

# The Flegt

Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade

## Newsletter

| 17th Edition, April, 2020 |



### NDF TO LAUNCH LEGAL TIMBER PURCHASING MOBILE APP

The difficulty in finding vendors who trade in legal timber is about to be a thing of the past as a mobile application to host only legal lumber vendors and link them up with prospective buyers, is being developed by the Nature and Development Foundation (NDF).

Easing the difficulty associated with purchasing of legal wood by buyers on  
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<https://www.cifor.org>

## Ban Charcoal Production ...To Save Shea Trees

A member of Forest Watch Ghana (FWG), James Saaka, has called for a ban on commercial charcoal production in Ghana.

shea trees which are felled for charcoal production.

Speaking at the just ended FWG Annual General Meeting (AGM), Mr. Saaka noted

This, according to him, is in order to save

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## Farmers accuse extension officers of wrong chemical application

Some community members under the Monitoring Cocoa and Forest Initiative Commitments through Participatory Approach (MoCCPA) project have expressed their disappointment at the way Extension officers teach and execute their duties, accusing them of being unqualified for the job.

community members from Adwumam, Nkwanta, Abrokofe, Seniegyakrom in the Western North region, Juaboso District and Akantanso, Chirayaaso, Bofaaso in the Ashanti Region (Atwima mponua district) recounted that, some extension officers wrongfully advised farmers in fertilizer and pesticides



Interacting with a team from Ecocare Ghana led by the country Director for Rainforest Alliance/UTZ Mr. Kwame Osei,

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## NDF TO LAUNCH LEGAL TIMBER PURCHASING MOBILE APP



<https://www.cncbs.co.uk>

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the domestic market is the aim for the development of this mobile application.

When developed and launched, buyers will just have the app installed on their mobile phones and with just a click, the buyer would find all legal timber vendors listed on the app to choose and trade with.

Illegal wood has become easily accessible and dominant on the domestic market of Ghana for consumers because purchasing legal wood has been a worry to the public. People find it difficult

to know vendors who trade in legal timber, which gives them no option than to engage in buying illegal wood for their works.

Several meetings for key stakeholders have been organised for the vendors and government officials in charge of ensuring legality (The Timber Industry Development Division-TIDD) to make input into the development of the App.

At one of the stakeholder consultations, stakeholders concluded that, development of the App was a smart move by the NDF, adding that, if developed well, the App will greatly promote trade in legal timber and go a long way to help the timber industry.

This activity is funded by the UKAid under the project "Building Capacities of Small and Medium Forest Enterprises (SMFs) in Ghana and Liberia to Supply and Trade in Legal Timber".

*Source: Nature & Development Foundation*

## Civic Response Embarks on RTM Radio Sensitization Exercise

Civic Response, a Civil Society Organization (CSO), has embarked on a two-month radio sensitization exercise across the country on Real Time Monitoring (RTM).

The exercise involves educating forest fringe communities about the role they have to play in forest management and monitoring.

Although progress has been made in forest management in Ghana through the development of the Ghana Wood Tracking System (GWTS) under VPA, the Ghana Timber Transparency Portal on the GWTS, as well as legislative reforms to enhance forest law enforcement, transparency and accountability, there is still the need for robust monitoring of forest activities as illegalities are still pervasive.

Effective monitoring requires the involvement of communities whose main source of financial benefit from forest management is timber companies' compliance with Social Responsibility Agreements (SRAs).

However, some logging companies often fail to fulfil their social responsibilities to communities within the stipulated 5 kilometre radius of their logging operations, or fail to negotiate and pay farmers compensations for crops destroyed during logging. Logs are often transported outside the legally acceptable period posing risks to communities.



© CR Raymond Ennin, Civic Response Local Partner (Right) and Nana Poku Bosompem, FSD District Manager (Left) answering questions at Uniik FM, Sefwi Wiawso.

In recent times, illegal mining in forest reserves has escalated, a major threat to climate change impacts making communities more vulnerable to the risks of climate change.

Some of the illegalities appear to happen on the blind side of the Forestry Commission (FC), hence the need for CSOs and communities' involvement in forest monitoring.

As a result, Civic Response, in collaboration with Rainforest Foundation UK (RFUK) is implementing the *Embedding community real time monitoring to sustain livelihoods and forests in Central and West Africa* project.

This project, funded by UKAid and DfID, deploys a mobile application, *Forestlink*, for Real Time Monitoring (RTM), which enables communities to report forest infractions via SMS, videos and photos.

This radio sensitization exercise aims at creating awareness about RTM against the backdrop that the forest monitoring app (*Forestlink*) will soon be made available for everyone to access on Google Play Store and Apple Store.

The ultimate goal is to improve forest governance through more effective participation of forest communities and civil society, thereby improving rights and livelihoods for forest people and promoting

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# Farmers accuse extension officers of wrong chemical application

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application, leading to terrible effects on their farms and produce.

“Some fertilizers and pesticides provided by Codapec some time ago destroyed (burnt the leaf of the cocoa) some farms of farmers in the Adwumam community; an example of the supposed chemical is 'bisaf'. This incident was reported to the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA), which had the product banned,” one of them revealed.

They, therefore, suggested that Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG) bring out a list of recommended fertilizers and pesticides for farmers to apply on their farms, to forestall recurrence of such incidences.

For his part, Mr. Kwame Osei from Rainforest Alliance/UTZ advised cocoa



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farmers to form cooperatives in their communities in order to be recognized and receive farm inputs as Cocobod has issued

a directive to that effect.

The purpose of the visit was to assess the work done so far by the EcoCare Ghana on the MoCCPA project and how far the Cocoa and Forest Initiative implementation process is unfolding in the project communities.

In each community visited, the community members gathered for discussions and shared some implementations from the Cocoa and Forest Initiative which has been done so far after the MoCCPA project was initiated.

All the communities visited, contributed immensely to the issues discussed and raised various concerns on their work.

The visit lasted four (4) days and in all, six (6) communities were visited and their capacity built. Rainforest Alliance/UTZ is the funding partner for the MoCCPA project.

*Story by EcoCare Ghana*

# Ghana's Timber Sector Gears Up For Eu, Other Markets

The private sector in the timber industry of Ghana, is gearing up to capitalize on the vast opportunities the European Union (EU) market presents with the setting up of a Message House to market its products.

The Message House, a communication strategy being developed by the private sector, civil society and government, is to communicate what Ghana has been able to do to meet the criteria required by the EU for wood and wood products under the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) - Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) signed over a decade ago.

A six months project titled “Development of private sector focused messages for Ghana's FLEGT license communication strategy”, funded by the FAO-EU FLEGT Programme, has been carried out by the Kumasi Wood Cluster (KWC) and the Ghana Timber Millers Organization (GTMO).

The project was to make available facts and figures to support messages to be carried by Ghana's overall FLEGT licensing communication strategy.

When ready, exporters of timber and timber



<https://ghananewsonline.com.gh>

products would have to meet certain criteria for FLEGT licenses to be issued on the products they export to Europe.

With this new communication strategy, licenses issued under the FLEGT-VPA will be worthwhile.

As part of the project activities, a photo catalogue (Ghana Wood Digest) of

exported timber products, company facilities and national infrastructure have been designed.

KWC and GTMO organized a one-day closeout workshop at Kumasi to update stakeholders on messages and the facts that support the messages, which the private sector would advance to promote

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## Anti-Mining In Atewa Forest Campaigners Head To Court

Campaigners against mining in the Atewa Forest Reserve, have taken their battle a notch higher by notifying government of their intention to file a case against its plans to allow bauxite mining in the natural reserve.

National Director of A Rocha, Ghana, Dr. Seth Appiah-Kubi, disclosed at a meeting of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Accra that, government had already been served notice and the 30-day ultimatum had elapsed. "Lawyers are working on filing the case."

Renowned lawyer Martin Kpebu, with support from Taylor Crabbe and other legal luminaries, is leading the process but more technical expertise would be needed to ensure victory, he revealed.

Though he couldn't tell how long the legal battle would take, he remains optimistic it would make significant impact, especially



<https://www.news.mongabay.com>

serving as a moral check on prospective companies and interested investors.

He said the campaign had generated a lot of

interest across the country and the notice of the case had attracted the biggest media attention in recent times.

"The campaign has generated a lot of media interest and become the biggest media frenzy; we receive a lot of calls from all over the country" he stated, adding that there was the need for more legal actions to be employed to deter government from going ahead with its plans that are considered detrimental to the environment.

Reeling under pressure from the campaigners, the Ghana Integrated Aluminum Development Corporation (GIADEC), the legally-mandated state institution overseeing the bauxite agenda has started taking steps to meet CSOs but the approach, according to Dr. Appiah-Kubi, was wrong.

The company claimed it had been involved in community engagements, but the CSOs have detected that they were only engaging the chiefs instead of the community members.

Dr. Appiah-Kubi expressed his disappointment at the GIADEC-led prospecting exercise that destroyed some 101 hectares of the Atewa forest without any assessment- something CSOs see as inconsistent with good practice.

On the possibility of CSOs getting an injunction from the court to stop further actions in the reserve, Lawyer Akapame intervened and explained that, that could only be possible if a separate application is filed praying the court to place an injunction on activities pending the determination of the case.

With this new approach, the CSOs are hoping to save the Atewa Forest Reserve from exploitation. They argue that the ecological benefits from the reserve make it imperative for government to preserve it from exploitation.

## Ghana's Timber Sector Gears Up For Eu, Other Markets



<https://theconstructor.org>

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and communicate the essence of Ghana's legal timber on the European Market when licensing is ready.

Contributing to the workshop discussions, the Chief Executive of the Domestic Lumber Traders Association (DOLTA), Mr. Kofi Afreh Boakye, said the Message House, an innovative marketing communication tool, "would help the private sector market itself and assure the international community, especially the EU, that Ghana has met the sustainability and legality requirements for wood to be exported."

He also disclosed that in the past, a miscommunication of these processes and the absence of information on

sustainability, seemed to have caused doubt among majority of EU countries over whether Ghana's timber products could be sustainable.

"The Europeans are more concerned about how sustainable Ghana's legal wood system is so this is a platform where we can tell the whole world that we are not only interested in legality but also sustainability," he clarified.

A former Deputy Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, Mr. Adjei Yeboah, said "it is very important that our messages are strong enough. We are not just talking about an industry. It is not cosmetic. We know by going by it, we are going to benefit members of our fringe communities. It is good that we are doing this and I pray that we would be able to articulate it well to the international community".

He debunked assertions that Ghana was not doing things right in the past, necessitating the creation of the Message House, revealing that initially they didn't place much emphasis on communicating sustainability.

Mr. Gustav Adu, the Executive Director of KWC recommended strongly to the Forest Industries Association of Ghana (FIAG) and the companies to use the communication strategy to promote FLEGT licensed timber products.

*Story by Kumasi Wood Cluster*

*Story by Communication Team*

# High Volume Timber Consumers schooled on emerging timber species

Members of professional bodies and associations making up the Ghana Chamber of Construction Industry, GhCCI, have been successfully taken through a one-day- training workshop on how to source legal timber.

They were also informed about the technical properties, specifications and standards that several lesser known timber species that abound on the market and are commonly used, must satisfy as constructional material.

GhCCI comprises Architects, Civil Engineers, Surveyors, Planners, Road Contractors, Building Contractors, Real Estate Developers and Artisans. These bodies are High Volume Timber Consumers (HVTC) and work on most government projects.

The workshop was organized by the Kumasi Wood Cluster (KWC), with sponsorship from the UK Department for International Development (DfID) under activities of the Forest Governance, Market and Climate Programme – FGMC.

Mr. John Allotey, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the Forestry Commission (FC) of Ghana, who chaired the workshop, expressed his excitement and support for this proactive initiative by KWC to bridge



©KWC Cross section of Participants at the Workshop

the gap between industry and research.

He stated that as the mandated institution with oversight responsibility over Ghana's forest sector, the FC is “committed to ensuring sustainability of Ghana's forest resources and facilitating the availability of legal wood and wood products to drive the country's development and ensure the sustenance of livelihoods of people who directly and indirectly depend on the sector”.

He further indicated that the FC is putting in place several measures to “ensure availability and procurement of legal wood

on the local market for public projects.

Among such measures include the Public Procurement Policy for Wood, creation of depots where contractors can go to buy legal timber in adequate quantities and encourage the use of lesser known timber species, among others”.

The Executive Director for KWC, Mr. Gustav Adu, walked participants through the critical processes and protocols that timber consumers need to know in order to conduct proper due diligence before purchasing timber from the local market. This was to ensure that the consumers are buying only legal timber.

The resource persons helped participants to understand the forest status and scarcity levels of certain timber species and how emerging timber species such as Yaya, Wawabima, Okoro, Senya, Dahoma, Akasaa among other species are equally fit for construction purposes due to their comparative quality in properties such as movement in service, strength, processing, durability, treatability and utilization.

A compilation of the wood species will be published for the HVTC and the general public as a resource document.

*Story by Kumasi Wood Cluster*

## GHANA RESTRUCTURES FLEGT COMMUNICATION TO EU

Ghana is restructuring its communication to the European Union (EU) following the latter's recent rejection of its Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) licensing processes.

According to Mr. Obed Addai-Owusu, Managing Campaigner of Ecocare Ghana and a member of the Communication team of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the sector, Ghana and Indonesia would be embarking on a Joint Communication Tour of Europe to present their strategies with the view to erasing misconceptions that led to the rejection of their FLEGT regime.

Mr. Addai-Owusu, who was speaking at this year's first meeting of the forest sector Legal Working Group (LWG) in Accra, said, “We are training key communicators

from all the stakeholders in the sector to communicate the technical issues on FLEGT to the European Union as part of the tour scheduled for September or October this year”.

He disclosed that the issues raised by the EU had already been taken care of, but the missing link was in the way it was communicated; the communication team would, therefore, seek to present issues that were misrepresented.

The main issues raised bordered on Gender-inclusiveness, Environmental sustainability and High Carbon Stock (HCS) and High Carbon Value (HCV).

He stated that Ghana had all those areas



covered in its FLEGT system, so the responsibility of the communication team would be to communicate them

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## EU-NSA Project Partner Countries Meet To Review Progress

As the European Union Non- State Actors Project enters its 4<sup>th</sup> and final year of implementation, partner countries of Liberia, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire have all met to review what worked, what did not work, and how what worked well can be factored into ongoing national sustainable forest programs in the three West African countries.

The meeting, which was held in Grand Bassam City, Cote d'Ivoire, brought together 12 participants from the three West Africa countries, including two international experts.

An International Expert in forest governance, David Young and International Project Coordinator, Henk Hoefsloot of Tropenbos International (TBI) served as Facilitators.

The purpose of the 3day meeting was for the countries to jointly work out and understand a methodology for developing "most significant change stories" of the project, share experiences and learn from each other in order to take inspiration for the final year.

The Liberian team presented 3 outcomes which include, increased evidence gathering and advocacy on governance in the forestry sector through Forest Hour

Radio Program and Liberia Forest Media Watch (LFMW), increased demand for compliance and accountability by forest communities, and government of Liberia through the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) now taking some corrective measures based on communities' and CSOs demands and information coming out of the media.

During the meeting, the Ghanaian team reported that, a platform of CSOs is successfully working together to drive change in forest governance.

As a result, communities are now helping to protect their forests against illegal loggers and bushfires, and government showing some commitment to responding to independent evidence of infractions in the forestry sector gathered from Civil Society Independent led Forest Monitoring Real Time Monitoring Platform (CS-IFM RTM).

While the Ivorians reported that their government has adopted a new forest code and has developed implementation texts through a multi stakeholder participatory process, with civil society and communities actively influencing final texts.

Small and medium-sized forestry companies, carpenters and women charcoal producers and sellers are now organized

and recognized and demanding rights. A Forest media governance network is established and is now actively increasing the information dissemination on VPA-FLEGT and REDD+ in the country.

The three countries presented their outcomes taking into consideration evidence, contribution, sustainability and breadth of the achievements. The participants jointly noted that each of the three countries has been driven by the partnerships they have established under specific contexts which evolved and were driven by the specific interests and strengths of each project team.

The European Union funded project "Strengthening the capacity of non-state actors (NSA) to improve FLEGT-VPA and REDD+ processes in Western Africa" under the leadership of Tropenbos International based in The Netherlands, is being implemented by the Volunteers To Support International Efforts In Developing Africa (VOSIEDA) in Liberia, Nature and Development Foundation (NDF) Ghana and Tropenbos Ghana and National Working Group for Sustainable Forest Management and Certification (GNT-CI) in Cote d'Ivoire.

*Written by Paul Kanneh, VOSEIDA, Liberia*

## Civic Response Embarks on RTM Radio Sensitization Exercise



© CR Peter Ossei-Wusu, Civic Response Local Partner (Right), sensitising community members on forest management at Kings Radio in Konongo.

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stronger environmental sustainability.

The exercise was carried out on seven radio stations in seven districts across the country. Issues explored include the current state of Ghana's forests, causes and effects of forest destructions, forest laws, social responsibility agreements and compensation, real time forest monitoring

and why Ghanaians should be interested in RTM.

Listeners expressed great enthusiasm about the exercise given that it has enlightened them on issues they were otherwise unaware of. Similarly, Forestry Services Division (FSD) of the Forestry Commission (FC) at the district levels has shown keen interest and support for the programme.

At Sefwi Wiawso, the FSD district manager, Nana Poku Bosompem, noted that the exercise was very good as it complemented their efforts. He personally contributed to the exercise by being in the studio to answer questions boggling the minds of callers.

*Story By: Civic Response*

## GHANA RESTRUCTURES FLEGT COMMUNICATION TO EU

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effectively to assure the EU countries that sustainability of Ghana's timber is catered for.

The EU had raised issues with Ghana's FLEGT system, which, it claimed took care of legality but failed to address issues of sustainability. As a result, only two countries, the United Kingdom and Luxembourg, accepted the system out of the then twenty-eight countries.

With the UK exiting the EU, the number comes to one country in the EU accepting Ghana's FLEGT system.

Mr. Addai-Owusu expressed optimism that the new strategy would push away the red flag, making Ghana's wood acceptable to the bloc when the FLEGT license is finally issued later this year.

*Story by Communication Team*

## Team of European Journalists visit Ghana

Last February, a team of European journalists, trainers and staff of the Minority Rights Group from Uganda, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, visited Ghana to learn more about the forestry and cocoa growing sectors.

EU, they attended the meeting of the Legal Working Group, paid a courtesy call on Kwaku Oppong Sasu, Executive Director of the Forest Services Division of the Forestry Commission and interacted with the Sefwi Forest District Manager, Nana Poku Bosompem.

The team also visited Aboagyekrom and Nyamegyiso, both forest fringing and cocoa growing communities, where child labour issues in cocoa cultivation have been effectively tackled.

Below are pictures

As part of the tour, with funding from the



The delegation being briefed at the Legal Working Group



The delegation at the office of the Forest Services Department



The delegation listening to Nana Poku Bosompem



Community visit

# Ban Charcoal Production

## ...To Save Shea Trees

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that this trend was worrying as it is gradually endangering the tree species.

"Apart from rosewood, shea trees are also in danger as they are logged for charcoal production," Mr. Saaka said.

He, therefore, called on government to ban

charcoal production immediately to salvage the situation.

"Government must do something about this new trend. Let's ban commercial charcoal production in order to save shea trees, the shea value chain, and the environment as a whole," he said.

The Shea tree is typically a Savanna woodland tree species. Its natural habitat stretches over the Southern Savannah part of Africa, 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.

Shea's usefulness cuts across diverse industries worldwide, including the detergents, catering and pharmaceutical industries. In Africa, shea butter is used as cooking lard, as a water proofing wax, for hairdressing, for candle-making and as an ingredient of medicinal ointments.

Shea trees grow on their own and take between 15 – 20 years to reach maturity, which explains the difficulty in its domestication. Shea trees have very long lifespan as they can live for more than 200 years.

Unfortunately, in recent times due to the activities of charcoal producers, who fell shea trees and process them into charcoal, the tree species have lesser lifespan now.

FWG is the national campaign vehicle of Civil Society Organisations and individuals committed to the rights of poor forest users. It organises an annual general meeting each year to discuss emerging issues in the sector and offer solutions.

*Story by Civic Response*

**Please send your Feedbacks, Articles, Stories and Contributions to [tettehsally@yahoo.com](mailto:tettehsally@yahoo.com) OR [sallyviwotor@gmail.com](mailto:sallyviwotor@gmail.com)  
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Compiled and Produced by Salomey Tetteh-Viwotor**



### 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](http://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.

DFID is responsible for

- honouring the UK's international commitments and taking action to achieve the United Nations' Global Goals
- making British aid more effective by improving transparency, openness and value for money
- targeting British international development policy on economic growth and wealth creation
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- roving the lives of girls and women through better education and a greater choice on family planning
- preventing violence against girls and women in the developing world
- helping to prevent climate change and encouraging adaptation and low-carbon growth in developing countries



### ABOUT THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU)

The European Union (EU) is a political and economic union of 27 member states. The union's purpose is to promote

peace, establish a unified economic and monetary system, promote inclusion and combat discrimination.

The union also breaks down barriers to trade and borders, encourage technological and scientific developments and champions environmental protection. It also promotes goals like a competitive global market and social progress.

The EU is considered to have the most extensive environmental laws of any international organisation. Its environmental legislation addresses issues such as the thinning of the ozone layer, air quality, noise pollution, waste, water pollution and sustainable energy.

### Supporters



This Newsletter was prepared by Nature and Development Foundation (NDF) with funds from DFID and EU.

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