FCS in GABON: STARTING THE JOURNEY TOWARDS 100% FSC CERTIFICATION

A cooperation agreement was signed between the Ministry of Forests of Gabon and the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) in Libreville on January 31, 2020.

In September 2018, the President of Gabon H.E. Ali Bongo Ondimba took an important step towards sustainable forest management by declaring that as of 2022, all forest concessions operating in Gabon will have to be certified by FSC. As part of the implementation of this policy the Gabonese Minister of Water and Forests, Prof. Lee J. White signed on January 31st, 2020 a cooperation agreement with FSC represented by its Executive Director, Kim Carstensen.

The signing ceremony of the said agreement took place in the presence of representatives from the Ministry, agencies monitoring forest cover, ENGOs, FSC certified companies from Gabon and the local media.

Recalling the measure taken by the President of the Republic to set 2022 as the target year for FSC certification of all forest concessions, Minister Lee White encouraged companies operating in the timber sector to embark on their journey towards certification in order to ensure their reliability on the international market.

"I am convinced that FSC certification will help forestry companies at all levels to improve their practices in this sector. It will also represent a marketing asset for the sale of their products, as buyers will be confident that Gabonese timber products are not from illegal logging. "said Minister Prof. Lee White.

The Gabonese government aims to gain economic benefits of the national forest sector and increase the income level from 500 million euros to 3000 billion euros in contribution to GDP by 2025.

“For us, it is very important to be a partner of the Gabonese government for the sustainable development of its forests. FSC is a unique facilitator whose mission is to bring together stakeholders to find solutions leading to positive development for forests and communities.“ said Kim Carstensen, Executive Director of FSC.

This agreement concluded for a period of five (5) years, renewable by tacit agreement, aims to promote the sustainable management of Gabonese forests and improve access for FSC certified wood products from Gabon to international markets.