

ELECTION
PREPAREDNESS



UN
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UNDP Liberia

Annual
Report

2022



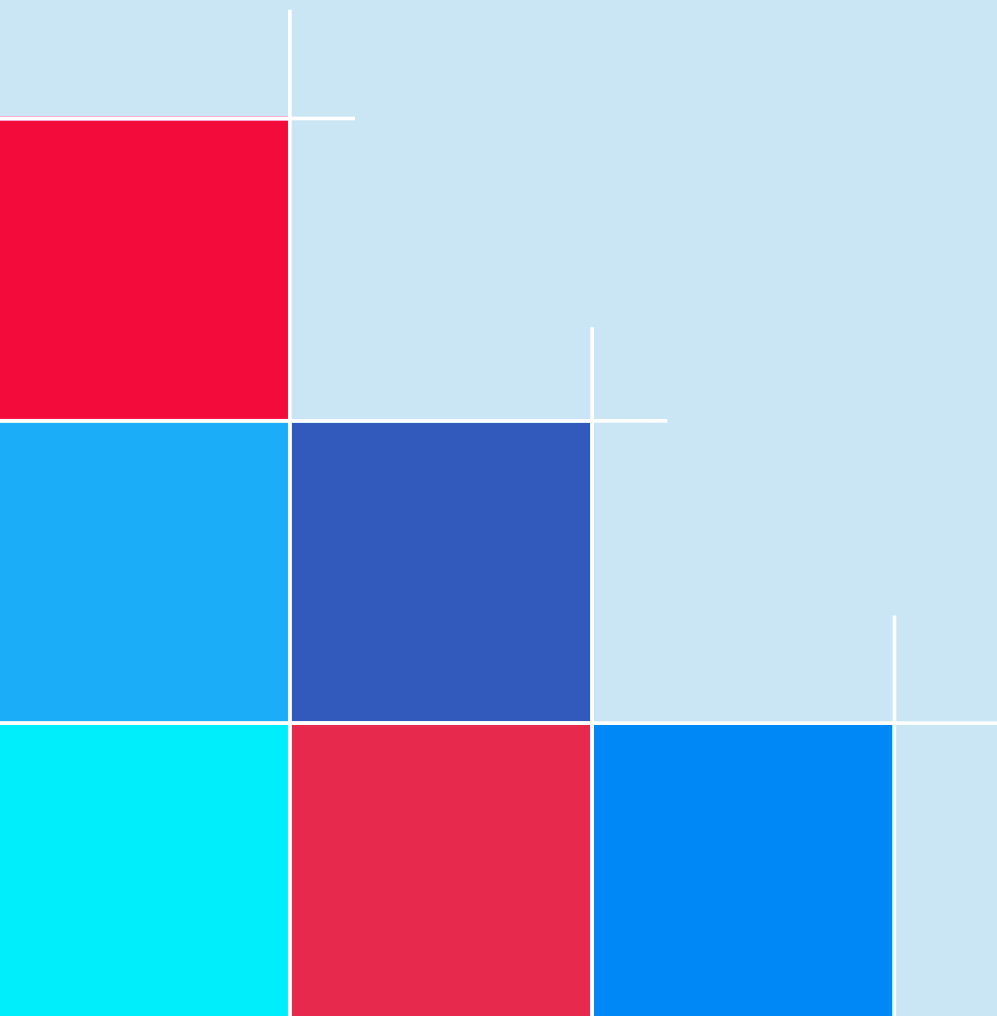




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FOREWORD

UNDP has supported Liberia to conduct every election since the end of the civil war in 2003. Following the successful conduct of the 2020 Special Senatorial Elections and the 2021 By-Elections, UNDP, and partners, through our Joint Electoral Programme, continued to support the National Elections Commission (NEC) and other stakeholders to prepare for the 2023 Presidential and General Elections which will be the first general elections since the withdrawal of the UNMIL mission. Among other things, our support included a feasibility study to advise the Government of Liberia, political parties, and electoral stakeholders on the viability of adopting Biometric Voter Registration (BVR), leading to the government’s procurement of the country’s first digital voter registration system for use in the 2023 elections.

Along with UNWOMEN and other international partner agencies, UNDP was involved in a series of high-level engagements with the President, the Vice-President, Senators, members of the House of Representatives, the international community, women’s NGOs, and other members of civil society to secure legislative passage of a mandatory 30% gender quota for women in political parties. The Bill, awaiting Presidential signature, is expected to noticeably improve the participation of women in political leadership. The concerted advocacy



Passage of a mandatory 30% gender quota for women in political parties



UNDP Liberia Resident Representative
Stephen Rodrigues



also brought to fruition long-running efforts to institutionalize the Prevention of Violence Against Women in Elections and Politics (VAWiE-P) through the adoption of a VAWiE-P Protocol by 29 of the country’s 33 registered political parties.

Our advocacy also contributed to the enactment of a Revenue Sharing Act, which is key to fiscal decentralization and redistribution of resources, including those from mining concession agreements, to enable counties to provide the full range of government services locally more effectively. The Act also allows for substantial amounts of revenues collected locally to remain in counties to spur local development. The Act establishes an Equalization Fund targeting the poorest regions of the country. The government, through the Liberia Revenue Authority, started piloting the Act in Margibi County.

To improve the living conditions of persons living in some of the poorer urban and rural areas of the country, President George M Weah, launched a US\$100m Accelerated Community Development Programme (ACDP) in October 2022. The ACDP will be a Government-UNDP flagship development programme employing local residents in building and/or repairing basic infrastructure like feeder roads, boreholes, schools, market facilities, and so on. The government has invested an initial US\$3 million of its own budget into the Programme.

UNDP was also very active in improving access to justice and the rule of law by, among other things, supporting the re-enactment of the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) Act, which granted the body prosecutorial powers. We also supported the development of a new prison law that will establish a semi-autonomous Liberia Corrections Service (LCS), replacing the Bureau of Correction and Rehabilitation (BCR), to enhance the management of prisons. The draft law is before the National Legislature. Furthermore, UNDP supported a raft of amendments to the Criminal Procedures Law introducing the use of plea bargaining in determining cases, limiting the powers of police to arrest people for minor breaches of the law, and ensuring accused persons have legal counsel for a fair trial. We also handed over to the Supreme Court the last of four circuit courts constructed in some of the country's remotest areas.

To help harness the entrepreneurial energy of the country, UNDP scaled up its Growth Accelerator



Rescue Women Micro Agricultural Cooperative Society used the Growth Accelerator grant to purchase additional tools and equipment to increase the production of assorted vegetables

business co-financing competition, upping our investment in local businesses to US\$900,000 from the previous year's US\$600,000. The competition expanded to include agricultural cooperatives, with the number of winners increasing to 13 from five in 2021. The competition attracted an additional US\$500,000 investment from the Embassy of Sweden in Liberia through the new Community-Based Forest Management Project to support a new category for forest-based enterprises. UNDP is now engaging with several commercial banks to join the partnership and expand concessionary financing to the SMSE sector.

UNDP also continued to provide business development support for business start-ups through a business development plan competition and to spur youth-inspired green businesses through our joint EPA-UNDP eco-brigade programme in two more counties – Grand Bassa and Sinoe, after a successful pilot in Grand Cape Mount County in 2021. We also partnered with the Government to improve the employment readiness of recent graduates and graduating seniors from tertiary institutions and universities through the National Youth Cadet Programme resulting in 67% of participants being retained by their host organizations.

Liberia is one of the world's biodiversity hotspots and the country hosts the highest remaining portion – more than 40% – of the Upper Guinean Forest. 2022 began with deep national reflections on how Liberia has managed her environment and rich natural resources over the past 50 years.

Business co-financing competition going up

Winners



5

in 2021

13

in 2022

Students at Cuttington University, for example, commended the country on its accomplishments on SDG 13 – climate action



The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Liberia, with support from UNDP and the Embassy of Sweden, convened 10 consultation events bringing together more than 1,000 participants who gave wide-ranging views on the country’s performance vis-à-vis its global obligations such as the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and environmental conventions. A consensus emerged that forest conservation, plastic pollution, and waste management should be high priorities in the country’s environmental management agenda.

Importantly, we also helped Liberia to secure additional funding from the Global Environment Facility for a second \$20.4m coastal defense project to protect residents of Sinoe County from coastal erosion. This brings to a total of \$46m for coastal protection secured in the past



A student of Cuttington University

2 years, including the \$25.6m for the Monrovia Metropolitan Climate Resilience Project financed by the Green Climate Fund in late 2021.

During the year we continued engaging the people of Liberia, national and international policymakers, and thinkers through our thought leadership Development Dialogue Series on a range of topics including the country’s climate change priorities for COP27, the use of traditional justice mechanisms for truth and reconciliation and mainstreaming alternative dispute resolution mechanisms to enhance access to justice. We leveraged our social media channels to promote and encourage participation to widen and deepen the engagement. We also published a series of Op-eds on topics such as the new Revenue Sharing Act that will enhance the decentralization of service provision; curbing electoral violence and disinformation; post-conflict judicial transformation; and press freedom.

In 2022 the office signed up for the global corporate Gender Equality Seal (GES) certification, which emphasizes the integration of gender equality in all programming and operations, and the targeting of investments in gender-focused and women-specific projects. In 2022, the Country Office exceeded the minimum required expenditure of 70%, achieving 89% for projects that integrated gender objectives. The office will be assessed for gold certification in 2023.

With respect to our operational performance, the Office improved programme delivery attaining 94% of its annual target up from 71% in 2021. Resource mobilization also increased substantially, with the Office securing over US\$21m in new funding, including funding from the Global Environment Fund (GEF) for the Sinoe Climate Resilience Programme, Sweden for Community-Based Forestry Management, and the Government of Liberia for the Accelerated Community Development Programme. All this lays a solid groundwork for 2023.

All we have been able to achieve came because of partnerships and collaboration, and we remain deeply grateful for the trust, confidence, and support of the Government of Liberia and all our national and international partners.

GEARING UP FOR ELECTIONS 2023



UNDP Liberia Electoral Support Project (LESP) with support from Sweden and Ireland continued providing critical electoral assistance to the Government of Liberia to consolidate the country’s democracy, peace, and stability. The LESP, launched in 2020, provided its fourth consecutive cycle of electoral assistance since the end of the devastating civil war. Liberia has come a long way in conducting elections as evidenced by the National Elections Commission’s (NEC) conduct of Special Senatorial Elections in 2020. Based on the UN Needs Assessment Mission Report (2019), LESP takes a governance approach to elections, supporting inclusiveness, transparency, and peaceful elections through assistance to the NEC and electoral stakeholders. Strong focus is placed on the capacity strengthening of electoral actors to foster self-reliance and national ownership of the electoral and democratic processes.

In 2022, NEC started its preparations for the 2023 General Elections amidst challenges posed

The Liberia Electoral Support Project, launched in 2020, provided its fourth consecutive cycle of electoral assistance since the end of the devastating civil war

VAWiE-P protocol signed by

29
out of

33
political parties



by late disbursement of the election budget, inadequate funding, protracted procurement of BVR kits, a delay in the national census with direct implications for demarcation of electoral constituencies, and revision of the New Elections Law, amongst others.

To help Liberia overcome some of the challenges, UNDP supported a comprehensive organizational and capacity needs assessment of the NEC and electoral stakeholders. We also supported a review of the NEC Strategic Plan and revisions of the NEC procedures and regulations, including a thorough revision of campaign finance regulations. The approach to capacity building was also transformed from the traditional isolated workshops to high-impact, interactive facilitation using the Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) methodology. NEC built a pool of Liberian BRIDGE facilitators from institutions such as NEC, civil society, the media, political parties, state institutions, and academia to ensure that NEC will in the future conduct training without the need for international facilitation.

Under the umbrella of ‘programming for peace’, LESP supported the collaborative development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) between the Security Forces of Liberia and the media to strengthen the electoral security and peaceful

conduct of elections. The SOPs, signed in November 2022, received additional support from the UNDP-UN Women Joint Peacebuilding Fund project (PBF) on Women's Political Participation. This support was geared towards ensuring greater protection for female journalists and female law enforcement officers during electoral processes and strengthening women's role in electoral violence prevention.

Early Warning and Early Response

LESP further supported the consolidation of the Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) mechanism, by revitalizing the Elections Situation Room; procuring motorbikes for Community Peace Committee (CPC) chairpersons and the regional hub reporters; training; and developing an EWER platform for Liberia. The mechanism tracks early signs of violence and conflict, assesses risks, and allows coordinated responses to prevent or de-escalate tensions. NEC and Liberia's Peacebuilding Office signed a Memorandum of Understanding to share information through decentralized mechanisms and an early warning situation room to anticipate and diffuse potential disputes before, during and after the elections in a coordinated manner.

Countering Violence against Women in Elections and Politics

In close collaboration with UN Women, UNDP extensively promoted women's participation in elections and politics through advocacy for legislative reforms working with a wide range of partners, including the Women Legislative Caucus of Liberia, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, civil society and women movements, and influential men such as traditional and church leaders. This led to the passage of a mandatory 30 per cent gender quota for women in political parties by both the House of Representatives and the Senate in the Elections Law (1986, 2014). The bill awaits presidential assent.

The concerted advocacy effort also campaigned for the prevention of violence against women in elections and politics (VAWiE-P) targeting political

parties, lawmakers, government ministries and civil society organizations resulting in 29 out of 33 registered political parties signing a VAWiE-P Protocol. A VAWiE-P curriculum derived from a UNDP-UN Women Programming Guide on Preventing Violence Against Women in Elections was developed and ten (10) Liberian trainers from NEC and civil society were trained on the Guide.

UNDP also supported the training of 100 (47m/53w) journalists to report on electoral processes and events through a gendered lens to create an enabling environment for women to participate in elections as voters, candidates, and party agents. The organization also provided support for training and mobilization of women's groups and political parties to secure their commitment to implement Section 4.5 of the amended Elections Law, which requires political parties to practice inclusivity, and on the VAWiE-P Protocol; sensitization of young people, especially women, persons with disabilities and other marginalized people in rural and remote communities to increase their awareness and motivation to engage positively in electoral processes and prevent VAWiE-P. Ten (10) Liberian VAWiE-P facilitators were trained and they subsequently conducted a BRIDGE Gender and Elections workshop for political parties.

UNDP supported NEC in establishing Gender and Elections Coordination Groups countrywide to improve the dissemination of information to women and other vulnerable groups and trained the 120 (55w/65m) members to equip them with knowledge on electoral processes in order to convey the correct information to targeted voters.

UNDP further contributed to the implementation of community election action plans by the CSO NAYMOTE, which organized 37 peer-group and civic education engagements to increase access to information on inclusive electoral processes (Section 4.5 of the Elections Law), VAWiE-P and civic rights. NAYMOTE reached 2,261 (1403w/804m) people including youth, persons with disabilities, traditional leaders, university, and high school students in nine counties – Bomi, Bong, Gbarpolu, Grand Bassa, Grand Gedeh, Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado, and Sinoe.

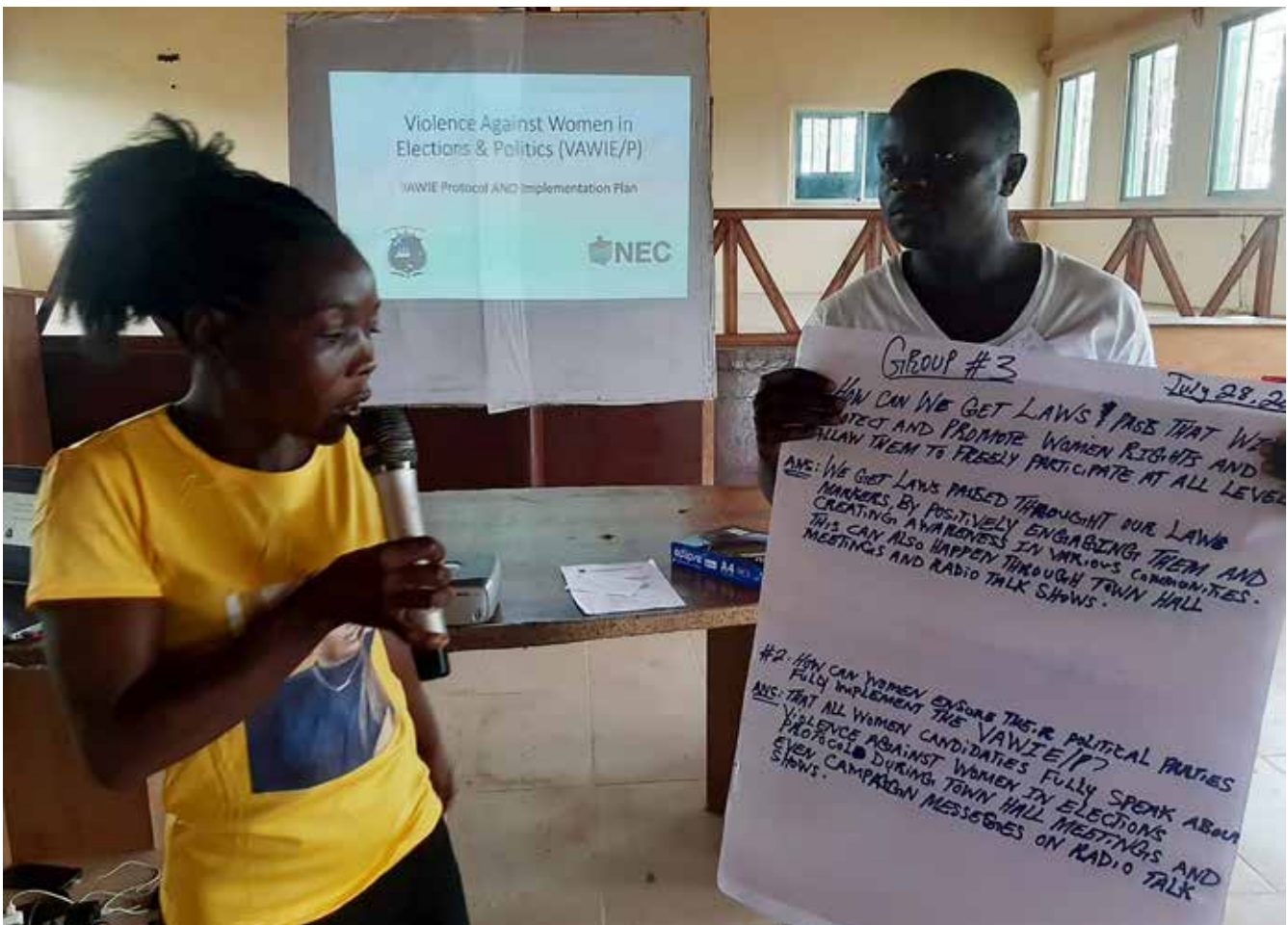
With support from UNDP, NEC further strengthened the capacity of 379 (259w/120m) political party leaders, members of the Inter-Party Consultative Committee (IPCC), women in political parties, Coalition of Political Party Women of Liberia (COPPWIL), youth wing representatives, civil society leaders, and representatives of ministries, agencies, and commissions on gender inclusive elections, particularly on the 30% gender quota in the Elections Law and the VAWIE-P Protocol.

Working through the UN Women partner, the Organization for Women and Children (ORWOCH) and the Center for Legal Education, Human Rights and Peace Studies (CLEPHS), UNDP supported stakeholder consultations on providing legal aid to women and disadvantaged candidates and providing pro-bono legal services to women experiencing VAWIE-P. This yielded a legal aid guidance note which includes standard operating procedures to guide VAWIE-P reporting and

referral and on the provision of pro-bono legal aid and information.

UNDP Electoral Support programme also supported a Gender Equality and Elections workshop for representatives of 16 political parties, 2 CSOs, and NEC representatives to identify the barriers and alternative measures political parties could implement to strengthen women’s participation alongside gender-responsive policies and legislation.

In collaboration with UN Women, the UNDP also supported gender mainstreaming within NEC reaching 91 (39w/52m) staff and senior management, such that gender and women’s participation in elections and politics were factored during the revision of NEC’s regulations. NEC also embarked on putting in place mechanisms for collecting gender-disaggregated data during the 2023 elections.



Wide-ranging Support to Electoral Processes

Overall, UNDP’s Liberia Electoral Support Programme directly reached at least 5,759 persons (3,368 women/2,391 men) across all 15 counties increasing the capacity of electoral stakeholders, public awareness, and coordination towards peaceful elections. Some additional achievements of the project include:

		
<p>245</p> <p>(116w/129m) CBO representatives trained on contemporary civic voter education.</p>		
<p>To prevent mis- / dis-information and hate speech, the iVerify tool was customized for Liberia.</p>	<p>78</p> <p>(47w/31m) CSO and PWD representatives trained on developing grant proposals.</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Magistrates and Assistant Magistrates, NEC staff, and CSOs trained as facilitators using the acclaimed BRIDGE methodology.</p>



BIG STRIDES TOWARDS FISCAL DECENTRALIZATION



Revenue Sharing Bill

The Liberia Decentralization Support Programme, also supported by the Embassies of Sweden and Ireland, was designed to support and facilitate the implementation of the National Policy on Decentralization and Local Government and to help operationalize the Local Government Act 2018. The programme has been supporting the decentralization of administrative, fiscal, and political governance from the national government to county administrations.

In 2022, the country recorded remarkable progress towards making fiscal decentralization a reality with the adoption of key legislative and regulatory frameworks namely, the passage and presidential assent to the Revenue Sharing Law in July 2022, and the amendment to the Public Finance Management Law, which awaits Presidential assent.

The Governance Commission, with technical support from the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA), the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS), organized four policy dialogues for local government officials attracting 75 participants (13w/62m). These dialogues increased knowledge and understanding among county officials on the new law, including the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder, cultivating a sense of ownership for fiscal decentralization. County officials have committed to working with the national government to implement the law.

Partnerships with civil society organizations – Integrity Watch Liberia and Rural Human Rights Activists Program, also contributed to the legislative successes. These organizations conducted several strategic meetings with legislative committees, organized talk shows on community radio, and produced jingles on the expected benefits of revenue sharing. They also organized a CSO and media dialogue to scale up the advocacy, and a technical forum for members of the Ways, Means, and Finance Committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate to increase their awareness and understanding of the proposed revenue-sharing formula.

The programme continued to strengthen the capacity of County Service Centres (CSCs) in several ways to improve service delivery.

150 (42w/108m) local government staff trained as Trainers-of-Trainers (TOT) on Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting.

32 (10w/22m) county treasury staff from Bong, Grand Bassa, Margibi, and Nimba trained on the new Revenue Sharing Law and County Treasury Frameworks, focusing on the national financial management and e-procurement system – the Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS).

Real Estate Revenue Sharing (piloted in Margibi County in 2021) launched in Grand Bassa County.

Bong, Grand Bassa, Grand Gedeh, Margibi, and Nimba CSCs equipped with computers, printers, and other specialized equipment enabling them to produce traditional and Western marriage certificates.

Margibi County resumed the issuance of driving licenses after a seven-year hiatus.

Solar power system installed at the Grand Gedeh CSC increasing staff time in the office. Revenue collection increased by 31% within two months of system installation.



21 county staff (3w/18m), three each from Bomi, Gbarpolu, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Kru, Lofa, Rivergee, and Sinoe counties trained on basic operation, management, and maintenance of the solar power installations.

30 CSC Coordinators and Commerce Inspectors (6w/24m) trained on the use of the manual in accordance with the Liberia Business Registry rules and procedures. Manual for business development support developed to help CSCs provide business advisory services to citizens interested in entrepreneurship.

25 women and youth business start-ups in counties received business training, 18 of them (10w/8m) successfully pitched business plans, each securing US\$500 seed funding.

Rivercess County Service Centre Testimonials



“Decentralization works for the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection. We are open for business daily and our window is busy, active, and effective. Every day we receive cases either of persistent non-support, rape, female genital mutilation, and domestic violence. The County Service Centre has raised more awareness about our services since it opened,”

Henry M K Jabbie



“The County Service Centre is good, but people are frustrated because they cannot get basic services like national identification registration. They really complain about having to spend 3,000LD to go to Bassa to pay 5LD for an ID card. They complain that they don’t have IDs yet they really need them for everything – to register a business, to pay taxes. As a county we are also losing revenue by sending identification, vehicle, and traditional marriage registration to Bassa,”

**Philip D. Toby,
River Cess County Project Manager**

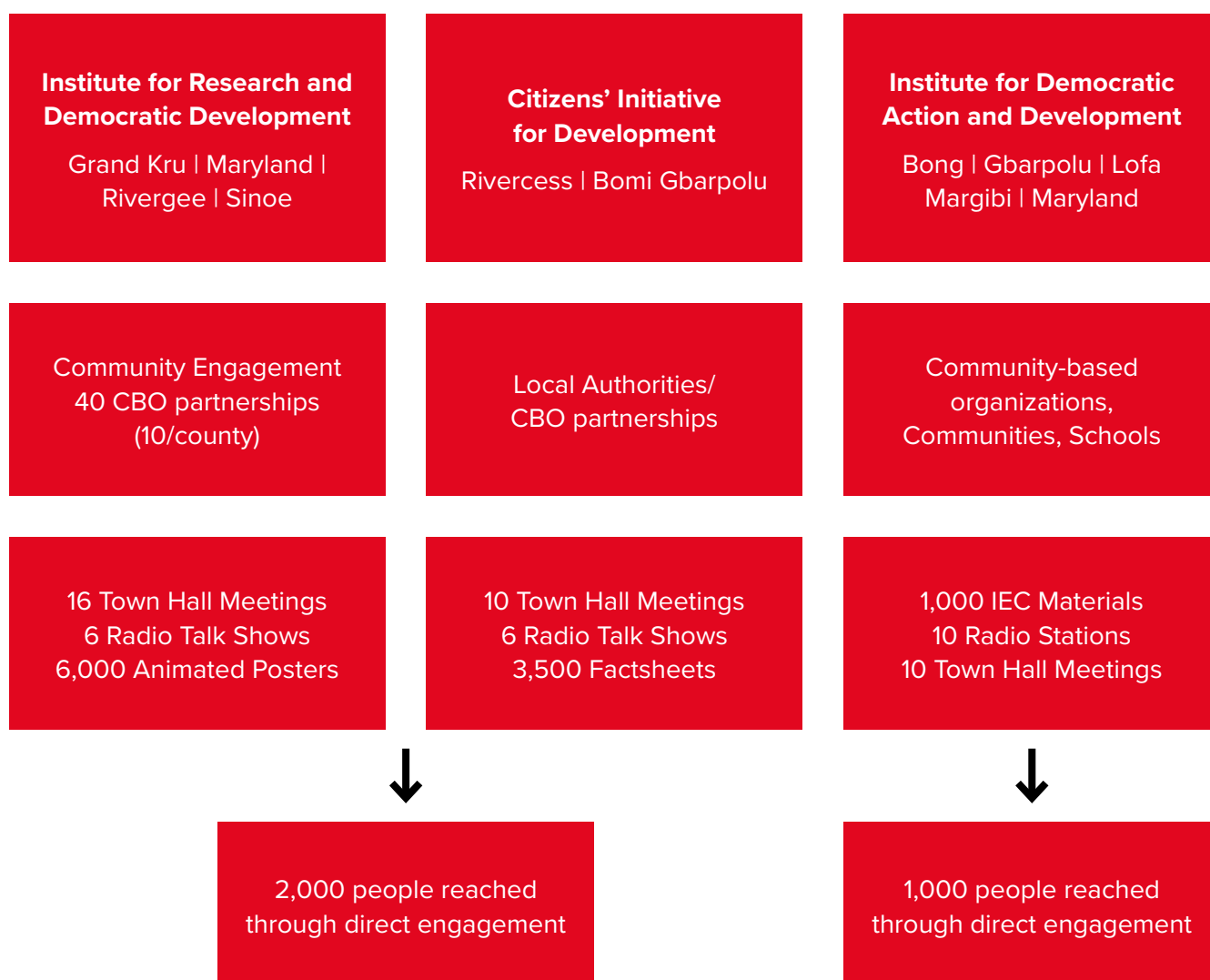


Civil society organizations contributed significantly to efforts to raise awareness on the Local Government Act, the services available at CSCs and the Citizens’ Feedback Mechanism (CFM). The awareness campaign on the CFM, which enables people to provide feedback on services provided in counties, increased Short Message Service (SMS) traffic by 63.1% between April and September 2022. Five more counties – Bong,

Gbarpolu, Lofa, Margibi and Maryland, were connected to the CFM system in 2022 bringing to ten the number of counties whose citizens can now interrogate and provide feedback on the quality of service provided. This data helps inform the design and implementation of a performance management system for the civil service, as well as the planning, implementation, and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) locally.

Local Government Act Campaign

Citizen Feedback Mechanism





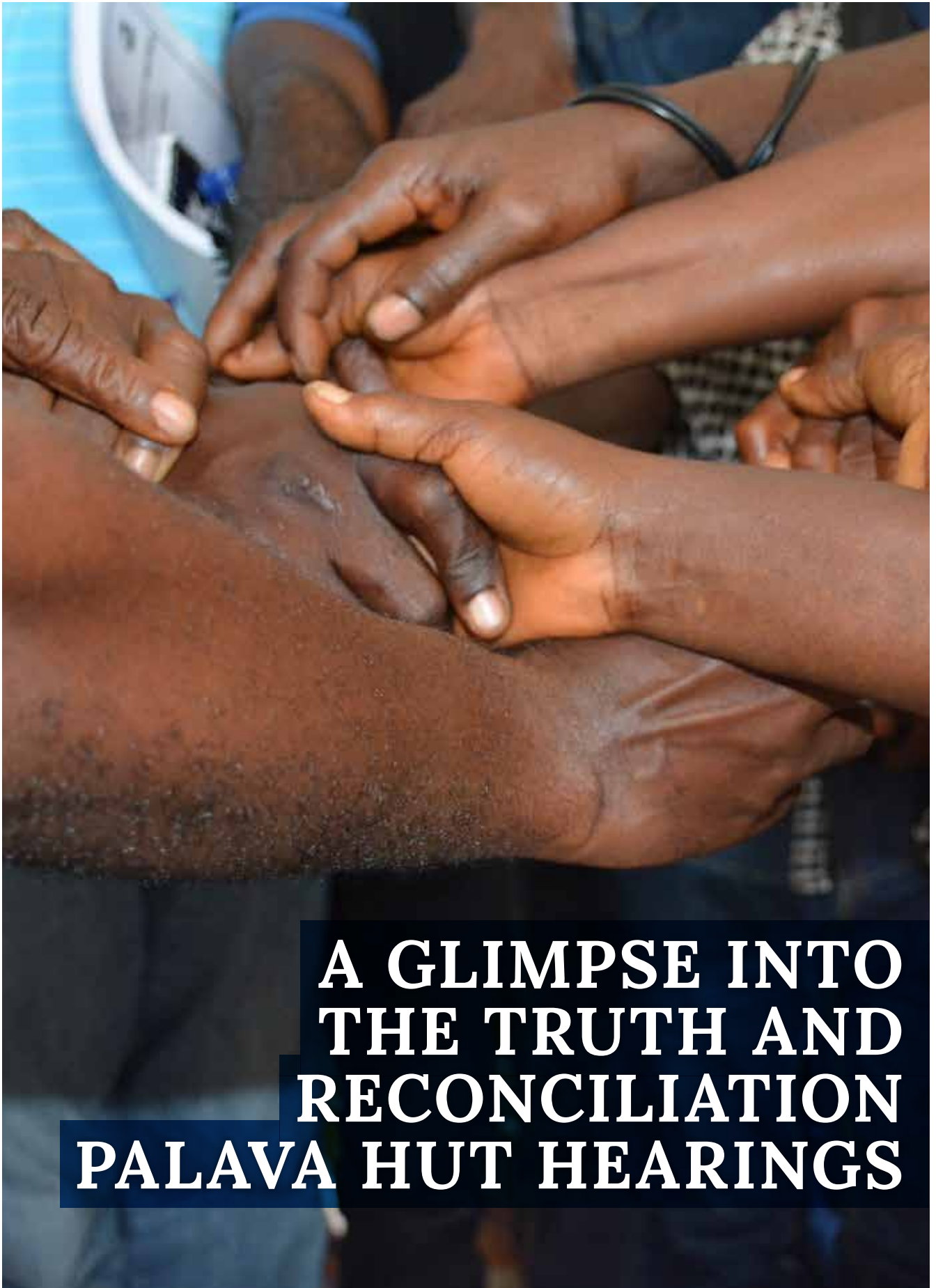
ACDP: Driving Development to the People

The Government of Liberia in October 2022 launched the Accelerated Community Development Programme (ACDP) to help reduce poverty and inequalities by creating employment opportunities for persons helping to build or repair basic infrastructure such as boreholes/water wells, feeder roads, markets, schools, and health centers across the country.

The programme will also augment ongoing efforts to spur agricultural growth in the country by providing farmers and farmer cooperatives with training, improved seed, and agricultural tools and equipment to improve agricultural production and productivity.

ACDP is modelled after programmes that have been successfully tried and tested in Senegal, The Gambia, Togo, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It is envisioned to increase investment in poor rural and urban areas, improve the welfare of communities, and reduce inequalities that exist between the country's urban and rural areas.

The approach has been shown to reduce poverty, and inequality and improve sustainable human development by improving access to basic social and economic infrastructure such as water and sanitation facilities, clean energy, health and education, transport and communication networks that connect farmers and traders to markets.



**A GLIMPSE INTO
THE TRUTH AND
RECONCILIATION
PALAVA HUT HEARINGS**

UNDP and the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) continued to implement the five-year (2020 – 2024) Peacebuilding, Reconciliation and Social Cohesion Programme, which has been working to consolidate, sustain, and enhance peace and social cohesion as well as promote the protection of human rights. Central to this has been organizing truth and reconciliation hearings and constructing memorials in areas where mass graves had been documented by the erstwhile Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The INCHR has, to date, conducted Palava Hut hearings in five of the country's 15 counties – Tchien District, Grand Gedeh County (2016); Voinjama District, Lofa County (2017); Tewor District, Grand Cape Mount (2020); Central C District, Rivercess County (2021), and Sanoyea District, Bong County (2022), with support from UNDP.

In 2022, the programme successfully conducted Palava Hut hearings in three communities – Sanoyea Town, Gbonota and Gbonyea, in Sanoyea District, Bong County, hearing 52 cases and amicably resolving all but one case in which the alleged perpetrator denied the accusations. This brought the number of cases resolved by Palava Hearings to date to 328, involving 289 perpetrators and 327 victims.

The programme also supported the construction of four memorials on mass graves and massacre sites in Behn Town, Grand Bassa County; Bloe Town, River Cess County; Bopolu City, Gbarpolu County; and Kpotomai, Lofa County to memorialize victims of the Liberian civil war. The memorials are meant to remind present and future generations of the devastation of war and help bring healing and closure to families and communities of victims of the war. Families of victims will converge at the memorial sites on Decoration Day, the second Wednesday of March each year – a day in Liberia dedicated to the decoration of the graves of departed relatives to remember their loved ones.

Here's a peek into the proceedings of a Truth and Reconciliation Palava Hut hearing.

Victim A suffered multiple ill-treatment at the hands of *Perpetrator 1* and other armed youths fighting alongside government troops during the Liberia civil war in 1995. Wearing a frown, *Victim A* explained how he and his brothers had cut and gathered some poles to renovate their home, but *Perpetrator 1* and his armed friends would take the wood and use it to cook their food daily. One day, *Victim A* mustered the courage to plead with *Perpetrator 1* to stop plundering their poles. *Perpetrator 1* misconstrued this as a challenge to his authority and infuriated, he forced *Victim A* to climb up and down a thorny tree. The thorns tore through *Victim A*'s chest, palms, and feet, some of them breaking and lodging in his flesh causing him to bleed profusely. "I never felt that kind of pain since I was born. This is why I brought this complaint to the Palava Hut," he said on the verge of tears. The accused pleaded guilty: "Everything he said is true. I was in charge. We were not ourselves. I beg the Palava Hut Committee to help me to apologize to *Victim A*. Let him forgive me," he said kneeling down and holding his victim's feet pleading for mercy. Satisfied with the acknowledgement of the torture incident and the public apology, the victim said he wholeheartedly forgave the accused.

“My grandmother was old and not able to walk. *Perpetrator 2* and other fighters entered our town and drove us from there. They beat people and looted our things. I left my grandmother behind in the house because I was not able to carry her on my back. Everybody was fighting for their life,” said *Victim 2* as her voice trailed off with emotion, prompting the psychosocial officer who sat by her to appeal to the Chairperson of the Palava Hut Committee for some time out. On their return to the hearing hall, *Victim 2* continued: “Because of my grandmother, I used to join other people to secretly go to the town to give her food and bathe her and then run back into the bush. But one night the house collapsed on my grandmother, and she died since nobody was there to help her. From that time, I did not like to see *Perpetrator 2*.” He too pleaded guilty and asked for forgiveness. He claimed to have acted on the orders of his commander. It took a lot of counselling from the psychosocial counsellors on hand and the Palava Hut elders for *Victim 2* to agree to wholeheartedly forgive *Perpetrator 2*.

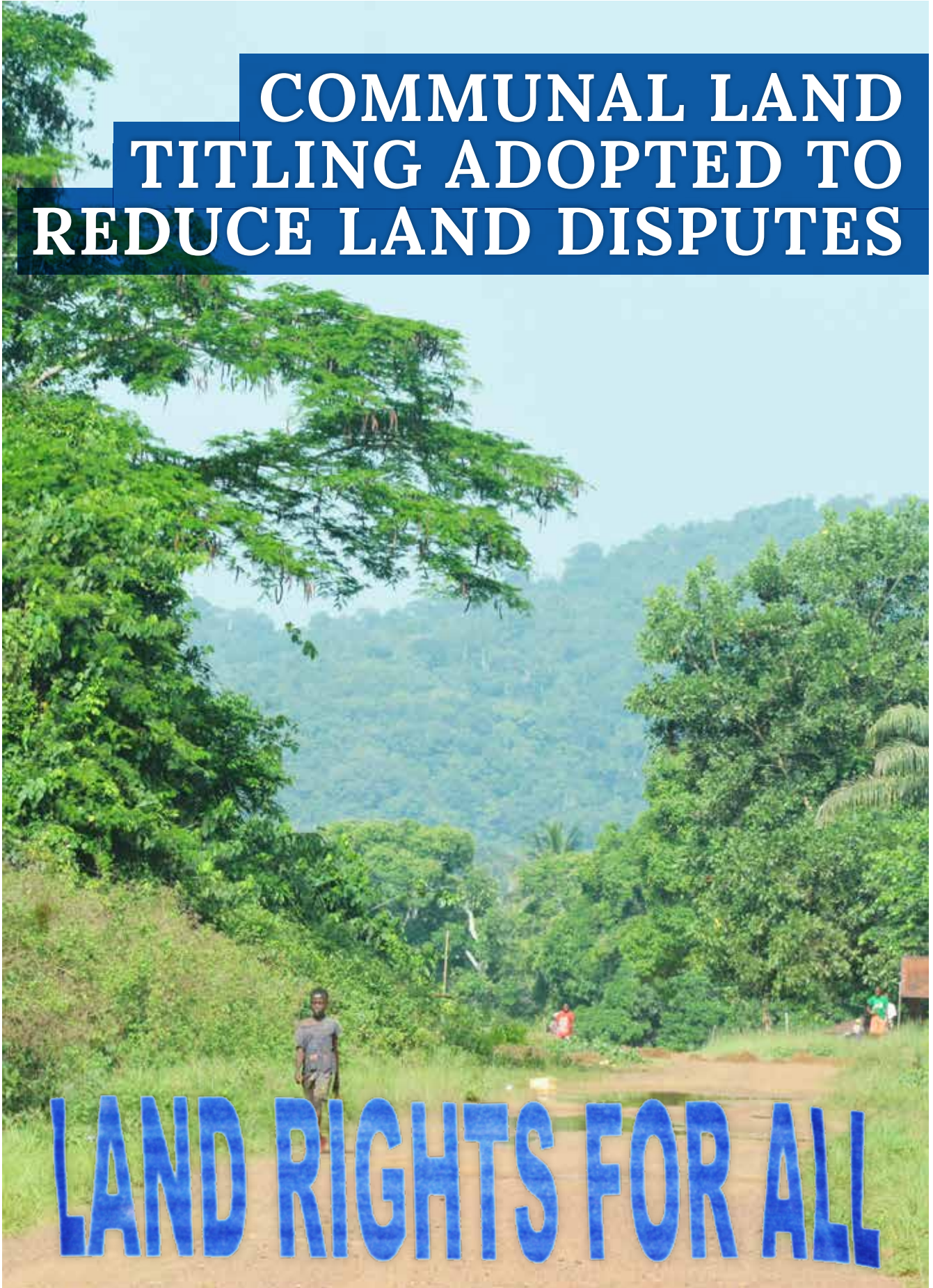


Mopping up Arms Stockpiles in the Justice System

- Liberia destroyed more than 105,400 arms, ammunition, and explosives over a period of three days in October 2022 as part of its commitment to consolidate peace after years of civil war. The weapons were mopped up from crime evidence exhibits in the country's justice system and police service.
- “You can't imagine the number of guns around the country. The destruction of these arms and ammunition today is significant because it shows our desire as a country to transition from crisis to sustained peace,” said Teklo Maxwell Grigsby, II (Atty.), Chairman of the Liberia National Arms Commission.
- The weapons were destroyed as part of the Organized Crime: West African Response to Trafficking (OCWAR-T) project, which provides support to ECOWAS Member States and Mauritania to reduce transnational organized crime by strengthening national and regional capacities and institutions to control arms and reduce human trafficking. It also fosters evidence-led policy and decision-making and supports criminal investigations and prosecution.
- UNDP commended the Liberia National Arms Commission for the public weapons destruction terming it a demonstration of transparency in the country's arms stockpile management program. The organization reiterated its commitment to support the National Arms Commission and state security agencies build their capacities in the fight against the trafficking, circulation and proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons in Liberia.
- Through the OCWAR-T Project, support is provided to ECOWAS Member States and Mauritania to reduce transnational organized crime by strengthening national and regional structures and capacities, fostering evidence-led policy and decision-making, supporting criminal investigations and prosecution, improving small arms control, and reducing human trafficking.



COMMUNAL LAND TITLING ADOPTED TO REDUCE LAND DISPUTES



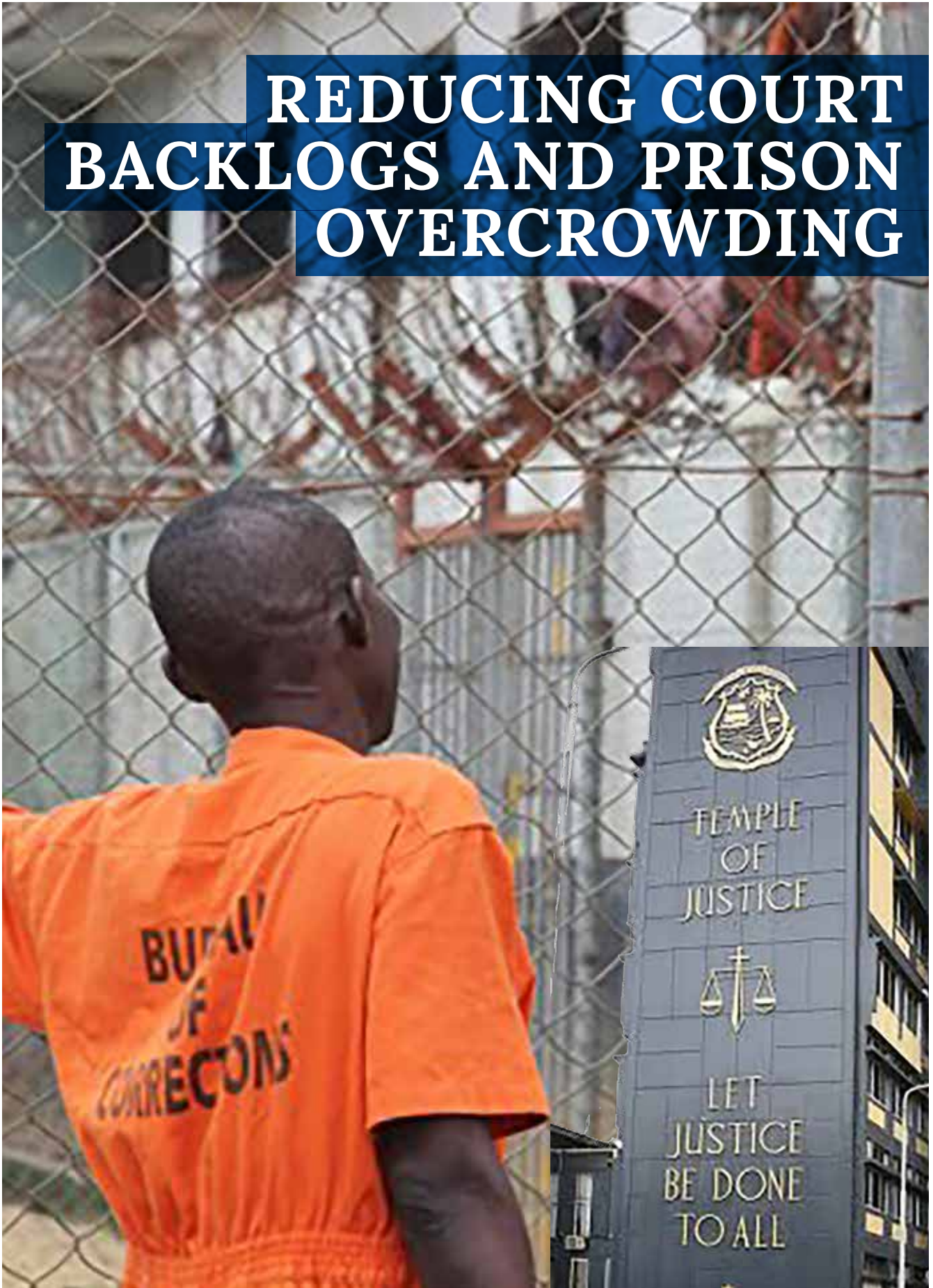


Liberia Land Authority Chairman Attorney James Monoba Sr. explains to UN Delegation how community land titling is done

- ✔ The joint United Nations Peace Building Support Programme for Liberia aims to support the Government of Liberia, through the Liberia Land Authority, to implement the Land Rights Act and Local Government Act both of which aim to uphold and protect community and women's rights to land and to reduce inter-communal tensions and conflicts, among other things. The programme is jointly implemented by UNDP, UN Women and WFP.
- ✔ In 2022, with support from the programme, the Liberia Land Authority undertook a historic land survey and mapping exercise in four conflict-prone counties – Grand Cape Mount, Maryland, Nimba and Sinoe, paving the way for issuance of the country's first-ever legally recognized title deeds for communally held land.
- ✔ Traditional leaders working together with women and youth in the four counties participated in the mapping of the boundaries of their customary lands and confirmatory surveys on agreed boundaries. Cornerstones, serving as evidence of boundary demarcation, were erected in 43 communities, ending centennial tensions between communities, and between communities and companies granted mining and farming concessions with little regard, involvement, or consultation with local communities.
- ✔ The inclusive, participative boundary demarcation and land titling increased communities' trust and confidence in the Liberia Land Authority's ability to intervene in potential disputes adequately and fairly. The programme also strengthened the capacity of local land governance and dispute resolution structures such as county land boards, community land management and development committees to monitor and address triggers of conflicts. The inclusion of women in land ownership and adjudication matters positively shifted communities' perception of women's rights resulting in more women inheriting and owning land.
- ✔ The boundary harmonization and confirmatory land surveys are major milestones for preventing conflicts centred on land boundaries and ownership on the one hand, and for fostering peaceful co-existence and social cohesion within and between communities.
- ✔ This success was due to close engagement with relevant Government ministries and agencies namely, the Liberia Land Authority, the National Bureau of Concessions, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.



REDUCING COURT BACKLOGS AND PRISON OVERCROWDING



The UNDP Rule of Law Programme continued to support Liberia's justice sector actors improve access to justice by addressing court docket backlogs through the operationalization of a digital online case management information system (CMIS) that facilitates the digital collection, uploading and tracking of case management data in real-time from any corner of the country. The CMIS avails consistent, accurate and reliable information to lawyers and judges to ensure the timely disposal of cases. It also helps the judiciary to identify case backlogs and provide remedies. This will have a knock-on effect by helping identify cases of prolonged pre-trial detention for redress, which will in turn reduce prison overcrowding. Since the launch of the system in 2021, a total of 821 cases were uploaded into the system by the judiciary. A similar system for crime statistics enabled the Liberia National Police (LNP) to upload and track 2,735 cases of reported crime enabling them to predict and act appropriately to emerging crime patterns.

The Rule of Law Programme also supported the enactment of a plethora of legislation and policies mostly geared towards addressing case backlog and reducing pretrial detention and prison overcrowding.

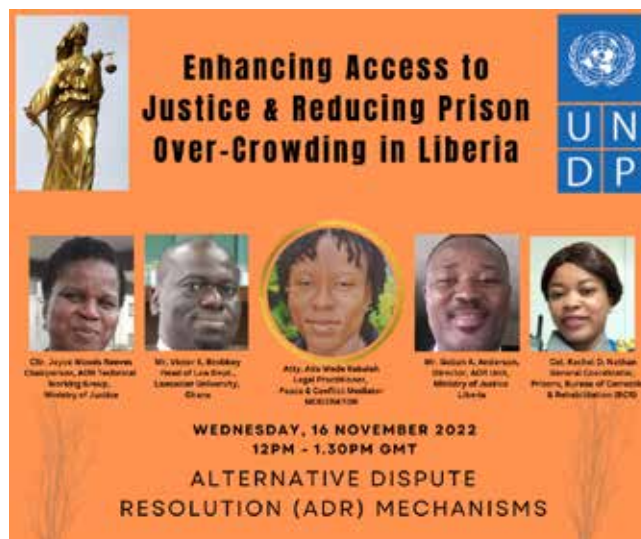
✓ Re-enactment of the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) Act to provide for institutional independence by granting LACC direct prosecutorial powers. LACC no longer requires the cooperation of the Ministry of Justice to prosecute cases. UNDP provided a technical review of the legislation.

✓ Amendments to the Criminal Procedure Law as follows:

- Chapter 16 provides for plea bargaining, which is intended to, among other things, fast-track legal proceedings and significantly decrease the courts' caseloads, reduce court fees and, above all, provide the parties (victims, the prosecution, and the defense) a just and equitable means to resolve matters.

- Sections 10.2, 10.4, and 10.6 of Chapter 10 of the Criminal Procedure Law, Title 2, Liberian Code of Laws Revised to Provide Conditions for, time of, and Authority to Arrest, which seeks to ensure that, where possible, suspects are not arrested for misdemeanours and non-violent offences on weekends, when lawyers are not readily available, to prevent further congestion in prison. The amendment also emphasizes alternatives to arrests, such as issuance of summonses to appear in court.
- Sections 12.1 and 12.2 of Chapter 12 of the Criminal Procedure Law, Title 2, Liberian Code of Laws Revised, to Provide for a New Standard on Preliminary Examination in Cases Above the Trial Jurisdiction of Magistrates and Justices of the Peace. This amendment guarantees the rights of suspects to fair preliminary examination processes including the right to legal representation and the obligation of the court to provide one if the suspect cannot afford one.

✓ An Act to Amend Section 3.6 of the Judiciary Law, Title 171, of the Liberia Code of Laws Revised to Provide for the Appointment of an Additional Relieving Judge for the Circuit Courts to ensure continuity of proceedings in the event of retirement, death, travel, or transfer of judges.



Enhancing Access to Justice & Reducing Prison Over-Crowding in Liberia

Speakers:

- Ch. Joyce Smith-Nwene, Chairperson, ADR Technical Working Group, Ministry of Justice
- Mr. Victor S. Mbuliye, Head of Law School, Lawmaker University, Ghana
- Atty. Aila Wade Kabaiah, Legal Practitioner, Peace & Conflict Mediation, MEDIATION
- Mr. Nelson S. Anderson, Director, ADR Unit, Ministry of Justice, Liberia
- Col. Raphael S. Nyimah, General Coordinator, Program, Bureau of Correctional & Rehabilitation (BCR)

WEDNESDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 2022
12PM - 1.30PM GMT
ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (ADR) MECHANISMS



The Bureau of Corrections rehabilitates offenders and provides safe custody, care, and control in order to protect the society.

Further, the following laws were drafted and validated by stakeholders, with support from UNDP and submitted to the national legislature for passage.

- ✔ A new BCR law that will establish a Liberia Corrections Service (LCS) that will be semi-autonomous from the Ministry of Justice. It will also command a budget of its own and can mobilise its own resources. This is expected to transform and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the institution.
- ✔ A Legal Aid Act which provides for the establishment of an independent legal aid board that will have an overarching role of providing legal aid to indigent Liberians and coordinating legal aid among various service providers including the Liberia National Bar Association.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

- ✔ It is estimated that about 80 per cent of the people of Liberia trust and use traditional institutions and mechanisms to resolve disputes rather than the formal court system. Many parts of the country remain cut off, or far removed from the formal justice system leaving them no alternatives but to seek justice through traditional justice systems.
- ✔ Given the significance of alternative routes to justice, the UNDP Rule of Law programme supported the development and adoption of an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) policy by the Ministry of Justice. UNDP provided a technical review of content and supported national consultations and validation of the policy which was adopted by the Cabinet in 2022. The policy provides alternatives to litigation and enables courts to facilitate ADR, with a view to reducing the congestion of court dockets, prison overcrowding and pre-trial detention. It also identifies and recommends the outlaw of harmful traditional practices, especially those that are discriminatory against women, denying them their right to justice. With funding from Irish Aid, the policy moved to the legislative drafting stage.

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN ADVOCACY AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE





In 2018, the Government of Liberia, the European Union and the United Nations launched the Spotlight Initiative to address all forms of violence against women and girls; to eliminate harmful practices through transformative and evidence-based approaches that address unequal power relations between men and women; and to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment.

In this partnership, UNDP Liberia is supporting the multi-sectoral capacity building of government agencies and civil society organizations in areas of preparedness, prevention, and response to violence against women and girls. UNDP Liberia is also supporting the development of integrated multi-sectoral services for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) and a comprehensive GBV accountability framework that will harmonize data collection and reporting, enhancing communication and coordination between stakeholders working to end GBV. UNDP’s Spotlight interventions are focussed in five counties – Grand Cape Mount, Grand Gedeh, Lofa, Montserrado and Nimba.

In 2022, UNDP ramped up support for community-driven advocacy by providing small grants to five civil society organisations (CSOs) to mobilize and train community-based organisations (CBOs) on how to recognize and promptly report GBV and

other harmful practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and domestic violence. The CBOs were also trained on human and women’s rights, and national and international laws relating to GBV and women’s and girls’ rights; and how to lobby county governments to prioritize ending GBV in their development plans and budgets.

DCFENETWORK

sensitized 535 people (378w/157m) on SGBV in Grand Cape Mount, Lofa, Nimba, and Montserrado counties, 111 of whom were persons with disabilities.

Medica Liberia trained 200 grassroots women’s rights advocates and women human rights defender organisations in all five focal counties on how to lobby county officials to integrate gender into development planning processes.

Rescue Women Liberia trained and mentored 30 women from the Montserrado County Joint District Women Movement on developing advocacy strategies and collaborated with WISE men of Bental City to develop a policy brief for their legislators.

SEWODA trained 45 women rights advocates (40 women/ girls and 5 traditional leaders) in Grand Gedeh County on SGBV, Domestic Relations and Rape laws. Their lobbying won support from the only two women in the county government, the Assistant Superintendent for Development and the Zwedru City Mayor, who became SGBV ambassadors.

PYCOSI conducted SGBV forums in Kolahun and Wanhassa districts in Lofa County resulting in the revamping of seven SGBV protection committees and an increase in reporting violence towards women and children that was never considered wrong.

In Nimba County, **CHES** worked with 18 communities to identify and train 10 women-led CBOs reaching 930 women. The CBOs – eight village saving organisations with about 100 members each and two agricultural organizations with about 65 members each – in turn conducted 40 general leadership and membership meetings reaching 925 people (688w/237m); 10 community dialogues reaching 64 local leaders; and 16 focused group discussions that benefitted 161 people (41girls/29boys | 44w/47m). The training and awareness sessions on SGBV strengthened monitoring and reporting of abuse cases resulting in the prosecution of 56 cases – 13 rape, 12 wife battery, 27 persistent non-support, three cases of trial by ordeal, and one, a land dispute between a widow and her deceased husband’s family.

As a result, 14 of 18 targeted communities developed sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) action plans, and five of the trained CBOs actively worked with local police, local authorities, the courts, and health duty bearers to track, monitor, and report SGBV-related cases. They actively participated in district and county SGBV task force meetings, improving coordination, and strengthening the use of the SGBV referral pathway by stakeholders.

One CBO went further to join a network of CSOs to petition the Nimba County Legislative Caucus to embrace inclusivity in establishing the County Council in line with the Local Government Act of 2018 resulting in women securing two positions on the nine-person County Council.

Additionally, UNDP’s Rule of Law programme supported the establishment of networks of women-led CSOs in Bong and Nimba counties to enhance access to the specialized Courts E that hear GBV cases. The CSOs raised community awareness on the courts, connected survivors to legal aid and psychosocial support, and monitored the justice chain to identify bottlenecks in the processing of cases.

The CSOs reached 53,641 people (27,183w/26,458m) through house-to-house sensitization activities. An estimated 178,935

**STOP
VIOLENCE
AGAINST
WOMEN**



persons were also reached through radio jingles and mass campaigns. Working with communities, the CSO networks identified and supported 57 cases of GBV – 10 rape cases, 20 persistent non-support cases, 14 domestic violence cases, 7 land/property dispute cases and 6 cases of action of debt.

The Rule of Law program further supported the establishment of Justice and Confidence Centres (JCCs) to provide psychosocial support and alternative dispute resolution (ADR), and conduct community awareness and education on GBV and human rights in six counties – Bong, Gbarpolu, Grand Bassa, Margibi, Nimba and Sinoe.

UNDP further provided small grants to seven CSOs to provide legal aid services through the JCCs to vulnerable groups including SGBV survivors, children, inmates, and others involved in minor civil cases in communities.

The JCCs cumulatively reached some 8,770 persons (4,188w/4,582m) between January and March 2022. An estimated 8,000 persons were also reached through radio during the same period. They also identified and supported several survivors of human rights abuse including survivors of GBV and prolonged pre-trial detainees and provided legal aid services to 54 survivors of GBV and 101 prison inmates.



Group of Traditional Leaders in Liberia.
Photo Credit/John Monibah-UN Women

Powerful Sande Society Traditional Leader Now Anti-FGM advocate

The 55-year-old mother of seven who lives in Kpaytuo town, Nimba County was responsible for mobilizing adolescent girls for initiation and aided her contemporaries in performing FGM rituals.

She had no idea that FGM is a violation of the human rights of women and girls. Mary was unaware of the consequences and complications associated with FGM, which include severe pain, excessive bleeding, infection, infertility, increased risk of HIV transmission, and even death.

Her attitude and behavior regarding traditional initiation only began to change with the intervention of CHES-Liberia, a local CSO working in the County that promotes the rights of girls and women.

The CSO, with support from UNDP under the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative against gender violence, undertook a series of focus group discussions, community engagements, and public awareness on the reproductive health rights of women and girls in communities where harmful practices were prevalent.

The awareness creation aimed at eliminating all forms of gender violence encouraged behavior change towards sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), FGM, and other harmful traditional practices. CHES-Liberia also strengthened and supported rural women networks in FGM hotspot communities to conduct awareness on these practices, promote women's well-being, and end SGBV.

"I was initially reluctant to participate in the awareness activities because of my status. But after two sessions I learned about the harmful effects of FGM and took a risk and joined the CHES focus group discussions and FGM awareness activities," said Mary. "It was risky for my family and me because of my rank in the Sande society."

Now, Mary works with her Sande colleagues to ensure that women in rural villages and towns within her chiefdom are aware of the dangers of SGBV and FGM and the legal consequences of continued practices. She has become a full-ranking member of the Kpaytuo rural women's group working to reach all women and girls with anti-FGM awareness. The entire chiefdom is astonished by Mary's advocacy for fighting SGBV and FGM despite her status.

"Something is wrong with Mary. We can't believe that as a traditional chief, she is against the traditions she once practiced. This is unbelievable because this woman had been encouraging young girls to join the Sande and always showing how powerful she was during Sande bush practices, but now, she is the one actively conducting house-to-house awareness on harmful traditional practices," said a young woman who was affected by FGM.

Her presence in the Kpaytuo group has motivated many women, especially young women aged between 18 and 28 years, to join the fight against FGM.

LEVERAGING INNOVATION AND PARTNERSHIPS TO FIGHT CORRUPTION





Corruption continues to be a challenge for Liberia, with the country scoring a historic low of 26 out of 100 in the 2022 Corruption Perception Index, representing a backslide of 11 points since 2016. The year 2022 was characterized by developments that highlighted the significant task ahead for the country in curbing corruption. These included the sanctioning of three top government officials for corruption and human rights abuses by the U.S. Government; the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission recommending prosecution of several high-ranking government officials following investigations; and findings of “systemic fraud and misappropriation by the staff of the Ministry of Health” of grants provided by the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria, where 91% of the expenditures reviewed were found to be “non-compliant, or other types of wrongdoing”.

The Legislature, in July 2022, made substantial changes to the 2008 Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) Act disestablishing the body and restating the law with amendments, re-establishing a new LACC. The changes include increasing the number of commissioners from five to seven, increasing the tenure of the commissioners from five years to seven years, and granting the LACC direct prosecutorial powers, for the first time ever. The new legislation effectively removed the chair and existing commissioners from office but permitted them to continue performing their roles until new ones are appointed. While the Restated LACC Act broke new ground by giving LACC prosecutorial authority, the dissolution of its leadership was seen by some stakeholders as having zapped the growing momentum in the fight against corruption.

The Legislature also passed a couple of landmark pieces of legislation – the Whistle Blower Act and Witness Protection Act, which are vital for guaranteeing safety to people who provide credible information admissible as the evidence required to successfully prosecute corruption cases, especially those implicating high-level individuals.

Launched in July 2021 with support from UNDP, the Liberia Anti-Corruption Innovation Initiative (ACII), continued to foster partnerships between

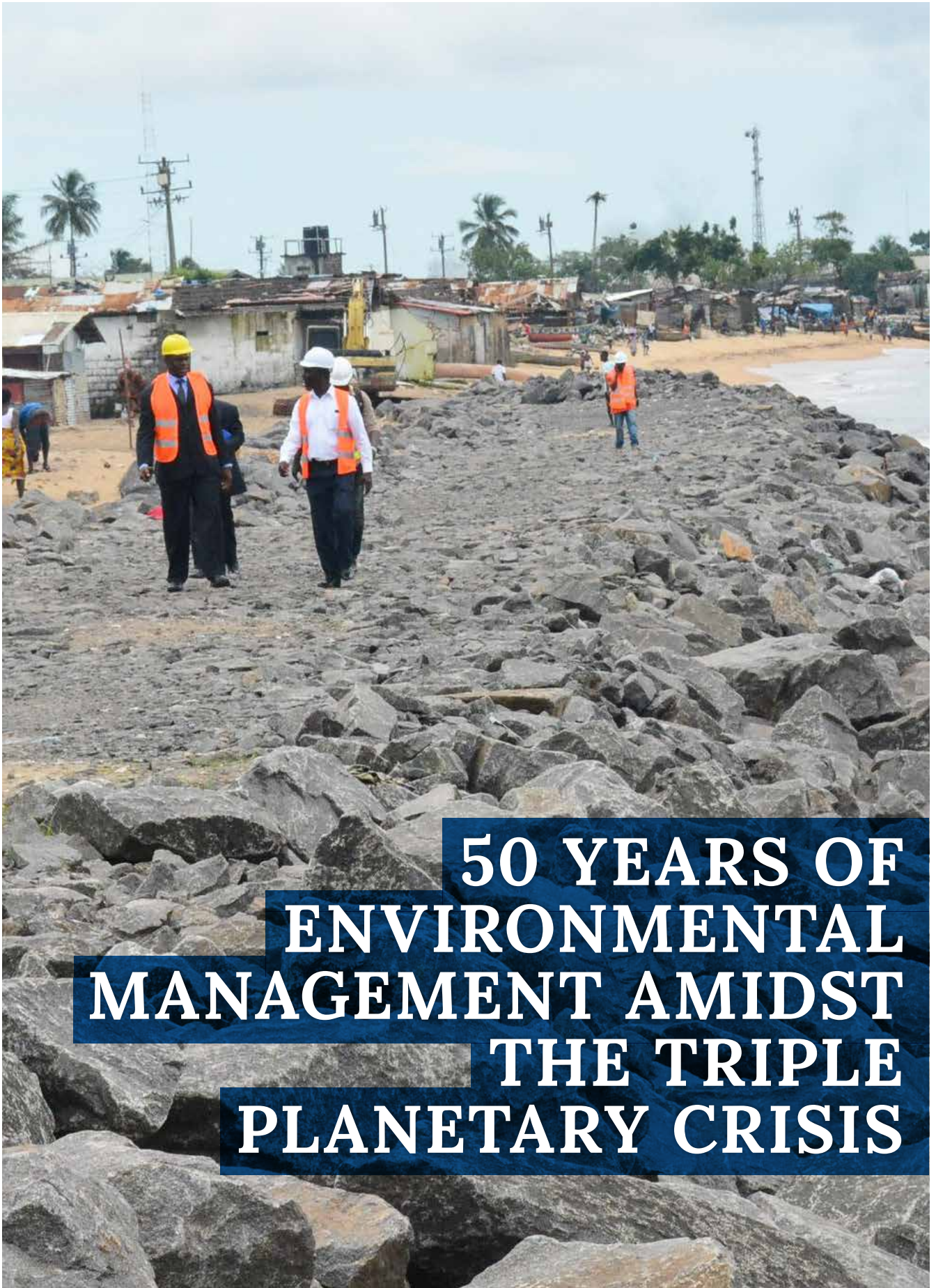
LACC and civil society organizations (CSOs) to create synergies in the fight against corruption, and to harness digital innovations to stimulate public demand for accountability and transparency.

UNDP commissioned the CSO Integrity Watch – Liberia to develop a digital corruption reporting platform constituting a mobile App (TALKAY) connected to a web portal that enables citizens to safely report corruption. The e-platform conceals users’ IP addresses and any other personal identifying information to guarantee users’ safety. It is also programmed to disaggregate all reports registered based on the types of incidents and locations where they occurred.

The organization also provided support to two CSOs, the Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL) and Accountability Lab Liberia to create public demand for accountability and transparency in public affairs. CENTAL raised awareness and promoted the use of the Talkay App, developing a raft of print and audio-visual information, education, and communication (IEC) materials that were distributed at county meetings. CENTAL also collaborated with LACC to organize the observance of International Anti-Corruption Day on December 9, 2022, where the focus was promoting integrity and accountability through increased citizen participation in the fight against corruption.

On its part, Accountability Lab Liberia developed messages on corruption and how to counter the vice, which reached 258,300 people through Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter, and engaged some 54,649 people through street performances, community dialogues, and other activities.

The corruption awareness activities also targeted four national institutions – the Liberia Electricity Corporation, the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority, the Ministry of Mines and Energy, and the Forestry Development Authority, which have low records of service delivery.



**50 YEARS OF
ENVIRONMENTAL
MANAGEMENT AMIDST
THE TRIPLE
PLANETARY CRISIS**

2022 was a pivotal year as nations reflected on environment management practices over the past 50 years since the 1972 Conference on the Human Environment. This happened in the backdrop of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and amidst the triple planetary crises of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss. Liberia – a biodiversity hotspot and carbon sink of global importance – was one of 56 countries in the world that held extensive Stockholm+50 consultations to chart the way forward for the management of its rich natural resource heritage. With 69 percent of its land mass covered in forests, Liberia is experiencing the ravages of climate change as rising ocean levels progressively submerge its coastline displacing thousands from their homes.

Supported by the Government of Sweden and convened by the Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia (EPA), the consultations recorded 941 participants (314w/627m), 67 percent of whom were youth. The participants were drawn from national and county governments, civil society, the private sector, schools and universities, fisherfolk, faith-based organizations, youth, international organizations, and people with disabilities. UNDP committed to ensuring that all its events would from thereon have a sign language interpreter to deepen inclusivity.

The consultations, held between March and May 2022, included a national launch event in Monrovia, two regional consultations in Grand Bassa and Nimba, six side consultations in Margibi, Bong, Nimba, Grand Bassa, and Montserrado counties, and a concluding national dialogue in Monrovia. Key recommendations made by the people of Liberia included:

- ✔ Improving and decentralizing environmental awareness and education to reach everyone in the country.
- ✔ Introducing a fair sharing mechanism for its forests and mineral deposits through cost-benefit analysis.
- ✔ Banning single-use plastics, increasing awareness on the dangers of plastics,

and strengthening the country's waste management policies and practices.

- ✔ Strengthening enforcement of environmental laws and penalizing improper waste disposal.
- ✔ Increasing investment in and development of clean energy – solar, wind, and hydropower – to reduce the dependency on charcoal and fossil fuels.
- ✔ Ensuring inclusivity of persons with disabilities by increasing their access to technology and developing/reconfiguring public infrastructure to facilitate their full participation in public life.
- ✔ Supporting women's education and awareness to enable them to participate effectively in the governance of natural resources.
- ✔ Establishing an agriculture bank or subsidizing agriculture inputs and equipment; increasing agricultural extension services; and developing food storage facilities to reduce post-harvest losses.

With 69 percent of its land mass covered in forests, Liberia is experiencing the ravages of climate change

UNDP is supporting the Government of Liberia to address the triple planetary crisis by promoting diversified, inclusive, low-carbon, and climate-resilient economic growth that leverages the country's natural resources. UNDP leverages its global network of expertise to help the Government of Liberia secure investments for livelihood diversification, climate change resilience; biodiversity conservation, ecotourism development, and land management; clean, renewable energy; and waste management.



High-level Dignitaries attending the Stockholm +50 National Dialogue

Climate Resilience

Liberia's coastal zones are adversely affected by climate change in several ways. Rising global temperatures are projected to cause sea level rises of 20–30 cm by 2040 while strong ocean winds are expected to increase the frequency of high-intensity coastal storms. The country's daily rainfall is projected to increase by between 9 and 18% by 2041, with the wet season rainfall increasing by 1–2% while the dry season rainfall will decrease by between 4 and 13% by 2040.

These changes together with non-climatic factors such as sand mining, agricultural expansion, unsustainable fishing, and pollution are compromising the resilience of the country's coastal ecosystems and communities. Coastal flooding and erosion in the past decade have destroyed and/or submerged more than 670 homes, roads, and fish landing sites, and counting. Other effects are saltwater intrusion into groundwater supplies, waterlogging, and sedimentation of freshwater resources.

In 2022, UNDP continued to support the Government of Liberia to broaden the adoption of integrated coastal management by mainstreaming climate change adaptation into national development planning and budgeting and promoting climate-resilient livelihoods through the country's ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). This led to the launch of a second coastal defense and integrated coastal zone management project in Sinoe County, with funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), in November 2022. This project comes barely a year after the Monrovia Metropolitan Climate Resilience Project (MMCRP) was initiated in October 2021, with funding from the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

The MMCRP in 2022, designed the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA), the Monitoring of Social and Environmental Safeguards, the Hydro-Engineering Study and Detailed Design, and the project's impact evaluation framework. It also developed awareness-raising materials, established community knowledge-sharing groups, and signed a memorandum of understanding with

the Nathaniel Varney Massaquoi School, which will host an Education and Innovation Centre. The project team also facilitated the creation of a Community Stewardship Council to oversee the Education and Innovative Centre.

UNDP accompanied the Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia (EPA), to the Africa Climate Week held in Gabon where Liberia shared its experiences in developing its National Determined Contributions (NDC) and the NDC Roadmap with support from UNDP. UNDP subsequently supported Liberia’s efforts to develop a position on accessing climate finance under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement for COP27, held in Egypt.



Forest Governance in Focus

UNDP also supported dialogues on the governance of the country’s forests and how to leverage them to attract carbon finance. These included a forest lab dialogue aimed at upgrading forest governance in line with the New York Declaration on Forests and the Glasgow Leaders Declaration on Forest and Land Use. The need for forest governance to incorporate communities was a recurrent message.

With support from the Embassy of Sweden in Liberia, UNDP and FAO worked with Liberia’s Forestry Development Authority (FAO) to launch

a community-based Forest Management project aimed at engaging forest-fringe and forest-dependent communities in the management of the country’s forests and forest resources.

Through the joint UNDP and Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) Environmental Governance Programme, we supported artisanal miners to participate in the review of the Mining Act.

Decentralizing Disaster Mitigation

To strengthen disaster mitigation, UNDP supported the establishment of the first decentralized disaster management regional hub in Gbarnga, Bong County in 2022, to support County Disaster Management Committees. The National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA), headquartered in Monrovia, was established in 2017 with the statutory responsibility to coordinate and manage disaster response activities in the country.

UNDP further supported capacity strengthening for the Disaster Management Committees of Bong and Grand Bassa counties, the development of a hazard and vulnerability map for Sinoe County, and a needs assessment for the National Emergency Operation Center at NDMA. The organization also supported the development of Environmental Action Plans for Lofa and Grand Gedeh counties. The exercise is expected to be conducted in all counties, Bomi and Grand Cape Mount counties scheduled for 2023.



UK Deputy Ambassador Kate Thomson (Right) with others at a forest dialogue

Increasing Access to Clean Energy

UNDP has been working with various public institutions to provide stable, clean solar energy to power their activities. Several County Service Centres and border posts countrywide have been equipped with state-of-the-art solar installations enabling them to operate the equipment required to effectively provide services. Likewise, UNDP supported the installation of solar power in all 19 of the National Elections Commission's (NEC) magisterial offices to ensure they can run electoral processes without hitches.

UNDP Liberia is supporting the Government of Liberia to mobilize some US\$35m from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to provide clean solar energy to more than 300 rural healthcare facilities to improve access to health nationally. The envisioned project follows the successful pilot of the Solar for Health (S4H) project in 2020. Twelve (12) health facilities were provided solar power to operationalize their critical sections including operating theaters, laboratories, and maternal and neonatal services.



One of the rural operating theaters powered by solar energy

Liberia is also set to benefit from the Africa Mini-grid Programme (AMP), a country-led technical assistance program for mini-grids targeting early-stage mini-grid markets, which is being implemented in 18 countries with GEF funding, by UNDP in partnership with the Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) and the African Development Bank (AfDB). The programme seeks to create an enabling environment for subsequent private investment.

Laying Foundation for Green Growth

For a second year, UNDP continued to support and scaled up the **Youth Eco-brigade**, which trains vulnerable, unemployed, or economically marginalized youth on green business opportunities. In 2022, the programme recruited 120 youth from two counties – Grand Bassa and Sinoe. All trainees cleaned their neighborhoods and beaches, each receiving a stipend of US\$400, which most saved and invested in some form of business. More than 98% of Eco-brigades reported making profits that they saved in cooperatives. The Youth Eco-Brigade was piloted in 2021 in Grand Cape Mount County.

Liberia has immense untapped potential for ecotourism with nature havens such as the Gola National Park in Gbarpolu County; Lake Piso, an open coastal lagoon in Grand Cape Mount County; and the Kpatawee Waterfalls in Bong County. UNDP is supporting the establishment and training of community biodiversity conservation teams, forest rangers, and tour guides to promote ecotourism businesses, and hydropower generation at Kpatawee to power an eco-lodge and surrounding areas.



Eco-brigades recruited to give Grand Bassa County a facelift

UNDP also trained 45 women from Bomi, Gbarpolu, and Grand Cape Mount counties on the production of energy-efficient cookstoves to reduce firewood consumption and provide an alternative source of income for the women. The trainees were each given five cookstoves as start-up capital for their businesses. One beneficiary



has emerged as a flourishing salesperson, selling enough stoves to generate enough money to register and pay her university fees.

UNDP is further supporting the creation of policy and institutional frameworks for sustainable waste management. The organization fostered community waste management and recycling businesses through Waste Innovation Challenge grants ranging between US\$25,000 and US\$60,000. Five small-scale enterprises – N’gheleh Enterprise Inc., Green Cities, HYSAA Liberia, Libra Sanitation, and Evergreen Recycling Institute used the grants to scale up their operations and create employment opportunities for women, youth, and persons with disabilities through the community-driven



collection, aggregation, and sorting of plastic waste for recycling.

Famata Boakai, the queen of energy efficient cook stoves



20-year-old Famata K. Boakai recorded the highest sales for a locally produced energy-efficient cook stove in 2022. She sold more than 120 eco-stoves from her mother’s clothes business stall at the Waterside General Market in Monrovia.

She receives a 10 percent commission on the sale of each cook stove, which has enabled her to enroll at the University of Liberia where she is reading for a degree in accounting and management.

This was after completing an intensive two-month training course that taught young women how to make and market clean cookstoves as a source of income. The course was provided by Green Gold Liberia with support from UNDP.

“The training was great, and I learned and have gained a lot from it. The training has changed my life. My little commission helped me pay for my university entrance fees and assists with transportation fare to and from school and the purchase of some school supplies and reading materials,” said Famata.

She attracts customers by sensitizing them about the benefits of energy-efficient cookstoves.

“This method has worked very well not only in attracting and encouraging more customers to buy and use the stoves but also in receiving feedback from customers, who say the stove has reduced the high cost associated with the purchase of regular coal for cooking purposes,” she said.

The use of energy-efficient cook stoves reduces the quantity of wood and or charcoal used for cooking and promotes a safe and healthy cooking environment with less smoke that affects the eyes and lungs.

UNLEASHING THE FULL POTENTIAL OF LIBERIA'S INFORMAL ECONOMY



Sustainable Agricultural Program uses UNDP grant to scale up production and supply of high quality seedlings

Liberia has a population of about 5.2 million, with half of its populace living in poverty. Only a small fraction of the population is in formal employment, and most people (85%) rely on informal business activities, subsistence agriculture, fishing, and artisanal mining for work and income. The population is highly entrepreneurial. About 63 percent of the population is under 25 years of age, and only about 15 percent of those who graduate from tertiary institutions secure jobs in either the formal or informal sectors.

UNDP is investing to fully unleash the true potential of the country’s informal sector and to harness the people’s entrepreneurial energy in a variety of ways, ensuring no one is left behind.

The **UNDP Growth Accelerator business development** competition for revenue-stage businesses entered its second year expanding to also provide agricultural cooperatives with business development support and co-financing.

The Growth Accelerator Liberia, implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, is designed to help small and medium-sized enterprises and commercially inclined agricultural cooperatives scale up their operations and contribute to national economic development through increased revenues and job creation.

This is accomplished through a rigorous annual business development training and business plan pitching competition with up to US\$40,000 co-financing for each winner. Most of the winning businesses in 2021 and 2022 used the funds to procure production equipment, improve and/or expand production and processing facilities and operations, increase their human resources, and improve their business services.

In 2022, the Growth Accelerator attracted 228 applicants (72w/156m) of which 188 were small and medium-sized businesses (56 women-headed/132 men-headed), and 40 agricultural cooperatives (16w/24m). Thirteen (13) – seven small and medium-sized enterprises (2w/5m), and six agricultural cooperatives (3w/3m) – emerged successful, each securing about US\$40,000 to improve and grow their activities to commercial viability. In 2021, the competition attracted 167 applicants (52w/115m), of which five (5) (1 woman-headed/4 men-headed) emerged successful, each securing between US\$36,500 and US\$40,000 in co-financing.

In 2022, UNDP invested approximately US\$ 900,000 in the Growth Accelerator Competition, which together with the previous year’s investment amounts to more than US\$1.5m benefitting 18 small and medium-sized enterprises and agricultural cooperatives, 40% of which were women-led. UNDP mobilized a further US\$500,000 from the Embassy of Sweden in Liberia through the Community-Based Forest Management Project to support a new sector – forest-based enterprises – with the objective of promoting alternative sources of livelihood for forest dependent communities.

At another level, UNDP in partnership with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, also supported the **Youth Business Startup Competition** for a second year.

UNDP invested US\$900,000 in the Growth Accelerator Competition



18

enterprises
benefitted

40%

women-led



Liberia International Christian College, uses UNDP grant to procure new processing machines, and increase production capacity of chicken feeds

The competition attracted 960 applicants (478w/482m) out of whom 300 (144w/156m) were selected for the business training that culminated in the development and pitching of business plans for seed grants of up to US\$500 each. Of the 300 applicants who secured the grant financing, 40% were in agribusiness. All 100 awardees surveyed had started or expanded their businesses, which included catering, farming, clothing, hairdressing, and information technology. Most awardees also used 20% – 30% of the grants for paying school fees and medical bills, taking care of family and relatives, and buying food.

Both the Growth Accelerator and Youth Business Startup Competitions are currently implemented in seven counties – Grand Bassa, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Gedeh, Lofa, Montserrado, Nimba, and Sinoe through UNDP's Livelihood and Economic Empowerment Programme. Given



Janet Varnia a beneficiary of UNDP business development support now uses modern #DigitAll technologies to market her catering business

the high demand for business development support registered, UNDP is also working with the Ministry of Internal Affairs through its Liberia Decentralization Support Programme to institutionalize business development support as a service to be provided through County Service Centres (CSCs).

To this end, UNDP supported the development of a business development manual for use by CSCs to provide business advisory services to citizens. 30 (24m/6w) CSC Coordinators and Commerce Inspectors were trained on how to use the manual in line with the Liberia Business Registry rules and procedures for establishing businesses.

The manual was further tested with 25 business startups in five counties – Bong, Grand Bassa, Grand Gedeh, Margibi, and Nimba. Five small-sized businesses per county were selected competitively for training, mentoring, and seed funding. 18 of these startups (10w/8m) successfully developed compelling business plans and each received US\$500 seed funding to grow and make their businesses competitive and vibrant generating revenue and creating employment locally.

Further, UNDP infused new life into the Government of Liberia's **National Youth Cadet Programme** by supporting an internship programme for recent graduates and graduating seniors, in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The 2022 internship programme

provided job readiness and career path training as well as job placement and mentorship, attracting 820 applicants, 315 of whom were shortlisted and 75 (41w/34m) selected for placement in public and private institutions, and civil society organizations for three months. Seventy-three (73) successfully completed their placements and 49 of them (65.3%) were retained at the host organizations.

For the most vulnerable segments of the population – disadvantaged youth and youth-at-risk, young mothers, the elderly, and people living with disabilities – UNDP rolled out a livelihood resilience cash-for-work programme that provided voluntary, short-term waste collection work in Monrovia for a token stipend to enable them to meet their basic needs, and even save up and start businesses.

“Nothing About Us Without Us”

UNDP continued to promote and support the inclusivity of persons with disabilities (PWDs) to ensure they are not left out or left behind in the country’s development efforts. Our support included assisting these groups to participate in key national dialogues (such as the Stockholm+50 consultations), electoral processes, access to justice initiatives, and business development opportunities.

2022 marked Liberia’s tenth anniversary since signing the UNCRPD (UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities). 2022 also marked the country’s transition to a new National Action Plan (NAP) 2023 – 2027, developed with support from UNDP.

The new NAP reaffirms the Government of Liberia’s commitment to fostering an inclusive society and sets out ambitious targets for greater inclusion of persons with disabilities over the next five years. It has been designed to complement the National Commission on Disability (NCD)’s Roadmap for Disability Inclusion both of which, working in tandem, will attempt to meet the immediate needs of persons with disabilities while simultaneously working to enact long-lasting changes in government policy.

The NAP advocates disability-inclusive policies and practices that amplify the agency of people with disabilities and remove barriers to full participation. Its focal areas are Livelihood Access and Economic Empowerment; Education; Health and Wellness; Agriculture and Food Security; Inclusive Governance; Access to Justice and Social Protection; Inclusive Sports, Recreation, and Leisure; Accessibility; Personal Mobility, Independent Living and Assistive Technology.



Person with Disability training

PEOPLE FOR 2030





In June 2019, UNDP launched a new human resource strategy, People for 2030, to progressively transform UNDP's culture and capacity to deliver more and better results – enabling the organization to successfully implement its Strategic Plan (2022-2025), which

envisions working with countries to expand people's choices for a fairer, sustainable future, and build the world envisioned by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Below find how UNDP Liberia is implementing the People for 2030 strategy.

Timothy Woods: From Driver to Monitoring & Evaluation Officer

I graduated from high school in 2003 and landed my first job with ArcelorMittal Steel as a driver four years later. It was a good job, but I did not consider it as a final achievement but rather a stepping stone to my dream of working for the United Nations and contributing positively to sustainable peace and enhanced democracy in Liberia. I applied for many job opportunities at UNDP Liberia but was not successful until 2008 when I was shortlisted for a driving position. I went through the recruitment process, but I was not the preferred candidate. I did not give up and kept pursuing my dream. Later in 2009 November, I got shortlisted and was hired as a driver for the UNDP small arms project in Lofa.



While in Lofa, I took courses offered by the UNDP Talent Development Centre in different administrative disciplines and started providing administrative support in the office. This added value to my professional growth and encouraged me to pursue my undergraduate degree. I enrolled at Starz University College of Science and Technology in 2012 in pursuit of my undergraduate degree. It was a challenge attending classes while balancing my work as a driver, but I persevered and graduated in June 2020 with a bachelor's degree in information technology majoring in system administration, database development, and management. In December 2011, the Lofa office was closed, and I was reassigned to the Liberia Electoral Support Project (LESP) still as a driver, where I continued providing administrative support to program staff and the Chief Technical Advisor.

In 2017, I was offered an opportunity to administer payments for 250 temporary staff hired by the National Elections Commission to paste the final voter roll, 15 electoral magistrates who oversaw the process, and 151 election police officers. I also developed a stand-alone access database management system to regulate the issuance and tracking of the project's assets. Based on the utility and results of the system, I developed a passion for M&E (monitoring & evaluation) and enrolled at the Liberia Institute of Public Administration and obtained a professional certificate. I further obtained two certificates in Results Based M&E from Liberia's Pert Consultancy Firm Inc. and Kenya's Vantage Africa School of Leadership.

I continued my search for work opportunities and participated in some interviews which motivated me to keep pursuing my dream. In November 2021, I applied for an M&E position in LESP and was shortlisted, vetted, and eventually selected as the preferred candidate. I have gained much more knowledge and experience over this period, which I see as a great milestone in my professional career. My heartfelt gratitude goes out to God Almighty for the life and strength bestowed upon me and UNDP Liberia for allowing me to serve and contribute towards Liberia achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Detail Assignments: Expanding Career Horizons

James Monibah, UNDP Liberia’s Team Leader for the Inclusive Governance Pillar, was seconded to UNDP Sierra Leone as a Conflict Prevention Specialist from October to December 2022 to support the implementation of a project on Fostering Peaceful, Credible, and Inclusive Elections. The project includes a component, funded by the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), to promote peace in elections and support state institutions and security sector actors to mitigate and prevent conflicts before, during, and after the elections.



James supported implementation of the peace-building activities related to early warning and early response (EWER) and other conflict prevention mechanisms including preventing hate speech and misinformation in elections.

Lady Pokolo-Anderson, UNDP Liberia’s Procurement Analyst was seconded to UNDP Guinea Bissau as a Procurement Specialist from May to August 2022. She provided general oversight and advice to the Country Office’s Procurement Unit and ensured all processes were conducted in accordance with UNDP’s Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures.



She led the establishment of two long-term agreements for common services for the One UN House and supported the completion of high-value procurement cases, which boosted the Country Office delivery by 30%. She also ensured that all cases submitted for oversight commitment were approved upon first submission; reviewed and updated the Standard Operating Procedures for the Procurement Unit; supported the rollout of Quantum Phase I; and facilitated knowledge sharing and capacity-building sessions on procurement policies.

Abraham Tumbey, UNDP Liberia’s Programme Manager, Livelihoods & Employment Creation Project, was seconded to UNDP South Africa as Programme Manager of Nature, Climate, and Energy from October 2022 to January 2023. He provided strategic direction, management, and oversight for the programme, supervising the team and consultants. He also supported partnership management and resource mobilization, providing policy advice to the Government, and facilitating knowledge management and sharing of best practices.



He developed and implemented a delivery acceleration strategy that increased programme delivery by about 40% within two months. He also supported the inception of the Integrated Transboundary River Basin Management for the Sustainable Development of the Limpopo River Basin, funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF).



Moses Massah, UNDP Liberia’s Programme Manager for Energy and Environment was seconded to UNDP Eswatini Country Office from September to November 2022 as Programme Manager for the Inclusive Economic Growth Portfolio.

He provided management, technical and advisory services to projects under the Inclusive Growth Portfolio. His immense knowledge of GEF and GCF programming helped the environment team finalize four project proposals. He also led the development

of a joint proposal for the Great Green Wall reforestation project and supported the development of concepts for the Big Five Ecotourism Project on biodiversity conservation and the Small Grants Programme. He further helped to strengthen partnerships with key government partners including the Department of Forestry, FAO, the African Wildlife Foundation, and the Non-Governmental Organization, SUEDE.



David Worjloh, UNDP Liberia’s Finance Analyst, was seconded to UNDP Nigeria between April and July 2022 to effectively back-stop the head of the Finance Unit, ensure compliance with corporate financial management rules and procedures, motivate staff to effectively monitor the financial dashboard and generate high-quality data to inform decision-making and improve overall performance results of the Office.



He maintained effective control over payment processes and created momentum for dashboard monitoring, increasing the team’s responsiveness to resolving issues as they arose, and reducing purchase order-associated dashboard problems. He developed a budget vs expenditure reporting format for common services to inform decision-making by the UN Country Team and the Operations Management Team.

FINANCIALS/PARTNER ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

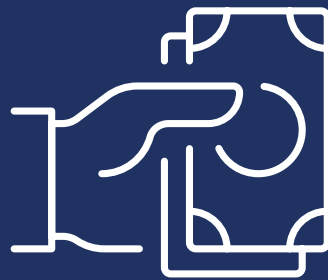


Partners of the new Community-Based Forestry Management project during the signing of the project documents

2022 UNDP Liberia Funding Partners

Partner	Amount (USD)
Government of Liberia	3,480,481.00
Swedish International Development Cooperation (SIDA)	1,831,672.85
Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)	65,186.88
Irish Aid	683,063.79
Global Environment Facility (GEF)	325,484.59
Germany	288,135.13
United Kingdom	216,000.00
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea	12,081.32
UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)	1,148,007.49
UN Trust Fund for Human Security	104,789.38
UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) for the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative	400,241.79
UNICEF	20,000.00
Total	8,575,144.22

UNDP Resources



TRAC 1
5,353,945

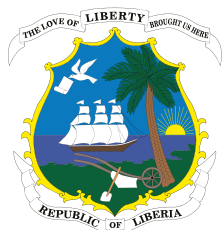
TRAC 2
1,500,000

COVID RFF from Core Programme
150,000

UNDP Funding Windows
224,888.23

TOTAL
7,228,833.23

A Special thanks to all development partners who supported UNDP's work in Liberia





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