



New Myanmar Logging Ban a First Step to Lasting Reform, Prosperity, and Peace - More Action Needed

5 August 2016 | WASHINGTON, D.C. | Following the news that the government of Myanmar imposed a temporary national logging ban to help curb deforestation, **Kerstin Canby**, Director of Forest Trends' Forest Policy, Trade, and Finance Program, made the following statement:

"Myanmar's timber trade has been fraught with problems for decades, including contributing to the armed conflict in ethnic minority territories, and reform is critically needed to make the sector environmentally and economically sustainable, as well as socially equitable, and to ensure that it contributes to peace rather than war. This moratorium could represent a good stopgap measure, if it is used to allow time for the national government to make necessary institutional reforms."

"In order to be a step toward meaningful change, the moratorium must be tied to key reforms in the sector that must be implemented before the resumption of logging. Only through these reforms can Myanmar put in place a sustainable forest management plan that responsibly values forests and equitably benefits all communities across the country."

The logging ban will remain in effect until the end of March 2017, with an exception for the country's famous teak forests in the Pegu Yoma hills, where the ban will be in place for a full decade.

Kevin Woods, Senior Policy Analyst for Forest Trends who manages the Myanmar program, welcomed the long-awaited logging ban, but called for it to be strengthened and expanded:

"The logging ban offers a welcome opportunity to achieve two crucial goals: first, to re-evaluate how community forestry can offer new, sustainable sources of wood while also contributing to rural economic growth; and second, to complete the planned national forestry inventory to ensure sustainable management, a process that will likely take several years."

"Indigenous forested areas just emerging out of decades of armed conflict – from a war partly defined by who has the right to extract and profit from natural resources – would also benefit from a longer logging ban duration so as to not disrupt the fragile process of peace building."

Dr. Arthur Blundell, an expert on the role of natural resources in post-conflict environments and co-author of the Forest Trends report "[How Do Peace Agreements Treat Natural Resources?](#)" added:

"Illegal logging has posed a threat to national security within Myanmar, which is in the midst of a delicate transition toward peace. We've seen examples around the world of the exploitation of natural resource undermining peacebuilding, particularly in ethnic minority areas where forest-ownership is often contested."

"In the short term, we hope officials in Myanmar take advantage of this moratorium to put in place governance reforms that ensure the nation's logging sector doesn't undermine its peaceful transition."

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