

PRESS RELEASE – Monrovia, September 21, 2016

“National Multi-Stakeholders Dialogue On Large-Scale Land Acquisitions (LSLAs) and Development in Liberia

Rights and Resources Coalition members of Liberia are organizing a two-day Multi-Stakeholders Dialogue (MSD) on Large-Scale Land Acquisition and **Concession** in Liberia. The Coalition whose primary aim is to seek the protection of community rights around land and natural resources consists of seven Liberian organizations, namely; Rights and Rice Foundation (RRF), Sustainable Development Institute (SDI), Foundation for Community Initiative (FCI), Green Advocates International (GAI), Natural Resource Women Platform (NRWP), Social Entrepreneurs for Sustainable Development (SESDev.) and Alliance for Rural Democracy (ARD).

The MSD will take place at the P. A's Rib House, Lakpazee Sinkor, in Monrovia from September 27 – 28, 2016. It will bring together over 100 participants from local communities, government line ministries and agencies, private sector-agro-concessionaires, relevant International actors, thematic civil society organizations and networks, experts and media institutions, around the following objectives:

1. Develop a common understanding on the status of tenure rights and Large-Scale Land Acquisitions through a review of national and international frameworks; especially given the implication of the Draft Land Rights Act of Liberia.
2. Provide the platform for stakeholders to present issues of land related conflicts with regards to LSLAs and tenure rights.
3. Provide space for dialogue to bridge the gap between local communities, the government of Liberia and the private sector on securing customary tenure rights in the context of LSLA.

Those invited to the Dialogue forum includes over one hundred participants, representing affected communities from ten (10) of the fifteen (15) counties of Liberia, government line ministries and agencies, civil society organizations, International Development partners and media institutions.

According to the Program Assistant of Rights and Rice Foundation, Mr. Wynston Benda Henries, speaking on behalf of the Coalition, the MSD is being organized

against the background that In Liberia today, the issue of land remains a paramount concern for every citizen in the Country and the diaspora as well as our development partners. Since the decades of civil unrest ended in 2003, there have been land conflict in every corner of Liberia with majority been community-concession related.

In recent years Liberia has embarked on series of reforms in land and natural resources sectors to propel economic growth, create employment and protect the rights of citizens and improve relationship with investors. However, these reforms have experienced huge challenges which have caused the reforms not have the desire impact. Recent cries and disputes between communities and investors particularly in agro-concessions indicate that there is a need to think through the process of mending these fences. These and many thorny issues concerning investment requiring large scale land acquisition and development will be discussed” Mr. Henries concluded.

The Dialogue conference is being sponsored by a Washington based group, *Rights and Resources Initiatives (RRI)*. The Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) is a global coalition of 14 core Partners, five Affiliated Networks and more than 150 Collaborator organizations engaged in forest and land policy reform in Africa, Asia, and Latin America—directly in 15 priority countries and indirectly in many others. RRI coalition comprises a wide spectrum of organizations to ensure the viability and sustainability of its work, including community and Indigenous Peoples’ organizations, research institutions, development assistance organizations, and local and international research and human rights groups.

Rights and Rice Foundation

Monrovia

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