

# ADDRESSING CONSERVATION COMMUNITY CONCERNS IN FOREST MANAGEMENT IN WEST& CENTRAL AFRICA

WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA TROPICAL TIMBER INVESTMENT FORUM: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVESTMENT IN NATURAL TROPICAL FORESTS: 28-30 AUGUST 2007 ACCRA, GHANA

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#### **OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION**

- Forest resources ownership & Mgt practices in West and Central Africa
- Forest resources access and benefit sharing systems
- Issues of concern
- Governments attempts at addressing forest mgt issues
- Conservation Community's role towards addressing the issues
- WWF's role towards addressing the issues
- Constraints in addressing the issues
- Opportunities for addressing the issues
- The way forward/Recommendations

















### Forest resources ownership systems in West & Central Africa

- Different ownership systems: There are state and communities ownership systems.
- Harvesting and use rights are granted by the state largely to logging companies and to lesser extent communities.
- Management Functions: either the state, leaseholder or by both.
- However, states perform policy making, regulatory and monitoring functions.
- Generally communities are not adequately consulted in management decisions which affect their use rights.
- Existing legislations and bureaucracies rather restrict communities' access to and control over forest resources in West and Central Africa



















### Forest management practices in West & Central Africa

- Most countries central theme: "Forests are being managed on a sustained basis for the benefits of the society"
- However, management practices are timberfocused rather than contributions to livelihood of rural poor.
- Selective logging focusing on few commercial species rather than range of species present in the forest.
- Forest dependent communities have very little or no role in forest management.
- Collaborative forest mgt concept widely accepted in West & Central Africa but mainly in theory



















# Forest Resource Access & Benefits sharing

- Rural livelihood in W & C Africa is inextricably linked to forest resources.
- Rural population access to forest resources is highly limited with severe restrictions on commercial purposes.
- Access to forest resources is usually granted with commercial interest primarily to logging companies.
- Fees and taxes are fixed, collected and distributed by governments with no consultation with other stakeholders.



Local communities are not involved in decision-making processes.











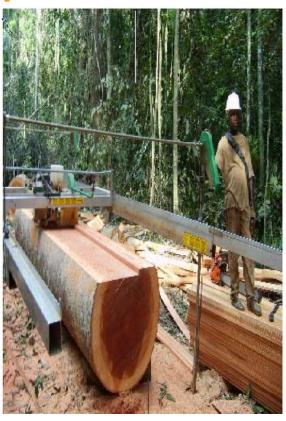






#### **Issues of Concern**

- Weaknesses in implementation and enforcement of laws and standard practices
- Unsustainable harvesting practices and illegal logging
- Poor mgt practices leading to structural degradation
- Unfair access and benefit sharing systems
- Weak institutional and governance structures to manage and regulate the use of forest resources
- Absence of incentives for community participation in forest management.
- Limited alternative livelihood options for the rural poor
- Slow progress on SFM initiatives including certification



















# Governments attempts at Addressing the issues

- Review of policies and laws
- Institutional reforms
- Gradual shift from timber management to forest management
- Slow but progressive shift towards collaborative forestry
- Commitments to international conventions eg. CBD, CITES etc
- Commitments to other international, regional and local initiatives eg. FLEG(T), AFLEG, VPA, ITTO targets, Log tracking etc



















# Conservation Community's Role towards addressing the issues

Lobbying and advocacy for states' commitment to SFM principles and participatory sector governance.

Awareness creation and education at all levels on issues affecting SFM.

A shift from critique approach to constructive engagement with states and other stakeholders.

- Collaboration with state institutions on joint management programmes.
- Hand on projects and programmes to demonstrate best practices.





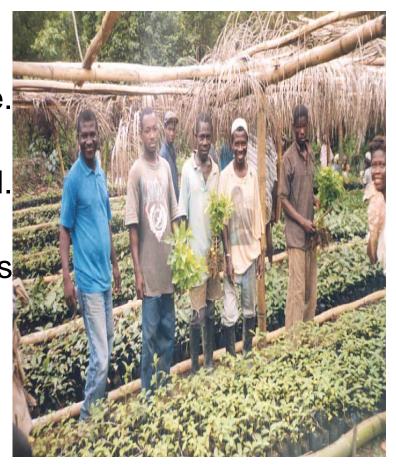














# WWF Specific programmes towards addressing the issues

- Advocacy for better regulatory framework for collaborative forestry to include fair access and benefit sharing regime.
- Joint forest management initiatives with state institutions on protected areas management
- Establishment of GFTN to help improve forest management and eliminate illegal logging.
- Field projects on community forestry in Central Africa focusing on best practices for community forest management.
- Support to community forest management entities to establish community forest enterprises.



















#### **WWF-GFTN**

- Set up by WWF to drive improvement in forest mgt and eliminate illegal logging using certification.
- Partnership with forest managers and private companies.
- Third-party assessment and analysis of forest management and CoC gaps.
- Time-bound action plan to sort out gaps
- Market links between responsible producers and buyers.
- Capacity building for local communities on sustainable forest management.
- Group certification for small forest enterprises.



















## Constraints in Addressing the issues

- Political instability and civil unrests
- Weaknesses/lapses in sectoral policies, laws and regulations.
- Ad hoc and uncoordinated policy-making processes instead of coherent approach.
- Weak and under-resourced sector institutions
- Circumvention of policies, laws and regulations by states and other stakeholders.
- Information gap on state of resources and poor resource assessment.
- Meeting incremental cost of forest mgt
- Weak sector governance.



















### Opportunities for Addressing the issues

- Global awareness and concerns over unsustainable forest mgt practices in the region.
- Emerging international, regional and national initiatives aimed at addressing illegal logging and associated trade.
- Increasing governments' commitment to legality and SFM
- Adoption and states interest in Collaborative Forestry.
- Increasing collaboration between governments and civil society organizations.
- Adoption of certification and growing interest by private companies.
- National and regional level interest in Community forestry.

















### The Way Forward/Recommendations

- Commitment to legality, certification and sustainability of the resource.
- Law enforcement, transparency and participatory sector governance.
- Adequate institutional support, formation of partnerships and inclusion.
- Empowering communities to engage in mgt, protection and monitoring.
- Capacity-building for collaborative and community forestry.
- Meaningful community engagement in forest management.
- Promotion of community forestry through improve access to forest resource and financial support.
- Governments to provide enabling environment for certification to thrive.
- Recognition and incentive to supporters and practitioners of responsible forestry.
- Social and environmental screening in forest sector financing.

















#### THANK YOU.

























