible for the destruction of the country's forests: its only significant economic resource. The Asian Development Bank described the Cambodian forestry sector as a "total system failure" in a 1999 report, and demanded that concessions should face termination unless they radically reformed, including the production of social and environmental impact assessments and long-term forest management plans, by 30th September 2001. None of the concessionaires achieved this deadline or achieved the required standards, and the legal concessionaires were still committing the majority of cases of illegal logging since then.

Since 1999, Global Witness, an environment and human rights group, has been working with the Cambodian government as the independent monitor of the forestry sector and has reported cases of illegal activity on all of the concessionaires. In order for the current suspension to be meaningful, it is important for the government to show its resolve to end illegal logging. The international community is watching closely to see that logging companies that have committed serious contractual breach, particularly with regard to illegal logging, are not be allowed to resume activities. All 17 current concessionaires fall under this heading.

According to Global Witness, the country would be much better off without the current concessionaires, as shown by the fact that the flooding that the country experienced in 2000 was the worst in 70 years. The UN blamed it on deforestation, and it is estimated that it cost the country US\$156 million. This compares to the total of US\$92 million, which was generated by the forestry sector between 1994 and 2000.

For more information contact Global Witness: mail@globalwitness.org or visit www.globalwitness.org

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