

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

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

**Report of the Independent Observer**

**No. 077En**

*Central Control Unit – Independent Observer Joint Mission*

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<b>Title</b>	CF Ngola-Achip
<b>Location</b>	Haut-Nyong Division, East Province
<b>Mission date</b>	20 August 2003
<b>Company</b>	None

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

*Mr Owada Jean Cyrille, Technical Assistant*  
*Mr Serge C. Moukouri, Technical Assistant*  
*Mr Che Tangyie Célestine, Driver*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	1
2. RESOURCES USED .....	2
3. COMPOSITION OF THE MISSION.....	2
4. CONSTRAINTS.....	2
5. MISSION'S FINDINGS.....	2
5.1 Case summary .....	2
5.2 Discussions with the communities.....	3
6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	4
APPENDICES .....	5
Appendix 1.....	6
Appendix 2.....	8

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Central Control Unit, accompanied by the Independent Observer (Global Witness), undertook a mission to Ngola Village in the Haut-Nyong Division of the East Province, on 20 August 2003.

The mission was a follow-up to a letter and a report addressed to the Minister of the Environment and Forestry by the Divisional Delegate of the Environment and Forestry (DDEF) for Haut-Nyong, and by a member of the Ngola community.

The mission held a working session with the village communities of Ngola and Achip.

From these discussions, it was concluded that:

- Some activities outlined in the Simple Management Plan of the Ngola-Achip Community Forest were being completed, but others had yet to be initiated;
- Disputes arising from the management of the funds derived from this community forest are persistent within the community. The main cause of these disputes seemingly lies in the poor communication between the funds managers and the rest of the community.

Consequently, **the Independent Observer recommends :**

- MINEF structures in charge of community forests enforce transparency in the management of funds derived from the Ngola-Achip Community Forest by rigorously monitoring all accounting records;
- A control mission be undertaken to this community forest in order to determine the extent of logging beyond boundaries.

## **2. RESOURCES USED**

- 1 Toyota Hilux Pick up
- 1 Yamaha 100 motorbike
- 4 GPS (Garmin brand)
- 1 Video camera (Sony brand)
- 1 Digital camera
- 1 Laptop computer (Sony brand)
- 1 Videotape recorder (Sony brand)

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

The mission was made up of Mrs Essono Danièle (Mission Head) and Mr Djibrila, agents of the CCU; Mr James Afene Obam, Senior staff at the Forestry Department; the Chief of Forestry Section for Haut-Nyong; the assistant of the Head of the Local Forestry Post for Lomie; and two members of the technical team of the Independent Observer.

## **4. CONSTRAINTS**

The mission was unable to verify allegations of logging beyond the boundaries of the Ngola-Achip Community Forest because it arrived late in the field.

## **5. MISSION'S FINDINGS**

### **5.1 Case summary**

The Ngola-Achip Community Forest (CF) was granted to the Ngola, Achip, Ngola-Baka and Ntan communities. Its Management Agreement was signed on 10 August 2002, and its exploitation activities started in 2002.

The mission was in direct response to complaints raised in a letter from the Divisional Delegate of the Environment and Forestry (DDEF) for Haut-Nyong, and in a letter sent from a member of the Ngola community to the Minister.

DDEF's letter denounced the poor administrative recordkeeping, irregular evacuation of sawn wood, and non-compliance with some of the obligations prescribed in the Simple Management Plan (see Appendix 1).

The second letter addressed to the Minister (see Appendix 2) requested that logging operations in the Ngola-Achip Community forest be stopped because of poor management of funds, wanton exploitation of timber, abandonment of wood in the forest, exploitation beyond the boundaries, and non-compliance with the Simple Management Plan.

## **5.2 Discussions with the communities**

After introducing the mission, the Mission Head briefly explained the purpose of the mission. The floor was then given to the Chairman of the Management Committee to explain how the activities of the CF are being conducted.

The discussions with the communities revealed that the revenues derived from the first exploitations were used for the reimbursement of loans and for settlement of debts out of contracts established in order to fund administrative costs for the preparation of the Simple Management Plan and for other formalities required to obtain a community forest.

The mission also learned that the remaining funds were used to buy corrugated iron sheets, nails and fuel to produce beams, and to pay for carpentry work. Some forty houses were said to have been constructed, information that the mission was unable to verify. The community is said to have also funded the training of some of its members in community forestry techniques.

A specialised non-governmental organisation (NGO) is said to have been recruited by the Management Committee of the Community Forest to create a palm plantation and a fish pond, and to organise training on beekeeping.

In addition, two chapels are said to have been constructed, and a hall refurbished.

The Chairman of the Management Committee mentioned that the bulk of the revenue of the Community Forest is derived from logging activities carried out in partnership with the logging company, Bexdan Standard Cameroun.

The Independent Observer noticed that there was an atmosphere of tension in the communities that owned the forests mentioned in this report. Several complaints were made regarding the management, especially suspicions about how the committee was managing the funds of the CF.

## **5.3 Recognition of logging beyond the boundaries of the CF**

In the field, the Chairman of the Management Committee confirmed allegations made by Mr Paul Keub that some trees had been felled out of the boundaries of the Community Forest. Unfortunately, the mission could not go to the sites where the logging took place because it arrived very late in the village concerned.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

It was concluded that:

- Some activities outlined in the Simple Management Plan of the Ngola-Achip Community Forest were being completed, but others had yet to be initiated;
- Disputes arising from the management of the funds derived from this community forest are persistent within the community. The main cause of these disputes seemingly lies in the poor communication between the funds managers and the rest of the community.

Consequently, **the Independent Observer recommends :**

- MINEF structures in charge of community forests enforce transparency in the management of funds derived from the Ngola-Achip Community Forest by rigorously monitoring all accounting records;
- A control mission be undertaken to this community forest in order to determine the extent of logging beyond boundaries.

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1

MINISTÈRE DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT  
ET DES FORÊTS

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN  
Paix - Travail - Patrie

DELEGATION PROVINCIALE DE L'EST

DELEGATION DÉPARTEMENTALE DU  
HAUT-NYONG

18°025 / L/MINEF/DPE/DDHN

Objet: Conclusion  
d'une mission de  
contrôles.

Le Délégué Départemental de l'Environnement et des Forêts du Haut-Nyong à

- ABONG-MBANG -

A Monsieur le Responsable des Opérations Forestières de la Communautés GBO, PA et  
MBOUH de NGOLA et ACHIP

- LOMIE -

Monsieur,

J'ai l'honneur de vous faire connaître les résultats de la mission de contrôles qui a séjourné chez-vous dans la journée du 11 décembre 2002.

Il ressort du rapport de ladite mission, une mauvaise tenue des documents administratifs. C'est ainsi que malgré l'intensité de l'exploitation forestière seulement 282 m<sup>3</sup> de bois débités ont été évacués régulièrement. Une fraction importante de la production ~~serait~~ aurait été transportée frauduleusement. Ce cas fait partie de graves malversations dénoncées par certaines de vos élites pendant le passage de la mission. Les revenus de la vente des bois vous ont permis d'entamer seulement l'amélioration de l'habitat en achetant 2800 feuilles de tôles encore en stock. Les autres obligations pour la période échue n'ont pas encore connu un début de réalisation. Il s'agit ainsi de la palmeraie, de l'Etang piscicole, de l'économat, de la case santé, de la chapelle et du projet de production de miel.

En somme, le bilan n'est pas satisfaisant. C'est l'occasion pour nous de vous inviter au respect de toutes les dispositions du plan simple de gestion faute de quoi, l'Administration Forestière sera dans la triste obligation de tirer les conclusions de droit.

..../..



Veillez recevoir, cher Monsieur, nos vœux de santé et de prospérité pour l'année 2003.

**AMPLIATIONS:**

- MINEF/DF/CFC/YDE ✓ |
- DNETE/BERTOUA |
- PREFET/HN/ABG-MBG/ |
- SOUS-PREFET/LOMIE |
- C/PFC/LOMIE |

Abong ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ 28 JAN. 2003



- P C R
- POUR INFO
- POUR SUIVI

Appendix 2

3 Haut  
le du village Ngola  
asinier de L'association

Ngola le, 21/01/03

A Monsieur Le Ministre  
de L'Environnement et  
des forêts. Yaoundé

Mauvaise gestion de  
rêt communautaire de

2 - Achip ( MGBOPABA )

23/01/03



Monsieur Le Ministre,

J'ai l'honneur de venir solliciter  
près de votre haute autorité L'arrêt des travaux d'  
itations du bois dans La forêt communautaire de  
à - Achip ( Ngbopaba ) pour Les motifs suivants :

- Mauvaise gestion des fonds.
- Exploitation anarchique du bois
- Bois abandonnés en forêt dans les chantiers
- violation des limites prévues pour la forêt communautaire
- Le non respect du plan simple de gestion

En attendant une suite favorable, je vous prie de bien  
avoir agréer, Monsieur Le Ministre L'expression de mes  
timents Les plus respectueux.

Liations :

E.F Est Bertoua

E.F du Haut-Nyong Abg-Mbg.

département Arrondissement Lomfo

MINISTÈRE DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT DES FORÊTS

DELEGATION DÉPARTEMENTALE DU HAUT-NYONG

BOURRIER - LOMFO

LE 23/01/2003

ENREGISTRÉ SOUS le N° 022