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Press Union of Liberia Winner Celebrates Land Reporting



Gbatemah Senah during his presentation on strong land reporting at the LGSA and LLA training workshop for local journalists.

“This [PUL] award has given me renewed energy and passion. I encourage LGSA to continue its work, and go beyond the PUL awards and workshops for journalists, by including more programs for media sustainability, including story grants for other competitions that would encourage and attract more journalists to report on land issues. Land is such an important issue, so encouraging more journalists to report on it is good for all Liberians.” Gbatemah S. Senah, reporting through Bush Chicken, and Best Land Reporter Award Winner

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In Liberia, there have been a number of reforms in the land sector, dating back to 2009 with the establishment of the Land Commission. There has been a lot of work done in the sector, so far, including the formulation to the Land Rights Policy, Criminal Conveyance of Land Law, and the establishment of the Liberia Land Authority.

Information on the happenings in the land sector was held by with a privileged few, as the vast majority of the citizens have little and in some places, no knowledge of land and property rights issues.

As such, there continues to be fights for land amongst families, communities, and even counties.

In 2016, the Land Governance Support Activity (LGSA) and the Interim Land Task Force started working with local journalists to equip them with knowledge and skills in reporting on the land sector and encouraged journalists to more frequently report on land issues.

Since then, there have been significant improvements in the quality and frequency of coverage on the land sector. As a result, LGSA has increased its efforts to appreciate journalists and motivate them to do more by collaborating with the Press Union of Liberia (PUL) in 2017 to introduce a new category of award at the annual PUL awards to honor the Best Land Reporter.

Gbatemah Senah of the Bush Chicken, an online news wire, won the award; as a result, he feels proud of himself and his work as a journalist.

“I believe that land rights should concern every citizen because it is tied to the maintenance and promotion of peace and development, and I acknowledge that my contribution as a journalist will promote this. I will continue to work with my institution to increase coverage on land issues from a development and citizens' driven perspectives, focusing on land rights, usage, and governance.” Said Mr. Senah.

During his presentation at LGSA and the LLA's regional media training, where Senah was a participant and guest presenter, he thanked LGSA for the award, which he says has motivated and encouraged him to go further beyond his previous works and efforts in reporting on the sector.

He also admonished fellow journalists to be diligent in developing their news stories.

“Don't be in rush. Spend time on your stories. Go the extra mile if you have to. Do your research. In that way, you could bring out your best, and it will be rewarded by the society and people you work for. Mediocrity will not help.” – Mr. Senah noted.