

Logging Equipment Dock at Buchanan Port

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As LTTC Pumps US\$12M in Rivercess Forest

By:

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The Liberia Tree and Trading Company (LTTC), Inc; a local Liberian own logging company in partnership with MANDRA Forestry Liberia Limited, has imported huge quantity of logging equipment into the country to commence logging operations in Rivercess County.

The equipments, valued approximately US\$12 million including freights, taxes paid to government and other levies, were offloaded from a vessel that docked at Port of Buchanan, Grand Bassa County, on Tuesday, June 8, 2010.

The 31 pieces of earthmoving equipments which include trucks, caterpillars, and other yellow machines were offloaded in Buchanan amidst cheers from county officials and jubilant potential job seeking residents from Bassa and Rivercess counties. Former Forestry Development Authority (FDA) managing director, John T. Woods was at this ceremony and said the demonstration of equipment LTTC, Inc was not a surprise to him.

Mr. Woods made particular reference to LTTC president, Ricks Y. Toweh, "The man," he said, "has demonstrated his commitment to professional and ethical business in the forestry industry of Liberia." The LTTC president CEO Ricks Y. Toweh officially displayed his company's equipment in Buchanan City on Wednesday, June 9, 2010 in the presence of senior government and county officials saying "The arrival of the consignment represents a new dawn for Liberia's forestry sector."

Mr. Toweh said the US\$12 million was his company's initial investment for the operations of Forest Management Contract (FMC) Area "C" in Rivercess County.

LTTC is one of three companies that the Government of Liberia through the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) awarded FMC to operate in Rivercess County.

In demonstration of his company's preparedness to commence logging soon, Toweh told Rivercess citizens that the next consignment of materials and equipment for the community forests will be much more than what has already docked at the Port of Buchanan.

The Liberian forestry expert assured Rivercess citizens of his company's willingness to improve their lives and the lives of their children, but urged them to allow LTTC to operate their community forests. He assured residents of Rivercess County that LTTC will prioritize their job interest during the commencement of full recruitment exercise.

Mr. Toweh pledged that his company will uphold the Liberianization policy thereby securing jobs for Liberian citizens.

LTTC's Malaysian partner, Sio Kai Sing, managing director Plantations and Resources (MANDRA Capital), in his intervention, said Malaysian expatriates were prepared to train Liberians to take over the company.

"The few expatriates we have here are not here to stay. They are here to train you so that you can be prepared to take over this company," Mr. Sing said amidst applause from the audience.

During the formal ceremonies, Rivercess Legislative Caucus chairman, Senator Jonathon Barney joined youth groups and County Superintendent, Givon Smith, to appeal to LTTC management to recruit 60% of their entire workforce from Rivercess County.

"We appeal to you Mr. Toweh and your partners to make sure that 60% of your workforce is recruited from the concession county-Rivercess," noted Senator Barney.

The Senator observed that Rivercess citizens residing in the county are among the most destitute people in the country because of the lack of job opportunity for them in the county.

Speaking on behalf of the caucus, Barney pledged his colleagues' commitment to working with LTTC, Inc and MANDRA through the county leadership including the Superintendent to improve the livelihood of Rivercess citizens and develop the county.

In his intervention, Labor Minister, Tiawon Gongloe, said job creation remains the key element to achieving poverty reduction in the country.

Minister Gongloe, a former human rights lawyer, welcomed the partnership between LTTC, Inc and MANDRA Forestry Limited and said such collaboration was necessary in order to create more jobs for the economy and reduce poverty.

The Minister however briefly reminded the companies to operate within the confines of the laws and respect the rights of their employees.

Rivercess County Superintendent, Givon Smith, for his part appealed to Rivercess citizens to respect the rule of law whenever something goes wrong in the county.

Mr. Smith challenged his citizens to always channel their complaints or grievances through his office to the relevant government authority when they felt dissatisfied with happening in their communities.

"We must follow due process of law and so anything that you are not satisfied with just let me know," he added.

Superintendent Smith cautioned LTTC and other logging companies operating in Rivercess County not to allow their companies' policies to have negative consequences on Rivercess citizens.

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