

# FORIG NEWS

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## First National Forestry Conference in Pictures

# FORIG NEWS

Forestry Research Institute of Ghana

Volume 8, Issue 2 May -Sept. 2014

## FIRST NATIONAL FORESTRY CONFERENCE

A three-day National Forestry Conference to commemorate 100 years of forestry practice and 50 years of forestry research in Ghana was held from 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2014. Over 150 participants convened at CSIR-Forestry Research Institute of Ghana, Kumasi for this first National Forestry Conference with the theme: *“The Contribution of Forests to Ghana’s Economic Development”*.

### Purpose of the Conference

The purpose of the conference was to offer opportunity for scientists, researchers, forest managers and policy makers to share information and appraise their contribution to national development. The overall goal of the conference was to highlight the role of forests and woodlands on livelihoods, environmental management and economic development in Ghana and the expected future contribution in the light of current challenges.



Dr. Tia Alfred Sugri, Deputy Minister (MESTI)

Participants explored a broad range of current and emerging issues of importance for the future of forests; and their capacity to provide the environmental, economic, social, cultural and health benefits that sustain rural and urban societies in Ghana.

### Highlights of the Conference

The Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR), Ms. Babara Serwaah Asamoah stated that a sober reflection on the status of Ghana’s forest cover is urgently needed in order to chart a new path in which the country can harness collective knowledge and capabilities for the needed socio-economic development. She also said the objectives of the conference as spelt out in five thematic areas were directly in line with key national development objectives the Government of Ghana is pursuing. When stressing on the importance of the conference, Ms. Asamoah emphasized significant improvement in the performance of the economy over the last two decades. She however quickly added that a number of macroeconomic and structural challenges have limited the capacity of the economy to be able to achieve the desired sustainable improvements in the livelihoods of Ghanaians. In her concluding remarks, Ms. Asamoah said in order to address the challenges of the sector, MLNR has identified three broad areas which require the attention of natural resource managers and foresters as follows:

- ⇒ Securing and protecting the forest and wildlife resources,
- ⇒ Developing the forest resource base; and
- ⇒ Maximizing revenue and benefit flows from the resources.

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“Ghana’s forestry, wildlife and mining sectors account for a significant proportion of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP); and have played important roles in Ghana’s recent impressive growth rates of approximately 6% per year.” Those were the words of the Deputy Minister of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) Hon. Dr. Tia Alfred Sugri who delivered the keynote address at the Forestry Conference. The speaker mentioned that the main thrusts of MESTI in addressing the challenge of environmental degradation is the application of science, technology and innovation to ensure there is sustainable extraction and utilization of natural resources, including forests, while ensuring minimal environmental damage.

Dr. Sugri further noted the role of research in the economic prosperity currently enjoyed by all developed nations. History, he said indicated that countries that have embraced well focused research policies have succeeded in creating competitive economies. It was in this light that MESTI is encouraging CSIR, GAEC and other scientific bodies to undertake research which has direct impact on economic development of the country.

The Hon. Deputy Minister ended his delivery by imploring all in attendance to address issues including:

- ⇒ The need to minimize environmental impacts associated with mining and mineral exploitation; and
- ⇒ The possibility of effectively integrating the mining sector more efficiently into Ghana’s economy

Another crucial matter deliberated on by conference participants included the need to enhance goods and services from forests and trees in Ghana’s forest landscapes. In this era of reformation, new perceptions of responsibilities and planetary stewardship that target the next generation of Scientists, Forest Managers and Policy Makers are prerequisites for meeting local livelihood needs and enhancing biodiversity and environmental goods and services.

### Excerpts of Conference Resolution

At the close of the three-day Forestry Conference, participants resolved to do the following:

- ⇒ Adopt people-centred approaches to forest manage-

- ⇒ ment, forest research and education focusing on environmental, social and economic pillars;
- ⇒ Expand the scope of forest research, training and education to address issues relevant to global sustainability including land use, livelihoods and environmental issues;
- ⇒ Increase information sharing and knowledge management by fostering stronger collaboration and cooperation amongst policy makers, forest managers, traditional authorities, forest fringe communities and forest and wood industry operators in the planning and management of forest resources;

In order to make progress on these, the Conference urges the Government of Ghana through MLNR and relevant agencies to effectively address the following issues:

- ⇒ Policies and associated governance frameworks should recognize local people as users and beneficiaries of forest and tree resources;
- ⇒ Governance frameworks should provide for conflict resolution, equitable sharing of benefits and gender equity through adequate policies including locally-relevant incentives. Accordingly, existing benefit sharing schemes in the forestry sector should be revised to make forest management relevant to the needs of land owners and forest fringe communities;
- ⇒ Government should make it possible to effectively address competing land uses;
- ⇒ The Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and Forestry Commission should ensure the immediate re-introduction of technical /vocational level forestry training for the development of middle-level personnel for the forestry sector.

The conference was jointly organized and sponsored by Ghana Forestry Commission (FC), CSIR-Forestry Research Institute of Ghana (FORIG), Forestry Research Network of Sub-Saharan Africa (FORNESSA), College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR) of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Tropenbos International (TBI) - Ghana, Ghana Timber Millers’ Organization (GTMO), Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR), and the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI).

## TDTC ORGANISES WORKSHOP AND BUSINESS SEMINAR

The Technology Development and Transfer Centre (TDTC), in an effort to support the technology transfer drive of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) organised a two-day training workshop from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2014. Selected scientists from CSIR-Building and Road Research Institute of Ghana (BRRI), CSIR-Crops Research Institute (CRI), and Forestry Research Institute of Ghana (FORIG) participated in the workshop which was held at BRRI, in Kumasi.

### Purpose of Training Workshop

The expected outcomes of the workshop were:

- Sensitize trainees on TDTC project objectives, outputs and outcomes;
- Adequately educate trainees on technology marketing and technology partnerships;
- Adequately educate trainees on collaboration agreements and technology licensing;
- Enable trainees have a hands-on application of knowledge acquired through group work on selected CSIR technologies.

### Objectives of TDTC

In his opening remarks, Dr. G. O. Essegbey, Project Coordinator (TDTC) and Director of CSIR-STEPRI indicated that the Technology Development and Transfer Centre aims at promoting partnership between CSIR and the private sector. It is an undisputed fact that technologies developed by CSIR Research Institutes still sit on shelves probably because of the existing gap between research institutions and the private sector.



Participants of TDTC Training Workshop

Dr. G. O. Essegbey during his presentation



CSIR-FORIG Team

The TDTC is committed to addressing

the gap through a number of measures, such as:

- Create a sustainable system for partnerships;
- Develop and implement a new technology transfer system linked to existing structures;
- Ensure effective development and transfer of innovations to the private sector;
- Operate a grant scheme to enable researchers work on various technologies that need to be marketed to the private sector.

### Highlights of Presentations

“CSIR sustainability and / or recognition depends on the degree and form of interaction between CSIR and the society we serve.” Those were the words of Dr. J. R. Cobbinah, former Director of CSIR-FORIG and now a contract staff who spoke on the issue “*Collaborations and Technology Licensing*.” In his delivery, Dr. Cobbinah stated that since knowledge is of little value unless it is communicated, every researcher’s daily concern should be on how technologies generated by the researcher is being transferred to communities; and whether it meets the needs and aspirations of the society.

The speaker in his presentation made reference to a study conducted by Cobbinah (2010) wherein, it was observed that the link between CSIR-FORIG and key industry players was not very strong. Factors that accounted for the weak link were ineffective institutional arrangements, insufficient interaction between researchers and users of research results in the planning, implementation and development of technologies, and timeliness of technologies to solve existing problems.

Dr. Cobbinah stressed on the urgent need for CSIR to market developed technologies; highlighting the role of collaboration in this area. "Collaboration is no longer an option, it is a must", said the speaker. He concluded by elaborating on the benefits of collaboration, some of which include:

- Encourages dialogue and avoids duplication
- Facilitates access to strategic information
- Facilitates collective learning
- Shares operational and technological development

Mrs. Josephine Okutu, former Commercial Director of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research deliberated on "**Technology Marketing**" and indicated that henceforth, research institutes should develop technologies from

the marketing perspective in order to address private sector needs for the ultimate well-being of society. Mrs. Okutu also gave an extensive delivery on technology development process, as well as the merits and demerits of various forms of partnerships. Participants, in addition to theoretical work had a practical feel of developing and marketing a product / technology by means of group assignments and presentations. Dr. (Mrs.) Apetorgbor, Dr. Paul Bosu, Dr. Joseph Mireku-Asomaning, Mr. Bukari Darimani and Mrs. Naomi Appiah represented CSIR-FORIG.

### **Business Seminar**

A day after the training workshop, the TDTC organised a one-day business seminar for potential private investors / users of CSIR technologies; on the premises of BRRI in Kumasi. The seminar created the opportunity for CSIR Research Scientists to interact with the Private Sector and share ideas on finding appropriate solutions to private sector technological needs.

A total of ten (10) customers / users of CSIR-FORIG technologies from various organisations such as FORM Ghana, SOLIDARIDAD, MOFA, TIDD and others participated in the seminar.

## **WOOD ANATOMY TRAINING WORKSHOP**

**C**SIIR-Forestry Research Institute of Ghana (FORIG) hosted a three-day International Wood Anatomy Training Workshop from 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2014. Over fifty participants from seven countries including Kenya, DR Congo, Gabon, Cameroon, Germany, The United States of America and Ghana attended the workshop which was sponsored by Thünen Institute of Forest Genetics (TI), International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and CSIR-FORIG.

The training workshop was part of the ITTO funded project "**Development and implementation of a species identification and timber tracking systems in Africa with DNA fingerprints and stable isotopes PD 620/11M (Rev.1)**".

The workshop focused on state of the art technologies for tracking legal timber to build local and regional capacity in the identification of timber species that would track illegal timber trade. Training sessions were held in areas of wood anatomy and microsatellites use. Dr. A. A. Oteng-Amoako (CSIR-FORIG), Dr. Shelly Gardne (US Forest Service), Ms. Paulinir Maike (TI) and Mr. Volker Hagg (TI) served as resource persons for the wood anatomy and microsatellites training.

An equipment for wood anatomy with micro-satellite use on barcoding was demonstrated to trainees, and the purpose was to equip participants with the needed skills in utilizing the equipment for identification.

Immediately following the “Wood Anatomy” training workshop was a seminar on “Timber tracking based on wood anatomy, isotopes and DNA fingerprints”; which was held on 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2014.

## TWO REGIONAL WORKSHOPS HELD

Many nations, including the coastal countries of West Africa are engaged in REDD+ readiness and are preparing national forest monitoring systems for monitoring and reporting changes in forest carbon stocks. Forest monitoring systems would incorporate the design of forest inventories to track and monitor other forest resources such as timber; and improve regional collaboration in order to have comparable and accurate data available.

The first workshop for forest monitoring and regional collaboration in West Africa was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2014 at CSIR-FORIG. Twenty four participants from over seven African countries were in attendance.

CSIR-FORIG hosted a four-day regional technical workshop on “*Tree Volume and Biomass Allometric Equations in West Africa*” from 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2014. The objective of the workshop was to identify gaps in knowledge and the need for information on tree volume and biomass allometric equations in West Africa. Twenty five participants shared experiences on the development of guidelines, technical requirements and actions needed to assess volume, biomass and carbon stocks in West Africa. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and CSIR-Forestry Research Institute of Ghana, with support from the UN-REDD Programme sponsored the workshop.

## SWST VISITING SCIENTISTS' AWARD

**D**r. Stephen Tekpetey of the Forest Industry Development Division of CSIR-FORIG undertook a four-month professional visit to the United States of America from April to July, 2013. He was the sole awardee from Ghana approved by the society. His visit was sponsored by the Society of Wood Science and Technology (SWST), USA; an organisation which provides financial support to members to visit laboratories and academic institutions in advanced countries through its International Professional Visit Programme.

### The Visit

The purpose of the visit was to expose him to best practices and state-of-the-art facilities in forest product processing and utilisation. At the State University of New York, Syracuse (SUNY), Dr. Tekpetey attended the ENS 296 Sustainable Living Class, toured a number of laboratories such as the NC. Brown Center for Ultrastructure Studies, visited wood testing facilities at the Department of Paper and Bioprocess Engineering, Tropical Timber Information Centre which hosts the C. deZeeuw Memorial Library and reference wood specimens of the H. P. Brown Memorial Wood Collection.

Dr. Tekpetey made a number of presentations such as “*Exploring the potentials of bamboo resources as a renewable and eco-friendly resource for greener construction*” and “*Sustainable utilisation of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) in a changing world: A focus on bamboo resources*”. It is hoped that the knowledge and experience acquired and shared during the visit will enhance research at CSIR-Forestry Research Institute of Ghana.



Dr. S. Tekpetey during his presentation



## ITTO & IUFRO CORNER

### ITTO Meetings

**28 January, 2015**

2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Western Forest Industry Conference: Mapping the Course—Timberlands, Forest Products Processing and Energy Issues for 2015

Vancouver, WA, USA

**Contact:** Richard Zabel

Email: richard@westernforestry.org)

### IUFRO Meetings

**16-19 March 2015**

Silviculture and Management of Dryland Forests

Stellenbosch/Western Cape, South Africa

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