

## **Briefing April 2005**

### **Critical views and political recommendations on the FLEGT licensing scheme and partnership agreements**

The system proposed by the European Commission which is currently being discussed by the Council has serious shortcomings:

- a) It is based on a voluntary approach, which means that a large number of producer countries may decide to stay outside the system;
- b) It does not prevent the risk of illegal timber being “laundered” in third countries and re-exported as processed timber products to Europe,
- c) it applies to a very limited range of timber products: round timber, sawn timber and plywood,
- d) It may be built on existing corrupt or ineffective systems, rejected by local populations, environmental NGOs and progressive businesses.
- e) there are as yet no safeguards in the system to ensure it will not legitimise illegitimate and unsustainable trade.

To be credible, the FLEGT licensing scheme should :

- specify the chain of custody from forest to export site;
- establish independent verification and independent monitoring of the system with the participation of civil society;
- include all forest products (including processed products such as paper, plywood and furniture) and all exports

To be effective, the FLEGT licensing scheme should :

- rely on good, just and fair legislation in producer countries. It should not reinforce unfair laws that legalise forest destruction and fuel human rights abuses and social injustice.

The EU should negotiate good partnership agreements with timber producer countries that will :

- ensure civil society involvement in the negotiations, particularly of local populations and indigenous peoples
- define actions to revise and amend the laws of a partner country and, where necessary, improve forest law enforcement and responsible management,
- lead to an agreed concept of legality, including with the local population and indigenous people,
- establish targets and adopt a time-bound programme for actions to move towards Sustainable Forest Management