



global witness

Cameroon

Project of Independent Observation in Support of
Forest Law Enforcement in Cameroon

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

Report No. 52 En

Joint mission : External service – Independent Observer

Title	FMU 10 010
Location	Boumba and Ngoko Department, East Province
Mission date	20 th March, 2003
Company	SEFAC

Independent Observer (Global Witness):

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1. SUMMARY

The Central Control¹ Unit (CCU), accompanied by the Independent Observer (Global Witness) carried out a mission within the Forest Management Unit (FMU) 10 010 on the 22nd of March 2003. The mission was part of a routine control program started on the 14th of March 2003.

Allocated to the company SEFAC (Société d'Exploitation Forestière et Agricole du Cameroun), this FMU is located in Boumba and Ngoko Department, East Province. SEFAC belongs to a group of companies which also includes SEBAC and Filière Bois.

During the mission, the Independent Observer noted stumps not bearing any markings. The mission also noted re-opened old tracks beyond the limits of Annual Cutting Permit (ACP) No. 04.

The CCU considered these two facts as minor and did not established any official report against this company.

In view of the above, **the Independent Observer recommends:**

- An official hearing of SEFAC representatives for a report on the non-marking of the felled trees' stumps;
- Prohibiting SEFAC the re-opening of the old tracks without authorisation.

2. COMPOSITION OF THE MISSION

The mission was composed of Ms. Essono Danièle and Mr. Mamene Pierre Marcel, CCU controllers; Afene Obam James, civil servant of the Direction of Forests; the Head of the forest law enforcement East Province Brigade, the Head of Boumba and Ngoko forest section and two members of the Independent Observer technical team.

3. RESOURCES USED

- 1 4x4 pick-up truck
- 1 motorbike
- 3 GPS
- 1 video camera
- 2 digital cameras
- 1 Laptop

4. CONSTRAINTS

The visual data gathered in this mission is part of the content of the videotape seized by Ingénierie Forestière (see the Independent Observer report No. 55 En). This incident, which has a major negative impact on transparency and good governance within the forest sector, occurred just as the Independent Observer had documented major scale illegal exploitation carried out by Ingénierie Forestière.

¹ "Control" in the context of this report means "Law Enforcement" or to "check compliance with law".

5. RESULTS OF THE MISSION

5.1 Summary of the case

FMU 10 010 is allocated to SEFAC, which, together with SEBAC and Filière Bois, form a group and also exploit FMU 10 009, 10 012 and 10 064.

These FMUs are part of a Technical Operational Unit (TOU) based at Yokadouma. The different parties in this TOU carry out control and monitoring missions in the concerned exploitation titles.

5.2 Non-marked stumps

The Independent Observer noted stumps which did not have any markings, at GPS (Global Positioning System) points whose coordinates are detailed in the table below.

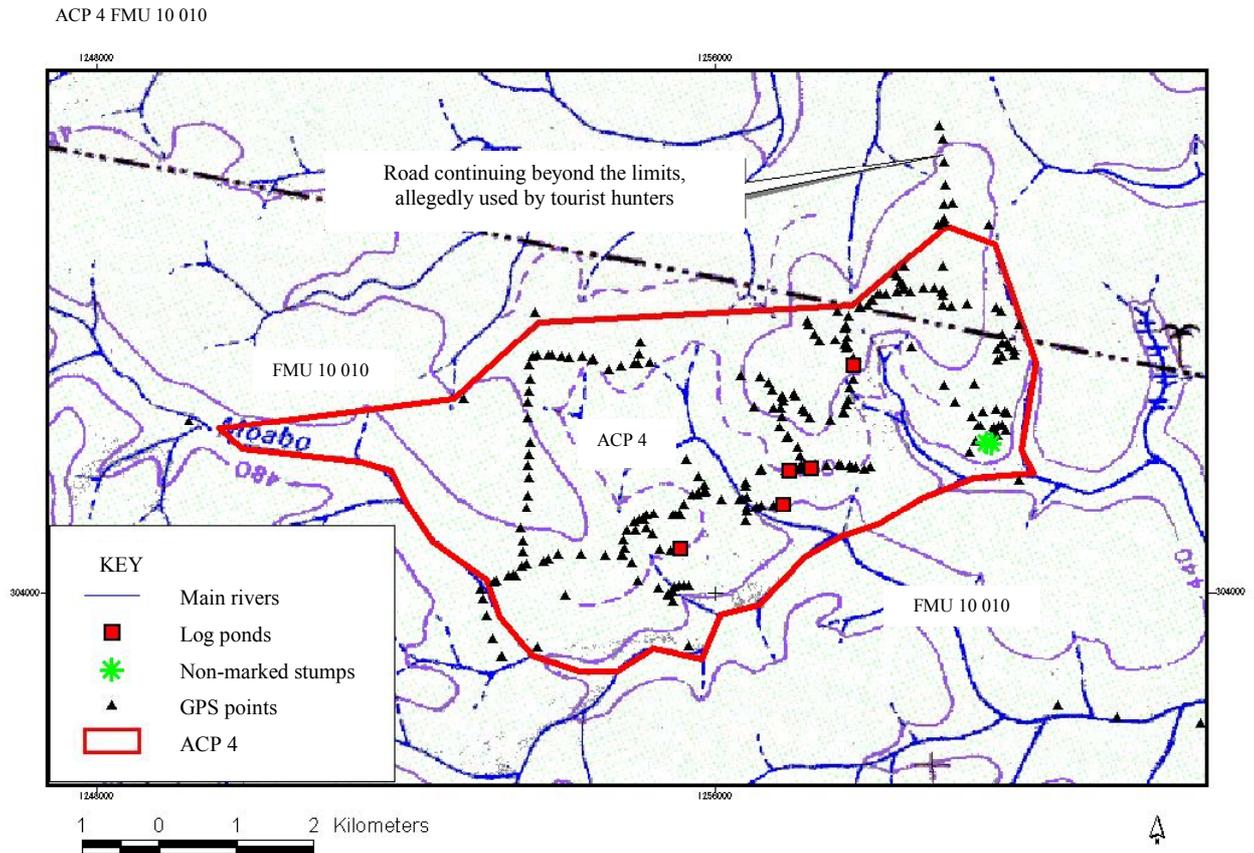
Non-marked stump	DD_long (°)	DD_lat (°)	Note
1	15.8177000	2.7509100	
2	15.8172200	2.7510700	

The SEFAC Head of exploitation was with the Independent Observer when this data was noted.

Immediately after the note of this fact, the Independent Observer informed the CCU about the situation. The latter considered these facts as minor and did not issue any official report on this violation by SEFAC of article 156 of the 1994 law, which regulates the use of markings for forest products.

The Independent Observer gathered the images of these stumps as evidence. Unfortunately, these pictures are part of the Independent Observer videotape seized by Ingénierie Forestière.

Map : ACP No.04 of FMU 10 010



5.3 Road beyond the limits of ACP No. 04

Besides, the members of the mission noted the existence of a track going beyond the limits of ACP No.4. The SEFAC representative alleged that the mentioned track had been opened during a previous exploitation; and that the track was used by tourist hunters who regularly visit the concession. The CCU seemed to accept the explanation given by SEFAC and did not establish any official report against this company.

As the Independent Observer already noted in a previous report, it is important to know whether the forest companies are authorised to re-open all the old tracks made in previous exploitations. This is an important question since it must be borne in mind that certain FMUs are undergoing their third exploitation. Allowing the re-opening without authorisation of all the pre-existing roads would create an important network of roads within certain FMUs and this would not be compatible with a sustainable exploitation.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

During the mission, the Independent Observer noted stumps which did not bear any markings. The mission also noted re-opened old tracks beyond the limits of Annual Cutting Permit No. 04.

The CCU considered these two facts as minor and did not establish any official report against this company.

In view of the above, **the Independent Observer recommends:**

- An official hearing of SEFAC representatives for an official report on the non-marking of the felled trees' stumps;
- Prohibiting SEFAC the re-opening of the old tracks without authorisation.