Lessons learnt in advancing tenure and other rights
Current VPA Implementation Status

• 2007 – Aug. 2009; VPA negotiation with later CS involvement through VPA Multi Stakeholder Implementation committee
• 2009: Ghana signed & ratified VPA
• 2010: VPA Implementation plan designed by FC & discussed with SH with specific roles for CS agreed on
• 2011 - 2012: Establishment of 2 new institutions – Timber Validation Division and Timber Validation Council
• 2011 – 2013: Development & testing of WTS delayed but in progress. WTS to be field tested in November 2013
• Appointment of Independent Monitor outstanding
• October 2014: Export of FLEG license timber
CS Participation in FLEGT / VPA

• Forest Watch Ghana (FWG) a coalition of ≥ 35 NGOs in the forest sector formed in 2004 had already started advocacy campaign and demands for law enforcement good governance in the forest sector.

• 4 Campaign objectives: Fair Access to forest resources, Fair Benefits sharing, Participatory governance and Greater CS activism around NR law enforcement, transparency and accountability

• Basis for FWG participation in VPA
Strengths – VPA processes & CS Participation

• Ensured legality definition is not diluted with prevailing illegal practices on award of timber rights

• Ensured effective stakeholder participation in and enrichment of decision making & arriving at acceptable decisions on contentious issues - bad laws, TRFs payment

• Space for stakeholder participation in forestry issues has come to stay
Weaknesses - VPA processes & CS Participation

- VPA MSIC has no decision making powers. Decisions made by MSIC is not binding on Government e.g arbitrary use of Ministerial powers / applying bad sessions of laws undermines spirit of VPA and good governance
- Forestry Commission (Govt.) is the convener of MSIC meetings. Undue delays in convening meetings poses challenges for meeting timelines for agreed processes and monitoring processes and outputs
- Unrealistic timelines inhibits effective consultation
Threats - VPA processes & CS Participation

• Bilateral nature of VPA creates room for exporting illegal timber to other countries outside EU and US

• Individual interests in maintaining status quo for personal gains: commitment vs will

• Radical measures required to put legal timber on Domestic market
Opportunities - VPA processes & CS Participation

• Enforcing governance reforms in the sector
• Industry to compel government to respect due process, issue legally acceptable timber rights to enable industry restore its credibility and integrity
• CS to learn more about more technical areas of the WTS / CoC for monitoring compliance with WTS
Opportunities - VPA processes & CS Participation

• Reducing the global trade in illegal timber if VPA moves beyond bilateral to multilateral like other global conventions
• Communities receive a fair share of income from timber trade
• Improve forest cover through community led initiatives
Main lessons learned in advancing tenure and other rights

• Public officials are not interested in advancing community tenure & rights. CS has responsibility to drive this agenda

• Community tenure is intricately linked to security of land tenure and both need to be addressed in tandem. Captured in new Forest & Wildlife Policy

• CS piloted models provide evidence for advocacy for community tenure and rights

• Community lands are not recognised as part of investment
Main lessons learned in advancing tenure and other rights

• Other rights include access to forest resources; compensations for destroyed crops and payment of SRAs
• Communities will assert and defend their rights once they know it. CS has responsibility of educating communities on their rights and responsibilities and those of other SH
• Increasingly, policy makers are listening to CS because of useful contributions / inputs & providing solutions and not just criticism. This confidence provides good opportunity to get policy makers to buy in on community rights
• Policy analysis, documentation of policy gaps, engagement with policy makers make policy review to include community rights more acceptable