

Just Forests

response to the review of the

White Paper on

Irish Aid - 2012



Nature of Views: On behalf of organisation

Organisation: Just Forests

Role in Organisation: Coordinator

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INTRODUCTION

Values-driven

Just Forests works to increase the Irish public's understanding and awareness of our reliance on natural resources to live, to develop economically, socially and environmentally. We promote a **'human values'** approach to poverty alleviation and natural resource management and consumption.

Our vision of a **'human values'** approach to development and trade will lead to justice and peace in a world where people's dignity is ensured and rights are respected; where basic needs are met and resources are shared equitably; where people have control over their own lives and those in power act for the common good.

We welcome the opportunity to engage with Irish Aid at this important time of reflection and planning on Ireland's role within international development.

Our submission draws on our experiences over the past 23 years of development education and advocacy within Just Forests and the business experience of our founder who ran a small furniture-making business for 25 years prior to founding Just Forests.

Stewardship
Fairness
Responsibility
Active Citizenship
Honesty
Courage to Change
JUSTICE
TRUST

Putting the ‘review’ in **context**.

Every two seconds, across the world, an area of forest the size of a football field is clear-cut by illegal loggers. In some countries, up to 90 percent of all the logging taking place is illegal. Estimates suggest that this criminal activity generates approximately US\$10–15 billion annually worldwide—funds that are unregulated, untaxed, and often remain in the hands of organized criminal gangs.

Thus far, domestic and international efforts to curb forest crimes have focused on preventative actions, but they have had little or no significant impact. While prevention is an essential part of enforcement efforts to tackle illegal logging, it has not halted the rapid disappearance of the world’s old-growth trees. New ideas and strategies are needed to preserve what is left of forests.

World Bank Study - March 2012: Justice for Forests - Improving Criminal Justice Efforts to Combat Illegal Logging



It must be about **justice** not charity



It's all about *resources*...resources & *resources*...

Climate change involves complex interactions between climatic, environmental, economic, political, institutional, social and technological processes.

It cannot be addressed or comprehended in isolation of broader societal goals such as equity or sustainable development, or other existing or probable future sources of stress.

Both adaptation and mitigation are fundamental in the climate change debate. (FAO Forestry Paper-2010: What woodfuels can do to mitigate climate change)

Wood is society's oldest source of energy. Its use for cooking and heating remains vital to the daily energy needs of over two billion people in developing countries. It is also a "new" energy source in the sense that modern and efficient applications for wood energy are increasingly being used, especially in member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), to produce cost-effective, high-quality energy services at various scales.

The complexity of woodfuel issues arises in part from this dual role: woodfuel is both an intimate part of basic energy needs in developing countries and integral to the ambitious plans for renewable energy in many OECD countries (and increasingly in some developing countries). (FAO Forestry Paper-2010: What woodfuels can do to mitigate climate change)

In the coming ten to 15 years, the carbon intensity of world economies must be lowered by deploying highly efficient technologies and alternatives to fossil fuels. Every effort must be made to get the most out of currently available technologies and to invest in those that promise results in the short term. Wood energy is a real and practical option for decarbonizing the global economy. Sustainably managed planted and natural forests, including ones managed for woodfuel, can help avoid or reverse deforestation and can offset carbon emissions by serving as carbon sinks.

Over the next 20 to 25 years, the International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates that global investments of US\$20 trillion will be made in oil and gas exploration and in the construction of power stations and other energy infrastructure, mostly in emerging economies.

Investments in renewable fuels and bioenergy will be far smaller. Given that most energy assets are built to last for between three to five decades, the choices made now will decide the future for the world's energy profile and the environment.

‘...the choices made now will decide the future for the world's energy profile and the environment.’

Progress Made

Has the Government been successful in implementing the commitments contained in the White Paper on Irish Aid?

Just Forests would like to reiterate what many other Irish NGO's have already stated in their submissions – *'Ireland should be proud of a 'cutting edge' (2009 OECD DAC Review) aid programme that is poverty-focused and rights-based, addresses climate change, promotes good governance and supports the development of a diverse and independent civil society.'*

The most notable lack of progress since the publication of the 2006 White Paper is in relation to our commitment to meeting the target of 0.7% GNI on ODA. A reduction in Overseas Development Assistance by 30% since 2008 has been a major set-back.'

Changing context

What are the implications of the changes in the global and domestic context for the Government's aid programme in the future and how will these affect current priorities?

We now have over 7 billion people on the Earth. This number is to increase to 9.3 billion within 25 years. Where will we get our wood, fresh water and other natural resources essential to life, economic development and basic needs?

The changing global climate, food matters, fresh water issues and the energy crises are increasing on a daily basis. Declining natural resources will create more conflicts, vulnerability and unpredictability. The present world population is putting huge stresses on already scarce natural resources. These are some of the underlying causes of poverty.

Addressing these underlying causes of poverty will be necessary to

reduce hunger and vulnerability in a sustainable manner.

In the rural areas of many developing countries, natural resources are an important source of food, both through direct consumption and through providing the basis for income generating activities (e.g. cash crops, forest products) that enable people to purchase food. Because of this, measures to improve access to resources are an important element of strategies for the progressive realization of the right to food.

As a member of IDEA, Just Forests fully supports their submission. However, Just Forests would like to emphasize in this submission that **Irish Aid must take a strong 'human rights' approach to resource-access as well as: ...cont'd**

Key Issues...cont'd

How should the Government respond to the key issues of hunger, fragility, climate change, basic needs, governance & human rights, and gender equality? Are there other issues? Given the limited resources and the need to focus these, which issues should the Government prioritise in its future aid programming?

- The **right to property**, which is of direct relevance to efforts to secure natural resource rights, and other “substantive” human rights such as the **right to housing**, peoples’ “**right to a generally satisfactory environment favourable to their development**”,¹¹ and peoples’ **right to freely dispose of their natural resources**.
- Rights of public participation, including **freedom of expression, assembly and association** and “**procedural rights**” that enable resource users to have greater say in decisions affecting their access to resources (e.g. rights of access to information and of public participation in decision-making).
- Rights aimed at ensuring legal protection of other human rights, particularly the **right to a remedy**.

Human rights and ***resource-access*** literatures and practitioners operated in a compartmentalized way. Human rights arguments were the reserved domain of lawyers and human rights campaigners, and prioritised civil and political rights like freedom from torture or freedom of expression.

Resource-access issues were traditionally tackled through diverse combinations of technical interventions and political mobilization — more rarely through human rights arguments.

WHERE ON EARTH

DO WE GET OUR

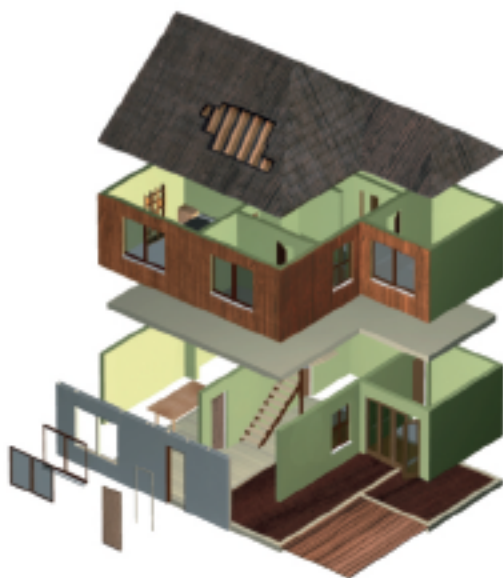
TROPICAL WOOD














WHEN PEOPLE ADMIRE WOOD AND WOOD PRODUCTS, they rarely think for a moment of the country of origin of the forest from which the wood is taken. Nor indeed do they think of the conditions in which the population of that country live or the damage caused to their environment by the destruction of their forests. Nor do they realise that the accumulated destruction of forests in all countries is contributing in a massive way towards overall global warming.



THE FOLLOWING TROPICAL WOODS MAY BE IN USE IN YOUR HOME OR SCHOOL:



-  **Iroko** (Africa)
-  **Mahogany** (Africa, South America, Central America)
-  **San Domingan Rosewood** (Africa, S.E. Asia, Central America, Australia)
-  **Tropical Olive** (Africa)
-  **Zebrano** (Africa)
-  **Teak** (Africa, Central America, S.E. Asia)
-  **Khaya** (Africa)
-  **Obeche** (Africa)
-  **Indian Laurel** (S.E. Asia)
-  **Ekki** (Africa)
-  **Wenge** (Africa)



Are we using our
forest resources
wisely?

CAN WE CUT DOWN ON OUR USE
OF TROPICAL TIMBER AND USE
IRISH-GROWN WOOD INSTEAD?

Boreal 33%

Temperate 11%

Tropical 47%

Sub-tropical 9%

Change TRADE ne

Tropical 47%

Stop the CLIMATE!



Mahogany logs from Cameroon in West Africa on their way to Ireland. Photo: Just Forests.



Original Forest Cover



Current Forest Cover

The aim of sustainable forest management is to ensure the long-term availability of forest resources while also maintaining ecosystem services such as soil and watershed protection; it encompasses the administrative, legal, technical, economic, social and environmental aspects of the conservation and use of forests.

Our particular focus is on good forest management and responsible timber sourcing as a means of **supporting Irish Aid's future aid programming**. There is an ever-increasing body of support stating that:

- fairly traded timber and wood-based products can be an effective way of promoting sustainable development
- other independently monitored trading initiatives designed to raise social and environmental standards such as the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) have as their ambition to market, sell and promote trade in products which comply with certain social, environmental and development criteria
- other independently monitored trading initiatives designed to raise social and environmental standards are important instruments to reach the **Millennium Development Goals (MDG's)**, particularly the eradication of poverty and the global partnership for
- other independently monitored trading initiatives contributing to raising social and environmental standards pursue objectives in support of sustainable development for producers and workers in developing countries and enable private companies to become actively involved and effectively supportive of sustainable

We are calling on Irish Aid to *do the right thing and put it all back...*

When Ireland's tropical timber imports are aggregated over the last 50 years, they represent a sizeable area of forest destruction.

For example, to produce the country's (1996) imports on a sustainable basis would require an area of natural forest some 200 times the size of the Phoenix Park in Dublin.

In 2000, Ireland's trade in tropical hardwoods increased by 140% in value over the 1999 figure. Levels of consumption have made Ireland one of the highest per capita consumers of tropical hardwoods in the EU. (TEAK 2000)

Let's reduce the *carbon footprint* of imported timber and plant an area of forest in Ireland *200 times* the '*Size of the Phoenix Park*' for our future self-sufficiency in quality timber needs...!



A lush rainforest scene with a stone path and dense foliage. The path is made of flat, mossy stones and leads into the forest. The trees are tall with thick canopies, and the ground is covered in green plants and ferns. The lighting is dappled, with sunlight filtering through the leaves.

Climate

Resources

Poverty

Let's also protect an area of rain forest 200 times the size of:

The Phoenix Park **X 200**

Ways of Working

How can the Government further strengthen its ways of working in delivering an effective aid programme, with a view to delivering real results in poverty reduction?

Since our inception in 1989, Just Forests has witnessed significant resistance in certain government departments to matters of fair trade and development. This resistance to embracing a responsible approach to trade in imported tropical timber has caused much conflict between Just Forests and some government departments over the years.



Debt and Aid:

Debt-for-nature initiatives were conceived to address the rapid loss of resources and biodiversity in developing countries that were heavily indebted to foreign creditors. Conservationists had noted that the pressure to pay off foreign debts in hard currency was leading to increased levels of natural resource exports (i.e., timber, cattle, minerals, and agricultural products) at the expense of the environment.

In many cases, indebted developing countries had difficulty meeting their hard currency debt obligations and defaulted.

- **Irish Aid must ensure that 'Debt for Nature' programmes are discontinued**

EU Timber Regulation (EU TR):

In November 2010, after more than seven years of negotiation, the European Union published "Regulation (EU) No 995/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2010 *"Laying Down the Obligations of Operators who Place Timber and Timber Products on the Market."* This banned the placing of illegal timber and certain, listed wood products on the EU market and put an obligation of due diligence on the operators who import them.

The new law is due to be enforced on 3rd March 2013.

- **We urge Irish Aid to advocate for and promote a whole Government approach to development policy and for coherence at a policy level between all government departments on matters of international development, trade, development education (DE) and education for sustainable development (ESD).**

Still failing the forests:

³The Irish government appears to be fully supportive of the EU FLEGT Action Plan [on illegal logging] but appears to be doing very little proactively to help it succeed. Ireland is still failing the forests.



Ireland has improved its performance somewhat, compared to 2007. A degree of inter-departmental collaboration is taking place, and the government has indicated its readiness to accept FLEGT-licensed timber once it becomes available.

There's no indication of a public procurement policy for sustainable / legal timber products.

The country is not involved with Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs). Work is ongoing on the implementation of the EU Timber Regulation, which will come in to force in March 2013.

(³Eurobarometer 2012 on the EU Timber Regulation (EU TR).



Justice *not* Charity -

Chico Mendez ((December 15, 1944 – December 22, 1988) was a great labor and community activist who environmentalists tend to remember as motivated by his love of nature. In truth he had more basic concerns: helping miserably poor people eke out a better living in the forest. He was murdered by violent landlords - the local aristocracy - for his work. New York Times reporter Andrew Revkin observed in his book, *the Burning Season*, that

“His demands were for schools and jobs and health care, hardly a green agenda. This overlap with environmental preservation brought the union man to the attention of conservationists who shared his goal of preserving the rain forest, but for far different reasons.”

the priorities of the poor

Wangari Muta Maathai (1 April 1940 – 25 September 2011) was a Kenyan environmental and political activist. She was educated in the United States at Mount St. Scholastica and the University of Pittsburgh, as well as the University of Nairobi in Kenya. In the 1970s, Maathai founded the Green Belt Movement, an environmental non-governmental organization focused on the planting of trees, environmental conservation, and women's rights. In 1986, she was awarded the Right Livelihood Award, and in 2004, she became the first African woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for "her contribution to sustainable development, democracy and peace." Maathai was an elected member of Parliament and served as assistant minister for Environment and Natural Resources in the government of President Mwai Kibaki between January 2003 and November 2005. Furthermore she was an Honorary Councillor of the World Future Council. In 2011, Maathai died of complications from ovarian cancer.



Further



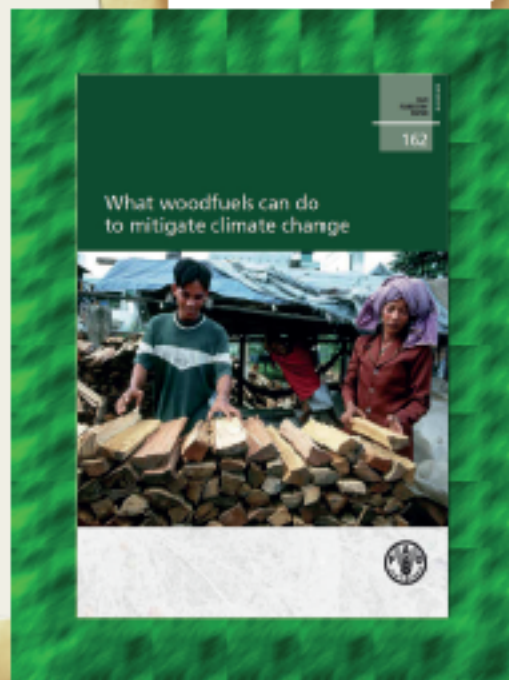
reading ...



Conservation Sustainability Climate change

Barking up the right tree?

A scorecard of UK local authorities' responsible wood and paper procurement



Common Cause

The Case for Working with our Cultural Values

September 2010

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For more information on the work of Just Forests please visit our website(s):

www.justforests.org

www.justmusic.ie

If this booklet is ever printed in hard copy, it will be printed on FSC-certified paper, from well-managed forests.

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Photos:

Cover photo. Pupils from St Bridget's N.S., Rhode, Co Offaly view one of the panels in the Wood of Life exhibition.

Page 2. First sample of Cuban "Spanish" Mahogany imported into Ireland- Dated: November 11th, 1855.

Page 4. Former Taoiseach, Mr Bertie Ahern, is challenged by a Just Forests activists about the use of illegal timber in public buildings

Page 5. Bale of Chinese plywood used in the construction of Mullingar Public Library