



The AFLEG and FLEGT Processes and the Challenges of Forest Governance in African Tropical Timber Exporting Countries

Workshop on Forest Governance
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Introduction



The issue of illegal logging and the role of timber consumers in world markets has been attracting increasing attention since the late 1990s.

In 1998, the G8 launched an action programme on forests, which gives high priority to eliminating illegal logging and illegal timber trade, seeks to complement initiatives undertaken at regional and international levels, and to identify actions in both producer and consumer countries.

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WSSD Plan called for actions ...



In 2002 the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) recognized that sustainable forest management is an essential element of sustainable development; to this end, the WSSD Plan of Implementation called for actions, *inter alia*, to enforce domestic forest law and combat illegal international trade; promote sustainable timber harvesting.

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EC adopted an Action Plan ...



In October 2003, the European Community adopted an Action Plan for Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) to address the problem of illegal logging and related trade.

With the new will inspired by these initiatives to fight forest crimes, there have been important efforts in promoting regional and bilateral cooperation for forest law enforcement.

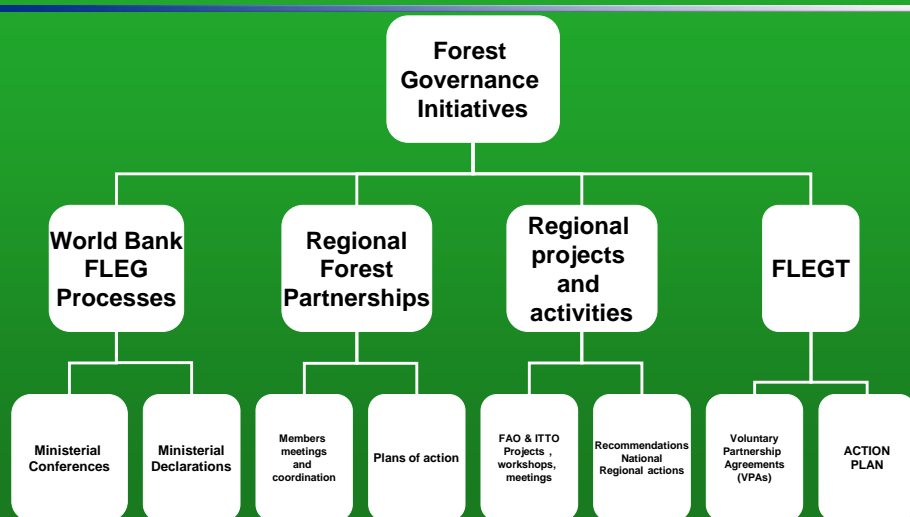
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This presentation will focus on:

1. Different Forest Governance Initiatives
2. AFLEG AND FLEG Processes.
3. Achievements of AFLEG and FLEG.
4. The challenges ahead.
5. Lessons learnt.
6. Conclusion.

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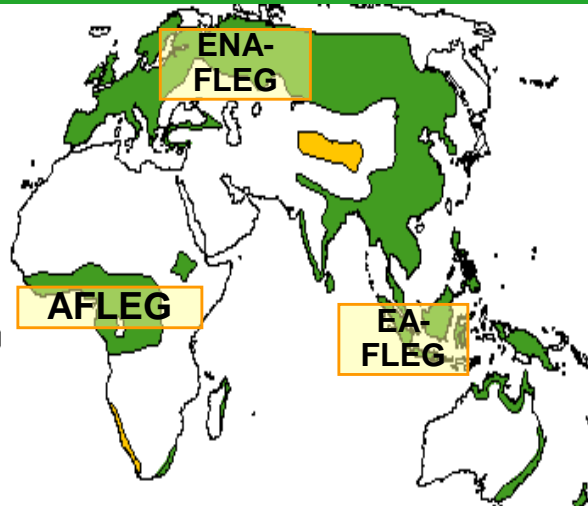
Forest Governance Initiatives



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AFLEG is one of the WB supported FLEG Ministerial Processes

These are co-organized by both timber producer and consumer countries, recognizing a shared responsibility to address a common problem, namely that of illegal logging and illegal trade of timber and other forest products.



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European Union FLEGT Action Plan

Bilateral Agreements with producer countries to improve the transparency of the forest sector (VPA).

The development of a Voluntary Licensing System and associated customs procedures

The FLEGT action plan aims to combat illegally harvested timber and associated trade and consists of three elements

Supporting legislative and procurement policies

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Congo Basin Forests Partnership

- The Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) was launched at WSSD in 2002 with the aim of encouraging donors to commit resources in the management and conservation of the forests in Central Africa.
- CBFP consists of 29 members including three international organizations and ten non-governmental groups.

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Processes and initiatives supported by International Organizations: **FAO and ITTO Activities**

- Since January 2007, FAO and ITTO organize jointly FLEG workshops in four key regions affected by illegal logging: Amazon region, Central America, Central Africa and South East Asia.
- The main purpose of the workshops is to provide an opportunity for countries to jointly identify the causes and impacts of illegal forestry activities in their regions; to share experiences on best practices to improve forest law compliance; and to establish or strengthen regional networks on forest law enforcement.

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Other processes and initiatives: FORCOMS

The Forest Concession Monitoring System for Central Africa (FORCOMS) is a partnership initiated in 2004 by Global Forest Watch (GFW) and World Resources Institute (WRI), in collaboration with Interafrican Forest Industries Association (IFIA), World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) .

It is an independent and voluntary initiative that is aimed at encouraging “self-reporting” to ensure the follow-up of forest concessions in Central Africa.

FORCOMS functions as a project and has got a multi-stakeholder steering committee. Its donors are France, BMZ, World Bank, USAID-CARPE, and USDA-USFS.



Progress in Regional Cooperation in Central Africa Sub-region: The COMIFAC Coordination



In February 2005, Central African countries Heads of States signed a Treaty creating the Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC).



COMIFAC is the sole political and technical authority in charge of orienting, coordinating, monitoring and harmonizing different strategies and initiatives pertaining to the forest sector in the Congo Basin.



Progress in Regional Cooperation in Central Africa Sub-region: The COMIFAC coordinated...



AFLEG/FLEGT Follow-up Workshops and Meetings coorganized with the WB (1) and FAO and ITTO (1).

First AFLEG/FLEGT Task force Bangui Meeting in November 2006



International Conference of Parliamentarians on the Sustainable Management of Central African Forest Ecosystems in October 2006 in Yaoundé, Cameroon, attended by more than 400 parliamentarians and experts from governmental and non-governmental organizations.



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Progress in Regional Cooperation in Central Africa Sub-region: Concrete cases



A trilateral agreement or "TRIDOM Agreement" was signed between Cameroon, Gabon, and Congo to protect 14.6 million hectares of forests including Dja, Odzala and Minkebe National Parks, the equivalent of 7.5 per cent of the entire Congo Basin.



A trilateral agreement between Cameroon, CAR and Congo concerning the Sangha Tri-National Conservation Area



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Progress in Regional Cooperation in Central Africa Sub-region: Concrete cases



The Agreements for Transboundary Cooperation in Central African Countries allow park staff between the three countries to work across international borders to counter illegal logging and poaching.

This means that park staff no longer has to just observe and limit their action to reporting as poachers in one country escape across the border into another.

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Progress in Bilateral Cooperation in Africa: Case of Cameroon

The Government invited Global Witness in 2000 to provide independent observation and to build capacity for inspection. As a result Illegal logging practices are significantly more exposed in Cameroon than in neighboring countries.

Having adopted a practical definition of legality in the forest sector, in October 2005 the Government addressed an official request to the EU to enter into negotiation of a VPA.

On a bilateral basis, the Government also asked Germany the assistance to support preparatory consultations. (GTZ) provides support to Cameroon for the development of the VPA.

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Progress in Bilateral Cooperation in Africa: Ghana-EU

The latest Ghana-EU negotiation session on a FLEGT VPA was held on 15 June 2007 in Brussels. It was agreed by parties that Ghana submit a plan of action towards building capacity in the area of FLE.

To promote transparency in FLE, Ghana agreed to engage civil society and the private sector to have their input on areas of concern.

The VPA will be legally binding on both parties once negotiations are completed. When fully operational, it will assure buyers in the EU that they can purchase Ghana's timber products with confidence.

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The Challenges Ahead

Securing long term commitment of countries and donors to support the effort in address the root causes of illegal logging and poor law enforcement.

Coodination with existing bilateral programs and other international initiatives at country level in order to translate political commitment into concrete action.

To overcome the controversy of the definition of "illegality", avoiding the negative impact of the requirements of legality to local small enterprises which may not comply, and may not survive without an access to market.

Decentralizing the governance of the forest sector, with attention to balanced distribution of responsibilities and resources at different levels, and adequate participation of the civil society and the provate sector.

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To summarize on progress in regional cooperation

Identification of priority actions and facilitated exchange of experiences and best practices.

Created some level of basic data on forest crime as basis for multi-stakeholder discussions and as means for establishing baselines to monitor progress.

Establishment of networks of information sharing



Some key lessons learned

Greater chance of progress in AFLEG Declaration implementation if governments, civil society and private sector work in concert.

FLEG processes inspired the EU FLEGT Action Plan and several bilateral cooperation initiatives.

There is more likelihood of success in improving forest governance and promoting FLE if regional/subregional institutions take the lead in coordination of related cooperation activities.



In Conclusion: for the future...

The AFLEG process needs to be revitalized to maintain the interest and reach higher results.

Resources promised in the Yaoundé ministerial declaration should be made available.

A more systematic national analytical work is needed in order to determine priority actions at policy and enforcement levels.

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In Conclusion: for the future...

More support should also be given to regional workshops to allow the dissemination of experiences in forest governance and FLE technologies.

There should be an evaluation of the measurable progress in achieving the planned actions that were spelled highlighted in the Yaoundé AFLEG ministerial declaration.

The results of such an evaluation could be used to draft the agenda of a second ministerial conference.

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
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