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Dutch pension fund admits forest problems in Niassa

Postado por [Agri-ProFocus](#) em 12 dezembro 2011 às 10:00

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Joe Hanlon is sharing this item in his newsletter.

A front page article in *Volkscrant* (Amsterdam) on Saturday 3 December has led the Dutch civil service pension fund ABP to admit that "forestry projects in Mozambique did not meet the requirements of our responsible investment policy," and to claim credit for the replacement of the entire management of the Global Solidarity Forest Fund earlier this year. (See *News Reports and Clippings* 187, 23 Nov, and *Mozambique Political Process Bulletin*, 22 Feb) *Volkscrant* is the third largest Dutch newspaper; ABP is one of the biggest pension funds in the world.

Volkscrant reports that in September Uniao Provincial de Camponeses de Niassa made an urgent appeal to western investors to stop this sort of project because land was being stolen and small farmers exploited: "We do not understand why church institutions and other investment funds are putting money in projects which are exploiting the poorest of the poor".

In a lengthy article running over two inside pages, *Volkscrant* also reports that the project failed to get Forest Stewardship Council certification, because the FSC team in May "found a lot of problems".

ABP owns 54.5% of Global Solidarity Forest Fund (GSFF) and has invested \$60 million; other owners are Swedish and Norwegian churches and Diversified International Timber Holdings (a US fund believed to be owned by Harvard College). GSFF controls Chikweti Forests of Niassa (28,970 ha), Tectona Forest of Zambezia (19,540 ha), Companhia Florestal de Messangulo, and Ntacia Florestas da Zambezia (9005 ha). Chikweti ran into huge conflicts with the government and local communities – pushing peasants off land, knocking down native forests, and planting on land it had not been given. Peasants responded by burning trees.

Niassa Bishop Mark van Koevering had been chair of the local board, but resigned in protest. ABP in a statement Saturday said the Bishop wrote a letter last month saying he is now "very satisfied" with the recent changes.

+ There is an English report on DutchNews:

http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2011/12/civil_service_pension...

+ *Volkscrant* only posts part of the report on the web, in Dutch, on:

<http://www.volkscrant.nl/vk/nl/2668/Buitenland/article/detail/30620...>

+ The ABP statement, also in Dutch, is on: <http://www.abp.nl/abp/abp/service/nieuws/bosbouw-mozambique.asp>

+ English and Portuguese translations by Google Translate are attached, but they definitely contain translation errors.

+ A blog on peasants being pushed off land by Illovo Sugar in Maragra has been posted by PLAAS, the Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies in South Africa: <http://t.co/YJFNJAY>

Exibições: **233**

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