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## FSC guarantees peace of mind to consumers

A recent WRM (World Rainforest Movement) report has called into question the credibility of FSC certification in four plantations in Uruguay.

The two FSC accredited certification bodies responsible for these certifications have investigated the issues and have now provided their responses to FSC. The certifiers' reports clarify and justify the decision to certify the companies named in the WRM report. 'Reading the certification body's reports it is apparent that some information in the WRM report was based on misunderstandings or in some cases presented out of context', said Heiko Liedeker, Director of FSC International.

FSC has a well established and internationally recognized accreditation program which monitors the performance of accredited certification bodies and ensures that their certification of forest management operations complies with FSC's international standards for socially beneficial, environmentally appropriate and economically viable forest management.

As part of the certification bodies' assessment of forest management FSC requires extensive consultation with local stakeholders to ensure that the needs of local people are respected and met. Along with many other stakeholders in Uruguay WRM was contacted during these processes to raise their concerns. Smartwood's public summary documents this well. The FSC accredited certification bodies will continue to involve social, environmental and economic stakeholders at every annual monitoring visit to each of their certified operations.

'FSC values and encourages the very active and often critical engagement of local stakeholders and NGOs. But FSC is neither campaigning against plantations nor an instrument to create publicity for 'Anti-Plantations-Campaigns'', warns Liedeker.

The FSC General Assembly discussed at length whether or not plantation forestry should be certifiable just like management of natural and semi-natural forests. It concluded with overwhelming support of its social, environmental and economic constituents that FSC shall not exclude plantations from its scope, but instead review its approach to certification of plantations. The aim of the review process is to ensure that certification of plantations does promote best practices.

Over the past 30 months a working group with balanced representation of social, environmental and economic stakeholders from the Global South as well as the Global North has reviewed in-depth all aspect of best practice in plantation forestry. This working group held extensive consultations around the world to ensure that experience and knowledge of local stakeholders, especially of those affected by plantation forestry is included. The working group will publish the results of its work in fall 2006. We expect the work of the working group to yield in many critical respects a much improved approach to FSC certification of plantation forestry.

'The FSC label continues to make every effort to promote socially and environmentally responsible forest management in plantations as well as natural and semi-natural forests. Consumers can count on the FSC system as a guarantee for good forest management', promises Liedeker.

SmartWood public summary certification report can be found on the SmartWood web site. A public statement can also be found at: [http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/forestry/smartwood/documents/fymnsa\\_clarifications.pdf](http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/forestry/smartwood/documents/fymnsa_clarifications.pdf)  
After SmartWood annual monitoring audit of the company mentioned in the WRM report, additional information will be available.

SGS public summary report is available on SGS Qualifor Program web site. For further information, please contact Gerrit Marais (Director of SGS Qualifor Program) (Gerrit.Marais@sgs.com).

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