



Compiled and edited  
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## Negotiations on European forest agreement suspended

The 4th session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Legally Binding Agreement (LBA) on Forests in Europe (INC-Forests4) was convened from 10-14 June 2013 in Warsaw, Poland. The session was attended by over 140 participants and observers from 33 countries, the EU, Japan, and 19 regional and international organizations, forestry associations and NGOs.

INC-Forests4 reached agreement on several elements of the LBA (which may be open to signature by all UN members), but was unable to reach final agreement on several others. Since the INC process is limited to four negotiating sessions, delegates decided to reconvene INC-Forests4 for three days on dates and at a place to be announced before sending the results of INC-Forests to an Extraordinary Ministerial Conference scheduled for November 2013 (see Meetings, page 32). Outstanding issues to be considered at the resumed session include: decisions on the depositary/host for the convention; interim and permanent secretariat arrangements; adjustments to the final clauses that might be necessary following the choice of the depositary; and provisions for admission of observers, the rules for the compliance committee and voting rights.

## FSC says “no go” to logging company in DRC

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) has recently revoked certifications granted to the multinational Danzer Group due to complaints from Greenpeace which alleged violation of FSC’s human rights policy at a logging site in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) operated by Danzer subsidiary SIFORCO.

According to the complaints filed by Greenpeace, in May 2011 Congolese police and military forces, paid by SIFORCO, attacked a community protesting logging operations. According to witnesses, security forces committed acts of physical violence which included rape of women and girls, destruction of property, and arbitrary arrests. SIFORCO claimed it had only asked the security forces to retrieve stolen goods.

Though Danzer Group disagrees with the outcome, it has accepted the loss of FSC certification of the DRC operation and stated its commitment to resolving the issues involved as well as applying for re-association with the FSC. “We respect the right of FSC to impose disassociation under conditions that could represent severe reputational risk to its system,” noted Danzer Group CEO Hans-Joachim Danzer. Danzer sold SIFORCO in early 2012 but the revocation of its FSC certificates, which became effective in May 2013, will affect its current African logging subsidiary, *Industrie Forestière de Ouesso* (IFO), which manages the largest area under FSC forest management certificates in the Congo Basin.

## Trees, the root of hydropower

Standing trees in the rainforest are important for the generation of hydropower, according to recent research published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS).

Continued deforestation in the Amazon region could significantly lower the output of hydropower dams by causing a reduction in flows of rivers and streams. Researchers say that projected outputs of these dams may be reduced by one-third. Until recently, the general belief of hydropower operators was that the felling of trees in forests near dams would improve the flow of river waters reaching the dams. But in the PNAS study, climate projections for the Amazon Basin were modeled in detail, as were the characteristics of the rivers on which the dams were built.

Scientists found that rainfall in the region is 6–7 percent lower now due to accumulated deforestation as opposed to what it was under full forest cover. At current rates of deforestation there could be up to a 40% loss of Amazon forests by 2050, resulting in less rain and 35–40 percent less electrical power than planned from regional dams.

## Internet to net illegal loggers

Gemalto, a Dutch company that develops digital security systems and network security, is using machine-to-machine (M2M) communications in efforts to preserve rainforests and thwart illegal loggers in the Amazon.

A tracking device (known as “Invisible Tracck”) uses Gemalto’s tiny and powerful Cinterion BGS2 M2M module to enable Brazil’s law enforcement agencies to track individual trees using cell-phone and internet technology. The cellular device is tucked into a case smaller than a deck of cards which is camouflaged to blend in with tree trunks and installed in remote active harvesting areas deep within the forests. When a tagged tree is harvested, it alerts officials from the Brazilian Institute of Environment as soon as it passes within 20 miles of a cellular network. Authorities can then pinpoint and track the harvested product and intercept the illegal loggers in the act of selling the illegally harvested timber at sawmills. The use of this technology could lead to quicker prosecutions and contribute to efforts to combat illegal forest activities.

The Invisible Tracck device is meant to supplement traditional methods of satellite surveillance and monitoring of illegal deforestation in high-risk areas with known populations of valuable trees. Gemalto is working on developing Radiation Data Exchange (RED) technology to boost the communications signals of the device in areas without effective cellular network coverage.