



CIVIC RESPONSE

NATIONAL FOREST FORUM

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL FOREST FORUM
HELD AT MIKLIN HOTEL, ACCRA
SEPTEMBER 5 -9, 2011

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFB	African Foresters Brigade
CFC	Community Forest Committee
CRMU	Collaborative Resources Management Unit
DCE	District Chief Executives
DOLTA	Domestic Lumber Trade Association
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FC	Forestry Commission
FFC	Forest Fringe Communities
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
FSD	Forest Service Division
GoG	Government of Ghana
IGF	Internally Generated Funds
KWC	Kumasi Wood Cluster Association
LAS	Legality Assurance System
MOFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
OASL	Office of Administrator of Stool lands
RMSC	Resource Management Support Centre
SRA	Social Responsibility Agreement
TVD	Timber Verification Division
VPA	Voluntary Partnership Agreements
WTS	Wood Tracking System

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	INTRODUCTION	5	
1.1	Workshop Objectives		5
1.2	Workshop Methodology and Presentations		5
1.3	Opening Session and participants Expectations		5
2.0	WORKING SESSIONS ON NEW FOREST INITIATIVES	7	
2.1.	Update on the Implementation of the Ghana-EU VPA	7	
2.1.1	Forum Discussion and Recommendations on the VPA	8	
2.2	Status of Forestry Sector Policy Reform and Initiatives	9	
2.2.1	Revised Forest and Wildlife Policy		9
2.2.2	Update on the implementation of the National forestation programme	9	
2.2.3	Forum Discussions and Conclusions on Plantation Development	11	
2.2.5	Forest Sector Laws and Offences		12
2.2.6	Forum Discussions and Conclusions on Forest laws and Offences		14
3.0	REPORTS FROM THE DISTRICT FOREST FORUMS	17	
3.1	Reports from the Northern Savannah Ecosystem		17
3.1.1	Main Issues From the West Gonja District Forest Forum		17
3.1.2	Main Issues from East Gonja District Forest Forum		18
3.1.3	Main Issues from Central Gonja District Forest Forum	19	
3.2	Reports from the District Forest Forums in the Transitional Zone Ecosystem		20
3.2.1	Sunyani District Forest Forum		20
3.2.2	Offinso North District Forest Forum	21	
3.2.3	Asunafo North District Forum		22
3.3	Reports from the High Forest Ecosystem		23
3.3.1	Kwaebibirem district forest forum Report		23
3.3.2	Birim North District Forest Forum		24
3.3.3	Juaso Forest Forum		25
3.3.4	West Akim Municipal Forest Forum	26	
3.3.5	Twifo Heman Lower Denkyira		27
3.3.6	Upper Denkyira East Municipal		27
3.3.7	Sefwi Wiaso District Forum	28	
3.3.8	Tarkwa Nsuaem Municipality		29
3.3.9	Nkawie District Forest Forum		30
3.3.10	Jomoro District Forest Forum		30
3.3.11	Wasa Amenfi East District Forest Forum		31
4.0	RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE ISSUES THAT EMERGED FROM THE DISTRICT FOREST FORUMS REPORTS		33
5.0	INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF FOREST FORUMS		35
6.0	FORUM COMMUNIQUÉ, INTERACTION WITH THE PRESS AND CONCLUSION	37	
6.1	Conclusion		37

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To all stakeholders who participated in the forum we say thank you for your time and inputs. We believe that your contributions to the recommendations made would continue in the interest of sustainable forest management in Ghana.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Workshop Objectives

The 2011 National Forest Forum was held at Miklin Hotel Accra, from September 5-9, 2011. The workshop was attended by over 210 delegates from 19 district forest forums across the country. The main purpose of the national forum was to share experiences and learn from the various issues that were raised during forest district forums on the governance initiative for right and accountability in forest management. The forum was also used as a platform to learn about new initiatives in the forestry sector (Plantation Development, Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA), the new Forest Policy that is in the offing, Forest Laws, and the new investment programmes in the forestry sector). Issues and challenges facing the district forest forums were discussed and recommendations made to improve on the system.

This report summarizes the main issues that were discussed at the forum and the recommendations made to the Government. The report is organized to meet the objectives of the workshop. First it highlights the policy initiatives in the forestry sector as presented by the government officials, followed by the reports from the 19 district forest forums including the issues that emerged and the joint communiqué that was issued to the national government based on agreed actions.

1.2 Workshop Methodology and Presentations

The workshop adopted participatory processes in its approach and delivery. The participatory methodologies adopted were mainly presentations using power points, brainstorming, questions and answers, and plenary discussions. Each working session of the workshop was moderated by a Professional facilitator and the discussions were bi-lingual with English and Akan dominating.

The workshop was conducted under five main sessions over the five days and 24 different papers were presented. The first session involved the presentation and discussion on new initiatives in the forestry sector.

The second session was a video show. The third session was used to present the district forest forum reports from 18 districts across the country. The fourth session was a meeting with the Press whilst the fifth session deliberated on the institutionalization of the forest forums. The daily itinerary for the forum is attached as appendix 1.

Stakeholder Participation

The workshop was attended by the following stakeholder groupings a) Traditional Authorities; b) representatives from the six community Forest Forums and two district level forest forums facilitated by Civic Response; c) Public sector service delivery agencies (Forestry and Agriculture), staffs of the District Assembly and District level Security/Disaster Management Agencies (Ghana Police, Ghana National Fire Service and National Disaster management Committee) that participated in the district/community level forest forum; f) representative from the National Association of Chainsaw operators. Also in attendance were some of the development partners including European Union, and CARE International. (See appendix 2 for the detailed list of participants).

1.3 Opening Session and participants Expectations

The opening ceremony was chaired by Nana Sarpong Kumakumah II Chief of Adonkrono, Kwaibiriem. Unfortunately, none of the invited speakers and representatives from the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and the Forestry Commission, was able to honour the invitation. No specific explanation was provided regarding the reasons of their absence.

As part of the opening courtesies, Mr. Kingsley Bekoe Ansah gave the background to the national forest forum tracing it from its inception to date. According to him, a number of dialogue meetings with stakeholders in the framework of the Akosombo series of stakeholder consultations on forest policies started in 2002 recommended the establishment of forest forums to

engender public participation in policy development and implementation in the forest sector. Under the Forest Sector Development Programme II (FSDP II), financial and technical support was provided for the establishment of about 17 district forest forums. Since then, some NGOs have collaborated with the Collaborative Resources Management Unit (CRMU) of the Forestry Commission in establishing additional district forums until in 2007 when with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) supported the establishment of a national level process.

A keynote address was delivered by Mr. Albert Katako from CARE International. His presentation centred on the sustainability of forest operation, how to sustain the

district forest forums and how to ensure sustainable financing for the activities of the forest forum.

He concluded his presentation by posing a challenge to the national forum to determine whether part of the forest resources should be used to finance the forest forum operations.

Participants Expectations

After the opening courtesies, the participants introduced themselves and shared their expectations of the workshop. The summary of the participants' expectations from the forum are indicated in box 1:

Box 1 Forum Participants Expectations

- » All planned activities of the district forest forum programme should be fully implemented
- » Recommendations made at the national forum should be implemented by those concerned
- » Develop community forestry action plans to guide stakeholders
- » Forest reserves would be protected and well managed
- » There should be a feedback system for decisions that would be taken
- » Address the marginalization of District Forest Forum (DFF) from Upper West Region (UWR), Upper East Region (UER), Greater Accra Region (GAR) and Volta Region (VR).
- » Discussions should have a real impact on the management of the forest resources.
- » The forum should not be a talk show
- » Issues to be discussed will be fussed into the national policy review.
- » Be abreast with the rules and importance of our forest
- » Marginalization of forest fringe communities would be a thing of the past.
- » Provide answers to the numerous problems encountered in the forest industry at the district levels.
- » The national forum would be used to share ideas
- » Contributing to the work at the end of the forum
- » Sharing the outcome of the forum to help bring back dead forests.
- » Contribute to the forest forum and carry out whatever knowledge to various communities to share ideas together for effective implementation to sustain the forest.

WORKING SESSIONS ON NEW FOREST INITIATIVES

2.1. Update on the Implementation of the Ghana-EU VPA

In his presentation, Dr. Gyimah of the Forestry Commission (FC) reiterated that the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) was negotiated as an agreement premised on the forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber products. He stated that Ghana's commitment under the VPA had been initiated through the following actions:

- » establishing a Legality Assurance System (LAS)
- » Issuing legality licenses on all European Union bound consignments including non-European bound consignments which will still go through LAS but will not carry FLEGT license and the domestic Market included in the LAS after piloting the formal sector
- » Conducting a legislative review (two tier review)
- » Working within an agreed time frame as set in agreement with EU (Voluntary Partnership Agreement - VPA)
- » Activating supporting measures of the VPA

He recounted the achievements' Ghana had made under the VPA as follows:

1. Wood Tracking System (WTS) pilot has been completed and an independent review conducted. The review identified further areas of development to ensure that the WTS is compliant with the VPA. It also identified challenges and provided recommendations for implementing a nation-wide WTS
2. Procurement process for a WTS service provider for the national roll-out is on course and expected to be completed by November, 2011
3. Legality Verification Protocols drafted and 3 manuals prepared;
 - » Verification framework and FLEGT license issuance manual

- » Chain of custody procedures for timber and timber products
 - » Legal timber standards and guidance notes for auditors
 - » Manuals are under review and will be field-tested from October-November, 2011
4. The FC has made institutional adjustments to meet the requirements of the VPA by creating a Timber Verification Division (TVD) at the FC Headquarters and filling the required position with qualified staff.
 - » Positions are being filled
 - » The FC has initiated a process to appoint an Independent Monitor. The tendering process for the services of Independent Monitor has been activated and expression of interest has been completed with short listed firms for the next stage. The process is expected to be completed by November 2011. However, the establishment of a Timber Validation Council is yet to be fully initiated
 5. The Forestry Commission has conducted policy and legislative review and has taken on board broader VPA governance issues. In order to gain strong legal backing for FC to operate FLEGT license scheme, a strategy has been adopted to secure FLEGT LI as a short-term measure. As a long-term measure to address legal reform questions identified in Annex II of VPA, Forestry Consolidated Act will be pursued. The Government of Ghana will complete the FLEGT LI and the new consolidated Forestry Act by the end of 2011 and 2012 respectively
 6. Ghana has made some strides to improve on the domestic wood market. The GoG has advanced a national debate on policy to address legality in domestic market to identify and control illegal chainsaw activities; the strategy is framed around the following measures: Supply side; Demand side; Use of market pressure; Influencing pricing to narrow gap between demand for legal and illegally produced timber

Examples of Supply side measures include eliminating illegal chainsaw lumber production, reviewing tree tenure and benefit sharing arrangements in off-reserve; piloting of mobile recovery teams; and identification of new sources of raw materials including plantation development, rubber wood development and promotion of lesser used species (LUS). Examples of demand side measures are the development of public procurement policy for verified legal timber, promotion of standards for domestic market, development of livelihood options for those displaced by enforcement of a legal regime and awareness creation and public education

Other supporting the initiatives to the implementation of the VPA are:

- a. The Kumasi Wood Cluster project on internal wood control systems for Small and medium enterprises; the Resource Management Support Centre (RMSC) project on VPA Sensitization and Thinking through on roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in the VPA and GIRAF- Governance issues
- b. The Government of Ghana (GoG) has initiated studies on VPA- related effects on the Timber industry of Ghana and VPA impact monitoring in general
- c. Indicative timelines/road map for key milestones has been agreed upon

Emerging Lessons

The implementation of the VPA has created the following important lessons for the timber industry:

- d. The VPA negotiation process has created ownership of the process beyond the technical nuclear group (VPA Secretariat).
- e. The agreement is binding. Targets, objectives and milestones must be realistic

- f. Keep the capacity of your institutions in mind when setting implementation milestones/timelines
- g. Combined core team of lawyers and technical personnel need to thoroughly acquaint themselves with content of agreement before concluding negotiations (initialling)
- h. Keep your legislature (Senate/Parliament etc.) on board
- i. Development of VPA-LAS systems requires:
 - » Project approach versus implementation through established structures of bureaucracy
- j. The VPA stakeholders to take the process forward are:
 - » **Government:** make a case for revenue, SFM & good governance
 - » **Industry:** make a business case
 - » **Civic Society:** case for good governance and livelihood improvement

2.1.1 Forum Discussion and Recommendations on the VPA

Following the presentation, the Forum adopted questions and answers to seek clarifications on some of the emerging issues and made recommendation for the consideration of the national government. The issues and recommendations on the VPA are summarized in box 2.

Box 2 Forum Conclusions and Recommendations on the VPA

- » Chainsaw operations should be mainstreamed into national policy programmes and their activities regulated.
- » Domestic lumber market should be developed to ensure that wood is adequately available on the local market to ensure easy access to wood for communities that are outside sawmilling areas.
- » Government is losing revenue from illegal extortions in the chainsaw business, therefore Chainsaw operation should be properly integrated into the forest business especially in areas where there are not sawmills.
- » The VPA implementation has Implications for forest ownership. These should be properly documented and public awareness created on the possible impacts. The CSO can play a led role in the awareness creation.
- » Compliance to agreement. The role of the forest communities should be well defined to minimise ambiguity in roles and functions.
- » Capacity building should be designed for forest fringe communities to respond to VPA issues
- » Monitoring of corruption and abuses should be well defined and made transparent.

2.2 Status of Forestry Sector Policy Reform and Initiatives

2.2.1 Revised Forest and Wildlife Policy

Representatives from the Ministry of Lands and Forestry and the Forestry Commission were unable to attend the forum to brief them on the forestry sector reforms and the steps being taking to review the 1994 Forest and Wildlife Policy. However, a report on the status of the forest sector policy reform and the road-map to formulating a new policy was made available to the forum and this was presented by Mr. Kingsley Bekoe Ansah Ansah. The report indicated that the Government was about to adopt a new forest and wildlife policy which will consolidate reforms in the forestry sector. The steps towards the revision of the 1994 forest and wildlife policy was as follows:

- a. Sectoral consultative meetings has been held with traditional Leaders, Civic Society organisations, the Academia and the industry:
- b. Geographic consultative meetings for the savannah, middle belt and the high forest zone in the southern sector have been completed.
- c. Draft Forest and Wildlife policy has been completed and a 2-day discussion with CSOs on the draft policy has been held.
- d. National workshop to validate and finalize the draft was held in July 2011.

- e. Annual ENR sector was held in July at Elmina
- f. The Forest and Wildlife Master Plan is also under revision.
- g. Currently, background information is being compiled. After endorsing the policy document, the master Plan will be finalized. The timeframe for this is at the end of September 2011.

2.2.2 Update on the implementation of the National forestation programme

Mr. Kingsley Bekoe Ansah again on behalf of the Forestry Commission presented the update on the implementation of the national forest plantation development programme, the achievements, challenges and way forward. He informed the forum that the Government had contracted out the planting of 30,000 ha of degraded forest lands in 100 political districts involving two companies - ECOTECH and ZOIL. So far about 30,000 persons had been employed.

African Foresters Brigade (AFB) was the sole contractor to produce and distribute about 40 million seedlings nationwide. The AFB works in collaboration with the private nursery operators nationwide. The following species were planted in teak, Cedrela, Ofram Cassia Eucalyptus (exotic) Mango Cashew (economic), Emire, Mahogany, Wawa, Mansonia, Ceiba (indigenous).

The key challenges facing the plantation programme and way forward are as follows:

1. Non-payment/Delayed payment of workers. Issue of payment based on daily attendance versus payment based on work done. Some workers are demanding payment for periods when they were on strike due to delayed payment.

The way forward is to secure sustainable sources of funding for plantation development and involve key stakeholders e.g. District Assemblies anytime payment is made to Contractors to enable them monitor subsequent payments to workers

2. Poor supervision of workers by contractors leading to inefficient utilization of labour. Work targets were set in many cases that were lower than accepted standards under the contract. Absence of contractor representatives at several sites led to workers working without clear targets or direction resulting in non-achievement of expected quality and quantum of work.

The way forward is for the Contractors to employ adequate and competent staff for effective supervision, train Field Coordinators of Zoil/Ecotech in good operational planning, task breakdown and supervision and engage more contractors to enable existing contractors focus their limited resources on much smaller areas in order to be effective.

3. Woefully inadequate supply of basic logistics to workers such as protective clothing (Overalls, Wellington boots, Raincoat) and working tools (cutlass, hoe, etc.) resulting in snake bites. (6 snake bites reported in Navrongo, 3 snake bites in Yendi (1 death). In 3 political districts (Ketu South, Ketu North and Akatsi) none of the 425 workers employed in May 2010 had received any protective clothing or working tools as at April 2011).

The way forward is for the contractor to procure required logistics well ahead of the commencement of field activities.

4. Inaccurate survey and demarcation of sites by FSD field officers and lack of check surveys. Lack of GPS equipment for surveys. Inadequate skills of field officers in the use of GPS.

The way forward is for the training of FSD Range Supervisors and Assistant District Managers in the use of GPS for survey and mapping. Procure of adequate GPS and other essential survey equipment for the staff.

5. Poor estimation of work done by FSD/Contractors
The way forward is for the Training of RS and Field

Coordinators of Contractors in the use of GPS for surveys and area estimation.

6. Supply of poor quality planting materials by Contractor (AFB). Poor handling and off-loading of seedlings at planting sites, leading to high casualties after delivery.

The way forward is to ensure *quality control through the sorting of delivered planting materials, seriously undertaken by Contractors (Zoil/Ecotech). Periodic visits to nurseries to assess capacity and seedling quality to be undertaken by AFB and FSD. Training of field staff of contractors on proper handling and storage of planting materials.*

7. Lack of/ and poor auditing of planting materials delivered at planting sites by Contractors/FSD.

The way forward is to *enforce laid down procedures ; such as sorting and counting of seedlings upon delivery and the implementation of Seedling Request Form, use of company way bill to cover seedlings in transit, Seedling delivery Forms.*

8. Over-supply of planting materials to some sites

The way forward is to ensure that *excess planting materials are maintained at the cost of Contractor (AFB) and planted during 2011. Payment should only be made after planting. Seedlings that cannot be accounted for should not be paid for or the 3 parties to the transaction (AFB, FSD, Zoil/Ecotech) could be made to equally share the cost.*

9. Inadequate competencies of field staff and low capacity of Contractors (Zoil/Ecotech) to undertake effective plantation establishment and management

The way forward is the *training of field staff of Contractors in plantation establishment and maintenance. There is the need for Contractors to hire more technically competent staff, provide key logistics (vehicles and equipment) to Coordinators. Reduce the target for each contractor and contract more companies through competitive methods to improve competition and efficiency.*

10. Uncooperative attitude of some District and/or Municipal Chief Executive (D/MCEs) leading to excessive recruitment of labour at some sites. Uncertainty about the benefit sharing terms between Government and landowners Off-reserve
The way forward is sensitization and education of D/MCEs, and landowners after the official communication from government on approved terms.

11. Demand for 'goodwill'/customary payments to landowners.

The way forward is that such payments should be fixed per hectare, budgeted and paid to landowners/stools/skins

12. Wildfires

The way forward is for Contractors (Zoil/Ecotech) to surcharged with the total cost of establishment where it is proven that adequate steps were not taken to prevent or mitigate such losses (i.e. construction of fire rides, 24-hour fire patrols during the dry season) and thus cannot be attributed to Force Majeure.

13. Floods and late submission of invoices for work done by contractors

The way forwards is due diligence in site selection to exclude flood-prone site. There is the need to hire competent field and office staff to facilitate invoice preparation.

14. Poor preparation of invoices by Contractors (Zoil/ Ecotech) leading to queries and long processing time due to inherent inaccuracies.

The way forward is to hire competent field and office staff to facilitate invoice preparation.

2.2.3 Forum Discussions and Conclusions on Plantation Development

The forum discussed extensively the challenges facing the Government Plantation development programme. Summary of the issues are indicated in box 3.

OUTLOOK FOR 2011

- a. The planting target for 2011 was set at 10,000 ha proposed Maintenance of old established plantations will continue and all the 170 Political Districts in the country will be covered using the sites within the on-reserve and off-reserve areas. As much as possible targets will be allocated equally between the forest reserves and off-reserve areas.
- b. Immediate sourcing of funds for the programme to pay arrears and appointment of ITP to assess the 2010 programme
- c. Plantation boundaries, sizes and essential features effectively mapped, analyzed and stored in digital format Improved plantation layout and planting designs to be implemented Maintenance of established plantations (weeding, pruning, thinning, coppice mgt., fire protection, etc.) growth data gathering (PSPs in plantations) effective and comprehensive data management platform deployed.

Box 3 Plenary Discussions and Conclusions on Plantation Development Issues

- » *The Government has given much prominence to exotic as against indigenous species*
- » *Natural forests are being cleared to plant teak.*
- » *Access to land is becoming a problem and the emergence of “goodwill fees” from land owners is undermining local efforts in the plantation development programme*
- » *Failure of foreign investors to allow local communities to interplant plantations with food crop*
- » *Neglect of fire volunteers in fighting forest fires*
- » *Members involved in Modified Taungya System are not registered and the future ownership of what they have planted cannot be guaranteed.*
- » *There is poor documentation of planted trees and areas*
- » *Fulani herdsmen are destroying planted species with their herds*
- » *Foreign investors employ people with little or no knowledge on tree planting due to cheap labour.*
- » *Poor implementation of Social Responsibility Agreement (SRAs)*
- » *Harvesting of matured trees is done without the involvement of the local people.*
- » *There is poor monitoring of forest operations.*
- » *Plantation Development*
 - » Should be considered as one of the main issues
 - » Plantation is a business case. It requires a big investment. Plantation development is therefore part of the process.
 - » Government is currently being given the necessary attention
- » *Mobile recovery mills should be introduced to ensure better recovery.*
- » *The FC should monitor, but with the human element. Technology will be use to do the stock surveys. Improved transaction data management system that can be used to monitor and track wood.*
- » *The local communities should be made part of the monitoring of the forest operation*

2.2.5 Forest Sector Laws and Offences

The session on forest sector laws and offences was presented by Mr. Joseph Boakye of the Forestry Commission. He opined that good forest laws were critical in how the forest resources are both managed and utilized. He referred to forest laws as a bundle of laws that deal with the reservation, protection, management, development and utilization of forest resources in the country.

Building his submission on the 1992 national constitution, Mr. Boakye quoted the following provisions as significant provisions on the environment/forest. Notable among them were:

Article 41 imposes a duty on every citizen to protect and safeguard the environment. This provision is however located in chapter 6 on the Directive Principle of State Policies whose provisions are not justiciable.

Article 267 (6) provides the formula for the disbursement of revenue from stool lands.

Article 268 makes it mandatory for any transaction involving the grant of a right or concession to any person, including the Government of Ghana, for the exploitation of any mineral, water or other natural resources to be subject to parliamentary ratification.

Article 269 deals with establishment of Forestry Commission among others for the regulation, management and utilization of natural resources and coordination of policies in relation to them.

The principal enactments affecting forestry practices in the country are:

- » **Forest Ordinance, 1927 (Cap 157) as variously amended**
- » This law provides guidelines for the constitution of forest reserves and the protection of forests and other related matters.
- » **Forest Protection Act, 1974 (Act 243) as variously amended**
- » This Act defined forest offences and prescribed sanctions and or penalties for such offences. It substantially re-enacts the offence creating provision under the Forest Ordinance.
- » **Tree and Timber Act, 1974 (Act 273) as amended by (Act 493), 1994**
- » This Act regulates the felling of timber for domestic use or for export.
- » **Control and Prevention of Bushfires Law, 1990 (PNDCCL 229)**
- » This law prohibits the setting up of bushfires for any purpose whatsoever.
- » **Timber Resources Management Act, 1997 (Act 547) as amended by (Act 617), 2002**
- » This Act provides for the grant of timber rights in a manner that secures the sustainable management and utilization of the country's timber resources.
- » **Forestry Commission Act, 1998 (Act 571) as amended by (Act 617), 2002**
- » This Act re-established the FC to bring under it the main public sector bodies and agencies implementing the functions of protection, management and regulation of forests and wildlife resources and to provide for related matters.
- » **Forest plantation Development Fund Act, 2000 (Act 583) as amended by (Act 623) of 2002**
- » The Act established a plantation development fund to provide financial assistance for the development of forest plantations and for research and technical advice to persons involved in plantation forestry.

The only useful legislative instrument affecting forest management and utilization of timber resources is the **Timber Resources Management Regulation, 1998 (LI 1649) as amended by (LI 1721), 2003** which provides for the operationalization of the principal enactment on the grant of timber rights and related matters.

FOREST OFFENCES

Any act or omission that is prohibited by statute (law) is an offence. The general rule is that 'No act or omission is punishable by a court unless a certain statute or law prohibits the doing of the act by the citizen (and the court is given the jurisdiction to try that offence)

Important Constitutional Provisions On Criminal Offences Generally

- » Art 19 (11): 'No person shall be convicted of a criminal offence unless the offence is defined and the penalty for it is prescribed in a written law'
- » Art 19 (5) Prescribes that the act or omission must constitute an offence at the time it took place
- » Art 107 (b) forbids Parliament from legislating retrospectively to affect adversely or limit the rights and liberties of any person. This means that criminal legislation with retrospective effect cannot therefore ground any criminal charge in Ghana

Accordingly forest offences are any act or omission that is prohibited under the forest laws of Ghana. Put simply, any act or omission that breaches or contravenes any of the forest laws in Ghana constitutes forest offence

Summary of principal enactments on forest offences

- » Forest Protection Act, 1974 (NRCD 243) as Amended by the Forest protection (Amendment) Act, 2002 (624)
- » Tree and Timber Act, 1974 (NRCD 273) as Amended by the Trees and Timber (Amendment) Act, 1994 (Act 493)
- » Timber Resources Management Act, 1997 (Act 547) as Amended by Timber Resources Management (Amendment) Act, 2002 (Act 617)
- » Timber Resources Management Regulation, 1998 (LI 1649) as variously Amended

Critique of the principal forest legislations

The state of our enactments on forest protection and conservation is not the best. There are serious and several inherent drawbacks. The forest laws are overly skewed towards the flora to the detriment of the fauna. Additionally the laws are scattered in various statutes. No regulations or subsidiary legislation prescribing for the manner in which the principal enactments are to be implemented.

Fines and penalties in the law were generally low and were not deterrent enough to prevent intentional and willful acts of destruction to wildlife. In deed in practical terms it is worthwhile felling one Odum/Mahogany and paying the maximum penalty of GhC500.00 since the returns generated from selling the tree far exceed the penalty on imposed on the culprits.

Other drawbacks are:

- » Alienation of the local or fringe communities from the protection and management
- » Payment of fines into consolidated funds or courts accounts
- » Public awareness and education on the laws are generally low

The Way Forward

In other to improve the legal regime for wildlife protection and conservation in forest reserves, the following suggestions are put forward:

- » Consolidation of all the forest and wildlife enactments into single Act, patterned along the lines of Criminal Act of Ghana. In this regard, there is the need for comprehensive review of all the existing laws with the view of updating them to meet the realities of the moment.
- » There is also the need for the fines imposed for breach of the laws to be constantly reviewed. This

enables the system to avoid the negative effect of inflation over time and the need to continually amend the law to increase fines.

- » The current system of entrusting the enforcement of the regime exclusively to officials of Forest Services Division should give way to the one in which the local/forest fringe communities are involved
- » There is the need for FC to strengthen its legal unit and transform it into law enforcement and prosecution unit to prosecute all infringements on our laws
- » Effort should be made to create awareness about the importance of forest resources and their conservation to enable the populace appreciate that forest conservation is tied up with our very survival
- » There is the need to encourage and support the on-going alternative livelihood schemes and plantation development.

2.2.6 Forum Discussions and Conclusions on Forest laws and Offences

The forum discussed extensively, the issues that emerged from the presentations and the conclusions made are summarized in box 4:

Box 4 Outcome of Issues discussed under Forest Laws and Offences

- a. Social Responsibility Agreement (SRA) and Compensation
 - » Social Responsibility Agreements
 - » most farmers have limited knowledge on the disbursement of SRA,
 - » there is poor negotiations for SRA
 - » there is non-payment of agreed SRAs
 - » Royalty (lack of transparency)
 - » No compensation payment (farm destruction)
 - » Lack of incentive for forest fringe communities
 - » Timber Utilization Contract (TUC) holders are not introduced formally to the communities
 - » TUC holders fail to meet the communities
 - » Issues- Land/tree tenure
 - » Leasing of land for other economic activities from migrant farmers.
 - » Migrant farmers, land tenure and conflict between landowners and tenant farmers are becoming more serious
- b. Tree tenureship
 - » Killing of trees on farm by aggrieved farmers
 - » Fringe communities unable to utilize trees on farm
 - » Issues - illegal forest operations
 - » Small mining activities (including illegal) in forest reserves
 - » Illegal chainsaw operations (off reserve areas??)
 - » Wildlife poaching in the Protected Areas
 - » Sand winning and pollution of water
 - » Encroachment on Forest Reserves including illegal farming and chainsaw milling
- c. Stakeholder Collaboration
 - » Lack of feedback from FSD to other security agencies.
 - » Failure of FSD to act on information of illegal operations
 - » Poor collaboration between the resource managers and security agencies
 - » Low level of cooperation from the local communities.
 - » Lack of protection from informants (lack of confidentiality)
 - » Poor representation of some stakeholders at forest forum (esp. women)
 - » Issue- Plantation
 - » Degradation by private developers (Jimira FR degraded)
 - » Non availability of seedling by for planting and extorting monies from the local farmers
 - » Subletting of rehabilitation of degraded forest reserves to other contractors by private investors.
 - » Non-release of land for taungya
 - » Long period waiting for the signing MTS

- » Removing natural forest for the planting of exotic species (teak)
- » NFPDP is very discriminatory and political
- » Non-existence of fire volunteers in the communities.
- » Misapplication of agro-chemicals
- » Ignorance about new initiatives - VPA, REDD
- » Inability to access NTFP
- » Royalties from reserves that is dedicated to research
- » There should be transparency in the planning, documentation, implementation and disbursement of SRA.
- » SRA guidelines should be made available to all stakeholders.
- » There should be increased education of SRA
- » Introduce sustainable farming practices to forest fringe communities. (organic farming).
- » Motivate task forces and community members to patrol and check illegal forest operations
- » Involve the military to check illegal operations in the forest
- » Chiefs should be proactively involved in the monitoring of forest operations

REPORTS FROM THE DISTRICT FOREST FORUMS

The purpose of this session was to allow the district forest forums to share on the issues that emanated from the community and district levels. In all 19 reports were presented centering on the main issues that were not resolved at the district level, the impact that district forums had made; reflections on what went good and what went wrong, lessons learnt and the way forward.

For purposes of discussions, the reports were classified under the three ecological zones in Ghana i.e. northern savannah, transitional zone and the high forest areas.

3.1 Reports from the Northern Savannah Ecosystem

The northern savannah forest forums were presented by the three district forest forums from Western, Eastern and Central Gonja in the northern Ghana. From the presentation, each forum was attended by the following stakeholders:

- » COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES; Farmers, women, youth and opinion leaders.
- » GOVERNMENT AGENCIES; District Assembly, Fire service, (NCCE), Information service, NADMO, Police, (MOFA), Forest Service Division, (FSD), Ghana education service etc.
- » OTHER CIVIC SOCIETY ORGANISATION; School for life

3.1.1 Main Issues From the West Gonja District Forest Forum

The main issues that came out of the presentation included the following:

- » Increasing Fulani's herdsman activities in the form of robbery, indiscriminate bush burning and rape in all the areas. The unfortunate consequence is the conflict between the chief, village committee, farmers and women leadership on Fulani herds and cattle. This is creating social unrest.
- » Indiscriminate sand winning activities along the

river bodies by building contractors.,

- » Most fishermen use drag nets, traps and chemicals in river fishing thereby polluting the aquatic ecosystem.
- » Low level of awareness and education on natural resource management and sustainability.
- » Increasing chainsaw operation on the fragile vegetation.
- » Unsustainable charcoal production and the unregulated transportation of charcoal to the southern cities.
- » No payments to persons on Eco-Tech tree planting project.
- » Communal hunters from Tamale who destroy the vegetation by setting fires as hunting tool.

Impact of the District Forum Actions

The report observed that since the District Forest Forum was organised, the following has been achieved:

- » Youth of Bunjia blocked the road and drove away communal hunters from their environment.
- » Communities have received poverty alleviation support from DA, JICA and Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) block farming project.
- » An agreement has been reached to make announcements and educate community members on natural resource management and governance on every Monday at the chiefs' palace, Fridays at the mosque and Sunday at churches.

Reflections

- » The strategy of meeting separately stakeholder groupings, for example women allowed for full participation. Community forums saw community togetherness and capacities built on natural resource management and governance.
- » Project focus on building capacities of communities was important.

Lessons learnt

From the forum organized the following lessons were learnt:

- » More time and visits needs to be spent at community forums and sensitization meetings.
- » Communities' members should be scheduled properly for community engagements.
- » Some Chiefs and landowners support the activities of chainsaw and Fulani's and this was counterproductive.
- » Uncooperative attitude of some of the Police officers to stop illegalities was undermining the efforts in fighting against illegal lumbering in the areas.

The way forward

- » Intensify education on natural resources.
- » The DAs should collaborate with the TAs to develop by-laws to regulate activities of the Fulanis, chainsaw operators and commercial charcoal production.
- » Communities must be encouraged to embark on tree planting to produce their own charcoal and for other uses.

3.1.2 Main Issues from East Gonja District Forest Forum

The main issues from the East Gonja District forum were as follows:

- » The borderline between Grupe and Kabampe communities and the Mole National Game reserve and the Keinekeine forest reserve so close depriving the community members of arable farmlands.
- » No compensation when wild animals destroy farmlands and eat up domestic and human beings. The Game Reserve does not provide any SRA to the outlying communities
- » Lack of accessibility to enjoy non timber and wildlife forest resources from the reserves
- » Shooting and killing of poachers by the staff of the Forestry Commission
- » Community members not satisfied with farming and planting of only teak trees in the area to the detriment of indigenous species
- » Local communities are not given adequate employment by Park authorities.

- » Commercial charcoal production
- » Fringe communities are not aware of royalties and demand to know ownership of the mole park
- » Chainsaw used for felling trees for lumber and charcoal
- » Fulani herdsmen cut tree branches to feed animals.
- » Indiscriminate bush burning

Impact of Actions

- » Fringe communities are advocating the Mole National Park for borderline expansion and payment of compensation;
- » Communities are vigilant and report chainsaw operators to the law enforcement agencies.
- » The District Assembly and Chiefs have halted the commercial charcoal production and chainsaw. Illegal Commercial charcoals produced are seized and the charcoal sold to Internally Generated Funds (IGF) of DA.
- » Communities' responses to meetings are now encouraging as they see it as a platform for capacity building and interaction despite farming activities.
- » In Grupe, two community members have started the process of registering their chainsaws with DA and FSD.
- » Fringe communities are advocating for their women to pick sheanuts in the Mole National Park.
- » Communities now challenge and engage the DCEs, FSD, Wildlife Managers and Traditional chiefs on their rights to sustain natural resources.
- » Communities are now developing some Bye-law to sustainably use forest resource and the involvement of landowners and chiefs as custodians of lands.

Reflections

- » Communities' responses to meetings were encouraging as the see it as a platform for capacity building and interaction despite farming activities.
- » The strategy of meeting separately stakeholder groupings, for example women allows for full participation. Community forums saw community togetherness and capacities built on natural resource management and governance.
- » The focus on building communities capacity on natural resources management and governance ensures sustainability and ownership.

Lessons Learnt

- » Most communities express worry on too many NGOs making promises but little achievements and doubt the credibility of GIRAF project
- » Communities' interests are in the livelihood interventions as against rights and governance.
- » Timing of community forums and scheduled meeting days, except Fridays, are problematic due to farming activities.
- » Some chiefs connive with chainsaw operators and also give accommodate to Fulani's

The way forward

- » Develop the bicultural protocol that focuses on rules and regulations on natural resource management and governance.
- » Spend more time on stakeholder meetings and community forums.
- » Promote networking of communities to advocate.

Conclusion

- » Communities need to be introduced to alternatives to producing charcoal.
- » Intensify education on natural resources management and include more communities.

3.1.3 Main Issues from Central Gonja District Forest Forum

- » There is extensive charcoal burning without tree planting.
- » There is weak monitoring by Central Gonja District FSD on the activities and operations of illegal chainsaw operators in the district.
- » Some traditional heads and landowners connived with illegal chainsaw operators to cut wood in off-reserve forest.
- » There is non- involvement of communities in monitoring illegal chainsaw operators in the district.
- » Some Fulani herdsmen connive with traditional authorities to destroy the savanna vegetation.
- » Farmers do not received compensation from Fulani herdsmen for destroying their farm products
- » There is massive ignorance on the forest laws and policies. In addition there is poor education and implementation of forest laws and policies by the

government

- » Traditional Authorities do not solicit the views of community members before apportioning vast tracks of land to buyers. Some chiefs and landowners alone mapped up vast areas of off-reserve lands to Fulani herdsmen.
- » There is a problem of bush burning in the area

What have been done?

- » District Assembly and chiefs have reduced commercial Charcoal Production.
- » District Assembly is in the process of gazetting bye-laws to ban commercial charcoal production
- » An Honorable Assemblyman reported and seized illegal chainsaw machine from an illegal chainsaw operators.
- » The FSD manager made available contact Numbers to participants to report illegal chainsaw operators.

Impact of the actions

- » Commercial charcoal production has been reduced.
- » Communities now report illegal Chainsaw operators
- » Communities now advocate for bye-laws to regulate the activities of Fulani herdsmen

Reflections

- » Responses of communities to meetings are encouraging as they see them as platforms for capacity building and interaction.
- » Strategy of meeting stakeholder - groupings separately was excellent
- » The focus on building communities capacities on natural resources management and governance ensure sustainability and ownership
- » District forum serves as opportunity to engage stakeholders

Lessons

- » Communities interest in livelihoods projects as against rights and governance.
- » Fulani activities as nuisances to conditions of lives
- » Women are more into commercial production than men.
- » Communication Gap between and FSD, District Assembly and Communities do not encourage

engagement and consultation.

The way forward

- » Traditional authorities should map up land to Fulani herdsmen to operate.
- » Instituting communities forest “watch dogs” to report illegal chain operators.
- » Communities should be encouraged to establish woodlot plantation for commercial charcoal production.
- » Networking among communities to advocate.

Conclusion

- » Community’s women want to be employed as forest guards.
- » Embarking on alternative livelihood activities for women as against charcoal production.
- » Communities need more capacity building on natural management and governance.

3.2 Reports from the District Forest Forums in the Transitional Zone Ecosystem

The districts that presented the transitional zone ecosystem issues were Sunyani, Offinso and Asunafo north. The issues from the various forest forums were presented as follows:

3.2.1 Sunyani District Forest Forum

The main issues presented by the district forum were:

- » Increasing illegal logging of teak and timber resources
- » Inability to arrange for effective benefit sharing of Modified Taungya system (MTS)
- » Lack of motivation for community forest committees and Fire volunteers
- » Widespread sand winning and stone quarrying
- » Failures in wildfire prevention
- » Poor management of SRA and tree compensation

Impact of the forum held

- » Community members now hold duty bearers accountable in the management of forest resources
- » The CFCs and Traditional Authorities(TAs) demand SRA from contractors

- » Youth checked wildfire
- » Queen mother’s shared rights and responsibilities with other mothers with regards to forest management and governance.
- » Communities members report illegal chainsaw operators
- » Brought unity to fight common course

Reflections

- » Organized community forum were new to communities
- » Forum serve as physical space to learn and share related concerns
- » The communities used forum as opportunity to discuss wildfire.
- » The used of community radio to disseminate information was good.

Lessons

- » Odikro and queen mothers’ all welcomed the forest forum and hope for sustainability of forest forum in communities.
- » There was no objection from community members in the formation of community forest forum.
- » Serves as an “eye opener” to community members.
- » Communities have come to realized they own the forum

The way forward

- » All communities should participate in the next round of forest forum
- » The fire volunteer squads, CFCs and traditional Rulers should embarked on intensive wildfire campaigns and illegal chainsaw operations
- » Encourage plantation development

3.2.2 Offinso North District Forest Forum

The Offinso traditional area, the largest in Ashanti, lies to the north of Kumasi. It comprises Offinso Municipal and South DA. It shares boundaries with six districts including three each in Ashanti and Brong Ahafo. The district lies in the transitional zone. There are (9) nine forest reserves covering a total area of 7 240 hectares. The stakeholders that participated in the district forum were: Community members, Chiefs, District Assembly

(Assembly members/Unit committee members, FSD the Ghana Police Service and Ghana National Fires Service

Main Issues

- » Too much chainsaw activities
- » Task forces condone and connive with operators
- » Rampant wild fires
- » Lack of access to wood for domestic use
- » Fast depletion of forest resource
- » Inadequate and sometimes no compensation for farms destroyed by timber contractors
- » Lack of adequate knowledge on SRA
- » Informants betrayed by FSD and Police
- » Tomato farming destroy forests, trees and soil
- » Task Forces made (Military, Police and FSD) arrest and release trucks with lumber
- » FC/FSD does not channel felling rights through Assembly and Unit Committee members
- » Assembly/Unit Committee members sign felling rights documents but fail to inform their communities
- » Most MTS farmers are not aware of the Benefit Sharing Agreement. None of them has; no one has signed
- » Large tracts of forest reserve land offered to foreign companies for reforestation, but they do not allow farmers to farm on the land

Impact of the Actions

- » Formed task forces on illegal operations – already someone arrested at Akomadan
- » Formulated bye-law(s) on wildfires to reduce occurrences – farmers no longer take matches and naked fire to the field
- » Identified serious loss of forest through chainsaw operations
- » Organized meetings for chiefs, unit committees, churches and farmers
- » Educated tomato farmers who were cutting down trees are now planting trees and turning into tree crop farming – cocoa, teak

Reflections

- » What worked well

- » Chiefs and opinion leaders were pleased and prepared to cooperate
- » What did not work well
 - » Feeling of chainsaw operators that ‘forum was against their operation

Lessons Learnt

- » Inability to meet frequently due to financial constraint
- » Lack of materials for education
- » Farmers are not enthused about plantation development
- » Most of the members are farmers and do not have much time to attend forum during the farming season.

The Way Forward

- a. To collaborate with the FSD and DAs to organize community forums on:
 - » SRA
 - » illegal timber operations
 - » wildfires
 - » plantation development
- b. Collaborate with NADMO on tree planting and disaster management
- c. Collaborate with GNFS to train fire volunteers
- d. Use local information centres for discussions and support local leaders to acquire more knowledge
- e. FC/FSD must channel felling rights through the Assembly and Unit Committee members;
- f. Impress upon all Assembly and Unit Committee members who sign felling rights document to inform the community;
- g. To learn more about Benefit Sharing Agreement under the MTS and make others aware

3.2.3 Asunafo North District Forum

The Asunafo district is located at the Southern part of the Brong Ahafo Region. It is bordered to the North and North Eastern parts by Asutifi district, North West by Dormaa district in the Brong Ahafo Region, East and South by Asunafo South District. It has an estimated total land area of 2,187.57 km² with Goaso as its district capital. The District has a population of 175,000. Economically, the area is predominantly rural with

agriculture as the prime contributor to the economy. The Asunafo District is endowed with six forest reserves covering a total area of 815km².

The stakeholders that participated in the forum were representatives from the six communities, District level stakeholders i.e. District Assembly, FSD, NADMO, Fire Service etc.

Main Issues

1. Social Responsibility Agreement (SRA)
 - » Timber contractors do not pay SRA to some communities
 - » When SRA is paid it is not based on the not less than 5% stumpage.
 - » Some Paramount chiefs have hijacked the SRA from their communities.
2. Illegal chainsaw activities lead to destruction of trees and farmlands.
3. Farmers must be paid some money for tending trees on their farms.
4. Non involvement of communities in the grant of timber rights.
5. None payment of compensation for crops destroyed by timber companies.

Impact of the actions

As a result of the district forest forum held, the following impacts are being realized.

- » With SRA education, the communities are now able to engage the timber contractors for their benefits.
- » The communities are able to approach the District Forest office to seek clarifications on important issues to them.
- » Some communities have benefitted from SRA's for community development.

Reflections

- » The platform given to the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission to explain its policy and laws enriched the capacity building process of the participants
- » Attendance to meeting has been encouraging and contributions from the various participants during discussions were also good.

- » Late arrival of community participants affected the time of starting the forum and the women's contribution at the forum was still not encouraging

Challenges

- » The problem of getting key institutions example the Forest Services Division and the District Assemblies to respond to issues raised at the Forum.
- » Timber firms do not honour invitations to forum meetings.

Lessons

- » The communities had first hand information on issues bordering them
- » By bringing the various stakeholders together, they were able to discuss and debate forest issues affecting them.
- » The DFF fosters unity among the various stakeholders

The way forward

- » The FSD should assist the forest fringe communities in the process of SRA negotiations and in particular the calculation of the 5% stumpage
- » The FSD and the Timber firms should make sure that they involve the communities in the grant of timber rights
- » Communities should be empowered to check the activities of the timber firms.
- » The compensation money paid to farmers for crops destroyed should be reviewed.
- » The communities should ensure that they protect the forest resources against illegal chainsaw activities and bushfires

3.3 Reports from the High Forest Ecosystem

3.3.1 Kwaebirem district forest forum Report

The Kwaebibirim district is in the Eastern Region of Ghana and is bounded by West Akim, Birim North, Birim South and Atewa Districts. The stakeholders involved were TAs, DAs, chainsaw operators, assembly men, traders, unit committee, FSD, Ghana Police Service, MOFA and Care International.

Main Issues

1. Small Scale Mining operations at Prankesse, Techiman, Apramang, and Dwenase including mining in the River Birim have failed to reclaim the excavated lands which pose as death traps.
2. Chainsaw operation and lumbering in all the communities has led to:
 - » Depletion of forest reserve at Apinamang
 - » Loss of revenue to the GovernmentThe ban on chainsaw lumbering is unfavourable to the communities.
3. Timber logging operation has the following problems:
 - » No proper negotiations between communities and the contractors
 - » Failure of the FSD to involve communities in allocation of permit to contractors.
 - » Timber companies' refusal to compensate farmers for damaged properties.
 - » On-going logging activities in Prankese community for which no SRA agreement has been negotiated.
 - » Timber Logging Activities in Prankese
4. National forest plantation project
 - » Communities were worried about the benefit sharing arrangement of the national plantation project.
 - » There are problems in land acquisition for national plantation (between Sekyikrom and Topremang). This has led to the destruction of the planted trees.
 - » National Plantation workers demanding their five months pay.
 - » National Plantation workers demanding their pay

Impacts of the forum

- » A community (Apramang) has been able to halt the activities of a small scale mining operator (Akum Ghana).
- » Adonkrono chief mobilized some community members to cease 16 mining machines and handed them over to the police.
- » Communities are now enlightened about forestry issues and are demanding accountability from duty bearers.

Lessons learnt

- » Where chiefs have accountability issues with the communities, they make it difficult to mobilize the people and talk to them knowing our work will expose him.
- » Where communities' recognize the importance of such meetings, they push the right buttons to ensure that the meeting takes off no matter what the chiefs may say.

The Way Forward

- » The District Assemblies should help sustain the forum
- » The DA should enact by-laws to regulate small scale mining activities
- » Since full implementation of VPA is not going to consider chainsawn lumber as legal, legal lumber should be readily available at the market at reasonable prices.
- » Banned chainsaw lumbering should be reconsidered and regulated in the interest of the local communities

3.3.2 Birim North District Forest Forum

Birim North is in the Eastern Region of Ghana which consists of 86 communities. There were community entries, baseline assessments, stakeholder consultation meetings, two rounds of community forums were held through which representatives were selected and issues generated and 2 rounds of district forest forums to discuss these issues.

The stakeholders involved were TAs, DAs, chainsaw operators, assembly men, traders, unit committee, FSD, DAs, Ghana Police Service, MOFA, NCCE and Care International.

Main Issues

1. Chain saw lumbering in the district is the only access to lumber in the district. The ban on chainsaw lumbering is therefore unfavourable to the communities. Traditional Authorities, DAs and communities should get involved in shaping new legislation and reforms in chainsaw lumbering since it is the only way for communities to get access to lumber.

2. Small scale and 'galamsey' mining was spreading in the communities throughout the district. Land used for mining activities by small scale illegal operators have been left un-reclaimed. This poses life threatening cases to locals.
3. Nonpayment of SRAs and compensations. WIF timber contractor is operating in the district but the district is not aware of its existence. Compensations however, were not paid to the farmers and land owners whose farms as a result of logging operations had been destroyed. Two farmers reported farm destruction by WIF to police at Afosu but as the time of the forum, no action had been taken (1 month)
4. Taungya Plantations - Communities are still worried with tree ownership in the taungya systems since they have not been fully briefed by the FSD. Farmers complained of the inability by the government to facilitate the documentation of the project before implementation. Farmers are confused about the different benefit sharing schemes in the Taungya and new Government plantation scheme. The Youth and women's groups thought that the Taungya plantation could create job opportunities but this failed to materialize.

Impacts of the Forum

At Afosu, after the first round of forums, the chief and elders invited the WIF contractor for SRA negotiations. The contractor paid GH¢1,000 cedis and provided 10 bags of cement to the community. The forum members demanded for the list of timber and mining companies from the District Assembly of which only that of the timber companies had been provided by the FSD.

Lessons

- » The chiefs are now very transparent as compared to previous times but inwardly they find it difficult to involve communities when it comes to money matters.
- » The DA does not know the modalities involved in the calculation of the percentages in the royalty disbursement and therefore accepts any amount given.

The Way Forward

- » The DA should identify the number of small scale mining companies and enforce land reclamation after their operations. The galamsey operators

should be tracked and activities halted.

- » DA should involve the communities in the allocation of land and rights to small scale mining operators.
- » Legal lumber should be readily available at the market at reasonable prices to community members.
- » Banned chainsaw lumbering should be reconsidered and regulated in the interest of the local communities.
- » DA and FSD should be practically involved in the negotiation of SRA. They should assist farmers and communities to negotiate well so as not to be cheated by the timber companies.
- » FSD should document all agreements between them and farmers on plantations whether Taungya or HIPC.
- » The DA demands that a forest district office should be situated in their district since they are ready to provide an office space for it.

3.3.3 Juaso Forest Forum

The Juaso forest district encompasses 3 administrative Districts namely Ejisu/Juaben Municipality (Ejisu); Asante Akim North (Konongo-Odumase); Asante Akim South (Juaso). The Stakeholders present were Traditional Authorities, Community people, Police, Fire Service, MoFA, Office of Administrator of Stool lands (OASL), Chainsaw operators, carpenters, FSD, CFCs, Taungya Farmers, District Assembly etc.

Main Issues

1. Plantation Development Issues:
 - a. The FSD not released lands for modified Taungya system (MTS) and they have failed to maintain trees planted under the MTS thereby allowing weeds to take over them
 - b. The National Forest Plantation Development Programme (NFPDP) is very discriminatory, and politically aligned
3. Illegal Farming and Mining (galamsey) Issues:
 - a. There is encroachment in forest reserves for farming activities For example 27 compartments have been taken over by farmers in North Fomanso Forest Reserve)
 - b. Small-scale mining companies illegally are prospecting for gold in Forest Reserves (Prakaw Forest Reserve)

- c. Galamsey operators taking over farmlands in the district.
- 4. SRA and Compensation Issues:
 - a. SRA negotiation have failed and some companies are unwilling to fulfill them
 - b. Refusal to pay compensation for destroyed farms during logging activities
- 3. Accessibility to on-farm trees (Tree tenureship)
 - a. The bureaucratic nature of the laws regarding accessibility to on-farm trees.
 - b. Killing of trees in farms due to ownership concerns
- c. Fringe Communities are unable to get lumber for building activities but are prohibited by law to utilize trees on their farm
- 4. Illegal logging and Chainsaw milling
 - a. High levels of illegal logging and chainsaw milling at the District
 - b. Forestry officials conniving with chainsaw operators to fell and transport lumber
- 3. Other General Issues:
 - a. High levels of ignorance about on-going sector projects and programmes such as VPA, REDD, etc.
 - b. Inability to access NTFPs and Royalties from Bobiri Forest Reserve which is a research reserve.

Actions taken

- a. Chiefs have met with contractors to discuss SRA
- b. District Assembly has initiated steps to engage with small-scale miners at the District
- c. District Forest Officer has mobilized forest guards to destroy all illegally cultivated farms in the District
- d. The Customer Service officer has been tasked to attend to admitted farm issues and report back for further action

Impact of the Actions

- » Some communities have managed to engage with contractors for SRA negotiation and fulfillment
- » Generally, there is high level of awareness about on-going sector initiatives due to the sensitization and education at the forums
- » Communities and Chiefs have become more aware of forest governance and management

The Way Forward

- » If possible, forums should be organized quarterly
- » The FSD should register Taungya farmers and issue them with ID cards or documents
- » The FSD should also engage with the communities on regular basis.
- » The community forum concept should be institutionalized to encourage discussion on forestry issues at the community level

3.3.4 West Akim Municipal Forest Forum

West Akyem Municipal is in the Eastern Region of Ghana. It consists of five zonal communities. There were community entries, baseline assessments, stakeholder consultation meetings, two rounds of community forums through which representatives were selected and issues were generated and 2 rounds of district forest forums through which these issues were discussed. The stakeholders involved were TAs, DAs, chainsaw operators, assembly men, traders, unit committee, FSD, DAs, Ghana Police Service, MOFA, NCCE and Care International.

Main Issues

1. Small Scale Mining operations at Akanteng/Kubriso/Awahem
 - » Small scale miners without permits are springing up in the communities.
 - » Abandoned pits are now full of water serving as death traps and breeding grounds for mosquitoes. 13 community members have lost their lives in such situations.
 - » Abandoned pit at Akanteng
2. Chainsaw operation and lumbering in all the communities
 - » The ban on chainsaw lumbering is unfavourable to the communities
 - » Chainsaw operators pay bribes to some Technical Officers and Security Agencies.
 - » Some community elders also complain about how Forestry officials pass by in their communities to arrest chainsaw operators without consulting them.
3. National and Private Plantation project

- » There is no proper documentation covering land given out for the project.
- » No clear-cut benefit sharing arrangement.
- » Farmers were made to believe that after the tree canopy closes, they could access (carbon) funds but nothing has happened so far.
- » Tenant farmers are beginning to lose out on their land as it is being given out for the National plantation project.
- » At Topease where a rubber plantation has been developed since 1962, the over populated community currently do not have lands to farm and undertake other infrastructural developments.
- » Eight Tenant farmers at Asuokaw were not informed and compensated when the landowner leased the land for national plantation.
- » Farmland of tenant farmers
- » Banned chainsaw lumbering should be reconsidered and regulated in the interest of the local communities
- » Land owners agreed to contact the Municipal Chief Executive (MCE) on plans regarding the lands taken and benefit sharing schemes involved. Proper documentation of land and agreements would be sorted out with the MA.
- » The DA should look into the issue of the eight tenant farmers and ask the landowner to compensate the farmers accordingly.
- » Communities should engage the DA and the 46 mining companies working in the district to reclaim the land after mining.
- » District Assembly and the Ghana Rubber Plantation company should release some farmlands for the communities.

Impacts of the forum

- » Community leaders have made follow up to the assembly only to find out that the Metropolitan Assembly does not know anything about the small scale mining operations. The NADMO Coordinator however, claimed he had made a case against them in court.
- » Attempts to refill the pits failed because the machines needed were not functional.

Lessons learnt

- » The chief are now very transparent compared to previous times but inwardly, they find it difficult to involve communities when it comes to money matters.
- » DA does not know the modalities in the calculation of the royalties due them and therefore accepts any amount given them.

The way forward

- » TAs, DAs and communities should get involved in shaping new legislation and reforms in chainsaw lumbering since it is the only way for communities to get access to lumber.
- » Since full implementation of VPA is not going to consider chainsawn lumber as legal, legal lumber should be readily available at the market at reasonable prices.

3.3.5 Twifo Heman Lower Denkyira

Twifo Heman Lower Denkyira District is located in the central part of Central Region. It is bounded to the west by Mpohor Wasa East; to the east by Assin Fosu; to the north by Upper Denkyira East and to the south by Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly. It has about 75% of its populace into agriculture, 15% are into illegal mining (galamsey) and 10% are government workers.

The stakeholders present at the forum were six community members from Wamaso, Bepobeng, Ayaase, Mampoma Aboabo Agona. Four community members were selected to represent various communities at the District forest forum. Other community members were invited. Two District forest forums were held and the stakeholders present; were:

FSD staff, MoFA, District Assembly representative, Community representatives, Chiefs, Media personnel, timber contractors and chainsaw operators.

Main Issues

1. Leasing of cocoa farms and other crop farms for oil palm plantation (cutting down cocoa farms) by traditional leaders.
2. Non payment of compensation by timber companies.
3. Use of chainsaws to convert timber into lumber.
4. Inappropriate disbursement of SRA's.
5. Destructions of water bodies and roads by timber contractors.

6. Illegal mining (*galamsey*) are destroying water bodies

Impact of actions

After the forum, communities are now expressing their sentiments on their farmlands which have been and about to be released to companies for oil palm plantations.

Reflections

What worked well

- » Communities had interest in discussing land and forest issues with FSD and DA during the forum
- » Involvement of communities in planning and implementation of project.

Lesson learnt

- » Community's participation in the planning and implementations of the project created a room for ownership of the forum.
- » There is the prospect of forest forum becoming sustainable.

Way forward

Organization and coordination of forum will be more community based to enhance full participation in the planning and implementation of the project

3.3.6 Upper Denkyira East Municipal

The Municipality is located in the Northern part of Central Region. It is bounded to the East by Wasa Amenfi east; to the west by Adansi North; to the north by Upper Denkyira West and to the south by Twifo Heman Lower Denkyira. The district is mainly an agrarian economy with about 70 percent of the population being farmers. The youth are mostly in the small mining sector (mostly *galamsey*) constituting about 20 percent with the remaining 10 percent being engaged in the other sectors of the local economy.

Community Stakeholders meetings were held in 6 communities namely: Asikuma, Twifo Kyebi, Buaben, Buabenso, Achiase and Esaase. Four community members were selected to represent various communities at the District forest forum. Other

community members were invited. Two District forest forums were held with the following stakeholders' present FSD staff, MoFA, Chiefs, Media personnel, timber contractors and chainsaw operators.

Main Issues

The forum discussed many issues, but the emerging ones were:

- » Timber Resource Management - There was inadequate knowledge on SRA and compensations by communities. The communities do not have knowledge on disbursement of royalties by Municipal Assembly. There are no rewards for communities that intercept and seize illegal timber. Besides there are no support for forest forums.
- » Mining- The forum observed that there was destruction of water bodies by the Chinese and other illegal foreign miners operating in the area.

Impacts of the Actions

As a result of the forum, the following impacts are being observed:

- » Communities demanded proper signing of SRA's
- » Five member committee was formed to meet the Municipal Chief Executive
- » Communities have agreed to form community based natural resource management team and watchdogs.
- » Forum participants demanded MA to use some fraction of royalties to support forest forum.
- » MCE pledge to support the forest forum with office and vehicle for community fora.
- » Communities demanded that FSD should sensitize communities on forest management.
- » Communities demanded list of developments undertaken by MA from royalties received (Accountability)
- » Communities demanded that FSD should reward communities that help to seize illegal timber and report illegal timber activities.
- » Communities demanded labeling and embossment of all development projects by MA from royalties.

Challenges

The institution of the district forum has resulted in community interest in discussing forest issues with FSD and MA. It has enlarged the involvement of communities in planning and implementation of project.

However, all was not well with the forum. Lateness of participants due to poor road network affected the output of the forum. Besides, the MA could not participate because the date fell on a holiday.

LESSON LEARNT

From the forum, we have learnt that

- » Community participation in the planning and implementations of the project created a room for ownership of the forum.
- » There is the prospect of forest forum becoming sustainable
- » Selected forum members met MCE to inform and discuss all proceedings of the forum.

The Way Forward

To ensure that the forest forum move forward the following are suggested:

- » Organization and coordination of forum should be more community based and involvement of MA stakeholders to enhance full participation in the planning and implementation of the project.
- » Efforts should be made to minimize the pollution of River Offin being used by nearby communities

3.3.7 Sefwi Wiaso District Forum

Sefwi Wiawso District is located in the Western Region. It is mainly an agricultural district producing cocoa, timber and minerals. Community Stakeholders meetings were held in 6 communities. Thereafter four community members were selected to represent various communities at the District forest forum. Two district forums were held with the following representations of stakeholders: community representatives, FSD staff, MoFA staff, Chiefs, Landowners, Media personnel, timber contractors and chainsaw operators.

Main Issues

The main issues that emanated from the two district forums are summarised as follows:

1. Community members do not report cases of illegal logging to authorities. Because when they report such cases FSD does not give them feedback. They also do not get any reward for their efforts at fighting illegal activities in the forest.
2. Ban on royalties at the Sefwi Wiawso traditional area is negatively affecting forest operations

Recommendations:

- a. Royalties to the DAs should be released since the conflict between the traditional council and stool lands does not affect the DAs.
 - b. Also the constitutional provisions that makes stool lands to get their revenue through the traditional council should be changed, so that stool lands can get their royalties directly from the Office of Administrator of Stool lands (OASL)
 - c. There should be a directive that will direct District Assemblies to invest part of their royalties into forest related projects
1. Lack of access to admitted farm.
 2. Some of the forest guides wear soldiers uniforms which contradicts the ethics of the security services and also affect the cordial relationship between the communities and FSD
 3. FSD officers connive with timber companies

Impact of action

- » Communities now have the confidence to demand their rights from FSD
- » Now a timber company has called some of the communities to come to the table for them to talk about their SRA

Reflections

- » Now more communities and other stakeholders want to join the Forum
- » Stool lands don't attend our District forums

Lessons learnt

- » Communities forum brought about a lot of issues for discussion

The Way forward

Sefwi Wiawso District Forest Forum will collaborate

with Juaboso forest forum to issue out press statement if the royalties saga is not resolved after the National forest forum

- » Carpenters will form an association so that they can also compete for auction lumbers

3.3.8 Tarkwa Nsuaem Municipality

Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality is the only district in Africa with 8 multinational mining companies operating in area, yet, things are not as expected in the district. The district is marked with bad road network (especially the one leading to Kumasi), and high cost of living affecting local communities. The Municipality has the following Forest Reserves, Nueng North, Nueng South, Ndumfri, Nkontoben, Ben West, and Bonsa River

The Tarkwa District Forum was a platform to deliberate and take decisions on issues pertaining to forestry and mining

Main Issues

The main issues reported to the forum were

- » Land use conflicts among Agriculture, Mining and other activities. About 70% of total land serves as mining concessions. The remaining 30% is shared by Agriculture, Galamsey and housing development. This has put a lot of pressure on land and generated conflicts among the users.
- » Boundaries between Mining concessions and community lands are not clearly demarcated. This often leads to encroachment and its associated conflicts. Farming expansion and tree plantations are new activities that are becoming a source of worry.
- » There is lack of documentation of land titles and benefit-sharing arrangements
- » There are inadequate Forest Guards to protect forests from encroachment by chainsaw and *galamsey* operators. Greater part of the off forest reserves are being used for surface mining
- » There is serious encroachment of Neung South forest reserve especially by Galamsey operators. Currently 18 suspects were standing trial in various courts in Tarkwa and Takoradi but frequent adjournment of cases has delayed justices.
- » Chainsaw operators are entering GSBA's in the night.

- » Timber contractors fail to replant the trees they fell and afforestation attempts by local communities are not fully supported by the FSD

ACTIONS TAKEN

- » Slow but on-going discussions have been initiated with major stakeholders to discuss the boundary issues. The district levels forums are discussing most of the issues.
- » The NGOs have intensified education on SRA, Compensation, Royalties, FLEGT-VPA and REDD+

IMPACT OF FORUMS

- » Through the district level discussions, chainsaw operators have accepted to register and regularised their operations.
- » Communities have been educated on SRAs, Royalties, Compensation, Climate change, FLEGT-VPA and REDD+
- » Most communities are now able to approach FSD and DA for clarification of issue
- » Most Communities are seizing chainsaws and protecting forest reserves through existing CBAGs and are reporting activities of illegal activities to appropriate authorities

NEXT STEP

The district forum intends to undertake the following:

- » Conduct community education on advocacy skills and techniques to be able to engage duty bearers and right holders
- » Make public illegalities in the forest and mining sector
- » Continuously advocate on forest issues until the right things were done policy-wise and community-wise
- » Continuous engagement of DAs, FSD to assist resolve issues as and when they arise
- » Provide the government sector with adequate information to arrest illegalities in the forest sector and ensure appropriate disbursement of SRA's.

3.3.9 Nkawie District Forest Forum

This forum encompass Juaso Forest Forum (Atwima Nwabiagya (Nkawie) and Atwima Mponua(Nyinahin). The stakeholders present were Chiefs, Community people Police, Fire Service, MoFA, OASL, Chainsaw operators, carpenters, FSD, CFCs, Taungya Farmers and District Assembly etc.

Main issues

- » Community Involvement in Forest Management
- » Refusal of FSD officials to respond to information given by community people
- » Lack of confidentiality in informants identity
- » Some communities protecting those involved in illegal activities
- » Illegal Farming Activities:
- » High level of encroachment in forest reserves for farming activities
- » Galamsey operators working in forest reserves (Tano-Offin Forest Reserve)
- » SRA and Compensation Issues:
- » Non fulfillment of SRA by contractors
- » Refusal to pay compensation for destroyed farms during logging activities
- » Accessibility to on-farm trees (Tree tenureship)
- » The bureaucratic nature of the laws regarding accessibility to on-farm trees.
- » Killing of trees in farms due to ownership concerns
- » Fringe Communities are unable to get lumber for building activities but are prohibited by law to utilize trees on their farm
- » Illegal logging and Chainsaw milling
- » High levels of illegal logging and chainsaw milling at the District
- » Forestry officials conniving with chainsaw operators to fell and transport lumber
- » Plantation Issues:
- » Jimira Forest Reserve completely degraded by private Plantation developers
- » Non-availability of seedlings for planting
- » Non-release of forest land for Taungya
- » Long period of waiting for MTS benefits

3.3.10 Jomoro District Forest Forum

Jomoro District is one of the high forest zone districts in the Western region with its capital located at Half Assini. The only reserve encompassing the Jomoro district is the Ankasa Conservation Area (formerly Ankasa National park) which is under the jurisdiction of the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission with about 4 CREMAs established around it. The forums in this district are being facilitated by Conservation Foundation. The Stakeholders represented at the district forest forum included District Assembly, Assemblymen, MOFA, Ghana National Fire Service, CEPS, NCCE, Western Nzema Traditional Council, and Community representatives.

Main issues

- » Chainsaw operations in off reserve areas
- » Sand winning in the Tano River which pollutes it.
- » Permit holders are not introduced formally to the local communities before timber operations
- » Non existence of Fire volunteers in the various communities
- » Lack of transparency between CREMA and Wildlife Division
- » Lack of collaboration between the Security agencies and WD
- » Lack of collaboration between the District Assembly and the Wildlife Division
- » Decision makers at the District Assembly not so much interested in natural resources management issues.
- » Non participation of FSD in the district forest forums
- » Low level of participation in natural resource management by the communities is as a result of lack of alternative livelihoods

The Way Forward

- » Government should make sawmill lumber accessible and available for sale at the local market to reduce illegal chainsaw operations.
- » FSD should be present at all forest forums to address issues that are specific to timber and forestry.
- » All Chiefs and CRMCs should always organize community forest forums at their level for sustainability

- » Decision makers at the District Assembly to show more interest in natural resource management especially on the issue of sand winning since it is polluting the Tano river and people use it as a raw source of drinking water.
- » The Ankasa conservation area needs to be promoted to attract more tourists to the area.

3.3.11 Wasa Amenfi East District Forest Forum

Wasa Amenfi East District is located in the central part of Western Region. It is bounded to the west by Wasa Amenfi West; to the east by Mpohor Wasa East; to the north by Upper Denkyira East and to the south by Prestea Huni Valley. It has a population of about 115,100. It has about 80% of its populace into agriculture, 15% are into illegal mining (galamsey) and 5% are government workers.

Community Stakeholders meetings were held in six communities namely: Mamieso, Saamang, Grumisa, Dawuramong Wantram Dikoto Junction. Four community members were selected to represent various communities at the District forest forum. Other community members were invited. Two District forest forums were held the stakeholders present were FSD staff, MoFA, OASL District Assembly representatives, Community reps, Chiefs, Media personnel, timber contractors, chainsaw operators, NCCE, CARE International and GIRAF representatives.

Main Issues

1. Illegal logging and chainsaw operations. - Rampant destruction of farms without compensations
2. Illegal mining (Galamsey) - Indiscriminate destruction of land and pollution of water bodies by illegal miners (Galamsey); Invasion of river Ankobra by Chinese and other foreign miners.
3. Mining companies- inappropriately entry into communities
4. Timber Contractors - improper signing of SRA's with communities, inadequate and non-payment of compensations.

Impact of the actions

- » Communities demand proper signing of SRA's
- » Communities demand list of registered timber companies from DA and FSD.

- » Seizure of illegal logs, lumber, from chainsaw/illegal operators.
- » Communities are demanding accountability on royalties from the DA.
- » Resisted illegal miners (galamsey).
- » Resisted mining company (Golden Star Company) by Saamang and Afransie.

Lesson learnt

- » Community participation in the planning and implementations of the project created a room for ownership of the forum.
- » There is the prospect of forest forum becoming sustainable.
- » Women and youth groups are now taking the lead in CFF and DFF's
- » Community networking to fight a common goal

RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE ISSUES THAT EMERGED FROM THE DISTRICT FOREST

FORUMS REPORTS

From the presentations of the district forest forums reports, certain cross cutting issues emerged. The Forum deliberated on these issues and made recommendations to resolve them.

The cross cutting issues were:

- » Poor management of savannah woodland resources - Traditional Authorities and District Assemblies do not benefit from revenues accruing from wildlife reserves.

- » Increasing illegal chainsaw operations and poorly organised domestic lumber market
- » Plantation Development
- » Wildfire Management
- » Royalty payments
- » Communities fringing Protected Areas
- » Existence of two separate national forest forum
- » Social Responsibility Agreements and Compensations
- » Sustainable livelihood development for forest fringe communities

The summary of the recommendations made are indicated in box 8

Box 8 Forum Recommendations on Cross cutting Issues

Issue - Savannah Woodland resources

- » *Government should consider allocation of at least 20% of revenue accruing from the management of National parks, resource reserves and wildlife sanctuaries to fringe communities, TAs and DAs.*
- » *Increase efforts to establish more Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs) around all the wildlife reserves in the country, to ensure better collaboration and benefit flow to fringe communities.*

Issue- Chainsaw and Domestic Lumber Market

- » *Integrate Chainsaw operations into sustainable forest management outside the forest reserves and design guideline to regulate their operations.*
- » *Support the establishment of domestic lumber markets for communities far away from sawmills to minimize the dependence on chainsaw lumber.*
- » *Part of the fines imposed on illegal timber operations should be paid to the communities where the illegal activities took place*

Issue- Plantation Development

- » *Clearing the natural forest for the planting of exotic species (esp. teak) should be stopped. Instead communities should be supported to do enrichment planting and allowing the forest to regenerate.*
- » *Foreign investors who have been given forest reserves to reforest should be encouraged to allow the local fringe communities to integrate agricultural crops into tree planting*

- » *Registration, documentation and benefit sharing arrangements of the national plantation development especially under the MTS should be completed, published and gazetted.*
- » *The situation where foreigners are investing in plantation at Offinso need to be investigated in order to minimize the current the abuses.*

Issues - Wildfire Management

- » *The Government should consider establishing community wildfire management as one of the national employment generation strategies.*
- » *Motivate fire volunteers to patrol and manage wildfires.*

Issue - Royalty Payments

- » *DA should invest part of the royalties into forest related projects in communities where the timber is being harvested.*
- » *Ban on the disbursement of royalties to some communities in the Sefwi Wiawso district should be lifted to enable the traditional authority.*
- » *Channeling the 25% of the royalties through the Traditional Authorities should be reversed and amount paid directly to the stools.*
- » *Part of forest royalties should be used to finance the forest forum at district levels.*

Issue - Communities fringing Protected Areas

- » *Private lands within the forest reserves should be clearly demarcated for the owners.*
- » *Continuously review land available to communities that are fringing forest reserves and wildlife reserves in view of population growth.*
- » *Government should give first priority to forest fringe communities in reforestation of degraded forests before considering foreign investors.*
- » *Introduce forest fringe communities to sustainable agricultural development*

Issue- Multiplicity of National Forest Forums

- » *Continue discussions with RMSC on the two processes in order to reconcile the two forest platform bring them together as one forum.*
- » *Continue advocacy and awareness at community levels*
- » *Develop a documentary on the proceedings*
- » *Need to identify a process that is legitimate*

Issues - SRA and Compensation

- » *There should be transparency in the negotiation documentation, implementation and disbursement of SRA.*
- » *SRA guidelines should be made available to all stakeholders.*
- » *There should be increased education of SRA*

Issue- Livelihood development for forest fringe communities

- » *Introduce sustainable farming practices to forest fringe communities. (Organic farming).*
- » *Motivate task forces and community members to patrol and check illegal forest operations*

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF FOREST FORUMS

It came out of the forum that under FAO programme being executed by the Forestry Commission another National Forest Forum exist. Most of the participants present were also members of the other platform. The Forum discussed compassionately, the issue and advocated for the merging of the two platforms to ensure a united voice for the Civic society organizations in the country.

Furthermore, the meeting advocated for the institutionalization of the Forest Forum. The following were recommended:

- » Continue advocacy and awareness at community levels
- » Develop a documentary on the proceedings
- » Maintain the present status where facilitation of the forest forum will be continue to deliberate on forestry issues
- » Need to identify a process that is legitimate
- » Continue discussions with RMSC on the two processes to bring them together to reconcile the two platforms
- » District Assembly support can only be possible if the inputs of the forestry sector is received in the preparation of the district development plan.

FORUM COMMUNIQUÉ, INTERACTION WITH THE PRESS AND CONCLUSION

The forum issued a Communiqué concentrating mostly on the main issues that emerged from the deliberations. The communiqué concentrated on the issues relating to VPA, chainsaw operation, management of savannah woodland resources, national plantation development programme, Social Responsibility Agreement Timber Allocation Agreement and improving governance in the forestry sector. The detailed communiqué is attached as appendix 3.

The Forum interacted with six media houses. Four representatives of the forum were selected to present the communiqué and responded to questions from the Press.

6.1 Conclusion

The forum concluded on the following future actions:

- » Finalize the workshop proceedings and send to the participants
- » Create a list space to exchange information by e-mails
- » Two more forums will be organized before December 2012. Another National forum would be organized by April 2012 and the last in October 2012.
- » The national forum should develop a strategic plan to win itself from donor funding.

APPENDIX 1 FORUM PROGRAMME



NATIONAL FOREST FORUM, Draft Programme Outline

5th to 9th September 2011

Miklin Hotel, East Legon, Accra

DAY 1

TIME	SESSION TITLE	SESSION HANDLER
08:30 - 09:00	Registration of Participants	S. Mawutor/R. Panford
09:00 - 10:15	Welcome Address and formal opening	Hon. Minister, Lands and Natural Resources
10:15 - 10:30	Participant introductions & expectations	Facilitator
10:30 - 10:45	Morning Break	
10:45 - 11:45	Introduction to the NFF and GIRAF project	K. Bekoe Ansah
11:45 - 12:45	Update on the implementation of the Ghana-EU VPA Q&A	Richard Gyimah (TVD, FC)
12:45 - 13:30	Update on Forest and Wildlife policy review Q&A	A rep from the MLNR
13:30 - 14:30	Lunch	
14:30 - 15:15	Presentation on the current status of the sector policy reform and road-map Q&A	K. Bekoe Ansah
16:00 - 16:45	Update on the implementation on National forestation programmes	A rep from the Plantations Department, FC
16:45 - 17:00	Summary and conclusions of Day 1	Facilitator
17:00	Close of Day	

DAY 2

TIME	SESSION TITLE	SESSION HANDLER
08:30 – 09:00	Registration of Participants	S. Mawutor/R. Panford
09:00 – 09:15	Recap of Day 1	Facilitator
09:15 – 10:45	Forest sector law and offences	Joseph Boakye
10:45 – 11:00	Morning Break	
11:00 – 12:15	Forest sector laws and offences	Joseph Boakye
12:15 – 13:30	Video screening (Justice in forests)	Facilitator
13:30 – 14:30	Lunch	
14:00 – 14:45	Video screening (Zembla)	Facilitator
14:45 – 16:45	Presentation of issues from DFFs (West Gonja, East Gonja, Central Gonja) Q&A	Facilitator
	Discussions and prioritizations of issues including recommendations	
16:45 – 17:00	Summary of Day 2 and Conclusions	Facilitator
17:00	Close of Day	

DAY 3

TIME	SESSION TITLE	SESSION HANDLER
08:30 – 09:00	Registration of Participants	S. Mawutor/R. Panford
09:00 – 09:15	Recap of Day 2	Facilitator
09:15 – 10:45	Presentation of issues from DFFs (Upper Denkyira East, Wassa Amenfi East) Q&A	Facilitator
10:45 – 11:00	Morning Break	
11:00 – 13:30	Presentation of issues from the DFFs (Twifo Heman Lower Denkyira, Aowin Suaman, Jomoro) Q&A	Facilitator
13:30 – 14:30	Lunch	

14:30 - 16:45	Presentation of issues from the DFFs (Nkawie, Juaso)	Facilitator
	Discussions and prioritization of issues including recommendations	
16:45 - 17:00	Summary and conclusions of Day 3	Facilitator
	Close of Day	

DAY 4

TIME	SESSION TITLE	SESSION HANDLER
08:30 - 09:00	Registration of Participants	S. Mawutor/R. Panford
09:00 - 09:15	Recap of Day 3	Facilitator
09:15 - 10:15 10:15 - 10:45	Presentation of issues from DFFs (Kwaebibirim, Birim North) Q&A	Facilitator
10:45 - 11:00	Morning Break	
11:00 - 13:30	Presentation of issues from DFFs (West Akim, Sunyani, Sefwi Wiawso) Q&A	Facilitator
13:30 - 14:30	Lunch	
14:30 - 16:45	Presentation of issues from DFFs (Asunafo North, Offinso) Q&A Prioritization of issues including recommendations	Facilitator
16:45 - 17:00	Summary and conclusions of Day 4	Facilitator
17:00	Close of Day	

DAY 5

TIME	SESSION TITLE	SESSION HANDLER
08:30 - 09:00	Registration of Participants	S. Mawutor/R. Panford
09:00 - 09:15	Recap of Day 4	Facilitator
09:15 - 10:45	Presentation of issues from the DFFs (Juaboso, Tarkwa Nsuaem) Q&A	Facilitator
10:45 - 11:00	Morning Break	
11:00 - 12:00	Institutionalizing Forest Forums	Facilitator
12:30 - 13:00	The Bigger picture General discussions and conclusions Communiqué	Facilitator
	Next steps	Facilitator/ GIRAF PMT
13:30 - 14:30	Lunch	
14:30 - 16:30	"Time with the Press"	GIRAF Communication Team
16:30	Close of Day	

APPENDIX 2 LISTS OF PARTICIPANTS

NO	NAME	COMMUNITY	PHONE/E-MAIL
1	Nana G. Akwawuah	Juaboso	0243935061
2	Nana Kwame Fuachie II	Juaboso	0242540307
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30	Asaah Mohammed	Accra	0242684285
31	Albert Katako	Accra	0244242180
32	Kingsley Bekoe Ansah	Accra	0302521905
33	Samuel Mawutor	Accra	0240852452
34	Newman Ofosu	Sefwi-Wiawso	0244178104
35	Peter Osei-Wusu	Amansie	0244461052
36	Margaret Owusu	Offinso	0243370884
37	J.Y. Amponsah	Offinso	0544662078
38	John Kofi Domfeh	Offinso Nkenkasu	0266773995
39	Charles Kwotuah	Offinso Akomadan	0246462836
40	G.K. Taikorang	Offinso Abofour	0266784459
41	Philip Amponsah Boakye	Offinso Kwapanin	0209412527
42	Charles Nkrumah	Offinso Abofour	0274999112
43	Nana Kwadwo Anye II	Sefwi Wiawso	0241010518
44	Paddy Appiah	Chorichori	0241081345
45	Andrew Ackah	Sefwi-Wiawso	0243684078
46	Cecilia Boamah	Sefwi-Attakrom	0244932728
47	James Affum	Sefwi-Anglo	0548915624
48	Mark Minta Sampere	Sefwi-Adiembra old	0540807774
49	Gyabeng Francis	Sefwi-Besibena	0243213431
50	John Atoukonto	Sefwi-Wiawso	0242039966
51	Elvis Oppong-Mensah	Sefwi-Wiawso	0244172818
52	Owusu Asare	Asunafo North	0243476335
53	Emmanuel Gyimah	Asunafo North	0240632818
54	Nicholas Addae	Asunafo North	0540524971
55	Nana Kwadwo Antwi	Asunafo North	0209447897
56	Asante Frimpong	Asunafo North	0243904150
57	Agyei Mensah	Asunafo	0248545552
58	Nana Kwadwo Darko	Asunafo North	0202575670
59	Nana Owusu Achiaw	Asunafo	0243164769
60	Otuo Acheampong	Asunafo	0244587112
61	Augustine Ayisi	Simpa-Dadwen	0244651868
62	John Nkoah	Simpa Tarkwa	0247819252
63	Nana Kwesi Benie	Simpa Dadwen	0207281648
64	Paul Nsiah	Abompuniso	0246617412
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74	Ameyaw Collins	Adoe	0541685093
75	J.K. Mensah	Fokuokrom	0248779608
76	Margaret Asantewa	Asuakwaa	0203535958
77	David Yeboah	Sunyani	0242158936
78	David Sarfo Kantanka	Buoku	02430352236
79	Hon Samuel Brenya	Nkawie	0247238327
80	Hamenu Francis	Nkawie	0549437162
81	James Acheampong	Nkawie	0570106402/0545437994
82	Adade-Adjei	Nkawie	0209529136
83	Charles Appertey	Nkawie	0202632484
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APPENDIX 3 FORUM COMMUNIQUÉ

NATIONAL FOREST FORUM, 2011 COMMUNIQUE

We participants from civil society organizations, Traditional Authorities, government officials from Forestry Commission, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ghana National Fire Services, the Police and forest communities, from 19 districts across the country, numbering 210 met at the Miklin Hotel, East Legon from the 5th to 9th September, 2011 for the National Forest Forum to discuss and share ideas on current forest governance issues and make recommendations to policy makers.

Forest Forums

A number of dialogue meetings with stakeholders in the framework of the Akosombo series of stakeholder consultations on forest policies started in 2002 and recommended the establishment of forest forums to engender public participation in policy development and implementation in the forest sector. Under the Forest Sector Development Programme II (FSDP II), financial and technical support was provided for the establishment of about 11 district forest forums. Since then, some NGOs have established 19 district forums until in 2007 when with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) supported the establishment of a national level process. The forum recognizes all these processes are significant in the drive by all forest stakeholders to improve forest communities' livelihoods and forest sector governance and we support it. The forum therefore calls on all actors, - the government, development partners, district assemblies, traditional authorities, NGOs, the timber industry, etc to provide all the needed support to institutionalise and sustain the forums.

Chainsaw operations

The forum recognizes that chainsaw operations are one of the major forest governance issues in Ghana. The forum agreed that the ban on chainsaw milling is not working considering the fact that chainsaw

lumber is readily available in almost every corner of the country. The forum therefore urges government that the current policy which bans chainsaw milling needs to be changed and replaced with a more realistic option. The forum supports the policy proposal by the Timber Industry Development Division (TIDD) of the Forestry Commission and Tropenbos International Ghana programme which calls for nationwide debate and discussion on how to make legal timber available in the domestic market.

The forum further proposes that chainsaw operators should be organized into groups such as the Domestic Lumber Trade Association (DOLTA) and allowed to participate in competitive bidding for small scale Timber Utilisation Contract (TUCs), pay taxes and other fiscal obligations and contribute Plantation Development. There is the need for the review of policy and laws to allow for different permitting and taxation system for such organized groups. This will save huge sums of money that the government loses through illegal chainsaw operations.

Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA)

On the implementation of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) Ghana has signed with the European Union, we recognize and continue to have faith in its ability to deliver significant improvement in the way forest resources are managed if it is implemented with maximum involvement of all stakeholders. In this light we call on government to institutionalize the multi-stakeholder consultative process used in the VPA negotiation for all government forest sector initiatives. We also call on government to build communities capacity to monitor the implementation of the VPA. We call on government to constitute the multi-stakeholder Timber Validation Council to oversee the overall performance of Ghana's Legality Assurance System (LAS).

National Forest Plantation Programmes

On the National Forestation programmes being implemented by government, we as a forum wish to commend government in its effort to provide resources and technical support to create forest resources. We however wish to state that government should adopt as a policy that no monoculture plantations should be established. Also the indigenous species component of the plantations as against the exotic counterpart should be increased from the current 6% to 30% in the 2011/2012 planting seasons. This will increase biodiversity and genetic integrity of our forests. We call on the Forestry Commission to speed up the process of documentation of farmers in the Modified Taungya System (MTS) by completing their registration process to secure their tenure in the plantations. We also call for the continuous use of the MTS as the main vehicle for the development of forest plantations, to ensure substantive benefit flow to forest fringe communities at the time of harvest of these plantations, and to avert the current conflicts between contractors and communities.

The forum proposes that Government should consult TAs when implementing afforestation programs.

Savanna Woodlands

On Savannah woodlands, the forum recognized that fringe communities, Traditional Authorities and District Assemblies do not benefit from revenues accruing from wildlife reserves. Though the forum recognize that compensations have been paid to land owners and affected communities at the time of their acquisition, we believe that it is in interest of collaboration and sustainable development of the resource that government should consider allocation of at least 20% of revenue accruing from the management of National parks, resource reserves and wildlife sanctuaries to fringe communities, Traditional Authorities and District Assemblies. We also call for increase efforts to establish more Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs) around all the wildlife reserves in the country, to ensure better collaboration and benefit flow to fringe communities. On the issue of rampant bushfires that destroys lives and properties; we call on government to provide financial and technical resources for the implementation of all aspects of the wildfire policy. We also call on government to provide the conducive environment for the private and communal establishment of woodlots to cater for the fuelwood needs of the country.

The forum recognizes the menace of Fulani herdsmen and their activities. We propose that as a matter of urgency government should constitute a military task force to control their activities.

SRAs and Compensation

The forum recognized the low level of awareness of communities on Social Responsibility Agreement (SRA) and its negotiations and massive non-compliance by timber companies to the SRA in cases when it has been signed. We call on the Forestry Commission and Environmental NGOs to increase their sensitization of the public especially forest communities on the roles and responsibilities with regards to SRAs. We also call on the Forestry Commission to implement to the full the regulation of no granting of timber right permit to companies who have not entered into social contract with the communities.

We call on government to mediate in the cases of destruction of properties of farmers through the activities of timber companies in order to arrive at a fair compensation for the affected farmers. The forum calls for an urgent and periodic review of the valuation system from the historical to accrual valuation which would ensure that compensations paid for destruction of crops are more realistic.

Timber allocation system

On the issue of allocation of timber rights permits, the forum call on government to follow the competitive bidding process as stipulated by LI1649 and its amendments in the allocation of all timber resources. We also call on government to disclose all timber permits allocation both in reserve and off-serve areas. This will increase the transparency and oversight of communities, land owners and citizens' audits of the process.

Land and Tree tenure

The forum recognized and commended the effort of government on clarifying land and tree tenure. We believe that this will contribute to giving security to farmers and communities to invest in creating forest resources. The forum also proposes that government devolves management responsibility off-reserve to communities through their District Assemblies and stools. This will give greater incentive to communities to sustainably manage forest resources.

Admitted farms/Farming in forest reserves

The forum recognizes that farming in forest reserves and boundary disputes over admitted farms in forest reserves has recently become one of the key drivers of deforestation. We call on government to provide technical and financial support to the Forestry Commission to re-demarcate all admitted farms in forest reserves through a consultative process. Any compensation or settlement agreement should be done through a consultative process with all stakeholders.

Mining in forest reserves

The forum adds its voice on the calls for a national policy on “no mining in forest reserves”. Furthermore, we call on government through the mandated agencies to as a matter of urgency, enforce our environmental laws with regards to mining close to water bodies and in unapproved sites. We call on government to ban all forms of surface mining.

Collaborative resource management

The forum recognises with appreciation the collaborative efforts that the Government has put in place to ensure active stakeholder participation in sustainable forest and wildlife resource management. However, it has been observed that there is lack of confidentiality for persons who report illegal forest operations; stakeholders are not better informed on newly signed initiatives and international protocols that may have implications on resource management and ownership; there are limited feedbacks from forestry authorities on collective decisions; and there is poor collaboration between the resource managers and the security agencies.

Improving governance in the forest sector

In strengthening collaboration for sustainable management of forest and wildlife resources therefore, the Forum states that:

- » District Assemblies and the Forestry Commission should support the functioning of the District Forest Forum as the medium for exchanging information and building capacities of civil society groups to participate in decision-making and planning
- » Forestry governance system should be decentralized to local levels to ensure transparency,

accountability and equity and to define the roles of Traditional Authorities, local government (District Assemblies), NGOs, CBOs in forest and wildlife management.

- » Integrate forest law into Judicial and provide forestry law enforcement training programmes for stakeholders

In conclusion, we as a forum are committed to serving as a democratic platform for forest stakeholders to dialogue and contribute to the policy making in the sector. We urge government as a policy maker and parliament as lawmaker to take up these issues that we have raised and put in place appropriate policies and legislation to address them. We will continue to use this platform to contribute to the improvement of collaboration among forest stakeholders. The forum proposes that government should put in place the necessary policy and legislation to set up a Forest Development Fund whose core responsibility will be to fund forest forums. Government should charge at least 5% of all forest revenues to service this fund and this fund should be managed by a multi-stakeholder board.

Finally we wish to acknowledge the support of Civic Response who organized this meeting. The forum recognizes the support of the European Union, the FERN organization, the Forest Governance Learning Group, the Governance Initiative for Rights and Accountability in Forest Management project, STAR-Ghana, and the Strengthening African Forest Governance Project.

