



WHY BUSINESSES SUPPORT GLOBAL CONSERVATION

Natural ecosystems such as forests, reefs, wetlands, and oceans provide inherent value and environmental services vital to human welfare and the global economy. Two-thirds of ecosystems are currently degraded,¹ costing the global economy an estimated \$2 trillion a year.²

Protecting the world's remaining natural areas benefits businesses and communities by:

OPTIMIZING THE ABILITY OF COMPANIES TO PROVIDE FOR THE NEEDS OF A GROWING GLOBAL POPULATION

- The world population is expected to reach 9.2 billion by 2050.³ Protecting natural resources will help ensure that people have soils to farm in, water to drink, and fish to catch. Conservation practices are paramount if we are to meet this demand.
- 75% of the world's fisheries are fully exploited or overfished,⁴ yet global demand for seafood has doubled in the past 30 years and continues to rise.⁵
- Nearly one-third of the world's cropland has been abandoned in the past 40 years because erosion has made it unproductive.⁶
- By 2025, an estimated 1.8 billion people will face severe water scarcity, and two-thirds of the global population will lack sufficient water.⁷

MINIMIZING RISK TO SUPPLY CHAINS, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND MARKET ACCESS

Experts project that at current rates of environmental degradation, the value of lost ecosystem services will be about 7% of the global gross domestic product by 2050.⁸



- Many businesses depend on reliable access to fresh water, wood, non-timber forest products, and genetic resources provided by forests around the world. The disappearance of 40% of the world's forests⁹ and the expected loss of an additional 20% by 2050 puts supply chains at risk, and makes it more expensive for businesses to operate.¹⁰
- As resources are depleted, reliable sourcing of commodities and raw materials is becoming more unpredictable. Suppliers are forced into remote, virgin areas with limited infrastructure, putting added pressure on fragile ecosystems and species.

LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD FOR LAW-ABIDING COMPANIES

Responsible U.S. businesses are being undercut by companies practicing illegal logging, fishing and mining around the world. These commodities flood the international market, depressing prices and making it difficult for law-abiding companies to compete.

- Illegally caught fish, which account for up to 30% of the catch in some fisheries, are sold at lower prices than legally caught fish.¹¹
- Sales from illegal timber producers abroad reduce U.S. exports of wood products by about \$460 million a year.¹²

IMPROVING THE WELL BEING OF CUSTOMERS, EMPLOYEES, SUPPLIERS, AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

A healthier environment benefits everyone, and a growing number of consumers make choices based on environmental impacts and corporate social responsibility.

- Sales of certified sustainable forest products quadrupled between 2005 and 2007.¹³
- The global market for eco-labeled fish products grew by more than 50% from 2008–2009.¹⁴
- Global spending on ecotourism is estimated to be increasing by 20% a year.¹⁵



CONTRIBUTING TO A MORE PEACEFUL AND PROSPEROUS WORLD

Competition for scarce natural resources has brought conflict and instability in some areas.

- The U.S. National Intelligence Council has said that scarcities of water, arable land, and food will increasingly cause international conflict this century.¹⁶
- A June 2010 report by the Center for a New American Security concluded that environmental degradation will contribute to conflict and instability in key international flashpoints.¹⁷

The Alliance for Global Conservation—a partnership of Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy, The Pew Charitable Trusts, Wildlife Conservation Society, and World Wildlife Fund—is encouraging nations to implement a comprehensive strategy to address ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss in the developing world.

The U.S. government could play a leadership role in this global initiative. U.S. policy leaders need to hear that global conservation is important to American businesses.

Join other U.S. business and industry leaders on a statement supporting action on the conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity around the world. Contact Elia Herman at The Pew Charitable Trusts, eherman@pewtrusts.org.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, *Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Opportunities and Challenges for Business and Industry*, World Resources Institute, Washington, 2005.
- ² John Adams, "Preventing the next big bailout—of nature." *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, March 21, 2010.
- ³ *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB), TEEB for Business, Chapter 1, "Business, biodiversity and ecosystem services," July 2010.*
- ⁴ *TEEB, An Interim Report*, 2008, p. 4.
- ⁵ U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (UNFAO), *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2008*, Rome, 2009, p. 7.
- ⁶ David Pimentel, Soil Erosion: A Food and Environmental Threat, *Environment, Development and Sustainability*, 2006, 8: 119–137, p.123.
- ⁷ UN-Water, *Coping with water scarcity—Challenge of the twenty-first century*, 2007, p. 10, www.fao.org/nr/water/docs/escarcity.pdf.
- ⁸ *The Cost of Policy Inaction: The case of not meeting the 2010 biodiversity target*, a study for the European Commission, Environment Directorate General, L. Braat and P. ten Brink (eds.), May 2008, p. 119.
- ⁹ *TEEB, An Interim Report*, p.11.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹ World Wildlife Fund. website, "Fishing Problems: Illegal Fishing", 2010. http://www.panda.org/about_our_earth/blue_planet/problems/problems_fishing/illegal_fishing.
- ¹² World Bank, *Strengthening Forest Law Enforcement and Governance: Addressing a Systemic Constraint to Sustainable Development*, Report 36638-GLB, August 2006, p. ES-2.
- ¹³ *TEEB for Business*, Executive Summary, p.20.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ The International Ecotourism Society. "Factsheet: Global Ecotourism," <http://www.ecotourism.org/atf/cf/%7B82a87c8d-0b56-4149-8b0a-c4aaced1cd38%7D/TIES%20GLOBAL%20ECOTOURISM%20FACT%20SHEET.PDF>
- ¹⁶ U.S. National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2025: A transformed world*, November 2008, chapter 5.
- ¹⁷ Center for a New American Security, *Sustaining Security: How natural resources influence national security*, June 2010.