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Joint UNECE/FAO Workshop on Illegal Logging
and Trade of Illegally-Derived Forest Products
in the UNECE Region

Geneva, Switzerland, 16-17 September 2004

THE NATIONAL REPORT ON ILLEGAL LOGGING

(Prepared by Mr. Robert Selmes, Forestry Commission, United Kingdom)

Summary

Tree felling in the United Kingdom is regulated by the forestry authorities through felling licence, approval of long-term Forest Plans, Environmental Impact Assessment regulations (for deforestation) or, in the case of development, through the statutory development control process exercised by local authorities. In the case of felling in woodlands, felling control is often strengthened by association with grant approvals for other activity. All cases of alleged illegal felling are investigated and prosecution may ensue. However only a very small area is affected each year and the majority of investigations relate to trees outside the woodland. As a result very little homegrown illegal timber enters the wood chain. About 70% of UK grown timber is from certified forests.

About 80% of UK wood demand is met by imports. The UK has taken a lead in promoting regional FLEG processes with the aim of eliminating illegally felled timber from UK imports. An active policy for government procurement of legally produced - preferably also independently verified as sustainably grown - timber and wood products has influenced both the domestic and imported timber trade. However, with the exception of CITES, species documentation of the original source of imports remains problematic both for timber traders and the Government.