



Statement by Faro West Lobeke in response to allegations from Survival International

4 November 2016

Faro West Lobeke is a sustainable game reserve in one of the most fragile and challenged regions of Africa. We believe that managed, sustainable game reserves are critical to the survival of African wildlife.

We work in close partnership with the government of Cameroon, WWF International and our local communities to preserve endangered species. Our goal is to contribute to the survival of endangered habitats and wildlife, and to support the sustainable development of local communities.

In particular, our reserves include some of the last remaining populations of critically endangered forest elephants. These extraordinary creatures are targeted remorselessly by commercial poachers who kill entire family groups indiscriminately for their ivory. Tragically, the discovery of the carcasses of elephants which have been killed with automatic weapons is an almost daily occurrence, despite our efforts to protect them.

We work extremely closely with our local communities, in particular the Baka people, who often describe themselves as pygmies. We employ many Baka, supporting dozens of families in our neighbourhoods.

We make a huge contribution to our local economy. We are deeply committed to partnership with our local communities. We are proud of our good relations with local peoples, and of the important contributions we make every day. We provide support with health as well as employment. We are investing in sustainable agricultural projects to provide alternatives to poaching as a livelihood for local people.

It is categorically untrue that our company or our employees are in any way involved in the mistreatment of local people. It is false and defamatory to suggest that we have burned homes, used violence, threatened people or displaced local populations. These are outrageous claims which should be withdrawn. Baka people are free to access our reserves, to cross the land, to visit religious sites and to fish. We allow the hunting of small numbers of game for food.

We are, however, committed to fighting commercial poaching. This is in no way related to traditional subsistence hunting. We remove thousands of illegal snares every year, and attempt to protect the forest fauna from gangs who slaughter large numbers of animals indiscriminately to sell their meat and ivory. Our Baka employees are vital allies in this work.

This is a challenging region which suffers from acute poverty, instability and terrorism. We are engaged in a constant and dangerous struggle against poachers. Incursions by armed gangs, and acts of violence against park rangers and local people are all too common. Earlier this year one of our rangers was shot dead, and another seriously injured, by poachers with automatic weapons.

Faro West Lobeke is committed to continue supporting a sustainable future for the indigenous people and wildlife of this precious region.

Pierre Guerrini