

FOREST POLICY

PREAMBLE

Forests cover 30 percent of the earth's land area, or nearly four billion hectares, and are essential to human wellbeing, sustainable development and the health of the planet. Forests provide essential ecosystem services -- such as food, fodder, fuel, timber, non-wood products especially medicines and shelter, as well as soil and water conservation and clean air. Forests prevent land degradation and desertification and reduce the risk of floods, landslides and avalanches, droughts, dust and sand storms and other disasters.

An estimated 25 percent of the global population depends on forests for subsistence, livelihood, employment and income generation. In fact, forests are home to an estimated 80 percent of all terrestrial species. Forests contribute substantially to climate change mitigation and adaptation and in conserving biodiversity. The sustainable use of forest resources is a prerequisite for the preservation of nature and ensuring a sustainable world for the future.

VISION

The vision of the Greens is to create a world where all old growth, natural virgin forests and wetlands are legally protected areas. Other forests and trees are sustainably managed, and provide economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits for present and future generations. Also, the vision is to protect and manage all types of forests and eco-sensitive zones based on sustainable development principles.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Greens is to see the protection of the world's remaining primary forests (estimated at less than 20% of original coverage) and to promote conservation and reforestation by strengthening cooperation and political commitment for example to halt illegal logging. Furthermore, secondary growth forests need to be sustainably managed and paper and timber resources need to be reused and recycled to ease pressure on the secondary growth forests. Alternative sources such as for packaging need to be introduced. Forests need to function as productive and resilient ecosystems and climate regulators.

ACTION PLAN

A commitment to protect old growth forests, conserve timber and paper use, and manage sustainable forestry needs to be nationally and internationally implemented. Therefore, the Greens will --

Forest Protection

- Recognise the rights of forests as a legal concept to protect ecosystems
- Establish effective mechanisms and measures to achieve full restoration of key eco-systems and old growth forests and a to prevent future violations of the rights of forests if an ecosystem's rights are breached
- Manage secondary growth forest resources in accordance with biodiversity conservation, community consultation including of indigenous peoples and strict environmental and social impact assessments

- Support efforts to strengthen forest governance frameworks, expand national parks and UNESCO World Heritage areas
- Ban all logging in native forests and institute native forest protection zones
- Develop sustainable alternatives to forest timber and paper industries
- Ban the sale and import of illegally logged wood products, both imported and domestic
- Use sustainably managed forests as recognised by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) mechanisms
- Ban export of raw logs and other minimally processed forest products like pulp, chips, carts, slabs, etc. to promote domestic industry
- Implement FSC standards and labels to identify ecologically sound forest products including traceability of all paper and timber products
- Discourage and phase out pine plantations for paper production as these trees cause erosion and make soil infertile due to their saline needles
- Legislate to stop forestry destruction practices so as to maintain habitat, ecosystem integrity and carbon sinks
- Introduce local forestry officers as employees of the local authority advising and liaising with communities and the sector
- Maintain adequate old growth forest cover in all regions while planting new forests, of indigenous species, in degraded lands.
- Ensure scientific management of all types of forests to increase their resilience as ecosystems and in commercial forestry to maintain productivity and maximise regrowth per hectare
- Carry out scientific research to understand the complexity of all types of forests and to record and protect biodiversity of all types of forest ecosystems
- Develop and implement special plans to protect marine and wetlands ecosystems
- Promote nature and wildlife tourism for sustainable development of local people
- Support awareness programmes on forest protection
- Support local people and NGOs for the creation of conservation and community reserves
- Manage initiatives for conservation of biodiversity and species both in the wild and in reserves
- Establish and strengthen medicinal plants conservation areas
- Support local people to reduce man-animal conflicts and poaching
- Develop strict policy for import and export of wild gene-based products
- Protect endangered species of flora and fauna through land protection and management initiatives.

Climate Change and Sustainable Economic Opportunities

- Recognise the inestimable value of native forests for climate management, water supply, and biodiversity
- Encourage use of locally grown, sustainable-certified timber products, including in public buildings and new constructions
- Have clear country of origin labelling on imported products

Protecting Forests and Education

- Ensure biodiversity by enforcing biosecurity measures at a national level, such as the Convention on Biodiversity
- Promote access for children and young people into wooded areas, and include the roles of forests and forestry in education curricula
- Ensure that forest ecosystems, protection and management are incorporated into school and tertiary curricula
- Encourage community woodland projects
- Promote the health and well-being benefits of access to trees and woodlands, and pay special attention to preserving or creating community and urban woodlands within the planning process.

Biodiverse Ecosystems

- Work to maintain, enhance and restore forest ecosystems and multi-functionality, to provide key environmental services, including flood mitigation, air, soil and water quality
- Introduce a moratorium on the destruction of ancient woodlands
- Encourage rewilding -- restoring and protecting natural processes and core wilderness areas and encourage natural regeneration
- Promote appropriate diverse planting to enhance biodiversity, both within woodland cover and related habitats, particularly understory
- Discourage monoculture non-native tree plantings instead regenerate native ecosystems
- Require the use of indigenous, local species during reforestation and ecosystem rehabilitation programs

Research & Development

- Recognise the importance of research in this area, including GIS mapping of illegal forestry practices, followed by government action against such practices
- Support research into regulation and practice of biosecurity of introduced species, ensuring updating and analysis of risk registers, improve training in identifying problem plants and products, and include biosecurity management in relevant course curricula
- Fund innovative and targeted research for CO₂ sequestration potential as an effective means of countering climate change and climate emergency adaptation and resilience opportunities, particularly flood mitigation, sea level rise and desertification.

Habitat Protection

- Ban mining and gas exploration in forests — including coal seam gas, shale gas, tight gas and shale oil mining and underground coal gasification -- as they pose unacceptable risks to land, water, agriculture, grazing, tourism and forest ecosystems.
- Prohibit use or destruction of native forests for hydro energy projects
- Encourage species diversity and ecosystem integrity instead of monocultures, such as palm oil plantations, resulting in massive land clearances
- Implement initiatives including strict government legislation to combat illegal logging and land clearances practices
- Minimise the use of pesticides and fertilisers in farm practices

- Transition from native forest logging to the development of sustainable alternative fibre industries.
- Retrain and offer assistance to workers in the timber industry.
- Ban broad-scale land clearing in order to protect biodiversity and to arrest soil loss, river degradation and salinity
- Ban logging roads through national forests and conservation areas
- Ban import of rain forest beef and agriculture products to discourage land clearing practices
- Maintain and restore values such as the protection of wildlife habitats, fisheries, biodiversity, protection of river scenery and recreation
- Promote sustained cooperative relationship between public and private sectors for forest protection
- Work to facilitate the provision of sustainable and non-polluting packaging and fencing

Economic Measures

- Substantially increase investment in forest protection, restoration and management through mechanisms such as UNESCO and national park legislation
- Incentivise land-owners to convert to permanent and sustainably managed forestry practices
- Incentivise sustainable forestry
- Create a sustainable and productive wood products industry from sustainable secondary forestry so that long-term skilled jobs and social sustainability in regional communities are available

International Forests Protection

- Work internationally to reduce deforestation through incentives such as at the UN, G20, UNFCCC, and regional mechanisms such as the South Pacific Forum
- Enhance coordination among international organisations, institutions and instruments addressing the forest issues and protection of old growth forests
- Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation and contribute to the global effort of addressing climate change
- Demand that an efficient continental system of forest-fire prevention be set up and traditional and local knowledge on fire prevention and management is incorporated
- Initiate a programme for the recovery and restoration of degraded forests and deforested land

Rights of traditional users and custodians

- Ensure that indigenous people and local communities have access to traditional lands and forests
- Support the rights of indigenous people to protect their native forests
- Where they are not returned to indigenous ownership, ensure local people's access to state forests for deadwood, fodder, food and medicines, etc.
- Ensure consultation with local people in a transparent and non-pressurised manner
- Ensure the rights of Indigenous and Tribal People in their ecologically sound use of the forests -- such as rubber extraction, nut gathering, and collection of medicinal herbs

References:

[The United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030](#)

Rights of Nature Articles in Ecuador's Constitution

<https://www.globalgreens.org/globalcharter-english>

<https://europeangreens.eu/content/save-european-forests>

<https://policy.greenparty.org.uk/fr.html>

<https://www.greenparty.ca/en/old-growth>

<https://greens.org.au/vic/policies/forests-policy>

<https://greens.org.au/policies/natural-resources-forests-and-mining>

https://www.greens.org.nz/forestry_policy

<https://www.cagreens.org/platform/forestry>