



## NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

### Greenpeace Update

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#### Introduction

Founded in 1971 by a group of activists seeking to protest US nuclear testing off the coast of Alaska, Greenpeace has since then grown into one of the most daring and well-known environmental action groups. Greenpeace's core value is to "use peaceful direct action and creative communication to expose global environmental problems and to promote solutions that are essential to a green and peaceful future." Fulfilling these goals in practice is anything but easy, and as a result of their dramatic methods of engendering change, Greenpeace has developed a reputation as one a radical group. Ultimately, however, the organization must make practical decisions as well. As Greenpeace activists, it is your responsibility to ensure that the organization's commitment to environmental preservation can be achieved. This will require adherence to the group's goals, as well as thoughtful consideration of how to work with governments and other NGOs.

#### House I

##### *Gasoline Prices*

Greenpeace has long advocated lifting America's dependence on fossil fuels and has consequently supported any policies aimed at decreasing the demand for oil and gasoline in the United States. In the past, Greenpeace has strongly advocated for the development of alternative sources of energy and for tax incentives for consumers to purchase hybrid electric vehicles and other automobiles with higher fuel efficiency. However, Greenpeace has remained **staunchly** opposed to proposals to increase the supply of oil within the United States, calling such policies a delay of the **inevitable** day when there is no more crude oil left to be drilled in the rest of the world, thus forcing the US to rely on other sources of energy. Greenpeace is generally opposed to any measures that would increase the consumption of fossil fuels, and that includes lowering the price of gasoline, even if providing that gas itself has no impact on the environment, because the consumption of gasoline produces greenhouse gases.

**Staunchly**—*firmly.*

**Inevitable**—*impossible to avoid.*

## Group of Eight

### *Energy and Trade Policy*

Greenpeace is generally **ambivalent** toward trade in theory. However, because Greenpeace is opposed to many of the energy industry's practices—coal mining, coal electricity production, and sometimes oil spills—they are opposed to lifting tariffs that would result in increased use of fossil fuels. They argue that lifting tariffs will encourage and incentivize many of the unsustainable energy practices that they oppose, such as increased carbon emission and increased greenhouse gas production.

**Ambivalent**—to be uninterested or dispassionate about.

### *Foreign Aid to the Developing World*

Greenpeace is generally ambivalent toward foreign aid. However, because Greenpeace opposes “unsustainable agricultural practices,” which are often encouraged by foreign aid in the developing world, the organization sometimes comes to blows with aid supporters. Greenpeace would only support foreign aid if there are assurances that it would be used in an environmentally-responsible way, something that can be assured with the proper guarantees from recipient countries, usually with some sort of oversight.

## Group of Fifteen

### *Developing Nations and Climate Change*

The issue of climate change is currently the one issue to which Greenpeace has dedicated the most time and resources. They feel that it is absolutely necessary to inspire a global energy revolution in order “to go from a world powered by nuclear and fossil fuels to one running on renewable energy.” Right now, Greenpeace has targeted coal as the greatest environmental offender and the first substance that needs to go. While Greenpeace clearly understands that not all nations pollute equally and identifies industrialized nations—particularly the United States—as the greatest environmental offenders, they would encourage the G-15 to invest in the world's future by creating a framework that would lead to zero consumption of fossil fuels. Greenpeace would suggest that the G-15 lead the way in investing in clean energy technology, which could benefit these countries as the world shifts to the energies of the future.

### *Food Insecurity in the Developing World*

Greenpeace is concerned with making sure that any plan for agricultural expansion is done in the best interest of the environment. Of course, they would not oppose agriculture at the cost of people starving; however, Greenpeace would advocate for “sustainable” agriculture, and

is very concerned with environmentally irresponsible expansion of agriculture, which both destroys natural landscapes and contributes to greenhouse gas emissions. Further, one of their strongest campaigns is one against genetically modified crops; Greenpeace would strongly advise against the use of **genetically-modified** crops in an attempt to increase crop yields.

## World Health Organization

### *Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)*

Greenpeace is vehemently opposed to the use of GMOs and instead stands firmly in support of organic methods. The organization argues that GMOs are a threat to **biodiversity**, unsafe for human consumption, and amount to corporate giants trying to gain control of the international food market. It advocates the labeling of genetically-modified ingredients and the segregation of genetically-engineered crops from conventional ones. Critics have accused Greenpeace's stance of lacking a scientific basis, but those on both sides of the argument must admit that scientific studies on the issue of GMOs are limited at best, with results varying widely depending on the group or organization that conducted the study.

### *Neglected Diseases*

Greenpeace carries out a strong campaign against toxic substances and pollutants that intersects with the health and sanitation goals of the WHO. Greenpeace strongly advocates for large industrial polluters to put capital behind providing clean water in areas that have been polluted by manufacturing plants or other polluters. The organization as a whole is highly distrustful of large pharmaceutical corporations and prefers **capacity building** in the developing world as opposed to ventures with large biotech companies.

## World Bank

### *Poverty and Agriculture*

Greenpeace campaigns for sustainable agriculture by encouraging socially and ecologically responsible farming practices. In this debate, it would strongly advocate that the environmental impacts of agricultural investments be understood and remedied. In early 2008, Greenpeace published a document entitled "Cool Farming: Climate Impacts of Agriculture and Mitigation Potential" that focuses on the significant contributions of agriculture to greenhouse gas emissions. The document questions the sustainability of modern industrial agriculture, instead providing suggestions for improvements in crop and grazing land manage-

**Genetically-modified**—*an organism whose DNA has been adapted by human technology to serve practical purposes.*

**Biodiversity**—*the variety of life forms within a given ecosystem or for the entire Earth. It is often a measure of the overall health of an ecosystem.*

**Capacity building**—*the development of personal skills or social infrastructures within a community or organization.*

ment and in the restoration of **organic soils** as **carbon sinks** to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture.

**Organic soil**—*natural, loose soil that can be used as a fuel resource.*

## World Trade Organization

### *Intellectual Property Rights*

As an environmental organization, Greenpeace has not developed a strong stance on TRIPS, but it does feel the limits that TRIPS puts on technologies that can be used by developing nations to generate green power are counterproductive and harmful to the environment. As such, Greenpeace is indeed interested in intellectual property rights law on a global scale in terms of how it can assist what they term the “energy revolution.”

**Carbon sinks**—*a collection of indefinitely stored carbon; can be used to mitigate the effects of large greenhouse gas emissions.*

### *Trade and the Environment*

Like several other environmental organizations, Greenpeace has not yet developed a concise policy on trade and the environment, but because Greenpeace so heavily supports UN efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change, it would undoubtedly be similarly supportive of efforts made by the WTO in this field. It would argue that most negative impacts on trade would be a minor price to pay for protecting the environment. Greenpeace also feels that proper trade agreements would allow for the flow of green technology to developing countries, which would be incredibly advantageous for the environment.

## United Nations Security Council

### *Crisis in Darfur*

While Greenpeace has not directly addressed the crisis in Darfur, one of the issues that it rallies against has garnered some attention as a potential cause of the conflict. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon has asserted that the crisis in Darfur came about in part due to climate change brought about by global warming. He believes that the rising temperatures of the Indian Ocean disrupted monsoon patterns, resulting in a drought in Darfur. Ban Ki-Moon says that this drought decreased the amount of **arable** land, and therefore created tensions between indigenous farmers and Arab herders that resulted in the conflict. This theory is certainly not the prevailing view on the origins of the conflict, but Greenpeace’s mission to curb global warming certainly falls in line with the Secretary-General’s worldview. Greenpeace might cite the crisis in Darfur as an example of the far-reaching ramifications of global warming.

**Arable**—*fit for or used for the growing of crops.*

### *Modern Maritime Piracy*

Greenpeace defines piracy very loosely, and concerns itself with fishermen illegally fishing in certain waters, which it includes in its definition of piracy. Greenpeace takes a stance on this issue primarily because of the environmental impact that these “pirates” have on the fish stocks and the unintentional damages done to the ecosystem by the fishing. Greenpeace would likely seek to pursue a definition of piracy that includes illegal fishing.

## **Greenpeace in the News**

### *Carbon Emissions in the UK*

United Kingdom government plans to build a third runway in London’s Heathrow Airport have been met with fierce opposition from many environmentalists, with Greenpeace at the forefront. Arguing that the construction of this third runway—which officials say would increase the number of flights through Heathrow to 700,000 a year from 480,000—would cause Heathrow to become the largest single source of **carbon emissions** in the UK. Greenpeace activists find this expansion to be ecologically reprehensible and a mockery of the UK’s legally binding commitment to reduce Britain’s carbon emissions by at least 60% by the year 2050. One spokesman, Ben Stewart, has said that Britain has “a binge attitude toward aviation here...We also have a more sophisticated climate-aviation debate here, and we think if we can win it here it will make a difference in other countries.”

Greenpeace activists, along with other environmentalists, have been opposing this construction proposal since its inception. In February 2008, four members of Greenpeace sneaked into Heathrow, climbed onto a parked airplane and affixed a banner with a statement against the new expansion to its tail; they were immediately arrested. More recently, Greenpeace has decided to take collective action in response to the government’s announcement on January 15, 2009 that the construction of a third runway and a sixth terminal at Heathrow would indeed take place. Greenpeace has purchased land on the proposed runway site and intends to delay the planning process with procedural challenges. Currently, they are calling upon citizens everywhere to sign up online as beneficial owners of the plot in hopes to hinder or even prevent a **compulsory purchase** of the land.

If these plans to expand continue, experts predict that they will come to fruition between 2015 and 2020, given that they still require planning and permission, even with the government’s clear announcement of its intentions. Despite the government’s promise that such an expansion would be coupled with the exclusive use of more environmentally-friendly airplanes, Greenpeace remains determined to derail

**Carbon emissions**—polluting carbon substances released into atmosphere; carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide produced by motor vehicles and industrial processes and forming pollutants in the atmosphere.

**Compulsory purchase**—in common law legal systems, the inherent power of the state to seize a citizen’s private property, expropriate property, or seize a citizen’s rights in property with due monetary compensation, but without the owner’s consent.

this project, and with the help of high-profile celebrities who are sympathetic to their cause, their efforts are garnering a fair amount of press.

### *Amazon Deforestation*

In the campaign to prevent further **deforestation** around the world, Greenpeace has focused its efforts lately on the destruction of the Amazon Rainforest, particularly in Brazil, in the interest of expanding cattle-grazing territory. Under the current policy in the Amazon, landowners must preserve the rainforests, or even reforest in cases of deforestation, on 80% of their property. Greenpeace argues that the government has provided **amnesty** to delinquent farmers who have engaged in deforestation by requiring that they reforest only 50% of their land. Furthermore, Greenpeace activists have perceived measures taken by the Brazilian government to expand the cattle industry as a direct affront to its promises to tackle destruction of the Amazon as part of its environmental commitments. These **transgressions** are all the more grave, argues Greenpeace, in light of Brazil's place as the world's fourth biggest climate polluter, with 75% of its greenhouse gas emissions produced as the result of deforestation.

Although the Brazilian president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, was hailed as the country's first green president upon his election in 2003, internal officials complained in 2008 of the state's failing in its attempts to stem deforestation. The inability of the government to strike a satisfactory balance between industrial growth and environmental concerns has been a troubling and recurring theme in Brazil.

Greenpeace Brazil has recently contributed to the cause of preserving the rainforest by producing a series of maps which show in great detail the direct links between cattle ranching and deforestation in the Amazon state of Mato Grosso.

**Deforestation**—*the process of clearing forests.*

**Amnesty**—*reprieve, mercy, withheld punishment.*

**Transgressions**—*violations of rules or laws.*

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