

THE TIFFANY & CO. FOUNDATION



For Immediate Release

Blood Diamond Land Reclaimed for Agriculture

The Foundation for Environmental Sustainability and Security (FESS) in Partnership with the Tiffany Foundation Announce Success of Major Agriculture and Development Program in Sierra Leone

Report Released and Project Discussed at NYC Event

Ten years of civil war scarred Sierra Leone with conflict, poverty and environmental degradation. Sierra Leone now has been at peace for more than five years, but poverty and environmental degradation persist in the diamond-producing communities. The landscape where diamond mining has taken place is scarred by innumerable abandoned malarial pits. These pits make farming, and other uses, impossible.

A recent project by FESS (“Improving Environmental Management and Mitigating Land-Use Conflicts in Alluvial Diamond Fields in Sierra Leone”), funded by The Tiffany & Co. Foundation, has put into motion a process to empower communities to reclaim land, develop alternative land use, increase food and livelihood security, and reduce the potential for conflict.

“By reclaiming mined-out diamond areas, we’re helping heal the scars of Sierra Leone and creating a new future for the people of Sierra Leone,” said Darci Glass-Royal, Chairman of FESS, “Formerly pitted, unusable land now yields jobs, stability and food for the country.”

FESS, in partnership with The Tiffany & Co. Foundation is hosting an event in New York on December 3rd to celebrate the success of their project. It will be attended by officers from The Tiffany and Co. Foundation, officials from Sierra Leone, the Paramount Chief of the Kono Region, Paul Ngaba Saquee V and singer-songwriter Ben Jelen who is known for his commitment to environmental causes..

The event will be used to premiere a short film documentary and release a report - “Improving Environmental Management and Mitigating Land-Use Conflicts in Alluvial

Diamond Fields in Sierra Leone” – which shows how the communities have reclaimed their land at three project sites, and put it to agricultural use.

“When land reclamation takes place and is followed by agriculture, artisanal mining begins to lose its character as the employment of last resort for all-too-numerous jobless youths,” says Daniel Gbondo, FESS field representative in Sierra Leone. “Artisanal mining will continue for some time to come, but with land reclamation, the serious hazards posed by mining pits are significantly reduced, and artisanal mining can continue as part of a balanced transition for the region.”

For more information, a copy of the report, and video and film opportunities, please contact: Robin Hohweiler, 703-560-8290, rhohweiler@fess-global.org

*The **Foundation for Environmental Security and Sustainability (FESS)** is a public policy organization established to advance knowledge and provide effective solutions to key environmental security changes around the world. FESS conducts extensive field research in combination with data analysis to produce policy-oriented reports and recommendations that address environmental risks to stability.*

The Tiffany & Co. Foundation, established in 2000, makes grants to nonprofit organizations working in the fields of the arts and environmental conservation, with a particular focus on responsible mining at both the large-scale and artisanal levels.

For more information on The Tiffany & Co. Foundation, see www.tiffanyandcofoundation.org

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