

AIDE MEMOIRE

SEVENTH MISSION OF THE JOINT MONITORING AND REVIEW MECHANISM

Accra, 4th-6th June, 2014

Introduction

1. The seventh Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism¹ (JMRM) to facilitate the implementation of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) between Ghana and the EU took place in Accra from 4th to 6th June 2014. The meeting was co-Chaired by Ghana and the EU. The Ghana Delegation was led by the Honourable Barbara Serwaa Asamoah, Deputy Minister of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR). The EU Delegation was led by Ambassador Claude Maerten, the Head of the EU Delegation to Ghana.
2. The Ghana team included representation from MLNR, the Forestry Commission (FC), Civil Society and the Private Sector. The EU team included representation from the European Commission, Member States and experts from the EU Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Facility. A participants list is attached as Annex I to this Aide Memoire.
3. The JMRM reflected on progress made with various aspects of VPA implementation since the last meeting in November 2013. The following sections provide a summary of the discussions and decisions in relation to each of the areas concerned.

Legality Assurance System (LAS)

4. The LAS comprises a legality definition, a wood tracking system (WTS) and a system to verify compliance with the laws included in Annex II of the VPA. An Independent Monitor (IM) that conducts periodic audits to assure credibility of the system to verify legal compliance also forms part of the LAS. Since the last JMRM, there has been significant progress with key elements of the system's development, to the extent that the design of the LAS is almost completed.
5. With respect to the legality definition, Annex II of the VPA clearly identifies the various timber use rights that constitute legal sources of timber. At previous meetings of the JMRM, the need to convert existing leases to Timber Utilisation Contracts (TUCs) in order to be compliant with Ghana's legal framework has been raised. Ghana confirmed that discussions between Government and the industry on this matter were ongoing but acknowledged that the completion of this process now needed to draw to a close as a matter of urgency so as not to impede progress towards FLEGT licensing.

¹ The purpose of the JMRM is described in Article 19 of the VPA

