

COMMUNIQUE RELEASED BY CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSOs) AT THE END OF A 3 DAY CONSULTATIVE FORUM ON NATURAL RESOURCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE.

Preamble:

We, the more than 70 participants, drawn from CSOs, the media and individuals involved in Natural Resource and Environmental management having met at Erata Hotel, East Legon from January 20th -22nd 2009 to deliberate on 'KASA', a 2 year pilot project aimed at supporting civil society and media organizations within the environment and natural resource sector,

Commend CARE, ICCO, SNV and The Royal Netherlands Embassy for supporting this timely and important initiative and introducing KASA, which we believe has great potential to give a voice to civil society and increase their participation in natural resource management and environmental governance,

Recognizing that the:

Ghanaian population depends on natural resources for basic food, water, medicinal herbs and energy requirement,

Existing laws do not adequately protect the environment,

Concerned that natural resource stocks are in decline and may not be sustainable in the long term if action is not taken now,

Concerned about the urgent need for information disclosure in the natural resource sector,

Concerned about, pollution, environmental degradation, climate change and poor sanitation,

Concerned about the lack of involvement of the owners of the natural resources in decision making and environmental governance,

Concerned about encroachment on protected forest zones of Ghana for natural resource extraction,

Noting with grave concern that CSOs engagement in the formulation of the NREG programme was highly minimal,

Concerned that the NREG document is not easily available to the public and noted the lack of commitment to free flow of information,

Affirming our commitment to efficient and effective natural resource and environmental governance, demand that :

- The Ghanaian public be given access to comprehensive information on NREG documents and current updates in order to enhance effective participation and implementation
- The Right to information disclosure on natural resource be respected
- There should be strict enforcement of all legislations that do not alienate communities from their natural resources and a review of NRE sector laws that affect livelihood
- Targets set by government in the NREG programme should be broadened
- Sector specific funding for the natural resource and environment sector is secured
- CSOs be made part of the setting of objectives and targets and all frameworks that govern policies in the environmental and natural resource sector such as the NREG programme
- CSOs are adequately resourced to engage fully in the broad issues of the NRE sector through a CS mechanism supporting both larger and smaller CSOs
- CSOs demand a clear demarcation of no go zones to protect forest reserves.

We commit to:

- Improve network amongst ourselves, share information, enhance capacity building for effective engagement in NREG
- To proactively give voice to the voiceless by improving their capacity to be meaningfully engaged at various levels of decision making that affect their livelihoods

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