

LETTER FROM THE ACTIVISTS TO THE HEADS OF STATE OF
G8 COUNTRIES

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Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori of Japan
Prime Minister Jean Chretien of Canada
President Jacques Chirac of France
Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany
Prime Minister Guilano Amato of Italy
President Vladimir Putin of Russia
Prime Minister Anthony Blair of the United Kingdom
President Willaim Clinton of the United States of America
Representative Romano Prodi of the Commission of the European
Communities,

We today are delivering our message to you at your G8 Summit in Okinawa, Japan for our concern to preserve what is remaining of the world's ancient forests. As we are not able to presently relay this message by other means than a direct approach to you we wish to stress the urgent need for meaningful and concrete domestic and international measures to combat illegal logging and the trade in illegally harvested timber.

The decision of the G8 foreign ministers to welcome the report on the implementation of the G8 Action Program on Forests does not in any meaningful way address these issues. Greenpeace Internationally has representatives in Okinawa and aboard our flagship the 'Rainbow Warrior' from all G8 from countries and all continents.

The eight logs of ash and oak that we are presenting to you come from Russia's Primorsky region in the Far East. Following Greenpeace investigations, actions, and press work in Vladivostock, the Sea of Japan and the importing port of Toyama Shinko in Japan: the regional prosecutor's office of this part of Russia is suspending logging licenses. Their own investigations indicate that 80% of logging in this region is illegal. This is one example of Greenpeace campaigns to preserve ancient forests that are active in all of your countries.

To date G8 countries did little of relevance to combat illegal logging and the trade in illegally harvested timber, one of your main commitments at the Birmingham Forests Action Programme in May 1998. The US openly admits that further work is needed in all five priority areas, particularly protected forest areas and illegal logging/trade.

It is disappointing that G8 foreign ministers did not adopt more definite commitments on illegal logging as proposed in a previous draft of the conclusions. This draft included the need to examine domestic measures so that domestic policy and law did not undermine the fight against illegal logging.

For instance, through the lack of a green procurement policy (only buying from independently certified sources such as FSC) your government spending of tax-payers money makes a large contribution to illegal logging and the international trade in illegally harvested timber.

Perverse subsidies with their harmful and destructive impact on ancient forests are not mentioned by the G8 foreign ministers. All existing direct and indirect subsidies of your government should be assessed and abolished if they prove a threat to sustainable and ecosystem-based forest management.

As the foreign ministers themselves say, the 1990 Pilot Program to Conserve the Brazilian Rain Forest is an important contribution to sustainable forest management, including combating illegal logging. However, implementation has yet to take place in a way that shows any result on the ground. Most of the timber in the Amazon is still harvested illegally. That is why Greenpeace urges G8 and EU governments to adopt the Greenpeace proposal for a G8 Project for the Protection of Brazilian Ancient Forests from Illegal logging. Furthermore you should provide assistance to developing countries to combat illegal logging.

Illegal logging and the trade in illegally harvested timber is still a matter of fact, as recently highlighted by Greenpeace in Europe, Japan, Russia and the US. It is now up to you to take accountability for the last ancient forests of the world. Adopt a green procurement policy; offer new development aid to combat illegal logging and abolish, after a serious assessment, all perverse subsidies for ancient forest destruction.

We hope that you as Heads of State of major importing countries of timber products as well as timber producing countries such as Russia, USA and Canada can and will adopt meaningful initiatives to halt illegal logging and trade as part of your G8 summit in Okinawa.

Yours faithfully,
Greenpeace International