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Deputy SRSG and the Forestry Development Authority of Liberia visit southeastern Liberia; Deputy SRSG meets County Support Team in Harper

Pleebo/Harper, Liberia – In line with Executive Order 1, issued on 2 February 2006 by President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Recovery and Governance, Mr. Jordan Ryan, together with the Managing Director of the Forestry Development Authority of Liberia (FDA), Mr. John T. Woods, and other representatives from the government and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), on 2 September travelled to Pleebo, Maryland County, in the southeastern part of the country, on an inspection tour of logging areas. The team was interested in particular to see first-hand the issues of compliance with the United Nations sanctions on timber that are currently in place.



DSRSG Ryan and FDA Managing Director Woods tour facilities of L.L.W.P.C./T.T.CO

While in Pleebo, the delegation was briefed by the management of the Liberian Logging and Wood Processing Corporation (L.L.W.P.C./T.T.CO), Messrs. Wael and Nader Charafeddine, on the current status of the company and was reassured that no logging activities have been taking place since the sanctions were imposed. L.L.W.P.C./T.T.CO is one of Liberia's largest logging companies.

“The current Government will introduce serious governance in the logging industry in order to re-establish its control of the forestry sector, regain its sovereignty and see the lifting of the sanctions,” said Mr. Woods, as he gave an overview of the new forestry reform package that has been developed. “Through the new National Forestry Reform Law 2006, the government will ensure that all timber products will have a legal origin,” he added.

DSRSG Ryan said that the visit to Maryland was very useful in determining the current situation on the ground. “I am pleased that nothing illegal that we can observe is taking place,” he said.

Executive Order No. 1 cancelled all forest concessions of Liberia and established a Forestry Reform Monitoring Committee (FRMC), under the chair and co-chair of the Managing Director of the FDA and the DSRSG for Recovery and Governance. It is charged with the responsibility of developing reform packages for the forest industry of Liberia to make it an efficient, effective, transparent and responsible business entity.

During the trip, DSRSG Ryan also travelled to Harper to meet with the Maryland County Support Team (CST), including Ms. Ophelia Droper, the Assistant Superintendent for Development, and Ms. Regina Simpson, Mayoress of Harper City.

Addressing the CST at the City Hall in Harper, Mr. Ryan recognized that Maryland County deserves more attention, both from the UN as well as NGOs, in order to properly address the various challenges, “including the real need to have County authorities re-establish civil authority over the entire County.” Mr. Ryan also commended the team for its good work so far. “This shows that the teamwork approach is the way forward.”

The meeting with the County Support Team was in line with UNMIL's commitment to support the restoration of state authority at the decentralized level, ensuring coherence between national and county-level policies and actions.