



global witness

Mr. Sébastien Delion
Wijma Cameroun S.A.
B.P. 1616
Douala
Cameroon

2nd June 2011

Dear Sir,

I acknowledge receipt of your email of 26th May 2011; however, I only received it after my departure from Kribi to London. For this reason my response has been delayed, for which I apologise.

Firstly, I would like to thank you again for having welcomed representatives of Global Witness' partners from various countries to visit Wijma's sawmill in Bidou and to have initially accepted the visit of Billy Kyte, one of our colleagues, to concession area 09 024 in the Ma'an region.

However, I have to express my deepest concern and disappointment that the company Wijma did not accept that a member of Global Witness' team be accompanied by a member of the Cameroonian NGO CED to facilitate his 'learning visit' of a forest management site. I have also recently learnt that the Operations Manager of your FSC-certified concession 09 024 was not informed about the arrangement agreed with you concerning the visit of my colleague Billy Kyte and, contrary to that agreement, you also refused his visit to the concession even without the company of the CED member.

CED has played, and continues to play, an important role in improving governance in the forest sector – through critical monitoring actions of activities of the timber industry and in accompanying populations affected by forest exploitation. Its commitment to the FLEGT process and the reform of the forest law is also well recognised.

Although recognising the tensions that exist between Wijma and CED I was however confident that Wijma would accept that our colleague be accompanied by a CED forest expert who, in the past, has worked in the Cameroonian forest

sector. As such, I was disappointed to learn of Wijma's rejection to enter its concession not only of CED but also of my colleague at Global Witness. This is especially surprising since your company presents itself in the public eye as modern and progressive, with some concessions FSC certified and others aspiring certification.

Furthermore, one of your stated reasons for denying CED's visit – that they need clearance from the Cameroonian Timber Industry Association (GFBC) - is unclear to us. Why should GFBC, an association that promotes and defends the industry's interest, be playing a role in granting permission to access concessions of an autonomous enterprise such as Wijma?

I had the intention of thanking you, Mr. Delion, for initially responding positively to our request however it seems Wijma has apparently not yet opened up to transparency and critical dialogue vis-à-vis local civil society as representatives of vulnerable populations.

I hope this response to your email meets with your good understanding and opens a platform for dialogue between Wijma and both local and international civil society.

Sincerely,

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CC: Samuel Nguiffo of the Centre for Environment and Development (CED)
Simon Rietbergen of the World Bank
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