

Project of Independent Observation in Support of
Forest Law Enforcement in Cameroon

**Approved by the Ministry of
the Environment and Forests**

Report No. 018 En

Joint mission: Central Control Unit – Independent Observer

Title: Deng-Deng Forest Reserve

Location: East Province

Mission date: July 22 - 28, 2002

Company: None

Independent Observer (Global Witness):

Mr. Albert K. Barume, Deputy Director

Mr. Serge C. Moukouri, Forester

Mr. Tangye C. Celestine, Driver

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---|
| 1. SUMMARY | 1 |
| 2. RESOURCES USED | 1 |
| 3. COMPOSITION OF THE MISSION | 2 |
| 4. CONSTRAINTS | 2 |
| 5. RESULTS OF THE MISSION | 2 |
| 5-1-Summary of the facts: | 2 |
| 5-2-Methodology | 2 |
| 5-3- Observations of the Independent Observer | 3 |
| 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS | 6 |
| 7. Appendices..... | 8 |

1. SUMMARY

The Independent Observer accompanied an evaluation mission of the Central Control¹ Unit (CCU) to the departments of Lom et Djerem and Haut-Nyong (East Province) from July 22 to 28, 2002. One of the aims of the mission was to evaluate the theft that had been going on in the **Deng-Deng Forest Reserve**.

The mission first went to the Belabo railway station, thought to be the main route for evacuating the wood suspected of coming from logging in the reserve.

The mission then toured the reserve under the supervision of the head of the ex-ONADEF (National Office for Forest Development/*Office National de Développement des Forêts*) regional agency, author of the complaints that led to the ordering of this mission.

With regard to this mission, the Independent Observer's conclusions are as follows:

1. There is intensive small-scale sawing of trees in the outlying areas of the Deng-Deng forest reserve.
2. A significant stock of wood is consistently passing through the Belabo railway station towards the Far North. This wood is of different origins and some of it bears no markings.

In view of the above, **the Independent Observer recommends:**

1. The visible demarcation of the boundaries of the Deng-Deng forest reserve;
2. Requiring the local forester responsible for Belabo to keep a permanent inventory of wood stored at or passing through the Belabo railway station;
3. Monitoring of the north-west and southern boundaries of the reserve;
4. Asking the Eastern Provincial Brigade to draw up a legal notification against anyone having stored wood at the Belabo railway station.

2. RESOURCES USED

- 1 4x4 pick-up truck
- 1 Yamaha 100 motorbike
- 2 Garmin GPS
- 1 video camera
- 1 Sony laptop computer

¹ "Control" in the context of this report means "Law Enforcement" or to "check compliance with law".

3. COMPOSITION OF THE MISSION

One CCU official, the head of the ex-ONADEF regional agency, the head of the Belabo Forestry checkpoint the head of the Deng-Deng forestry post, two officials from the local ex-ONADEF agency, one official from the Forest Law Enforcement Provincial Brigade and two members of the Independent Observer technical team took part in the mission.

4. CONSTRAINTS

The mission encountered two problems. Firstly, the CCU team reached Bertoua two days late. This delay seriously reduced the time available for field investigations. Secondly, the mission did not have access to some station warehouses, which did however contain wood. The station officials holding the keys were not available.

5. RESULTS OF THE MISSION

5-1-Summary of the facts:

The Deng-Deng Forest Reserve is located in the district of Belabo, department of Lom et Djerem, East Province. It is made up of four forest blocks separated by forest spaces that have already formed the object of various logging titles (SSV, licences², etc.). The reserve is bordered by FMU 10 061 to the south, and FMU 10 062 to the north-west. It is also surrounded by several villages.

On the 5th February, 2002, the office of the Minister of the Environment and Forests was informed of an alleged forestry offence. This complaint, made by the head of the ex-ONADEF regional agency. The complain read, "...the Deng-Deng forest reserve is currently the object of unprecedented looting, in spite of the presence of surrounding Forestry checkpoints. The Belabo and Goyoum railway stations have become terminals to evacuate the wood sawn in the reserve and fields to the Far North, for the collection of money following the official marking. Instead, the MINEF marking hammers have become instruments encouraging illicit logging in this area". (see Appendix)

5-2-Methodology

The mission held work sessions with the head of the ex-ONADEF regional agency and the head of the Belabo forestry and hunting official respectively.

² Licence: Logging title granted for a renewable period of five years and which gives its holder the right to log exclusively aimed for export or for local processing subject to restrictions on some species as a consequence of the current forestry regulations or the contractual conditions (Law No 81-13 of the 27th November, 1981 and Decree 83-169 of the 12th April, 1983 on the system of forests, fauna and fishing).

The mission then went into the field (to the railway station and to the reserve) accompanied by the head of the ex-ONADEF regional agency in order to enable this latter to show the members of the mission the logging and evacuation sites noted in his letter to the Minister.

5-3- Observations of the Independent Observer

a. Unidentified wood at Belabo station.

At the Belabo railway station, the Independent Observer noted the presence of a significant stock of wood, comprising rough sawn wood sawn traditionally and bearing no regulatory markings (see photo 1 below). Most of this wood belongs to dealers.



Photo 1: Wood of unknown origin stored at the Belabo station

The head of the Belabo forest and hunting checkpoint was not able to provide the mission with information regarding its origin, quantity or the validity of the titles from within which the wood had originated. Article 127 of Decree of the 23rd August, 1995 prescribes, however, that forestry officials are required “to undertake controls to ensure that forest products transported are in line with the indications noted in the documents presented”.

Cameroonian wood transportation regulations require, moreover, that all wood ready to be transported must have documents indicating its origin and specifications (article 27.2 of Decree of the 23rd August, 1995).

In addition, the Independent Observer noted the presence of an edging machine. One of the uses of this machine is to correct sawing faults (see photo 2 below). The Independent Observer questions the legality of activities undertaken with this machine at the station.



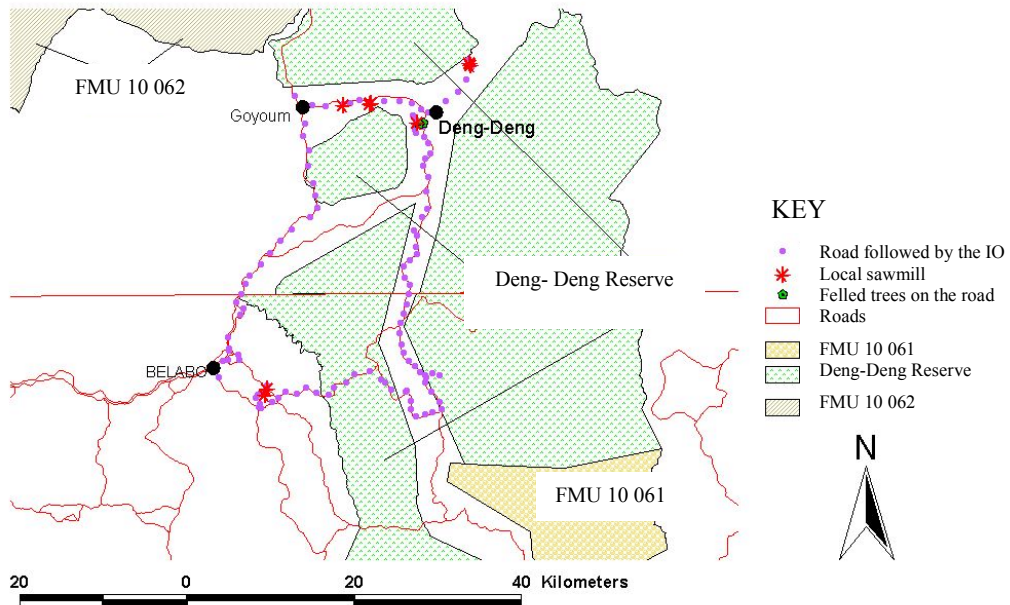
Photo 2: Wood processing workshop at the Belabo station

b. Small-scale sawing of wood in the peripheral areas of the forest reserve.

Intensive small-scale wood processing is underway in the outlying areas of the Deng-Deng forest reserve.

The GPS points represented on the map below and the photos taken by the Independent Observer during the mission confirm this assertion.

Small-scale sawmills on the borders of the Dend-Deng Reserve



The significant quantities of planks found in certain places convinced the Independent Observer of the extent of small-scale sawing activity in areas very close to the reserve. (see photos below.)



Photo 3: Stock of planks in the periphery of the Dend-Deng reserve



Photo 4: Product of traditional sawing in the periphery of the forest reserve

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A significant stock of wood is passing through the Belabo railway station towards the Far North, among other destinations. Some of this wood bears no markings.

The outlying area of the Deng-Deng forest reserve is the object of intensive small-scale sawing activity which, in all probability, forms a threat to the reserve. Moreover, the contiguity of the southern and north-western borders of the reserve to those of two FMUs is a source of additional concern for the integrity of the reserve.

The failure to mark wood ready to be transported from the Belabo station constitutes an offence under Cameroonian forestry regulations. In fact, article 127 of Decree of the 23rd August, 1995 stipulates that, “transporters of forest products must be in possession [of documents] indicating the quantities and specification of products transported, in particular, along with their place of origin”.

Moreover, any act of logging, even small-scale, constitutes the offence of unauthorised logging, provided for and penalised by articles 156 and 158 of law N° 94/01 of 20 January 1994, on forestry, wildlife and fishing regulations.

From a criminal point of view, the perpetrators could incur the penalties provided by article 156 of the law of the 20th January, 1994, which punishes all unauthorised logging in a State forest with a fine of 200,000 to 1,000,000 francs CFA and/or a one to six month prison sentence.

From a civil point of view, the authors could incur the penalties provided by article 159 of the law of the 20th January, 1994, providing for damages and interest relating to fraudulently cut wood. These damages and interest must be calculated on the basis of the entire current market value of the species in question.

Given the above, **the Independent Observer recommends:**

1. The visible demarcation of the boundaries of the Deng-Deng forest reserve;
2. Requiring the local forester responsible for Belabo to keep a permanent inventory of wood stored at and passing through the Belabo railway station;
3. Monitoring of the north-west and southern borders of the reserve;
4. Asking the Eastern Provincial Brigade to draw up a legal notification against anyone having stored wood at the Belabo railway station.

7. Appendices

4

OFFICE NATIONAL DE DEVELOPPEMENT
DES FORETS B.P 1341 YAOUNDE

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Travail -Patrie

AGENCE REGIONALE DE L'EST
B.P 54 BELABO

MINISTERE DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT
ET DES FORETS
COURRIER ARRIVE/UCC
LE 15 FEV. 2002
S/N° 099

MINISTERE DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT
ET DES FORETS
COURRIER ARRIVE
LE 07 FEV. 2002
S/N° 9200

N° 1282 /L/ONADEF/A.BBO.

/E CHEF D'AGENCE REGIONALE DE L'ONADEF DE L'EST
- BELABO -

Objet : Protection
de la Reserve Forestiere
de Deng Deng.

MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT
ET DES FORETS
S/C MONSIEUR LE DIRECTEUR DES FORETS
- YAOUNDE -

*UCC + Goba Mitras
pour la mission etel
et pour le dossier
de Deng Deng*

Excellence Monsieur le Ministre,

Par correspondance n° 260/L/MINEF/DPEF-E du 15 Octobre 2001
dont photocopie ci-jointe, Le Délégué Provincial de l'Environnement et des
Forêts de l'Est nous a saisi en vue de prendre d'urgence avec la Brigade
Provinciale de Contrôle des mesures pour l'élaboration d'un plan de sécu-
rization de la Reserve Forestiere de Deng Deng.

La protection de ce patrimoine privé de l'Etat, support de nos
travaux d'aménagement forestier ayant toujours été notre préoccupation, nous
avons salué à sa juste valeur, les termes de cette correspondance et nous
avons fait au Délégué les propositions dans notre correspondance dont copie
ci-jointe.

Jusqu'à ce jour, notre correspondance est restée sans suite.

Nous avons repris du 14 au 31 Janvier 2002 nos missions de surveil-
lance de ce patrimoine. Au cours de celles-ci, nous avons le regret de vous
faire connaître que la Reserve Forestiere de Deng Deng fait à présent l'objet
d'un pillage sans précédent, malgré la présence des Postes Forestiers qui
l'entourent.

Les gares de Bélabo et Goyoum sont devenues des ports pour l'évacua-
tion vers le Grand Nord des bois sciés dans la Reserve et des champs, pour
la recolte de l'argent après martelage. Les marteaux forestiers sont plutôt
des instruments qui favorisent l'exploitation illicite dans ce domaine.

.../...

Nous attirons donc votre attention sur cette situation allarmante dont les conséquences compromettront l'existence de ce domaine si des mesures de protection plus rigoureuses ne sont pas entreprises. Nous suggérons qu'une mission d'évaluation de la situation ci-dessus décriée descende sur les lieux.

gfw
Veuillez agréer Excellence Monsieur le Ministre, l'expression de ma très haute considération./-

BELABO, LE 5 FEV. 2002

LE CHEF D'AGENCE,

AMPLIATION:

- D.G/ONADEF.



AGENCE REGIONALE DE L'EST
B.P 54 BELABO

N° 275 /L/ONADEF/A.BBO.

/_E CHEF D'AGENCE REGIONALE DE L'ONADEF DE
L'EST -BELABO-

Réf. : V/L n° 260/L/MINEF
DPEF-E du 15 Octobre 2001.

/>
/))ONSIEUR LE DELEGUE PROVINCIAL DE
L'ENVIRONNEMENT ET DES FORETS DE L'EST
-BERTOUA-

Objet : Sécurisation
de la Reserve Forestière
de Deng Deng.

Monsieur le Délégué,

Faisant suite à votre correspondance citée en référence et relative
à l'objet repris en marge.

J'ai l'honneur de vous faire connaître que nous avons saisi à sa
juste valeur les termes de cette correspondance. En effet, la protection
et la préservation de la Reserve Forestière de Deng Deng, support de nos
travaux d'aménagements forestiers ont toujours été notre préoccupation.

En ce qui concerne l'élaboration d'un plan de sécurisation de ce
domaine privé de l'Etat, nous suggérons que les missions de contrôle ou de
surveillance de ce domaine soient faites conjointement par la Brigade Pro-
vinciale de contrôle de l'Est et l'Agence ONADEF de Bélabo et qu'ensemble
nous prenions des sanctions réglementaires qui s'imposent à l'encontre des
exploitants et scieurs artisanaux véreux qui travaillent dans ce domaine.

Par ailleurs, des barrières de contrôle mixte, ONADEF GENDARMERIE
et POSTES FORESTIERS qui entourent cette forêt devront être installées au
niveau de l'axe Bélabo Goyoum et à la sortie de ladite Reserve à Yanda.

Compte tenu de l'urgence qui s'impose pour les mesures à prendre
pour la sécurisation de cette Reserve, je propose que les missions commencent
le Jeudi, 25 Octobre 2001.

.../...

Vous voudrez donc bien instruire au Chef de la Brigade Provinciale de contrôle de l'Est à se rapprocher de nous pour qu'ensemble nous organisons lesdites missions.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur le Délégué, l'expression de ma franche collaboration.

BELABO, LE 22 OCT. 2001



LE CHEF D'AGENCE

[Signature]
ENGBWEM LUC
INGENIEUR DES EAUX
FORETS ET CHASSES

DELEGATION PROVINCIALE DE L'EST

22/10/01
Mr. Alava
B.U enregistrer
et classer
Bl

LE 27/10/2001 N° 0260 /MINEP/DPEF-E.
N° 3131 onadef/ABho

LE DELEGUE PROVINCIAL DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT
ET DES FORETS DE L'EST A BERTOUA

A

MONSIEUR LE CHEF D'AGENCE ONADEF DE BELAEO.

Objet : Sécurisation de la réserve forestière
de Deng-Geng.

La réserve forestière de Deng-Deng faisant l'objet ces derniers temps d'une coupe frauduleuse par les exploitants et scieurs artisanaux véreux,

J'ai l'honneur de vous demander de prendre d'urgence attache avec la Brigade Provinciale de Contrôle de l'Est, pour l'élaboration conjointe d'un plan de sécurisation de la dite réserve.

Veillez croire, Monsieur le Chef d'Agence, à l'assurance de ma parfaite collaboration./-

AMPLIATIONS :

- BRIGADE DE CONTROLE (suivi). ✓
- ARCHIVES.
- CHRONO.

Bertoua, le 27 OCT 2001

LE DELEGUE PROVINCIAL

