



PRESS RELEASE

Liberia and the EU in the run-up to concluding a timber trade agreement

Voluntary Partnership Agreement to be signed on 9th May 2011 in Monrovia

The Republic of Liberia and the European Union have successfully concluded the fifth negotiation session on a FLEGT (Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade) Voluntary Partnership Agreement. This timber trade accord will support Liberia to ensure the legal exports of timber to the European and other international markets, and lends credibility to the Liberian forest sector. Furthermore, it reinforces Liberia's efforts to strengthen forest sector governance and to curb illegal logging.

For the fifth round of negotiations, the Parties met in Brussels from 15th to 17th March 2011. In a joint statement, Liberia's Minister of Agriculture, Florence Chenoweth (PhD) and Luis Riera, Director of the European Commission Development Directorate, said: "We are very pleased with the progress achieved and we are aiming to initial the Agreement and conclude negotiations on 9th May 2011 in Monrovia. Both teams are working hard towards finalisation." The timber trade agreement will enter into force once ratified by both Parties.

Before the civil crisis in Liberia, the forest sector was one of the major revenue generating sectors. This Agreement will help to revive the forestry sector to its pre-war status and to create much needed jobs and community development for the Liberian people.

Liberia will thus successfully become the fifth African country to initial a FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement with the EU, following Ghana, Cameroon, the Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic.

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