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2. PNG Post-Courier

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HEADLINE: Greens take campaign abroad

BYLINE: By ALEX RHEENEY

BODY:

GREENPEACE has urged an international forest governance summit to force the Papua New Guinea Government to comply with national forestry and environment laws and respect human rights. Meeting in Manila this week to coincide with the East Asia Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) meeting, the environment group said countries within the region such as PNG continued to fail to implement measures to stop the trade in illegal timber. In PNG illegal logging continues to be out of control, with more than half a dozen major legal cases taken out by landowners against industrial loggers this year, Greenpeace forests campaigner Dorothy Tekwie said in a statement yesterday.

It is imperative that the FLEG process force timber exporters like PNG to comply with national forestry and environment laws, as well as respect human rights. Timber consuming countries must be tougher on import controls, including bans on illegal timber. A report released last week by Washington DC-based international forestry organisation Forest Trends pointed to the continued existence of a culture of illegality within the PNG forestry sector, a claim that industry lobby group Forest Industries Association (FIA) denied. Greenpeace Paradise forests campaign co-ordinator Stephen Campbell expressed his disappointment in the FLEG process saying: The Paradise Forests of the Asia Pacific are no better off than they were four and a half years ago. Logs that have been illegally harvested continue to find their way to countries like Japan and China where they are used domestically or processed and sold on to markets in the EU and the US. Strong measures need to be adopted in not only producer countries (like PNG and Indonesia), but also consumer countries (like China and Japan). Consumer countries must recognise the demand from their markets for cheap timber and wood products is fuelling this environmental disaster, and respond appropriately with measures such as legislation.

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