



global witness

Cameroon

# Project of Independent Observer in Support of Forest Law Enforcement in Cameroon

**Approved by the Ministry of the  
Environment and Forestry**

## **Report of the Independent Observer**

**No. 045En**

*Central Control Unit – Independent Observer Joint Mission*

-----

<b>Title</b>	None
<b>Location</b>	Eséka, Nyong et Kellé Division, Central Province
<b>Mission date</b>	27 March 2003
<b>Company</b>	TTS (sawmill)

**Independent Observer Team (Global Witness):**

*Mr. Reiner Tegtmeyer, Project Director*

*Mr. Serge C. Moukouri, Technical Assistant*

*Mr. Albert Mballa Mbarga, Driver*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	1
2. RESOURCES USED.....	2
3. COMPOSITION OF THE MISSION .....	2
4. CONSTRAINTS.....	2
5. MISSION FINDINGS.....	2
5.1 Case Summary.....	2
5.2 Mission's Observations .....	2
6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	3

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the routine control mission programme started by the Central Control Unit (CCU) on 17 March 2003 in the Centre Province, the CCU team on 27 March 2003 carried out a mission in a sawmill managed by the company Transformation Tropicale du Sud (TTS) located at Eséka, Nyong and Kellé Division.

Accompanied by the Independent Observer (Global Witness), the mission focussed on two main aspects, namely inspection of logs kept in the timber-yard and a study of the sawmill bookkeeping documents. A number of companies, namely Ingénierie Forestière, SFB, SFCS and TRC, supply TTS with timber.

The mission noted that some logs supplied by the company SFCS (Forest Management Unit 10 023) found in the timber-yard were not officially marked.

The Independent Observer also noticed that the same DF10 number was used in two Bills of Lading issued four days apart. Using the same DF10 number in two or several Bills of Lading may indicate an attempt to avoid payment of taxes on logs supplied to the sawmill; a DF10 number must refer to a single log.

The Independent Observer believes that the absence of official marking on some logs found in the timber-yard of the company TTS could be an indicator of fraudulent logging activities, and hence the need to carry out an investigation to establish the origin of the logs at issue.

The Independent Observer concludes that a further investigation should be carried out to identify the origin of some logs with a view to confirming irregularities noticed in the timber-yard of the company TTS. Using the same DF10 number in two or several Bills of Lading is a practice that warrants further investigation.

Consequently, the **Independent Observer recommends:**

- o Control mission be carried out within Annual Operation Permit No.06, FMU 10 023, granted to the company SFCS;
- o Examination of Entry-of-Transformation Unit Documents of the company TTS's sawmill be examined to assess the extent to which the same DF10 number is being used in different Bills of Lading, and the taking of appropriate sanctions where called for.

## **2. RESOURCES USED**

- 1 Toyota Land cruiser
- 1 Digital camera
- 1 Sony laptop

## **3. COMPOSITION OF THE MISSION**

The mission was made up of Mr. Djibrilla and Mrs. Dzana Margareth of the CCU; Mr. Eya'ane Bannister, Head of the Provincial Control Brigade for the Central Province; the Head of the Forest Section of Eséka; and Mr. Reiner Tegtmeyer and Mr. Serge Moukouri of the Independent Observer.

## **4. CONSTRAINTS**

No constraints were met during the mission.

## **5. MISSION FINDINGS**

### **5.1 Case Summary**

The company Transformation Tropicale du Sud (TTS) is a timber processing commercial entity which is also authorised to undertake timber extraction activities. The company has no valid logging title for the year under review. However, the company TTS is a beneficiary of a subcontract for timber extraction in the Forest Management Unit (FMU) 08 006 granted to the company Société Forestière de Bouraka (SFB). A number of other companies supply the company TTS sawmill with timber, namely Ingénierie Forestière, SFCS and TRC.

### **5.2 Mission's Observations**

#### **a. Unmarked logs**

On the timber-yard of the TTS sawmill, the mission noted that four logs were unmarked. All the logs are from the Annual Operations Permit (AOP) No.06, FMU 10 023, granted to the company SFCS. In terms of the company TTS, this is contrary to the provisions of Article 115(2) of Decree issued on 23 August 1995 whereby owners of processing units should ensure that *«produce bought is exclusively logged from valid titles in conformity with the norms provided by this Decree»*.

A case should be established against the company, which holds the forest management title to the forest from which the unmarked timber originates. This company's activities are not in compliance with the provisions of Article 127 of Decree issued on 23 August 1995 stipulating that any timber logged shall be marked. Such irregularities may be an indication of illegal logging activities in the FMU 10 023.

It is important to note that the FMU 10 023 where the unmarked timber was produced is now the subject of a case before the Bertoua Court of Appeal. Based on information collected in the field during a control mission, and the need to confirm these findings, the Court has suspended logging activities in the FMU pending final decision.. It has not yet been verified whether this is the reason why the local forest law enforcement agent at the site did not mark the logs found in the TTS timber-yard (see the Report of the Independent Observer No. 043En).

#### **b. Double use of same DF10 number**

A verification of the Bills of Lading (BoL) revealed that BoL No. 491852 of 03.02.2003 and 491846 of 07.02.2003, issued four days apart, refer to the same log , DF10 number 413334 – 06/2 (2,051m<sup>3</sup> of *sapelli*). This means t that the same log was delivered to the sawmill twice, within four days.

It is important to note that each log transported to the sawmill bears a single DF10 number that serves as a reference framework for calculating taxes based on the volume delivered to the sawmill. Given that taxation services consider each DF10 number as representing one log, marking of the same DF10 number on two different logs would constitute fraud where two logs are taken to the sawmill but the company pays taxes on only one.

The Independent Observer also draws attention to the fact that Bill of Lading No. 491852 would have been issued 4 days before Bills of Lading No. 491846. Bills of Lading are generally issued from a counterfoil-book in an ascending numerical sequence. In other words, the number of leaflets and date stamps should follow the same sequence. This is not the case with the two leaflets at issue.

## **6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Independent Observer concludes that irregularities observed within the timber-yard of the company TTS's sawmill cannot be assessed appropriately unless further investigations are conducted in the concessions from where the logs at question originate. Using the same DF10 number in two or several Bills of Lading is a practice that needs further investigation

Consequently, the **Independent Observer recommends:**

- o Control mission be carried out within Annual Operation Permit No.06, FMU 10 023, granted to the company SFCS;
- o Examination of Entry-of-Transformation Unit Documents of the company TTS's sawmill be examined to assess the extent to which the same DF10 number is being used in different Bills of Lading, and the taking of appropriate sanctions where called for.