

FINAL STATEMENT, MEANGWE II MEETING

We the people, elders, traditional title holders elites, farmers, teachers, community leaders and hunters, NGOs coming from the different villages in and around the SGSOC proposed plantation concession area in Ndian Division who attended the Meangwe II enlarged meeting which focused on community information sharing on environmental protection and development on 30th to 31st of July 2012.

Whereas, our natural environment is vital for the protect and enrichment of our planet;

Whereas, we solely depend on our native forest for our livelihoods;

Whereas, this area is very fragile and has highly bio-diverse ecosystems crucial for a vast number of fauna and flora including fish, amphibians, reptiles;

Whereas, our native forests serve as protection against dangerous storm action, protecting land loss and wind and lightening damage;

Whereas, our forest acts as important filters to purify water and help prevent inland salinisation of freshwater and arable land;

Whereas, our forest is crucial source of fuel wood, building materials, traditional medicines and food for countless people in our communities as well as other coastal communities dependent on the resources from this area;

And whereas, any loss of this forest constitutes serious a serious threat to the future of our communities as well as other coastal communities affecting our livelihoods and way of life;

We gather here made the following resolutions:

Deny and reject reports by Herakles Farms that they have established MoUs with each village in the proposed concession area, as Herakles has never come to our villages to organize meetings to seek our free, prior and informed consent of their project. Consequently we consider any such document like MoU of Mundemba and Toko subdivisions and any other agreements with chiefs as simply nonsense propagandas designed by Herakles to illegally grab our native land.

We equally condemn Herakles for taking an undue advantage of the lack of ICT in our area to tell lies to the world that they have provided mosquito nets to our people, books, drinkable water, medical treatment, scholarship and compensation of damages done to our properties. We strongly consider the move as an attempt by Herakles to deceive the world as to where we stand against their proposed plantation which is, “NO Plantation and SGSOC OUT!!!”.

After taking into consideration the environmental and social issues involved in the proposed Herakles palm plantation in our land, we have no doubt that while this project will be a boon to the owners, the social, economic, cultural and environmental costs associated with this project will be borne by us and our progeny.

We also note with anger and dismay the attitude of Herakles in ignoring the judgments of the Cameroon Courts in this thereby giving the impression that the company has no respect for Cameroon and its institutions.

We equally note with dissatisfaction the non applicability of the precautionary principle in this area considered by many scientists and development experts as a global asset; in terms of biodiversity, hydrology and climate change therefore see this project unsuitable and unviable in our ancestral land.

We also aver that the presence of SGSOC/Herakles and their activities in our native land for over a year today very clearly violates our fundamental human rights and is repugnant to Cameroonian and International Law.

We call on the our President, Paul Biya to reexamine the process leading to the signing in 2009 of the establishment convention between the government of Cameroon and SG Sustainable Oils Cameroon (SGSOC) which clearly undermines Cameroon's sovereignty and her commitments to international institutions on issues of environment and human rights

Appeal to the our Head of State, President Paul Biya to cancel forthwith the application for the grant of land lease submitted by SGSOC, an affiliate of Herakles Farms because it will lead to abuse of our rights to food due to land shortage since the area is already limited in size by the Korup National Park and the Rumpi Hills Forest Reserve (a complex watershed formation).

Noting that SGSOC/Herakles promises of providing employment, scholarships, medical services, electricity, roads and so on is merely to gloss the truth of the impacts to be generated by the project as all persons in our communities are self employed, and detest working in plantation settings and preferred to carry on with our subsistence agriculture with the possibility to bequeath our investments to our families and progeny than working in plantations.

Noting that the roads which have encouraged the SGSOC to illegally grab our land was realised the self - reliance efforts of our collective communities for the best interest of our communities and progeny not for companies to come and grab it without our free, prior and informed consent like the case of SGSOC.

Having taken note that large-scale palm oil plantations are not strange development in our area with empirical experiences showing that this kind of development is not a cure to poverty alleviation, we hereby call on SGSOC and any other company that wants to undertake such business that it will worsen the cause of poverty and ill-being of our people which has nothing to do with the absence of palm plantations but rather the lack of roads to evacuate our produce: cocoa, coffee, plantains, bananas, fruits and so on, to the market centers. Any large-scale plantation will inevitably put our livelihoods in great jeopardy and makes it difficult for us to escape from poverty as our land and existence shall be taken away from us causing insecurity of life and closes our advantage of new opportunities.

Recognising the actions taken by the Fabe People on 29/05/2012 and stand in solidarity with them for defending their inalienable rights to stop the illegal occupation of their village land by SGSOC and congratulate the activists who protested at Toko

during the visit of the Governor of South West Region to Toko on June 6, 2012 that brought to the forefront our voices and opinions vis-à-vis Herakles illegal occupation and pledged henceforth to act collectively against the illegal presence and activities of SGSOC in our land.

That should this project go ahead, it will lead to some serious and irreversible environmental and social problems; some of which are evidential since the illegal presence of SGSOC in our area such as land conflicts and disputes, socio-cultural opprobrium, loss of biodiversity including change of hydrological equilibriums and flood incidents affecting not only our communities but many other communities and natural systems such as mangroves, rivers, floodplains, mudflats and so on that depend on the freshwater from this area in both Cameroon and Nigeria.

Finally we vouch our rock-solid and unequivocal support to the actions taken this far by SEFE, other organisations and individuals to stop the illegal presence and activities of SGSOC/Herakles in our land whose activities have already chopped down several hundred of hectares of land in disregard of our fundamental rights and freedoms.



Cross section of chiefs



Cross section of Women who came to know about Herackles project for the first time



Cross section of youths



Some Participants in the hall



Participant



Participants out of the Hall



Cross section of men after the meeting

● Mr. Nasako Besingi



Food for entertainment