

**Country Programme Outline  
UNDP Liberia  
2003-2005**

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## **Part I. Situation analysis**

### *Background*

After seven years of a devastating civil war, Liberia is still faced with the challenges of reconciliation, peace building, reconstruction and recovery. The spiral of armed conflict, weak governance and poverty has constituted a vicious cycle that represents a great challenge for peace-building and progress towards recovery and long term sustainable development.

The elected government installed in 1997, saddled with an enormous national debt burden of US\$2.8 billion has not been able to generate the required resources domestically and internationally to revive the economy to its pre-war level. After five years of transition, GDP remains below 50% of its pre war level; the unemployment rate in the formal sector is approximately 85%. In addition to a severe decline in international aid, since May 2001 the country is under selective sanctions imposed by the Security Council for allegedly supporting RUF in diamonds and arms smuggling.

Furthermore, outlook for durable peace and security has been dampened by sporadic fighting with dissidents in the northern county of Lofa, resulting in significant displacements of populations. The gains in recovery and resettlement of displaced people and refugees between 1997 and 2000 are being reversed by a new humanitarian crisis. An estimated 80,000 displaced now require humanitarian assistance for their survival. In early 2002, the conflict spread to three counties causing nationwide insecurity as thousands were displaced and security forces deployed across the country. This led to the declaration of a national state of emergency in February 2002 for a three month period.

### *Trends towards achieving MDG*

All dimensions of human development indicated in the revised UN Common Country Assessment are low. Liberia is ranked 174 in the HDI out of 175 countries; 80% of the population live below the poverty line of US\$ 1 per day, with severe poverty estimated at 52%. Liberia is among the most food insecure countries with 35% of the population undernourished. With a population of 2.7 million, life expectancy is recorded at 47.7 years. Child mortality is 194 per 1000 with maternal mortality at 578/100 000 live births. HIV/AIDS prevalence has increased to 8.2% with an upward trend. An estimated 75% of the population lack access to primary health care and safe drinking water. Since 1997, the country has achieved some results in primary education with an enrollment rate of 72%. However, the literacy rate is only at 33% (compared to 58% for Sub Saharan Africa). Liberia faces major gender disparities, and women's access to health and education (women's literacy rate is 26% only) as well as to productive assets is still limited. There are also strong inequalities in terms of women's participation in the public life and the decision-making processes, with only 11% of women participating in the national legislature.

To progress towards the achievement of the MDGs, the CCA, the draft modified UNDAF, and the national Medium Term Plan have identified national reconciliation, transition to sustainable recovery, good governance (democratic and economic), social justice and human security as some of the critical challenges facing Liberia today.

## **Part II. Past cooperation and lessons learned**

### *Key results achieved*

During the transition period after the war, UNDP assistance focused on providing emergency development assistance for early recovery by supporting the resettlement and reintegration of the

displaced populations and ex-combatants, providing technical support to the electoral process and rebuilding governance institutions.

The first Country Cooperation Framework (CCF) for Liberia covering the period 2000-2002 focused on two programme areas, namely (i) poverty reduction and sustainable livelihoods and (ii) good governance and economic management. The contribution of UNDP included: Support to the Government to coordinate and plan the recovery process and formulate policies in key areas such as economic and financial management, education and environment; Establishment of the Ministry of Gender; Launching of the first national HIV/AIDS awareness campaign; Improved access to basic social services (schools, clinics, water and sanitation); Increased opportunities for sustainable livelihoods through the delivery of micro grants, micro credit and vocational training; Advocacy for sustainable human development; Improved coordination of early development assistance and support to resource mobilization

#### *Major lessons learned*

The first CCF demonstrated a good complementarity between upstream and downstream interventions. The range of activities undertaken partly reflects the many development needs in a post conflict environment. However, in view of the drastic decline of ODA flows to the country and limited UNDP funds, there is a need to better focus on key strategic areas.

Despite the number of results achieved, their impact has been severely constrained by the extreme weakness of national capacity, poor infrastructure and continuous fighting in the northern part of the country and resulting insecurity. Therefore, UNDP support needs to focus more specifically on the basic building blocks for a fuller transition to recovery while pursuing longer term development goals.

At the community level, a lack of social cohesion, ethnic polarization and the resulting weak leadership led to limited participation by beneficiaries in the design and implementation of projects. While a number of projects helped rehabilitate social infrastructure and services, the need to adopt a more comprehensive and integrated approach to these projects has been identified.

Despite the efforts deployed by the CO to mobilise resources, the status of the country vis-à-vis the international community had a significant negative impact that severely constrained their effectiveness. Further efforts have to be made in this area with strong headquarters support.

### **Part III . Proposed Programme**

#### *Proposed Priorities*

Given the lessons learned from the first CCF and the challenges of the current country context outlined above, Peace-building, reintegration and sustainable recovery will be the main focus of UNDP support. This choice is predicated on the continued urgency to put in place the building blocks for the effective transition from dependence on humanitarian relief to longer- term sustainable recovery at both the community and national levels. These building blocks also constitute a foundational support for an inclusive and durable peace building process in Liberia. This is consistent with the national priorities underlined in the Medium Term Plan, the goals and objectives of the draft modified UNDAF for Liberia and the CAP. Consistent with the CCA findings, the proposed UNDAF points to five inter-locking areas: peace building and relief, good governance, sustainable recovery, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and malaria, and cross cutting issues which are gender, child rights protection and environment.

The main entry points for UNDP under the over-arching theme of peace-building, reintegration and sustainable recovery will be: (a) reintegration and recovery at community level (b) Capacity building for key governance institutions and mechanisms. These entry points are consistent with UNDP's mandate and comparative advantages. They relate to the need to address both the capacity building constraints in

key areas of democratic and economic governance, as well as the reintegration and recovery processes at community level, as part of the overall peace-building strategy.

### *Proposed strategies*

To address the specific constraints of the post crisis environment, UNDP will focus on building strategic partnerships with all stake-holders, including Government, Parliamentarians, NGOs and CBOs, private sector and the international community, to deal with the wide range of challenges in crisis context and enhance participation and ownership aimed at creating an enabling environment for peace and reconciliation.

In order to ensure sustainability of capacity-building interventions, active and effective participation of national and local government institutions, NGOs, CBOs and local communities in all programme areas will be sought, from the early stages of programme identification and formulation to implementation and evaluation. A gender sensitive approach aimed at strengthening the active participation of women in the development and peace-building process as well as responding to the expressed needs will be cross-cutting in all of UNDPs entry points for peace-building, reintegration and sustainable recovery. As part of UNDP capacity-building strategy, efforts will be made to use as much as possible locally available technical expertise in support of UNDP intervention, including through contracting local NGOs.

UNDP, whose RR also assumes the functions of RC and HC, will provide leadership in bringing together the UN Country Team in support of the peace-building process for Liberia, in ensuring complementarily of interventions and developing effective synergies between humanitarian assistance and capacity-building for development. In this regard, close cooperation will also be developed with DPA/UNOL. In close coordination with the Government and the international community, UNDP will assist in the strengthening of aid coordination mechanisms. With UNIC support, UNDP will also lead the efforts of the UN Country Team in advocating for the MDGs as well as developing and implementing effective communication and resource mobilisation strategies.

### *Programme areas and expected results*

#### (a) Reintegration and Recovery at Community Level

UNDP will address reconciliation and recovery through a community based approach that supports the sustainable reintegration of displaced populations, primarily through the restoration of basic social services, confidence building related processes as well as the creation of job opportunities and means of sustainable livelihoods. Specific areas of intervention will include:

- rehabilitation of basic social infrastructure and delivery of basic social services, including notably health, water and sanitation and education services;
- sustainable livelihoods, through micro-credit schemes and skills training and development.
- confidence building and peace education.

Particular attention will be given to ensure access of social services and productive activities by vulnerable groups, including women and children.

Expected results will include: an enhanced environment for national cohesion, increased community capacity for the delivery of basic social structures and services, increased local capacity for self organization and participation, increased livelihoods opportunities and reduced dependence of the population on humanitarian assistance.

## (b) Capacity Building for key Governance Institutions and Mechanisms

Democratic and economic governance were identified as some of the causes of the crisis and therefore would be source for national reconciliation, sustainable development and Liberia's stability in the long run. UNDP support will focus on key governance institutions and mechanisms which are essential for the sustainable recovery of the country. Specific areas of intervention will include:

- Economic policy reform and aid coordination, including support to economic and financial management, PIPs and PEPs and national statistics system.
- National Reconciliation and support to the electoral process.
- Regulation of Security Forces, through the strengthening of protection and human rights enforcement mechanisms, as well as reintegration of ex-combatants.
- HIV/AIDS prevention, including the development of a national policy against HIV/AIDS as well as the design of implementation and monitoring mechanisms, allowing for the full participation of all stakeholders.

Expected results will include : an institutional electoral framework conducive for free and fair elections, enhanced rule of law, strengthened civil protection in the context of security sector reform, enhanced human rights protection, increased public awareness on good governance issues, increased use of SHD concepts within key national policies, enhanced capacity for aid coordination, data collection and macroeconomic management in support of poverty reduction and economic recovery, enhanced capacity for HIV/AIDS prevention.

### **Part IV. Management arrangements, monitoring and evaluation**

The over ten years of civil crisis has significantly adversely affected government's overall capacity to own and implement development programmes. Agency and Direct Execution would therefore be the key modalities of programme execution. However, the possibility of piloting NEX and NGO execution modalities will be explored to the extent possible. With the Results Based Management in place and fully functioning, planning, monitoring and evaluation will focus on outcomes and results. The SRF process would be critical in ensuring partnership buy-in and consensus on the expected results and output indicators for effective monitoring. Joint assessment missions will be undertaken with key partners for monitoring and evaluating programme performance. Because of the pivotal role the office is expected to play in strategic programme management, work processes would have to be reviewed in order to better concentrate on strategic and substantive activities.

#### *Resource Mobilization and Partnership Strategy*

Within the current socio-economic and political context, UNDP resources will continue to be catalytic in addressing Liberia's development challenges in two ways – attract donor as well as national resources in support of programmes designed and financed by UNDP seed capital; and foster partnership with other development partners in support of national development objectives. Cost sharing and/or trust funds arrangements will be pursued with the USAID the EU, and other interested bilateral or multilateral donors in all programme areas, including in particular the support to the electoral process and the regulation of security forces. In this context, RBM would be effectively used to rally support and resources around specific outcomes as well as demonstrate the effectiveness of UNDP interventions.