

The FLEGT

Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade
Newsletter

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NGOs Mass Up Against Government

• Over Bauxite Mining In Atewa

Local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) continue to mobilize against government over its decision to allow the mining of bauxite in the Atewa Forest.

The initial exchanges between NGOs and government resulted in the Minister for Environment Science, Technology and Innovation, Dr. Frimpong Boateng, calling the leadership of the protesters 'galamseyers'.

Unperturbed by the Minister's attacks, the NGOs are now galvanizing support from international organizations to ensure that government reneges on its agenda of giving away the Atewa Forest for the mining of bauxite.

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Sefwi Wiawso Forestry Manager Under Attack

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KALAKPA COMMUNITY TO SUE GOVERNMENT IF...

Community leaders in Abutia, a town near the Kalakpa Resource Reserve in the Ho West District of the Volta Region of Ghana, have threatened to take the government to court if it fails to stop illegal logging in the reserve.

The enraged community members want government to take steps to protect the reserve from the activities of illegal loggers and poachers or revert the land to the original owners since it has not been up to task on



Legal Understanding Of Forest-Fringe Communities Broadened

Forest fringe communities' lack of knowledge on their rights and responsibilities with regard to the management of the forest, has led to the infringement of their legal entitlements as protectors of the forest.

Most fringe communities are said to be ignorant of the laws governing the forests, limiting them in assessing and demanding what is rightfully due them. For this reason they are unable to detect infringements on their rights.

Furthermore, they are also unaware of the responsibilities of other stakeholders such as the Forestry Commission of Ghana, and the timber companies and that also affects their benefits as custodians of the reserves.

To help address these problems, representatives from thirty-five forest communities in Kade, Akim Oda, Assin Fosu, Goaso, Nkawie, Jasikan and Dormaa were taken through a three-day training on legality awareness. This was to broaden their legal understanding on the rights and responsibilities of forest stakeholders and how they as community members can assert their rights.

The participants were taught the need for community participation in forest monitoring, logging operations in Ghana (areas of community interest), securing community interest in Social Responsibility Agreement (SRA) processes, compensation for destroyed crops in off-reserve, tree tenure, and climate change (REDD+ Safeguards).

After the training, satisfied participants indicated how the programme had enlightened them. They expressed the desire to re-train their fellow community members in the future.

Edmund Appiah from Amantia in the Akim Oda Forest District said, "The training has been very beneficial, because through this training we have understood a lot about the SRA. We have also got to know about the benefits that will accrue to us when we protect our forests."

"But for this programme, we wouldn't have known about Social Responsibility

Agreements," Appiah Emmanuel from Amakyekrom, Dormaa Forest District recounted.

The participants later developed action plans to guide their activities back in their communities.

In all, a total of 1,030 forest-fringe representatives have received legality awareness training from Civic Response since 2016. This year's training was held under the *Embedding community real time monitoring to sustain livelihoods and forests in Central and West Africa* project, which is being implemented by Civic Response with support from Rainforest Foundation UK.

Source: Civic Response



©CR Cross-section of Community representatives at the training

Stakeholders Meeting on MoCCPA Project Held

EcoCare Ghana has organized a second level district meeting for stakeholders in Juaboso and Atwima Nponua districts.

The meeting was organized to bring together all

relevant stakeholders at the district level to discuss the Monitoring of Cocoa and Forest Initiative through Participatory Approaches (MoCCPA) project, dueling on what has been done so far by government and the chocolate companies, what is left to be done and what stakeholders can contribute to the CFI implementation process.

Participants were drawn from the Forestry Commission, Ghana Cocoa Board (CocoBod), Licensed Buying Companies (LBC), Farmer-Base Organizations (FBO), Opinion Leaders from communities, Cocoa Farmers and District Assembly members.

They were updated on the

implementation process.

The forum was utilized to further create awareness on the commitments made by government and private sector (chocolates companies) in the cocoa and forest initiative (CFI), its relevance and what benefits it will render to cocoa farmers, cocoa buying companies and the nation as a whole.

It was also used to garner stakeholders support for the successful implementation of the CFI in Ghana.

Participants in both meetings raised some concerns, questions and suggestions about the implementation process of CFI and the MoCCPA project such as the seemingly lack of consultation of chiefs prior to the signing of the CFI, the need for CFI related activities like reforestation to be done across the nation and not only around the forest areas and the fast tracking of the passing of the law on tree to



New Wood Tracking Interface Portal To Ensure Private Sector Compliance -NDF

The Director of the Nature and Development Foundation (NDF), Mr. Mustapha Seidu, has noted that the new interface portal system introduced into the timber sector is key to ensuring that the private sector complies with laws governing the Wood Tracking System.

Mr. Mustapha Seidu, who was speaking at a training workshop in Kumasi to update participants on the system, said the system would ensure transparency, thus compelling the private sector to be more accountable in its dealings with the Forestry Commission and other stakeholders.

The participants, who were from legally recognized timber and wood processing companies in the Ashanti, Brong Ahafo and the Western North regions, were educated on the nature, functions and importance of the Interface Portal for a better appreciation and application.

The web-based industry portal is to serve as an interface between the Forestry Commission and private sector players in the timber and wood industry to engender greater transparency in

Ghana's Wood Tracking System.

Stakeholders believe its implementation will enable private sector players undertake automatic notification of corrective actions for legality compliance.

The participants welcomed the introduction of the interface portal since it will inure to the mutual benefit of both the timber industry players and the Forestry Commission, hoping that it would reduce to the barest minimum mistrust among the two key industry players to engender greater cooperation.



©NDF Director of NDF, Mustapha Seidu, addressing participants at the training workshop in Kumasi

As part of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement entered into by some African countries including Ghana, the country has since 2013 implemented the Wood Tracking System in phases to ensure that all timber and timber products entering the European or local markets are from legal sources to avoid or reduce undue exploitation of Ghana's forest resources.

However, in the course of the implementation, one challenge that has emerged is that the system design did not grant private players in the timber and wood industry access to the data, thereby giving rise to undue delays in the capture of producers' transaction data and eventually slowing their businesses.

The Interface was therefore developed to address the gap and the lack of transparency in the data management system of the Wood Tracking System (WTS), and at the same time allow the private sector timber and wood stakeholders to submit their legality data requirements directly into the System to bolster their confidence in the legality assurance system.

On the other hand, the Portal will enable the Forestry Commission to define and regulate the type of data users should enter into the system.

The Portal was developed with the support of the UKAID and the implementation is being facilitated by Nature and Development Foundation (NDF), an environment-oriented organization in partnership with the Forestry Commission of Ghana.

An official from the Timber Validation Department (TVD) of the Forestry Commission, Dr. Richard Gyimah, said the FLEGT system calls for transparency, therefore the need for the interface portal to help with reconciliation of data between the Commission and the data providers' to ensure forest resources management towards compliance.

Community Based Organisations Enlightened on Real Time Monitoring

Four Community Based Organisations (CBOs) in the Bia Juaboso and Sefwi Wiawso Forest Districts have been trained on how to verify the ForestLink Real Time Monitoring (RTM) platform.

The CBOs were taken through the verification process, accessing GPS coordinates with submitted alerts, report writing on the platform and other supporting documents that can be attached to such reports.

On financial reports, they were trained on receipt procedure and accounting report. They were also taught how to write technical reports in order to be able to deliver well drafted reports and write proposals for funding to address identifiable problems in their respective communities.

Participants were also trained to provide technical support to community monitors and help them in raising alerts and troubleshooting on the Real Time Monitoring (RTM) app for the monitors.

The ForestLink Real Time Monitoring platform,



©NDF CBO Verifiers going through training on the RMT platform

Independent Forest Monitoring (IFM) in Ghana.

The first tier involves community monitors who will submit alerts to the system through the Collectaur App installed on smartphones.

The second tier system has to do with the verification and authentication of the alerts by the Community Based Organizations (CBOs) then finally, controlled mission on the alerts are undertaken by Civil Societies, Verifiers and District Managers.

NGOs Mass Up Against Government Over Bauxite Mining in Atewa

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According to Daryl Bosu, Convener of the Coalition Against Mining in Atewa, besides seeking avenues for possible legal action against government, the Coalition is collaborating with other international Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), to dissuade potential investors from bidding for mining in that area.

Some of the organizations involved in the fight against mining in Atewa are A Rocha Ghana, Aluminum Stewardship, Friends of the Earth (FOE), the Global Environmental Institute (GEI) of China, among others.

Mr. Bosu, who made this known at a meeting of the Legal Working Group of NGOs in Forestry, said an international motion is being prepared to be submitted to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, IUCN, to protect Atewa from being exploited.

"We are expected to submit the motion by August

27 this year to make Atewa a no-go area for any exploration activities and we have got sponsors on board to push the agenda," Mr. Bosu disclosed.

Recounting actions taken so far, he said, there was a massive walk in Accra in June by various NGOs and CSOs that ended in Parliament.

The impact of the walk was so felt that the sector Minister came out with a statement that, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has been conducted on Atewa, a statement that was quickly rebutted by the Ghana Integrated Aluminum Development Corporation, a state institution, showing a sign of confusion at government's level.

Story by : Communication Team



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Study Endorses Procurement Policy For Legal Wood Supply



©NDF Participants at the Validation Workshop looking on as Madam Elizabeth Asantewaa Obeng explains the findings of the report

A study carried out by the Nature and Development Foundation (NDF) has come to the conclusion that, the Public Procurement Policy (PPP) on Timber and Timber Products is an appropriate vending (strategic development intervention) tool to encourage domestic use of legal wood.

The policy proposes that the Government of Ghana, as the largest single consumer through the Public Procurement Policy (PPP) on timber prohibit the use of illegal chainsaw timber for all its funded projects.

The study also posits that, to ensure the availability of legal wood on the domestic market, capacity building, institutional interventions, monitoring, enforcement, and availability of sawmill wood should be some of

the measures put in place.

It came out that, lumber remains the dominant timber product sold in major wood markets in Ghana and illegal chainsaw milling accounted for over 48% of the total number of lumber demand on the domestic market.

Forty-three percent (43%) of timber available on the domestic market, the study revealed, come from sawmill supply and individual customers were identified as the

biggest category of costumers to demand for legal wood.

Illegal chainsaw lumber was ranked by 31% of respondents as the most patronized lumber for government contracts.

The study noted that the implementation of the Public Procurement Policy (PPP) would potentially lead to control of market pricing of timber and ensure positive impact on wood on the domestic market and a progressive elimination of illegal chainsaw timber through

increasing the supply of legal timber to meet demand.

The study also looked at Free Zone (FZ) Act 1995, Act 504, the basis for the creation of a free zones enclave for the Free Zones companies, which are exempted from paying taxes, and are given other benefits.

There are more than twenty-five (25) timber companies operating under the Free Zones Act and Timber companies under the Free Zone are obliged to export 70% of total wood products.

The study recommended there should be a review on the Free Zone statutory requirements if there should be a halt in illegal logging in the country.

Source: Nature and Development Foundation



Stop Logging Mole National Park and Address Rosewood Related Illegalities

There is no doubt Ghanaians need closure on the alleged corruption-related issues in respect to rosewood exploitation and trade in Ghana.

Five state-announced bans and CITES Appendix II which took effect in 2016, seem to have no effect addressing the highly organized syndicate involved in the harvesting, transport, and trade of rosewood in Ghana.

Yes, there is some legal trade but clearly from the evidence adduced by the Environmental Investigation Agency in its July report and information from forestry sector researchers, clearly there are lots of abuses in the system.

Last year, Forest Watch asked for an independent investigation into the alleged involvement of the Chief Executive Officer of the Forestry Commission in galamsey related activities in some forest reserves in the country. The call was swept under the carpet and ignored.

We now have on our hands, another illegality riddled rosewood issue which is not going away until the state organizes a forensic audit of the trade and brings closure that sees the illegal trade in rosewood halted.

Is the Forestry Commission going to be a sitting duck, and just wish away the pressure and hope that Ghanaians will forget? Or will they take the bull by the horns and do the needful to halt the illegal and unsustainable trade in rosewood in Ghana once and for all?

CSOs have long called for deterrent and effective measures to address the illegalities within the rosewood trade without action. Now the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report has delved deep and opened up a can of worms.

Hopefully, the agencies that matter do not shirk their responsibility this time. That said, we ask "How committed is our state agencies to bring closure to these developments and ensure due diligence that will sanitize and ensure sustainable forest governance in this country?"

The urgency to halt this menace has become critical in that, now the trade has transformed, with the harvesting of rosewood happening in Ghana's Premier Protected Area, Mole National Park, despite a national ban being in



© A Rocha Ghana

place since March this year.

Already, some forest reserves in the northern region are yet to recover from the impact of rosewood harvesting. These developments cast doubts on the commitment of both political and state agencies to address vulnerabilities related to deforestation and the impacts of climate change, which is inseparable from sustainable forest management.

Mole National Park is seeking a listing under UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. Thanks to the European Union (EU), recent wildlife census commissioned and completed has removed a major hurdle, which stalled the process.

Going forward, we cannot let illegal rosewood logging activities to derail the process further. The Forestry Commission and the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources must show their dedication by immediately bringing to halt ongoing rosewood logging activities in the northern parts of the Mole National Park.

The recent regional dialogue on rosewood by ECOWAS states held in Accra, affirmed that, Ghana needs to do more to address the illegalities and unsustainable exploitation of rosewood in Ghana.

A species is under threat, eco-zones at risk, and critical environmental safeguards systems crucial for climate change adaptation and achieving sustainable development goals remains compromised, with the continuous unsustainable exploitation of rosewood.

For the sake of affirming the rule of law, and preserving the reputation and integrity of the state, the government needs to commission an independent investigation and ensure punitive measures are applied to whoever is found culpable without fear or favour.

Stakeholders Meeting on MoCCPA Project Held

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They called for the chiefs to mete out punishment to encroachers and illegal loggers in the communities, destool chiefs found to be aiding illegal loggers and put in place measures to ensure proper registration of tungya farmers.

Issues concerning land tenure were identified as the major threat to CFI implementation and stakeholders hope to get a better understanding of who owns what before they plant or nurture trees in their farms.

Stakeholders suggested more of such meetings to create the platform for deliberations and knowledge sharing.

The MoCCPA project which is being implemented with funding support from Rainforest Alliance and UTZ seeks to build capacity of stakeholders to effectively participate and also monitor the implementation process of the cocoa and forest initiative.

Source: EcoCare Ghana



Kalakpa Community to Sue Government If...

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"Any time government fails to utilize a land it acquires for its purpose, the people have the right to take it back", Mr. Eric Alifo, a member of the Abutia Development Union stated at a press conference in Accra.

"What we are saying is that, we are at a point where we are very determined and very anxious to take our land back. And if we think that the efforts we are making are not yielding any results, then we must go to court", Mr. Alifo, a legal practitioner, threatened.

Kalakpa Resource Reserve has been in the news lately over illegal logging of rosewood and other forest species, as well as poaching, a situation considered as endangering the survival of the Reserve and livelihood of surrounding communities.

The Ghana Wildlife Society (GWS) has also joined the community in calling on the Forestry Commission (FC) to act on reports of illegal logging in the Resource.

In a press release read by the Policy and Advocacy Officer, Mr. Faisal Elias, "The Ghana Wildlife Society (GWS) observes with disappointment the wanton illegality occurring in the Kalakpa Resource Reserve".

According to evidence gathered by the GWS, there have been massive felling of trees,



©GWS Representatives from Kalakpa Youth Club and the Abutia Development Union

especially rosewood, in the reserve. There is also evidence of an onsite sawmill operations in the reserve.

Mr. Elias further alleges that, "There are truckloads of timber, mostly rosewood, being transported out of the Kalakpa reserve for the

international market. Hundreds of logs are being smuggled out of the reserve by "unknown" persons, some through unofficial routes into neighbouring Togo."

He raised concerns over the fact that, *the logging activities happening in the Kalakpa nature reserve constitute an affront to the laws of Ghana, adding that, the environmental destruction caused by illegal logging creates negative perceptions of the timber industry in general.*

The Kalakpa Reserve was designated a wildlife protected area in 1975 pursuant to the Wildlife Reserves (Amendment) Regulations (L.I. 1022). It is home to over 270 species of birds as well as buffaloes, river-hogs and monkeys, and attracts thousands of tourists annually. It is one of the last examples of intact Guinean bush savannah and an important part of the nation's heritage.

GWS is accusing the Forestry Commission, which is the authority responsible for the management and conservation of the Kalakpa Reserve and other forest and wildlife areas, of falling short of their mandate as stated in the laws.

"A widespread failure by the Commission to effectively enforce forest and timber laws, meant that the forest management regulations enacted in Ghana have failed to live up to their promise to provide for sustainable and socially equitable forest use," the release noted.

The Society is calling on the various stakeholders of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) under Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT), to help enforce a ban placed by the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources on the harvesting and trade in rosewood.

Community Monitors Benefit From Mobile Application

Fifty persons from twelve forest districts across Ashanti, Eastern, Central, Western, Brong Ahafo, and Volta regions have been given android phones to assist them gather real time data on forest infractions and transfer them onto a central database.

Real Time Monitoring (RTM), is a system pioneered by The Rainforest Foundation (RF) – UK and identified as a viable community-level inclusiveness monitoring medium that is capable of addressing the challenge of forest illegalities.

Civic Response, in partnership with RFUK, developed an SMS mobile application platform called the forestlink to help in the real time data collection.

The representatives were given three days training to use the SMS mobile application to identify and transmit forest infringements to the central database in order to enhance monitoring in their respective communities.

The representatives, who double as forest



would enhance their monitoring works.

The group was trained under the *Embedding community real time monitoring to sustain livelihoods and forests in Central and West Africa* project, being implemented by Civic Response and supported by Rainforest Foundation UK.

Empowering Communities in Forestry Laws – New Report by ClientEarth



© pxhere

The right set of laws are crucial to ensure that 'community forests' are successful in halting deforestation, mitigating climate change and preserving biodiversity while also providing livelihoods for communities that depend on them, a new report from ClientEarth shows.

The report demonstrates how important the right legal framework is for creating successful community forest systems, which grant formal management rights of forests by and for local communities and indigenous people.

Drawing on two years of research from Nepal, the Philippines and Tanzania, 'Communities at the heart of forest management: How can the law make a difference' launched earlier this at a Congo Basin community forest conference in Yaoundé, Cameroon: <https://www.clientearth.org/empowering-communities-in-forestry-laws-key-to-stopping-global-deforestation/>.

ClientEarth law and policy advisor and report co-author Nathalie Faure said "Halting deforestation is crucial if humanity is to prevent

catastrophic climate change and biodiversity loss. Granting management rights to communities on forest land and creating 'community forests' has been proven to reduce deforestation.

"Drawing on the lessons from the Philippines, Nepal and Tanzania, we can see that the right laws are vital for community forests to be successful in providing livelihoods, while also preserving biodiversity and halting deforestation.

"These three countries prove that protecting forests and providing livelihoods is not a zero-sum game. So with inclusive laws, community forests can be a cost-effective opportunity to secure long-lasting environmental, social, economic and cultural benefits."

Forest-dependent communities have managed forests for generations and a growing number of countries worldwide are recognising how important this community role can be. This is a paradigm shift away from the approach of conceding forest areas to companies and states to either exploit or protect them.

But key to the success of community forests are strong, clear and inclusive laws to properly empower communities to use, manage and benefit from their forests.

Source: ClientEarth

Online Legal Hub for Forest Defenders Launched

Lawyers from ClientEarth have launched a new online resource to help forest defenders and managers everywhere to have access to the most up to date information about forestry laws: <https://logbook.clientearth.org/>

The free online hub will offer open access to unbiased legal information regarding the forestry sector, with information on forest governance and measures affecting commodities that currently rely on forest clearings, such as palm oil and soy.

Each year deforestation results in a loss of around 18 million acres of forests annually, the equivalent of 27 football fields every minute, and forest protection and management is vital to avoid catastrophic climate breakdown.

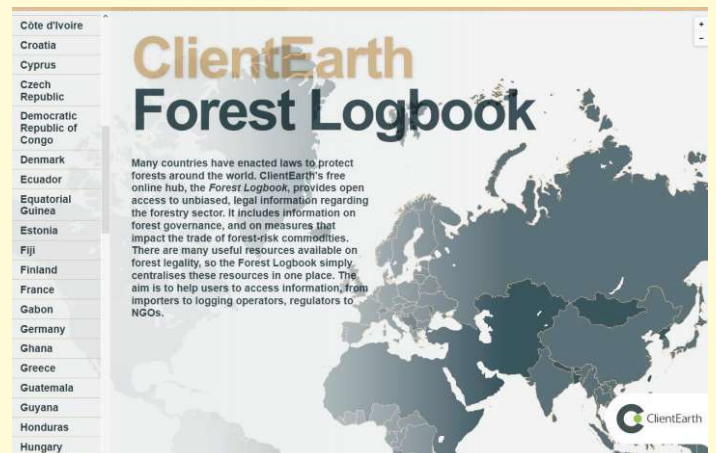
In response, ClientEarth has built the 'Forest Logbook' for all users – from lawyers, communities and NGOs to importers, logging operators and regulators – to have access to the most up to date legal information available.

ClientEarth climate and forest programme officer Heather Kingsley said "With so many laws across different jurisdictions, and different organisations providing resources on forest legality, we saw a need for a centralised hub where users could

"Forests are under such pressure everywhere, so providing easy, instant access to the most up to date information about vital forestry laws will help to empower anyone working to protect forests.

"From our experience, working in west and central Africa with the communities that rely on forests for survival and the lawyers defending them, as well as lawmakers themselves, we've found that forest protection and management is most effective where the rule of law is strongest.

"We envisage the Logbook will be a dynamic resource, designed to evolve over time. We encourage users to send us new or updated information that could be added to the logbook, to expand on the information available."



© ClientEarth

published by organisations and institutions. These resources are selected based on their impartiality or on their official status.

The online hub currently focuses on resources related to timber legality. In the future, it will be expanded to include more information on non-timber forest-risk commodities, such as palm oil and soy.

Source: ClientEarth

Sefwi Wiawso Forestry Manager Under Attack

The Nature and Development Foundation (NDF), a Non-Governmental Organization in forest management and legality, has expressed its objection to calls by members of the Sefwi Wiawso Constituency executives of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) for the removal from office of Nana Opoku Bosompim, District Forest Manager of the area.

In an interview, the Project Officer of NDF, Margaret Appiah, condemned the politicization of the forestry sector, saying the accusations leveled against Mr. Bosompim are baseless.

“How can you call for the removal of an officer just because he is not yielding to your calls to do things inconsistent with the laws governing the forestry sector?” Madam Appiah asked.

Some executives of the NPP in the Sefwi Wiawso constituency gave a June 28, 2019 ultimatum to their Regional Chairman to have Mr. Bosompim removed from office for, among others, causing the transfer of forest guards considered to be members of the party.

In their June 24, 2019 letter, signed by Mr. Michael Kwarteng, Chairman and Mr. Emmanuel Fosu Nkuah, 1st Vice Chairman,



© Metro FM Nana Opoku Bosompim, District Forest Manager, Sefwi Wiawso

together with other executives, the party alleged that Mr. Bosompim refused to do local sales of confiscated wood, blatantly disregarded 30% local sales and extorted money from carpenters over seizure of finished goods.

They threatened to lay down their tools for the party in support of the 'carpenters that brought us to power' if the party leadership failed to act before the ultimatum.

Madam Appiah explained that confiscated wood can only be auctioned under court authority, insisting that, “the Party in power does not dictate laid down wood management systems in favor of party members since forests are national but not party resources.”

She said Schedule One of the Timber Resource Management and Legality Licensing Regulations (L. I. 2254), stipulates that a Certificate of Purchase be issued by the court after the auction.

She denounced the recourse to political interference to bend and break forestry laws in favor of influential members of society and urged the leadership of the country to allow the legitimate actors to do their work.

Story by: Communication Team

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ABOUT NDF



The Nature & Development Foundation (NDF) was legally established in November 2013 in Ghana. It was born out of the long presence of WWF in Ghana and across the West African region as a non-profit organization, limited by guarantee.

The foundation has a mission to help build a society in which human development and nature conservation complement each other. It also believes that, ways exist to balance the needs of development with sustainable land uses that do not threaten forest biodiversity and forest dependent livelihoods of the region.

NDF understands that it must not limit itself to working only with those in the forest industries itself, but must engage more widely in multiple sectors and processes if it is to achieve its mission.

Though currently active in Ghana, it aims to increase its activities in Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia in the future. For more information visit www.ndfwestafrica.org Or call TEL: +233-302-518-710

ABOUT Ukaid



The Department for International Development (DFID) was set up in 1997 and leads the UK's work to end extreme poverty. DFID tackles global challenges including poverty and disease, mass migration, insecurity and conflict. It works to building a safer, healthier, more prosperous world for people in developing countries and in the UK too. It employs around 2,700 staff who work in offices in London, East Kilbride and globally.

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