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Will Cameroon bear the brunt of Herakles' implosion?

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Will Cameroon bear the brunt of Herakles' implosion?

For Immediate Release

Contact: Anuradha Mittal, +1 510 469 5228, amittal@oaklandinstitute.org

The embattled Herakles Farms palm oil plantation project in Cameroon appears to have now gone off the rails. Recent news of CEO Bruce Wrobel's early retirement from parent company Sithe Global, plus charges of corruption filed in the US by Cameroonian NGOs and the virtual disappearance of All for Africa, an NGO (chaired by Bruce Wrobel) that granted a faux "green" legitimacy, combine to indicate that failure is at hand for the maligned project. The word on the ground points to a dire financial situation and an erosion of faith in Herakles Farms by investors and company's own workers. Herakles Farms had purported to herald a new era of "sustainable agriculture" by replacing old-growth rainforest with palm oil plantations. But the company has faced a series of setbacks since the Oakland Institute and Greenpeace International released a [report](#) in May 2013 documenting false promises, risks, and legal flaws in Herakles' planned operations. Since the report's release, we have seen the following developments:



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- On June 18, 2013, Reuters reported a Cameroonian senior official stating, “We have asked them to forget their original deal signed with MINEPAT.” The Herakles Farms project is being renegotiated with the plantation’s surface area reduced from 73,000 to 20,000 hectares.
- On June 13, 2013, two Cameroonian NGOs filed a complaint in the United States via OECD against Herakles Farms for corruption.
- Senior staff have left the company, including the Project Director and Senior Vice President for Agriculture.
- Herakles Farms is now harvesting logs from its project area rather than developing a palm oil plantation.
- On September 12, 2013, Greenpeace released evidence that Herakles Farms has been logging illegally even after the suspension of their activities in May 2013.
- Ongoing dispute with former staff members and a subcontractor over the non-payment of salaries and fees.
- On July 30, 2013, Sithe Global announced that its CEO, Bruce Wrobel, who is also the CEO of Herakles Farms, was retiring from the company for unspecified reasons. Sithe Global, Herakles Farms, and All for Africa share the same New York address.
- All for Africa, the NGO chaired by Bruce Wrobel, appears to have vanished. Its website is not accessible anymore and the contacts previously provided online no longer function.

“Even if the size of the project is reduced, the fragility of Herakles Farms is a high concern,” said Anuradha Mittal, Executive Director of the Oakland Institute. “It is an unsustainable project, led by a company known for serious wrongdoing, which will take over and destroy people’s farmland and Cameroon’s vital natural resources. Given the project is well below minimum sustainability standards, it begs for immediate intervening review and action by the Cameroonian government,” she continued.

Resources

[Herakles Exposed: May 2013 report](#)

[Massive Deforestation Portrayed as Sustainable Development: September 2012 report](#)

Herakles Farms documents for investors

[Executive Summary, Herakles Farms Investment Opportunity](#)

[Investment Opportunity Presentation, Herakles Farms](#)

[Value Drivers, Herakles Farms](#)

Herakles Farms internal documents

[Financial Model, Herakles Farms](#)

[Greenpeace’s press release on illegal logging by Herakles Farms](#)

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