
Burma: China Continues Devouring Neighbour's Forests

In a letter sent to Premier Wen Jia-bao of the People's Republic of China on June 24, more than twelve conservation groups and more than 30 individuals from the international environmental and academic communities expressed concern regarding Chinese logging in the N'Mai Hku area of northern Burma (the full letter is available at http://www.rainforestrelief.org/News_and_Events/Rainforest_Relief_News/Burma_Forests_Letter/Letter.html).

We have said that China is devouring the forests of neighbouring countries (see WRM Bulletin N° 82). The N'Mai Hku area is part of the Gaoligongshan mountain forest eco-region located on both sides of the border between Burma's Kachin State and Yunnan Province, China. The Gaoligongshan eco-region contains several internationally important rivers, such as the Nujiang (Salween) and the Dulong (Irrawaddy) which flow through Burma. Logging these mountain forests would destroy the watersheds, causing disastrous flood/drought cycles.

China knew well those impacts in 1998 when unsustainable logging in the Yunnan region resulted in extensive flooding, thousands of deaths, large scale human displacement and massive agricultural, economic and infrastructural damage. But the ensuing logging ban implemented by China will prove useless if the conservation of forests along the Yunnan border are not operated on a trans-border scale so the neighboring country's remaining old-growth forests are not devastated.

The concerned Burma citizens and groups request the Chinese government to take immediate action to halt all logging in the N'Mai Hku area, implement stricter cross-border trade regulations, and more effectively apply the existing laws to prevent corruption.

Article based on information from the press release "Letter from Environmentalists Urges Chinese Government to Protect Neighboring Forest Region of Burma", and "Text of Letter to Premier Wen Jia-bao regarding N'Mai Hku Region", sent by RainforestRelief, E-mail: relief@igc.org ; <http://www.rainforestrelief.org>