



COMMUNIQUE FROM THE NATIONAL FOREST FORUM 0111-20



**Adopted on this 13th day of November A.D. 2020
At the Jackie's Guest House in Ganta City, Nimba County**

WHEREAS, the National Forestry Reform Law (NFRL) of 2006 establishes a transparent framework for the use, management, and protection of forest resources that balances the commercial, community, and conservation priorities of the Republic;

WHEREAS, section 14 (e) and (f) of the NFRL provides for establishing the National Benefit Sharing Trust (NBST) Board mandated to manage the 30% land rental payment by forest resource license companies (FMC and TSC) to affected communities;

WHEREAS, the National Forest Forum (NFF) is organized under the theme “Forest Resource Benefit Sharing for Sustainable Development” to evaluate, analyze, and assess the National Benefit Sharing Trust mechanism and provide a forum to discuss policy and legal frameworks of the benefits sharing mechanism;

WHEREAS, the NFF will increase understanding of sources of revenue currently being generated by the forest sector and identify new areas of income generation and how they can be integrated and consolidated under existing benefit management structures;

WHEREAS, lessons learned from experiences around benefit sharing from other sectors, including mining and oil palm, that can enhance current processes in the forest sector, identifying best practices and strategies;

WHEREAS, the NFF identifies policy, legislative and implementation gap. share experiences, knowledge, share network essential to the NBSTB and share the role of the NBSTB in sustainable project management,

WHEREAS, the participants including representatives of the agencies and ministries of government, communities, civil society, private sector, and international non-governmental organization, national observers met at the Jackie's Hotel in Ganta City, Nimba County on 12th to 13th on November, 2020.

WHEREAS Summary of Presentations made covered the following:

1. The Liberia Revenue Authority presented in three parts: 1. Accessing information: mechanisms for reporting on revenue captures & outstanding 2. confirmation of payments by GoL and 3. Direct & indirect revenues: scope for growth, opportunities & challenges;
2. FDA presented in two parts: 1. Current sources of revenue from the forestry sector of Liberia and revenue projection from Forest Management Contract

(FMCs). It was indicated that the one FMC has withdrawn while some FMCs remain inactive. Having implication for reduced land rental payments and future production export fees.

3. The REDD+ Implementation Unit has not yet determined whether they will use the existing benefit sharing mechanism or not. However, the REDD+ mechanism should recognize that the benefit to the community will be linked to the obligation to reduce emersion from the forest after determining the baseline emersion (REDD+ Implementation Unit)
4. Presentation on the Status of Concessions in Liberia by National Bureau of Concessions (NBC)
5. Many opportunities, challenges and expectations were presented on the VPA-SU 2 Implementation in Liberia
6. National Union of Community Forest Management Body (NUCFMB) presented on four topics: 1. Examine the laws governing benefits sharing in forestry and those relevant regulations and legal instruments, enforcement mechanisms and contributions of benefits mechanism to community development 2. Community benefits in third parties, Communities have developed projects such as pumps, latrines, guest houses, schools, Clinics etc. with benefits. Communities also received benefit from social agreements attached to forest license holders 3. Proposal for improvement in the benefit mechanism was made in the presentation “Understanding the frameworks for community project implementation: Sustainability of the projects Case studies: reflections from the field visits”. 4. How are communities managing the benefits received?
7. The NBSTB presented in three parts: 1. Legislative framework of the National Benefits Sharing Trust Board 2. The process of review and award of projects submitted by communities and financed by 30% land rental payments managed. The numbers and type of projects funded by the NBSTB,
8. LEITI presented on “Results of Reconciliation between Companies and Government reporting” at one time Liberia was delisted for noncompliance with the EITI procedures but Liberia is now in compliance with publishing requirements.
9. The major lesson learned is that benefit sharing mechanism appear fragmented, lack supervision and control. The potential benefit sharing schemes are RED+ benefit payment, the conservation fund of CI, and current benefit sharing scheme include the CFMA, agriculture and mining concession.
10. Strengthening of the NBSTB by providing adequately training and manual and operational procedures

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION POINTS

NOW THEREFORE, Participants to the National Forest Forum in consideration of the lessons and issues discussed considered and adopted the below recommendations and actions:

COMMUNITIES

1. Community capacity needs to be strengthened to ensure accountability and transparency and improve governance in the execution of projects and use of forest resources. Support programs should include reforestation need to be designed interventions that will improve the communities' capacity to manage the forests.
2. Communities should explore other avenues for income generating activities beyond commercial contracts: Conservation International explained that there exists a conservation trust fund that they have contributed 1 million dollars into. Communities can access this fund if they are engaged in conservation driven projects.
3. Communities can also explore matching funding initiatives after receiving their benefits to allow them to engage in sustainable IGA such as agricultural processing, value adding to forest products, etc.
4. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on the project selection, review, and approval as well as monitoring and evaluation of the projects need to be developed. The SOPs shall be agreed upon by every stakeholder.
5. The various benefits coming to communities should be defined clearly so that communities, private sector, civil society, and government are aware of exactly what communities are entitled to.
6. Communities should explore partnerships with private sector companies to engage in profitable eco tourisms initiatives.
7. Community should consider conservation projects in their proposals to the NBSTB. How do you encourage community to carry out conservation initiatives in their forest (REDD+ and Eco-tourism)?

National Benefit Sharing Trust Board (NBSTB)

1. Reconcile the various community benefit mechanisms to bring the two systems – community forests and CFDCs under one umbrella. Explore the method for combining the two systems under a national benefit sharing mechanism. The NBST Board is formal and cater to funding a range of community's projects developed by communities from the grassroots level.
2. The NBSTB should train communities in business plan development (including market analysis) to ensure business-oriented proposals.
3. Community benefits should be paid directly to the NBST Account. A mechanism should be defined to ensure that this happens. The NBSTB should be a signatory to any escrow account opened by the company, as specified in the law, co-signing with the relevant community.
4. Should cubic meter fees be paid directly into the NBSTB account and transferred through the benefit sharing trust account to combat the governance issues at community level? Or should there be a mechanism put into place to enable community manages the fund better? How are the cubic meter fees distributed and managed? Do they trickle down directly to communities? Was it the intent that community forests not be commercial, but conservation based? It might be necessary to look at the current mechanism to ensure that the original intent is maintained.
5. The NBSTB should develop a grievance redress mechanism to investigate and monitor funds disbursed. The Board should also support incomplete projects to see how they can best be used.

Forestry Development Authority (FDA)

1. Inactive dormant FMC, TSC and CFMAs legal status needs to be verified by the FDA. What are the legal options open to FDA to rescind/ re-award/ renew these licenses?
2. Concession holders claim that a given concession area is depleted/ exhausted: FDA responds quickly to determine land rental payments for harvestable areas.
3. As stated in paragraph 5 under community benefits, ensure that all benefits are placed into the NBSTB account. NFRL provides for 30% but no mechanism provided for how communities should be paid the money. It is

necessary to define a mechanism to ensure that the benefits are paid directly to NBSTB account. FDA regulation 106-7 deals with National Benefit Sharing Trust Fund (NBSTBF) but does not specify the mechanism as well. Forestry revenues go to the transitory account from where fees are paid. Balance then goes to the consolidated account. Reg. 106-7 can be amended to ensure that the funds are paid directly from the transitory account to the NBSTF.

4. FDA to enforce payment of taxes by companies and should take legal actions against inactive or dormant companies.
5. A committee, headed by FDA, should be set up to meet MFDP to discuss issues related to benefits.



1st National Forest Forum

Ganta, Nimba County, Republic of Liberia

November 11-13, 2020



Resolution Signature 0111_20

No	Participant Name	Sex	Organization/Status	Address/Location	Phone #	Date	Signature
1.	Joseph T. Tally	M	FIDA	Monrovia	0886550508	13-11-20	
2.	John T. Woods	M	UL	Monrovia	0886564070	11/13/20	
3.	Kou Dorla	F	MOS	Monrovia	0777713627	11/13/20	
4.	Jimmy G. Gbureck	M	FDA	Monrovia	0775462564	11/13/20	
5.	Hilton Juma		CSD	Nimba	0770926567	11/13/20	
6.	Harrison Kamara	M	FIDA Board	Monrovia	0886515358	13/11/20	
7.	Joseph S. Koon	M	NBSTB/FIDA	Monrovia	0778495299	11/13/2020	
8.	Edward L. Harris	M	MFDR/NBSTB	Monrovia	077247846	11-13-20	
9.	Noses K. K. K.	M	MIA	Grand Bassa	0775855404	11-13/20	
10.	R. Baijerehah W. Brown	M	EPRA	Monrovia	0886536531	✓	
11.	Richard Dabou	M	NACUL	Monrovia	0886754739	✓	
12.	Julius Kamara	M	LICSAID/KOM	Monrovia	077704263	✓	
13.	James Davis	M	TUL	Monrovia	0888237742	✓	
14.	G. Mehu Z. Abednego	M	FFI	Monrovia	0886581158	13-11-20	
15.	Samuel Kweh	M	NGO Coalition	Monrovia	077044458	13-11-20	
16.	Augusta Taba	M	LRA	li	0770610323	13/11/20	

17.	James Sangar M	LRA	Monrovia	0777037124	11/13/20	James Sangar
18.	Kelvin P. Page M	P.D.C.C	Bojce Town, Margibi	0776228496	13/11/2020	K. Page
19.	Isaac K. Safu M	NUCFMB	Bojce Town, Margibi	0886810502	13/11/2020	Isaac K. Safu
20.	Ma. Stephen Sheriff M	Joint represen Cape	Cape Mount	0770167163	13-11-2020	Ma. Sheriff
21.	William V. Page M	NBSTB	Grd Bassa Co.	0775595677	13-11-2020	W. Page
22.	Jebbeh E. Dia F	NBSTB	Gr. Cape mont	0886914804	13-11-20	J. E. Dia
23.	Matthew T. Waller M	NBSTB	Rivercess	0776264431	13-11-20	M. Waller
24.	Ann's Jerrue F	NUCFDC	Rivercess	0775110248	13-11-2020	A. Jerrue
25.	K. ROBERT MAMINGO M	NUCFDC	Gbarpolu	0886947896	13-11-2020	K. Robert Mamingo
26.	Vincent De	NUCFDC	G. Kru Co.	0776711452	13-11-2020	V. De
27.	David P. Beale M	NUCFDC	Nimba Co.	0881859901	13-11-2020	D. Beale
28.	Abu M. Kamara M	NUCFDC	Cape Mount Co	0886970936	13/11/2020	A. Kamara
29.	Moses B. Baidoo M	NUCFDC	Gbarpolu	0886785294	13/11/2020	M. Baidoo
30.	Bonathan G. Wadwa M	NUCFMB	Monrovia	0555267649	13-11-2020	B. Wadwa
31.	Mercy M. S. Diallo F	LibTA	Monrovia	0770336930	13/11/20	M. S. Diallo
32.	Moses Quarm M	LFMA	Monrovia	0770922412	13/11/20	M. Quarm
33.	Nora B. B. F	NBSTB	Monrovia	0770456868	✓	N. B. B.
34.	Angie W. W. F	NUCFDC	Nimba	0775510099	13/11/2020	A. W. W.
35.	Mamie Chandra F	NUCFDC	Sinose	0886914804	13/11/2020	M. Chandra
36.	Martheline Saturday F	CFDC	Rivercess	0770011460	13/11/20	M. S.
37.	Ebenezer White M	CFDC	Rivercess	0775068366	13/11/20	E. White

38.	Eligah J. Kromah F	NRSTB	Monrovia	077042704	11/13/2020	Eligah J. Kromah
39.	Augusta Nelson F	steering committee	Monrovia	0880321197	11/13/2020	Augusta Nelson
40.	David K. Kromah M	CFDC	LoFa	088659218	11/13/2020	David K. Kromah
41.	James K. Kromah M	Youth REP	LoFa	0881349551	11/13/2020	James K. Kromah
42.	Andrew Y. Zelena M	NUCFDC	Monrovia/LoFa	0772395143	11/13/2020	Andrew Y. Zelena
43.	Yassah Y. Matar F	NUCFMB	LoFa	0880747675	11/13/2020	Yassah Y. Matar
44.	James S. Bryan M	NUCFDC	Gbarnga	0555772224	11/13/2020	James S. Bryan
45.	Saye Thompson M	NUCFMB	Nimba	0779153599	11-13-2020	Saye Thompson
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47.						
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