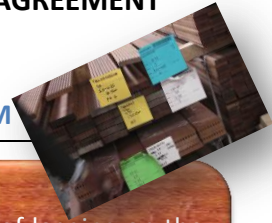


GHANA TIMBER LEGALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS AND THE VOLUNTARY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (VPA): 1ST GHANA VPA STAKEHOLDER CONFERENCE



28th OCTOBER, 2013 – LONDON, UK & 30th OCTOBER, 2013 – BRUSSELS, BELGIUM



Background

In both developed and the developing countries, there is an increasing concern about the impacts of logging on the environment. Nonetheless, the most common perception is that, logging in the entire tropical region of the world is mainly illegal. Despite the increasing menace of illegal logging to the environment and national economies, some tropical countries such as Ghana with long standing history of sustainable forest management and timber trade partnership with the EU has acknowledged this concern and is genuinely taking steps to address illegal logging.

Forest certification undoubtedly is touted as the ultimate step for ensuring forest sustainability, but its implementation has been difficult for most tropical countries due to the huge financial resources required aside other area-specific implementation bottlenecks. As a result, many tropical countries have positioned themselves to take advantage of the support provided under the EU FLEGT initiative that seeks to engage in the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) which in its strictest terms tackles forest law enforcement, governance and trade.

Since the inception of FLEGT Action Plan, Ghana became the first country to sign a Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the European Union (EU) in 2009. To further demonstrate commitment to the VPA, Ghana is also committed to applying the same legality standards to all timber exports, regardless of their destination as well as apply the same standards to the domestic market.

It is worth noting that even though Ghana was the first country to sign the VPA with the EU, no effort has been made thus far to create awareness and articulate the myriad of benefits to be accrued to Ghana and consumer countries alike. For this reason, there is the need to stage this conference with the singular vision to create awareness about VPA benefits, seek opportunities to interact effectively with stakeholders, developmental partners as well as use the same platform to articulate the various sustainable forest management regimes and the various legality assurances systems already in place in Ghana prior to VPA FLEGT and after FLEGT license is issued.

Objective

The objective of the conference is to **create awareness** and effectively generate confidence about the Ghana FLEGT VPA process in the European Union and beyond.

Target Audience

The target audience for this conference include the timber products traders, timber trade federations / associations, policy makers, civil society groups, academia, policy think tank groups, forest certification associations, environmental NGOs.

Topics to Cover

The conference will cover the following subject areas:

1. Ghana's Sustainable Forest Management: Principles and Forest Governance
2. The Timber Industry in Ghana
3. The Ghana FLEGT VPA Process and Updates
4. Ghana Legality Assurance Systems
5. Markets and Policy Update

Conference Venue

The conference will be conducted in two separate venues in the EU namely London, UK and Brussels, Belgium as such participants should indicate their choice of venue during the registration process.

Registration: Registration is free of charge and space is limited.



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