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UCATT urges contractors to stop illegal logging

UCATT and Greenpeace have joined forces to launch an initiative to ensure that UK construction companies stop fuelling illegal logging.

The UK is currently the largest importer of illegal tropical timber in Europe, with 60% of all UK tropical timber imports coming from illegal logging operations in some of the world's most important rainforests, including the Amazon, Indonesia and central Africa.

The construction industry uses around 70% of all the timber sold by the UK timber industry. Central government contracts account for 15% of UK timber use, and the public sector as a whole accounts for 40%.

UCATT has produced a report, *The case for specifying timber from sustainable and legal sources*, that will be distributed to UCATT members, contractors, local authorities, housing associations and property developers.

The report makes clear that only by purchasing timber certified by the Forest Stewardship Council can companies guarantee that timber used in their projects is from well managed forests.

George Brumwell UCATT general secretary said: "The construction industry is often criticised for its approach to the use of natural resources. This initiative is an opportunity to silence those critics and prove that everyone within the industry can contribute to sustainable development.

"What is certain is that we cannot continue to use up the world's resources at the current rate without the risk of permanently damaging the delicate ecological balance. We must take responsibility for our actions and help protect endangered species and cultures."

The government's failure to implement its own policies on timber procurement was highlighted earlier this year when Greenpeace shut down the construction site of the new Home Office HQ after discovering that the project was using timber from Indonesia's last remaining ancient forests.

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