

Position statement

A [story by Deutsche Welle](#), broadcast on January 8, focused on our activities in Cameroon. We would like to provide further details and answers to the elements put forward in the story.

Following the broadcast of this story, we note that we were not given the opportunity to comment on the facts stated in the story, contrary to what is said. Indeed, prior to this broadcast, on December 5, 2020, the journalist, Elisabeth Ansen Somo, had of course contacted Socapalm announcing the theme of her story. We answered her email within 48 hours and requested to be able to comment on factual and precise questions (interview questionnaire) in order to engage in a constructive dialogue. Unfortunately, no action was taken following our request until the story was broadcast.

The story pays very little attention to our commitments, monitoring systems and concrete results in terms of sustainable development, clearly demonstrating our transparency and our willingness to work on a daily basis to develop responsible tropical agriculture that respects neighboring communities and preserves the environment.

We would therefore like to clarify the situation by providing answers to the allegations made in this story.

More specifically:

- 1. The proclaimed location of the story is erroneous: filming took place on the Edéa plantation, located on the banks of the Nyong River, and not on the Mbongo plantation.** In fact, the Edéa plantation is crossed from north to south by the national tar road leading from Edéa to Kribi. And, no paved road crosses the Mbongo Plantation, although the journalist mentions the rural women living in the vicinity of the Mbongo Plantation. (See map attached at the end of this document).
- 2. Socapalm did not grab any land: Socapalm uses land made available by the State of Cameroon under a 60-year emphyteutic lease.** At the time of the transfer, on June 30, 2000, the leased area was 78,529 hectares. For various reasons such as third party occupations, identification of land not suitable for palm cultivation, road rights-of-way, railways and power lines, etc.; a revision of the lease was carried out in 2005 and an area of 20,785 ha was thus returned to the State of Cameroon. Hence, at the end of this operation, the concession was reduced from 78,529 to 58,063 ha, of which **only 37,000 ha are planted and not 80,000 ha as indicated in the story.**

→ *This land identification work, proposed for restitution, was carried out jointly in 2003 by Socapalm and the Ministries involved, namely: the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry of Domains and Land Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Urban Planning and Housing.*

In order to clarify the land tenure situation, which is the subject of certain tensions and misunderstandings, an inventory of the concession started in 2018, in close collaboration with the State, through the local land registry services, and with the affected neighboring communities. This inventory, initiated by Socapalm, is undertaken on all of its plantations,

and in some cases requires the placement or densification of boundary markers, which was done with the communities' cooperation.

This inventory will make it possible to:

- Clarify possible encroachments of the company outside the concession and intrusions - illegal occupations by third parties in the concession;
- Improve good neighborly relations between the communities and Socapalm;
- Reduce the areas covered by the lease between Socapalm and the State, for which Socapalm pays an annual rent.

A commission in charge of examining the land situation has been set up at the Ministry of Domains, Land Registry and Land Affairs; its purpose is to assist us in our efforts and to carry out field inspections if necessary. This operation is ongoing but has slowed down due to the many changes within the administration. We hope to finalize it during the course of 2021.

The specific "land grab" issue was the subject of a trial in Paris in March 2018, where the judge clearly stated that accusing Socapalm of land grabbing was defamatory.

We would like to remind you that the State of Cameroon is the legitimate landowner, and as such the only one to decide on the updating of the concession limits and Socapalm cannot grab any land from the surrounding populations.

In addition, as part of the RSPO certification, community communication and awareness was carried out regarding the protection of High Conservation Value Areas. To this end, information signs were placed in the concession to inform the populations that the areas in question could not or could no longer be cultivated.

- 3. The river mentioned in the story, i.e., the Ongue river, was analyzed twice in 2020 and showed no pollution. These analyses were carried out by an external organization approved by the State, QHSE Consulting.**

Moreover, contrary to the allegations, there is no possible discharge of oil mill effluents into the Ongue river since the oil mill of the Edéa plantation is located on the banks of the Nyong river. The Ongue River flows into the Nyong River.

Environmental and social impact studies were conducted on all of Socapalm's industrial sites and appropriate environmental and social management plans are implemented. These plans have been duly validated by the competent authorities.

- *The company is audited several times a year by the certification body, by our consultant in this area who has been working with us for several years, and of course by the authorities: missions from the Ministry of the Environment, Industry and Agriculture.*

For example, concerning effluents, each oil mill is equipped with lagoon basins collecting water from the industrial process. They consist of a cooling tank and 4 basins aimed at improving the quality of the water discharged at the end of the treatment cycle into the 5 basins.

The water discharged by the oil mills does not contain any chemical products, it only requires treatment to reduce its organic load.

- In order to ensure compliance with legal standards, regular measurements of the main parameters related to water quality are carried out by independent laboratories. Socapalm regularly analyzes the water of the rivers crossing its plantations, including the Ongue River. In case of a non-conformity, corrective measures are systematically implemented.

More specifically, the river mentioned in the story was subject to two analyses in 2020 and their results showed that the freshwater complied with the environmental quality criteria for watercourses. (March and October 2020, excerpts attached at the end of the document).

Socapalm relies on accredited laboratories to perform these analyses.

- 4. Socapalm applies a zero-tolerance policy regarding harassment, violence against women or rape, whether within its workforce or within teams of subcontractors and temporary workers and, of course, teams in charge of security. We have not received any official information relating to such facts from the organizations mentioned (RADD, Synaparcam) which confirm the statements made in the story. Should such acts have taken place, it is important to share the information with us in order to verify and take appropriate action in the event that such facts are proven.**

To strengthen this zero-tolerance policy regarding harassment, Socapalm has implemented a series of actions:

- *Publication and dissemination of a policy on respect for human rights;*
 - *Publication and dissemination of a policy on sexual harassment and other types of harassment and violence in the workplace (in appendix 3 of this document);*
 - *Implementation of an internal and external complaints management system;*
 - *Implementation of a structure and staff dedicated to relations with neighboring communities;*
 - *Establishment of "gender committees" that provide a forum for discussion of topics related to discrimination and sexual harassment;*
 - *We regularly educate our workers, communities and subcontractors (including safety teams) about our policies and existing complaint management systems to ensure that they are strictly applied.*
- 5. Socapalm has always scrupulously respected the agreements signed with the State of Cameroon. Moreover, the first judge of the respect of this agreement is of course the State of Cameroon through the Technical Committee of Privatization and Liquidation. The company has fully complied with the terms of the cession convention as well as the social mission which was its responsibility. On many aspects, it even went beyond the requirements of the text, whether in the areas of its mission or in other areas.**

For example:

- *Socapalm carries out a large number of public service missions that benefit both its staff and the neighboring populations: maintenance of roads used by communities and village planters, material and financial support for schools in the region, occupational medicine for its direct and indirect employees, emergency care for communities, etc.*
- *Socapalm's 2019 sustainable development report gives a precise overview.*

Thanks to the implementation of community dialogue platforms, dialogue is strengthened and structured with the communities around the plantations.

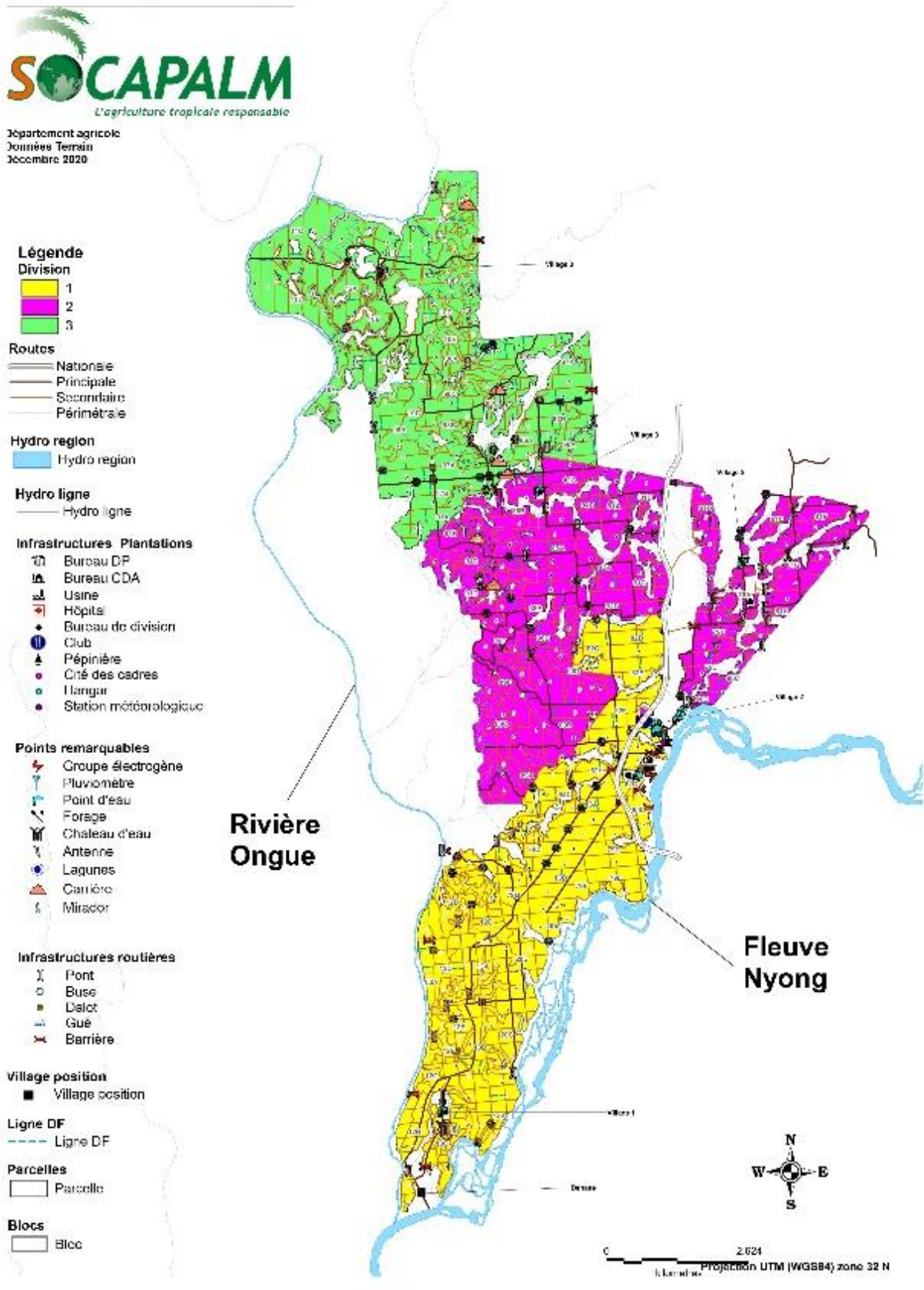
During these meetings, a large number of community actions and projects are proposed and implemented after selection by the parties present.

Conclusion

The various factual elements, commitments, policies, measures and verification systems detailed above demonstrate that the allegations made in the story are unfounded. At Socapalm, we want our palm oil and rubber production activities to **benefit everyone: employees, smallholders and communities by improving their rural livelihood.**

Annex 1: Edea's plantation map and the Ongue river.

Edea - Carte des divisions - 2020



Annex 2: Water analyses



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Email : contact@qhseconsulting.biz
N°contribuable : M071812714357K ; N°RCCM : RC/DLA/2018/B2622
Site : www.qhseconsulting.biz

BULLETIN D'ANALYSE

Référence	EDEA/RO/08 - 05/03/2020		
Client	SOCAPALM / Téléphone : 237 697 014 791 / PB : 691 Douala		
DONNEES SUR ECHANTILLONNAGE			
Nature de l'échantillon	EAUX DE RIVIERE	Date de prélèvement	05/03/2020
Type d'analyse	COURS D'EAU	Date d'analyse de l'échantillon	05/03/2020
Point de prélèvement	RIVIERE ONGUE EDEA	Prélèvement effectué par	QHSE - CONSULTING
RESULTAT D'ANALYSE			
PARAMETRES	REFERENCES	RESULTATS	NORMES
PHYSICOCHIMIE			
NATURELS			
pH	ISO 10523 : 2008	7,2	6,5 - 8,5
Température	ISO 7888 : 1995	30 °C	
Conductivité	NF EN 25814	39000	< 40000 mS/cm
MES	ISO 7980 : 1986	20	> 25 mg/L
Coloration	EPA Method 340-2	90	200 (mg/l Pt/Co)
Substances tensioactives	EPA Method 9071 B	100	1000µg/l
Phénol	NF EN 16192	0,9	Aucune odeur spécifique (mg/l)
Transparence	EPA Method 340-2	4	5
TDS	ISO 7888 : 1995	15	< 1000 mg/L
POLLUTION			
Azote Kjeldahl	NF EN 25663	5	6mg/l
DCO	HACH DR/2400-8000	30	40mg/l
DBO5	NF EN 1899-1/-2	10	20mg/l
Huile & Graisse (mg/l)	EPA Method 9071 B	0	Pas de film visible à la surface de l'eau
MICROBIOLOGIE			
Coliformes totaux	NF EN ISO 9308-1	30000	< 50000/100ml
Escherichia Colis	NF EN ISO 9308-3	1000	< 20000/100ml
Streptocoques Fécaux	NF EN 7899-1	10	< 10000/100ml
CONCLUSION			
"Critères d'appréciations" : Les paramètres analysés ont été comparés aux limites et références de norme qualité environnementale (NQE), spécificité "cours d'eau".			
"Conclusion" : Eau douce, conforme aux critères de qualité environnementale des cours d'eau.			

NB : Ces résultats ne concernent que l'échantillon soumis à l'analyse



Pour QHSE - CONSUL
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Agrément N°AR/0439/A/MINMIDT/SG/DI/SORI/SEC/MM du 17 juin 2019
Agrément N°2955/D/MINSANTE/SG/DPS/SDHA/SHM du 14 décembre 2018

BULLETIN D'ANALYSE

Référence	EDEA/RO/02 - 27/10/2020		
Client	SOCAPALM / Téléphone : 237 697 014 791 / PB : 691 Douala		
DONNEES SUR ECHANTILLONNAGE			
Nature de l'échantillon	EAUX DE RIVIERE	Date de prélèvement	27/10/2020
Type d'analyse	COURS D'EAU	Date d'analyse de l'échantillon	27/10/2020
Point de prélèvement	RIVIERE ONGUE EDEA	Prélèvement effectué par	QHSE - CONSULTING
RESULTAT D'ANALYSE			
PARAMETRES	REFERENCES	RESULTATS	NORMES
PHYSICOCHIMIE			
NATURELS			
pH	ISO 10523 : 2008	7	6,5 - 8,5
Température	ISO 7888 : 1995	25,8°C	
Conductivité	NF EN 25814	17	< 40000 mS/cm
MES	ISO 7980 : 1986	11	< 25 mg/L
Coloration	EPA Method 340-2	30	200 (mg/l Pt/Co)
Substances tensioactives	EPA Method 9071 B	100	1000µg/l
Phénol	NF EN 16192	0,7	Aucune odeur spécifique (mg/l)
Transparence	EPA Method 340-2	2	5
TDS	ISO 7888 : 1995	12,4	< 1000 mg/L
POLLUTION			
Azote Kjeldahl	NF EN 25663	3	6mg/l
DCO	HACH DR/2400-8000	30	40mg/l
DBO5	NF EN 1899-1/-2	10	20mg/l
Huile & Graisse (mg/l)	EPA Method 9071 B	0	Pas de film visible à la surface de l'eau
MICROBIOLOGIE			
Coliformes totaux	NF EN ISO 9308-1	100	< 50000/100ml
Escherichia Colis	NF EN ISO 9308-3	40	< 20000/100ml
Streptocoques Fécaux	NF EN 7899-1	20	< 10000/100ml
CONCLUSION			
"Critères d'appréciations" : Les paramètres analysés ont été comparés aux limites et références de norme qualité environnementale (NQE), spécificité "cours d'eau".			
"Conclusion" : Eau douce, conforme aux critères de qualité environnementale des cours d'eau.			

NB : Ces résultats ne concernent que l'échantillon soumis à l'analyse



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Agrément N°AR/0439/A/MINMIDT/SG/DI/SORI/SEC/MM du 17 juin 2019
Agrément N°2955/D/MINSANTE/SG/DPS/SDHA/SHM du 14 décembre 2018

Annexe 3 : Harassment policy



SOCIETE CAMEROUNAISE DE PALMERAIES
SOCIETE ANONYME AVEC CONSEIL D'ADMINISTRATION AU CAPITAL DE 45 757 890 000 F CFA

POLITIQUE CONCERNANT LE HARCÈLEMENT SEXUEL ET LES AUTRES TYPES DE HARCÈLEMENT ET DE VIOLENCE EN MILIEU DE TRAVAIL

Le harcèlement sexuel est un comportement indésirable de nature sexuelle qui fait qu'une personne se sente offensée, humiliée et/ou intimidée. Un environnement hostile, intimidant ou humiliant est ainsi créé pour la victime. Les harceleurs ou les victimes peuvent être de n'importe quel sexe. Le harceleur peut être n'importe qui : un superviseur, un collègue, un client, un enseignant, etc. Le harcèlement sexuel peut impliquer un ou plusieurs incidents et actions. Le harcèlement peut être physique, verbal et/ou non verbal. Un comportement fondé simultanément sur l'attraction réciproque, l'amitié et le respect mutuel n'est pas du harcèlement sexuel.

Les autres types de harcèlement et de violences comprennent sans toutefois s'y limiter : l'intimidation, la persécution, les menaces, les attaques physiques, les dommages matériels ou encore la violence domestique et familiale.

- La SOCAPALM se conforme aux lois nationales pertinentes en matière de harcèlement sexuel et d'autres types de harcèlement et de violence. Le respect des lois, réglementations et accords applicables est assuré grâce à un système de veille réglementaire mis en place.
- La SOCAPALM s'engage à fournir un environnement sûr et exempt de harcèlement sexuel et de violence à toutes les personnes travaillant sur la concession.
- La SOCAPALM interagit pacifiquement avec ses employés et avec les populations locales, et interdit tout recours à l'intimidation ou au harcèlement de la part des sociétés de gardiennage sous contrat. En outre, la SOCAPALM interdit l'utilisation de mercenaires et de paramilitaires dans ses opérations.
- La SOCAPALM prend au sérieux les signalements de harcèlement sexuel et d'autres types de harcèlements et de violence, et résout les différends de manière efficace, opportune et appropriée, en garantissant la confidentialité pour éviter toutes représailles.
- La SOCAPALM s'engage à avoir une tolérance zéro à l'égard du harcèlement sexuel et les autres types de harcèlement et de violence, quelles que soient les circonstances ou le lieu dans le milieu de travail.
- La SOCAPALM s'engage à communiquer cette politique et à sensibiliser sur son contenu de manière régulière à l'ensemble de ses parties prenantes internes.
- La SOCAPALM s'engage à mettre en place un comité genre dans l'ensemble de ses sites.


Toute partie prenante interne victime ou témoin de harcèlement sexuel ou d'un autre type de harcèlement ou de violence est encouragée à en faire part à l'enquêteur désigné du site SOCAPALM (président(e) du comité genre) soit directement, soit en appelant le numéro de téléphone assigné du site. Si la victime souhaite déposer une plainte officielle, le mécanisme de plainte officielle sera utilisé pour régler la question.

Les accusations de harcèlement sexuel et d'autres types de harcèlement et de violence, lorsqu'elles sont fondées, donnent lieu à des mesures disciplinaires et peuvent également donner lieu à des poursuites judiciaires. Les accusations fausses et malveillantes, lorsqu'elles sont avérées, donnent lieu à des mesures disciplinaires et peuvent entraîner des poursuites judiciaires.

Des mesures disciplinaires ou judiciaires seront prises à l'encontre des travailleurs de l'entreprise ou des parties prenantes internes qui enfreindront délibérément la présente politique.

Douala, le 23 avril 2019
Le Directeur Général,
Dominique Cornhet

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SOCIETE CAMEROUNAISE DE PALMERAIES
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POLICY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ALL OTHER FORMS OF HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature which makes a person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated and thus creates an environment which is hostile, intimidating or humiliating for the recipient. Harassers or victims can be of any gender. The harasser can be anyone: a supervisor, a co-worker, a client, a teacher etc. Sexual harassment can involve one or more incidents and actions. Harassment may be physical, verbal and/or non-verbal. A behavior based simultaneously on mutual attraction, friendship and respect is not sexual harassment.

Other forms of harassment and violence includes, but is not limited to: intimidation, bullying, threats, physical attack, property damage, or domestic and family violence.

- SOCAPALM complies with relevant national laws regarding sexual harassment and all other forms of harassment and violence. Compliance with applicable laws, regulations and agreements are monitored by a regulatory watch.
- SOCAPALM commits to providing a safe environment which is free from sexual harassment and all other forms of harassment and violence for all the people working on the concession.
- SOCAPALM interacts with its employees and local populations in a peaceful way and prohibits any use of intimidation or harassment by contracted security firms. In addition, SOCAPALM prohibits the use of mercenaries and para-militaries in its operations.
- SOCAPALM takes reports of sexual harassment and all other forms of harassment and violence seriously and resolves disputes in an effective, timely and appropriate manner, ensuring confidentiality to avoid any retaliation.
- SOCAPALM has zero tolerance regarding sexual harassment and all other forms of harassment and violence under any circumstances or location in the workplace.
- SOCAPALM commits to communicating this policy and raising awareness of its content on a regular basis to all SOCAPALM internal stakeholders.
- SOCAPALM commits to set up a gender committee in each site.

All internal stakeholders experiencing or witnessing sexual harassment or other form of harassment and violence are encouraged to report this to the SOCAPALM site's appointed complaint investigator (chair/wojman of gender committee) either directly or by calling the site's assigned phone number. If the victim wishes to make a formal complaint, the formal complaint mechanism will be used to resolve the matter.

Charges of sexual harassment and all other forms of harassment and violence, where substantiated, will result in disciplinary action and may also lead to legal action. False and malicious accusations, where substantiated, will result in disciplinary action and may lead to legal action.

Disciplinary or legal actions will be taken against company workers or internal stakeholders who willfully are in breach of this policy.

Douala, 23 April 2019
General Manager
Dominique Cornhet

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POLICY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ALL OTHER FORMS OF HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

Liste des enquêteurs assignés par l'entreprise (président(e) du comité genre)
List of the company's appointed complaint investigators (chair/wojman of the gender women committee)

SITE SOCAPALM	Enquêteur assigné(e) Appointed Investigator	Poste Position	Numéro de téléphone Phone number
Direction générale - General management Douala			
Dibombari			
Edéa			
Eséka			
Mbambo			
Mbongo			
Kienké			

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