

Fact Sheet: *Justice for Forests. Improving Criminal Justice Efforts to Combat Illegal Logging*

The Significance of the Report

Justice for Forests. Improving Criminal Justice Efforts to Combat Illegal Logging calls for stronger inclusion of criminal justice in domestic and international strategies to combat illegal logging. The report makes recommendations to policy makers and forestry and law enforcement actors on using criminal justice to more effectively fight illegal logging.

State of Play

- **Every two seconds an area the size of a football field is cut by illegal loggers.** In some countries, as much as 90 percent of all logging is illegal.
- **Between US\$10 and 15 billion** in criminal proceeds is generated annually. This money is mostly controlled by organized crime, untaxed and used to pay corrupt government officials at all levels.
- **So far, preventative actions** have been the focus of domestic and international efforts to combat illegal logging, without significant impact.
- **Criminal justice efforts have traditionally targeted low-level criminals**, who often engage in crime to get out of poverty.
- **Large-scale illegal logging operations are almost always linked to high level corruption** and organized crime networks.

Main Recommendations

- **Developing an integrated criminal justice strategy for illegal logging** that targets high-level corruption and the companies that pay bribes. This strategy should promote systematic investigations, prosecutions, and the confiscation of the proceeds of crime, and focus on large scale, organized illegal logging activities.
- **Improving domestic cooperation** among agencies with a stake in the illegal logging process and engaging the private sector by looking into the financial dimension of forest crimes and related proceeds. Better use of financial intelligence gathered by financial institutions and other entities that are obligated to report suspicious transactions is key to successful investigation of illegal logging, and related money laundering activities.
- **Engaging civil society actors** as powerful partners who can help governments, law enforcement, and the judiciary combat illegal logging and related crimes.
- **Country assistance strategies** aimed at helping address the problem of illegal logging should include anti-money laundering measures.

Background

The Financial Market Integrity (FMI) team of the World Bank Group supports transparent and inclusive financial systems. FMI helps client countries implement effective legal and operational frameworks to fight illicit financial flows.