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## **Statement on Forest Certification and Guidance for Companies and Consumers**

**March 2018**

### **Summary Recommendations**

- **Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle.** Greenpeace recommends that individuals and companies reduce consumption, reuse products as much as possible, and when necessary purchase products that are made of 100% post-consumer recycled fibre and reclaimed timber. All products must be designed so that they are easily and fully recyclable.
- **When sourcing virgin fibre/wood, large volume buyers should do proper due diligence** on source location, species utilized, protection of High Conservation Values (HCVs) including Intact Forest Landscapes (IFLs) and validation that indigenous peoples' rights have been respected.
- **Forest Certification, like FSC 100% forest management certified timber, can be a useful tool in conducting this due diligence.** However, additional due diligence is often required, for example, when sourcing from regions where civil society institutions are weak, corruption is high, and/or High Conservation Values (HCVs) are not formally protected, and to ensure that No Deforestation, no Peatland and no Exploitation (NDPE)<sup>[1]</sup> commitments are met. Greenpeace cautions against the use of weaker forest certification schemes like PEFC, which cannot guarantee either legality or minimum responsible forest management practices on the ground.
- **Greenpeace International is no longer a member of any timber certification scheme.** Greenpeace federated entities may be members of FSC where they choose to engage at a national level for strong local implementation. No Greenpeace entities are members of PEFC or its affiliates.

### **Guidance to Individuals and Communities**

**Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle.** Greenpeace reminds individuals and communities that the best thing to do is first reduce consumption, then reuse products as much as possible, and third, use products that are made of 100% post-consumer recycled and responsibly produced alternative fibres.<sup>[2]</sup> The most environmentally friendly products are those that do not end up in the wastebasket. We need to dramatically reduce our consumption of wood fibre products if we want to protect our last remaining forests. When disposable products are absolutely necessary, they should consist of 100% recycled and/or responsibly produced alternative fibres whenever possible.

For Pulp & Paper Products, FSC 100% is typically the best available option when recycled is not available. Where possible, Greenpeace recommends finding out more about where the products come from and in particular whether there are any environmental or human rights issues in those regions, including ensuring NDPE commitments are met. Products using virgin fibre should be designed to be fully and easily recyclable.

For timber products, Greenpeace recommends reclaimed wood. When reclaimed is not an option, the FSC 100% label is currently the best available choice - however, whenever possible, consumers (especially those buying in larger volumes such as builders) should dig deeper to minimize the risk of buying timber from controversial sources. Larger volume buyers should always obtain information about source location and species utilized and to opt for responsibly operating local and regional sources.

Greenpeace cautions customers that FSC Mixed label products do not follow the full set of principles of FSC forest management. FSC Mixed contains wood that has come from simply 'controlled' rather than forest management certified sources, and we have found in some cases to include wood from the destruction of High Conservation Value areas, and where traditional rights have been violated. In addition, PEFC and associated labels (such as SFI, CSA in North America and IFCC in Indonesia) are not currently a reliable guarantee of a high level of environmental and social performance, and therefore Greenpeace recommends avoiding them.

### **Guidance to large volume buyers of timber and pulp & paper**

Greenpeace encourages all large volume buyers of forest products to first and foremost reduce their use of virgin forest fibre. We continue to promote 100% post-consumer recycled forest products and responsibly produced alternative fibres as the most sustainable options and the best indicators of environmental performance.

When virgin wood or fibre is absolutely necessary, FSC 100% forest management certified fibre remains the best available option. However, depending on where the fibre comes from, additional due diligence is often required to ensure that it meets company policy requirements including NDPE <sup>[1]</sup>, especially when it comes from "high risk" regions where democratic and civil society institutions are weak and corruption is high. Furthermore, Greenpeace International cautions against the use of "FSC Mix" products that includes "controlled wood" <sup>[3]</sup> which may contain wood from destructive sources that has not been certified to FSC principles and criteria for forest management.

Greenpeace strongly advises against using PEFC certified wood fibre, as the PEFC and associated certification schemes do not provide a strong global framework for forest conservation and human rights.

As corporations navigate this increasingly complex reality, Greenpeace is happy to be a resource.

### **Greenpeace membership in the Forest Certification Schemes**

Greenpeace International is not a member of any forest certification scheme.

Greenpeace's twenty-six national and regional offices choose for themselves whether or not to actively join forest certification systems as members. Currently, as of April 2018, no Greenpeace entity is a member of PEFC or a PEFC affiliated system, such as the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) in North America and Indonesian Forestry Certification Cooperation in Indonesia. Some Greenpeace national entities are members of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) <sup>14</sup>.

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### **March 26, 2018: Shift in Greenpeace International membership in the Forest Stewardship Council**

Greenpeace International was a founding member of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), but now has decided to not renew its FSC membership due to inconsistent implementation and failures to protect forests.

Greenpeace International is a founding member of FSC, so we do not take this decision lightly. FSC's guiding principles and governance model remain admirable: responsible management criteria are negotiated between representatives of industry, environmental organizations, civil society organizations, and Indigenous representatives, in a democratic chamber balanced system and then independent parties audit and certify forestry operations to these criteria. Therefore while Greenpeace International is withdrawing its membership, we will continue to engage in dialogue with FSC International on issues relating to forest conservation and human rights, as well as FSC members.

However, Greenpeace has seen very uneven implementation of FSC principles and criteria globally. In some regions FSC certification improved forestry practices, but in others it fell short of its goals of conserving forests and providing for wider social benefits. This happens in particular in "high risk" regions where democratic and civil society institutions are weak, and corruption is high.

FSC, as a forest certification scheme, is a tool for forestry and timber extraction and Greenpeace believes it is not doing enough on protection. While it has rules for conservation built-in, and can contribute to conservation outcomes, we believe the FSC system is currently focussing on commercial forest operations and needs to carry out improvements to achieve large scale forest protection in all the forest regions of the world.

Furthermore, we believe transparency is the foundation of accountability and responsible sourcing of products. It is now becoming the norm across commodity supply chains. To be considered credible, a forest certification scheme must publish digital maps for certified forest management units and sourcing areas deemed by the system to be 'low risk'. Neither FSC, nor any other timber certification schemes, currently publish maps globally, or make audit reports publicly available for all Chain of Custody certificates.

Greenpeace International is therefore downscaling its global support for FSC and leaves it to our national offices to maintain membership in regions where appropriate to work with FSC to achieve strong standards and performance on the ground<sup>[4]</sup>. Greenpeace International will continue to engage in dialogue with FSC International on issues relating to forest conservation and human rights, as well as FSC members.

Greenpeace's position on the weaker forest certification schemes has not changed. We do not support PEFC, or its affiliated certification systems, such as the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) in North America, Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC), Australian Forestry Standard (AFS), and Indonesian Forestry Certification Cooperation in Indonesia. Neither Greenpeace International nor national offices hold membership in any PEFC schemes. Nor does Greenpeace as a global organization endorse PEFC-certified products in the marketplace because PEFC schemes lack the basic foundations and requirements to protect social and ecological values, and primarily serve the interests of the timber industry.

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[1] See: <http://highcarbonstock.org/> for implementing no deforestation in the humid tropics.

[2] Studies show that alternative fibres, particularly agricultural waste, can have a lower environmental footprint than virgin wood fibre. Here is one example of a Life Cycle Analysis which shows the impacts of various fibres:  
[http://www.cms.kimberly-clark.com/UmbracoImages/UmbracoFileMedia/Alternative\\_Fiber\\_LCA\\_Public\\_Report\\_FINAL\\_01-14\\_umbracoFile.pdf](http://www.cms.kimberly-clark.com/UmbracoImages/UmbracoFileMedia/Alternative_Fiber_LCA_Public_Report_FINAL_01-14_umbracoFile.pdf)

[3] For information on the different FSC labels and the use of "controlled wood", see  
<https://ic.fsc.org/en/choosing-fsc/fsc-labels>  
Statement on Forest Certification and Guidance for Companies and Consumer

[4] Current Greenpeace national office members of FSC International are China, Canada, USA and New Zealand.