



**REPORT ON THE
ELEVENTH (11TH) CIVIL SOCIETY ANNUAL REVIEW FORUM ON THE
NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT SECTOR
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS**



Theme: “Non-State Actors Partnership on Sustainable NRE Governance in Ghana within the context of Climate Change”

NOVEMBER 23rd, 2020

VENUE: Coconut Grove Regency Hotel, Accra

By Ama Kudom-Agyemang



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Preamble

This year 2020, we want to introduce a change in our approach to NREG issues in Ghana. We realise from the community level where the resources are mostly located and found, private sector is actively involved in the extraction of the resources for their business purposes. So we thought that for our recommendations to be effective and impactful especially at the community level, partnering with the private sector is the way to go, so that the best practices that we always talk about can be discussed directly with the private sector, for the effect to be seen on the ground.

We realise that climate change is a cross cutting issue that affect the work of both, we the conservation CSOs and private sector as well, because of their resource sourcing issues. So we picked up a discussion with Private Enterprises Federation (PEF), which is the apex body that coordinate the activities of private sector form the communities. We believe that once we pick up this dialogue with them from the national level, it will trickle down to what happens at the community level. We all interrogate the best practices that we talk about as conservationists and see how it relates to the sustainability of the work of the private sector in the community. So this is the kind of engagement we want to continuously have with the private sector, so that their operations, in the communities where the natural resources are located, become more sustainable and benefit the community, environment and private sector as well, because of the win-win approach that we are adopting in some of the engagements.

This is a process we have just begun and it's less than one year. So each group has its perceptions about each other. We need to agree on common best practices that works for everybody. Initially, it will be challenging, but we believe with continuous dialogue we will get to the objective of this initiative that we've put together.

So the 23rd November meeting was the first time a big group like PEF partnered with a whole CSO sector on NRE issues. And we believe as we continue to engage and dialogue it will become better. Of course we will give ourselves a big mark for even convening this meeting and making it happen in the first place.

The half-day novel forum marked a change in focus and form. For the first time in the history of the CSO Annual NRE Reciew, its focus shifted from a typical review of Natural Resources Environment (NRE) to Strategic Partnership between CSOs and private sector actors. The move marks a paradigm shift aimed at building consensus based on a common understanding of the need to sustainably manage the nation's natural resources for mutual benefits. This move also properly aligns Kasa to several of the SDGs.

In view of this, the usual Annual General Meeting (AGM) held alongside the review, did not take place. However, it was a remarkable beginning of new chapter for CSOs in NRE – A partnership with the private sector.

Jonathan Gokah
Kasa National Coordinator

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Kasa is a civil society support mechanism aimed at promoting evidence-based research and advocacy in the Natural Resource and Environment sector. *The Kasa mechanism was necessitated by the fact that, even though Ghana is endowed with natural resources, the country's economic model continues to increase her dependence on her natural wealth. This has placed premium on resource extraction associated with increased environmental cost that exacerbates poverty among the people, which if not addressed by the state could create a situation where the cost would outweigh the benefits.*

The Kasa initiative started in August 2008 as a two-year pilot to build capacity of civil society networks, coalitions and media groups to effectively engage with government and pursue concerted advocacy agenda aimed at poverty reduction. It was funded by the Royal Netherlands Embassy, with contributions from CARE, ICCO and SNV. When the Kasa pilot phase ended in October 2010, one observation about its performance by the Project Evaluation Team, was the appreciation of the added value for CSO coordinated engagements on NRE issues. The Team therefore recommended that Kasa should be supported to continue beyond the pilot phase. To this end, ICCO, DANIDA and CARE-Denmark have committed resources to maintain the Kasa Secretariat to facilitate some key activities including: NRE CSOs capacity strengthening and the organization of the Civil Society Annual NRE Sector Review forums.

The review process enabled CSOs and their public sector partners to annually assess the performance of the natural resources sector management and exploitation in relation to governance, transparency and accountability. Following the assessment, recommendations are made to enhance the sector's performance towards meaningful contribution to the well-being of the people and the nation's socio-economic development.

Kasa continues to build the capacity of its member coalitions for effective delivery of engaging government and pursuing a concerted advocacy agenda in the NRE sector.

This year, the 11th CSOs Annual NRE Sector Review took a different turn in terms of its focus and participation. The half-day forum took place on Monday November 23rd, 2020 at the Coconut Grove Regency Hotel in Accra. It was jointly organized by the Kasa Initiative with funding from Care, Ghana and the Private Enterprise Federation (PEF) on the theme “Non State Actors Partnership on Sustainable NRE Governance in Ghana within the context of Climate Change.” The focus was to engender CSO Private Sector partnership for the purpose of identifying common NRE advocacy objectives with climate change as a critical factor.

1.2 Objectives

- Identify a point of convergence for COSs in NRE and the private sector for sustainable NRE management; and
- Identify common NRE advocacy objectives with climate change as a critical factor.

1.3 Participation

Participants were mainly representatives of civil society coalitions representing the seven key areas of the natural resources sector, members of the Private sector (PEF) and officials of UNDP and Government agencies.

1.4

The meeting was facilitated by Ben Arthur, a consultant in the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector.

2.0 Details of the Forum

2.1 Opening Session

The facilitator noted that the need for private sector and CSO partnership in securing a sustainable natural resources sector is critical now more than ever before. This is because natural resources have always been and is the common denominator on which rural communities directly depend for their subsistence, while private sector depends on it for their businesses to thrive, and CSOs interest is in ensuring that the resources are sustainably exploited and managed for the mutual benefit of all, without disadvantaging rural communities. He said the focus of the 2020 Annual Review, was timely.

2.2 Chairman's Opening Remarks

The CEO of PEF, Nana Osei Bonsu was the Chairman for the forum. He said one of PEF's main concerns is to ensure the efficient allocation of the country's resources, noting that the players in the arena do not apply the rules that must be applied. Nana highlighted several issues worthy of note: i.) Forestry Commission (FC) has been trying to streamline the forestry sector, yet things appear not to be working; ii.) The country has abundance of natural gas, yet its potential remains largely untapped; iii.) CSOs and the private sector must prompt government to use the resources judiciously; iv.) People find it easier to illegally exploit the country's natural resources; v.) How do we incentivize these people to do the right thing?

Nana welcomed the move by Kasa to partner the private sector for effective NRE governance advocacy to ensure sustainability of the resource base saying "governance of the natural resources requires partnership." He described the 2020 Forum as marking the beginning of a dynamic engagement on policy, adding that "if we frame our conversation towards making policy to work, governance will also work."

Earlier, the Chairman deplored the situation where civil society sees the private sector as only interested in making profits by over exploiting natural resources. He urged civil society members

to appreciate the fact that private sector understands the need for sustainable exploitation and are also interested in the welfare of rural people and not just making huge profits. Nana further asked civil society members to stop shielding people who indulge in illegalities in the sector in the name of protecting their rights, and rather expose them.



Pic.1 Nana Osei-Bonsu giving remarks

2.3 Statements

Statement by Chairman of Kasa Charles Agboklu

The statement was delivered on behalf of the Chairman of Kasa Initiative Ghana by Albert Katako, the Vice Chairman.

I bring you greetings from Kasa Initiative Ghana and the CSOs in the Natural Resources and the Environment fraternity. This is the 11th year Kasa and its member CSOs with support from Care International in Ghana are organizing this annual review of the NRE sector.

By way of Introduction, Kasa Initiative Ghana is an independent CSO mechanism to support concerted engagement with government, Donor community and private sectors in the management of Ghana's natural resources since 2014. Kasa provides the interface of civil society with government to build on and strengthen existing non- state actors, coalitions and networks experiences that seek to promote direct engagement with Government at all levels.

This year 2020, Corona Virus Pandemic has pushed us to alter our usual ways of holding such NRE forums and be innovative towards greater impacts in the sector. Therefore, per our mandate and thinking of innovation, Kasa has decided to expand its partnership by deepening their relationship with the Private Enterprises Federation (PEF) which is the apex institution that forges consensus and provide the leadership voice for advocacy for private initiatives in Ghana. This relationship is also in line with the Global thinking on creation of synergies.

This partnership of NRE CSOs and the Private sector actors is aimed to leverage on each other's capacities to advance the cause of sustainable development through NRE advocacy and push for implementation of best practices in the sector.

It is expected that the discussions lined up for the today's event should help forge greater partnerships on special initiatives and widen the scope of engagements on NRE issues that inures to the benefit of both partners and the country at large.

We urge all present here to assist in contributing knowledge and ideas to support this unique initiative Kasa and PEF have commenced. We expect that Government and its representatives in the NRE and Climate change space to recognize this collaboration and consider its relevance in future stakeholder engagements when it comes to sustainable Natural resources and environment governance as well as Climate change initiatives in the Country.



Pic 2 Mr Albert Katako delivering his speech

Statement by UNDP Representative (Mr Ayirebi Frimpong)

UNDP recognizes that the need for partnership in order to fully address the SDGs. So it is important to recognise who can serve as relevant partners. The goal of the UNDP is to identify such partners to achieve the targets. We recognize that partnerships such as that between the private sector and the CSO fraternity, is crucial and our hope is for continuous engagement on related issues. We can look at all the key things that have become a challenge in the sector including how to ensure proper management and sustainability of CREMAS, through which farmers manage off-reserve resources. Therefore, this partnership can come up with something that is fruitful and useful, and serve as the basis for discussion in next year's Annual Review.



Pic 3 Mr Ayirebi Frimpong delivering his speech at the Forum

Statement by Yakubu Zakaria on behalf of Care Ghana

Non-state actors play a very key role in the NRE sector and Care Ghana sees the coming together of Kasa and PEF as very laudable. Care Ghana is interested in forging relationships that promote solutions to ending problems in the NRE sector. There are opportunities for us to work together in social enterprises that focus on social benefits and sustainability. Question is how do we work together? Today's event marks the beginning of working together. But beyond this meeting, let us continue to engage in advocacy in the NRE sector.



Pic 4 Mr Yakubu Zakaria delivering his speech

2. 4 Thematic Presentation

Non-state Actors Partnership on Sustained NRE Governance in Ghana within the Context of Climate Change by Dr. Emmanuel Asiamah Yeboah---University of Ghana, Legon

Highlights of Presentation

Synergy and collaboration is crucial in the natural resources sector since public institutions alone cannot work to sustainably manage the resources. There is need to identify critical stakeholders and this requires boundary analysis. Some resources are trans-boundary in nature, so an attempt to ensure its protection requires multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Natural resources including water, trees and wildlife have three main stakeholders namely – community of place, community of identity and community of interest. All of these have goals towards the resources and they might appear to be conflicting.

The problem is that most entities in-charge of natural resources are ineffective and if café is not taken, some species will go extinct. There are forces in the world that are widening the problem, so they cannot be simply resolved, but require concerted efforts that also lead to emergent issues. This requires dialogue to come up with emergent solutions, which also involves building of synergy.

This means moving away from the fortress approach, where the state tank is in control. The current period is an era of networking focused on SDG 16 on promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies. Unless institutions work, the tragedy of the commons will become the order of the day,

where everyone goes for the resource unlimited and unrestrained, creating problems for all. For example, trafficking in wildlife affects all people. So there is need for rules and law enforcement.

Corruption is a major challenge and addressing it requires strong institutions, strong men and women, people of conviction who will ensure that institutions work. It also demands cross-sector collaboration based on for instance, a model of sustainable development that recognizes the inter-linkages between society, environment and people. Therefore, the state of NRE should be the concern of all – government, CSOs and the private sector. There is also the Public Private Partnership (PPP), which aims at fostering mutually beneficial development for the social good.

Effective collaboration results in environmental justice, which seeks a win-win situation and rising of CSOs and private sector partnership jointly seeking the sustainability of resources. The value of collaboration is seen in the benefits that is eventually derived from the partnership. Besides, collaboration can lead to better decision making with stakeholder acting in concert. Thereby communities gain economic, social and other benefits, while the private sector is motivated.

Collaboration can be philanthropic involving a course of action at the basic level such as when an organization donates items. It can also be a situation where organizations work together sharing competencies and expertise as well as instances where organizations share leaders with a steering team in place. This is hierarchical in nature and the drafting stage is done with all members.

The sustainability agenda should focus on environmental degradation and should highlight corporate scandals, the exploitation of weak governance regulation including rules and enforcement characteristics and the loopholes.

There is need for the organization or partnership to identify the kind of entity it wants to be whether economic or obstructionist focus; profitable or just to obey the law as well as possible role of media and academia, which is required to make visible the activities of those who are following the principles and rules.



Pic 5 -Dr. Emmanuel Asiamah Yeboah-Delivering the key note address

2.5 Key discussion points based on thematic presentation-By Participants

There is evidence of an existing conflict and mistrust between CSOs and the Private Sector especially when it comes to research. Private sector do not trust researchers and are unwilling to

contribute their perspectives to such research. There is need for more action research on how partnership has brought changes to the natural resources sector. Researchers need to use appropriate methodology and organizations and firms should open up when researcher approach them.

However, in spite of the mistrust, there is need to forge ahead in the proposed partnership for mutual progress to be made.

When private sector firm spends money, it's not for social responsibility, but for profit. This is a business law and good businesses follow the law.

There are businesses who do not follow the law and yet get away with it. There is need to fish out those that are not obeying the law and perpetrating bad things.

There are lots of private sector firms who lead and create platforms for CSOs to work on and thrive. Thus, there already exists a kind of synergistic relationship between CSOs and the private sector.

The alliance of CSOs Private sector partnership and its sustainability, should be based on mutual respect and aimed at tackling bribery and corruption.

Sometimes CSOs make unfounded claims that create serious problems for the private sector. For example, CSOs lumped “galemse” and small scale mining together, leading to a ban on small scale mining that cost them over \$ 600 million. Following that, the leadership of the small scale miners approach government with a strategy to arrest Chinese involved and deport them. They offered to be the ears and eyes of the government.

In order to make progress in their relations, it is important that CSOs back their claims with evidence and data. When this happens, issues can be addressed in ways that create a win-win situation.

Key Qs and As

Q.1. How will CSOs minimize the risk of corruption in the face of private sector interest in bribing the government and dwindling resources for CSOs?

Ans. by Dr. Asiamah Yeboah – Partnering with the business sector can put CSOs in conflict or limit their freedom of action and risk being part of image washing. However, CSOs do not have to box all private businesses together, but rather strive to classify businesses based on whether they are obstructive or pro-active in nature. CSOs need to be choosy in the kind of contract they want to work in, know their boundaries as well as adopt a collaborative approach with the media.

Q. 2. CSOs partner the private sector mainly for resources, and if this is not possible, then such partnership is irrelevant.

Ans by Dr. Asiamah Yeboah – Yes, there is need for CSO Private Sector collaboration for the purpose of joint action. Because without such collaboration, SDG 17 will be weakened, especially if the state is not brought on board. The proposed CSO Private Sector collaboration is more of a

working relationship, which goes beyond monetary benefits. CSOs should also identify and highlight the efforts of private sector firms with good principles.

There is another collaborative approach, known as ABC, in which A stands for “Advancing” human skills. It requires a broker organization to facilitate the collaboration. B stands for “Bridging” the organization with another or others and C stand for tool of “Communication.”



Pic 6 -Section of Participants during the open discussions after key note address

2.5.1 Group discussion and reporting based on thematic presentation

Four groups were formed to discuss the key issues from the thematic presentation and make proposals, aimed at moving the CSO/Private Sector Partnership process forward. Accordingly,

Groups I and 2 discussed the following questions:

- What strategic roles can CSOs and Private Sector play together in sustainable natural resources governance in Ghana?
- What should be the bases for CSOs and Private Sector Partnership?
- Suggest three Practical Recommendations that could implemented within a year.

Groups 3 and 4 discussed the following questions:

- How do we build trust between CSOs and the Private Sector?
- How do we work together as partners without compromising our values and identity?
- Give three recommendations in building that relationship.

Group Reports

Group 1

Question 1. What strategic roles can CSOs and Private Sector play together in sustainable natural resources governance in Ghana?

1. Joint research to generate evidence
2. Joint advocacy on Human Rights and Sustainability
3. Establish common platform for information sharing/knowledge management
4. Undertake joint capacity building

Question 2. What should be the bases for CSOs and Private Sector Partnership?

1. Identify shared Interest
2. Identify shared values
3. Core principles of accountability & transparency
4. Mutual respect

Group 2

Question 1. What strategic roles can CSOs and Private Sector play together in sustainable natural resources governance in Ghana?

- A. Joint Advocacy
- B. Joint Development of Standards for easily monitoring (principles and policies)
- C. Joint Research on *Private sector funding with private sector providing information and CSOs responsible for protecting information*
- D. Joint Awareness

Question 2. What should be the bases for CSOs and Private Sector Partnership?

- A. Sustainability of the resources
- B. Trust and mutual respect
- C. Based upon evidence
- D. Document rules of engagement

Question 3. Three Practical Recommendations that could be implemented within a year

- A. Institutionalized Collaboration
- B. Set up a working group to operationalized recommendation agreed at this platform
- C. Institutionalized quarterly engagement between CSOs and Private sector to review strategies

Group 3

Question 1. How do we build trust between CSOs and the Private Sector?

- Functional identity
- Common understanding of issues
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Inclusiveness

Question 2. How do we work together as partners without compromising our values and identity?

- Establishment of common interests
- Set core engagement values
- Strong institutions

Question 3. Give some recommendations in building that relationship.

- Effective communication
- Empirical Evidence
- Engagement of community people
- Appreciation of each other's roles
- Media engagement
- Periodic common platform for engagement

Group 4

Question 1. How do we build trust between CSOs and the Private Sector?

- Identify Common Interest
- Dialogue
- Negotiate
- Agreement (MoU)
- Commitment
- Transparency and accountability

In answering questions 2 on how do we work together as partners without compromising our values and identity and 3 on give some recommendations in building that relationship, the group was of the view that the two were related and so provided answers covering both questions as follows:

Recommendations

1. Involve all key Private Sector stakeholders and their executives
2. Establish a joint review committee
3. Clearly defined MoUs on areas of interest and specific areas of collaboration
4. Define joint capacity needs
5. Deepen internal coordination mechanisms
6. Institute annual CSOs/PS joint review relationship and outcomes



Pic 7---Group discussions in progress during the forum

3.0 Closing session

3.1 Final Remarks by the Chairman

CSOs, businesses and government are not enemies but partners. Businesses also engage in advocacies that CSO sometimes engage in. So if a business in the sector decides to establish rules of practice for a profession and a CSO wants to do an advocacy in that areas, it should be built on empirical data. In conducting research, the scope of work should include talking to the opposite side.

Majority of CSO activities are funded by foreign entities, who do not care about the mandate to look within for the benefit of the country. Governments do not have bad intentions, but when they do not understand the system, things get wrong. So everyone needs to have an understanding of the background issues.

Working with CSO groups is laudable. We need to ponder over how we can work together for our communities to benefit and to sustain our livelihoods.

3.2 Identified rules of engagement

There is need to discuss a general framework for collaboration to coordinate all partnership activities. This framework will serve as a point of reference for individual CSOs and Private Sector Firms to engage in joint activities.

The narrative about what Private Sector stands for and what CSOs stand should change.

It is good to identify the overarching values – especially because Private Sector is also interested in sustainability of the resources and companies are trying to go by the paths of sustainability.

3.3 Closing remarks by Dr. Steve Manteaw, Convener of the Oil and Gas Platform

This is an entirely different NRE Review Meeting and a partnership of the nature we are forging, must endure for the common benefit. We need to find the nexus for this partnership.

And the real work begins from here now. Going forward, we may need to hold periodic meetings and review sessions. So that next year we can review what progress we have been able to make.

So, next year when we meet, the focus should not be on partnership, but on what each partner and organization has done.

Following his remarks, Dr. Manteaw launched seven sector policy briefs, which Kasa has developed on forestry, oil and gas, fisheries, water and sanitation, gender, climate change, environment and land.



Pic 8 -Dr Steve Manteaw- Doing the launch of the CSOs Policy Briefs and giving of closing remarks.

ANNEXES/ATTACHMENTS

1. The seven CSOs Policy Briefs
2. Participants attendance list.