

On 30th November 2010 the Ghana EITI Secretariat in collaboration with Publish What You Pay Coalition (PWYP) organized a knowledge sharing and information gathering workshop for stakeholders involved in the Ghana Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (GHEITI) and forestry sector. The workshop was to provide the opportunity for stakeholders to better understand the dynamics of fiscal transparency issues in the forestry sector, particularly with respect to its revenue streams.

In September 2009, Ghana signed unto the Voluntary Partnership Agreement on Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (VPA - FLEGT). By this singular action the country is committed to combat illegal logging and contribute to sustainable forestry management. Ghana is also expected as from the end of 2010 to introduce a Timber Licensing Scheme (TLS) that will ensure that all timber consignments leaving the country specifically to the European Union are issued with licenses attesting to their compliance with all laid down regulations. The improved enforcement of law resulting from implementing VPA - FLEGT is expected to contribute to better regulation of the utilization of the source which should manifest itself in sustainable utilization of the country's forestry resources.

Topics discussed at the workshop among others included the following, the Impact of Illegal logging on Governance, Economy and the Environment; Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Process and Ghana Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) Process; and overview of Forestry Sector Fiscal Regime: Ensuring Transparency in Forestry Sector.

A scoping report will be produced as an output of the workshop to provide the relevant information on the best approach to extend EITI to the forestry sector. The extension of EITI to forestry will mark the final phase of the Ghana EITI three-tier strategy to extend the initiative to the extractive sectors (mining, oil and gas and forestry). In September 2010, the initiative was successfully extended to cover the oil and gas sector and the expanded National Steering Committee to include oil and gas sector players inaugurated on 8th September 2010.