



## Combating Illegal Logging in Africa

Declaration strengthens law enforcement and sustainable forests management

**November 13, 2003**—Forests cover more than one-quarter of the Earth's land surface. They total 3.3 billion hectares, split about evenly between developing and industrialized countries, and are critical for the quality of the global environment; for the well-being of large numbers of people, particularly the poor; and for fulfilling major economic functions. But the world's forest area is being reduced at some 9 million hectares per year. Deforestation is almost exclusively concentrated in tropical regions.

Illegal logging on public lands worldwide is estimated to cause annual losses in revenues and assets in excess of \$10 billion.

In African countries, millions of dollars in revenue are being lost every year due to poor regulation of timber production – in Cameroon, losses are estimated at \$5.3 million; in Congo Brazzaville, it's \$4.2 million; in Gabon, \$10.1 million; and in Ghana, losses reach \$37.5 million per year.

Recently, 39 countries committed to a Ministerial Declaration and Actions targeted at combating illegal logging, associated illegal trade, and corruption in the forest sector at the Africa Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (AFLEG) conference held in Yaoundé, Cameroon. This declaration builds upon an agreement on the same issues reached in East Asia in 2001.

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- Click [here](#) for the full Declaration, participant speeches, and more information
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Over 150 delegates, including representatives from 31 African countries, from the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union, France, China, Russia, Japan, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, and Canada, as well as local and international NGOs, industry, and civil society, participated in the four-day Cameroon conference co-hosted by the Government of Cameroon and the World Bank.

“With this Declaration, participating countries are able to step up efforts at the national level and to strengthen bilateral and multilateral cooperation in handling offences and contraventions to forestry laws, which are indispensable for sustainable forest management, fair profit sharing, and poverty alleviation to be achieved,” said Minister Tanyi Mbianyor Clarkson Oben, Minister of Environment and Forestry (MINEF) for Cameroon.

On June 18-20, 2002, the Government of the Republic of Congo hosted the planning meeting of the AFLEG process in Brazzaville. The event brought together more than 73 participants from 27 countries, representing governments, international organizations, NGOs, and the private

sector.

Building on the commitment expressed by government representatives at the Brazzaville meeting, the AFLEG Ministerial Conference in Yaoundé aims to galvanize international and multi-stakeholder commitment at the highest political levels to strengthen capacity for forest law enforcement in Africa

“Forest law enforcement and governance are the foundation upon which all real forest conservation must rest,” stated Deputy Assistant Secretary Jeffrey Burnam, U.S. Department of State. “Governments must have the will and the capacity to administer and enforce their forest and wildlife plans, to effectively manage parks and protected areas, and to ensure that forest concessionaires respect the law. The United States Government has committed to assisting the governments of Africa to achieve these objectives.”



Over 150 Ministerial representatives from 39 countries participated in the AFLEF conference.

#### The AFLEG Declaration confirms:

- Governmental commitment and will to eliminate illegal logging, associated illegal trade and corruption in the forest sector, including actions to monitor wildlife trade;
- The need for shared responsibility and cooperation between stakeholders to address these issues – this will include action and partnerships from producer and consumer governmental programs, donor programs, civil society, and the private sector; and
- Establishing a Program of Action to move these intentions forward.



Odin Knudsen, Senior Advisor for Sustainable Development, applauded the participants for attending the meeting and addressing the difficult issue of illegal logging, but that it must also go beyond Declarations and Action Plans to results on the ground—in the rich, and even degraded, forests of Africa.

“This AFLEG Declaration is a pact,” emphasized Odin Knudsen, World Bank Senior Advisor for Sustainable Development. “It is a pact between Africa and donors, between governments and the people they govern, between sellers and buyers of timber products, between companies and their shareholders and their customers to do more in partnership. It is saying in one voice that illegal activities in forests can no longer be tolerated. That it must be stopped. And we must do it together.”

“AFLEG represents an opportunity for our countries to exchange best practice on national and sub-regional levels to combat illegal logging and illegal trade in the forest sector,” said Minister Henri Djombo, Minister of Forest Economics and Environment for the Republic of Congo, and President of the Conference of the Ministers of Central African Forests (COMIFAC), “and to discuss concrete ways of working together on this issue. COMIFAC supports exploring financing mechanisms such as carbon credits and directing a proportion of funds from debt-reduction programs towards forest conservation projects.”

The Declaration includes innovative approaches to the forest sector, such as:

- Ways to facilitate the mobilization and the provision of financial resources for and related to forest law enforcement and governance, such as a commitment from the Finance Ministries that a proportion of the gains from improved forest law


enforcement and governance are reinvested in the sector, including through national forest funds;

- Review economic reforms, including structural adjustment, to ensure that forest law enforcement and governance capacity is not jeopardized;
- Implement market-based instruments, including certification, and rationalize the fiscal regime in the forest sector so as to provide better incentives for good governance, sustainable forest management, and value-added processing;
- Explore new mechanisms for securing finance for sustainable forest management, including for forest law enforcement and governance, through mechanisms such as the Clean Development Mechanism, debt for conservation, and other innovative funding approaches; and
- Address issues of illegality in the forest sector and the re-establishment of good governance in post-conflict situations.


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## Africa Forest Law Enforcement and Governance Ministerial Conference Concludes with a Declaration of Governments' Commitment to Further Action

The AFLEG Ministerial Conference convened in Yaoundé, Cameroon from October 13-16, 2003, drawing together ministers from Africa, Europe and North America to consider how partnerships between producers and consumers, donors, civil society and the private sector could potentially address illegal forest exploitation and associated trade in Africa. The Conference resulted in the endorsement of a Ministerial Declaration and Action Plan for AFLEG.

**Background Information on Africa Ministerial Process**

- ▶ [June 18-20, 2002 AFLEG Ministerial Planning Meeting](#)
- ▶ [October 13-16, 2003 Ministerial Process](#)

**AFLEG Declaration and Speeches**

- [AFLEG Declaration \(English\)](#) (28KB PDF)
- [AFLEG Declaration \(French\)](#) (30KB PDF)
- [Meeting Agenda](#) (10KB PDF)
- [Speech by Odin Knudsen, World Bank](#) (13KB PDF)

