



General Assembly

Distr.: General
24 August 2020

Original: English

Human Rights Council
Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review
Thirty-sixth session
4–15 May 2020

National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21*

Liberia

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List of abbreviations

AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia
AfT	Agenda for Transformation
ART	Anti-Retroviral Therapy
BCR	Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation
BPHS	Basic Package of Health Services
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms Violence against Women
CHAs	County Health Administrators
CHVs	Community Health Volunteers
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DPOs	Disable People Organizations
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EPHS	Essential Package of Health Services
EPI	Expanded Program on Immunization
G2B-ESP	Getting to Best Education Sector Plan
ESRP	Economic Stabilization and Recovery Plan
FBO	Faith Based Organizations
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
HHPs	Household Health Promoters
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRC	Human Rights Council
HRPD	Human Rights Protection Division
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IDLO	International Development Law Organization
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMNCI	Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illnesses
INCHR	Independent National Commission on Human Rights
IOM	International Office for Migration
IPRS	Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy
IPT	Intermittent Preventive Therapy
ITN	Insecticide-treated Nets
JJSP	Joint Justice and Security Programme
KAK	Kamara Abdullahi Kamara
LBDI	Liberia Bank for Development and Investment
LGBTI	Lesbians, Gays, Bi-Sexual, Trans-Gender, Intersex
LGBTQI	Lesbians, Gays, Bi-Sexual, Trans-Gender, Queer, Intersex

LIPRIDE	Liberia Initiative for the Promotion of Rights, Identity, Diversity, and Equality
LIS	Liberian Immigration Services
LNP	Liberian National Police
LNBA	Liberia National Bar Association
MFDP	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
MFIs	Micro Finance Institutions
MGCSP	Ministries of Gender, Children and Social Protection
MOCI	Ministry of Commerce & Industry
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MYS	Ministry of Youth & Sports
NCD	National Commission on Disability
NDP	National Development Plan
NESN	National Ebola Survival Network
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NHRAP	National Human Rights Action Plan
NIR	National Identification Registry
NMRF	National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up
NPHIL	National Public Health Institute of Liberia
NUOD	National Union of Organizations for the Disabled
OHCHR	Office of the High Commission for Human Rights
PAPD	Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development
PFL	Prison Fellowship Liberia
PHC	Primary Health Care
PMTCT	Prevention of mother-to-child transmission
PREVAIL	Partnership for Research on Ebola Virus Disease in Liberia
PWDs	Persons with Disability
SCNHRAP	Steering Committee of the National Human Rights Action Plan
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual Gender Based Violence
SHED	Serving Humanity for Empowerment and Development
SMEs	Small Medium Enterprises
SPT	Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture
TTMs	Trained Traditional Midwives
T-VET	Technical Vocational Education Training
UCMJ	Uniform Code of Military Justice
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees

UNICEF	United Nations Children Funds
UNPD	United Nations Development Programmed
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
VSLAS	Village Savings & Loans Association
WFP	World Food Programms
WHO	World Health Organization

I. Introduction

1. The Republic of Liberia is pleased to submit its third cycle National Report to the Human Rights Council (HRC) in compliance with the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process, and hereby reaffirms its commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights.
2. This report covers the period of four years (January 2015 to December 2019) and is the product of consultations with a broad spectrum of the Liberian society including governmental actors, members of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR), representatives of civil society organizations, Development partners, including the United Nations. The report also includes implementation of the recommendations from the second cycle of the UPR that were accepted by Liberia.

II. Methodology and consultation process

3. On January 17, 2019, the Steering Committee of the National Human Rights Action Plan (SCNHRAP) constituted a technical drafting team¹ comprising of representatives from line ministries and agencies, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), including the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR), to develop Liberia's Third Cycle Report.
4. The technical team reviewed recommendations that emanated from the second cycle report, conducted desk reviews and finalized the first technical draft of the report. Thereafter, a series of consultations were held with partners and local actors including; Faith Based Organizations (FBO), youth groups, women groups, disable persons organizations, street peddlers (*Yarna boys*), marketers (Market women), students leaders, traditional leaders amongst others, for broader inputs and participation.
5. A two-day consultation was held in Gbarnga City, Bong County from May 21-24, 2019, with a wide range of local stakeholders drawn from the fifteen political sub-divisions of Liberia, to review the report and build consensus on its accuracy.
6. A two (2) day residential working session was also held from September 27-28, 2019, in Ganta City, Nimba County to develop the first draft of the report. During this session, the technical committee took stock of achievements and challenges as well as reviewed recommendations from the previous reports².
7. Additionally, essential inputs were incorporated in the draft document and shared with members of the steering committee for review and adoption. On February 20, 2020, a national validation session was held in Buchanan City, Grand Bassa County, Liberia, and the final UPR State Report was subsequently submitted to the office of the High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR) through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

III. Acceptance of international norms

Recommendations: 100.1, 100.2, 100.3, 100.4, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 42, 51, 52

8. Liberia remains committed to ratifying human rights treaties and conventions it has signed. Going forward, Instruments that Liberia is yet to sign or ratify have been included into the National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP 2019-2024) for implementation.
9. The existing moratorium on the death penalty demonstrates the government's commitment to comply with the Second Optional Protocol of the ICCPR, signed in 2004 and ratified in 2005. Considering that this issue borders on constitutional³ amendment, a national referendum will be required to amend same.

10. While there is no standing Mechanism, the Ministry of Justice Human Rights Protection Division (HRPD-MOJ) in line with its mandate, conducts regular bi-annual monitoring exercises to prisons across Liberia to ensure compliance with human rights standards. The Division also conducts human rights training for personnel of the Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation (BCR), Ministry of Justice (MOJ). To address human rights challenges in prisons, the Human Rights Protection Division initiated the Human Rights in Prisons Coordination Meeting with the BCR, CSOs, and others development Partners such as the UNPD, US Embassy, FINN Church Aid, Serving Humanity for Empowerment and Development (SHED) and Prison Fellowship Liberia (PFL). The partnership has mitigated challenges in five prisons⁴ across Liberia. Notwithstanding, much remain to be done in order to bring Liberia prisons in full compliance with its international obligations under the Convention Against Torture. The Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) also enjoys unhindered access to prisons and places of detentions around Liberia.

11. In 2017, the Government of Liberia signed a Country Office Agreement with OHCHR, which paved the way for the opening of the UN OHCHR-Liberia office.

12. In 2018, the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights to Freedom of Opinion and Expression of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights visited Liberia from 5–12 March 2018.

13. The President of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights and delegation visited Liberia on a sensitization mission from 6–8 August 2018.

14. A delegation from the United Nations Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture (SPT) visited Liberia from 29 October – 2 November 2018. These visits were part of the UN way of assessing Liberia's human rights record independently, void of Government interference. These visits were coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and the INCHR who played a leading role in making the mission a success.

IV. Implementation of recommendations from previous cycle

A. Constitutional and legislative framework

Recommendations: 100.43, 100.44, 100.49, 100.50, 100.47, 100.71

15. The State Party has made notable achievements in the area of Constitutional reform. A Constitutional Review Committee in 2016 made several proposals for amendment to the 1986 Constitution. In 2019, the President of Liberia, H.E George M. Weah reemphasized the need to accelerate the constitutional reform process. Key amongst the propositions is the affirmative action clause which seeks to ensure equal representation and participation for women.

16. Efforts were also made for the passage of legislations seeking to protect human rights and gender based violence. Amongst them include:

(a) The passage of the Domestic Violence Act of 2019, which criminalizes gender and sexual based violence;

(b) The Land Rights Act of 2018, which increase women access to land and enhances economic empowerment and participation in community land ownership;

(c) Decent Work Act of 2015 ensures that women and men are equal before the law in terms of employment and the increase of minimum wage is not discriminatory across gender;

(d) Liberian National Police Act of 2016 provides for civilian oversight to ensure accountability within law enforcement institutions. It also provides for the right to peaceful assembly, protest, and organize marches through notification of authority instead of permit.

(e) The Kamara Abdullah Kamara Act for Press Freedom of 2019 promotes free speech, expression, independence and the safety of the Liberian Press;

(f) The Local Government Act (2018) protects women participation in local governance and opportunity for training of women and girls on leadership. The Local Government Act is also gender sensitive, as it exclusively provides 2 out of 7 members local assembly seats for women. In addition, women can compete for the remaining 5 seats.

B. Institutional, policy and administrative framework

Recommendations: 100.169, 100.83, 100.84, 100.85, 100.93, 100.161, 100.94, 100.178, 100.96

17. On October 27, 2018, the Government of Liberia launched the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD 2018-2023). The PAPD is the second in the series of a 5-year National Development Plan (NDP) anticipated under the Liberia Vision 2030 framework. It follows the Agenda for Transformation 2012-2017 (AfT) and is informed by lessons learned from both the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy 2007 (IPRS) and Poverty Reduction Strategy (2008-2011) implementations.

18. The PAPD has four pillars of interventions:

- Power to the People - 1;
- Economy and Jobs - 2;
- Sustaining the Peace - 3; and
- Governance and Transparency – 4.

19. Pillars one and two aim towards contributing directly to income, security and empowerment goals; while Pillars three and four contribute to the building of a peaceful and united country pursuing a new vision of full integration into the African continent both in culture and in vision.

20. September 4-6, 2019, Liberia, with funding from partners hosted a 3-day Economic Dialogue. The 3-day dialogue, attended by stakeholders and partners, sought to rally behind the national consensus on feasible short & medium-term policy measures, strategies, programs and a time-bound road map to strengthen economic recovery, growth, peace and reconciliation. The dialogue focused on four interrelated areas;

- Mobilization and management of public finance;
- Promoting investment and growing private sector business;
- Tracking existing high employment rate amongst the youthful population and the shortage of appropriate skills; and
- Sustaining the peace to bring about genuine reconciliation.

21. In 2019 the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection led the validation and endorsement of the second phase of the five-year strategic plan (2019-2023) of Liberia's National Action Plan (LNAP) on Women, Peace and Security. The plan outlines the government's commitment to the United Nation's Security Council's Resolutions on women, peace and security, as required by Article 25 of the United Nations Charter.

22. Liberia continues the implementation of the Joint Justice and Security Programme (JJSP), which aims at enhancing access to justice and security at regional and county levels through the maintenance of Justice and Security Regional Hubs. Currently, five security hubs are operating in Liberia despite funding constraints.

23. Liberia in 2019 validated its second national action plan on women peace and security in line with UNSCR 1325. This second plan contributes to goal #3 of the Government of Liberia's Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development and emphasizes building an inclusive society where women's rights are protected; women and girl's empowerment, as well as the promotion of women's full participation in national decision-making are ensured.

24. These strategies and programmes are geared towards improving socio-economic conditions, strengthening the rule of law and ensure access to justice. However, implementation of these initiatives and access to justice for rural communities and vulnerable groups remain a serious challenge.
25. Liberia has committed to the development of a Business and Human Rights National Action Plan in the Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity Development (PAPD), the current national development agenda.
26. The government of Liberia in 2018 established a national steering committee on Business and Human Rights. The committee in consultation with stakeholders has concluded a work plan and road map for the drafting of a national action plan for business and human rights in line with the PAPD. The Ministry of Justice is the lead, while the Ministry of Labor is the co-lead. The committee receives technical assistance from the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) and advisory support from the OHCHR Liberia office.
27. In 2016, the State appointed the second batch of INCHR commissioners, based on plural representation of cross section of Liberians consistent with the Paris Principles. The number of human rights monitors have been increased and regional offices established, making INCHR presence felt throughout the country.
28. To ensure judicial independence and enhance its capacity, the James AA Pierre Judicial Institute was established to train judicial officers. Up to June 2019, it had trained a total of 176 Magistrates who are deployed throughout the country. Also, public defenders have been deployed throughout the country to provide legal services for indigents.
29. The State established Criminal Court 'E' in Montserrado County, as a pilot project to deal with sexual offence related crimes. Currently, the project have been extended to Bong and Nimba Counties in 2019. The President has since appointed two new judges to the courts to ensure that people in that region have access to justice.
30. The Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) crimes unit and the public defender's office, established a plea bargaining agreement where those persons who have overstayed in pretrial detention are speedily tried. From 2016-2019, 464 cases were received. Out of these cases, 274 received convictions. There are presently 448 indictments to include backlog and new cases.
31. The National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL) was established in 2017 to build a preventive health system for infectious diseases, thereby reducing discrimination and stigmatization of EBOLA survivors. This was done in collaboration with Partnership for Research on Ebola Vaccines in Liberia (PREVAIL).
32. With the presence of human rights monitors and CSOs in collaboration with the women and children's desk established at the hubs, human rights continue to be monitored.
33. In December 2018, the implementation phase of the first National Human Rights Action Plan 2013-2018 (NHRAP) ended. The State Party has developed its second NHRAP, to cover the period 2019-2024. The Action Plan outline how Liberia intend to implement its human rights obligations. The NHRAP prioritizes human rights issues and concerns, including compliance with regional and international human rights obligations.
34. The government of Liberia has developed the Mental Health policy, the five year national action plan 2017-2022, and the inclusive educational policy and guideline. The national union of Persons with Disability (PWDs) is supported by government.
35. The National Action Plan for Disability (2018-2022), was developed by the State party with support from partners. The National Union of Organizations for the Disabled (NUOD), a consortium of local CSOs and CBOs, is supported by the government of Liberia.
36. In fulfilment of Liberia's treaty reporting obligations, several reports were submitted during the period under review, to include the submission of Liberia's first report on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to the Human Rights

Committee (HRC) in 2018; Liberia's first report on the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, was submitted in 2019.

37. On May 31, 2018, President George M. Weah, in compliance with the Table Mountain Declaration, submitted to the 54th Legislature a bill with modifications to repeal some sections of the penal law of Liberia, in an effort to decriminalize free speech and further pave the way for unfettered media environment. The bill amended chapter 11 of the penal law of 1978, repealing sections 11.11 on criminal libel against the president; 11.12 on sedition and 11.14 on criminal malevolence, which led to the passage into law of the Kamara Abdullai Kamara (KAK) Act on February 28, 2019.

C. Non-discrimination

On LGBT rights

Recommendations: 100.75, 121, 122, 123

38. The Liberian Constitution provides for the equal protection of all under the law, including the right to be free from discrimination based on creed, race, religion, or sex. Since the Government's position in 2015, at the 30th Regular Session, cautious steps are being taken to create the needed awareness to protect the rights of LGBTI persons in Liberia. Notable steps taken include: the participation of relevant government institutions; the Liberian National Police (LNP) and the Human Rights Protection Division of the Ministry of Justice as members of the Liberia Initiative for the Promotion of Rights, Identity, Diversity, and Equality (LIPRIDE) Coalition meetings, where rights issues of minorities (key population) are discussed. Additionally, the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) has setup a desk, to amongst others address rights issues of LGBTI persons.

39. Moreover, the Ministry of Health (MOH), with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Rule of law program, through the Liberian National HIV prevention Strategy 2017-2020 is working to provide an enabling environment that promote access to justice for members of the LGBTIQI community at risk of discrimination and victimized from abuses.

Ebola survivors

Recommendation: 100.177

40. The GoL through the Ministry of Health and the National Public Health Institute (NPHIL), has initiated work with Partnership for Research on Ebola Virus Disease in Liberia (PREVAIL) in an effort to reduce discrimination and stigmatization of Ebola survivors at all levels. Additionally, PREVAIL, through its partnership with the Ministry of Health, is working with community based structures (peer groupings) in 11 counties to address the health and well-being of Ebola survivors. These structures are linked to community health facilities to enhance integration and other health concerns.

41. The National Ebola Survival Network (NESN), which is closely working with PREVAIL, has been able to identify a total of 2000 survivors, of which 1350 are men and 650 are women survivors. Also, about 7125 orphan children of which 20% are totally orphan (double orphan), who are currently catered for by the NESN with support from the World Health Organization (WHO), World Food Programs (WFP), United Nations Children Funds (UNICEF) and other Agencies.

42. The MOH continues to improve antenatal care through its implementing partners with guidelines and protocols by providing access to skilled, facility-based delivery services, incentive to CHAs across the country and they work in the community to help monitor and refer pregnant women to health facilities for antenatal services (Fefa, IPT and ITN) given to pregnant mothers during their visits. Health facilities providing PMTCT and ART services for prevention and treatment of HIV in pregnant mothers. Through the help

of PREVAIL and other health partners, the MOH has been providing screening and treatment to Ebola survivors since 2015

Promotion of women participation and empowerment

Recommendations: 100.98, 100.115, 100.163, 100.101, 100.120, 100.127, 100.129, 100.143

43. Efforts are being made to ensure that women are fully integrated into the entire security apparatus of Liberia. The Liberian National Police has up to 14 percent female officers, while the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) has less than 5% females principally due to the high standard in term of requirements for recruitment. Notwithstanding, the Deputy Chief of Staff, Brigadier General Geraldine George, is a female officer and the second highest in the command structure of the AFL. The AFL, cognizant of Liberia's obligation under the CEDAW, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Maputo Protocol and the Beijing Platform including UN Resolution 1325 is endeavoring to reduce inequality and increase the participation of women and girls in decision making amongst other things. The AFL is also encouraging women to apply to join the army, but at the same time, maintain that they will not lower the standards.

Gender-based violence

Recommendations: 100.57

44. The Liberia Government through the Liberia National Bar Association (LNBA), with support from USAID-LPAD, established Legal Aid Clinics in 5 Counties in Liberia to provide free legal aid services in misdemeanour criminal cases and low value civil cases for clients of indigents through its Access to Justice Program. The first clinic was established in 2017. Currently, the LNBA operates 5 legal aid clinics in 5 of the political sub divisions. At the legal aid clinics, there are case officers assigned to receive cases and made contact with lawyers who are on calls. In an event where the lawyer is not available, the case officer will contact the LNBA who will make provisions for the availability of a lawyer presiding in that county.

45. The Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia (AFELL) also operates a Legal Aid Clinic concentrating on protecting the rights of women and children and other indigent persons in regards to access to justice for cases of gender based violence, inheritance and property rights, custody and spousal as well as child support.

Sexual violence

Recommendations: 100.112, 100.114, 100.126, 100.135

46. The SGBV Crimes Unit of the Ministry of Justice bears great demand at some of the challenges on the unit's capacity, specifically logical support; to deal with this innumerable signal of sexual violence as it expands its jurisdiction nationwide. Nevertheless the issue of cultural and traditional belief remains a challenge to fight SGBV in Liberia, especially in relations to unwillingness of community members to cooperate with prosecution.

47. During the period under review the unit received the total 464 cases for trial within Montserrado and Hub Counties, of which 274 convictions were obtained at the same time, the unit indicted 448 cases both backlogged and new,

FGM and harmful traditional practices

Recommendations: 100.130, 100.137, 100.133, 100.139, 100.136, 100.141, 100.145, 100.147

48. Efforts are also being made to address harmful traditional practices. These efforts include the conduct of awareness on women's rights, through the yearly observation of the sixteen day of activism, which His Excellency, the President declare himself **Feminist in Chief**. Topics discussed during these awareness activities are around discrimination,

Female Genital Mutilation other harmful practices (FGM & Early Child Marriage) being carried out throughout the fifteen counties by the Ministries of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Nationality and registration

Recommendations: 100.59, 100.18, 100.119, 100.125

49. The Constitution of Liberia firmly discourages discrimination by sex. There have been various discussions surrounding the discriminatory aspect of the Alien and Nationality law. In furtherance of these concerns, the Ministry Foreign Affairs in collaboration with the Liberian Immigration Services (LIS), with support from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in 2018, reviewed the alien and nationality law and submitted a proposal amending title 4, Section 20 of the alien and nationality law. A classic example is a dual citizenship case which was ruled in favor of Mr. Alvin Teage Jalloh on December 26, 2019 by the Supreme Court of the Republic of Liberia.

50. The Ministry of Internal Affairs has initiated a process of National Identification Registry (NIR), which provides identification cards to native and naturalized citizens of Liberia. This was established by an Act of Legislation in 2017.

Family friendly relationship

Recommendations: 100.58

51. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection is currently working with families to encourage children upbringing within the families. With this process, the Government has closed down several orphanages and reunite children with their families or close relatives. During the beginning of this process, Liberia previously had 143 orphanages which have now reduced to 53.

D. Right to an effective remedy, impunity

Recommendation: 100.144

52. Reference is made to the Liberia Rape Law 2016. In addition, the government continues to provide medical, psychosocial and protection services within the one stop centers that are located in various health facilities within the 15 counties.

E. Rights related to name, identity, and nationality

Recommendation: 100.125

53. The government has set up a system in all public health facilities and service centers across the country to ensure the issuance of delayed birth certificate free of charge for age 0 to 5 in health centers, 0 to 12 year-olds at the Bureau of Vital Statistics for Birth Registration and Death Certificate, and the service centers across the country. The exercise is intended to keep track of all births within Liberia.

F. Rights related to marriage and family

Recommendation: 100.58

54. To ensure and protect the family as a natural nucleus of society, MGCSP carried out massive awareness in the 15-counties, which was geared towards educating families of the importance of allowing children to grow up in the family instead of orphanages and other institutions. Out of 114 orphanages, 61 orphanages have been closed through these exercises, thereby reuniting children with their next of kin.

G. Right to an adequate standard of living – general

Recommendations: 100.165, 100.170, 100.168

55. To improve the standard of living, MGCSP with support from the World Bank through the social cash transfer program continues to provide financial assistance to the following counties: Bomi, Maryland, Grand Kru, and River Gee. The targeted number of household is 10,500 in these counties.

56. The Government of Liberia through the Nation Lottery, NCD, and MGCSP provides quarterly subsidies to DPOs and residential welfares institutions.

57. With the provision of Essential Package of Health Services (EPHS), the Ministry of Health expands and make health care services available to all Liberians in public health facilities across the 15-counties and standardize Liberia health care delivery system in order to ensure quality health care to all Liberians. In so doing, the MOH has public facilities and human resource to these across the 15-counties.

58. In the case of education, the Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Education remains committed to the provision of free and compulsory basic and primary education policy in all public schools across the country. The Ministry of Education with support from World Food Program, Mary's Meal International and Save the Children have provided hot meals to 280,709 school children in 1,316 pre-primary, primary, and community schools across the 15-counties.

H. Right to education

Recommendations: 100.181, 183, 184, 185

59. The Government has taken steps to ensure quality education for all through the development of the following policies: Free and Compulsory Basic Education (1st to 9th grades), National Technical Vocational Education and Training, Girls Education with emphasis on educating girls in low endowed communities, Alternative Education, National School Health, and Special and Inclusive and Education.

60. The government has also made all public universities across the country free for all undergrad students and has embarked on paying regional exams (West African Examination Council/ West African Senior School Certificate Examination) fees. Public expenditure increased from 10.3% in 2014/2015 to 13.5% in 2015/2016 due to the Economic Stabilization and Recovery Plan (ESRP) which focused on health and education sectors and was designed to guide the economy back to the path before the Ebola epidemic.

61. The Education Management Information System (EMIS) annual school census shows that overall school enrolment has increased to 1,415,106 in 2016 compared to 996,779 in 2014. The gap between male and female is speedily narrowing as a result of government's commitment to bring female up to speed with their male counterpart. In 2014, the total female attending early childhood education through senior secondary education was 478,082 while male in the same manner accounted for 518,697. The 2016 education data showed 689,010 female and 762,096 male in early childhood education through senior secondary education across the country.

62. The government has developed a four-year education plan to address the most urgent challenges facing the education sector in Liberia: Getting to Best Education Sector Plan (2017-2021). The government is using the G2B-ESP to implement series of strategic, evident based, and innovative programs to measurably improve the quality and relevance of teaching and learning for all students by June 2021.

I. Right to health

Recommendations: 100.172, 100.175, 100.176, 100.177, 100.180, 100.182

63. The adoption of Revised Public Health Law in 2019 title: “Title 33 Liberian Code of Laws Revised” Public Health Law of Liberia which was adopted on July 16, 1976 has a life spanning over 40 years; provides for fines and fees that do not reflect current day economic realities, and does not address new and emerging public health challenges such as emergency treatment, discrimination, mental health, nutrition, regulation of marketing of products for infants and young children, zoonotic diseases, non-communicable diseases, antimicrobial resistance, clinical trials, and complementary and alternative medicine.

64. Liberia has established a national vision of becoming a middle-income country by 2030 and the health and social welfare of the population are critically important to reach that vision. Therefore, in order to substantially improve the health status and social welfare of the population, the government led a participatory process of establishing one holistic, evidence-based policy framework explicitly aimed at guiding decision makers through the next ten years. The process included analyzing the health and social welfare situation and the experience of implementing the 2007 National Health Plan, revising the National Health and Social Welfare Policy and ultimately developing the 2011-2021 National Health and Social Welfare Plan.

65. The MoH has improved on health services in expanding on health facilities and human resources across the 15-counties. The health care services have been distributed nationwide. As part of the national health policy and plans 2011-2021, the essential package for health services seeks to expand and make health care services available to all Liberians and also continue to improve and standardized Liberia health care delivery system in order to ensure quality health care for all Liberians.

66. The EPHS emphasizes the importance of Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illnesses (IMNCI), the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI), child nutrition programs and malaria control, amongst others. The MOH has instituted incentive payment to CHVs and CHAs in order to help prevent under 5 mortality and morbidity. They work within 5 kilometers from the health facility to raise awareness, do community base surveillance that is, be able to detect and report any trigger of priority diseases and make report in time, provide treatment to children with malaria, diarrhoea and ARI at community level and also do referral of cases at the facility. MOH through NPHIL also put into place zoner, districts and county surveillance officers to early detect priority diseases.

67. The EPHS talks about The Community Health System that is the main primary care provider. It includes:

- Community Level Services: A standard set of outreach, health promotion and referral services is provided for communities more than one hour walk (5km) from the nearest health facility by: Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) and CHAs that receive incentive and include: Household Health Promoters (HHPs), Trained Traditional Midwives (TTMs) and general Community Health Volunteers (gCHVs).
- PHC Clinic Level 1: The PHC Level 1 Clinic covers isolated clustered communities with a population of up to 3500. Each PHC Level 1 is, at minimum, expected to be open 8 hours each day between Monday and Friday.
- PHC Clinic Level 2: The PHC Level 2 Clinic covers a catchment population of 3,500 to 12,000 and provides out-reach services to the portions of their catchment population outside of a 5km radius. Each PHC Level 2 is, at minimum, expected to be open 8 hours each day between Monday and Friday.

68. The MOH continue to improve antenatal care through its implementing partners with guidelines and protocols by providing access to skilled, facility-based delivery services, incentive to CHAs across the country and work in the community to help monitor and refer pregnant women at the health facility for antenatal services (Fefa, IPT and ITN) given to pregnant mothers during their visits. Health facilities provide PMTCT and ART services for prevention and treatment of HIV in pregnant mothers. Through the help of

PREVIL and other health partners, the MOH provides screening and treatment to Ebola survivors since 2015 to present.

69. The Mental Health Unit has an Act that was passed into law on June 23, 2017 that protects the rights of people living with mental health disorders like any other person and equally protects their properties.

70. The Mental Health Law also spells out their rights to education while in recovery.

J. Discrimination against women

Recommendations: 100.98, 163, 101, 114, 135, 136, 141, 173, 95, 186, 73

71. Continuing with the measures aimed at promoting and protecting in law and practice the human rights of women, several actions have been taken. Liberia passed the Rape Law, the Domestic Violence Law, instituted a Gender Policy, an Affirmative Action Bill, and a Girls Education Policy, which served as legal and policy measures to address the human rights of women.

72. In practice, there have been several awareness raising programs, workshops, trainings, participation in conferences at international, regional, and local levels to ensure that the rights of women are well understood by decision makers and communities. Nationally, several structures and mechanisms are supported by the government to ensure that women rights and empowerment are enforced.

73. The establishment and supporting of rural women structures in the 15-political subdivisions of the country, the support to the women NGOs secretariat, the village saving loan association, the national women dialogue in all 15-counties are noticeable steps taken by the government aimed at promoting and protecting women rights. Besides, women are empowered through awareness and training to report on sexual and gender based violence and other harmful forms of traditional practices.

74. Since the ratification of the CRC in 1993 and the development of the Liberia Children's Law in 2011; there is adherence to the statutory law. In application of the children law, a 5-year national child protection action plan was developed in 2016 and implementation is ongoing.

K. Right to social security

Recommendation: 100.174

75. As part of the 2011–2021 National Health Policy and Plan, it is critical that the long-term view not only expands the services available to all Liberians but also continues to improve and standardize the health care delivery system to ensure quality health care for all Liberians. The National Health Policy Plan provides a more comprehensive set of services that strengthen key areas that had performed poorly in the implementation of the Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS)⁵, now providing new services necessary to address needs at all levels of the health care system.

76. The Essential Package of Health Services (EPHS) emphasizes high-impact, evidence based interventions; integration of services; standardization of protocols, guidelines and procedures; phased expansion of services towards a more comprehensive package; and consideration of urban and rural differences. The EPHS place an increase emphasis on all maternal and child health services including child nutrition, adolescent health services, emergency services and communicable disease control.

77. To ensure all Liberians are able to live healthy and productive lives, new services have been instituted in order to ensure early interventions ; (e.g., school health services), and vulnerable populations (e.g., prison health services, sexual and gender-based violence services, mental health services). Following evidence gathered during this phase of implementation, chronic disease care (e.g., reproductive cancers, non-communicable diseases, and tropical diseases) will be rolled out in phase two.

L. Access to justice

Recommendations: 100.160, 162, 159, 156, 157, 158, 59, 119, 118

Condition of detention:

- The magistrate court jurisdiction has increased;
- Improved prisons facilities within three counties (Grand Cape Mount, Sinoe and Gbarpolu);
- Manuel skill training program for Inmates and prisoners;
- Training of prison officials in data base management and the establishment of a unit that is fully responsible for record keeping, tracking and updating;
- The establishment of Clinics within prisons facilities through an essential health package with Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Health.

Armed Forces of Liberia

- The Armed Forces of Liberia has only one detention facility;
- At present the AFL has administrative disciplinary process to handle minor offences;
- In order to deal with serious offences, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Defense on June 6, 2016, to handle these offences;
- The passage of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, (UCMJ) Act was passed on October 9, 2017; and
- The AFL has other alternative means to decongest its detention facilities like (Restriction to Barracks, Extra duty, Forfeiture of 2/3 pay per month for six months, Reduction in rank and Letter of reprimand).

Liberia National Police

- Liberia National Police enforcement of the 48 hours detention policy;
- Allowing Community Chairman/Chairperson to sign for person/persons with minor offences;
- In line with international best practices, all newly constructed police stations across Liberia are now having latrines facilities and Juvenile cells.

Bureau of Correction and Rehabilitation

- There has been increased campaign for the use of the probation services to avoid overcrowding of prisons;
- Magistrate sitting program has been extended in two counties, Bong and Margibi;
- The Diversion Program of the Child Justice Section, Ministry of Justice, diverts juvenile from the criminal justice system, utilizing the Juvenile Code;
- The Ministry of Justice has taken steps to update the code on persons held in pre-trial detention over the statutory period;
- MOJ has improved its system to ensure timely indictment of people charged with indictable offences;
- MOJ continues to enforce policy requirement that County Attorneys make timely report on the number of cases handling;
- MOJ in collaboration with MOH and MOGCSP has established several one stop centers at health facilities that are presently dealing with issues of rape, domestic violence and other sex crime affecting women;

- The establishment of the Women and Children Section at all Police Stations, Detachments, Zones, Deports across the country;
- The Government of Liberia has established the Human Trafficking, Domestic Violence and Sexual assault units within the Liberia National Police.

78. There is a provision of the Liberia Immigration Law, that provides for dual citizenship for children between the ages of 1-21 years, in that such children one of whose parents (Mother or Father) a non-Liberian, are allowed to enjoy both citizenship. In this case a foreign mother of a Liberian child confers citizenship to that child.

M. Right to work

Recommendation: 100.171

79. In an effort to create an enabling environment for Liberians to be gainfully employed, the government of Liberia has put the following structures and policies in place:

- The establishment of the Technical Vocational Education Training (T-VET) policy seeks to harmonize T-VET activities for proper control;
- Continue to provide training and job placement through the T-VET program;
- Provision of vacation jobs for young people;
- Provision of job for young people under the Water Ways project that is currently running;
- The continuation of the National Cadet Program.

80. The Ministry of Labor, in line with other government Ministries, has continued to identify progressive ways through which concessionaires may design programs that are protective of employment to both skilled and unskilled laborers in areas of employment, in line with the Decent Work Act of Liberia. The National Cadet Program of the Ministry of Youth and Sports has been revitalized since 2013 through assistance from partners to combat the unemployment crisis challenging the youthful population of Liberia. The program has been focused on graduates and graduating seniors of universities for job placement in public institutions. Two phases of the program have been running since 2013, benefitting about 300 youth. Of that number, 99 cadets have been gainfully employed.

81. On Microfinance program, the Government of Liberia, on January 17, 2019, through the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) along with the Ministry of Commerce & Industry (MOCI) and the Liberia Bank for Development and Investment signed a US \$2 million Small Business Pro-Poor Development Fund Loan Scheme aimed at empowering Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) and Village Savings & Loans Association (VSLAS) on January 17, 2019.

N. Gender-based violence

Recommendations: 100.112, 126, 135, 73, 149

82. In order to address gender-based violence, the State Party has initiated the following programs:

- The establishment of the Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking Units within the Women and Children Protection Section of the Liberia National Police and the continued support to the Sexual Gender Base Violence Unit of the Ministry of Justice;
- Speedy trial of Rape Cases;
- Massive awareness on SGBV referral pathways and Reporting by the Liberia National Police Community Services Section;

- The assignment of special Prosecutors for SGBV cases at the Regional Peace and Security Hubs; and
- Increased awareness on Human Rights and Child Rights issues by the Liberia National Police Community Services section.

O. Prohibition of slavery, trafficking

Recommendations: 100.113, 134

83. The Trafficking in Persons Act of 2005 criminalizes trafficking in persons within the Republic of Liberia. On the prohibition of slavery, Chapter 2 Section 2.3 of the Decent Work Act of 2015 prohibits all forms of slavery. Article II Section 1 (b) of the Act names the Ministers of Justice, Foreign Affairs, Labor, and Internal Affairs as members of the Anti-trafficking in Persons Taskforce and to include two other persons learned in law enforcement.

84. The Minister of Labour serves as the head of the Taskforce. Since 2018, the Ministry of Labour has actively been engaged in programs that are executive of the act, to include: the adding of “trafficking in persons” into its Plan of Action 2018/2019, and the successful setting up of an operational “trafficking in persons” taskforce which includes the Liberia National Police, the Liberia Immigration Service, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and IOM, IDLO and ILO resident Office at the Ministry of Labour as international partners. At the Ministry, the “TIP” Secretariat is functioning in line with the Ministry’s action plan as a monitoring unit on trafficking cases.

85. On July 30, 2019, the Ministry of Labor led a four days of action for the first National Observance of the World Day against Trafficking in Persons, which included awareness programs and a formal program by stakeholders in solicitation of support against “trafficking in persons.” See Ministry of Labour “Report on the First National Observance of the World Day Against ‘Trafficking in Person.’ ” 2018, Republic of Liberia.

P. Children: protection against exploitation

Recommendation: 100.148

86. The Ministry of Labour is the statutory arm of government responsible to monitor and regulate all labour matters and enforce standards compliance. Chapter 2, Section 2.3, of the Decent Work Act prohibits the worst forms of child labour; while Chapter 21 Section 21.4 lists the kinds of work hazardous for children. Since 2018, the Ministry of Labour through its Child Labour Division has made incremental efforts for the realization of the elimination of the worst forms of child labour within available means, with assistance from partners.

87. In June 2018, the Government of Liberia observed the World Day against Child Labour with the lead entities, Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, reaffirming national commitment to the resolution of issues regarding protection against exploitation.

88. The current legislation on child labour is the Decent Work Act of 2015. Chapter 2 Section 2.3 of the law prohibits the worst forms of child labour, while Chapter 21 Section 21.4 lists the kinds of work hazardous for children. Until this legislation is amended, it remains controlling.

89. Since 2018, with assistance from partners, the Ministry of Labour through its Child Labour Division has made incremental efforts for the realization of the elimination of the worst forms of child labour within available means.

Q. Other issues

Key national priorities

90. With key stakeholders from a variety of government institutions, the INCHR, and civil society organizations and development partners, the State identified the following areas as key national human rights priorities:

- Implementation of the Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development four (4) pillars;
- Strengthening the capacity of government institutions, including the judiciary, police, corrections, and government ministries on human rights and the application of a human rights-based approach;
- Take steps to ratify, domesticate, and implement human rights conventions;
- Ensure that the Constitution Review process considers human rights standard as basis for the proposed Constitutional amendments.

Notable achievements

- The Government of Liberia through an Act of Legislation established the National Disaster Management Agency in 2016 as an autonomous agency with the task to address emergencies caused by nature or man-made disaster.
- Liberia contribute to peace keeping in Africa under the UN Peace Keeping Mechanism. In 2019, the Ministry of National Defense, in addition to troops operating in Mali since 2013, sent a Platoon of Solders to join the United Nations Peace keeping Mission in South Sudan. We are pleased to note that our troop have performed exceptionally.

Challenges

- Lack of funding for the operationalization of the National Mechanism for treaty Reporting and Follow-up (NMRF);
- Insufficient capacity of existing prisons facilities to address prisons congestion;
- Inadequate funding to support the National Human Rights Action Plan.

Expectations in terms of international assistance

91. Based on consultations with key stakeholders from a variety of government institutions and civil society organizations, the following expectations for international assistance were formulated:

- Enhance the capacity of civil society organizations to monitor, report, and advocate on human rights;
- Continue to provide the needed support to Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) to implement its core mandate and the Palava Hut Program;
- Provide logistical support to the National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up to facilitate compliance with international human rights treaty obligations, including treaty reporting, domestication, and implementation of the recommendations of treaty bodies and the UPR; and
- Support the capacity building of government actors, in particular the judiciary, the police, and corrections officials, as well as human rights focal persons at ministries and agencies on thematic human rights issues, including the application of the human rights-based approach in development programs.

Notes

- ¹ The technical committee, composed of focal persons from various NHRAP stakeholder institutions, was setup to draft the Report.
 - ² 1st and 2nd cycle reports.
 - ³ Art. 20 (a).
 - ⁴ Bong County Central Prison, Voinjama Central Prison, Margibi Central Prison, Tubmanburg Central Prison and Monrovia Central Prison.
 - ⁵ National Health and Social Welfare Policy and Plan 2011–2021.
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