



SNAPSHOT

Liberia Land Commission Drafts Land Rights Policy

LIBERIAN POPULACE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT LAND COMMISSION'S PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS ON DRAFT LAND RIGHTS POLICY STATEMENT



Photo: Anna Knox

The draft land rights policy recognizes customary tenure, thereby guaranteeing land rights to all Liberians.

The Land Commission has for the first time in Liberian history developed a policy that guarantees land rights to all Liberians. The Land Commission's work in this endeavor has been supported by its development partners including support from the USAID and Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) funded Land Policy and Institutional Support (LPIS) Project.

The draft policy paper is a result of lengthy deliberations of a Real Property Task Force within the Land Commission including participation of related government institutions, NGO's and civil society. The draft paper has been validated by the President and Cabinet and will now be taken to the public through a country-wide consultation exercise.

Government and local authorities have embraced the commencement of a robust outreach and education campaign which sets the pace for a series of public consultations throughout the fifteen counties, to be culminated in a national validation conference. The Land Commission believes that these consultations will provide the citizens, particularly rural populations, the opportunity to make the necessary inputs, indicating "most policies formulated in the past were never taken to our people for comments or observations."

Two press conferences were held at the Ministry of Information and the Land Commission that triggered the interest of the Liberian media to report on more developments from the Land Commission. The eagerness of the 100+ journalists representing all of the media houses in Liberia who converged at the press conferences to question the Land Commission's Chairman and his fellow Commissioners demonstrated just how important land issues are to every Liberian.

At the press conference the Chairman of the Land Commission proclaimed that no set land policy currently exists in Liberia. This statement quickly gave rise to public debates on radio stations as the public expressed their enthusiasm to make the necessary inputs to ensure that the Land Commission's draft Land Rights Policy statement is validated.