

SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL IN AFRICA: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO AFRICANS? The Liberian Experience

By

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Evolution of Liberia's Tropical Forest Alliance (TFA 2020) African Palm Oil Initiative (APOI)

- **2013 - Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) National Technical Working Group (NTWG) set up.**
- **2014 - *Republic of Liberia becomes the 1st African country to be a full TFA 2020 partner.***
- **26-28 May 2015 - 1st TFA 2020 APOI national workshop held.**
- **28-29 January - 2016 National Conference on Forest Definition (agreed on 30% minimum forest cover; 5 meter minimum tree height; 1 hectare minimum area).**

Evolution of Liberia's TFA 2020 APOI (cont'd)

- **2nd - 3rd March 2016 in Accra, Ghana** – Liberia participated in a regional TFA 2020 workshop to develop and agree on harmonized principles and actions for sustainable palm oil production at the regional level.
- **3rd - 4th August 2016 - 2nd National workshop** held to develop TFA 2020 principles and actions.
- **6th - 7th October 2016 in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire** – Liberia also participated in a follow-up TFA 2020 regional workshop to harmonize principles and actions for sustainable palm oil production at the regional level. Through the March and October 2016 regional workshops, the countries jointly negotiated and agree on the text of the “*Marrakesh Declaration*” to be signed at COPP 22 in Morocco.
- **16th November 2016** - Liberia signed the TFA 2020 Marrakesh Declaration at COP22 in Morocco along with 6 other African countries (Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, Republic of Ghana, Central Africa Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone).
- **September 13, 2017** - National Review Session held on theme: “Making the TFA 2020 & RSPO work for customary tenure rights”.

Stakeholders that are engaged in Liberia's TFA 2020 APOI

- **Public sector**: Forestry Development Authority (FDA)/REDD+ technical team; Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
- **Private sector**: Sime Darby, Golden Veroleum Liberia (GVL), Equatorial Palm Oil (EPO), Société Immobilière et Financière de la Côte Africaine (SIFCA).
- **Civil Society**: Sustainable Development Institute (SDI), Social Entrepreneurs for Sustainable Development (SESDev).
- **TFA 2020 Main Partners**: Fauna & Flora International (FFI), Conservation International (CI), World Resources Institute, Rainforest Alliance, and IDH Sustainable Trade Initiative.

Liberia's 9 TFA 2020 Principles and Actions

(Liberia APOI National Workshop, 4th August 2016, Monrovia)

- 1. Liberia should achieve zero net deforestation by 2025 through the adoption of High Carbon Stock (HCS) and High Conservation Value (HCV) designations *(3 actions to be fully implemented within 1-5 years:***
 - Develop a strategy to achieve zero net deforestation in the palm oil sector by 2025 in < 1 year.**
 - Increase education and awareness on no deforestation concepts within 1-5 years.**
 - Implement at least 3 pilot incentives schemes for community stewardship within 1-5 years.**

Liberia's 9 TFA 2020 Principles and Actions

2. Concessionaires should support local livelihoods through a *Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) agreement* (2 actions within 1-5 years):

- **Convene stakeholders of Oil Palm Sector Technical Working Group in 2016.**
- **Design & implement a national independent monitoring & grievance mechanism with 1-5 years.**

Liberia's 9 TFA 2020 Principles and Actions

- 3. Entities commercially producing oil palm in Liberia should be RSPO members aiming to produce RSPO oil palm (4 actions within 1-2 years):**
- **National Interpretation for RSPO Principles & Criteria needs to be completed and approved in < 1 year.**
 - **National Interpretation for HCV needs to be completed and approved in < 1 year.**
 - **Clarify High Carbon Stock (HCS) definition and thresholds in the Liberia context in line with Liberia's commitment to Zero Net Deforestation (ZND) in < 1 year.**
 - **Develop effective monitoring, reporting & verification mechanisms for HCV & HCSs in 1-2 years.**

Liberia's 9 TFA 2020 Principles and Actions

4. All palm oil companies in Liberia, both local and international, should conduct a thorough FPIC compliant process as defined by RSPO before any agreement with communities are signed (*4 actions within 1-3 years*):

- **All OP companies should have an FPIC standard operating procedure (SOP) in place from the onset of engaging communities – the SOP should be available to be scrutinized by all stakeholders in < 1 year.**
- **Standard national template developed by the national interpretation of the RSPO criteria and principles process (when completed/adopted) actors within the oil palm sector should define FPIC processes in the Liberian context and how it aligns with Liberian cultures and traditions – should be considered within the national interpretation within 1-2 years.**

Liberia's 9 TFA 2020 Principles and Actions (cont'd)

#4 Actions – FPIC - cont'd:

- **Mobilize resources (human and financial) so communities have access to independent legal and technical assistance within 1-5 years.**
- **Civil society organizations should independently monitor FPIC compliance processes in < 1 year.**

Liberia's 9 TFA 2020 Principles and Actions (cont'd)

5. Promote food security for communities as an integral part of oil palm development, especially access to current and future farmlands (2 actions within 1-2 years):

- **National Oil Palm Strategy should include a major section on food security in < 1 year.**
- **Set up a mechanism to ensure food security is factored into effective land use planning between companies, communities and local authorities in oil palm landscapes (This needs to tie in with national food security strategy/plan) within 1-2 years.**

Liberia's 9 TFA 2020 Principles and Actions (cont'd)

6. Develop sustainable smallholder components as part of the oil palm sector through access to finance, markets and extension services (5 actions within 1-5 years):

- **Improve access to finance and market within 1-5 years.**
- **Improve research in the palm oil sector within 1-5 years.**
- **Develop smallholder capacity to increase productivity, value addition and diversity production within 1-5 years.**
- **Improve infrastructure (feeder roads, processing mill capacity for smallholders, crude palm oil storage/warehousing system (continuous)).**

Liberia's 9 TFA 2020 Principles and Actions (cont'd)

7. **Develop an outgrower framework - that is transparent and fairly administered** (*5 actions within 1-5 years:*

- **Support the development of an acceptable outgrower model, including a governance framework < 1 year.**
- **Conduct community needs assessment, developed collaboratively by all of the parties < 1 year.**
- **Consult to agree on the basic outgrower model that would be adapted as needed for different locations and contexts < 1 year.**
- **Develop financial models that supports this approach, also developed by all of the parties collaboratively < 1 year.**
- **Company ensure that outgrowers have the capacity to reach certifiable status with RSPO 3-5 years.**

Liberia's 9 TFA 2020 Principles and Actions (cont'd)

8. **Develop a single, integrated national land use plan with appropriate implementation policies and associated mapping resources (5 Actions within 2-5 Years):**

- **Land use policy should be drafted, with involvement of all relevant agencies and stakeholders, and then be validated and enacted within 3-5 years.**
- **Enact the new land rights act in < 1 year.**
- **Develop the national land use plan within 3-5 years.**
- **Develop different land use maps at needed scales; Need to agree upon methodologies for how data sets are collected and integrated within 3-5 years.**
- **Land-use plan implementation to be properly resourced within 1-2 years.**

Liberia's 9 TFA 2020 Principles and Actions (cont'd)

9. **Develop governance systems at all levels with rules and regulations that are effective and enforceable (3 actions within 2-5 years):**

- **Awareness raising/sensitization around contract law and its obligations within 3-5 years.**
- **Improve mechanisms for enforcement of rules and regulations 1-5 years.**
- **Develop and implement appropriate public and private mechanisms to ensure proper monitoring systems within 3-5 years.**

What key learnings should RSPO draw from Liberia's TFA 2020 Principles and Actions to make the final output of the ongoing revision of the RSPO Principles and Criteria?

The TFA 2020 process in Liberia involved deeper engagements at strategic levels that included:

- Engagement with highest levels of government, including the presidency. The President of Liberia (H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf) is the greatest champion of the TFA 2020 initiative.
- Madam President is committed to ensuring that Liberia's natural resources are used to benefit the country and the communities in which those resources are found.

Key learnings RSPO should draw from Liberia's TFA 2020 Principles and Actions (cont'd)

- **President Sirleaf's administration is credited with attracting the largest investments in the oil palm sector in Liberia:**
 - **Agreements signed with several major oil palm concessions in the country (Sime Darby, GVL, EPO, SIFCA)**
 - **Estimated investments of over US\$6 billion**
 - **Estimated 81,000 direct jobs expect to be created**
- **Strong collaboration and support from partners such as FFI, CI, and IDH for regularly capacity building workshops and other activities to provide opportunities for a broad range of stakeholders to understand the RSPO principles and criteria.**

Key learnings RSPO should draw from Liberia's TFA 2020 Principles and Actions (cont'd)

- **Strong bilateral and multilateral engagements and support:**
 - **EU – Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA)**
 - **Norway – Forest Carbon Partnership Fund (FCPF)**
 - **USAID – Forest Governance**
 - **World Bank – Liberia Forest Sector Project**
- **Government has established transparent and accountable agencies that support RSPO related issues and activities (Land Authority; Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI); Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-information Services (LISGIS); and processes such as validation workshops and meetings are held regularly for all stakeholders.**

Issues and challenges of implementing Liberia's TFA 2020 Principles and Actions

A. Political Issues/Challenges:

- **Compliance and enforceability of the principles and corresponding actions.**
- **Land Rights Act needs to be passed by the Liberian National Legislature to address land-related litigations legally.**
- **Priorities of the National Government.**
- **Absence of a clear outgrower scheme and policy.**
- **There will be a change in government in Liberia in January 2018**
 - **Will the new government continue the progress that has been made so far with the “Marrakesh Declaration” and the agreed “TFA 2020 principles and actions”?**

Issues and challenges of implementing Liberia's TFA 2020 Principles and Actions (cont'd)

B. Socio-Economic Issues/Challenges:

- Who implements and validates the FPIC process?
- Development of standard operating procedure for FPIC.
- How to provide incentives to community for better stewardship to achieve conservation.
- Development of standardized Feedback-Grievance-Redress-Mechanism (FGRM).

Technical Issues/Challenges:

- Absence of a comprehensive land use planning.
- Limited human resource capacity.
- Operationalization of TFA 2020 (secretariat formation).
- Inadequate understanding of HCS & HCV.

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Thank You