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OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF APDR (ASOCIACIÓN POLA DEFENSA DA RÍA) REGARDING THE FSC CERTIFICATION OF NORFOR

On February 5th the company SGS published a summary of the report of the second assessment audit of the certification under FSC standards of the forest company NORFOR, which operates in Galicia, Asturias and Cantabria (northwest of Spain). This report was full of falsehoods, manipulation of the information, misrepresentation of the facts and concealment of the reality. But now the problem is not the intention of defrauding which the company has held from the beginning of the certification process. The problem is that FSC, fully aware of the fraud, has decided to continue with this certification in spite of the increasingly crushing evidence of nonfulfillment of the standards; thus, FSC takes another backward step by moving further away from the aims with which it was created.

Now that the future of our land and forests is full of uncertainties and our ecosystems and forest systems seem more threatened than ever, it is necessary to follow a management approach which will allow us to improve, or at least to maintain, the conditions of rural communities, and to guarantee the maintenance of the resources and the survival of the ecosystems. In Galicia, the worst management system, which favours erosion, the loss of biodiversity and the disappearance of forest uses and resources, has the FSC certificate. More than two years after the certificate was issued, NORFOR's forest management system has not been modified and the maintenance of the certificate is based on deceit and concealment of reality on the part of the certification body, SGS, and the complicity of FSC, which, almost two years after APDR (Asociación pola defensa da Ría) lodged a formal complaint by bringing forward clear and easily contrastable evidence of nonfulfillment of the standards, continues to strive to maintain the certificate at any price. FSC is demonstrating, in the certification of NORFOR, that their real primary objective is to protect a flourishing business rather than "guarantee the authenticity of its certifications" and "promote a forest management system which is responsible, beneficial to society and financially viable".

In these times of changes in the approach and extension of forest activities in the whole planet, in which natural systems are deteriorating at great speed whilst enterprises, far from assuming social and environmental responsibility, strive to maintain systems of management of highly intensive lands, which are socially and environmentally degrading and where the great benefits result from the impoverishment of the inhabitants of forested areas, FSC has chosen to focus on the business and has become the enterprises'

instrument in order to expand and prosper with their destructive management. In this case, NORFOR, FSC is benefiting from one of the greatest axes of the certification business, and one of its major frauds, the setting in value of the certificate as a document which gives enterprises access to important public subsidies granted by states and international organisms, which surprisingly prove to be clear evidence of financially unsustainable management. On the hand, the certificate allows the enterprise to improve its position in a market where the certification is granted a value and a prestige which, as the falsified certifications proliferate, it is losing. It is only the economic value of the benefits which forest enterprises obtain from the acquisition of the certificate which makes the companies seek them and FSC maintain them at any price, not taking into account the nonfulfillment of the standards.

In APDR (Asociación pola defensa da Ría) we denounce and will continue to denounce the intention of maintaining an increasingly grotesque fraud which FSC has shown in the certification of NORFOR and in other certifications worldwide. Therefore, we must show our society the fact that being in possession of the certification does not necessarily mean that the holder's forest management is responsible, beneficial to society and financially viable and that FSC, in spite of being fully aware of this, maintains the fraud.

Pontevedra, April 9th 2007

Further information on NORFOR in:

