

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **3rd GUYANA-EU NEGOTIATION SESSION ON A FLEGT VOLUNTARY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (VPA)**

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**GEORGETOWN GUYANA, APRIL 16, 2015**

As part of the Government of Guyana's Forest Policy implementation, the Government of Guyana formally entered into the negotiation process with the European Union for a VPA, in December 2012.

The VPA is a key element of the EU's Forest Law and Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan, and a VPA with the European Union would facilitate increased market access for Guyana's timber into the lucrative EU market.

The FLEGT VPA process also provides an opportunity for Guyana to further strengthen and mainstream its consultation and engagement process to enhance forest governance, improve legal compliance and build in-country capacity for community engagement in forest policy development and implementation

Further, the VPA will govern trade in timber between Guyana and the 28 Member States of the EU.

To facilitate this increased market access, Guyana is committed to signing a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the EU in the latter part of 2016.

As part of the VPA process, the EU and Guyana successfully concluded the third negotiation session on the 16<sup>th</sup> April, 2015. Guyana was represented at this session by the National Technical Working Group (NTWG) - a multi-stakeholder group comprising representatives of the private sector, indigenous bodies and Government Agencies selected through a participatory process.

At this negotiation session, the parties committed to maintaining the momentum to reach an agreement that considers the views of all relevant stakeholders.

The parties also committed to further promoting the identification of synergies amongst FLEGT, Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+) and the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) processes. Additionally, the parties agreed to continue examining the framework under which these initiatives can be further integrated and be mutually supportive.

Both parties acknowledged the progress that has been made since the last negotiation session and during this session, including the revision of the joint roadmap.

It was agreed that the next negotiation session would be held in Brussels in November 2015.