

First Log Shipment Leaves for France

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Logs loaded on board Magdalena Vallentta at the Port of Buchanan for France

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Exportation of log from Liberia has begun at the Port of Buchanan since the sanction on forestry was lifted a few years ago.

According to the Deputy Managing Director for Administration at Forestry Development Authority (FDA), Kederick Johnson, the shipment of logs being carried out by EJ&J Investment Corporation operating in Rivercess County is the first major and legally arranged one to leave Liberia following the lifting of the sanction.

Mr. Johnson disclosed that some logs had left Liberian soil on a container ship a while ago, but was in "small quantity." He added that the current shipment was being carried out in a transparent way with all stakeholders involved.

In an interview with a team of reporters at the Port of Buchanan on April 24, 2010, Mr. Johnson said this major shipment had gone through all legal formalities with the Société Générale de Surveillance (SGS), that is in Liberia to monitor forestry activities to ensure that logs do not leave the country illegally.

He further said EJ&J Investment Corporation is in cordial relations with the FDA in meeting up with its social and economic responsibilities to the state and people in whose settlement it is operating. He said the FDA ensured that all revenue incentives to government had been paid prior to the shipment of the logs.

Mr. Johnson also disclosed that while companies were pushing in to commence operations in the Liberian forest, the FDA too was doing all it could to put in place mechanisms that would prevent such companies from brushing the forest only to leave it unplanted.

He said for every tree cut down in the forest, the FDA ensures that the company involved carries out reforestation to restore the forest. "Besides," he said, "there is a cut limit that enables the forest to still be in a better position to uphold wildlife and prevent communities from facing storm disaster."

Also speaking to reporters, the president of the EJ&J Investment Corporation, Madam Eliza D.J. Kronyahn, said through the help of the Malavasi Logging Company, with which her company is in partnership as far as shipment is concerned, including the Government of Liberia and the Liberian Group of Loggers, her dream had 'reached this far'.

She said having gone through strenuous scrutiny coupled with numerous disappointments from some parties involved in the process, she could now boast that, as a woman in the midst of men, she had succeeded in her effort to be the first to export logs from the port of Buchanan to France since the lifting of sanction in Liberia.

Commenting on the company's social responsibility to the communities in which it works, Madam Kronyahn said all social responsibilities agreed upon in the contract were being followed well and that the company and the people were in a cordial working relationship.

The first shipment is leaving Liberia on the vessel Magdalena Vallentta with International Marine Organization (IMO) number 8302234 of the Euro-Africa shipping line.

The EJ&J Corporation president further disclosed that they were shipping 1,917 cubic meters of logs. Another speaker, the Magdalena Vallentta captain, Jaceu Zoebui, said his vessel was carrying 600 pieces the first time.

Sharing his impression about Liberia, Captain Zoebui, who spoke to reporters in his office on board the vessel, said unlike other countries where he had encountered difficulties, he and his crew members felt comfortable in Liberia and that they could assure business partners in the world that Liberia had improved in doing business.

This first shipment is part of improvements emerging in the forestry sector of Liberia since the war ended in 2003. It can be recalled that on March 21, 2010, the B&V Timber Company brought its first batch of logs to the Freeport of Monrovia from Grand Cape Mount County, but could not have them shipped abroad.

This first loading of logs to Europe from Liberia was also witnessed by Grand Bassa County Superintendent, Madam Julia Duncan Cassell. She told journalists that it was a sign of Government meeting up with its responsibility to the people in booming the economy and providing jobs for the citizens.

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