

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****GHANA LAUNCHES TIMBER TRANSPARENCY PORTAL**

**Accra, 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2018.** Ghana has launched the **Ghana Timber Transparency Portal**, a public portal that provides access to information on logging in Ghana. The portal can be accessed by all stakeholders both in and beyond Ghana in real time via the url: [www.ghanatimbertransparency.info](http://www.ghanatimbertransparency.info). This is part of governance reforms in the forest sector happening as a result of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) signed between Ghana and the European Union in 2009.

This interactive public portal provides information on the various valid logging permits, timber logging companies and their areas of operation; information on exports of timber from Ghana, and other periodic reports that are generated from time to time. This public portal links to the electronic Ghana Wood Tracking System (GWTS), which is a complete database of information on timber production process in Ghana. The Ghana Timber Transparency Portal is expected to be expanded to include other relevant public information on forest management and timber logging in Ghana.

This timber portal draws inspiration from Article 16 of the VPA and Regulation 76 of the recently passed Timber Resources Management and Legality Licencing Regulations 2017 (LI 2254), which commits the Forestry Commission to proactively share information on forest management with the public. The launch of this portal demonstrates the advancement in good forest governance by the Ghana Forestry Commission (FC) despite the lack of progress in a national Right to Information law.

“Without credible information, it is not possible for local communities or Civil Society to work to address illegalities in the forest sector. Therefore, the development of the portal comes as good news to Civil Society, and also demonstrates the commitment of the FC to be open about forest management,” Samuel Mawutor, Co-ordinator of Forest Watch Ghana, said.

The Ghana Timber Transparency Portal was developed as a result of collaboration between Civic Response (a leading natural resource and environmental governance policy advocacy organisation in Ghana) and the FC under the auspices of the former’s Civil Society-led Independent Forest Monitoring (CSIFM) Project with funding from the EU, Swedish International Cooperation Agency and UKAid under the FAO-EU FLEGT Programme.

Signed

Albert Katako

Head of Programme, Civic Response