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**Press Release**  
For Immediate release

### **Interactive Forest Mapping Launched for Communities in Cameroon**

*Oxford & London, United Kingdom and Yaoundé, Cameroon, January 30 2008:* The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the British High Commission Yaoundé and Helveta (UK) Limited announced today that Helveta's technology will be used by local communities in Cameroon as part of a new initiative to map their key assets and sensitive resources in the forest. The project will build on prior successful deployments in Cameroon by "Centre pour l'Environnement et le Développement" (CED) and Forest Peoples Programme (FPP), in the Central African Republic by FPP, and in Republic of Congo by "Congolaise Industrielle des Bois" (CIB) and Tropical Forest Trust (TFT).

Local communities will use Helveta's CI Earth™ technology to map forest environments using ruggedized icon-driven touch screen handheld units. Forest management activities and forest usage will be monitored, mapped and GPS referenced. Data will be made available for sharing by project stakeholders in an online environment that can be used for the planning of forest resource management. CI Earth further enables the online sharing of maps among communities over the web, allowing users to view and query maps produced. A core goal of the project is to use this platform to provide stakeholders sharing resources in a given area of the Cameroon forest to have a common view on forest data and avert and avoid sources of conflict.

The icons presented on the handheld interface have been designed by project partners Dr. Jerome Lewis of University College London and John Nelson of Forest Peoples Programme and CED. This has resulted in a substantially expanded library of community mapping icons accessible through the CI Earth map sharing environment, using Helveta's new release of its handheld application CI Mobile™.

The project is supported by the Cameroon Forestry Ministry and funded by the Global Opportunity Fund from the FCO. Particular focus will be on supporting the Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) and Voluntary Partnership Agreement processes in Cameroon, providing a platform to aid in forest monitoring and remote verification of forest management activities in sites across Cameroon. The project aims to deliver benefits to the communities by enabling their direct involvement in the FLEGT process and by enhancing their ability to monitor forest logging activities in the areas in which they live. The project stakeholders further plan to use the online map environment as a conflict avoidance mechanism in dialogue between the communities and logging operators.

Syd Maddicott, British High Commissioner to Cameroon, said: "We are delighted to have been able to support such an innovative project. Local communities in Cameroon depend on the country's forests for their livelihoods and are badly affected by illegal logging. This project offers a communication process to local communities to ensure their needs are taken into account. This is essential if sustainable forest management is to be achieved."

Euan Wallace, FCO Sustainable Development unit, said: "This ground-breaking project will enable local communities in Cameroon to use state-of-the-art technology to gather evidence of illegal logging activity for themselves. In doing so, they will not only be helping themselves, but also helping the Cameroonian government to meet their future obligations under the EU-FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement to monitor logging activity. Projects such as this can only help ensure a sustainable timber industry for the benefit of future generations."

John Nelson, Policy Advisor, Forest Peoples Programme, said: "This technology is helping Central African forest communities protect their traditional lands and livelihoods, and is accelerating their participation in forest planning in the Congo Basin. It is helping forest communities put themselves on the map. A technological revolution helping a high tech people, perfect"

Patrick Newton, CEO of Helveta, commented: "It's great to see the project partners on this initiative using Helveta technology to good effect in supporting the FLEGT and Voluntary Partnership Agreement processes on the ground in Cameroon. We see this project as the first step in establishing the technology platform for timber traceability and chain of custody management across Cameroon. "

### **About FCO SD**

Sustainable development is at the heart of the UK's domestic and international policies. The UK Government's Sustainable Development Strategy – [Securing the Future](#) – was launched by the Former Prime Minister in March 2005.

The UK Government is working to promote sustainable forest management, conservation and sustainable use for human needs for all types of forests. The impacts that illegal logging, along with associated trade and corruption, have on environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, deforestation, and climate systems are widely recognised. The harvesting and transport of timber in contravention of a country's laws also damages livelihoods in the poorest countries and costs governments in developing countries and timber producing countries an estimated \$10-15 billion every year in lost revenue. Illegal logging also distorts markets and trade, and funds and sustains conflicts, such as in Cambodia, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The UK is taking a leading role in working to achieve sustainable forest management, and in tackling illegal logging and the trade in illegally harvested timber. We are taking this work forward in a number of ways.

For more details visit the sustainable development section on the FCO website - [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk)

### **About British High Commission Yaoundé**

The British High Commission represents Britain and promotes British interest in Cameroon and the region. As such the BHC seeks and funds projects which meet UK international priorities. Cameroon became a priority country for the Global Opportunities Fund: Sustainable Development in 2005 . A total of seven projects have since been designed and selected for Cameroon, addressing issues such as sustainable natural resource management, environmental governance, wildlife law enforcement, sustainable eco-tourism and environmental education.

### **About Forest Peoples Programme**

The Forest Peoples Programme ( [www.forestpeoples.org](http://www.forestpeoples.org)) is an international NGO, founded in 1990 and registered as a Stichting in the Netherlands and with its main office in the UK, which supports the rights of forest peoples. The organisation provides policy advice and training to indigenous peoples and other forest peoples at local national and international levels for them to secure and sustainably manage their forests, lands and livelihoods. Over the past fifteen years of its work, the programme has emerged as an influential actor in international debates about forests and indigenous rights. It has also developed field programmes in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

### **About Helveta**

Helveta was incorporated in 2004 and is the developer of the CI World™ software platform. CI World is a unique technology providing fully auditable traceability and chain of custody control for extended supply chains in the Timber and Food production sectors. CI World and its components – TracElite™ and CI Earth™ - have won a number of awards as innovative technologies for the timber sector. Helveta is privately held.

### **For further information, please contact:**

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