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Republic of Liberia

**GOVERNANCE COMMISSION**

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Monrovia, Liberia

**FIRST GOL-CSO NATIONAL SUMMIT REPORT**

**February 16, 2023**

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# **ACRONYM**

AfDB African Development Bank

Atty Attorney-At-Law

CSA Civil Service Agency

CSOs Civil Society Organizations

CSR Corporate Social Responsibility

EITI Extractive Industry for Transparency Initiative

EPA Environmental Protection Agency

EU European Union

FDA Forestry Development Authority

GAC General Auditing Commission

GC Governance Commission

GOL Government of Liberia

IRDI Institute for Research & Development Initiative

LEITI Liberia Extractive Industry for Transparency Initiatives

LIS Liberia Immigration Services

LLA Liberia Land Authority

LRA Liberia Revenue Authority

MACs Ministries Agencies and Commissions

MFDP Ministry of Finance and Development Planning

MIA Ministry of Internal Affairs

MME Ministry of Mines and Energy

MOU Memorandum of Understanding

NCSCL National Civil Society Council of Liberia

PAPD Pro Poor Agenda for Prospective and Development

PPTWG Private Partnership Technical Working Group

s/he She/he

SDGs Sustainable Development Goals

US United States

# **I.0 SUMMARY**

The first GOL-CSO National Summit deepened partnership and strengthened a structured relationship and collaboration between the Government of Liberia (GOL) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in accordance with the GOL-CSO Accord of 2016. More importantly, consensus were reached on protecting the environment particularly with focus on improving the artisanal and small skills mining, land rights, deforestation, climate change, drawing synergies and diagnosing their impacts to strengthen future engagements.

The Summit went through a series of presentations and highlights therefrom are expressed below:

* The Policy space for artisanal-mining in Liberia remains promising especially for being eco-friendly, gender sensitive, Liberianized, etc. Nonetheless, the Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME), the arm of Government that provides oversight and policy guidance for the energy sector, revealed that the existing policy space is challenged by low budgetary allotment, limited logistics, over crowdedness of the artisan and small skills mining with illegal activities, 80% of mineral inspectors and mining agents deployed to monitor the sector are volunteers and, the mining law of Liberia drafted since 2000 is yet to be passed into law. These challenges are impeding revenue generation and making monitoring of the sector difficult.
* The Forestry Development Authority (FDA) plays an important role in combating illicit mining. Its attention is in Protected Forest Areas which are governed by the forest management law. The law amongst other issues ensures a viable network of sites representative of territorial and marine natural eco-systems dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, natural and associated cultural resources. The FDA collaborates with other authorities including MME, LLA, CSOs, etc. to regulate and protect the forest, conduct assessments, monitor protected areas and do not grant dimension licenses that covered parks.
* LEITI oversees the extractive sector and its reporting process. It ensures that whatever comes from under the ground is duly accounted for, paid for, and utilized for the betterment of the Liberian people. Every transaction that covers exports and exploration of the natural resources must be verified and duly accounted for. LEITI records showed from 2009 to 2021, Liberia benefited US$1.63 billion from its extractive sector. LEITI work is centered on reducing corruption by reporting on the extractive sector. It focuses on mineral, oil and gas. It promotes an open and accountable management in gas and mineral resources including forestry and agriculture which were recently included in its reporting for Liberia. LEITI cannot stop companies/individuals from doing wrong. However, it serves as watch-dog and can notify the public of wrong doings of companies/individuals.
* Liberia Land Authority (LLA) resolves and mitigates land conflicts in artisanal mining and other concession areas. It has the authority to develop and implement policies and programs, as well as, institute actions to strengthen land governance, land administration and management. In collaboration with other entities, through its well-structured internal administrative tribunals, LLA has instituted appropriate measures that have amicably resolved land disputes and conflicts.

The Summit cautioned CSOs to remain neutral in their engagements and avoid seeking recognition from county authorities. Because, such could have the propensity to thwart and divert CSOs from being neutral in the development process. Against this, communities have already started to label CSOs as being a bad and unprofessional entity not wanting to seek the best interest of the voiceless. Hence, as partner to the Government and other stakeholders - CSOs is cognizant that they need to govern themselves as watch dog entities to remain a major stakeholder in the governance process to promote natural resource governance by fighting corruption, illicit mining and monitoring companies to adhere to their corporate social responsibilities (CSR).

At the close of the Summit, the GOL and CSOs concurred in a communiqué to strengthen and improve their existing networking and collaboration for an improved enabling environment based on genuine commitment to accelerate national development (Appendix 1: GOL-CSO Communique).

**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

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The GOL through the Governance Commission (GC) in collaboration with the parent umbrella organization of CSOs, the National Civil Society Council of Liberia (NCSCL), hosted the first GOL-CSO National Summit in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County from 22nd – 23rd, November, 2022. The Summit was funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB), European Union (EU), Irish Aid and the Swedish Embassy.

The Summit brought together representatives from government entities, including the Liberia Land Authority (LLA), GC, Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiatives (LEITI), Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME), Forestry Development Authority (FDA), Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP), development partners, the Chairperson, Regional and County Coordinators of the NCSCL and several CSO actors from across the fifteen (15) Counties in Liberia.

Discussions at the Summit centered on protecting the environment comprising activities affecting artisanal and small-scale mining, the forest, land, endangering the lives of Liberians around concession areas, as well as, reiterating the agreement in the GOL-CSO policy instrument between the GOL and CSOs with regard to their respective roles in the national development process. The Summit noted the insurmountable challenges that have engulfed and continued to undermine efforts to protect the environment and benefits that supposed to accrue to the communities and people. Against these, the Summit found it compelling as enshrined in the Pro Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) for the Government and CSOs to assiduously work in the interest of the citizenry.

## **2.1 OBJECTIVES**

The major objectives of the Summit included:

1. Convening the first GOL-CSO annual national partnership summit;
2. Reviewing the existing partnership obligations and lay out plans for future engagements;
3. Identifying challenges around Natural Resource Governance (i.e., artisanal mining, environmental degradation, climate change, aquaculture, etc.) and their far reaching effects on revenue generation;
4. Fostering joint planning to achieve National Development Agenda, and;
5. Understanding how CSOs can assist to curtail illicit mining.

## **2.2 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**

**Honorable D-Karn Carlor, Commissioner, National Integrity System Mandate Area, GC**: Commissioner Carlor welcomed the participants and said the Summit in his mind, was an integral component of a multiplicity of a series of national events agreed on between the GOL and CSOs/NCSCL. In retrospection, the GOL and Civil Society’s engagement spanned many years back and have produced many outcomes. Since 2006, the Government and CSOs have at different periods renewed their commitments to a new way of engaging each other. The Commissioner said, the role of transnational or international Civil Society actors in Liberia’s development since 1990s and the shift of donor partners to work through CSOs have presented opportunities and challenges to the development of a viable National Civil Society. Institutionally, new kinds of structures and arrangements are required to take into consideration the potential for new national partnerships between the Government, its citizens and CSOs for deepening and broadening democratic governance in Liberia.

The Commissioner stated that the different engagements between both institutions highlight the need for an effective and productive collaboration. This first GOL-CSO National Summit is being held to basically recalibrate and strengthen the existing collaboration between the Government and CSOs as watch dog entities thereby setting the stage for deepening future engagements, including remaining engaged with vulnerable communities and peoples in the leeward parts of Liberia to enhance and strengthen natural resource governance in artisanal and small-scale mining. He concluded by stressing the need for constructive engagements in Liberia’s governance process.

**Mrs. Loretta Aletha Pope-Kai, Chairperson, NCSCL**: With support from the AfDB, Irish Aid, EU, and the Embassy of Sweden in Monrovia, the NCSCL in collaboration with the GC organized this two-day National Summit to deepen partnership and strengthen a structured relationship and collaboration as contained in the GOL-CSO Accord of 2016.

The Chairperson stated that amongst other things, the Summit brought together wide range of representatives from the Government, the Regional and County Coordinators of the NCSCL and CSOs. She further said deliberations primarily will be on key national issues: revision of the existing partnership agreement between the Government and CSOs, reviewing and streamlining the challenges affecting Liberia’s natural resources (artisanal and small skills mining, land rights, deforestation, climate change, etc.) and revenues, the roles of CSOs in supporting and combating illicit activities in this sector and their impacts and harnessing best practices to strengthen collective engagements.

## **2.3 SPECIAL WELCOME REMARKS**

**Counselor Kula L. Jackson, Commissioner for Planning & Policy, LLA:** He said stakeholders cannot easily discuss natural resource governance without discussing land issue because they are intertwined. The LLA is willing to work with other partners to ensure everyone works in the best interest of vulnerable communities. There is a need for the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) to get involve in addressing the many issues confronting the artisanal mining sector vis-vis the communities. No one goes in the community to start mining without the involvement of someone in the community. It has to be that either someone from the local authority must have invited the person or a representative of the community. He hopes the Summit discusses those sticky issues in the best interest of the country and when the stakeholders return to their respectively areas, they will create the awareness to protect the environment. There is a need for collaboration amongst the Government entities in addressing the problems associated with the artisanal mining sector.

**Honorable Joseph J. Tally, Deputy Managing Director, FDA:** He said he was excited to be a part of the Summit. The FDA has been collaborating with civil society and other stakeholders through the holding of meetings to address issues of the forestry and how the forest protected areas can be managed and protected to prevent illegal activities. He commended the organizers and stakeholders that attended and participated in the Summit (Appendix 4: FDA Presentation).

**Representation from LEITI:** The representative from LEITI said that his institution felt very happy to be a part of the Summit. Civil Society is a member of the LEITI process and the latter participation in the Summit will bond it closer with civil society and GC. LEITI believes that such engagement will lead to the practice of good governance in the natural resource sector especially where the Country is losing millions of US Dollars to artisanal mining activities. There is no other time than now for all state actors to sit around the table to discuss the issue of artisanal mining and how the Country can harness resources from this particular sector.

LEITI is happy that the MME and LLA are present at the Summit so that together they can find means to formalize the artisanal mining sector. The LLA has an important role to play in the Summit because it is difficult to discuss natural resources without talking about the land as the land is the bank for the natural resources. He cautioned the stakeholders to remain engage at every level of the Summit which will help them to address the some of the challenges affecting the sector.

**Mercy Corps Coordinator- Supportive Advocacy in Liberia Project**: The Coordinator stated that the entity was excited to be a part of the Summit. Thanks to our partners, the NCSCL and GC for this great occasion. The CSOs coming together in one space to talk about issues affecting the Country’s natural resources is a good thing and laudable. And, for the Mercy Corps ‘Supportive Advocacy in Liberia Project’, we remain committed in supporting CSOs in Liberia. We will never get tire following the NCSCL to implement these wonderful events. We encourage CSOs that during this time, they should please take the learning from these events to improve their work processes.

# **2.4 OVERVIEW**

**Atty. Monroe N. Outland, Program Manager, CENIV Mandate area, GC:** Atty. Outland said the Summit focuses on protecting the environment with emphasis on artisanal and small Scale mining, environmental pollution, environmental hazards, etc. and their impacts. The AfDB has been engaged with the GOL through several MACs including the GC and supports several projects i.e., economic governance (promoting natural resource governance).

Since 2006, the GOL in partnership with a range of CSOs through consultations has established policies to guide the relationship between the GOL and CSOs. These consultations have even led to the reforming of some government institutions such as:

* MPEA emerged into the new MFDP;
* The Governance Reform Commission transformed into the GC, and;
* The participating CSOs formed an umbrella organization known as the NCSCL

He pointed out that the AfDB somehow has been concerned about the tragedy that took place in 2019 in Tappita, Nimba County where 40 young Liberian artisanal miners lost their lives. This prompted the Bank, GOL and other partners to design mechanisms to tackle and address illicit mining and ensure there is no reoccurrence of such.

Through concerted efforts, the GOL and NCSCL have existing policy frameworks which have committed the two institutions to ensure improved partnership to enhance national development for the Liberian people (Appendix 2: Overview of GOL-CSO Engagement).

### **Questions/comments on the presentation**

* Why CSOs’ Code of Conduct (COC) should be a sub-set of the National Code of Conduct?
* I like to thank the GC and NCSCL for organizing the Summit and sensitizing CSOs about the work that NCSCL and the GC have been doing on our behalf. My concern is, why is it that some government institutions are not doing or working with CSOs as the policy documents are saying?
* In your presentation, I heard you telling us that there is a draft GOL-CSO Implementation Strategy that is yet to be finalized to guide the workings between GC and CSOs. I like to know, why is it such a good policy document is still in draft form and has not been finalized?
* What is happening to the Local Government Act?

**Response and feedback**

* Since the GC has been engaged with the NCSCL, its Chairperson has demonstrated high level of commitment and willingness for the two institutions to collaborate for the goodness of the Country. You are correct for saying institutions in the counties are not playing the roles they supposed to play.
* Your concern and similar concerns from other stakeholders are the main reasons for which this GOL-CSOs National Summit was organized so stakeholders can look at some of the problems to find ways to address them.
* The Chairperson of NCSCL had cautioned the GC not to move too fast to review and finalize the draft GOL-CSO implementation strategy. Because the Chairperson had indicated that she would appreciate a broad based representation and participation of CSOs in reviewing/finalizing the draft implementation framework. She asked those CSOs at the Summit to see reason and agree to work with the GC to finalize the draft implementation strategy. The GC advised the CSOs to work with the former to set a timetable to review/finalize the draft implementation strategy because it contained defined milestones and direction of engaging in the development process.
* On the issue of the Local Government Act, the Act has been passed into law but there are few outstanding issues being worked on between state actors and the MIA.
* The immediate setting up of the Private Partnership Technical Working Group (PPTWG) will help to strengthen policies and regulations and enforcement.
* The Chairperson of NCSCL said that the Summit supposed to proffer ways to tackle illicit mining considering that the sector is rapidly growing. The issue of mining is key at this discussion and the deprivation of forest resources is another thing to critically look at. Hence, CSOs are also looking at the broader picture associated with artisan and small skills mining as livelihoods for most of people who largely depend on the sector.
* Discussions as to whether or not the NCSCL should work with the GC to draft an Act for CSOs was reserved until a research is conducted in and outside of Liberia. Findings/recommendations therefrom will help CSOs to know if it’s a best practices for CSOs and government to work together to draft an Act for CSOs.
* CSOs garner their support from partners, because they are independent bodies. But if an Act is enacted to govern CSOs; would it not lead to CSOs losing their neutrality and independence? The issue was tabled till the research is done and findings known.
* CSOs are doing lot of works in line with the SDGs and PAPD in a way to support national development in the Country.

# **3.0 DAY ONE PRESENTATIONS**

**Honorable Alexander Blotey Scere, Deputy Minister for Administration, MME**: Artisanal Mining is by and large alluvial mining where folks used manual methods of extracting minerals from the earth. This falls in Class “C” Mining. It is exclusively reserved for only Liberian citizens. Class “B” is semi-industrial while Class “A” is industrial. These two categories of mining are for all nationals.

To improve the sector, several reforms have been initiated including drafting ofthe Mineral and Mining Law of 2000 which is yet to be passed into law coupled with low budgetary allotment, limited logistics, over crowdedness and illegal activities of the artisan and small skills mining, 80% of mineral inspectors and mining agents deployed to monitor the sector are volunteers, thereby making it hard to regulate and minimize the illegal activities. The Ministry has banned dredges on Liberia’s water bodies and placed a moratorium on the usage of heavy machines in Class “C” mining. Overcoming these problems do not only require creating an effective policy space; getting the needed financial and logistical support to bolster artisanal mining which remains promising, considering it is eco-friendly, gender sensitive, and Liberianized (Appendix 3: MME Presentation).

**Questions/comments on MME’s Presentation**

* What is being done to encourage proper dissemination of information on national issues through CSOs?
* How can the MME ensure miners work comply with the mineral and environmental laws of the Liberia?
* What type of reports does the MME receive from the inspectors and mining agents?
* Will the illegal mining continues since the MME says it does not have money to pay the inspectors and agents to monitor artisan and small skills mining across Liberia?
* Is the MME aware of the sand mining taking place in Montserrado County where its office is situated?
* There are miners in Zorzor and Salayea Districts, Lofa County who are using dredges: how is the Ministry handling the issue of dredging?
* In River-Gee County, all the miners are Class “C” miners and they are using dredges, dangerous chemicals and heavy equipment that have eroded the soil and polluted the waters thus creating health hazards in the county. There are also Burkinabe and Ghanaians who have infiltrated the forest and causing it to be depleted. What is the Ministry doing about such?
* How serious is the Ministry taking the illegal mining?
* The Government has banned dredges but still being used by miners around Monrovia. What is the Ministry doing about this to ensure it does not happen? How strong and tough are the measures put in place to either curtail or eliminate this unwholesome practice?
* What are the procedures in obtaining mining licenses? How long does it take to obtain a mining license?
* What is the Ministry’s post mining strategy?
* Are CSOs included in the Ministry’s collaborative policy framework?
* The regulating scheme for the mining sector is fragmented in terms of who manages what, How can the Ministry build synergy to ensure communities have safe drinking water, etc.?

**Response and feedback**

* Honorable Alexander Blotey Scere: Most of the concerns are centered on bad mining practices and governance. In addressing the issue of volunteers, the Ministry is working with CSA and MFDP in making sure that the inspectors and mining agents be placed on government’s payroll in the coming budget year, 2023.
* The Ministry is doing all in its powers including working with the MIA and other authorities to curtail the situation of dredges. The use of dredges by class ‘C” miners is banned.
* Inter-marriages between the community people and the miners especially foreigners are posing serious threat to the process. Foreigners are using inter-marriages to register their businesses. Let help ourselves to do the right thing. There are discussions on-going for the formalization of Artisanal and Small Scale Mining in Liberia.
* The Ministry has been issuing moratorium and has even issued more moratorium in the counties.
* CSOs have been always included in the MME’s activities. The Ministry is depending on all the collaborating partners to get its work done.
* Before the Ministry reaches the communities, the dredges can disappear; natural resources will go, and it will not stay forever, so we should all protect it together.
* At the Ministry, when one goes to obtain a license, one needs to sign the forest reformation document as part of the requirement.
* If sand mining is not done, how will infrastructural development go on? The Ministry is aware of the sand mining around Brewerville and other areas.
* It is advisable not to always be confrontational, because such will not help to solve the insurmountable problems that have engulfed the sector. The Ministry does not have the capacity to be in every community at the same time. So let continue to work with the mining agents/inspectors already deployed in the communities.
* The community dwellers for economic reasons accommodate the illegal miners. With such attitude, the Government alone cannot solve the problems; it requires concerted efforts on the part of every stakeholder to work together to solve the problem.
* The Superintendents and MIA have their own CSO Leadership structures in the various communities that attend concession meetings while the original CSOs are denied access to the meetings.
* In some counties, some CSOs are seen as enemies to the people. This should not be the case; instead CSOs should be seen as our partners who are positively contributing to the development work

**FDA roles in Illicit Mining covering Protected Areas**: Honorable Joseph J. Tally, Deputy Managing Director for Operations at the FDA stated that Liberia currently accounts for 42% of the Upper Guinea Forest. But there have been disturbances including increase in human population and activities, hunting, mining, and farming which are undermining the ecosystem and forest of Liberia.

The forest protected areas in Liberia are: Sapo National Park (1983), East and West Nimba (2003), Lake Piso Multiple Use Reserve (2010), and Grebo-Krahn National Park (2017). FDA is working on the gazettement of four (4) other proposed forest protected areas to include (the proposed Kop Mountain in Gbarpolu, proposed Foya Protected Area, proposed Krahn-Bassa Protected area in Grand Gedeh, Sinoe and River Cess, Cesstos Sankwehn, in Sinoe and River Cess, and Grand Kru-River Gee in Grand Kru and River Gee).

Conserving and preserving forest land for present and future use are absolutely necessary. Adequate care must be taken to address the needs of community dwellers. Regulations to protect selected forest areas largely affect the people livelihoods; they depend on the forest to survive (Appendix 4: FDA Presentation).

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### **Questions/comments on FDA Presentation**

* What action is the FDA instituting against logging companies that are destroying the Country’s forest? Is there a policy that can hold them accountable?
* What are the CSRs of logging companies in addressing climate change?
* What is the FDA doing about the Gola reserved forest?
* How do people obtain clearance to enter the Gleeyo Krobo, Grebo-Krahn national park?
* The Grebo National Park is preventing some citizens from entering the area. What is the FDA doing about this?
* What mechanism does the FDA has in placed to encourage people to leave the Park?
* Is the FDA addressing conflicts between the people and the companies regarding benefits?
* What is the FDA doing about the cutting of the trees in the forest?
* How does the FDA intend to work with the MME to decentralize policy on protected forest areas?
* What mechanism is put in place to curtail overlapping of duties between the MME and other relevant government entities?
* In Sinoe County especially in the Titus forest, residents do not go in that forest to farm or hunt. What is the government doing for them to survive?
* Does the FDA has the right to remove someone like a chief officer from his/her position?
* What alternative option does the FDA has in place for citizens if the people stop farming, hunting and cutting trees in the forest?

**Response and feedback**

* Logging companies are destroying the road leading to the Sarpo National Park, when engaged they say they are paying taxes to the Government.
* Land boundary is a serious issue, there are claims that the FDA is going beyond its limit, and this is something that needs to be addressed.
* Companies have huge sum of money for communities as part of their CSRs. It is a known fact that some of the companies are about to leave from the concession areas because they think they are no longer getting what they want. Most importantly is that the people in the forest are relying on the forest for their individual survival. Hence, companies need to settle whatever money they may have for the communities before they exit the concession areas.
* More and more Community awareness is needed and partners need to assist in promoting sustainable forest management to ensure its success.
* Gazettement of all proposed protected areas should go along with high community involvement
* FDA should be vigilant in dealing with illicit mining, poachers, and all other illegal miners. FDA must start to alert the local officers/officials about these unwholesome practices and begin to enforce the regulations to protect the Country’s biodiversity for future generations.
* FDA is concerned about the National Stakeholders Working Committee which civil society is a member and participate in the meetings and at times address the issue of companies using the roads and not helping to fix those roads. FDA had held meetings with the MPW and some of the companies at which time the latter were ready to sign an agreement committing to help fix some of the damaged roads. The MPW is responsible for road works across the Country. The companies complained that the pit sawyers are using the roads and destroying them. Roads should be in protected areas. This was said during the last meeting held with the Legislature.
* GOL is ensuring that incentives are paid for fixing of roads because the companies are paying their taxes to the Government.
* FDA does not know about the usage of all the sticks in the forest. So, it is discouraging people who used money from harvesting them especially the chewable.
* Pit sawing is not good. It was recommended that pit sawing be stopped.
* The taxes companies paid are distributed: 30% for the community in general, 30% for the host community and 40% go as revenue into the consolidated GOL’s account.
* Companies in Lofa and the community should always hold quarterly meetings. The companies should pay the community after selling.
* They should sign on to their equipment if they want to leave through LRA and FDA so they do not escape
* Roads are dangerous to forest management
* Regulations are in placed to protect logistics from the government. The sectors are being empowered to protect these areas. Protected areas are earmarked and there are areas one can hunt and farm while there are areas one can’t farm or hunt. There are lot of secondary and tertiary forests one can hunt and farm in.
* The Liberia Forest Sector has led the signing of an MOU between MME and FDA showing a cordial relationship between the two entities.
* The FDA has auditors that go in the bush to monitor.
* Before a head of a government body is removed, it is by law. Chief Officers are not there to disrespect the chiefs. Some of these happened because of the level of illiteracy. FDA is coming up with a way that people who are illiterate can also join the work process.
* Even though there is limited resources to work with, FDA has cars, 12 motorbikes and it is expecting 10 additional motorbikes to help it monitors and enforces the forest regulations.

**Training Models Provided by Mercy Corps:** Advocacy is talking for people that cannot talk for themselves. One cannot advocate when s/he is not a good communicator. SEAL offers capacity building training to enhance CSOs capacity. SEAL is partnering with Mercy Corps to build the capacity of NCSCL members in advocacy, project proposal writing and monitoring and evaluation. In collaboration with Mercy Corps, Pace Consulting will build CSOs capacity to enable them properly manage their affairs. The focus of Pace Consulting areas of work include: budget development, communication plan, outreach strategy, financial sustainability, gender planning, public policy and financial management, etc.

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## **Mathias Yeanay, Executive Director, Institute for Research & Democratic Initiative (IRDI):** Mr. Yeanaystarted his presentation by asking participants to define in their own words “integrity”. The below were responses to his question:

* Integrity is doing the right thing;
* Integrity is being honest, and;
* Integrity is not to be corrupt; etc.

Based on the Oxford Dictionary, Mr. Yeanay defined “integrity”: Integrity is the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles (personal/professional/artistic) to behave as a person with integrity - a man of great integrity. He encouraged CSOs to apply a great deal of integrity in the work they do as it is an important means through which partners can trust them.

# **4.0 DAY TWO PRESENTATIONS**

#

**Role of LEITI in the Extractive Sector and reporting process:** EITI was founded in 2002 in London by 140 delegates from governments, companies, industries, international organizations, CSOs and people who have money to invest in natural resources and must be willing to conform to EITI principles. The process led to the establishment of EITI multi-stakeholders organization and defining its mission. In 2007, Liberia joined EITI as a project. After 2 years, in 2009, Liberia was assessed and subsequently became the first EITI compliance country in Africa and the second in the world. EITI and its scope of work are governed by an Act.

LEITI momentum is meanly drawn from a body of research which revealed how a potential benefit of mineral wealth was not being realized. Since the establishment of EITI in 2002, it has evolved over time to effectively implement the EITI principles, which state that “a country natural resource belongs to its citizens”. EITI promotes an open and accountable management of gas and mineral resources. It discloses gas and mineral resources but forestry and agriculture have been included in its reporting. Liberia is the only country among the 57 Countries that have added forestry and agriculture to EITI reporting. The focus of EITI is mineral and oil & gas. In the agriculture sector, Liberia focuses its report on cash crops, oil palm, rubber, logging and not food crops.

LEITI has begun to consider cocoa and coffee but it has not started to report on them, because they have not yet reached the threshold under EITI framework for reporting. From 2009 to 2021, EITI has disclosed that Liberia had benefited US$1.63 billion from its extractive sector.

EITI’s economic development and governance reform work cover data on employment, beneficial ownership, contract transparency, and gender. CSOs and policy makers can use the data to make policy decisions. LEITI ensures whatever comes from under the ground is duly accounted for, is paid for, and utilized for the benefits of Liberians regardless of creed, culture, and religion. It also ensures every transaction done in areas of exports and exploration of the natural resources must be verified and accounted for.

###

### **Questions/comments on LEITI Presentation**

* Is there any mechanism in place to address the issues of beneficial ownership, transparency and full disclosure?
* Is LEITI keeping track of companies that merged to become one?
* According to the LEITI 13th report there is a decline of 11% in revenue. What is LEITI doing to increase from 11% to a higher percentage so the country can benefit?
* Concerns continued to mount about logging companies upholding their CSRs. How can LEITI help communities to benefit from their component of CSRs agreed between communities/government and concession companies?
* Has LEITI done any assessment to know the value of unshipped logs?
* What is LEITI role in addressing conflicts between companies and communities?
* What are the strategies employed to avoid unwanted money on beneficial ownership?
* What method does LEITI use for information to reach people in leeward counties?
* What mechanisms are LEITI using for people to be held accountable?
* Does LEITI have people deployed in the counties responsible to collect data to form part of its reporting?

**Response and feedback**

* Please share with CSOs additional knowledge on systemic and unilateral disclosures
* CSOs should take key interest in LEITI report and LEITI should share its reports with CSOs because CSOs can’t advocate in the absence of not having the proper information.
* LEITI is tightening the screws to avoid terrorists from entering the system that is the reason the entity has signed unto the beneficiary ownership.
* When there is transferred from one company to another, the company in existence incurred the liabilities and assets.
* Disclaimer: LEITI is just a referrer in this process, and cannot stop one from doing wrong, but once discover, the entity will notify the public for proper action. LEITI is responsible to disclose transactions of companies.
* There are several factors that have contributed to the decrease in price of natural resources
* There is no law that says two companies can’t operate under one person.
* Beneficiary ownership is the reduction of many companies into smaller number as per the reporting amount. For example, where the Ministry unilaterally discloses that reporting entities’ figures are not captured in the reporting amount.
* Systematic disclosure – using the system to disclose.
* Naming and shaming – disclosing names of companies that are not reporting on time
* Full disclosure is enshrined in LEITI’s Act. LEITI has been discussing with LACC so the latter can use LEITI’s report to fight corruption
* GAC can verify and sign unto LEITI’s reports for quality insurance.
* The companies, government and CSOs are in the counties, so decisions reached at the SMG are based on consensus.
* LEITI’s process is based on engaging with Civil Society not the government
* When CSOs say no and the government and the company agreed that agreement is not valid until the CSOs agree.
* LEITI has deployed people in the 15 counties, but the lack of funding has slowed down the entity’s works in the counties. LEITI has started to negotiate with partners for assistance to enable it undertakes some of its activities.
* LEITI usually brings stakeholders such as CSOs together to discuss pertinent national issues. LEITI expects after meetings for the CSOs to disseminate information from the meeting to their audiences.
* LEITI is seeking funding from the World Bank to develop an online App that will contain all the concessions agreements for easy access.

**Role of LLA in resolving land conflicts in Artisanal Mining and in Concession Areas:** Counselor Kula L. Jackson, Commissioner, Land Policy & Planning, LLA - He said the LLA develops policies on a continuous basis, undertakes actions and implements programs to support land governance, land administration and management. Since the early 1800s, there have been two parallel systems of land tenure in Liberia, namely:

* Customary: communal land system based on traditions and norms practices in rural areas of Liberia. Customary Land tenure regimes bestow the rights of the land unto the entire community and the land is used by inhabitants of the community.
* Statutory: based on Common law includes statute and case law practices in urban and coastal areas of Liberia. Statutory land tenure bestow rights of land ownership through fee simple, giving permanent, heritable and fully transferable rights to the holder(s).

###

### He further stated that Liberia has delineated the categories of land ownership and rights into Public Land, Customary Land, Private Land, and Government Land. The Counselor also articulated that the reform of the land sector layout well internal structure toresolve land conflicts and matters. (Appendix 5: LLA Presentation).

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### **Questions/comments on LLA Presentation**

* How can one determine land value?
* Is it possible to register one’s land deed with LLA while the deed is already registered with the Center for National Documents and Archives?
* Does the LLA has penalties for land rights violators?
* Is it good for a surveyor to register one’s land deed?
* How is the LLA working on the customary land boundary harmonization issue? This is important because when this issue is adequately addressed, it will motivate people from all sides to accept the outcome.
* Is there any limitation on land tenures in Liberia?
* How do you value land in a particular location?
* What is the LLA doing about creating awareness?
* Are there fees for land registration?
* Is the LLA aware that communities have started selling land?
* How is moratorium placed on land activities? Are the private and government surveyors working in line with the LLA’s Mandate?

**Response and feedback**

* LLA does not have land market. If the entity has organized land information system then it could have land market
* LLA along with CSOs is working on the fees regime.
* Double land sales can lead an individual to go to jail for 10 years
* Tribal certificate is not a deed because it lacks the meats and bounce to determine it is a deed
* LLA is working in Grand Cape Mount
* LLA is like a Court, which does not look for cases. When one call on the LLA, it is always ready to dispatch its surveyors to carry on surveys
* There are 5% undiluted shares in a company when the concession expired.
* Not everything that is registered and probated is legal.
* To harmonized customary land issue, LEITI needs to be truthful to state actors
* Let make it our duty to identify boundaries
* The Burkinabe issue is a national security issue which required the attention of the Liberia Immigration Service (LIS)
* There is a professional body called Association of Surveyors comprising private and public surveyors that handle surveying of land. For every time one sells a piece of land, used the mother deed, the LLA issued a new deed.

# **6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations were proffered.

1. That the MME, FDA and LLA should partner with the NCSCL/CSOs to monitor activities in the natural resource sector;
2. Due to the presence of CSOs in concession communities, it is important they be included in natural resource sector meetings and decision making processes;
3. That GC and NCSCL should assiduously work to ensure the establishment of the PPTWG;
4. That CSOs should set up a team to research both overseas and in Liberia on best practices i.e., pros and cons if jointly CSOs and a government can draft a CSO Bill and, if such would not undermine and take away the neutrality role of CSOs. It was further recommended the NCSCL should organize a technical working session to review the research findings and reach consensus on drafting a CSOs Bill;
5. That there should be increased community awareness undertaken by stakeholders including CSOs to promote sustainable forest management;
6. That the MME and FDA should be vigilant to deal with the illicit mining and poachers;
7. That local officers/officials should be empowered to enforce regulations to protect the County’s biodiversity for future generations;
8. That the MME should deploy and station monitoring and evaluation officers in areas where mining is taking place without any further delay;
9. LEITI should establish offices in the 15 counties and ensure the people have access to the reports;
10. That superintendents and other county authorities should stop appointing their own CSO representatives to attend meetings in their interest and exclude legitimate CSOs that supposed to be present in meetings;
11. That the government and development partners should work to recognize CSOs for the type of works they engaged in across communities, and;
12. That concession companies and the communities people be brought together to enable the people to ask questions about how concession companies can help to improve their welfare.

# **7.0 CONCLUSION**

The first GOL-CSO National Summit went on successfully. CSOs and other state actors were exuberant to come together to discuss critical national development issues such as protecting the environment that everyone relies on for livelihoods.

While committing themselves through a communique to closely work with the Government to combat illicit activities impeding the environment, the CSOs and Government underscored the need to strengthen national regulatory institutions to enable them effectively play their statutory roles. They also agreed to strengthen their relationship by working in a concerted fashion to promote national development for the betterment of the people of Liberia.

The CSOs concurred that as they hold the Government responsible to demonstrate accountability and transparency; they too must be accountable and transparent in whatever they do. This, according to them, will create a level playing field for every stakeholder most especially for the voiceless whom CSOs represent.

1. **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: Communiqué from the Summit

Appendix 2: Overview of GOL-CSO Engagement

Appendix 3: MME Presentation

Appendix 4: FDA Presentation

Appendix 5: LLA Presentation