



EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 53 **MORATORIUM ON PUBLIC LAND SALES**

WHEREAS, current issues surrounding the sale of public land pose serious challenges to ensuring equal access, security of tenure and the rule of law with regards to public land transactions;

WHEREAS, there is recognition that issues involving public land are complex and entail current procedures that contribute to many of the problems and abuses associated with public land sales;

WHEREAS, there is need to address and investigate these procedures, recognizing that there are technical and social issues involved in identifying available public land, including the issuance of Tribal Certificates or Town Lot Certificates;

WHEREAS, the Land Commission is undertaking comprehensive reforms of the land sector and has completed a National Land Rights Policy which redefines Public Land and requires the formulation of new laws, regulations and procedures to guide transactions involving public land;

WHEREAS, the continuing issuance of Tribal Certificates and Town Lot Certificates for effecting public land sales, if left unchecked, will significantly hamper implementation of the National Land Rights Policy, specifically diminishing the benefits of customary land rights;

WHEREAS, because continuation of public land sales under current procedures, as outlined in the Public Land Law of 1973, will exacerbate problems of unequal access, insecurity of tenure and the rule of law in public land transactions, it is imperative that a moratorium be placed on the sale of public land to allow for new law, regulations and procedures to be formulated; and

WHEREAS, recognizing that during the formulation of the new land laws, regulations and procedures, some public land transactions must be undertaken to secure land for public uses and development initiatives which will require thorough vetting procedures;

NOW THEREFORE, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and Laws of the Republic of Liberia, I do hereby declare and order:

1. A moratorium on public land sales and all transactions including the issuance of Tribal Certificates and Town Lot Certificates.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. J. J.', located at the bottom right of the page.



2. That this moratorium applies to all individuals, government functionaries, local officials, traditional authorities, communities, groups, businesses and associations involved in public land transactions.
3. That this moratorium applies to all activities involving the issuance of Tribal Certificates by traditional or other governmental authorities or the issuance of Town Lot Certificates by municipal authorities.
4. That the relevant ministries and agencies of Government shall be responsible to closely monitor the situation to insure compliance with this moratorium.
5. That all Tribal Certificates or Town Lot Certificates issued by any local authority during the period of this moratorium shall be considered illegal and void.
6. That a nine-member Screening Committee is hereby constituted to vet all Public Land Deeds in the country and work in accordance with the Interim Guidelines and Procedures for the sale of Public Land (2011) recommended by the Land Commission. Members of the Committee are:
 - i. Chairperson of the Land Commission - Chair
 - ii. Minister of Justice
 - iii. Minister of Internal Affairs
 - iv. Minister of Public Works
 - v. Minister of Agriculture
 - vi. Minister of Lands, Mines and Energy
 - vii. Chairman of the National Investment Commission
 - viii. Managing Director of the Forestry Development Authority
 - ix. Executive Director of the Environmental Protection Agency

This Executive Order shall take immediate effect.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL OF THE
REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA THIS 20th DAY OF
DECEMBER, A.D. 2013.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ellen Johnson Sirleaf', written over a horizontal line.

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
PRESIDENT
REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA