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Eight months of Independent Forest Monitoring in Nicaragua

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Global Witness today publishes the First Summary Report of the Independent Forest Monitoring (IFM) Pilot Project in Nicaragua, which presents the results of eight months of work carried out between August 2006 and March 2007. IFM has been designed and implemented in the country at the invitation of the Nicaraguan Forest Authority (INAFOR – *Instituto Nacional Forestal*), with financial support from the UK Department for International Development (DFID). The project is expected to continue into a second phase starting in April.

As the official independent monitor in Nicaragua, Global Witness has undertaken ten field missions and documented each of them in an individual report, all of which present the factual evidence gathered, as well as conclusions and recommendations stemming from it, to the relevant authorities. In so doing, the project aims to support forest law enforcement in the country and, ultimately, achieve sustainable forest management that equitably benefits the Nicaraguan people.

This work has shed a spotlight on various grave weaknesses facing the forest sector in Nicaragua. These include both, major problems at an institutional level, most notably a lack of due control by the law enforcement institutions, and an atmosphere of impunity that results in ample bad and illegal management practices.

The Summary Report provides an overall outline of the work carried out thus far. This report, as well as the ten individual field mission reports, are available in English and Spanish at <http://www.globalwitness.org/pages/en/nicaragua.html>.

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