SRA change story from the Old Aberim community in Ghana
ABOUT CIVIC RESPONSE

Civic Response is a leading natural resource and environmental (NRE) governance policy advocacy organisation working to entrench resource rights.

Founded in 2003 in Accra, Ghana by a group of activists with experience in resource rights campaigns both locally and globally, Civic Response undertakes activities which address the policy needs of communities who depend directly on natural resources, particularly forests.

Our Mission
Civic Response seeks to change social arrangements that entrench marginalisation, exclusion and division as well as provide advocacy and networking support to self-organised citizens’ groups in the natural resource and environment sector.

Our vision
We envision a just, productive, pluralistic and tolerant society collectively in control of its resources and systematically improving development opportunities for all citizens’ and communities.

Our History
Civic Response is a product of the thoughts of the founding members on how to contribute to the country’s development. The original concept as the name reflects is broadly about helping Ghanaian communities. The focus was on individual rights (not necessarily on resource rights) and promoting power of civic institutions.

‘Student Parliament Project’ was one of the first projects Civic Response embarked on in 2003. The aim was to improve the politics of student movement. However, following a workshop convened by CARE Ghana in Kumasi in the same year, seeking to create a forest sector advocacy group,
the need arose to provide a secretariat for this forest sector advocacy group (now called FWG) and Civic Response was unanimously agreed on by the participants in that meeting to host the FWG secretariat. This caused Civic Response to shift into the natural resources sector and remained as such with focus on forest governance. It became logical to remain in the natural resources sector as it employs lot of Ghanaians in both the informal and formal sector.

Our Work
Currently, our work is divided into three main programmes:

Forest Governance: Forests are at the core of Civic Response’s work. Under the Forest Governance programme, we advocate for forest sector policy and legislative reform based on community tenure, management and enterprise. We seek forest management systems that provide just, democratic and sustainable development at local and national levels. We are also concerned about Chinese involvement in illegal natural resource exploitation especially Rosewood and working with communities to monitor, document and publish findings for advocacy. Lack of tree tenure for farmers and landowners is promoting deforestation. Civic Response is advocating for farmers and landowners to receive significant financial benefits from nurtured trees as an incentive to maintain trees on farm.

Minerals Governance: The focus of Civic Response in the minerals sector is the salt sub-sector. This sub-sector has many community rights challenges but little advocacy attention. Nevertheless, from the year 2016, we
started paying attention to mining in forest reserves and have become a major part of the campaign against mining in forest reserves. We are again concerned about Chinese involvement in the promotion of illegal surface mining and consequent environmental degradation and educating communities on how all these will come back later to affect their health and livelihoods negatively.

**Climate Governance**: In 2006, Civic Response got involved in the climate change/REDD+ discourse because of the impact of government decisions on communities in the long run but also to understand the on-going global discussions on climate change and their consequences for forest-owning communities.

The overall objective for our climate governance work is that democratic and development-rights based responses are adopted and implemented. It is worth mentioning though that, our climate governance programme focuses on mitigation. We are working with communities to understand the causes of climate change, impact, how communities’ activities contribute to climate change, and how communities can support mitigation efforts. Over the last couple of years, we have also followed the discussions on National Determined Contributions (NDCs) with specific interests in restoration and the involvement of communities and the private sector.

Apart from the three main areas, other areas Civic Response has worked at over the years are:

- Water rights campaign (access, distribution, privatization)
- Campaign by the people of Ada to regain control of their Songhor Lagoon which has been their main source of livelihood
• Frequency spectrum: this is directly linked to the struggle by the people of Ada over broadcasting right to operate a community radio; an awareness that communities’ access to frequency spectrum as a natural resource is an issue. We have also promoted community radios as a vehicle for communities to report wrongdoing, discuss and make inputs into policy issues and make their voice heard.
• Health delivery, national health insurance
• Education

**Land Governance:** Current major challenges in the land sector include large-scale land acquisition for plantation development against carbon offsetting, biofuel development, as well as other agricultural commodities. Large-scale land acquisition by companies and individuals deprives community members, whose livelihood depends on access to these lands, their source of livelihood and getting further entrenched into poverty. Large-scale land acquisition has been on the ascendency in recent times, especially across Sub-Saharan Africa.

To regulate the spate of large-scale land acquisition, the Lands Commission has developed a draft national guideline on large-scale land acquisition, which spells out the roles and responsibilities of investors in large scale land acquisition, as well as the limits of the size of land that can be acquired. It however, does not limit multiple acquisition of large scale land acquisition. The guideline has no legal backing. Studies conducted by Civic Response into some of the large scale land acquisition in Ghana has revealed that Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) was not applied in the large scale lands acquired by investors and farmers were left at the mercy of the investors who decided how much to compensate affected farmers. The study revealed that farmers were compensated for cash crops and food crops were considered by the companies as flowers and not compensated for. The farmers were also not compensated for loss of
access to their lands in situations where their lease had not expired before the land was taken away from them. Some farmers who were employed on the lands the companies had taken away from them indicated they earn less than 50% of what they used to earn when the land was in their care.

Security of land tenure for most farmers is an issue because they have no documented title deeds/agreements with the landowners on their farmlands. This makes them very vulnerable, insecure and the reason why they can easily lose the lands they are farming on to investors. Farmers are not able to undertake any long-term investments like growing trees because they lack secure land tenure. The insecurity of land tenure for farmers is one of the drivers of deforestation. Civic Response’s land governance campaign focuses on advocacy for a national land governance framework that is climate conscious and socially just.

Our programme activities can be grouped under four main approaches:

**Research**
We undertake research in various programme areas (forest governance, minerals governance, climate governance) to generate evidence for our advocacy campaigns.

**Capacity Building**
We organise training activities for our partner organisations in the forest sector in order to ensure consistency in the work we do. Our training activities also ensure that the community-based organisations we work with are able to identify and take up critical natural resource rights issues emanating from their own engagement with stakeholders at the local level. Our training activities also extend to local communities.

**Networking and Coalition Building**
Civic Response currently hosts Forest Watch Ghana, the foremost coalition of organisations and individuals in the forest sector working to promote community-based resource management. We also work with networks both
locally and internationally on resource rights issues. In Ghana, Civic Response is a member of the National Coalition on Mining (NCOM) and the Network for Women's Rights in Ghana (NETRiGHT). We also work with the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) on land tenure issues and FERN on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) issues. Civic Response is also a founding member of the Africa Community Rights Network (ACRN), a vehicle for community tenure rights campaign in Africa.

Advocacy
Advocacy is at the core of all our programmes. Civic Response campaigns for rights-based policy formulation and implementation in the areas of forests, climate change, and minerals. We believe that communities must be effectively engaged in making decisions about their land and other natural resources, which serve as their livelihood. They must also have an equitable share of the benefits that accrue from the exploitation of these resources.
MEET THE TEAM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kyeretwie Opoku

Dzodzi Tsikata

Eiblin Ni Chleirigh

Coleman Agyeyomah
OUR STAFF

Kafui Denkabe
Administrator

John Azumah Kebir
Accountant

Albert Katako
Head of Programme

Elvis Oppong-Mensah
Programme Officer

Jemima Opare-Henaku
Communications Officer
OUR ACTIVITIES & SUCCESSES IN THE YEAR

COVID-19 Impact

The year 2020 was an unusual year which saw new innovations in approaches to working to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. In the beginning of March 2020, the world started experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic which to date has infected over 120 million people globally and killing over 2 million people as at end of 2020. In Ghana, the number of people infected had increased from a modest figure of 6 people with no recorded death on 14th March 2020 to almost 55,000 infected people and about 330 deaths as at the end of 2020. Government’s response to the COVID-19 situation was varied; starting with a brief partial lockdown in Accra, Tema and Kumasi cities and passing of legislation which made respect for COVID-19 protocols enforceable. 2020 also happened to be an election year so in spite of the increasing number of people getting infected and increasing number of reported deaths, government went ahead with plans like registration of all Ghanaians for a new Voters Register and elections in December 2020. Staff of most organisations including Civic Response, started working from home during and after the lockdown. Physical meetings were prohibited, then relaxed with a determined maximum number of people in meetings. As a result, virtual meetings became the norm until the 3rd quarter of 2020 when some organisations resumed physical meetings with limited number of participants. Over 50% of the reported infected cases were in Accra, about 25% in the Ashanti Region and the remaining 25% spread across the rest of the country. This affected Civic Response’s community work at large; we could not go to the communities nor invite the community representatives to Accra for fear of putting them at risk.
Communities did not have the capacity to be part of virtual meetings. It was difficult to engage with our stakeholders and activities slowed down a great deal.

FOREST GOVERNANCE
Forest governance is a key advocacy area for Civic Response. Below is a summary of activities implemented in 2020 as part of Civic Response’s forest governance campaign:

1. Real Time Monitoring (RTM)
Prior to COVID-19, Civic Response was working in 75 communities in 15 Districts. Civic Response trained 375 community monitors in these communities to monitor and report forest infractions in real time using android phones to a web platform accessible to Forest Services Division (FSD) District and Regional Managers. Through the training provided by Civic Response and CSIFM platform members, FSD District Managers are required to develop and implement corrective actions to address verified reported infractions in a timely manner. The focus of action in 2020 was to increase the practice of verification of infractions with FSD District Managers which triggers development and enforcement of corrective actions. This forms part of the institutionalisation of RTM within the FSD monitoring processes. However, fieldwork had to be halted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to reduce the risk of infection. Civic Response used the period in producing 6 RTM documents for publication by RFUK. Civic Response also organised virtual training for CSO verifiers on updated versions of the apps used for reporting infractions.

RTM Impact documentation
As part of efforts to raise communities' awareness on long-term sustainability stakes in relation to forest resources, Civic Response did a video documentary of the ForestLink RTM deployment, use and impact.
The video highlighted:

- the importance of forests in Ghana, identified forest management challenges/gaps and discussed the significant role of forest fringed communities in sustainable resource management.
- Provided basic information about the Real Time Monitoring (RTM) project and how the technology is addressing forest management challenges such as illegal logging and other unsustainable activities through Real Time Monitoring;
- Discussed the significant role of RTM to forest protection and reducing deforestation and forest degradation;
- Showed how the technology is enabling communities to report forest infractions via SMS, videos and photos;
- Demonstrated Civic Response’s approach and work within target communities under the RTM project;
- Show some significant impacts of the project through visualization of data trends, observations and testimonies;
- Show how the project is supporting the achievement of targets under SDG 11, 13 and 15.

2. FLEGT VPA

Much of the focus in this area was on support to enable the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR) and the Forestry Commission (FC) to clear the final hurdle for Ghana to issue FLEGT licence. While physical meetings were limited, virtual meetings were held to ensure the processes for the submission of documents for ratification of extant leases to parliament were on course. In spite of efforts made by CSOs and Timber industry independently and jointly, including press conferences to draw public attention, the political leadership failed to submit the necessary documents to Parliament for ratification. CSOs took the decision to wait till the presidential and
Parliamentary elections were over so as to engage the new Minister for MLNR to continue the process.

At the international level, there are concerns about Chinese involvement in illegal natural exploitation in African countries including Ghana. In a policy tour organized by one of our international partners- Fern- in 2019, it was alleged that the response from Chinese politicians is that they were unaware of Chinese involvement in illegal natural resource exploitation in Africa. Civic Response therefore decided to document evidence of Chinese involvement in illegal natural resource exploitation to provide evidence for further discussions on this at the international level with the hope that it will enable the Chinese government bring its citizens operating in Africa to order. In Ghana, the case of the involvement of Aisha in illegal surface mining which led to her deportation from Ghana is well known. Involvement of Chinese in illegal Rosewood logging is also well known and documented by Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) USA. In 2020, Civic Response successfully made a video documentation of Chinese involvement in illegal Rosewood, surface mining and fisheries.

**SRA Impact documentation**
Civic Response has been documenting Social Responsibility Agreement (SRA) compliance by timber companies in 15 districts in the high forest zone. Civic Response followed up to a number of SRA beneficiary communities to collect evidence on what they did with the SRA funds they received. This has been documented in a video. Click the video link for details
https://youtu.be/pqHEY93IXSg
3. Collecting Data to Contribute to the Implementation of Ghana’s VPA Impact Monitoring Framework

Ghana signed the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the EU in 2009 to enhance trade in legal timber. The VPA implementation is expected to have impact on the livelihoods of communities and timber industry. However, how and the extent are not yet known. The VPA anticipated this and made provisions in Article 17 of Ghana’s VPA for a better understanding of the potential VPA impacts on the livelihoods of potentially affected local communities and timber industry including those engaged in illegal logging in order to minimise the possible adverse impacts of VPA implementation on affected stakeholder groups. The Forestry Commission (FC) identified 7 main areas for VPA Impact monitoring namely:

i. Livelihoods,
ii. Forest Conditions,
iii. Forest Governance,
iv. Market Performance,
v. Forest Management,
vi. Revenue Generation and

In supporting FC on this action, Civic Response and ResourceTrust Network are collecting baseline data on Livelihoods, VPA National Deliberative Processes and FC10 (ratio of volume of legal timber to volume of illegal timber including confiscated timber as “illegal” removals) from the formal timber sector. Under livelihoods, baseline data is to be collected under 6 indicators, namely:

i. L2 (income levels in forest fringe communities in forest window districts)
ii. L3 (amount of revenue delivered through the implementation of SRAs)
iii. L4 (ratio of revenue disbursed by OASL to funds spent by district assemblies on development projects).

iv. L5 (Farmers are compensated according to market values)

v. L8 (Number of registered employees in the formal timber industry in window forest districts)

vi. L10 (Average price of timber in local markets in selected window districts)

The VPA national deliberative processes indicators for which baseline data is to be collected are:

- NVP.1 Clear and relevant mandate to convene stakeholders
- NVP.2 The capacity (finance, human resource) to convene stakeholders
- NVP.3 (once convened) Inclusive engagement for agenda setting and debate
- NVP.4 Inclusion of all key stakeholders and interest group
- NVP.5 Legitimacy of representatives to speak for their constituencies
- NVP.6 Ability of representatives to consult /engage/lead constituencies as the shape of collective decisions emerge
- NVP.7 Quality (validity, shared-ness and relevance) of the evidence that stakeholders engage with and use to reach collective decisions
- NVP.8 Significance and importance of the outcomes of collective decisions made for stakeholder interests
- NVP.9 Number of policy and practice recommendations adopted

In this reporting period, Civic Response and ResourceTrust Network developed methodologies for baseline data collection for the indicators listed above. The data collection methodologies, processes, approaches, questionnaires, the respondents and the sample sizes were discussed with an expert team for approval.
4. Forest Services Division Training

Civic Response, with support from Rainforest Foundation UK, organised a training workshop for managers of Forestry Services Division (FSD) of the Forestry Commission of Ghana. The workshop took place on 15th and 16th October, 2019 at Noda Hotel in Kumasi, Ashanti Region. In attendance were 50 FSD officials comprising 46 males and 4 females. CSIFM has been in practice since 2017 when the Forestlink platform (a tool for community forest monitoring) was developed and perfected. In December 2019, Civic Response on behalf of the CSIFM platform organised a training on the Forestlink web platform for FSD regional managers, assistant regional managers, district and assistant district managers from the 17 districts in which CSIFM platform members are working. These are: Sefwi Wiawso, Juaboso, Asankragwa, Enchi, Bibiani, Nkawie, Juaso, Bekwai, New Edubiase, Kumawu, Dormaa Ahenkro, Goaso, Assin Fosu, Dunkwa, Kade, and Oda. The main objective of the training was to build capacity of FSD managers to be able to effectively utilise the ForestLink web platform.

Due to some concerns raised by the FSD managers, they were not enrolled onto the ForestLink platform as intended. When it was time for participants to be signed onto the web platform so they could explore it themselves and know how to use it, most of them resisted. They stated that they needed permission from the FC headquarters before that. Most also noted that once they are signed onto the platform, they would have to take responsibility for infractions that appear on it and take necessary corrective
actions. Their fear was that in a case where they are unable to take corrective actions, it would go against them. Given these concerns, the practical training session could not be done. It was proposed that issues raised must be sorted out before the managers are signed onto the platform. After those concerns raised had been addressed, it became necessary to retrain and enrol them onto the platform.

So in 2020, Civic Response on behalf of the CSIFM platform organised a workshop for the FSD managers in order to achieve this. As part of COVID-19 protocols, the meeting was organised in two instalments (in two days) to allow for social distancing. The FSD managers were signed unto the platform at the end of the workshop.

5. Support to 2012 Forest and Wildlife Policy Implementation

*Tree Tenure Policy framework and Planted trees registration*

Stakeholder discussions on the implementation of the Tree tenure policy framework stalled in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, Civic Response used the opportunity to document the tree tenure implementation processes so far. Unfortunately, stakeholder meetings on planted trees registration processes could not be finalized.
6. Guidelines for District Assemblies use of Timber Royalties

The 1992 Constitution makes provision for District Assemblies to receive 55% of stumpage fees (after FC and OASL have deducted their shares) as timber royalties. However, the Constitution has been silent on how District Assemblies should use the funds. Studies conducted by Civic Response have shown that District Assemblies spend the royalties on recurrent expenditures and other allowances but not on supporting forestry issues like CREMA, forest forums, environmental challenges and social infrastructure development for communities. Concerns have also been raised about the fact that District Assemblies are not accountable and transparent on the use of the timber royalties they receive. With this background, MLNR in conjunction with Civic Response facilitated the development of guidelines for District Assemblies use of timber royalties. The guideline was developed collaboratively with 116 District Assemblies who are beneficiaries of timber royalties. It provides for the following allocations to be made to project areas:

- 60% for Communities Infrastructural Development
- 10% for Forestry Resource Development
- 30% for Recurrent Expenditure

Five hundred (500) copies of the Guidelines have been printed for disbursement to District Assemblies for implementation.
Training on Guidelines to Ensure Transparent and Accountable Use of Forest Royalties by District Assemblies

Prior to the printing of the Guidelines document, Civic Response in collaboration with the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and MLGRD organised a series of zonal workshops in Accra and Kumasi (25th August – 3rd September, 2020) for district coordinating directors of district assemblies in Eastern, Western, Ashanti, Bono, Bono East and Ahafo regions. The workshops aimed at reviewing the draft guidelines for district assemblies’ use of timber royalties. Overall, the meeting was attended by 191 people comprising 21 females and 170.

This was with the support of the UK Department of International Development (DFID) through the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, and the Forest Governance, Market and Climate (FGMC) Programme.

The workshops were organised for district assemblies to review the draft guidelines for finalisation. The guidelines were developed in 2017 with a team from eight district assemblies and validated in 2018 by a cross-section of stakeholders. In November 2019, Civic Response made an official presentation of the draft Guidelines to the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR) for further discussions and understanding to enable MLNR engage MLGRD. The inputs made by MLNR enabled the review of how the 55% timber royalties received by the district assemblies should be allocated between communities’ infrastructure provision, district assemblies’ recurrent expenditure and environment.
7. Forest Watch Ghana

In 2020, Civic Response continued to serve as the secretariat of Forest Watch Ghana (FWG), the national campaign vehicle of civil society organisations and individuals committed to the rights of poor forest users.

In its capacity as the Coalition’s secretariat, Civic Response successfully organised the FWG annual general meeting and two general meetings, during which issues relevant to the forestry sector were discussed. Also members shared updates on their works.

During the September 2020 general meeting, members’ attention was drawn to the fact that people have started cutting down shea and dawadawa trees for fuel and so FWG must take action. The shea tree is typically a Savannah woodland tree species. Its natural habitat stretches over Africa south of the Savannah, from the eastern part of Senegal to the north of Uganda. In Ghana, shea trees grow in almost half of the country. It occurs over almost the entire area of Northern Ghana. The kernel oil derived from its fruits is known as the shea butter. Cutting down economic trees such as shea trees come with socio-cultural, economic, and environmental impacts. To curtail this, some recommendations were made including upscaling advocacy, resorting to alternative fuel wood and establishing a comprehensive policy of all economic trees in the savannah, shea and dawadawa inclusive.
CLIMATE GOVERNANCE

Climate Adaptation Finance Tracking

CARE Denmark and CARE Netherlands partnered Civic Response to implement the Climate Adaptation Finance tracking project in Ghana. The project was implemented in 5 other developing countries around the world namely, Uganda, Ethiopia, Nepal, Vietnam, and the Philippines.

In 2019, Civic Response, under the project, commissioned a study to understand if the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) donors’ reporting of climate finance for adaptation activities in the selected developing countries reflected reality on the ground; that is, no over reporting of funding takes place.

The study also tried to Investigate if the supported adaptation activities targeted the poorest and most climate vulnerable parts of the population and whether the activities were gender sensitive.

The project was commissioned in 2019 but was published in 2020.
Summary of Key findings:

- The breakdown of adaptation and mitigation finance received by Ghana was 43% and 57%, respectively, with 228 million USD and 331 million USD committed for adaptation and mitigation projects. Representing a significant imbalance between the objectives of 103 million USD over the 5-year analysis period. Thus climate finance received by Ghana predominantly targets mitigation.¹

- Only 35% of adaptation projects in 2016 have a Gender Equality marker and that this trend decreased from 2013-2016. The analysis also showed that 37% of adaptation finance received in Ghana had no consideration of gender equality.

- The IMF finds that Ghana is at high risk of entering into debt distress, yet around 28% of all climate finance commitments received in Ghana from 2013-2017 were in the form of loans. Providers of climate finance should increase their provisions of grant-based support for climate change in Ghana to prevent the negative impacts related to debt².

- Donor Transparency - Accurate and independent analyses of adaptation finance, and climate finance more generally, was hindered by a lack of willingness of

¹ A large portion of adaptation projects in Ghana are concentrated in the northern regions, and in the agricultural sector, which is a good indication of the vulnerability of the north and of the sector in question (Dazé and Echeverria, 2016).

² Research commissioned by UN Environment in 2018 found that climate impacts and risk significantly increase the cost of borrowing in vulnerable developing countries. In effect, this makes the interest repayments attached to climate-related loans more expensive to return. To finance climate activities in countries such as Ghana – vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and at high risk of debt distress as defined by the International Monetary Fund (IMF)² – through loans, jeopardises financial stability and the ability of public entities to invest in social infrastructure. Despite these risks, we estimate that from 2013-2017, 28% of total climate finance commitments received in Ghana, were provided as loans.
donors to make project documents public. This lack of transparency made it difficult for recipients of climate finance to determine if it suitably met national, regional and local needs and priorities.

- Projects which effectively considered the relevant context of climate vulnerabilities, were found to develop activities addressing the identified risks, vulnerabilities and impacts. Similarly, projects which fail to outline an adequate vulnerability context, often fail to meet the adaptation needs of those affected by the project’s activities.

- Donor agencies and local stakeholders need to develop detailed contexts regarding climate change risk, vulnerability and adaptation for projects planned in other parts of Ghana, as they currently exist for the north. It is recommended that Ghana intensifies its data and information collection and management, to help donors acquire the relevant data to inform where funds are directed, and how effectively to put those funds to use.

- The team estimated that of the 216 million USD of adaptation finance reported by donors across the 20 assessed projects, 31.7 million USD, or 15%, can be considered as over-reported. Over-reporting originates in projects provided by the EU (9.3 million USD), CIF (9.2 million USD), the WB (4.6 million USD), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (3.6 million USD) and the AfDB (3.6 million USD). This highlights the potential for inflated adaptation finance figures, and a significant level of inaccuracy in current donor reporting methods.

- Additional to the estimated USD 31.7 million of over-reported adaptation finance, the team also found that USD 26 million of climate finance has been over-reported by the International Finance Corporation, in its “Construction Policy and Administrative Management” project which involves the building of hotel, office and retail space in Accra. The team finds no evidence in the project’s
documentation, to any degree, to suggest that this project targets either climate change mitigation or adaptation.

- The team also found that USD 4.4 million of adaptation finance, primarily resulting from cross-cutting projects with both mitigation and adaptation objectives, was under-reported by donors. This finding highlights that mitigation and adaptation finance reported in cross-cutting projects, as estimated using current climate finance accounting methods, is a further source of inaccuracy in climate finance figures.

**LAND GOVERNANCE**

Civic Response’s land governance campaign is focused on advocacy for a national land governance framework that is climate-conscious and socially just. Civic Response, therefore, campaigns to ensure that the acquisition of land for commercial purposes does not affect the rights of vulnerable community members.

Civic Response over the years in collaboration with the Land Coalition in Ghana and other CSOs has been advocating for the passage of the land bill into Act. In 2020, the land bill was successfully passed into the land Act. Civic Response has started analysing the community rights issues in the new Land Act. The analysis which will be published in 2021 will be used to engage local communities to understand their rights in the new land Act.
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

Civic Response is still serving as the representative of Forest Watch Ghana - a Ghanaian Civil Society Platform - on SDGs which was formed in 2015. The platform serves as the vehicle to bring CSOs in Ghana together to coordinate initiatives for the achievement of the SDGs. As the convenor of the CSOs SDG platform on goal 15, Civic Response coordinated the input of SDG goal 15 by members in a survey conducted by the Ghana CSO SDG platform on the Impact of Government COVID-19 Measures on Citizenry.

As the convenor of goal 15, Civic Response organized a general meeting for the platform in 2020. The theme of the meeting was “Reconnecting to The Targets of SDG 15”.

Even though the SDG goal 15 has 12 targets and 15 Indicators, Ghana reported on only 1 indicator in June 2019 attributing it to lack of data. The CSOs SDG goal 15 meetings were used to discuss possible areas where Ghana can report on.
RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

In 2020, Civic Response undertook the following projects:

- Civic Response in conjunction with Rainforest Foundation UK (RFUK) is working together to enhance and consolidate the work on Civil Society-led independence forest monitoring began under the FAO-EU FLEGT Programme. Under this project, Civic Response will support about 50 communities to monitor and report forest infractions with the use of a mobile app. This project is being implemented in conjunction with the Forestry Commission as part of its efforts to ensure law enforcement and reduce illegalities.

- Civic Response in conjunction with Resource Trust is implementing the project entitled Collecting Data to Contribute to the Implementation of Ghana’s VPA Impact Monitoring Framework under the auspices of the FAO-EU FLEGT Programme. This project aims at collecting baseline information on identified data gaps in three VPA impact areas, namely: livelihoods, forest condition (FC 10 - volume of illegal timber and confiscated timber as “illegal removals”) and VPA stakeholder deliberative processes in order to assess the impact of the VPA implementation in these three areas.

- Civic Response in conjunction with Fern (based in Brussels and London) is working on Consolidating good governance, tackling illegalities in Ghana’s forest
sector. Under this project, Civic Response will be working with two sector ministries to develop guidelines for District Assemblies’ use of timber royalties; document timber companies’ compliance with forest sector laws, especially SRA fulfilment, and compensations for destroyed crops.

- Civic Response is also working with CARE Ghana under the Yensore programme which seeks to strengthen core partners’ capacity to influence government and private companies in the mining, oil & gas and forest sectors. The programme will deepen the focus on rights and access to productive resources and economic opportunities as well as community resilience and adaptation to climate change. The capacity of core partners will be strengthened to systematically collect and document evidence, rights abuses by extractive companies and other power holders.