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GFTN-France

Less than a month after the start of GFTN-Iberia, GFTN-France re-launched in Paris, with commitments from seven leading companies: Setragroup, Berrywood, Leroy Merlin, Fournier (Mobalpa), Castorama, Nature et découvertes and the Regional Council Nord Pas de Calais. GFTN-France was originally launched in 1999 as 'Club Proforêt'; its re-launch reflects an increased focus on promoting responsible tropical timber trade between France and the Congo Basin. Under this new, more focused vision, GFTN-France and GFTN-Central Africa will develop coordinated activities among Participants to more effectively leverage GFTN's impact in transforming the global timber trade.

The 24 Iberian and French companies that are now part of the GFTN network are not only industry leaders looking to transform their purchasing and trade policies, but are also pioneers in developing markets for Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) products. In Iberia, Leroy Merlin offers a wide range of FSC-certified home improvement products and Lafarge Cement is the first company in its sector to use FSC-certified cement sacks and pallets. Likewise, Puertas Luvipol has launched its first FSC tropical wooden door and Benito Sistemas de Carpinteria offers an FSC-labeled window. In France, Carrefour has certified 80 per cent of its garden furniture line.

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2 GFTN on the Ground

Big Wins and Accolades Shine a Light in the Green Heart Of Africa

October was a dynamite month for forest certification in the Congo Basin. Three companies: Rougier-Gabon, Precious Wood, and GFTN-Central Africa (GFTN-CA) Participant Pallisco, received FSC certification for over 1.5 million ha, more than doubling the total area certified in the Congo Basin to almost 3 million ha.

For Pallisco, FSC Chain of Custody certification and Forest Management certification for 341,708 ha culminates four years of hard work. As one of the largest forest management companies in Cameroon, Pallisco's certification contributes to FSC's growing momentum in the Congo Basin. Because they export to Spain, France and the United Kingdom, Pallisco's progress is another step in the transformation of forest products trade between Cameroon and Europe.

Since 2005, Pallisco and GFTN-CA have worked side-by-side to implement ecological practices and social programmes necessary to meet the requirements of FSC certification. Over the years, Pallisco has assessed the social and environmental impacts of their logging operations and implemented activities to mitigate those impacts. This work has included enhancing Reduced Impact Logging practices, conducting wildlife surveys, negotiating on the multiple uses of the highly valuable tree species moabi (African pearwood, *Baillonella toxisperma*), and working with local NGOs to build capacity for communities around Pallisco's concessions. Pallisco's certification brings the GFTN-CA portfolio of credibly certified forests to 848,323 ha, or 30 per cent of FSC-certified forests in the Congo Basin.

GFTN-CA's work with Pallisco illustrates the importance of responsible forest management as a conservation tool in the Congo Basin. In July 2008, Jim Leape, director general of WWF-International, journeyed to the Congo Basin to observe WWF's work in the region. Included

in his visit was a study tour to GFTN-CA Participant SEFAC's recently certified logging concession.

'I think FSC certification is one of the most important strategies we have developed over the last 15 years because, we absolutely must find ways to conserve the forest and at the same time meet the economic and social needs of surrounding communities', Mr. Leape said. 'And certified forestry is a proven strategy for doing that. It is very exciting to see that strategy work here in Central Africa'.



WWF Director General Jim Leape (left) commended key players involved in achieving FSC certification in the Congo Basin, especially Mr. Parfait Mimbimi, executive director of FSC-Cameroon.

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