

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

2012 NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REPORT

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
CBL	Central Bank of Liberia
CDO	County Development Officer
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FTI	Forestry Training Institute
LACC	Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission
LEC	Liberia Electricity Corporation
LEITI	Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MoH	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NEP	National Environment Policy
NSDS	National Sustainable Development Strategy
PFMA	Public Financial Management Act
PPCC	Public Procurement and Concessions Commission
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
RREA	Rural and Renewable Energy Agency
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
TVET	Technical Vocational Education Training
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
UNCSD	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
CI	Conservation International

EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FDA	Forestry Development Association
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LWSC	Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rio+20 takes place at a critical time for Liberia: the transition from post-conflict stabilization to long-term development. Liberia is currently embarking on completion of its long-term development strategy: *Liberia Rising*, Vision 2030, with the goal of becoming a middle-income country by 2030. This new strategy reflects Liberia's dedication to inclusive economic growth and the decision to integrate environmental considerations into economic development efforts and to prioritize green economy initiatives.

Fourteen years of civil conflict in Liberia destroyed government institutions, decimated infrastructure, forced the flight of thousands, and left approximately 250,000 dead. Since 2004, the country has been rebuilding these institutions and services while putting in place new mechanisms to ensure economic growth that will benefit all Liberians. Concerted effort has been made to improve economic, political, and social governance in Liberia. Post-conflict Liberia's national development strategies have included short, medium, and long-term visions for moving toward a sustainable future.

Natural resource capital is essential for economic development in Liberia. Recognizing this, there has been focus on revitalizing the country's traditional engines of growth with an influx of Foreign Direct Investment into key sectors. Liberia's mining, commercial agriculture, forestry, and other industries are again operational, while new industries like the petroleum are under development. These efforts have already paid dividends. Liberia has seen dramatic economic growth over the past five years. In 2006, the National Budget was USD 86 million. Five years later, in 2011, the budget was USD 580 Million. GDP growth has been projected as 7% over the next ten years, well over the sub regional average of 5% and the global average of 3%.

At the same time as the engines of the economy have been revived, Liberia has also maintained a focus on sustainability. A host of legal and social reforms aimed at improving management of natural resources, transparency and accountability, and inclusivity of economic development have been instituted. Substantial progress has been made in key sectors like agriculture, forestry, energy, and environment but reform effort are ongoing and continuing support for implementation is needed. Challenges in implementation of sustainable development principles and the goals enshrined in Agenda 21 persist, due to limited human and institutional capacity, weak implementation and enforcement of legal and regulatory instruments, and lack of modern technologies and infrastructures.

Liberia has recognized that sustainable development requires greening our economy: utilizing natural resources sustainably and efficiently, reducing vulnerability and adapting to climate change, transformation to a low carbon economy, and maintaining and enhancing natural capital

as a source of job creation, livelihoods, and ecosystem services. With this recognition, Liberia is eager to incorporate sustainability into all of our economic initiatives.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Defining Sustainable Development

The Brundtland Commission Report entitled *Our Common Future* (1987) defined sustainable development as “development, which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” The 1992 United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED), commonly referred to as the Rio Earth Summit, brought together world leaders with the aim of obtaining political commitments and setting a framework for definitive measures that would ensure a sustainable future. The Rio Earth Summit and the resulting framework for action, the UN Sustainable Development Agenda 21, aimed to reduce economic and social disparities and address global development challenges. Agenda 21 called for increased financial support to developing countries and global commitment for implementation of sustainable development goals, including, poverty eradication, protecting public health, and conservation and management of resources.

Sustainable Development principles and the goals enshrined in Agenda 21 have faced challenges in implementation due in part to the global economic crisis and internal conflict as is the case for Liberia. Global challenges like mitigation and adaptation to climate change, unsustainable production and consumption patterns, and food insecurity have heightened the need to renew the commitments agreed to at the 1992 Earth Summit. For Liberia, sustainable development challenges are even more poignant, increasing our susceptibility to renewed discontent and possibly internal conflict. Achieving sustainable development goals is critical to ensuring lasting peace, security, and improved quality of life for Liberians.

1.2. Objectives and Themes for Rio+20

In June 2012, world leaders and the global community will again meet in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) or “Rio+20”. 20 years after the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, UN member states and major groups will meet with the objective of securing renewed political commitment for sustainable development principles and assessing progress to date and the remaining gaps in implementation of sustainable

development goals that were agreed upon in Agenda 21. The themes for Rio+20 are (1) Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development and (2) Green Economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

1.3. Liberia Preparatory Processes for Rio+20

Liberia began its national preparatory process for Rio+20 in July 2011, holding a series of technical meetings and stakeholder consultations. Liberia participated in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Regional Preparatory meeting held in Accra, Ghana during which focus was placed on implementation gaps and gaps in integration of sustainable development into National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS). Liberia also participated in the Africa Regional Preparatory Meeting held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and is committed to the regional vision for Rio+20 as contained in the Africa Consensus Statement. In November 2011, Liberia's post conflict development was the focus of a UNDESA Sustainable Development in Post Conflict Countries, which outlined challenges for post conflict countries and Liberia's post conflict sustainable development agenda.

Liberia is committed to the principles of sustainable development and the objectives and goals of Rio+20. Renewed global commitment to sustainable development principles and support to developing countries is key for Liberia's long term development goals. As a fragile state following many years of civil conflict, Liberia is strategically poised for a transition and has already begun to undertake efforts to ensure integration of the three pillars of sustainable development: economic, social, and environment development into its national policies. Liberia is planning for a future that is inclusive, ensuring the fair and equal distribution of wealth created from Liberia's natural resources, where Liberians are positively impacted by economic growth, and political governance is representative of all members of society. For Liberia, sustainable development is a requirement for sustained peace and long term prosperity.

1.4. Summary of Liberia's Post-Conflict Development Achievements

In 2003, Liberia emerged from 14 years of civil war and conflict that destroyed government institutions, forced the flight of thousands of Liberians, including the exodus of educated Liberians, and decimated infrastructure in the country. Failure to sustainably manage resources in the country fueled the civil conflict. Following the signing of the Accra Peace Accord in

2004, Liberia embarked on national reconstruction, including rebuilding government institutions and desperately needed infrastructure. The efforts to rebuild have been predicated on the lessons of the past: knowledge that there is a direct linkage between conflict, peace, and sustainable use of Liberia's resources.

Since 2004, concerted effort has been made to improve economic, political, and social governance in Liberia. Post-conflict Liberia's national development strategies have included the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy (2006-2008), the Poverty Reduction Strategy (2008-2011), and a medium term PRS II (2012-2018) currently under development. Liberia has begun national consultations for its long term development strategy, "Liberia Rising: Vision 2030," with the goal of making Liberia a middle income country by 2030. Liberia has made significant progress in past eight years; investing heavily in infrastructure, initiating sectoral reforms, including revising existing policies and laws, reviewing the mandate of political institutions to avoid duplication in functions, and creating necessary institutions that will improve transparency and accountability in government processes.

1.4.1. Status of Poverty Reduction Strategy

Liberia's first Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), *Lift Liberia*, was for the three fiscal years from July 2008 to December 2011 and had a three-pronged growth strategy: 1) rebuilding roads and other critical infrastructure; 2) reviving the traditional engines of growth in mining, minerals, forestry, and agriculture; and 3) establishing a competitive environment to help diversify the economy¹ (PRS Annual Report 2012).

The strategy was designed around four pillars, one of which were more important for Liberia's post-conflict context, peace and security, and the rest of which were more directly tied to economic development, and thus are more relevant for sustainable development: economic revitalization, governance and rule of law, and infrastructure and basic services. Activities were designed to lay the groundwork for economic development: developing detailed plans, building

¹Thus, it is thus not an assessment of the whole first term of the elected government, 2006-12, or of the whole recovery process since 2003.

capacity, passing laws, building or rebuilding parts of institutional and physical systems, and rehabilitating or repairing infrastructure. It was deliverables-driven, intended to inject much needed resources into rebuilding basic infrastructure and providing basic services. As of the end of the PRS I implementation period, 2/3 of the objectives of *Lift Liberia* were accomplished. (PRS Final Report 2012).

The goal for the **infrastructure and basic services** pillar was: *To rehabilitate infrastructure and rebuild systems to deliver basic services in order to create the conditions and linkages needed to achieve broad-based growth and poverty reduction.* This pillar mainly concerns the government's provision of inputs for stronger economic growth and improved social indicators, both of which Liberia needs in order to achieve its aspiration of becoming a true middle-income country. Overall, the completion rate of deliverables in Infrastructure and Basic Services (IBS) was 57 percent. The completion rate varied from 31 percent in water and sanitation to 68 percent in education (PRS Final Report 2012).

Energy is essential for economic activities and infrastructure for energy generation is lacking in Liberia. The initial objective of increasing electricity generation by 35 MW was not completed, though three of the four outputs for electricity transmission and distribution were completed, bringing some benefits in the Monrovia area, where there is now some central electric generation. Most of the other completed deliveries were preparatory—assessments, etc. and might be continued in the coming years.

In terms of improvements in access to electricity, as the main source of energy for lighting, there was growth of two to fivefold in the number of households that use the main grid and generators. The share of households having refrigerators is about the same as those with access to the grid for lighting.² (PRS Final Report 2012)

²Less than 3 percent of Liberian households nationwide have refrigerators, with the rate being about 6 percent in Greater Monrovia. About 11 percent of households nationwide have generators, and about 27 percent in Monrovia and 3.6 percent in rural areas, with similar percentages of households in each category having a TV or a VCR or DVD.

In furtherance of the transportation aspects of economic revitalization the government prepared a National Transport Policy and Strategy. Roads were identified as the most important transport subsector, and PRS-1 identified four strategic objectives but progress was limited³ (PRS Final Report 2012). About 45 percent of households—nationwide, rural and urban— have access to an all-season road within 5km, and 57 percent with access to any road within 5km, though it is data to demonstrate a change in these statistics is unavailable (PRS Final Report 2012).

The goal of the **governance and rule of law** pillar was: *To work in partnership with all citizens to build and operate effective institutions and systems that will strengthen peace and promote and uphold democratic governance, accountability, and justice for all.* More reliable rule of law also contributes to economic revitalization. (PRS Final Report 2012 p.31) Two of the four most prominent areas of intended outcome in the Governance and rule of law agenda are decentralization to empower local citizens and anti-corruption, both of which are critical for sustainable development. Under this pillar, some ministries made strides, with indicators from the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs showing 50% completion of deliverables in this area.

Decentralization is an objective of Liberia's PRS because of its potential to increase transparency and accountability.⁴ At least 80 percent of deliverables were completed including some key

³“Ensure that all primary roads are pliable year-round, while aggressively opening secondary feeder roads around the country....Build or reconstruct 1187 miles of primary roads and 300 miles of all-weather secondary roads ...to connect the headquarters of the fifteen counties....Work in partnership with mining, logging and agricultural companies to undertake rehabilitation of feeder roads as part of concession agreements and encourage the construction ...at minimum LPW standards. Rehabilitate roads in Monrovia and the capitals of the 15 counties.” Rebuild the [public and private] capacity for sustained construction and maintenance of roads and bridges. ...” (pp. 99-100)

⁴The term decentralization in Liberia often refers to both true decentralization and to what is called deconcentration elsewhere—the distinction being that decentralization means giving decision power to locally elected officials whereas deconcentration gives decision power to officials stationed at the local level but appointed at the center. Deconcentration has often been a step leading to decentralization, as in Latin America and parts of South Asia. Deconcentration itself can bring benefits of having officials that know the local situation better and respond to views of the local population. Deconcentration can also be implemented by a central administration without recourse to the legal basis for decentralized political and fiscal administrations, which requires legislative concurrence. A lot depends on what incentives the central government sets for its deconcentrated branches (PRS Annual Report 2012).

deliverables for the decentralization team such as the development of a decentralization policy and strategic implementation plan. In terms of outcomes since 2008, there has been some deconcentration, but not real decentralization (PRS Final Report 2012).

Reducing corruption and increasing transparency were important goals of the anticorruption and transparency pillar. Liberia completed some deliverables for this theme by finalizing the structure and mandate of, and establishing by legislation, the Anti-Corruption Commission and the Freedom of Information Act. It failed to complete the other important deliverable of enacting other legal protections such as a Whistle Blower Statute, Broadcasting regulations, and a National Public Broadcasting Service Act.

Thus far, according to international surveys, Liberia has made some progress against corruption, although much remains to be done. In 2007, the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index was 2.1 (on a 1-10 scale, with a 90 percent confidence interval of 1.8-2.4), and by 2010 Liberia's score had improved to 3.3 (2.6-4.3 confidence interval)⁵ (PRS Final Report 2012). Finally, there have also been efforts in the crosscutting sectors of **capacity building and gender** and improvements in these sectors have been made (PRS Final Report 2012).

Many challenges in implementation still remain including, water and sanitation, food insecurity, inadequate health services, and a high poverty rate. For Liberia, sustainable development is critical to ensuring sustained peace and alleviating poverty. Integration of sustainable development principles into our national vision is essential to attaining our goal of sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

Liberia is currently engaged in national dialogue for the PRS II and Liberia Rising: Vision 2030. These national consultations feed prominently into our national preparatory process for Rio+20. Though these consultations, Liberians are informing their government of the issues and challenges that are important to them. These issues were also identified during the Rio+20 National Consultative Workshop held in 2011. The issues and challenges identified during both

⁵This was the same score as for India and Jamaica and ahead of The Gambia, Mexico, Zambia, and many others.

processes have underpin the framework for the goals and targets of our medium term national development strategy, the PRS II.

2. COUNTRY CONTEXT

2.1. Historical Perspective

Perhaps the biggest factor affecting sustainable development in Liberia today is the legacy of its 14-year civil war. The war left 250,000 dead, reduced Liberia's gross domestic product by 50 percent, and decimated critical industries such as manufacturing, iron mining, rice, and rubber (UNEP 2004).⁶ Uncontrolled extraction of high-value natural resources—timber, diamonds, and gold—filled this economic void. As the economy contracted sharply, the unregulated and unrestrained use of Liberia's forests transformed timber into a leading economic sector. By the end of the conflict, timber represented over 50 percent of Liberia's income (McAlpine, O'Donohue, and Pierson 2006; *FAO Newsroom* 2006). From 2000 to 2002, forestry was the biggest industry in Liberia, representing 50 to 60 percent of export earnings and 26 percent of gross domestic product—so recordkeeping failures had significant implications. A 2005 study by the Forest Concession Review Committee showed that by the end of the war, concessionaires owed the FDA US\$64 million (FCRC 2005a). Timber revenues to buy weapons, draining the very lifeblood of the nation to support the protracted and devastating conflict (Price 2003).

During this period, sustainable development initiatives were sporadic. A new forest sector law was passed in 2000. In response to international pressure, in August 2001, President Charles Taylor responded to international pressure by issuing a plan to use timber revenue to foster development projects in counties that were significant sources of timber (UNSC 2002).⁷ In 2002, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Act, the Environmental Protection and Management (EPML) Act was passed, establishing the Liberian Environmental Protection agency and setting the framework for improved monitoring and protection of Liberia's natural resources.

By the end of the war, Liberia's infrastructure had largely been destroyed, and most of the population lacked access to power, to running water, and to basic goods and services. Under these conditions, forests were more essential than ever for meeting subsistence needs (UNEP

6. Before the war, iron mining was responsible for more than 50 percent of Liberia's export earnings (UNEP 2004).

7. In January 2002, Taylor further agreed to establish a system of protected areas, consisting of 30 percent of Liberia's remaining forest areas, but he did not follow through with this plan.

2004). Between 1990 and 2005, pillaging—for both commercial and subsistence needs—led to the loss of approximately 33,000 hectares of forest per year. Economic development indicators had plummeted. But the richness of Liberia’ natural resources – forests, minerals, oil, fisheries – remained, holding promise for a way forward.

While the socio-economic conditions of Liberians have improved since the end of the war the data is still alarming. 68% of Liberians live in poverty, with over 43% living in extreme poverty. The National Food and Security Report found that 41% of Liberians are undernourished (2010). During reconstruction efforts, government expenditure focused primarily on immediate rehabilitation to critical infrastructure including roads and health care facilities. Liberia’s current development pathway seeks to ensure government resources have more direct impact for Liberians.

2.2. Post-Conflict Progress

During the initial period after the signature of the Accra Peace agreement, the focus remained on reestablishing security. But even at that time, the critical importance of natural resources in providing an opening for the economic development that would be necessary to prevent conflict recurrence was recognized. For example, in 2004, while UNMIL was still attempting to establish security, a group of representatives from the Government of Liberia, U.S. governmental agencies, international development agencies, and international and Liberian NGOs came together to design a forest sector reform process (McAlpine, O’Donohue, and Pierson 2006). This group became known as the Liberia Forest Initiative.⁸ The LFI partners recognized that to respond to the increasing demands on forest resources, Liberia would need to ensure that those resources were managed sustainably from generation to generation (McAlpine, O’Donohue, and Pierson 2006).⁹ Many aspects of the reform designed by this group, including the emphasis on sustainability, have served as models in the reform of other sectors.

8. Ultimately, the LFI was made up of fifteen partners: the Center for International Forestry Research, Conservation International, the Environmental Law Institute, the European Commission, Flora and Fauna International, the Food and Agriculture Organization, Forest Partners International, the International Monetary Fund, the International Union for Conservation and Nature, the UN Environment Programme, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Forest Service, the World Agroforestry Centre, and the World Bank. See www.fao.org/forestry/site/lfi.

Reform efforts started during the period of the transitional government but began in earnest when President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf came in to office. In recognition of the fact that any legal and policy reforms would only be as effective as the institutions that would implement them, Liberia has reformed many public institutions to reflect current international best practices, protect Liberian interests, and safeguard the natural environment. Liberia has instituted the Public Financial Management Act (PFMA), the Liberia Governance and Economic Management Program (GEMAP), the Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI), Public Procurement and Concessions Commission (PPCC), the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC), a functional Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the revamped General Auditing Commission (GAC). These public institutions have the mandate of ensuring transparency and accountability in government process and protecting the resources of Liberia.

Liberia economic development is heavily dependent on its natural resource capital. Agriculture, including fisheries is a source of livelihood for over 75% of the population. There has been a reemergence of the country's traditional engines of growth with an influx of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into key sectors. Liberia's mining, commercial agriculture, forestry, and other industries are being revitalized. With the discovery of hydrocarbon in neighboring countries, Liberia is currently exploring the possibility of developing an oil industry, awarding exploration licenses for offshore blocks in Liberia territorial waters.

3. Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development

3.1. Introduction

Rio+20 is taking place at a critical time for Liberia. Liberia has embarked on a national development pathway that is leading the way for post-conflict countries. The country has experienced robust growth resulting in improvements in economic, social, and institutional indicators since 2006. Liberia's development trajectory entails deliberate, measured steps aimed at improving institutional framework for governance, economic growth, and social development. Our national policy following the end of the civil conflict has included development strategies for inclusive economic growth and we have been realizing steady gains towards improving the

socio-economic condition of Liberians. In the aftermath of the civil crisis, Liberia has developed and implemented a series of planning documents designed to ensure sustainable economic development, including a 150-day Action Plan, the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy (IPRS), and the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). Currently, Liberia is currently developing the PRS II – its medium term development plan for sustainable development.

At the end of 2011, an impressive 85% of PRS deliverables had been achieved.¹⁰ However, the government has recognized that there were gaps and missed opportunities in implementation of PRS I. Thus, the development of PRS II is less deliverables driven and more results driven.

Following the successful implementation of PRSI, the government is currently finalizing the PRS II – “Economic Transformation.” The PRSII, Liberia’s medium term strategy for sustainable economic growth and development, will focus on Liberia’s growing economic opportunities and potential to diversify the country’s economic portfolio. Additionally, the theme “Economic Transformation” shows Liberia’s dedication to eradication of poverty and increasing provision of basic services, including water, sanitation, and healthcare to all Liberians.

In February 2012, Liberia began national consultations for ‘Liberia Rising: Vision 2030,’ the country’s long-term development strategy that will seek to make Liberia a middle-income country by 2030. In addition to economic growth, several priorities have been identified during the national consultations. Foremost among these are employment creation, vocational training, empowering town and clan chiefs, and reclaiming Liberian identity.

3.2. Economic

¹⁰Another sector important for economic revitalization in Liberia is mining. During the period of the first PRS, the Minerals and Mining Law was reviewed and revised to be consistent with other relevant laws and policies and the Model Minerals Development Agreement was developed and pending approval by the legislature and cabinet, will be incorporated into the revenue code. The expected outcomes of increase exports and concession revenue and increase demand for labor, goods and services from the domestic economy only yielded modest results.¹⁰

14 years of civil conflict devastated the Liberian economy. Sustainable economic development is critical to our national development agenda. Historically, Liberia has been affected by the so-called “Dutch disease,” where natural resource wealth failed to translate into development of the Country. Liberia is keenly aware of this history and is dedicated to economic growth that will reduce disparities and facilitate the eradication of poverty.

Our development strategies have sought to ensure that Liberia’s economic policy includes ensuring economic growth that is inclusive of all Liberians and protective of our national resources and culture. Liberia has seen dramatic economic growth over the past five years. In 2006, the National Budget was USD 86 million. Five years later, in 2011, the budget was USD 580 Million. GDP growth has been projected to be 7% over the next ten years, well over the sub regional average of 5% and the global average of 3%.

The economic revitalization objective of Liberia’s first poverty reduction strategy was “to firmly establish a stable and secured macroeconomic environment and to be on an irreversible path toward rapid, inclusive and sustainable growth and development.” This pillar included several outcomes with direct implications for sustainable development: mining, agriculture, forestry, and the private Sector (PRS Final Report 2012).52% of the deliverables for the agriculture component of the economic revitalization pillar were completed; 100% for fishing and forestry; 59% for environmental protection; and 92% for mineral resources and mining. (PRS Final report2012 Table 5.). One of the 15 successfully completed institutional objectives of the Growth and Macroeconomics part of the economic revitalization pillar was revising the policies and procedures for forestry and mineral taxation (PRS Final Report 2012).

The traditional engines of growth have been revitalized in the agriculture, forestry, and mining sectors, significantly increasing government revenues. Liberia is also exploring new sectors, particularly the potential for a hydrocarbon industry, and with that, putting in place mechanisms to ensure the greatest economic benefit for Liberians should commercial quantities of hydrocarbon exist within the territory of Liberia.

Liberia is committed to transparency and accountability as a necessary component of economic development. In 2009, the Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI) was established, requiring disclosure of government contracts and revenue. Liberia is the first country to including the mining sector in its EITI initiative.

3.2.1. Agriculture

Agriculture is the predominant source of livelihoods for over 70% of the population. The PRS included two main outcome objectives for the sector: 1) Increased sales and shipments of agricultural production to urban and export markets; and 2) Increased agricultural production of food supply to rural families—improved subsistence farming. Success in the agriculture sector during the period of the first PRS centered around provision of technical and material inputs to farmers to stimulate increased production (PRS Final Report 2012).

Two of the most important agricultural commodities in Liberia are oil palm and rubber. Foreign investment in this sector has increased with the reemergence of large commercial agricultural concessions. Smallholder subsistence agriculture and fisheries directly and indirectly is the main economic activity for a majority of the population.

Although Liberia's agricultural sector has made significant gains, many challenges remain. Sustainability of the agricultural sector requires an integrated approach to resource use, including innovative farming practices, conservation of critical wildlife habitat, and sound land use planning. Enhanced production of Liberian staple foods – rice and cassava- is needed. Substantial improvement in land administration – a complex and politically charged issue in Liberia – will be critical going forward.

The farming sector is currently under performing with low productive capacity, contributing to food insecurity. Dependency on imported food is increasing, two-thirds of the food on the Liberian market is imported. Food insecurity remains a major challenge for Liberians, with 41% of the population undernourished. Enhanced production of Liberian staple foods – rice and cassava- will alleviate the challenge of food security.

The Liberian government goal for the agricultural sector is to promote a robust, competitive, and modernized agricultural sector supportive of sustainable economic growth and development. Sector priorities include capacity building for farmers and increased investment in the sector. This will include support to rural agricultural financing and diversification of farming practices. The Ministry of Agriculture has plans to establish a national agricultural land resource database and invest in capacity building of farmers. During PRS II implementation, the government investment in the sector will be geared to improving productivity through the establishment of service provision centers and a leasing scheme for farm machinery. These interventions by the government are intended to increase food production and sustainability of sector.

3.2.2. Forestry

The forestry sector in Liberia generates major revenue for the Government. Approximately 60 different timber species are routinely harvested in Liberia. To ensure the sustainability of the sector, improved management of forest resources is essential. This includes promoting alternative livelihood strategies that enable business opportunities for communities from the development of non-timber forest products, ecotourism and payments for ecosystem services. Deforestation and inadequate implementation of reforestation remain primary concerns for the forestry sector.

Sustainability of the sector requires a dual approach that supports commercial forestry while protecting our natural resources through conservation. The Forest Reform Law of 2006 requires an integration of the commercial, conservation, and community uses of forests for sustainable forest management.

3.2.3. Energy

Energy is the bedrock for development and is necessary to propel Liberia nation into middle-income status. The energy sector presents an opportunity for creation of much needed revenue and has the potential to transform the development of Liberia. In 2009, Liberia developed a National Energy Policy (NEP), setting the framework for affordable access to modern energy services for all Liberians. The NEP aims to make Liberia a carbon neutral economy by 2050. This will entail promoting the use of renewable energy and leveraging biomass and water resources as a source of carbon credits for energy development.

Currently, household energy use is dominated by biomass energy. Only 10% of urban residents and 2% of rural residents have access to electricity through diesel-powered generators. A small minority of Liberians have access to electricity through the state owned Liberian Electricity Corporation (LEC), which is only operational in the capital city of Monrovia and operates on diesel fuel. Prior to the civil conflict, electricity was supplied to Monrovia by the Mt. Coffee hydropower Plant. LEC now operates on high impact diesel fuel, which raises the cost of electricity to 0.55 per kilowatt. The current price is prohibitively high and thus unaffordable to many Liberians in Monrovia.

Sustainable energy production and distribution is essential for Liberia. The Liberian government has committed \$40 million dollars to the rehabilitation of the Mt. Coffee Hydropower plant with the goal of increasing the plant's capacity. The project, once completed, will provide electricity services at more affordable cost to Monrovia and surrounding cities.

Liberia is also investing in the newly created Rural and Renewable Energy Agency (RREA), which is within the Ministry of Lands, Mines, and Energy. With support from donor-partners, RREA is implementing small-scale hydropower projects for rural communities. Liberia recognizes its high potential for renewable energy. RREA has been empowered by government to explore Liberia's potential in this area.

With oil exploration currently taking place and the potential in the future for oil production in Liberia, we are also developing a petroleum policy and revising the New Petroleum Law of 2000 to ensure the greatest economic benefit for Liberians and ensuring protection of our natural resources and the environment.

3.3. Social

Social development is a necessary factor in the transition to becoming a middle-income country. The key social challenges in Liberia include poverty, education, health, and gender. Continued investment in the education and health sector are key to Liberia's goal of reaching middle-income status. Poverty reduction remains a challenge for Liberia. Approximately 1.7 million Liberians live below the national poverty line. Of these, about 1.3 million people live in extreme

poverty. Poverty is an even greater challenge in rural areas (68%) than in urban areas (55%). Since 2006, Liberia's social indicators have improved dramatically. Overwhelming challenges, however, still hinder development efforts. Rural to urban migration to Monrovia and other major cities has resulted in overpopulation, placing severe stress on the environment and resulting in poor sanitary conditions and increased prevalence of communicable diseases.

3.3.1. Health Care

During the civil crisis, the Liberian healthcare system was completely destroyed. Health care infrastructure was devastated and the health care sector lost skilled professionals. Providing basic health services and improving health delivery remains a challenge for Liberia. The Liberian Government has made rehabilitation of healthcare facilities and reviving the health care sector a priority. A related challenge for the health sector is the destruction of the country's road network during the civil crisis. Poor road infrastructure further hinders access to health care facilities particularly during the rainy season.

Since 2006, the Government has invested over US \$500 million dollars into health care and infrastructure development. The Government has invested significantly in rebuilding the country's road network, which will improve access to health care facilities for rural communities. By the end of 2011, 1,500 miles of paved and laterite roads were reconstructed or rehabilitated.

3.3.2. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Meeting MDGs targets is critically important for improving quality of life for Liberians and propelling Liberia to a middle-income country. Achieving the targets of the eight MDGs is a challenge for Liberia due to multiple contributing factors including chronic malnutrition, high illiteracy rate, and weak health care system. The 2010 Liberia MDGs Report shows that while there has been progress toward meeting some MDGs targets, Liberia will be unable to meet many key targets, including halving poverty by 2015.

Liberia is on course to meet two of the eight MDGs, namely, Goal 3 (Gender Equity and Female Empowerment) and Goal 6 (Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and the spread of other diseases). The

2010 MDGs Report shows Liberia has made significant progress toward Goal 2: Achieving universal primary education. Liberia's protracted civil war prevented sustained national efforts to tackle key indicators and contributed to worsening the situation. High rates of infant mortality, under-five mortality, and maternal mortality are affecting Liberia's progress toward MDG targets.

3.4. Environment

Sound environmental management in Liberia is particularly important in light of our recent history and the direct dependency of much of the population on natural resources. Poor management of Liberia's resources fueled the civil war and unregulated harvesting of timber financed the civil war. Liberian economic development must have the twin goal of maintaining healthy ecosystems. Liberians rely heavily on ecosystem services for their basic needs and livelihoods. Sustainable development requires maintaining healthy ecosystems and the critical services they provide.

In the first PRS, land and the environment were considered cross-cutting issues annex of the document. In this sector, achievements included passage the Community Rights Law, establishing a system for community exploitation of forests and a series of other forest-related regulations were also promulgated.¹¹ On the other hand, poaching of wildlife remains rampant and the draft Wildlife Management and Protected Areas Act remains in draft form. Efforts are underway to improve management of existing protected areas¹² and to set aside more land.¹³ Environmental policy is improving incrementally.

¹¹ National Benefit Sharing Trust Regulation, Bushmeat Regulation, Non-timber Forest Products, and Wood Energy.

¹² Liberia is managing existing protected areas (Nimba Nature Reserve and Sapo National Park) totaling 193,500 hectares, in accordance with the National Forest Reform Law and FDA regulations.

¹³ Liberia is working to conduct social and biological surveys of proposed protected areas and allocate up to 950,000 hectares to the National Protected Area Network with at least 100,000 allocated per year as consistent with the suitability study.

Recognizing the important role environmental protection plays in development processes, Liberia has introduced a fifth pillar into the second poverty reduction strategy: Cross-Cutting Issues. This category includes the environment. Additionally, environmental issues have been integrated into other pillars of the PRS II, specifically the economic pillar (to ensure sustainable agriculture and forestry). Protection of ecosystems, including conservation and protection of the environment, must underpin the development agenda.

3.4.1. Forest Resources

Liberia has the largest remaining portion of the Upper Guinean Forest and contains unique species of flora and fauna. As a world biological diversity hotspot, the potential for ecotourism is substantial. However, deforestation and other human activities are affecting the integrity of the forests. It is estimated that approximately 480,000 acres (192,000 hectares) of forestland is lost annually due to logging, shifting cultivation and other activities, while government has replanted less than 27,000 acres (10,927 hectares).

Liberia has recognized that reforestation efforts have been minimal and must be a priority for government. Protection of forest resources and ecosystem services is critical. Current drafting of PRS II requires improved monitoring to ensure reforestation is a key component of forest management.

3.4.2. Water Resources

With 14% of Liberia's surface area covered by water and a particularly heavy annual rainfall, the country's water resource potential is vast. During the rainy season, annual rainfall averages 4,320 mm. Liberia's groundwater is exploited primarily through wells and boreholes. Liberia's abundant water resources are also favorable to agricultural and rural energy development. Water and Sewer Corporation (LWSC) is mandated to provide safe drinking water is mandated to provide safe drinking water for Liberians. However, low capacity and a lack of modern technologies hinders the ability of LWSC to provide this critical service. There are critical challenges in this area that requires financial and technical support if Liberia is to effectively manage its water resources.

Population growth, particularly in urban centers like Monrovia has placed tremendous stress on water resources. Other stressors such as uncontrolled waste disposal, industrial processes, agricultural activities, and mining contribute to decreased water quality, increasing the potential for water-borne diseases. Additionally, reliable water quality data is unavailable as nation-wide baseline studies have not been completed. Liberia's current water quality standards are no longer applicable as long-term degradation and industrial processes have changed water quality in the country. A full study of the current quality water bodies in Liberia is needed to inform policy decisions and protect public health.

Proper water resource management is essential for combating water issues. Liberia needs integrated approach, including strong policy and coordination among government ministries responsible for managing water resources. In 2007, under the direction of the Ministry of Lands, Mines, and Energy (MLME), an Integrated Water Resource Policy was developed. This Policy called for strategies for the development of domestic water supplies, water for agricultural use, industry use, recreation, and maintenance of productive ecosystems. It is vision of the Policy that by 2015, water resources will be developed integrally with land and other natural resources and managed in an efficient, environmentally sound, equitable and responsible manner, with due consideration to all varied and conflicting or competing uses. The PRS II will provide mechanisms for increased support to LWSC for improvements to the water and sewage systems in Monrovia.

3.4.3. Marine and Coastal Issues

Liberia's coastline stretches for 350 miles along the Atlantic Ocean. The coastal and marine ecosystems in Liberia include lagoons, estuaries, bays, creeks, etc. The marine ecosystem plays a significant ecological role, exerting influence over local processes such as the absorption of atmospheric carbon dioxide. Locally, the marine and coastal areas are home to a wide variety of species including plants, birds, mammals, reptiles, fisheries and insects. The coastal ecosystem in Liberia also provides many economic benefits to society by supporting industries ranging from fisheries to sustainable tourism. Intensive fishing, shipping, land-based pollution and development, the increasing human population are negatively impacting coastal areas.

Liberian beaches have great potential for tourism. Liberia coastal cities face severe threat from sea erosion. Uncontrolled beach sand mining for development purposes has endangered coastal cities. The coastal city of Buchanan, in particular, is in critical condition, requiring immediate intervention to mitigate the damage.

3.4.4. Multilateral Environmental Agreements

Liberia is party to many Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) that are implemented through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as focal agency for MEAs in Liberia. The three Rio conventions that resulted from the Earth Summit have provided support to Liberia for implementation of convention-related activities. Appendix B provides a list of MEAs to which Liberia is asignatory.

Changing climate patterns can affect agricultural producers, thereby affecting food production, leading to food insecurity and potentially resulting in civil unrest. While Liberia's CO₂ emissions are negligible, commitment to becoming a low carbon economy is an important step for climate change mitigation. Adaptation to climate change requires support of developing countries and international partners, technology transfer, and better awareness.

Through support from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Liberia has developed its National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA). Other national policy documents and framework for implementation of the conventions have been developed. However, implementation of the NAPA remains hampered by limited government resources, lack of appropriate technologies, and inadequate human capacity.

4. Green Economy

The second theme at the UNCSD in June 2012 is a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. A green economy has been defined as one that results in improved human well being and social equity while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities (UNEP, 2011). As part of sustainable development initiatives, instituting green economy mechanisms can lead to green jobs, poverty eradication, food and energy security, and sustainable use of resources (UNEP, 2011). For Liberia, the transition to a

green economy means utilizing natural resources sustainably and more efficiently, reducing vulnerability and adapting to climate change, mobilization of resources toward a low carbon economy, and maintaining and enhancing natural capital as a source of job creation and livelihoods. A critical aspect of post-war reforms has been to introduce social and environmental rights into development policies and initiatives. Public/private partnerships are also key to advancing green economy initiatives.¹⁴

Liberia's PRS II directly recognizes the need to consider environmental aspects of economic development. The draft offers several entry points for green economy initiatives. In particular, development of the energy sector is a priority for Liberia and should be accomplished in a sustainable way. The current development of off-grid small-scale hydropower projects in rural communities will provide affordable low-emission access to electricity in rural areas. The human and institutional capacity of RREA should be improved as well as increased investment in harnessing renewable energy potential.

A host of legal reforms acknowledge social and environmental rights in a range of sectors that have historically viewed purely as economic development activities in Liberia. The heralded 2006 National Forest Reform Law contains substantial public participation, social benefits, and sustainability provisions. The 2009 Community Rights Law specifically provides forest-dependent communities rights to manage forest land. In the mining sector, social agreements have become the rule and the fisheries law is being reformed. While Liberia has taken these critical first steps towards greening its economy, capacity and resources for implementation are still needed.

Liberia also has potential to build on its natural capital assets through ecotourism.¹⁵ The country's potential for ecotourism will need to be explored further. Liberia has two natural forest reserves and is internationally known as a biological diversity hotspot. Ecotourism can

¹⁴ For example, Conservation International is leading a public private partnership to promote conservation efforts in the East Nimba Nature Reserve.

¹⁵ In April, 2012, a national geographic cruise traveled to Liberia, demonstrating this potential.

enhance conservation efforts and sustainable utilization of ecosystem services, create jobs, and provide much needed revenue to government.

5. Liberia Rio+20 National Preparatory Process

5.1. Introduction

The objective of the Rio+20 national preparatory process is to enable Liberia to prepare for and contribute effectively to the Rio+20 process, based on its sustainable development goals and objectives. It is also acknowledged that meaningful participation in the Rio+ 20 meetings has the prospect of creating opportunities for Liberia in the form of capacity building, technology transfer, and financial and technological investment and assistance. The preparatory process is also intended to ensure a solid foundation at the national level for implementation of the outcomes of the Conference. The context for the Rio+20 national preparatory process is the Liberia PRS II and the Vision 2030 development process. The Process is supported with technical and financial assistance from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Division for Sustainable Development (DSD) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Concurrently with the national preparatory process, UNDESA/DSD and UNDP are also collaborating on the implementation of the Development Account project ROA-105 “*Strengthening National Capacity for the Integration of Sustainable Development Principles into Development Strategies in Countries Emerging from Conflict.*” Liberia is the African representative pilot country under this project. The implementation of the project is focused on supporting Liberia’s efforts to help conceive and shape the PRSII to ensure sustainable development and peace.

5.2. Liberia National Consultative Workshop

In preparation for Rio+20, a National Consultative Workshop was held November 30 – December 1, 2011 with 60 stakeholders from county and national government, civil society, conservation NGOs, and international development institutions. The objectives of the workshop were: 1) to share information and discuss conflict-sensitive development principles as contained

in the UNDESA/DSD Guidance Notes “Developing National Sustainable Development Strategies in Post-Conflict Countries;” and 2) discuss and make recommendations for Liberia’s sustainable development goals and objectives. Substantives presentations were made including: an over view of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (UNDESA); a summary of progress towards completion of PRS I (Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs); overview of upcoming Rio+20 Conference (UNDESA); an example of a public private partnerships in East Nimba Nature Reserve (Conservation International); and Liberia’s role in Rio+20 (UNDESA). Subsequently, participants developed recommendations based on the three interdependent dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental and the four pillars of Liberia’s Poverty Reduction Strategy (peace and security and rule of law; the economy; human development; and governance and public institutions).

During the Workshop, participants were divided into four Working Groups corresponding to the four pillars of PRS 1 (Peace and Security, Revitalizing the Economy, Governance and Rule of Law, Infrastructure and Basic Services). The Working Groups recommendations focused on strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development; capacity building and technical training, decentralization of government, investment in the rule of law and security, and increasing citizens confidence in government through increased transparency and accountability. Recommendations specifically focused on measures for improving the agricultural sector for increased food production and livelihood opportunities.

6. STRENGTHENING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

Liberia’s medium and long term development agenda emphasizes sustained economic growth and social development. The development strategy of Liberia along with the various reforms efforts has set the framework for sustainable development. During the Liberia Rio+20 National Consultative Workshop and other strategizing processes, five issues have been identified as essential for accomplishing its development goals and objectives: 1) Coordination between Government Ministries and Agencies and Harmonization of Authorities; 2) Implementation of Legal and Social Reforms; 3) Land Rights, Tenure, and Administration; 4) Human and Institutional Capacity Building; and 5) Enforcement and Compliance of in Extractive Industries. These are described in detail below.

6.1. Coordination between Government Ministries and Agencies and Harmonization of Authorities

The government of Liberia has made substantial strides towards updating the mandates and restructuring critical government ministries and agencies to improve effectiveness and efficiency of government processes and restore rule of law. Liberia has also established new agencies like the Rural and Renewable Energy Agency that can promote government sustainable development strategy and undertaking other initiatives aimed at improving transparency and accountability such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. These reforms, however, have taken place on an institution-by-institution basis and have not been considered on a holistic basis. They have not focused on coordination or harmonization of mandates.

Economic development activities occur in a host of institutions in Liberia. The environmental implications of these activities are thus cross-cutting. Standards set in given institutions apply to activities carried out by others. Similarly, programs and initiatives carried out by given institutions have implications for others. Without coordination, implementation cannot take place appropriate any progress made by these efforts is lost if information and outcomes are not shared appropriately. Ministries and agencies must organize plans and activities that take into account the parallel efforts of other ministries and agencies. For example, the strategic plans and activities of EPA should be coordinated with other relevant government actors like Maritime Authority, Ministry of Agriculture, and the Forest Development Authority.

A possibly more harmful challenge is the fact that, in many cases, legal authorities provide mandates that are duplicated amongst multiple institutions. Unclear authority complicates efforts at implementation, compliance, and enforcement and undermines rule of law.

6.2. Implementation of Legal and Social Reforms

Liberia has been lauded for its outstanding accomplishments in the reform of several natural resources sectors to integrate transparency, accountability, equity, and sustainability. The establishment of reformed legal frameworks has indeed represented remarkable progress, but in many cases, progress has stalled after the legal reforms. In case after case, pioneering legal improvements remaining on paper and are not bringing the intended benefits to the people of Liberia. Substantial investment of resources and political will went into the establishment of

these reforms. If implementation does not bring the anticipated benefits, the lesson to be drawn from these great efforts will be that such reform in a post-conflict developing context like Liberia is impossible. A great deal is at stake and further resources, technical assistance, and political will are critical to forestall this catastrophic failure. In the meantime, failure to implement these reforms, particularly in the extractive industries sector, has weakened implementation of PRS and other development strategies. Continued failure may threaten the very stability of Liberia.

6.3. Land Rights, Tenure, and Administration

The substantial reforms described above notwithstanding, the essential underlying issue of land rights in Liberia remains to be addressed. While information has been gathered, analyses conducted, and even some sector-specific tenure issues reformed (i.e. the 2009 Community Rights Law provides for certain forest areas to be managed directly by communities), comprehensive resolution of land ownership and administration continues to elude Liberia. This lack of clarity is not only resulting in ambiguity but is directly undermining economic activities. Land ownership is unclear and in many cases concessions for various types of natural resources are being issued, granting rights to private corporations, when property may be owned by the people of Liberia. In addition, the lack of coordination between institutions further compounds this lack of clarity, as multiple concessions are also being issued by different institutions for various resources and uses on the very same land area. Poor institutional mechanisms for land administration, public awareness, and public consultations weaken economic and environmental security – and in the context of Liberia’s history, may threaten the very stability of the country. The mandates, functions, and roles of the Land Commission, the MLME, FDA, and other institutions with land use authority must be made clear. Community participation, including obtaining informed consent, during the early stages of development activities must also be improved.

6.4. Human and Institutional Capacity Building

Liberia is still recovering its education sector following years of civil conflict. Low human and institutional capacity hampers development efforts and the ability of government to implement its development plans. Liberia has developed a National Capacity Development Strategy (2010), which calls for investment in key disciplines needed for achieving development goals.. Sustainable peace and economic growth are dependent on the extent to which Liberia develop its

human capital resource, ensuring improved quality of life for Liberians. Implementation of this Strategy requires resources are allocated to achieving the goals. Increased resources are needed to achieving the goals of this strategy. Liberia's long-term sustainable development goals are contingent upon having professionals that are able to meet the demands of the country.

6.5. Enforcement and Compliance in Extractive Industries

Liberia has lived through the nightmare of the resource curse. Substantial reforms have been made to rectify the systematic problems that allowed the conflict to occur. As described above, much of the success of these efforts depends on whether they are implemented. But even with the best implementation efforts, compliance and enforcement are also critical components of the rule of law. Weak human and institutional capacity impacts the ability of government to effectively monitor development projects within the extractive industries. Liberia lacks the scientific and technological advances needed for effective monitoring and enforcement of extractive industries. Improved enforcement mechanisms are essential for sustainable mineral extraction and sustainable forestry. Liberia is currently developing its petroleum sector and structural reforms will be necessary to ensure the sector benefits Liberians and develops sustainably.

7. CONCLUSION

Integration of sustainable development principles is a priority for Liberia for maintaining the progress essential for Liberia's continued transformation toward lasting peace and stability. Liberia has taken substantial strides to overcome its post conflict legacy, but the transformation is not complete. Together with support from the international community, Liberia is committed to inclusive economic growth and social development and accomplishing the goals embodied in the initiatives of the UNCSD.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX A: Liberia Rio+20 National Consultative Workshop Report

National Consultative Workshop November 30 – December 1, 2011

The Government of Liberia in partnership with UNDESA/DSD held a 2-Day National Consultative Workshop on November 30 – December 1, 2011 dedicated to “Building Capacity to Utilize sustainable Development Principles In National Policy-Making” and “National Preparations for Rio+20 in Liberia.” The Workshop brought together 60 representatives of government, including key stakeholders contributing to the development of the PRS II, Vision 2030 and representatives from each of the fifteen (15) counties participated. A Listing of Workshop participants is included in Annex B. The workshop was organized with two overarching objectives. One, to share information and have discussion on conflict-sensitive development principles as contained in the UNDESA/DSD Guidance Notes “Developing National Sustainable Development Strategies in Post-Conflict Countries.” Two, national preparation for Rio+20 through national discussions and recommendations on Liberia’s sustainable development goals and objects, with a view toward defining Liberia’s national context for Rio+20.

Themes of the Workshops

Liberia’s PRS II

Day One of the national Consultative Workshop focused on the value of integrating conflict-sensitive development principles into existing national strategic planning processes. Liberia’s PRS II is a key entry point for long-term sustainable development and peace building efforts. The Guidance Note principles concentrate on strengthening the three interdependent dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental and emphasizes the importance of a medium to long-term outlook, rather than just urgent and short-term interventions. Thus, the workshop focused primarily on how to bolster the PRSII by ensuring that each of its five pillars

addresses the three dimensions of sustainable development, while also considering the five elements and seven key challenges for sustainable development in post-conflict countries.

Connecting PRSII and Sustainable Development in preparation for Rio+20

This session of the workshop focused on how the outcomes and sustainable development objectives identified could feed into Liberia Rio + 20 National Report. The UNDESA/DSD Project Manager Sami Areikat emphasized the linkage between sustainable development and green economy, stressing that the two concepts had similar goals. Dr. Keneti Faulalo of UNDESA/DSD recounted the strides made and challenges encountered by global actors since the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro through the Sustainable Conference in South Africa and Rio + 20. The need for greater commitment and a consolidated approach in working towards the objectives of Rio + 20 was also stressed.

Conflict-Sensitive NSDS and the UNDESA Guidance Notes

The UNDESA Guidance Notes, “Developing National Sustainable Development Strategies in Post-Conflict Countries,” were developed to help fill in development gaps for countries emerging from conflict, outlining principles for taking a hands-on and realistic approach to developing conflict-sensitive national sustainable development strategies. The guidance notes focus on existing national development strategies and planning processes—such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) and promotes the integration of conflict-sensitive development principles and to support peace-building through development in post-conflict contexts. The guidance notes were developed to address the dual challenges of peace-building and sustainable development, and more specifically, provide guidance on how to approach sustainable development in post-conflict countries.

Working Groups Report and Recommendations

Following presentations on both days providing background information, participants were arranged into four working groups consistent with four Pillars of the PRS II.

Group 1: Pillar I – Peace, Security and Rule of Law

Paramount to sustainable development efforts is strategic planning to ensure lasting peace and security. It is expected that the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) will depart in the near future, turning the security sector completely to the Government of Liberia. The security sector needs to be fully capacitated to handle the monumental task of securing the Country. Additionally, improving the rule of law is a necessity. Current gaps in access to justice and the continued perception of a corrupt justice system hinders the sector. The Working Group identified the following gaps:

Gaps:

Peace and Security

- 1. Funding
- 2. Logistics
- 3. Limited man power
- 4. Forensics equipment & training
- 5. Training/Capacity Development
- 6. Sustainability/Maintenance
- 7. Accountability/Marginalization
- 8. Infrastructure

Rule of Law

- 1. Training
- 2. Infrastructure
- 3. Speedy trial/access to justice
- 4. Corruption/Bribery
- 5. Juror Selection

A Green Economy Roadmap for Liberia should include water and health sector security, provisions for and sustainable use of energy, and equal distributions of proceeds from natural resource extraction. Increase investment in infrastructure is necessary and enhances peace, security, and the rule of law. Additional investment in the Transportation sector should be made.

Key opportunities for green economy are in further development of the agriculture and forestry sector. The agriculture sector is key for food security (access to nutrition, increased production and supply, and affordability). In the forestry sector, Government must improve efforts at protecting biodiversity (security for wildlife) and improve reforestation efforts.

Recommendations:

1. Liberia should begin to take ownership of the process for security and the rule of law: we need to factor financial sustainability and governmental ownership of development.
 - a. Need multi-year plan for transitioning national army/police force away from reliance on UNMIL and AU Peace/Security Officers
2. Provide scholarships for specialized training in the sector
3. Allocate additional funding for monitoring and evaluation
4. Infuse environmental issues into police training programs and manuals

Group 2: Pillar II – Economic Sector

The Economic Pillar of the PRS II contains many sectors including agriculture, forestry, and mining. To illustrate the specific recommendations, the Working Group used agri-business as a case study, while emphasizing the recommendations applies to all sectors within the Pillar.

Priorities for Agro-business

1. Participation (sustainability)
 - a. Public-Private partnerships, which includes incentives, protection and provision of subsidy and sharing of goal and responsibilities; tax incentives for encouraging domestic manufacturing.
2. Inclusive market strategy
 - a. Market-based manufacturing incentives for businesses to manufacture, sell, and reap benefits.
 - i. Ex: Liberia should not be importing rice. Government should invest in domestic production of this staple food.
 - b. Commodity/price structure
3. Integration
 - a. Greater balance and youth participation
 - b. Incentives for gender and disabilities balance
 - c. Data management for improved access to markets and pricing information (results must be based on monitoring and evaluation at all levels)
 - d. Focused on building local and effective capacity

A key entry point for a green economy is investing financial resources for green technologies. Liberia lags behind in utilizing technological advances to improve service delivery. Green economic growth must include technology transfer, capacity building, and job creation and opportunities in this critical area. Transition to a green economy should seek opportunities to improve the technical capacity of the agricultural sector including mechanized farming, irrigation for lowland and vegetable production, and technological advances in the industry for higher yield crops. Liberia is a country with high water resource potential, the Government should encourage domestic production for drinking water. Transportation infrastructure is also a necessity for the transition to a green economy, including an improved mass transport system and a better paved roads network. Infrastructure is necessary for farm to market roads, market buildings, and storage and processing facilities.

Group 3: Pillar III – Human Development

Sustainable development requires investing in Liberia's most important resource: Human capital. There are several gaps in this area that if not addressed, will impede our attempt to become a middle-income country by 2030. Gaps identified include:

1. Education
 - a. Comprehensive plan needed for restructuring the sector
 - i. Infrastructure: repair and re-furbish buildings, chairs, benches, books, windows of schools
 - ii. Employment incentives: salaries, benefits, teachers quarters, etc.
 - b. Broad consultation of major stakeholders
 - c. Develop and incorporate environmental curriculum in primary or junior school level
 - d. Provide incentives for technical/vocational education in schools: manufacturing, engineering, geology, geo-engineering, etc.
2. Health and Social Welfare
 - a. Provision of funding to support comprehensive health budget so that people feel economic/job security

- b. Attractive incentives (tax or education covered, for ex.) for doctors, nurses, physician assistants, Mid-wives
 - c. Provision of equipment for triage (emergency rooms)
 - d. Exclusively free Medicare for the elderly, disabled and ultra poor
 - e. Restructure & rehabilitate the Catherine Mills
 - f. Social welfare and homes for elderly and orphans
 - g. Ensure accessibility for all disabled in all public facilities to change attitudes around equity and openness
3. Social Protection
- a. Expand social cash transfer to all counties
 - b. Comprehensive system for tax returns
 - c. Nationalize Food for Wealth program as a way to spark job growth
4. Water & Sanitation
- a. Construction of wells must be drilled at least 30 feet away from toilet and be enforced by relevant authorities
 - b. Penalties and fines levied against those who improperly dispose of garbage/provide incentives to those who expose doers of act
 - c. Pipe borne water be provided to all major cities and safe drinking water to all counties
 - d. Construction of public toilets in all populated cities and house structures
 - e. Periodic spraying/fumigation should be carried out in communities, including wetlands

In the same way that human development is crucial for sustained economic growth, it is also the entry point for a green economy. Opportunities for a green economy also offers the potential for jobs, capacity building, technology transfer, and improved socio-economic status for Liberia. A green economy roadmap for Liberia should comprise of integrated water resource management, water conservation policy with emphasis on rain water harvesting, development of a water transport system. The PRS II should provide incentives for investment in renewable energy including, hydropower, solar energy, biofuel, and windmills. Infrastructure development should

place emphasis on an improved road network including rehabilitation of primary, secondary, and feeder roads.

Agriculture plays a major role in the Liberian economy and should therefore be central to green economy initiatives. Liberia should move away from the shifting cultivation method to low land farming techniques and support mechanized farming. The PRS II should make provision for the establishment of cooperatives and build capacities of farmers.

Preservation and conservation of Liberia's rich biodiversity should be a priority. The PRS II should ensure that biodiversity and ecosystem services are incorporated into the national curriculum. Improved enforcement of biodiversity laws and public awareness campaigns (including institutional awareness) is key. Finally, Liberia should revise the curriculum of the Forestry Training Institute (FTI) to include international approaches to protection of biodiversity. Conservation efforts should also include strict monitoring of concessionaires to ensure reserved lands are protected.

Pillar 4: Governance and Public Institutions

An inclusive and efficient government can enable Liberia to reach its goal of becoming a middle income country. Government structure must be transparent and accountable to the people. Poor governance can lead to distrust by the citizenry, disrupting peace and fueling potential conflict. To ensure an effective governance structure and efficient public institutions, the PRS II must include the following:

1. Provide an enabling environment which includes institutions, systems and infrastructure that will make public information (eg. Policies, laws, programmes) easily accessible, available and affordable across country
 - a. open governance/Governmental transparency
2. Institute an effective review process/reporting care system that reviews governmental activity and publishes annual, public review
3. Put the elements of Sustainable Development into the mandate of national institutions to ensure adherence to these principles in all governmental activities.
4. Position/place in key public institutions a focal person, preferably a senior civil servant who will have responsibility in playing lead role for sustainable development activities

5. Promote Technical Vocational Education & Training (TVET) across the country through establishing more TVET programmes into local, regional and national education programmes.

Sustainable Development objectives must be integrated into national policies. The principles of sustainable development should be put into the institutional mandate, policies, and strategic plans. A focal person (a senior civil servant) should be placed in each ministry/agency, who will have the responsibility as the lead for integration of sustainable development into government's development plans.

Conclusion

The National Consultative Workshop resulted in concrete recommendations for integration of the sustainable development principles into the PRS II. The Workshop also resulted in key concerns, issues, and challenges for Liberia related to sustainable development and Rio+20. The recommendations from the workshop are closely aligned with issues and challenges identified during the PRS II formulation process.

ANNEX B: List of Multilateral Environmental Agreements

<u>Multilateral Environmental Agreements</u>
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
United Nations Convention on Desertification and Land Degradation (UNCCD)
United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD)
United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity
Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants
International Convention on the Prevention of Pollution from Ships
Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer
Copenhagen Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer
Convention for Co-operation in the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Atlantic Coast of the West, Central and Southern African Region (Abidjan Convention)

ANNEX C: List of Laws/Policies Enacted and Revised since 2003

Community Rights Law	2009
Community Rights Regulation	2011
Consolidated Tax Amendments Act	2010
Environmental Protection Agency Act	2003
Environmental Protection and Management Law	2003
Fisheries Regulation	2010
Forestry Regulations (10 Core)	2007
Integrated Water Resource Policy	2007
Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI) Act	2009
Maritime Authority Act	2010
Mineral Policy of Liberia	2010
National Environmental Policy Act	2003
National Forestry Reform Law	2006
National Gender Policy	2009
National Environment Policy	2009
National Investment Commission Act	2010
National Social Welfare Policy	2010
Public Financial Management Act	2009
Public Procurement and Concessions Act	2005
Regulation on the Commercial and Sustainable Extraction of Non-timber Forest Products (NTFPs)	2009