



TV

# UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES

U.N. IN ACTION

Release Date: April 2008

Programme No. 1126

Length: 1'59"

Languages: English, French, Spanish, Russian

## PYGMIES USE GPS SYSTEM TO SAVE TREES

### VIDEO

PYGMY FAMILY OUTSIDE THEIR  
HUT / FALLING TREE

MBENDJELE PYGMIES IN THE  
FOREST

TIMBER BEING CUT AT SAWMILL

HIGH ANGLE SHOT

FALLING TREE

GIUSEPPE TOPA ON CAMERA.

### AUDIO

#### NARRATION

The idea is to enable the forest's inhabitants – the Pygmies – to use the Global Positioning System to communicate with logging companies.

Over nine thousand Mbendjele Pygmies live in this part of the vast Congo River basin. The huge trees here are the centre of life for the Pygmies...but the land is also used for logging. (20")

Some of these trees are sacred to the Pygmies; some are rich in fruits and nuts. But the logging companies often didn't know which trees or areas were important to the Pygmies, and which were not. Communication is the key, according to the World Bank's Giuseppe Topa. (15")

GIUSEPPE TOPA: (English) **M**

*"The pygmies know the territory, know the trees, know the smell of the forest, know the animals and where the animals are in different seasons. And so the GPS technology allows to capture this*

*and to communicate this in ways that are not mistakable.” (13.5”)*

SCOTT POYNTON ON CAMERA

SCOTT POYNTON: (English) **M**

*“So what we’ve done is developed a system by which they can identify the areas – by clicking into a GPS system – that are important to them. So this is a sacred area, blip, it takes a GPS reading, this is important because our ancestors are buried here, this is important because we gather food here.” (14.5”)*

MAN LECTURES IN CLASSROOM  
LAKE / GPS SYSTEM

NARRATION

The system is easy. The Pygmies don’t need to read or write. When they come upon important trees, or stands of trees, they simply click on an icon on the GPS and their location bounces off a satellite and gets mapped for the logging company. (14”)

BIG LOG / SAWMILL /  
LUMBERYARD WORKERS

Scott Poynton, of the Tropical Forest Trust, says the logging company, CIB, has honoured the Pygmies’ choices and steers clear of the designated areas. (8.5”)

SCOTT POYNTON ON CAMERA.

SCOTT POYNTON: (English) **M**

*“If you’re going to do sustainable forest management, you’ve got to do it right. You’ve got to listen to these people, you’ve got to give them a voice.” (5.5”)*

SAWMILL / WORKERS.

NARRATION

The World Bank gave the start-up money for this

project. And according to the Bank, the key here is old technology used for a new purpose. (7.3”)

GIUSEPPE TOPA ON CAMERA

GIUSEPPE TOPA: (English) **M**

*“This is a new approach to communication, to communicate between people who want to collaborate and who have not found a way to communicate yet.” (7”)*

MALE PYGMIES / WORKERS

NARRATION

GATHER / TRUCK TRANSPORT

The hand-held GPS devices have been in use in the Congo Basin since June of 2006.

LOGS / PYGMIES CLAP AND

And the programme, so far, is working so well that there are plans to expand it to nearby Cameroon and then, perhaps, to the tropical forests of Asia. (15”)

PLAY DRUMS.

UN LOGO

This story was prepared by Alison Schafer for the United Nations. (4)