



Briefing for the House of Commons general debate on the Copenhagen Climate Change Summit, Thursday 16 July

DECC, 'The Road to Copenhagen' a manifesto for a global climate change deal

The Woodland Trust welcomes the UK Government's recognition that global deforestation represents a major threat to the future sustainability of the planet. Ahead of the forthcoming Copenhagen conference the Government has demonstrated its concern in respect of deforestation by pledging to reach an agreement on the following points:

- To reduce tropical deforestation by at least 50% by 2020, and to halt global forest cover loss by 2030 at the latest.
- Take account of the concerns of indigenous peoples and local communities realising biodiversity and other co-benefits.
- Agree to substantial interim financing arrangements of action to reduce deforestation in advance of bringing it into the carbon market in due course.
- Work towards the more comprehensive inclusion of forestry and land use in developed countries' targets so that the sector can make a real contribution to the goal of limiting global temperature rises to no more than 2°C.

However, the manifesto is limited by its failure to consider forest degradation – a vital consideration in relation to irreplaceable old growth forests – and its lack of consideration as to how international trade drives deforestation in developing countries.

If an agreement is to reduce global deforestation successfully, it will need to restrict international trade to forest products certified in line with Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) principles.

Mitigation

Climate change presents a severe threat. The UK Government has a moral obligation to show leadership by maximizing the UK's carbon emissions reductions in line with the latest scientific evidence. The UK Government should therefore:

- **Show leadership in international climate negotiations by pressing for a deal that offers the best opportunity for avoiding dangerous climate change.**



- **Reduce UK carbon emissions. In particular, extensive and immediate action is needed to meet the commitments in the Climate Change Act. Domestic cuts in carbon emissions below 1990 levels of at least 40 per cent by 2020 and 80 per cent by 2050 are required.**
- **Reject plans for carbon-intensive infrastructure; for example, expansion of Stansted airport, which also threatens ancient woodland.**

Adaptation

While it is crucial that strenuous efforts are made to tackle global carbon emissions, even if they are substantially reduced immediately, the effects of accelerated climate change will continue for many decades. The UK Government must show leadership by acting to enable people and ecosystems to adapt to climatic changes.

Deforestation

Deforestation accounts for approximately 18 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions. Yet, the Kyoto Protocol has not halted forest loss, making it essential that international deforestation is high on the agenda at Copenhagen. The Trust believes that a deal to stop global deforestation is urgently needed. In particular, any mechanism to prevent deforestation and degradation emerging from the Copenhagen negotiations this December must ensure:

- **No net loss of total forest area.**
- **Absolute protection for all old growth forests from destruction *and* degradation resulting from direct human impacts.**
- **All management of forests to be ecologically sustainable and certified in line with FSC principles.**
- **All international trade in forest products to be certified in line with FSC principles.**
- **Funding to prevent deforestation must be guaranteed and not linked to the often volatile global carbon, timber and financial markets.**

Finally, countries should also be motivated to maintain forests by factoring into their emission reductions target both the conservation of forest area and afforestation.

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