



Global Greens Declaration Biodiversity and the Climate Crisis 4 May 2008, Sao Paulo, Brazil

Ecological wisdom is a fundamental principle of the Global Greens Charter and protecting biodiversity, the variety of life on earth, is a central Green priority.

Biodiverse ecosystems, particularly forests, have a crucial role to play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating impacts, yet they are almost absent from the climate debate. This is exacerbating the global biodiversity crisis. Natural ecosystems are suffering directly from the impacts of climate change but also from the perverse impacts of measures which are supposed to tackle climate change, for example clearing natural vegetation to plant agrofuel crops.

Oceans cover almost 70% of the earth's surface and have a primary role in temperature setting and maintaining the earth's carbon balance. Coastal zones, the transition between oceans and continents, have the highest rates of diversity and biological productivity in the world as well as high levels of endemism. They are under pressure from more and more people living in coastal cities (expected to reach 75% of the world's population by 2050), industrial development, and over-exploitation of fisheries and other biological resources.

The earth's remaining natural ecosystems are essential to regulate the climate and keep the planet habitable. Extensive, natural forests are especially valuable: they are stable, resilient, very large carbon stores and must be protected at all costs.

Forest destruction through clearing and industrial-scale logging, the degradation and desertification of shrublands and grasslands and industrial-scale agrofuel production (crops, including tree crops, grown to produce energy) are all contributing to climate change. Emissions from clearing and degradation of other natural ecosystems add to this.

Emissions from forest clearing, industrial-scale logging and ecosystem degradation are at least 25% of the global emissions problem. They demand 25% of the resources and attention.

The Global Greens agree

1. To propose a common protocol under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: The Biodiversity and Climate Protocol, which
 - a) recognises the linkages between biodiversity and climate change, specifically the role of terrestrial and oceanic ecosystems in the global carbon cycle, the critical role of extensive natural forests and rangelands in storing carbon and protecting the climate, and the need to protect biodiversity as a key response to climate change;
 - b) commits parties to prevent actions under the Climate Change Convention which have adverse impacts on biodiversity;
 - c) includes enforceable commitments to (i) protect extensive natural forests and other ecosystems from clearing and industrial-scale logging; and (ii) restore degraded

ecosystems; in order to maintain and enhance their vital role in storing carbon and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions;

- d) establishes a very large global biodiversity fund to support local communities and all levels of government in protecting, restoring and managing natural ecosystems to conserve biodiversity, store carbon and improve water management.
2. To campaign for carbon offsets to be excluded from emission trading systems¹, and in favour of the establishment of a very large global biodiversity fund. The fund would draw resources from sources including a proportion of the proceeds of emissions trading schemes and carbon taxes, and from the redirection of fossil fuel subsidies.
3. To oppose mandatory targets and subsidies for agro-fuels, except where their production is demonstrably greenhouse positive, does not impact on biodiversity, and does not compete against food production for land and water.
4. To campaign for full carbon accounting, measuring emissions and uptake separately, as the basis for determining the climate impact of actions. We reject any assumption that industrial-scale logging in natural forests is 'sustainable' or carbon neutral.
5. To work for the protection of forests, especially in Amazonia, as a priority. Forest destruction is threatening biodiversity as well as forcing the Indigenous people of Amazonia out of their lands. The Greens will protect the rights of the Indigenous communities living in Amazonia.
6. To uphold the rights of Indigenous peoples, women and local communities in forest and ecosystem protection programs.
7. To campaign against illegal and unsustainable logging by (i) banning imports of tropical timbers, unless certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, and (ii) taking action against corruption.
8. To work for sustainable tourism that provides economic incentives to preserve and protect ecosystems and culture, and creates income for local communities.
9. To campaign for effective government action at national and international level to protect oceans and their biodiversity.
10. To promote organic, diverse and GMO-free agriculture and carbon-conserving forms of land management to improve the health and carbon-richness of agro-ecosystems.
11. To recognize that raising animals for food contributes significantly to biodiversity loss and climate change, through deforestation and methane production.
12. To support voluntary carbon offsets based on the restoration of natural ecosystems and cultural and amenity plantings that have legally enforceable permanent protection.

Implementation

The Global Greens agree to form a small working group, reporting to the Global Greens Coordination. Its role is to work with interested Green parties/movements to develop and implement strategies in accordance with the action plan above.

1. We aim to make substantial progress before the Copenhagen UNFCCC conference of parties in November 2009, following which there will be a review.
2. Participating parties/movements will nominate a contact person before 31 July 2008.
3. Resources required: co-ordinator, phone meetings, possibly some travel.

¹ Note however that the Global Greens support the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) as a means of promoting climate-friendly technologies as a supplement and not a replacement for domestic reductions.