
[Action for Papua New Guinea's rainforests](#)

Papua New Guinea (PNG) possesses one of the planet's largest remaining tropical rainforest biomes. At least seventy-five percent of its original forest cover is still standing, occupying vast, biologically rich tracts over 100,000 square miles in all. Nevertheless, lately the government of PNG has been taking steps to revive the dying timber industry, which favour a small group of companies, weaken forest sector governance and accelerate logging in these precious remaining forests (see WRM Bulletin 22).

At least twelve new industrial logging operations are being promoted by Prime Minister Bill Skate. This means that millions of acres of rainforest -including the three largest and most biologically significant old growth rainforest tracts in PNG- will be allocated over the next few months to logging operators outside of normal forest regulations. PNG's Forestry Board has already approved a 2 million acre extension to an existing 1.5 million acre logging area held by Rimbunan Hijau, the Malaysian logging company that dominates PNG's timber industry. The extension, which lies within the largest remaining lowland rainforest in Asia, was granted non-competitively and against the wishes of resident landowners and the advice of the Forest Authority.

Since Australia provides aid to PNG, the Rainforest Action Network (RAN) is asking all interested people and organizations to address Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Honorable Alexander Downer, MP, House of Representatives, Parliament House, Canberra, ACT 2600. Here's a sample letter:

Honorable Alexander Downer MP,

I am/We are writing to you expressing my/our concern for the fate of the irreplaceable old growth rainforests of Papua New Guinea. Such forests play a valuable role in regulating climate and contain an estimated five percent of the Earth's species, making them critical to the maintenance of regional -and global- climate and biodiversity.

Recent actions taken by Papua New Guinea's government -including a reduction of the log export tax, the fast tracking of new logging operations, and failure to support log export monitoring- pose a serious and immediate threat to these forests. Until this forest crisis can be brought under control, I/We urge you to make a condition of your country's aid to Papua New Guinea an immediate moratorium on new forest management agreements and extensions of existing forest concessions.

Source: Glen R. Barry