



PRESS RELEASE

**Revised Draft of Firearms Act Presented to
Technical Working Group on Small Arms**

April 24, 2006, Monrovia – The Center for Democratic Empowerment (CEDE) on Friday April 21 presented a final draft of the proposed National Firearms Control Act to the Technical Working Group on Small Arms Control. The document, which is a revision of the 1956 Firearms Traffic Act, was contracted to CEDE by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through its Small Arms Control unit. The revision fulfills part of the United Nations Plan of Action (UNPoA) on small arms and light weapons.

According to CEDE representative Urias Teh Pour, who presented the document, the decision to draft a new Act was informed by the devastating impact of small arms in the 14-year Liberian civil conflict. The 1956 Act, he said, does not reflect the current realities imposed by the crisis.

CEDE organized several focus groups made up of representatives from the government and civil society to help decide the basic framework of the Draft Firearms Control Act. One of the most important additions in the proposed Act is the inclusion of the Liberia National Police (LNP) in the control of firearms. If the Draft Act passes into law, the LNP will be responsible for registration and control of firearms.

Hon. Conmany B. Wesseh, Deputy Minister for International Cooperation and Chairman of the TWG, accepted the Draft Act during their coordination meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He encouraged all members of the Technical Working Group to lobby both houses of the legislature for support of the draft so that it would be passed into law in the shortest time possible.

With the help of the UNDP Small Arms Control Programme, the Technical Working Group is preparing to evolve into the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms (LINCOSA). Once established through legislation, LINCOSA will serve as technical supervisor on the registration and control of firearms as outlined in the National Firearms Control Act. The Commission would also be responsible for regional cooperation through collaboration with their counterparts in neighboring ECOWAS countries.

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