

RESOLUTION OF THE
THE NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON
FOREST LAW ENFORCEMENT, GOVERNANCE AND TRADE (FLEGT)
VOLUNTARY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS (VPA) AND
FOREST CERTIFICATION
June 29, 2007

WHEREAS, we the one hundred and fifteen (115) participants from the Government of Liberia, Private Sector, Local and International Civil Society, Rural Communities and Academia at the National Workshop on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT), Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPA) and Forest Certification at the Latter Day Saints Compound on Horton Avenue, Bassa Community in Monrovia, Liberia from 27th to 29th June, 2007;

RECALLING the various stakeholder meetings, workshops, regional exchanges and learning initiatives on FLEGT, VPA and Forest Certification;

ACKNOWLEDGING the support of various donors, including the European Commission, the World Conservation Union (International and the Netherlands Committee), the Department for International Development of the Government of the United Kingdom, the Government of Liberia, Fauna and Flora International, Sustainable Development Institute, Environmental NGO Coalition for Liberia and the Private Sector;

EXPRESSING our appreciation to the organizers for the forum that enabled us understand the principles associated with FLEGT, VPA and Forest Certification;

RECOGNIZING that our exposure to the these processes and initiatives are a major step towards promoting good governance in the forest sector to maximize the ecological, social and economic benefits of forests in Liberia;

HIGHLIGHTING the benefits of sustainable, accountable, transparent, and responsible forest management in Liberia;

WHEREAS joining the international efforts to combat bad governance in the forest sector and illegal logging will ensure that forest products from Liberia meet international standards to make them acceptable on the global markets to accrue substantial benefits for the people of Liberia;

DECLARE our overwhelming endorsement of the Ministerial Declaration of the African Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (AFLEG) adopted in Yaoundé, Cameroun in 2003, support for the European Union Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Action Plan (FLEGT) and Voluntary Partnership Agreements, and Forest Certification as a first step towards securing the production of legal timber products earmarked for the local and international markets;

WITH THIS DECLARATION RECOMMEND, THROUGH THE FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS:

1. Publicly announce its endorsement of the European Union FLEGT Action Plan and the Voluntary Partnership Agreements;
2. Establish a Steering Committee on FLEGT and VPA comprising of stakeholders from the Government, timber industry, civil society, rural and forest dependent communities and academia to coordinate Liberia engagement with the European Commission on FLEGT and VPA;
3. Mandate the Steering Committee to elect a National Focal Person for FLEGT and VPA to coordinate the work of the Steering Committee on FLEGT and VPA;
4. Mandate the Steering Committee to develop a plan for nationwide awareness raising, consultation and preparation for discussions with the European Commission on VPA;

5. The Steering Committee through consensus define a role for civil society in this process; and
6. Integrate independent and competent third party verification into the Chain of Custody management contract (SGS).

Other recommendations to the Forestry Development Authority include:

1. Establish a National Initiative on Forest Certification and appoint a National Coordinator to coordinate engagement with the Forest Stewardship Council.