

**Goodwill Remarks By Dr. John O. Kakonge, UNDP Resident Representative
At The Opening Of The Ministry Of Education Executive Management Workshop On
Implementation Strategies For The New Education Act, Master Plan, And Operations
Manual And Guidelines
St. Theresa Pastoral Retreat Center, Monrovia
11-12 June 2001**

Hon. Senators and Representatives of the Legislature

Hon. Ministers

Representatives of UN Agencies

Representatives of NGOs and Partners

Chairpersons and Representatives of the:

- *National Education and Training Council (NETC)*
- *National Commission of Higher Education (NCHE)*
- *Liberia National Commission for UNESCO*

Chairpersons of the County Education and Training Councils (CETC)

County Education Officers

District Education Officers

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I want to thank the Ministry of Education and Dr. Evelyn Kandakai, Minister of Education for inviting me to make some goodwill remarks at this opening of the Ministry of Education Executive Management Workshop on Implementation Strategies for the New Education Act, the Master Plan and the Operations Manual and Guidelines. I see this workshop as a very important step in the right direction considering that each of the participants here contributes, either directly or indirectly, towards decision-making that affects the policy and programmes of the Liberia education system. This is a particularly pertinent exercise because, as you all very well know, one of the UNDP's areas of focus is to serve as a catalyst in support of Government's upstream policy and strategic initiatives. In addition, UNDP has effectively played this support role in the major sectors, such as Education, Planning and Economic Management, Good Governance, and Environment. UNDP is also providing support to Micro-Credit, Rural Housing, Re-settlement and Re-integration projects. Fortunately, all of these projects have elements of public education, especially training. However, the specific project that warrants our meeting here today is the UNDP-funded "Rehabilitation Support to the Education Sector" project (LIR/97/001), which is executed by UNESCO.

Ladies and Gentlemen

We have come a long way and made substantive progress in the rehabilitation of the education sector with the development of the Education Act, the Master Plan and the Operations Manual and Guidelines and the Ministry of Education and all partners must be congratulated for this significant achievement. However, this is not the end of the road. What is needed now is to translate the policy and plans into concrete actions through the development of effective implementation strategies at all levels. This process, however, poses a number of key challenges, which include:

- Popularizing the plan and policies with other stakeholders to ensure they understand their usefulness.
- Establishing an effective delivery system to use in the implementation of the plan and policies
- Ensuring that there is continuous monitoring and evaluation of the information being disseminated.

Ladies and Gentlemen

In conclusion, I see three factors that are critical for making the implementation of the Education Act, the Master Plan and the Operations Manual and Guidelines meaningful.

1. Capacity-Building – There is need to ensure adequate logistical and human resource capacity to effectively and efficiently carry out the implementation strategies. Interestingly, the Ministry of Education has been able to come up with two innovative programmes: a crash programme for primary school teachers and also the “Each-One-Teach-One” programme. These are remarkable achievements, which should be consolidated as part of capacity building.
2. Partnership – As part of the implementation, strong partnerships, where they do not already exist, should be developed and, where they do exist, should be strengthened, between the various stakeholder groups – government, teachers, parents, religious bodies, etc.
3. Cost-Sharing – the government needs to translate the policies and plans into feasible, bankable and fundable proposals to be used in mobilizing cost-sharing support of the partners and donors. Since the development of the plan and policies was cost-shared by some donors, I am confident that the same organizations may be willing to cost-share the implementation process.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Once again, I want to congratulate our Government counterpart in the Ministry of Education and the UNDP/UNESCO Project Team, led by professor Nwankwo, for a job well done. I am proud to say that this is one sector where UNDP funding has been able to address both upstream issues (in the production of these plan and policies) and downstream ones (rehabilitation of the schools in various parts of the country). We are committed to work with you and support you in the implementation of the plan and policies.

For the participants in this workshop, I wish you successful deliberations.

Thank You.