



THE *PAPUA NEW GUINEA* ECO-FORESTRY FORUM

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Media Release

Forum calls for a Commission of Inquiry into the Logging Industry

In light of the latest controversy over Prime Minister Sir Michael Somare's attempts to fast-track a logging project and the admission by ANZ Bank that it is concerned by the allegations of illegal logging, EFF is re-iterating its call for a commission of inquiry into the logging industry in the country.

"It is for the purposes of transparency and good governance that an independent commission of inquiry be immediately executed to investigate any such reports in the media involving allegations of abuse of power at higher places and questionable conducts of those involved in the forestry industry," says the Forum. The Forum makes this call after a recent media report alleging undue influences of the Prime Minister to fast track the controversial Ili-Wawas logging project in East New Britain.

According to the Forum, this latest media report allegedly involving the Prime Minister is serious as it also comes at a time when PNG's logging industry has continuously been put under the spot-light for illegal and irresponsible logging practices. "Hence, an immediate independent commission of inquiry is imminent to investigate the alleged irregularities into the entire industry," said the Forum.

The Forum says the allegations involving the Prime Minister is serious also for the fact that it comes after the recent Forest Trends damning report of unscrupulous logging practices in the country which also alarmed many foreign governments.

While making the call as an industry participant representing the interests of those involved in sustainable eco-forestry practice and as a member in the National Forest Board, the Forum also appeals to all honest forest industry participants to fully support the call for an inquiry into the matter. "In light of the allegations, an independent commission of enquiry is imminent as it will while satisfy the wishes of foreign governments like New Zealand, United Kingdom, Australia, and Dutch who are concerned about the state of PNG logging industry, would also create investor confidence for worried banks like ANZ and Citigroup," says the Forum.

PNG Eco-Forestry Forum

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