

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

NATIONAL INVESTMENT COMMISSION

MONROVIA DECLARATION

Outcome of the Fourth Workshop on Contract Negotiation Support for Developing Host Countries

Hosted by GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA and the HUMBOLDT-VIADRINA School of Governance.

July 22 – 23, 2013

The Fourth Workshop on Contract Negotiation Support for Developing Host Countries has ended in Monrovia. The workshop provided a forum for discussion about a concrete organizational approach for support for developing host countries as they prepare, negotiate or monitor complex contracts for large-scale investments, for example in natural resource or infrastructure projects. The workshop was hosted by the Government of Liberia, represented by the National Investment Commission, and organized in collaboration with the HUMBOLDT-VIADRINA School of Governance from Berlin, Germany.

Participants who were largely made up of African government officials, investors, and lawyers as well as representatives of existing initiatives, members of civil society, donors, multilateral organizations and academics reached a consensus on what is referred to as the MONROVIA DECLARATION. The Monrovia Declaration recognizes that there are important gaps when it comes to strengthening the capacity of least developed country governments as they prepare for, negotiate and monitor large-scale complex contracts for large-scale investment projects. In order to address these gaps in the most adequate and effective manner, it has been decided to pursue three complementary approaches in order to improve existing negotiation support:

1. Information-sharing and Coordination Mechanism, possibly taking the form of a multidimensional online database or portal,
2. Contract Negotiation Support Centre enabling interaction between the support requester and experts providing advice or information via email or telephone,
3. Rapid Response Advisory Unit, mobilizing multi-disciplinary teams of both local and international experts ready to step in when governments need timely and affordable advice before and during negotiations.

A Task Force has been mandated to elaborate and shape the approaches and support their implementation. The secretariat of the Task Force will be based at the HUMBOLDT-VIADRINA School of Governance in Berlin.

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The MONROVIA DECLARATION also alluded to the gains that the Government of Liberia has made in the governance environment of the extractive industries, particularly:

- Liberia was among the first African countries to implement the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) process. It also innovatively incorporated the forestry sector in its framework, which is called Liberia-EITI (LEITI). Pursuant to the LEITI Act of 2009, the LEITI also recently in May 2013 concluded an audits of the process by which each material concession, contract and licenses, was awarded by the Government in respect of forestry, mining, oil & gas and agriculture.
- The formulation of a land rights policy in which the Government recognizes and protects Private Land rights.
- The establishment of a National Bureau of Concession to monitor and ensure compliance with concession agreements.

As host to the workshop, the Government of Liberia, through National Investment Commission Chairman, Hon. O. Natty B. Davis, understands and appreciates the complexities of negotiation. The country is therefore proud to be at the forefront of international discussions that could yield in the creation of a new mechanism to fill the existing gaps in support provided to developing host country governments, who lack the capacity to fully address the issues and challenges related to the natural resource governance environment.