



PRESS RELEASE

IP/09/799

Brussels, 15 May 2009

EU supports the efforts of Sierra Leone and Liberia to save one of the last rain forests in West Africa

The European Union is providing € 5.5 million to Sierra Leone and Liberia to establish a new Trans-boundary Peace Park and to save the last intact rainforest in the Upper Guinea Area: the Gola Forest.

At a ceremony today in Lalehun in Southern Sierra Leone, the President of Sierra Leone, Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma, and the President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, jointly launched the "Trans-boundary Peace Park Project" and laid the foundation of the new Gola Forest project management office.

Louis Michel, the EU Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, said:

"I am convinced that this kind of joint actions will help to foster peace, stability and reconciliation in a region that witnessed long and brutal civil wars. Therefore I warmly welcome the intentions of the Presidents of Liberia and Sierra Leone to work together to fight against climate change and to promote peace in the Mano River region. The joint project will secure the long-term conservation of the rain forest, its biodiversity and global carbon storage benefits and will contribute to improved cross-border forest governance between Sierra Leone and Liberia".

Both, the Trans-boundary Peace Park as well as the Gola Forest project have been developed in cooperation with Civil Society Organisations of EU Member States. They are in line with the Commission's strategies towards Sierra Leone and Liberia for 2008-2013 to promote peace, democracy and economic development. In the run-up to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen later this year, the Commission welcomes the commitment of Liberia and Sierra Leone to take the measures needed for reducing the threat of climate change and for increasing the collaboration for the conservation of their Nations' natural resources.



A project implemented
By the Contractor

Address:
Tel:
Fax:

This project is funded
by the European Union

Delegation of
The European Union
In xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Tel:
Fax:

The European Commission is the EU's executive body.

"The European Union is made up of 27 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders".



P R E S S R E L E A S E

Background:

The projects "Across the River: A Trans-boundary Peace Park for Sierra Leone and Liberia" and "The Gola Forest: A new, practical model for achieving sustainable protected areas in post-conflict Sierra Leone, a Least Developed Country" aim at preserving the last remnants of the vast Upper Guinean Rainforest, which once covered large parts of coastal West Africa between Togo and Sierra Leone. These rainforests are classified as a biodiversity hotspot of global value, while at the same time ensuring sustainable livelihood conditions for the local population.

The future Trans-boundary Peace Park unites the Gola Forest Reserve in Sierra Leone (75,000 ha) and the Lofa and Foya Forest Reserves in Liberia (80,000 ha and 100,000 ha respectively). The Gola Forest provides for important ecological services for the entire West African region: Climatic conditions favourable for agricultural production (e.g. cocoa/coffee), continuous provision of water, protection against soil erosion, mitigation of climate change, provision of wood and non-wood forest products to the local population.



A project implemented
By the Contractor

Address:
Tel:
Fax:

This project is funded
by the European Union

Delegation of
The European Union
In xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Tel:
Fax:

The European Commission is the EU's executive body.

"The European Union is made up of 27 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders".