

BLCC will Seek Legal Redress Against PriceWaterhouse Coopers for Participating in Dispossessing the Bakweri of their Lands

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Mr. Hampo Ghazurossian

Price Waterhouse Coopers: Afrique Francophone
Tour AIG, 34 Place des Corolles
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Dear Mr. Ghazurossian:

**RE: The Status of Bakweri Lands after the Sale or Privatization of the
Cameroon Development Corporation**

On the 24th February 2001, I addressed a letter to you and attached a copy of a separate one that had earlier been sent, on instructions of the Secretary General of the Bakweri Land Claims Committee (“BLCC”), to prospective foreign buyers of the assets of the Cameroon Development Corporation (“CDC”) which put them “on notice that a cloud continues to hover over the title to the lands on which stand the CDC plantations.” In my 24th February letter I drew your attention to BLCC’s total opposition to any attempts by the Government of Cameroon (“Government”) to enter into *ex parte* discussions with these prospective buyers which exclude the Bakweri landowners and its resolve to take appropriate legal action “to block the sale of CDC property until the land ownership question has been resolved to the satisfaction of the Bakweri landowners.”

It has now come to our knowledge that Government has decided finally, on the recommendation of Price Waterhouse Coopers, to adopt the “commercial company, residual regulatory” formula in the privatization of CDC. Under this formula, as we have been made to understand, the various plantations owned by CDC will be privatized piecemeal to foreign multinational corporations, leaving a “residual CDC” to manage the lands. BLCC opposes any privatization “formula” which vests control and management of CDC occupied lands on any entity other than the native Bakweri people from whom these lands were forcibly expropriated without compensation by the German colonial administration over a century ago.

We note in passing that agreements resulting from privatization exercises, which have followed the “commercial company, regulatory residual” formula, have never been *ex parte*. The tradition has been one involving all parties which have a stake in the privatization in the negotiations, and discussions that lead to the ultimate privatization agreements. Clearly this approach has not been followed in the case of the CDC since a major stakeholder, the indigenous Bakweri people on whose land, it bears repeating, the agro-industrial activities of the CDC are based, have been deliberately excluded in these discussions and are, therefore not party to any agreements concluded thereof.

To the extent that Price Waterhouse Coopers is cooperating with Government to dispossess the Bakweri people of their lands, it too is hereby put on notice of BLCC’s intention to seek legal redress against it and all participants in this *ex parte* privation exercise, in all jurisdictions where Price Waterhouse Coopers and all other participants in the CDC privatization do business (Please see our letter to all prospective buyers of the CDC at the BLCC webpage: <http://www.bakwerilands.org/warning.htm>)

Furthermore, if and when appropriate, BLCC will associate itself with human rights, environmental labor, peasant/indigenous peoples movements and other such organizations in Europe, Latin America and the United States who have

expressed a strong interest in this matter. BLCC would, however prefer to have this issue settled amicably rather than see it injected into the volatile cauldron of international globalization debates.

FOR THE BAKWERI LAND CLAIMS COMMITTEE

Ndiva Kofele-Kale, Esq., Counsel

cc:

Horst K oehler, IMP Managing Director

President, World Bank

Commission on Privatization

Secretary-General BLCC

BLCC-USA

Press