



THE *PAPUA NEW GUINEA* ECO-FORESTRY FORUM

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Media Release

Woodlark Islanders must be respected, Forum

The PNG Eco-Forestry Forum is challenging the government to come out clear on its position on dealing with issues concerning forest resource development in the country.

It said, there are so many issues relating to forest resource development such as landownership, equal participation, and fair and prior informed consent in decision making, which the government continues to overlook.

The government seems to be contradicting itself in many ways and have gone out of focus on what it is supposed to do," says Chair of the Forum Mr, Damien Ase.

He said it is now talking about tapping into carbon credit scheme given the country's rich forest stock but its export driven economic policy on the other hand, seems to be having toll on the forest stock through its growing investments in unsustainable logging and large agro-forestry projects in the country.

Mr. Ase said this while calling on the government to respect the views and the wishes of the Woodlark Islanders who have this week come out on the media opposing oil palm estate on their island.

He said the government does not seem to care about the people any more. All it cares about is its economic interests which supersede its social and environmental responsibilities.

"We are concerned because this is not the first time resource owners have come out opposing oil palm projects due to serious environmental and social impacts. Late last year we had a strong resentment from the Mamba landowners over the Mamba Palm Oil development project in Northern Province. Also in August this year there was a joint opposition by landowners from the government proposed six agro-forestry projects sites around the country who among others issues said the government failed to consult them before pushing the proposals," said Mr. Ase.

He said the Woodlark Islanders' appeal now makes it the third time in a row which is just too much, and sufficient enough to get the government to come down and do something about it.

While making the call, the Forum is also challenging the government to tell the nation about whose interest it serves in its forest resource development agenda.

For more information, contact the Forum on phone 323 9050 or email: teff@global.net.pg

PNG Eco-Forestry Forum

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The Papua New Guinea Eco-Forestry Forum supports integrated rural community development and sustainable resource use through a viable and sustainable eco-forestry industry