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Common Ground Ends Development Forum In Bong

Thursday, 7th August 2008

Bad governance, the lack of accountability in the management of public funds coupled with the exclusion of the majority of the population from decision-making processes that affected them, all contributed to the violent conflict in Liberia.

As the nation makes a transition from war to democracy, it is imperative that leadership is exercised differently and the design and implementation of development programmes are equally done in a manner that reflects the needs of the people.

In response to this, Search for Common Ground/Talking Drum Studio with funding from the United Kingdom for International Development (DFID) facilitated a one-day development meeting in Gbarnga, Bong County on August 2, 2008.

The meeting brought together lawmakers, citizens, Superintendent and District Commissioners to discuss critical development and reconciliation issues affecting the county.

At the forum, the Superintendent presented a written narrative report to the citizens on progress made in the implementation of the county's development agenda and other resources received by the county.

Lawmakers present also gave reports on their activities. The reports were followed by questions from citizens for clarity on issues that were ambiguous.

After hours of discussions and deliberations, a consensus was reached between the county leadership and the people that in keeping with the budget law, a new county development council be formed to as the initial first in developing the framework to drive the county's development process.

The county's leadership also agreed that the Superintendent, Rennie Jackson will instruct District Commissioners to convene citizens' meetings in each district in the presence of the District Representatives in the National Legislature to select a representative to be on the District Development Council which will be comprised of 12 members, one from each district.

The Superintendent according to the decision will then convene a

meeting of the Special Development Council in collaboration with the County Legislative Caucus to elect a three-member Project Management Committee, PMC) which will be done by the 12-person Council.

The PMC will then be charged with managing the county's development agenda.

It was agreed that the setting up of these structures be done by August 15, 2008 so that the county's development program can be implemented in a structural manner.

It was also agreed that the Superintendent will make public financial report on money expended from the county's development funds.

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