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AFRICAN FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

FIFTEENTH SESSION

Maputo, Mozambique, 29 March-1 April 2006

FOREST LAW COMPLIANCE

Information Session –Thursday, 30 March 2006

Objectives:

1. The objective of this agenda item is to inform delegates about key current activities in forest law enforcement in Africa. Participants attending the 15th Session of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC) will be invited to discuss and provide feedback on the presentations and make suggestions for improving forest law compliance in the region.

Partners:

2. Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO); International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO); and Central Africa Forests Commission (COMIFAC).

Content:

3. FAO and ITTO will present “Best Practices for Improving Law Compliance in the Forest Sector” and the corresponding document (FAO Forestry Paper 145) will be made available. It is based on country case studies from Africa, Latin America and Asia and the experiences of ongoing international initiatives to combat illegal activities in the forestry sector. The proposed actions revolve around rationalizing the policy and legal environment, building institutional capacity for forest law enforcement and improving data and knowledge. The document can be used as a basis for national and regional policy dialogue as well as the development of national strategies and actions to improve forest law enforcement.

4. The organizations will also present a proposal for a regional workshop to be held in the COMIFAC countries, which is scheduled for late 2006 and will be based on the “Best Practices” document. The workshop will provide countries with the opportunity to jointly identify the main

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problems and impacts of illegal forestry activities in the region; share experiences on ongoing initiatives and identify the most promising strategic elements to improve forest law compliance; and strengthen regional networks on forest law enforcement.

5. COMIFAC will report on progress made in the Africa Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (AFLEG) process. The AFLEG Ministerial Conference took place from 13 to 16 October 2003, in Yaoundé, Cameroon, resulting in the AFLEG Declaration and Action Plan. In the Declaration, governments expressed their intention to, *inter alia*: mobilize financial resources for FLEG; provide economic opportunities for forest-dependent communities to reduce illegal activities; promote cooperation between law enforcement agencies within and among countries; involve stakeholders in decision making; raise awareness of FLEG issues; and explore means of demonstrating the legality and sustainability of forest products.

6. The COMIFAC countries have also agreed on a “*Plan de convergence*” for the region, which includes activities to improve forest law compliance in support of the AFLEG Action Plan. The implementation of these activities is supported by the FAO-Netherlands Partnership Programme. COMIFAC will report on these as an example of regional cooperation in combating illegal logging and associated trade.

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