



## Response to the Swedish Energy Agency

10th of May 2016

Dear General Director Erik Brandsma and Mattias Eriksson, Head of Market Development Department,

We want to express our dissatisfaction with your decision to continue to remain engaged in the Green Resources tree plantation project in Kachung, Uganda. This project is still deeply flawed – socially, ecologically and economically – and must be questioned in nearly all respects.

One of a number of critical issues which are being completely ignored by you, the Swedish Energy Agency, and Green Resources, is the fact that non-native trees are being planted in Kachung. These alien trees do not occur naturally in Uganda or in Africa. Besides having the tendency to be invasive, they consume excessively large amounts of water and profoundly alter the soil's chemistry and micro fauna. This has a tremendous negative impact on the natural environment and the local community, which will most likely, suffer from food and water shortages as a consequence. Indeed, detailed research has already proven the adverse impacts on food security for communities affected by Green Resource's activities in Uganda.

In addition, there is great uncertainty regarding the potential of tree plantations to sequester carbon. Studies show a general pattern of decreasing carbon pools in tree plantations relative to primary and secondary forests (natural forests), independently of biomes, geographic regions or other factors.<sup>1</sup> The tree plantations in Kachung (considering the short anticipated logging rotation periods) are more likely to become net sources of greenhouse gas emissions during the full cycle of habitat destruction, timber production, wood processing, transportation, consumption and disposal. The trees in the plantation area would need to remain in place permanently, in order not to release carbon dioxide back into the atmosphere, but this would also defeat the other stated object of the exercise.

In other words, by supporting the Green Resources tree plantation project, you neither benefit the climate nor the local community in Kachung. The villagers in Kachung sued Green Resources and the National Forest Authority in 2008 based on the poor way in which they were treated. This issue is the matter of an ongoing lawsuit. Furthermore, Green Resources profits from the sale of carbon credits, while Uganda gets very little in return. Green Resources already had a bad reputation under its former name Tree Farms at the end of the 1990s. Tree Farms exploited farmers by using them as free labour to clear and prepare the plantation land. Social conflicts arose and poverty increased. Read more about 'CO<sub>2</sub>lonialism' in the FERN report (2000), p. 46-51: <http://www.fern.org/sites/fern.org/files/pubs/reports/treetr.pdf>

Swedish investor groups also played a key part in land-grabbing for tree plantation projects in Mocambique. Their shares have since been taken over by Green Resources.

In addition, Uganda will not be able to use the claimed carbon-offsets for its own carbon emission reduction targets, since the credits are being sold to rich countries such as Sweden. Through its purchase of dubious carbon credits from Green Resources, the Swedish Energy Agency is supporting a system which continues to exploit African nations and their resources for the benefit of 'colonial' powers in the form of polluting corporations. This is a guaranteed recipe for future socio-economic problems in Uganda.

In the past, Sweden made a great contribution by supporting the struggle for liberation in southern Africa and against apartheid in South Africa. Why is Sweden now so tolerant regarding the actions of Green Resources?

Given that you deliberately covered up information related to Green Resources' poor conduct – by falsely stating that the project land was unused bush-land, when in reality it was utilised by the community – can your responses be considered trustworthy?

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<sup>1</sup> Liao C, Luo Y, Fang C, Li B (2010). *Ecosystem Carbon Stock Influenced by Plantation Practice: Implications for Planting Forests as a Measure of Climate Change Mitigation*. PLoS ONE 5(5): e10867; [www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0010867](http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0010867)

We ask you to immediately cancel your carbon credit purchase contract with Green Resources.

Yours sincerely,



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Sweden



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