



**Forest Policy and Environment Group
Overseas Development Institute**

Project Title: Understanding and addressing the constraints to and information needs for evidence based policy in Ghana

Year / Time Period: July to September 2005

Country: Ghana

Client: ODI Civil Society Strengthening Programme (DFID PPA)

Partners: Civic Response Ghana

Objectives:

This 'collaborative project' between Civic Response and ODI aimed to provide case-study material on, and improve ODI's understanding of, the ways in which environmental CSOs in Ghana use research to promote policy and ways in which constraints that they face in doing so can be tackled. Through the action research methods which will be used, this project also aims to engage in capacity building of the CSOs involved.

Policy Relevance:

Civil society activism over socio-economic rights issues in Ghana has increased significantly. National-level coalitions addressing gender, water, forestry, mining and broadcast rights for example have emerged. These augment traditional "membership" movements focused on labour, student, disabled, gender and other rights. The success of this surge of activism could transform Ghana's civic and political culture and accelerate the realisation of the 1992 Republican Constitution. The collapse of promising coalitions such as "Sisters' Keepers" and the "National Resources Platform" suggest the lack of consistent capacity to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate their campaigns. In addition the use of empirical data to inform these campaigns may, in many cases, be limited leading to problematic policy formulation. Reasons for the limited use of empirical data in policy influence are diverse: ranging from a lack of available data, limited analytical capacity, the influence of the agendas of funding agencies, and the manipulation of campaign discourse by interest groups such as urban elites or private sector issues. Further analysis would add to an understanding of this issue and thus address ways in which the use of empirical data in CSO campaigning can be increased.

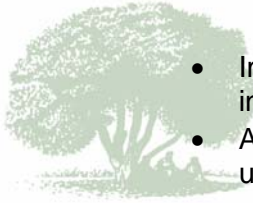
Civic Response is developing a programme on Socio-economic Rights Advocacy (SERA) which seeks to strengthen the contribution of activism to democracy and development. The goal of SERA is to bring about "more effective socio-economic rights advocacy". One network in which Civic Response is active is **Forest Watch Ghana (FWG)**, which is a new coalition of six Ghanaian civil society organisations with an interest in rights and forestry. FWG has already made an impact in national policy circles by questioning the government, through the national press, over its forest concession policy and the allocation of national forest revenues.

Results:

Research is on going

Proposed Outputs:

- Case-studies on the way in which research is used by CSOs to influence policy in Ghana
- Identification of the constraints and information needs which CSOs face in basing campaigns on empirical data
- Recommendations on methodologies, tools and strategies for increasing the evidence base to campaigning by CSOs



- Improved understanding and capacity of CSOs to use both local and international research-based evidence to inform policy makers.
- A summary of lessons on CSO information needs and how CSOs can best use evidence to maximise impact