



PRESS RELEASE

Environment seminar urges Liberian Government to act on four key recommendations

Monrovia, 19 July 2004 - A two-day seminar on the environment in Liberia at Monrovia City Hall has ended on 13 July with a clear message on the importance of environment protection during the country's recovery and reconstruction process. The meeting, in which over 100 participants from government, non-governmental organizations, academia and the international community participated, resulted in four key recommendations:

- Environmental issues should be firmly entrenched as a cross-cutting theme in all reconstruction programmes planned and currently under way for Liberia.
- The administrative structure of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) should be finalized through the appointment of its National Environment Policy Council and Board of Directors.
- The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan should be signed and adopted by the National Transitional Government of Liberia.
- Environmental issues can be used to build stability in the region through increased cooperation between neighboring countries and the establishment of trans-boundary protected areas.

The seminar focused on two recent environmental reports: the UNEP "Desk Study on the Environment in Liberia" and the draft National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, to be executed by the EPA, implemented by UNDP and funded by the Global Environment Facility. Both documents highlight the importance of biological diversity and the natural environment for Liberia's reconstruction and development. This view was supported and endorsed by the seminar participants.

The seminar was jointly organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). It was opened on Monday, 12 July 2004 by NTGL Chairman Charles Gyude Bryant and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Jacques Paul Klein. The Special Representative underlined that the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) is the first peacekeeping mission to have an environmental component embedded in its mandate. Therefore the United Nations family will continue to work with all stakeholders to ensure that Liberia's regulatory framework is restored to allow for the proper oversight and management of its natural resources.

Contact in Monrovia:

UNDP Communications Officer Paul Van Goethem : cel +377 47 53 47 30 paul.van.goethem@undp.org