

Republic of Liberia



**REPORT**

**2010**

**Land Commission Consultations**



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This section of the report is an abbreviated version of the records of the county consultative meetings held between March and April 2010. It provides information on the Land Commission, the consultative meetings, the views of participants on land issues, the key recommendations and their linkage to the program areas of the Land Commission.

### *The Land Commission*

The Land Commission (LC) was established by an Act of the National Legislature of Liberia in August 2009 and has a life span of 5 years. It is an autonomous agency that is structured with seven commissioners at the strategic apex. Each commissioner is from a different county; appointed by the President and confirmed by the Liberian Senate. In addition to the commissioners, there is a technical secretariat which provides technical and administrative support to the Commission.

The mandate of the Commission is to 'Propose, advocate and coordinate reforms of land policy, laws and programs in Liberia'. Contrary to the widely held public view and perception, the LC does not have adjudicatory powers or an implementation role. Its specific policy objectives include the pursuit of:

- Equitable and productive access to the nation's land, both public and private;
- Security of tenure in land and the rule of law with respect to landholdings and dealings in land;
- Effective land administration and management; and
- Investment in and development of the nation's resources.

The functions of the Commission are multiple and they include the following:

- To undertake fact-finding studies and public consultations on land;
- To recommend actions, programs, and reforms of land policy and law;
- To call together government ministries and agencies to consider complex issues relating to land, including the creation of task forces;
- To propose to the President actions to deal with urgent land problems; and
- To propose legislation and supervise its drafting, including amendments to the constitution in respect to land matters.

To achieve optimal organizational efficiency and effectiveness, the work of the Commission is programmed into specialty areas; namely, (1) Land Administration, (2) Policy and Program Development, (3) Dispute Resolution, (4) Land Use Management, (5) Education and Outreach, and (5) Land Law, with each area headed by a commissioner. These areas are not mutually exclusive but complement each other in addressing specific land issues and accomplishing certain objectives of the Commission. In addition to these, each commissioner has oversight responsibility for either one or more of the 15 counties of Liberia.

## *The Consultations*

The County Consultative Meetings were planned and organized by the Land Commission to familiarize local authorities in the counties with the Commission, its members, mandate, operations and programs. The meetings were a follow-up to the 2008 Regional Consultative Meetings organized by the Governance Commission of Liberia on land issues. Specifically, they were geared towards soliciting the views of the Liberian citizenry on land issues. The meetings were also driven by the Government of Liberia (GOL) Land Policy Agenda as contained in its Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) of 2008 - 2011.

The consultative meetings were convened in the administrative headquarters of the 15 counties of Liberia and brought together a targeted audience of paramount, clan and town chiefs, district commissioners, public surveyors, land commissioners, women's groups, civil society and youth organizations.

Except for Lofa County with seven (7) groups representing the seven districts of the county, all other county participants were randomly assigned to four groups and asked to respond to a set of structured questions on land issues. The topics around which the questions were formulated included: (a) access to public and private land, (b) security of tenure in land, (c) land administration and management, and (d) investment and development of natural resources. These issues form the strategic goals and objectives of the Government of Liberia's (GOL) agenda on land as encapsulated in the PRS. The plenary sessions on the other hand, were larger forums for participants to note agreements and disagreements on group responses, record concerns, and express opinions regarding individual group reports as presented by the chair/moderator. Each group's presentation was followed by two to four questions.

The overall impression of the discussions in the meetings was that participants had a very good understanding of what are the bottlenecks that impede the efficient functioning of the land administration and management system in Liberia. In many instances, the groups were able to formulate practical recommendations on how to overcome these problems. In general, the degree to which the people understand the formal system and its proceedings is quite low and in many instances it was pointed out that local administrative officials representing central government are contributing to the problems and the confusion in the land sector.

## *Summary of discussion*

- Access to land:

The issue of accessing land as an asset upon which economic development thrives and poverty reduced is quite controversial, while the processes leading to its acquisition either through public or private sale have become more complex in post-conflict Liberia. For example, on the availability of land particularly public land, nine (9) out of the fifteen (15) county group participants felt there is enough land in the country that is laying idle and could be put into productive use once the appropriate regulatory framework and

intervention measures are instituted, while participants from five(5) counties (Margibi, Nimba, Lofa, Bong and Grand Cape Mount Counties) expressed the view that past and recent land grabbing by wealthy individuals and concessions mainly in the agriculture sector makes the argument of land being plenty an illusion.

In terms of women's access to land, the majority of participants responded that the culture and custom of rural areas continues to support inheritance of land rights for men while women's rights to land seem to be at the mercy of their male relatives in spite of the passage of the much heralded Inheritance Law by the National Legislature of Liberia in 2003. However, rural women do access land in relatively few instances through the land market depending on their purchasing power.

The predominate mode of accessing land by youths remains inheritance, intermarriage, and market transactions while for 'strangers' the main avenues are, stranger/, father/, mother/wife relationship, the process of naturalization, and land market transactions. For the sale of private land, the majority participants responded that this is done through market transactions.

- **Security of tenure:**

On security of tenure in land, most participants agreed that it is not guaranteed due to multiple reasons; the foremost being (a) the practice of double land sales by county land commissioners with the assistance of county surveyors, and (b) the alteration of legitimate land rights documents in land administration institutions in favor of those that pay the highest bribe. Notwithstanding, this dismal assessment, some participants indicated that once the existing legal channels are followed in acquiring the land, the risk of buyers being manipulated by unscrupulous land sellers and institutions is negligible.

Regarding the definitions of public, communal, private and swamp lands, almost all participants defined public land as land owned by the government, communal land as land owned by the community, private land as land purchased by an individual through the land market, and swamp land as wet or low land not usually sold except through the authorization of the government.

On the issue of land disputes, participants recommended a hybrid system of land dispute resolution that draws on the strengths of both the customary and civil law approaches with the 'palava hut' method of the customary approach being the most preferred.

- **Land Administration and Management:**

Under land administration and management, there was a shared understanding of a tribal certificate, a deed, squatter's right and a lease. Tribal certificate is construed to mean a document received from the traditional elders, chiefs and district commissioners which enable an individual to own land in the jurisdiction of that tribe. A deed is understood as a land title document with metes and bounds granted an individual or institution with property rights. Squatters' rights is defined as a privilege or permission granted by an

authority like a city or municipality for an individual to settle, occupy or use a parcel of public land for a specified period of time without any ownership. Lease on the other hand, is referred to as an agreement entered into between two parties or more for the use of a property or land for a specified time frame

On the specific question of the type of role(s) expected of the rural communities in the management of land, forest and mineral resources, an overwhelming majority of participants noted the inadequacy of the current legal and institutional framework and safeguards under which so much administrative abuse and political interference in the management and use of these resources have occasioned extensive degeneration of these vital natural resources. Of utmost significance, observed the participants, is the absence of clearly defined rules on the rights, roles, obligations of the citizens and mandates of government institutions regarding the management of land based resources.

Notwithstanding the above limitations, the degree of community/citizens involvement in the management of these resources varies. Some, particularly the youths and the educated, are demanding local community involvement from the initial process of negotiating concessions to the granting of shares in companies with business interest in the exploitation of these resources; while others suggested that the community's role be restricted to that of a watchdog in preventing the prowling of the land by unsuspecting individuals and companies through a process of public disclosure of their misdeeds for possible sanctions.

Regarding the types of land records that should be kept and by whom, participants noted the human and institutional capacity constraints of existing land records management agencies which have given rise to the present system to fraud and abuse, and therefore prefer tribal certificates and land deeds originating from tribal jurisdictions to be kept by the tribal authorities (paramount, clan and town chiefs) themselves as the option of first choice, while others named the National Archives, the offices of the county superintendents, district commissioners or banks as alternative custodians of land related records.

- **Investment and development:**

Discussions pertaining to the issue of investment and the development of natural resources brought out some striking findings. For example, in reference to what should be done to public land not utilized, participants prefer that such lands be turned over to the appropriate institutions, i.e. (1) the local communities for the construction of development projects such as schools in addition to other social and basic services; (2) the State, through the use of its power of eminent domain; and (3) private individuals and entities with the financial resources should develop such land. Conversely, private land not utilized should be turned over to the institutions and persons cited above for development purposes. A retaliatory tax levy that is much higher than the present land tax is proposed by participants to compel land hoarders disinterested in improving upon the land to begin developing their lands.

A range of 1 lot to 1 acre for a house spot, and 100 acres for farm land is proposed as quantitative limits under freehold and an upper limit of 100,000 acres for concessions. The basis for this limitation, according to participants is the grinding realities of Liberia's post-conflict democratic dispensation which requires at the most extreme the reversal and or mitigation of some, if not all historical injustices meted out to the vast majority of the citizenry including past injustices associated with accessing the land.

The national government is identified by participants as the institution best placed and positioned to manage the natural resources of the land on condition that such role is limited to that of a trustee while recognizing the ownership role of the citizens. Complementing this role, according to the participants should be the citizens of local communities in particular the traditional authorities, women and youth representatives, civil society groups and opinion leaders in the management of these resources. On the contentious issue of restricting land ownership to only Liberians as enshrined in the Constitution, an overwhelming majority of the participants gave a 'yes' answer to maintaining that provision.

### *The consultations report*

Following the Executive Summary, this report discusses in chapter 2 an overview of the consultation process beginning with a section on the background of the consultation and ending with a summary of participants' responses organized by topical issues.

Chapter 3 includes the full county-wide group discussions and responses by topical issues, a list of land disputes by county and key recommendations.

The challenges and opportunities on the way forward for the Commission are discussed from the perspective of the program areas and are recorded in chapter 4.

## 2. OVERVIEW OF THE CONSULTATIONS

### I. BACKGROUND

Immediately following its official launch on March 11, 2010, the Land Commission embarked on the process of consultations in each of the 15 political sub-divisions of the country. The consultations complemented an earlier process of Regional Consultative Meetings of 2008 organized by the Governance Commission of Liberia on land issues and concerns.

The issues and concerns raised during the 2008 meetings are multiple and cross-cutting in nature. A number of actions; i.e. the creation of the Land Commission, have been taken to address some of these concerns while a critical mass of them remain unaddressed.

Some of the concerns raised during the 2008 Consultative Meetings included but are not limited to (a) the reclaiming and re-establishment of ownership of traditional lands by rural citizens' following the Liberian civil crisis, (b) apprehensions regarding security of land tenure, (c) pressure on accessible land. These concerns and issues still linger, and if left unchecked could generate into potential crises.

Given the importance of land as a determinant of access to economic opportunities, especially for those living in the rural area and for whom land constitutes a large percentage of their asset portfolio, the numerous concerns and issues raised during the 2008 Regional Consultations indicated that the way land rights are defined, that conflicts pertaining to it are resolved through formal and informal means to empower and give them a clearer voice and thus creating the basis for more democratic and participatory local government remained unresolved.

Recognizing the pivotal role proper land governance plays in generating sustainable livelihoods and development for its people, the Government of Liberia (GOL) has prioritized the land issue in many policy documents including its flagship economic revitalization policy, the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) in which the government is committed to:

- Promoting equitable and productive access to both public and private land;
- Promoting security of tenure and the rule of law with respect to land holdings and dealings in the land;
- Promoting land administration and management; and
- Promoting investment in and development of the nation's resources

In order to solicit the views of the people regarding these broad policy objectives and means to realize their implementation, the Land Commission, with funding and technical support from UN-HABITAT, planned and organized a program of county consultations as a first step in the land reform process.

## *Objectives*

The county consultations were convened in the administrative headquarters of the 15 counties of Liberia between March and April, 2010. The primary objectives were:

- To inform local authorities about the statutory mandate of the Land Commission,
- To introduce the Commission, Commissioner with oversight responsibility for each county, and give firsthand information about oversight responsibilities, operations and programs, and
- To listen to the people and gather firsthand information on county-specific land concerns and issues.

## *Target Audience*

The targeted audiences for the meetings were paramount, clan and town chiefs, district commissioners, public surveyors, land commissioners, women’s groups, civil society and youth organizations.

## *Venue and schedule*

VENUE	COUNTY	DATE
The Fair Ground Pavilion, Buchanan	Grand Bassa County	March 23
Zwedru Multi-lateral High School, Zwedru	Grand Gedeh County	March 29
The City Hall, Harper	Maryland County	March 29
The City Hall, Sanniquellie	Nimba County	March 31
The Administrative Building, Barclayville	Grand Kru County	March 31
The Administrative Building, Fishtown	River Gee County	April 3
The Administrative Building, Greenville	Sinoe County	April 6
The Administrative Building, Gbarnga	Bong County,	April 5
The City Hall, Bopolu	Gbarpolu County	April 7
The Administrative Building, Tubmanburg	Bomi County	April 10
The City Hall, Cestos City	River Cess County	April 12
The City Hall, Robertsport	Grand Cape Mount County	April 13
The Administrative Building, Bentol	Montserrado County	April 14
The Administrative Building, Kakata	Margibi County	April 19
The Administrative Building, Voinjama	Lofa County	April 23

## *Planning and organization*

The Land Commission Consultations were planned and organized by the Technical Secretariat and involved mobilization, preparation and dissemination of materials and the mapping of roles and responsibilities.

- **Mobilization:** In order to ensure high participation of targeted audience and effective time management during the meeting, an advanced team was sent to the consultation venue to coordinate with county authorities to ensure the attendance of participants, linked with local radio stations and through press releases and secured the venue and catering services.
- **Back-ground and dissemination materials:** The Commissioners agreed to use the same speaking notes and adopt the same programs for the day to ensure consistency throughout the country. Moreover, in order to familiarize the audience with the Commission's mandate and structure, the Technical Secretariat prepared program for the day, a brochure of the Commission featuring the Commissioners and their program areas, fact-sheets on each Commissioner and guiding questions for the group discussions.
- **Roles and responsibilities:** The teams participating in the consultations were led by the Commissioner with oversight responsibilities on the specific county supported by a facilitator, a rapporteur and a logistician. The Commissioners used their opening speeches to inform participants on the Commission's mandate, its oversight responsibilities, and programs. During the rest of the meeting, the Commissioners' primary role was to gather first-hand information on local land issues and concerns. The facilitators managed the discussions, clarified the purposes and the methodology to participants, and supported the Commissioners at all times. The rapporteurs were given the responsibility to record the proceedings and document the exchanges. The logisticians were entrusted with arranging and securing transportation, food and related support in addition to the disbursement of transportation re-imbursments to participants.
- **Institutional collaboration:** To attract key stakeholders at the locale, the Commission selected the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) to coordinate via the offices of the county superintendents, the process of identifying and inviting local government authorities and others in the land sector. Officially invited participants included paramount and clan chiefs, district commissioners, township commissioners, mayors, land commissioners, county surveyors, representatives of women and youth groups and traditional elders, county legislative caucuses, representatives of civil society organizations, representatives of UNMIL and a host of ordinary citizens who were either guests or observers during the consultations.
- **Program:** The Program included a welcome statement by an authority of the county, an introductory speech by the county oversight Commissioner, an overview of the consultation by the facilitator, working groups sessions, presentation to plenary with questions and answers session and the closing.

## II. COMMISSIONERS' SPEECH

### Welcome and brief introduction of the Commissioner

#### *We have been hearing about the Land Commission, what is the Land Commission?*

As some of you may know, the Land Commission was established in August 2009 as an independent, autonomous body of the Republic of Liberia. It comprises seven Commissioners including a Chairman and Vice Chairman. We all come from different Counties. Our mandate is to propose, advocate and coordinate land policy, laws and programs in Liberia. This Commission is in no way intended to replace Land Commissioners

and Surveyors in the Counties. We are here to hold consultations and enhance the work you are already doing in the County(ies). Let it be made clear that the Land Commission does not have adjudication power. We are aware of the problems associated with land in our country. Therefore, the Land Commission will endeavor to carry out some reforms based on the recommendations that will come from you. It is from these recommendations that the Commission will come up with clear and fair rules; identify responsibilities of the various players in the land sector and ensure that the system we are going to put in place is accessible to all Liberians in order to obtain security of tenure.

***Why was a Land Commission established?*** The Land Commission was established for several reasons: (1) There is lack of coordination in the land sector. We need to build a coordination mechanism between all those involved in the land sector including the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy, Ministry of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Agriculture, Forestry Development Authority, Center for National Documents Records and Archives, and many others. (2) We all will agree that legislations on the books are outdated and should be reviewed and revised to represent current realities. The Government has established a Law Reform Commission and we need to work with that Commission and the Judiciary and the National Legislature to bring these legislations in keeping with best practices. (3) The war experienced in the country has further exacerbated the problems associated with land. There are unscrupulous land owners and surveyors who sell land to more than one person, thus propagating tensions and conflicts. This needs to be stopped. (4) Legal Pluralism is strong in Liberia where customary and statutory laws coexist and need explanation and clarification for public consumption. (5) There is a huge back-log of Land Cases in our courts. Thanks to the establishment of the Law Reform Commission. The issue of enforcement of land laws is critical to the objectives of the Land Commission. Land is one of the main sources of conflicts. (Examples that have taken place in places such as, Nimba, Lofa, Maryland and even in Grand Bassa County. (6) Access to land and our natural resources are vital to sustainable livelihoods and economic development. However, the unsustainable management of our natural resources remains a challenge.

***How does the Commission work?*** During the tenure of the Commission, which is five (5) years, we will strive to undertake studies, consultations such as this, hold conferences to garner support and discuss with multi-stakeholders groups (task forces) and all parties involved so as to reach a common understanding of what the issues are and identify challenges and opportunities. The Commission will collate all the land issues and present them to the National Legislature for land sector reforms. The Land Commission is accountable, impartial and transparent in all that we do. Therefore, we have apportioned program areas to each Commissioner since the issue of land is very broad. We have developed an integrated work plan with specific objectives.

***What has the Commission done already?*** The Commission was officially launched on March 11, 2010, by the Vice President of Liberia, His Excellency Joseph N. Boakai. This event

was to inform the public about the presence of the Commission and what we can do and cannot do. Apart from the Government of Liberia support, we are receiving support from our partners including UN-HABITAT, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the World Bank (WB). The Government and donors would require strong accountability in the use of their funds.

Since our existence, the Commission has: completed an inventory of land disputes in Circuit and Magisterial Courts in five(5) counties (Montserrado, Margibi and Bomi, Nimba and Lofa); been instrumental in the placing of a three-month moratorium on sale of public land – validation of public land sale deeds before the President of Liberia during the 3 month moratorium, the Chairman of the Commission was appointed by the President of Liberia to Chair a ten-member inter-ministerial Screening Committee to vet public land sale deeds within the overall context of revising the 1973 Public Land Sale Law; has reviewed its five year Land Program with work plan prepared for each program area; has solicited and obtained donor funding in support of the Land Commission’s mandate; developed a robust communication strategy to ensure visibility and impartiality; held a two-day retreat to review roles and responsibilities of the Commissioners, updated the plan of action, developed administrative policies and procedures; actively involved in the Interim Border Harmonization Task Force; and participated in the investigation and resolution of several land disputes and incidents, for example, the University of Liberia Fendell land dispute, the burning of experimental plots at the Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI), and the Zorzor land dispute.

### **III. GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND SUMMARY OF RESPONSES BY TOPICAL ISSUE**

For the group discussions, the targeted participants were randomly assigned to four (4) thematic groups, except Lofa County with seven (7) groups representing the seven districts of the county. Each group was asked to respond to set of structured questions. There were occasions where group membership was disproportionately high due to the high influx of observers who expressed interest in the discussions. Each group selected a chair/moderator and a rapporteur to record the proceedings of the discussions.

Facilitators from the Technical Secretariat of the Commission provided explanations on the structure of the discussions and how to answer the guiding questions. They also provided guidance to ensure that discussions proceeded as planned in addition to assistance in the preparation of the group reports.

One of the four areas of the GOL land agenda as enshrined in the PRS, i.e.; (a) access to public and private land, (b) security of tenure in land, (c) land administration and management, and (d) investment and development of the natural resources, was assigned each group in a county except Lofa County with seven (7) groups representing the seven districts of the county, and Montserrado where an item dealing with zoning laws and regulations was added.

Following extensive and intense debate of the issues, group responses were agreed upon, recorded and presented to the plenary session with recommendations except for the southeastern counties, Bong and Bassa Counties, where consultative meetings were held prior to request for 'recommendation' as an addendum to the guiding questions.

The following represents an aggregate summary of responses to a set of questions posed during the various county group discussion sessions on the following land issues: (a) access to public and private land (b) security of tenure in land (c) land administration and management, and (d) investment and development of natural resources. Each group was additionally asked to list the existing land conflicts in the area and describe them and to put forward any recommendations they may have in terms of needed land reforms:

### ***GROUP 1: Access to public and private land***

**QUESTION 1:** How do you get land?

**QUESTION 2:** Are you able to get enough land for your: house; rice farm; tree crops; business?

**QUESTION 3:** How do you make sure that land is put to good use?

**QUESTION 4:** How do women, youth and strangers get access to land?

An over whelming majority of respondents in all counties indicated that they acquired public land through the traditional authorities - meaning the chiefs and elders by and through a process of engagement that most often requires payment of money as a 'token', and in some cases by and through inheritance and the payment of dowry for women whose parents are part of the rural landed aristocracy.

Regarding private land acquisition, the most common answers were through land market transactions involving sales and leases, and informal negotiations involving the prospective buyer and seller.

When asked if there is enough land for housing, rice and tree crops farming, and business, nine out of the fifteen counties agreed in the affirmative while five; namely, Margibi, Nimba, Lofa, Bong and Grand Cape Mount Counties, indicated a 'no' answer, citing amongst other things, past and recent land grabbing by wealthy individuals and concessions mainly in the agriculture sector.

On how to make sure that land is put to good use, participants across the counties listed a number of 'first steps' that include mainly infrastructure development (constructing homes and public facilities, leasing and renting land to domestic and foreign investors for business purposes), and a government regulatory framework to ensure proper land use planning and management.

Regarding the accessing of land by women, youth and strangers, the responses were as follow: For the youths, the predominant mode of land access was identified as inheritance, followed by intermarriage and outright purchase. Marriage and having children for the

husbands, wills left by deceased parents (though often disregarded) and direct purchase if the financial means exist were found to be methods for women's access to land. For 'stranger', through a stranger father or mother, the process of naturalization, direct purchase through the land market and negotiation/signing of a MOU with the land owners(tribal authorities).

## ***GROUP 2: Security of land tenure***

**QUESTION 1:** How can you be sure that the land is for you? Do you have any fear that something might happen to your land in the future?

**QUESTION 2:** What is public land? Communal land? Private land? Swamp land?

**QUESTION 3:** How do you settle land matters? Is it working? How can laws and decisions pertaining to land be enforced?

On the issue of security of tenure and fear of what might happen to the land in the future, there was unanimous agreement that once the proper/legal channels are followed in respect to land deed probation in courts and registration at the National Archives, the risk of exposure is minimized. In spite of this legal process, most participants expressed the fear of land documents issued by the National Archives and other land administration institutions being altered with the connivance of corrupt officials to the benefit of persons who pay the highest bribe.

Responding to the question of what is public land, communal land, private land and swamp land, almost all participants defined public land as land owned by the government, communal land as land owned by the community for any use deemed necessary by community citizens, private land as land purchased by an individual through the land market and swamp land as wet or low land not usually sold except through the authorization of the government.

On the settlement of land matters and the enforcement of land laws and decisions, the majority of the participants expressed preference for a hybrid system of land dispute resolution that draws on the strengths of both the customary and civil law approaches. The 'palava hut' approach that has as its core, the assemblage of traditional elders, authorities and significant others seem to be most preferred by the rural participants given the ease with which disputes are settled coupled with the virtual absence of the cumbersome procedures and prohibitive financial requirements of the civil law approach.

## ***GROUP 3: Land Administration and Management***

**QUESTION 1:** What is your understanding of a tribal land certificate? A land deed? Squatter's rights? Lease?

**QUESTION 2:** What role should rural communities play in managing land, forests and mining?

**QUESTION 3:** What kinds of land records should there be and who should keep them?

When asked of their understanding of a tribal certificate, a land deed, squatter's rights, and a lease, participants' definitions and understandings of these documents were almost uniform on a cross-county basis. Allowing for minor variations in the way the various definitions were phrased, rural participants commonly understand tribal certificate to mean a document received from the traditional elders, chiefs and district commissioners which enables an individual to own land in the jurisdiction of that tribe.

A land deed is construed by rural people to mean a land title document delineated by metes and bounds granted to an individual or institution which represents legal ownership of a property. "Squatter's Rights" is defined by the participants as a privilege or permission granted by an authority like a city or municipality for an individual to settle, occupy or use a parcel of public land for a specified period of time without any ownership. In their definition of a lease, participants referred to it as an agreement entered into between two or more parties for the use of a property or land for a specified time period.

On what role rural communities should play in managing land, forest and mining resources, all of the responses called for the involvement of local people and communities in the management of these resources. However, there were variations in responses ranging from active community involvement in the process leading to the negotiation and signing of concession agreements to securing equity shares in companies with business interests in these resources. Other participants felt that the role of the community in these matters should be restricted to that of custodianship, while others preferred the role of a watchdog in assisting the government to prevent the prowling of the land by unsuspecting individuals and companies through a process of public disclosure of their identities for possible sanctions.

There were variations in the responses to the question regarding the types of land records that should be kept and by whom. The majority of the participants expressed preference for tribal certificates and land deeds originating from tribal jurisdictions to be kept by the tribal authorities (paramount, clan and town chiefs) themselves, while others named the National Archives, the offices of the county superintendents and district commissioners or banks as proper custodians of land related records.

#### ***GROUP 4: Investment and Development of Natural Resources***

**QUESTION 1:** What should be done with land not utilized?

**QUESTION 2:** How much land do you think someone should have for a house?

**QUESTION 3:** Who should manage the natural resources on the land?

**QUESTION 4:** The Liberian Constitution says that only Liberians can own land. What do you think about this?

On what should be done to land not utilized, participants strongly felt that such lands are turned over to the local communities for the possible construction of development projects, to the State through the use of its power of eminent domain or to any private individual

with the financial resources to develop such land. Conversely, private land not utilized is treated in like manner as the case of public land mentioned above. Participants also noted that unutilized private land be levied a punitive tax that is much higher than the current land tax. The imposition of this retaliatory tax levy will serve as a disincentive for land hoarders disinterested in improving the land.

Participants expressed the need to set quantitative limits on the amount of land that is allocated for house, farm, concession, mining, plantation, real estate, tourism and forestry. These limits range from 1 lot to 1 acre for a house spot and 100 acres for farm land is proposed as quantitative limits under freehold and an upper limit of 100,000 acres for concessions. The national government is identified by participants as the institution best placed and positioned to manage the natural resources of the land. However, the local communities inclusive of the traditional authorities, women and youth representatives, civil society groups and opinion leaders representing all strata of the local communities are to complement the role of the government in this process.

An overwhelming majority of the participants gave a 'yes' answer to maintaining the constitutional provision restricting land ownership to only Liberians, when asked how they think about this issue.

#### **IV. OVERVIEW OF LAND CONFLICTS**

Participants in the consultations were asked to list and describe the land conflicts that they were aware of in their area of residence. While this question gave diverse results in terms of the quality and quantity of the information and cannot be considered exhaustive, it does represent an interesting indicator of what types of conflicts are considered a priority in the different counties and how much information the people have on their apparent and root causes. The discussion always generated by this question did confirm how high of a priority participants considered the peaceful resolution of these conflicts.

While the Land Commission will follow-up on the individual conflicts listed during the consultations and will collect further information to include them in the land conflicts database that is being produced for the purpose of this report, the conflicts have been organized based on the types of actors involved. The typology includes boundary disputes where the stakeholders are:

- Individuals/family groups
- Communities/clans/chiefdoms
- Commercial companies/communities, clans, towns
- Towns
- Districts
- Counties

## V. OVERVIEW OF QUESTIONS ASKED BY PARTICIPANTS

At the end of each meeting, participants were given the opportunity to ask the Commissioners questions to receive their feedbacks on specific issues. Topics raised during the questions and answers period included:

- The mandate of the Land Commission and its specific function given that it does not have adjudicatory power;
- The legal provisions regarding the acquisition of land and legal dispute resolution mechanisms;
- The mandate and responsibilities of land surveyors;
- Inheritance law;
- Regulations for assigning rights and management of concessions vis-à-vis the local communities' role;
- Roles and responsibilities in land administration;
- The Moratorium on Public Land Sales; and
- Planned land policy reforms.

## VI. OVERVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS

For an expansive coverage of recommendations from the meetings, a cross-county synthesized list of recommendations on the land question in Liberia is contained in chapter-3 of the main report. What follows below is a summary of the salient recommendations from the list:

- That on account of past governments' selective arbitrariness, inefficiency and lack of transparency in the exercise of its trustee powers over public/government land, a policy of quantitative limits on land allocation ranging from 1 lot to 1 acre for a house spot to 100,000 acres for concessions be developed to overcome the historical injustices that deprived communities mainly in rural Liberia of vast ancestral and public land;
- That the land rights of land resource-dependent communities be adequately defined, protected and enforced;
- That there is a shift in the policy paradigm in favor of sustainable and productive land use and development of under-utilized and inefficiently managed land;
- That a hybrid system that recognizes the social legitimacy of customary land laws and the predominant statutory land laws be introduced to speed up the resolution of the mass of land disputes and conflicts that have broken across county boundaries and spread to tribal and ethnic groupings;
- That land administration institutions' systems of procedures in obtaining land rights documents and other services be reformed against the backdrop of eroded performance standards and loss of confidence in the entire land administration system;
- That a decentralized structure of land record management be instituted to afford rural people access to land records;
- That in order to ease the long and cumbersome process leading to the signing of public land deeds by the president, the county superintendents be designated the final authority to sign all public land deeds, and
- Setting up of a fast track court to prosecute those involved in double land sales and other unscrupulous land transactions.

## VII. PLENARY SESSIONS

The plenary afforded the various groups the forum to present their reports to a wider audience including officially invited guests and the general public. These larger forums also provided the opportunity for participants to note agreements and disagreements on group responses, record concerns and express opinions regarding individual group reports as presented by the chair/moderator. Each presentation was followed by 2 to 4 questions from the participants. The plenary sessions were characterized by frank expressions of citizens' views and concerns; disregarding the usual Liberian attitude and tendency of deferring frank views and opinions on critical issues in the presence of authority figures. Some plenary sessions also witnessed the active participation of some invited guests who generously gave their expert comments and observations on land issues and matters.



*Paramount and Clan Chiefs, Elders, Youth and Women Groups at the Zwedru Consultative Meeting*

### 3. COUNTY-WIDE RESPONSES TO GROUPS QUESTIONS

Listed below are the county-specific group responses to the structured land issues questions discussed at the consultative meetings. Respondents were mainly the official targeted participants and a small number of observers. In terms of gender balance, the numbers of male participants were disproportionately high compared to women participants; a consequence of existing imbalance in the social and political relations obtaining in most rural environments in Africa with Liberia being no exception.

#### I. RESPONSES TO GROUPS QUESTIONS

##### **GROUP 1: ACCESS TO PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LAND**

##### **1.1 How do you get land?**

##### **a. Public Land**

- Meet and discuss with the tribal people, the number of acres you want to buy in their community;
- Upon consent of the tribal people (Paramount and Clan Chiefs), the following processes are followed:
  1. Land Commissioner is authorized by the elders to issue public land certificate;
  2. Land certificate is signed by all parties involved (elders, chiefs, district commissioners and superintendents);
  3. Land Commissioner issues survey notice and the surveyor conducts the survey and gives the field notes to the Land Commissioner;
  4. Land Commissioner prepares purchase order to the buyer and obtains a receipt;
  5. Land Commissioner sends a letter of request to the Superintendent for onward transmission to the President requesting the signing of the deed;
- 6. The deed is sent to the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy (MLME) for verification before it is signed by the President. Thereafter, the deed is sent to the court for probate and registration by the National Archives; **(Montserrado, Bassa.)**
- Consultation with the owner/authority and paying of token to the elders; **(Rivercess)**
- Through an assessment to determine the availability of the land by relying on the chiefs, elders, prominent citizens, district commissioners, superintendents, women and youth groups; **(Bomi)**
- You get public land through the tribal people with all the relevant tribal authorities signing a tribal land certificate. This land becomes legally owned by means of obtaining a tribal certificate. The land is bought, surveyed and deed probated and registered; **(Nimba)**
- We get land by going through the various processes, such as landlords, youth, women and elders; **(Lofa)**
- Land is acquired through the owners of the land such as elders, youths and women; **(Lofa, Zorzor)**
- Land is acquired through (a) inheritance, (b) tribal certificate/deed (c)

- donation/grant, and (d) government purchase; **(Grand Gedeh)**
- Land is acquired through (a) tribal authorities, and (b) city mayors; **(Maryland)**
- By a quarter selling a portion of a forest land that belongs to the people; paying dowry for a women, and paying money; **(Grand Kru)**
- Through the traditional people, township commissioners and city mayors; **(River Gee)**
- By (a) inheritance, (b) through the process of obtaining documents from the proper authorities, (c) through the tribal authorities to get land from the government, and (d) buying from another person who owns the land; **(Bong)**
- You get land through the tribal people; **(Gbarpolu)**
- The land is owned traditionally by reaching to the important people in our communities to engage the elders to get the approval to buy the land; **(Grand Cape Mount)**
- House, yes; Rice farm, yes; Tree crops, yes; Business, yes; **(Rivercess)**
- For now, yes; **(Bassa)**
- No! All the land has been bought or hijacked by our colonial masters (Adverse Possession); **(Margibi,)**
- Generally, it is difficult to acquire land. This is because ancestors acquired huge portions of land for themselves and are still clinging onto their lands. The population has increased while the land space remains constant; **(Nimba)**
- No! Because land is not enough for rice farming, tree crops, houses and businesses. There are more reasons for that. The family of that land may not have large areas of land to give out and also we do not want conflict; **(Lofa)**
- Yes, through the owners of the land; **(Lofa, Zorzor)**
- Yes; **(Grand Gedeh)**
- Yes, but we have to first of all join a quarter or family that will take us to the tribal authority for our land request; **(Maryland)**

### *b. Private Land*

- Land bought from government and owned by an individual; **(Margibi)**
- By negotiating with the land owner and when he/she agrees the buyer will be given a transfer deed which is probated and registered; **(Nimba)**
- The buyer goes to the land owner/buyer and negotiates with the owner for a title deed; **(Bomi)**
- House, yes, at least 2 lots; Rice farm, yes, at least 200 acres; Tree crops, yes; Business, yes; **(Montserrado County)**
- Yes, there is enough land for all of the above; **(Grand Kru)**
- Yes, by building and farming; **(River Gee)**
- Yes, there in enough land; **(Sinoe).**
- “No”, because there is no clear policy on the acquisition of land and it is too costly to process land documents; **(Bong,)**
- Yes, but sometimes not enough due to population growth, mass migration in a given area and the scarcity of land, which could serve as setback to acquiring the land; **(Bomi)**
- Yes, we can get enough land for the above mentioned; **(Gbarpolu)**

### *1.2 Are you able to get enough land for your house; rice farm; tree crops; business?*

- Yes, before it was possible but for now, it is difficult. At that time, people did not know their rights about land issues therefore; people in authority used their power to acquire large portions of land for said purposes. But for now, people have gotten sensitized about development and the importance of land. Therefore, they no longer give large portions of land out and don't allow people in power to fool them; **(Grand Cape Mount)**
- By inviting investors to develop the land and do business and farming; **(Grand Kru)**
- By building and farming; **(River Gee)**.
- By undertaking agricultural activities; constructing homes and leasing/renting the land to investors; **(Sinoe)**
- By farming on it wisely, building on it correctly, planting cash crops and using the natural resources wisely to develop the community; **(Bong)**

### *1.3 How do you make sure that land is put to good use?*

- Land Commission should ensure the proper monitoring of land use for the purpose of generating taxes; **(Montserrado)**
- Land is put to good use through leasing, renting, building and engaging in agricultural activities; **(Rivercess)**
- Government should take the lead in ensuring that land is put into good use; **(Bassa)**
- By developing the land through infrastructure, lease, farming, etc. **;(Margibi)**
- By enacting laws that will compel land owners to develop their lands within a specific period otherwise actions should be taken; in addition, owners of land must be willing to give land for developmental purposes; **(Nimba)**
- By carrying on development on the land. If you do not have money to develop the land, then you should encourage people with intentions to have the land developed. The main reason is that, we do not sell or lease land in our area; **(Lofa)**
- By developing, leasing, planting and farming on the land, etc.; **(Grand Gedeh)**
- By farming and building; **(Maryland)**

- The land is put to good use by developing it through agricultural programs, educational, housing and health facilities; **(Bomi)**
- The land is put to good use by proper management i.e. by discouraging uncovering mining holes and putting up good construction; **(Gbarpolu)**
- Through strong observation; **(Cape Mount)**

### *1.4 How do women, youth and strangers get access to land?*

- Youth get land through their parents;
- Strangers get land through joining or becoming a member of special quarters, tribal authority and the City Mayor; **(Maryland)**
- By either inheritance or by purchasing; **(Montserrado)**
- Women get land through purchase, marriage and family inheritance. Youth acquire land through the sharing of family property, purchase and negotiation with the community elders, and strangers through the purchase or lease of the land; **(Rivercess)**
- Either by inheritance or by purchase and in some cases by will or gift; **(Bassa )**
- Intermarriage, parents, purchasing, will, etc. Strangers get land through

- citizenship, lease, marriage, purchase; Women obtain land through their husbands, parents and by buying; Youth by inheritance and buying; **(Margibi)**
- Strangers through negotiation with local authorities; purchase; goodwill based on marriage/friendship; **(Nimba)**
  - The various groups get land through the town authorities such as Town Chief, landlords, elders, youth, women and the stranger father. He/she will be accompanied to the authorities by the stranger father to acquire land; **(Lofa)**
  - Women and youth who are citizens of our district can get land through the landlords; **(Elders)**
  - Strangers can acquire land from the owners of the land through a written memorandum of understanding specifying the tenure, purpose and what happens after the tenure expires. If the land is for purchase, it has to meet the approval of the land owners (elders, youth and women); **(Lofa, Zorzor)**
  - Through inheritance, marriage and the government; **(Grand Gedeh)**
  - Women get land through marriage or through their husbands; **(Maryland)**. This category of persons can access land on condition of being a citizen or through inheritance; **(Grand Kru)**
  - Women get land through family; stranger get land through family and city mayor(s) or township Commissioners while the youth also get land through the above process/pattern; **(River Gee)**
  - Through inheritance, marriage, purchase and lease, rent and grant; **(Sinoe)**
  - Through inheritance, marriage and self-purchase by following the correct process; **(Bong)**
  - Women, youth and strangers get land through the “proper” channel; **(Bomi)**
  - Strangers get access to land through naturalization, while women and youths obtained land through the legal process; **(Gbarpolu)**
  - The youths and women through customary land ownership, whereas the strangers (a) must have a stranger father and mother, (b) must be developmental oriented, (c) must be respectful, (d) must live with the people for number of years, (e) must go through the same customary process with his/her stranger father; **(Cape Mount)**
- GROUP 2: SECURITY OF TENURE IN LAND**
- 2.1 How can you be sure that the land is for you? Do you have fear that something might happen to your land in the future?**
- Acquiring a deed from the seller or administrator, which is duly registered and probated through the Monthly and Probate Court/Archives, and fears that someone will obtain a certified copy of a deed from the tribal certificate and have it back-dated; buying from an illegal seller or that the land was sold earlier; **(Montserratado)**
  - The land must be identified by the tribal authorities/administration, purchased by the applicant, surveyed, developed and taxes paid; and fears that in the process of transaction, the land may be challenged and taken away; **(Rivercess)**
  - Going through legal procedures to obtain the land from Government and have the land surveyed and deed submitted to the President for signature and finally probated; **(Bassa)**
  - By having a genuine tribal certificate and a deed. There will be no fear once there is a tribal certificate and deed; **(Margibi)**
  - By having a legal document which is signed, probated and registered and fear when the document is not processed the proper way; **(Nimba)**

- Through land purchase, inheritance and traditional boundaries, and fear of future encroachment;**(Lofa)**
  - We can be sure the land is ours based on the traditional or customary boundaries laid out by our ancestors and, (2) by legal means through the processing of documents such as deeds for the land, and fear until death when the land is not developed as it could be claimed by someone;**(Lofa, Vahun)**
  - One must possess a legal land deed to substantiate ownership, such as: (a) surveyed and registered (b) probated and (c) signed by the President. If you don't have a legal document, the land may be taken away from you in the future;**(Grand Gedeh)**
  - Following the legal and due process will ensure proper ownership and the absence of fear;**(Maryland)**
  - Following the legal process and making sure that the land is surveyed;**(Grand Kru)**
  - Through inheritance from forefathers together with the probate of the land deed;**(Rivercess)**
  - Through the process of following the legal guidelines, and expressed fear if the land is re-sold to a second party by the original seller;**(Sinoe)**
  - By following the legal procedure to obtain the land, and fear of population growth, government oversight and gender pressure;**(Bong)**
  - There is no fear once the proper procedures have been followed;**(Bomi)**
  - There is no fear once the property is legally owned;**(Gbarpolu)**
  - By going through the right procedure in acquiring the land will reduce the situation of fear;**(Grand Cape Mount)**
- 2.2 What is public land? Communal land? Private Land? Swamp Land?*
- Public land is land that is owned by the government. Private land is owned by an individual or individuals through the legal process. Communal land is a land owned by a community or a group of people for farming or development purposes from government that is set aside for community development. Swamp land is a wetland or a low land;**(Montserrado)**
  - Public land is a land that is owned by the government. Private land is a land that is owned by an individual through legal and legitimate documents which can be purchased from government or another private entity by a transfer deed. Communal land is a land that is set aside for community development. Swamp land is a land that is owned by the government but can be purchased as well;**(Rivercess)**
  - Land that is owned by Government is Public Land. Private land is owned by individuals through the due process of law. Communal land is ancestral or tribal land like a native reserve that the people control and preserve for a longer period of time. Swamp land is land that is 75% covered with water;**(Bassa)**
  - Land that is owned by Government is Public Land. Private land is owned by individuals or a group of individuals. Communal land is a land earmarked by the community for community development, farming, etc. Swamp land is low land which can be owned by a private individual or can be public land;**(Margibi)**
  - Public land is that which is owned by the Government. Communal land is set aside for agricultural purposes. Private land is owned by an individual, whose document is signed, probated and registered. Swamp land is lowland that contains water;**(Nimba)**
  - Communal land is any land that is owned by the community as it is set aside for the common good of the community residents. Private land is any land that is

- duly owned by an individual or group with a deed. Swamp land is lower watery land that is usually not sold to a person, but falls below the land and is owned by Government;**(Lofa)**.
- Public land is land owned by Government. Communal land is any land that is owned by the community. Private land is any land that is owned by an individual. Swamp land is a lowest wetland surrounded by highland; **(Lofa, Vahun)**.
  - Public Land is land that is not owned by an individual, group of persons or family but is owned by government absolutely. Communal land is land that is used for community development. Land that is owned by individuals, group of persons and business entities is called private land. Wetland is swamp land;**(Grand Gedeh)**.
  - Public land is a land owned by government. Communal land is owned by a group of people; a land inherited from their ancestors. Private land is a land owned by an individual or a group of people through a legal document. Swamp land is a land considered wet land and mostly covered by water;**(Maryland)**.
  - Public land is a land surveyed and owned by the government. Communal Land is the land that is owned by the community. Private land is a land owned by an individual through documents while swamp land is a land purposely reserved for farming;**(Grand Kru)**
  - Public land is owned by the Government. Communal land is a land owned by a group of people or community. Private land is a land owned by an individual. Swamp Land is a low land which contains water and can be used for individual or public development;**(River Gee)**
  - Public land is a land sold by the Land Commissioner and it is also a land owned by the government. (No definition was provided for communal land by this group). Private land is a land owned by an individual(s) with legal title documents. (No definition was also provided for Swamp land by this group);**(Sinoe)**.
  - Public land is owned by the community and used for public good/development. Communal land is set aside by community for development. Private land is purchased by an individual or family from government or individual upon the presentation of a deed. Swamp land is land that is not permitted to be sold, it is also a low land with water;**(Bong)**.
  - Public land is land owned by the government. Communal land is set aside for the community to use. Private land is acquired from government and paid for by individuals or a group of people. Swamp land is reserved for government for development purposes;**(Bomi)**.
  - Public land is owned by everybody and is controlled by central government under the Constitution. Communal land is owned by a particular group of people and controlled by them through the local administration**(Gbarpolu)**;
  - Public land is land owned by Government. Communal land is land owned by group of people either for farming or squatting. Private land is land that is owned by individuals, family, institutions, etc. Swamp land is land owned by Government; **(Grand Cape Mount)**
- 2.3 How do you settle land matters? Is it working? How can laws and decisions pertaining to land be enforced?**
- Through conference (resolution), traditional means, and court referral. Yes, it is working. They can be enforced through the courts;**( Montserrado)**
  - Land matters can be settled by elders, community members, local authorities, town hall meetings, and harmonization. Yes, it is working. Regarding

- enforcement, no response was recorded(**Rivercess**)
- Through the courts and traditional methods. These methods are working partly. By inviting the parties that are involved to a palava hut meeting;(**Bassa**)
  - Yes, it is working;(**Margibi**)
  - By dialoging with disputants, inviting influential persons to form part of the discussion. In some areas it is working while in other areas it is not. The laws can be implemented by adhering to any and all decisions reached with the consent of parties involved in the dispute;(**Nimba**)
  - Land matters are settled through the traditional system and through the way the people think is the best means to settle land matters. Yes, it is working except for the people who feel that their case must go through court procedures. It can be enforced by educating the citizens through awareness raising and also through traditional means and the courts;(**Lofa**)
  - Land matters are settled through traditional means, involving those who know more about the particular land in dispute. Through statutory procedure using the court. Yes, these methods are working in our communities. These laws and decisions are enforced only if all stakeholders and decision makers in the community are involved;(**Lofa, Vahun**)
  - Land matters are resolved through tribal mediation that involves the elders, chiefs, women groups and youth. Yes, it is working. If traditional mediation fails as a result of dissatisfaction from any of the contending parties, the County Land Commissioner should also try to resolve the conflict and if it fails, then the matter be moved to adjudication; (**Grand Gedeh**)
  - Land matters should be settled through the community leadership by inviting the parties involved. On the issue of whether it is working, they said no. They stated that the process is not working properly. Regarding laws and decisions pertaining to land, they said those in land conflicts should be invited by the authorities to present all their legal documents that grant them power of possession of the land in question; (**Maryland**)
  - Through traditional leaders; county authorities or the legal process. No, it is not working;(**Grand Kru**)
  - They are settled by inviting elders and citizens of either side of the area in dispute to a meeting. These procedures are working well, and can be enforced through the traditional method and assistance from the Ministry of Internal Affairs in their county;(**River Gee**)
  - People settle their land matters through the court and the surveyor; but this process is not really working well;(**Sinoe**)
  - By first informing the elders and establish contact with all parties. Yes, but not 100%. Land matters are resolved through public awareness by means of radio and workshops and the enforcement of land laws in addition to respecting the cultural norms and values of the local people; (**Bong**)
  - We settle land matters by the intervention of the elders, local authorities and court proceedings. Yes, it is working but to some level. Laws and decisions pertaining to land can be enforced by verifying and improving the land laws and regulations;(**Bomi**)
  - We settle land matters by inviting the parties/individuals concerned in the matter; asking for the history of the land in question and finding a common ground. Yes, it is working. Laws and decisions pertaining to land can be enforced by setting-up a committee that will make laws governing land ownership binding on the local authorities with violators been penalized; (**Gbarpolu**)

- The first step is handled by the Council of Elders in that community. If the Council of Elders can't resolve the matter, they forward the case to the District Commissioner's Office. If it can't be settled it is then forwarded to the Superintendent's Office. The Superintendent will then forward said matter to the Land Commissioner Officer's office; (**Grand Cape Mount County**)

### GROUP 3: LAND ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

#### 3.1 What is your understanding of a Tribal Land Certificate? A Land Deed? Squatter's Rights? Lease?

- *Tribal Land Certificate* is a document issued by the tribal people to an individual to begin the process to acquire a portion of public/government land.
- *Land Deed* is a title document granted to an individual that goes through legal processes to show ownership of a parcel of land
- *Squatter's Rights* is a permit issued by the local authorities of that locality for a short period of time for the use of public land
- *Lease* is a document for the use of land or property for a period of time signed by both parties that can be probated;(**Montserrado**)
- *Tribal Certificate* is the first step in obtaining a parcel of land, and such certificate is issued by the office of the clan chief for farm land and that all elders of that area may sign followed by the land commissioner and the county superintendent.
- *Land Deed* is a document which shows ownership of a land that contains a full description of the said land and shows the metes and bounds of the property;(**Rivercess**)
- A *Tribal Certificate* is a document granting an individual or group of people the right to purchase a parcel of land
- A *Deed* is a legal document given to an individual or group of people the right to own a piece of land;(**Bassa**)
- A *Tribal Certificate* is not a deed but it is a process of engagement of the land from the tribal people;(**Margibi**)
- A *Tribal Certificate* is a document that represents the consensus of the tribal people to issue somebody a portion of their tribal land
- A *Deed* is a final land document under the signature of the President approving ownership of the land
- *Squatter's Rights* is temporary permission by a land owner for the use of a given place;(**Nimba**)
- *Tribal Certificate* is simply a mutual understanding between the town elders, chiefs and the person who is in need of a parcel of land
- *Deed* is a legal document obtained from government for a piece of land
- *Squatter's Rights* is a permit given to someone by an authority
- A *Lease* is a document given to someone to use a piece of land for a specified period of time for financial reward;(**Lofa**)
- We don't have any idea/understanding about tribal certificate because (a) our people used to have land through inheritance, and (b) brushing roads and farmlands used to be our boundaries;(**Lofa, Quadru Gboni District**)
- A *Tribal Certificate* serves as a guarantee to prove that the land is for you and you have secured that portion of land from the tribal people. It also gives you clearance to obtain a land deed;
- A *Deed* is the proof of ownership for a particular parcel of land;
- *Squatter's Rights* is a privilege given to you by government or an individual to occupy a portion of land for a short

- period of time. It does not give you the right of ownership
- A *Lease* is a bigger form of rental obligation of a particular land or property indicating the duration of occupancy. The terms and conditions of a lease can be renewed by both parties;**(Grand Gedeh)**
  - *Tribal Land Certificate* is a document obtained from tribal authorities for land ownership
  - *Land Deed* is a legal document granting entitlement to land ownership
  - *Squatter's Rights* is a privilege or permission granted by an authority to settle, occupy or use a parcel of land for a specified period of time without any ownership;
  - *Lease* is a legal agreement entered into between two or more parties for the use of a property or Land for a specific period of time;**(Maryland)**
  - *Land Deed* is a document obtained from the Lands and Mines Ministry whenever a public land is purchased and it is witnessed by the court and approved by the President's office;
  - *Squatter's Rights* are a portion of land provided to someone or group of people with temporary document;
  - *Lease* is an agreement between land owner and the lessee for a particular period of time;**(Grand Kru)**
  - *Tribal Land Certificate* is a document received from elders, chiefs and commissioners of a district which enables an individual to own a land;
  - *Land Deed* is a document received from Government which states the exact acres of land given to an individual, and it also states the metes and bounds. It is signed by the President and probated by the Probate Court;
  - *Squatter's Rights* is a land given to an individual to be used for a period of time;
  - *Lease* is an agreement entered into between two persons; the owner of the land and the one who wants to use the land for a period of time;**(River Gee)**
  - *Tribal Land Certificate* is a paper obtained from elders, Paramount Chiefs, Clan Chiefs and approved by the Superintendent to award a piece of land to an individual;
  - *Land Deed* is a legal title issued to an individual for a parcel of land been acquired or purchased from either Government or private individual;
  - *Squatter's Rights* is a piece of paper issued by the City Corporation for a parcel of land to an individual for a certain limit of time at which time Government can move the person. This area can either be a street edge or swamp;
  - *Lease* is a legal title issued to an individual for a piece of land within certain specified period of time;**(Sinoe)**
  - *Tribal Land Certificate* is the beginning document for acquiring public land;
  - *Land Deed* is the final document in the purchase of land;
  - *Squatter's Rights* is given to a person to operate a parcel of land that is not purchased by him or her by law;
  - *Lease* is an agreement between 2 or 3 persons about the transaction of land financially;**(Bong)**
  - *Tribal Land Certificate* is an acceptance document for an individual, institution or group certifying that the tribal authorities have agreed to give certain portion of their reserve or land for ownership;
  - *Land Deed* is a legal title document for land ownership, when signed by the President for public land and/or private land when signed by an individual transferring ownership to another; probated and registered according to the law within the statutory time;

- *Squatter's Rights* is a temporary permit issued by municipal authorities for a particular period of time to an individual, group or institution, etc.;
  - *Lease* is a legal document prepared by and between two or more parties for a certain period of time for land, house; to make it more legal it should be probated and registered according to law; (**Bomi**)
  - *Tribal Land Certificate* is a document given by tribal authorities authorizing the holder to survey the quantity of land specified therein
  - *Land Deed* is a probated and registered document given ownership of a piece of land to the holder or holders
  - *Squatter's Rights* are rights given to individuals to occupy a position of land on temporary basis/period
  - *Lease* an agreement between a lessor and a lessee given the lessee the right to hold and use a particular property as specified in the lease agreement;(**Gbarpolu**)
  - *Tribal Land Certificate* is a paper obtained from Government by a tribe or a group of people that occupy a specific area of land on which they have lived for a long period of time;
  - *Land Deed* is a paper given to people after they have paid to Government some amount of money to cut or survey some piece of land for their use
  - *Squatter's Rights* are rights given to tribal or individual or family living or occupying a piece of land;
  - *Lease* is an agreement between two parties to use a land for a specific period of time (long or short period) for money or goods; (**Grand Cape Mount**)
- 3.2 What role should rural communities play in managing land, forest, and mining?**
- To set up a land management team that will demarcate the land, identify the resources and apportion dwelling areas and concession areas. The land management team will work with the Land Commissioners in the registration of land deeds to know the private and public land. The management team will ensure that a percentage is returned for every concession in the area among others. The management team should consist of eminent citizens, elders, youth representatives, women representatives, religious leaders and local authorities;(**Montserratado**)
  - The community should have access to any development as it relates to the resources of the forest (logging, mining and farming);(**Rivercess**)
  - Local communities should encourage investments and also serve as security in protecting their forest from illegal mining and forestry;(**Bassa**)
  - Their role is to protect, monitor, share information with each other and report to local authorities anything about the land;(**Margibi**)
  - The community should serve as a custodian and manager of the land in the interest of national Government. Forest – Community should set aside portion of the forest for different purposes including farming, reforestation, cash crop plantation and logging. For mining, there should be benefits accrued to the community in addition to the preservation of the mining site;(**Nimba**)
  - The role played by rural communities is assisting government to prevent illegal transactions in any form(**Lofa**)
  - The role rural communities need to play in managing their lands, forests and mining is the total involvement of the communities in all arrangements and activities;(**Lofa, Quadru Gboni District**)
  - Local communities should be a part of the process to reach an agreement in land acquisition and management for

- forest and mining purposes;(Grand Gedeh)
- Rural communities should be and must remain custodians of all land in partnership and in compliance with government land policy(ices) etc.; be signatories to documents relating to collective bargaining or concessionaires; become beneficiaries in terms of royalty incentives, social and community benefits, etc.; have access to document(s) and mapping. Rural communities should assist government in preventing the misuse and destruction of the forest resources e.g. endangered species and wildlife, shifting cultivation etc. and share in revenues generated with the community; assist government against illicit mining and deforestation; benefit from revenues generated; benefit from social and community services, e.g. schools, clinics, roads, water and sanitation, electricity, etc.:(Maryland).
  - Rural communities should identify boundaries amongst clans, chiefdoms, districts and counties in order for them to have peaceful co-existence;(Grand Kru).
  - Community should be a watchdog for the land so that no one should just penetrate and do anything on his/her own without the knowledge of the Government and residents of the communities ;( Sinoe).
  - The community members should be represented in the discussion and decision making of our land, mining and forest management; (Bong).
  - Rural communities should play a key role in managing land, forests and mining by being a part of the negotiation committees to put in their suggestions of what they need as direct beneficiaries;(Bomi).
  - Rural communities should perform the following roles: utilize the land wisely; stop illegal mining, hunting, pit-sawing and logging and other forms of mismanagement/abuse; ensure straight compliance to the terms of a contract; be involved in awarding of contracts; (Gbarpolu County)
  - Rural Community Leadership: Youth and Women Groups, Elders and Zoes should participate in the management of the forest, land and mining. They should be informed through their Chiefs and Elders; (Grand Cape Mount)
- 3.3 What kinds of land records should there be? Who should keep them?**
- Land deeds, land certificates and other title documents should be kept at the National Archives, the county Archives, and the local office where the property exist;(Montserrado)
  - The land deed, registered and probated and kept by the probate court;(Rivercess)
  - The tribal certificates should be kept by the tribal people and the deeds by the Government and copies sent to the tribal people;(Bassa).
  - The records (deeds and tribal certificates) should be kept by the county authorities like township commissioners, land commissioner, office of the county superintendent and local authorities ;( Margibi).
  - Community boundary certificates/deeds; tribal certificates; public land certificates; legal land sale receipts and the land records system be decentralized to district level;(Nimba).
  - The kinds of records are boundary records between towns, clans, chiefdoms, etc. Those to keep such records are town chiefs, clan chiefs, paramount chiefs; (Lofa)
  - The records need to be kept by the Archives within the county seat; (Lofa, Quadru Gboni District).
  - The communities should give the lease agreement. The deed should be kept in the archives; bank and the communities should keep their copy;(Grand Gedeh)

- Tribal certificate should be kept by the clan chief and land owner; land deed (private), should be placed in the Archives and owner possesses a copy. The squatters permit should be handled by the land owner and the squatters and the lease document should be handled by the lessor and the lessee and archives;**(Maryland)**
- Land records including tribal certificates, land deed, squatter’s rights and lease agreements should be kept by the tribal authorities;**(Grand Kru)**
- These records should be photocopied and a copy remains with the paramount chief of the area and original copy be kept with the county superintendent and also with the National Archives;**(Sinoe)**
- The records should be kept at the Center for National Archives, Documents and Records (CNDRA) but should be decentralized in all the communities and that the present documents remain the same;**(Bong)**
- Tribal Certificates, Deeds, Lease Agreements, Contracts, etc., these land records should be kept by the archivist in charge of archives at the national and county levels; **(Bomi County)**
- **Kinds of land records:** Tribal Certificates, Deeds, Lease Agreements, Contracts. **Custodians of land records:** These land records should be kept by the archivist in charge of archives at the national and county levels;**(Gbarpolu)**
- **There should be the following land records:** Records for tribal land certificates; Lease Agreements; Land deeds. These records should be kept by trusted persons accepted by a family, community or town, village, clan, city, etc. Government through the County Superintendent should also keep such documents with the Local Land Commissioner;**(Grand Cape Mount)**

**GROUP 4: INVESTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

**4.1 What should be done to land not utilized?**

- City lands unutilized for 10 years and more; and farmlands for 10 years or more should be declared for sale. Use it for public development. Lease such lands to investors. Rent out the lands to generate public revenue;**(Montserrat)**
- The land should be leased to investors for possible use where the people will benefit in terms of roads, schools, clinics, etc.;**(Rivercess)**
- Government should determine who owns the land. Government should also determine the suitability of the land. If the land is privately owned, then Government has the capacity to contact the owner; **(Grand Bassa)**
- Land that has not been utilized should be used for community projects such as hospitals, schools, market grounds, youth centers. Private land should be leased or portion sold by government and funds generated be given to the owner(s) of the land. Tribal Reserve should be kept for certain purposes;**(Margibi)**
- Land that is not being utilized should be turned over to the local authorities (Clan Chiefs, Paramount Chiefs or District Commissioners) to be distributed among needy citizens. However, a timeframe should be given to the first person claiming ownership to prove that he/she can really utilize the entire land;**(Nimba)**
- All land that has not been utilized in a given community or district, the local authorities should have oversight responsibility to make decisions on said land on behalf of the government except owners of land that have acquired legal documents;**(Lofa)**
- As regards public land, the land should be sold to a citizen and or leased to an alien;

Private land – Lease to an alien, relocate the occupant(s); Tribal Reserve should be kept for certain purposes; **(Grand Gedeh)**

- Private land in cities or townships: Government should reclaim private land in cities and townships and levy taxes in order to encourage people to utilize it for economic purposes. Prime properties (land) should be taxed more than remote properties (land) so as to encourage better use; twenty percent (20%) of unutilized interior land is reserved for the community and 80% for concessionaire in any agreement between government of Liberia and concession companies for development purpose, and people should reserve the right to repossess their land if government fails to ensure their interest; **(Maryland)**
- 50% of the unutilized land be given to investors and 50% reserved; **(Grand Kru)**
- Unutilized land should be surveyed and reserved for future use; **(River Gee)**
- The land that is not being utilized should be kept; **(Sinoe)**
- The government should have 1/3 of the land not utilized and the citizens should have 2/3 of the unutilized land; **(Bong)**
- Public land not utilized should be sold to those who have the means and are willing to develop it. Private land not utilized should be given a time-frame of up to 5 years and if not developed, Government should sell the land to anyone willing to develop it; **(Bomi)**
- The ownership document should be revisited after the period of 30 years and be reclaimed by government for utilization if the land has not been utilized; **(Gbarpolu)**
- Taxes for undeveloped land should be increased by US\$25.00 as opposed to the ordinary tax of US\$2.00 for empty land per year. That within 5 years, if any structure is not erected, said land should

be turned over to Government; **(Grand Cape Mount)**.

#### 4.2 How much land do you think someone should have for a house?

- House – 1 lot to 1 acre maximum; Farm – 100 acres; Mining Concession – 5,000 acres; Plantation Concession – 40,000 acres; Real Estate – 200 acres; Tourism – 150 acres; Forestry – 15,000 acres; **(Montserrat)**
- A family should have at least 150 acres of farm land; **(Rivercess)**
- All Liberians should obtain one acre for building his or her house; all Liberians should receive 100 acres for farming; for concession 1000 acres should be given; **(Margibi)**
- The house spot for an individual should depend on the family size of the person and should not be more than one (1) acre. Two hundred acres (200) should be given to an individual for farm land. Regarding concession area, it should be based on the concession agreement and the allocation of land should involve the local people; **(Nimba)**
- Land acquired to build a house in a city limit should not be more than two (2) lots. As regards farm land, a farmer should be able to cultivate at least not more than 10 or 15 acres of land, example vegetable, tree crops and rice. Concession should have 1,500 acres; **(Lofa)**
- Two (2) lots for a house; 200 acres for a farm land and concession, 500 acres; **(Grand Gedeh)**
- House: 1 acre (4 lots); Farm: 150 acres; Concession: 10,000 acres; **(Maryland)**
- Four (4) lots for house; Twenty (20) acres for farm; One hundred (100) acres for concession; **(Grand Kru)**
- House should be 2 lots; Farm land should be 25 acres; Concession be 50 – 500 acres; **(River Gee)**

- A house should cover one acre upward; a farm should cover 250 acres; Concession should cover 500 acres; **(Bong)**
- House– 1 acre of land maximum; Farm – 200 acres of land maximum; Concession – a maximum of 100,000 acres of land should be leased and not sold;**(Bomi)**
- House – 1 acre; Farm – 250 acres; Concession – 4,000 acres;**(Gbarpolu)**
- For a house, not more than 2 lots; For a farmland-mechanized, not more than 100 acres and not more than 25 acres for shifting cultivation; For concession, not more than 500 square feet; **(Cape Mount)**
- Regarding farmland, a person should own 1,000 acres of farmland. In order for a person to build a house he/she should own one acre, and for concessions, it will be preferable for investors to acquire 50,000 acres;**(Bassa)**
- House, one (1) acre; Farm land, one hundred fifty (150) acres; Concession, one thousand five hundred (1,500) acres;**(Sinoe)**
- Be managed by the Government of Liberia;**(Maryland)**
- It should be managed by Government in consultation with the local citizens;**(Grand Kru)**
- It should be managed by the local community; **(River Gee)**
- The government should manage the natural resources;**(Sinoe)**
- Government should manage 40% and the citizens should manage 60% **(Bong)**
- Government should manage all natural resources in consultation with the local people;**(Bomi)**
- Government should manage all natural resources through the citizens;**(Gbarpolu)**
- Proprietor(s) in collaboration with Forestry Development Authority, Lands Mines & Energy and County authorities;**(Cape Mount)**

#### 4.3 Who should manage the natural resources of the land?

- The citizens and government should manage the natural resources on the land **(Rivercess)**
- The management of the natural resources should be done by Government in consultation with the citizens on the ground;**(Margibi)**
- The natural resources should be managed by the government along with the local authorities/communities and said management of the natural resources should be in the interest of the people;**(Nimba)**
- Government should manage the natural resources through the local authorities in the district;**(Lofa)**
- The owner(community) of the land should manage the resources; **(Grand Gedeh)**

#### 4.4 The Liberian Constitution says that only Liberians can own land. What do you think about this?

- We strongly defend the Constitution that only Liberians should own land; **(Rivercess)**
- We agree that only Liberian citizens should own land in Liberia;**(Margibi)**
- This law is alright and should stand; **(Nimba)**
- We concur with the Liberian Constitution that states only Liberians can own land; **(Grand Gedeh)**
- We firmly support this provision of the Constitution;**(Sinoe)**
- We are in support of this portion of the Constitution;**(Grand Kru)**
- We are in total agreement of this part of the law **(River Gee)**
- Foreigners including the white race should buy land from Liberians who own land legally ate maximum of 50 acres;**(Bong)**

- We agree with the Constitution that only Liberians should own land in Liberia;(Bomi)
- We agree with the Constitution that only Liberians should own land in Liberia;(Gbarpolu)
- This law should be reversed as of now, to allow the white race to own land for development purposes; (Cape Mount)

#### 4.5 What is your understanding of zoning law and regulation?

- Zoning laws govern border lines in communities. Zoning law is not known by the citizens. Basically people are not aware/informed about it;(Montserrat)

#### 4.6 What do you think about putting land aside for public use?

- It is necessary for the government to set aside lands for facilities such as parks, play grounds, cemeteries;(Montserrat)



*Partial view of participants in Robertsport, Grand Cape Mount County (left) and Voinjama, Lofa County (right)*



*Participants in Groups' Discussions – Grand Bassa County*

**LIST OF LAND DISPUTES BY COUNTY**

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**Annex - 1**

**RIVERCESS**

- Negbeh and Farah Communities Vs Yarnee District and Elders and Youths
- Buewein and Wolozohn Section Vs Zarflah District and Elders and Youths
- Gbarsaw Section and Buezohn Section Vs Monweh and Central Rivercess District
- Junior Sackie Family Vs The Simes Children
- Philip Godo Family Vs Ansu Kamara Family
- Farm land, Mining area, Town boundary
- County boundary: Nimba Vs Rivercess, Grand Gedeh Vs Rivercess
- District boundary: Jo-River Vs Nyorwian, Yarnee Vs Central Rivercess, Vs Timbo & Central Rivercess
- Boundary Morweh Statutory District Vs Nimba on boundary issue County
- Statutory District Vs Gbargbo Town and Neegba on boundary issue.
- Beah/wor Vs Central River Cess boundary issue
- Jo-River Vs Central River Cess
- Doedain District Vs Jo-River in Morweh
- Gabor Vs Yehn in Yarnee District
- Zarflan Clan-Boiwein Vs Wrobahn Towns Yarnee District:
- Neegbah Town Vs Faah Town
- Gborwuzohn Town Vs Gbadiah Towns

**MONTERRADO COUNTY**

**Caldwell Township:**

- Kennedy Family Vs Findley Family
- Kennedy Family Vs Young Family
- Kennedy Family Vs. Davies Family
- Kennedy Family Vs Nappy Family
- Kennedy Vs Hobchom Family
- Johnson Vs Davis
- Jetamutee Family Vs Johnson Family
- Nine finger Friday Vs Davies
- Sheriff Family Vs. Capperhart Family
- Bullom Family Vs. Jackson Family
- Bullom Family Vs. Richardson Family
- Bullom Family Vs Townson Family
- Sheriff Family Vs Hobchom Family
- The Murray land case
- The Harris case
- Philip Godoe Vs Ansu Kamara
- Sinoe Kortoe Vs Wohn Family

- Kpo Clan Vs Todee District
- Blackton Town Vs Johnson and Kpose Towns
- Kinley Family Vs Others-Fendell. Louisiana
- Gbawein Town Elders Vs Youths-Robertsfield Highway
- Pleemu Vs Pakistan Agriculture Company-Todee District

## **GRAND BASSA COUNTY**

- Grand Bassa Vs Margibi County in District # 1
- Liberia Agriculture Company Vs citizens of Zondoe in District #3 and 4
- Bong County and Bassa County in District #2B
- Geebah administrative District Vs Margibi County
- Gee Clan Vs Marlor Clan in Yeablo administrative District
- Border dispute – Gibi Vs Geehgahn
- Gorr Section and Monyah Clan
- Gould Section and Garyeazohn
- Rivercess/Bassa
- Nimba/Bassa
- District #1 Vs District #2
- J-Matthew family Vs Quoi family
- Senator Roland Kaine Vs Mr. Charles Bennie
- Mr. Alfred D. Logan of Gee Clan Vs the people of Marloi, District #2.

## **MAGIBI COUNTY**

- Krakpacon Vs Henry's Town
- Kpain Town Vs Ben's Town and others
- Foday Town, Whein Town Vs Deomah Town
- Kponpolu Vs Kamara Town
- Kpaye Vs Neka Town
- Kpaye Vs Giah Town
- Whowein Vs Neidonwein
- Salala Rubber Corporation Vs surrounding areas
- Garmozue Vs Konoquelleh
- The Okai's Vs the McGee family
- Richard Wrights Vs Philip Garpue
- The family land dispute in Marshall City
- Sectional land dispute in Mabah Kabah District
- Tribal land dispute in Konoquelleh Clan
- Grant family Vs Kpelle and other tribes
- Public land dispute: The Late John Henry, the Stewart children and the Waymaquelleh citizens
- Henry Town Vs the Kporokpacon people along the Marshall Road
- Citizens of Yarnwueller Vs Mr. John Dennis Borlorla Township
- Garlon Gossah Vs Jukuju Dwanah of Borlorla Township
- Boundary dispute between Henry Town, Kpra-kpa-con and Kpahn's Town along the Marshall City Highway in Mamba Kaba District
- Nyankai Town, Cinta Township, Weah Clan in Gibi Vs Ma-Gbazzie-Amin and Nuepuelleh family

- Cinta Township citizens Vs Whisnant family
- Thomas Corlu Cinta Township Vs H. R. Cooper
- Land Dispute involving General Wright, Philip Garpue Vs Philip Bent Brown in Marshall city

## **NIMBA COUNTY**

- Inter family land dispute
- Inter quarter land dispute
- Inter quarter land dispute
- Inter clan land dispute
- Inter chiefdom land dispute
- Inter district land dispute
- Inter-tribal land dispute

### **LAND DISPUTES:**

#### I. Twah River Administrative District

##### **BOUNDARY DISPUTES:**

- Kpairplay Vs Loelay Towns in Sollay Chiefdom
- Mahn-Display (Twa River District) Vs Tiaplay
- Bleemieplay (Twa River District) Vs Nanlah (Buu-yaa Administrative District)

#### II. Wee-Gbeyi Administrative District

- Duanpa Vs Gborwin (Loowee Clan)
- Kpatua Vs Loyee (Wehpea Chiefdom)
- Fleedin (Wee-Gbeyi) Vs Menla (Yarwin Mensonnoh)

#### III. Sanniquellie-Mah Administrative District

- Sehyikimpa, Boapea Towns and Mr. Dennis Torlon

#### IV. Buu-Yao Administrative District

- Wea Clan and Yao Clan, Yao Chiefdom
- Beadatuo and Gbarplay – Buu-Yao administrative District and Boe-Quilla Administrative District

#### V. Doe Administrative District

- Doumpa and Zuaplay
- Madam Nagbeh Varmie and Madam Mary Larngo
- Boundary dispute between Slangonplay and kpairplay, Towns, Sollay Chiefdom
- Boundary dispute between Yoetween Slangonplay in Sollay Chiefdom and Boahplay in Yarpea District
- Kpehtuo and Kehplay towns boundary dispute in Sollay Chiefdom
- Boundary dispute between Yoolah and Gbei-Bonah towns in Shrolay Chiefdom
- Land dispute between Lugbayee town and Gbeleyea town Yarwein District
- Land dispute between New Yekepa town and Karnlah town. The above two disputes have divided the people of four (4) towns. There is no peace and understanding between them.

- Paramount Chief Henry W.S. Larkpor in Yarwein District
- Mah-Diahplay Township in Twah River and Tiaplay Town in Buu-Yao District boundary dispute
- Duanpan and Gborwin Town
- Kpatuo quarter and Gar quarter in Duapa town
- Fleedin and Garwonpa
- Kilikpo and Luogon families of Nyao town
- Doumpa and Garwonpa
- Nyansin and Garwonpa
- Loyee (the Voker Gban) Gwellay in Zoe-Gbao
- Fleedin and Menla town of Yarwein Mensonnoh District
- Kpatuo and Loyee

A. Yarmein Administrative District

<u>Individual</u>		<u>Town</u>
Lugbeh	Vs	Gbleyee
New Yekepa	Vs	Kahnla

B. Leewehyepea Administrative District

<u>Individual</u>		<u>Town</u>
John Voker	Vs	Grayblin and Lampa

<u>Individual</u>		<u>Town</u>
Zahnglehsonlah	Vs	Zao and Kpallah
Kpanpa	Vs	Lampa

C. Yarpeamah Administrative District

<u>Group</u>		<u>Group</u>
ULTC	Vs	Luogon Benson and Family

D. Doe Administrative District

<u>Town</u>		<u>Town</u>
Doumpa	Vs	Zuaplay
Kpelleuo	Vs	Ganwee
Vahntown	Vs	Noway Camp
Zuolay	Vs	Marlay
Farm lands	-	Zahn Glehsonla and Zao
Tribal boundary	-	Gbi and Karngbo towns
	-	Zuaplay and Dumpa
	-	Karblee and Doe, Loa and Bain
Private land	-	Ganta, Saclepea, Bahn, Sanniquillie, Tappitta

## **BOUNDARY DISPUTES**

- District boundary dispute, e.g.
- Yarwein Mehnsonnoh versus Gbi and Doru
- Zoe-Gbao versus Boe and Queli
- Doe District/Kparblee
- Town boundary dispute
- Zuaplay and Dohnpa
- Town farmland dispute
- Ziah # 1 and 2
- City and Town lot disputes

## **LOFA COUNTY**

- Clan to Clan = Gbalain Vs Palama Clan
- District to District = Belleh District Vs Salayea District
- Vavala Vs Palama Clans
- Town to town – Gbonyea versus Tinsue
- Quardu-Gboni and Voinjama Districts
- Kruka and Boloyezaga
- Selega and Samodu
- Kpakuma and Samodu
- Lobolozu and Barkedu
- John's Town and Bulor
- Galamai and Sammie Galama's family
- Lobobah and Wanlama Vs Hembah Clan
- Kolahun District Vs Zorzor District.
- Hembah Vs Lukasu Clan
- Kolahun District Vs Foya District over customary boundary
- Voinjama and Quadru Gboni Districts over customary land
- Lawalazu and Sammy's Town over customary boundary
  - House spot issue – Marvin Gaye Vs Bosso Roberts families
  - Tribal land issue – The Bestman Vs the Dolley families
  - District boundary issue – Wenwuta in Zorzor district Vs Tinsue in Salayea district.
  - Town Vs. Town issue – Nekeborzu (Midenda) and Barziwen; Small Nekeborzu and Big Nekeborzu
- There is no land issue within Vahun District except the boundary between Kolahun Vs Vahun District; Gbarpolu Vs Lofa County
- The land issue in our area is the boundary dispute between Samodou and Selekai Towns

## **GRAND GEDEH COUNTY**

### **Encroachment**

- Inability to process land deed
- Double selling of one parcel of land
- Surveying one parcel of land for more than one person
- Obstruction of survey without title.

## **Boundary issues**

- Konobo Vs Putu on Polo
- Gorbo Vs Gborbo regarding She creek
- Grand Gedeh Vs River Gee
- Konobo versus Kanneh
- Konobo Vs Putu; Gorbo Vs Gborbo; Konobo Vs Kanneh; Ploe Vs Sennewen; Grand Gedeh (Putu) Vs River Gee.
- (1) Selling one parcel of land to more than one person; (2) people go beyond the original land boundary to claim ownership, and (3) people are falsely claiming land ownership. Examples are: land issue between Konobo and Putu; Ploe and Bhai; Kanneh and Konobo and Rivercess and Grand Gedeh
- The boundary between Bleto in Grand Gedeh and Rivercess; Kanneh and Konobo; Gbao, Gborbo and Gorbo; Putu and Konobo; Grand Gedeh and River Gee

## **MARYLAND COUNTY**

### **LAND DISPUTES**

- Gedebo, Maryland County Vs Nyenebo, River Gee County
- Fish Town, Maryland County Vs Wilsonville, Grand Kru County

### **DISTRICT LAND DISPUTE**

- Pleebo Sodoken Vs Harper District

### **CHIEFDOMS LAND DISPUTE**

- Nyemuweh Vs Klemonweh

### **TOWNS LAND DISPUTES**

- Pumuken and Gbiabo Vs Karluway 1 and 2
- Rock Town and Big Town Vs Harper District
- Welluken and Gbaken Vs Karluway 1 and 2
- Rock Town, Harper and Wehchoken, Pleebo Sodoken land dispute
- Pedebo, Harper Vs whole Graway, Pleebo land dispute

### **QUARTER LAND DISPUTE**

- Howe Family and the Harmon Family in Harper District
- Howe family Vs Bedell family in Pleebo
- Rock Town Vs Putuken Town
- Fish Town Vs Wetchoken
- Cavalla Rubber Corporation Vs Pleebo Sodoken District

### **BOUNDARY DISPUTES**

- Maryland Vs Grand Kru
- Wilsonville Vs Fish Town
- Wilsonville Vs Gbololu/Gbeawein
- Maryland Vs River Gee
- Gedebo in Maryland Vs Nyenebo in River Gee

## **DISTRICT LAND DISPUTES**

- Big Town Vs Rock Town

## **CHIEFDOMS LAND DISPUTES**

- Pleebo-Sodoken & Harper
- Wetchoken Vs Rock Town

### **a) Pleebo – Sodoken District (Callava Rubber Corporation Vs Nyanbo Tribe)**

- County boundary disputes
- District land disputes
- Clan land disputes
- Family to family land disputes
- Neighbor to neighbor land disputes
- Land dispute between tribal people and concession companies

## **GRAND KRU COUNTY**

- Wedabo and Trehn land disputes,
- Wedabo and Kpilo land dispute;
- Topoh and Suehn (Barclayville Chiefdom) land dispute; Sasstown and Kpilio land dispute;
- Buah and Kpilio land dispute;
- Picnic-cess and Sasstown land dispute;
- Getugbaken and Gessaken land dispute;
- Trehn and Po-River land dispute;
- Yonnoh and Duelieh (Barclayville City) land dispute;
- Mahpoh and Mugboloh (Barclayville City)
- Wedeba Vs Blebo;
- Patty Vs Nifa (Trehn District);
- Sasstown Vs Kpilo;
- Kpilio Vs Buah
- Sasstown Vs Picnic –cess
- Wedabo Vs Kpilo
- Topo Vs Suehn (Barclayville Chiefdom)
- Geetugbaken Vs Gissaken (Buah)

## **FARM LAND DISPUTES**

- Wedeba Vs Kpilo
- Patty Vs Nifa
- Kpilio Vs Saasstown
- Forpoh Vs Borloh
- Wedabo Vs Trehn
- Buah Vs Kpilo
- Wedabo Vs Kpilo

**COUNTY BOUNDARY DISPUTES**

- Grand Kru Vs River Gee
- Grand Kru Vs River Gee
- Grand Kru Vs Sinoe
- Grand Kru Vs Maryland;

**DISTRICT LAND DISPUTES**

- Buah Vs Barclayville
- Sasstown Vs Barclayville
- Wedabo Vs Barclayville
- Blebo Vs Wedabo
- Bolloh Vs Jloh

**CLAN LAND DISPUTES**

- Behwan Vs Garraway
- Paitty Vs Po-River
- Duogbo Vs Genoyah
- Big Suehn Vs Topo
- Tarken Vs Woloken one

**TOWN LAND DISPUTES**

- a) Picnic-cess and Sasstown

**RIVER GEE**

- Potupo Vs Chedepo
- Potupo Vs Sarbo
- Potupo Vs Kiteabo
- River Gee Vs Grand Gedeh
- Nyenebo Vs Tuobo
- Webbo Vs Tuobo
- Tuobo and Deabo
- Nyentiabo and Sarbo
- Kiteabo Vs Glarko
- Klibo Vs Kiteabo
- River Gee Vs Sinoe(Seagboken and Saygbeken)
- Tienpo Sherriken Vs Gaeboken
- Grand Kru Vs River Gee
- Dorobo Vs Nyenebo (Maryland and River Gee)
- Woroken Vs Geneken
- Sarbo Geeken (Sarbo Districts Vs Nyentiabo Warliken (Tuobo District);
- Tuobo Sweaken (Tuobo District) Vs Nyenebo Bertiken (Nyenebo District);
- Fish Town, Potupo District, River Gee County Vs Feloken, Barobo District Maryland County;
- Kilepo, Chedepo District, River Gee County Vs Putu-Pennuken, Konobo District, Grand Gedeh County

- Tartuken, Nyenawliken District, River Gee County Vs Big-Jaye, Barrobo District Maryland County
- Joquiken, Nyenawwliken District, River Gee County Vs Bouh- Dweken, Bouh District

## **GRAND KRU**

### **County Boundary Disputes**

- River Gee Vs Grand Kru
- River Gee Vs Grand Gedeh

### **District Land Disputes**

#### a) Nyenawliken and Nanee

- Kallepo and Chedepo Chiefdom in Chedepo District
- Nyantiebo and Sarbo both of Tuobo and Sarbo Districts
- Tuobo and Nyenebo
- Glarro and Kittabo in Sarbo District
- Glaro and Kiteabo, since 2000
- Chegoken Clan and Kanweaken, since 2009-2010

## **BOUNDARY DISPUTES**

- Nyenebo and Tuobo
- Tuobo and Webbo
- Nyenebo and Dorobo
- Nyenebo and Gedebbo
- Gbeapo and Boah, Gbeapo and Potupo, Gbeapo and Barrobo

## **SINOE COUNTY**

### **COUNTY BOUDARY DISPUTES**

- Sinoe and Rivercess Counties: Sanquin Statutory Vs Rivercess County
- Sinoe and River Gee counties: Jadeipo Statutory Vs River Gee
- Jadeipo, Sarpo family and the Central Lowere Jadeipo Dubuken Family

### **DISTRICT DISPUTE**

- Tarjouwon Statutory and Juarzon Statutory; Tugba Vs Plandiabo Towns

## **CHIEFDOMS**

- Karbor and Tarsue Chiefdoms Vs Karbor and Totoe Chiefdoms

## **GREENVILLE CITY**

In Greenville City there is unchecked sale of street land by City Corporation/administrators, including Township commissioners.

- Sinoe Vs Rivercess
- Sinoe Superintendent (Hon. J. Milton Teajay) Vs Ophelia S. Brown Roberts and Johnstone Streets
- Tarsue Vs Kaboh, District # 2 Sanquin
- Tarjuwon Vs Juarzon

- Dugbe District (Sinoe) Vs Jluah District(Grand Kru)
- People do things in their area without their knowledge
- People sell land without document (deed). Some acquire Government Land on charity and intend selling portions to individuals
- The City Corporation is in the habit of selling street land; hence creating problems for others;
- People are claiming land without document (deed)
- Some authorities of the county are interfering with land issues without the consent of the Surveyor and the Land Commissioner
- Sinoe Vs Rivercess
- Juazon Vs Tarwon
- Tarsue Vs Karboh
- Thomanville Vs Kabada
- Sanquin Statutory District, Sinoe County and Jarnee Statutory District, Rivercess County

## **BONG COUNTY**

### **County Boundary Disputes**

- Bong Vs Gbarpolu
- Bong Vs Margibi

### District Boundary Disputes

- Suakoko Vs Sanoyea
- Zota Vs Sanoyea
- Zota Vs Suakoko
- Panta Vs Zota
  
- Two persons fighting over a piece of land
- Duplication of tribal certificates, deeds, diagram, etc.
- Double sale of land and
- Encroachment
- The quantity issue in the certificate and the purchase before the survey.
- The double sale of land
- The illegal planting of life crops on land not belonging to you
- Selling land without title
- Tribal boundary disputes
- Boundary issues
- Double selling of land
- Illegal sale of other people's land
- Encroachment
- Unfair distribution of land in the interior

## **BOMI COUNTY**

- Land dispute in the Nyala Community between Mrs. Zoe T. Ross and Eman Alhosanic Z. Folley
- Land dispute in the Nyala Community between Eman Alhosanic Z. Folley and the Ahmadiya Muslim Organization; boarder disputes between Bomi and Gbarpolu; Bomi and Montserrado; Bomi and Bong; etc.

- National level: Gbarpolu and Bomi; Montserrado and Bomi; Bong and Bomi
- Internal level:
- Lower Mecca Clan, Mecca District and Mannah Clan, Klay District
- Kpo Clan, Klay District and Manoah Clan Senjeh District
- Sass Town, Klay District and Bonwen Town, Dowein District
- Golodee, Mazen, Lahe, Fleeta and Zuah Town, Mecca District
- Kornehs, Conteh, Ma-Watta & City on-the-other-hand
- Republic of Liberia Vs. the Follies' and Ross'
- LMA Vs. Karnleys' and others

### **Boundary Disputes**

- Bomi and Gbarpolu
- Bomi and Montserrado
- Bomi and Bong

### **Internal Disputes**

- Sass Town and Bowein
- Malema and Gonzipo
- Moward Agricultural Project and the people of Fleeta Town and Maizen

### **External Disputes**

- Bomi (Suehn Mecca District) & Bong (Fuama District)
- Bomi (Sawmill) & Gbarpolu (Sawmill)
- Bomi & Montserrado (Royesville & Chessmanburg Townships)

### **Internal Disputes**

- Mana Clan, Klay District & Lower Mecca Clan, Suehn Mecca
- Sasstown, Klay District & Bowein, Dewoin District
- Guie Town & Vorkor-Klay District
- Malema & Gonzipo-Klay District
- Sieh Town, Klay District & Beh Sao, Senjeh District

## **GBARPOLU COUNTY**

- Sawmill – Gbarma District bordering Bomi County
- Belleh District bordering Lofa County
- Gou – Wolalai District bordering Bong County
- Timba Village in Kongba District bordering Grand Cape Mount County
- The land boundary between Gbarpolu and Bomi (Sawmill); Cape Mount and Gbarpolu (Timber Village in Kongba); Belle District in Gbarpolu and Lofa County
- Bong and Gbarpolu Counties along the St. Paul's River bank
- Gbarpolu, Belle and Zorzor and Kolahun Districts respectively
- Boundary disputes between Gbarpolu and Bomi
- Illegal occupation of land (many)
- Confusion for farmland (many)
- Mining conflicts (many)

- Encroachment on the county by other counties
- Bomi and Gbarpolu i.e. Sawmill, Yomo Town, Karnley's Town in Gbarma
- The Johnson's and Pools' families in Gbarma District
- Confusion for farmland in Totoquelleh
- Miners from Vahun in Kongbah District
- Encroachment on Gbarpolu by Lofa in Kongbah – Normor Daron
- Bong and Gbarpolu in Gotoma Gungbeya Chiefdom
- Tribal land dispute
- Boundary delimitation

## **GRAND CAPE MOUNT COUNTY**

Existing land dispute areas that are known for our group are:

- Gbesseh
- Kenema
- Wonde
- Tienii
- Massatain
- Between Porkpa and Tewor Districts (Yates xilles) – Boundary dispute
- Tima village – Between Cape Mount and Gbarpolu Counties
- Upper Porkpa and Gbapala
- Town disputes (Yates-ville and Sannoh park)
- Land disputes between individuals (Alhaji Jeidi of Jeidi Village and People of Bombor Old Town)
- Inter-clan land disputes
- Inter-County Land disputes (Grand Cape Mount and Gbarpolu Counties County)
- Inter-District Land Disputes (Tewor and Porkpa Districts)
- Congba and Porkpa Districts: Camp Alpha, Weaben Creek, Timmer Village

## II. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

During the consultation process, many recommendations and proposals were advanced. The recommendations that follow are the key synthesized recommendations from participants in each thematic group in a county; hence that county's recommendation(s). Unmentioned are those whose consultations that took place prior to the request for 'recommendations' as addenda to the guiding questions. The recommendations presented here are not arranged along the many cross-cutting themes that overlaid the spectrum of land issues and concerns. They are slightly edited proposed recommendations from the 'common people' to the Government of Liberia through the Land Commission.

### *MARGIBI COUNTY*

- That the required amount to be paid as 'Token' to acquire land from indigenous people or local authorities should be clearly defined;
- That a decentralized structure for acquiring public land be put in place and the procedures be communicated to the people;
- That fee charged for the various categories of land to be surveyed should be clear;
- That deeds obtained prior to the establishment of the Land Commission be resubmitted and reregistered;
- That the Commission endeavor to establish a clear and complete chain of title;
- That individuals or institutions responsible for information dissemination regarding land ownership in clans, villages, sections, townships, districts and counties be identified to avoid a situation of misidentifying the rightful person or institution;
- That property owners be educated on their rights of ownership and obligations in the development of their land;
- That any land deed that traces its origin from tribal land reserve without a tribal certificate be set aside until said deed is verified; and
- That the Land Commission decentralizes its education and outreach program on the procedures to be followed in acquiring land. This will better inform them of their rights, and that the youth and citizens form part of a council that will review past and present land sale before the Moratorium is lifted.

### *NIMBA COUNTY*

- In order to resolve land disputes in the county, the National Legislature should enact a law specifically designed to demarcate all inter and intra county boundary disputes;
- De-centralization of the work of the Land Commission to link the existing knowledge of county resident surveyor and land commissioner to its work at the county level;
- That the 1<sup>st</sup> option of purchase of public land be given to those individuals who trace their inheritance to that particular land;
- That the Land Commission restrict the random planting of cash crops especially rubber to deeded properties;
- That land access should consider traditional ownership and the relevant provisions of the Constitution of the country;

- That the processing of public land sale deed is carried out at the county level; and
- Decentralization of land record management to afford rural people the opportunity to easily access their land records; and that government should share the cost associated with the survey of land (free service).

## ***LOFA COUNTY***

- In order to resolve land disputes in the county, the National Legislature should enact a law specifically designed to demarcate all inter and intra county boundary disputes;
- A robust education and outreach program be initiated by the Land Commission to educate the people about land issues and matters in addition to the decentralization of its activities to enable the local people give their inputs;
- A hybrid system that recognizes firstly the social legitimacy of customary land laws and the existing statutory land laws be introduced immediately to tackle boundary and related land disputes in rural areas;
- Conflicts arising from the issuance of tribal certificates be settled by the government through the tribal authorities;
- Local and traditional authorities be constantly consulted on all land matters in the county; and
- That as a matter of urgency, a dispute resolution committee under the aegis of the Land Commission be established to begin taking action to harmonize the boundary dispute between Hembah and Lukasu Clans as well as the breakaway clans from Hembah.

## ***GRAND GEDEH COUNTY***

- Compulsory erection of cornerstones when you obtain land;
- More coordination between government surveyor, private surveyor and land commissioner to avoid or minimize double dealings;
- The sale of land deed forms should fall under the supervision of the county land commissioner to avoid the discretionary sale of private land; and
- To ease the long and cumbersome process leading to the signing of public land deeds by the President, the county superintendent be designated the final authority to sign public land deed.

## ***RIVERCESS COUNTY***

- To ease the long and cumbersome process leading to the signing of public land deeds by the President, the County Superintendent be designated the final authority to sign public land sale;
- Survey fees should be reduced by 50% so tribal people can afford to survey their land;
- For individuals and groups owing land and failing to develop the land over a period of 10 years, the government should lease such land to any citizen or group with interest to develop said land;
- The activities of the Land Commission be decentralized;

- In order to resolve land disputes in the county, the National Legislature should enact a law specifically designed to demarcate all inter and intra county boundary disputes
- Investors with interest in the forestry sector develop a plan of reforestation and a program that obligates social responsibility;
- That the county land commissioner be a signatory to the signing of public land deeds;
- That the duration for the holding of tribal certificate for farm land be extended to 120 days instead of the present 90 days; and
- That tribal authority is keyed in the process of recommending potential miners to the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy (MLME); and those individuals involved in the sale of land without the original (mother) deed be turned over to the courts for prosecution.

## ***BOMI COUNTY***

- That the government develop a clear land policy;
- That land allocation be made along the following lines (a) individual- 100 acres, (b) organization -25 acres, (c) business-25 acres, and (d) agriculture-200 acres;
- Local communities be given the opportunity to secure and develop the tribal reserves;
- That the activities of the National Archives be decentralized;
- That a land verification system be established in all counties;
- That the sale of land be restricted to Liberian citizens and others of the non-negro descent; and
- That the Land Commission explores with urgency technical training opportunities for people involved with land matters at the county level; and that the mandate of the Land Commission be extended beyond the statutory period of five (5) years owing to the enormity of land issues and concerns in the country.

## ***GBARPOLU COUNTY***

- Government should reclaim land from persons who have owned land for more than 10 years without developing same;
- Persons in the habit of selling land to more than one person should be charged and sent to court; and
- That the tribal certificate system be maintained; and that the activities of the National Archives be decentralized.

## ***GRAND CAPE MOUNT COUNTY***

- That all tribal certificates be signed by the county superintendent;
- That all undeveloped land owners should pay higher taxes to the government;
- That there be a limitation on owning a very large portion of land; and
- That government investigates citizens squatting on waterfronts.

## ***MONTSERRADO COUNTY***

- For the immediate and long-term, a special task force and court be established to probe into the urgent land disputes needing quick resolution;
- The long procedure followed in obtaining public lands be minimized and rationalized;

- Double and illegal land sellers should be prosecuted and punished under the law;
- Illegal and dubious surveyors' licenses should be withdrawn in addition to punishing them under the law;
- Vacant lands with no development for years be turned over to heads of communities for use;
- A computerized land information and management system be established in each county;
- As a first step, land survey and deed registration should commence at the local level as the locals have firsthand knowledge of the land in their areas. Prior approval should be obtained from the Land Commission before documents are retrieved from the National Archives; and
- The Land Commission should establish a technical team to authenticate all land deeds at the National Archives.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD

### **LAND POLICY AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

The discussion groups' recommendations acknowledged the contribution of the land sector to overall socio-economic development, wealth creation, poverty reduction, democratic governance and environmental sustainability in Liberia. Unfortunately, a robust national policy debate on the structural issues, i.e., land access, tenure security, etc. has not been a national priority until in the most recent time with the launch of the Land Commission. Furthermore, past national development strategies and plans did not reflect the land issue and identified intervention programs, hence the disorder existing today in the sector.

The recommendations and observations of the groups are not explicit on a specific policy framework that could capture the contentious structural land issues raised. However, implied are certain portions of the recommendations that have policy implications for land reform in Liberia. For example, the following are some of the issues raised during the consultative meeting that are key areas for specific policy formulation and intervention:

- 1) The harmonization and *streamlining* of the complex *tenure systems* (customary and statutory) in Liberia for equitable access to land and security of tenure;
- 2) *Clarification* of the complex *Constitutional and legal framework* for the management of land resources; in so doing, aspects to do with the complexity regarding ownership, control and management of land resources could be captured in a policy formulation framework. Additionally, the overlapping and multiple rights that overlaid tenure insecurity are areas to be addressed through policy;
- 3) *Resolving the historical injustices* of the issues of land access with the objective to achieve balanced growth and social equity; hence, access to land by all Liberians must reflect concern with equity and justice irrespective of gender; whether through the market or through any system of inheritance, customary or statutory;
- 4) Reforming and streamlining *land rights administration* in Liberia especially at the local level with the objective to ensure efficient, effective and equitable delivery of land services. This requires that the Land Commission establishes a policy to *overhaul the moribund and dysfunctional land administration and land management systems and structures* which as observed by the participants are characterized by inadequate capacity for service delivery, corruption, and fraud; and,
- 5) Harmonizing all land-related policies and laws, and *strengthening institutional capacity* at all levels of the Liberia Government through a process of devolution to ensure the sustainable management of land resources.

### **INFORMATION DISSEMINATION, OUTREACH AND EDUCATION**

1. Information dissemination on land ownership be enforced at all levels from the village to the counties;

2. Property owners should be educated on their rights of ownership and obligation in the development of their lands;
3. Decentralize education and outreach programs on procedures in acquiring land;
4. The role communities should play in managing land, forest and mining is to protect, monitor and share information with each other and report anything dubious to the authorities;
5. That a decentralized structure for acquiring public land be put in place and the procedure communicated to the people;
6. A robust education and outreach program should be initiated by the Land Commission in order to educate the people about land issues;
7. The Land Commission should explore the urgency of providing training opportunities for people involved in land matters at the county level;
8. A computerized land information and management system should be established in every county;
9. Zoning laws are unknown to the citizens and these laws should be made public through awareness rising. The people need to be aware/informed about land issues; and
10. Information on land matters should be communicated to our people through the community radio stations.

## ***LAND LAW REFORM***

To ensure the full implementation of the various recommendations and comments made by the participants regarding the illegal sales of lands and wrongful possession of properties, there is the need to draft new legislations that will result to changing the old laws on the books to be enforceable against those individuals who are engaged in such criminal act. Such measure will help curtail unnecessary land conflicts in Liberia.

The draft legislations should consider giving authority to the Land Commission subject to review by any court of competent jurisdiction whenever there is a ruling in a given land dispute.

Upon the passage of such legislations into law, the Land Commission will subsequently begin to appoint hearing officers in the counties to speedily conduct trials in consultation with judicial officers with specific mandate in line with the trial procedure that will be established.

Given the enormity of the number of land disputes to be settled, applying the palava hut method should not be the only means, but other methods should be taken into account in applying judiciary authority.

## ***LAND ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT***

During the consultative meeting a participant from Montserrado County expressed 'fears that someone will obtain a certified copy of a tribal certificate and 'back-date it'. Another county discussion group recommends the need for 'more coordination between government surveyor, private surveyor and land commissioner to avoid or minimize double dealings,'

while another county group recommends that ‘the sale of land deeds forms should fall under the supervision of the county land commissioner to avoid the discretionary sale of land’.

As illustrated by the few examples above, land administration operations in Liberia have contributed to severe land rights insecurity especially as a result of lack of proper record keeping, persistent inaccuracies in land registry information, corruption and fraud and the general mistrust of the land administration system. As observed from the many consultations, land rights administration needs to be treated as a professional function, removed from the realm of politics and insulated from political pressures, often bent on the appropriation of land resources.

The use of two parallel systems comprising of the informal customary/traditional systems governed by customs and norms of given communities and the centralized statutory (or state) system governed by written law has resulted to conflict with regard to the type of standards, rules and procedures to apply in cases of land rights administration.

The majority of the recommendations from county group discussions on this topical issue tended for a decentralized land administration and management structure. The imperative for this is amply put by a discussion group from Grand Gedeh County in this submission, ‘to ease the long and cumbersome process leading to the signing of public land deeds by the President, the county superintendent be designated the final authority to sign public land deeds’.



*A female participant in Kakata, Margibi County raises concern on women's rights to own property*

## LIST OF LAND DISPUTES BY COUNTY

### Annexes

#### RIVERCESS

- Negbeh and Farah Communities Vs Yarnee District and Elders and Youths
- Buewein and Wolozohn Section Vs Zarflah District and Elders and Youths
- Gbarsaw Section and Buezohn Section Vs Monweh and Central Rivercess District
- Junior Sackie Family Vs The Simes Children
- Philip Godo Family Vs Ansu Kamara Family
- Farm land, Mining area, Town boundary
- County boundary: Nimba Vs Rivercess, Grand Gedeh Vs Rivercess
- District boundary: Jo-River Vs Nyorwian, Yarnee Vs Central Rivercess, Vs Timbo & Central Rivercess
- Boundary Morweh Statutory District Vs Nimba on boundary issue County
- Statutory District Vs Gbargbo Town and Neegba on boundary issue
- Beah/wor Vs Central Rivercess boundary issue
- Jo-River Vs Central Rivercess
- Doedain District Vs Jo-River in Morweh
- Gabor Vs Yehn in Yarnee District
- Zarflan Clan-Boiwein Vs Wrobahn Towns Yarnee District:
- Neegbah Town Vs Faah Town
- Gborwuzohn Town Vs Gbadiah Towns

#### MONTERRADO COUNTY

##### Caldwell Township:

- Kennedy Family Vs Findley Family
- Kennedy Family Vs Young Family
- Kennedy Family Vs. Davies Family
- Kennedy Family Vs Nappy Family
- Kennedy Vs Hobchom Family
- Johnson Vs Davis
- Jetamutee Family Vs Johnson Family
- Nine finger Friday Vs Davies
- Sheriff Family Vs. Capperhart Family
- Bullom Family Vs. Jackson Family
- Bullom Family Vs. Richardson Family
- Bullom Family Vs Townson Family
- Sheriff Family Vs Hobchom Family
- The Murray land case
- The Harris case
- Philip Godoe Vs Ansu Kamara
- Sinoe Kortoe Vs Wohn Family
- Kpo Clan Vs Todee District
- Blackton Town Vs Johnson and Kpose Towns

- Kinley Family Vs Others-Fendell. Louisiana
- Gbawein Town Elders Vs Youths-Robertsfield Highway
- Pleemu Vs Pakistan Agriculture Company-Todee District

## **GRAND BASSA COUNTY**

- Grand Bassa Vs Margibi County in District # 1
- Liberia Agriculture Company Vs citizens of Zondoe in District #3 and 4
- Bong County and Bassa County in District #2B
- Geebah administrative District Vs Margibi County
- Gee Clan Vs Marlor Clan in Yeablo administrative District
- Border dispute – Gibi Vs Geehbahn
- Gorr Section and Monyah Clan
- Gould Section and Garyeazohn
- Rivercess/Bassa
- Nimba/Bassa
- District #1 Vs District #2
- J-Matthew family Vs Quoi family
- Senator Roland Kaine Vs Mr. Charles Bennie
- Mr. Alfred D. Logan of Gee Clan Vs the people of Marloi, District #2.

## **MAGIBI COUNTY**

- Krakpacon Vs Henry's Town
- Kpain Town Vs Ben's Town and others
- Foday Town, Whein Town Vs Deomah Town
- Kponpolu Vs Kamara Town
- Kpaye Vs Neka Town
- Kpaye Vs Giah Town
- Whowein Vs Neidonwein
- Salala Rubber Corporation Vs surrounding areas
- Garmozue Vs Konoquelleh
- The Okai's Vs the McGee family
- Richard Wrights Vs Philip Garpue
- The family land dispute in Marshall City
- Sectional land dispute in Mabah Kabah District
- Tribal land dispute in Konoquelleh Clan
- Grant family Vs Kpelle and other tribes
- Public land dispute: The Late John Henry, the Stewart children and the Waymaquelleh citizens
- Henry Town Vs the Kporokpacon people along the Marshall Road
- Citizens of Yarnwueller Vs Mr. John Dennis Borlorla Township
- Garlon Gossah Vs Jukuju Dwanah of Borlorla Township
- Boundary dispute between Henry Town, Kpra-kpa-con and Kpahn's Town along the Marshall City Highway in Mamba Kaba District
- Nyankai Town, Cinta Township, Weah Clan in Gibi Vs Ma-Gbazzie-Amin and Nuepuelleh family
- Cinta Township citizens Vs Whisnant family

- Thomas Corlu Cinta Township Vs H. R. Cooper
- Land Dispute involving General Wright, Philip Garpue Vs Philip Bent Brown in Marshall city

## **NIMBA COUNTY**

- Inter family land dispute
- Inter quarter land dispute
- Inter quarter land dispute
- Inter clan land dispute
- Inter chiefdom land dispute
- Inter district land dispute
- Inter-tribal land dispute

## **LAND DISPUTES:**

### I. Twah River Administrative District

## **BOUNDARY DISPUTES:**

- Kpairplay Vs Loelay Towns in Sollay Chiefdom
- Mahn-Display (Twa River District) Vs Tiaplay
- Bleemieplay (Twa River District) Vs Nanlah (Buu-yaa Administrative District)

### II. Wee-Gbeyi Administrative District

- Duanpa Vs Gborwin (Loowee Clan)
- Kpatua Vs Loyee (Wehpea Chiefdom)
- Fleedin (Wee-Gbeyi) Vs Menla (Yarwin Mensonnon)

### III. Sanniquellie Mah Administrative District

- Sehyikimpa, Boapea Towns and Mr. Dennis Torlon

### IV. Buu-Yao Administrative District

- Wea Clan and Yao Clan, Yao Chiefdom
- Beadatuo and Gbarplay – Buu-Yao administrative District and Boe-Quilla Administrative District

### V. Doe Administrative District

- Doumpa and Zuaplay
- Madam Nagbeh Varmie and Madam Mary Larngo
- Boundary dispute between Slangonplay and kpairplay, Towns, Sollay Chiefdom
- Boundary dispute between Yoetween Slangonplay in Sollay Chiefdom and Boahplay in Yarpea District
- Kpehtuo and Kehplay towns boundary dispute in Sollay Chiefdom
- Boundary dispute between Yoolah and Gbei-Bonah towns in Shrolay Chiefdom
- Land dispute between Lugbayee town and Gbeleyea town Yarwein District
- Land dispute between New Yekepa town and Karnlah town. The above two disputes have divided the people of four (4) towns. There is no peace and understanding between them.
- Paramount Chief Henry W.S. Larkpor in Yarwein District

- Mah-Diahplay Township in Twah River and Tiaplay Town in Buu-Yao District boundary dispute
- Duanpan and Gborwin Town
- Kpatuo quarter and Gar quarter in Duapa town
- Fleedin and Garwonpa
- Kilikpo and Luogon families of Nyao town
- Doumpa and Garwonpa
- Nyansin and Garwonpa
- Loyee (the Voker Gban) Gwellay in Zoe-Gbao
- Fleedin and Menla town of Yarwein Mensonnoh District
- Kpatuo and Loyee

C. Yarwein Administrative District

<u>Individual</u>	Vs	<u>Town</u>
Lugbeh	Vs	Gbleyee
New Yekepa	Vs	Kahnla

D. Leewehyepea Administrative District

<u>Individual</u>	Vs	<u>Town</u>
John Voker	Vs	Grayblin and Lampa

<u>Individual</u>	Vs	<u>Town</u>
Zahnglehsonlah	Vs	Zao and Kpallah
Kpanpa	Vs	Lampa

C. Yarpeamah Administrative District

<u>Group</u>	Vs	<u>Group</u>
ULTC	Vs	Luogon Benson and Family

D. Doe Administrative District

<u>Town</u>	Vs	<u>Town</u>
Doumpa	Vs	Zuaplay
Kpelletuo	Vs	Ganwee
Vahntown	Vs	Noway Camp
Zuolay	Vs	Marlay
Farm lands	-	Zahn Glehsonla and Zao
Tribal boundary	-	Gbi and Karngbo towns
	-	Zuaplay and Dumpa
	-	Karblee and Doe, Loa and Bain
Private land	-	Ganta, Saclepea, Bahn, Sanniquillie, Tappitta

**BOUNDARY DISPUTES**

- District boundary dispute, e.g.
- Yarwein Mehsonnor versus Gbi and Doru

- Zoe-Gbao versus Boe and Queli
- Doe District/Kparblee
- Town boundary dispute
- Zuaplay and Dohnpa
- Town farmland dispute
- Ziah # 1 and 2
- City and Town lot disputes

## **LOFA COUNTY**

- Clan to Clan = Gbalain Vs Palama Clan
- District to District = Belleh District Vs Salayea District
- Vavala Vs Palama Clans
- Town to town – Gbonyea versus Tinsue
- Quardu-Gboni and Voinjama Districts
- Kruka and Boloyezaga
- Selega and Samodu
- Kpakuma and Samodu
- Lobolozu and Barkedu
- John’s Town and Bulor
- Galamai and Sammie Galama’s family
- Lobobah and Wanlama Vs Hembah Clan
- Kolahun District Vs Zorzor District.
- Hembah Vs Lukasu Clan
- Kolahun District Vs Foya District over customary boundary
- Voinjam and Quadru Gboni Districts over customary land
- Lawalazu and Sammy’s Town over customary boundary
  - House spot issue – Marvin Gaye Vs Bosso Roberts families
  - Tribal land issue – The Bestman Vs the Dolley families
  - District boundary issue – Wenwuta in Zorzor district Vs Tinsue in Salayea district.
  - Town Vs. Town issue – Nekeborzu (Midenda) and Barziwen; Small Nekeborzu and Big Nekeborzu
- There is no land issue within Vahun District except the boundary between Kolahun Vs Vahun District; Gbarpolu Vs Lofa County
- The land issue in our area is the boundary dispute between Samodou and Selekai Towns

## **GRAND GEDEH COUNTY**

### **Encroachment**

- Inability to process land deed
- Double selling of one parcel of land
- Surveying one parcel of land for more than one person
- Obstruction of survey without title

### **Boundary issues**

- Konobo versus Putu on Polo
- Gorbo versus Gborbo regarding She creek

- Grand Gedeh Vs River Gee
- Konobo versus Kaneh
- Konobo Vs Putu; Gorbo Vs Gborbo; Konobo Vs Kanneh; Ploe Vs Sennewen; Grand Gedeh (Putu) Vs River Gee
- (1) Selling one parcel of land to more than one person; (2) people go beyond the original land boundary to claim ownership, and (3) people are falsely claiming land ownership. Examples are: land issue between Konobo and Putu; Ploe and Bhai; Kanneh and Konobo and Rivercess and Grand Gedeh
- The boundary between Bleto in Grand Gedeh and Rivercess; Kanneh and Konobo; Gbao, Gborbo and Gorbo; Putu and Konobo; Grand Gedeh and River Gee

## **MARYLAND COUNTY**

### **LAND DISPUTES**

- Gedebo, Maryland County Vs Nyenebo, River Gee County
- Fish Town, Maryland County Vs Wilsonville, Grand Kru County

### **DISTRICT LAND DISPUTE**

- Pleebo Sodoken Vs Harper District

### **CHIEFDOMS LAND DISPUTE**

- Nyemuweh Vs Klemonweh

### **TOWNS LAND DISPUTES**

- Pumuken and Gbiabo Vs Karluway 1 and 2
- Rock Town and Big Town Vs Harper District
- Welluken and Gbaken Vs Karluway 1 and 2
- Rock Town, Harper and Wehchoken, Pleebo Sodokeh land dispute
- Pedebo, Harper Vs whole Graway, Pleebo land dispute

### **QUARTER LAND DISPUTE**

- Howe Family and the Harmon Family in Harper District
- Howe family Vs Bedell family in Pleebo
- Rock Town Vs Putuken Town
- Fish Town Vs Wetchoken
- Cavalla Rubber Corporation Vs Pleebo Sodoken District

### **BOUNDARY DISPUTES**

- Maryland Vs Grand Kru
- Wilsonville Vs Fishtown
- Wilsonville Vs Gbololu/Gbeawein
- Maryland Vs River Gee
- Gedebo in Maryland Vs Nyenebo in River Gee

### **DISTRICT LAND DISPUTES**

- Big Town Vs Rock Town

## **CHIEFDOMS LAND DISPUTES**

- Pleebo-Sodoken & Harper
- Wetchoken Vs Rock Town
- Pleebo – Sodoken District (Callava Rubber Corporation Vs Nyanbo Tribe)

## **TYPES OF LAND DISPUTES**

- County boundary disputes
- District land disputes
- Clan land disputes
- Family to family land disputes
- Neighbor to neighbor land disputes
- Land dispute between tribal people and concession companies

## **GRAND KRU COUNTY**

- Wedabo and Trehn land disputes
- Wedabo and Kpilo land dispute
- Topoh and Suehn (Barclayville Chiefdom) land dispute; Sasstown and kpilio land dispute;
- Buah and Kpilio land dispute
- Picnic-cess and Sasstown land dispute
- Getugbaken and Gessaken land dispute
- Trehn and Po-River land dispute
- Yonnoh and Duelieh (Barclayville City) land dispute
- Mahpoh and Mugboloh (Barclayville City)
- Wedeba Vs Blebo
- Patty Vs Nifa (Trehn District)
- Sasstown Vs Kpilo
- Kpilio Vs Buah
- Sasstown Vs Picnic-cess
- Wedabo Vs Kpilo
- Topo Vs Suehn (Barclayville Chiefdom)
- Geetugbaken Vs Gissaken (Buah)

## **FARM LAND DISPUTES**

- Wedeba Vs Kpilo
- Patty Vs Nifa
- Kplio Vs Saasstown
- Forpoh Vs Borloh
- Wedabo Vs Trehn
- Buah Vs Kpilo
- Wedabo Vs Kpilo

## **COUNTY BOUNDARY DISPUTES**

- Grand Kru Vs River Gee
- Grand Kru Vs River Gee
- Grand Kru Vs Sinoe
- Grand Kru Vs Maryland;

## **DISTRICT LAND DISPUTES**

- Buah Vs Barclayville
- Sasstown Vs Barclayville
- Wedabo Vs Barclayville
- Blebo Vs Wedabo
- Bolloh Vs Jloh

## **CLAN LAND DISPUTES**

- Behwan Vs Garraway
- Paitty Vs Po-River
- Duogbo Vs Genoyah
- Big Suehn Vs Topo
- Tarken Vs Woloken one

## **TOWN LAND DISPUTES**

- Picnic-cess and Sasstown

## **RIVER GEE**

- Potupo Vs Chedepo
- Potupo Vs Sarbo
- Potupo Vs Kiteabo
- River Gee Vs Grand Gedeh
- Nyenebo Vs Tuobo
- Webbo Vs Tuobo
- Tuobo and Deabo
- Nyentiabo and Sarbo
- Kiteabo Vs Glarko
- Klibo Vs Kiteabo
- River Gee Vs Sinoe(Seagboken and Saygbeken)
- Tienpo Sherriken Vs Gaeboken
- Grand Kru Vs River Gee
- Dorobo Vs Nyenebo (Maryland and River Gee)
- Woroken Vs Geneken
- Sarbo Geeken (Sarbo Districts Vs Nyentiabo Warliken (Tuobo District);
- Tuobo Sweaken (Tuobo District) Vs Nyenebo Bertiken (Nyenebo District)
- Fishtown, Potupo District, River Gee County Vs Feloken, Barobo District Maryland County
- Kilepo, Chedepo District, River Gee County Vs Putu-Pennuken, Konobo District, Grand
- Gedeh County
- Tartuken, Nyenawliken District, River Gee County Vs Big-Jaye, Barrobo District Maryland
- County

- Joquiken, Nyenawwliken District, River Gee County Vs Bouh- Dweken, Bouh District

## **GRAND KRU**

### **County Boundary Disputes**

- River Gee Vs Grand Kru;
- River Gee Vs Grand Gedeh;

### **District Land Disputes**

- Nyenawliken and Nanee
- Kallepo and Chedepo Chiefdom in Chedepo District
- Nyantiebo and Sarbo both of Tuobo and Sarbo Districts
- Tuobo and Nyenebo
- Glarro and Kittabo in Sarbo District
- Glaro and Kiteabo, since 2000
- Chegoken Clan and Kanweaken, since 2009-2010

## **BOUNDARY DISPUTES**

- Nyenebo and Tuobo
- Tuobo and Webbo
- Nyenebo and Dorobo
- Nyenebo and Gedebo
- Gbeapo and Boah, Gbeapo and Potupo, Gbeapo and Barrobo

## **SINOE COUNTY**

### **COUNTY BOUDARY DISPUTES**

- Sinoe and Rivercess Counties: Sanquin Statutory Vs Rivercess County
- Sinoe and River Gee counties: Jadepoe Statutory Vs River Gee
- Jadepo, Sarpo family and the Central Lowere Jadepo Dubuken Family

### **DISTRICT DISPUTE**

- Tarjouwon Statutory and Juarzon Statutory; Tugba Vs Plandiabo Towns

## **CHIEFDOMS**

- Karbor and Tarsue Chiefdoms Vs Karbor and Totoe Chiefdoms

## **GREENVILLE CITY**

In Greenville City there is unchecked sale of street land by City Corporation/administrators, including Township commissioners

- Sinoe Vs Rivercess
- Sinoe Superintendent (Hon. Teajay) Vs Ophelia S. Brown Roberts and Johnstone Street
- Tarsue Vs Kaboh, District # 2 Sanquin
- Tarjuwon Vs Juarzon
- Dugbe District (Sinoe) Vs Jluah District (Grand Kru)
- People do things in their area without their knowledge

- People sell land without document (deed). Some acquire Government Land on charity and intend selling portions to individuals
- The City Corporation is in the habit of selling street land; hence creating problems for others
- People are claiming land without document (deed)
- Some authorities of the county are interfering with land issues without the consent of the Surveyor and the Land Commissioner
- Sinoe Vs Rivercess
- Juazon Vs Tarwon
- Tarsue Vs Karboh
- Thomanville Vs Kabada
- Sanquin Statutory District, Sinoe County and Jarnee Statutory District, Rivercess County

## **BONG COUNTY**

### **County Boundary Disputes**

- Bong Vs Gbarpolu
- Bong Vs Margibi

### District Boundary Disputes

- Suakoko Vs Sanoyea
- Zota Vs Sanoyea
- Zota Vs Suakoko
- Panta Vs Zota
  
- Two persons fighting over a piece of land
- Duplication of tribal certificates, deeds, diagram, etc.
- Double sale of land and
- Encroachment
- The quantity issue in the certificate and the purchase before the survey.
- The double sale of land
- The illegal planting of life crops on land not belonging to you
- Selling land without title
- Tribal boundary disputes
- Boundary issues
- Double selling of land
- Illegal sale of other people's land
- Encroachment
- Unfair distribution of land in the interior

## **BOMI COUNTY**

- Land dispute in the Nyala Community between Mrs. Zoe T. Ross and Eman Alhosanic Z. Folley
- Land dispute in the Nyala Community between Eman Alhosanic Z. Folley and the Amadiya Muslim Organization; boarder disputes between Bomi and Gbarpolu; Bomi and Montserrado; Bomi and Bong; etc.
- National level: Gbarpolu and Bomi; Montserrado and Bomi; Bong and Bomi  
Internal level:

- Lower Mecca Clan, Mecca District and Mannah Clan, Klay District
- Kpo Clan, Klay District and Manoah Clan Senjeh District
- Sass Town, Klay District and Bonwen Town, Dowein District
- Golodee, Mazen, Lahe, Fleeta and Zuah Town, Mecca District
- Kornehs, Conteh, Ma-Watta & City on-the-other-hand
- Republic of Liberia Vs. the Follleys' and Ross'
- LMA Vs. Karnleys' and others

## **Boundary Disputes**

- Bomi and Gbarpolu
- Bomi and Montserrado
- Bomi and Bong

## **Internal Disputes**

- Sass Town and Bowein
- Malema and Gonzipo
- Moward Agricultural Project and the people of Fleeta Town and Maizen

## **External Disputes**

- Bomi (Suehn Mecca District) & Bong (Fuama District)
- Bomi (Sawmill) & Gbarpolu (Sawmill)
- Bomi & Montserrado (Royesville & Chessmanburg Townships)

## **Internal Disputes**

- Mana Clan, Klay District & Lower Mecca Clan, Suehn Mecca
- Sasstown, Klay District & Bowein, Dewoin District
- Guie Town & Vorkor-Klay District
- Malema & Gonzipo-Klay District
- Sieh Town, Klay District & Beh Sao, Senjeh District

## **GBARPOLU COUNTY**

- Sawmill – Gbarma District bordering Bomi County
- Belleh District bordering Lofa County
- Gou – Wolalai District bordering Bong County
- Timba Village in Kongba District bordering Grand Cape Mount County
- The land boundary between Gbarpolu and Bomi (Sawmill); Cape Mount and Gbarpolu (Timber Village in Kongba); Belle District in Gbarpolu and Lofa County
- Bong and Gbarpolu Counties along the St. Paul's River bank
- Gbarpolu, Belle and Zorzor and Kolahun Districts respectively
- Boundary disputes between Gbarpolu and Bomi
- Illegal occupation of land (many)
- Confusion for farmland (many)
- Mining conflicts (many)
- Encroachment on the county by other counties
- Bomi and Gbarpolu i.e. Sawmill, Yomo Town, Karnley's Town in Gbarma

- The Johnson's and Pools' families in Gbarnma District
- Confusion for farmland in Totoquelleh
- Miners from Vahun in Kongbah District
- Encroachment on Gbarpolu by Lofa in Kongbah – Normor Daron
- Bong and Gbarpolu in Gotoma Gungbeya Chiefdom
- Tribal land dispute
- Boundary delimitation

## **GRAND CAPE MOUNT COUNTY**

Existing land dispute areas that are known for our group are:

- Gbesseh
- Kenema
- Wonde
- Tienii
- Massatain
- Between Porkpa and Tewor Districts (Yates xilles) – Boundrary dispute
- Tima village – Between Cape Mount and Gbarpolu Counties
- Upper Porkpa and Gbapala
- Town disputes (Yates-ville and Sannohpark)
- Land disputes between individuals (Alhaji Jeidi of Jeidi Village and People of Bombor Old Town)
- Inter-clan land disputes
- Inter-County Land disputes (Grand Cape Mount and Gbarpolu Counties County)
- Inter-District Land Disputes (Tewor and Porkpa Districts)
- Congba and Porkpa Districts: Camp Alpha, Weaben Creek, Timmer Village