

**5<sup>th</sup> Regular VPA Steering Committee Meeting**  
**Tuesday, January 26, 2010**  
**FDA Board Room, Congo Town, Monrovia**

The meeting was called to order at approximately 2:43 pm by the Chairman of the Steering Committee, Hon. John T. Woods. Mr. Woods requested for a prayer which was offered by Mr. Kula Jackson of the Coalition of NGOs.

The Chair presented the agenda of the meeting and asked for amendment. The agenda was then adopted with no amendment made

**Welcome Remarks:**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and informed the SC members that the meeting was the first meeting in the New Year and the fifth regular meeting of the SC and as such, expected the meeting to have a quorum. The Chairman requested a roll call to determine the legitimacy of the meeting. The head of the TS Mr. Amos T. Kofa went through the exercise which established that the meeting had a quorum.

After the roll call, Cllr. Alfred Brownell of the CSO was interested in knowing the reason why the GoL as representative to the SC would at the same time have an observer status. Cllr. Brownell then expressed the concern that other agencies and organizations be given the opportunity to have observer status as well.

However, the Secretariat informed the body that it inherited a lot of documents which it has been working with. Mr. Amos Kofa said, "We met some documents and those are the documents we are working with, we do not have the power to change whatever that was agreed on." The Secretariat's clarification prompted Mr. Mulbah Sumo of the MPEA who made reference to the meeting held at PA's Rib House on September 15, 2009 where decisions were taken as to the legitimacy of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs (MPEA) as observer.

He noted that everything that has been done has been through a democratic process. "There were several meetings held before now, and a lot of decisions were taken to move the process forward", he asserted. He cautioned Chairman Woods to follow the agenda items and be watchful of representatives of the CSO

who are known for throwing meetings backward. “We must stop dragging the meeting backward all the time.” The MPEA Representative added.

In concluding his welcome remark, the chairman noted that the SC was prepared to update the NT on those significant issues which will form part of the negotiation that is scheduled for March 2010. Hon. Woods also spoke on the ToR that is to be discussed, reviewed and finalized.

**Adoption of Minutes:**

The Chairman asked every member at the meeting to review the minutes for corrections if any. The minutes were reviewed with corrections and recommendations made.

**Matters Arising from the Minutes:**

Mr. Isaac Mannah of the Liberia Timber Association spoke about the draft ToR. He made specific reference to page 3 of the December 29, 2009 SC meeting minutes. The Industry representative said the minutes reflected that the ToR which exists will be turned over to the CSO as draft document something he said was incorrect.

According to Mr. Mannah, it was agreed that the ToR be turned over to the CSO for review and comments and not to be sent as draft

The UNMIL Observer noted that the minutes were direct quotations from individuals representing institutions. Mr. Ireland clarified that minute of meeting do not only carry the final decision of discussions during meetings, but rather they also comprised of arguments and counter arguments.

Mr. Dan Saryeh of the Liberia Democratic Institute (LDI) also agreed with Mr. Ireland’s points and stressed that the ToRs are all draft since in fact they carried the heading Proposed ToR as reflected on the documents.

**Comments from CSO on the various ToRs:**

An observer from the CSO, the Executive Director of the Sustainable Development Institute (SDI), Silas Saikor said the Proposed Participatory ToR should be considered as the CSO's comment.

The TS suggested and it was unanimously agreed upon by the body that a committee be set up consisting of two (2) representatives from each stakeholder group to work on the draft ToRs and the Proposed Participatory ToR from the CSO.

The committee members were as follows:

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Government of Liberia (GOL)       | Madam Victoria Cole (FDA)<br>Mr. Moses Wogbeh (FDA)<br>Cllr. Sylvester Gbeintor (MOJ) |
| 2. Civil Society Organizations (CSO) | Mr. Kula Jackson (NGO Coalition)<br>Mrs. Julie Weah (FCI)                             |
| 3. Industry of Liberia               | Mr. Isaac Mannah (LTA)<br>Mr. John Deah (LTA)   |
| 4. Observer                          | Mr. David S. Kollie (EPA)   |
| 5. Community                         | Mr. Michael M. Robert<br>Mr. George Kpawulu   |

The committee members agreed to meet on Friday, February 5, 2010 at 10:00 am. at the NGO's Coalition's office in Central Monrovia to begin work.

**Decision Making Process:**

The TS Coordinator said this agenda item has been discussed indirectly. He said this item was a result of the last SC meeting which was held on December, 2009. Mr. Kofa said based on the fact that the ToRs are being proposed and referred to as DRAFT which is to be worked on by committee members, there was no need to discuss it further.

### **Update on Secretariat Activities for January 2010:**

The TS did not give its usual update due to a very busy schedule during the month under review. The Coordinator however apologized on the Secretariat's behalf and promised to send copies of the report through email as well as delivered the hard copies to members of the SC by Thursday, January 28, 2010. Mr. George Kpawulu, a community representative emphasized the need for separate reports in terms of monthly updates and quarterly report.

### **Presentations on the Working Groups (LAS & LD):**

The Chairman of the Technical Working Group on Legality Definition (LD) reported on activities of his group. Cllr. Alfred Brownell updated the SC on a three-day retreat held in Robertsport, Grand Capemount County.

He said the retreat was organized by the group to enable them focus on what their responsibilities are and understand what Liberia will be negotiating for. The retreat began on Saturday, January 23 and ended on Monday, January 25, 2010. The LD Chairman outlined some significant points as reflected in the report from the retreat and also made mentioned of a detailed work plan. He emphasized on the time involved and the cost attached. Cllr. Brownell however classified the three-day working sessions as successful and rewarding. He furthered requested that the SC approve/endorse the work plan so that they would begin work as soon as possible.

Following the Working Group report, Mr. Isaac Mannah stressed the need for local consultant to be hired. He added that people who are familiar with community issues should be hired to undertake short-term consultancies with respect to legality definition.

The Chairman buttressed the LTA representative's idea because according to him, Liberia has a lot of capable men and women to serve as consultants to the process. Chairman Woods congratulated the LD Working Group for taking up the initiative in organizing a wonderful working session. The Chairman however expressed concern over the LD work plan and what it entails in terms of finances. He said he could not endorse the LD work plan without knowing also the cost of

the LAS activities. He concluded by reemphasizing the need for consultancy to help speed up the process.

The LDI Executive Director spoke about mechanisms to be put in place for the upcoming negotiation. Mr. Dan Saryeh outlined that the NT should first have an idea of the negotiation and then developed the interest. He further said the NT should be adequately informed on issues that will be negotiated. Mr. Saryeh then encouraged Chairman Woods to endorse the LD work plan which he termed as the tool to drive the process.

Finally, it was agreed that activities that are earmarked for February up to April 2010 in the LD work plan be approved. .

### **AOB**

Mr. Kula Jackson of the CSO encouraged his colleagues to attend meetings on time.

Mr. Dan Saryeh informed the body that all of the elections in Nimba, Grand Gedeh, River Gegee, Grand Kru and Maryland counties had been held and that all these communities have their representatives now. He expressed regret why the newly elected representative from Platform four did not attend the meeting.

It was then moved and seconded that the meeting be adjourned.

The meeting was adjourned at 17:18 GMT.

In attendance were the below thirty (30) persons.

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|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Dan Saryeh         | LDI <b>(CSO)</b>           |
| 2. Kula L. Jackson    | NGO Coalition <b>(CSO)</b> |
| 3. Sollie K. George   | Com. Rep.                  |
| 4. Thomas Z. Barleh   | Com. Rep.                  |
| 5. William V. Page    | Com. Rep.                  |
| 6. Wesseh A. Wesseh   | Liberian Senate            |
| 7. Sylvester Gbeintor | MOJ                        |
| 8. Michael M. Roberts | Com. Rep.                  |

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|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 9. Kofi Ireland          | UNMIL CA                     |
| 10. Victoria Cole        | FDA                          |
| 11. Isaac Mannah, Sr.    | LTA                          |
| 12. George F. Kpawulu    | Com. Rep.                    |
| 13. Joseph F. Mulbah     | NIC                          |
| 14. Alfred L. Brownell   | Green Advocates <b>(CSO)</b> |
| 15. Jimmie F. Jimmy      | MOL                          |
| 16. Mulbah B. Sumo, Sr.  | MPEA                         |
| 17. David S.K. Kollie    | EPA                          |
| 18. John T. Woods        | FDA – Chairman               |
| 19. Lawrence Satia       | MOF/BOC                      |
| 20. Stephanie Altman     | VPA-Facilitator              |
| 21. Julie T.B. Weah      | FCI <b>(CSO)</b>             |
| 22. Teyah S. Moore       | Green Advocates <b>(CSO)</b> |
| 23. Mai E. Saryeh        | LDI <b>(CSO)</b>             |
| 24. Robert L. Nyahn      | SAMFU <b>(CSO)</b>           |
| 25. Edward S. Kamara     | FDA                          |
| 26. Salis Saikor         | SDI <b>(CSO)</b>             |
| 27. Amos T. Kofa         | VPA                          |
| 28. Charles K. Miller    | VPA                          |
| 29. F. Dadeh Harper      | VPA                          |
| 30. Queta Johnson-Hessou | VPA                          |

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