Protection of natural resources: promotion of tropical forests, Community action

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Adopting the report by Mrs Maartje VAN PUTTEN (PSE, NL), the committee called for the adoption of measures to conserve tropical forests, trade regulations and controls on Community imports of wood and wood-based products. It called for the regulation to encourage developing countries to conserve and manage tropical forests to last five rather than three years. It also called for aid to be set at ECU 150 million for the first three years (1995-1997) and for at least 60% of appropriations to be earmarked for projects to conserve tropical forests supported by the local people or geared to sustainable forest management with assistance from the local authorities. The appropriations allocated by the Community would take the form of non-refundable aid. Community aid should be allocated primarily to: - conserving primary tropical forests and their biodiversity and renewing damaged tropical forests, the objective being to provide full protection for at least 10% of ecologically representative primary forest in each country and for compensation to be paid to these countries in order to protect these regions; - sustainable management of forests designated for the production of timber; - the development and implementation of an independent assessment system which guarantees the reliability of the procedures and the quality of the criteria underlying certificates issued on the market; - the introduction of a monitoring system which guarantees the authenticity of certificates issued during transportation and marketing within the Union; - the provision of prior information to forest peoples, followed by their support in identifying, planning and implementing projects; - the development and implementation of forest management plans which also promote other wood products, mainly from forests other than primary forests; - aid for projects to promote a world convention on forest conservation; - the development of buffer zones to assist the conservation or regeneration of tropical forests. Annual reports summarizing the quality and quantity of projects funded should be submitted to the European Parliament.