

Liberia: EU & Liberia Celebrate VPA Enforcement With Signing of Funding for CSOs

3 DECEMBER 2013

The European Union and Liberia Monday, December 2, 2013 celebrated the entry into force of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) on Forestry and Timber products.

This celebration was marked with the signing of funding projects with Civil Society Organizations in support of the protection of the environment in Liberia.

In the context of a panel discussion that took place in Monrovia to mark the event, Mr. Pierre Amilhat, Director for Western and Central Africa of EuropeAid, who is on a working mission to Liberia remarked: "The European Union warmly welcomes the entry into force of the EU-Liberia Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) in Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade in Timber products.

The entry into force of the Agreement, and the frank and constructive exchanges that I had today with Liberian Authorities and other representatives from the Liberian Private sector and the Civil Society confirm the commitment of Liberia to make the best of its vast forest resources for its citizens and generations of Liberians to come. The European Union is fully committed to support Liberia in this Endeavour and I have signed today three grants with Civil Society Organizations to protect the Liberian forest".

The VPA is an international agreement between the EU and the Government of Liberia which aims to improve forest governance and ensure that the wood imported into the EU has complied with the Liberian legal requirements and therefore benefits all Liberians through public revenues, community support and sustainable forestry exploitation.

In parallel to this agreement and in order to assist Liberia in making the most of its rich natural resources, the EU and the United Kingdom have already mobilized 17.7 million Euros in support to the development of Liberian capacities in this area.

In addition to on-going support, the EU signed three contracts on 2nd December to support the Royal Society Protection of Birds, FERN and four Liberian Civil Society Organizations (Vosieda, Green Advocates, Foundation for Community Initiatives and Save My Future Foundation) to protect the Liberian forest by empowering communities and raising VPA awareness. The total budget for these three contracts is 4 million euro (or 5.4 Million USD).

EuropeAid Director Ahmilat, the EU Ambassador to Liberia, Mr. Attilio Pacifici, Mr. Harrison Kamwea, Managing Director of the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), Mr. John Deah, from the Liberian Timber Association, and Mr. Silas Siakor, representing the Civil Society participated in the panel discussion.

Mr. Amilhat is visiting Liberia from 2nd to 4th December to discuss with Government officials on future and ongoing EU cooperation and support to Liberia. During his visit, Mr. Amilhat will meet with important members of the Government, donor partners and civil society to reinforce the cooperation between Liberia and the EU and sign projects for more than 10 million euro (13.5 million USD).

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