

## 1. Minister and Deputy Minister's Priorities for the next 12-18 months

**COP26:** We welcome the Minister's commitments to working across sectors to coordinate actions for COP26 and hold a COP Cymru climate conference during this period. This will be an opportunity to reflect on how to take forward agreements at COP26 and ideas shared from other countries and stakeholders. We hope that Wales' discussions on how to address Wales' overseas deforestation footprint is included in the agenda for COP Cymru. This should also include communities, especially indigenous people at the frontline of the deforestation and climate change crisis.

**Climate change / net zero:** We welcome the targets set in legislation to reach net zero by 2050. Urgent action to reduce CO2 emissions this decade must be the focus for the

Minister and Deputy Minister. It is important that Ministers consult with civil society in Wales to capture ideas for the new Low Carbon Plan. Given Wales' overseas deforestation footprint (see info below), we believe that the plan should introduce a mechanism to measure greenhouse gas emissions associated with overseas deforestation caused by commodities and products that are imported into Wales. This measure should be considered as part of the setting of the Well-being of Future Generations Act National Well-being Indicators and Milestones.

We welcome the Minister's statement that the Welsh Government's Climate Change Board is developing a holistic view of the decarbonisation that needs to take place across Wales" and that they plan to "engage every person, community, business and public servant" to embed and drive positive changes with regards to emissions. This approach links with Size of Wales' Deforestation Free Nation campaign which aims to engage government, public sector bodies, companies and the public to reduce their overseas deforestation footprint. This requires changes to farming practices in Wales, public sector procurement and food systems.

A key area missing from the priorities is sustainable land management in Wales. We have ample evidence that our food and farming system can help to resolve the climate, nature, and health crises, if we move quickly and make the right choices. The ['Ten Years for Agroecology in Europe'](#) study from French thinktank IDDRI demonstrated that we can feed a growing population a healthy diet, helping to tackle chronic disease, while phasing out fossil fuel and chemical inputs, protecting our pollinators, easing our environmental footprint overseas by reducing our dependency on soy feed, and regenerating our soils – but only if strides are taken this decade to achieve a 'Ten-Year Transition' to agroecology and sustainable diets. For more information about the campaign, see [here](#).

**Tree planting:** It is positive to see the ambitious tree planting targets in Wales. This complements the Welsh Government's tree growing activities in Uganda via the Wales and Africa programme in partnership with Size of Wales and our local partner METGE. We are on track for planting 25 million trees by 2025. Alongside the commitments for tree planting, there is a need to also commit to protecting existing forests both in Wales and overseas. Studies show how ancient intact forests store 30-70% more carbon than logged, degraded or plantation forests. Therefore, if we are serious about reducing our carbon emissions, we need to protect our existing forests.

## 2. Priorities for the Committee

One of the key factors driving the global climate and nature emergency is deforestation and habitat loss. The International Panel on Climate Change is clear that without our forests, we will fail to limit global warming to 1.5°C. Wales needs to play its part by changing what it buys, consumes and invests in, since these choices can drive unethical practices and environmental degradation overseas.

Ensuring supply chains are fair, ethical and sustainable is important for a number of reasons, including Wales' obligation to establish itself as a Globally Responsible Nation in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Wales has a responsibility to consider how its practices impact global habitats, but Wales also has an opportunity to demonstrate global leadership towards driving sustainability across commodity supply chains around the world.

More than 70% of tropical forest loss and land conversion is attributable to the production of just a handful of agricultural commodities and forestry products demanded by consumers. Precious habitats like the Amazon are being burnt to clear land - rainforests are being destroyed to produce just a handful of commodities. Wales imports significant quantities of agricultural and forest commodities, some of which are driving deforestation and habitat destruction overseas. Whether that is commodities for the production of soymeal for livestock feed in Wales, palm oil used in everyday supermarket items, beef imported into Wales, cocoa used in many Welsh treats and desserts, or even rubber used to produce latex or car tyres.

Size of Wales, along with WWF Cymru and RSPB Cymru and Size of Wales have formed a Deforestation Free Nation Partnership. We have commissioned research which is due to be published in October to provide data, for the first time, of Wales' deforestation footprint. The research confirms that

- **An area equivalent to 40% of the size of Wales (823,000 hectares)** was required overseas to grow Welsh imports of cocoa, palm oil, beef, leather, natural rubber, soy, timber, pulp and paper in an average year between 2011-2018.
- Crucially, **30% of the land used to grow Welsh imports of commodities is in countries categorised high or very high risk for social issues and deforestation.** This means commodity supply chains supplying Wales in these countries risk deforestation, conversion of natural ecosystems and/or social issues, such as child, forced labour or abuse of Indigenous People's rights.
- The GHG emissions associated with the conversion of natural ecosystems and changes in land cover for the production of Welsh imports of soy, cocoa, palm and natural rubber total

1.5 million tonnes CO2 each year. This is equivalent to **4% of Wales' total estimated domestic and imported goods carbon footprint, or 22% of the GHG emissions from transport in Wales.**

The research is clear – if we are serious about tackling climate change and nature loss in Wales, we have to also address our overseas impacts. Wales needs to tackle global footprints in our supply chains, particularly through the food commodities and products we import. There are levers that the UK Government have to address this, through trade deals for example, but we also have significant levers in Wales to address our Global Responsibility. This includes:

- Introducing mandatory ethical and sustainability requirements for public sector procurement in Wales;
- Monitoring our consumption emissions and setting targets to reduce this in Wales' carbon budgets and low carbon delivery plans
- Ensuring that the Welsh Government's Economic Contract, which aims to strengthen a relationship with business and drive inclusive growth and responsible business behaviour, is strengthened so that signatories to the contract commit to ethical supply chains that protect human rights and the environment.
- Introducing sustainable farming practices via the Sustainable Farming scheme that do not contribute to human rights abuses and environmental degradation overseas. For example, this includes ending the reliance on imported soy and palm oil animal feed that originates from forest risk areas and adopting nature and climate-friendly farming methods such as organic farming, agro-ecology and agroforestry.

We would welcome committee scrutiny in relation to Wales and its global responsibility, climate change and overseas deforestation footprint.

### 3. Size of Wales

Size of Wales is a Welsh charity that brings people together in Wales and beyond to help protect two million hectares of tropical forests (the size of Wales), helping to reduce deforestation as part of Wales' response to the challenge of climate change. We also support tree growing initiatives around the world and raise awareness about how vital tropical forests are for us and our climate as well as for the wildlife and people who live in them. We work in schools and colleges to engage children and young people in understanding and sharing responsibility for the protection of the world's forests. We work with businesses, government and communities in Wales to bring about changes in policies and practices to tackle our overseas deforestation footprint. Our work is funded by the Welsh Government, trusts and foundations, corporate partners and individuals.

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