



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations

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***National Launch of the FAO-EU Funded Project, “Promoting Women and Community Rights in Forest Governance and Management in Liberia”***

Liberia hosts the largest remaining fragments of the Upper Guinea forest ecosystem across West Africa. Reform initiatives have led to policies and legislations to strengthen legal frameworks governing forestry and advance community rights and ownership. Liberia also signed and begun implementation of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the European Union in December 2013, committed to improved forest governance and poverty reduction. The forestry sector in Liberia therefore has a huge potential for transforming communities. However, gender inequalities across the sector and country in general challenge the fulfillment of this promise. This unequal status of women limits meaningful participation in community forest governance bodies. In general, decisions are often made by male-dominated structures and issues paramount to women such as sexual and reproductive health rights and services and gender based violence are relegated further increasing the marginalization of women from community to national levels. Therefore, women participation is necessary to ensure an inclusive community management and governance in Liberia.

ActionAid Liberia in partnership with Sustainable Development Institute (SDI) and Foundation for Community Initiatives (FCI) is proud to announce the launch of a project, ***“Promoting Women and Community Rights in Forest Governance and Management in Liberia”*** which is being implemented with funding support from the European Union (EU) through the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). This project seeks to enhance the capacity of women to meaningfully participate in forest governance and management and promote a gendered and participatory process for inclusive natural resources governance and management. The project will provide evidence based documentation demonstrating critical need for inclusion of women in forest governance and management and promote gender-sensitive forest governance and management at community and national engagements. The project will also ensure that women have the increased confidence, knowledge and enhanced economic independence needed to claim and exercise their rights to govern and manage forest resources and benefits at community and national levels. The project will also contribute to the assessment and monitoring of the Liberian VPA impact on gender relations and gender-related livelihoods opportunities. The project is being implemented over a nine month period in 10 communities in five counties, including Grand Gedeh, Gbarpolu, Nimba, Grand Bassa and Margibi.

ActionAid Liberia, SDI and FCI would like to express its sincere gratitude to the donors FAO and the EU as well the Government of Liberia and communities for making this intervention a reality through their different levels of support.

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**CONTACT: James Pewee, Project Coordinator, ActionAid Liberia; [james.pewee@actonaid.org](mailto:james.pewee@actonaid.org); +231 886 656 591/ 0776 495 539**

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**ActionAid Liberia is a non-governmental organisation that has operated in Liberia since 1997. AAL is a member of ActionAid International federation headquartered in Johannesburg with member organisations present in over 45 countries. AAL is one of the leading organizations in Liberia on women’s rights and gender equality with government and community recognition.**