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The Rt Hon George Howarth MP
House of Commons
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The Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP
Secretary of State

27 August 2015

Dear George,

Thank you for your letter of 24 July on behalf of your constituents, about the trade in illegal timber. I am sorry for the delay in replying.

Defra is committed to tackling the trade in illegal timber. We implement the EU Timber Regulation (EUTR), which makes it an offence to place illegally logged timber on the EU market for the first time, and the EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Regulation, which aims to combat illegal logging and improve the supply of legal timber to the EU. The EU FLEGT Regulation establishes Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) between the EU and timber producing countries. Once VPAs have been agreed, timber producing countries will issue exports with a 'FLEGT licence' which verifies the timber's legality.

Our efforts in these areas were reflected in WWF's 2014 'EU Government Barometer' on illegal logging and trade, where we received the highest score of all the EU Member States, see: [http://barometer.wwf.org.uk/what we do/government barometer](http://barometer.wwf.org.uk/what_we_do/government_barometer).

Earlier this year, Defra responded to the current EU review of the EUTR to recommend that the scope of the regulation is broadened to cover more timber products. We believe this would allow the EUTR to better meet its objectives in preventing illegal timber entering the EU market.

In addition, Defra is responsible for the UK Timber Procurement Policy (TPP), which requires central government departments, executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies to go beyond the requirements of the EUTR and procure timber and timber products that are both legal and sustainable. I am delighted that other UK organisations are making similar commitments to trade in sustainable timber by signing up to WWF's Forest Campaign.

More broadly, Defra has contributed £140 million to the UK International Climate Fund (ICF) from 2011-2016. Defra's ICF funding is dedicated to projects addressing deforestation and forest restoration in developing countries.

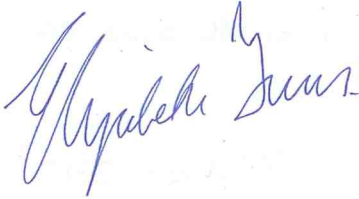


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Thus far our ICF contribution is supporting work in Brazil to support low carbon agriculture and avoid deforestation, and we have contributed to the BioCarbon Fund Initiative for Sustainable Forest Landscapes which supports sustainable land-use management to prevent deforestation.

Thank you again for your letter.

Best wishes,



Elizabeth Truss MP
Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs



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