

GREENPEACE

M for Moratoria

MORATORIA IN THE LAST

LARGE AREAS OF ANCIENT FORESTS

Governments need to decide to immediately establish moratoria on logging and other industrial scale projects in all remaining large ancient forest areas and other forest areas with key conservation values until representative protected area networks have been established (Precautionary Principle).

Ancient forest is a common concern of humankind

Ancient forests, i.e. primary, old growth, natural forests dominantly shaped by nature and with small human impact, are a natural heritage and a common concern of humankind¹. In particular ancient forest areas which have not been carved up by roads or other infrastructure, and are large enough to sustain all native species including far ranging animals, offer a unique opportunity to adequately address conservation needs before any of the conservation values are lost. These areas must therefore be priority for conservation in land use planning.

Why are regional moratoria needed?

In order to keep these last large ancient forest areas and address their conservation needs in planning decisions, regional moratoria are essential. Moratoria call for temporary halts on logging, other industrial scale activities, such as the construction of roads, railways, powerlines etc. that are likely to cause fragmentation of ancient forests.

These moratoria are essentially a tool which provides the necessary time to enable the transition from uncontrolled development of forest regions into well-planned, sustainable development. This time can be used to assess the conservation and economic values of the forest, so that in the land-use planning (zoning) of the areas these values can be balanced. This is a requirement of the Precautionary Principle and follows the Ecosystem Approach to look for all values and components of an ecosystem, while including all relevant stakeholders in the decision-making. Furthermore, moratoria are a prerequisite for good governance.

Moratoria to overcome lack of knowledge

Moratoria help to avoid situations where unique conservation values are lost through fragmentation caused by an industrial project with limited or short-term socio-economic benefits for the region. At the same time they can prevent wrong decisions being made regarding conservation - i.e. protected areas with limited conservation value being

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

established, hindering projects which could create significant socio-economic benefits for the region.

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 which turns a blind eye to conservation will continue. This disregard has already led to the loss, or caused serious damage, to the vast majority of the world's original forest cover.

Where are the moratoria needed?

Moratoria are needed in all remaining non-fragmented ancient forest landscapes larger than 500 km² in size. The threshold size of 500 km² is a pragmatic compromise, which covers the largest ancient forest areas. Furthermore forest areas below 500 km² in size with evidence of key conservation value² and all ancient forests in regions where they have become scarce³, must be included in the moratoria, with the goal of converting them into protected areas. All these areas must be accurately mapped.

How long must the moratoria last?

The moratoria must be kept enforced until conservation and other values have been thoroughly assessed, zoning of these areas into protected areas and sustainable use areas has been completed and resulting new protected areas have been established and are sufficiently equipped. The zoning must be based on balancing conservation values with other values, as well as on consultation and informed consent with indigenous peoples and other traditional forest dwelling communities. Where necessary, economic losses during and after the moratoria must 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 are banned inside the moratoria areas. Small-scale activities with a low impact on the forest ecosystem and which do not cause fragmentation are acceptable. Large industrial scale activities such as logging, flooding through river dams, land clearance and burning, the construction of roads, railways, pipelines or powerlines are prohibited.

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 agreeing to regional moratoria, Governments will show at the start of the 21st Century leadership, vision and commitment to conserve the remaining ancient forests for centuries and generations to come.

**For further information see
www.greenpeace.org/saveordelete**

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).