

WWF, World Bank Would Trim Global Deforestation 10 Percent by 2010

NEW YORK, New York, May 26, 2005 (ENS) - WWF and the World Bank are determined to curb illegal logging and cut global deforestation rates by 10 percent within the next five years. Currently around the world, more than 54,000 square miles (14 million hectares) of forest are cut down each year, an area roughly equal to the size of Greece.

As a call to action for the international community, the two organizations announced their new global forest protection target Wednesday at the ongoing meeting of the United Nations Forum on Forests at UN Headquarters in New York.

In the Central African country of Cameroon a logger prepares a tree for sale.
(Photo courtesy [WWF](#))



The Alliance chose to announce its new 10 percent target as forest ministers, heads of organizations, and representatives of Major Groups gathered for the high level segment of the two week forum, which concludes on Friday. The focus of discussion is on restoration of the world's forests and on forest law and governance for sustainability.

While their global program to achieve a 10 percent reduction in forest destruction is new, its announcement marks the renewal for another five years of their forest conservation alliance, known as the World Bank/WWF Alliance for Forest Conservation and Sustainable Use.

“Ecologically and economically valuable forests in places like the boreal forests of Russia’s Far East, the lowland forests of Sumatra, and the rainforests of the Amazon and the Congo are disappearing quickly to forces such as illegal or poorly regulated logging and agricultural clearing,” said Claude Martin, WWF’s director general.

“By renewing the Forest Alliance, we are committing the World Bank and WWF to working with a governments and a

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“We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.”
-- Aldo Leopold, *American environmentalist and author*

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wide range of forest stakeholders to develop effective solutions to these forest threats,” Martin said.

The program will support the establishment of new forest protected areas such as national parks, as well as more effective management of forested areas that are already designated for protection, and improved management of forests outside of protected areas.

Also, the Alliance will facilitate regional cooperation and the adoption of policies in support of more effective forest management.

Illegal logging is not only taking ecologically valuable forests, it is robbing poor countries of the tax revenues they need to provide services to their people. World Bank studies estimate that US\$15 billion in tax revenues is lost annually in developing countries due to illegal logging.

“This is money that governments in poor countries could have used for social services and health. These practices need to be stopped,” said Ian Johnson, vice president for sustainable development with the World Bank. “The World Bank and WWF are committed to work with all involved parties to establish effective and equitable regulation of forest practices.”

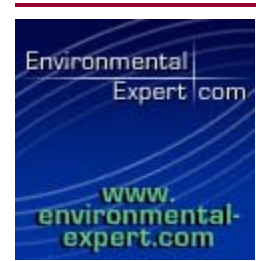
The Forest Alliance has played a pivotal role in facilitating regional initiatives in developing countries and has been working with the private sector to promote responsible forest practices.

Central America

Forest still covers much of Nicaragua's Layasiksa area where WWF works with indigenous people on forest protection. (Photo © Cinthya Flores)



One Alliance innovation is a computer program about chain of custody for monitoring the flow of wood from the forest to the factory and its final sale.



This program is now used by the Nicaraguan government and the private sector to respond to demand for products from legal sources in international markets, and to comply with treaty requirements under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species.

The development of this computer program has been supported by the Forest Alliance and USAID-Nicaragua. Shortly the same model will be applied in Peru.

The Moskitia of Honduras and Nicaragua and the Darién region in Panama have natural tropical forests inhabited by indigenous peoples. The Alliance has collaborated with WWF Central America in the strengthening of indigenous initiatives to manage their own forestry resources.

Entrepreneurs as well as community residents participate in educational programs about responsible forestry management and trade, the creation of financing mechanisms for responsible forestry management, and wood production from legal operations that are pursuing certification as a viable alternative to illegal tree felling.

Brazil

The Alliance supports the Brazilian government's Amazon Regional Protected Area Program (ARPA), a 10 year program that aims to protect 12 percent of the Brazilian Amazon.

A US\$220 million trust fund to support the on-going management of this protected areas network is part of the ARPA program.

The scope of ARPA is equivalent to building the entire U.S. national parks system in 10 years, the Alliance says.

ARPA has already added new protected areas totaling more than 69,000 square miles (17 million hectares) to the system of protected areas in the Brazilian Amazon.

Central Africa

The Alliance has supported the 1999 Yaounde and 2005 Brazzaville Heads of State Forest Summits. These meetings have resulted in a cooperative among the leaders of Congo Basin countries who are willing to cooperate on forest conservation and responsible management.

A U.S. State Department initiative of US\$53 million to

promote forest conservation, and 13,000 square miles (3.5 million hectares) of new protected areas have been established in the Congo Basin since 1999.

Indonesia

Machines push Indonesian trees to the water's edge, sending them on their way to world markets. (Photo courtesy [WWF Indonesia](#))



Groundbreaking analytical work that has led to the

development of a systematic approach for the detection, prevention, and suppression of illegal logging in Indonesia is another project of the Alliance.

This approach has brought together a wide range of stakeholders and helped develop a constituency for change. The Alliance points to the recently released Presidential Instruction to combat illegal logging as an outcome of this work.

Forest Products Companies

Companies committed to practicing responsible forestry are offered technical assistance and support to improve forest management practices by the WWF's Global Forest and Trade Network with support from the International Finance Corporation, the private sector arm of the World Bank.

The Forest Alliance says it will continue to work closely with the Global Environment Facility to put in place innovative financial mechanisms to fund a suite of initiatives and field projects leading to measurable improvements in forest conservation and management around the world.

Since the Forest Alliance was first created in 1998 it has contributed to the establishment of 193,000 square miles (50 million hectares) of new protected areas, the Alliance said in a statement Wednesday.

It claims credit for improved management of 270,000 square miles (70 million hectares) of protected areas, and responsible

management of some 85,000 square miles (22 million hectares) of commercially harvested forests.

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