

UNDP and Partners Monitor Progress of Community-Based Forestry Project in Liberia

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The Swedish Embassy in Liberia and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative conducted a field mission to monitor project sites in Grand Cape Mount, Gbarpolu, and Lofa Counties.

The four-year project, titled “Community-Based Forestry and Protected Area Management (CBFM),” is implemented by UNDP, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) with funding from the Swedish Embassy.

The project aims to strengthen biodiversity conservation and improve livelihoods in forest-fringe communities. It focuses on improving governance of community forest management bodies, building capacity of forest regulatory institutions, empowering national CSOs/NGOs and Forest and Farm Producer Organizations, and promoting sustainable livelihood incentives.

The monitoring team engaged with project beneficiaries in Takpoima, Gbarma Lumeh, Varguaye, Benduma, and Salayea to assess project progress and gather feedback.

“Nine years ago, before this project, we were unable to harvest because the elephants would come out of the forest and damage our crops”, said Juma Dambah, the chair lady of the group in Varguaye town project site in Grand Cape Mount County.

Key Achievements:

- **Community Engagement:** The project has successfully engaged over 140 people in Benduma and Varquaye towns, providing training on lowland rice production and forest biodiversity conservation.
- **Improved Livelihoods:** Project beneficiaries have reported increased resilience to climate change and reduced crop damage from elephants.
- **Enhanced Forest Protection:** The project has trained 80 Eco-Guards to combat illegal activities in the forests.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- **Deforestation:** Liberia faces significant deforestation challenges due to reliance on forests for firewood and hunting.
- **Climate Change:** The project addresses the impacts of climate change on forest-dependent communities.

Future Plans:

The project will continue to work with partners to implement sustainable forest management practices, strengthen community resilience, and protect Liberia's valuable forests.