



24 October 2011

FSC Statement – Oxfam report 'The New Forests Company and its Uganda plantation'

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) has recently been made aware of a new Oxfam report which raises serious concerns about land ownership and land use rights in Uganda and has filed a complaint with SGS Qualifor so that a full investigation can be launched. FSC takes the findings of the Oxfam report very seriously and is committed to ensuring that Principle 2 requiring demonstrated land tenure and use rights, as well as all other relevant principles and criteria, are upheld.

The claims relate to plantations in Uganda operated by the New Forests Company, certified by accredited certification body SGS in March 2009. Accreditation Services International (ASI) performed an assessment audit of SGS at NFC in February 2010 with local experts and a full stakeholder consultation.

The process of certification made by SGS Qualifor did evaluate the change in land use on the government-owned land where NFC obtained a land license from the National Forestry Authority. However, Oxfam has brought to light evidence that existed of outstanding claims and disputes over land ownership.

FSC has filed an official complaint with SGS Qualifor in order to ensure that any allegations about contradictions with FSC's Principles and Criteria – particularly with regards to violent evictions and unresolved land claims – are investigated with the utmost rigor.

FSC is engaging with all stakeholders, including Oxfam, to fully investigate the claims. FSC is committed to the transparent and democratic resolution of disputes and will ensure that all findings relating to the complaint are made public.

For further information, please contact:

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