

Liberia's First Country Cooperation Framework (1997-2001)
Mid-Term Review
Remarks by Dr. John O. Kakonge
UNDP Resident Representative

Honorable Amelia Ward, Minister of Planning & Economic Affairs

Other Cabinet Ministers

Deputy Ministers

Government Officials Present

UNDP Country Team

Ladies and Gentlemen

I have the honor to welcome you to this joint UNDP and Government of Liberia Mid-Term Review of Liberia's First Country Cooperation Framework (CCF) (1997-2001). This is the first official Mid-Term Review since the UNDP programme was suspended in 1991. Before I proceed, I want to thank Minister Amelia Ward, Deputy Minister Langley and all our counterpart colleagues within the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, which is the main coordinating ministry, and also the other Line Ministries for the smooth collaboration and atmosphere of trust that we have experienced over the last three years.

As you know, the first Country Cooperation Framework (CCF) for Liberia was formulated in 1999 and eventually approved in January 2000. Before the approval of the CCF, UNDP Headquarters gave flexibility to continue on a project by project basis. The presentation of the CCF to UNDP's Executive Board was delayed due to concerns of some donors during the meeting held in Paris in April 1998. The Country Cooperation Framework has three underlying goals: (i) the consolidation of democracy and peace, reconciliation and stability, national security and conflict prevention; (ii) restoration of the social and economic viability of the war-affected communities; and (iii) laying the foundation for long-term economic and social recovery. The CCF has two major areas of focus that impact on sustainable human development. These programme components include: Good Governance and Economic Management – Programme Area 1, and Poverty Reduction and

Sustainable Livelihoods – Programme Area 2. This First Country Cooperation Framework was closely linked with the National Reconstruction Programme (NRP) and included earlier UNDP projects that were approved to facilitate the process of reintegration and resettlement as well as specific program themes responding directly to the war's aftermath.

This Mid-Term Review provides the Government, UNDP and other partners a forum and opportunity to re-examine the objectives of the CCF in the light of experience gained and developments in the economic and social spheres since its approval, review progress made in programme implementation, examine the critical issues affecting ongoing development cooperation between the Government of Liberia and UNDP and ascertain the continuing relevance of the programme.

Honorable Minister

The Country Cooperation Framework has achieved some important successes across a wide front, despite the many hurdles facing the Government and UNDP. I would like to highlight some of the achievements gained through the CCF interventions:

1. Under the Good Governance Programme, a National Governance Framework was developed and presented officially to the President, the Media Network on Governance was established, and support was provided for a cabinet symposium on good governance as well as the participation of Liberia in good governance conferences outside the country.
2. As part of capacity building, training has been provided to various government ministries and institutions including the Special Elections Commission for the 1997 Presidential and Legislative elections, the Revenue Department and the Budget Bureau. In addition, 4-5000 teachers have been provided with in-house training.
3. Under the Micro Projects Support for Resettlement and Reintegration, we have rehabilitated and sustained public services through the completion of 263

(72%) micro projects, against an initial target of 366, in the areas of education, health, WATSAN, agriculture, infrastructure, among others.

4. Under the Rehabilitation to the Education Sector Project, we have significantly strengthened the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Education, both the national and county levels, in the areas of policy making, planning and monitoring. In particular, a Sector Master Plan has been developed as well as operational and policy manuals.
5. Under the Micro Credit and Trickle Up Projects, we have improved access by vulnerable populations to a more sustainable livelihood, including the restoration of local economic and social infrastructure. Micro grants have been provided to 1,800 beneficiary groups (65% women) and micro credit extended to 5,000 groups. This financial assistance has benefited approximately 50,000 people from seven counties of Liberia. In addition, some 6,000 demobilized war-affected persons have been trained in various income-generating skills. Most of the recipients have been able to establish small enterprises to provide sustainable livelihoods for themselves and their immediate families.
6. We funded a Situation Analysis on the National Response to HIV/AIDS in 6 counties and, thereafter, an official report was published. We also carried out a survey on the strengths and weaknesses of the ongoing National AIDS Control Programme, and developed an instructional manual on the management of STD/HIV/AIDS.
7. We have created substantial awareness at all levels on gender mainstreaming and its potential impact on economic growth and poverty alleviation. Women leaders have been trained in project design, leadership, advocacy and networking and an assessment of the critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action has been prepared.
8. We are currently providing support to strengthen the National Environmental Commission of Liberia, which has overall responsibility for environmental management and protection in Liberia.

9. Total resources committed to the programmes and projects under the first CCF over the last three years amount to US\$31,712,767 of which US\$20,809,796 was provided by UNDP with the balance contributed by other donors. The Good Governance and Economic Management component absorbed 34% of the resources (US\$10,824,623), while the Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Livelihoods component utilized 66% (US\$20,888,144).

Honorable Minister

We recognize that the implementation of the Country Cooperation Framework requires careful attention, especially with regard to the modalities of execution and the tools and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation. However, in a post-crisis country like Liberia, concerns about the pace and quality of implementation have been, and continue to be, of fundamental importance given the devastation and destruction brought about by the civil war.

We wish to highlight, in particular, five issues that have affected implementation and, therefore, merit examination:

1. Project duration and funding. Many projects were emergency-oriented with limited duration and inadequate project funding, and were governed by uncertainties. Therefore, they were restricted to short-term duration and subject to frequent review.
2. Counterpart funding. The lack of counterpart funding from Government continues to be a constraint by all projects.
3. Project ownership and participation. National/local ownership and participation have remained limited despite their critical importance to ensure project relevance and sustainability.

4. Quality and continuity of project staff and counterparts. The frequent turnover of qualified staff, both in projects and in key government ministries, has been a problematic issue. The identification of national counterparts in some projects has helped to improve national participation and possibly future ownership.
5. Data availability and quality. In the absence of substantial baseline data, project objectives tended to be general and this made them appear overly optimistic during implementation. The obvious lack of gender-disaggregated data has, to some extent, impeded the targeting of women beneficiaries and kept gender sensitivity of projects at a low level. To address this lack of baseline data, UNDP, under SPPD funds, has carried out a number of studies, including the National Human Development and the Poverty Mapping, among others.
6. Capacity building. Despite a few notable exceptions, the CCF-1 has been hampered by the inability of capacity building efforts to take hold. When the programme was designed, there was little realization that capacity building should go beyond human resource development to include the provision of an enabling environment (e.g.. equipment and electricity, etc.) for counterparts within the various ministries. It was assumed that this would be provided by the Government, without realizing that in a post-crisis country where most infrastructure was destroyed, it was a challenge for them to provide their share in all the projects.

Honorable Minister

The last section of the Issues Paper looks at the way forward for future UNDP-Government of Liberia collaboration. It recognizes that the CCF-1 can be used as a mechanism for helping the Government to re-establish a level of trust with the donor community, and proposes the following possible mid-course refinements to the CCF-1 aimed at improving effectiveness in development cooperation sought by both parties

1. Establishing a series of measurable confidence-building milestones. Both UNDP and the Government need to solidify their long tradition of collaboration by arriving at a number of milestones or benchmarks that articulate the expectations of each party for the next 2-3 years.
2. Agreeing on a formula or procedure by which Government's cash or in-kind contributions can be assured as part of project implementation. Without such an agreed formula outlining government's support for the programme, the perception of Government's lack of commitment would be perpetuated and would affect ongoing and future development cooperation.
3. Re-evaluating the 'mix' within CCF-1 of emergency/transitional project assistance and more traditional forms of development assistance. Some 2/3 of CCF-1 funds have gone towards humanitarian assistance and reconstruction and have, thus, diverted UNDP from its traditional development cooperation role where it has comparative advantage. Although humanitarian support will still be required, there is need to re-evaluate and shift the major focus of UNDP from humanitarian to development.
4. Formulating a mutually agreed strategy for addressing Liberia's capacity building problem. Although Government's efforts at capacity building have been supported by UNDP and other donors, the desired results have not been achieved. Without the formulation of clearly focused, incremental strategy for capacity building, other longer-term development objectives cannot be achieved.

Honorable Minister

The issues raised in the paper serve to remind us that there are many things that were taken for-granted when some of the projects were being formulated in 1997/1998. However, the implementation to date of the CCF has been an important

learning process, which will help us in the design of a focused, realistic and achievable second CCF.

As we discuss the Issues Paper, therefore, we look forward to re-confirmation of Government's objectives for the Country Cooperation Framework, and the reaching of agreement on the follow-up activities before the end of this first CCF. This exercise should also set the stage for the preparation of the Second Country Cooperation Framework.

Thank you.