EU/Cameroon Voluntary Partnership Agreement: forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber and derived products to the EU (FLEGT)

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This document outlines the content of the voluntary agreement between the European Union and Cameroon on forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber and derived products to the EU (FLEGT).

Its main provisions may be summarised as follows:

Objective: The objective of this Agreement (hereinafter the "VPA") is to provide a legal framework aimed at ensuring that all imports into the Union from Cameroon of timber and derived products covered by this Agreement have been legally produced or acquired. It lays down, in particular, a FLEGT licensing scheme based on controlling the supply chain.

The Parties are required:

- to promote trade in timber and derived products;
- to establish a basis for dialogue and cooperation;
- to promote the development of the forest industries in Cameroon and to thereby improve the competitiveness of the sector;
- to create and encourage economic opportunities for resident local communities and local enterprises;
- to strengthen the capacities of actors in Cameroon by encouraging the creation of a favourable climate for investment in the sustainable management of forests.

Scope: this Agreement applies to all timber and derived products that come under the FLEGT licence scheme and are listed in the annex. Overall, the agreement covers more than the products in Annex II of Regulation (EC) No 2173/2005 (or the 'FLEGT Regulation') and concerns all forestry products. Cameroon thus undertakes to introduce a system which will provide the EU with the assurance that **all forest products coming from that country are harvested and produced legally**.

In particular, the Agreement provides for:

- a **FLEGT licensing scheme** with a set of procedures and requirements aimed at verifying and attesting, by means of FLEGT licences, that timber and derived products shipped to the Union have been legally produced or acquired. The Union shall accept such shipments from Cameroon for import into the Union only if they are covered by those FLEGT licences;
- a **licensing authority**: licensing authorities must be established as well as control authorities in the EU responsible for checking imports coming into the European Union;
- the drawing up of the Cameroon **FLEGT licence** in the same format as that in the EU;
- a **dialogue and cooperation mechanism** with the EU on the FLEGT scheme, in the form of a Joint Implementation Council and a consultative structure called the Joint Monitoring Committee;
- **supporting measures**: including development measures such as i) local development support; ii) promotion of forestry sector industrialisation; iii) capacity building. The provision of additional resources shall be subject to the procedures governing Union aid, as set out in the Cotonou

Agreement, and to those governing the bilateral aid given to Cameroon by each of the Member States of the Union;

- **market-related incentives** including the encouragement of public and private procurement policies that recognise efforts to ensure a supply of legally harvested forest produce;
- **participation of the stakeholders,** the introduction of social safeguards, transparency, monitoring of effects and the drawing up of enforcement reports;
- a **schedule for implementation** and procedures for the Agreement's entry into force. The Agreement will have an initial duration of seven years and shall be renewable by tacit agreement;
- a **simplified procedure for amending the annexes**.