



REPUBLIC OF GHANA

A photograph of a dense forest with tall trees and a thick canopy of green leaves. The forest extends to the top of a hill under a clear blue sky.

GHANA FOREST AND WILDLIFE POLICY

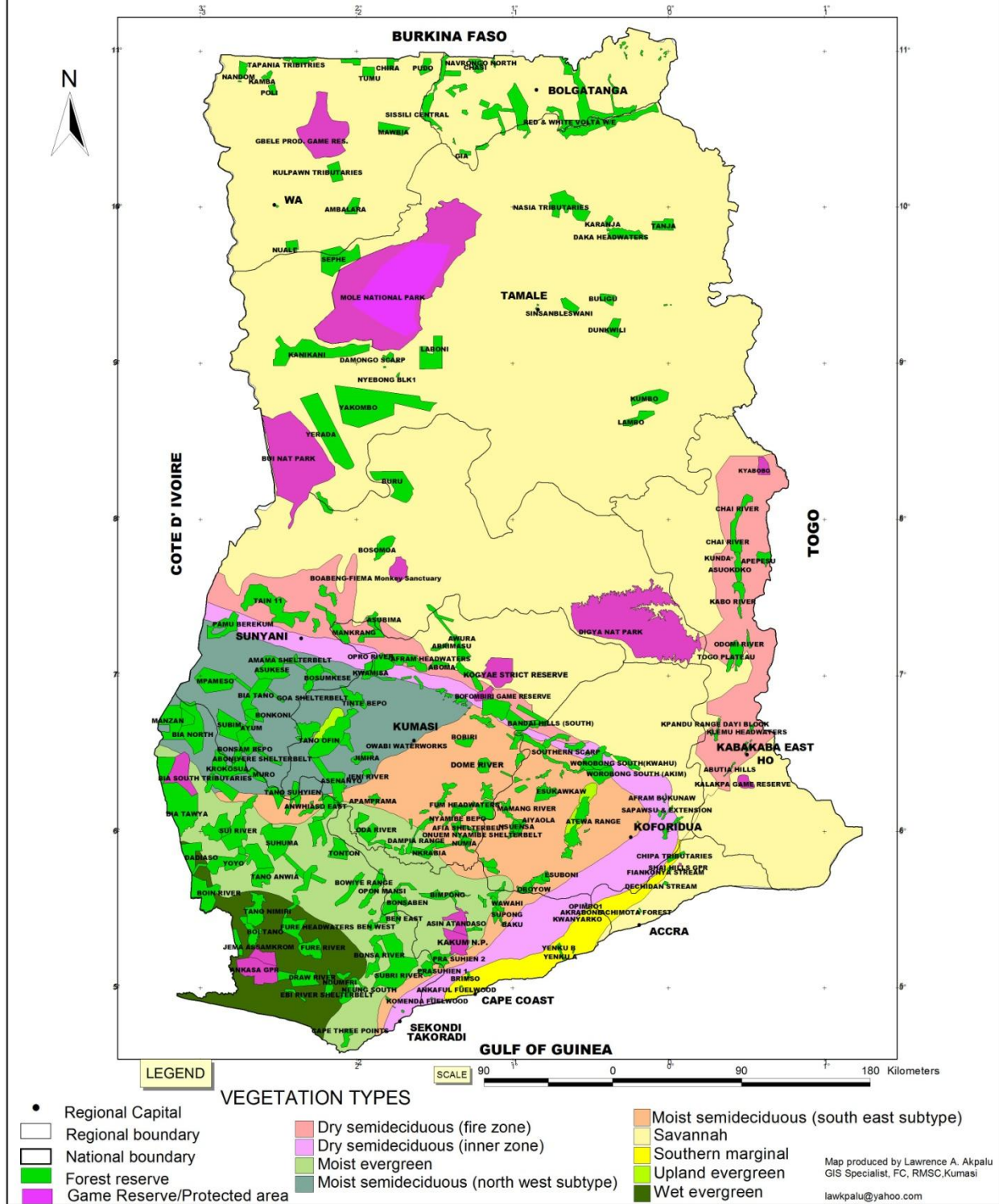
Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources

ACCRA – GHANA

OCTOBER 2011

VEGETATION ZONES AND FOREST RESERVE MAP OF GHANA

HALL & S WAINE



ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AAC	Annual Allowable Cut
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
CFM	Collaborative Forest Management
CREMAs	Community Resource Management Areas
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FC	Forestry Commission
FMP	Forest Management Plan
FMU	Forest Management Unit
FSD	Forest Service Division
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoG	Government of Ghana
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
GSBA	Globally Significant Biodiversity Area
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
NRMP	Natural Resources Management Programme
NTFPs	Non-timber Forest Products
PAs	Protected Areas
REDD	Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation,

SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SME	Small and Medium Size Enterprises
WD	Wildlife Division

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Forest and Wildlife Policy of 2011 was written with the support and active involvement of all stakeholders in the forest and wildlife sector (formal and informal) across the country. Various communities, regional and national stakeholders' workshops were held at different locations representing the different ecological systems in the country. Different stakeholders, researchers and academia presented memorandum towards the policy revision. Let all these stakeholders find here an expression of gratitude and recognition for what they have provided.

The same gratitude is extended to our Development Partners, the media and Civil Society Organizations whose invaluable contributions and criticisms enabled us to refine the objectives and strategies. We also express our heartfelt appreciation to the various facilitators and chairpersons during the district, regional and national workshops that were able to bring the best out of the participants in a relatively short period. In deed the excellent job they did has contributed to this output.

Finally we acknowledge with gratitude the work of the National Forest Policy Review Team made up of representatives from the Forestry Commission, the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme, the Ghana Institute of Foresters, Private forest Consultants and led by the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources. They worked tirelessly to collate all views and drafted the document.

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FOREWORD

The implementation of the 1994 Forest and Wildlife Policy witnessed significant changes in the structure and form of the forestry sector in Ghana. The sector institutions were transformed into a corporate Forestry Commission in accordance with the 1992 constitution. A number of strategic initiatives, were introduced to improve and develop the forest and wildlife resource base; integrate good governance, transparency, equity and poverty reduction into the forest and wildlife sector. The 1994 policy introduced equitable sharing of management responsibilities; increased benefit flows to local stakeholders, especially the rural poor; and increased participation, transparency and accountability in the sector activities.

However, there is a paradox. The implementation of the 1994 policy with all the associated reforms could not halt the degradation in the forest resource base. Illegal chainsaw and mining (*galamsey*) operations in forest areas have thrived over the years despite conscious national efforts to curb the situation in collaboration with the security agencies. Wood fuel productions especially in the fragile areas of the savanna regions have remained unsustainable whilst wildfires continue to be an annual occurrence in all the ecosystems. The timber industry still operates with obsolete equipment and having installed capacities exceeding the Annual Allowable Cut (AAC).

Besides the challenges inhibiting the attainment of the 1994 forest and wildlife policy objectives, the forestry sector today is also confronted with emerging global issues like the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA), Forest Certification and Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD) which have far reaching implications for the forest and wildlife industry as well as local livelihoods.

In keeping with the objectives of the national development agenda, the forest and wildlife sector will have to explore new measures to halt, and reverse the pace of deforestation and forest degradation in Ghana. There are emerging opportunities for sustainable forest financing especially through the Carbon Credit which the country needs to take advantage of to develop the forestry sector. In addition, the Civil Society Organizations and the local people are today much better organized and well informed to be mainstreamed into the forestry sector decision-making and resource management.

A revised policy is therefore necessary to take advantage of these emerging opportunities to maximize the rate of social and economic development of the country and secure optimum welfare and adequate means of livelihood from the forestry sector to all Ghanaians.

The 2011 Forest and Wildlife Policy therefore, is a paradigm shift from the past policies, creating a balance between timber production and marketing to satisfy particularly domestic wood demands. The policy also seeks to promote: (i) good governance through accountability and transparency (ii) forest enterprise development as a means of job creation for the rural and urban poor, and (iii) biodiversity conservation and ecotourism development.

The 2011 Forest and Wildlife Policy is a reflection of the aspirations of all stakeholders, who were actively involved in the review and formulation process. We call on stakeholders to embrace and assist in the implementation of this revised policy to enable the country continue to enjoy better benefits from the products and services that the forest and wildlife sector provides.

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Minister for Lands and Natural Resource

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1.0 PREAMBLE

1.1 Forest and wildlife resources have long been major contributors to Ghana's economic development, formal and informal employment, livelihoods and export earnings. The forest and savannah ecosystems provide rich biodiversity of national and global significance and form the backbone of the economic and productive sectors of the Ghanaian economy. Unfortunately, the exploitations of these resources for national development have not been sustainable over the years.

1.2 In 1994, Ghana enunciated a forest and wildlife policy to replace the first formal forest policy of 1948, which was formulated for the conservation and protection of the forest reserve estates. The main policy thrusts of the 1994 Policy were environmental protection, sustainable production and use of forest and wildlife resources, involvement of local people in management and benefit sharing, institutional restructuring and promotion of research and human resource development. A Forestry Development Master Plan was formulated to implement the policy via a comprehensive donor funded sector development programme- the Natural Resource Management Programme [NRMP].

1.3 The implementation of the 1994 forest and wildlife policy brought a number of strategic initiatives and sector reforms, which sought to improve and develop the forest resource base and integrate good governance, transparency, equity and poverty reduction into the forest and wildlife sector. Unfortunately, after almost two decades of implementing the policy, Ghana's timber and non-timber forest products resources are being overexploited and continue to decline both in quantity and quality. The estimated cost of unsustainable management of the country's forest land resources, wildlife and fisheries is 10 per cent of the Gross Domestic Products (World Bank: Ghana Meeting the Challenge of Accelerated and Shared Growth November 2007).

1.4 The past Forest and Wildlife policies sought to maintain the forest resources as a source of timber to feed a vibrant timber industry, however given the current trends in the national development agenda, stakeholders' expectations and the international obligations, a change in policy direction is inevitable. The sector therefore envisions a future prosperous sustainable forest and wildlife sector that provide continued benefits to the present and future generation by promoting equity in the allocation of forest resources, supporting rural livelihoods and realigning the forestry sector institutions to meet multi-stakeholder's expectations without compromising the environmental integrity.

1.5 The Government expects that the future forest and wildlife development will continue not only to foster and encourage the industry which plays such a vital role in our economy, but will also ensure that forestry, hitherto almost reclusive, is brought to all the stakeholders in ways which can enhance the quality of their socio-economic life which is the over-arching guide to all interventions.

1.6 The development of forestry in Ghana will therefore encompass all forms of forests in both the high forest and savanna ecosystems; commercial plantations development; and the promotion of the formal and informal forest-based industries which they support. It will promote research and science to support the planting and use of trees on farms, in villages, towns and cities for amenity, recreation, for shade and for fuel; effective decentralization of forest and wildlife governance and promotion of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures as well as payment for ecosystem services. It will also seriously address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and promote a paradigm shift from consumptive use of the forest to non-consumptive use.

2.0 OVERVIEW OF FOREST AND WILDLIFE SECTOR

2.1 Forest and Wildlife Conservation

2.1 Ghana has two predominant ecological zones: the high forest zone mainly in the south-western part constituting a third of the country (about 35 percent of the country) and the savannah zone occupying the rest of the country. The forests are classified as *on-reserved* and *off-reserved* and there are 282 Protected Areas covering a total area of 23,729 km² with 216 of them located within the high forest zone. Forest and wildlife conservation areas constitute about 16.2 percent of the total land area. Two types of Protected Areas exist - Production reserves exploited for timber (75 per cent) and Protected forests (25 per cent) established for conservation purposes.

2.2 The biological diversity of the high forest ecological zone is considerable and accounts for most of the biological diversity of the country. For example, out of 3,725 higher plants known to be in Ghana, about 2,300 are found in the high forest zone, including 730 tree species. Similarly, 185 of the 222 mammals of Ghana and about 200 of the 494 resident birds in Ghana are present in the high forest zone. Amphibians, reptiles and fishes have not yet been systematically surveyed in the forest zone but it is assumed that this zone harbours most of the diversity of these groups. (National Biodiversity Strategy for Ghana, 2002)

2.3 In terms of economic contribution, forestry and logging accounted for 3 per cent GDP in 2009 and contributed US\$240.9 million (representing 7.6 per cent) to total export value. It is estimated that about 120,000 people are formally employed by the forest and wildlife sector, and it serves as a source of livelihood for about 2 million people. There are 84 sawmills and 12 companies with plywood capacity in the formal sector, directly employing about 120,000 people. (Country Environmental Analysis, 2007)

2.4 In the informal sector, however, a wide mix of actors and rural households depend on forest resources for their livelihoods, ranging from micro/small scale carpentry, hunting, illegal chain-saw operations, and woodfuel collection to the gathering and commercialisation of diverse non-timber forest products (NTFPs). About 11 million people live in forest areas of which about 67 per cent of their livelihoods are supported by forest activities.

2.5 It is estimated that there are about 5,000 to 6,000 people engaged in regular hunting, with an average income from hunting of around \$1,000 per year. Even though they are of very high importance to the national economy, the extent of the contribution of non-timber forest

products (NTFPs) is not formally recorded, and remains inadequately represented in policy analysis. Wild animal and wild plant exports were valued at US\$18.0 million in 2003 (World Bank, 2006). Bush-meat is of high dietary importance as a protein source in Ghana, but there is no consistency in national statistics on the annual trade in bush meat.

2.6 The primary indigenous energy sources in Ghana are from the forestry sector comprising of 94.5 percent woodfuel (Strategic National Energy Plan, 2006). Biomass in the form of firewood and charcoal dominates the total energy consumed in the country (averaging 67 per cent in 2008).

2.1.1 Forest Plantation Development

2.7 Traditional taungya system was practiced from the early 1950's to help replant impoverished forest reserves in land-hunger areas in the high forest zone. Between 1960 and 1982 the Forest Services Division (FSD) was engaged in a reforestation programme and established about 50,000 ha of Teak (65 percent), Cedrela, and Gmelina plantations. These plantations provide the key source of transmission poles for rural electrification, furniture and for export.

2.8 A Plantation Development Fund was established in 1999 to provide funding to the private sector to invest in commercial plantation establishment. The fund was sourced from the levies imposed on the export of air-dried lumber. In 2001, the government launched a National Plantation Development Programme and was re-launched in 2010 with the aim of planting 30,000 ha of trees per year across all the administrative districts of the country.

2.9 The current plantation development effort is designed to reduce the pressure on natural forests, which is not capable of meeting the increasing demands to satisfy both domestic and export markets for wood. Sustainable and profitable plantation forestry is being achieved through public private partnership to ensure raw material supply to the timber and related industries.

2.1.2 Collaborative Forest Management

2.10 Due to the strong interest and rights of local communities in forest resource management, the Forestry Commission has modified the focal point of its management system to ensure greater consultation with stakeholders, especially local communities that are dependent on the forests and are willing to ensure its maintenance. Thus, the focus of forest management in Ghana is shifting from a government-led system to a community-government collaborative management approach.

2.2 Challenges and Issues in the Forest and Wildlife Sector

2.11 There is overexploitation of timber and wildlife resources with the official Annual Allowable Cut (2 million m³) being consistently exceeded by over 1.7 million m³ annually for more than a decade. Biodiversity loss is very high with more than 10 species projected to becoming extinct in less than a decade. Most of the indigenous species like, *Milicia excelsa* and *Milicia regia*, the mahoganies (*Khaya* and *Entandrophragma* species), *Pericopsis elata*, *Nauclea diderrichii*, and *Triplochiton scleroxylon* which, mainly generate substantial revenues for Ghana's economy, have drastically reduced. The timber stocks in the off-reserve areas are disappearing at faster rates, leaving the forest reserves areas as "vulnerable small isolated islands" with limited populations of trees and animals and no possibilities for genetic exchange.

2.12 The tertiary processing levels of the timber industry is constrained by the supply of quality and preferred timber species and products. Illegal timber operations have not been brought under effective control and there is overcapacity in the sawmilling subsector. Although the raw material supplies are dwindling, production yields in the timber industry have not improved either by the application of efficient processing methods or the use of appropriate machinery that are suited to the sizes of materials available.

2.13 The 1994 policy objective of promoting the export of *less volume high value* products was under stress as the export volume of furniture and furniture parts continued to decline. Raw material supplies to the tertiary processing subsector were mostly from illegal sources with low quality wood.

2.14 Other issues and challenges confronting the forest and wildlife sector include the following:

- a) The inadequacy of the 1994 Policy to respond adequately to domestic demand for timber and timber products to match the massive domestic investment in infrastructural development in the country. The past policy was export-oriented and failed to address domestic utilization of timber products. This has resulted in a huge domestic timber demand gap which has induced widespread illegal chainsaw operations in the supply of lumber to the market.
- b) The Forestry Commission (FC) has not fully developed its capacity for properly managing the forests and wildlife. Due to broader environmental responsibilities it receives a large part of its budget from international funding and draws its salaries from the government funds. Being under the Civil Service, morale is low

due to unattractive remuneration and reward systems. Weak capacity is observed in technical skills, financial management and procurement.

- c) The Forestry Commission (and its Divisions) is not decentralized and continue to centralized control systems over resources in the off-reserved areas which is an affront to an otherwise decentralized system. A situation like this does not encourage local community participation in planning and management, the main tenets of the 1994 Policy.
- d) Natural resources are still perceived as public goods, which are free of charge and of unrestricted use both in the high forest and the savannah ecosystem. Primary as well as secondary users have resisted changes and are slow in adopting sustainable management practices.
- e) There is poor accountability in resource exploitation and lack of cost-effectiveness in the use of resources and creation of appropriate benefits in a transparent and accountable manner. More than 1.7m³ of the Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) harvested is not accounted for in the national accounts leading to considerable loss of revenue to the landowners, District Assemblies and the State.
- f) There is poor delivery of quality services by the service providers to resource owners and lack of active multi-stakeholder involvement in forest sector activities.
- g) Although civil society is willing to participate in sustainable natural resource management, their capacities are weak to carry out the responsibilities.
- h) Another challenge to collaborative forest management strategy is how to achieve sustainability in the forest management, to integrate local communities into planning and management and still maintain a profitable sector. The tree tenure arrangement still remains unclear and the influx of alien Fulani herdsmen continue to heighten tensions within the local communities.
- i) The issuing of concessions, the fees and taxation systems within the natural resource sector are not rationalized and transparent. The framework for collecting, recovering and redistributing revenues accruing from natural resources between resource owners, state users are ambiguous, inequitable and lack transparency. There is the need to restructure and make more transparent natural resource revenues going to state, local government administrators and local resource owners.

- j) There is lack of capacity in the tertiary sector leading to the production of low quality products for both the domestic and export markets.

2.15 The prevailing situation in the timber and wildlife sector defeats the premise upon which the 1994 policy was formulated and raises questions on the balance between the socio-economic benefits and the associated opportunity cost of exploiting the country's forest and wildlife resources.

2.3 National Development Agenda and Forest and Wildlife Management

2.16 The development agenda of Ghana is underpinned by the objectives of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The third GPRS (Ghana's Shared Growth and Development Agenda) has three distinct pillars:- private sector competitiveness, human resource development, and good governance with civic responsibility. Implicit in the narratives of the growth agenda is the need for the forestry sector to:

- *Achieve sustainable forest management* and reducing deforestation and forest degradation and so developing a stable timber resource for Ghana's future.
- *Increase value addition* in the timber processing industry, to create jobs with manufacturing skills.
- *Increase rural employment and livelihoods* through local management of off-reserve forests, through mechanisms such as dedicated forests or Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs).
- *Support investments in plantation timber, tertiary processing, eco-tourism, and wildlife facilities.*
- *Fully capture economic and financial rents* to ensure an effective regulator and a broader tax base.
- *Capture the full range of values of forests including biodiversity conservation, ecosystems services and related values,* such as carbon.

2.17 The national development agenda therefore places an obligation on the forest and wildlife sector to promote good governance, civil society participation and involvement of effective, responsible and accountable state mechanisms to engage the private sector in the policy-making processes related to growth and poverty reduction.

2.4 International Concerns on the Global Environment

2.18 The current global economic trends, climate change, a growing population, and high rate of urbanization threaten access to food, water, and forests. The Convention on Biological Diversity calls for conservation and sustainable use of the biodiversity and an equitable sharing of its benefits. Instruments like the Global Environmental Facility and bilateral Aid Programmes (NREG-SBS) are set up to assist developing countries with achieving the objectives. The initiatives under the Climate Change Convention are opening new opportunities that are attracting finance capital and initiatives to enhance the forest ecosystem (e.g. Carbon Trading, Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+), Clean Development Mechanism (CDM, Climate Change Adaptation). New regulatory standards are emerging which accommodates indigenous people's rights and local/community/ commons participation in natural resource management.

3.0 THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

3.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

3.1 The Forest and Wildlife Policy covers the laws, institutions, systems, organizations and individuals and how they interact for the conservation and sustainable development of forest and wildlife resources. It is also about the conservation of flora, and fauna and the provision of forest ecosystem services. The Policy also recognizes the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda and international guidelines and conventions, to which Ghana has ratified including the four global objectives on forests, non legal binding instruments on all types of forests and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Forest Policy framework.

3.2 The guiding principles of the Policy therefore incorporate the following:

- 3.2.1 Maintaining the ecological integrity of the forest and savannah ecosystems;
- 3.2.2 Employing multi-sectoral approaches to planning and management of forest and wildlife resources;
- 3.2.3 Recognizing multi-stakeholder interests in forests and wildlife and forging a common vision to protect, manage and use the resources;
- 3.2.4 Encouraging collaborative resource management among communities' government and other stakeholders;

- 3.2.4 Ensuring the capture of the contribution of the forest and wildlife sector in national development thereby integrating forest and wildlife issues into national development policies and programmes;
- 3.2.5 Integrating traditional and scientific knowledge to promote sustainable forest management;
- 3.2.6 Increasing forest and tree cover through afforestation and reforestation;
- 3.2.7 Promoting value addition of timber and non-timber forest resources;
- 3.2.8 Mainstreaming relevant international agreement and conventions into planning and management in the forestry sector;
- 3.2.9 Deepening decentralization of forest administrative functions;
- 3.2.10 Promoting public-private sector partnerships and investment in forestry sector;
- 3.2.11 Promoting capacity development for stakeholders in the forestry and wildlife sector;
- 3.2.12 Mainstreaming gender and vulnerability issues into forestry development planning and management;
- 3.2.13 Promoting transboundary, regional and international cooperation in forestry and wildlife management;
- 3.2.14 Promoting good governance in the forestry and wildlife sector;
- 3.2.15 Securing sustainable funding for the forestry and wildlife sector.

3.2 This policy further gives recognition to the common property issues associated with managing the off-reserve wildlife estate and the devolution of authority to an appropriate level for management. An integral part of this policy is a new governance system based on transparency, equity and the involvement of local people, especially forest-fringe communities.

4.0 THE FOREST AND WILDLIFE POLICY STATEMENT

4.1 AIM OF THE POLICY:

4.1.1 The policy aims at the conservation and sustainable development of forest and wildlife resources for the maintenance of environmental stability and continuous flow of optimum benefits from the socio-cultural and economic goods and services that the forest environment provides to the present and future generations whilst fulfilling Ghana's commitments under international agreements and conventions.

4.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

The specific objectives of the policy are:

- 4.2.1 To manage and enhance the ecological integrity of Ghana's forest, savannah, wetlands and other ecosystems for the preservation of vital soil and water resources, conservation of biological diversity, enhancing carbon stocks for sustainable production of domestic and commercial produce.
- 4.2.2 To promote the rehabilitation and restoration of degraded landscapes through plantations development and community forestry informed by appropriate land-use practices to enhance environmental quality and sustain the supply of raw materials for domestic and industrial consumption and for environmental protection
- 4.2.3 To promote the development of viable forest and wildlife based industries and livelihoods, particularly in the value added processing of forest and wildlife resources that satisfy domestic and international demand for competitively-priced quality products.
- 4.2.4 To promote and develop mechanisms for transparent governance, equity sharing and citizens' participation in forest and wildlife resource management.
- 4.2.5 To promote training, research and technology development that supports sustainable forest management whilst promoting information uptake both by forestry institutions and the general public.

5.0 POLICY STRATEGIES

5.1 The realization of the policy objectives would be guided by the following strategic directions and recommended strategies:

MANAGING AND ENHANCING THE ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY OF FOREST, SAVANNAH, WETLANDS AND OTHER ECOSYSTEMS.

Forest Ecosystem Management

5.2 Sustainable forest management will maintain the health of the forest to produce economically viable harvests, provide social and environmental benefits for now and the future. In ensuring sustainable forest ecosystem management, therefore the following strategic directions and actions would be pursued:

Strategic Direction 1.1: Manage gazetted Forest Reserves based on *forest management units (FMU)* system in line with national policies and legislation as well as international treaties that the country has ratified.

Policy Strategies

1.1.1 Strengthening the legal framework to give permanency to gazetted forest reserves, and Protected Areas (PAs) in order to conserve representative samples of major ecosystems and species (biodiversity) in the country. In doing this, the Government will:

- a) Develop and approve Forest Management Plans to cover all Gazetted Forest Reserves.
- b) Conclude legal processes for the reservation of all proposed forest reserve areas.
- c) Reduce as much as possible the prospecting and mining of mineral resources in gazetted Forest Reserves.

1.1.2. Promoting inter-sectoral collaboration among relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies concerned with sustainable management of forest ecosystems. This would be done by:

- a) Involving all stakeholders in forest management planning, policy formulation and decision-making.

- 1.1.3 Updating information and conducting biological inventories on forests on regular basis and monitoring the growth and health of the nation's forest and wildlife resources. This would be done by:
- a) regularly conducting forest inventory to support forest management policy;
 - b) developing framework (technical and legislative) for natural and artificial regeneration to ensure prompt establishment of a satisfactory growing stock to increase forest/tree cover;
 - c) supporting the development of techniques for natural and artificial regeneration.

Strategic Direction 1.2: Develop Off-reserve forest production areas with well-defined and clearly established objectives compatible with sustainable forest management principles

Policy Strategies

- 1.2.1 Continuously survey and inventory all off-reserve potential timber production areas, and constitute them into forest management units covered by forest management plans with active involvement of the local landowners.
- 1.2.2. Developing the capacities of decentralized local institutions including the District/Municipal/Metropolitan Assemblies, Traditional Authorities, and civil society organizations in sustainable "off-reserve" timber resources and non-timber forest products (NTFPs) management.
- 1.2.3 Updating information and conducting biological inventories on off reserved forests on regular basis and monitor the growth and health of the nation's forest and wildlife resources.

Strategic Direction 1.3: Establish network of national parks, sanctuaries and other protected areas to adequately conserve ecologically representative areas and biological corridors that maintain genetic continuity of flora and fauna.

Policy Strategies

- 1.3.1. Managing all National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Wildlife Resource Reserves and other Protected Areas (PAs) in accordance with the duly approved wildlife management plans to ensure comprehensive biodiversity conservation and

development in line with Government of Ghana's commitment to international conventions and protocols. In pursuance of this, the Government will:

- a) create biological corridors between existing networks of conservation areas to maintain genetic continuity of flora and fauna.
- b) increase community participation in wildlife management in all forest areas through appropriate participatory models such as the Community Resource Management Area (CREMA) concept for sustainable livelihood of fringe communities.
- c) develop incentive systems to promote investment in community-based eco-tourism and commercial wildlife conservation and development.

Strategic Direction 1.4 Sustainably manage and develop commercial woodfuel supplies and other non-timber forest products on both on-and-off-reserved forest areas.

Policy Strategies

1.4.1 Harvesting and production of woodfuels and other non-timber forest products (NTFP) would be done within sustainable limits on both reserve and off-reserve production areas. This will be achieved through the following actions:

- a) Enact the necessary legislation to support and ensure that forests, trees, wildlife and NTFPs on private and communal lands are managed according to the national forestry development objectives and resource owner's priorities.
- b) Develop Criteria and Indicators and a chain of custody to ensure that commercial production of woodfuels in forms of forests are sustainable.
- c) Enact the necessary legislation to ensure that commercial productions of woodfuels are certified by a National Woodfuel Accreditation Authority.
- d) Develop a national regulatory framework for the commercial exploitation of defined NTFPs at district levels.
- e) Promote research and development programmes for commercially viable NTFPs.

Strategic Direction 1.5: Promote the traditional autonomy for the protection and management of sacred forests and community dedicated forests for biological and cultural diversity on and off reserves.

Policy Strategies

1.5.1 Traditional sacred sites would be considered as part of the national Protected Areas and cultural heritage sites. In pursuance of this Government will:

- a) Review relevant legislation to recognize the rights of local people and the customs and belief systems that lead to the management of their sacred sites;
- b) ensure that economic and development planning authorities as well as other landuse agencies all levels of governance recognize sacred natural sites as legitimate landuse and their custodians as legitimate managers;
- c) document sacred natural sites of biological, spiritual, religious, cultural and heritage values whilst maintaining their secrecy where required.
- d) support the provision of livelihood systems (materially, socially and spiritually) for needy communities associated with significant sacred natural sites when the need arises.

1.5.2 Encouraging national planning agencies and protected area managers to engage with custodians of sacred natural sites to undertake best practices and support the development, testing, dissemination and implementation of relevant international and national agreements and guidance in accordance with international and local guidelines.

1.5.3 Supporting the establishment of a dedicated fund for the sustainable management of sacred natural sites.

Savannah Ecosystem Resources Management

5.3 The savannah ecosystem has served as a major water catchment area for the Volta River and its tributaries and the woodlands and the grasslands are good sources of woodfuel, biodiversity storage and grazing fields for livestock. However, the exploitation of the savannah natural resources is unsustainable without any form of management. The woodland lacks basic data on the structure, composition and density of species. There are no data on the supply of these resources to determine their sustainability. Most of the gazetted forest reserves in the savannah are without approved management plans to guide exploitation. Bushfires coupled

with unsustainable farming have contributed significantly to the fast deterioration of the woodlands.

5.4 This policy seeks to place the savannah ecosystem (coastal and northern) under sustainable management and the following strategies and actions would be pursued:

Strategic Direction 1.6 Develop systems and technologies for sustainable management of savannah woodland resources for environmental protection and enhance socio-economic development.

Policy Strategies

1.6.1 The savannah woodland resources would be considered as part of the national assets to be protected and managed. In pursuance of this efforts would be made to:

- a) support the formal and informal forestry sector institutions to develop systems and manuals of operation to guide the sustainable management of savannah woodland resources building on indigenous and scientific knowledge on sustainable resource management;
- b) develop systems and structures to support sustainable commercial establishment of commercial woodfuels plantations whilst targeting the implementation of savannah biodiversity conservation strategy.

1.6.2. The high incidence of indiscriminate wildfires in the savannah woodland would be brought under control with active involvement of land owners and resource users. In pursuance of efforts would be made to:

- a) develop sustainable wildfire management framework for the savannah areas with active involvement of landowners and resource users;
- b) provide incentive systems to implement the wildfire management plans;
- c) establish savannah eco-restoration fund to be accessed by civil society organizations and communities for tree planting along ecologically sensitive areas.

Wetlands Development

5.5 Ghana has been a signatory to the RAMSAR Convention, an international treaty focusing on the conservation of wetlands of international importance, since 1988. A major obligation

under the Convention is the implementation of the principle of 'wise use' of the wetlands resources, where "wise use" is understood to mean "***their sustained utilization for the benefit of humankind in a way compatible with the maintenance of the natural properties of the ecosystem***". Contracting Parties to the Convention are also required to integrate wetlands conservation issues into their national land-use planning policies.

5.6 To ensure the judicious use of the nation's land and all its natural resources Ghana has mainstreamed wetland management in its national landuse policy. In spite of this wetlands management are still unsustainable. This policy will seek to promote the use of wetlands for farming, grazing, fishing, timber production and salt-winning, provided that such uses also serve to conserve the ecosystem, biodiversity and sustainable productivity of the wetland.

Strategic Direction 1.7 Promote sustainable management of mangroves to safeguard the wetlands and also protect endangered species like the marine turtles

Policy Strategy

- 1.7.1 Enacting legislation to support the implementation of the national wetland conservation strategy.
- 1.7.2 Supporting the mainstreaming of wetland management in district and community level natural resource management planning.

Response to climate change

5.6 Climate change is becoming an increasing threat to livelihoods and social and economic development in Ghana. The Government of Ghana (GoG) is fully committed to mitigating these effects, as well as preparing measures to adapt to these changes. The government through the Forestry Commission and a multi-stakeholder Steering Committee comprised of participants from relevant ministries, civil society and the private sector, are working to engage with both national and international actors in preparing Ghana's national strategy in response to the climatic changes.

5.7 In pursuance of this objective, the following policy direction and strategies would be followed:

Strategic Direction 1.8 Develop capacities in public institutions and civil societies to engage in future international and domestic mechanisms that will respond to climate change.

Policy Strategies

- 1.8.1 Conscious efforts would be made to respond to the threats and risks posed by climate change. Efforts would be made to:
- a) Enacting the necessary legislations to guide allocation of carbon rights and related matters.
 - b) Supporting training and education in forest resource management at district levels in carbon rights allocations.
 - c) Creating national awareness about the role of forests in climate change (mitigation and adaptation)

PROMOTING THE REHABILITATION AND RESTORATION OF DEGRADED LANDSCAPES THROUGH PLANTATIONS DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY

5.8 Large tracts of forest lands are degraded and need to be rehabilitated. There is the broad acceptance that plantations will require both public and private sector initiative with better information dissemination about the contribution of plantations to reverse land degradation, restore forest cover and improve rural livelihood and food security through agro-forestry schemes.

5.9 The current plantation effort has been designed to ensure the involvement of government and private organizations and communities. However, sustainable and profitable plantation forestry will be achieved through greater government and private sector capital investment. The follow the policy direction and strategies will be followed:

Strategic Direction 2.1 Develop systems and incentive packages to support public, private sector and community investment in reforestation and forest plantation development in degraded priority forest areas and private/community lands.

Policy Strategies

- 2.1.1 Developing and implementing a National Reforestation Plan with realistic annual targets based on best practices and updated plantation information for both the savannah and forest areas. In pursuance of this, efforts would be made to:
- a) Promoting community and private sector investments in Forest Plantations establishment for multiple functionality including biodiversity, agriculture productivity and soil and water conservation.
 - b) Reviewing the Plantation Development Fund to set up and operate a National Reforestation Fund indexed to the exploitation of timber and wildlife resources

and managed by an independent reforestation board and operating through a national commercial bank with flexible terms of lending.

PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF VIABLE FOREST AND WILDLIFE BASED INDUSTRIES AND LIVELIHOODS, PARTICULARLY IN THE VALUE ADDED PROCESSING OF FOREST AND WILDLIFE RESOURCES.

5.10 The socio-economic importance of forest based industries to the national economy cannot be overemphasized. This policy will therefore seek to promote the establishment of a modern efficient timber and non-timber forest products' industry that will maximize the forest and wildlife resources to ensure a balance between the industrial capacity and the sustainability of the resource and contribute significantly to wellbeing of the rural dwellers. The following policy direction and strategies will be followed:

Strategic Direction 3.1 Support the development and modernization of the tertiary wood Industries

Policy Strategies

- 3.1.1. Facilitating the technological improvements and retooling to increase competitiveness; reduce waste and promote value-addition through high quality secondary and tertiary processing. In support of this, efforts will be made to:
- a) Setting up standards and regulations to govern the operations of the small and medium scale forest enterprises including the development of the informal wood sector.
 - b) Enacting the necessary legislation to regulate the production and trade of legal/ (sustainable) lumber whilst promoting the development of the domestic wood market.
 - c) Supporting specialized training and craftsmanship schemes for wood processing, bamboo, rubber wood, cane and rattan and lesser-known tree and NTFP species as a means of reducing reliance on chainsaw lumber.
 - d) Developing a public procurement policy on timber and timber product for the domestic market
 - e) Exploring possibilities of the importation of logs sawn timber and veneers for further domestic processing.
- 3.1.2 Facilitating the setting up and development of funding initiatives to support the retooling and technological improvements in the tertiary wood sector to improve on efficiency.

Strategic Direction 3.2 Promote the development of the wildlife based industries

Policy Strategies

3.2.1 Building partnerships to enforce the ban on hunting of all protected wildlife species in Ghana whilst re-establishing the control over bushmeat hunting to bring these activities to a sustainable level through training/capacity development. In pursuance of this efforts will be made to:

- a) Collaborate with Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations in implementing programmes and liaising between government and rural people by intensifying the national awareness campaign about bush-meat and hunting issues and supporting investments in commercial captive breeding (domestication) of wildlife in heavy demand for export and domestic markets.

PROMOTING AND DEVELOPING MECHANISMS FOR TRANSPARENT GOVERNANCE, EQUITY SHARING AND PEOPLES PARTICIPATION IN FOREST AND WILDLIFE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

5.11 The current collaborative approach involves consultation, needs assessment, investigation, synthesis and consensus building aimed at ensuring equity and the fair distribution of benefits and efficiency in the execution of forest management prescriptions. The Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) approach adopts the learning-up process, which concentrates on devising effective strategies at the conceptual stages, reviewing the effective phase to make it more efficient and finally expanding the lessons learnt to cover the target area. Consultations have been done at both the strategic and operational levels of forest management. Unfortunately, there are no legislative supports for the collaborative forest management.

Strategic Direction 4.1: Institute transparency, equity and legalize public participation in sustainable forest and wildlife resources management.

Policy Strategies

4.1.1 Enacting the necessary legislation and regulations to facilitate and enhance local participation and control through decentralization of forestry operations at the district level. In pursuance of this Government will:

- a) Develop sustainable institutional frameworks for effective participation of key stakeholders in forest and wildlife resource management and governance.
- b) Enact the legislations that will enable communities and individuals to benefit from trees on their farms and fallow lands, provide off-reserve tree tenure security, authority to legally dispose of resources and allocate greater proportion of benefits accruing from resource management to community members individually or collectively.
- c) Establish and make accessible a stable source of financial support for building capacity and attitudinal changes of community institutions.
- d) Support local communities and Non-Governmental Organizations including women and youth to receive training that will allow them to meet their objective and assume optimal management responsibilities.

4.1.2 Enacting legislation to support the allocation of all timber resources (and other natural resources where appropriate) through transparent competitive bidding and continuous auditing of the forest utilization operations to ensure compliance with forest management specification and environmental protection standards. Efforts will be put in place to:

- a. Ensure increased institutional transparency, consistency, and credibility so as to foster responsiveness, accountability and the rule of law in forest and wildlife resource management.
- b. Allocate and define property rights (land and tree tenure rights, intellectual property rights), and rules that define permissible and non-permissible forms of cooperation and competition (licensing laws, laws of contract and liability, company and cooperative laws, anti-trust laws);
- c. Rationalize forest fees and taxation systems and improvement of the framework for apportioning, recovering and distributing equitably and effectively forest rent (royalties) between the resource owners, state and the users of the resources through consultative processes.
- d. Build partnerships for the effective collection of stumpage, fees and taxes as by law defined.
- e. Set up improved tracking system for exploited forest products (forest, wood fuels, wildlife, biodiversity, medicinal plants, and other non-timber forest products) to establish legal origin of these products.
- f. Define forest and tree tenure rights in all kinds of forests and ownership systems.

PROMOTING TRAINING, RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT THAT SUPPORTS SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT.

5.12 Research and training are the twin pillars for sustainable forestry development. Given the emerging importance of environmental services and participatory governance, there is the need to strengthen capacity in resource economics, policy impact analysis, and genetic engineering in addition to traditional disciplines relevant for sustainable forest management. Forestry research and education will be in line with national priorities and development programmes whilst taking advantage of emerging global technologies.

5.13 Conservation education will seek i) to increase peoples' awareness of the value of natural resources now and in the future, ii) to show people what threatens the well-being of their environment and how they can contribute to its improved management, iii) motivate them to change their behavior/attitude in a way that leads to improved environmental management.

5.14 The policy strategic directions and strategies to be pursued are:

Strategic Direction 5.1 Support the uptake and dissemination of information built on indigenous and scientific knowledge to improve on the management of forest and wildlife resources.

Policy Strategies

5.1.1. Updating infrastructure for research, education and training at all levels of management in the forest and savannah ecosystems. In pursuance of this, the policy will:

- a) Encourage institutions of higher learning and corporate bodies to integrate indigenous and scientific knowledge in forest and wildlife management.
- b) Promote targeted research in forest and wildlife issues and support the publication and dissemination of results to increase awareness.
- c) Update forest information database to monitor sustainable forest management and establish forest and wildlife research funds which research and academic institutions, as well as civil society can access.
- d) Build national capacity for accurate accounting and timely collection of resource production and utilization of data to be linked up with macro-economic data.
- e) Support the development of research infrastructure for the savannah ecosystem

- f) Promote sectoral and cross-sectoral institutional collaboration to generate and share information to improve forest policy and management.

Strategic Direction 5.2: Increase Public Education and Create Awareness on the Value and Multiple Uses and benefits of Forests

Policy Strategies

5.2.1. Initiating steps to intensify public education on the links between natural resources, over-exploitation, environmental degradation, and community poverty. In pursuing this strategy, Government will:

- a) Build capacities of communities, including the youth and women, to enhance their participation in sustainable resource management.
- b) Disseminate information on forestry events, issues and trends to allow informed participation by the wider public as well as the forest fringe communities.
- c) Provide advisory services through a dynamic forestry extension service to promote social acceptance of forestry.

Strategic Direction 5.3: Support Research and Development to enhance efficiency in the wildlife industries

Policy Strategies

5.3.1 Setting up a support system to promote research in packaging and selling of wildlife on the export market.

6.0 SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FOREST AND WILDLIFE POLICY OBJECTIVES AND PROGRAMMES

6.1 The implementation of this policy will be through the formulation and implementation of a comprehensive 20-year Forestry Development Master Plan to fit into the national poverty reduction strategy. The following strategic directions and policy actions would be pursued to guide the implement this policy

Strategic Direction 6.1 Stimulate political and institutional support for the implementation of the forest and wildlife policies and programmes at all levels of governance.

Policy Strategies

In pursuance of this policy direction Government will:

6.1.1 Institute an annual forestry forum where all stakeholders will meet to review actions and plan programmes. The necessary legislation to include a representative of cross-section of stakeholders in policy-making to support conservation initiatives will be enacted.

6.1.2 Decentralize forestry governance system to locality levels to ensure transparency, accountability and equity and to define the roles of Traditional Authorities, local government (District Assemblies), NGOs, Community based organizations (CBOs) in forest and wildlife management.

6.1.3 Enact specific legal provisions governing the establishment and management of Protected Areas; integrate forest law into Judicial and Law enforcement training programmes and clarify and consolidate forest related laws and regulations into Forest Law.

Strategic Direction 6.2 Develop sustainable and predictable financing instruments to support forestry sector activities

Policy Strategies

6.2.1 Developing forestry financial mechanisms towards the achievement of more secure, predictable funding sources for the sector. In developing this framework the policy will:

- a) Strengthen the revenue management of the forestry sector institutions
- b) Conduct a strategic review of forest regulations and the operations of the Forestry Commission with the view to ceding out, where necessary, the current public sector activities that the private sector has the comparative advantage.
- c) Develop a 20-year forestry and wildlife environmental governance support programme to deliver reform, long-term, sustained multi-donor commitment to the sector.

- d) Set up a trust fund board to manage grant and trust funds to provide flexible source of funding for (i) communities in support of establishing CREMAs, dedicated forests and similar opportunities and (ii) advocacy organizations that hold government more accountable

Appendix 1: Glossary and Definition of Terminologies

Biological Diversity: The variability among living organisms from all sources including inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems

Forest Management Unit (FMU) a clearly defined area with mapped boundaries, managed by a single managerial body to set of explicit objectives which are expressed in a self-contained multi-year management plan

Non-timber Forest products: All forest products except timber including other materials obtained from tree such as resins and leave as well as any other plant and animal

Wetland' groups together a wide range of habitats that share common features, the most important of which is continuous, seasonal or periodic standing water or saturated soils

Strict Nature Reserve: Generally, relative small areas containing fragile habitats, outstanding ecosystems or natural features in and/or Natural features in a relatively undisturbed state and which are prime representatives of the scientific study, monitoring, education or conservation of biological or cultural resources. Such areas are to be maintained in an evolutionary dynamic state and will require strict protection with minimal human disturbance, i.e. no management interventions will generally be permitted. Tourism, recreation and public access will be generally proscribed except for educational, scientific and cultural reasons, when only non mechanized access will be allowed.

National Park: Generally, large and relatively undisturbed areas of outstanding natural containing representative samples of major natural regions, features or scenery and containing one or several entire ecosystems and not materially altered by man (or reflecting long-standing cultural land management practices). The areas should be accessible to the public have high recreational, educational, inspirational and cultural potential of clear benefit to the local people, the region and the nation. The WD will administer and manage these areas so as to prevent or eliminate exploitation or intensive occupation in order that they might be maintained in perpetuity in national or near natural state.

Wildlife Sanctuary: Relatively small areas used to protect plant or animal species, either resident or migratory, of exceptional conservation interest, from any form of destruction. Such species will be protected from any form of exploitation which is inconsistent with their conservation status, except where that intervention is necessary to secure the continued survival of particular species. These areas are opened to public access for cultural, touristic, education, scientific, spiritual or inspiration reasons. Forms of traditional land use which are compatible with and will contribute to the conservation objectives will be encouraged. Some of the traditional sacred formally gazetted or registered; central government's legal support would thereby be extended to local and traditional institutions to ensure the continued protection of such sites.

RAMSAR Site: A wetland set aside for conservation because of its international importance according to set criteria. They are normally managed to provide maximum benefit to the local communities living within and around the area.

wetland' groups together a wide range of habitats that share common features, the most important of which is continuous, seasonal or periodic standing water or saturated soils

Appendix 2: Conventions and International Treaties that Ghana is a Signatory (Environment and Forestry Related Conventions)

Conventions + national planning frameworks + Treaties	Description /Date of ratification/completion
UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	August 29, 1994 Conservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilisation of genetic resources
CBD National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)	August 29, 1994
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)	June 09, 1995 To stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.
UNFCCC National Communications (1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd)	May 1-2 2001
UNFCCC Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMA)	November 2010
UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)	December 27, 1996
UNCCD National Action Programmes (NAP)	April 2002 To combat desertification and mitigate effects of drought in countries experiencing serious drought and/ or desertification, especially in Africa, through effective action at all levels, supported by international cooperation and partnership arrangements.

World Bank Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)	February 19, 2003 & November 2005
Strategic Action Programmes (SAPs) for shared international water-bodies	May 2006
The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) based in Yokohama, Japan;	An international organization made of producers and consumers of tropical timber
International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA)	18 November 1983
The African Timber Organization (ATO) based in Libreville, Gabon;	This is association of timber producing countries on the African continent
	March 1973
The Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES);	This is to monitor international trade in endangered species and in species that may become threatened with extinction due to international trade, maintain those species in ecological balance and assist contracting parties towards sustainable use of species through international trade
Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species and of Wild Animals	23 June 1979

