The first set of data on forest illegalities has been successfully transmitted onto the real time forest monitoring platform from six forest communities in Nkawie and Goaso in the Ashanti and Brong Ahafo regions respectively.

The over 150 alerts of illegalities are to be used for further remodeling of the platform to boost its robust nature and ensure that it hosts a great deal of data that could be accessed by relevant stakeholders for law enforcement, advocacy and accountability purposes.

The platform has so far been tested with various data collected from community monitors in the project communities leading to a field verification mission by the project officers, Friends of the Earth (FOE) Ghana, and officials of the Forest Services Division (FSD).

With the multi stakeholder nature of the forestry sector, the need to get a robust database platform for hosting transmitted data on illegal activities is of great essence.

Officials of FOE say, the platform is near completion and would soon be shared with relevant stakeholders most especially the FSD for joint verification mission on alerts.

The pilot implementation of the “Community-Based Real Time Forest Monitoring” project in Ghana by Friends of the Earth-Ghana and its partners, the Rain Forest Foundation-UK, focuses on active participation and involvement of forest communities (13 communities across the Nkawie and Goaso Forest districts) in detecting and reporting forest illegalities in real time using mobile phone technology.

Through the project, there has been training of monitors and sensitization of stakeholders alongside the development of data recipient and transmission platform; a major pillar to the successful use of technology in forest monitoring.

The Community-Based Real Time Forest Monitoring project involves five basic stages, collection of data, transmission, storage, verification of the data and enforcement.

According to the project implementers, the first four steps which are dependent on technology, have been dully tested and have proven to be successful. They said, collaboration with the FSD in achieving the final stage is also highly advanced as it has led to the confiscation of some lumber and " >>> Continue on Page 4"
International Conference on Independent Forest Monitoring Held

A n international conference on Independent Forest Monitoring (IFM) has been held in Accra with the aim of exploring the potential for monitoring roles and responsibilities to civil society and communities.

The two-day conference was attended by participants from government, civil society, the private sector, forest-dependent communities, international organisations, academia, the media, and donor organisations from Ghana and beyond.

At the opening of the conference, the head of Programme at Civic Response, Mr. Albert Katako, expressed confidence that the conference would enable Ghana to learn from the experiences of international participants on Independent Forest Monitoring implementation.

Independent Forest Monitoring (IFM) has proven to be an effective tool for assessing and strengthening legal compliance in the forest sector. IFM has worked as a complementing factor to official law enforcement activities with high levels of objectivity, credibility, and wide stakeholder acceptability. It has the potential to improve transparency in the short-term while contributing to the development of sound legislative and regulatory framework for responsible forest management.

Some forms of IFM focus on the establishment of a partnership between an official ‘host institution’ responsible for oversight of the forest sector and an appointed monitoring organisation which could be mandated or be an official IFM. This has been the case in Cameroon for some years, and in the Republic of Congo and Democratic Republic of Congo. Local NGOs practicing IFM in these countries have negotiated a “mandate” with the forest authorities. The monitoring organisation’s principal activity is to conduct field investigations, observe the work of the official law enforcement agency, and to document illegal activities in the forest and related trade.

However, with the advent of FLEGT-VPAs, IFM has evolved to include monitoring activities that are undertaken by civil society either through a formal or informal role. The FLEGT-SPA process provides the vehicle for Ghana to improve upon the existing weak forest governance, which has been identified as one of the major causes of illegal logging in the country.

In his keynote address, the Deputy Minister for Lands and Natural Resources Mr. Benito Owusu-Bio, expressed concern that even though Ghana was the first country to sign the VPA, it has still not been able to export FLEGT-licensed timber. He noted that a lot of governance reforms had so far taken place to facilitate the issuance of FLEGT license in Ghana.

Mr. Owusu-Bio advised that the IFM should not be used as a post-FLEGT due diligence tool but rather a pre-FLEGT due diligence tool to ensure credibility of FLEGT licenses. “We intend that IFM be used as a tool that provides us with adequate feedback to continually improve forest management practice and the systems,” he said.

Non-State Actors’ Participation in FLEGT-VPA and REDD+ Processes to be Enhanced

W eak organizational and operational capacity of smaller Non State Actors (NSAs) to monitor FLEGT-SPA and REDD+ processes have been identified as some of the factors hindering NSA participation in FLEGT-VPA and REDD+ processes.

Speaking at the launch of a project jointly implemented by Nature and Development Foundation (NDF) and Tropenbos Ghana (TBG) in Accra, the Director of Tropenbos Ghana, Mr. K.S. Nketiah, further explained that poor access to platforms for participation, the inability to generate evidence-based information and inadequate sharing of information also form part of accompanying interferences that obstruct the contributions of NSAs.

It is for this reason that a four-year project funded by the European Union is targeted at smaller groups or organizations that have been barely engaged in both FLEGT-VPA and REDD+ processes such as, Small-Medium Forest Enterprises (SMFEs)—including community-based forest enterprises, local NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs), Traditional authorities, Women groups, Youth groups and umbrella organizations such as coalitions of Civil Society dependent communities.

The project is to enhance the capacities of these actors to monitor, advocate and engage with state Actors in FLEGT-VPA and REDD+ processes.

The Operations Director of NDF, Mr. Glen Asomaning, stated that, the multi country project will be implemented in Ghana, Cote D’Ivoire and Liberia concurrently. He said, the idea of this project is to develop interventions to reach out to beneficiaries of both processes (FLEGT & REDD+) with the same resources and ensure the success of REDD+ and FLEGT in the sub region.

The project will employ the Trainer of Trainers (TOT) approach where a group of NSAs would be given trainings to build their capacity and then given resources for them to act as trainers for other smaller NSAs. There will also be enhancement of capacity and information sharing amongst NSAs within their network and beyond.

On the status of FLEGT VPA in Ghana, the director of the Timber Validation Division of the Forestry Commission (FC)
No Mining In Protected Forests

– Hannah Owusu-Koranteng

The Deputy Executive Director of Wacam, a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in the mining sector, Mrs. Hannah Owusu-Koranteng, has proposed a halt to any form of mining activity in protected forest reserves.

Mrs. Owusu-Koranteng explained that protected forests such as Globally Significant Biodiversity Areas should under no circumstances be mined, adding that, “once a forest is exploited to an extent that community members can no longer pick snails or mushrooms from it, its integrity is lost forever.”

Mrs. Owusu-Koranteng made this comments when she gave her take on illegal mining in the country at a meeting of a cross section of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Accra, under the umbrella of the Legal Working Group (LWG), an initiative of ClientEarth, a group of environmental lawyers.

Mrs. Owusu-Koranteng said water sources from these protected forests that serve as drinking water for thousands of people, especially communities around the forests, are not only polluted by their change of colour but also by the heavy metallic equipment used during mining.

She added that CSOs and other institutions campaigning against galamsey (illegal mining), should be more concerned about the threat these heavy metallic apparatuses pose to the water bodies and its subsequent health hazards to citizens rather than the axe digging.

With regards to the livelihood of communities involved in galamsey, Mrs. Owusu-Koranteng said “Mining has not only disrupted the livelihoods of community members, but has also introduced violence into communities, which, the stoppage of galamsey is likely to heighten.”

She drew attention to the need for the advocacy message to delve into how operators can be absorbed into much more responsible and sustainable livelihood ventures. She said, “there are very probable Acts and policies that protects the mining sector and their activities but limited when it comes to the rights of communities”.

Mrs. Owusu-Koranteng called for more sustained legal provisions that would push in favour of the rights of communities and citizens, especially those in mining areas.

Supporting her argument, Mr. Albert Katakoh, head of programmes at Civic Response, said ‘galamsey’ was in the past practiced with simple tools like shovels and pickaxes, hence minimal environmental damage.

Green Livelihoods Alliance Programme to Rescue Ghana’s Forest Landscapes

The GLA Programme is the brain child of Tropenbos International (TBI), International Union for the Conservation of Nature, Netherlands (IUCN-NL), and the Milieudienst. Who in November 2015 entered into a strategic partnership agreement with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the aim of strengthening the role of CSOs in forest governance.

As a global programme being implemented in low to low-middle income countries, it will focus on CSOs in Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Indonesia, Liberia, Vietnam, The Philippines, Paraguay and other countries in this economic belt.

Under the programme, the capacity of CSOs in these countries would be strengthened to generate evidence-based information to support lobbying and advocacy to influence policy and practice at the local, national and international levels. This would promote inclusive growth and development to address prevailing inequities in natural resource governance.

Touching on the issue of inadequate staff at the FC, Mr. Atta Owusu, Eastern Regional Forestry Officer, said the commission was supposed to employ 100 forest guards to monitor Ghana’s forest reserves with each forest guard being responsible for cleaning, inspecting and patrolling a forest boundary.

Low remuneration, inadequate staff strength, lack of resources and logistical support are among the numerous problems plaguing Ghana’s Forestry Commission (FC) and undermining its efforts at patrolling the country’s forest reserves to protect it from the activities of chainsaw operators and illegal miners who have degraded its forests.

The resulting ad hoc exploitation of the country’s forest resources has decimated its forest landscapes, thus calling for the adoption of new measures to ensure their rehabilitation and sustainable exploitation.

It is in this regard that the Green Livelihoods Alliance (GLA) Programme was launched to the sustainable management and exploitation of Ghana’s forest landscapes.

Over 100 participants from Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working in the forestry sector, the Forest Services Division (FSD) of the FC, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), District Assemblies, the Juabeso Landscape Management Committee, Milieudefensie, and the media attended the launching ceremony for the programme which is being jointly implemented by Tropenbos Ghana, A Rocha Ghana and Friends of the Earth, Ghana.

The GLA Programme would shift focus in the management of forest landscapes from the current regime to empowering CSOs to promote an inclusive and sustainable governance of forest landscape. This would be by influencing policy at the governmental and corporate levels to support the restoration of degraded landscapes, reduce deforestation and also enhance the socio-economic wellbeing of local communities. This is a far cry from the current management regime under which local communities fall victim to the unscrupulous activities of exploitors of natural resources which impact negatively on their environment leading to the degradation of the landscape.
Forest Guards Trained on Identification of Pericopsis elata

The training is part of a project titled “improving sustainable Pericopsis elata conservation and trade regulation in Ghana” which NDF has been implementing on behalf of the government of Ghana with funding from the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO).

Participants at the training were enlightened on the characteristics of Pericopsis elata, how to protect it and stakeholders’ engagement in the conservation of the species in Ghana.

A curator at Ntim Gyakari Herbarium of the Research Management Support Centre (RMSC) of the Forestry Commission, Mr. Kwasi Kwarteng Boakye, explained that Pericopsis elata (kokrodua) on the market can be identified by observing its fine texture with straight grains. He said, the lumber of the species is slightly heavier, stronger, durable and harder than teak. But in the forest, the species can be identified by the characteristic nature of its bole which is speckled with large reddish patches and the thread-like stipels at the base of its leaflets.

On the economic extinction of the species, an assistant Manager of Ntim Gyakari Herbarium of RMSC, Mr. Adoma Owusu, said, the economic extinction of Pericopsis elata will be reduced if these ideas are being implemented; establishment of provenance trials, establishment of Pericopsis elata nurseries for planting up suitable lost habitats, intensity restrictions on harvesting of Pericopsis elata and the protection of areas identified with Pericopsis elata from wildfires.

Prof. S.K. Oppong, a Lecturer at the Faculty of Renewable Natural Resource Management at the Department of Wildlife and Range Management in K.N.U.S.T., mentioned that the creators of our forests are few but the terminators are more. He urged all to be creators of our forests by making credit schemes for Pericopsis production systems credible, institutionalizing agroforestry practices in all agricultural land-use systems, softening land acquisition procedures for Pericopsis plantations as well as intensifying research into the history of the species and why regeneration is lacking in its natural distribution area.

Over the years, unsustainable logging and commercial over-exploitation is said to have posed a threat to Pericopsis elata which ranks among the most valued hard tropical timber species across the globe. This resulted in the classification of the tree as endangered on the IUCN Red List in 2004, and subsequent listing on Appendix II of the Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). Pericopsis elata (Aframomus), even though listed as a CITES appendix II species (meaning trading in this species is not permitted without special authorization by the relevant authorities), continues to be a victim of over exploitation mainly for its precious hard wood.

Source: Nature & Development Foundation

NSAs’ Participation in FLEGT-VPA and REDD+

Continued from Page 2
Mr. Chris Beeko, said, “eight years of working and seeing much progress with NSAs, we are much closer to our destination than when we all first began.”

He was optimistic that, in 2016, the FC made tremendous progress on policy issues and technical elements including joint assessments which would lead to the issuance of FLEGT licenses soon, adding that, software for an end – to – end testing of legality has also been developed and once approved, will be available for use. With a sigh, Mr. Beeko said some political administration that plagued the smooth export of timber and subsequently FLEGT, is being regulated.

The Deputy Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, Mr. Benito Owusu Bio, launched the project and confirmed that a new forestry bill has been drafted to parliament proceedings for approval. According to him, when approved and adopted, the draft bill report will pave way for smooth export of legal timber.

Largely, participants commented on the need to establish a data collation centre or hub for all information that will be gathered from the project, filter and share with relevant communities, SMFE and CSOs in the concerned area.

Source: NDF & TGB

Real Time Forest Monitoring Platform Chalks Success

Continued from Front page
logs as well as caused the gradual reduction of illegal activities in the project communities.

Officials of Friends of the Earth Ghana are hopeful and looking forward to a wider scale of impact when the platform is ready.
Let’s Tackle Galamsey Well

The issue of small scale and illegal mining, popularly known as galamsey, has gained so much currency in the country these days that one wouldn’t be wrong if they named 2017 a Galamsey year.

The airwaves have been inundated with the news of the effects of the activities of small scale illegal miners causing havoc to forest reserves, arable land and more seriously water bodies. The situation looks very scary and truly deserves the attention being given to it.

The unfortunate killing of an Army Officer, Major Maxwell Mahama, at Denkyira Obuase gave a more serious perspective to the menace of galamsey, especially when it emerged that the gruesome killing of the soldier was galamsey-related.

The unfortunate incident would for a long time remain in the news but as it tapers off, the reality of fighting against galamsey, would be an issue to grasp with.

One still wonders why it has now become an attractive issue when it is a fact that, galamsey has been with us over the decades.

From the presidency through the airwaves and the newspapers, everybody is now talking about it but the question remains, “what are we doing about galamsey?”

A school of thought is proposing an outright ban on illegal and small scale mining to save the environment and water bodies from further destruction. In pushing this argument, some have even failed to make a distinction between small scale mining and illegal mining.

It is important to distinguish the two in order to wage a better campaign or war against this menace. Across the country are litigations of several small scale miners who are sustaining themselves using the same ‘genuine’ documents authorizing them to mine in some areas without the knowledge or consent of the local authorities or people.

There are also many small and illegal miners in the communities whose activities have been tacitly or actively endorsed by the chiefs and people who are direct beneficiaries or otherwise. This makes it difficult to stop the activity since you may be fighting an entire community. There are reports indicating that the unfortunate killing of Major Mahama was as a result of the community feeling unfairly treated by the Army, whom they accused of allegedly protecting a foreign mining firm whilst preventing them (the community) from doing galamsey.

In many instances, departmental and political heads are accused of being accomplices in the act with the documentary and political support they offer small scale and at times illegal miners, to bulldoze their way through community resistance to their activities.

In general, almost all the people condemning or calling for the end of galamsey have a “hand” in the act for which reason they all need to agree to bring it to an end. The task is by no means going to be an easy one.

The road to ending galamsey need to take a two-pronged approach- the political and the community approaches. There must be a strong political will to stop the menace and this can be done through strict enforcement of the laws on mining without fear or favour and irrespective of political affiliation.

people need to appreciate the fact that the little they get from the illegal miners is not commensurate with the effects left behind by these “galamseyers”. So they have an obligation to resist the temptation to allow them to operate in the areas without following laid down processes.

The general public and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) must continue to speak up against this environmental illegality, just as the Media Coalition against Galamsey is doing. If the issue merits the attention it is being given this year, then also deserves to be stopped with the same amount of enthusiasm.

On another note, the provision of alternative means of livelihood is very crucial in keeping the youth who were otherwise into galamsey in useful ventures to keep them away from the temptation of getting back to the practice. The regularization of galamsey can also help keep our environments safe from degradation.

Let’s all build a synergy against galamsey and save our environment. Email: mwiwotor@yahoo.com
Ghana CSOs to push government to FLEGT-VPA

From a two-week policy tour of Europe, visiting decision-makers working on the EU Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan in Belgium, Germany, France and the Netherlands, I was hoping to whip up interest in and support for FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) by showing Member State the successes and impacts that the Ghana VPA is already having and to raise the challenges that civil societies are having with the process.

Together with colleagues from Liberia and Cameroon, I sought to highlight the fact that FLEGT is a transformational approach to developmental aid which may be slow but could have far reaching effects.

We engaged with competent authorities for the EU Timber Regulation, government officials working on FLEGT, members of the trade federation and people working to use forests to help mitigate climate change. As much as we brought messages for them, so they taught us a lot too. There was also a strong shared understanding of our collective responsibility for dealing with the drivers of deforestation and in particular illegal logging. Addressing the trade in illegal timber requires high-level political commitment between governments and the private sector, and a stronger push from civil society in both the EU and timber producer countries.

As the tour continued I was sad to find that, enthusiasm for VPAs and interest in illegal logging was low despite the recent positive feedback from the FLEGT evaluation and the European Council. The issue seems to be that they measure the success or failure of VPAs according to the availability of FLEGT Licenses. This is over simplification of a complex process which ignores the incremental but important progress that VPAs keep delivering.

Does the fact that only Indonesia has FLEGT licensed timber mean that efforts by civil society in Ghana, Liberia, Cameroon and other countries is not relevant? Is it not worth anything that we have managed to push back corruption; challenge crooked politicians and bureaucrats; work with industry to ensure they meet their social obligations; reform laws driving deforestation and illegal logging; deliver benefits due to the local forest communities at the front line against illegal logging; and democratise the political space for forest decision making?

I should not have been surprised to find the waning enthusiasm as political will is also low in producer countries. It is one of the reasons for the slow pace of change in terms of improved capacity, development of the Legality Assurance Systems (LAS) and legal reform more widely.

This need to change and it is up to us, civil society, to take our advocacy a notch higher, to put systems back on the agenda, and generate the pressure to get the LAS going. Without civil society pressure, Southern governments will not push forward the legal and policy reforms with the required speed, but they need to own the VPA process, as the long-term impact of a VPA is of greater benefit to producer countries than the EU.

So to move forward, the EU needs to show they are still supportive of FLEGT and civil society needs to convince their governments that VPAs need to be a priority. We need to re-examine our vision of the governance changes we want the VPA to deliver and define the steps to ensure that VPAs are nationally owned and working.

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No Mining In Protected Forests

—Hannah Owusu-Koranteng

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However, “invasion of the ‘galamsey’ sector by foreign nationals and the introduction of heavy earth moving equipment changed the dynamics” he recounted.

Mr. Kato named rivers Birim, Densu, Pra, Ankobra and Tano as highly polluted with heavy metals and high level of turbidity. He said if treatment of these polluted water bodies was possible, the cost could be very high. He feared “chances are that Ghana may resort to importing drinking water”.

In March this year, the Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, Mr. John Peter Amewu, issued a three-week ultimatum to illegal miners to halt their activities or be prepared to face the full rigours of the law.

The challenge by the minister to the ‘galamseyers’ was followed by a massive media campaign which called for a national concern on the devastating damages caused by illegal miners to the country’s forests and water bodies.

By this, they suggested that the advocacy message should consider data on the contribution of forests to the GDP of the country, challenges the environment faces as a result of illegal mining, first-hand information or testimonials from communities on some benefits they are deprived of due to forest illegalities and suggestions on an alternative livelihood programme for communities such as the ‘one-distinct-one-factory’ policy.

CSOs were hopeful that once details of the message are well executed, communities would be discouraged from indulging in illegal mining. They also sought to ensure that small scale miners with genuine permits and operating in accordance with the laws are not
Polish government to cancel illegal logging or risk EU Court

The Polish government has 24 hours to justify to the European Commission its illegal logging in Białowieża Forest, or risk facing judges from the EU Court.

On April 27, the European Commission gave the Polish government a final warning over a threefold increase of logging in Europe's last primeval forest. The increase breaches EU nature laws and poses a huge risk to the UNESCO World Heritage site.

If the Polish government does not provide a satisfactory reply within the one-month deadline, it could be hauled before judges from the Court of Justice of the European Union. This is widely expected, because of its lack of cooperation since the Commission launched legal proceedings less than a year ago.

ClientEarth lawyer Agata Szafraniuk said, “a case before the EU Court of Justice would be hugely embarrassing for the Polish government. It would very likely end in significant fines, and taxpayers would ultimately have to pay the bill. In the meantime, Białowieża’s delicate ecosystem, home to hundreds of protected animals and plants, could be destroyed by illegal logging at any moment”.

He added that “the Commission must continue to hold the Polish government to account for flouting EU nature laws. This is the only way to defend Białowieża, and to show that environmental protection around Europe cannot be ignored on a whim.”

Legal proceedings over the illegal logging plan were launched in June 2016, when the Commission issued a letter of formal notice against the Polish government following a complaint from ClientEarth and six other campaign groups. It has fast-tracked the process at every stage, showing the severity of the legal breach and imminent threat to Europe’s oldest forest.

UNESCO has also called on the Polish government to cancel its logging plan, saying Białowieża should be allowed to grow with minimal intervention.

Source: ClientEarth

Knowledge of Law Empowers Communities Negotiating With Timber Companies

Defenders to develop the social agreement negotiation guide.

ClientEarth forests law and policy advisor Jozef Weyns said “this guide will be a definitive tool for communities who are entitled to a share of the benefits from timber operations in Liberia. In the past, vague and incomplete social agreements have frustrated communities who have felt that they have been left with too little by logging.

“The guide will empower communities in their negotiations and improve the agreements, which will reduce the chances of conflicts and illegal harvesting of timber. It will also help people improve their legal skills and confidence and connect forests, people and the law.

Social agreements must contain strong and enforceable measures if they are to truly benefit forest communities. The community members who negotiate the agreements need the information, knowledge and skills to enter these discussions to be able to represent their communities.

Counsellor Negbalee Warner from HPA said “communities are playing an increasingly important role in the management of forests.

The guide will give people the information and legal clarity they need to start negotiations in the best position possible.

ClientEarth has been working with partners in Liberia on forest law reform since 2015, and has been engaged in this process for many years.”
Continued from Page 3

However, only 70 forest guards have been employed at the moment. The forest guards also have the additional responsibility of monitoring portions of off-reserve areas for illicit activities in the forest such as the cultivation of hard drugs. The gap of 30 forest guards means that a large percentage of forest reserves and off-reserve areas remain unmonitored, making it easy for galamsey operators and illegal miners to trespass on them.

In addition, the forest guards at post are poorly remunerated, and also lack the necessary resources to enable them carry out their duties effectively. The combination of low remuneration and motivation makes them easy prey to illegal miners and chainsaw operators who are able to buy their way into the forest by offering them bribes far in excess of their monthly or even yearly remuneration.

Furthermore, the FC lacks the necessary resources such as vehicles, motorbikes and even bicycles to patrol and, when necessary, chase and arrest intruders in the forest. And even when they succeed in arresting intruders, they still face the problem of hiring lawyers to represent them in court which, in most cases, is delayed as a result of lack of funds. While the FC is also charged with establishing tree plantations, their maintenance is hampered by the unavailability of funds so most of these plantations which do not benefit from silvicultural practices, are choked with weeds and easily fall prey to bushfires.

Mr Owusu welcomed the establishment of the GLA Programme in Ghana as an opportunity for CSOs and the FC to work collaboratively towards ensuring the restoration and sustainable use of Ghana’s forest resources. Source: Tropenbos Ghana

Int. Confab on IFM Held

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The Programme Officer of European Union Delegation to Ghana, Christopher Ackon, also noted in a speech that the issuance of FLEGT licenses would not bring to a close the whole work of the VPA implementation.

“It however heralds the beginning of another important phase, the monitoring phase, to ensure that the system is robust enough and is working perfectly,” he added.

The two-day conference was held under the Civil Society-led Independent Forest Monitoring (CSIFM) in Ghana Project, which is being implemented by Civic Response through the FAO FLEGT Programme with funding from European Union, the Swedish International Cooperation Agency and the United Kingdom Department of International Development. The conference was also supported by CIDT-University of Wolverhampton, Resource Extraction Monitoring (REM) and the Forestry Commission of Ghana.

Source: Civic Response

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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 ClientEarth

“ClientEarth is a public interest environmental law organisation, founded in 2007. Their work combines legal approaches with scientific and policy analysis to create practical solutions to the most pressing environmental problems (www.clientearth.org).

ClientEarth’s Climate & Forests programme works to influence the development, implementation and enforcement of legal frameworks and policies. They seek to improve the operation and effectiveness of law in the EU and in non-EU focus countries with a view to minimising the impacts of agriculture, extractive industries and illegal logging on forests. They focus both on the substance and procedure of laws so that they become effective and equitable mechanisms to protect forests. Improved use and management of forests can contribute to a reduction in inequality and to tackling poverty, particularly in forest dependent communities.

Since 2012, ClientEarth has been working with national lawyers in Ghana, Gabon and the Republic of Congo to empower civil society organisations (CSOs) to take part in processes of law reform and implementation. Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) contribute to these processes and are therefore an integral part of the focus of their work in country. This body of work is by the UK government under a DFID-FGMC (Forest Governance, Markets and Climate) grant.”

ABOUT FOE-GHANA

Friends of the Earth (FoE) is a member of Friends of the Earth International, a federation of 76 autonomous environmental organizations from all over the world.

Our vision is that Ghana should become an ecologically and economically sustainable society based on equitable distribution of resources to both men and women and the highest achievable standard of living for all. We promote solutions that will help to create environmentally sustainable and socially just societies.

Our mission is to work with others to build a movement for environmental change that spans from local to global levels. Our core activities cover natural resource management, policy and legislation issues including forest and biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, sustainable land management, extractive sector advocacy, watershed conservation management, livelihoods support and women and youth empowerment.