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Bong To Set up New Development Council

Superintendent Rennie Jackson

A consensus has been reached between Bong County leadership and the citizens that in keeping with the budget law, a new county development council be formed as an initial step in developing the framework to drive the county's development process.

The county's leadership also agreed that Superintendent Rennie Jackson should instruct district commissioners to convene citizens' meetings in each district and those meetings should be held in the presence of the District Representatives to select a representative on the County Development Council.

The decision was reached recently at a one-day development meeting facilitated by the Search for Common Ground/Talking Drum Studio with funding from the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in Gbarnga, Bong County.

The meeting brought together lawmakers, citizens and district commissioners to discuss critical development and reconciliation issues affecting the county.

According a Common Ground release, the gathering mandated the Superintendent to convene a meeting of the Special Development Council in collaboration with the County Legislative Caucus to elect a three-member Project Management Committee (PMC), which will be done by the 12-man Council.

The release said the PMC will then be charged with managing the county's development agenda. It was agreed that the setting up of these structures be done by August 15, 2008 so that the county's development program would be implemented in a structural manner, the release added.

It was also agreed that the Superintendent will make public financial report on money expended from the county's development funds.

The Gbarnga meeting is a continuation of Search for Common Ground's engagement between citizens and their leaders on governance and accountability. Similar meetings were held over the past two months in Nimba and Grand Bassa Counties.

The release said Common Ground has been wooed to initiate these meetings because bad governance, the lack of accountability in the management of public funds coupled with the exclusion of the majority of the population from decision-making processes that affected them, contributed to the violent conflict in Liberia.

The release added that as the nation makes a transition from war to democracy, it is imperative that leadership is exercised differently and the design and

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implementation of development programs are equally done in a manner that reflects the needs of the people.

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