

## Project Update: March 2010

During the first six months of the project, I have held planning meetings with my team and have subsequently held meetings with the coordinator in charge of the Agumatsa Tourist and Wildlife Sanctuary at Wli-Afegame. I have also met various stakeholders and interest groups from the participating communities to discuss the extent to which the sanctuary is threatened and further explained to them the implications of this on the environment and the community as a whole. We also discussed how to collaborate in promoting conservation mindset among the members of the communities and we also discussed alternative livelihood options for families who have lands in the sanctuary and continue to cultivate it illegally. Some community representatives who were at the meeting indicated that their lands were taken without any compensation and that was the only reason why they continue to depend on the sanctuary for the very survival.

After these discussions project team identified various roles for the communities and the various stakeholders so as to ensure community ownership of the project. Four community environmental awareness programmes have been undertaken in four communities with the key message being keeping the promise to protect the environment. Three local assembly members accept the role to organize their community members for awareness programmes and to also lead the crusade on charcoal burning in the sanctuary.

Six school-based green clubs have been established. These clubs were established in isolation. Community school Clubs (ROC) already exist which promote the rights of children. I met with the Club leaders and the Patrons to discuss the need for children to be involved in the protection of the environment and the message was very well accepted by the various clubs. So far six of such clubs have adopted our environmental conservation message of **Keep the Promise lets all protect the environment** as one of their key activities alongside their ROC.

In the local Ewe dialect, it (*Le ngbedodoo de asi, Mina misdzo miafe ave wo nuti*) Eight billboards have been produced and erected with the message in local dialect- *Le ngbedodoo de asi, Mina miadzo miafe ave wo nuti* and in English -*Keep the Promise, lets protect our environment*.



Left: Project Leader in a discussion with the Coordinator of the Agumatsa Sanctuary. Right: Some Members of the Green Clubs.

