

Statement regarding recent media releases

Recent media releases have described incidents taking place in and around the Kikonda Forest Reserve in western Uganda. Global Woods have managed the Kikonda Forest Reserve since the National Forest Authorities awarded the company in 2002 with a tree-growing license. The Kikonda Forest reserve itself have been designated for plantation forestry since the government of Uganda demarcated the area as a forest reserve in 1963.

The most severe allegation are concerning an incident taking place inside the forest reserve in November 2013 when a cattle keeper grazing his herd in the newly planted part of the plantation was confronted by global-woods security guards. The situation was not handled in accordance with company procedures for a situation like this, got out of control and culminated with a number of cattle keepers, including children of the main complainant over the age of 20, being beaten by the security guards. Subsequently the temporary shelter build by the cattle keeper was damaged by fire resulting in the roof burning. The security guards and supervisor involved in the incident were suspended immediately after the incident and were later dismissed, as the management team understood the full picture. A process to compensate the involved parties started and the only outstanding issues are in relation to a case that was taken to court by the cattle keeper. The court in 2015 finally rejected to deal with this case and global-woods have reinitiated the process of compensating the affected person.

global-woods deals with the somewhat blurry land tenure conditions in Uganda as well as anyone else operating small or large-scale land-based operations. To make sure that any complaints or grievances are addressed Global Woods have set up a grievance procedure. From 2012 to 2015 69 grievances were recorded and by November 2015 seven were pending a solution. Out of the seven cases, six were from incidents occurring during 2015. In the vicinity of the forest reserve app. 50,000 people are living.

Other allegations have dealt with the possible negative effects on cattle caused by watering ponds being polluted with herbicides used in the plantation. These are serious allegations that we consider important to understand and we investigate every case immediately but have not been able to establish a link between cattle decease and the use of herbicides. Further, there is no scientific evidence linking the herbicide used and detrimental effects to cattle health.

If you have any further questions or require additional information please do not hesitate to contact us on mail@global-woods.com .