

## Ghana becomes the first country to sign a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the EU, in an effort to reduce illegal logging

*On the 3rd September 2008, Ghana became the first country to sign a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the European Union. The agreement aims to stem illegal logging, promote good governance in forest management practices and ensure that timber exported from Ghana to the EU has been legally sourced.*

*For the purposes of the agreement, the Government of Ghana in consultation with the private sector and civil society representatives, defined which timber can be regarded as 'legal' based on existing Ghanaian forest laws and policies. The agreement introduces a 'legality assurance scheme', which enables Ghana to identify and licence timber as legal for the EU and other markets. The agreement has been developed with the participation of civil society groups and recognises communities' rights over their land and resources, as well as the need for forest law reform.*

*Ghana has been working towards this agreement for three years. FRR, a division of theIDLgroup has been supporting Ghana in its negotiations with the EU throughout this process, through its work on Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT).*

