



# A Common Vision for Transforming the Paper Industry: Striving for Environmental and Social Sustainability

Drafted by the Center for a New American Dream, Conservatree, Co-op America, Dogwood Alliance, Environmental Defense, ForestEthics, the Green Press Initiative, the Markets Initiative, Natural Resources Defense Council, the Recycled Products Purchasing Cooperative

Ratified at The Environmental Paper Summit

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## **An Urgent Problem**

Pulp and paper production, consumption and wasting have many negative environmental and social impacts. The pulp and paper industry is among the world's largest generators of air and water pollutants, waste products, and the gases that cause climate change. It is also one of the largest users of raw materials, including fresh water, energy, and forest fibers. Forests that are essential for clean air and water, wildlife habitat, climate protection, spirituality, recreation and indigenous peoples' cultural survival—including old-growth and other ecologically important forests—are being logged for fiber; in many places they also are being cleared for replacement by plantations that have reduced ecological value and employ toxic chemical herbicides and fertilizers. The pulp and paper industry also has negative impacts on the health, well-being and stability of local communities. In North America the majority of paper products are buried in landfills or burned in incinerators, resulting in substantial pollution, forest destruction and major climate change impacts.

Industrialized nations, with 20 percent of the world's population, consume 87 percent of the world's printing and writing papers.<sup>1</sup> Global production in the pulp, paper and publishing sector is expected to increase by 77% from 1995 to 2020.<sup>2</sup> While paper and paper products yield many benefits, due to society's growing demand for paper and the industry's unacceptably large ecological footprint on the planet, it is necessary to transform global paper production and consumption towards processes that are ecologically and socially responsible and sustainable.

## **Goals For Transforming Paper Production and Consumption Toward Environmental and Social Sustainability**

We, the undersigned, call upon the paper industry to adopt the 'Precautionary Principle' with regard to the use of natural resources and chemicals throughout the production process and to refrain from activities that could potentially cause irreparable harm to human health and the environment. Communities' rights to a healthy environment, workers' rights to beneficial employment, and indigenous peoples' rights to control their traditional lands and protect their cultural identity are fundamental. Industry has a responsibility to respect these rights. We are committed to achieving the following goals and call upon pulp and paper manufacturers, suppliers, and purchasers, as well as governments to accomplish these goals in pursuit of an environmentally and socially sustainable paper production and consumption system.

Minimize Paper Consumption:

- Eliminate excessive and unnecessary paper consumption

Clean Production:

- Minimize the combined impacts of water, energy, wood, and chemical usage, as well as air, water, solid waste, and thermal pollution across the entire paper production system including: fiber

Originally printed on 100% postconsumer recycled paper, processed chlorine free (PCF)

<sup>1</sup> Klaus Toepfer, Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme, Keynote Address UNEP's 7th International High Level Seminar on Cleaner Production, 29-30 April 2002.

<sup>2</sup> OECD Environmental Outlook (Paris: OECD, 2001), p. 215

production/sourcing, pulping, production, transportation, use, and disposal.

- Eliminate harmful pulp and paper mill discharges and the use of chlorine and chlorine compounds for bleaching.

#### Responsible Fiber Sourcing:

- End the use of wood fiber that threatens endangered forests. (Some forests are so rare, threatened, or ecologically vulnerable, or are of such global biological or cultural importance that any logging or commercial use could irreparably damage their conservation value.)<sup>3</sup>
- End the clearing of natural forest ecosystems and their conversion into plantations for paper fiber.
- Source any remaining virgin wood fibers for paper from independent, third-party certified forest managers that employ the most environmentally and socially responsible forest management and restoration practices. (Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is the only acceptable international certification program that comes close to meeting this goal.)
- Use alternative crops for paper if comprehensive and credible analysis indicates that they are environmentally and socially preferable to other virgin fiber sources.
- Eliminate widespread industrial use of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers in plantations and fiber production.
- Stop the introduction of paper fiber from genetically modified organisms, particularly transgenic trees and plants with genes inserted from other species of animals and plants.

#### Maximize Recycled Content:

- Eliminate paper manufactured solely of virgin fiber and fundamentally reduce reliance on virgin tree fibers.
- Maximize post-consumer recycled fiber content in *all* paper and paper products.
- Increase the use of other recovered materials (e.g., agricultural residues and pre-consumer recycled) as a fiber source in paper.

Specific implementation guidance for these goals is detailed within the attached document, *Guidance to Best Practices For Advancing Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Papers*.

### **Working Together Toward a Solution**

We, the undersigned, come together to pursue informed and realistic goals for positively transforming paper production and consumption. We are committed to working together in a variety of campaigns to achieve this transformation. We recognize the unique role that each organization plays in moving paper producers and consumers toward environmental and social sustainability and we agree to support both individual campaigns and the collective effort. We agree to work together and with manufacturers, governments, suppliers, and purchasers to accomplish the above goals for creating a more environmentally and socially responsible system of paper production and consumption.

**Signed this 20<sup>th</sup> day of November 2002, Environmental Paper Summit,  
Sonoma County, California:**

<sup>3</sup> See "Wye River" discussion document "Endangered Forests: High Conservation Value Forests Protection– Guidance for Corporate Commitments" for additional details.