



7th Report of the LTA Secretariat

For the period • December 18, 2015-February 18, 2016



Since the last sitting of this body on December 19, 2015, the Secretariat has undertaken and/or implemented the following activities:

A. ADMINISTRATION

Staffing: During the period under reviewed, the staff of the Secretariat continued to enjoy a cordial working relationship with each other. The Secretariat also continues to enjoy a cordial working relationship with members of the Executive Committee as well as most of the member companies.

Electricity & Internet: During the period under review we continued to experience an uninterrupted supply of internet services. We however experienced an interrupted supply of electricity. This was due mostly to irregular supply of current by LEC. This irregularity in the supply of electricity had a high financial toil on the Secretariat as we were constrain to purchase fuel to run the generator.

Registration of Members: During the period under reviewed, no additional member registered with the Secretariat. A large number of companies listed in the directory of the LTA didn't register with the Secretariat during the 2015 year. Registration for 2016 is expected to begin shortly and Registration Completed Certificates will again be giving out to those who complete their registration. We are now encouraging members who did not register in 2015 to please do so in 2016.

The LTA's Act and Memorandum of Understanding: As soon as funding is available, the Secretariat will be perusing this endeavour. The Secretariat has however already reached out to Attorney Kulah L. Jackson on the possibility of him and a team of lawyers drafting a new LTA's Act for onward submission to the Legislatures for enactment. There are still a few member companies who haven't as yet signed the Memorandum of Understanding. We are again openly appealing to all member companies who are present here today and haven't signed to kindly stop by at the desk of the Administrative and Finance Officer to do so today.

The LTA's Articles of Incorporation: The Secretariat received from the Liberia Business Registry the probated and notarized Articles of Incorporation of the LTA in mid-December. We also received our official Certificate of Business to operate as a non-for-profit organization. This certificate is expected to be renewed on a yearly basic and now hanged in the Conference Room of the LTA. This was a major achievement for the office as it now put us on a legal footing. We are now in the process of paying the required withholding taxes for our staff after which we will be perusing the settling of things with the National Social Security and Welfare Corporation.

LTA's Personnel Manual & Code of Conduct: Work on the Personnel Manual for staff was delay last year for several reasons beyond our control but is still ongoing. Work on the Code of Conduct for LTA member companies has not yet begun. We are now appealing for the approval of funding to complete the Personnel Manual. Funding needed to complete this manual is US\$350.00. The Secretariat is hopeful that these two key documents will be ready within the first half of 2016.

LTA's Website: The Secretariat through the efforts and backing of the President, Mr. Rudolph J. Merab, has contacted the Iron Web Designs in the USA to design the LTA's website and also give training to few staff of the Technical Secretariat to manage said website as well as upload materials to said website. We are currently at the stage of entering a contract with said company. We are now encouraging all member companies to take advantage of this

project by buying a page on the website for a one-time fee of US\$250.00. This offer is only available until after the designing and construction of the website. After that time the cost of buying a page will be US\$350.00. It is hope that the contract for the designing, construction, establishing, and maintenance of the website will be concluded on or before the 31st of March 2016.

LTA's Work Plan and Budget: The Secretariat, during the period under review, and under the guidance of the Executive Committee, completed and presented to the VPA-SU the 2016 Work Plan and Budget of the LTA but since then there hasn't been any concrete information as to what percentage of the budget they are willing to sponsor as well as what areas of our work plan they are interested in. Meanwhile, kindly be informed that we presented a budget of three hundred seventy one thousand five hundred ten United States Dollars and twenty three cent (US\$371,510.23) as LTA budget for 2016. Of this amount, we have requested the VPA-SU to support fifty-seven (57%) percent of this budget, in the tune of US\$210,562.00. Soft copy of said work plan and budget were sent to each of you.

Company Export Information Form & Company Profile Form: While all members have been continuously encouraged during the last three (3) meetings to fill out these two forms and return them to the Secretariat as soon as possible, we have not as yet received any. We cannot over emphasis the need to have these forms fill out by members and file with the Secretariat therefore we are again appealing that each of you stop by at the office and fill same out before leaving here today.

Support from the VPA: As can be seen from the below financial report, the major source of income for the running of the Secretariat during this reporting period continue to be from the VPA-SU as monthly dues from member companies and other expected sources of income weren't fully forthcoming. We are currently renegotiating support from the VPA-SU as their support to the LTA ended in December 2015. They have already expressed their commitment, verbally, to supporting us for another twelve months but haven't as yet been definite as to how much that support will be and to what areas it will be directed to.

Networking:

VPA-SU: The President as well as the Head of Secretariat sought and obtained several audiences with the Team Leader of the VPA-SU in order to conclude on the VPA-SU sponsorship of our 2016 work plan and budget. We were both assured that our work plan and budget have been forwarded to DFID for consideration and that they will be getting back to us on or before the end of this month.

National Multi-stakeholders Steering Monitoring Committee: The LTA was represented by its Head of Secretariat and Mr. Isaac F. Mannah at the January regular monthly meeting of the NMSMC at the Chamber of Commerce held on January 13, 2016.

Liberia Implementation Committee (LIC): The LTA was represented by its Head of Secretariat at the first quarterly meeting for 2016 of the LIC at the Chamber of Commerce held on January 15, 2016.

Joint Implementation Committee (JIC): The LTA was represented by its President and its Head of Secretariat at the third JIC meeting at the Monrovia City Hall held on January 20 - 22, 2016.

The Liberia Chamber of Commerce (LCC): During the period under review, we began negotiations with the LCC for the re-admittance of the LTA back into the membership of the LCC. Based on the instruction of the President, we have submitted a Membership Application Form to the LCC and now awaiting its reaction to it. There is a progress on regaining membership with LCC. The form have been signed by the President of the LCC and the LTA

need to make payment of One thousand United States dollars (US\$1,000) annually to the LCC if LTA is reactivating her membership with the LCC. Secondly, the LTA needs to present copy of business registration receipt, which we have now acquired. As soon as the necessary funding is available and we have your go ahead we will be concluding on this.

The LTA was also invited by the LCC to participate in a meeting with the Belgian Business delegation to Liberia. Said meeting was held on January 20th thru 22nd 2016 at the Mamba Point Hotel. The LTA was represented by its 2nd Vice President and Mr. Isaac F. Mannah.

Forestry Development Authority: The LTA received a communication from the FDA to attend a two-day workshop at the Milderd Page's Conference Hall of the S. T. Nagbe UMC for the validation of five regulations, inclusive of the Timber in Transit Regulation and the Abandon Timbers Regulation. Said workshop was held on January 4th and 5th 2016 and the LTA was represented by its Head of Secretariat, Mr. Joesphus S. Banks, Mr. Clarence Massaquoi, Mr. Stanley F. Sartie, among others.

The LTA also received another communication from the FDA to attend a one-day workshop at the Milderd Page's Conference Hall of the S. T. Nagbe UMC for the validation of Charcoal Regulation. Said workshop was held on January 13, 2016 and the LTA was represented by its Training and Communication Manager.

The LTA received an invitation from the FDA to participate in a workshop "Definition of Forest in Liberia" that ran from the 25th thru 30th of January 2016, and held at the Administrative Building in Voinjama, Lofa County. The LTA was represented by its 2nd Vice President, its Head of Secretariat, and Mr. Isaac F. Mannah. At the end of the workshop a resolution was adopted establishing a national forest definition with the following thresholds: 30% minimum forest cover, 5 meter minimum height, and 1 ha minimum area.

SGS Office: The Secretariat is still actively engage with this office. During the period under review, we still unable to access its files as promised by them but we are working with them to ensure that same is done. We are hopeful that same will be accomplished before the end of this first quarter of 2016.

European Timber Trade Federation and Timber Legality Programme Management: We are still engaging Mr. Andre de Boer, Secretary General of the European Timber Trade Federation and Mr. Christian Sloth of the Timber Legality Programme Management for some form of cooperation and collaboration between their respective organization and the LTA.

National Union of Community Forestry Development Committee (NUCFDF): The LTA received an invitation from the above mentioned group to fill a seat on its Advisory Board. The Executive Committee has since accepted the invitation on behalf of the LTA.

LEITI Secretariat: The Secretariat is still actively engage with the Secretariat of the LEITI and hope to strengthen said relationship during this year. The workshop that was supported by the LEITI has been implemented and a draft report of said workshop was sent to the LEITI for their perusal and a final copy of the report is in the process of being send.

Norwegian Ministry of Climate & Environment: On February 4th 2016 the Head of Secretariat accompanied the President to a meeting at the Mamba Point Hotel with the Senior Advisor of the Government of Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative, Mr. Arild Skedsmo. The meeting focused on possible joint cooperation between the Initiative and the LTA among others. It ended with Mr. Skedsmo being given a copy of the LTA's work plan and budget as well as being requested to assist the LTA.

Environment Protection Agency (EPA): On February 9th & 10th the LTA, based on an invitation from the EPA, through its Communication and Training Manager, participated in a

two-day workshop for the purpose of validating the Social Economic Strategic Assessment (SESA) of the REDD program. The SESA is particularly concerned about environmental issues such land suitability assessment, cost benefit analysis; barriers analysis and incentives to reduce emission from forest, and investment in low carbon development,; support sustainable forest management by countries in high conservation value forest; reduce impact of logging in FMC and CFMA; complete the demarcation of protected area network; as well as prevent or offset clearance of high carbon stock. Thematic areas during the workshop are: (1) Climate Change, (2) Biodiversity; (3) Water and soil (4) Governance; (5) Food security, Livelihoods and development potential, (6) Land; (7) Community Cohesion; (8) Revenues; (9) Supplies and services for domestic market and (10) Jobs.

FLEGT's Facilitation Office: We received an invitation from the FLEGT's Facilitation Office to participate in the meeting of a sub-committee of the NMSMC that is responsible to develop a draft TOR for the VPA's Secretariat. It is being envisaged that the current VPA-SU will be split into two separate and distinct entities: the new VPA-SU and the VPA Secretariat. Another meeting of the task force is expected to be convened sometime next week in order to conclude on this. The LTA was represented at this meeting by its Administrative and Finance Officer. The meeting was held on the 12th of February at the office FLEGT's Facilitation Office. A follow up meeting is planned for early next week to conclude on this.

B. FINANCIAL REPORT FOR the Periods November 18th 2015 - January 17th, 2016

An analysis of the office receipt books and deposit slips reveal the following:

Income

➤ Receipt (November 27, 2015) International Consultant Capital	US\$ 2,000.00
➤ Receipt (November 27, 2015) Geblo Logging	US\$ 1,000.00
➤ Receipt (December 1, 2015) VPA-SU Monthly Support for November	US\$ 3,950.00
➤ Receipt (December 17, 2015) VPA-SU Monthly Support for December	US\$ 3,950.00
➤ Receipt (January 13, 2016) Alpha Logging	US\$ 1,500.00
➤ Receipts (January 13, 2016) Atlantic Resources Ltd.	US\$ 2,000.00
➤ Receipt (February 5, 2015) VPA-SU Monthly Support for January	US\$ 3,950.00
Total	<u>US\$18,350.00</u>

Expenditure

➤ Salaries & Transportation Allowances for November 2015	US\$ 3,322.61
➤ Cost of Hosting LEITI-LTA Workshop	US\$ 3,930.00
➤ Salaries & Transportation Allowances for December 2015	US\$ 3,322.61
➤ Operational Cost for December 2015	US\$ 1,250.00
➤ Farewell Dinner for Mr. Baxter	US\$ 1,185.00
➤ LTA's participation in S. G. F. Johnson, Jr. Funeral	US\$ 135.00
➤ Advertisement in the Daily Observers Newspaper	US\$ 350.00
➤ Office equipment purchased in the USA	US\$ 1,772.00
➤ Operational Cost for January 2016	US\$ 900.00
➤ Staff Taxes return (June - December 2015)	US\$ 3,359.00
➤ Salaries & Transportation Allowances for January 2016	US\$ 3,322.61
➤ Operational Cost for February 2016	US\$ 750.00
➤ LTA's participation in REDD meeting in Lofa County	US\$ 2,161.00
Total	<u>US\$25,759.83</u>

Shortage

US\$ 7,409.83

Financial Narrative: A total of US\$18,350.00 was disbursed during the period November 18th 2015 thru January 17th 2016. Of this amount, US\$9,967.83.00 was used for salaries and transportation allowances for staff for the months of November, December, and

January. US\$2,900.00 was used as operational cost for the three months in review. US\$2,296.00 was used to facilitate the participation of the LTA in the funeral of Mr. Singbe G. F. Johnson as well as in the REDD meeting that was held in Lofa County. US\$1,185 was used for a farewell dinner in honor of Mr. Baxter while US\$3,930 was used for the hosting of the LTA/LEITI's retreat/workshop. Based on a decision to start actual withholding of taxes from the income of staffs starting January 2016, staffs were reimbursed with the amount of US\$3,359.00, representing deductions made in their respective salaries from June to December 2015. As can be seen, the Technical Secretariat expenses during the period under review surpass revenues received during that same period by US\$7,409.83. Kindly be reminded that the LEITI awarded the LTA US\$4,000.00 for the hosting of the LEITI/LTA workshop/retreat.

Personnel Expenses: According to our records the total cost of maintaining the staff in the Secretariat monthly is US\$4,106.75, inclusive of the 4.75% required employer's payment to NSSWC. The VPA-SU, at the moment, is supplementing this monthly salary with the amount of US\$3,500.00. This leaves the amount of US\$606.75 that needs to be raised every month to augment the monthly payroll of the Secretariat.

C. HINDERANCES AND SETBACK

During the period under review, the Secretariat continued to be plagued with the issue of lack of needed office equipment and logistics to carry out the various tasks that were assigned to it. Most often than not, cartridges have to be refilled instead of being purchased due to the limited funds allocated for monthly stationaries. The Secretariat is without an official vehicle to move around to carry out the various tasks assigned to it. The amount of time spent waiting for a taxi is a serious steal away from productive office hours. Due to serious financial setback cause by the slow payments of dues by its members which can rightly be attributed to the slump in the market; the LTA wasn't able to do some of the key things it had original earmarked to do under its work plan in 2015.

D. FUTURE OUTLOOK AND IMPLEMENTATION

During the incoming period, the Secretariat hopes to continue working with the Executive Committee in striving to implement the goals and objectives of the LTA. Based on a mandate of the President, we will be developing a policy of Foreign Travels for your review and endorsement. It is also envisaged that we will finalize with SGS our access to its monthly report on the internet, execute the VPA-SU's sponsored workshop/retreat, as well as the documentary activities. It is also hope that we will continue networking with those that are listed in this report and that we will be able to begin work on the new Act, the Code of Conduct for Members, among others.

E. BANK RECONCILIATION FOR the Periods December 17, 2015 - December 17th, 2015

DESCRIPTION	CK #	DATE	DEBIT	CREDIT	BALANCE
Balance B/F					8,772.40
Bank Service Charge		1-Nov-15	25.00		8,747.40
Withdrawal (P. Gbatu)		3-Nov-15	1,248.00		7,499.40
Withdrawal (E. Witherspoon)		4-Nov-15	280.00		7,219.40
Deposit (Check)	134595	16-Nov-15		4,000.00	11,219.40
Withdrawal (P. Gbatu)		19-Nov-15	580.00		10,639.40
Withdrawal (S. Gardiner)		19-Nov-15	595.00		10,044.40
Withdrawal (YMCA)		19-Nov-15	400.00		9,644.40
Withdrawal (Terra-Restaurant)		24-Nov-15	500.00		9,144.40

Deposit (Check)	119804	27-Nov-15		800.00	9,944.40
Withdrawal (E. Witherspoon)		27-Nov-15	1,612.00		8,332.40
Withdrawal (M. Kerkula)		27-Nov-15	1,094.00		7,238.40
Withdrawal (H. Baysah)		27-Nov-15	278.00		6,960.40
Withdrawal (P. Gbatu)		27-Nov-15	191.00		6,769.40
Withdrawal (J. Teld)		27-Nov-15	145.00		6,624.40
Withdrawal(E. Witherspoon)		27-Nov-15	85.00		6,539.40
Withdrawal (Terra-Restaurant)		27-Nov-15	600.00		5,939.40
Deposit	UBA-00344254	1-Dec-15		3,000.00	8,939.40
Deposit	ECO-00369444	1-Dec-15		3,950.00	12,889.40
Bank Service Charge		1-Dec-15	25.00		12,864.40
Withdrawal (S. Gardiner)	154790	1-Dec-15	595.00		12,269.40
Withdrawal (P. Gbatu)	154791	1-Dec-15	1,822.00		10,447.40
Withdrawal (P. Gbatu)	154792	8-Dec-15	1,250.00		9,197.40
ECO Bank Check returned	ECO-00369444	8-Dec-15	3,950.00		5,247.40
Comm. On return check		8-Dec-15	30.00		5,217.40
Withdrawal (E. Witherspoon)	154793	10-Dec-15	135.00		5,082.40
Withdrawal (E. Witherspoon)	154794	15-Dec-15	1,612.00		3,470.40
Withdrawal (M. Kerkula)	154795	15-Dec-15	1,094.00		2,376.40
Withdrawal (H. Baysah)	154796	15-Dec-15	278.00		2,098.40
Withdrawal (P. Gbatu)	154797	15-Dec-15	191.00		1,907.40
Withdrawal (J. Teld)	154798	15-Dec-15	145.00		1,762.40
Deposit	ECO-00431910	17-Dec-15		3,950.00	5,712.40
Withdrawal (P. Gbatu)	154799	21-Dec-15	1,772.00		3,940.40
Withdrawal (Liberia Observer)	154800	21-Dec-15	350.00		3,590.40
Service Charge		1-Jan-16	25.00		3,565.40
Withdrawal (P. Gbatu)	154801	6-Jan-16	900.00		2,665.40
Deposit (Check)	GT-100064834	14-Jan-16		1,500.00	4,165.40
Deposit (Check)	GT-100064832	14-Jan-16		2,000.00	6,165.40
Withdrawal(P. Gbatu)	154808	21-Jan-16	2,161.00		4,004.40
Withdrawal (M. Kerkula)	154803	22-Jan-16	1,078.00		2,926.40

Withdrawal (P. Gbatu)	154805	22-Jan-16	64.00		2,862.40
Withdrawal (E. Witherspoon)	154802	22-Jan-16	2,033.00		829.40
Instant Statement Charge		22-Jan-16	5.00		824.40
Withdrawal (H. Baysah)	154804	23-Jan-16	148.00		676.40
Withdrawal (J. Teld)	154806	23-Jan-16	36.00		640.40
Deposit (Check)	ECO-00369444	25-Jan-16		3,950.00	4,590.40
Service Charge		1-Feb-16	25.00		4,565.40
Deposit (Check)	ECO-00431937	5-Feb-16		3,950.00	8,515.40
Withdrawal (E. Witherspoon)	180226	5-Feb-16	1,612.00		6,903.40
Withdrawal (M Kerkula)	180227	5-Feb-16	1,094.00		5,809.40
Withdrawal (H. Baysah)	180228	5-Feb-16	278.00		5,531.40
Withdrawal (P. Gbatu)	180229	5-Feb-16	191.00		5,340.40
Withdrawal (J. Teld)	180230	5-Feb-16	145.00		5,195.40
Comm. on return check		5-Feb-16	30.00		5,165.40
Withdrawal (P. Gbatu)	154809	8-Feb-16	750.00		4,415.40
Book Balance					4,415.40

The above reconciliation is in keeping with the records of the Administrative and Finance Officer of the Technical Secretariat, Ms. Henra G. Baysah, and isn't an official reconciliation statement of the Association's account with the LBDI.

Revamping the Nation's economy through Sustainable Forest Management, I remain,

Respectfully submitted: _____

E. Ekema A. Witherspoon, I.
Head of Secretariat
Liberia Timber Association