RAVAGED BY MORE THAN A DECADE OF CIVIL WAR, BOTH SIERRA LEONE AND LIBERIA ARE NOW ON A PATH TO RECOVERY. BUT PEACE IS FRAGILE. POVERTY AND HUNGER ARE WIDESPREAD IN BOTH COUNTRIES. AND WHILE OIL PALM IS NATIVE TO THE REGION, BOTH SIERRA LEONE AND LIBERIA ARE IMPORTERS OF PALM OIL.

Large palm oil companies are investing in both markets, and smallholder farmers play an important role in production. There is great potential for expanding employment and income. To fully realize this potential, palm oil development must benefit broader communities, and cannot come at the expense of biodiversity. The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) was developed a decade ago to confront concerns over the environment and social impacts of growing plantations and to support sustainable development of the palm oil industry.

IFC is supporting RSPO engagement in Sierra Leone and Liberia with the goal of increasing incomes and employment and through inclusion of smallholder farmers in palm oil production. Specifically, the project is supporting development of a National Interpretation of RSPO Principles and Criteria as a way to define good social and environmental practices for producers. Further, the project will develop and disseminate tools for smallholders showing them how good practices can increase efficiency, quantity, and quality of harvests.

LIBERIA & SIERRA LEONE: Sustainable Development of the Palm Oil Sector in the Post-Conflict Countries

EXPECTED RESULTS:

This project brings together oil palm industry companies, farmers’ groups, NGOs and government to develop a consensus for sustainable practices consistent with the international RSPO.

It is raising awareness of the importance of these practices for mills and plantations. It will also provide help to small farmers in complying with the RSPO requirements.