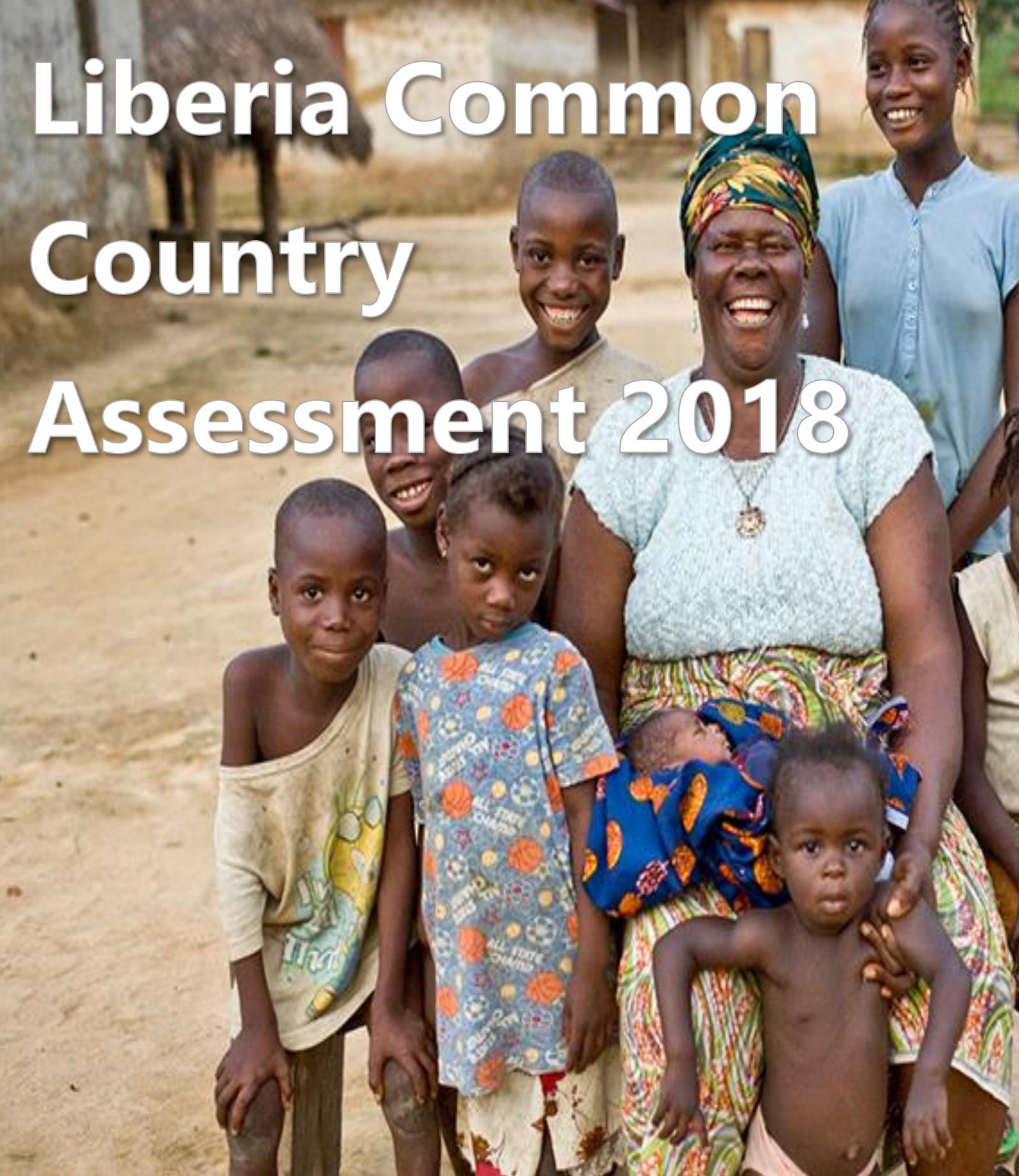


Liberia Common Country Assessment 2018



Prepared for the UN in Liberia by Primson Management Services

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Acronyms

AfDB	Africa Development Bank
AfT	Agenda for Transformation
ART	Anti-Retroviral Therapy
ARV	Anti-Retroviral Drugs
AU	African Union
BPU	Border Patrol Unit
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CBL	Central Bank of Liberia
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CCVI	Climate Change Vulnerability Index
CEDAW	Convention of the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CET	Common External Tariff
CFSNS	Comprehensive Food Insecurity & Nutrition
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSC	County Services Centre
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DPs	Development Partners
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EIA	Environmental Impact Assignment
EOSs	Emergency Operation Centres
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EU	European Union
EVD	Ebola Virus Disease
FAPS	Food and Agricultural Policy & Strategy
FHH	Female Headed Households
FPS	Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy & Strategy
GC	Governance Commission
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GoL	Government of Liberia
GPI	Gender Parity Index
GRC	Governance Reform Commission
GSI	General Services Index
HCT	HIV Counselling & Testing
HDI	Human Development Index
HDRs	Human Development Reports
HIES	Household Income Survey
ICR	International Rescue Committee
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross
IHR	International Health Regulations
IIAG	Ibrahim Index of African Governance
IIE	Independent Information Commission

IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMS	Incident Management System
INCHR	Independent National Commission on Human Rights
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
IYCF	Infant and Young Child Feeding
JEE	Joint External Evaluation
LASIP	Liberia Agriculture Sector Investment Plan
LATA	Liberia Agricultural Transformation Agenda
LDHS	Liberia Demography Health Survey
LEITI	Liberia Extractive Industries & Transparency Initiative
LNP	Liberia National Policy
MACs	Ministries, Agencies & Commissions
MCEE	Maternal and Child Epidemiology Estimation Group
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MFDP	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
MHH	Male Headed Households
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children & Social Protection
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
MPW	Ministry of Public Works
MRU	Mano River Union
MSM	Men having Sex with Men
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
MW	Mega Watts
NAPA	National Adaptation Programs for Action
NAPHS	National Action Plan for Health Security
NCDS	National Capacity Development Strategy
NDMP	National Disaster Management Policy
NECOLIB	National Environmental Policy of Liberia
NEP	National Environmental Policy
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NFSNS	National Food Security & Nutrition Strategy
NGO	Non- Governmental Organisations
NGP	National Gender Policy
NLP	National Livestock Policy
NP	National Petroleum
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OCT	Optical coherence tomography
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OSIWA	Open Society Initiative for Western Africa
PFM	Public Finance Management
PICT	Provider Initiated Testing
PMIDs	People Who Inject Drugs
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission
PMU	Programme Management Unit
PPCC	Public Procurement & Concessions Commission

PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PSU	Police Support Units
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
PWIDs	People Who Inject Drugs
SARA	Service Availability and Readiness Assessment
SGBV	Sexual Gender Based Violence
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
ToC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade Rights
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHER	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNV	United Nations Volunteer programme
UPR	Universal Periodic Peer Review
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WACPs	Women and Children Protection Section
WAMZC	West Africa Monetary Zone Convergence
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
YOCEL	Youth Coalition for Education in Liberia

Definitions of Key Terms

Accra Agenda for Action (AAA): A platform on which developing countries committed to taking control of their own future whilst donors pledged to coordinate better amongst themselves, and all agreed to be more accountable to each other and to their citizens.

Capacity: Refers to the overall ability of a system to create value. Capacity is an emergent property or an interaction effect. It comes out of the dynamics involving a complex combination of attitudes, resources, strategies and skills, both tangible and intangible.

Concession: A right to exploit a facility and a service of general interest, conceded by a concession granting authority to an equity company concessionaire, under the concessionaire's obligation to construct and to manage and maintain the subject of the concession or to manage the service at the concessionaire's own risk.

Decentralization: The process by which the activities of an organization, particularly those regarding planning and decision-making, are distributed or delegated away from a central, authoritative location or group.

Decongestion: The process of relieving congestion from a central position spreading to other outer areas.

Fragile states: States are fragile when state structures and institutions lack political will and capacity to provide the basic fundamentals needed for poverty reduction, sustainable development and to safeguard the security of human rights (OECD-2014).

Gini coefficient: A measure of inequality of a distribution. It is defined as a ratio with values between 0 and 1.

Governance: The exercise of political and administrative authority at all levels to manage a country's affairs. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions, through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences.

Human Development Index (HDI): A composite statistic (composite index) of life expectancy, education, and per capita income indicators, which are used to rank countries into four tiers of human development.

Human Development: Is the expansion of people's freedoms to live long, healthy and creative lives; to advance other goals they have reason to value; and to engage actively in shaping development equitably and sustainably on a shared planet.

Impunity: Freedom from any form of punishment despite committing serious crimes.

Income Poverty: The kind of poverty level that is based on minimum incomes needed for basic necessities

Multidimensional poverty: refers to multiple deprivations at the household and individual level in health, education and standard of living.

Peacebuilding: An intervention technique or method that is designed to prevent the start or resumption of violent conflict by creating a sustainable peace.

Reconciliation: A process through which a society moves from a divided past to a shared future.

SGBV: A term, sexual and gender-based violence is used increasingly to mean sexual violence and gender-based violence.

The New Deal: Is a breakthrough agreement between fragile states and partners to change the policy and practice of engagement.

The Paris Declaration: Is a practical, action-oriented roadmap to improve the quality of aid and its impact on development. It gives a series of specific implementation measures and establishes a monitoring system to assess progress and ensure that donors and recipients hold each other accountable for their commitments.

Youth Bulge: A situation in which the population share of the 15-24 year-olds exceeds 20 per cent and the share of the 0-14 year-olds is higher than 30 per cent.

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Common Country Assessment (CCA) has become a mandatory first step process for the preparation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The CCA for Liberia serves two purposes, which include, informing priority settings for the UN Vision 2030 and providing the much-needed evidence in the development of the Theory of Change for the next UN Programme of Support for the Government of Liberia. This CCA was conducted between mid-January and end of March 2018. [The methodological approach of the CCA was guided by the UNDG \(2017\) guidance of CCA¹ in terms of assessment and analysis.](#) The methodology for the development of the CCA included CCA thematic area reviews by stakeholders (Government, UN, Development Partners – DPs, Civil society Organisations (CSOs and private sector). The stakeholders undertook a SWOT analysis of key themes and produced CCA thematic papers which were a key input to the development of this CCA. The CCA methodology also included: an extensive desk review; intensive stakeholder consultations; field data collection; data analysis and a stakeholder validation workshop. A total of 136 personnel from the government, development partners, private sector and UNCT were interviewed. [The limitations for the compilation of the CCA included: access to compratice up-to-date survey data including sex disaggregated statistics, lack of baseline for SDGs and a country in political transition which limited clarity on a shared understanding of government priorities.](#)

Country Context

Economic Overview and Poverty Trends: Liberia is one of the poorest countries in the world ranked 4th of the 30 poorest countries. The 2013 multi-dimensional poverty values for Liberia reflected that the majority of people in Liberia were experiencing multi-dimensional poverty. Liberia's multi-dimensional poverty index for 2013 showed that 70% of the population were multi-dimensionally poor. The incidence of poverty is estimated to have increased from 54.1% in 2014 to 61.2% in 2016.² Rural poverty was higher at 76.1% compared to urban poverty at 31.5%. Male-headed households (MHH) had absolute poverty at 53.3% compared to 46.3% for female headed households (FHH).³ The Gini Coefficient which measures inequality was 0.33 at national level, 0.32 in urban areas and 0.27 in rural areas. The national inequality was lower in Liberia compared to its neighbours Sierra Leone (0.34), Cote D'Ivoire (0.43), Ghana (0.43) and Guinea (0.34).

Key challenges for sustainable economic development: Liberia experiences high inflation. [In 2018 inflation averaged 12.5% compared to 8.5% in 2017.](#)⁴ The growth evidence shows an increase in external debt stock, which rose from USD 597 million in September 2016 to USD 736 million in June 2017. Liberia's economy is characterised by high importation dependency. The country is experiencing high national expenditure which is not conducive for sustainable economic growth. It has an under-developed formal employment sector with low national employment rates. The national formal employment rate is only 20.1% and the remaining 79.9% are in the informal sector.

¹ United Nations Group (UNDP) 2017, Common Country Analysis: UNDAF Companion Guidance.

² World Bank (2018) Power Point Presentation on Poverty Trends

³ UNDP (2016) Human Development for Everyone: Briefing Note for Counties on the 2016 Human Development Report- Liberia,

⁴ World Bank (2018) The World Bank in Liberia. Overview.

Human Development: Liberia's Human Development Index (HDI) remains low at 0.427 (2015) compared to that of the region (0.525).

Health: Child survival remains below the expected level. The rate of neo-natal mortality in 2013 was 38/1 000 live births, infant mortality rate was 54/1 000 while under five mortality stood at 94/1 000 live births. Overall Liberia has high stunting levels, with national average at 32 per cent (Liberia Demographic Health Survey (LDHS 2013). Stunting levels vary little residence with urban areas at 30 per cent while rural areas are 33 per cent (LDHS 2013 p.160/161). One of the key drivers of undernutrition in Liberia is the sub optimal feeding practices among children under five years. The exclusive breastfeeding rate among children 0-6 months is 55 per cent. The percentage of children age 6-23 months fed with an adequate diet (i.e., with all three IYCF practices) is 12 percent in 2013. Immunisation coverage is very low due to inadequate access to health facilities, especially for underserved and remote communities. Maternal mortality still remains at unacceptable levels with a national average at 1075/100 000 live births in 2013. Causes of maternal death include inter alia abortion, sepsis, embolism, haemorrhage and hyper tension.

Clean water and adequate sanitation are rights in themselves and yet fewer than 10 per cent of Liberians have access to safely managed drinking water and sanitation services. Contamination of water and unsafe sanitation are a major public health threat and a key reason for Liberia's high rates of diarrhoeal diseases and childhood malnutrition. While many actors have water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) projects and programmes in rural and urban areas across Liberia, a range of surveys⁵ have found that WASH needs are not equitably addressed. There are unique, inequitable and stark differences in access to WASH services between rural and urban areas, poor and wealthy quantiles. The differences are more pronounced especially between affluent urban areas and slums, and in hard-to-reach areas compared to accessible areas.

Liberia has frequently experienced cholera outbreaks which, with the recent Ebola outbreak, highlight the risks associated with inadequate access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services. Inadequate access to water and sanitation services in health care facilities leads to poor infection prevention and control measures, which among other effects reduces survival of especially newborn children.

HIV and AIDS: HIV prevalence rates are noted to be increasing with variations by sex, sub-population groups and geographical location. The national prevalence is at 2.1%. It is higher among women at 2.4% compared to males 1.8%. The prevalence rate is slightly higher in urban areas (2.6%) compared to rural areas (0.8%). The South Central Region has the highest prevalence at 2.7%. There is high prevalence among male sub-groups: 19.8% in men who have sex with men (MSM); 5% in people who inject drugs (PWIDs) and 4.8% for transport workers. Overall, uptake of HIV counselling and testing has remained low, with 19.1% of women aged 15-49 having been tested in 2013, compared to 1.6% of women in the same age group in 2007. Uptake of counselling and testing for youth (ages 15-24 years) was estimated at only 18.3% for girls and 6.4% for boys (2013). Mother-to-child transmission of HIV is on the downward trend, having decreased from 5.4% in 2007 to 2.5% in 2013. Health facilities offering PMTCT services have also increased from 55 in 2009 to 327 in 2015, whilst those offering anti-retroviral therapy (ART) services have increased from 29 in 2009 to 55 in 2015.

⁵ Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) reports 2013 -2017, LDHS 2013, water point mapping, WASH in Schools Assessment and other studies.

Health Systems Strengthening: The country's capacity to respond to public health threats has been strengthened, mainly prompted by the need to control the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD). Patient screening for infectious diseases has improved. National diagnostic capacity for public health diseases has improved the capacity of the country to diagnose six (6) priority diseases of epidemic potential.

Education: Average educational enrolment is significantly low at all levels of the Liberian education system. At ECE level, 61% of the children are usually above the official pre-primary school age and more than three years older than the age considered to be appropriate. For primary education, as of 2017 the net enrolment rate (NER) stood at 45% while that for the senior high school was at 62% in 2015. The total Liberian population with tertiary education currently stands at 10.4%. Literacy levels in the country vary along gender, social status and geographical location. Male literacy is currently at 77% while female's is less than 54%. There are also differences according to location. About 47% of the rural youth reach the 6th grade as compared to 88% of the same age group in urban areas. Social status which determines economic muscle has an impact on educational attainment. The wealthy groups can afford private schools and mission schools as compared to poorer classes. In an effort to improve the education sector, the Liberian government has opened avenues for partnerships. *However there were controversies with regard to Government's policy decision in January 2016 to outsource primary and pre-school education system to a US Based Private Sector entity. Despite considerable opposition to this unprecedented move, government went ahead to implement the partnership school programme for Liberia.* Quite a number of stakeholders including international donors and NGOs are involved in improving Liberia's education sector. Key areas of support include inter alia: training of school teachers, support for girls' education, providing teaching and learning materials, funding research, development of vocational and technical education training, establishment of computer laboratories and micro-science kits and revision of the educational curriculum. Nevertheless, Liberia's education system is marred with challenges. The sector has inadequate inputs for effective and efficient service delivery. There are high levels of untrained teachers, inadequate infrastructure in schools, corruption and incapacity, with some reports of teachers with fake qualifications. The country's educational curriculum is failing to meet development needs. The education system is exclusive, of the poor population.

Lack of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities in schools can contribute to the spread of disease and in the case of adolescent girls, lack of separate facilities and menstrual hygiene management can lead to absenteeism and drop-out, depriving them of an education. WASH is therefore critical in establishing and maintaining a good learning environment.

Population and Demography: To date the country has carried out four (4) censuses with the most recent one having been carried out in 2008. Almost 75.8% of Liberia's population live in the South-Central region and the remaining living in either Montserrado, South Eastern, or, Northern Regions. About 41.1% of the population lives in rural areas compared to 58.9% living in urban areas. The population has a youth bulge (40% are under 15 and one third are aged between 15-35 years).

Infrastructure: The country has poor infrastructure, most of which was destroyed, or, simply deteriorated beyond use during the years of civil war. Access to electricity is limited across Liberia and practically non-existent in rural areas. As of May 2016, Liberia had an installed electricity grid with capacity of only 23MW. Only 2% of the population had access to own grid electricity and only 1% of the population has access to rural-small grid electricity. The country has a poor road and transport network system and experiences limited road transport connectivity. About three-fifths of the roads are in poor condition and about 2.3 million people who live in remote spaces remain unconnected. Transport costs are high due to poor roads

with sub-optimal linkages among different modes of transport. Post and telecommunication services are relatively poor for those living in rural areas while access to internet and other ICT services remains extremely low. Of all the ECOWAS countries, Liberia has the second lowest levels of ICT services uptake. There are significant housing challenges in Liberia with access to affordable housing for vulnerable groups remaining a major problem.

About 70 per cent of Liberia's population (rural: 60 per cent/urban: 80 per cent) use basic drinking water sources, against the 100 per cent universal coverage required for SDG 6.1. The lack of functionality of water facilities is a major concern: in 2017, only 65 per cent of water points were functional, compared to 53 per cent in 2011. Slums in Monrovia and the south-east counties have the worst indicators for basic water supply.

Only 17 per cent of Liberia's population (rural: 6 per cent/urban: 28 per cent) have access to basic sanitation and there has been no improvement in sanitation coverage for the last three years.⁶ Only 45 per cent of the households in urban slums in Monrovia have access to an improved sanitation facility.⁷ Some 61 per cent of the rural population practice open defecation, compared to 23 per cent in urban areas.⁸

Governance and Conflict Analysis: Liberia is a republic and has three branches of governance which include the executive, legislature and the judiciary. The country's post-war governance reform agenda is organised in four categories: i) political and legal reform; ii) public sector reform; iii) civil engagement, national identity and visioning; and iv) national integration system. Liberia is ranked 28th out of the 54 countries on the Ibrahim Index of African Governance. Since the end of the war in 2003, the country has enjoyed 3 peaceful elections, but vulnerability to conflict remains high. The withdrawal of UNMIL in March 2018 has created concerns among Liberians who believe that the local security has limited capacity to maintain peace. Noted potential triggers of conflict include corruption, land disputes, high levels of youth unemployment, and governance and inequality issues associated with concessions. Decentralization remains a highly contested issue and there are government deficits to deliver public services. Liberia has a number of sound policies, but implementation is a challenge.

International and regional relations are important for growth and transformation in the country. Liberia is one of the 15 ECOWAS member states, a leading member of the Mano River Union, an active member of African Union (AU). Liberia is party to the New Deal, a key agreement between over 50 fragile and conflict affected states to improve effectiveness of development assistance.

Human Rights, Inequalities and Discrimination: Gender inequality issues are a common phenomenon across all spheres of life in Liberia. Despite women constituting a higher proportion of the population compared to men, development indices are negative for women. Women have limited participation in the economy, with 53% of women compared to 74% of men involved in gainful employment. Their participation in politics is equally low. In 2017 women held four (4) out of 19 ministerial positions. Human rights in Liberia are marred with rampant rape with impunity. Women also experience high levels of **Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV)** with statistics showing that in 2016, 1431 women reported SGBV cases. In 2016, 803 case of rape were reported with only 34 convictions being made. Female genital mutilation (FGM) is common and deeply rooted in society such that efforts by the government to stop the practice are met with resistance. In 2015, 11% of women aged 20-22 were married by age 15 and 23%

⁶ DHS-2013 & JMP 2015-2017.

⁷ 2013 Oxfam WASH baseline study.

⁸ DHS-2013 & JMP 2015-2017.

were married by age 18, bringing in the concept of early and forced marriages. The government has made efforts to address and improve human rights situations in the country. Human rights institutions such as INCHR and IIE have been established. The country is part of the regional and international human rights community and has also put in motion processes to address human rights issues in the country, including prioritising CEDAW reporting.

Climate and Environment: Climate change vulnerability is high in the country with low resilience and adaptive capacity. In an effort to build the country's resilience and adaptation to climate change, in 2008 the government set up a National Adaptation Program for Action. The country faces numerous environmental challenges including land degradation, fragmentation, soil erosion and pollution. [Coastal counties face risks of flooding and salt intrusion affecting water quality](#). To manage its environmental issues, Liberia established the Environmental Protection Agency. A number of environmental policies and laws have been developed, including the Forest Protection Act. Despite the existence of these policies and laws, Liberia has little success stories in environmental management.

Peace-Humanitarian-Development Nexus: Any development planning in Liberia calls for addressing the inter-connectedness, or, appreciating the intersectionality of sustaining peace, planning for humanitarian response and the developmental elements. Sustaining peace in Liberia will require taking into consideration the potential conflict risk factors which include: shallow and inadequate post-war reconciliation, weak governance systems, unchecked abuses of democratic freedoms, perceived limited capacity of the government to safeguard peace, and poor social cohesion strategies. People displacement risks in the country include: a high alertness for potential civil war, contagious disease outbreaks, displacement linked to investments (mining, infrastructure development and agriculture, timber and rubber extraction) and natural disasters.

Liberia SDGs and Development Priorities: The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were formulated and adopted at a time when Liberia was in the middle of a protracted war. The country struggled to achieve the MDGs, making a progress rate of only 33%. Given her context, domestication of SDGs and Agenda 2063 must be fragility sensitive and risk informed. The SDG implementation process was officially launched on the 25th of January 2016. The Government of Liberia (GoL) prioritised 7 out of 17 SDGs. At least 106 out of 169 targets of the SDGs are strongly represented in the AFT-1. Liberia adopted a roadmap for implementing the SDGs and Agenda 2063 including the establishment of institutional arrangements for implementation of SDG. The process for mainstreaming of SDGs is, however, slow. This CCA and a mid-term review of the AFT, UNDAF evaluation 2013 – 2017, and analysis of the Agenda 2063, shows that there are SDG gaps in the current AFT and the prioritised SDGs may also have omitted critical SDGs that would respond to noted development challenges in Liberia. Under Goal 1 on poverty reduction, SDG target 15 relating to resilience and reduction of vulnerability is not captured in AFT 1. Targets 2.2 on nutrition, 3.4 on non-communicable diseases and 3.7 and 5.6 relating to agriculture are also not covered in AFT 1. On Goal 7, target 11.3 on inclusive and sustainable urbanisation is not covered. Goals 12 on sustainable consumption and 15 on terrestrial ecosystem, forests, and biodiversity are not prioritised in the AFT 1. This analysis points to the need for consolidating the priority SDGs for Liberia ensuring they address the critical development challenges of the country. However, this should also be realistic given limited financial and human resources and make sure that this does not just become a wish list.

UN Comparative Advantage: A critical step in defining the comparative advantage for the UNCT in Liberia is the analysis of the development challenges that militate against the country's development

challenges to include: high level of youth unemployment; lack of youth skills and competencies, persistent negative impact of war time atrocities; severe capacity gaps in the rule of law institutions; high vulnerabilities associated with ethnic, religious, gender based, class based polarisation; an economy heavily dependent on imports, extractive industry and increasing debt. The country faces high environmental challenges and poor performance for human development. UNCT comparative advantage will need to be complemented by strengths of key stakeholders that include GoL, international development and financial institutions like the World Bank, European Union, International Monetary Fund (IMF), AfDB, private sector and CSOs. The strengths of these stakeholders include: ability to raise resources and provide financial guarantees, local presence (CSOs) making them important partners for reaching out to those vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion; keeping a check on government accountability, capacity to support employment creation particularly for youths (both males and females). Against this background UN comparative advantages include: core approach of institutions development, capacity building and community engagement. Due to its global knowledge and rich technical support network, the UN can provide a leading role in driving the SDG agenda, mainstreaming SDGs in various sectors and monitoring performance around their targets. UN has comparative advantage on issues of SGBV, weak governance across sectors, human rights issues, access to education and health including issues of HIV and AIDS and [national capacity development through volunteer schemes \(volunteer infrastructure\)](#). The UN are particularly well placed to strengthen the rule of law and restore justice, security and protection services. The UN is trusted and reliable peace broker and can give credible support to governance challenges including consolidation of sustainable peace especially at grassroots levels, consolidate outstanding constitutional review processes. However, in order to make this possible and vibrant the UN needs to address internal weaknesses that have to do with issues of individual UN mandates, modalities of resource mobilisation, reporting and accountability systems and HQ demands that are agency based which create competition among UN agencies and the demand for individual agency visibility instead of fostering Delivering as One.

Partnerships: During the UNDAF period 2013-2017 extended to 2019, relationship among development stakeholders (UN, Civil Society, Private Sector) remained relatively weak. The period was characterised by fairly strong relationships between the GoL and the UN in delivering the UNDAF, limited participation of the CSOs and Private sector in contributing to the UNDAF and generally weak coordination among all development stakeholders with respect to contribution to development priorities. Achieving the ambitious agenda for the 2030 SDGs calls for stronger partnerships in Liberia and a paradigm shift in stakeholder relationships. In light of the above, this CCA suggests a One Common Programme, One Fund (Trust Fund) and Jointly Owned Results. Strengthening stakeholder groups for effective contribution to national development priorities via the One Programme is paramount. Against this backdrop, the role of the UN in strengthening stakeholder coordination is: improving aid effectiveness, supporting open budget initiatives, improving of fund tracking for the proposed One Programme, One Fund and Jointly Owned Results. The role of the UN also includes support to the functioning of the LDA, needs assessment and development of the successor [Macro-Economic Blue Print](#). The support to the SDG agenda (consolidating prioritisation, mainstreaming and monitoring) is key. This however, cannot be done just from the country office perspectives or level, it will require the full support of the UN agency HQs that will enable and support in spirit, financially and administratively the Delivering as One Modality. In the absence of HQs support nothing will change as the evaluation has shown this is where the larger limitations lie.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Liberia had continued to move along a sustainable recovery path from the aftermath of the civil war. It invested significant efforts towards the strengthening of its governance and judiciary systems, including the rule of law, economic and human development. It also made important strides towards addressing human rights, inequality and discrimination. The Government of Liberia also showed commitment towards the integration of the country into the regional and international communities for the much needed political and developmental support it required for rebuilding the country after the civil war.

The structure of Liberia's economy remained one of the key determinants of its development. Macroeconomic risks were high as a result of an open economy heavily dependent on foreign aid, and high dependency on foreign direct investment (FDI) and primary exports. The country's vision, Liberia Rising 2030, would only become a reality if macroeconomic risk was addressed. Development partner support played a critical role in the rebuilding of Liberia. It should, however, be noted that some of the development assistance in the form of loans was driving the country into a debt trap, with Liberia's external debt stock increasing from USD 597 million in September 2016 to USD 736 million in June 2017. Since the end of the civil war Liberia received a lot of humanitarian aid inflows, which reached a climax of US\$1.2 billion in 2014 in response to the Ebola virus outbreak.

The major challenge for Liberia remained the consolidation of peace and reconciliation with the risk of conflict remaining very high. Sustaining peace in Liberia would require taking into consideration the potential conflict risk factors. A lot still needed to be done towards reconciliation of the nation from the scars of the civil war. Partners needed to build their future support on the goodwill gained from the successful three consecutive peaceful democratic elections held since the end of the civil war to 2017.

Employment creation was another major challenge that requires attention to defuse the youth unemployment time bomb, as well as absorb greater proportions of women into the formal economy. The employment creation deficit also needed to be addressed through economic decentralisation, accompanied by decentralisation of public service provision. Centralisation of public service provision and economic development, as well as gender inequality were the major drivers of inequality and exclusion, in Liberia. Further, the issue of a generation of youth who lost out on education etc. because of the war remains a major handicap given the current limited efforts in providing skills capacity development for those who have limited education and hence whose chances for skills capacity development remains low.

Moving forward towards sustainable development, post 2013-2017/18 development planning needed to consider a systematic integration of: (i) continued efforts on sustaining peace; (ii) planning for unexpected humanitarian emergencies; and (iii) prioritising key developmental challenges. Sustaining peace in Liberia required taking into consideration the potential conflict risk factors and people displacement risks in the country.

With the prevailing situation and the development challenges in Liberia, the need for UNCT assistance could not be overemphasised. The various mandates of the UNCT in Liberia were evidently relevant for the outstanding development challenges in the country. The UN needed to prioritise those areas of development for which they have undoubted comparative advantage, zeroing in on areas where they had UN combined added value. In selection of those areas of comparative advantage, noting the key areas that could better be done by other development stakeholder would be critical. This however, would require

Government leadership and the inclusion of all development partners in the planning, management and coordination structures and systems.

Recommendations

Moving forwards, aligning the UNCT comparative advantage to the development priorities of the Government of Liberia would be critical. Accordingly, based on the analysis of the UNCT comparative advantage this CCA came out with the following prioritised recommendations. [The priorities are determined by the location of the key intervention areas in the UN Comparative Advantage Framework as defined in the UNDG guidance.](#)

Priority Recommendations for UN Support

Recommendation 1: Support the sustenance of peace particularly at the grassroots level by channelling resources towards addressing the potential triggers of conflict.

Recommendation 2: Supporting efforts to address gender inequalities and human right violations associated with ethnicity, religious and traditional values (harmful traditional practices, early marriages, SGBV).

Recommendation 3: Support Government decentralisation of government services and development to combat exclusion of large proportions of the population located away from the centre, thus ensuring that *No One is Left Behind*.

Recommendation 4: Promoting employment opportunities for youth and women to reduce inequality, marginalisation and exclusion.

Recommendation 5: with respect to agriculture, extractives and land, the UN should support the GoL to invest in agriculture with a focus on the development of agriculture value chains. Efforts to make the sector attractive to youths through the development of Agripole is key. The UN should consider supporting GoL to implement the Land Right Act. Furthermore building the linkages between agriculture and social protection to break the cycle of poverty and enhance food security and nutrition is a priority.

Recommendation 6: Using its convenor and technical knowledge comparative advantages, the UNCT should lobby for, and support the development of an all-inclusive stakeholder development assistance programme under a One Plan, One Fund modality, i.e. a programme going beyond the UNDAF to be an inclusive all stakeholder development assistance framework.

Recommendation 7: Using its comparative advantages of convening power, staff expertise and capacities to coordinate and cultivating strong partnerships towards unleashing combined strengths for the realisation of Liberia's medium to long term development aspirations.

Recommendation 8: Capacity building of CSOs for enhanced support to community [engagement to yield social transformation](#)

Recommendation 9: Support data production use and availability to inform localization and monitoring of SDGs

Recommendation 10: Support the strengthening of emergency planning and humanitarian response and preparedness frameworks and mechanisms so as to strengthen the country's resilience to natural hazards.

Recommendation 11: Support the constitutional review by the GoL, taking it to the “Last Mile” through increased advocacy and deepening legislative engagement to ensure agreed proposals go for referendum.

Recommendation 12: Support the GoL in developing the AFT 1 successor programme and aligning the pillars to the 5Ps, i.e. People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace and Partnership.

Recommendation 13: Support enhancement of public institutions capacities and effectiveness to enable them implement and enforce policies, through technical assistance, South-South triangular corporation and innovative approaches. Strengthening the capacity of the civil service in Liberia is paramount.

Recommendation 14: Support GoL to consolidate prioritisation of SDGs in line with the country’s development priorities and alignment to the Agenda 2063. The SDG agenda should include supporting SDG national planning across line ministries, ensuring relevant data for monitoring SDG targets is readily available.

Recommendation 15: Strengthen the rule of law and restore justice, security and protection services for all vulnerable groups (Disabled, LGBT, Sex-workers, HIV/Aids affected and infected persons) in Liberia.

Recommendation 16: Support the GoL in improving human development in the areas of education, health including HIV and AIDS, and food security and nutrition.

Recommendation 17: Support the GoL to leverage UN’s technical expertise and focus programmatic work on national capacity development through volunteer schemes (volunteer infrastructure) to enable stronger development outcomes in basic social services, youth, disaster risk reduction and other thematic areas corresponding to Agenda 2030 and national development priorities.

In all these issues, the Government needs to take leadership of the development process and the UN to provide technical expertise, management and reporting systems and coordination structures and systems that include all the partners including donors.

1. INTRODUCTION

A Common Country Assessment (CCA) has become a mandatory first step process for the preparation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).⁹ It is an independent UN system analysis of the country context, outlining outstanding development challenges against the Global Sustainable Development Agenda. It provides critical building blocks for strategic planning processes for the UN System in any host country. In Liberia the CCA serves two purposes. It informs priority setting for the UN Vision 2030 and also provides the much-needed evidence for the development of the Theory of Change (ToC) for the upcoming UNDAF.

The CCA was conducted between mid-January and end of March 2018. The timing of the Liberia CCA has many unique features. It was undertaken in parallel with the evaluation of the 2013-2017/18 UNDAF. The CCA was conducted at a time when the country was experiencing three very important transitions. (i) The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) was preparing for its exit since its presence in 2003, handing over security function to the Government of Liberia (GoL) security sector institutions. UNMIL was leaving by end of March 2018; (ii) The CCA was conducted at a time when the new Government led by Mr George Weah was taking over responsibilities from the former government of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf; and (iii) Having experienced one of the worst Ebola outbreaks, the country was also transitioning from a humanitarian to developmental focused development.

Methodological Approach: The CCA methodology followed guidance from the [UNDG \(2017\) Common Country Analysis: UNDAF Companion Guidance](#) in terms of assessment and analysis including identification of key thematic areas. The assessment component encompassed key areas of the 2030 Agenda including; the well being of people in the country, the political, policy and legislative environment for achievement of SDGs, and other national commitments. This also included obligations under international conventions to which Liberia was State Party. With respect to analysis, the CCA relied on UNDG guidance pertaining to the identification, of the immediate, underlying and root causes of multi-dimensional poverty inequalities and discrimination and reasons why particular groups were being left behind. Guidance was also given on examining gaps in the capacities of Duty Bearers to fulfil their obligations and of Right Holders to make their claims. Special emphasis was paid to gender equality and women's empowerment as well as geographical analysis at the macro-meso- and micro levels. Where relevant conflict analysis was undertaken on underlying and root causes and identifying potential triggers as part of the early warning and conflict prevention roles of the UN. The UN comparative advantage was informed by the [Compare Advantage Analysis Framework](#) as defined in the [UNDG \(2017\) guidance](#).

The CCA preparation was mainly informed by existing secondary data. The methodology followed these key stages:

- i. **Desk Review:** The assessment carried out an intensive desk review of available data sources from all stakeholders. A minimum of 73 sources were reviewed and sited.
- ii. **Stakeholder Consultations:** The assessment made intensive consultations with a wide range of stakeholders including government, private sector, development partners (DPs). The

⁹ United Nations Development Group (UNDG) (2017) Common Country Analysis: UNDAF Companion Guidance.

consultations lasted close to a month (14th January to 8th February 2018) reaching as many as 136 respondents.

- iii. **Field Data Collection:** Towards the end of the stakeholder consultation interviews and meetings, the team of consultants conducted field site visits to Bomi and Magibi Counties, where they observed the decentralised administrative centres and held FGDs with stakeholders and administrative officers.
- iv. **Data Analysis and Drafting of the Report:** This involved the compilation and analysis of all the information and data collected from data collection phase. The process was home-based, hence executed exclusively by the consultancy team.
- v. **Validation Workshop:** A one-day validation workshop was conducted to allow for stakeholder buy-in of the CCA.

Overall, the UNDG guidance for the CCA development informed the data collection and analysis. Annex 4 provides the CCA key questions and analytical approach including the steps for arriving at the UN Comparative Advantage.

Data Sources: Key data sources which provided a comprehensive national overview included: The AFT 1 2013-2017, The Mid Term Review of the AFT I conducted in 2016, the 2013 Demographic Health Survey, Population Census of 2008, the Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2016. The CCA also made reference to relevant sector study report. The key challenge, however, was lack of comparability between the main data sources such as DHS of 2013. At the time of the CCA review, the DHS 2018 and Population Census were still in preparatory stages.

Organisation of the Report: The CCA has 6 chapters. Chapter 1 is the Introduction. Chapter 2 covers the Country Context which reviews the key issues that include: Economic Overview, Human Development; Population and Demography; Infrastructure and Urbanisation; Governance and Conflict analysis; Legal and Policy Frameworks; Climate Change and Environment, Human Rights; Inequalities and Discrimination; and the Position of Liberia in the Regional and Global Development Context. Chapter 3 focuses on Liberia, SDGs and Development Priorities. Chapter 4 looks at the UN Comparative Advantage, while chapter 5 analyses the Partnership. Chapter 6 carries the Conclusion and Recommendations.

Limitations of the Assessment: The CCA encountered a number of limitations which compromised the analysis of the country situation. These limitations included the following: i) Limited access to comparative national survey data to provide current status of key indicators. For example the Liberia DHS of 2013 and Census of 2008 did not have subsequent surveys. ii) The AFT 1 Successor Macro-Economic Blue Print has not yet been finalised, which limited analysis of government policy and comprehensive analysis of UN comparative advantage; iii) unavailability of adequate gender disaggregated data which resulted in inadequate analysis of the gender dimensions of the various indicators; and iv) the political transition period during which conclusive policies of the new Government had not yet been adequately spelt out. This in turn limited the CCA capacity to map the way forward as well as tightening of the UN Comparative Advantage.

2.0 COUNTRY CONTEXT

The country context provides a broad overview of the socio economic context of the country. The chapter will cover a wide range of issues including: economic overview, human development, population and demography, infrastructure and urbanisation, governance and conflict analysis, legal and policy frameworks, climate and environment, human rights, inequalities and discrimination and the position of Liberia in the regional and global development context.

2.1 Economic Overview

The subsection gives an outline on the economic status of Liberia. It covers issues that include the country's micro-economic indicators, poverty trends, employment patterns, inflation trends, the country's debt stock and key challenges to sustainable development.

2.1.1 Economic Overview

Liberia is one of the poorest countries in the world: On the ranking of the 30 poorest countries in the world, Liberia sits on the fourth position with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of USD 882 .¹⁰ **Over the years since 2013, the country has experienced GDP fluctuations.** Its economic growth fell to nearly zero since 2014, when the country was hit by Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) crisis and by falling international prices for rubber and iron ore, its two key exports. After real GDP growth of 0.7 % in 2014 and 0% in 2015, the country contracted to an estimated -0.5% in 2016.¹¹ **Liberia's economy is market-based and largely dependent on natural resources, foreign aid and foreign direct investment.** The economic impact of the 2014 Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak was compounded by a sustained decline in global iron ore and rubber prices, which negatively affected exports and new investment in these sectors. The IMF estimated real GDP growth in 2016 was negative 1.2 percent, with an annual inflation rate of 12.5 percent. Liberia's exports were valued at \$169.6 million at end-2016; the export sector relies heavily on rubber and iron ore which accounted for 64 percent of total exports in 2016. Liberia's macroeconomic risks are rooted in structural economic imbalances: a highly-concentrated export and fiscal revenue base, a heavy reliance on foreign aid, and over-dependence on food imports.¹² Table 1 shows trends of key macro-economic indicators for Liberia.

Table 1: Trend in selected Macroeconomic Indicators for Liberia 2015-2018

Macroeconomic Indicators	2015	2016	2017	2018
Real GDP Growth	0.0	-0.5	4.0	4.4
Real GDP Per Capital Growth	-2.4	-2.9	1.5	1.9
Consumer Price Index (CPI)	8.0	12.5	10.0	8.6
Budget Balance % GDP	-8.4	-2.2	-6.2	-7.0
Current Account % GDP	-29.2	-28.5	-22.5	-18.0

Source: Adapted from Africa Economic Outlook (2017) pp3

¹⁰ UK. Business Insider.com 2017 and Global finance (2018) Poorest countries in the world.

¹¹ Africa Economic Outlook {Patrick Hettinger- AfDB; Moses Sichei- UNDP and Stanely Kamara- UNDP} (2017) Liberia.

¹² World Bank, (2018). Poverty & Equity and Macroeconomics, Trade & Investment Global Practices.

Poverty Trends

The 2013 multidimensional values for Liberia reflect the majority of people experiencing multi-dimensional poverty: In 2010, Human Development Reports (HDRs) introduced a concept of multidimensional poverty index (MPI), which identifies multi-deprivations suffered by households in three (3) dimensions- education, health, and living standards. Liberia's MPI for 2013 indicated that 70% of the Liberian population constituting 3,010,000 people were multi-dimensionally poor, while an additional 21.5% lived near multidimensional poverty (924,000). The intensity of deprivations in Liberia reflecting the average deprivation score of people in multi-dimensional poverty is 50.8 percent. Table 2 compares multi-dimensional poverty with income poverty, measured by the percentage of the population living below the PPP USD 1.90 per day.¹³

Table 2: Comparing Multidimensional Poverty with Income Poverty for Liberia and Guinea Bissau

Country	Survey Year	MPI Value	Head Count	Intensity of Deprivation %	Pop Share %			Contribution overall poverty of deprivation in %		
					NP	ISP	BIPL	Health	Edu	Liv Stds
Liberia	2013	0.356	70.1	50.8	21.5	35.4	68.6	25.6	23.0	51.4
Guinea Bissau	2010	0.422	76.3	55.6	10.5	58.4	67.1	27.9	30.5	41.6

Source: Adapted from UNDP (2016) Liberia Human Development for Everyone report.

Key: NP- Near Poverty; ISP- In Severe Poverty; BIPL- Below Income Poverty Line

The statistics in Table 2, show that income poverty only reveals parts of the poverty deprivations. The multidimensional poverty headcount is 1.5 percent point higher than income poverty. The implication is that people living above the income poverty line may still suffer deprivations in education, health and other living conditions.

The economic crisis in past years (2014 to 2016), led to an Increase in poverty levels:

The incidence of poverty is estimated to have increased from 54.1% in the first half of 2014 to 61.2% in the same period of 2016 nationally using the 2014 poverty line. Rural poverty increased significantly while urban poverty declined marginally.¹⁴ See Figure 1.

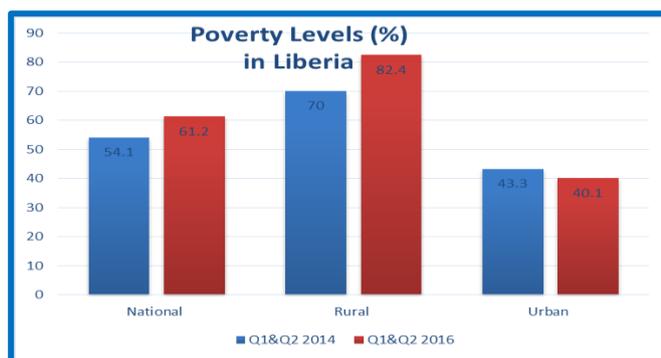


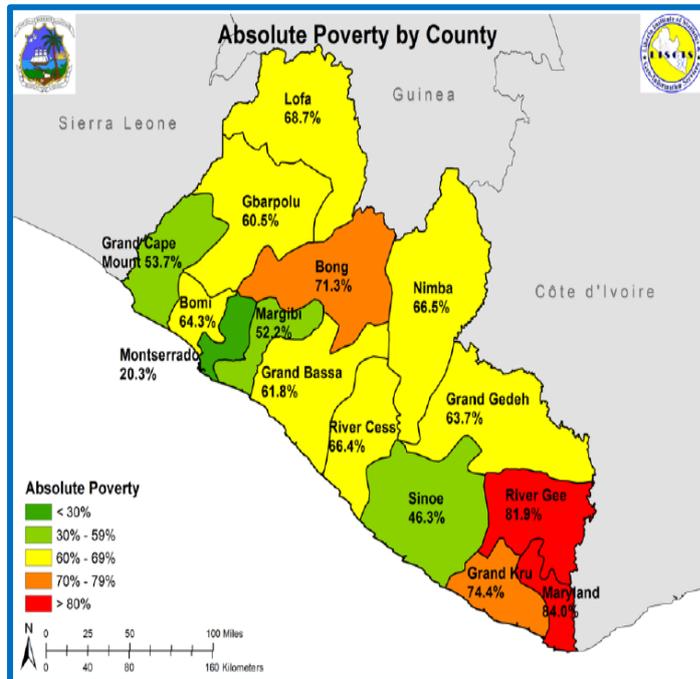
Figure 1: Poverty Trends between 2014 and 2016 in Liberia

As of 2016 Liberia's income poverty stood at 50.9%, with higher intensity of poverty for people living in rural areas, male-headed households and predominantly agricultural sub-population

¹³ UNDP (2016) Human Development for Everyone: Briefing Note for Counties on the 2016 Human Development Report- Liberia.

¹⁴ World Bank (2018) Power Point Presentation on Poverty Trends.

groups: The 2016 Households and Income Expenditure Survey (HIES) indicated that nearly half of the Liberia's population is poor (50.9%). Rural poverty is higher at 76.1% compared to urban poverty at 31.5%. The HIES also show regional variations in poverty with Montserrado having the lowest share of people living below the national poverty live, followed by the South Eastern A (58.4%). Poverty is highest in the Southern Eastern Region B (81.3%) followed by North Central region (68.5%).¹⁵



Further analysis of poverty trends in Liberia revealed that poverty is more prevalent in counties that are heavily dependent on agricultural activities. Counties in the Southern Eastern B region (Mary Land- 84.0%; River Gee- 81.9%; and Grant Ru- 74.4%) have more poor people than any other counties. The analysis also indicate that counties that were once considered as basket of Liberia, with the North Central Regional also have high level of poverty rates with Bans- 71.3; Lofa- 68.7% and Nimba- 64.4%.¹⁶

The Gini Coefficient which measures inequality is at 0.33 for national level, 0.32 for urban areas and 0.27

for rural areas. The national inequality is lower in Liberia compared to its neighbours Sierra Leon (0.34); Cote D'Ivoire (0.43); Ghana (0.43) and Guinea (0.34).

Figure 2: Absolute Poverty Rate by Country (Source: LISGIS Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2016)

Liberia's key challenges for sustainable economic development

Inflationary pressures increased during the first half of 2017: Headline inflation averaged 12.4% in the first half of 2017 compared to 7.3% the previous year, mainly due to the relatively fast pace of the depreciation of the Liberian dollar to the US dollar of 20% in the first half of 2017 compared to 11% in the same period in 2016. Inflation is also reported to have been caused by some of the following factors: i) excess liquidity of the Liberian dollar; ii) the relative shortage of inflows of foreign exchange; iii) the resultant rise in the cost of living, especially the cost of food which was mostly imported; and iv) an increase in fiscal pressures.

Increased indebtedness/ growth of debt stock: Statistical evidence show an increase in debt stock. The external debt stock had been increasing partially due to scaled-up infrastructure spending and multiple adverse shocks. Micro-economic risks were high as a results of: i) an open economy heavily dependent on foreign aid, ii) high dependency on foreign direct investment (FDI) and primary exports. The country is also dependent on imported fuel and food which makes it vulnerable to shocks with both fiscal and balance of payments implications. From September 2016 to June 2017, the total debt stock

¹⁵ Republic of Liberia and Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) (2017) Household Income and Expenditure Survey: Agenda for Transformation, Baseline Indicators.

¹⁶ Ibid.

increased from USD 597 million to USD 736 million. External debt stock comprised mostly of multilateral loans. Table 3 presents a summary of the country's indebtedness by June 2017.¹⁷

Table 3: Liberia's debt stock as of June 2017

	End of June 2017	
	Millions of US D	% of total
Total Debt Stock (As % of GDP)	736	100
By Creditors	683	35
Multilateral including IMF	199	93
Of which IMF	291	27
World Bank	70	40
AfDB	54	9
Bilateral		7

Source: Liberian Authorities and IMF staff calculations (Adopted from IMF 2017 Document-Ibid)

As of Financial Year 2017, around USD 218 million of external loans had been contracted and the debt accumulation is expected to continue: Liberia remains vulnerable to external shocks as a commodity exporter. The country's debt vulnerabilities calls for prudent debt management strategies, a credible path of revenue mobilisation, fiscal consolidation, structural reforms to promote growth, and economic diversification. The authorities need to be committed to a prudent borrowing strategy, the prioritisation of pro-growth initiatives and the diversification of the economy to make it more resilient to external shocks. While fiscal consolidation is needed to keep a sustainable debt trajectory, the nature of

the fiscal adjustment should not jeopardise critical spending for poverty reduction and productivity.

Liberia's trade is characterised by high importation dependency: The country's current account deficit is projected to remain at 26% of the GDP over the medium term due to a decline in Official Development Assistance (ODA) into the country.¹⁸ According to the Policy Brief informed by the Social Cohesion study supported by UNDP (2018), the country's economy continues to experience external imbalance due to high import-dependency, export concentration and dollarization. The slow recovery in prices of rubber and iron ore mean reduced exports while donor inflows have declined significantly due to the changing dynamics. At the same time, there is high demand for foreign currency to facilitate import payments, reflected by continued over-subscription at the Central Bank of Liberia's (CBL's) foreign exchange auction. This results in immense pressure on the Liberian dollar exchange rate. As such, the Liberian dollar depreciated by 48% between January 2015 and November 2017.

Liberia experiences high national expenditure not conducive to sustainable economic growth: Analysis of data generated from multi-stakeholder consultations (government, private sector development partners and the UN reiterated the high expenditure patterns which might become an obstacle to sustainable economic growth. The Social Cohesion Study policy brief on the Liberia economy also confirms this development challenge. The policy brief highlighted that the national expenditure pattern of the country (consumption and investment) far much exceeded the gross domestic product (GDP), resulting in the chronic current account balance and pressure on the exchange rate. Evidence from the United Nations Conference on Trade Data (UNCTAD) in 2015 shows that the final consumption expenditure and investment exceeded the GDP by 57%.

¹⁷ IMF (2017) Liberia: Seventh and eight reviews under the extended credit facility arrangement and request for waiver of non-observance of performance criteria-Debt Sustainability Analysis.

¹⁸ World Bank (2017) Ibid

Liberia has an underdeveloped formal employment sector with a low national employment rate:

The country has 20.1% national formal employment rate. The labour force is characterised by informality and vulnerability. According to the HIES (2016) 79.5% of workers are found in what are described as vulnerable employment jobs while another 79.9% are found in the informal employment. Unemployment is 3.9%. About 58% of the active workforce is literate but largely unskilled, or, semi-skilled. Employment is largely concentrated in the agriculture sector constituting half of the total employment and employed around three quarters among the rural population. The manufacturing sector constitute 6.5% of total employment and capital intensive mining carrying 1.6 percent. In addition, the formal economy employs only 4.5% of the youth because there are not enough private sector jobs, hence over 90% of youths did not have access to formal employment. Women experience much higher informal employment at 90.9% and vulnerable employment at 91.1%. Despite these challenges, Liberia developed a National Employment Action Plan in 2013 and the Decent Work Act (DWA) was enacted in 2015. It set the minimum wage at USD3.50 per day for domestic workers and USD 5.50 per day for formal sector workers.

2.1.2 Agriculture Extractives and Land

Agriculture, Extractives and Land

Agriculture remains the most important livelihood activity that provides employment for about 67% of the population.¹⁹ Nevertheless Liberia economy is characterized by its dependence on natural resources exports like iron ore and rubber. In this context, the lack of equitable land tenure system that would allow more secure access to land is impacting on food and nutrition security.

Situation of agriculture, extractive and land: In Liberia, it is estimated that only 28% of arable land is being used for agriculture, which employs the majority of the working-age population.²⁰ The Liberian agricultural sector is dominated by traditional subsistence farming in which rice and cassava are the staple foods. The farming systems are primarily forest based and are largely concentrated in the central belt of the country, which accounts for almost half of the total land area of the country and almost 90% of arable land. The main cash crops harvested for export (coffee, cocoa, rubber and oil palm) are facing a decline of international prices. It was estimated that about 640,000 people living in Liberia (16% of the population) are food insecure whilst 52,000 of them (2%) are severely food insecure.²¹

Policy environment: Since 2003, after 14 years of armed conflict, Liberia has been on the pathway of reconstructing/rehabilitating the war-affected economy. The government of Liberia was in a transition from an emergency context in 2005, to recovery in 2011. In 2008 the “From Subsistence to Sufficiency” strategy was adopted, with the ultimate goal of building long-term sustainability both in food self-sufficiency and competitiveness in agricultural export commodities. In 2009 the Food and Agriculture Policy and Strategy (FAPS) was developed, and it has served as the main policy reference document for the Agriculture sector. After the Ebola crisis, the government developed the Liberia Agricultural Transformation Agenda (LATA), which is agribusiness oriented and focuses on developing value chains of selected crops.²²

¹⁹ WFP (2013)

²⁰ See <https://www.wfp.org/countries/liberia>

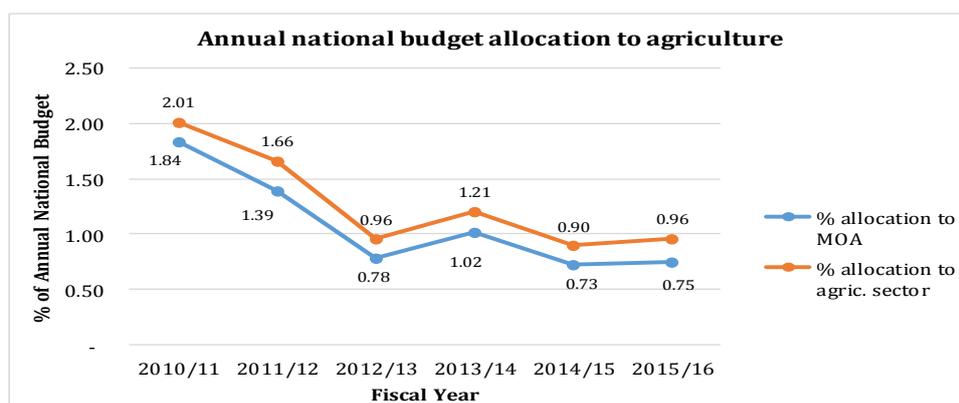
²¹ Government of Liberia (2015) Cluster Coordination

²² Rice, Cassava, Rubber, Oil Palm, Cocoa, Poultry, Maize, Vegetables and fruits (Tomatoes, onions, peppers, Plantains), Fisheries and Aquaculture and Cattle, Sheep, and Goats are the main values chains selected in LATA

In addition the following policies and strategies have been developed: Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender Issues in Agricultural Programs and Projects, the **National Livestock Policy (NLP)** in 2015; the **Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy & Strategy (FPS)** in 2014; the **National Food Security and Nutrition Strategy (NFSNS)**, prepared in 2008 and revised in 2014; and the **Liberia Agriculture Sector Investment Plan (LASIP)** introduced in 2010; Agenda for Transformation (AfT) (2012-2017) and the Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender Issues in Agricultural Programs and Projects in 2010 and the National Export Strategy. A Land Rights Act has been developed, but not yet endorsed.²³ The land reform effort aims at improving access to, and control over land, these issues having been identified as one of the constraints on improving food and nutrition security and building sustainable agriculture. In line with the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the LASIP 2 is being developed and 5 components have been identified: 1) Food and Nutrition Security; 2) Competitive Value Chain development and Markets Linkages; 3) Research and Development; 4) Natural Resources Management and 5) Institutional Strengthening, Program Delivery, and Change Management.

Funding: Government funding on agriculture has been low compared to other sectors, and to the commitment of the African Union (AU) to designate 10 % of national budgets on agriculture. Evaluation of LASIP 1 indicates that an amount of US\$947.7 million was budgeted to implement LASIP I programmes. However, only US\$ 409.26 million was mobilised. Further disaggregation of the US\$ 409.26 million mobilised revealed that US\$ 175.4 million was directly utilised by MOA to implement some of the LASIP I programmes through its Project Management Unit (PMU) whilst the remaining US\$ 233.86 million came from the implementation of 27 projects that were directly funded by development partners and implemented by NGOs and PMU/MOA. As indicated figure 3, the trend in Government of Liberia's annual budgetary allocation to the agricultural sector and to the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) has been declining over the years. Donor partners provided at least 90% of the funding through multilateral and bilateral means. The private sector, through 7 concessions agreements with the Government of Liberia, injected more than US\$2.6 billion into the Liberian economy through investments in oil palm, rubber, cocoa, and rice

Figure 3: Annual National Budgetary Allocation to the Agriculture Sector



Source: Kanneh, A. N. M (2017) LASIP {2010-2015} Final Review Report

Key Issues and Bottlenecks: The agriculture sector is characterized by low public investment, use of low quality of inputs, low agriculture technologies, poor rural infrastructures, poor markets access, weak capacity for processing available agriculture production, high dependence on imported food, insignificant exploitation of the irrigation potential (estimated to 600,000 hectares with only 1% developed), and decrease of farmer income (average value of food production [constant \$] per person also decreased).

²³ Land is under the management of the Land Commission

Liberians are net buyers of food, and therefore are vulnerable to food price volatility. Approximately two third of the rice consumed in Liberia is imported. The Ebola Virus Disease outbreak detrimentally affected cereal production, decreasing by 8.8% in 2016 compared to 2015 and by 5.1% compared to the average of the last five years.

The lack of policy on the acquisition of land for agricultural purposes is somehow undermining the development of agriculture of vulnerable farmers. It is worth noting also that the following factors are contributing to undermining the development of agriculture: the changes in rainfall patterns that have resulted in low agricultural crops yields; 2) the tree cutting for firewood and charcoal that have resulted in the depletion of natural resources; 3) the shift to rubber that has pushed farmers to planting new trees on disputed land; 4) the lack of equitable land tenure system, water and pasture resources that would allow more secure access to land and 5) the sea level rise that affect the livelihood along coastal areas where the majority of Liberian live.

In terms of services, the extension delivery and the research have limited resources to support the development of agriculture. The structure of the Liberian economy is being driven primarily by mining activities.

Progress in the Agriculture Sector: After 2004, the government has been engaging with the support of donors to implement long-term investment for sustainable agriculture and food and nutrition security. In March of 2014, Liberia was affected by an unprecedented outbreak of the deadly Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) that contributed to undermine the efforts invested in the agriculture sector. This provoked disruption in food access and production and had negative impacts on food and nutrition security. It must be noted that Liberia has the potential to leap from production level of 107.4kg/capita/year (2011) to the 1979 pre-war production levels of 128.9 kg/capita/year.²⁴

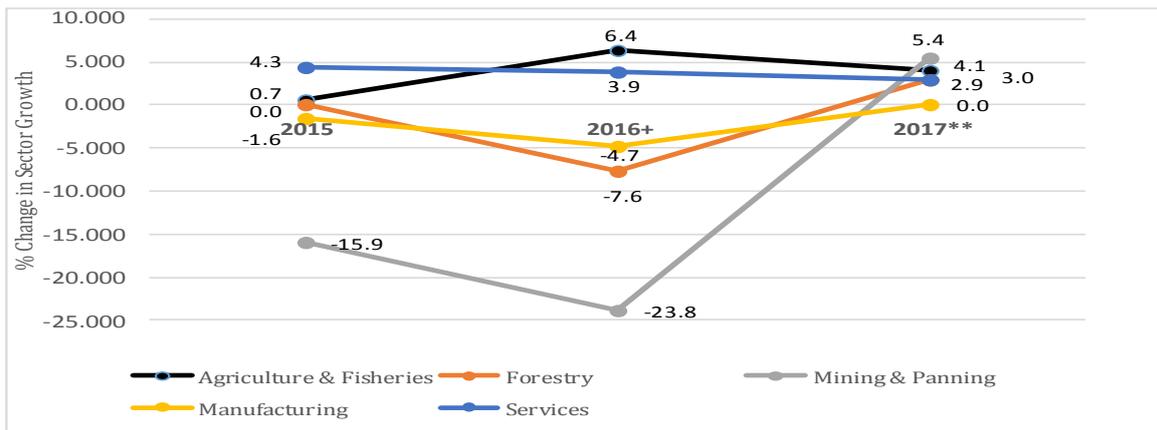
In terms of annual growth of each sector, figure 4 reveals that the annual growth in the agriculture and fisheries sector increased from 0.7% in 2015 to 6.4% in 2016, followed by a projected decline to 4.1% in 2017. The forestry sector's contribution to GDP increased by 5% in 2013, growing from US\$ 131.8 million in 2012 to about US\$138.4 million in 2013. The fiscal year 2012/13, forestry specific revenues collected (excluding income taxes) generated US\$ 6.6 million, a decline by 22% from the 2011/12 revenues of US\$ 8.46 million, mainly attributable to lower revenues from export taxes which can also be traced to the poor transport infrastructure.²⁵

But the overreliance on iron ore and rubber exports constitutes risks to growth, employment, and fiscal revenues. For example, with iron ore and rubber constituting about 85% of total exports earnings, an estimated 50% average decline in global prices for these two commodities in 2014 resulted in significant drop in export revenue (ibid). In view of challenges in the sector, amongst others, the sector experienced a slump from 0.0% in 2015 to -7.6% in 2016 and then projected to grow to 3.0% in 2017 (CBL, 2016). Likewise, the industrial sector shrunk by -22.4% in 2015 and was estimated to shrink by -26.2% in 2016 (MoA, 2017).

²⁴ Murphy, E.E and Macon, K.T (2016) USAID Office of Food for Peace: Food Security Desk Review for Liberia 2016-2020. Washington DC. FFI 360FANTA

²⁵ Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) (2016) Central Ban of Liberia Annual Report 2016.

Figure 4: Annual Percent Growth by Sector 2015-2017

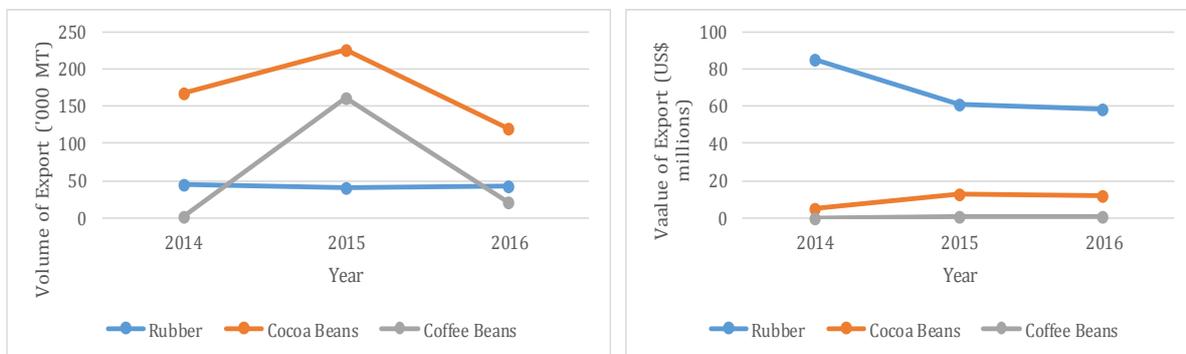


Source: CBL (2016) Central Bank of Liberia Annual Report

Three major exportable commodities, namely, rubber, cocoa and coffee beans exports contributed about US\$ 90.1 million in export value in 2014, representing 20.2% of total export value. In 2015, the combined export value of these commodities dropped to US\$ 73.7 million but recorded an increase to 27.8% in export value. Agriculture in Liberia is therefore a major contributor to export revenue.

At commodity level, rubber is a high value commodity due to the low volumes exported and commands a very high export value compared to cocoa and coffee beans over the period. For example, it is indicated that 42,500 MT of rubber exported generated US\$ 58.8 million in export revenue whilst cocoa beans generated US\$ 11.9 million by exporting 119,500 MT of cocoa beans in 2016 (Figure 5)

Figure 5: Export Volume and Value of Rubber, Cocoa and Coffee Beans 2014-2016



Sources: CBL, 2016; *Revised; **Preliminary

Noted Gaps: Despite the progress observed in the agriculture sector over the last years, more efforts need to be invested to achieve lasting food and nutrition security in Liberia. This includes adopting an integrated approach that addresses access to and management of natural resources, mainly land, water and forest, building infrastructures and access to markets, access to production inputs, the development of livestock and fisheries sub/sectors. More attention has to be paid to public investment in the sector as well as to reinforcement of technical capacities of the Ministry of Agriculture to be able to deliver services aimed at improving sustainable agriculture for food and nutrition security. There is also a limited private investment for food crops production (low agriculture production).

The rural and agriculture development may require sound technical expertise to accompany the farmers. Unfortunately in Liberia the extension services are quite inexistent. The rural area needs more restructuring in order to accelerate technical knowledges sharing, improve costs effectiveness for the production and the entire value additions processes as well as the final marketing.

2.2 Human Development

The section covers Human Development Indices And the performance of key sectors that include education, health and HIV are analysed.

2.2.1 Human Development Indices

Liberia's Human Development Index (HDI) and Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI) remain low compared to regional and sub-regional averages: Liberia's HDI value for 2015 was 0.427, placing the country in the low human development category and also positioning it at 177 out of

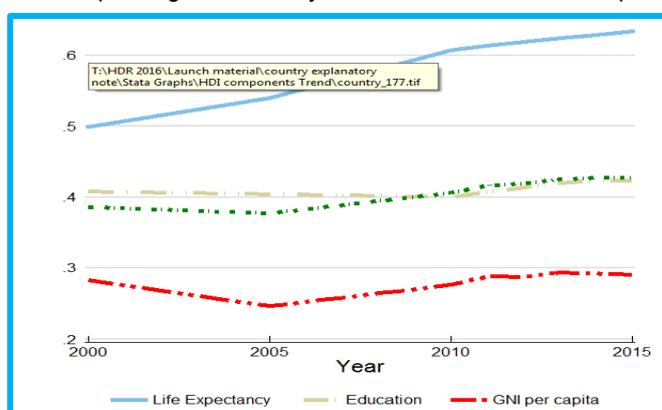


Figure 6: Trends in Liberia's HDI component indices 2000-2015
(Source: UNDP Human Development Report Liberia 2016)

188 countries. Despite the low ranking of its HDI, the country recorded some improvement in its HDI, increasing from 0.386 in 2000 to 0.427 in 2015. Factors which have contributed to the relative improvement in the country's HDI were noted as: Liberia's life expectancy at birth which increased by 14 years, and mean years of school which increased by 1.8 years. However, expected years of school were reported to have decreased by 0.6 years. Figure 6 shows trends in the Human Development Index for the country between 2000 and 2015.²⁶ Despite the seemingly

improving HDI for Liberia since 2013, the 2015 HDI of 0.427 was below the average of 0.427 for countries in the low human development groups and also below the 0.523 for countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.²⁷ Further, Liberia's HDI for 2015, when adjusted for inequalities (IHDI) fell further to a value of 0.284, a loss of 33.4%.

2.2.2 Health

The Liberia Demographic Health Survey (LDHS) of 2013 informed the analysis of the health sector key performance indicators. The CCA was developed at a time when the LDHS for 2018 had not been carried out. As such trend analysis of key health indicators could not be as effective in the absence of 2018 LDHS. Pockets of health sector performance data were used for some level of trend analysis. This section analyses the health situation based on selected health indicators, major achievements and broad challenges for the sector. The impact of the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) on the performance of the health sector was mainstreamed in the analysis of the sector performance.

²⁶ UNDP (2016) Human Development for everyone: Briefing Note for countries on the 2016 Human Development Report- Liberia.

²⁷ Ibid.

Trends in Selected Health Indicators

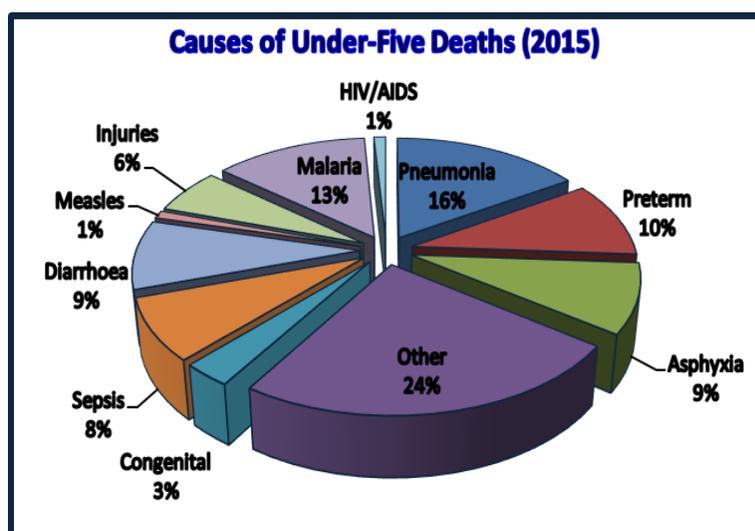


Figure 7: Causes of Under Five Deaths in Liberia as of 2015

MDG targets of 85/1000. The causes for under five mortality are numerous with preventable diseases like malaria, pneumonia and diarrhoea accounting for the majority of deaths. Figure 7 shows some of key causes of under-five mortality in Liberia.

Nutrition: One of the major factors inhibiting the survival and optimal development of children in Liberia is the high prevalence of stunting, which affects one third of all children under 5. Liberia has made some progress towards reducing stunting in the last decade, with a reduction of 13 percentage points from 2000 to 2013, from 45 to 32 per cent (2013 LDHS). Another 6 per cent of Liberian children suffer from acute malnutrition, as manifested by wasting (low weight for height). Fifteen per cent of Liberian children are considered underweight for their age. The key drivers of malnutrition in Liberia are disease, sub optimal child feeding practices and household food insecurity. The most common preventable diseases affecting under five children include malaria, diarrhoea and pneumonia.

Sub-optimal infant and young child feeding practices. Despite a significant increase in exclusive breast feeding from 29% in 2007 to 55% in 2013 (LDHS 2007 and 2013), a significant number of infants are still sub-optimally breastfed. Among children aged 6-23 months, only 11 per cent met minimum dietary diversity standards, 30 per cent met minimum feeding frequency standards and 4 per cent consumed a minimum acceptable diet. Among children 6 to 8 months, only 47 per cent are introduced to timely complementary food (LDHS, 2013). In addition, 89 per cent of Liberian children are fed mainly rice and lack sufficient nutrients, especially vitamins and minerals. Some 59 percent of children under 3 are anaemic (LNMS, 2011).

Household food insecurity. An estimated 18 per cent of Liberians are food insecure and 2 per cent are severely food insecure (Liberia Food Security Assessment, 2015). This means that households end up consuming foods that are inadequate in quantity and quality. Children are more sensitive to short-term foods shortages and this pushes them into malnutrition.

Malnutrition rates vary little by area of residence with 30 per cent in urban areas and 33 per cent in rural areas. The prevalence of stunting, wasting, and underweight is inversely correlated with wealth quantile.

Indicators in child survival including immunisation slightly improved but remained below the expected level: According to 2013 LDHS *neonatal mortality* rate was 38/10 000 live birth. By 2015, neonatal mortality had reduced to 24/10 00 (Count down to 2015 Liberia).²⁸ In 2013 *infant mortality* rate in 2013 was 54/10 00 (LDHS 2013) and the rate barely moved to 53/10 00 by 2015 (Count down to 2015 Liberia). In 2013 **under five mortality** stood at 94/10 00 (LDHS) and by 2015 the rate had reduced to 70/1000, thereby surpassing the

²⁸ County Down to 1015 (2015) A decade of tracking progress for maternal and child survival. The 2015 Report.

Children in the highest wealth quantile are less likely to suffer from malnutrition than those in lower wealth quantiles. The prevalence of overweight children varies little by background characteristics.

Immunisation Coverage: Realisation of universal immunisation coverage in Liberia is very difficult due to inadequate access to health facilities by underserved and remote communities. In 2016, 80% of infants received measles vaccine, 92% were immunised with Penta third dose and 68% were fully immunised.²⁹ Despite these efforts, the country continues to have pockets of measles outbreaks among children above 5 years of age. It is assumed that such children might have missed measles vaccines in the past.

Despite improvement in services for pregnant mothers, maternal mortality in Liberia still remain at unacceptable levels: Although the proportion of births attended by health workers increased from 40% in 2007 to 61% in 2013, this fell back to 51% in 2015/16, particularly due to low utilisation of health

services in post-Ebola period.³⁰ This limited progress on **maternal mortality** rate which at 1072/100 000 live births in 2013, was one of the highest in the world. Health Monitoring Information Systems (HMIS) (2016) showed that 60% of pregnant women attended the 4 antenatal visits and 56% of deliveries occurred in were attended by skilled birth attendants. This was an improvement from the 51% in 2015/16. Figure 8 present the causes of maternal mortality in Liberia.

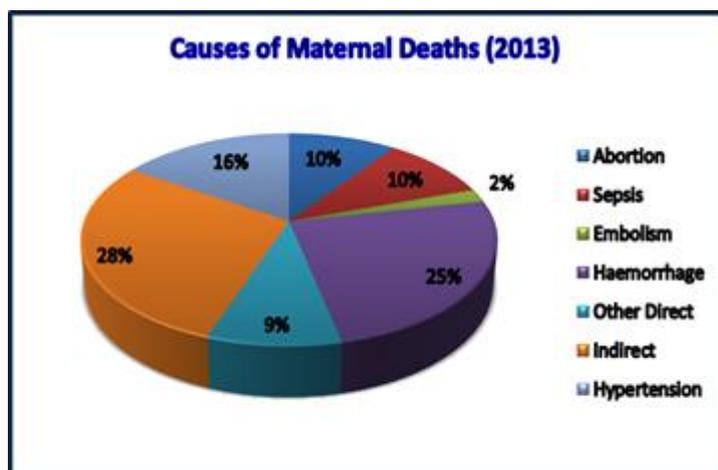


Figure 8: Causes of Maternal Mortality: Source Government of Liberia

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

(WASH): Clean water and adequate sanitation are rights in themselves and are also necessary for child survival and development, yet fewer than 10 per cent of Liberians have access to safely managed drinking water and sanitation services. Contamination of water and unsafe sanitation are a major public health threat and a key reason for Liberia's high rates of diarrhoeal diseases and childhood malnutrition.

2.2.3 HIV and AIDS

HIV prevalence rate, though relatively low, is noted to be increasing and was also characterised by variations by sex, sub-population group and geographical location. The 2013 LDHS noted that Liberia had a generalised HIV epidemic with a nation **HIV prevalence** of 2.1%. The prevalence was higher among women at 2.4% especially those above 20 years compared to males (1.8%). The HIV prevalence rates in urban areas was slightly higher at 2.6% compared to rural areas at 0.8%. South central region had the highest prevalence of 2.7% among 5 regions of Montserrado, Margibi, and Grand Bassa counties. Key populations were disproportionately impacted by the epidemic because of their high risk behaviour. In 2013 an Integrated Bio-Behavioural Surveillance Survey (IBBSS) found the HIV prevalence among predominantly male sub-groups as follows: 19.8% in men who had sex with men (MSM); 5% in people who injected drugs (PWIDs) which was predominantly male behaviour and 4.8% in

²⁹ One UN (2017) Thematic areas for Common Country Assessment: Issues Papers: Health Draft

³⁰ One UN (2017) bid.

transport workers (long distance bus and truck drivers). By the end of 2015, spectrum data estimated that 87% of overall HIV population were adults of which 12% were ages 15-24 years.³¹

HIV Counselling and Testing: The 2013 LDHS showed that among women of ages 15-49, 19.1% had been tested for HIV compared to 1.6% in 2007 LDHS. Among the youth, only 18.3 of girls and 6.2% of boys aged 15-24 had been tested for HIV and received results. Multi-pronged approaches were used for the delivery of HIV counselling and testing (HCT) services. These include voluntary counselling and testing and provider initiated testing (PICT). The number of sites providing HCT services rose from 79 facilities in 2007 to 395 sites in all 15v counties. However this figure represents only 52% of health facilities offering HCT.³²

Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV: HIV prevalence among pregnant women had consistently been on the downward trend from a peak of 5.4% in 2007 to 2.6% in 2011 and 2.5% in 2013. It was generally assumed that the decline in HIV prevalence among pregnant women was due to the scale-up of integrated PMTCT interventions for pregnant women. The counties with the highest HIV prevalence had the greatest need for PMTCT (Montserrado, Margibi and Grant Bass). The number of health facilities offering PMTCT increased from 55 in 2009 to 327 in 2015. This represented 61% of health facilities. Only 42% of health facilities provided ARV prophylaxis to HIV positive women. Services for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) were offered in 94% of health facilities.³³

Antiretroviral Therapy: The number of health facilities offering antiretroviral therapy increased substantially from 29 sites in 2009 to 54 in 2015. As a result, there was a gradual increase in the coverage of ART although not meeting the required expectations. Figure 10 present statistics on coverage of ARV.

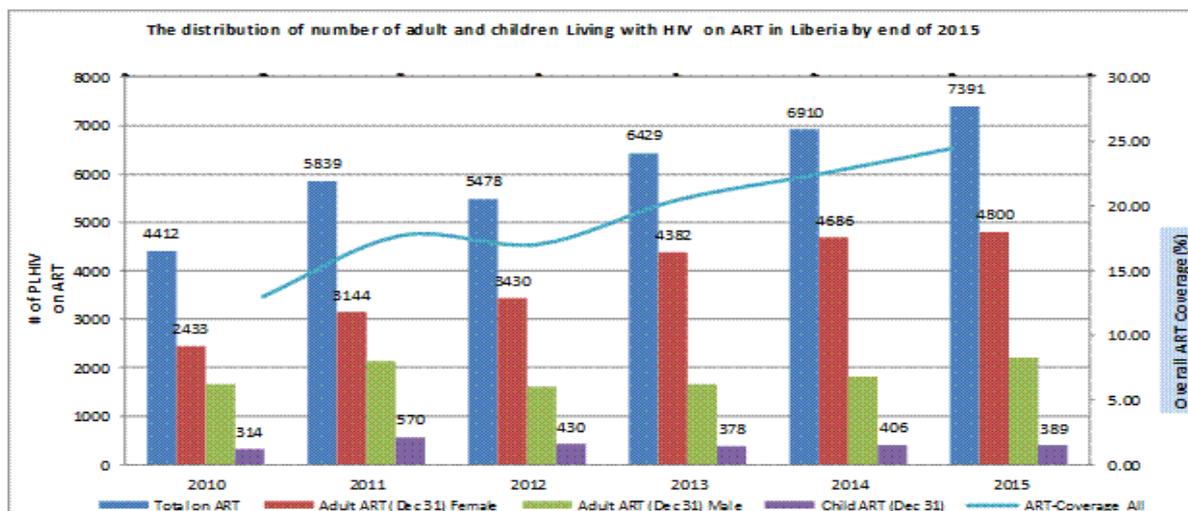


Figure 10: The distribution of number of adult and children living with HIV on ART in Liberia by 2015

Source: Republic of Liberia (2016) Catch up plan to end AIDS 2017-2020: Leaving no one behind

Access to treatment was generally low and might not be sufficient to achieve the fast track target by end 2020. More women than men accessed treatment in a ratio of 3 to 1 and unfortunately children aged 0 to 14 years were left behind.

³¹ Republic of Liberia (2016) Catch up plan to end AIDS 2017-2020: Leaving No One Behind.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid

Owing to the EVD experiences, patient screening for infectious diseases had improved: One of the biggest lessons generated from the successful fight against Ebola was the critical importance of ability to detect and control infectious diseases. Patient screening for infectious diseases improved by completion of the 13 triages and near completion of 6 public hospitals and health centres. National diagnostic capacity for public health disease improved the capacity of the country to diagnose six (6) priority diseases of epidemic potential. The number of health workers on payroll increased from 5821 in 2015 to 7000 and 280 health workers were trained in different disciplines including field epidemiology, laboratory equipment maintenance and other various health programmes in the country.

Liberia's capacity to respond to public health threats was strengthened. Liberia conducted a Joint IHR (International Health Regulations) core capacity Joint External Evaluation (JEE) to build the country's capacity to prevent, protect, control and respond to public health threats. Preparation for a national Action Plan for Health Security (NAPHS) was reported to be at a very advanced stage towards finalisation. The NAPHS served as a manifesto of IHRJEE recommendations as well as a resource mobilisation tool to align partner support around public health security. The National Public Health Institute was established with core functions to improve public health surveillance services and research. A five year national integrated disease surveillance and response plan was being implemented on one health coordination mechanism under the auspices of the office of the deputy president.

Overarching challenges in the health sector

The Ebola outbreak exposed the health system structural vulnerabilities, including shortage of qualified health care workers, a weak incentive system, inadequate infrastructure and unpredictable donor-driven financing. What follows are some of key health challenges in detail.

Liberia's Performance on selected WHO standards in the health sector was below expectation: SARA revealed that Liberia's health facilities density (facility per 10, 000 person) is 1.7 lower than WHO standards at 2/10,000. The health workforce was 11/10,000 population against WHO recommended 23/10,000. Overall, the capacity for health facilities to provide health services in Liberia measured by the General Services Index (GSI) was 59%, implying that 1 out of 2 health facilities were ready to provide health services.

Overall there were many health challenges that impeded delivery of the quality services for desired health outcomes: The following were some of the priority challenges:

- i. Access to health services was still inadequate in some rural or remote communities;

Box: 2. Best Practice in Liberia's Health System Strengthening

- i. There is strong political will to develop IHR capacities by taking forward a multi-sectoral health system approach
- ii. There are strong partnerships and stakeholder involvement at sub national, national, regional and global level.
- iii. The country has made significant progress post-Ebola in all domains of human and public health.
- iv. There is a robust surveillance system with countrywide coverage in the human health sector
- v. Robust emergencies operations centres (EOCs) and incident management system (IMS) have been established at national and international levels.

Source: WHO (2017) Joint External Evaluation of IHR Core Capacities of the Republic of Liberia: Mission Report. September 2016.

- ii. Despite efforts to improve maternal health services, maternal and neonatal mortalities rates remained exceptionally high for Liberia;
- iii. There were still some supply chain gaps with shortage of medicines and medical supplies in health facilities; and
- iv. The number of qualified health workers was still inadequate to meet the health needs of the population. Additionally, health workers were demotivated due to low salaries, lack of accommodation, job insecurity and inadequate allocation to the Ministry to facilitate additional health workers on GoL payroll. (Contract employees that were paid by partners)

2.2.4 Education

Trends in selected education Indicators

Average educational enrolment was significantly low at all levels of the Liberian education system: As of 2012, overall gross enrolment rates (GER) for Early Childhood education (ECE) was 122% (125% for boys and 118% for girls). Of those enrolled in ECE, 0.4 were below 2 years and 61% were above the official pre-primary school age and should have been in primary school.³⁴ By 2016, over 36% of early childhood education (ECE) students were more than three years older than the age considered to be appropriate for the grade in which they were enrolled.³⁵ The net enrolment rate (NER) for primary education in the year 2008-2009 was 42% (44% for boys and 40% for girls).³⁶ As of 2017 45% were enrolled in primary education (41.4- boys and 50.4 girls). The GER of children in junior high school nationally was 48% during the year 2008-2009.³⁷ The 2010/2011 National School Census reported a NER for junior school education at 44% (46% for boys and 42% for girls). By 2015, senior high school GER was 62% but is characterised by an 82% drop-out rate. The reasons for high school dropouts include inter alia the Standardized West African Exam Council Testing, financial difficulties, overage and pregnancy. Student numbers in tertiary education roughly doubled from 27 954 to 55 000 between 2008 and 2015. The percent of the youth population that has tertiary education qualifications is now 10.4%.³⁸ Overall enrolment increased at all levels but this placed significant pressure on government resources including provision of teachers and infrastructure at all level.

Literacy levels in Liberia varied along gender, social status and geographical location: While there had been some slight improvement in national literacy rates over the past few years, the levels still remained lower than expected. In 2016, about 15-20% of 6-14 years olds were out of school.³⁹ In 2012 average national literacy rate for Liberia was around 42% and by 2014 national literacy rate was 66.7%, with wide disparities by sex. The male literacy rate was over 77%, while it was 54% for females.⁴⁰ Although Liberia had recently realised improvements in the Gender Parity Index (GPI) (at primary 0.96; junior and high levels 0.98), only 29% of males in the 15-24 years age group had no education compared to 43% of females in the same age group. . In 2012, only 16,258 female students were enrolled in higher education compared to 27,585 male students.⁴¹ Figure 11 and Table 4 shows literacy levels by age group

³⁴ UNICEF (2012) Situation of Children and Women in Liberia: From Conflict to peace.

³⁵ World Bank (2016) Liberia Education Sector Analysis.

³⁶ UNICEF (2012) Ibid

³⁷ Government of Liberia (2009) Liberia Census

³⁸ World Bank Group (2017) Liberia Country Report-Tertiary Education.

³⁹ UNFPA (2016) Liberia Education sector analysis.

⁴⁰ World Bank (2018) Overview of Liberia's Economy

⁴¹ World Bank Group (20

and sex. While the primary school completion rates increased from 43% in 2007 to 54% in 2013, only 69% of the children who enrol in school survived to grade 6 and 59% survive to grade 9. Geographical location which usually determines economic muscle played a part in educational survival. Children from rural and poorer households were less likely to survive to grade 9 and attain basic education as compared to children in urban setting who were relatively wealthier.

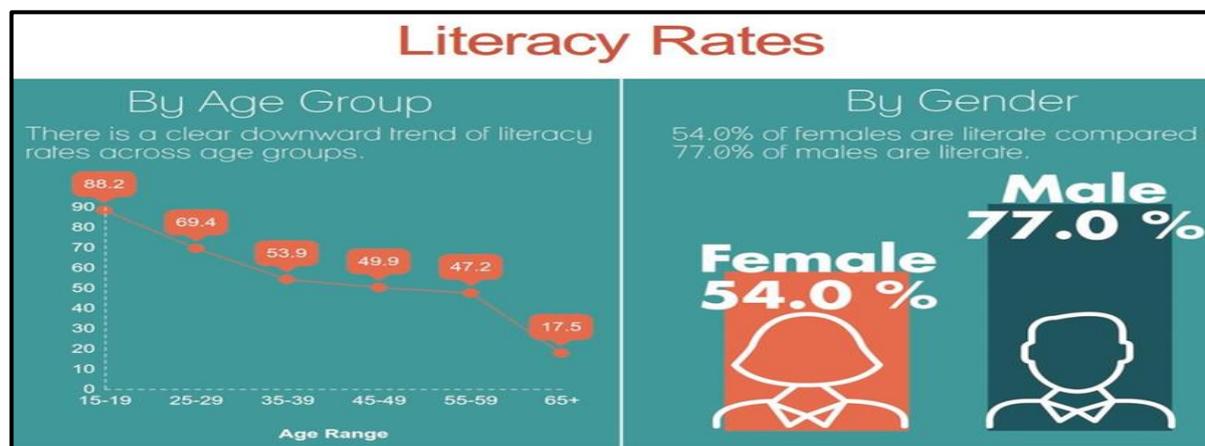


Figure 11: Literacy by age group and Sex

Source: World Bank (2018): Overview of Liberia's Economy

As of 2018, overall literacy levels for males is 77% compared to 54% of their counterparts. Figure 11 shows literacy levels of 88.2% for youth aged 15-19, 69.4% of those aged 25-29 and 53.9% of those aged 35-39. Literacy levels for those aged 55-59 stands at 47.2% while that for those above 65 years of age is 17.5%.

Table 4: Percentage of People with Formal Education in Liberia (2018)

	Liberia%	Male%	Female%	Urban%	Rural%
Primary School	45.5	41.4	50.4	37.2	60.9
Junior High School	21.1	20.5	21.7	20.9	21.3
Senior High School	26.3	29.9	21.8	31.6	16.3
University (Bachelors)	6.8	7.7	5.8	9.7	1.4
Masters	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.6	0.03

Source: Adapted from World Bank (2018) Overview of Liberia's economy

According to the HIES 2016 Report, the literacy rate in Liberia is 64.7%. Overall primary school enrolment in Liberia as of 2018 stands at 45.5% (41.1% males, 50.4% females, 37.2% urban and 60.9% rural). For junior high school overall enrolment is at 21.2% (20.5% males, 21.7% females, 20.9% urban dwellers and 21.3% for rural children. Senior high school enrolment rate stands at 26.3% (29.9% males, 21.8% females, 31.6% urban dwellers and 16.3% rural dwellers). For tertiary level as of 2018, 6.8% Liberians enrolled for a bachelor's degree with 7.7% being males, 5.8% females, 9.7% from urban areas compared to 1.4% from rural areas. For masters degrees the enrolment rate is extremely low at 0.4%. Of the 0.4%, 0.5% are males, 0.2 females and 0.6 from wealthy urbanites compared to 0.03 rural poor. Social status has an impact on Liberia's education system. Educational enrolment and attainment are directly influenced by social status.

Overall Key achievement in the Education Sector

The Liberia Government created an enabling environment for partnership in improving the sector. The stakeholders in the education sector included USAID, European Union (EU), the World Bank, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNESCO, UNFPA, WFP, OSIWA, The Liberia NGO Forum, the National Teachers Association, YOCEL and the Global Partners for the education. Key areas of support by these multi-sectoral stakeholders included training of primary school teachers, support for girls education, provision of teaching and learning materials, funding research in early learning systems,

development of vocational and technical education training, revision of the education curriculum, establishment of computer laboratories and micro-science kits.⁴² With support from multi-sectoral stakeholders, the country adopted a vision for tertiary education in 2012 and in 2017 developed the 'The Getting to Best Education Sector Plan 2017-2021', after revising the first sector plan of 2010. The new education sector plan sought to improve access to quality education, improving learning outcomes, teacher professional development and strengthening school level support.

Box: 2. Best Practice in Liberia's Health System Strengthening

- There is strong political will to develop IHR capacities by taking forward a multi-sectoral health system approach
- There are strong partnerships and stakeholder involvement at sub national, national, regional and global level.
- The country has made significant progress post-Ebola in all domains of human and public health.
- There is a robust surveillance system with countrywide coverage in the human health sector
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Source: WHO (2017) Joint External Evaluation of IHR Core Capacities of the Republic of Liberia: Mission Report. September 2016.

Overarching challenges in the educations sector for an effective contribution to Human development

The education system was characterised by inadequate inputs for effective and efficient service delivery. The distribution of key educational inputs (teachers, trained teachers, infrastructure and text books) varied greatly across all schools and levels. According to Ministry of Education (2016) the range of student-qualified teacher ratio was from 33.8 to 90.0 with a mean of 43.5. The student teacher ratio (across all school and levels of education) varied from 21.1 to 40.6 with a mean of 27.0. There were high numbers of untrained teachers, inadequate infrastructure in schools which led to overcrowding. Over 36% of early childhood education classrooms and 30% of primary school classrooms were in make shift and partitioned structures. In junior and senior high school, instances of corruption within the schools and cases of teachers with fake qualifications had been reported. In the academic year 2011/12, only 40 out of 428 full time faculty members in Liberia's Masters granting institutions, held PhDs, while only 124 faculty members had Bachelor's Degrees. The scenario raises concerns on the quality of tertiary education in the country.⁴³

The Liberia education curriculum was problematic, failing to meet the development needs of the country. The national education curriculum developed in 2011 for basic and secondary education did not strategically link education programmes to economic and developmental needs of the youth and the

⁴² UNDP (2018) Social Cohesion Education Policy Briefs

⁴³ Ministry of Education (2016) Liberia Education sector analysis.

growing population. For example, the curriculum did not provide guidance on the pattern of subjects, or, learning areas which include a description of the rationale for learning areas, standards or resources to be assigned to each subject.⁴⁴

The Liberian education system was not inclusive, A large share of Liberia children and youth were vulnerable and large numbers faced various forms of exclusion which affected access to quality education. Several social and economic factors contributed to the vulnerability of Liberian children and youth, including extreme poverty and other external shocks. The vulnerability coupled with other variables of disadvantage and disparity such as rural status, being in a household where the head had low educational attainment, contributed to some children not accessing education. Poor and most rural families could not afford private and mission schools which were more clearly, meant for the elite.⁴⁵

The education sector was characterised by poor infrastructure, equipment and weak foundational skills, Libraries, laboratories and classrooms at all levels were generally poorly equipped. Many institutions were too small to achieve economies of scale, thereby increasing costs and compromising quality. There was no national quality assurance, or, accreditation system, or, any process for international or regional peer review. Due to poor learning outcomes in lower levels of education, high school graduates were generally incapable of handling the advanced educational programmes. In 2013, nearly 25,000 school leavers failed the admission test at the University of Liberia.⁴⁶

2.3 Population of and Demography

Liberia's population was concentrated in South Central, Montserrado and Northern Regions with slightly more people living in urban settings. To date, the Government of Liberia had conducted four censuses, with the most recent one having been carried out in 2008⁴⁷. A census proclamation had already been signed by the former president giving a go ahead for another census in 2018. The period of the proposed 2018 census was between 21st March and 21st November with the government expected to make an official announcement on the exact dates. According to the HIES (2017), the estimate population of Liberia was approximately 4.2 million people up from 3.5 million in 2008. The estimate was informed by the growth rates from the 2008 national population census. Compared to other countries in the region, Liberia had a relatively small population. The majority of the people constituting about 75.8% of the population lived in South Central, Montserrado and Northern Region. South Eastern B had the least proportion of the population, constituting about 7.5%. About 46.1% of the population lived in rural areas compared to 53.9 in urban areas. Figure 12 shows the distribution of the population in Liberia.

⁴⁴ Ministry of Education (2016) *ibid*

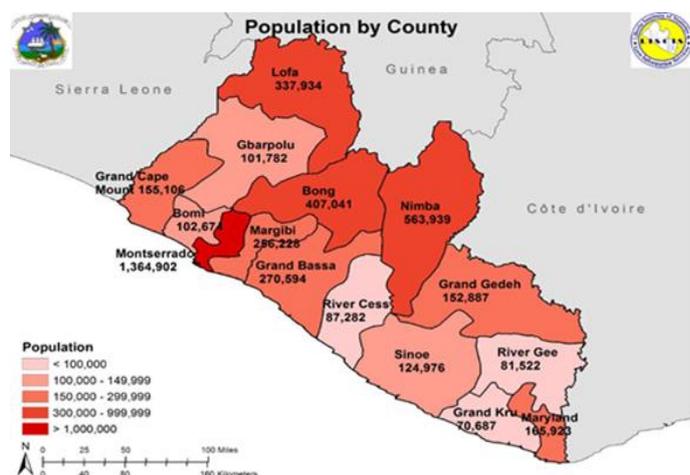
⁴⁵ World Bank (2016) *Ibid*.

⁴⁶ World Bank (2016) *ibid*

⁴⁷ World Bank (2016). *Ibid*

The Youth Bulge: Approximately 40% of the population were under the age of 15 and about a third of

Figure 12: Liberia Population Distribution by region: HIES 2016



the population were aged between 15 and 35. This means there was a relatively high share of the youth in the total population, putting pressure on social services provision such as education, health, employment, *inter alia*.

Table 5: Liberia demographics

Demographic Indicator	Previous/ Census Year	Current	Source
Number of Districts	4 regions and 15 counties	4 regions and 15 counties	GoL 2017
Population size	3,894,959 (2014)	4,600,000 (2016)	World Bank 2016
Rural population	1,800,000 (2008)	49.8% (2,290,800: 2016)	Hts://indexmundi.com/Liberia/demographics
Urban population	1,600,000 (2008)	50.2% (2,311,925: 2016)	Hts://indexmundi.com/Liberia/demographics
Children (under 15)	47% (2013)	40% (2016)	Hts://indexmundi.com/Liberia/demographics
Youth (15 & 35 years)	28% (2013)	33.3% (2016)	World Bank 2016
Elderly (over 65)	25% (2013)	26.7% (2016)	World Bank 2016
Annual pop growth rate	2.1% (2008)	2.44% (2016)	Hts://indexmundi.com/Liberia/demographics
Life expectancy	56.8% (2007)	59% (2015)	Hts://indexmundi.com/Liberia/demographics

2.4.2 Transport, Roads and Bridges

Liberia had a poor road and transport network system. The country experienced limited road transport connectivity. About 60% of Liberian roads were in poor condition. This problem was compounded by the rainy seasons, which often rendered roads impassable, with vehicles unable to pass critical points for weeks at a time. A survey of roads in 2016, by the World Bank mapped 11,561km and found out that 578km were paved and of the 578km, 86% were in good and excellent condition and 10,984km were unpaved of which 57% were in poor, or, very poor condition.⁴⁸

Liberia had limited road transport connectivity. In Liberia, the estimated Rural Access Index (RAI) for 2015 was 41.9%. This level implied that 2.3 million people, or, more than half of the country's population remained unconnected. Preliminary results of an ongoing transport study by the World Bank showed that poor connectivity to rural areas was one of the biggest impediments to economic and social inclusion and equal access to opportunities. The study also observed that there was a strong correlation between poverty and rural access. Rural access index was found to be lowest in high poverty areas particularly in the south eastern region. This highlighted the importance of the expansion of the transportation network, especially roads to improve inland connectivity to the unconnected and deprived rural areas. Transport improvement especially road was necessary not only to improve connectivity, access to basic

⁴⁸ World Bank (2016a)

services and market exchange, but also to support other sector activities including agriculture trade and service sectors.⁴⁹

Transport costs in Liberia were very high due to poor roads. On average transport costs were USD 20.00 per tonne-kilometre. In some parts of the country with low population density and economic activity, the cost per passage –kilometre, or, per freight tonne-kilometre of usage was extremely high. These low density high cost road areas were also where poverty rates were highest (Southern Easter region).⁵⁰

Linkages among different transport modes were sub-optimal and regional trade with neighbouring countries was limited: Besides road network, other modes of transport for Liberia included aviation, railways and maritime. All these modes of transport were sub-optimal (poorly linked to each other). As such, regional trade with neighbouring countries was limited. Trade through the border crossings with three neighbours (Sierra Leone, Guinea and Cote D'Ivoire) was limited and accounted for only 1% of the total traded goods volume. Intermodal complementarity of transport was far from being optimal.

2.4 Infrastructure and Urbanisation

Infrastructure is key to modern society and urbanisation. It enables society to function effectively, grow and prosper. Long term planning of infrastructure development contributes to national and regional integration in a way that secures peace and stability and encourages inclusive development.⁵¹ Infrastructure in Liberia encompassed supply of energy, roads and bridges transport, post and telecommunication, houses and buildings. Most of Liberia's infrastructure was destroyed, or; simply deteriorated beyond use during the years of civil conflict. While rebuilding was a priority, the majority of work remained to be done. This section provides a situation analysis of the infrastructure sector in Liberia spanning from 2013 to 2018. The analysis revolves around the key elements of infrastructure. Key achievement and challenges in the sector will also be highlighted.

2.4.1 Energy and Power

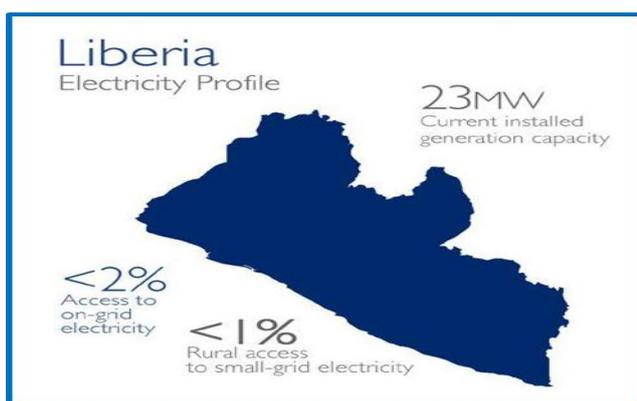


Figure 13: Liberia's energy capacity as of May 2016
Source: USAID (2016). <http://222.usaid.gov/liberia>

Electricity supply services were limited across Liberia and practically non-existent in rural areas. Inadequate electricity remained a crippling constraint for industrial development in Liberia. The entire infrastructure for generation and distribution of electricity was destroyed during the civil war.⁵² During the first Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS 2008) the power sector made little progress, beginning from a very low starting point. During the 2013-2018 period, the thrust of the government and its partners was to restore energy infrastructure with expectation to reach 126

⁴⁹ One UN (2017) Ibid

⁵⁰ Government of Liberia (2013) Agenda for Transformation (AFT) Republic of Liberia, Steps towards Liberia rising 2030.

⁵¹ AfDB (2013) Liberia Infrastructure and Inclusive growth. One UN(2017) Liberia Common County Assessment Thematic Issues: Infrastructure Draft

⁵² Aft (2013)

megawatts (MW) by end of 2017 from 38 MW which was also expected by end 2016. According to the results of the HIES (2016), only about 18% of the total *population had access to electricity (either from grid connection of the utility, or, from diesel generators)*. Only 3% of the rural population had access to electricity mostly from diesel generators. As such Liberia had one of the World's lowest rankings of electrification and one of the highest electricity tariffs at USD 0.35/KWH. To date electricity generation had increased with the rehabilitation of the country's main hydro power plant (Mt Coffee, 88MW) and the construction of 38MW HFO power plant. Lack of transmission and distribution network, however, meant the generation capacity remained under-utilised.⁵³ Figure 13 shows Liberia energy capacity as of May 2016. According to the statistics indicated in in Figure 13, as of May 2016, Liberia had 23 MW grid installed electricity. Only 2% of the population had access to own grid electricity and only 1% of rural communities had access to small-grid electricity. Less than 23 MW of Liberia's own grid installed generation operated on a daily basis. As such large facilities including hotels, restaurants, and office building generated their own electricity at a capacity ten (10) times greater than the cost of the existing installed generation capacity.

Poor Infrastructure increases the risk of women and girls to shocks and stresses: Poor water and sanitation pose a challenge to communities in Liberia, and expose dwellers (especially rural communities) to disease, lack of privacy, indignity and poor hygiene (GoL, 2009). When outbreaks of disease, such as diarrhoea, cholera occur in the country, rural women are particularly affected, because they not only have to take care of themselves, they also have primary responsibility to look after the sick. Girls are withdrawn from school to help their mothers care for the sick, or attend to domestic chores while the mothers take on this role. Lack of toilet facilities and clean water in many schools, particularly in rural areas, also undermines girls' attendance in school, and has an overall impact on national development.⁵⁴ Despite the fact that infrastructural programmes received the largest amount of funding during the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) period, the country is still challenged by a poor road network and power supply, (GoL, 2013). In the World Bank's Doing Business 2012 survey, 59 percent of respondents identified poor access to electricity as a major constraint, and 39 percent identified inefficient transport in similar terms. Poor roads limit the ability of farmers to deliver their goods to markets, and also limit the development of some of Liberia's most promising sectors – agriculture, tree crops and forestry. An inadequate road network limits transportation, with the result that poor people in rural areas, especially girls and women, have to walk to reach schools, health centres and markets, and fetch water and fuelwood. Women and girls may be at risk of sexual and gender-based violence while walking to and from markets, school, or fetching wood and water, inter alia. The country is only connected through seasonal laterite roads and served by an occasional electricity supply, mainly in the urban areas (GoL, 2013). Lack of electricity increases post-harvest losses in rural areas, and specifically affects women who sell horticultural produce.⁵⁵

2.4.3 Post and Telecommunications

Internet, post and telecommunication coverage in Liberia was relatively poor especially for those leaving in remote areas. Improving telecommunication infrastructure would contribute to broadening the possibility of introducing digital technology in education, health and other essential services.⁵⁶ In 2013 the government through the Liberian Telecommunications Authority (LTA) promised to provide the regulatory framework for private sector provision of cell phones and internet services. The Ministry of

⁵³ World Bank (2017) *ibid*

⁵⁴ GoL Agenda for Transformation: Steps towards Liberia Rising 2030.

⁵⁵ FAO and ECOWAS, (2018). Country Gender Assessment Series National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods Liberia.

⁵⁶ World Bank (2017a) *ibid*

Public Works (MPW) and the general services agencies would participate in the construction equipping, and staffing the post offices once the political decisions were made concerning the scope mandate and financing to that service.⁵⁷ **Access to internet and other ICT services remained low.** Access to the internet doubled from 2.6% in 2012 to 5.4% in 2014. By 2015 access to internet was at 7.6 percent. While internet connectivity was available throughout the country, the vast majority of the population remained unconnected largely due to the cost of acquiring and maintaining connectivity. Table 6 shows ICT and telecommunications subscription as of 2017.⁵⁸

Table 6: Statistics for ICT and Telecommunications use in Liberia as of 2017

ICT Types	Usage
Fixed telephone subscription per 100 inhabitants	0.2
Mobile cellular subscriptions per 100 inhabitants	67.6
Fixed (wired) broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants	0.1
Mobile broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants	5.2
Households with a computer	2.6%
Households with internet at home	3.0%
Individuals using the internet	7.3%

Source: **Adapted from ITU 2017, Report Liberia.**

There was a slight increase in the usage of ICT services. Internet use increased from 5.9% in 2015 (GoL 2016) to 7.3% in 2017, while mobile broadband increased from 4.1% in 2016 (GoL 2016) to 5.2% in 2017. Fixed broadband subscriptions remained the same since 2015 at 1%.⁵⁹ Although there were slight improvements in the uptake of ICT and telecommunications services, the figures remained extremely low for an effective contribution to effective development. Of all ECOWAS countries, Liberia had the second lowest levels of uptake of ICT services.

2.4.4 Affordable Public Housing and Buildings

Liberia was facing significant housing related challenges. The destruction and depreciation of infrastructure during the war combined with recent population growth meant that the stock of low income housing was inadequate to meet the demand. Access to affordable housing for vulnerable groups including low income households and women remained a major problem. Urbanisation was growing rapidly and with it, urban housing demand was intensifying. The urban population was at 49% of the total population with an annual growth rate of 3.2%, putting pressure on housing. There was little and low quality housing stock. The actual housing stock (2010) was 327,000 units, among which only 183,098 were in good condition and 144,000 needed repairs. There was, however, little or no access to credit for housing development. Formal and informal credit and housing loans remained inaccessible to the majority of the population. The country ranked 98th out 183 countries on the getting credit indicator.⁶⁰

Key challenges for the Infrastructure sector.

Investment in the infrastructure sector remained complex. There was relatively high capital cost of investment, lack of knowledge about alternatives and poor coordination between government agencies and international donors and investors. There was need for investment in technical assistance to build up capacity for strong coordination and priority setting, especially for the government. Government

⁵⁷ Government of Liberia (2013) Ibid

⁵⁸ The International Union (ITU) 2017: ITU Report 2017 Liberia

⁵⁹ Government of Liberia (2016) Liberia ICT policy 2017-2021: Initial stakeholders Consultations

⁶⁰ UK AID (2017) Liberia: Employer assisted Housing feasibility study.

agencies had limited technical and institutional capacity to manage large and complex projects, including PPPs.

Government has limited capacity for urban construction and related infrastructure works. The Ministry of Public Works and Ministry of Transport lacked adequate technical and contracting capacity as well as institutional capacity arrangements when dealing with operations and management of private sector contractors. The cost of constructing or rehabilitating paved roads is about 16 times as high as for laterite roads, yet laterite roads deteriorate quickly and have annual maintenance costs estimated at over one-third their initial investment cost. In these circumstances, short term affordability versus longer term sustainability of road sector investments present a difficult trade-off to the authorities.

2.5 Governance and Conflict analysis

2.5.1 Conflict Analysis

Since 2003, which marked the end of the civil war, Liberia enjoyed relative peace. The country enjoyed peace driven by the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). Since 2003, the country held three peaceful presidential elections 2005, 2011 and 2017. Liberia was also enjoying a much improved sub-regional situation and did not face threats from her neighbours, Sierra Leone; Cote D'Ivoire and Guinea. As of 1 July, 2016 the Government of Liberia assumed security responsibilities from UNMIL after the latter's gradual withdrawal. UNMIL was working on its transition to exit Liberia planned for 30 March 2018.

This assessment analysed the potential risks associated with disturbing the current peace, including potential triggers of conflict. It also reviewed the key achievements for sustaining peace and outstanding challenges that might affect sustained peace.

Indices to measure risks associated with conflict or peace

UNDP supported the process of conducting a social cohesion study in Liberia which generated new information that could be used to appreciate the status of peace and risks associated with conflict. The SCORE has interrogated many areas which may have impact on social cohesion in the country. It generated indices which could provide an appreciation of the status of peace in the country. The country average **score for aggression** was 2.7. Approximately 3 out of 10 people displayed aggression tendencies in one way or another. Aggression in daily life was markedly higher in Grand Cape Mount, Lofa, Grand Gegeh (Grand Cape had the highest score of 8. Eight out of ten people having aggressive tendencies).⁶¹ Figure 14 shows distribution of aggressing tendencies by counties.

⁶¹ UNDP/SCORE (2017) SCORE Liberia Draft: United Nations Police (UNPO) Deployment Strategy: A policy Brief.

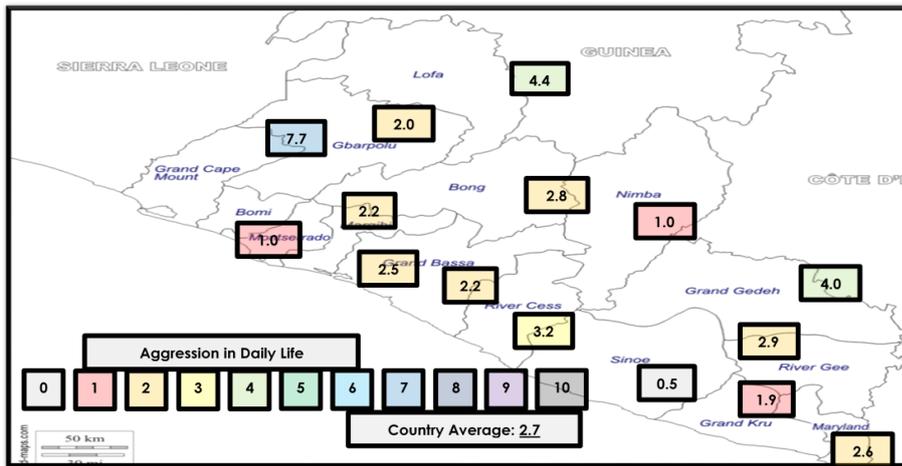
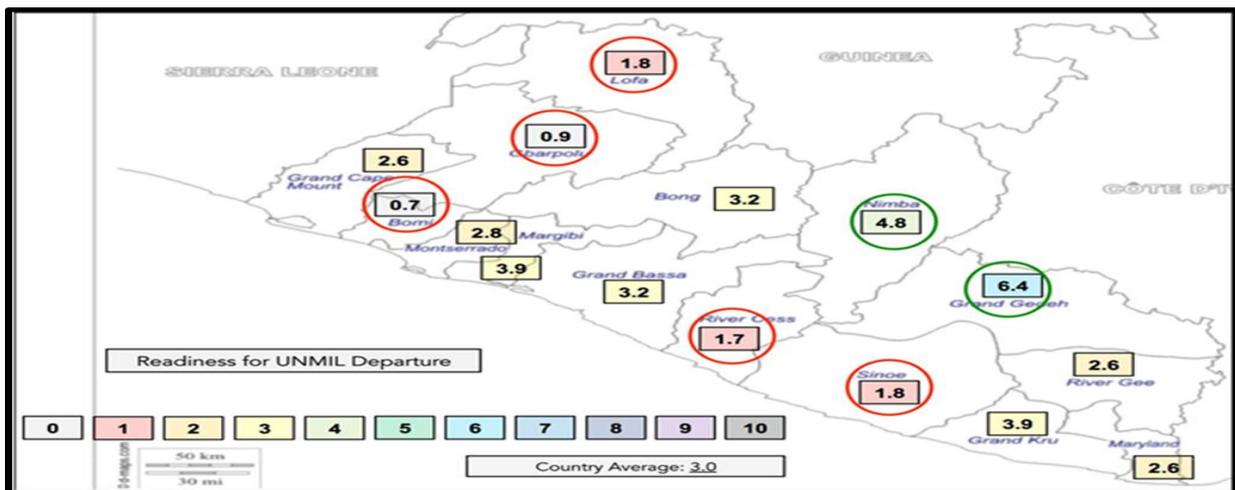


Figure 14: Liberia aggression in daily life score by county

The SCORE (2017) noted that 57% of Liberians shared generally peaceful attitudes while 14% held the opinion that aggression was a necessary tool to address community disagreements.⁶² Tribalism played a significant role in the socio-political life of

Liberians. Liberian society witnessed a rise in political tribalism after 1980, following the civil war. Political tribalism is about politicization of tribal identities that can lead to polarisation and inter-tribal rivalries.⁶³ The clan structure corresponded to traditional local political groupings.⁶⁴ Tribal polarisation respects traditional ways of life instead of democratic governance and values. The national average for **political tribalism score was 3.0** on a scale 0 (no political tribalism) to 10 (strong political tribalism).⁶⁵

Figure 15: Liberia Readiness for UNMIL to Leave Score by County



The score also included the concerns on peace with UNMIL withdrawal. The withdrawal of UNMIL created concerns among some Liberians and other development stakeholders on the ability of the country to maintain peace in the absence of UNMIL. The **readiness for departure of UNMIL score** was at 3.0 on a scale 0 (no readiness) to 10 (strong readiness). Figure 15 shows results on readiness for UNMIL departure by county. With this national average score, Liberians were expressing the need for UNMIL presence, which related to the perception that UNMIL was a significant actor for provision of security and acted as a potential deterrent for potential conflict and violence.⁶⁶ The SCORE study focussing on UNMIL departure revealed that women in general and individuals with post-traumatic stress disorder

⁶² Ibid

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ Country Watch (2018) Liberia Country Review

⁶⁵ UNDP/SCORE (2017).

⁶⁶ UNDP/SCORE (2017) SCORE Liberia Draft Policy Brief: Improving the Readiness for UNMIL's Departure.

(PTSD) experienced heightened sense of insecurity and anxiety about potential vacuum the departure of UNMIL would create.

The Country Watch noted that the Political Risk Index for Liberia was 3.5 on a scale 0 (highest political risk) to 10 (lowest political risk). This conflict peace index was closer to the results of the SCORE readiness to leave score for UNMIL.

The conflict opened new fault lines and triggers for new conflicts. A study in 2016 by the Catholic Relief Services observed that potential triggers of conflict included corruption (85.9%); land disputes (83.7%) and high youth unemployment (79%). The social fissures were worsened by high rates of unemployment. Liberia youth had scanty professional training, or, employable skills for the job market.

‘Liberia youth have scanty professional training, or, skills for the job market but they do have extensive military experience and skills with weapons of war. Youth are a pool of war ready young people who can be rapidly mobilised’ (CRS et al 2016: 8)

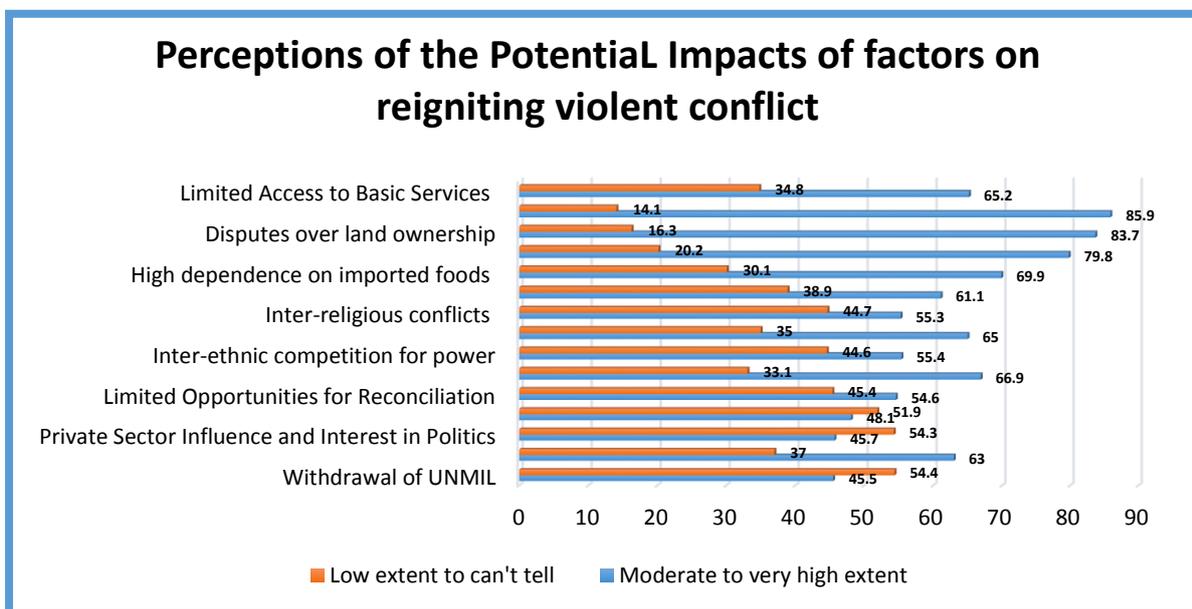


Figure 16: summarises the potential trigger of conflict and proportion of Liberians holding such view

The prevailing peace was greatly valued but viewed as ‘negative’ and ‘fragile’. The Liberians valued the past 13 years of peace. They viewed the peace period in terms of ‘silence of gun’ or ‘cessation of hostilities’ rather than the positive elements of peace such as ethnic integration, harmonious inter-communal relationships, civic conduct, mutual trust and civic trust. Some Liberians viewed the current peace as ‘tentative, fragile and volatile.’

Efforts to sustain peace in Liberia

Liberia made some notable efforts to sustain peace. Since signing the Accra Peace Agreement in 2003, the country successfully held 3 peaceful presidential elections. On December 15, 2017 UNMIL created a platform where youths from all political parties converged to sign the Liberian Youth Peace Declaration. Provisions of the pact included maintaining good political, social, economic and democratic frameworks of the country, maintaining peace and security. Youth involvement and activeness in decision making was also one of the sounding provisions of the declaration. Other efforts by the government included allocating more money for public sector investments, long term investments in national institutions that were inclusive, accountable and responsive. Transfer of security responsibilities from UNMIL was noted

as a major step for sustaining peace. Liberia also enjoyed a much improved sub-regional situation and at the time did not face threats from neighbouring countries.

Gaps and challenges

Key issues identified as root causes of civil war remained unaddressed: Despite the main gains made in maintaining national peace and security, issues identified as the root causes of the country's 14 year civil war, remained unaddressed. Some of the pending triggers of conflict included: issues on effective delivery of national legislative agenda, land disputes, corruption, county boundary disputes and concession related tensions. Liberia experienced a slow process in national reconciliation. Relations between the executive branch of government and society had improved but remained strained in the absence of meaningful national reconciliation. Constitutional review was also an area of concern where the citizens would like to see the constitution addressing the inherent inequalities embedded in it. The pace of implementing critical government reforms was also very slow.

Up-country, grievances around concessional issues were a potential trigger of conflict. There were grievances over the political legitimacy of concessional agreements, given the failure of contractual processes to involve the affected communities and local authorities in decision making when granting concessions. There was also a strong perception among affected communities that the central government was biased in favour of concessionaries. Other grievances included a lack of government accountability for ensuring good conduct by the concessionaries.

Post War reconciliation in Liberia was incomplete and shallow. Although some Liberians acknowledged that gains had been made in reconciliation and healing, the vast majority were convinced that the main perpetrators had escaped punishment and that the victims of violence had largely been denied justice. The review noted that the processes of peace and reconciliation was an unfinished business. Furthermore, there was a strong view that the national peace and reconciliation had the weakest impact on the grassroots level. The reconciliation did not contribute to rebuilding the torn relationships within and between ethno-religious groups. More impact could have been felt had the process penetrated deeper and wider into the social fabric and created more space for honest discussions on the grassroots level. The majority of Liberians, especially at community level, held the view that the perpetrators of violence did not genuinely participate in truth and reconciliation processes.⁶⁷ In the eyes of many Liberians, the elite manipulated the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to absolve themselves of wrong doing and to gain political advantage. A deep-seated, community-based and internally-driven reconciliation process remained a major gap for the effective healing of post-war atrocities.

2.6 Governance

This subsection addresses Liberia's governance structures, issues of governance, the success stories as well as the key challenges for governance.

2.6.1 Government Structure

The Republic of Liberia's government structure is divided into three branches. The three branches of governance are the Executive, Legislature and the Judicial. The Executive comprised of the Chief of State, Head of Government and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces (President) and the Cabinet.

⁶⁷ Catholic Relief Services and Catholic Bishops Congress of Liberia (2016) State of Peace and Reconciliation and Conflict in Liberia.

The executive power is vested in the President elected by universal adult suffrage for a six-year term. The Legislature consisted of the Senate and House of Representatives. Legislative power is vested in the bicameral National Assembly comprised of 30 members and the Senate and 64 members of the House of Representatives. Members of both houses are elected by popular vote, with members of the Senate being elected for 9 year terms and members of the House of Representatives for 6 year terms.⁶⁸ The Judicial encompassed the Supreme Court and Legal Systems. The People's Supreme Court is headed by the Chief Justice and had Associate Justices all appointed by the President. The Judicial System also included Circuits, Magisterial Courts and Specialised Courts.. Liberia has four regions that are divided into fifteen counties. Each of the counties is administered by a Superintendent appointed by the President. The counties are sub-divided into 90 districts that are further divided into clans.

2.6.2 Efforts for Building Governance Structures

Liberia's Governance Commission was established in 2007. Transforming from conflict and establishing good governance and legitimate institutions is a complex exercise. Inclusive governance in Liberia was a gradual process that called for a multisectoral strategy inclusive of health, education, economic growth, social reconciliation and conflict mitigation. In 2003, Liberia's Governance Reform Commission (GRC) was established with the view of addressing postwar governance challenges to reforming and strengthening public institutions overtime. In 2007, the Act establishing the GRC was amended and changed to the Governance Commission. [The Governance Commission is the leading government think tank that has made significant progress in the restructuring of the public sector through its wide variety of policy and programmes especially covering a review of the mandates and functions of Ministries, Agencies and Commission \(MACs\) of government, Land Reform and Civil Society capacity building. on decentralisation, which is one of the Commission's flagship programmes, significant progress has been made to the stage were the National Policy on Decentralisation and Local Governance has been promulgated and a programme of deconcentration is being implemented with the roll-out of County Service Centres. The Commission is currently pursuing the passage of the Local Government Act which, if passed, will be a game changer in the governance structure in Liberia.](#)⁶⁹

Liberia's governance reform agenda was organized in four categories. The four categories under the governance reform agenda were Political and Legal Reform, Public Sector Reform, Civil Education, National Identity and National Visioning as well as National Integrity System.

The Political and Legal Reforms: The pending legal reforms to include the Local Government Act (LGA), the Land Reforms Act (LRA) and The Constitutional Review have far reaching political implications. The LGA for example is lingered in the legislature since its draft in 2015. This Act affirms the commitment of the Government of Liberia to further the unity of the Republic by providing equal opportunity for all of its citizens to engage in the governance of the state through the devolution of certain administrative, fiscal and political powers and institutions from the national government to local governments.⁷⁰The Land Reform Act was approved by the 53rd House of Representatives in August 2017 and since then has been before the Senate for concurrence and passage into law. Enacting the Land Rights Bill, which has been severely altered against the interest of poor forest dwellers would no

⁶⁸ Country Watch (2018) Liberia Country Review

⁶⁹ [UNDP Senior Officer.](#)

⁷⁰ Liberia Governance Commission LGA Draft 2015

doubt undermine Liberia's peace, security and economic development.⁷¹ The Constitutional Review process which culminated in a referendum in 2015 is a heated area. Liberians continue to debate and disagree around issues of gender representation in politics, religion, dual citizenship inter alia. The Constitutional Review process to this day is still hanging.

Decentralisation of Administration Centres culminated in a policy of decentralization designed to devolve political power to the people away from the centralized Monrovia, much of which has characterized Liberia in the past. In this respect, the County Service Center (CSC) in Buchanan was launched on June 30, 2015. It linked 9 Ministries with 3 Ministries, Agencies and Commission (MACs) in a single building and under a central coordination. From July 2015 to January 2016, the Buchanan CSC had over 3,400 service center users.⁷² Services delivered include driver's licenses, vehicle registrations, and birth and marriage certificates, all services for which inhabitants of Buchanan once had to make a day long journey to Monrovia to access.

Public Sector Reform was one of the most critical component of broad governance reform efforts. It focused on enhancing responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency in the public sector service delivery by complementing mandates and functions reviews, restructuring of public institutions, establishing a Civil Service Commission and developing a policy and implementation strategy on the privatization of State-owned enterprises. Steady progress had been made in this respect. In 2005 a Public Procurement and Concessions Commission (PPCC) was established and to complement its work, the Public Financial Management (PFM) law was passed in 2009. A national anti-corruption strategy developed by the GC outlined a few critical measures to strengthen the fight against corruption. The anti-corruption strategy recommended 'fast track courts' for trial of corruption cases and also human capacity development in the Ministry of Justice.⁷³

Civil Engagement, National Identity and Visioning was designed to strengthen government-civil society relations. Key efforts towards strengthening relations of the government and CSOs included: development of a Government-Civil Society Organizations (CSO) Policy; a CSO directory; support for the establishment and capacity development of a CSO Council and an independent CSO Secretariat; development of a civil education policy and implementation strategy. These efforts contributed to the development of a shared long term development vision, national identity and reconciliation program. In 2012 the GC and Civil Society Advisory Council launched the first ever CSOs directory. This directory provided detailed information on the location and work areas of civil society organizations across the country, the total number of CSOs, their structure, funding sources, areas of specialization and gender representation.

National Integrity System focus on contributing to the institutionalization of transparency, integrity and accountability in governance at the national, regional and local levels through assessment of the anti-corruption strategy, working with CSOs and the National Legislature in the enactment of various anti-corruption instruments. **The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) by Transparency International ranks countries and territories based on how corrupt their public sector is perceived to be. A country or territory's rank indicates its position relative to the other countries and territories in the index. The 2017 corruption perception index highlights that the majority of countries are ,making little or no progress in ending**

⁷¹ The Democrat Liberia 7 March 2018

⁷² USAID (2016) Liberia Conflict Vulnerability Assessment

⁷³ UN (2017) United Nations in Liberia: Governance and Sustainable Peace

corruption. The index, which ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption according to experts and business people, uses a scale 0 to 100 where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean. Liberia scored 31 points out of 100 on the 2017 CPI. Corruption Index in Liberia averaged 32 from 2005 until 2017, reaching an all time high of 41 points in 2012 and a record low of 21 points in 2007. According to the 2017 Corruption Perceptions Index, Liberia is the 122 least corrupt nation out of 175 countries.⁷⁴ The national integrity system also seeks to develop and implement an integrity barometer system and strengthen the National Integrity Forums and Policy Dialogues. This is to be achieved through the establishment of an independent secretariat for the Forums and transmitting reports of the conclusions and recommendations emanating from Policy dialogues to relevant agencies.

2.6.3 Governance Indices

Liberia's governance ranked 54.1 on the Ibrahim's Index of African Governance and 28 out of 54 African countries. The Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) is a tool which measures and monitors governance performance of 54 African countries using 100 indicators with 177 variables. It is measured across four key components which effectively provide indicators for overall country governance performance which are: (i) safety and rule of law; (ii) participation and human rights; (iii) sustainable economic opportunities; and (iv) Human Development.⁷⁵ Safety and rule of law analyses rule of law, accountability, personal safety and national security whilst participation and human rights focus on participation, rights and gender. Sustainable economic opportunities examine public management, business environment, infrastructure and rural sector while human development analyses welfare, education and health. Table 7 shows the performance of Liberia in terms of governance across the Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) aforementioned indicators.

Table 7: Liberia Performance on the Mo Ibrahim Governance Index (2017)

	Score	10yr trends	5yr trends	Rank	Out of 54
OVERALL GOVERNANCE	51.4	+0.72	+0.18	28	54
A. Safety and Rule of Law	61.4	+12.1	+2.5	19	54
(i) Rule of Law	62.1	+16.6	+6.9	15	54
(ii) Accountability	43.1	+13.7	+4.2	19	54
(iii) Personal Safety	51.4	-3.8	-1.9	24	54
(iv) National Security	88.9	+21.6	-5.0	18	54
B. Participation and Human Rights	57.7	+1.8	+0.6	18	54
(i) Participation	67.5	+2.9	+0.9	13	54
(ii) Rights	46.8	+1.9	+4.6	27	54
(iii) Gender	58.8	+0.6	-3.7	25	54
C. Sustainable Economic Opportunities	39.6	+7.2	+2.6	36	54
(i) Public Management	39.9	+1.2	+0.6	38	54
(ii) Business Environment	41.7	+3.6	+3.8	31	54
(iii) Infrastructure	33.7	+4.1	+1.7	40	54
(iv) Rural Sector	43.7	+20.1	+4.3	41	54
D. Human Development	47.0	+5.2	-2.6	44	54
(i) Welfare	39.1	+6.5	-3.5	43	54
(ii) Education	43.6	+0.1	-6.5	33	54
(iii) Health	58.2	+8.8	+2.1	47	54

Key: Numbers close to 54, denote poor performance while smaller number close to 1 denote good performance

Source: Adapted from Mo-Ibrahim African Governance Index Report 2017.

⁷⁴ Trading Economics Liberia Corruption Rank 2005-2018

⁷⁵ Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) (2017) Index Report: Mo Ibrahim Foundation

Overall, Liberia was ranked 28th out of 54 African countries on good governance with respect to the following: (i) Safety and the Rule of Law (19th); (ii) Participation and Human Rights (18th); (iii) Sustainable

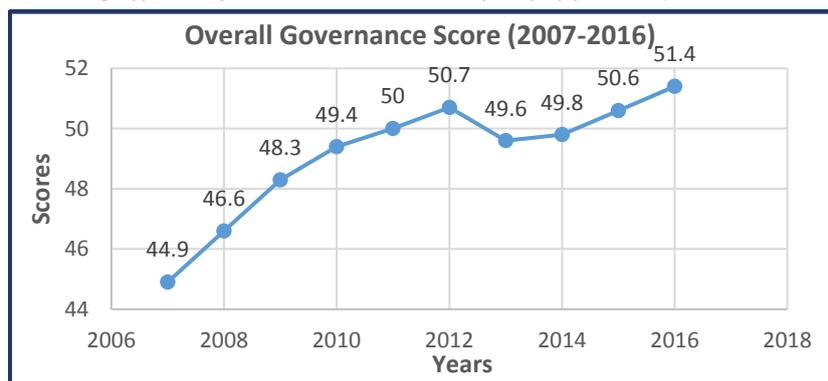


Figure 17: Overall Governance Scores (2007-2016)

Economic Opportunities (36th); and (iv) Human Development (44th).⁷⁶ Of the 40 countries that had shown improvement in overall governance over the last 5 and 10 years (2007-2016), Liberia was joint best 5th, increasing its score by +18 per year average in the last 5 years and + 72 in the last 10 years.⁷⁷ The areas of Human Development and Sustainable

Social Economic Opportunities continue to lag behind, with the country ranked 44 and 36 respectively out of 54 Africa countries.

2.6.4 Key Governance-related Challenges

While progress had been made in the areas of governance, vulnerability in Liberia remains high. Liberia was still struggling with ethnic, religious, gender driven and class-based polarization. There are high levels of mistrust, especially due to issues of bad governance that pre-dated the war.

Ineffective Public Finance Management Systems: Historically, the Public Finance Management (PMF) sector like many others suffered severe decline during the civil crisis as transparency and accountability in the area of public resources became almost non-existent. With assistance from the development partners particularly The World Bank and the AfDB, government enacted the PFM Act in 2009, to strengthen greater transparency and accountability.⁷⁸ A 2008 survey for Liberia on PFM reported that 32% of Aid made use of PFM systems. Very few donors channeled funds completely through the country's PFM system due to concerns about the strengths fiduciary controls and low government implementation capacity. Most projects are stand alone projects and they do not rely on government financial management and procurement systems. External assistance has mainly been channelled through the UN, UN Trust Funds, NGOs and Private Contractors. The World Bank set up PMF Unit with the Ministry of Finance. The establishment of the Public Procurement Commission in 2006 has contributed to some progress.⁷⁹ Despite some progress, the new leadership continues to grapple with understanding PFM programmes and normal operational procedures as seen in the PFM operational manual. Weak government capacity to manage procurement processes remains an issue. Many ministries currently under-spend due to poor procurement capacity and oversight.⁸⁰

Revenue Generation and Expenditure Management is presented with Challenges: In the financial year 2017, fiscal pressures increased due to declining domestic revenue and highly non discretionary

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Liberia (www.mfdp.gov.lr/index/php/homepage).

⁷⁹ OECD- Liberia (www.oecd.org/countries/liberia/42243397.pdf)

⁸⁰ Republic of Liberia (2018) Project Preparatory Advance (IPFMRPII) FY 2017/2018 First Quarter PFM Progress Report.

expenditures. Total revenue and grants for the FY 2017 fell short of the approved budget by 9% compared to a shortfall of 4% in FY 2016. This was mainly due to lower domestic revenue mobilization as a result of a lull in economic activities. International trade taxes fell short of target by 29.1% and 5.7% respectively.⁸¹ The government mitigated the full impact of revenue challenges by introducing new revenue measures, General Sales Tax (GST) and also minimizing expenditures.

Civil Service Capacity Remains a Challenge: A historical perspective of civil capacity for Liberia shows a country with capacities seriously affected by the civil war. At the end of Liberia's war in 2003, the new government lacked the capacity to carry out core government functions especially with respect to PFM. To address the decline in civil servants during the war, the government adopted a Civil Service Reform Strategy in 2009 which laid out an ambitious agenda to be implemented under three years. A pay reform strategy was developed in 2010 and civil servants are routinely paid better and on time compared to 2005.⁸² Despite these noted accomplishments the civil service continue to have huge challenges that are associated with weak payroll compliance, relatively low salaries, poor alignment between skills and functions. The outbreak of EVD between 2014 and May 2015 which further put pressure on the country negatively affecting the effective functioning of the public sector institutions.⁸³ A Liberia government document noted key challenges of the civil service as belonging to three broad categories: i) Not regulated, ii) Low performance and wages. Legitimate employees work in government institutions and receive wages. There is a mismatch between positions grade and remuneration and also lack of job descriptions. With respect to performance, there is low capacity and productivity, shortage of skills and talent and a demotivated workforce. The report notes the existence of ghost workers, a bloated bureaucracy and inequity in pay.⁸⁴ Stakeholder consultation during the data collection phase also echoed the same challenges and even highlighted the challenges of disparities of wages with the sectors. The political appointees and other civil servants were reported to be receiving huge salaries ranging from USD 5000 to 25 000 per month. Without a solid public sector, a change in government is often associated with loss of personnel with capacity for continuity. This CCA was conducted at time of transition of a new government and the team of consultants experienced the capacity challenges associated with a transition to a new government. Anecdotal information also indicated that about 80% of the government resources went towards payment of an ever growing wage bill.

The future of decentralization in the country is uncertain: All revenues generated by the CSCs continue to go to the central government coffers without retentions for building the CSCs' own service capacity. Fiscal decentralization plan in Liberia is contingent on pending legislations.

There are government deficits to deliver public services. Liberia has a weak public service system and operates without a Public Service Commission. This coupled with persistent systematic corruption and lack of accountability triggers low public confidence in the legitimacy of national governance. The quality and coverage of public services has not improved and in some areas economic conditions are actually deteriorating. For example, in 2015 UNDP found out that 61% Liberians reported dissatisfaction with education and 71% complained of poor quality health care. Stakeholder consultations revealed that the decision making capacity lay with political appointees in government ministries, thereby providing a capacity gap each time there was a change of government.

⁸¹ The World Bank (www.worldbank.org/en/country/liberia/overview)

⁸² The World Bank (2016) Strengthening Public Service in the Context of Fragility: What works for strengthening public service training in post conflict environments? A review of Public Sector Training in Africa.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Republic of Liberia (2014) Public Sector Modernisation Government of Liberia.

There are ongoing structural inadequacies that reinforced poor governance: Almost all the new structures and frameworks created by the Government of Liberia to increase participation, accountability, transparency and service delivery suffered from capacity deficits in both the numbers of staff and trained staff. Access to physical resources needed to carry out intended functions was limited. For example, the police lack vehicles and communication equipment. There is also corruption, including nepotism and capture of government resources for personal gain.

2.7 Legal and Policy Framework

Like any other nation Liberia has national and policy frameworks intended to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development. The legal and policy context is informed by the broader national vision of becoming “a middle income country by 2030” through medium term five-year national planning frameworks. [On the legal framework area, the government developed the strategic Roadmap for National Healing, Peacebuilding 2013-2030. The Peace Building plan has priorities defined for Phase 1 \(March 2017- March 2018\) and Phase 2 \(March 2018 onwards\).](#)⁸⁵

Liberia has a National Health and Social Welfare Policy: In contributing towards attaining Vision 2030, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare developed the National Health and Social Welfare Plan (2011-2021). The policy aimed to achieve the following: (i) increasing access to and utilization of quality health and social welfare services; and (ii) making health and social welfare more responsive to the people’s needs, demands and expectations through decentralization.

The nation had a National Social Protection Policy and Strategy: The policy was validated by relevant government ministries, county representatives, UN agencies, donors and key stakeholders including civil society, beneficiaries from the Bomi pilot social cash transfer program and children’s parliament , and was adopted on July 5, 2013.⁸⁶ The overall goal was to improve protection of the poorest individuals and groups from poverty, deprivation, and hunger and to enhance their resilience to risks and shocks. The policy was included under the Agenda for Transformation (AFT) which was the government’s articulation of the medium-term economic review strategy which sought to catalyse the country’s transition from recovery to inclusive growth. The policy sought to protect the poorest and most vulnerable households from sinking further into destruction, prevent the moderately poor from sliding into extreme poverty and improve the livelihoods of the “at risk” population.

The country established the National Capacity Development Strategy to support the Poverty Reduction Strategy of 2008. Liberia identified a number of constraints that could derail the Poverty Reduction Strategy, namely: (i) shortfalls in external financing; (ii) limited leadership including administrative and technical capacity; and (iii) internal and external stability.⁸⁷ The second factor contributed much to the establishment of The National Capacity Development Policy & Strategy (NCDS) in 2011. The NCDS was understood as a process in which individuals, organisations and society obtained, strengthened and maintained the capabilities to set and achieve their own development agenda. The policy aimed to equip Liberian institutions to drive and manage their own affairs by investing in the knowledge, skills and productivity of individuals, building strong institutions to drive and sustain reform and promoting values that foster social cohesion and equity.

⁸⁵ [Republic of Liberia and United Nations \(2017\) Sustaining Peace and Securing Development. Liberia Peace Building Plan](#)

⁸⁶ Government of Liberia (2013). National Social Protection Policy and Strategy

⁸⁷ Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs (2011) National Capacity Development Strategy

The government had made efforts in addressing the plight of women through its National Gender Policy developed in 2017 Gender disparities and imbalances were common in every sphere of life in Liberia. The National Gender Policy (NGP) was, therefore, an instrument for change, illustrating the government's bold step to breaking with the past. The overall objective of the NGP was to promote gender equitable, socio-economic development and improve national capacities for enhanced gender mainstreaming in the national development process.⁸⁸

The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Policy in Liberia was approved and adopted in 2011: The stand-alone policy was designed to fit easily with other government policies including Industry for Liberia's Future, Policy for Industries Development, Trade Policy, National Export Policy and the Private Sector Development Policy.⁸⁹ The overarching goal of the policy was to reduce poverty by increasing economic growth and decreasing income inequality so that all share in a growing economy. In this pursuit for growth and more equitable income distribution, the policy sought to: (i) increase flow of capital to MSMEs; (ii) enhance the skills for small business owners; (iii) build the productiveness of MSMEs; (iv). increase undeserved groups' access to economic opportunities; and (v) broaden undeserved groups' access to resources needed to respond to economic opportunities.

The Liberian government established the National Environmental Policy on November 22, 2002: As a commitment to environmental management, the government first established the National Environment Commission of Liberia (NECOLIB). The National Environmental Policy (NEP) was then established and approved in 2002 stating out the implementation of environmental objectives and plans. The policy aimed at ensuring sound management of resources and the environment, as well as attempting to avoid any exploitation of these resources in a manner that might cause damage to the environment.⁹⁰ The policy particularly sought to integrate environmental considerations into sectoral, structural, regional and socio-economic planning at all levels.

2.8 Position of the Liberia in the regional and global development Context

The unpleasant political history of Liberia had adverse effects on the country's development. Years of potential development were lost through the war. Since the end of the war in 2003, the country was trying to focus on development and reconciliation. To achieve this, regional and global relations were very important. Although Liberia was operating on a rough terrain, it remained connected to the regional and global village. The section traces Liberia's current position in the regional and global context.

Liberia is one of the 15 ECOWAS members: For years ECOWAS played a role in Liberia's developmental aspirations. Throughout the war ECOWAS was actively engaged in peace keeping missions and negotiations in Liberia. Economically, ECOWAS through its trade policy ensured that Liberia was integrated into the world economy for development priorities. The ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Programme progressively established a Customs Union among its member states. The initiative covered, among other issues the elimination of customs duties and taxes on unprocessed goods, traditional handicrafts and industrial products. In 2015, ECOWAS started to implement a Common External Tariff (CET), allowing its members to pay a uniform tariff on all borders in the sub-region.⁹¹ This helps Liberia

⁸⁸ Ministry of Gender and Development (2014) The Liberia Gender Policy

⁸⁹ Government of Liberia (2011) Poverty alleviation and wealth creation through small Enterprise Development

⁹⁰ Government of Liberia (2003) The National Environmental Policy of the Republic of Liberia

⁹¹ Country Watch (2018) Liberia Country Review

to enjoy the benefits of trade boost as well as moving towards sustainable development. Nevertheless, it should be noted that a fully integrated regional market remained far off. Liberia was part of a West African Examination Council (WAEC) system. The country needed to upgrade its educational curriculum to meet the standards of WAEC. In 2017, a total of 31,009 candidates sat for the WAEC exam and 39% failed. No candidate scored high enough to qualify for the first division classification of the senior high school category.⁹² In the same year, Liberia participated in the Niger Summit on the development of an ECOWAS Child Protection System. This initiative is expected to strengthen national Child Protection (CP) systems to ensure that children are safe guarded from all forms of violence and that needed services are available and accessible to support their recovery and reintegration should they suffer violence.

The country was a leading member of the Mano River Union (MRU) regional establishment. The relationship between Liberia and the MRU covered a wide range of developmental issues between Liberia and its neighbours - Cote D'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone. Many of Liberia's updated policy statements, including those in transport, trade and energy made reference to the country's aspiration to engage more proactively with the MRU & ECOWAS.⁹³ An example is the sphere of monetary policies where Liberia was actively engaged within the West Africa Monetary Zone Convergence (WAMZC) initiative designed for the 15 ECOWAS members to move towards a single currency.⁹⁴ Another notable example was in the petroleum sector where Liberia and Sierra Leone were coordinating on fiscal policy incentives.

Liberia was one of the 53 members of the African Union. The African Union regional establishment had three main guiding principles: (i) improvement of human life in Africa; (ii) improvement of finances and infrastructure; and (iii) improvement of security. Liberia was an active member of the AU and as such it was benefiting from the organisation's arrangements in different areas and sectors. Liberia was part to the African Union Development Aspirations contained in Agenda 2063. As such it was supposed to align its development frameworks to relevant development aspirations in order to contribute to the African development agenda.

Liberia was part of the global development Agenda: Following the civil war that ended in 2003, Liberia had a UN Mission which played a key role in maintaining peace. The UN Mission (UNMIL) in Liberia would be exiting on 30 March, 2018 after a 13-year peacekeeping operation which had a tangible confidence-building presence across all counties of Liberia.⁹⁵ The mission had both civilian and uniformed (security) components. In July 2016, however, a security transition meant the Liberian authorities embraced full responsibility for managing security issues. Liberia had global partnerships with United States of America (USA) National Institute of Health and the USA Army Medical Research Unit of Infectious diseases in the context of management of the Ebola Virus.⁹⁶ It was also part to the Sustainable Development Goals of 2030 and had since developed an SGG roadmap.

2.9 Human Rights, Inequalities and Discrimination

⁹² Ministry of Education (2017) The West African Examination Council Results Update.

⁹³ UN (2017) Sustaining Peace and Securing Development Liberia Peace building Plan

⁹⁴ Economist Intelligent Unit (2017) Country Reported Liberia 4th Quarter

⁹⁵ UNDP (2017) Supporting Peaceful Transition and Sustainable Development Pathways in Liberia

⁹⁶ Nyenswah, T.G., Kateh, F., Bawa, L., Massaquoi, M., Gbanyan, M., Fallah, M., and De Cork, K.M (2016).

"Ebola and its Control in Liberia, 2014-2015" in *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, 22 (2) 169-177.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid.2202.151456>.

This chapter reviews the country context with respect to human rights and gender inequalities. Gender inequalities are also human rights violations. For example, SGBV issues are gender inequality issues and they are also human rights violation issues. In order to give adequate attention to the two closely linked concepts the section on gender inequalities focuses mainly on gender differences across key areas of life and sectors. Issues that also show gender disparities such as health and education that have already been covered in earlier sections will not be repeated. The component on human rights will mainly be informed by the Liberia Universal Periodic Peer Review (UPR) reports.

2.9.1 Gender Inequalities

Gender inequalities cut across all spheres of life in Liberia. Women are disproportionately represented in all areas of livelihoods. Inequalities give rise to unequal gender power relations, lack of access to basic and productive services, underrepresentation in governance systems, lack of access to legal and judiciary services. Limited participation of women in all aspects of life often contribute to poor development results characterised by poor performance in most development indicators. *Adolescent girls especially, continue to experience various forms of deprivations(harmful traditional practices: Child marriage/ teenage pregnancy and gender norms) which often affect their capability to realize their aspirations in life.*

Despite some important gains for women after the war in terms of improved access to education, strengthened economic roles and greater involvement in political and social spaces under the leadership of Africa's first female president, the situation and status has not improved for the majority of women, particularly those in rural areas, in the post-conflict period. This is reflected in the 2012 Gender Inequality Index (GII) where Liberia was ranked 143 out of 148 countries (UNDP, 2013) and in the 2012 Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) where Liberia was ranked 62 out of 86 countries (OECD, 2012).⁹⁷

Gender Situation Analysis

Despite women constituting a higher proportion of the population compared to men, development indices were negative for women: Women constituted 51.5% of the population (HIES 2016). Liberia's demographic statistics revealed high fertility rates (almost 5 children per woman) and a high adolescence birth rate of 109 births per 1000 of females in the ages 15 to 19.⁹⁸ In 2010 the UNDP Human Development Reports (HDRs) introduced Gender Inequality Index (GII) which reflects gender-based inequalities in three areas of reproductive health, empowerment and economic activities. GII can be interpreted as the loss of human development due to inequalities. Liberia's GII had a value of 0,649 (where a rate closer to 0 is better performance while that closer to 1 is poor performance), ranking 150 out of 159 countries.⁹⁹ Women had low literacy rate 54.8%. For young women aged 15-24 years, only 44% women were literate compared to 64.7% for young men in the same age groups. Cross cutting barriers to women's education included: sexual gender-based violence, early marriages, teen pregnancies, rape of under-age girls and other forms of abuse in the school environment. 'Sex for grade' is not an uncommon expectation from teachers which negatively impedes the retention and completion of girls' higher education.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Jones. N, Cooper. J, Presler-Marshall, E and Walker. D (2014). *The fallout of rape as a weapon of war. The life-long and intergenerational impacts of sexual violence in conflict* Overseas Development Institute.

⁹⁸ One UN (2017) CCA Thematic Paper on Gender

⁹⁹ UNDP (2016) Human Development for Liberia.

¹⁰⁰ One UN (2017) *ibid*

There are gender disparities in women's participation in the economy. About 53% of women compared to 74% of men are involved in gainful employment. Although women have made important contribution to the informal economy, and in the agriculture sector, they still experienced limited access to productive resources and services essential for investment in economic activities.¹⁰¹ [The Gender Development Index \(GDI\) is defined as a ratio of the female to male HDI. GDI measures gender inequalities in achievement in three basic dimensions of human development: health, education and control over economic resources. The 2014 female HDI value for Liberia was 0.387, compared with 0.491 for males, resulting in a GDI value of 0.789.](#)¹⁰²

Participation of women in politics and governance structures remain low. Women are severely misrepresented within the legislature. As at 2017 status, women held 4 seats out 19 ministerial positions which constitute only 21%. In the senate, women occupy only 27 seats out of 90 while in the House of Representatives, men occupy 65 out of 75 seats constituting 89% representation by males. Representation of women in the security sector also continue to be a challenge with 20% representation in immigration and 17% in Liberia National Police (LNP).¹⁰³ [The Gender Empowerment Measure captures gender inequality in three key areas: the extent of women's political participation and decision-making, economic participation and decision-making power and the power exerted by women over economic resources \(Gender Empowerment Measure, 2016\). From the review of national documents, and specifically the country's National Gender Policy, women in Liberia experience gross inequalities in three areas monitored by the GEM. These put the country's gender empowerment indicators among the lowest in the world.](#)¹⁰⁴

Women experience high levels of SGBV in Liberia. SGBV is a topic that will also be addressed under human rights violations. Issues of rape with impunity will be discussed under the section on human rights. In Liberia the percentage of women who have experienced violence was 41.2% of which 38.6% had been committed by intimate partners and 2.6% by others. According to the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MOGCSP) (2017), on average 1400 women reported SGBV each year as follows: 2011 (2,383 cases); 2012 (2,493 cases); 2013 (2,159 cases); 2014 (1,359 cases); 2015(1,555 cases) and 2016 (1,431 cases).¹⁰⁵ Institutions lacked the capacity to provide a comprehensive and coordinated package of assistance to the survivors, including psychosocial counselling, access to adequate medical assistance, access to justice and the protection from perpetrators. Men constitute 2% of reported victims of SGBV.

Noted Achievements in Addressing Gender Inequalities in Liberia

Establishment of one stop centres for SGBV: In response to the growing prevalence of SGBV cases, and its devastating impact on women and children, the GoL with support of development partners especially the UN established One-Stop Centres in some [counties \(Mont-5. Bong 1. Sinoe 1, Grabd Bassa-1. River Gee -1. Margibi-1\)](#) Despite these improvements, only 6 out 15 conties have such facilities.

¹⁰¹ Ibid

¹⁰² [Human Development Report, 2015](#)

¹⁰³ Revised Gender Policy cited in the UNT- One UN (2017) CCA Thematic Paper for Gender.

¹⁰⁴ [Human Development Report, 2015](#)

¹⁰⁵ Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (2017) cited in UNCT-ne UN (2017 CCA Thematic Paper Gender

.¹⁰⁶ The One-Stop Centres provided services to survivors of SGBV which helped them to ease the pain of trauma, cope and recover in the quickest possible time. These services included medical examination and treatment, psychosocial counselling, protection, law enforcement, legal procedures and short stay accommodation for survivors.

The country developed and launched the National Adolescent Economic Empowerment Strategy with a focus to increase equality in terms of access to socio-economic and education opportunities that target girls. The National Youth Policy 2012-2017 was also in place. It provided a framework that would promote fundamental human rights and protect the health, social, economic and political wellbeing of all young men and women in order to enhance participation in the overall development process and improve the quality of life.¹⁰⁷ *To develop a critical mass of women leaders, special attention should also be given to women in non-elective positions through trainings in transformative leadership to access decision-making positions in the public service and in the private sector. The decentralization process will certainly lead to more rural women having access in local governing bodies and increase their participation and representation at community level.* The government with support of development partners was in the process of reviewing the National Gender Policy of 2012. The policy had provisions aimed at addressing gender inequalities across all sectors and social life. The Government of Liberia in partnership with the UN developed a Joint Programme for SGBV. Some of the successes under this programme were efforts to lobby for the Rape Law, where the legislatures wanted to include conditions of bail for perpetrators of rape. The following except from a press release, highlights the issues around the advocacy.

'According to the media information, the Liberia Senate, among other proposed amendments, has decided that perpetrators of sexual violence/rape should be entitled to bail. We believe this amendment, if passed into law will make futile, all efforts to fight rape and sexual gender based violence in Liberia'¹⁰⁸

2.9.2 Human Rights in Liberia: The context

Liberia was part of the international community that participated in Universal Periodic Review (UPR) processes, therefore, reaffirmed her commitment to the protection of the promotion of human rights. It had a UPR report covering 2010 to 2014. This section highlights country human rights situation, efforts by the government of Liberia to address human rights violations and compliance to the global and regional human rights protocols.

Country Situation of selected Human Rights Issues

Rape with impunity was rampant in Liberia: The UN Human Rights Police Services (HRPS) reported that the cases of rape in Liberia were extremely high. It was the most commonly reported crime in the country. In 2014 according to the MOGCSP, 708 cases of rape were reported, including gang rapes. Survivors of rape often did not get access to justice. In 2015 the number rose to 803. Of the 1,511 cases, only 836 were registered by the police and of this figure, only 259 cases went through the courts. According to the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection Annual Stakeholder report of 2015,

¹⁰⁶ Government of Liberia and One UN (2013) Standard Operating Procedures for GBV Services at "One Stop Centre".

¹⁰⁷ Government of Liberia (2012) The Revised Youth Policy 2012-2017.

¹⁰⁸ Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection (2017) Joint Statement on the amendment of rape Law.

only 2% of SGBV cases that were reported resulted in conviction.¹⁰⁹ An UNMIL report of 2016, indicated that 803 cases of rape were reported to Health Facilities, NGOs, and (NP/WACPs) and only 34 had convictions. The same report indicated that a significant proportion of victims of rape were under 18 years and of the 150 cases monitored, 78% were minors. Survivors of sexual assault in Liberia faced stigmatisation and were often pressured by their family members or communities not to pursue formal charges against perpetrators. While many alleged perpetrators were arrested, they were rarely brought to trial due to various factors such as legal and institutional weaknesses, strong social norms and attitudes, corruption, lack of will or diligence on the part of government and official and logistical challenges. These factors led to a wide-spread culture of impunity, thereby putting more women and children at severe risk of sexual violence.¹¹⁰ The level of impunity was not compatible with Liberia's Human Rights obligations.

Traditional harmful practices are common in Liberia: Early marriages and trial by ordeal are some of the harmful practices which violate the rights of women and girls, as well as those offenders. Government faces significant challenges in combating these practices as they are deeply rooted in Liberian society and attempts to curtail them are often strongly resisted by local communities. Additionally, it is often difficult to engage in discussion of these topics as they are linked to the practices of secret societies, therefore, might not be considered suitable for discussion with non-members. Trial by ordeal is also another traditional form of punishment. Wrong doers in the communities are exposed to some form of harsh punishments to prove themselves guilty, or, not guilty in the way they responded to the nature of punishments. The practice was called 'sassywood'. Gang rape is allegedly used on other occasions by traditional actors to punish women who allegedly broke local customs.¹¹¹ The Supreme Court outlawed the use of trial by ordeal. The practice, however, still exists and enjoyed some support in rural communities as an alternative form of justice.

Under age and forced marriages remains a problem especially in rural areas.: The 2011 National Children's Act set the marriage age at 18 years. Despite a supportive phenomenon on prevention of child marriages and forced marriages, under age marriages remains a problem especially in rural areas. According to the 2015 UNICEF report, 11% of women aged 20 to 22 were married by age 15 and 23% were married by age 18. [In keeping with its commitment to the AU declaration on ending child marriage, Liberia through the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, officially launched 'The End Child Marriage Campaign' on 8th December 2016, as part of the observance of the 16 Days of Activism against gender based violence against women and girls. A national Strategy was developed and has been rolled out in five counties.](#)

Accusations of witchcraft against children remain a huge human rights abuse: At least 86 children from Nmba, River Gee and Grand Cape Mount counties were accused of practicing witchcraft. Children as young as four years were allegedly accused of witchcraft and were subjected to "cleansing rituals". Documented cases indicated that children accused of witchcraft "confessed" confessed to their supposed wrong doing under tremendous pressure by the communities and without understanding the meaning of the accusation. The nature of these accusations is generally violent and the experience can be both physically and psychologically traumatic. For instance, in 2014 in the Wissetoken community of Tuoba

¹⁰⁹ United Nations (2016) Addressing Impunity for Rape in Liberia

¹¹⁰ United Nations (2016) *ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid*

District, Rive Gee County, a witchdoctor was invited by local authorities to examine 14 children accused of witchcraft. The witchdoctor's alleged method of detecting a witch was to place a fishhook in the victim's throat and a hot machete on their skin. There were reports of children being separated from their families for cleansing purposes for long periods of time and sometimes never being returned to their families. Such situations place children at serious risk of physical and sexual abuse including exploitation.¹¹² Many children remain at risk of this violation of human rights and the government has been alerted of this new growing wave of child abuse.

The Liberian government maintained death penalty due to particular circumstances. Liberia acknowledged her international obligations to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights with respect to the abolition of death penalty. The law reinstating death penalty was passed amid high rates of armed robbery, hijacking, prompting higher penalties from Liberians. However, to date no death warrants have been passed. The issue of death penalty was raised in the PRU processes. The government of Liberia indicated the need to maintain a de facto moratorium of the death penalty until such a time as the security was fully consolidated.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): About 50% of 17 ethnic groups practice FGM, primarily in the regions where the Sande society is present. It is estimated that 58% of Liberian women and girls have undergone FGM. This practice significantly affects women and girls from the poorest households who are twice as likely to have experienced it compared to those from the wealthiest households. FGM violates the rights of women and that of children to be free from violence, to enjoy the rights to life and physical integrity. Between September and December 2014 at the height of the Ebola crisis, as many as 250 girls from several counties were taken in *Sande* bush for initiation, despite MIA directive to *Sande* and *Poru* to suspend their activities to prevent the spread of ebola. This raised serious public health concerns in addition to human rights abuses inherent to FGM. Bomi, Grand Cape Mount were the counties most affected by Ebola outbreak.¹¹³

Liberia has made an effort to improve the state of prisons in Liberia: The government of Liberia had made some significant efforts to work towards improving human rights situation in the country. The following were highlights of some the positive developments.

Country Efforts to address Human Rights Issues

Human rights institutions established: Liberia successfully established human rights related institutions which included Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) established in October 2010 and the Independent Information Commission (IIE) created in 2013 in pursuance of the Freedom of Information Act of 2010. The country ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It has made good progress in reporting on Human Rights protocols to include the Convention on the Rights of Children and the Convention of the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against women (CEDAW). **Liberia had become part of the regional and international Human Rights Community:** Liberia made progress in addressing its reporting obligations under regional and international human rights instruments. In 2014 Liberia sent her first ever delegation on the African Convention on Human and People's Rights Session in Luanda, Angola. The country also made great

¹¹² UNMIL and UNITED Nations Human Rights, Office of the High Commission (2015) An Assessment of the Human Rights Issues Emmanating from Harmful and Traditional Practices in Liberia.

¹¹³ Ibid

strides in domestication of international treaty obligations and harmonisation of legislation with international obligations.

Liberia put in motion processes for addressing human rights issues in the country: In December, 2012 the country launched the roadmap for national healing, peace building and reconciliation. The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) led the process. UN supported the government of Liberia to put in place processes for managing peace and reconciliation. In particular, the UNMIL and UNDP through South-South Corporation supported the Governance Commission to learn from the experiences of South Africa, Rwanda and Sierra Leone with respect to managing peace and reconciliation processes.

As part of the justice sector reforms, the country established five regional justice and security hubs. With support from development partners especially the UN, the Government of Liberia established five regional hubs with the first at Gbarnga. All hubs had Police Support Units (PSU) officers' Border Patrol Unit (BPU) officers, courts (both circuits and magistrates), a prison and a Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) Unit. All hubs were staffed by public service officers, public defenders, county attorneys and human rights monitors from INCHR.

2.10 Climate and Environment

Liberia faced numerous environmental challenges including land degradation, fragmentation, deforestation, soil erosion and pollution. The population's dependency on forestry presented a unique environmental risk. Sustainable management of natural resources was essential for economic development in the country. On another end, natural and human systems in their complexity had made climate change a topical issue in Liberia. The country's vulnerability to climate change was mainly due to limited institutional human resources and financial capacities, absence of a meteorological and hydrological early warning systems, high dependency on fossil fuels and a nation which thrives on a natural resource based economy.

2.10.1 Natural Resources Management

Liberia established the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2003: The Agency became fully functional in 2006 and since then it was charged with the executive authority over the environmental activities and programmes relating to environmental management in Liberia.¹¹⁴ The EPA oversaw the implementation of the national environmental policy and sustainable management law of the protection of natural resources. The regulation also dealt with the submission of environmental management plans, the consultation and decision making processes and the environmental impact assessment (EIA) process and monitoring. Environmental management in Liberia covered forests, land, mining and agriculture.

Coastal and marine ecosystems in Liberia had been subjected to rapid deterioration due to a combination of factors including anthropogenic and natural factors. As a consequence flooding, erosion, siltation of seaport and major water bodies were on the increase and this affected human settlement, especially around Monrovia City (Bushrod Island), Buchanan and Cestos cities. Measures to control this cancerous development had been developed. Notable examples included coastal land reclamation in

¹¹⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2016) Liberia Land Policy and Land Rights

Monrovia (West Point, New Kru Town & Banjor) and in Buchanan (Walvis Bay, Robert Street and Port of Buchanan). Other efforts made included the construction of Gyron Systems and Break Water Systems in the aforementioned areas.

There are a number of policies and laws under forest protection in Liberia: In 2003, the Government of Liberia established a Protection Forest Areas Network (PFAN) followed by the adoption of the Forestry Reforest Reform Law in 2006. In 2009 it moved on to set up the Community Rights Law with respect to Forest Lands. To further buttress the protection of forests, in 2011 Government revised the Forestry Reforest Reform Law of 2006 to establish the Regulation Forest Development Authority to the Community Rights Law with respect to forest lands.¹¹⁵ Recently the GoL had developed, through its Division of Scientific Research, the National Forests Classification, Acreages, Location and Utilization Framework.

The Land Authority established in 2009 and actioned in 2016 managed land in Liberia.: The Authority was mandated to formulate and implement laws, policies regulations and programs in support of land governance, including land administration and management. Among other things it oversaw the promotion and support of the development of land use plans, implementation of property rights, including security of tenure of those holding land under customary rights. The Act also established a National Consultative Forum, a County Land Board for each County and Community Land Management and Development Associations. In 2013 GoL established the Land Rights Policy to consolidate the pending Land Authority Act, aimed at ensuring secure land rights, economic growth, equitable benefits, equal access, equal protection, environmental protection and participation.¹¹⁶

There were environmental protection laws and policies around mining, agriculture and investments. Mining, agriculture and investments were directly linked to resource management issues as they all depended on the environment. In 2000 the GoL established the Minerals and Mining Law for the Liberia Extractive Industries and Transparency Initiative (LEITI). The LEITI was responsible for ensuring the sustainable use of all extracted resources were. Under investments LEITI handled natural resource investment contracts and concessions.

¹¹⁵ Ibid

¹¹⁶ Land Commission (2013) Land Right Policy

Despite existence of policies and laws, Liberia had little success in its environmental management efforts. The country was threatened by high rates of deforestation, wetland deterioration, biodiversity loss, coastal erosion and pollution. Increase in deforestation and land degradation were due

Box 3: Challenges in Natural Resources Management

- ✦ Lack of institutional capacity, poor governance, weak technical, administrative and managerial capacities
- ✦ Weak institutional coordination
- ✦ Unclear policies and mechanisms to enable effective participation by especially non-state actors at national and local levels.
- ✦ There is inadequate public awareness and education/training
- ✦ Inadequate institutions and institutional frameworks
- ✦ Inadequate political commitment
- ✦ Inadequate planning skills and resources as well as incomplete structures at all levels of policy implementation
- ✦ Inadequate financial resources and economic framework
- ✦ Inadequate strategic plans and implementation
- ✦ Responsible authorities have limited access to information because of lack of effective mechanism for information processing and sharing
- ✦ Limited stakeholder participation in planning and decision making processes

to displaced people clearing land, unsustainable farming practices, mining, charcoal production, invasive species, hunting and unregulated timber extraction. Box 2 shows the noted challenges on natural resources management Liberia:

Source: Adapted from UN Liberia (2017) CCA Thematic Issue: Environment and Climate Change.

Gender dimensions in natural resources management are weak in Liberia: Grand Bassa, Sinoe, Grand Gedeh, Gbarpolu, Cape Mount and Bomi counties are the most affected areas with regards to natural resource management challenges. The challenges include access to and control over land (including community land), industrial mining, artisanal mining, commercial forestry and large-scale agricultural concessions. Major steps towards addressing these challenges have been taken by the European Union Delegation in Liberia in partnerships with key stakeholders in the Government (including: Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy; Ministry of Internal Affairs; Land Commission; Governance Commission; Ministry of Justice; Forestry Development Authority; and the National Investment Commission). The social status of women, particularly those in the rural areas are persistently undermined by gender inequalities. Government efforts as well as those of development partners have not been sufficient to mitigate the overarching challenges they face year after year. The disadvantaged status of rural women and the prevalence of gender stereotypes limits women's access to power, decision-making, resources and fulfilment of rights. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection has developed a national gender policy to help facilitate gender mainstreaming across all ministries, departments and agencies. However, in order to achieve gender transformation that will accelerate sustainable development, it is critical that the underlying factors that hamper the progress towards equality are addressed.

2.10.2 Resilience and Climate Change Adaptability

Negative climate change impacts are a threat to humanity in the 21st century.¹¹⁷ Adaptation to increasing climate change variability and climate change was a very important topic in Liberia. The Government of Liberia had put in place some initiatives to address the challenges of climate change.

¹¹⁷ IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) (2007) Climate Change: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Group 1, 11 and 111 to the Fourth Assessment Report of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (Core Writing Team, Pachauri, R.K., and Reinsinger, A., (eds). Geneva, Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change.

The country developed the National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA) in 2008. At NAPA's policy level, Liberia developed several adaptation initiatives aimed at reducing the adverse effects of climate change while promoting sustainable development. NAPA identified three highest priorities in the area: (i) capacity building to integrate climate change in development planning, designing infrastructure, land and coastal zone management; (ii) raising awareness by dissemination of climate change and adaptation information particularly to vulnerable communities such as farmers and coastal settlements; and (iii) mainstreaming adaptation to climate change into policies through programs in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, health, gender and meteorology. In 2017, stakeholders held a workshop in Buchanan to launch **The Green Climate Fund**, established with a mission to advance the goal of keeping temperature increase below 2 degrees.¹¹⁸ The fund was a unique global initiative to respond to climate change by investing into low-emission and climate resilient development. Despite all the efforts and arrangements made, Liberia still suffered from resource gaps and policy barriers to effectively tackle climate change.

The country's vulnerability to climate change affected large proportions of the population in the low income profile of Liberia's population has made the country vulnerable to climate change.: The impacts of climate change were more detrimental to the poor. In Liberia the low income profile of the population made the country more vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The most vulnerable were those who depended on climate sensitive rain-fed agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy and mining. The aforementioned rain-fed activities are the main livelihood strategies in Liberia. Most vulnerable populations face serious food insecurities. Vulnerable smallholder farming populations have low adaptive capacity against climate change shocks and stresses such as droughts.

Liberia had limited resilience and adaptive capacity to combat the effects of climate change. Low adaptive capacity in the country was exacerbated by both climate change and non-climate change impacts. Liberia was ranked 4th of the five worst performing countries on the 2017 Climate Change Vulnerability Index (CCVI)¹¹⁹ with a score of 0.25.¹²⁰

Table 8: Liberia's Climate Change Vulnerability Index score

Rank	Country	Region	Score	Category
1	Central African Republic	Africa	0.01	Extreme
2	DR Congo	Africa	0.20	Extreme
3	Haiti	Africa	0.24	Extreme
4	Liberia	Africa	0.25	Extreme
5	South Sudan	Africa	0.41	Extreme

The high risk was due to high levels of poverty and extreme dependence on climate sensitive sectors. Recurring crop failure and irregular rainfall patterns were increasingly leading to high food insecurity and subsequently malnourishment. The majority of the population lived in extreme poverty and their livelihood strategies were entirely based on the natural environment making it difficult to manage the environment sustainably, hence the risk of climate change vulnerability continued to increase.

2.11 Peace- Humanitarian-Development Nexus

¹¹⁸ Front Page Africa (2017) www.frontpageafrica.com/liberiagreencclimatefund.

¹¹⁹ Climate Change Vulnerability Index Scale (0-10) in which 0 is the worst performing measure and 10 is the best.

¹²⁰ Climate change Vulnerability Index 2017

This section emphasises the importance of addressing the connectedness of peace, humanitarian response, and development towards planning for sustainable development. Given the fragility context and environmental risks levels, disaster risk planning is key. The Peace-Humanitarian–Development nexus becomes the hub for development efforts in Liberia.

2.11.1 Disaster Risk Reduction

As a result of high vulnerability from over 14 years of war, poverty and low human and physical capacity, Liberia was a high risk country in terms of disaster. Risk of economic, health, environmental and social losses was high. Disasters can be classified as follows: geophysical, meteorological, hydrological, climatological, biological, technological, environmental and manmade.

Liberia had a National Disaster Management Policy: The government of Liberia defined Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) as a framework of elements considered to minimise vulnerabilities and disaster risks throughout society within the broader context of sustainable development¹²¹. The ultimate goal of DRR is to contribute to sustainable development through reducing the burden of disasters on the poor and most vulnerable. As such the National Disaster Management Policy (NDMP) was implemented by the National Disaster Management Agency, a branch under the Ministry of Internal Affairs established in 2012.

Liberia was a signatory of the Sendai Framework: The country was a signatory of the Sendai Framework and was guided by its four key factors on disaster risk reduction that included:

- Understanding Disaster Risk;
- Strengthening Disaster Risk Governance to manage disaster risks;
- Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience; and
- Enhancing disaster preparedness for response and to build back better recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.¹²²

The country participated in regional and global platforms on Disaster Risk Reduction: Recently at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, Liberia vowed to the world that it no longer treated disaster as marginal but had adopted a more proactive, holistic and comprehensive approach. Liberia's disaster management efforts were guided by internationally agreed standards and frameworks. The country is devoted to improve in providing early warning systems, preventing and mitigating all hazards that posed threats to communities and socioeconomic groups, especially women, children and people living with disabilities.

2.11.2 Conflict and Displacement Risks

Current conflict risk status in Liberia: As noted in earlier sections, Liberia was a high conflict risk country. Although it's almost 15 years since the end of the war, pain and wounds of the war were still fresh in the hearts of many.¹²³ Despite having witnessed three democratic and peaceful elections, the country remained a divided society. The post-war efforts to heal the nation had not fully addressed the

¹²¹ Government of Liberia (GoR) (2017) Statement made at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

¹²² Ibid

¹²³ Country Watch (2018) Liberia: Country Review

issues that triggered the war. Reconciliation efforts did not address the notion of rebuilding relationships within and between ethno-regional groups.

Post-war reconciliation and peace building in Liberia was shallow and inadequate: The vast majority of Liberians felt that the main perpetrators of violence escaped punishment and that the victims of violence had largely been denied justice. Statistical data from the Catholic Relief Services survey of 2016 showed that 80% of respondents did not believe that people who suffered from the war received justice through truth and reconciliation processes.¹²⁴ As such the risk for conflict to erupt again remained high.

Weak governance poised a risk to peace and reconciliation in Liberia. Public corruption, contentions land disputes and high rates of youth unemployment were potential drivers for fresh outbreak of violence. Attempts by some politicians to declare Liberia a Christian state were also seen as a destabilising force. This led to high insecurity levels in the country hence a conflict risk atmosphere.

Unchecked abuses of democratic freedoms in Liberia jeopardize peace, Rights in the country were considered fragile and easily abrogated. Lack of civility in the media, inflammatory rhetoric in the public spheres and judicial corruption were noted areas that held potential triggers of conflict. Some individuals who held public offices were cited for abuse of power, a notion that cultivated hatred among the masses.

The Liberian government lacks capacity to safeguard peace. It was failing to create opportunities for citizens to constructively engage with institutions for peace building. Disarmed soldiers who participated in the war and complained of not having received what they deserved were a major time bomb. . The government was also accused for the diminishing respect for traditional leadership which had played a crucial role in conflict mediation¹²⁵. All these and other government loopholes provided fertile ground for potential conflict.

The government had poor social cohesion strategies. Weak social cohesion and inequality led to persistent fragility of mutual trust. Gender inequality undermined women's access to justice, economic opportunities and reconciliation. Religion on the other hand could be a force for peace, or, for conflict. Residents of remote areas cited persistent isolation and this created bitterness among them.

Displacement Risk in Liberia: Displacement risks in Liberia were included civil war, epidemics, floods, tropical storms, tidal abnormalities, development induced displacements inter alia. Alertness to **civil war displacement risk in Liberia was always high.** From a historical point of view of civil unrest in the country, there was no absolute guarantee that Liberia was safe from civil war. During the years of civil war in Liberia people were displaced, some would find refuge in neighbouring countries -Cote D'voire, Guinea and Sierra Leone, while others moved from rural areas and surrounding cities into Monrovia. The results after the withdrawal of UNMIL in March 2018 were uncertain¹²⁶. Considering this background, the country remained with high conflict displacement risk.

Outbreaks of highly contagious diseases posed high displacement risk in Liberia: The West African Region was prone to outbreaks of highly contagious diseases. Telling from the 2014/2015 Ebola

¹²⁴ UN (2017) Sustaining Peace and Securing Development: Liberia Peacebuilding Plan

¹²⁵ Ibid

¹²⁶ Ibid

crisis, there was no guarantee that such cases could not recur, hence the disease outbreak remained a high displacement risk.

The country sometimes experienced development induced displacements: Liberia was in its post-war recovery stages and investments remained among the best options for development. Displacements such as that of the New Liberty Gold Company which displaced villagers and failed to fully account for their compensation were noted case examples. High likelihood of displacements also surrounded timber and rubber extraction. Thus, if unchecked investments also increased the risk of displacements in Liberia.

There were high levels of displacement risk around climate induced vulnerabilities. Natural disasters, most notably coastal flooding, sea level rises, sea surges and storms poised serious threats to Liberian populations leaving along the coast. Most Liberians leaving in coastal areas (West Point, New Kru Town, Banjor, Walvis Bay, Robert Street and Port of Buchanan) lived in poorly-built houses with little protection from the sea and storm surges. From 29 June 2016, Upper and Lower Margibi County in Liberia experienced widespread flooding, which affected 15,431 people in 49 communities. (IFRC, 12 Jul 2016). As of July 11, 2016 more than 1,300 people had been affected by torrential rains that destroyed their houses in Unification Town, Dolo Town and Mambahn Kaba District in Lower Margibi County in the east of the capital Monrovia. A temporary relocation site was identified by the authorities. The National Disaster Relief Commission provided initial relief assistance with support from partners including UNICEF and the Liberia Refugee, Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (OCHA, 11 Jul 2016).¹²⁷ Such hazards increased the levels of displacement risk in Liberia.

2.11.3 Activities for sustainable development

The lead role for sustainable development in Liberia is vested in the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP): The mission of the MFDP is was to promote inclusive sustainable growth and development through efficient resource allocation, equitable wealth distribution, prudent financial management, integrated development planning, coordinated management and well formulated and implemented policies. For decentralization and specialisation purposes, the MFDP had engaged several key ministries agencies and commissions to provide inputs and execute roles in their respective sectors.¹²⁸ Some of the key selected actors to spearhead activities for sustainable development included: Governance Commissions; Ministry of Internal Affairs; Civil Society Agency; Ministry of Health and Social Welfare; Ministry of Public Services; Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Education; and Liberian Institute for Public Administration. Development Partners and other organizations were involved as they offered immense assistance and support to Liberia's sustainable development agenda. Some of the development partners included inter alia UN, SIDA, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, USAID, African Development Bank and Catholic Relief Services.

Liberia developed sound policies in line with sustainable development. Lift Liberia Poverty Reduction strategy was one example which the country from post-conflict emergency reconstruction to growth.¹²⁹ Agenda for Transformation (AFT) five year plan (2012-2017) which aimed at steering Liberia's sustainable development efforts. The current prominent policy was the Liberia Rising 2030 aiming at

¹²⁷ UNDP (2017) Supporting Peaceful Transition pathways in Liberia

¹²⁸ Government of Liberia (2015) Poverty Reduction and Economic Management

¹²⁹ Ibid

achieving an inclusive middle income economy. The Public Financial Management Reforms and Public Procurement and Concessions Commission were other important policies for sustainable development.

The country had established economic measures for sustainable development. Increasing exports and domestic production, protecting minority investors and enforcing contracts as guided by the above mentioned economic policies being pursued for achieving sustainable development in Liberia.

Liberia health and human development activities for sustainable development. The government believed that development was about people and their wellbeing. Since the Ebola outbreak, the government has increased disaster preparedness. Advanced screening of contagious diseases and other deadly epidemics became a priority in the health sector. The government established a package of free basic health care services of acceptable quality known as the Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS) and made it available at 70% of health facilities since 2010.¹³⁰ In the education sector, the government and other development partners were working on increasing access to and quality of education.

Improvements in governance were a positive sign towards sustainability. The political front has made significant progress as the country remained stable throughout the three general elections and several by-elections. Elections were generally free and fair, with relatively high levels of participation and with the voters exercising universal suffrage to choose and change their leaders and representatives. The Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission and Judicial Services were also branches within governance working towards achieving sustainability.

Environmental sustainability was a priority in Liberia: Liberia was trying to achieve environmental sustainability through the use of policies and laws. It recently partnered with the European Union (EU) and signed an agreement that timber only would be exported to the EU. Norway was also supporting the conservation of 30% of Liberia's forests. It was also enhancing capacity at the country's Forest Development Authority and providing budget support to help it make progress with reforms. The government also partnered with quite a number of private and civil organisations in working towards environmental sustainability.

2.11.4 Humanitarian Response

Understanding the Content of Humanitarian Response: The objectives of humanitarian action are to: save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain humanitarian dignity during and in the aftermath of man-made crisis, or, natural disasters, as well as to prevent and strengthen preparedness for the occurrence of such situations. Humanitarian response should be guided by four principles of: humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. Humanitarian action includes the protection of civilians and those no longer taking part in hostilities and the provision of food, water, sanitation, shelter, health services and other items of assistance undertaken for the benefit of affected people and to facilitate the return to normal lives and livelihoods.¹³¹

Liberia has received humanitarian support since 2011 reaching a climax in 2014 as a result of the Ebola Virus. Humanitarian funding peaked at US\$1.2 billion in April 2014 at the height of Ebola response. Resources decreased significantly in 2015. Figure 18 shows contributions by various donors to humanitarian assistance.

¹³⁰ World Bank (2013) Poverty Reduction and Economic Management

¹³¹ www2.wpro.who.int : Principles and Good Practices of Humanitarian Donorship.



Figure 18: Contributions to the Ebola Virus Disease by donors 2011-2015

The bulk of funding for humanitarian response went towards health with less to water and sanitation, protection and other sectors. Figure 19 shows distribution of expenditure of donor resources by sector. The bulk of the resources were absorbed into the health sector.

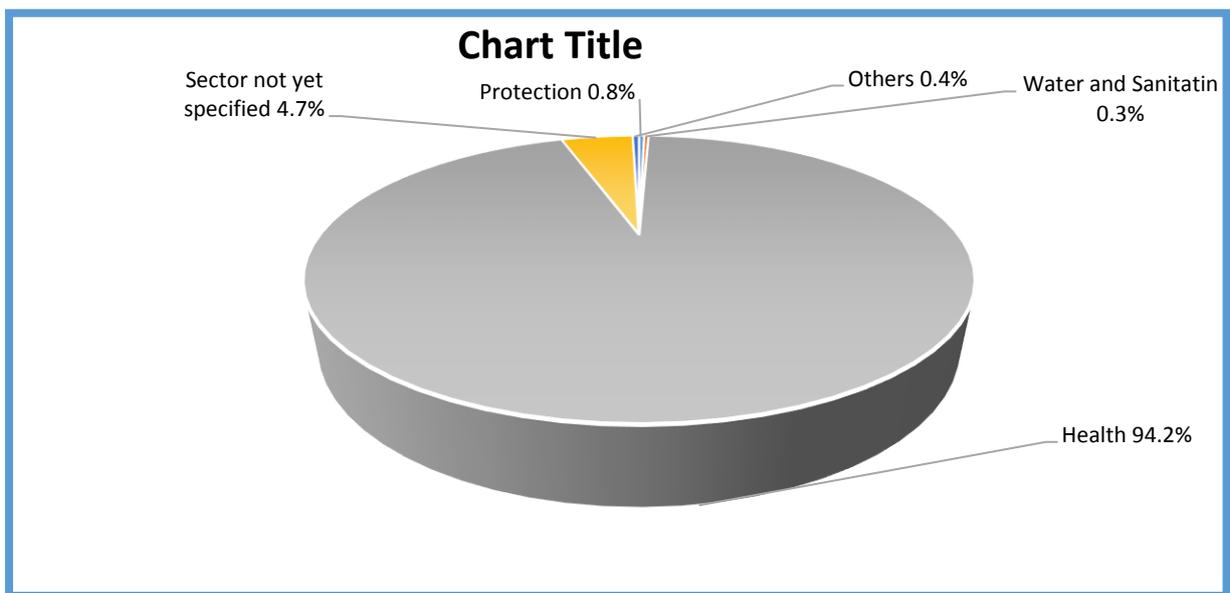


Figure 19: Allocation of Resources by sector 2011-2015

3.0 LIBERIA, SDGs AND DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

3.1 Unfolding of the SDG processes in Liberia

Liberia struggled to achieve the MDG targets, making a progress rate of 33 percent: In September 2015 the Member States of the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, under United Nations Resolution A/RES/70/1 as the successor agenda to the MDGs. The MDGs were formulated and adopted when Liberia was in the middle of a protracted civil war. The country began the implementation of the MDG agenda six years after its adoption. Despite efforts to align the MDGs to the country's national Poverty Reduction Strategy, Liberia struggled to achieve the MDG targets, making a progress rate of 33 percent¹³².

Domesticating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2063 must be fragility sensitive and risk informed: The Government of Liberia, as a member of the G7+, recognizes that the country is burdened with a high degree of fragility. The legacy of a nearly two-decade civil war, the dependence on highly volatile primary commodities in the extractive sector, the challenging Mano River region in which Liberia exists, and its exposure to a number of exogenous climate, conflict, and disaster risks impose unique challenges on Liberia's determination to exit out of fragility, achieve the SDGs and Agenda 2063, and attain middle income status. As the country embarks upon a process to adopt the 2030 and 2063 Agendas, fragility remains a key impediment.

The national SDG implementation process in Liberia was officially launched on 25th January 2016: The design of the process drew guidance from, and was aligned to the following national and international strategic frameworks¹³³.

- i. *Liberia Agenda for Transformation (Aft 1):* The Aft 1 is Liberia's Medium-Term Growth and development Strategy (2013-2017). It sets out precise goals and objectives that Liberia will achieve in the next five years in order to take the necessary steps toward its long-term goals, which are to become a more prosperous and inclusive society. This Aft 1 is consistent with the principles of the Paris Declaration, Accra Agenda for Action and the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States.
- ii. *The Buchanan Declaration:* The Declaration as adopted at a multi-stakeholder dialogue organized by the Government of Liberia in November 2015 to strategize on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 in Liberia. The Buchanan Declaration set forth the first principles and called for a comprehensive roadmap for domesticating the SDGs.
- iii. *The New Deal:* The New Deal is a key agreement between over 50 fragile and conflict-affected states, development partners, and civil society to improve the current development policy and practice in fragile and conflict-affected states. It requires development cooperation

¹³² Daily Observer, 27 January 2016, Liberia Starts Domesticating SDGs

¹³³ Ministry of Finance, 2016, The 2017/18 Citizen's Guide to the National Budget: Guide

in fragile states to shift from past donor-to-recipient transfer models, policies and practices – or using blueprint approaches to institutional reform – to an equal partnership between governments and development partners, based on dialogue and collaboration. It is premised on the realisation that fragility impedes development and erodes the capacity of institutions and societies to manage shocks and stresses and to deliver development results that build resilience. In April 2016 Member States committed themselves to operationalize and implement the 2030 Agenda in its g7+ member countries guided by the principles of the New Deal for engagement in fragile situations (the New Deal).

- iv. *African Union Agenda 2063*: Agenda 2063 is a strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent over the next 50 years. It builds on, and seeks to accelerate the implementation of past and existing continental initiatives for growth and sustainable development.

3.2 SDG Agenda Implementation Framework

Liberia’s Development Priorities determine the relevant SDGs: The Agenda for Transformation is the key instrument guiding the implementation of Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 in Liberia. In the context of the Aft 1 the SDGs can be defined around the five pillars of this national strategic development framework. Figure 20 shows how the five pillars seek to translate to the realization of the SDGs.

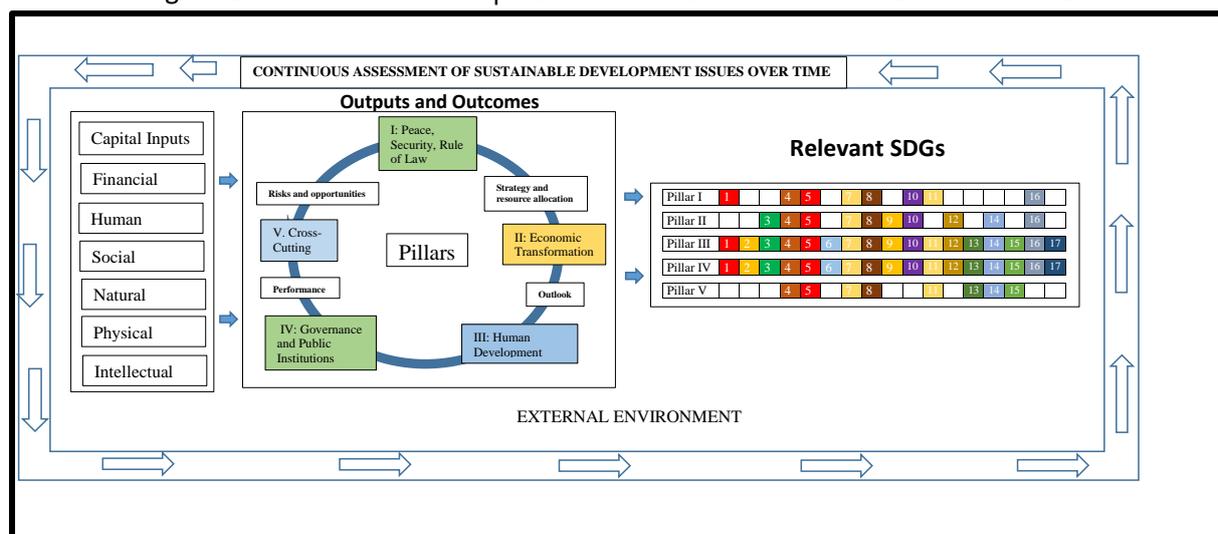


Figure 20: Relationship between GoL AFT 1 Pillars and SDGs

For details of the SDGs, see Annex 6. The GoL has prioritized 7 of the 17 SDGs and the priority goals are: SDG 3: Health, SDG 4: Education, SDG 5: Gender Equality, SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, SDG 9: Infrastructure, SDG 16: Peace and Justice and SDG 17:¹³⁴ These priority SDGs fell under Pillars I, II, III and V of the following pillars of the Aft 1. Table 9 presents the selected priorities by the Government of Liberia in 2016.

¹³⁴Executive Mansion, January 2016, President Sirleaf Launches National Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development; Calls on All Liberians to Engage in a National Dialogue

Table 9: Priority FGDs selected by the Government of Liberia¹³⁵

Pillar	Priority SDGs															
Pillar I				4	5											16
Pillar II			3	4	5											16
Pillar III			3	4	5	6			9						16	17
Pillar IV			3	4	5	6			9						16	17
Pillar V				4	5											

As an initial step in assessing the progress with regards to the domestication and implementation of the 17 SDGs and Agenda 2063, the GoL undertook a mid-term review of the Aft 1. The review, provided a useful basis for the alignment of the Aft 2 with the SDGs and Agenda 2063. GoL also carried out initial rapid mapping of the degree of alignment between the Aft 1, the SDGs and Agenda 2063. The exercise focused on aligning indicators. In addition, at the request of the GoL, UNDP facilitated a rapid assessment of alignment with focus on targets in the SDGs and Agenda 2063¹³⁶.

Based on the Mid –Term Review of the Aft 1 (2017), the priority SDGs discussed above, need to be strengthened by addressing the gaps identified in the Aft1 MTR. These improvements should inform the design of Aft 2 or its equivalent. The gaps are presented in Table 10.

Table 10: Targets of Priority SDGs Omitted in AFT1 to be addressed in AFT 2¹³⁷

SDG	Omitted Targets
SDG 3 (Good health and Well Being)	<p>Target 3.4: By 2030 reduce by 1 third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention, treatment and promotion of mental health and well beings</p> <p>Target 3.7: By 2030, ensure universal access to SRH care services including for family planning, information and education and integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes.</p>
SDG 5: (Gender Equality)	Target 5.6: Ensure universal access to Sexual and Reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the programme of action of the International conference on Population and Development and the Beijing platform for Action and the documents of their review conferences.
SDG 16 (Peace and Justice)	Target 16.4: By 2030 significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organised crimes.

The assessments revealed some critical gaps between Aft 1 and the SDGs and Agenda 2063 frameworks, some of which are as follows.

- **At least 106 of the 169 targets of the SDGs are strongly represented in the current Aft 1.** The Aft 1 prioritizes 65 SDG targets out of 106 (169 SDG targets minus 43 on means of

¹³⁵ <http://sdg.iisd.org/news/liberia-somalia-launch-domestication-of-2030-agenda>: Wahlen, C. (2016) Liberia, Somalia launch domestication of 2030 agenda.

¹³⁶ Domesticating Agenda 2030 For Sustainable Development & Au Agenda 2063 Using The New Deal Principles :Roadmap For The Republic Of Liberia

¹³⁷ Ibid

implementation under each of the goals; 19 targets of Goal 17 on partnerships and Goal 14 (Life below Water) target 14.7 which does not apply to developing countries).

- **Although Goals 12 (on Responsible Consumption) and 15 (on Life on Land) are included among the 11 priority goals for Liberia as captured under the Buchanan Communique on November 2015, these were not prioritized in the AfT 1.** Gaps are particularly prominent with respect to Goals 12 (Responsible Consumption), 14 (Life Below Water) and 15 (Life on Land) related to sustainable production and consumption; oceans, seas and marine resources; and terrestrial ecosystems, forests, land degradation and biodiversity, respectively.
- **Liberia is on a good footing to respond to the global pledge of ‘leaving no one behind’ and reaching the most vulnerable first.** The analysis shows that targets related to Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities) are prioritized under 16 of the 38 sectors of the AfT 1. This is in part due to the AfT 1’s focus on vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, youth, women (gender equality), and persons living with HIV and AIDS, and children (child protection). The AfT 1 also emphasizes support to smallholder farmers in pillar II.
- ***Liberia did not have a robust disaster risk reduction strategy:*** Resilience and reducing vulnerabilities to shocks and disasters, including those induced by climate-extreme events, health epidemics, and other natural hazards (SDG target 1.5), are not integrated in the AfT 1. It was only when the Ebola disaster struck that the Government factored disaster response in its recovery plan, the Economic Stabilization and Recovery Plan (ESRP). Going forward, it may be worth reflecting upon the importance of mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and resilience considerations as part of the national development planning process to strengthen the capacity of communities and the country as a whole to respond to crisis such as the EVD in future. Liberia already has a draft DRR Act which this Roadmap will support to pass into law.

Liberia adopted a roadmap for the implementation of SDGs and Agenda 2063: In September 2016, and in response to its Buchanan Declaration, Liberia, with the support of its development partners, adopted a roadmap for the domestication and implementation of the SDG and 2063 agendas. The purpose of the Roadmap was to provide clarity and define an easy to follow direction for domesticating the Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 guided by the New Deal. The Roadmap also sought to achieve continuity in the context of the SDGs, Agenda 2063, and the New Deal in the design of AfT-II. The Roadmap was founded on the following principles:¹³⁸

- Leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first;
- The integration imperative;
- The last mile challenge;
- Conflict-sensitive and risk-informed development;
- Embracing universality; and
- One Vision, One Plan.

Liberia established institutional arrangement for implementation of SDG: The success of the SDG and 2063 agendas and the country’s commitments under the New Deal requires robust and resilient delivery and coordination institutions and institutional arrangement. The Government of Liberia established an Inter-Agency Task Force, led by the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, to

¹³⁸ Ibid

coordinate the SDG implementation and to monitor, evaluate and report on progress and impact. Since the launch of the SDGs and Agenda 2063 by H.E. President Johnson-Sirleaf initial efforts towards this aim have taken place. The country's engagement in global level dialogues remained under the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whilst an SDG Secretariat was established in the Ministry of State. In addition, the institutional arrangement which was in place for Aft-I provided a solid basis for conceptualizing and designing the institutional arrangement that for Aft-II based on the SDGs, Agenda 2063 and the New Deal. [Liberia has also been identified as one of the SDG Center hubs for ECOWAS and Mano River countries. To this end a Unit has been established in the Office of the President.](#)

The SDG Domestication Process: Notable Challenges and Gaps. While the institutional arrangement yielded considerable results, the MTR report and other key stakeholders observed some challenges. The challenges included design and operational challenges faced by technical level coordination mechanisms; weak coordination between the budget/MTEF working groups and the planning sectors which created alignment difficulties between the budget and the implementation of Aft I priorities; absence of a mechanism to ensure that the outcomes of cross pillar coordination meetings informed discussions at the Liberia Development Alliance (LDA) level; weak sector resource absorption capacities of delivery institutions; and ministries largely had separate budgets, communication channels, and monitoring systems. These challenges were expected to grow with the introduction of the SDGs and Agenda 2063 which demand even higher quality performance, stronger coordination and coherence, and fluid interactions between the local and national level coordination and supply systems.

[A UNCT assessment on SDGs domestication and popularisation \(2017\) also noted the following gaps and challenges. With respect to building awareness, there was noted absence of detailed advocacy and communication strategies for rolling out SDGs and limited public awareness on SDGs. With regards to multi-stakeholder approaches for SDG integration, there was lack of consultations, relevant information and feedback mechanisms on consultations. There was also limited engagement of private sector and CSOs and political parties on SDGs. The prioritisation of SDGs is an area that requires to be revisited ensuring realignment to national development priorities and also inclusion of multi-stakeholder participation. There was also weak decentralisation and sub-national focus of the SDG domestication process. A silo approach was the main hinderence to horizontal policy coherence. SDG coordination within the GoL was mainly through three ministries \(Ministry of Finance and Development planning – MFDP; Ministry of Foreign Affairs- MoFA; and Ministry of Security – MoS\) without visible formal partnerships across sectoral line ministries and agencies. The UNCT assessment also noted that the absence of a multi-stakeholder formal forum on SDGs.¹³⁹](#)

Despite the operational challenges outlined above, the institutional arrangement provided a springboard from which the institutional arrangement for Aft-II could be designed. Moving forward, the GoL should explore the possibility of reclassifying the national budget and related preparation mechanisms Mid Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) to better align with the SDGs and Agenda 2063 around the 5Ps – People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace and Partnership. The reclassification of the budget in line with the SDGs can promote greater alignment between the Aft II and the SDGs and facilitate expenditure tracking against the SDGs.

¹³⁹ UNCT (Pa Lamin-Beyai) (2017) UNCT Transtion Positioning, AFT, SDGs Domestication, AFT Alignent, Options for Joint UNCT Support. Power Point Presentation to a UNCT Retreat. December 2017.

Financing the SDGs and Agenda 2063: The resources mobilization efforts of the Government on Aft-I (which is also the framework for the financing of the SDGs and Agenda 2063) were very successful. According to the MTR report total spending on the Aft I as of March 2016 had reached US\$3.7 billion. Government contributed 47 percent and partners' contribution is 53 percent. The original cost estimate of the entire Aft I was US\$3.21 billion. This means the government has already secured and spent 103% of the original funding estimate¹⁴⁰. The EVD crisis and the slump in commodity prices led to rapid shrinking of the fiscal space. The country continued to reel from the negative socio-economic impacts of the EVD crisis compounded by the collapse in iron ore and rubber. FDI was unlikely to return to the 2013 (pre-Ebola) level before 2020.

The government would need to urgently diversify its development financing base to give Aft-II any chance of succeeding. [There is need for a Costed SDG National Investment Plan with an analysis of financing options](#). As the country defines its priorities for the next development planning cycle and implementation of the SDG an engagement strategy to mobilize the finance and partnerships to support the country's priorities would be useful. [Long term non donor dependent opportunities for resources need to be better explored such as improving domestic resource mobilisation, exploring forms of innovating blended financing and Private Public Partners](#).

Monitoring, Reporting and Accountability Gaps for SDGs: Liberia specific SDG indicators that reflect national priorities had not yet been agreed upon with sector engagement still ongoing. SDG data needs assessments is required including the development of SDG baselines and the respective M&E framework. There is also effort required to ensure disaggregated data and adherence to "Leaving No One Behind" by tackling inequalities and discrimination in SDGs.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Development Management Associates, 2016, Agenda For Transformation: Report Of The Midterm Progress Review

¹⁴¹ Ibid

4.0 COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE OF THE UN IN LIBERIA

In 2017 the UN in Liberia conducted thematic swot analysis to inform the CCA: The overall purpose of the analysis of the comparative advantage of the UNCT in Liberia was to establish how the UNCT could effectively and efficiently complement Government's development priorities as well as the strengthening of the development partners. Specifically, the objective of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis was to assess the operating environment for the UN. It also sought to reach stakeholder consensus on the main strengths and weaknesses of the UNCT in Liberia, as well as the most important opportunities and threats from the external environment.

4.1 SWOT Analysis of the UNCT Capacities and Capabilities

Liberia carried out participatory thematic SWOT analysis of the UNCT capacities and capabilities. The thematic areas included the following: Infrastructure; Rule of Law, Justice and Security; Governance and Sustaining Peace; Youths; Employment; Environment and Climate Change; Gender; Socioeconomic Overview/Development Effectiveness and SDGs Implementation; Health; Education; and Partnerships. Each of the thematic groups examined the status and evolution of the thematic area, plans and commitments to address the challenges in the thematic area, thematic area stakeholders, UN's current response to the issues, gaps in the thematic area, UN's comparative advantage and what the UN can do to optimize its capacities. The thematic analyses also made recommendations on how the UNCT can contribute to the national plans and to the key objectives/results of the UN in the area, how key UN programme principles can be integrated in UN's work in the area, and how UN can strengthen its capacity, create efficiencies through synergies. While the thematic SWOT analyses discussed above were carried out before the commissioning of this independent assessment, the independent assessment also collected complementary information for the SWOT analysis.

A critical step in defining the comparative advantage of the UNCT in Liberia is the analysis of the development challenges that militate against the achievement of the country's development objectives. Whilst previous chapters of this CCA have extensively dwelt on these challenges, this section seeks to summarise the key challenges that constrain progress across all the thematic areas. These challenges will also be superimposed against the mandates and comparative advantage of the UNCT. The major development challenges as drawn from the thematic group discussions and other literature are as follows.

- Young people are highly marginalised and excluded from the development planning processes;¹⁴²
- Persistent negative impacts of the war-time atrocities on societal norms and beliefs relating to respect for human life and dignity, resulting in a deeply damaging legacy expressed in extremely high rates of violent crime, including SGBV;¹⁴³
- Severe capacity deficits in the different rule of law institutions which constraint the provision of proper access to justice, security and protection services, particularly at the local level;

¹⁴² Common Country Assessment – Youth Issues paper

¹⁴³ Thematic Area/Issue: Rule Of Law, Justice And Security

- Vulnerability remains high and Liberia is still struggling with ethnic, religious, gender-driven and class-based polarization associated with histories and enduring legacies of distrust, as well as issues of bad governance that pre-date the war;¹⁴⁴
- High inflation, shrinking fiscal space and rapidly increasing debt stock that might in the near future leave the country in a debt trap¹⁴⁵;
- The country is highly dependent on low value primary industry (i.e. agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing). Compounded by the high proportions of the population in informal and vulnerable employment and a shallow financial system, poverty in Liberia has remained high;
- High inequality, reinforced by slow employment growth, a high degree of economic informality, and few remunerative livelihood opportunities. Gender inequality remains high reflecting inherent cultural norms. Gender inequality index (GII) was 0.649 in 2015 (ranking 150 out of 159 countries);
- The current development model is environmentally unsustainable given the heavy reliance on the extractives sectors. Consequently, Liberia faces numerous environmental challenges including land degradation, fragmentation, deforestation, soil erosion, and pollution;¹⁴⁶
- Weak decentralization of political, economic and fiscal governance resulting in gross underdevelopment in interior counties (i.e. unbalanced regional development);
- Liberia has no Disaster Risk Management Framework. The country's disaster risk preparedness is weak;
- Low performance in human development indicators; and
- Lack of Government political will to operationalize well-thought policies, including slow pace of finalising critical policies.

The above mentioned challenges have defined the Government development priorities which for Liberia are critical for addressing post-conflict issues. The post-conflict nature of the country has played a major role in the definitions of both the challenges underlying the development processes in Liberia, and the solutions to the same, which are conflict sensitive.

Government Priorities: The UNCT comparative advantage should support the achievement of national priorities. Given the problem challenges highlighted above, the priorities for the GoL as expressed by stakeholders and outlined by the new President of Liberia include:

- Improving social service delivery (i.e. reviewing and revision of the education system, improving health and sanitation, promoting and strengthening gender equality, and providing for youth re-orientation and empowerment through training of all kinds, job creation and the expansion of sports); addressing youth unemployment is a high priority¹⁴⁷
- Reducing poverty, increasing youth empowerment through job creation and training, and improving the productivity of our economy, through a comprehensive road and highway construction program, that will link all county capitals with all-weather paved primary roads;¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴ ibid

¹⁴⁵ CCA UNCT Thematic Group: Socio-Economic Overview/Development Effectiveness and SDGs Implementation

¹⁴⁶ Thematic Area/Issue: Environment and Climate Change

¹⁴⁷ H.E. President Weah's Annual Message to the Legislature, 2018

¹⁴⁸ Ibid

- Achieving sustainable economic growth, development and expansion of agriculture, and addressing the very large infrastructure deficit, with particular emphasis on road construction and the provision of affordable and adequate electricity for all our people;¹⁴⁹
- Sustaining peace After the departure of UNMIL;
- Promote decentralization of institutions and systems of governance, review and build upon the current Code of Conduct in order to increase accountability of public officials and reduce the incidence of corruption;¹⁵⁰
- Providing Technical Assistance (TA) to strengthen effective functioning of the public sector
- Improving the judiciary system to ensure that the basic rights of all Liberians are protected, thus sustain peace and promote full reconciliation;¹⁵¹
- Improving the professional and operational development of the Armed Forces of Liberia, and other security agencies, in order to better prepare them to participate in the fight against global terrorism;¹⁵²
- Promoting land reform, mitigating conflict and building resilience to climate change, evidenced by fight against coastal erosion threatening livelihoods and communities with focus on the access to and control of women to land and mainstreaming gender in climate resilient agricultural practices.¹⁵³

For Liberia, all these development priorities are guided by the need to achieve the SDG agenda, Agenda 2063 and the New Deal. In the programming period the UN will, thus, have to direct its comparative advantage towards supporting the AfT II as the medium term instrument for achieving the abovementioned development frameworks. At the time of the development of this CCA, the new government was still in the process of developing a country blueprint spelling out national development priorities. It is important to note that all the development priorities of Liberia have attributes of peace, justice and inclusivity in the development processes in the spirit of '*Living No one Behind*'.

Strengths of international development agencies and NGOs: The UNCT comparative advantage will need to be complemented by the strengths of key stakeholders that include GoL, international development and financial institutions like the World Bank, European Union, IMF, ADB, NGOs, private sector, etc. The strengths of these stakeholders lie in:

- their abilities to control national development and legislative instruments that define the course of national development;
- abilities to mobilise resources and provide financial guarantees that are critical for investment;
- control of investment resources and capital that shape the employment, consumption and expenditure patterns in the economy;
- local presence (NGOs), making them an important UN partner for reaching out to those vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion due to weak decentralization of Government services;
- ability to respond quickly to emergencies;
- keeping a check on Government accountability;

¹⁴⁹ Ibid

¹⁵⁰ CCA UNCT Thematic Group on Governance

¹⁵¹ Ibid

¹⁵² Ibid

¹⁵³ CCA UNCT Thematic Group: Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change

- UN to transfer skills and knowledge (capacity building) to local people so that they have the capacity and ability to do things themselves. Avoid parachuting technical experts to provide technical expertise without transfer of knowledge and skills to local people. (their technical expertise that is critical for the capacity building of the various arms of Government through training and technical support;) and
- capacities to support employment opportunities for youths and women through provision of productive infrastructure, access to capital financing , support to vocational training and access to technology.

Aligning these partner strengths to the UN comparative will be critical for the generation of synergic impacts on the development processes in Liberia.

Comparative advantage of the UNCT: Given the abovementioned challenges and development priorities of the Government of Liberia, the UN system should marshal its comparative advantage towards supporting the Government development priorities.

- UN's comparative advantage lies in its core approach of institutional development, capacity building and community engagement.
- The key role that the UN plays in monitoring the achievement of SDGs places the UN through its various mandates to address the rampant inequalities that cut across all sectors of Liberia's development and social life (gender inequalities, SGBV, weak governance with respect to resource utilisation, human rights violations, access to education, health)
- Due to its neutrality and impartiality, the UN system is particularly well-placed to further strengthen the rule of law and restore justice, security and protection services for the population of Liberia. To do this the UN needs to work through and with the Government partners, CSOs and donors.
- UN neutrality and impartiality makes it a reliable peace broker in Liberia. It can give credible support to NEC to ensure a peaceful, transparent and gender sensitive election processes with credible results that are accepted by a broad spectrum of stakeholders and a subsequent transition to the new administration that is structured and orderly.
- Due to its neutrality and impartiality the UN can support initiatives working with relevant stakeholders (CSOs, Church Organisations) to consolidate the unfinished business of meaningful peace and reconciliation efforts at the grassroots levels
- It can strengthen coherence among development, peacebuilding efforts and human rights mechanisms for the realization and sustainability of governance, peace and development gains.
- The UN has a global knowledge and technical support network which gives it a comparative advantage to assist the GoL develop a strategy to achieve/domesticate the SDGs, and engaging the international community to mobilize funds for the SDGs. This comparative advantage is critical for supporting the SDG alignment to national priorities and plans, national SDG strategies and targets, and internationally agreed policy frameworks defining integrated approaches to sustainable development as well as norms and standards;
- The UN is a trusted partner in supporting constitutional reviews, taking this to the 'last mile' through increased advocacy and sensitization of the citizens to create demand for completing the constitution review process, including deepening legislative engagement to ensure agreed proposals go for referendum.

- The delivering as one approach is a true advantage for striking a balance between being result-oriented and focusing on developing people and institutions. The UN needs to agree on who provides leadership for the major areas that it supports and put in place efficient and effective management and coordination structures that enable the UN to Deliver as One and hence eliminate competition.
- [Engagement of United Nations Volunteers and the integration of volunteerism in youth, disaster risk reduction and other thematic areas corresponding to Agenda 2030 and national development priorities.](#) An analysis of Government priorities, UN comparative advantage and stakeholder strengths according to the above analytical model shows important relationships that are critical for determining UN decisions that can unlock optimal impact for Liberia. This analysis reveals the UN comparative advantage that best speak to the Government development priorities in accordance to the analytical model above.
- [Through advisory services, the UN can offer substantive expertise on volunteerism and volunteer infrastructures to the Government of Liberia, as a vehicle for capacity development across all thematic areas and furthermore, support the Government in its effort to attain national development outcomes and reach the SDGs](#)

The combination of the Government development priorities, international development partners, private sector and NGO strengths and the UN comparative advantage shows that in Liberia there is great scope for collaboration among these key actors. The analytical model shows that the efforts of the next Joint UN/Government/Partner development framework (i.e. the expanded UNDAF) will achieve value addition and impact by focusing on intersections 1, 2 and 3. The three intersections are explained in detail in Figure 21.

Intersection 1: UN comparative advantage responds to Government development priorities and overlaps with the strengths of international development agencies and NGOs. The most important development priority for Liberia is sustaining peace and ensuring that the basic rights of all Liberians are protected, thus sustain peace and promote full reconciliation. UN neutrality and impartiality will be critical for the strengthening of the rule of law and restore justice, security and protection services for the population of Liberia. The UN comparative advantage of a reliable peace broker and its ability to strengthen coherence among development, peace building efforts and human rights mechanisms for the realization and sustainability of governance, peace and development gains will greatly contribute towards

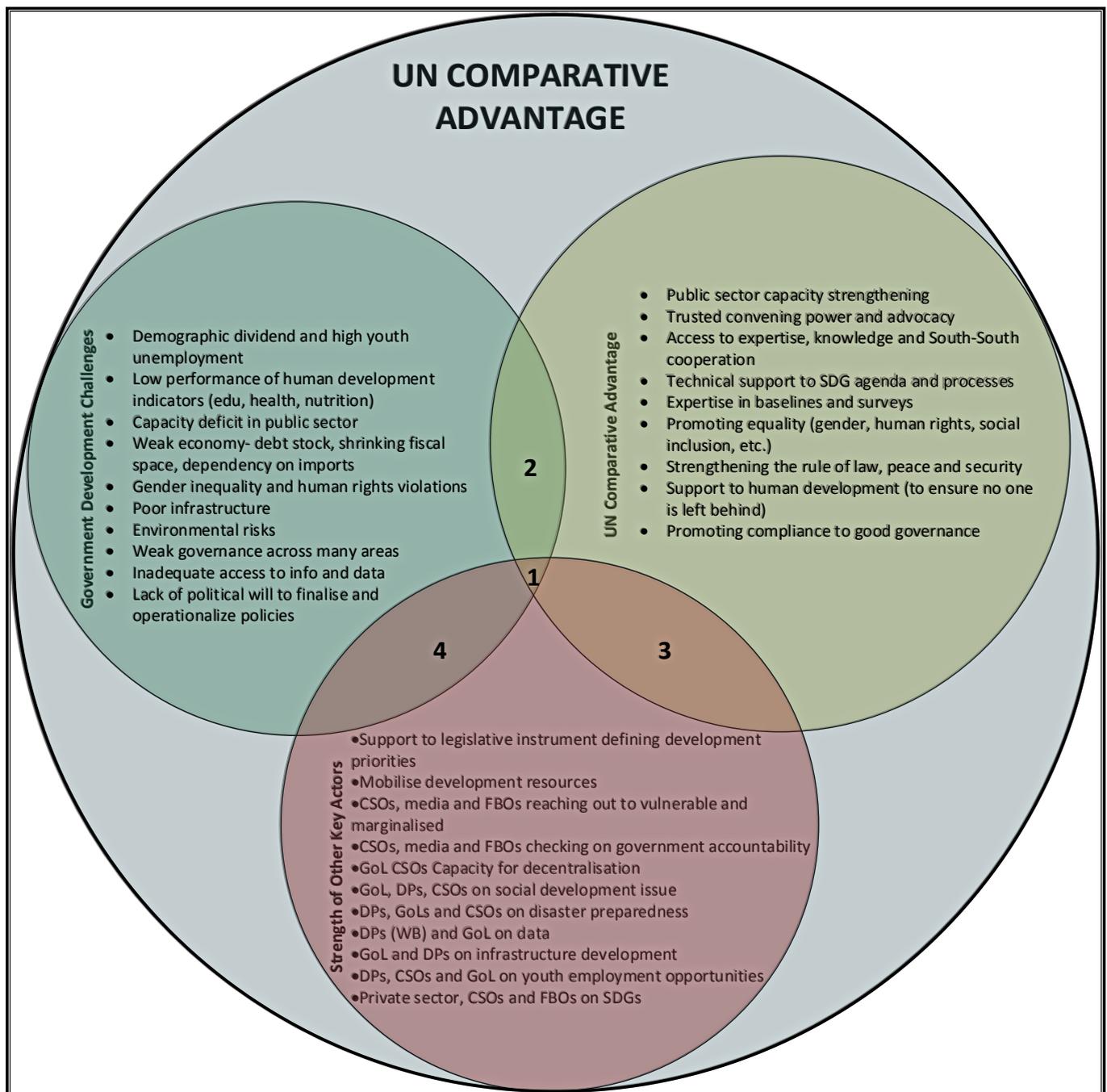


Figure 21: Analytical Framework for UNn Comparative Advantage

the realisation of this development priority. On the other hand, NGOs will also promote peace through **Intersection 1: UN comparative advantage responses to Government development priorities and overlaps with the strengths of international development agencies and NGOs.** The most important development priority for Liberia is sustaining peace and ensuring that the basic rights of all Liberians are protected, thus sustain peace and promote full reconciliation. UN neutrality and impartiality will be critical for the strengthening of the rule of law and restore justice, security and protection services for the population of Liberia. The UN comparative advantage of a reliable peace broker and its ability to strengthen coherence among development, peace building efforts and human rights mechanisms for the realization and sustainability of governance, peace and development gains will greatly contribute towards the realisation of this development priority. On the other hand, NGOs will also promote peace through their local presence and ability to reach out to those vulnerable due to weak decentralization of

Government services. International development agencies will contribute to the reduction of marginalization and exclusion (which are the key triggers of conflict) by promoting employment opportunities for youths and women through provision of productive infrastructure, access to capital financing, support to vocational training and access to technology.

Improving social service delivery and achieving sustainable economic growth priorities of Government through promotion of evidence-based policy making and programming will be other important areas for collaboration between the UN comparative advantage and strengths of international development partners and NGOs. UN's comparative advantages in institutions development, capacities building and community engagement, result-orientedness and focusing on developing people and institutions as well as promoting volunteerism will blend with the strengths of international development agencies in controlling of investment resources and capital that shape the employment, consumption and expenditure patterns in the economy, keeping a check on Government accountability capacity building expertise to optimally contribute to these development priorities. This will be buttressed by the UN access to its global knowledge network that can provide the much needed technical support and expertise through knowledge transfers, knowledge exchange and South-South cooperation.

Intersection 2: UN Comparative advantage that supports Government development priorities without the complementarity of other partner strengths: UN can carry out bilateral engagements with the Government of Liberia when it comes to supporting government priorities to do with peace building, rule of law and governance. The UN can support legislative reforms, institutional capacity development for peace building and strengthening the rule of law, and engaging government in dialogue in these areas without requiring the complementarity of the international development partners. Nevertheless, a portion of these activities can also fall into the critical intersection where all the three parties need to collaborate for high impact results.

Intersection 3: Partners strengths that support Government development priorities without the complementarity of UN comparative advantage: These are the development priorities for which the UNCT has no comparative advantage. The government priority on poverty reduction through job creation can be realized with the support of development partners, especially the international financial institutions that have active programmes in Liberia. These partners have the abilities to resource mobilise and provide financial guarantees that are critical for investment; control of investment resources and capital that shape the employment, consumption and expenditure patterns in the economy; and can deploy their technical expertise to support employment opportunities for youths and women through provision of productive infrastructure, access to capital financing, support to vocational training and access to technology. The private sector also have capacities for public-private partnerships with GoL, especially in infrastructure development and natural resource management. Corporate social responsibility will also complement some of the GoL capacities. While the UN might have comparative advantage in programmatic IEC, the Media has an comparative edge with regards to outreach and diversity of tools. The government and other key actors would support the UN interventions, but the UN lacks the necessary comparative advantages to participate in large infrastructural projects, sectoral budget support for social services delivery, support to public financial management, industrial and trade reforms.

In order to optimally realize its comparative advantage, the UN system will need to address some of its own capacity gaps/weaknesses that were identified by the multi stakeholder SWOT analysis. Liberia has already conducted the capacity mapping, which clearly shows the UN expertise and capacity to support the government. The UN has already repositioned itself as trusted partner of the Government

of Liberia, hence, synergizing resources at its disposal with increased efficiency, effectiveness and quality of support. The UN needs to strengthen its capacity in developing a theory of change that identifies viable development pathways for overcoming the development challenges of Liberia. According to the SWOT analysis, the Delivering as One philosophy has not yet been fully embraced by the UN in Liberia. Despite the existence of the UNDAF and its Results Framework, the agencies still tend to pursue their individual mandates. Capacities for collaboration and exchange among all relevant UN agencies responsible for thematic areas need strengthening. Resource mobilization strategies are also not in harmony with the priorities as stated in the UNDAF, an issue that can be resolved through joint programming. UN capacity to forge partnership with relevant organizations for resource mobilization still has scope for improvement by exploring new frontiers. In addition, the UN is spreading itself too thinly on the ground in trying to do everything. The UN working together should concentrate on fewer areas with a bigger impact. This was raised separately by government partners and donors and this was also reflected in the UNDAF Evaluation Report. The UN does not have a clear strategy on how to build both institutional capacities of individual experts in government. The UNDAF evaluation observed that the UN system in Liberia did not afford Liberian citizens to grow professionally in the UN system. Most positions are filled by internal staff. There is no explicit mentorship strategy of transferring skills to government official by UN experts. With regards to gender mainstreaming, there is a scope to strengthen its efforts by mapping the existing gender gaps – within the UN and the GoL and build on them for providing tailor-made support to increase the replication of GEWE efforts across sector and UN agencies.

The greatest **opportunities** for the UN in Liberia are: (i) the successful swearing in of a democratically elected new government that underpins the hopes of all Liberians for peace, stability and growth; and (ii) the global support to the SDG 2030 agenda which provides the UN with leverage for resource mobilization. The greatest **threat** is the regional instability which might drift the country back into conflict. In addition, the likelihood of another Ebola virus outbreak, or, another new disease, remains a reality.

The comparative advantages of the UN should be realized within the framework of the five UN programming principles. UN assistance to the government of Liberia is geared towards attainment of the SDGs based on national ownership, human rights, capacity building, gender equity, results-based management and environmental sustainability. As a cardinal principle of the Sustainable Development Goals “**leaving no one behind**” principle guide all the UN interventions in Liberia. All levels of UNDAF programmatic areas should be developed in line with international standards and key human rights principles. The UN’s long-term perspective and emphasis on national ownership positions it as a trusted partner and enables it to access otherwise inaccessible institutions. In doing so, will serve as a facilitator for broader engagement in the rule of law sector, while also investing in full-fledged capacity building to complement and follow up on short- and medium-term interventions. Capacity development is critical for addressing the human resource challenges in the country.

In summary, the UN will have to focus its comparative advantage on supporting efforts towards the achievement of the Government development priorities. Rather than compete with the international development organisations, NGOs and the private sector, the UN should seek to collaborate with the same to benefit the people of Liberia. But above all the UN needs to put in place a Delivering as One Modality that works. That modality must have efficient and effective institutional, structural, finance, management, coordination and reporting systems that facilitate Delivering as One and hence eliminate competition among UN agencies. Such a modality will need the full support of the UN HQs as many of the constraints are due to different mandates and HQ financing and reporting requirements.

5.0 PARTNERSHIPS

This chapter reviews partnership arrangement for the period 2013/2018 and suggest tentative proposals that may guide partnership arrangements moving forward. It also discusses the role of the UN in strengthening partnership arrangements in the context of contributing to the achievement of the GoL priority SDGs.

5.1 Stakeholder Partnerships for the period 2013-2017/18

Stakeholder relationships for the 2013-2017, extended to 2018/18 period remained relatively weak: The CCA stakeholder consultations held between January and February 2018 noted the following key observations around partnerships for delivering on Liberia's development priorities:

- There was a relatively strong relationship between GoL and the UN centred around the delivery of Liberia's development priorities contained in the UNDAF;
- International Development Agencies had specific country programmes of cooperation with the GoL towards supporting AfT I. They also supported UN agencies to execute some components of mutual interest in the UNDAF. In addition the International Development Agencies also implemented their programmes with the support of CSOs and other institutions. Close analysis of feedback from International Development Agencies noted that UN was a more expensive service provider compared to others. While the UN worked with some CSOs to deliver on their mandates in the UNDAF, the relationships with the CSOs were generally weak. Involvement of CSOs in the delivery of UNDAF was generally low.
- Despite the relationships between the UN and selected private sector organisations, the CCA consultations noted average to below average involvement of the private sector in contributing to the delivery of the UNDAF programme.
- CCA Stakeholder consultations noted some positive development where Liberia development stakeholders came together to discuss matters for development.

In a nutshell, the multi-stakeholders (GoL, UN, DPs, CSOs, Private Sector) were involved in issues of development in Liberia, albeit not in a well-coordinated and robust manner.

5.2 Stakeholder Partnerships Moving Forward

Achieving the ambitious agenda for the 2030 calls for stronger partnerships in Liberia and paradigm shift in stakeholder relationships: A CCA multi stakeholder SWOT on Partnerships, noted that achieving the ambitious targets of the 2030 agenda called for revitalised and enhanced stakeholder partnerships that bring together government, UN system, DPs, CSOs, private sector and other players to mobilise available resources and capacities.¹⁵⁴ Liberia is part of the global compacts including SDGs, Aid Effectiveness, New Deal and Agenda 2063. In the design of the new Macro-economic framework (successor of AFT I), the country will align and embrace key development principles in these global compacts. As such stronger partnership arrangements are required if Liberia were to effectively contribute to the global and regional development targets.

¹⁵⁴ One UN (2017) Thematic areas for Common Country Assessment Issues paper: Partnerships.

One Common Plan, One Fund and Jointly Owned Results: In 2013-2017/18 the UNDAF was the focus for UN efforts in supporting the GoL development priorities. The CCA Stakeholder consultations suggests the need to move beyond the UNDAF modality to an SDG driven One Common Programme of Delivery to which all stakeholders can contribute (i.e GoL, UN, DPs, CSOs, Private Sector and other development players). This will require the creation of One Fund to resource the execution of the programme. Subsequently the One Programme

Box 4: Suggested Name for the Liberia Programme of Development

- i. Liberia Development Programme for Achieving SDGs (LDPAS) 2019-2023
- ii. Driving Development in Liberia through SDGs 2019-2023 (DDLs)
- iii. **Liberia Expanded Delivery as One Programme 2019-2023 (LEDOP).**

will lead to jointly owned results. Achieving the ambitious goal of One Programme, One Fund and Jointly owned Results, will also call for rejuvenated efforts in improving coordination, of key development players in Liberia. A mindset and paradigm shift in doing development in Liberia will thus be called for. Having such a common programme, will not deny individual agencies to have a sub-plan aligned to their roles. Box 4 makes suggestions for the proposed One Programme. For the UN, the One Common Programme of Delivery expands upon the Delivery as One modality for UNDAF. This CCA was produced at the time when the GoL had not developed its medium term framework for development. As such this becomes a key priority before the suggested programme document is developed. In line with the principles of Aid Effectiveness, ensuring that the GoL is on the driving seat for development efforts in Liberia becomes paramount.

Strengthening stakeholder groups for effective contribution to national development priorities via the One Programme is paramount: Analysis of Liberia development stakeholder groups (GoL, UN, DPs, CSOs, Private Sector and others), indicates a strong need for strengthening group stakeholder entities. CCA thematic area review noted positive development on the coordination of stakeholders. With support from UNDP, the country launched the Liberia Development Alliance (LDA). The coordination forum is chaired by the President and comprises: DPs, UN, private sector and CSOs. The LDA helps consolidate gains and sustain progress, attract additional domestic and external support by mobilising resources and strengthening the networks for coordination and monitoring development effectiveness. Despite these notable efforts around LDA, there has been no continuity of meetings which provided the coordination of GoL and the country's development stakeholders. The CCA thematic review papers for Partnerships also noted some positive developments within the CSO groups. The Liberia International NGO (LINGO) Forum and CSO network hold separate coordination meetings which help to improve coordination, reduce duplication and improve impact of development assistance to Liberia. The private sector in Liberia is noted to be relatively small and may require more energy for improved coordination to contribute effectively to national development priorities. At the global level, there is a strong movement for private sector contribution to and participation in the SDG agenda. In line with Aid Effectiveness, there may be need for the enhancement of the coordination of the Donor Group.

UN role in strengthening Liberia's development stakeholder partnerships: The UN with its comparative advantages of convening power, staff expertise and capacities to coordinate including cultivating strong partnerships, was expected to support: ¹⁵⁵

- i. Improvement of aid effectiveness and support open budget initiative;
- ii. Improvement of fund tracking for the proposed One Programme One Fund, Jointly Owned Results development programme;
- iii. Support functioning of the LDA;
- iv. Support needs assessments and development of the successor AFT II; and
- v. Support consolidation of Liberia's priority SDGs

¹⁵⁵ One UN (2017 Thematic Papers for CCA: Partnerships (Ibid))

6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

Liberia had continued to move along a sustainable recovery path from the aftermath of the civil war. It invested significant efforts towards the strengthening of its governance and judiciary systems, including the rule of law, economic and human development. It also made important strides towards addressing human rights, inequality and discrimination. The Government of Liberia also shown commitment towards the integration of the country into the regional and international communities for the much needed political and developmental support it required for rebuilding the country after the civil war, as evidenced by its membership of a number of development blocs including ECOWAS, AU, the New Deal, UN, among others. Of major significance is its membership to the UN, g7+ and AU, whose flagships – Agenda 2030, the New Deal and Agenda 2063 – underpin the country's development planning.

The structure of Liberia's economy remained one of the key determinants of its development. Macroeconomic risks were high as a results of an open economy heavily dependent on foreign aid, and high dependency on foreign direct investment (FDI) and primary exports. The country was also dependent on imported fuel and food which made it vulnerable to shocks with both fiscal and balance of payments implications. The efforts by the Government of Liberia to address the macroeconomic risks through its development planning frameworks including the Poverty Reduction Strategy (2008) and AfT-1 (2012-2017), albeit the economic losses suffered from the Ebola virus crisis. The country's vision, Liberia Rising 2030, would only become a reality if macroeconomic risk was addressed.

Development partner support played a critical role in the rebuilding of Liberia. Partners, particularly the UNCT, supported institutional reforms and strengthening. Other development, especially the international financial institutions including the World Bank and African Development Bank on one hand, and others like the European Union, Norwegian Agency for Development, etc. on the other supported the reconstruction of the country's infrastructure and public service systems. Development assistance was also important for the Government of Liberia in pursuit of its objectives under its AfT-1. It should, however, be noted that some of the development assistance in the form of loans was driving the county into a debt trap, with Liberia's external debt stock increasing from which rose from USD 597 million in September 2016 to USD 736 million in June 2017. Since the end of the civil war Liberia received a lot of humanitarian inflows, which reached a climax of US\$1.2 billion in 2014 in response to the Ebola virus outbreak.

The major challenge for Liberia remained the consolidation of peace, with the risk of conflict remaining very high. Sustaining peace in Liberia would require taking into consideration the potential conflict risk factors which include: shallow and inadequate post-war reconciliation, weak governance systems, unchecked abuses of democratic freedoms, perceived limited capacity of the government to safeguard peace, and poor social cohesion strategies. A lot still needed to be done towards reconciliation of the nation from the scars of the civil war. With public opinion in the country having little faith in the country security establishment to maintain peace after the withdrawal of UNMIL, the country required support in addressing the potential risk factors to maintain peace. In this regard partners needed to build their future support on the goodwill gained from the successful three consecutive peaceful democratic elections held since the end of the civil war to 2017.

Employment creation was another major challenge that requires attention to defuse the youth unemployment time bomb, as well as absorb greater proportions of women into the formal economy. The high levels of economic informalisation were not sustainable. The employment creation deficit also needed to be addressed through economic decentralisation, accompanied by decentralisation of public service provision. Centralisation of public service provision and economic development, as well as gender inequality were the major drivers of inequality and exclusion, in Liberia, leading to large proportions of populations located away from the centre being left behind. With the adoption of the SDG 2030 agenda, Liberia could address this development deficit.



Figure 23: Peace - humanitarian -development Nexus

Moving forwards towards sustainable development, post 2013-2017/18 development planning needed to consider a systematic integration of: (i) continued efforts on sustaining peace; (ii) planning for unexpected humanitarian emergencies; and (iii) prioritising key developmental challenges. Sustaining peace in Liberia required taking into consideration the potential conflict risk factors and people displacement risks in the country.

In addition, there will be need for a conversation among the various stakeholders including the youth to discuss the future of the youths. Given the context of the youth population in Liberia, there will be need for a unique strategy to address the skills deficiency within the context of employment creation and sustainable livelihoods.

Consolidation and **sustainability of peace** should entail a multi-stakeholder and participatory approach towards addressing the myriad of potential triggers of conflict discussed in this report. **Development priorities** should seek to address human development challenges especially in areas with poor development indicators such as education, health, food insecurity and employment creation for the young people. Considering the fragility status of Liberia, such preparedness could include enhancing capacities of institutions responsible for emergence crises and also building the capacities for response for communities in the red spot areas for potential disasters.

With the prevailing situation and the development challenges in Liberia, the need for UNCT assistance could not be overemphasised. The various mandates of the UNCT in Liberia were evidently relevant for the outstanding development challenges in the country. The UN needed to prioritise those areas of development for which they have undoubted comparative advantage, zeroing in on areas where they had added value. In selection of those areas of comparative advantage, noting the key areas that could better be done by other development stakeholder would be critical.

Conclusion & Recommendations

6.2 Recommendations

Moving forwards, aligning the UNCT comparative advantage to the development priorities of the Government of Liberia would be critical. Accordingly, based on the analysis of the UNCT comparative advantage this CCA came out with the following prioritised recommendations.

Priority Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Support the sustenance of peace particularly at the grassroots level by channelling resources towards addressing the potential triggers of conflict.

Recommendation 2: Supporting efforts to address gender inequalities and human right violations associated with ethnicity, religious and traditional values (harmful traditional practices, early marriages, SGBV).

Recommendation 3: Support Government decentralisation of government services and development to combat exclusion of large proportions of the population located away from the centre, thus ensuring that *No One is Left Behind*. While decentralisation of services is a good start, analysis of the CCA suggests the need for the UN to support the GoL to work on enhancing GoL capacities to decentralise power, governance and decision making. This would also include capacities of districts and counties to have financial decision making capacities.

Recommendation 4: Promoting employment opportunities for youth (including adolescent girls) and women to reduce inequality, marginalisation and exclusion. In addition, the UN should consider supporting GoL to have frameworks and approaches for targeting youth and women with skills development and SMEs initiatives where these groups can benefit.

Recommendation 5: with respect to agriculture, extractives and land, the UN should support the GoL to invest in agriculture with a focus on the development of agriculture value chains. Efforts to make the sector attractive to youths through the development of Agripole is key. The UN should consider supporting GoL to implement the Land Right Act. Furthermore bulding the linkages between agriculture and social protectionto break the cycle of poverty and enhance food securityand nutrition is a priority.

Recommendation 6: Using its convenor and technical knowledge comparative advantages, the UNCT should lobby for, and support the development of an all-inclusive stakeholder development assistance programme under a One Plan, One Fund modality, i.e. a programme going beyond the UNDAF to be an inclusive all stakeholder development assistance framework.

Recommendation 7: Using its comparative advantages of convening power, staff expertise and capacities to coordinate and cultivating strong partnerships towards unleashing combined strengths for the realisation of Liberia's medium to long term development aspirations.

Recommendation 8: Capacity building of CSOs for enhanced support to community engagement

Recommendation 9: Support data production use and availability to inform monitoring of SDGs

Recommendation 10: Support the strengthening of emergency planning and humanitarian response and preparedness frameworks and mechanisms so as to strengthen the country's resilience to natural hazards.

Recommendation 11: Support the constitutional review by the GoL, taking it to the “Last Mile” through increased advocacy and deepening legislative engagement to ensure agreed proposals go for referendum.

Recommendation 12: UN should lobby for, and support an all-inclusive, decentralised and participatory approach to SDG priority identification, awareness raising and roll-out for enhanced national and subnational integration and ownership of the SDG agenda.

Recommendation 13: There is need for a costed SDG investment plan with a comprehensive analysis of financing options, as well as a financing strategy.

Recommendation 14: Support the GoL in developing the AFT 1 successor programme and aligning the pillars to the 5Ps, i.e. People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace and Partnership.

Recommendation 15: Support enhancement of public institutions capacities and effectiveness to enable them implement and enforce policies, through technical assistance, South-South triangular corporation and innovative approaches. Strengthening the capacity of the civil service in Liberia is paramount.

Recommendation 16: Support GoL to consolidate prioritisation of SDGs in line with the country’s development priorities and alignment to the Agenda 2063. The SDG agenda should include supporting SDG national planning across line ministries, ensuring relevant data for monitoring SDG targets is readily available.

Recommendation 17: Strengthen the rule of law and restore justice, security and protection services in Liberia.

Recommendation 18: Support the GoL in improving human development in the areas of education, health including HIV and AIDS, and food security and nutrition.

Recommendation 19: Support the GoL to leverage technical expertise and focus programmatic work on national capacity development through volunteer schemes (volunteer infrastructure) to enable stronger development outcomes in basic social services, youth, disaster risk reduction and other thematic areas corresponding to Agenda 2030 and national development priorities.

