

RaceWood in Douala – Cameroon March 2010

**The 3rd edition of the African Meetings of Cooperation with Europe will take place
in Cameroon**

RACEWOOD, which will be held in Douala – Cameroon in March 2010, was officially launched on the occasion of the INTERZUM trade fair in Cologne. These meetings aim to promote partnerships between European companies and African industrialists within the tropical timber industry.

RACEWOOD 2010, the 3rd edition after Gabon in 2004 and Ghana in 2006, has set out to gather together a hundred European and African companies or so on the following three thematic:

- Consolidation of forest certification and market availability of FSC certified products,
- Challenges of climate change with debates on REDD following the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December 2009
- Prospects for local and interregional market development in the context of strengthened requirements (FLEGT, VPA, ...)

RACEWOOD 2010 is a Pro€Invest project within the framework of the EU-ACP programme supporting promotion of investments and technology transfers in favour of ACP businesses operating in environmental projects, among which RACEWOOD, for sustainable forestry activities in the ACP. The event was thought out by IFIA and is supported by the European Commission and Pro€Invest.

Why attend RACEWOOD in Douala in March 2010?

During the three days of RACEWOOD, European importers have a unique opportunity to meet decision-makers and industrialists including 23 forest concessions from the Congo Basin engaged in a process of forest certification.

Focus on illegal logging

Within the framework of FLEGT, the European Union multiplies negotiations with countries in the Congo Basin for the implementation of VPAs (Voluntary Partnership Agreement). Ghana and Congo Brazzaville have already signed up. The criteria of legal timber apply to the whole timber industry. From 2011, importers will be responsible for the wood products they provide their customers with and must be sure that they come from legal sources.

On the occasion of these meetings, there will be a possibility to visit FSC certified forest concessions and companies. RACEWOOD 2010 is the privileged occasion that provides you with all the necessary arguments towards your contacts: customers, distributors, financial partners, media...

RACEWOOD provides the forest industry with the opportunity to make the sector known (often 1st or 2nd employer in the country) and to demonstrate the progress in matters of sustainable forest management.

Africa has a strong potential for certified products

With 4,7 million ha under FSC certification, the Congo Basin has become the world's largest surface area of certified natural forests. Nine companies have been certified since June 2009: 4 in Cameroon - Pallisco, Pasquet Group subsidiary, Transformation Reef Cameroon, Sefac, Wijma; 3 in Gabon – Rougier Gabon, CEB/Precious Woods, CBG/Compagnie des bois du Gabon and 2 in Congo – CIB (DLH Group) and IFO (Danzer Group).

Those companies, whose practices are assessed by a third party, guarantee that operations are carried out in compliance with the most demanding environmental and social requirements, even though the present economic crisis makes the context particularly complicated.

Certification of sustainable forest management for the **European markets** does not only provide the civil society and the environmental community with proof of credibility and legitimacy, but is also a mark of differentiation for **distributors** following a responsible timber purchasing policy. As for **consumers**, increasingly concerned with environmental issues, they have the guarantee that the certified wood products they buy come from sustainably managed forests.

For the other private and public partners, RACEWOOD provides the opportunity to discuss social, political, environmental and economic issues with all the players in the tropical timber industry.

While waiting for the RACEWOOD website to get online (company presentation sheets, practical information, online registration...) and for the catalogue of European and African companies to be published, please contact us for any further information.

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