



Draft Land Rights Policy Consultation/Gbarnga, Bong County

March 5-7, 2013

Transcript of Group Discussions on the Draft Land Rights Policy

TRANSCRIBED BY:

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THE LAND COMMISSION

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Day 1; March 5; Morning Session

Group 1 (Women)

Facilitator: Alfred Quayjandii

Facilitating Process: Welcome to everybody to this workshop, we will ask someone who will be taking down record on all we will be discussing her for the three days that we will be her for and that person will be the one who will also be writing down all that will be discuss; so at this time we introduce ourselves where we came from and what group we are representing.

Group Members:

C. J .Weaba, CGBS women group, Bong County

Nancy Benda, Bong County Women Association

Shirley Brown, District Commissioner, Nimba County

Brush F.D. Passaway, representing Women Land Rights Task Force

Pincekether Kamara, representing women Land Right Rights Task Force

Debora Gee, Nimba County

Angel Damkpell, Commissioner Bo and Kurla District

Nancy Gobeh, women representative Bo and Kurla District

Mary Lietor, representing Zoeken women

Mamie Charpleh, District Chairlady Koluhum Lofa County

Margret Zobon, member women group

Korpo Kamara, Voinjama District

Maima Jabateh, District Chair lady

Katherine Toe, Lower Nimba district women representative

Dorothy Torment, women education Network Bong County

Weedor Jallah, Superintendant Marketing Association.

Question: Are the four land categories clear to you? If not, why? Is the difference between Government Land and Public Land clear to you? If not, why?

Facilitator: So you hear the question, can anyone say something? Or do you have any idea on government and public land? If no one has a question than let us read 5.1.

Speaker: This section discusses the following issue surrounding government and public land and make policy recommendation for each definition transfer acquisition, these recommendation that are follow are the product of an intensive two year process which began with the identification of numeral problem in the public land sale process and the imposition of a moratorium on public land sale to give the land the commission a suffusion time to address them, the result was the intern guard line and procedural for the sale of public land of 2001 which help to remanded the problem of public land sale process in the existence of the statutory frame work of the 1973 public land law.

[Audio Unclear]

Facilitator: So what this whole part is trying to say, there was a law in 1973 which people was using to sell public land but people was not using it the right way and the president put stop to it and the give the change to see what they can do because there were no clear law; another thing the law was not ready good for this present time.

Speaker: The population at the time was very small but stay other is stay enjoying the right why the other is not why?

Facilitator: Any more comments or question? Ok; let go to the next one 5.1.

Speaker: Historically, all land under government control was treated as public land without any distinction how the land should be manage use and transfer, this has contributed to the mismanagement under government control and ineffective land administration by establishing the category of public land including government protected area, the below recommendation will strength and administration.

Facilitator: So here again, what this is saying all the land that was under government control is called a public land, people miss use the land and so we will know the difference between public and government land including government protected area after that your will tell us your own experience.

Speaker: For me, I want us go to the recommendations.

Facilitator: Ok let someone read policy recommendations 5.11

Speaker: All government land and public land is owned by the republic of Liberia.

Facilitator: The major thing in 5.11 is that all public and government land is owned by the republic of Liberia so any comment? Or is it clear to you?

Speaker: Who control public land?

Speaker: The government.

Speaker: I don't know where we can find an example of that, because if you look at the definition of government land it say for building projects activities for the government, than if you look at public land definition it say a land which is not private or customary or government land it is confusing there.

Facilitator: So they say government land for this paper is a land we use for government activities or project.

Speaker: Public Land which is not private or customary land or government land

Facilitator: So let's go to 5.1 public lands.

Speaker: Public land may be lease or granted as concession or otherwise transfer to the government an individual, private entity including a community, public land may be converted to private, customary or government land.

Facilitator: So I want your get this straight, public land is a land which is not private, customary or government land but can be sold or lease to individual so what is not clear to you?

Speaker: Government land is clear but I have problem with public land.

Facilitator: Could you identify the problem so we can discuss it?

Speaker: How can one identify public land from government land?

Facilitator: How do we identify public land? If no comment than let us read 5.13.

Speaker: Government land may be sold or lease to government an individual or a private entity including a community only if the transfer process follows the straight protection design to prevent fraud and abuse set forth in the land right policy statement.

Facilitator: So are we there?

Speaker: Yes

Speaker: Yes

Speaker: Yes

Speaker: Yes

Speaker: Who sell government land to government?

Facilitator: Let answer your question.

Speaker: Public Land should be referred to as government land

Speaker: I agree with her.

Speaker: I also agree with her.

Facilitator: So public land should be called government land right?

Speaker: Yes

Speaker: Yes

Speaker: Yes

Speaker: Yes

[Audio Unclear]

Speaker: Customary land deeded or not is define as land own by the community and it member and use and manage in accordance with tradition and customary practices and norms, ownership of customary land including the right and use of management should be recognized as equal to private land right whether or not the community or it members have receive deed in accordance with the below recommendation

Facilitator: Is this clear to you?

Speaker: Women right to customary ownership should be included in the policy.

Speaker: If a woman is included, the sensitization should go all around the country.

Facilitator: Any other thing that is not clear to you on customary land? If no comments let us look at deeded or not under customary land.

Speaker: Customary land weather deeded or not is define as a land own by a community and it members and use and manage in accordance with tradition and customary practices and norms, ownership of customary land including the right and use of management should be recognized as equal to private land right whether or not the community or it members have receive deed in accordance with the below recommendation.

Facilitator: Whether deeded or not customary land they say the land for you, so what you say; do you agree with that definition?

Speaker: Well for me the law will always request for a deed to any land but what the policy is saying deeded or not; how can we reconcile the both sentence?

Facilitator: What she is trying to say if there is a legal action against customary people what will happen right?

Facilitator: Just know your boundary no one will take your land from you if this law is passed and so customary land is clear for women now let us go to 6.26 recommendations.

[Audio Unclear]

Facilitator: What do we know about customary protected area?

Speaker: Sandi bush and tribal reserved area are places you should not sell.

Facilitator: She saying these are places you should not sell or lease to anyone; any other comments?

Facilitator: Let us read Private Land ownership 7.0 and policy recommendation.

Speaker: Private land is define as land own by an individual or an private entity other than land use and manage in accordance with customary practices and norms, such that the owner has the unrestricted and perpetual right to include all others.

Facilitator: What this is telling us is that, anyone can own and enjoy private land, be a church or whatever can own a private land, is that clear to you?

Speaker: Yes

Speaker: Yes

Speaker: Yes

Speaker: Yes

Speaker: Yes

Facilitator: Let someone read 7.12.

[Audio of Group 2 Missing]

Day 1; March 5; Morning Session

Group 3 (Lofa)

Facilitator: Raymond Zaizay

Introduction of Group Members:

1. Momo S. Sayla – Paramount Chief (Foya District, Lofa County)
2. Rev. Amah W. Vaflee – Pastor (Lofa County)
3. Patrick M. Manjo – Senior Protocol Officer (Lofa County)
4. Michael J. Siafa – Commissioner (Vai Home)
5. Gbaku K. Laray Gba - Town Chief
6. Francis M. Daylon – Administrative Asst./ Superintendent (Lofa County)
7. Gbakolleh M. Gallakpaya – Commissioner (Salaya Dist, Lofa County)
8. Fokpa Bukeh – Council Chairman (Lofa County)
9. Morris M. Dahn – Superintendent Office
10. Koolie M. Basie – Commissioner (Voinjama)
11. Anthony V. Kamara – Commissioner (Kollieboyan Dist., Lofa County)
12. Joseph Golee – Commissioner (Foya Dist.)
13. Henry K. Wolobah – Commissioner (Zorzor Dist)
14. D. S. Mohammed Fofana – Chairman Peace Network
15. Nathaniel S. Waha – Lofa County
16. Henry Korvah – Lofa County
17. Christian Bannah – Lofa County
18. Harris Woloba Gobason – Acting Paramount Chief (Zorzor Dist. Lofa)
19. Sherman- City Mayor (Voinjama)
20. Unclear – Paramount Chief (Zorzor Dist.)
21. Unclear – Development Superintendent (Lofa County)

22. William L. Zaizay - LCC Staff
23. Zubah – Land Commissioner (Zorzor Dist.)
24. Mamoe E. Johnson – Land Commissioner (Lofa County)
25. George G. Kaffie
26. Koko Meller
27. James Koolie – County Land Surveyor
28. Musa S. Kumara – Paramount Chief
29. Marieama Sayon
30. Beyan Konneh – Clan Chief
31. Alvin Waya - LCRP

Facilitator: My people good morning. I want to take this time to welcome all of us to this discussion. This discussion is very important because anything you agree on here will be carried for discussion to become law. So please feel free to make your import. Everybody here have equal right to speak. So please feel free to say anything you feel on your mind. We will need one person who can talk that will go up there and talk to everyone or present the things will discuss. We also need one person to write for us. I have marker in my hand I have the flip chart,

Speaker: I will like to recommend James Koolie the county surveyor of our county to be the secretary for our group.

Speaker: I will also like to recommend the Land commissioner to talk for us after we shall have come together.

Facilitator: Two persons have been nominated to write and talk for the group. Do you all agree?

Speaker: Yes: we all agree that these two persons work in those various positions.

Chairman Land Commission: Hello; I want to encourage you to take this meeting seriously. This matter is should be very important to all of us. We are happy that there are lots of old people among us here. They have been settling land issues. So we will use' their wisdoms. We want to ask you not to sit down and say that the people's thing. We have called you here so that we all can craft the policy that will be for the good of the whole country. This thing we are doing should have been done more than hundred years ago, than Liberia would be far ahead of what it is. I also want to appeal to you to take the message back to your people. Anything we discuss here, please educate your people.

Facilitator: Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. He has said it all. I don't have anything to add there. Now as we go into the discussion, we will like to know everybody by names, so as you come up you call your name.

Facilitator: OK. Thank you everybody. We are about to go into our morning question. But please let us not do talking in talking, which means we have the discussion on the floor, than

people are under our voices talking. It will disturb our discussion. So let someone read our question for the day.

Question: Are the four land categories clear to you? If not, why? Is the difference between Government land and public land clear to you? If not, why?

Facilitator: If we answer these two questions, then we finish with the morning discussion so look on page one the document is talking about the principle; this means the idea of putting this document together Section 1.1 of the document talks about secure land rights, In the past lands were not protected because we were only getting travel certificate, which was not guaranteed. This policy will allow you to get deed which will protect you as a land owner. So secure land right will give the full right and protection to your land.

Economic growth, you can make farm on your land and make some money to improve your life. So this will give you economic growth. So the document will give you the right and opportunity to your land to carry on economic activities equitable Benefits, everybody as Liberian will have the right to benefit from their land. You can do what so ever we want to do with our land. In the past one class will benefit while the other will not benefit from land. In some traditions, women never use to own land. So this document is saying everyone is equal before the law and can benefit from land by owning it, Equal Access, everybody can have access to land, it could be women, youth, men and everybody; Equal protection, we know we are under one big umbrella that is the law or constitution. So this land law will protect everyone equally; Environmental protection, this document is saying even though we have the land, but is our responsibilities to use our land wisely to protect our environment. There are some things we will be allowed to don on our land and there are some things we cannot do on the land. The Environmental Protection Agency will regulate that one, Clarity, the document should be clear to us all. So there is an effort to put this document in Liberian English for everyone to understand it, Participation, as all Liberian get equal rights, all Liberian should have saying in the making the document so that we all can make the decision. So people from all parts of Liberia will have saying in this thing. It should not be like only people in Monrovia make the law; you are also doing your part. This document will be used as evidence because it will be passed into law. So these are the ideas behind this document. But before we go into the question, let me tell that this is not the only land discussion, this is only about land rights, we will discuss tomorrow about other things.

Before we go into government and public land let me give you a little history about that; from the beginning, people we occupying the land here. When the ACS decided to bring the free slaves here, they bought the land from the people who they met here. So they place they bought for the slaves is where we call Liberia today. Now the law says before that there are only two types of land in Liberia. Private land, that one anyone can buy it get deed and do anything they to do with it. The second type of land is public land. That one was not for special person, it was for all Liberians, no one had the right to buy; you can't be issued deed for it. Only the president can sell it when necessary. Only the president can sign the deed. So the president say land issue had

been serious and conflicting issue and so she recommends that we look at it seriously to address these issues once for all.

So let someone read 3.1 of the policy document.

Speaker: Section 3.1 of the policy document reads. All government land and Public land is owned by the republic of Liberia.

Speaker: 3.2 Government land is defined as land used for the buildings, projects, or activities of the Government.

Facilitator: Says, all Government and Public land is for Liberia and not individual. The next section is saying Government land is the land that has Government building, like Ministries, JFK hospital, or projects or activities carried out by the Government.

Speaker: Section 3.3 Government land may be sold or leased to the Government, and individual or a private entity, including a community, only if the transfer process follows the strict protections designed to prevent fraud and abuse set forth in the Land Rights Policy statement. Government land may not be granted as a concession.

Speaker: If I may ask, you are talking about government being sold. What is the difference between government land being sold to government and private land being sold to government? Why Government should sell land to Government when Government finished buying the land?

Facilitator: Agencies within the Government can sell land to one another. For instance, if Ministry of Health has a large portion of land that they are not using. If Ministry of Public works wants the land to use, they can pay for the land to Ministry of Health. So that what the policy mean by government can sell land to government.

Speaker: As there is government officials like the city mayor or superintendent in each county or city. Is it right for any individual to get up from the sky to sell government land without consulting those government representatives?

Facilitator: It is not right. People who sell government lands have been doing it illegally. This is what had been bringing plenty confusion. Right now as we speak the president had placed a moratorium on the sales of public lands. So right now the president is not signing any deed for public land. And only the presidents supposed to sing for the sale of public land.

Speaker: In which year did the president pass the order to stop the sale of public land?

Facilitator: It was passed somewhere between 2009 and 2010. But you can do some small research on it to have the actual information. Let us know that we have plenty discussion to carry out on land rights which is our discussion for today. So let move on.

Section 3.4: Government land includes government protected areas which are owned by the Republic of Liberia and must be conserved and managed for the benefit of all Liberians. Government protected areas shall not be sold, leased, or granted as a concession. A government protected area shall only be converted to private land, or public land in accordance with a law passed by the Legislature.

Facilitator: So as you heard the reading, government protected area cannot be sold, leased or granted to concession. Concession that the companies that can come to do mining or do other things in the forest. So government protected area means no one should own it, government is protected those area for good reason that will benefit all Liberians.

Chairman: Now that we have heard. Can anyone tell me the meaning of government land?

Speaker: Government land is public and private land belonging to government.

Speaker: Government lands include those lands that belong only to government that have deed.

Chairman: Ok, Government lands are land that government gets deed for and have government buildings, projects and activities on. Government land should not be owned by private citizen except the government sells it to you.

Speaker: We have heard all these definitions and explanations. For me, you people should all the thing you have in the policy to us, then anything we are not in favor of we can say it. We can make all our inputs.

Speaker: Thank you, but the policy books you are talking about we all don't have it. If we had it then I will agree with that.

Facilitator: We will try for everyone to have a copy of the policy before we leave from here. So let's go on with the reading.

Speaker: Section 3.5: Limited use rights may be granted over Government protected areas to individuals, private entities only if the use is consistent with the land's conservation management for the benefit of all Liberians.

Facilitator: Again I am saying this, the only reason government will protect certain area or say no one should cut tree from this forest, or don't kill any animal from this place is for the benefit of all Liberians. And sometimes government can give limited use rights. That means you can do certain things that will not destroy the land or the place. But the government will tell what you can do there. That's all about protected area and limited use right.

Speaker: Section: 3.6: Public land is defined as land which is not private land, customary land, or government land.

Facilitator: All the other talking was about Government. Now we talking about public land which is for all Liberian, it is not for the government, not for any individual or customary people. It is managed by the government. So when we take all the traditional people land which is the customary land, we take all the government land out and we take all the private lands, the land that will remain will be the public land.

Speaker: I want to ask. Before I took over, the government as me to preserve two hundred acres of land. No my question is it right to sell that land private individual? Can I allow cemetery to be build there on sell to anyone for that purpose.

Facilitator: Many things are not right that people been doing in the past. I cannot answer that question directly, but this policy is here to make all the wrongs right.

Speaker: In the first place it is wrong for government to survey two hundred acres of land, the land had not been laying down there vacant. It was occupied by people so the government can't just get up and claim it. This is what the policy is here to address how government can evacuate people from land that they want to use. Then the next thing about selling land to an individual because the policy says individual can buy land from government or another private citizen or individual. When we went to Sinoe group, their modification was that government land should not be sold. It should rather be reserved and protected for government purpose. The reason is that some people in authority like the Superintendent or Mayor could decide to a vast portion to themselves, family or close friends. So we all can look at it to see if can change some of the policy written about the lands.

Co-Facilitator: What I want you to do is to look at the policy bridge and see what you can add there. We sat in Monrovia and wrote it just so that we can have something to look at why we talk. So we are here to read it and give you own idea that can change it for the best of all of us.

Speaker: You see the city land in Lofa as being small small hala hala. The city government is saying they should manage the city land, and the big government is saying they should manage the city land. So there is confusion. So I want to suggest that we put something in the policy call city land. And it should state who should manage the city land.

Facilitator: Let me come in. If we go through the four categories of land we will know if we need city land. So let us not jump the gum. Let us not move in circle or else we will not meet the end. In the document we have four categories of land. So city land could be any one of them.

Speaker: I want to thank the Commissioner very much for asking to solicit our ideas to become part of this document. The purpose of this conference is to add or subtract from the policy that have been drafted so we all can come up with the final one. In u content, I have serious issue with this public land business. Who owns the public land? That is my confusion. The other issue here is we are in the peace building conflict resolution area. There had always been conflict of interest among the city mayors, the land commissioner, and the county authorities with this city

issue when there is clear act that establish the city ordinance. So we want this policy to clearly spell out who will have the responsibility of selling government land within the limit of the city.

Facilitator: Exactly that is why you are here. To guide the process, when it is time for recommendation we will put these on the floor. So you can just write those good ideas on a piece of paper and later you can bring them.

Facilitator: Ok. To answer your question, public land is that land owned by the Republic of Liberia. It is owned by all Liberians but is being taken care of by the government. It is for the public and not for special person.

Speaker: We in the city we have problem. Some times when we want to do something on a piece of land, the people will say this is a public land but my grandfather left it with me many years ago. So where are we heading?

Facilitator: Ok. This is what the policy is here to address; to address so many questions in this direction. So you are going to answer these questions as to how you want it to be from now. Those that just claim lands are not rightful owners of land. Only legitimate deed can give you rights to own land; so sometimes when two three persons buy the same land the person with the oldest deed will win the case. The only people that could claim land if they own it after the policy becomes law is the customary people. That is they can claim the land around their town with the consent of the neighboring town. And they will stay have to obtain deed for it.

Speaker: I want to suggest that the city have the certain apportioned space of land. That a certain kilometer be given them from the city and if a private citizen land within that range, that person be relocated. With this the city government can have the opportunity to manage a specific portion of land from the city.

Facilitator: Just what you are saying is the very thing this policy is discouraging; let me just make it clear. Except the people of Lofa encourage, but actually discourage it.

Co-Facilitator: Let make some clarification on this issue. We need to clear our minds on this issue of city land and how this policy is going to deal with it. It is in everybody's mind in Liberia that when the city is expanded, then the land becomes city's land, that's not the way it is done all over the world. You can have city authority having power to manage land, have power to tax, having power to clarify whether you do industries here or there or so on. Those are city authority powers or management powers. You may have that and don't have ownership of the land. So if you expand the city with the proposal we are doing, if the land is deeded as private land, the city authority should not have power to own that land. If you want to anything on your land you can, but you apply to the city authority to see if what you want to do on your land is acceptable. The other thing is the customary land; the customary land is for the traditional people. That land was left for them by their ancestors. So if a city is extended there, the land is still for the people. If the city decides to build factory there, there selling of the land should be done by the customary

people. So if this policy becomes city authority will only have management power; like where roads should pass, which buildings should be built here etc, but not to manage land. So if the city wants the customary land to become government's land, it should pass through the procedure. This is the first time a law is proposing customary land; because this land has been occupied by these people for so many years so they must own it. The law is going to protect the customary land as private land.

Facilitator: So he had said it all. Customary land in the city should be for customary people. Private land in the city should be for private individuals. So this is our idea; but if you feel our idea is not correct and you want to change it, you can. We are saying anyone can own land in the city. But there are control mechanisms in the city that are not in the customary areas. For instance, zoning where you can't build are certain distance close to the road.

Speaker: For me what I understand that this is drafted document. If we look at this definition we can decide if we should go by it or change what so ever we want to do. For me, I agree with that particular part of the policy that customary or private land should be owned by those people and city authority.

Speaker: Section 3.7: public land may be sold, leased, granted as a concession, or otherwise transferred to the government, an individual, or a private entity, including a community. Public land may be converted to private land, customary land or government land.

Speaker: Customary Land: Rights to customary land, including ownership rights, must be secured by ensuring that these rights are as protected as private land rights. Rights to customary land include rights of the community as a collective land owner and rights of groups, families, and individuals within the community. Secure rights to customary land will promote long-term decision making and thereby strengthen Liberia's economic growth. However, the nature of communities varies greatly throughout Liberia. The below policy recommendations recognize this diversity such that communities may define themselves and determine how their land is manage, used, and allocated but within a framework of transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, and share responsibility with the government of Liberia.

Facilitator: This customary land is very important to this discussion. No one should sleep, everyone please get up. We have heard the definition of customary land. These people have the rights to use their land. They can decide how to control their land. If they want sell it, that's their land, if they want lease or grant concession, it left with them. So under customary land let us hear the principles.

Speaker: Equal Protection 4.1: Customary land rights must be as protected as private land rights.

Local Control 4.2: Decisions about customary land shall be made at the most local level consistent with sound policy and shared responsibilities between the government, communities and their members.

Minimal Impact 4.3: National policy and laws shall have as minimal an impact on the customary practices and norms of communities as is consistent with sound policy, shared between the government and the communities, and international best practices.

Incorporation 4.4: Customary practices and norms not in conflict with national land laws, the constitution, and international legal obligations shall be considered incorporated into the national formal legal framework.

Institutionalization 4.5: Communities shall establish legal entities consisting of transparent procedures and institutions accountable to their communities as a whole to interact with external actors to govern internal interactions regarding land.

Facilitator: In the principle Equal protection means the law shall protect customary land like private land. With local control, they are saying decisions about customary land shall be take at the most local level meaning the affect community should make their own decision about their land. With minimal impact, it says that the constitution should have a minimal impact on customary practices and norms of the community. Incorporation is saying that the customary practices and norms should be in agreement with the constitution because it is the law that is supreme. Customary practices and norms should also be in line with international obligations and best practices. With institutionalization, it means communities should establish a group to represent them calls the legal entity. This group will be legal and they should be transparent and accountable to the community. It means anything they do everybody must have idea on how they are doing it. Continue the reading.

Speaker: 4.6: customary land, whether deeded or not, is defined as land owned by a community and its members and used and managed in accordance with customary practices and norms. Ownership of customary land, including the right of use and management, shall be recognized as equal to private land rights, whether or not the community or its members have received a deed in accordance with the below recommendations.

Speaker: From this document, we can see that there will be no public land in the city and this had been the practice, city government had been controlling public land. So I want us to carry this document and really look at it.

Chairman: Let me just provide information. City does not own any land. The land in the city can be owned by any of the four land categories. Many of the commissioners in the city been selling public land and this is wrong and illegal. If anyone is caught in such an act, that person will lose their job. So let's get this straight.

Speaker: 4.7: Ownership of customary land means private ownership, such that the community and its members have the unrestricted and perpetual rights to use and manage the land in accordance with customary practices and norms, to exclude all others from use and possession,

and to sell, lease, or otherwise transfer all or some of the rights associated with the land to any individual, private entity, or the government.

Speaker: 4.8: A community is a self-identifying group that uses and manages its land in accordance with customary practices and norms.

Speaker: 4.9: Each community shall be responsible for identifying its own membership in accordance with a transparent, accountable, and inclusive process.

Speaker: Now that this law will be given customary land, and there had be boundary dispute in the towns or communities. So when we get the land how will be able to cut our boundaries without conflict?

Chairman: This is why the policy a community is a body that defines itself. That means the community should know its people and land space. So the neighboring communities should come together to settle their boundaries demarcation.

Speaker: Is it right for the land commissioner to just give permit to sell land to anybody?

Facilitator: The land commissioner can prepare the document but the president has to sign; for the president to sign, the city mayor has to be aware. So everyone will play a part.

Facilitator: Let us listen to one important thing the policy says about the customary land.

Speaker: 4.11: Ownership of customary land includes ownership of natural resources on the land, such as forest, including carbon credits, and water. In accordance with the constitution, the government has the exclusive ownership rights of any mineral resources on or beneath any land. Or any lands under the seas and waterways. The government shall have authority to regulate natural resources use and access.

Facilitator: So the policy is saying that customary people can own natural resources which include forest that contain carbon credit. Mineral resources are found under the ground and owned and control by the government according to the constitution. So resources like diamond, gold, oil, etc. are for the government. So the customary people have carbon credit rights. You can decide who to accredit you forest to for carbon and you get the money.

Speaker: 4.14: The boundaries of customary land shall be determined through active participation by the community, neighboring communities, and their members, including: elders, chiefs, youth, women, and local authorities.

Facilitator: This is how we have come to this morning discussion; we will now go for lunch and return afterward for the afternoon group discussion.

Day 1; March 5; Morning Session

Group 4 (Bong)

Facilitator: Jeremiah F. Karmo

Facilitating process: Good morning, I am your facilitator for the next three days. This morning we will be discussing the land rights, if the four land categories are clear to you. Before we go further, we will have to select a presenter and secretary. The floor is now open for your nomination.

Question: Are the four land categories clear to you? If not, why? Is the difference between Government land and public land clear to you? If not, why?

Facilitator: This morning we are discussing the four land rights categories; government land, public land, private land and customary land; the next thing is the difference between government's land and public land clear to us. I want to beg you let us stick to the discussion. Only land rights we are going to be discussing, not payment which is administration, they surveying of the land is land use, all these topics have their day for discussion and before we go further let me touch on the nine principles but the first one is secure land rights, each of us have rights to land, whether woman, man, disabled, youth we all have rights to land. The next principle talks about Economic Growth, we all can use our land for economic benefit to improve our lives. The next one is equitable benefit; this means the same right given to man should be given to woman. We also have equal access. We all have equal rights access the land. We have equal protection. The protection for John must be given to Mary. We have Environmental protection. We should be able to protect and sustain the land in order that it does not pollute the next man or community. The next principle is clarity. The law should be clear to everyone. Whether you know the law or not, you should understand the laws. Participation, we all should participate in making the law from all the counties. The last one is evidence base, these laws we are making we also have some examples from other countries. We brought other ideas and took the best that is good for us and we put it before you. So everything we will be discussing this morning is based on these nine principles.

Commissioner Hebb: Good morning; what we are discussing is important for all of us. We are going to listen and take your views that everything we take will become law. We will take these views and carry them to the law makers, when they argue on it they will pass it as law to benefit the whole Liberia. Please take this discussion important and give your input.

Facilitator: We want to thank the commissioner for that eye opener question. Everything is saying is exactly important; let us take everything here serious and so let us read from the policy on Government land and public land.

Speaker: Government land and Public land. Historically, all lands under government control were treated as public land without distinction based on how the land should be managed, used and transferred. This has contributed to mismanagement of land under government control and ineffective land administration. By establishing the categories of government land and public land including government protected areas, the below recommendations will strengthen land management and administration.

Speaker: Section 3.1 of the policy document reads. All government land and Public land is owned by the republic of Liberia, 3.2 Government land is defined as land used for the buildings, projects, or activities of the Government; Section 3.4: Government land includes government protected areas which are owned by the Republic of Liberia and must be conserved and managed for the benefit of all Liberians. Government protected areas shall not be sold, leased, or granted as a concession. A government protected area shall only be converted to private land, or public land in accordance with a law passed by the Legislature.

Facilitator: All these areas that have government building and project on it, like the ministry or hospitals or even CARI are government lands.

Speaker: Section 3.4: Government land includes government protected areas which are owned by the Republic of Liberia and must be conserved and managed for the benefit of all Liberians. Government protected areas shall not be sold, leased, or granted as a concession. A government protected area shall only be converted to private land, or public land in accordance with a law passed by the Legislature.

Speaker: Section 3.5: Limited use rights may be granted over Government protected areas to individuals, private entities only if the use is consistent with the land's conservation management for the benefit of all Liberians, Section: 3.6: Public land is defined as land which is not private land, customary land, or government land.

Section 3.7: Public land may be sold, leased, granted as a concession, or otherwise transferred to the government, an individual, or a private entity, including a community. Public land may be converted to private land, customary land or government land.

Facilitator: So now that we have gotten to two definitions, let someone tell me the difference between government land and public land.

Speaker: Government land is that land which contains government building and project or it; for public land it is not owned by special person, it is for all Liberians.

Facilitator: Thank you I thank we all have understood. Now let us go to customary land.

Speaker: Rights to customary land, including ownership rights, must be secured by ensuring that these rights are as protected as private land rights. Rights to customary land include rights of the community as a collective land owner and rights of groups, families, and individuals within the

community. Secure rights to customary land will promote long-term decision making and thereby strengthen Liberia's economic growth. However, the nature of communities varies greatly throughout Liberia. The below policy recommendations recognize this diversity such that communities may define themselves and determine how their land is managed, used, and allocated but within a framework of transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, and share responsibility with the government of Liberia.

Facilitator: The law is saying customary land must have equal protection as private land. But communities can use their lands according to the norms and practices. You can use and manage your land the only thing it should not contravene the constitution. The community should also be able to define itself and manage their land business using transparent, accountable and inclusive procedures.

Equal Protection 4.1: Customary land rights must be as protected as private land rights.

Local Control 4.2: Decisions about customary land shall be made at the most local level consistent with sound policy and shared responsibilities between the government, communities and their members.

Minimal Impact 4.3: National policy and laws shall have as minimal an impact on the customary practices and norms of communities as is consistent with sound policy, shared between the government and the communities, and international best practices.

Incorporation 4.4: Customary practices and norms not in conflict with national land laws, the constitution, and international legal obligations shall be considered incorporated into the national formal legal framework.

Institutionalization 4.5: Communities shall establish legal entities consisting of transparent procedures and institutions accountable to their communities as a whole to interact with external actors to govern internal interactions regarding land.

Facilitator: The principles explain it all, it says customary land must be protected equally as private land. The principle also says national policy and laws should not influence customary lands decision except the customary land policy contravene the national policy. It also says about incorporation, customary practices and norms that will be in conflict with the national constitution will not be incorporated. It also says communities should establish legal entity represent them in land matters.

Speaker: 4.6: customary land, whether deeded or not, is defined as land owned by a community and its members and used and managed in accordance with customary practices and norms. Ownership of customary land, including the right of use and management, shall be recognized as equal to private land rights, whether or not the community or its members have received a deed in accordance with the below recommendations.

4.7: Ownership of customary land means private ownership, such that the community and its members have the unrestricted and perpetual rights to use and manage the land in accordance with customary practices and norms, to exclude all others from use and possession, and to sell, lease, or otherwise transfer all or some of the rights associated with the land to any individual, private entity, or the government.

4.8: A community is a self-identifying group that uses and manages its land in accordance with customary practices and norms.

4.9: Each community shall be responsible for identifying its own membership in accordance with a transparent, accountable, and inclusive process.

4.10: Community ownership of customary land shall be formalized by the issuance of a deed to a legal entity, bearing the name of the community. The legal entity shall have legal personality and may therefore enter into contracts, own land, and participate in court actions or proceedings before alternative dispute resolution bodies. The deed shall provide for private ownership by the community, so long as any decisions regarding management, use, and transfer are made in accordance with principle 4.5

4.11: Ownership of customary land includes ownership of natural resources on the land, such as forest, including carbon credits, and water. In accordance with the constitution, the government has the exclusive ownership rights of any mineral resources on or beneath any land. Or any lands under the seas and waterways. The government shall have authority to regulate natural resources use and access.

4.12: Communities should have land-decision management making authority regarding their customary land, including, but not limited to, authority over formal transfer of customary lands rights to individuals, families or groups within the community or outside the community; allocation of customary lands rights to members of the community and non-members in accordance with customary practices and norms; and use of land and natural resources. Land management decision-making authority must be exercised in accordance with principle 4.5

4.13 Customary land includes customary protected areas which are owned by a community and must be conserved and managed for the benefit of the community and all Liberians. Customary protected areas must be established either by the community or by the government in consultation with the community.

4.14: Customary protected areas shall not be sold, leased or granted as a concession. Limited use rights may be granted over customary protected areas to individuals, private entities, or the government only if the use is consistent with the land's conservation and management for the benefit of the community and all Liberians.

4.15: The boundaries of customary land shall be determined through active participation by the community, neighboring communities, and their members, including: elders, chiefs, youth, women, and local authorities.

Facilitator: We have read government land, customary land and public land we are now coming to private land. Please continue the reading. After the private land, we will then go into discussion.

Speaker: Private land: Much of the current law on private land does not address basic rights and obligations. The below policy recommendations are the foundation for addressing these gaps in the current laws.

5.1: Private land is defined as land owned by an individual or private entity, other than land used and managed in accordance with customary practices and norms, such that the owner has the unrestricted and perpetual right to exclude, all others from use and possession, to pass ownership through inheritance, and to sell, lease, or otherwise transfer all or some of the rights associated with the land to any individual, private entity, or the government. Ownership of private land includes ownership of the natural resources on the land.

5.2 Private land includes private protected areas which are owned by an individual or legal entity and must be conserved and managed for the benefit of all Liberians. Private protected areas may be sold, leased, or otherwise transferred to individuals, private entities, or the government only if the transfer is consistent with the land's conservation and management for the benefit of all Liberians. Concession shall not be granted over private protected areas.

Facilitator: Thank you for that lengthy reading. We all listened to the reading and the definitions as well as policy recommendation of the four categories of land. So the floor is now opened to everyone. What is your recommendation or contribution? Anyone can now come up.

Speaker: As we know in Liberia, land acquisition starts with travel certificate. People were given travel certificates long time and not deeds. It is clear that people are saying if you don't deed you don't stand a good chance before the law. So what mechanism is land commission putting in place to protect those who have travel certificates for their land and not deeds to stop possible encroachments?

Facilitator: Anyone can come in; this question will be answered by you. This is why we are here to get ideas on how some of these issues must be solved.

Speaker: We really need the land commission into this. Some people are claiming land say their travel certificate was signed by Tolbert. Many persons are claiming huge portions of land on the basis of travel certificate. Some of these lands that are being claimed, people have been living there for decades. So we really need the land commission in this issue.

Co-Facilitator: what the land commission is trying to do is to first register all travel certificates. After the registration we will carry on vetting to know if the lands you are claiming are really yours. After the vetting process, the commission will then transform those travel certificate into deeds. Thank you.

Speaker: I will like to recommend that after the registration and vetting process, the commission and the land owner come to the town to ask if this land truly belongs to the claimer before deed can be issued.

Speaker: In our traditions, only men can own land. Women cannot own land so I recommend to the land commission that this policy give women the right to own land.

Speaker: I fully agree with the four definition of land given by this policy; it is in detail most especially the full protection given to customary land. The only place I have problem is where when we have large portion of customary land, all natural resources on that land belongs to us and leaving the government out. I will like to recommend that government plays a regulatory role over all resources, whether it is found on customary land or not.

[Audio Unclear]

Speaker: There are lots of people that have a very huge quantity of private land and we don't know how some of them acquire those land. In this light, I want to recommend that all private lands be re surveyed. When it comes to boundary harmonization, I will like to recommend that every community set up a committee to settle up boundaries dispute or demarcation.

[Audio from Group 5, Morning Session, Missing]

[Audio from Groups 1 & 2, Afternoon Session, Missing]

Day 1; March 5; Afternoon Session

Group 3 (Lofa)

Facilitator: Raymond Zaizay

Group members:

Henry K. Wolobah-Commissioner, Zorzor District

Anthony Kamara-Commissioner Kola home District

Mohammed Fofana-Group Presenter, Kola home

Mr. Harris Gorbesson- Group Secretary, Zoh District

Facilitator: Good morning; we will decide a presenter and secretary who will take down our note on everything that will be discuss today; also, we will ask you to respect one another views. That we talk only when recognized, and that we all feel free to express our views and opinions.

Speaker: I will like to recommend that we all respect the facilitator's rules. Yesterday we told us that all phones should be of or on silence, but others had their phones on loud and when they ring we were all disturbed. So please let's obey the facilitator.

Facilitator: Thanks for that observation. Now we shall go straight in to today question.

Question: How should the policy address concessions? Should communities be allowed to grant land to concessionaires? If yes, how should the community make that decision?

Facilitator: Before we can go any further, can anybody tell us the meaning of concession?

Speaker: Concession is the agreement between companies and the owner of the land that the company want to work on.

Speaker: Concession is an agreement between the Government of Liberia and investor extract the mineral or natural resources.

Facilitator: Concession is that agreement that is between the stake holders, the affected community and the company that will come to do business.

Facilitator: So back to the question; at first, customary land was not for you, now this document is trying to make customary land be for you. So what should be your right the customary land?

Speaker: From the onset the concessional agreement, all the stake holders should be involved. The stake holders include the Government, the community and the concessionaires so that what so ever law passed will be obligatory to all.

Speaker: Companies that will be coming as concession groups should be able to train our youth so that they can be future beneficiaries after their departure. Renewable resources like these trees should be replaced for future use after the companies leave.

Facilitator: Ok. Thank you but let me just say that law exists. The forestry law states that when you cut one log, you should be able to replace that law. So we can only enforce that law.

Speaker: In every concession agreement, the Government's benefit should be spelled out and the affected community should be spelled out also. The benefit of the affected community should be use only for that community's development and benefit and not any other community.

Speaker: Concession agreement should be inclusive by everybody from the beginning. No few people should be allowed to make decision for the majority of the people. And the agreement

should clearly state the benefit of the community and that the benefit is left in the community for development.

Speaker: Land rental fees should only be for the benefit of the affected community.

Facilitator: Let us go to the next question.

Question: Should communities be allowed to grant land to concessionaires? If yes, how should the community make that decision?

Speaker: Yes, communities should be allowed to grant lands to concessionaire s, but this agreement should be done legally and in written and not orally as we are living in a modern world. The contract should be sent to Government to let the government know what has transpired between the community and the concession company.

Speaker: Yes. We agree, but when any contract is signed, it should be the right of every community member to know what type of contract is signed and the detail of the contract. That is awareness or education should be carried out to the community.

Speaker: The concession agreement should be signed between the Government and the company, reason being; sometimes these companies do their own thing and sometimes pull out without the knowledge of the community. When the government is involved, they will have the power to handle the company and not the community.

Speaker: Government should respect whatsoever concession document that will be signed. Pass Government had not been respecting previous agreements for instance, LAMCO, the government did not respect the community and dealt directly with the company.

Speaker: It is true that the government respects our document. Sometimes the companies do not come through the community but through some prominent citizens of the community from the city. It happened that one of our citizens from Kutubu district brought an organization to make farm, they went straight to the youth to negotiate promising to give them five US dollars a day to brush. They did not come to me as a chief. I argued that no land will be given except by signed agreement. Some of our elders challenged me stating they will start the job until the agreement comes. I still insisted and the matter was taken to the superintendent who and the land commissioner later prepared and signed the document. The superintendent later took my complaint to the Minister of Internal Affairs.

I am simply trying to say that this the issue of respecting agreement does not only go to the government alone, our citizens residing in Monrovia should also be advised.

Facilitator: Just what he is saying, this policy talks about local control. The decision should be made for the community through the legal entity. So let give recommendation.

Speaker: I recommend that all agreements be subject to amendment due to change in economic situation.

Speaker: I recommend that no concession agreement go more than a decade, it should be given a limited time.

Speaker: For future development and generation, all resources should not be granted to concession agreements at the same time or within a short space of time.

Speaker: I recommend that the kids in the community should have scholarship to academic, technical or vocational learning opportunities.

Facilitator: We want to thank you for all your views and recommendations

Day 1; March 5; Afternoon Session

Group 4 (Bong)

Facilitator: Jeremiah F. Karmo

Facilitator: Good afternoon, you are welcome to this afternoon session of our group discussion. We are going to go straight in to our question for the day.

Question: How does the draft land policy address customary land rights? Does allowing the community to define itself sound like a good idea to you?

Facilitator: We will go directly to the definition of community. So let Bro. Saul read 4.8 of the policy for us.

Speaker: 4.8: Community is a self-identifying group that uses and manages its land in accordance with customary practices and norms.

Facilitator: We have heard the definition of community according to the policy. Does allowing the community to identify itself sounds like a good idea to you.

Speaker: I say yes it's good for it to identify itself because the opportunity is given the community to recognize or identify itself members and well as land. By this, no one have to come from another community to do that.

Speaker: We all agree with the definition because it gives us more rights.

Facilitator: Now that we have all agreed that the definition given by the draft land policy is accepted; but it goes further to say should the policy be more specific about how community is defined? Let us read section 4.9.

Speaker: 4.9: Each community shall be responsible for identifying its own membership in accordance with a transparent, accountable, and inclusive process.

Speaker: I suggest that the identification of the community should not be left with the community but rather be spelled out by the policy so that when the community makes contrary decision the policy can correct that.

Speaker: For me I don't want us to dwell on this too much. We should understand that communities have various traditions. So if a Vai man wants to live in a Kpelleh community, he should be able to live by the Kpelleh man traditions. So if this is protected land and the Vai man was instructed not to go there for the sake of the tradition, he should live by the traditional instruction.

Speaker: In my view, if you come to a particular community, you can be allowed to live there. But to become a permanent member of that community you must have had married and have children there; if not, you should not be a permanent member.

Speaker: For me as long you are a particular community, you become part of the community in decision making. In this light you are a member of the community.

Speaker: I recommend that the government give the right to any Liberian to become member of the community he/she is found. The only the cultural and norms should be obeyed by that individual.

Speaker: Community members should be identified by the participation of all community members. In other words the process should be inclusive, and transparent.

Facilitator: 4.9 made it clear that each community shall be responsible to identifying its members. Let us try to conclude on this issue.

Speaker: We all agree that those identifying community members should be inclusive of all stake holders of the community.

Facilitator: Ok, we want to thank Bong County for her participation in this discussion; but before we go, let us go back to this morning question. When it comes to government land and public land, do we understand the difference?

Speaker: Yes, what I understand about it is that; after you extract all government lands, private land and customary land we have public land. Government land contains government properties, like government buildings, government projects, or government activities.

Facilitator: Thank you, we are on course. So which category of land can we find protected land?

Speaker: Protected land is the land that should be reserved and protected by all Liberians for the benefit of all Liberians. We can find government protected areas anywhere in all the four categories of land.

Facilitator: What are some of the protected lands?

Speaker: The reserved forest for wide lives.

Speaker: The zoe-bush.

Speaker: The Mountains containing mineral.

Speaker: National parks.

Speaker: Swamps or wetland.

Facilitator: So we want to conclude here that the definition of community in the policy is clear to us; and that identification process of community members should be inclusive.

[Audio from Group 5, Afternoon Session, Missing]

Day 2; March 6; Morning Session

Group 1 (Women)

Facilitator: Alfred Quayjandii

Facilitating process: Good morning, you are all welcome to today's group discussion which is day two morning session. We are about to start this morning discussion. I want us to start by asking someone to read our question for today.

Question: How does the draft policy address the issue of wetlands? What are the rights and responsibilities of landowners who have a deed for land in a wetland area? Should the Government treat wetlands that have been developed differently from wetlands that have not been developed?

Facilitator: As you have heard the question, it talks about wetlands, the rights and responsibilities of wetlands owners who have deeds for their lands. Should the developed wetland be treated differently from wetland that has not been developed? These are questions to answer. Before going further, let us read section 3.0 and 3.3 of the draft land policy.

Speaker: Section 3.3: It is important to rephrase that the above protections are a frame work and additional, more specifically policy recommendations to follow for each type of land which falls under a Government protected area such as policy for national parks, wetlands and national

movements. The purpose is therefore to set minimized protection for the transfer to individual or legal entities for limited use for consisting with the land conservation for all Liberians.

Facilitator: So section 3.3 is saying that the policy reemphasize those areas that are considered Government's protected areas. Such areas include National parks, wetlands and national movements. The main purpose is to reduce transfer of such area to individual or legal entities. With this the individual of legal entity will have limited use over the land and the Government will be able to conserve those lands for the benefit of all Liberians.

So since the policy is saying wetlands are government protected areas, and then let us know what is government protected are or government land in the policy.

Speaker: Government land according to section 3.4 of the policy includes, Government protected areas which are owned by the Republic of Liberia and must be conserved and managed for the benefit of all Liberians. Government protected areas should not be sold, leased or granted as a concession. A Government protected area should only be converted to private land, public land or customary land in accordance with a law passed by the legislature.

Facilitator: So the policy is saying that Government protected area should not be sold leased or granted as concession; who should own wetland according to the policy.

Speaker: The Government should own wetland because wetlands have resources that should be taken care of by Government. And also, if citizens go and build on wetlands, in case of any disaster like flood, it is the Government that bears the burdens.

Speaker: Wetlands should be considered Government protected area so Government can give maximum protection to the wetland, especially those wetlands that are needed to be conserved.

Speaker: According to the policy, wetland is defined as Government protected area that should be conserved and not to be sold, leased or granted to concession. Before it can be converted to private or customary use, it should be a law passed by the legislature.

Facilitator: Now that you have understood what the policy says about wetland, what is your input or recommendation pertaining wetlands?

Speaker: I recommend that wetlands be Government land. It shouldn't be sold or leased but it can be granted as concession so that companies can develop the land.

Speaker: For me, wetlands should remain as Government land since it will be use for the common good of all Liberians, there should be laws to enforce that wetlands shouldn't be sold or leased, but community's members can use wetlands behind their houses to make gardens and small farms.

Facilitator: You are agreeing with the policy that wetland should remain as Government protected area, it shouldn't be sold, lease or given as concession, but you are saying communities

members can carry on minor things like garden making or farming. So let's read section 5.1 which also supports what you are saying.

Speaker: Section 5.1 reads: limited use rights maybe granted over Government protected areas to individuals, private entities, or government entities only if the use is consistent with the land's conservation and management for the benefit of all Liberians.

Facilitator: So we have two views on the floor. One group is saying that should not be sold or granted to concession. Another view is saying wetland should not be sold or leased, but can be given to concession only if the concession will be to the benefit of all Liberians.

Speaker: It should not be given to concession because concessionaires will build on the wetlands which will cause floods during heavy rain.

Speaker: I suggest wetland be given to concession for limited purpose, mainly agriculture.

Speaker: I agree with our sister, the policy says wetlands can be use for the benefit of all Liberians. So it can be given to concession with restrictions and its use should benefit all Liberians.

Facilitator: So you all agree that wetland remains government's protected area, it should not be sold or leased. And you are saying that we modify the concession area to say that it can be granted as concession to concessionaires for limited use that is only for agricultural purpose. It can be given for farming purpose, but arm that will not dry the land completely.

Ok. So let us go the next question.

Question: What are the rights and responsibilities for landowners who have deeds for land in the wetland areas?

Speaker: I cannot look at wetland and buy it, but if I have a deed for large portion of land, and I get to realize that wetland is part of that land, I will not build on the wetland but rather preserve it for agriculture purpose.

Facilitator: According to her, if she has a portion of land and she finds out that wetland is part of that land she has a deed for, she will not use the wetland, and she will reserve it. That will be her responsibility.

Facilitator: Even when we are preserving our wetlands, we should not do things on it that will be embarrass our neighbors, for instance, cutting blockades or partitions that will stop the flow of water which could lead to flood.

Facilitator: What about our rights to the wetlands? Let say you have your deed for that wetland and you have planted your boundary, now the government's surveyor come to survey the wetland since it is for the government, so what will be your right there?

Speaker: In that case I have the right to continue making my garden and keep protecting it for the benefit of the community.

Speaker: Sometimes wetlands become dry lands. So if this wetland was in this community and after some years it becomes dry land, I suggest that the dry land be used for the benefit of the whole community, probably a school, pump or any community project.

Facilitator: So if you have deed to a land near a swamp or wetland, do you have ownership right to that wetland?

Speaker: We are all aware that wetlands are protected land, so if one finds his/her land near a wetland, that person does not have ownership right over that wetland.

Speaker: If I have my land or house near a wetland, some of my responsibilities will be to be an eye or witness the government. That is if anyone comes to use it in destructive manner, I can stop them or report them to the authority.

Facilitator: So we are saying some of our responsibilities in wetland matters are to preserve, protect, take care or serve as eye for the government. So let us go to the third question.

Question: Should the Government treat wetlands that have been developed differently from wetlands that have not been developed?

Speaker: I say yes because Government has already made the mistake by selling these wetlands area and they have already been developed by community members. So Government should leave it with them and help build drainages to those wetland communities that are that are suffering from floods because of the development carried on there.

Speaker: I support her, Government should help with drainages, and government should not allow anyone to build in wetland again as of the passage of this bill.

Mr. Jailet (Member of Women's Land Rights Task Force): Even though we say government should leave those developed wetlands, I am looking at it from another point-of-view; in other countries those lands are called eco-tourism. Those lands are used for tourism purposes, sometimes you have speedboats on those water and people go there and enjoy the species and other organisms there. So if you have a wetland behind your house it could be used for same purpose, so it is your duty to safe guide it. Watch it to make sure no one use it for the wrong purpose. Government should also heavily tax those people who have developed those wetland to discourage further development there.

Speaker: Government should warn surveyors who are in the constant habits of selling wetlands. Government should even revoke their licenses if they are caught in such practice.

Speaker: We have been focusing on only Monrovia, let us look right here in Gbarnga, in the water way in the swamp there people are building there, and it has began to cause embarrassment

for all of us. So it should be our responsibility to call on the authority to stop them from going further.

Facilitator: One question I wanted to ask is this. Do we know or have we come across customary protected area? So how do we treat wetland that is found in customary protected area?

Speaker: It should follow the same rule. It should be treated as reserved area and be considered Government land. Customary people should protect the wetland for the Government.

Day 2; March 6; Morning Session

Group 2 (Youth)

Facilitator: Mackins Pajibo

Facilitator: Good Morning, we want to thank you for your participation and presentation made yesterday. We want to encourage you to freely participate in the discussion. Don't be shame or afraid of anyone. All you need to do is just raise your hand and be recognized before speaking. This morning we are going to be discussing different question.

Question: How does the draft policy address the issue of wetlands? How shall the policy address wetlands which are part of customary land?

Facilitator: Thank you for that reading. Now can anyone tell us what wetland is?

Speaker: I think wetlands are mainly swamp lands.

Speaker: Wetlands are those lands near the rivers.

Facilitator: Basically, as he stated, wetlands are swamp lands. In normal practices, swamp lands are considered government lands.

As our question is talking about the way the policy addresses wetland, let's identify where we can find wetland in our policy. We can find wetland under protected areas. So let someone read that area.

Speaker: It is important to rephrase that the above protections are a frame work and additional, more specifically policy recommendations to follow for each type of land which falls under a Government protected area such as policy for national parks, wetlands and national monuments. The purpose is therefore to set minimized protection for the transfer to individual or legal entities for limited use for consisting with the land conservation for all Liberians.

Facilitator: Thank you very much for your clear reading, let some also read section 3.4 of the policy which talks about government land and government protected areas.

Speaker: Section 3.4 reads, Government land includes, and government protected areas which are owned by the Republic of Liberia and must be conserved and managed for the benefit of all Liberians. Government protected areas should not be sold, leased or granted as a concession. A Government protected area should only be converted to private land, public land or customary land in accordance with a law passed by the legislature.

Facilitator: So government land includes government protected areas such swamp. So swamp should be protected for the government. One reason is that swamps contain resources that can benefit the entire nation. For instance, the swamp near the river contains mangrove trees. Mangrove trees contain carbon credit which facilitates combustion. This means it provides a suitable and comfortable air that we require for healthy living. In addition, the swamp was created by God to absorb water during the rainy season. When there is a heavy downfall of water, the swamp will stop the water from over flooding. So where there is no swamp, when it rains heavy, the water flood in the communities and enter into people houses. There are some animals like fishes that can only live in the swamp. Some of these animals are not seen anywhere besides the swamp, so there is a need to preserve these species for tourisms. The Environment Protected Agency has also advised that swamp lands be preserved and protected by the government. So let us go to the question which talks about how the policy addresses the issue of wetland.

Speaker: You see, the policy placed wetland under government area and protected area. For me wetland was not addressed adequately. The policy should be in more detail about wetland to tell us what makes it a protected area, the importance of it and what benefit will we get if we protect and conserve the land.

Speaker: As you stated, wetland should be protected area, if so, why had it been giving to people in the farm for farming purpose?

Facilitator: To answer your question, there had been no specific policy on wetland. The EPA is drafting that policy. They will tell us which wetland to use and what to do on a specific wetland. There are some wetlands if you make some garden or small farms, it wouldn't dry the land. So they come up with a policy that will address wetlands sufficiently.

Speaker: The EPA should be able to tell us the categories of wetlands. For instance if you travel around Monrovia specifically the from Island at Policy Academy area, there is a sign board which says wetlands are not wasted lands, please keep away from wetlands.

Speaker: We have an ordinance which says anyone which to acquire wetland should obtain a squatter right, meaning this land is protected and it is not for anybody to live permanently.

Speaker: My question about protected area is that, when we say something is protected, it shouldn't be touched or played with. Now we know wetlands as protected areas but we have people making farms on it. So please clarify.

Facilitator: When we say protected area, the policy says we have limited use rights to it. Meaning we can do certain things and we cannot do certain things on protected areas. Maybe they will advise you to only make farm and not to build house.

Speaker: Where in case the wetland falls within my private land, will it still be considered as government protected area?

Speaker: Swamp lands are protected lands and they are only for the government. So no one will sell it to you. So if you are purchasing a large piece of land which contains swamp land, only the dry land around the swamp will be sold and not the swamp land. So it is difficult for swamp land to become an individual land.

Speaker: From my understanding, you can only manage swamp lands but you cannot own swamp lands. So if for any reason someone sold swamp land to you that deal is illegal.

Speaker: When NCADP came, all the swamps that they lay out through the Ministry of Land Mines and Energy and Ministry of Agriculture, they became personal property of those farmers. Those swamps were surveyed and deeds were issued to those people that were farming there. So those swamps became legitimately owned by those farming there. So we are saying if a swamp falls within a portion of land that you are purchasing, the swamp land should become yours: except this policy wants to change it which will be very difficult. We should understand swamp lands in the city areas like Gardnerville and Paynesville are different from those in the rural areas. For the city areas the city is congested, so you have to seek authority from the city mayor or authority before doing anything there, and you cannot own it, but in the interior, one can own swap land.

Speaker: I have not heard swamp land be deeded. The same NCADP went to Voinjama, and I can't remember them issuing us deed. If you want to do something on a swamp land you go to the city mayor of Voinjama city and you be given permit to operate there for a specified period of time, and when the time is over you go renew you permit.

Speaker: From my understanding, when UNDP came with the DDR program, we were made to understand that swamp lands cannot be personalized; they belong only to the government. So I think the policy should be more explicit on this swamp land. There was a conflict in Johnny's Town where this lady's grandfathers and father were using this wetland for farm. The Town chief wanted to give it to another person at some point in time; she stated the land was her personal property from her generation. So let the policy be clear on it.

Speaker: The Kpakeo family have about 125 acre of land which wetland is inclusive. And they have deed for it. When NCADP came after the war, the issue deeds to people who they had record on and whose deeds got missing during the war. I am a beneficiary to that and I still own my land.

Speaker: We own thirty eight acres of land and still benefit from the land. When NCADP came, they did not give us deed. Probably, you people were given some travel certificate on something but not deed. It is only the government that gives deed.

Speaker: Let just provide information, the NCADP was not issuing deed to farmers, they were only empowering and developing farmers. The policy should really address this wetland issue, because lots of people encroach on it and dry it for their personal purpose. So EPA alone should not make the policy, Land Commission should also be actively involved to enforce it.

Speaker: The Land Commission should work along with EPA and the Ministry of Agriculture to address this wetland issue.

Speaker: As we are aware there are more people who are illiterate in Liberia than literate. And even the literate people more of them are not reading. The constitution makes it clear that protected lands are government lands and we know wetlands are protected lands, but most of the people especially in the rural areas do not know. So I want to recommend for massive information campaign and awareness to inform and sensitize our people on the issue of wetlands.

Facilitator: So let me ask you this question; how should the government deal with wetlands that have already been developed?

Speaker: I will suggest if land owners develop wetlands, those people should be compensated when the government gets ready for the land and they be relocated.

Speaker: For me I am looking at it the other way. The constitution was made to suit and favor those people that were around time, it can be amended or changed. For me I want to suggest that those people who have developed their wetlands, government should leave it with them, meaning individual or private entity can own wetland. The government should also regulate what people should do with their wetlands or which type or building or projects to put on wetlands.

Speaker: If we look at Foya district, about 75% of the land is wetland, now if the government goes and say those the township she be compensated and relocated, it will cause chaos. So I want to recommend that the clause of the constitution which states “wetland are protected area for the government” be changed to say those wetlands that have been developed be owned by those owner who developed the land. Those lands that are currently been used by squatter or owner, the government should give it to the owners or squatters. Government should issue deeds for those lands to the owners. Those lands that have not been used, government can claim it. This will avoid future embarrassment and conflict

Facilitator: How should the policy address wetlands that are found in customary or private areas?

Speaker: If wetlands are found within customary lands, I want to suggest that resources found on the surface of that land should be entirely owned and used by the customary people. For

resources that are found beneath the wetland in the soil, the government can own it but percentage should be given to the customary people.

Speaker: I want to suggest that government works with the community dwellers to see how wetlands found in the community can be distributed or used without conflict.

Speaker: As we all know wetlands are protected land owned by the government, if wetland is found within customary community location I suggest that such wetland be used by the community for time been, but it should not be owned by the community.

[Audio of Group 3 Missing]

Day 2; March 6; Morning Session

Group 4 (Bong)

Facilitator: Jeremiah Karmo

Group Members:

Abraham Kenneh

Jerry G. Taye- Kadai (City Mayor)

Wilmot Tarpeh- Gbaison District (District Commissioner)

Joko Kweyon- Bong County (Director of Native and Culture Affairs)

Arthur W. Duwor- Gbesen (Paramount Chief)

Togar Grebo- Kokoya (Paramount Chief)

Wellington Kay- Panta District (District Commissioner)

Old man Flomo

Ma. Sando- Salala District

Moses B. Mulbah Bong County (County Inspector Representative)

Moses Garguah- Panta (Paramount Chief)

Lorpu M. Killie- Zota (Paramount Chief)

Karmo A. Kanneh- Salala District (Commissioner)

William Kollie- County Inspector

Facilitator: Good morning. This morning we will be discussing how should the draft policy address concession. What should communities' rights in the policy regarding concession be? And we will be discussing this opening and we hope that we all participate so we can come up with the right decision in this draft land right policy. Yesterday we never took attendance. This morning the attendance sheet will be going around and each of you should write your names, position and if possible where you represent.

Facilitator: So we will ask Brother Saul to read this morning question for us and then we find someone to interpret it for us.

Question: How should the policy address concession? What should be community's rights and responsibilities regarding concession?

Facilitator: Let us read the part of the policy that talk about concession.

Speaker: 1.3 concessions. A commercial use right granted by the Government to an individual or private entity and managed in collaboration between the individual, a private entity, or the government in accordance with a written agreement.

Facilitator: The question is asking us for our rights and responsibilities in concession issues. Concession is a commercial use right according to the definition. Meaning you give someone the right to use your land for business or commercial purpose. So concession could be mining, agriculture or anything you give your land for to carry out commercial activity. So what's your input in this question?

Speaker: I should have the right to benefit from whatsoever concession that will go on the land that I had been taken care of, whether government land or not. So if the community had been taken care of any land belonging to the community or the government, the community should benefit from any concession agreement that surrounds that land.

Speaker: I think the community should be responsible to take care and safe guard any land given for concession.

Speaker: It should be our rights to be fully aware of any concession agreement that will take place in our community. The concession should be to our consensus. The community members should also have the rights to benefit from employment from any company coming in with the concession.

Speaker: Before any concession goes on in our community, there should be an agreement or MOU between the community and the company, and this MOU should outline our benefits.

Speaker: I agree with my colleagues that there should be agreement signed between the community and the company, and there must be benefits for the community. I also want to add

that concession agreements meet the consensus of all the members of the community, which includes the youth, women group, elders and community leaders.

Speaker: Our rights in the concession agreement shall include educational benefit for our children. Scholarships should be awarded to deserving children of the community.

Speaker: Concession should include that social fund allotted to the community as benefit is managed by the community's stake holders.

Speaker: The concession agreement should ensure that companies carry on cleaning up, in case of environmental pollution or water pollution. The community should be kept clean at all times for the proper health of the citizens.

Speaker: Concessions should provide social services within the affected communities such as school, safe drinking water, toilet facilities clinics, etc. environmental control should also be carried out.

Speaker: Our responsibility as community dweller should be to make sure that thing that is penned in the MOU be respected and be implemented. We should not just sign MOU and we turn our backs. We should save guide the agreement to its full implementation.

Speaker: In case of any vacancy for skilled and unskilled employees, the company should first contact the community, if no one there meets the qualification of the job, the county should be contacted before it can be open to the general public to all Liberians.

Speaker: Copies of all concession agreements surrounding customary land should be given to the community, even if it is signed in Monrovia.

Speaker: All agreements signed should be abided by both parties; that is the community and the company.

Speaker: We have noticed over the years that concessions are signed in Monrovia and representatives and Senators do not inform us. We are not respected in these deals. We only come and see the companies coming to work, and in that case, they don't listen to us in anything we say. So I want to suggest that any company coming should first go to the superintendent, and they can call the land commissioner in that community who should invite the chiefs and elder and community stake holders to discuss the with the company.

Speaker: We also need to talk about death benefits. For instance the Chinese people don't employ the only call people contractors. It happened that some died whilst working for them; they only buried the person and were finished with that family. And the person had children and family left behind. So we should stress on the issue of death benefit in the concession.

Speaker: Any MOU signed between the community and the company, the government should play a supervisory role in that concession agreement.

Speaker: If any company comes, in the concession agreement it should be stated that companies build vocational or trade schools for capacity building of our youth, so that they can take over when the companies leave. The companies should also build their office or headquarters in or near the community.

Speaker: In the concession agreement, we stress that any company coming to mine in our community, the road that the use to get to our community should be the first project these companies should carry on. They should first build the roads leading to the community before thinking about building on their roads leading to their company's sites. Bridges should be built as well.

Speaker: Part of our responsibility should be to probate the document of the land that will be given to concession.

Speaker: In the concession agreement, it should be agreed that community or county members hold share in the concession of company. I also want to recommend that qualified members of the community be placed in managerial position in the company.

Speaker: In many cases, some companies can carry on exploring or prospecting in a particular community for five years, we don't even know what they do with in those five years, whether they discover some of our resources and mining it we don't know. At the end they pull out and go telling us no mineral was found. So I want to recommend that concession should not grant rights to companies to prospect for more than two years.

Speaker: One thing when these companies are carrying on prospection, they don't allow community members to go around there, they take long time and they could do anything. So I want to recommend during prospecting time community members should be around to be witness for the community.

Speaker: In the MOU of the concession, the concession should have specific duration, and it should not be long it should be renewable. The community should also set up a committee to serve as a liaison between the community and the company.

Speaker: If a company comes to a particular community, the land that they may have interest in could be for community member or could have been taken care of by a member of the community. In this light, I want to suggest if such happens, special benefit be given to the owner or custodian of the land besides the one benefit that will go to the community.

Speaker: The community should provide an enabling environment for the companies to operate friendly and safely. Community should cooperate with concessionaires fully.

Speaker: EPA should be contacted to ensure there is environmental control, that waste products be properly managed in order to avoid air borne or water borne pollution.

Speaker: companies always have other headquarters in Monrovia, with this they have less interest in the county or community. Based on this I will like to recommend that companies built their headquarters in the administrative city or capital city of the counties instead Monrovia and build sub office in the affected communities. The county Anthony should guide the community in preparing the MOU and obtaining the deed for the land.

Speaker: I suggest that the community owns share in the company. The percentage should be determined by the total percentage that the concession will benefit.

Speaker: We all are thinking about the concession, none of us is thinking about finish product r I want to recommend if any company is extracting our resources, they should build factory so that we can also export finish product.

Facilitator: we have come to the end of group 4 discussion.

Day 2; March 6; Morning Session

Group 5 (Nimba)

Facilitator: Jerome Vanjahkollie:

Group members:

John Dede White-Tarpeh Ta Statutory District (Chairman Peace & Reconciliation Committee)

Daniel S. Zegbeh- District Commissioner

Davis Toe- Commissioner (Location Inaudible)

Davis Myers- Mehbema Administrative District (Commissioner)

John Quatey- Gbellegeh, Nimba (Commissioner)

Regenald W. Karto

Zah A. Dekan- Twan River, Nimba (Commissioner)

G. Yah Dakei- Leiwepeiu (District Commissioner)

G. Patrick Vonlor- Land Commissioner

George Doemah- Deinga (Paramount Chief)

Charleston Kohwu Nimba (Citizen)

Moses Kpaku - Ya-menslon (Commissioner)

Gabriel Vamel- Tarpeh Ta District

Samuel Saye Gbonto- Yameh District

Alexander M. Tentay- Kpablee District (Commissioner)

Peter G. Gballon Saywon- Nimba (Traditional Council Chairman)

Mary Toe Nobo – Ya-Meslon (Township Commissioner)

G. Doman Gballon – Sanniquellie Mahn (District Commissioner)

Mamie Saywa- Civil Servant

Facilitating Process: Good morning this is the group fine morning session, Nimba County. You all are welcome to this morning discussion, and we want to encourage you to fully participate by sharing your views. The ball is now in your coat. Please begin to chat what you want the policy to carry as regulations to protect your rights when it comes to concession that will use your customary land. Please raise your hands and call your names and where you come from. Now let go straight in to the question.

Question: How should the policy address concession? What should be the rights and responsibilities of communities, Government and companies?

Facilitator: Nimba County the ball is in your court. Pleas begin to chart what you want the policy to carry as regulation protecting your right when it comes to concession that will use your customary land?

Speaker: When companies come to use our land, I will suggest that the concession carry construction of roads network, there should be training for community members to be able to work with the company. Thank you.

Speaker: I want this policy to address the top to bottom discussion that been going on in our community. I mean previously, any concession regarding our community was always discussed at the top level. These companies will not discuss with us, we only see them coming and operating on our land. In this case they don't respect us because they got their authorization from higher level. So I want to recommend that discussion of concession regarding our land starts from our community. We should discuss with the company and take the outcome to higher level or to the government and say this is how it will be.

Speaker: What I want to suggest to this policy is that, after the companies have discussed with the community and have been licensed to operate, the government should direct them directly to the community. They should meet the community and its legal entity. The legal entity should play a mediatory role between the company and the community. I want to also suggest what so ever facility or structure the company built in our community, it should be left for the benefit of the community after they shall have left. If another company is coming to take over, they should build their own facilities. This will also help to develop the community.

Speaker: If the company wants to operate on a land where our people are dwelling, they should be resettled. They should have a package to that will be able to resettle them to another location without complain.

Speaker: I want to suggest that what so ever community the concession is going to go on, that community should duly be informed. There should be an awareness carried out to let the people know the type of concession that will soon be operating on their land before the company can start operating on the land.

Speaker: I will first of all like to thank the government and Land Commission for coming to solicit views and making them part of the policy document. I want to recommend if any company comes, they should build office and headquarters in around our community. They should not put temporary camp down near the town and rent in the capital city, so when they leave that could be benefit and development for the community. It is sure that most of people have travel certificates for their lands. So I want to suggest that the companies that will like to use these people lands first help them to survey the land so that these can have up to date deed for the land and do business with them. And these people should also be given resettlement benefit before they can give their land to any concession.

Speaker: The concession group should first meet the community, the community and the concession group should come to an agreement as to what they will do for the community, how they are going to run as a company and all the detail of the contract be spelled out in that agreement. When the community certifies the agreement before the concession can be give permit to operate by the Government.

Speaker: Concession agreement should be drafted in the community and when finished the community can take it to central government for approval. For that concession that will go straightly to the legislature, our representative should come and get our views before going for the sitting on that concession.

Speaker: Even though we are talking about concession here, but there are some local groups or individuals doing gold or diamond mining on our customary land. I want to suggest that these people give the due benefit to the customary land owners or the community.

Speaker: Many times companies come and promise us to build roads, hospitals, schools, clinics etc. they only make these promises but they do not live up to their promise until they leave. So I want to suggest before any company starts to operate on our land, they should implement what so ever commitment they will make. Everything they will promise should be done before they can operate.

Speaker: while it is true the concession may be signed by the government, the community and company should come up with a separate MOU that will outline all the benefits the community as well as the details of the concession.

Facilitator: Let me bring this to your attention, how about those lands that lay close to the land that the company wants to operate on; companies will use adjacent lands as roads and passage to carry their goods and materials to their sites. Should there be any benefit to the owner of those adjacent lands?

Speaker: What we are saying, the concession agreement should be between the community, the company and the company. The separate social agreement can carry what the adjacent community can carry. A percentage could be allotted to land owner from our social benefit. The two communities can sit and discuss that.

Speaker: At many times, these concessions promise scholarships to the youth and children, promise employment to community dwellers and so on. Time to meet up with their obligations these companies will be requesting for high averages or GPAs that will make most of our children not to be qualified for the scholarships. For employment even if you are qualified, they will ask for ten or five years' experience. So if you don't have that experience, you will be denied employment. So I want to recommend to the policy that these things as scholarships and employment be given without preconditions.

Speaker: The final decision should be left with the community to decide what to do with the customary land, as to whether they want concession group operating in their land or not, which type of operation should be carried out on the community land. When this decision is made, then we can carry it to the government for approval and supervision.

Facilitator: To enlighten you, what government over the past time been at the full front in terms of concession agreement is that, government had not recognized that this land was belonging to you. It is this policy which is trying to make it law for the land to be for you. So this policy we are making when it goes into law, there is no way government can play active role in your concession issue. When the land is yours, you are the one going to decide what to do with your land, you will make the final decision as to whether you want a concession or not and which concession you want. You will be the first decision maker. So all the things you're talking about people not giving the proper benefit was happening in the past. Now we are leading to the future where when the government gives you the land, you and the companies can sit under the palava hut to discuss on what you want and how you want it. Let me just let you know that we can't rule

government out because they are eminent domain, so if you give the forest to concession that will destroy the forest, government can step in to regulate the forest because it suppose to be Liberia at large, but to a greater extend, you will have do the negotiating with the concession companies.

Speaker: The issue of this eminent domain, are you saying that because the government have that eminent domain right, so they can seize any of our customary anytime? Even if we have concession operation there they can exercise that right?

Facilitator: Let me tell you that the framer of this policy is knowledge about eminent domain. The law around eminent domain is not in detail. So the policy framer tried to go in detail on eminent domain. So some detail of eminent domain is that, eminent domain is not just a raw force to take your land. It should begin with negotiation with you and the government. Many persons had not really understood that and so it leaves room for phobia. So this policy is say that for instance, if there is a threat that endangers the national security, for example a particular forest is suspected of harboring rebels, the government can say for security reason this forest should be strictly under governments watchful eyes and monitoring, therefore no one go near that forest to do anything. In that case the government should go the land owner and negotiate with them before taking the land. Let read 5.3.1 of the policy which talks about eminent domain.

Mutual Agreements and Eminent Domain: The current law on eminent domain in the constitution is inadequate, the constitution allow for the use of the eminent domain power for public purposes and imposes certain requirements, but land owners require additional protection. Further under principle it says, owners of private land and customary land should be provided just compensation such that land owners should be put in the same position as much as possible before expropriation. So what they are saying is that government should first negotiate with you, government should also pay you just compensation before taking the land.

Just compensation according to the policy shall be calculated based on the land's fair market value assuming a willing buyer and a willing seller.

So this fair market value done by willing buyer and seller means the current realistic market value of the land agreed on by the two parties.

Going further it says, any change in fair market value as a result of the decision to expropriate shall not be considered.

What it means that the same price you will charge anybody will be the charge you will charge the government. It should not be we will charge the government heavy because the government has money.

Speaker: Let me ask this question. Where in case the land owner becomes so adamant, the government says because of security reason we need this forest, government say I pay this you say no, government increase the fee you say no. what will the government do.

Co-facilitator: Then eminent domain is a special right government has to take any land in the interest of the country. If you refuse to give government the land after all possible negotiations, government will stay take the land. But they will deposit the fair market value in to an account. The morning will be there for certain time, if you can't stay with draw the morning, government can take the money and use it for different purpose. But it is also necessary to cooperate with government at all times.

Facilitator: Let us understand when government can exercise eminent domain. Under policy recommendation 5.3.1.3 of the policy it says, the state may expropriate private or customary land only for the security of the state, where the state was in danger, for public health or for another public use; this means only three reasons the government has to take land from you. For security purpose, for public health purpose, may be a particular place is causing environmental pollution or health hazard, and the last reason for public use that will benefit the general public.

Facilitator: Let's read on what the policy says about relocation under this same eminent domain. If relocation of those living on customary or private lands to be expropriated is deemed necessary after all other options have been thoroughly explored and rejected, then, in addition to just compensation, the government must paid for the cost relocation, relocation cost must include transportation to your new location Compensation and project to restore the natural resources and economic base of those relocated and the cost of land and building of where they are relocated and So we can say the government will have plenty expensive to make if they decide to take you from your land the policy will help government to not just take land from people except the need is really there.

Speaker: Can we relate this eminent domain to the breaking of the houses near the streets or near the roads?

Facilitator: For the breaking of house close to the streets that is a different thing and not eminent domain. What is being applied is the zonal law. You are to build seventy five feet from the road. Some people even build like five from the road; those are the people being affected. Building close to the road endangers you safety, it deprives government from carrying on development or extension. Sometimes the government compensates you when they break you places near the road. Sometimes the government will not give you a dime because they say you violate the zonal laws but we only brought the issue of this eminent domain to broaden your knowledge on that issue. So we have come to the end of this discussion. Thanks for all your views and inputs we hope see them passing as laws to affect Liberia.

[Audio of Day 2, Afternoon Session, Missing]