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# AN ASSESSMENT OF DECENTRALIZATION AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN LIBERIA:

## A STRATEGIC REVIEW WITH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USAID/LIBERIA'S CROSS-CUTTING DECENTRALIZATION STRATEGY

**SEPTEMBER 11, 2012**

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# AN ASSESSMENT OF DECENTRALIZATION AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN LIBERIA

## FINAL REPORT



Contracted under Contract No.: AID-OAA-I-10-00003, Task Order AID-669-TO-12-00002

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS .....	ii
POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE: DECENTRALIZATION CHRONOLOGY.....	v
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	vii
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Consultancy Purpose and Scope of Work.....	1
1.2 Consultancy Deliverables.....	1
1.3 Report Structure and Content .....	1
II. METHODOLOGY .....	3
2.1 Technical Approach.....	3
2.2 Definition of Terminology .....	3
2.2.1 Political Decentralization .....	4
2.2.2 Deconcentration.....	4
2.3 Analytical Framework .....	4
2.4 In Conclusion.....	5
III. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT.....	8
3.1 The Broader Governance Context .....	8
3.2 An Overview of Decentralization .....	9
3.3 USAID’s Country Development Cooperation Strategy and Sectoral Programs .....	12
3.4 Other Development Partner Support .....	12
3.5 A Brief Overview of Liberian Civil Society .....	17
IV. POLITICAL DECENTRALIZATION – LIBERIAN DEVOLUTION.....	19
4.1 The Analysis and Principal Devolution Findings.....	19
4.1.1 General Analysis: The Institutional and Policy Framework.....	19
4.1.2 General Analysis: Principal Actions to Date .....	21
4.1.3 General Analysis: Remaining Actions.....	23
4.1.4 Principal Findings and Summing-Up: Devolution.....	24
4.2 Timeline and Principal Devolution Actions .....	29
4.3 Principal Devolution Conclusions and Recommendations .....	41
4.3.1 Principal Devolution Conclusions .....	43
4.3.2 Principal Devolution Recommendations .....	45

V. DECONCENTRATION – SERVICE DELIVERY .....	49
5.1 The Analysis and Principal Deconcentration Findings .....	49
5.2 Deconcentrated Service Delivery: The Cases of Health and Education.....	51
5.2.1 <i>A Special Focus on Decentralization in the Education Sector</i> .....	51
5.2.2 <i>Special Focus on Decentralization in the Health Sector</i> .....	56
5.3 Overall Deconcentration Conclusions and Recommendations .....	59
VI. SYNTHESIS AND OVERALL DECENTRALIZATION CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
.....	62
6.1 Overall Conclusions and Recommendations .....	62
6.2 Cross-cutting Strategy Guidance.....	63
APPENDICES .....	65
APPENDIX A: SCOPE OF WORK.....	66
APPENDIX B: ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED.....	72
APPENDIX C: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED .....	82
Figure 1: Map of Liberia.....	7
Figure 2: The Structure and Function of Civil Society.....	16
Figure 3: Remaining Actions and their Sequencing.....	30
Figure 4: Timeline of Actual and Planned Political Decentralization Actions.....	39

## ACRONYMS

AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia
BIN	Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CDF	County Development Fund
CEO	County Education Officer
CFMB	Community Forest Management Body
CHO	County Health Officer
CHT	County Health Team
CLA	County Legislative Assembly
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CRL	2009 Community Rights Law With Respect to Forestry
CSA	Civil Service Agency
CSB	County School Board
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CST	County Support Team
DA	Development Assessment
DC	District Commissioner
DG	Democracy and Governance
DEO	District Education Officer
DIS	Decentralization Implementation Secretariat
DO	Development Objective
DP	Development Partner
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EU	European Union
FDA	Forestry Development Authority
FOI(A)	Freedom of Information (Act)
GEMAP	Governance and Economic Assistance Program
GC	Governance Commission
GRC	Governance Reform Commission
GOL	Government of Liberia
IMCD	Inter-ministerial Committee on Decentralization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LACC	Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission
LC	Land Commission
LISGIS	Liberian Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Systems
LCC	Land Coordination Center
LDLD	Liberian Decentralization and Local Development
LNP	Liberian National Police
LRC	Law Reform Commission
LTTI	Liberia Teacher Training Institute
LTPP	Liberia Teacher Training Program
MAC	Ministries, Agencies and Commissions
MCSS	Monrovia Consolidated School System
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture

MOE	Ministry of Education
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOHSW	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
MPW	Ministry of Public Works
NEC	National Elections Commission
PBC	Performance Based Contracts
RBHS	Results Based Health System
PMC	Project Management Committee
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PUP	Private Use Permit
RTTI	Rural Teacher Training Institute
SDF	Social Development Fund
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SOW	Scope of Work
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank

## POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE: DECENTRALIZATION CHRONOLOGY

1847	Liberia becomes a Republic, adopts first constitution establishing the Republic as a unitary state with centralized system of governance
1964	Monrovia Consolidated School System established
1980	Master Sergeant Samuel K. Doe, member of Krahn ethnic group mounts coup d'état kills Tolbert
1984 (July )	New constitution that provided for the first multi-party elections in Liberia's history put to referendum and approved with over 78%
1985	S.K. Doe, standard bearer of National Democratic Party of Liberia wins disputed polls
1986 (Jan.)	Current constitution comes into effect with election of Doe and Legislature
1989	Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia invades Nimba from Cote d'Ivoire to oust Doe who is later executed
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1991	Interim government of national unity headed by Amos Sawyer sponsored by ECOWAS formed; rejected by Taylor's NPFL faction
1997	Taylor's National Patriotic Party (NPP) wins 75% of vote in election deemed free and fair by international community
1999	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy organized under Al Hajji Krumah operating from Guinea attack in Lofa county
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2003	Special Court for Sierra Leone unveils indictment against Charles Taylor who resigns and is exiled in Nigeria handing power over to his Vice President Moses Blah
2003 (Aug)	Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in Accra, Ghana
2003 (Dec.)	The Security Council imposes sanctions on the export of diamonds and timber from Liberia
2005 (Sept.)	International Contact group for Liberia and GOL sign Governance and Economic Management Program (GEMAP) to address corruption and other sources of conflict
2005 (Oct.)	Tripartite elections usher in Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's Unity Party after second round victory over George Weah, Congress for Democratic Change
2006 (Feb.)	Executive Order # 1 establishing Forestry Development Authority
2006 (Feb.)	The Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission is set up to investigate human rights abuses between 1979 and 2003
2006 (Mar)	Executive Order # 2 transformed the Governance Reform Commission into the Governance Commission
2006 (June)	The Security Council lifts the timber embargo
2006 (Sept)	National Forestry Reform Law (allows for community rights and forest management)
2006 (Oct.)	The Security Council lifts the embargo on diamonds
2008 (Mar.)	LISGIS: first post war National Population and Housing Census; Liberia's population 3.48 million

- 2008 (Apr.) Poverty Reduction Strategy-I launched
- 2008 (Aug) Act establishing Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission
- 2009 (June) Law Reform Commission established by National legislature
- 2009 (Aug) Land Commission established by National Legislature
- 2009 (Nov) National Policy on Decentralization and Local Governance adopted by Cabinet
- 2010 Governance Commission begins Regional Consultative Meetings to inform citizens on newly adopted Decentralization Policy
- 2011 (Aug) New Education Act providing for decentralization is signed into law
- 2011 (Aug) All four Constitutional Referendum propositions fail
- 2011 (Oct.) Elections return President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Unity Party for a second term
- 2012 (Jan.) President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf officially launches National Decentralization Policy in Bong County
- 2012 (May) President dedicates first Peace and Justice Security Hub in Gbarnga, Bong County

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Consultancy Purpose and Scope of Work

This report, *An Assessment of Decentralization and Local Governance in Liberia*, is the second of two democracy and governance assessments undertaken by Social Impact (SI) for USAID/Liberia's Democracy and Governance (DG) office. As per the scope of work, the purpose of this decentralization assessment is to help "inform the development and implementation of USAID/Liberia's decentralization strategy, including the design of future and implementation of on-going activities across the Mission's technical teams, that is, education, health, economic growth and democracy and governance, through a country-level analysis." The importance of decentralization to Liberia, and its Development Partners (DPs), was clearly noted in January 2012, when President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf launched the Decentralization and Local Governance policy, which provided the framework for the country's implementation of a strategy of phased political, administrative and fiscal decentralization.

While the first assessment took a macro-political optic to the analysis of Liberia's current democracy and governance situation, this second study focuses narrowly on the two principal dimensions of decentralization that are currently being promoted by the Government of Liberia and that will have a direct impact on the Mission's newly developed Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS), that is, political decentralization and the deconcentration of service delivery, discussed in detail below. While the Mission does not intend to develop a stand-alone decentralization program, the results of this assessment are intended to be used to formulate a cross-cutting political decentralization and deconcentrated service delivery strategy that can be embedded across USAID/Liberia's technical teams, including the DG Development Objective (DO).

### Methodology and Technical Approach

The assessment was carried out by a two-person team composed of a decentralization expert and country specialist. Since the team was expected to provide for its own logistics and administrative support, a local logistician was engaged for the duration of the field work. In order to achieve the SOW deliverables, the DA team undertook actions through four phases of work: (a) a literature review starting prior to the team's departure for Liberia, (b) data collection, (c) analysis of data while in the field, and (d) the development of recommendations for USAID/Liberia's review. Prior to the field portion of the assignment, the team spent a day in Washington, DC meeting with concerned members of USAID/Washington.

The technical approach employed by the team was one of "full immersion" meaning that the combination of a thorough review of the literature (see Annex 3, Documents Reviewed) and casting as wide an interview net as possible with the time available would provide the basis for both an evidence-based assessment and one which ensured that the views reflected were broad-based. A total of four weeks were spent in Liberia, including two weeks in Monrovia and two weeks in field visits to five of Liberia's 15 counties: Bong, Nimba, Lofa, Grand Cape Mount (GCM) and Bomi.

Decentralization is a fundamental political issue and reform and goes straight to the heart of citizenship and the social contract that underlies it. Are citizens at the center of politics and development, both as the drivers and beneficiaries of public policy in the new Liberia? Or, are all the reforms and talk just so

much chaff and misdirection used to maintain the neo-patrimonial form of governance that has benefited the few at the expense of the many since the country's founding in 1847? This is the optic that we will use in the forthcoming analysis. While we may not definitively answer all of these questions here, we hope to at least provide both a framework for analysis as well as our own interpretation of the facts that can be used by our readers to make their own determination of the findings and conclusions laid out here.

## **Principal Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations**

The following three sections provide the Assessment Team's analysis and principal conclusions and recommendations divided into three parts: Chapter 4.0 provides the first of two decentralization analyses on Political Decentralization and Chapter 5.0, the second on Deconcentration through Service Delivery. Chapter 6.0 provides a synthesis of the two forms of decentralization with an overall set of conclusions and recommendation.

### **POLITICAL DECENTRALIZATION – LIBERIAN DEVOLUTION**

There is a critical mass of reforms now underway in Liberia that both support decentralization and are supported by it. We were impressed by the commitment of the GOL officials we met in Monrovia but also wary of past experiences with reform and specifically the inability to move from good public policy making to good public policy implementation, or as one of our respondents noted, the difficulty of moving from the theory of decentralization to its practice. We conclude that the right institutional framework has been developed to push decentralization reform forward with the MIA coordinating this effort under the auspices of the IMCD and supported by the GAC, GRC and several other key agencies. What is lacking, from our perspective, is a deeper pool of staff supporting the few professionals that are currently leading this exercise, a problem we realize that is not unique to decentralization reform.

Decentralization as devolution is a huge undertaking and requires both a long time horizon and adequate resources to ensure its success. It is, from our perspective, a true test of the Government's commitment to deepening Liberian democracy and promoting sustainable development and a true test of the country's development partners' commitment to Liberia. Our conclusion is that on both counts the commitment is ample but could benefit from greater coordination among the development partners and between them and concerned GOL agencies. We have detailed many, if not most, of the individual actions that need to take place, including support to the principal government agencies responsible for the implementation of decentralization. The question that this raises is where the significant level of financial wherewithal comes from to support these actions over a timeframe that exceeds the planning periods of most DPs who will be critical to the success of Liberian decentralization.

While no DP is capable of committing resources beyond its defined strategic planning period we think it would be useful to engage in a longer-term planning exercise first among DPs and later alongside their government counterparts that looks at the big picture over the stated decentralization implementation timeframe and at least prioritize those actions which are critical to its success with the aim of developing a division of labor that builds on comparative advantage and available resources. Allied to developing a common strategic plan would be the construction of more creative joint funding mechanisms. We heard considerable support for more and better coordination among the DPs on both issues, but this seems to be common refrain in most countries from our experience, which of course, makes it no less true.

We were asked to not only develop a timeline of the principal actions that need to take place for devolution to succeed, but to determine how reasonable it was to think that these actions would take place as planned culminating in local government elections in 2017 and the establishment of

autonomous County governments shortly thereafter. To answer this question we need to look at the interim steps that condition the achievement of these two larger objectives:

- First, will elections for mayors and chiefs take place as suggested in 2014? It seems unlikely as there are too many preconditions that need to take place for these elections to take place such as territorial boundary delimitations, voter roll updates, consultations, civic education, not to mention actual campaigning.
- Secondly, will elections for Superintendents, DCs and CLAs be held by 2017? Our conclusion is that this is at best a 50 / 50 proposition for the same reasons noted above, plus the passage of the Local Government Act and holding of the Constitutional Referendum and all the ancillary actions they entail.
- Thirdly, can we expect that fully functioning, or even partially functioning, democratically elected local governments with a significant degree of devolved powers and adequate resources will be in place by 2017? It is our view that this is highly unlikely, but by 2020 it is possible, depending on what the metrics are that define partially or fully functioning.

One of the principal constraints to the above conclusion, even more so than resources, is the **Legislature** and its willingness to vote for the public good. We note the following in this regard:

- From our discussions with respondents in the Counties as well as in Monrovia, we heard that many legislators had mixed feelings about decentralization and how it would affect their influence in the Counties which has not been particularly positive to date. Furthermore, the legislature must approve the Local Government Law with its many contentious issues (e.g., resource allocation formula, territorial boundary redrawing) as well as approve the contents of the Constitutional Referendum and sign off on its eventual outcome. We question whether incentives exist for legislators to pass the Law, approve the contents of the referendum or sign-off on the results if it does not promote their personal rather than public interest. While they may agree to its substance, the politics of some of the provisions will be difficult to accept, and the latter is normally what motivates politicians. In this regard, our conclusion is that the incentives to act in the public good coming from the supply side, that is, from the legislators themselves is unlikely. Rather to achieve political decentralization, in which true devolution of power and resources to the County takes place, will require the demand of citizens, acting individually through their vote, and collectively as members of civil society organizations.

In summary, there is considerable reason to believe that political decentralization has the commitment of the country's leaders and its people. Overcoming entrenched interests that have burrowed into the body politic over generations will not be easy to overcome but there are champions (see 4.3.2, below) in and out of government that must be mobilized into a broad-based constituency for decentralization reform. As we mentioned in passing in Chapter 3.0, the success of political decentralization will come not from the push of government on its own, but rather from the pull of an informed and active citizenry. The key will be to raise awareness among the country's people that they are, in fact, citizens, that they have what might be called certain inalienable rights with concomitant obligations, and that they are at the center of both Liberian politics and development.

### ***Principal Devolution Recommendations and Devolution Roadmap***

Support to Liberian **devolution** will depend on a tripartite partnership between government, civil society and development partners – and particularly identified champions in each – and their ability to maintain the momentum that this assessment has witnessed, push aggressively for achievement of key actions

and overcome the identified constraints. We see short-, medium- and long-term opportunities that include:

### **Step 1: Policy Dialogue – The Long-term**

In conjunction with both the Embassy and with Development Partners, maintaining pressure on the government to honor its policy commitment to political decentralization is critical. The principal DPs involved in support of decentralization in general and the United States in particular have developed a good deal of trust with Liberia's political leaders. This chapter has laid out in significant detail the issues that are and will constrain the ability of devolution to take place as expressed by the highest level of government and by Liberian citizens. The following policy dialogue actions are recommended:

- In the many forums where the US Mission meets its counterparts in government as well as in collaboration with its development partners, a push for a commitment on the timetable for the principal devolution actions, that is, voting on the Local Government Law, Mayoral and Chieftaincy elections, the Constitutional Referendum and Local Government Elections.
- We have noted that there are a number of institutional constraints to a better functioning and more efficient decentralization policymaking and implementation structure. We believe that the IMCD should become more active (see step 2 below) and that the Governance Commission should be better integrated into the MIA. Either separately in collaboration with other DPs, USAID should push for a more coherent effort on the part of the GOL in moving the process forward with an improve policy making and implementation team.
- As noted above, we believe a joint strategic planning exercise with concerned DPs, i.e., WB, UNDP, IMF, SIDA, the EU, and GiZ, to fashion a longer-term common strategy and approach to support political decentralization, in order to ensure that a common position, to the extent it is possible, be reached on how to support decentralization, including a timeline with priorities and with a division of labor and resources agreed-upon to the identified action.
- A related recommendation would be to create a pooled, basket fund or similar common financing mechanism that would support the implementation of priority actions identified in the joint strategic plan. With a division of labor identified in the strategic plan, not all priorities would pass through a pooled funding mechanism, as each DP has its own priorities as well. Clearly, the DP strategic plan would be refined with the GOL and serve as the basis for long-term support to decentralization.

### **Step 2: Support to Targeted GOL Institutions and Champions of Reform – Short- to Medium-term**

This is a two-track recommendation as it promotes both a supply and demand-side approach to achieving political decentralization objectives: 1) support to improving the capacity of concerned GOL Ministries, Agencies and Commissions involved in political decentralization (the supply-side); and, identifying and supporting champions of reform both inside government and in civil society (the demand-side). More specifically:

#### ***The Supply-Side: Build Capacity for Implementing Reform***

- Consider support to key MACs involved in decentralization in concert with other concerned development partners. In this regard, there is a major opening for USAID/Liberia vis-à-vis the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Decentralization, which is the overall body responsible for the implementation of the decentralization and local government policy. This body has been, from our discussions, largely passive to date. It is our opinion that it could and should play a larger role in mobilizing government and the civil service to focus on the fundamental implementation actions that need to take place over the short to medium term to end in democratically elected local

governments. No DP is currently providing any direct support to the IMCD and therein lays USAID's opening.

- As we noted in Chapter 3.4, several DPs are currently providing technical assistance the MIA's Decentralization Implementation Secretariat, the Law Reform Commission and the Governance Commission. These are the key MACs involved in the implementation of decentralization policy. USAID/Liberia has no current support to them and, for whatever reasons, the lack of presence in these bodies has meant a lack of information coming from them (e.g., no knowledge of the GC's analytical studies or vetting meeting of the first four studies) and likely an inability to influence more directly the course of decentralization in the country. We recommend in this regard, discussions with other DPs concerning their future plans of support to these three MACs and to look for gaps where the Mission could support their technical needs. One immediate possibility is the likely conversion of the Law Reform Commission to a Constitutional Reform Commission that will be writing the new amendments to the constitution. Equally important, is the Governance Commission, which is, at this point, the principal brain trust of the MIA. Two of the member, at least, are former USAID heads of Implementing Partners (back in the 1990s) and are disposed to a more robust USAID support role.
- Given the increasing importance of administrative and fiscal decentralization to the efficiency and viability of local governments, both in the current configuration as extensions of the unitary state as well as in the future as democratically constituted and autonomous bodies, support to the MOF and CSA would critical interventions in the medium to long-term, particularly in addressing the range of actions noted in Table 1, above. This would require coordination with both the IMF (MOF) and World Bank (CSA), but there is currently little support for either MAC, and particularly the CSA.
- USAID has considerable experience in support of elections and has provided considerable assistance to both of Liberia's national elections. Much depends on whether or not the government is able to take the necessary steps outlined in this report that will lead to the election of mayors and chiefs in 2014, the holding of a constitutional referendum in 2014 and local government elections in 2017. Support to elections are medium to long-term steps in the broader decentralization process. The focus in the short to medium-term should be on those actions that will lead to these elections and referendum.
- Once a better idea of how the GOL will proceed on decentralization, including the validity of the action timeline, **targeted assistance** to specific actions and institutions would be in order, preferably in concert with DPs, including support for:
  - ✓ Rationalizing and consolidating territorial boundaries with support to MIA;
  - ✓ The constitutional amendment process, including the Law Reform Commission and NEC;
  - ✓ Devising a formula for the equitable distribution of national and public resources;
  - ✓ Public sector reform including a review of MAC mandates and functions.

### ***The Demand-Side: Support Champions of Reform***

- It is critical that civil society play a greater role in both the policy and legislative debate over decentralization than it has to date. While we discuss this support in considerably greater detail in Chapter 6.0, suffice it to note here that there are a number of very capable civil society specialized support organizations (see Chapter 3.5, above) that have demonstrated a capacity to undertake policy research and fashion policy positions and advocate for them in a number of policy forums. USAID's current civil society projects are working with many of these CSOs, but not on specific

aspects of the decentralization policy reform agenda. One of the principal targets of this demand-side capacity would be individual legislators and the legislature more broadly.

- The principal constituency for reform is the Liberian citizenry. We strongly recommend support for a massive grassroots campaign of civic education to create a **demand** for political decentralization. Our premise is that active citizens are informed citizens, thus making the purpose of this initiative one of ensuring that the information required to empower citizens around the subject of decentralization is readily available. We go into more detail on this particular recommendation in the concluding chapter of this report.
- Within the Liberian Government, we see the principal champions of reform to reside in the MIA (the Deputy Minister and the newly created decentralization secretariat), Governance Commission (virtually all the technocrats) and Law Reform Commission as well as several of the principal line ministries and particularly the Ministry of Health. It is for this reason that we believe providing technical assistance to one or more of these MACs along with the IMCD not only supports improved quality in their areas of responsibility, but makes good strategic sense in building a broader reform constituency within government.
- For every champion there is an opponent of reform ... or two. As we have noted in this Chapter, we see the Legislature as real constraint to decentralization reforms. We thus recommend that for the remainder of USAID's **Legislative support** program, activities should be reconfigured to issues and actions related to decentralization and sensitizing House and Senate members to them (improvements to supply-side). A specific focus should be directed to the concerned committees, particularly the **Governance Committee**, in each House. Consideration should be given to support for open hearings on decentralization and related reforms; research on the various issues that will be addressed in the LG Law; conducting in-house education and learning related to decentralization; and, promoting constituency outreach. This is both a demand- and a supply-side recommendation designed to improve the ability of those legislators with an interest to respond to the interests of their constituents; for those without such a concern, exposing them to their constituents would likely have more positive effect on their future actions in relation to decentralization.
- In the short-term and addressing the reality of the current local government situation, we recommend promoting actions that increase accountability, transparency & responsiveness by County leaders under existing local governance structure (e.g., posting of CDF, SDF expenditures, local auditing, broadening participation on concerned decision making bodies to civil society and other interests; proper role of legislative caucus). This can be accomplished through on-going projects under each of the DOs, particularly the DG SO and the several projects (IREX, Carter Center, Tetra Tech, etc.).

## **DECONCENTRATION – SERVICE DELIVERY**

The analysis now turns to decentralization as deconcentration and its impact on the delivery of public services. Deconcentration is one element in the GOL's overall decentralization strategy. While the groundwork for political decentralization will take the better part of a decade to achieve, improved service delivery through deconcentration is possible with a minimum of legal reform and, equally important it already has significant funding within the regular sector budgets. While there are certainly financial implications for deconcentrated service delivery as we discuss in the main body of the report, the underlying principal of deconcentration is to simply move existing resources, i.e., human, material and financial, down the organizational hierarchy, with the added benefit that they will also be more efficiently utilized.

## Overall Deconcentration Conclusions and Recommendations

The in-depth analysis of the health and education sectors found in Chapter 5.0, provides significant evidence that deconcentration can work to improve service delivery, is working rather well in the health sector, and through comparison with each other, where improvements can be made. Before moving to a discussion of our overall conclusions and recommendations, we turn for a moment to examine in a summary fashion some of the findings that we extracted from our readings and interviews related to (a) natural resource management and particularly community forestry management; and (b) small scale hydro-electric programs.

Natural resource management (NRM) has several areas of importance to deconcentration and none more so than the area of conflict management, addressing such issues as the role of traditional authorities in resolving conflict, the use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) techniques and mechanisms, the growing abuse of Private Use Permits, and harmonizing customary and statutory law. USAID has considerable experience in this area and its current implementing partners, including TetraTech, the Carter Center and IREX are all ably managing a number of projects that address these issues.

Given this existing expertise, our interest takes us to an examination of community forestry and the concept of self- or co-governance. As a result of the war and the embargo that was placed on Liberian timber, new and more flexible ways of thinking emerged about how to allocate and manage Liberia's considerable forests and the resources contained in them. The 2009 Community Rights Law With Respect to Forest Lands (CRL) provided for communities entering into a forest use contract with the Forest Development Authority (FDA) to manage and exploit in a sustainable manner the forests that have been part of their patrimony since time immemorial. Concerned communities could register with FDA as a Community Forest Management Body (CFMB) and then negotiate a contract for the management of the concerned forest. These voluntarily formed, self-governing associations were thus given the right to co-manage a given forest and benefit from its exploitation. Self- or co-governance is more aptly considered the devolution of power from the central state to an autonomous non-state actor acting in the public interest (the management of a public or common good, i.e., a forest).

Similarly, in our discussions with Winrock International staff around their energy sector project, they pointed out that one of their activities was the creation of a rural electrification type self-governing association that would manage electricity generated from a mini-hydroelectric facility for a public purpose. The Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy agreed that the self-governing association created to manage this facility could undertake the effort independently as long as it remained within the existing laws governing the generation and sale of electricity. This is another example of an association having power devolved to it to undertake a public function normally reserved for government.

Both the examples cited above of self-governance indicate that devolution of power also takes place within sectors and not just in the more "political" domain, which brings us back full circle to our discussion of deconcentration in the health and education sectors. There is a view among many donors, and not a few CSOs, that the primary job of civil society is to act as a countervailing force to the state, provide oversight of its performance of the public good and generally to demand that the state supply good governance defined as formulating good policy and delivering good public services. This conception of civil society's role in a democracy is true, but it only focuses on the part of the equation of a "public" actor working within a system of democratic or shared governance.

One of the principal conclusions of our review of public service delivery and deconcentration is that there is a greater role than has been the case for CBOs such as PTAs and Community Health Development Committees in co-governing alongside, rather than replacing, concerned state institutions involved in the delivery of health and education services. These CBOs should be a key partner with the County Education and Health Boards respectively, working with them to improve the quality of health and education in their Counties with an additional focus on the schools and health facilities that they support in their communities. The reality is, based on our above analysis, that neither the County Boards nor the relevant CBOs seem to have a meaningful role in health and education governance matters in the Counties. The issue is that there is not any meaningful linkage between the deconcentrated line Ministry staff at the county level who are still responsible to their headquarters, and the appointed Country Administration under the MIA. While the PTAs and CHDCs do have a demand-side role in these matters, they have an equally important role on the supply-side working to improve the welfare of the children and neighboring community members.

In summary, CBOs and some intermediary CSOs that are membership-based, including federations of CBOs working at higher levels of governance, have, depending on what their purpose is, either a self-governing (CFMC) or a co-governing (PTA) role in their communities and merit support from USAID through its sectoral programs. This would include promoting sectoral policies (laws and regulations) as well as political decentralization laws that permit CBOs and intermediary CSOs to undertake self- and co-governance functions.

## SYNTHESIS AND OVERALL DECENTRALIZATION CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The ten-year Decentralization Implementation Plan shows the synergy between and inter-connectedness of deconcentration and devolution. Deconcentration is intended to create the foundation for devolution by improving service delivery through the transfer of certain authorities, functions and resources from a line ministry's headquarters in Monrovia to its branch office in the Counties, while County Administrations gain some new powers and resources but remain tethered to central government with their own elected representatives. Deconcentration, it is hypothesized, will increase the legitimacy of government at all levels as citizens gain better access to public services whose quality has improved and which is more equitably distributed than in the past. Over time, the critical actions that are necessary for a politically autonomous County government to be created will be implemented culminating in elections for local government leaders. This is a reasonable scenario but comes with certain caveats and risks:

- There is a need to begin harmonizing the efforts of deconcentration with devolution, keeping a very clear eye on the ultimate goal, which is devolution. For USAID, and other DPs, this means ensuring that its sectoral DOs look at how their programs can simultaneously promote sectoral objectives while contributing to political decentralization.
- The risk in focusing on deconcentration is that it continues the pattern of Executive domination, identified in the recent DG Assessment (Tripp and Grossman, 2012) as the principal democracy and governance problem, albeit in a democratic context, which in some ways is more insidious than good old plain authoritarianism with which Liberians are intimately familiar. As a consequence, deconcentration and improved service delivery will likely lessen the urgency for devolution of power and resources to democratically elected County governments, particularly when overcoming the many hurdles to devolution makes it easier to delay than to act. When Liberians talk about “Danger in Delay” this is how it translates in the political decentralization process.

- The key to an incremental approach to achieving devolution will be to create “facts on the ground” that deconcentrated services work and that County Administrations have begun to prove their ability to plan, manage and monitor/evaluate the resources that are provided to them (CDF/SDF). Creating facts on the ground also means that each and every devolution action as discussed in Chapter 4.0 is itself critical to the achievement of another action and that reaching a critical mass of such actions makes demand for devolution irreversible. The devolution timeline shown in Figure 3 above (4.2) gives the impression that devolution is a linear series of discrete events that culminate in the promised land. Unfortunately, neither life nor decentralization is quite so orderly. USAID, along with other DPs and reform champions in government and civil society, will need to maintain pressure on Liberia’s leaders to achieve as many devolution actions as it can, in whatever order makes most sense.

### **Cross-cutting Strategy Guidance**

To support the deconcentration to devolution continuum in a way that actually leads to devolution and not just strengthened line Ministries and weak county administrations, we recommend a two-pronged strategy:

The first prong is to undertake what might be called a “small DG” strategy in which both devolution and deconcentration actions are undertaken simultaneously within the technical DOs, that is, health, education and economic growth (natural resource management). As the DOs work with their government counterparts to improve their capacity to deliver services (deconcentration supply-side) they are also working to strengthen both local level civil society actors and the intermediary CSOs that support them (devolution demand-side). As noted in the preceding section, each sectoral DO should balance its deconcentration efforts with devolution actions. For instance:

- Build up the demand-side by working with CBOs such as PTAs, community health development committees, farmers associations, resource user groups to:
  - get a seat at the **policy making** table; provide oversight of their respective service providers (e.g., schools, health facilities, extension services) or concessionaires;
  - participate in performance-based contract **reviews**, citizen score cards, evaluations, etc.
- Encourage concerned MACs to include intermediary NGOs and CBOs in the design, planning, management and evaluation of their programs and service delivery performance; and, to participate on committees that decide on the allocation and management of public resources, including the SDF and CDF.
- A good principle that should guide the deconcentration – devolution balance is subsidiarity, or whatever can be done at the lowest level of governance, either by deconcentrated MAC or County government or a CBO. The question that should be asked by USAID, its implementing partners and concerned GOL MACs, is who is best placed to sustainably undertake the provision of a good or service: is it central government through a deconcentrated MAC? Local government through a Health or Education Board? Or, is it a CSO, such as a PTA or natural resource user group. These are questions that are as pertinent in Liberia as they are in the US today.
- Encourage concerned MACs to better coordinate their activities with the County Administrative Team, including participation planning exercises for CDF and SDF.

While the first prong of the strategy is a combination of demand and supply-side interventions designed to get government to undertake those actions for which only it has a mandate, the second prong is

purely demand-side in nature and is more akin to a traditional “big DG” strategy managed by the DG DO team. In this regard, we have recommended throughout this assessment that the push of government must be met by the pull of civil society. As such, we propose a more coherent strategy for increasing the effectiveness of the demand-side than was presented in Chapter 4.0:

We recommend that USAID, through its DG DO, and preferably with like-minded DPs, support a long-term and coherent program to first strengthen local level civil society or as we noted in Figure 3, the primary level of association and secondly to strengthen the linkages between it and intermediary CSOs and ultimately Specialized Support Organizations at the national level. The purpose of such a program is not just as a means to “demand” good governance from local government, but to begin the supply of good governance through co-governance and self-governance efforts that enhance the quality of social and economic life as it builds democratic practice by citizens participating in collective efforts that they voluntarily choose to associate around. Consistent with earlier recommendation on the need for a massive civic education campaign on decentralization (development and democracy) the following specific actions are put forth:

- Use an “all-of-the-above” strategy to educate citizens about their democracy, the role of decentralization in promoting it and sustainable development, which in turn mobilizes them to act in promoting and defending their interests, particularly as relates to decentralization. Elements of the strategy include: ramping up and expand support to community radio stations; supporting intermediary CSOs to provide capacity building to CBOs; supporting the proposed youth democracy or civic action corps (see below) as the principal on-the-ground strategy for education communities; considering assistance to support regional CSOs to create regional CSO hubs to support the initiatives of County-level CSOs/CBOs and to engage in supra-County advocacy efforts; supporting the development of civic education materials for use in the widespread dissemination of information of all sorts (e.g., health, forestry, etc.) and community forums that bring their legislative representatives before their constituents to discuss issues of concern.
- Consider creating a **youth democracy (or civic action) corps** with at least two volunteers, one male and one female, preferably per chiefdom, but at a minimum at the District level with a resource center that can be used for sectoral program information and dissemination as well as serving as the focal point for moving the devolution reform agenda along at the grassroots level.
- Target CBOs, both traditional and more modern ones, as communication channels to reach citizens throughout the country. Provide capacity building for internal CBO democratic self-governance and advocacy and oversight skills with intermediary CSOs being the principal technical assistance and training providers. A necessary first step in this regard and one that is strongly recommended is to conduct an *Associational life Mapping Exercise* to get a better understanding of the contours of associational life at the County level and below.
- USAID’s several civil society projects should recalibrate their approach and focus on strengthening civil society from the ground up to support decentralization and local governance efforts. Such a strategy does not simply end with CBOs but looks at how both the intermediary and tertiary levels of civil society can be strengthened to create a strong sector with strong foundation of CBOs.
- Consider (strongly) joining with other DPs and INGOs to develop a basket fund in support of civil society bottoms-up decentralization strategy.

# I. INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter provides the consultancy purpose and scope of work (1.1), the principal consultancy deliverables (1.2), and report content and structure (1.3).

## 1.1 Consultancy Purpose and Scope of Work

This report, *An Assessment of Decentralization and Local Governance in Liberia*, is the second of two democracy and governance assessments<sup>1</sup> undertaken by Social Impact (SI) for USAID/Liberia's Democracy and Governance (DG) office. As per the scope of work (SOW, see Annex 1), the purpose of this decentralization assessment is to help "inform the development and implementation of USAID/Liberia's decentralization strategy, including the design of future and implementation of on-going activities across the Mission's technical teams, that is, education, health, economic growth and democracy and governance, through a country-level analysis." The importance of decentralization to Liberia, and its Development Partners (DPs), was clearly noted in January 2012, when President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf launched the Decentralization and Local Governance policy, which provided the framework for the country's implementation of a strategy of phased political, administrative and fiscal decentralization.

While the first assessment took a macro-political optic to the analysis of Liberia's current democracy and governance situation, this second study focuses narrowly on the two principal dimensions of decentralization that are currently being promoted by the Government of Liberia and that will have a direct impact on the Mission's newly developed Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS), that is, political decentralization and the deconcentration of service delivery, discussed in detail below. While the Mission does not intend to develop a stand-alone decentralization program, the results of this assessment are intended to be used to formulate a cross-cutting political decentralization and deconcentrated service delivery strategy that can be embedded across USAID/Liberia's technical teams, including the DG Development Objective (DO).

## 1.2 Consultancy Deliverables

The seven principal SOW deliverables called for under the USAID/Liberia – SI contract are:

1. A final interview List representing a wide range of in-country informants (see annex 2)
2. Outline of draft report (submitted, June 8, 2012)
3. Presentation for USAID and other partners (undertaken June 26, 2012)
4. Draft report for USAID review and comment (this report, July 31, 2012)
5. A final assessment report of no more than 45 pages (SBU if necessary)
6. A final executive summary of no more than 5 pages (unclassified)
7. Presentations to USAID and other USG officials in DC

## 1.3 Report Structure and Content

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<sup>1</sup> See, Tripp, Aili and Shelby Grossman, July 2012. Liberia Democracy and Governance Assessment, USAID/Liberia, Monrovia

This introductory chapter is followed by one detailing the technical approach and methodology utilized by the Decentralization Assessment (DA) team, including a brief discussion of terminology used and the analytical framework applied (2.0).

In Chapter 3.0, we present a background and context section which provides a discussion of the broader politics and governance context within which decentralization is playing out in Liberia (3.1 and 3.2); a review of USAID/Liberia's sectoral programs and how decentralization is currently being addressed in the different CDCS DOs (3.3), followed by a summary of Development Partner programs in support of the decentralization process (3.4). Because of the importance of civil society to the country's political, social and economic development, a final section presents an analytical framework for evaluating its capacity to participate as an effective partner in a decentralized system of democratic governance (3.5).

In chapter 4.0, we turn to an analysis of the first of the two types of decentralization, i.e., political decentralization, and provide sections on principal findings, conclusions and recommendations, including a discussion of the set of questions to be addressed as called for in the SOW. In chapter 5.0, the second type of decentralization, i.e., deconcentration of service delivery, is taken up with a presentation of findings, conclusions and recommendations as in the previous chapter.

The concluding chapter 6.0 provides an Assessment Synthesis and discussion of Overall Decentralization Conclusions and Recommendations and Future Directions (6.1) and Recommended Strategy Guidance to USAID/Liberia (6.2).

## II. METHODOLOGY

This methodology section looks at the technical approach used by the Team, provides a brief discussion of the terminology of decentralization found in the report, and summarizes the analytical framework utilized in carrying out this assessment.

### 2.1 Technical Approach

The assessment was carried out by a two-person team composed of a decentralization expert and country specialist. Since the team was expected to provide for its own logistics and administrative support, a local logistician was engaged for the duration of the fieldwork. In order to achieve the SOW deliverables, the DA team undertook actions through four phases of work: (a) a literature review starting prior to the team's departure for Liberia, (b) data collection, (c) analysis of data while in the field, and (d) the development of recommendations for USAID/Liberia's review. Prior to the field portion of the assignment, the team spent a day in Washington, DC meeting with concerned members of USAID/Washington (see Annex 2, interview list).

The technical approach employed by the team was one of "full immersion" meaning that the combination of a thorough review of the literature (see Annex 3, Documents Reviewed) and casting as wide an interview net as possible with the time available would provide the basis for both an evidence-based assessment and one which ensured that the views reflected were broad-based. A total of four weeks were spent in Liberia, including two weeks in Monrovia and two weeks in field visits to five of Liberia's 15 counties: Bong, Nimba, Lofa, Grand Cape Mount (GCM) and Bomi. The team met with over thirty-five organizations and individuals in Monrovia and some 110 in the five counties visited (see Annex 2, Organizations and Individuals Interviewed) including:

- Monrovia-based: (i) USAID/Liberia DO Teams; (ii) concerned Government of Liberia (GOL) Ministries, Agencies and Commissions (MAC); (iii) development partners working in the governance field; (iv) USAID Implementing Partners (IPs); and, civil society organizations (CSOs);
- In the Counties: County Superintendents and their teams; deconcentrated MACs represented at the county level (e.g., Country Health and Education teams, Gender Officers), District Commissioners (DCs), chiefs (town, clan and paramount); and local CSOs, particularly community-based organizations; and,
- Regionally-based: A number of regional offices of several MACs were also visited including: the Rural Teacher Training Institute (RTTI, Zorzor), Land Coordination Center (LCC, Zorzor), Peace and Security Hub (Gbarnga), and, the Forestry Development Authority (FDA, Tubmanville).

### 2.2 Definition of Terminology

Decentralization has increasingly become an important strategy that countries use to transfer certain powers, authorities and resources to lower levels of government and the proximity of their citizens. As such, it is a term of art in the field of political science, although it is often used differently by both practitioners and analysts. The purpose of this section is to provide a very brief set of definitions for the two forms of decentralization that are the focus of our inquiry and the analytical framework that we use (see section 2.3, below) to assess the state of decentralization and local governance in today's Liberia. And, because there is constant reference to Liberia as a "unitary" state, and much confusion among the respondents we interviewed about what it actually means, we present a short discussion of this term as well.

### *2.2.1 Political Decentralization*

Political decentralization, or what we refer to as “devolution” (the two terms are used interchangeably in this report), is the full transfer of political power, authority and resources to a legally (constitutionally) mandated and autonomous lower level of government with corresponding and significant administrative and fiscal dimensions. In the case of Liberia, the principal administrative unit of local government that has been targeted for administrative decentralization is the county. Decentralization as devolution is thus a principal political reform as it is intended to bring power closer to where the majority of people reside so that they are better able to participate in making public policy, which is the hallmark of any democratic system of governance.

### *2.2.2 Deconcentration*

Decentralization as deconcentration is concerned with the transfer of a number of well-defined powers, authorities and resources and/or certain functions and operations down the hierarchy of a given ministry, agency or commission to lower levels of its governance or decision-making structures. There is no political decentralization associated with deconcentration outside the hierarchy of the concerned MAC, but rather administrative and fiscal functions, including human resources, are moved from the center to lower levels of the organization. Deconcentration is normally associated with those line ministries which deliver public goods or services (e.g., health, education, agricultural inputs) to citizens and their communities. The deconcentration of service delivery functions is thus viewed as a principal governance reform because it brings responsibility and accountability for the delivery of services closer to the point where citizens and communities can directly interact with and judge the performance of the service provider.

### *2.2.3 The Unitary State*

Within a unitary state,<sup>2</sup> the central government functions as the sole distributor of power. The central government retains the power to create and abolish administrative divisions or sub-national entities and distribute or limit power accordingly. Under this system, the central government enforces and legitimizes its power primarily through legislation, normally flowing from fundamental law, i.e., the constitution. While power within a unitary state may appear to be delegated across the political landscape, ultimately the central government controls the distribution of power; this gives the central government the ability to redistribute or rescind power within sub-national entities as the need arises and according to established statutory provisions.

In contrast, federal systems of governance are organized in such a way that states, regions, or other governmental units have certain powers that are independent from the central government. Sometimes, the federal government’s powers are limited to what is explicitly laid out in the constitution. Most states in the world have a unitary system of government; in Africa, the only country with a federal system is Nigeria, although Ethiopia with its framework of a federal parliamentary republic also can be so classified. The point to make here is that Liberia clearly considers itself a unitary state and in all discussions, whether informational forums or consultations, the government ensures that it is clearly understood as such.

## **2.3 Analytical Framework**

The DA team applied elements of USAID’s Decentralization Handbook (USAID, 2009) as the principal analytical tool used to assess the state of Liberian decentralization and the two sets of SOW questions related to both devolution and deconcentration. The Handbook focuses the analysts’ attention on the three principal dimensions of decentralization (political, administrative and fiscal), and how they play out in a particular country context as follows:

- The Political: An examination of the legal, both constitutional and statutory, status of political decentralization with a focus on the county level and the set of powers and authorities that are currently being considered for devolution to them. The analysis will include a review of the steps necessary to achieve full political decentralization as laid out in the principal government policy documents, including a constitutional referendum, elections for county and district level officials, and new legislation required to operationalize the devolution of power, authority and resources at the county level. Devolution incorporates both administrative and fiscal dimensions and our review will examine what the requirements would be for them to reinforce this first type of decentralization.
- The Administrative: This second decentralization dimension is more closely associated with deconcentration, although it is a requirement for devolution as well. Whether power and resources are devolved or deconcentrated, there are a number of critical functions and competencies (e.g. planning, managing, monitoring and reporting) that must be replicated in the principal units of decentralized governance and the human resources that will operate within them. The analysis will review and assess the organizational structures and required skills and expertise that will be required at the county level and what actions need to be undertaken to ensure the effective delivery of public services at the local level. To a large extent, this will depend on the final form that devolution and deconcentration take. Put differently, form follows function, and the nature of the structures at the local level and the human resources required to make them work are dependent on how the people, through referendum, and the legislature through enacted laws, will define their new system of decentralized governance.
- The Fiscal: The financing of decentralization is undoubtedly a critical element for both devolution and deconcentration. The allocation and management of public resources permits the realization of programs, plans and strategies, whether for the nation as a whole or any of its legally recognized sub-national units. Who makes the decisions about the allocation of resources, for what purposes and how they are transferred, is the object of this analytical review. Equally important, we will examine the laws that govern revenue generation and expenditures as well as the fiscal agencies that are to be established or whose mandates are to be reoriented given the type of decentralization that is adopted; ultimately, the flow of resources are a function of the nature of the authorities conferred upon a decentralized unit of governance.

Furthermore, we will take a second set of analytical concepts from the Decentralization Handbook, i.e., **authority, autonomy, accountability, and capacity**, and apply them, as appropriate, to the actions that have been taken to date, as well as those which are under discussion, to determine whether the counties will be able to exercise their powers effectively or whether there has been an improvement in the access to and quality of key public services.

One final methodological point: The recently completed DG Assessment addresses and analyzes the broad contours of Liberia's system of politics and governance. We do not attempt, therefore, to cover ground (e.g., rule of law, electoral process and political parties) already ably undertaken by the DG assessment team. Where we do touch on such issues, it is only insofar as they have a bearing on our own analysis of decentralization and local governance in Liberia. Thus, we take the DG assessment's final report analysis and findings as a point of departure for our own work. Where we may differ on interpretation of this analysis, it will be noted.

## **2.4 In Conclusion**

Decentralization is a fundamental political issue and reform and goes straight to the heart of citizenship and the social contract that underlies it. Are citizens at the center of politics and development, both as

the drivers and beneficiaries of public policy in the new Liberia? Or, are all the reforms and talk just so much chaff and misdirection used to maintain the neo-patrimonial form of governance that has benefited the few at the expense of the many since the country's founding in 1847? This is the optic that we will use in the forthcoming analysis. While we may not definitively answer all of these questions here, we hope to at least provide both a framework for analysis as well as our own interpretation of the facts that can be used by our readers to make their own determination of the findings and conclusions laid out here.



### III. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

This third chapter sets the evidence base for the remainder of the report. The first section provides an overview of the broader governance context (3.1) within which decentralization efforts have unfolded. This is followed by a more extensive discussion of the decentralization process and the institutions that are involved in planning and implementing it (3.2). The next two sections look at USAID's current decentralization efforts within the context of its new CDCS (3.3) and the decentralization initiatives of other development partners (3.4). Finally, because of the importance of civil society to the decentralization process, a very brief discussion of the analytical framework utilized by the team in assessing civil society is presented (3.5).

#### 3.1 The Broader Governance Context

Liberia's foundation as a unitary state in 1847, governed exclusively by and for Americo-Liberians, was solidified in 1878 when they formed the True Whig Party, which banned opposition. The Americo-Liberian stranglehold on governance was absolute for over a century. In 1980, Master Sergeant Samuel K. Doe, member of the Krahn indigenous ethnic group mounted a coup d'état killing President Tolbert and setting off the inevitable Liberian conflict. After the coup, Doe's 1984 constitution provided for the first multi-party elections, which his National Democratic Party of Liberia won in heavily disputed polls. Less than a decade later in 1989, Charles Taylor and his splintered NPFL invaded through Nimba, ending eventually in the death of Doe, and setting off the first civil war. A similar cycle was repeated after Charles Taylor won the 1997 polls in technically free and fair elections that were marred with brutal voter intimidation and other coercive means. LURD operatives organized under Al Hajji Krumah attacked from Lofa County, initiating Liberia's second civil war.

After fourteen years of war, broken peace accords and a series of interim governance arrangements, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed in Accra on August 18, 2003, set the ground work for Liberia's nascent democratic overtures. The CPA not only paved the way for the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), but handed power to a transitional government in October of that year. The main thrust of the transitional government, assisted significantly by UNMIL, was preparations for tripartite elections slated for October 2005. The historic vote ushered in Africa's first female President, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, of the Unity Party.

Immediately following her 2006 inauguration, the President's administration initiated sweeping reforms aimed at simultaneously consolidating peace and establishing a legal framework that would lay the foundation for, *inter-alia*, a decentralized system of governance. Among her first acts as President was the repositioning of the Governance Reform Commission (GRC) originally created by the CPA to "promote good governance and initiate the process of instituting necessary reforms in public sector management." Executive Order Number 2, issued March 6, 2006 transformed the GRC into the Governance Commission (GC) mandated to "finalize and implement a blue print providing options for political, social and economic decentralization."

The GC was also charged with creating a framework for a new national vision (Vision 2030) as well as spearheading constitutional reform efforts. Upon recommendation from the GC, President Johnson-Sirleaf later established the Law Reform Commission by Executive Order #20 on June 11, 2009 to "supervise the law reform process of the country and serve as the coordinating arm of government." A

month later, the National Legislature enacted the Land Commission Act to address the growing number of contentious and pervasive land disputes, a very real and potential catalyst for renewed conflict.

While the first two years of the Johnson-Sirleaf administration were focused on emergency measures aimed at eliminating cleavages that could return Liberia to a state of war, the focus shifted considerably by 2008 to one in which sustainable development and the deepening of democracy were in the forefront of government's concerns. The President launched the Poverty Reduction Strategy I (PRS-I) in 2008, which articulates the Government of Liberia's overall vision and major strategies for moving towards rapid, inclusive and sustainable growth. It covered the period of April 1, 2008-June 30, 2011. The PRS-II largely overlaps with the President's second term and governs 2012-2018.

Though originally promising a single term, Johnson-Sirleaf ran and won the 2011 presidential election. The election took place months after the constitutional referendum in August of 2011 in which four propositions: 1) reducing residency requirement from 10 years to 5 years for contesting the office of President; 2) increasing the upper age limit of Chief Justice from 70 to 75; 3) moving the date of elections to November, after the rainy season; and, 4) adopting a simple electoral majority system, all failed to attain the required number of votes, and were thus defeated, an issue we will return to later. Notwithstanding the failed referendum, the President embraced the larger decentralization objective at the beginning of her second term. She articulated the link between jobs, economic opportunity, better infrastructure and transparent democracy as fruits of a decentralized system of governance.

### **3.2 An Overview of Decentralization**

Though the National Decentralization Policy on Local Governance was approved by the Cabinet in November 23, 2009, the policy was not formally launched until January 5, 2012, two weeks before President Johnson Sirleaf's second inauguration. The policy established four strategic areas of focus required to realize decentralization in Liberia: 1) the establishment of a legal framework; 2) planning and budgeting; 3) human resource reform; and 4) capacity building of concerned political actors, CSOs and Traditional Authorities. It is critical to note that decentralization in Liberia, as laid out in the policy was envisioned as a ten year, three phased process with deconcentration of key ministries and their service delivery arms designed to eventually lead to devolution of authority to democratically elected local governments, that is, to political decentralization.

The first phase was primarily focused, then, on administrative decentralization and was planned to last three-to-five years. It is the current phase in which this assessment is being carried out. It was and is concerned with building human resource capacity and constructing infrastructure (e.g., administrative office and meeting space) at the county and regional levels to house local government agencies. In addition to administrative buildings, there was also a critical need for residential infrastructure for government functionaries stationed in the counties, but this was a secondary concern with less achievements than the construction of administrative offices; as of today, 14 of 15 counties now have administrative buildings, albeit without the space to fully accommodate all the MAC personnel intended to work at the county level.

#### ***The Current Pre-reform Administrative Structure***

Currently, the administrative structure at the county level is headed by the *Superintendent*, a Ministry of Internal (MIA) employee and presidential appointee who serves indefinitely at the pleasure of the president. The *Assistant Superintendent* (for Development) is also appointed and serves under the Superintendent, primarily overseeing development related matters in the county. The *County Council* is another administrative structure, currently the highest decision making authority at the county level for

County Development Funds (CDF) funds. County Councils are comprised of officials (District Officers), opinion leaders (e.g., the County Chairlady and youth representatives) and Traditional Authority representatives of the county (Paramount and Clan Chiefs), chaired by the senior senator (elected) of the *legislative caucus*.

Additional offices in the current county administration, all appointed by and responsible to the MIA, include County Inspector, Administrative, Solicitor, Attorney, Engineer and Budget Officer. District Commissioners (DC) are likewise appointed indefinitely by the president as is the head the Traditional Authority in each District, although according to the constitution these positions are to be elected. The DC oversees all levels of her district including chiefdoms from Town, Clan/Zone to Paramount Chief. In the larger cities (and many smaller ones as well), mayors are also appointed by the president and immediately responsible to the MIA.

Many of the deconcentrated ministries have also installed representatives at the county level. Currently, each county capital has a County Agricultural Officer, Gender Officer, and Environmental Protection Agency Officer in addition to health and education officers. Currently, the Superintendents are the chairpersons of the County Education and Health Boards, both constituted under recently issued reform policies. Members of these boards are appointed not elected as we discuss in greater detail in Chapter V, below.

The **second** phase in the decentralization process was planned to last two years and was envisioned as an opportunity to step back and assess the progress of phase one and to incorporate lessons learned into the remainder of the process. It was predicated on a Local Government Act being passed and successful elections for the principal positions of local governance, that is, Superintendents, District Commissioners, Mayors, County Legislative Assemblies and Traditional Authorities. The intention, based on our discussions with concerned MAC personnel, was that there would be a sharing of limited political authority with newly elected local government institutions as well as national public revenues while creating or empowering mechanisms to finance their local endeavors. The **third** phase would be the institutionalization of the aforementioned policies.

### ***The Proposed Post-reform Administrative Structure***

If the political reforms noted in the principal policy documents (e.g., the President's January 2012 Decentralization and Local Government policy), and confirmed in discussions with GOL officials in key MACs (e.g., MIA, GC and GRC), are ultimately realized, then the post-reform governance structure would change significantly from the current administrative structure noted above: Elected Superintendents would be the chief executive of the county. The county would be governed primarily by a County Legislative Assembly (or Council) comprised of elected representatives throughout the county, including District Commissioners and traditional authorities (e.g., Paramount and Clan Chiefs). Elected Mayors would oversee municipalities and such functions such as sanitation and waste management though specific duties are currently being debated. In contrast to the current appointment of staff by central ministries to county assignments, the decentralized county administration would either contest for local positions in locally organized elections or be appointed by the Superintendent to fill the various county level education, budget health, agricultural etc. positions. In turn, the heads of these various departments would manage their own small support staffs.

The intention of the policy reforms which will need to be confirmed in the Local Government Act currently in draft, is for the county (and district) branches of deconcentrated ministries to come under the authority of the County Superintendent (except for technical areas such as health and education

standards) and be integrated into the overall county administrative structure. This obviously would take place in the final phase in the implementation of the decentralization and local government policy.

As noted, the penultimate document in establishing the legal framework for decentralization is the Local Government Act, which is currently being drafted by the Law Reform Commission in two phases. First, the LRC has formed a committee to research all Liberian laws that affect decentralization. Liberia currently has two conflicting legal systems, one customary and the other statutory, that need to be harmonized for the efficient functioning of Local Government. Second, the LRC intends extensive consultative visits to the counties to ensure broad-based participation in the process of designing the proposed system of decentralized local governance. The Local Government Bill is expected to be tabled before the legislature in August of this year, although as we discuss below in Chapter 4.0, the likelihood of this happening is receding.

Based on our discussions with the MIA and both the Governance Commission and the Law Reform Commission, the Local Government Bill is expected to:

- Provide for the election of County Superintendents and District Commissioners;
- Establish the County Executive Branch comprised of the Superintendent as Chief Executive Officer, County Administrative Officers, Heads of County Administrative Departments and District Commissioners;
- Establish the County Legislative Assembly (or Council) comprised of one representative per Administrative District as well as one Paramount Chief from each Chiefdom within the County;
- Provide statutory definitions and criteria for establishing County Administrative Districts, cities and municipalities;
- Redefine the role of Traditional Authority, particularly in relation to the County Superintendent and District Commissioners;
- Abolish the post of Assistant Superintendent for Development;
- Reference to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), along with community monitoring and financial rewards for whistle blowers are envisioned as mechanisms designed to prevent corruption at the county level and below.

Prior to adopting a Local Government Bill, constitutional amendments are required to provide for the election of Superintendents and District Commissioners. Liberia's constitution must be amended by referendum with successful propositions receiving at least two-thirds approval by *all registered voters*. Pursuant to Article 91 of the constitution, a referendum can be initiated by the legislature or by petition of at least 10,000 registered voters. Once the language is approved by two-thirds of both the Senate and the House, the National Elections Commission (NEC) is then mandated to conduct civic and voter education throughout the counties. The referendum can then take place *no sooner than* one year after approval of the Local Government Bill by the legislature (both the House and the Senate).

In addition to popular agreement based on referendum results, the legislature must also establish a threshold formula for the delimitations and subsequent demarcation of electoral districts in advance of local government elections. Liberia's constitution requires the delimitation exercise to "immediately follow" a national population census, last conducted by the Liberian Institute for Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) in 2008. Moreover, resulting electoral districts must exhibit population parity and be contiguous.

Fiscal decentralization efforts have also been piloted in all 15 counties. Stemming from a surplus in the 2007-2008 budget, President Johnson Sirleaf inaugurated the County Development Fund (CDF), a pilot fiscal decentralization effort whereby each County was given \$200,000 for development purposes as decided by the County Council through the County Support Team (CST) mechanism. The County Superintendent as chair of the CST is charged with overseeing all development spending in the County. The mechanisms for spending the money are outlined in the budget law, which stipulates a three-member Project Management Committee (PMC) to oversee county spending. In practice, the Legislative Caucus, specifically the senior Senator as chair of the County Legislative Caucus, must also sign off as an “acknowledgement” on all CDF funding designed as an oversight function by the Legislature. As discussed in the following chapter, the gross mismanagement of this fund by the concerned county officials occasioned the president to “freeze” the fund for the better part of the past year; nevertheless, it does demonstrate the principle and actual implementation of fiscal decentralization at the county government level.

The Social Development Fund (SDF) functions in a similar manner to the CDF and is intended for county development purposes. The County Legislative Caucus is also required to sign-off on the PMC minutes before the funds can be released to the county. The SDF adds concessions funds (e.g. mining, logging, rubber, palm oil) collected by the central government and distributes them to the County Authority, which decides how to use them. The SDF funds only exist in counties that have concessions agreements stemming from private sector operating agreements with the central government (Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy).

Efforts to decentralize access to justice are also underway with the first of five regional *Peace and Security hubs*, one of which is already dedicated and under construction in Gbarnga, Bong County. The hubs are aimed at delivering speedy justice for rural communities. From the Team’s discussions with the County Attorney in Bong, we found that the pilot Hub in Bong County will service rural communities in Bong, Lofa and Nimba. It is slated for completion in September of this year. When completed, it will house all courts – Magisterial, Circuit, Probate and Traffic – in one location. Additionally, the Hubs will have representatives of the Bureau of Immigration, Liberia National Police and the Drug Enforcement Agency.

Issues concerning land, an understood catalyst for conflict in Liberia, have also begun to see corresponding decentralization efforts. The Land Commission established by the National Legislature in 2009 to “propose, advocate and coordinate reforms of land policy, laws and programs in Liberia” has a five-year mandate. The Land Commission is primarily concerned with security of tenure in land and the rule of law as well as promoting effective land administration and management. In order to reach rural communities, the Land Commission has commissioned five Land Coordination Centers in “Hot Spots” of Bong, Lofa, Nimba, Margibi and Maryland Counties. According to the team’s meeting with the Land Coordination Center in Lofa, the Centers will “help promote institutional coordination for efficient and timely resolution of land disputes.”

### **3.3 USAID’s Country Development Cooperation Strategy and Sectoral Programs**

An important area of USAID/Liberia’s five-year Country Development Cooperation Strategy for Liberia (2012-2016), seeks to address ongoing or potential sources of conflict arising from land ownership and use, natural resource management and other factors that could return the country to a state of war. It simultaneously addresses inequities in service delivery and seeks to make incremental gains irreversible, change citizen perception of government and develop the capacity of CSOs as a counter-balancing force

to government at all levels. The CDCS is consistent with the strategy laid down in PRS-I, and its four-pillared framework, as well as the initial tenets of Vision 2030. As a medium-term development strategy, it aims to support Liberia's goal of achieving middle-income country status by 2030. USAID's four Development Objectives are:

- 1) More effective, accountable and inclusive governance,
- 2) Sustained, market driven economic growth to reduce poverty,
- 3) Improved health status of Liberians, and
- 4) Better educated Liberians.

The CDCS notes that decentralization is both a political reform and, through deconcentration for improved service delivery, is a critical element for achieving each of the DO results. Below, we briefly note how the Mission's CDCS integrates decentralization into the DOs, including tentative steps in fostering an effective role for local government in individual sector programming.

**DO 1:** The first Development Objective (DO) broadly seeks to support the Government of Liberia in its efforts to govern transparently and in an accountable fashion. The Mission sees the county as a critical locus for service delivery and thus efforts at both devolution and deconcentration are important to achieve DO1 results as well as those of the three service delivery sectoral DOs. Intermediate Results from this DO include management of resources at the county level as well as access to justice through ADR. Current programs like Tetra Tech ARD's Land Conflict Resolution Project supports the work of the Land Coordination Centers that are intended to provide land administrative and dispute resolution services to the counties. The Carter Center's training for Traditional Authorities intends to build skills and expertise to use ADR while settling disputes for county residents. Additionally, Intermediate Result 1.4, strengthens civil society to perform a watchdog and advocacy function contributing to transparent, responsive and accountable local governance. IREX programs promote both the strengthening Liberian civil society organizations (CSOs) to improve their capacity to participate as effective advocates in the policy making process; and, in disseminating information concerning decentralization policy to communities so that citizens are better able to understand public policies, if not participate in their making. IREX's community radio mentoring project and the Liberian Women's Media Action Campaign's (LIWOMAC) capacity building for journalists initiative also provides a critical platform for the public to engage in dialogue on issues related to decentralization.

**DO 2:** The second DO seeks to foster private sector-led agricultural development and food security through strengthened natural resource management. Intermediate Result 2.2 contributes to the DO as it relates to decentralization through improved natural resource management with the active participation of local communities. Tetra Tech ARD's Community Forestry Training and Technology program brings people together in communities to both collectively manage local forests and to resolve many *land use* disputes. County level expertise will be required in a decentralized system because land dispute resolution will no longer be solely Monrovia-centered. Projects that encourage and empower local government to manage initiatives will contribute to more effective local governance. For instance, several Mission-financed projects addressing community forestry contribute to decentralization by establishing county involvement in balancing competing interests between host communities and concessions.

**DO3:** The third DO in USAID's new strategy mirrors that of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare MOHSW, promoting improved health status of Liberians through health system strengthening, including

improved service delivery. Intermediate Result 3.2 directly addresses responsive services through effective decentralization, or in this case deconcentration. The Mission's primary engagement in the health sector is through the Rebuilding Basic Health Services (RBHS) project. RBHS promotes decentralization through support to County Health and Social Welfare Teams, including providing incentives alongside salaries, procurement of medical equipment and drug and management of country health facilities. Moreover, projects that improve the capacity of the County Health Officer (CHO) and her Team (CHT) to collect information and help inform policy are designed to improve the decentralized delivery of health services.

**DO 4:** The fourth DO aims at better educating Liberians through interventions that boost educational access in selected counties while also building the capacity of the Ministry of Education in the areas of policy making and implementation. Both Intermediate Results 4.1 and 4.2 promote decentralization efforts by addressing issues of access to and quality of education. The Liberia Teacher Training Program (LTTP) contributes to decentralization through the development of the Education Management Information System (EMIS), which collects information from the district level and transmits it through the County Education Officer (CEO) to the central ministry to verify payrolls, structures, supplies etc., thus providing the CEO and her five member team and the County School Board with accurate information on the schools they manage. CSOs and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), in particular, that have received capacity building support from LTTP and IREX are also better able to participate in demanding quality education and management at the county level thus enhancing deconcentrated education by making it more responsive and accountable. Finally, LTTP assistance to the Rural Teacher Training Institutes (RTTI) increases the number of qualified teachers available for rural postings.

The majority of the Mission's work, including that of each of the DOs is undertaken in six targeted counties (Nimba, Lofa, Bong, Grand Bassa, Margibi and Montserrado), or the "development corridor," which contains the majority of the country's population.

### **3.4 Other Development Partner Support**

While the number of development partners (DPs) in Liberia is relatively modest as befits a country with such a small population, those that are present, are an active and committed group, with significant programs in the field of democratic governance broadly defined and decentralization more specifically. The DPs with significant decentralization programs are the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the World Bank (WB or the Bank), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the German Development Agency (GIZ) and the European Union (EU).

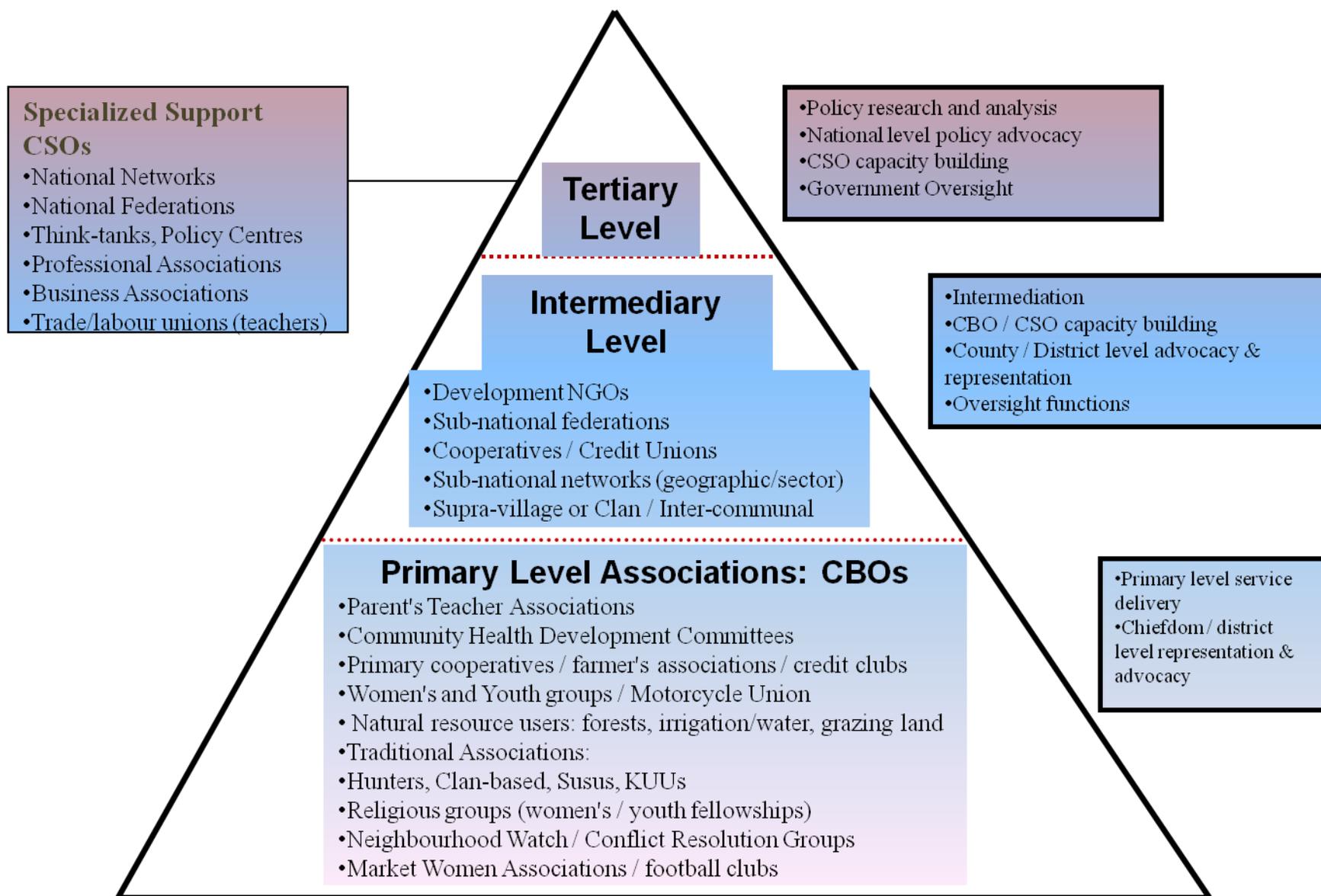
UNDP is the most extensively engaged DP in supporting the government's overall decentralization efforts. It has provided significant technical assistance to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) and its newly formed *Decentralization Implementation Secretariat* (DIS), which is responsible for and coordinates the government's decentralization policy making and planning functions. It also provides technical support for the president's decentralization policy through the \$50 million Liberian National Decentralization and Local Development Program (LDLD), designed jointly by the Government, the European Union. LDLD is currently being piloted in nine counties and is supporting the Governance and Law Reform Commissions as well as the Inter-ministerial Committee on Decentralization (IMCD). UNDP's support in the immediate aftermath of the war to communities through voluntarily formed District Development Committees (DDCs) demonstrated that communities, independent of government, were capable of planning and managing their own local development initiatives. As discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.0, these relatively autonomous self-governing committees representing local

communities were seen as a threat to the local power structure of legislators and appointed superintendents and were subsequently undermined. From this experience, however, UNDP has become one of the few DPs with programs aimed at strengthening Liberian civil society, including community-based organizations.

GiZ, along with SIDA and EU, has provided significant assistance in establishing and then providing on-going operational support to *Decentralization Implementation Support* Units at the major line ministries and agencies, particularly health and education. The EU and UNMIL have also been the principal financiers of Country Support Teams. SIDA has provided significant funding for the construction of county administrative buildings in 14 of 15 counties. Both the World Bank and the IMF are involved in support to public sector reform efforts with the Bank along with SIDA engaged in civil service reform by supporting the Civil Service Agency (CSA), while the IMF is supporting public sector financial management reform through the Ministry of Finance (MOF), including the eventual establishment of county treasuries. And finally, the WB, SIDA and EU are providing significant support to the *Land Commission* and the five *Land Coordination Centers* that are in the process of being set up at the regional level.

While the team heard complaints from a number of respondents about the lack of coordination among the Development Partners related to decentralization planning and support, there was significant commitment among all of the DPs interviewed for this assessment concerning both the need and desire for closer coordination and where appropriate for joint programming of technical support. This is taken up again in greater depth in Chapter 6.0.

**Figure 2: The Structure and Functions of Civil Society**



### 3.5 A Brief Overview of Liberian Civil Society

The intent of this section is not to provide an in-depth analysis of civil society, as there was not the time for such an assessment by the team, but rather to look at its structure and functions by laying out a framework for analysis of CS that permits the later development of our strategy recommendations.

There is a tendency among analysts and those writing about civil society to define it by the organizations that compose it rather than to look at this societal domain in the same way we look at the state and market, that is, in their ideal form as coherent and holistic sectors where organizations specialize and take on functions that no single one of them can undertake themselves. Put differently, rather than defining what a strong CSO looks like, which is the focus of most donor analyses, the more relevant question is how would we know a strong civil society if it was sitting across from us. Unless, this question can be answered, with a well defined set of characteristics and metrics, then developing a coherent program to support the growth of a strong civil society capable of engaging with government and the private sector as an effective partner in democratic governance, including the making and implementation of public policy, is not possible.

As the above graphic points illustrates, the analytical framework of civil society, which is used here,<sup>2</sup> shows three levels of associational life that together compose a coherent civil society where each level has specific functions that strengthen the broader sphere of societal engagement and civic action:

1. The primary or grassroots level of association is composed of community-based organizations, the building blocks of civil society, or as de Tocqueville called them, “the free schools of democracy.” CBOs represent voluntary collective action that is either ascriptive in nature, that is, based on primordial characteristics of ethnicity, clan, religion, gender, etc., or, around the promotion or defense of shared interests (e.g., sports and social needs, mutual aid, economic advancement, education, etc.). Primary level associations are largely traditional and informal, provide a mutual aid function and include a wide range of economic, social and cultural groups such as the *Kuu* (communal farming groups), the *Susu* credit clubs, hunters and palm wine tapper associations, and a wide range of women’s and youth groups. Increasingly, however, a growing number of more formal groups are beginning to emerge at community level that include PTAs, primary level cooperatives and farmer’s associations and natural resource user groups that undertake a more “civic action” function in the sense that they are promoting some aspect of the “public” good, beyond the confines of their own organizations.
2. The intermediary level of association includes traditional development and environmental NGOs as well as associations of CBOs (e.g., credit and savings associations, cooperatives) that federate at higher levels of governance such as the county or region; and, geographic and thematic networks at the sub-national level that deliver services (e.g., education, health, credit) to communities and / or strengthen CBOs to be able to better defend and promote their own interests vis-à-vis government at the district or county level. These CSOs also provide an intermediating function by representing the interests of communities and their voluntarily formed associations in governance arenas beyond the local level.

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<sup>2</sup> This conceptual framework underlying this graphic is a synthesis of work undertaken by the DA Team Leader and the excellent analytical efforts of CIVICUS and its Civil Society Index: <https://www.civicus.org/en/what-we-do/cross-cutting-projects/csi>

3. The tertiary level of association includes a much smaller number of specialized support organizations (SSO) whose principal function is to work on behalf of civil society more broadly by providing a number of services to intermediary CSOs and indirectly to CBOs, including representation and advocacy (from policy research, analysis, formulation to policy monitoring) vis-à-vis national level government organizations, capacity building and information collection and dissemination. SSOs include national level federations, trade and labor unions, thematic networks and coalitions, think-tanks and policy institutes, etc.

The strength of Liberian civil society lies at its base with the thousands of associations that have, through the worst of times, maintained a semblance of social cohesion and ensured the survival of their members and society more broadly. The primary level of association is as diverse as it is dense and is characterized by voluntary association, broad-based membership and collective action. These attributes distinguishes it from development NGOs and most of today's non-membership-based SSOs, and provide the possibility for the elusive CSO sustainability that has been absent among the more formal and "modern" CSOs. As we discuss in the concluding chapter of this report, it is time that Liberian associational life, at the base of civil society, be considered for inclusion in a decentralization strategy alongside the urban-based, elite-led CSOs that make up much of the intermediary and tertiary levels of Liberian civil society; and, which have been the object of most donor programs

## IV. POLITICAL DECENTRALIZATION – LIBERIAN DEVOLUTION

Chapter 4.0 provides the first of two decentralization analyses and corresponding findings that is called for in the consultancy SOW, including the six issues that we were specifically asked to address (see Box 1). The chapter provides Principal Devolution Findings (4.1), a Timeline and Principal Devolution Actions, a principal requirement by the Mission (4.2), and Principal Conclusions and Recommendations (4.3). A specific focus is on the TOR SOW, What major results should USAID expect to deliver through a mid-to-long-term decentralization.

### **Box 1: Scope of Work Issues: Political Decentralization**

- What challenges and opportunities do current decentralization strategies and directions bring to current programs in health, education, agriculture, infrastructure and DG in order to meet immediate and future needs?
- What type of donor assistance will be required to address immediate and potential challenges and opportunities related to decentralization?
- What are the largest gaps in meeting these immediate and potential needs that are not being covered or supported by USAID or other donors?
- What is USAID’s role given other donors’ approaches to date?
- What are the most likely challenges/pitfalls given both the mix of high level political and implementation action required?
- What major results should USAID expect to deliver through a mid-to-long-term decentralization strategy?

### **4.1 Decentralization Policy Reform**

If there is one issue related to decentralization that every one of our respondents noted, it was that policy and the institutional framework governing Liberian decentralization was “superb,” “well-formulated,” “sound in concept,” and “a clean break with the past,” just to name a few of the many glowing remarks that we heard. For instance, the Preamble to the President’s January 2011 decentralization policy is clearly as sharp and honest an analysis of the country’s unhappy past as could be found anywhere.

The Decentralization Policy is consistent with and builds on the first and second Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS); Liberia Rising, the concept paper laying out the initial framework for Vision 2030; and, the Decentralization Policy. While Liberia is not expected to achieve many of the MDGs,<sup>3</sup> one of the reasons that it signed on to the *New Deal for Fragile States*, these meta-policies and a range of systemic

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<sup>3</sup> According to the 2010 MDG Progress Report, Liberia has enjoyed success in three of the eight MDG goals. The most notable, goal three, concerning gender equity saw Liberia awarded the prestigious MDG Three Award in 2010. Liberia has also demonstrated success in implementing MDG goals six and eight, which address HIV/AIDS where Liberia has a 1.5% prevalence rate, and creating partnerships for development respectively. However, Liberia admittedly has not achieved, and will likely not achieve the remaining goals including end poverty, universal primary education, child mortality, maternal health and protecting the environment by the target 2015. This realization prompted Liberia’s inclusion in the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States in November 2011.

and sectoral reforms are seen as major contributing factor to the eventual achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. A blueprint for the next ten years, the *Liberia Decentralization Implementation Program: The Way Forward: Phase I: 2013 – 2017*, has been developed and highlights what has been accomplished to date, the constraints to its successful implementation and the process for achieving it. It is being complemented by a host of other reform efforts, including civil service reform, public financial management reform, sectoral reforms in health and education, national forestry reform, etc., and most importantly, drafting of a new Local Government Act, all of which we discuss in further detail below.

#### **Box 2: Liberia National Policy on Decentralization and Local Governance**

***PREAMBLE WHEREAS**, since 1847 and throughout the history of Liberia, governance and public administration have remained highly centralized in Monrovia and controlled mainly by institutions and structures of the central state which have not allowed adequate legal opportunities for the establishment of a system of participatory local governance; and*

***WHEREAS**, the highly centralized system of governance has impeded popular participation and local initiative, especially in the provision of public goods and services, and has contributed to the need for greater accountability and transparency in the management of public affairs and led to the gap in economic growth and development, equal access to social and economic opportunities and human wellbeing between Monrovia and the rest of Liberia; and*

***WHEREAS**, these conditions have slowed down Liberia's overall economic growth and development and democratization processes, leading to underinvestment in human resources and human wellbeing throughout the Republic; and,*

***WHEREAS**, the Government of Liberia, realizes the need to ensure greater participation of the Liberian people in their own developmental processes and for equitable distribution of the nation's resources so as to ensure a more wholesome process of development and democratic governance; and,*

***WHEREAS**, the Government of Liberia, while profoundly cognizant of its constitutional duty to preserve the unitary state system and equally committed to perfecting the unity of the Republic by providing equal opportunity for all of its citizens to engage in the governance of their affairs thereby promoting local self-governance through the sharing of political, fiscal and administrative powers with county authorities through the devolution of certain political, fiscal and administrative powers and institutions from the national government to county governments ...*

#### **4.1.1 New Governance Institutions Responsible for Decentralization Implementation**

On the institutional side, a number of new reform entities, including the Governance (2010), Law Reform (2011) and Land Commissions (2009), have been created either by executive order or through legislative action. As noted above, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and its **Decentralization Implementation Secretariat**, is taking the lead in translating the overarching decentralization policy into concrete actions under the supervision of the **Inter-Ministerial Committee on the Implementation of the Decentralization** (IMCD). At the same time, the Ministries of Health, Education, Agriculture and Public Works, which are piloting deconcentration efforts at the local level in nine targeted Counties, have created internal **Decentralization Implementation Support Units**, to guide their Ministries' decentralization efforts and to begin planning for the many changes that have and will continue to take place as they move from centralized to deconcentrated structures. As the new Head of the Civil Service Reform Unit told the DA, a *Ten Year National Capacity Development Strategy* has been developed to ensure that the needed skills, expertise and knowledge base of the civil service are addressed as the decentralization process moves forward and downward to the county level and below.

The underlying strategy of the 10-year decentralization implementation strategy, broken into three phases, is that an early emphasis on deconcentrating key public services to the County level, while implementing key reforms necessary to move the broader process along will culminate in 2020 in the

prized objective of political decentralization. Based on our discussions with key MAC officials, the principal DPs and a broad swath of civil society, we believe that the central government's commitment to see decentralization, and particularly devolution, achieved has increased appreciably from a year ago with a flurry of reform initiatives and required actions receiving serious and sustained attention. There is a difference, however, between good intentions and good actions, and if there was a second point that most of our interviewees agreed on it was that Liberians are a lot better in formulating good policies than they are in implementing them, a point we will return to later in this and succeeding chapters. Suffice it note here, while the President and key members of her cabinet are politically supportive of devolution of political power to the counties, there are a number of important opponents to real political decentralization particularly among senators and functionaries in front line ministries. Both these groups see devolution as a loss of their own power, particularly over financial resources.

The general response from our County visits to the question about what people thought about decentralization was overwhelmingly positive. While a handful out of the 100-plus people we interviewed from all walks of Liberian life were skeptical of decentralization, the desire for increased self-rule at the County, district and clan levels was broad based and strong. While it is true that our many respondents saw decentralization as a means to improved services and quality of life, especially as concerns health and education, they also equated it to an improved quality of their democracy broadly and ability to better participate in the affairs of their counties more specifically. Put differently, decentralization as a political reform was as intrinsically important to most Liberians as it was as a governance reform with the potential to lift them, their families and communities out of poverty. What happens if the political reform does not lead to the fruits of good governance remains to be seen as it has most every where else in the post-“third wave” democracy world. Nevertheless, as we note below, if devolution is to ultimately succeed in Liberia, then it will be because citizens in the Counties are ready to make it so.

#### Box 3: What we heard in our travels about decentralization

- *Government is great at producing nice sounding policy, but poor on implementation ... let's wait and see.*
- *Decentralization needs to graduate from theory to practice*
- *Decentralization ... brings government closer to the people ... will turn everything up-side down; the bottom becomes top and top becomes bottom ... will bring back pride to the Counties and traditional life*
- *People are not yet capable; go slow ... but there is danger in delay*
- *We've been hearing about it ... it's good but it's strange to us ... our whole history is centralization*
- *Monrovia is not Liberia! When the Counties are weak, the country is weak*
- *Government here, not here; we feel government, we don't feel government; services present, not present ... what's the difference*
- *Decentralization means responsibility and accountability ... are we ready?*
- *Elections for Superintendents and Mayors should not take place now because the locals are not strong enough to manage power and money.*

#### **4.1.2 General Analysis: Principal Actions to Date**

In the preceding section, we noted the principal policy (legal and regulatory) and institutional steps that had been taken to put decentralization on a sound legal footing and to create a strong organizational structure for achieving reforms. In this section, we examine the actual implementation of the policy, including national level actions required to provide the Counties with financial and administrative structures and processes to move devolution forward while improving service delivery through

deconcentration of the concerned ministries and agencies. The following provides the more important actions taken to date:

- Payroll payments through a direct deposit system to employee bank accounts for most public sector workers have been established over the past two years. The lack of banking facilities outside of most capital cities, however, remains a problem for many employees who must still travel significant distances to obtain their salary payments.
- Efforts are underway to introduce a bio-metric employee system that will improve the integrity of payroll payments and, hopefully address the major problems associated with “ghost” employees which have plagued several MACs, the most notorious being the Ministry of Education and teacher salary payments; it is estimated that \$7.0 million of the \$47.0 million deficit in the salary budget in 2011 was due to ghost payments (CSA, 2012). According to the head of the Civil Service Reform Unit within the CSA, teachers would not fall under the new IFMIS / bio-metric system, so it is unclear how the ghost payment problem would be fully addressed as ghost teacher payments are the principal element in this long-running problem.<sup>4</sup>
- Birth registration is now being handled at the County level but there are still some bottlenecks slowing the process. Marriage registration has not yet been transferred to the Counties.
- The development of a sector deconcentration matrix for the major line ministries is intended as a blueprint for the transfer of all relevant functions to Counties and districts within the next 3-year period; significant progress has been made by three of the pilot ministries: Health, Education and Agriculture.
- County governments and communities have received a significant portion of the USD \$40 million for local development through three principal development funds: the County Development Fund (GOL budget transfer), the Local Development Fund (UNDP, LDLD),<sup>5</sup> and Social Development Fund (from concessionary agreements in those Counties where concessions exist). These funds were, until June 2012, frozen by the president because of misuse and mismanagement. The DA team confirmed with both Bong and Nimba Counties that funds for the CDF and SDF were now being released.
- Several County, district and sub-district structures such as the County Council (known as the County Legislative Assembly (CLA) in the Decentralization Policy), County Development Steering Committee (CDSC), Project Management Committee (PMC), District Development Committee, and Project Management Team to strengthen decentralization and local development are in place (GOL, 2011).
- The establishment and operationalization of County Development Offices and County Statistics and Information Offices in all 15 Counties that are capable of providing critical capacity for local level data collection and management capacity, enhanced planning and monitoring capacity as well as support to local coordination functions such as the County Development Steering Committee.
- Participatory planning and budgeting has been piloted in nine Counties through District Development Committees utilizing the Local Development Fund.

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<sup>4</sup> While the DA team understands that the CSA is in the process of completing a teacher verification exercise for CSA enrollment and payroll purposes, we were unable to reconfirm with the head of the Civil Service Reform Unit that the bio-metric system would not cover teachers.

<sup>5</sup> The Local Development Fund was created by UNDP with UNMIL support and financed through the LDLD as an emergency fund to support local initiatives following the Accra Peace Accords; funds went directly to local development committees by passing the normal country administrative structure. The CDF, and the SDF where it exists, are both GOL funded, with funds for the SDF coming from the concessions agreements in the concerned counties.

- A national locality database (e.g., clans, chiefdoms, municipalities, administrative districts) has been developed, a precondition to the rationalization and consolidation of local government structures, a critical step required for holding local elections and the likely constitutional referendum (see section 3.3, above).
- The Ministry of Finance (MOF), with IMF technical support, is in the initial stages, i.e., research and studies, required to establish treasuries in the Counties.
- The Law Reform Commission has begun an initial review of customary law for purposes of eventually harmonizing it with statutory law.

#### **4.1.3 General Analysis: Remaining Actions**

The following discussion provides the actions remaining to be undertaken to make political decentralization a reality by the end of this decade.

##### **Legal and Regulatory Framework: Required Steps and Actions**

While much has been accomplished in developing an enabling policy and institutional environment for the implementation of the decentralization policy, the reality is that there remain a significant number of primary and secondary legal and regulatory actions to be undertaken to achieve true devolution, the most prominent of which are:

- Elections for local government officials including Superintendents, District Commissioners, Members of the County Councils, Paramount Chiefs, Clan Chiefs and Mayors and members of city councils granted city charters;
- A constitutional amendment changing the Superintendent and Traditional Authority appointment by the president to their selection by county level voting, (see Chapter II) is required prior to the holding of elections for Superintendents and District Commissioners;
- Preparing the legal framework defining the establishment, mandates and functions, powers and restrictions, and reporting relationships of the national and local governments consistent with the decentralization policy;
- The drafting and passage of the Local Government Act;
- Enactment of statutes to establish 15 autonomous County capital cities and the national capital;
- Provision of a statutory definition and criteria for the creation and qualification of various categories of local government structures and political sub-divisions; and
- Abolishment of positions of Assistant Superintendent for Development and establishment of positions of County administrative officers, sector directors, district officers with civil service qualifications.

Most of these provisions will be incorporated into the Local Government Act. One of the principal challenges among the legal actions noted above, and which affects other important devolution requirements, concerns the previous expansion of the number of local administrative structures (e.g., cities, districts), most of which are sparsely populated. Many of the district and sub-district administrative units are too small to be viable and to sustain a basic level of service delivery. As the *Liberia Decentralization Implementation Program* notes, “Even under fiscal decentralization, most of their revenue will be spent on administration leaving little for development.” It is for this reason that definitions and criteria (e.g., traditional geographic boundaries, minimum population threshold, geographic size, etc.) must be developed and applied in an objective manner to rationalize and consolidate the proliferation of these administrative units, or as one respondent noted, the

“Balkanization” of Liberia’s territory for political gain rather than to promote sustainable growth and development.

### ***Administrative and Fiscal Challenges and Actions***

The nuts and bolts mechanics of decentralization, whether devolution or deconcentration, is a well-functioning bureaucracy, with empowered workers operating in a coherent organizational structure that is bound by rules (systems and procedures) that establish incentives which promote behavior which is consistent with and encourages the effective performance of their duties and functions. None of this is possible of course without the resources necessary to make the “trains run on time,” or more appropriately, to ensure the effective delivery of public goods and services in a timely manner. The following set of actions, many associated with civil service and public financial management reforms, are all critical to the ability of political leadership to successfully translate good public policies and strategies into concrete and relevant programs and services<sup>6</sup>:

- Defining the local government civil service structure and identifying the national civil service positions to be transferred to local administrations (the Counties and Districts);
- Formulating a plan for the smooth transfer of staff positions from national to county administrations as well as for training and/or retraining of the current and new civil servants;
- Establishing essential rules, systems and procedures, and preparing supporting manuals for local governments, including use by local officials in the proposed Superintendent, DC, Mayoral and traditional authority elections;
- Articulating well-defined roles and responsibilities and the reporting and operational procedures of each layer of government (a component of civil service reforms);
- Developing a comprehensive set of manuals of standard operating procedures (SOP) for local government administration and management, and of Public Financial Management procedures and targeted training in planning and budgeting, revenue administration and expenditure management, internal audit and oversight;
- Strengthening the Decentralization Implementation Support Units within major line ministries, and that of MIA, to accelerate implementation of sector deconcentration to effectively serve as a secretariat to support the IMCD;
- Establishing County treasuries in all 15 counties;
- Harmonizing the planning and budgeting cycle of central and local governments; and,
- Establishing an adequate and reliable revenue base for each county government and granting local governments the authority to set and collect taxes such as licensing and operating permits for local businesses.

#### ***4.1.4 Principal Findings and Summing-Up: Devolution***

Having now presented the status of political decentralization, including what has been accomplished and the challenges and actions that remain to be completed, it is now possible to present our findings for this first assessment objective. We note the following:

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<sup>6</sup> The administrative and fiscal actions that are discussed in this section come from the team’s discussions with concerned MIA, GC and LRC as well as the President’s Decentralization Policy and the *Liberia Decentralization Implementation Program*, which begins the process of laying out implementation requirements.

### ***No County direct control over resources or budgets***

What resources are made available to the Counties, i.e., from the CDF and SDF, are subject to approval by the central government and, as our discussions with County officials made clear, the whims of the concerned Legislative Caucus. What funding is made available to the Counties for their operations come from the CDF, as there are no central government transfers that cover local administrative costs, including building repairs and maintenance, equipment procurement, maintenance and service, office supplies, vehicle operating costs, etc.. Similarly, the financing of local development activities comes from the CDF and the SDF for those counties that are fortunate enough to have a concession that generates public revenues (e.g., royalties) or corporate social responsibility funding. In our discussions with a Lofa County District Commissioner we were told that an allocation of LD 10,400 per year was made available to the district but that these funds were rotated between different Clans for their own use; there were no funds for carrying out her responsibilities including no access to a vehicle or equipment (e.g., computer, photocopier). Similarly, the Superintendent had no control over the recruitment, payment or firing of employees working at the County level; these were all Monrovia-based functions. Reinforcing this tendency, reporting relationships are currently all top-down with appointed Superintendents and DCs all reporting up the line to the President. According to the *Liberia Decentralization Implementation Program*, the same reporting relationships, i.e., from Superintendent via the MIA to the President are still expected to maintain after elections take place for politically decentralized County governments.

### ***Approval requirements are rent seeking opportunities***

The approval of or gaining access to approved County funding (e.g., CDF and SDF) are choke points that open up the possibility for kick-backs and other corrupt acts. In four of the five counties we visited, County administrators noted problems that they had with members of their legislative caucus or with Monrovia-based officials who demanded bribes for the release of approved funds. If they were lucky enough to avoid submitting to these demands, they still ended up spending excessive time in trying to secure their County's funds; in many cases, approved funding "leaked" and significant time was wasted. Now that Counties are being asked to prepare development plans and budgets as an interim devolution task, it is likely that requisite approvals will also entail "costs."

### ***No harmonization of County boundaries***

Over the course of the long civil war, and into the period of the transitional government the number of administrative units below the county (i.e., districts, cities, chiefdoms) mushroomed. This administrative fragmentation was primarily a result of political patronage conducted by both the Doe and Taylor regimes to reward warlords or gain the support of key groups. The net effect of this political maneuvering has been to create administrative units with no rationale in either economic or social (service delivery) terms although it did produce culturally or ethnically homogenous entities. This has led the MIA and GC to begin developing a set of "evidence-based" criteria that is intended to rationalize and consolidate the number of administrative units within the counties; the number of Counties is fixed and politically untouchable as respondents in the MIA and GC made clear. As discussed below, the criteria that are to be used and the eventual consolidation of administrative units based on the application of these criteria must be approved by the Legislature.

The consolidation issue is, however, only one dimension of the larger harmonization problem. Administrative units, and particularly the districts, do not currently overlap either with electoral districts or with health and education operational areas. For instance, in Grand Cape Mount there are five administrative districts and three electoral districts, while in Lofa County there are six health districts

and seven administrative districts. The issues concerning electoral districts, and health and educational districts and their harmonization with administrative districts are different but no less important. As discussed in more detail below, this harmonization can only take place if legislators pass a threshold bill that gives rise to boundary delimitation or harmonization.

Elections, for both efficiency and effectiveness reasons, need the pre-condition of a rationalized administrative system with fewer districts, cities and chiefdoms, which is far from the case now. As the acting Chairlady of the National Electoral Commission (NEC) told us for elections, the constitution calls for delimitation of “constituencies” rather than the current electoral districts, which were intended to be temporary measures but are not too fraught with partisan politics to change easily.

The importance of a rationalized and consolidated system of territorial administrative boundaries for future elections is critical, particularly for mayors, district commissioners and paramount chiefs. To compound the problem of administrative and electoral harmonization brought about by politics, the Constitution requires that a census be conducted before redistricting can be undertaken and new elections held. This was a problem that was never solved prior to the presidential election and hangs over future elections at all levels.

While harmonizing administrative units, particularly the County and District, with educational and health operating zones, is not a problem for deconcentration – by definition, the line ministries operate largely apart from County administrative control – it is a principal problem for the future of Liberian devolution. There is technically no current legal requirement for coordination, let alone integration of the deconcentrated service arms of the ministries (e.g., the County Education and Health Teams) with the County Superintendent. Since, as we note below, elections for County government appear to be years away, the continued existence and support of deconcentrated service delivery that are not fully integrated into local government is likely to hinder future devolution efforts.

#### ***Freedom of Information and its Impact on the Counties***

The recently passed Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is certainly a major step forward in Liberia’s commitment to good and transparent governance. However, its application at the County level has been less than successful. Many of the CSOs we talked with in our County visits said if there was in fact a local County Information Officer that handled FOI requests, then they were unable to find this official and were referred to Monrovia to obtain the necessary documents and to make their submissions there.

#### ***Inadequate resource mobilization at County level: circumscribed by law***

Uniformly, in all our interviews with County level officials, the issue of inadequate funding of their local governments was repeatedly made. Furthermore, virtually no meaningful revenues were raised from the few types of fees and taxes that were permitted by law for local use and those that were had to be sent back to Monrovia with the hope they would be returned at some point in the future. While this issue is treated seriously by the concerned government MACs, and is reflected in the pertinent policy documents and implementation plans, it remains a problem for the future viability of County governments, an issue we take up below.

### ***Civil society does not have a seat at the County decision making table***

In our discussions with CSO representatives in each of the Counties, there was a consensus that, in most cases, they were not given a seat or permitted to participate in County Council meetings that discussed how SDF and CDF funds would be used; the Nimba SDF being the single exception. In Grand Cape Mount, for instance, the Civil Society Council (national CSO umbrella organization) County representative was told that as far as the Superintendent knew, there was nothing in the law that required him to include NGOs in County Council meetings and, even if there was, he already had youth and women members participating in their deliberations.

While this may have been an extreme case of a Superintendent's view of civil society's role in County governance, most of the CSOs with whom we met on our visits (e.g., FLY Ganta branch representative, regional and County Civil Society Council representatives, the Red Cross branch members, women's groups, etc.) did not feel that civil society was viewed as a valued partner in local matters, which runs contrary to the concerned policy documents (e.g., PRS, Liberia Rising, Decentralization Policy, etc.) and the views of government officials in Monrovia. To be fair, most of the County administrative officials with whom we talked with did hold a positive view of CSOs and their work in delivering services to the communities.

We highlight the particular problem of women and youth under-representation on the concerned County-level decision making bodies with particular reference to the CDF and SDF management committees and the County Council more generally. From our discussions with County Council members in Bong, Nimba and GCM, it became clear that the "women's" member on these bodies was concerned "Chairlady" from the County who was the default choice for bodies in which representation of "the people" was called for. Youth representation was also the Superintendent's choice rather than civil society's selection, a point made to us by the Lofa County NGO Network.

### ***The return of Traditional Authorities to a more active role in County governance***

The role of chiefs in local governance matters has been in decline since President Tolbert's administration and accelerated significantly during the country's long period of war. Historically, the role of Traditional Authority was the primary and highest governing authority for local communities in all spheres of life. Chiefs were, and arguably still are landlords and custodians of land and thus oversaw its use and distribution as well as arbitrated any and all disputes. Additionally, chiefs performed a police/judicial function performing the investigative, prosecutorial and punishment phase of all disputes involving members of their chieftom. Of course the procedure was also traditional and stepped in mystique. As the President of the Traditional Chief's Association recounted to us, the creation of many new chieftoms under the Taylor regime had the consequence of diluting the power of the chiefs as well as sowing discord among them.

There are currently 185 chiefs of all categories according to the President of the Traditional Chief's Association. For example, the *sassiwood* means of ascertaining guilt or innocence has been banned by the GOL, yet the chiefs welcome a return to *sassiwood's* trial by ordeal and other means of traditional justice. This, however, is now in the process of being reversed as evidenced in both the principal policy documents including Liberia Rising and the President's Decentralization Policy as well as the public pronouncements of political leaders particularly during election time. According to the President, all 185 chiefs were meeting in Monrovia July 4-11, 2012 to debate the specific role of Traditional Authority in a decentralized local governance structure. Our interviews with a wide range of groups in the Counties (e.g., Market Women in Ganta, several meetings with a cross-section of youth groups in Lofa,

Bomi and Nimba) indicated that people were generally happy to see an expanded role for the chiefs per the new policies and believed they had an important role to play in local governance, particularly in resolving local disputes.

Article 56 of the constitution provides for the election of Paramount, Clan and Town Chiefs to serve for a term of six years but was silent on setting a timeframe for elections. Chiefs can be re-elected without restriction and can only be removed for “proven misconduct” by the President. However, since the last official chieftaincy election was in October 1986, a series of make-shift executive appointments or locally organized elections has prevailed to replace chiefs who died. In 2006 the NEC in conjunction with local authorities submitted a timeframe to the 53<sup>rd</sup> legislature for chieftaincy elections but the proposal was never passed. The NEC stated they are hopeful the current 53<sup>rd</sup> legislature will pass clear definitions for the timing of chieftaincy elections. According to the acting NEC Chairperson, the reason there have been no new elections for chiefs is primarily due to a lack of resources to hold the elections following costly two-round presidential and parliamentary elections in both 2005 and 2011. Although as noted above there is also the issue of redistricting and rationalizing the administrative units.

### ***The Issue of Fairness in the Allocation of Public Resources to the Counties***

The team heard repeatedly from respondents (e.g., Superintendents, County Health and Education Officers) in Lofa, Nimba and Bong Counties that government’s allocation of public revenues was unfair to the larger and more resource wealthy Counties. The fact that each County received the same CDF allocation, i.e., \$200,000, or that health and education budgets did not take into account the significantly larger number of health facilities (e.g., Lofa with the most at 56) or schools in these Counties. Nor do they feel as if the financial returns that they get from the concessions that are located in their counties are a fair share of the significant revenue generated from concession operations. MIA DIS and GC staff have acknowledged this issue and note that the new policy foresees a first-year balloon grant of equal amounts to the democratically elected County governments followed thereafter with allocations that would be made based on a formula that takes into consideration a range of variables including population, the presence of concessions, etc. As we discuss below, the formula must be passed by the Legislature, most probably as part of the Local Government Act, and is sure to generate considerable debate between the larger number of smaller and poorer counties who have an outsized degree of power within the Senate in particular, and the smaller number of large, more prosperous Counties.

### ***Decentralization is already underway***

While we have noted a number of challenges to devolution, it must also be acknowledged that there are an increasing number of examples of decentralized structures and processes that have been or are in the process of being devolved to either the regions or the Counties. The following discussion provides the more important of these, several of which have been mentioned under 3.2, above.

- Community colleges are either up and running (e.g., Nimba) or are under construction in all the Counties. From our discussions, particularly with young people with whom we met, the importance of these local centers of higher education was among the most appreciated of the current decentralization efforts.
- Additional regional decentralized agencies include Peace and Security Hubs, Land Coordination Centers (Land Commission), Forestry Development Agency, Rural Teacher Training Institutes and CSA offices.

- Most of the line ministries are now resident in the counties and an increasing number such as CSA and the Internal Revenue Service are in the process of opening offices as well.
- Inter-governmental transfers to the Counties are a reality as evidenced by the establishment and operations of the CDF and SDF, albeit with significant conditions. The MOF is in the initial stages of opening county treasuries while the banking system continues to open branches in the Counties, although many secondary cities are still without a bank.

#### 4.2 Timeline and Principal Devolution Actions

This section responds to a SOW requirement by providing a timeline of the principal devolution actions that have either taken place, or are foreseen in the relevant decentralization policy documents as well as the Liberian Constitution itself. We provide immediately below a table (Table 1) of the principal actions or issues that need to be addressed in order for the ideal state of political decentralization to be realized sometime between 2017 when elections for County Government offices are expected to take place and 2020, when the principal actions related devolution of power and resources to the county are institutionalized. The table lays out the principal actions that need to take place, the status of these actions as of the conduct of the Decentralization Assessment, what remains to be done in order to achieve the necessary result required for devolution, whose responsibility it is to ensure that the result is achieved and, finally, the time-frame and sequencing of the action. We regroup these actions into three broad categories of results and the set of actions that are required to achieve them: (1) Mayoral and Chieftaincy elections; (2) Local (county) government elections; and, (3) creation of administrative and fiscal rules and infrastructure. The first two categories are political decentralization actions leading to the establishment of legally constituted local government structures and elections for the positions that will fill them, while the latter category addresses the fiscal and administrative steps create the rules (systems, processes and procedures) and infrastructure that

Figure 3 is followed by an illustration that provides a simplified timeline of the principal expected actions. The timeline covers ten years, consistent with the Decentralization Implementation Plan. The three actions at the top of the graph (in green) represent known and agreed upon events which have either taken place, i.e., the President’s launching of the Decentralization and Local Governance Policy (2012), or are constitutionally mandated, that is, Senatorial Elections (2014) and Presidential Elections (in 2017). The baseline is the 2012 launching of the Decentralization Policy, although the policy and a range of other devolution work (e.g., research, planning, etc) began as early as 2009. We have taken Presidential elections in 2017 as the end-point of the process because this is the date that President Johnson-Sirleaf leaves office, and the date that the majority of concerned respondents have given as the time when elections for local government should have taken place and democratically elected County governments will have been legally established.

**Figure 3: Remaining Actions and their Sequencing**

Key Actions to take / Issues to resolve	Status of Action / Issue as of Decentralization Assessment	What Action(s) remains to be done	By Whom / Whose Responsibility	When / Sequencing of Action
<p><b><i>Elections for Mayors and Chiefs</i></b></p> <p>Elections for these two political positions are called for in the constitution.</p>	<p>They have not been held for at least 15 years (1997).</p> <p>The principal reason for not holding them has been a lack of funding; many would say a lack of political will is the more fundamental reason</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rationalization of districts and chiefdoms.</li> <li>2. The Electoral Commission needs to announce elections.</li> <li>3. Electoral lists need to be updated</li> <li>4. Some say a new Census has to be undertaken</li> </ol>	<p>These steps are all largely technical and the responsibility of the Electoral Commission.</p> <p>However, this is an act of political will above all</p>	<p>This devolution action could take place relatively soon if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Rationalization of districts and chiefdoms takes place.</li> <li>✓ Funds are made available</li> <li>✓ There is no need for a census (see constitution)</li> </ul> <p>The intent is to have these elections take place with the scheduled Senatorial Elections in 2014</p>
<p><b><i>Elections for Superintendents, District Commissioners, and County Councils</i></b></p> <p>All three are currently appointed</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Four of ten draft Analytical Studies to inform LGA are completed in draft and vetted in one day meeting of concerned stakeholders</li> <li>2. Decentralization and Local Government Policy has been promulgated</li> <li>3. GC has held county level forums to discuss policy</li> <li>4. LGA is in the process of being drafted</li> <li>5. Last national census was</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Completion and vetting of remaining six analytical Studies to inform LGA</li> </ol> <p>Local Government Act is drafted</p> <p>Principal issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Rationalization of district / chiefdom boundaries</li> <li>✓ Formula for allocation of public resources to counties</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Approval / vetting of draft LGA</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. MIA and Governance Commission</li> <li>2. Law Reform Commission to complete draft LGA</li> <li>3. IMCD / MIA</li> </ol> <p>GC and MIA address the principal issues with on-going IMCD and concerned Legislature committees</p>	<p>September – October 2012</p> <p>August to December 2012</p> <p>September – November 2012</p>

**Figure 3: Remaining Actions and their Sequencing**

Key Actions to take / Issues to resolve	Status of Action / Issue as of Decentralization Assessment	What Action(s) remains to be done	By Whom / Whose Responsibility	When / Sequencing of Action
	in 2005	3. LGA draft dissemination & discussion in the Counties	4. GC and Electoral Commission to disseminate / explain LGA with major civil society effort in collaboration with and/or independent of NEC	January – June 2013
		4. Hearings on LGA is debated and voted on in both Houses of the Legislature  Principal debate issues: ✓ Rationalization of district / chiefdom boundaries ✓ Formula for allocation of public resources to counties	5. Legislature hearings / debates and vote on LGA	July - October 2013
		5. Constitutional amendment to be drafted permitting elections of the three new political positions	6. Law Reform Commission which drafts amendments	January – June 2013
		6. Legislature approves amendment language	7. Both Houses of the Legislature approve language	October 2013
		7. Dissemination and discussion of amendment	8. Electoral Commission does dissemination	November 2013 – June 2014

**Figure 3: Remaining Actions and their Sequencing**

Key Actions to take / Issues to resolve	Status of Action / Issue as of Decentralization Assessment	What Action(s) remains to be done	By Whom / Whose Responsibility	When / Sequencing of Action
		8. Constitutional amendment voted on by citizenry	9. Electoral Commission organizes vote	October 2014
		9. Legislature must approve Amendment Results	10. Legislature reviews / confirms amendment election results	October – November 2014
		10. Rationalization of districts and chiefdoms, including the establishment of criteria for each administrative unit	11. Electoral Commission organizes and legislature approves redistricting plan; GC defines criteria	<p>October 2013:</p> <p>If mayoral and chieftaincy elections are to take place in 2014, then the rationalization / delimitation process would need to be completed and approved as part of the LGA</p> <p>October 2016:</p> <p>If there are no Mayoral and chieftaincy elections before October 2017 (LG elections) then there may be room to push this contentious issue further down the LG election continuum</p>
		11. The Electoral Commission announces / confirms LG election dates, including candidate criteria	12. Electoral Commission	October 2016
		12. Electoral lists need to be updated	13. Electoral Commission updates registration lists	October 2016

**Figure 3: Remaining Actions and their Sequencing**

Key Actions to take / Issues to resolve	Status of Action / Issue as of Decentralization Assessment	What Action(s) remains to be done	By Whom / Whose Responsibility	When / Sequencing of Action
		13. Some say a new Census has to be undertaken	14. Electoral Commission is responsible for census	2015
		14. Elections for Superintendent, DCs and CLA	15. Electoral Commission administers elections	October 2017
<b><i>Establishing Full Functional Local Governments (Creation of Administrative and Fiscal Rules and Infrastructure) with a degree (50 percent) of financial sustainability</i></b>				October 2020
1. Defining the local government civil service structure	Under way. Identified in Decentralization Implementation Action Plan	Needs to be completed	Civil Service Agency / MIA / Governance Commission	By the end of Phase 1 of the Decentralization Implementation Action Plan
2. Identifying the national civil service positions for transfer to LGs	Under way. Identified in Decentralization Implementation Action Plan	Needs to be completed	Civil Service Agency / MIA / Governance Commission / IMCD	By the end of Phase 1 of the Decentralization Implementation Action Plan
3. Formulating a plan for the transfer of staff positions from national to county administrations	Initial steps underway within the pilot Technical Ministries (e.g., health, education, Public Works and Agriculture)	These are deconcentration / administrative decentralization actions being undertaken on a pilot basis. They will continue like this for until the end of the first phase of the 10 year implementation strategy	Civil Service Agency / MIA / Governance Commission / IMCD	By the end of Phase 1 of the Decentralization Implementation Action Plan

**Figure 3: Remaining Actions and their Sequencing**

Key Actions to take / Issues to resolve	Status of Action / Issue as of Decentralization Assessment	What Action(s) remains to be done	By Whom / Whose Responsibility	When / Sequencing of Action
4. Training and/or retraining of the current and new civil servants;	Initial steps underway within the pilot Technical Ministries (e.g., health, education, Public Works and Agriculture)	Significantly more needs to be done	Civil Service Agency with concerned technical ministries	By the end of Phase 1 of the Decentralization Implementation Action Plan
5. Establishing election rules, systems and procedures, for use by local officials in the Superintendent, DC, Mayoral and traditional authority elections;	Not yet started. Identified in Decentralization Implementation Action Plan	Must adapt current rules and procedures for national elections to local elections	Electoral Commission and Legislature	By the end of Phase 2 of the Decentralization Implementation Action Plan
6. Articulating well-defined roles and responsibilities and the reporting and operational procedures of each layer of government (a component of civil service reforms);	Outlined in the President's Decentralization and Local Governance Policy	Must finalize these roles and responsibilities based on both the Policy and the Implementation Action Plan	Civil Service Agency	By the end of Phase 1 of the Decentralization Implementation Action Plan

**Figure 3: Remaining Actions and their Sequencing**

Key Actions to take / Issues to resolve	Status of Action / Issue as of Decentralization Assessment	What Action(s) remains to be done	By Whom / Whose Responsibility	When / Sequencing of Action
7. Developing a comprehensive set of manuals of standard operating procedures (SOP) for local government administration and	Not started. Identified in Decentralization Implementation Action Plan	Significant work remains	Civil Service Agency	By the end of Phase 1 of the Decentralization Implementation Action Plan
8. Public Financial Management procedures and targeted training in planning and budgeting, revenue administration and expenditure management, internal audit and oversight;	Not started; Identified in Decentralization Implementation Action Plan	Significant work remains	Ministry of Finance	By the end of Phase 1 of the Decentralization Implementation Action Plan

**Figure 3: Remaining Actions and their Sequencing**

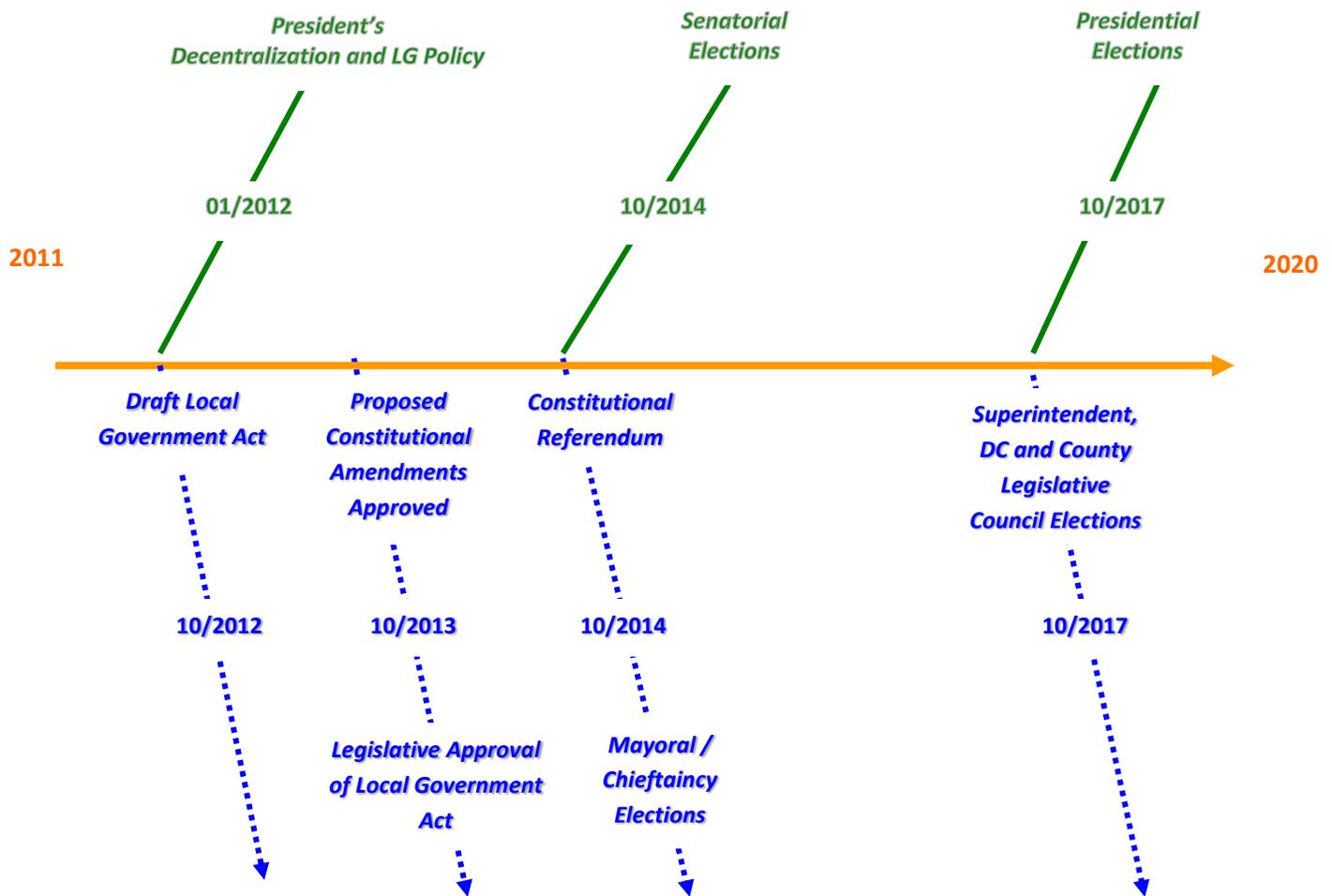
Key Actions to take / Issues to resolve	Status of Action / Issue as of Decentralization Assessment	What Action(s) remains to be done	By Whom / Whose Responsibility	When / Sequencing of Action
9. Strengthening the Decentralization Implementation Support Units within major line ministries,	Being supported by DPs (see chapter 3.4) for the four pilot technical ministries	There is room for other DPs to support the current Technical Ministries and those that will be added over time	IMCD / Concerned Technical Ministries with new ones added on as the implementation of the Decentralization Policy progresses	Immediately
10. Strengthening the MIA, to accelerate implementation of sector deconcentration to effectively serve as a secretariat to support the IMCD;	Being supported by DPs (see chapter 3.4)	There are several areas where donor support can be provided to the MIA and to the IMCD in particular	Ministry of Internal Affairs and IMCD	Immediately
11. Establishing County treasuries in all 15 counties;	Initial research underway with World Bank / IMF support	This work is ongoing with support from the IMF and World Bank to the MOF	Ministry of Finance	2015 - 2020

**Figure 3: Remaining Actions and their Sequencing**

Key Actions to take / Issues to resolve	Status of Action / Issue as of Decentralization Assessment	What Action(s) remains to be done	By Whom / Whose Responsibility	When / Sequencing of Action
12. Harmonizing the planning and budgeting cycle of central and local governments; and,	Identified in Decentralization Implementation Action Plan	This work is ongoing with support from the IMF and World Bank to the MOF	Ministry of Finance	Phase II of Decentralization Implementation Action Plan
13. Establishing an adequate and reliable revenue base for each county government and granting local governments the authority to set and collect taxes such as licensing and operating permits for local businesses.	Limited revenue collection is permitted in current legal framework ... but insufficient for fiscal autonomy	New policies and legal framework is required to ensure that financial sustainability of the Counties is minimally possible	Ministry of finance / the Legislature	Phase II of Decentralization Implementation Action Plan

The actions shown on the bottom of the graphic (in blue) are those that are considered the most important preconditions to the establishment of autonomous local governments consistent with the stated decentralization policies. They are not, as the previous discussions in section 4.1 and 4.2 point out, inclusive of all actions that are required to achieve full devolution. We take up each of the four planned actions with a discussion of what is entailed in achieving them by the date shown. It should be noted that the certitude of these dates was not always precise as different respondents gave different times and, in some cases, the same respondent modified his or her estimate of the date more than once.

**Figure 4: Timeline of Actual and Planned Political Decentralization Actions**



### ***Draft Local Government Act: October 2012***

The Local Government (LG) Act will contain the various provisions (e.g., political, administrative and fiscal) that are required to put County government on a solid legal footing. While the original plan was to have the LG Act in draft by August 2012, the date was shifting throughout our June 2012 visit. The Law is currently being drafted by the Law Reform Commission. Given two principal tasks that need to take place before the draft can be sent to the Legislature, our best estimate is that it will take a herculean effort to get it to the Legislature by October 2012. Those two principle tasks are:

- Ten analytical studies covering a number of key political, administrative and fiscal issues (e.g., fiscal, model city statutes, role of traditional authorities, corruption, reporting relationships) undertaken by the GC to inform the Local Government Law drafting process have either been completed in draft or will be submitted in July 2012. During the Team’s in-country visit, four<sup>7</sup> of the 10 studies (Model City Statutes, Role of Traditional Authorities, Anti-Corruption, and, Financial And Administrative Implications of Civil Service Decentralization) had been released in draft for comment at a mid-June meeting sponsored by MIA and the GC. We assume that the remaining six (to the best of our knowledge they include: Boundary Harmonization, Aid Coordination and Reporting Relationships and Financial Management and Local Audit) will be disseminated and discussed soon with a similarly wide range of concerned actors.
- Dissemination of and consultations on the laws’ provisions with concerned stakeholders. Before sending the draft law to the legislature, it will need to be vetted with members of the IMCD, other concerned MACs and, we would hope, concerned DPs, traditional authorities, civil society representatives and the private sector.

### ***Legislative approval of the Local Government Law: October 2013***

Debate and hearings within the House and Senate will, based on discussions with MIA, GC and the GRC, take the better part of a year to conclude and will necessarily have to deal with several contentious issues among the many provisions that will be incorporated into the law, especially:

- Criteria for boundary delimitations: One of the principal goals of the local government act according to a number of key respondents is to decrease the number of districts and cities from 158 and 16 respectively to a more rational number based on a set of evidence-based criteria and not the political machinations that led to uncontrolled fragmentation of the Counties. As discussed above, the rationalization and consolidation of territorial boundaries, i.e., town, clan, city, chiefdom and district, is a critical element for several steps in the establishment of autonomous local governments, including local elections and the constitutional referendum discussed below.
- A formula for the allocation of public resources to the Counties: How Liberia’s revenues will be shared between central government and counties, as well as between the counties themselves, will be one of the most difficult areas of negotiation among and between the members of the House and Senate as well as with the President and Cabinet.

In addition to the Legislative hearings, which should take place both in Monrovia and in the Counties, there needs to be a separate civic education dissemination and outreach effort of crucial proportions. Liberian citizens will have to live with the consequences of the law and should have the opportunity to fully participate in defining its content. While the GC has held consultations on both the President’s

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<sup>7</sup> The DA Team sent these four studies in draft to the Mission when we received them from the Governance Commission in mid-June.

Decentralization Policy and Vision 2030, the findings from our field visits indicate that they were limited to a relatively small group of County and district leaders (e.g., DC, paramount and perhaps clan chiefs, chairladies, youth leaders) who tend to be the same “default” representatives of the broader citizenry. This needs to be expanded significantly once the draft LG law is rolled out and should probably take place in a partnership between the MIA and a representative of civil society. NARDA, one of Liberia’s oldest research and advocacy NGOs, is currently undertaking a parallel “Visioning” consultation effort on behalf of civil society and in collaboration with the GC, an indication that the expertise to undertake such an effort exists locally.

The date of October 2013 is noted for passage of the LG Law because in October 2014, the expectation is to hold elections for Mayors and Chiefs along with the planned Senatorial elections. It has also been proposed by the GC and MIA that a constitutional referendum take place at the same time as the Senatorial elections, as discussed below.

#### ***Voting on Constitutional Amendments: October 2014***

As per Article 54 D of the Constitution, appointment of Superintendents is by President while Articles 56 A and B discusses the ability of the President to remove Paramount Chiefs. The intention is to hold a constitutional referendum on these amendments, and quite possibly others, at the same time as the Senatorial elections in October 2014. Articles 91 and 92 of the constitution govern amending the constitution. The constitution can be amended whenever either a proposal by 2/3 of the legislature or a petition containing 10,000 signatures of registered voters is approved by 2/3 of the legislature. Once the proposal is approved, the NEC must engage the nation in a civic education campaign publicizing the substance of the referendum. When multiple amendments are included, the constitution requires each must be presented in such a manner as to allow voters to vote on each provision individually. Moreover, the constitution provides the referendum take place *not sooner than* one year after approval of the proposal by the legislature. In our discussions with the Law Reform Commission, we were told that it would most likely be transformed into a *Constitutional Review Commission* to draft the new amendments.

#### ***Senatorial Elections: October 2014***

Government leaders have strongly indicated that they would like to hold Mayoral and Chieftaincy elections at the same time as Senatorial elections which are scheduled for October 2014. The senior Senatorial elections are first since the highest vote-getting senators were elected in 2005 for nine-year terms; Junior Senators serve six-year terms and were elected in the 2011 polls. This would, in our understanding, require validating and/or updating voter registration rolls prior to the holding of these elections. Perhaps more problematic is whether or not rationalization and consolidation of territorial boundaries, or new delimitation exercises, will need to take place to determine how many towns, clans, cities chiefdoms and districts will still exist and, therefore, where mayoral and chieftaincy elections will be held (new or revised constituencies). Whatever the case, Senatorial elections for senior Senators will take place in October 2014.

#### ***Rationalization and consolidation of territorial boundaries: October 2013***

In the absence of legislative action adopting a threshold formula that would form the basis for constitutionally mandated electoral districts that are both contiguous and exhibit population parity after a delimitation and demarcation exercise, Liberia’s elections have been conducted using temporary *electoral districts* instead of the constitutionally envisioned *electoral constituencies*. Furthermore, the constitution specifically requires a national census immediately precede any re-districting exercises so new constituencies are in accordance with new population figures. Additionally, it limits the total

number of constituencies must not exceed one hundred. Thus if Mayoral and Chieftaincy elections take place in October 2014 before the aforementioned, the election would be on the basis of now defunct and often irrelevant constituencies that governed the last chieftaincy election in 1986 presumably or yet another temporary configuration of voting blocs.

If a delimitation exercise is, in fact, required to hold chieftaincy and mayoral elections then this would require that the LG Act be passed in 2013, because the criteria that would determine the chiefdom and city delimitations would be incorporated as part of the law. This would then give roughly a year for the delimitation exercise to take place which would be confirmed through the gazetting of the new district and chiefdom boundaries. The question raised by several respondents both in and outside of government was whether there might be a requirement for a new census for either the elections, the delimitation exercise, or both.

#### ***Constitutional Referendum: October 2014***

Once the proposed amendments to the constitution have been approved, they are forwarded to the National Electoral Commission (NEC), which then places them in the Official Gazette and uses the information services of Liberia to make them widely known. Depending on the timing of a referendum, the NEC may conduct a voter registration exercise with the necessary exhibition, inspection and challenge of the voter roll. At this point the amendments must be broadly disseminated which again should be accompanied by a major civic education effort. The NEC is responsible to educate voters not only on the substance of the numerous proposals contained in the referendum, which the NEC Acting Chair estimated at nineteen to date, but also inform voters and candidates of their new constituencies. The new geographic areas often differ from common wisdom and logic adding to significant confusion. The importance of this cannot be overemphasized given the rather disastrous experience of the August 2011 referendum, which only contained four proposals, all of which failed, discussed in Chapter 3.0 above. Thus injecting a cautionary tale excessive haste may indicate for the success of the referendum. According to the NEC, the more time and resources to educate voters, the more likely the referendum will succeed and avoid politicized civic education at the hands of politicians.

#### ***Local Government Elections: October 2017***

The heart of a system of politically decentralized local government is the election of local government leaders by the citizens that will be governed by them, which in this case includes the County Superintendent, District Commissioners and members of the County Legislative Assembly. Given the President's strong endorsement of political decentralization and autonomous County governments; and, the many actions that have been discussed publically and recorded in this report, we have concluded that local government elections will be held to coincide with the next presidential elections in 2017. This is the end-point of the decentralization and local government timeline that we believe reflects the views of the principal GOL officials involved in this exciting enterprise. It is not, however, the end of the process of establishing effective and autonomous local governments but rather the starting point. The myriad actions that we described in detail in both this section and section 4.1 will still need to be completed in this regard. The year 2020, which would complete the Government's ten-year implementation plan, would hopefully see many of these actions completed or well along in the process. We discuss the reality of this plan in the following section.

### **4.3 Principal Devolution Conclusions and Recommendations**

Before commencing our discussion of the principal conclusions (4.3.1) and recommendations (4.3.2) emerging from our analysis of political decentralization, we want to very briefly summarize some of the most important findings that we noted in the first two sections of this chapter:

- Administrative unit fragmentation has led to non-viable (economically and socially as well as politically) unsustainable cities, districts and, by extension, Counties.
- There is a dearth of local level human resource capacity and a general lack of resources of all kinds, (e.g., human, financial, technological and capital assets).
- Sector-deconcentration, which we discuss in more detail in the following chapter, has been largely ad-hoc and uncoordinated, especially between the deconcentrating line ministries, agencies and local governments, principally the Superintendent and County Councils.
- County operational budgets are inadequate for the limited functions that local government is expected to carry out under the current system of centralized but slowly decentralizing governance.
- The expense, uncertainty of timing and organizational requirements for conducting local government elections including chiefs and mayors as well as Superintendents, DCs, CLAs elections is having a negative effect on peoples' belief in whether political decentralization will actually take place.
- There is an enormous lack of information about decentralization, economic and social development, and Liberian democratization more generally at the community level. One of the principal bright spots in the information and communications area is the important role that community radios have played as the primary source of news and information for citizens throughout the country.
- Consultations and information sharing by government have been limited to a rather narrow group of government, traditional authority and community leaders. This pertains to both decentralization and ongoing "visioning" exercises.
- Local government service is neither financially nor professionally attractive for most Liberian functionaries, which leads to the need for relevant incentives. As the country decentralizes with particularly the deconcentration efforts that are currently underway, but also the initial first steps in the devolution process, the large cadre of capable Liberians currently working in Monrovia will have to begin moving to the Counties. This is a considerable obstacle to decentralization in both its forms.
- The role of Legislative Caucuses in both CDF and SDF decision-making has been intrusive and not consistent with the intent of the rules governing both of these funding mechanisms. Whether they have been significant participants in the mismanagement of these funds, both of which were frozen by the President, is less important at this point than is clarifying their responsibilities vis-à-vis the two funds and transmitting them to the concerned committees and County Councils.
- The role of civil society in County deliberations remains unclear and for the most part County level CSOs have been marginalized in the forums where County decisions are made.
- The increased role for Chiefs foreseen in the new decentralization and local governance policy is a two-edged sword. There is a risk in chiefs maintaining socio-cultural norms and practices vis-à-vis both women and youth that are detrimental to their participation in County level decision-making.
- Inter-governmental transfers like the CDF and the SDF are already taking place under section 8 of the Budget Act of Fiscal Year 2011-2012. It is our understanding from discussions with the GC and MIA that the CDF will be replaced by budget allocations approved by the Legislature as part of the normal budgeting approval process and consistent with the yet to be developed resource allocation formula.
- Finally, while we were able to meet with only a few community-based organizations in each of the five Counties we visited, it is clear from our interactions with them and the intermediary NGOs that

support their efforts at the community level, that they have a potentially greater role in local governance than has been the case heretofore. From the more formalized PTAs and savings and credit associations to the traditional Susus and Kuus, CBOs seem able to reach and mobilize their members in way that government cannot, while also doing so sustainably. Like the Market Women's association that we met in Saniquille, the great majority of these local associations were unaware of the broader landscape of politics and governance in Liberia, including the current decentralization efforts underway, or the rights and obligations they have as citizens. They all seemed eager to know more about their country and ways in which could exercise their citizenship. How to build on this finding is taken up below.

#### **4.3.1 Principal Devolution Conclusions**

There is a critical mass of reforms now underway in Liberia that both support decentralization and are supported by it. We were impressed by the commitment of the GOL officials we met in Monrovia but also wary of past experiences with reform and specifically the inability to move from good public policy making to good public policy implementation, or as one of our respondents noted, the difficulty of moving from the theory of decentralization to its practice. We had the distinct impression that all the different reforms from land tenure to civil service were not always coordinated with decentralization in mind and that keeping on top of the many moving parts (laws, institutions, systems and processes) that are required to keep this critical national effort on track could have benefited from a more focused and inclusive effort, including greater participation from some of the more capable and representative CSOs.

We conclude that the right institutional framework has been developed to push decentralization reform forward with the MIA coordinating this effort under the auspices of the IMCD and supported by the GAC, GRC and several other key agencies. What is lacking, from our perspective, is a deeper pool of staff supporting the few professionals that are currently leading this exercise, a problem we realize that is not unique to decentralization reform. Given the relatively thin spread of professional expertise, we wonder if better integrating the GC and MIA, including housing it under one roof, might not help to address some of the human resource problems that were noted by the many officials with whom we talked. While the IMCD appears to be a good oversight and policy making body representing the highest level of government, we did not get the impression that there was someone who woke up every morning thinking about how to move the process along more quickly and effectively—a kind of chief decentralization ombudswoman or man intermediating between the implementers and policy makers and ensuring an inclusive “whole-of-government and society effort.”

Decentralization as devolution is a huge undertaking and requires both a long time horizon and adequate resources to ensure its success. It is, from our perspective, a true test of the Government's commitment to deepening Liberian democracy and promoting sustainable development and a true test of the country's development partners' commitment to Liberia. Our conclusion is that on both counts the commitment is ample but could benefit from greater coordination among the development partners and between them and concerned GOL agencies. We have detailed many, if not most, of the individual actions that need to take place, including support to the principal government agencies responsible for the implementation of decentralization. The question that this raises is where the significant level of financial wherewithal comes from to support these actions over a timeframe that exceeds the planning periods of most DPs who will be critical to the success of Liberian decentralization.

While no DP is capable of committing resources beyond its defined strategic planning period we think it would be useful to engage in a longer-term planning exercise first among DPs and later alongside their government counterparts that looks at the big picture over the stated decentralization implementation timeframe and at least prioritize those actions which are critical to its success with the aim of developing

a division of labor that builds on comparative advantage and available resources. Allied to developing a common strategic plan would be the construction of more creative joint funding mechanisms. We heard considerable support for more and better coordination among the DPs on both issues, but this seems to be common refrain in most countries from our experience, which of course, makes it no less true. We were asked to not only develop a timeline of the principal actions that need to take place for devolution to succeed, but to determine how reasonable it was to think that these actions would take place as planned culminating in local government elections in 2017 and the establishment of autonomous County governments shortly thereafter. To answer this question we need to look at the interim steps that condition the achievement of these two larger objectives:

- First, will elections for mayors and chiefs take place as suggested in 2014? It seems unlikely as there are too many preconditions that need to take place for these elections to take place such as territorial boundary delimitations, voter roll updates, consultations, civic education, not to mention actual campaigning.
- Secondly, will elections for Superintendents, DCs and CLAs be held by 2017? Our conclusion is that this is at best a 50 / 50 proposition for the same reasons noted above, plus the passage of the Local Government Act and holding of the Constitutional Referendum and all the ancillary actions they entail.
- Thirdly, can we expect that fully functioning, or even partially functioning, democratically elected local governments with a significant degree of devolved powers and adequate resources will be in place by 2017? It is our view that this is highly unlikely, but by 2020 it is possible, depending on what the metrics are that define partially or fully functioning.

One of the principal constraints to the above conclusion, even more so than resources, is the **Legislature** and its willingness to vote for the public good. We note the following in this regard:

- From our discussions with respondents in the Counties as well as in Monrovia, we heard that many legislators had mixed feelings about decentralization and how it would affect their influence in the Counties which has not been particularly positive to date if the stories about their interference in the CDF and SDF decisions are any gauge, not to mention the abysmal showing of both Representatives and Senators in the last elections. It was also mentioned that many legislators felt somewhat threatened by direct elections for County Legislative Assemblies as it would somehow decrease their own powers and authority, which in fact it might and which is not necessarily a negative given their previous performance.
- Furthermore, the legislature must approve the Local Government Law with its many contentious issues (e.g., resource allocation formula, territorial boundary redrawing) as well as approve the contents of the Constitutional Referendum and sign off on its eventual outcome. We question whether incentives exist for legislators to pass the Law, approve the contents of the referendum or sign-off on the results if it does not promote their personal rather than public interest. While they may agree to its substance, the politics of some of the provisions will be difficult to accept, and the latter is normally what motivates politicians. In this regard, our conclusion is that the incentives to act in the public good coming from the supply side, that is, from the legislators themselves is unlikely. Rather to achieve political decentralization, in which true devolution of power and resources to the County takes place, will require the demand of citizens, acting individually through their vote, and collectively as members of civil society organizations.

Without adequate resources necessary to implement decentralization policy and to support the operations of newly constituted local governments, the enterprise is likely to fail and call into question the legitimacy of local self-governance. This will require not only **an equitable distribution** of national

resources but also the ability of County governments to raise revenues locally. Both are possible but they will require a high degree of political will and a commitment to placing the national interest before more narrow personal interests. It also assumes that there will be sufficient resources from both Liberian and Development Partner sources.

In summary, there is considerable reason to believe that political decentralization has the commitment of the country's leaders and its people. Overcoming entrenched interests that have burrowed into the body politic over generations will not be easy to overcome but there are champions (see 4.3.2, below) in and out of government that must be mobilized into a broad-based constituency for decentralization reform. As we mentioned in passing in Chapter 3.0, the success of political decentralization will come not from the push of government on its own, but rather from the pull of an informed and active citizenry. The key will be to raise awareness among the country's people that they are, in fact, citizens, that they have what might be called certain inalienable rights with concomitant obligations, and that they are at the center of both Liberian politics and development.

#### **4.3.2 Principal Devolution Recommendations and Devolution Roadmap**

Support to Liberian **devolution** will depend on a tripartite partnership between government, civil society and development partners – and particularly identified champions in each – and their ability to maintain the momentum that this assessment has witnessed, push aggressively for achievement of key actions and overcome the identified constraints. We see short-, medium- and long-term opportunities that include:

##### **Step 1: Policy Dialogue – the Long-term**

In conjunction with both the Embassy and with Development Partners, maintaining pressure on the government to honor its policy commitment to political decentralization is critical. The principal DPs involved in support of decentralization in general and the United States in particular have developed a good deal of trust with Liberia's political leaders. This chapter has laid out in significant detail the issues that are and will constrain the ability of devolution to take place as expressed by the highest level of government and by Liberian citizens. The following policy dialogue actions are recommended:

- In the many forums where the US Mission meets its counterparts in government as well as in collaboration with its development partners, a push for a commitment on the time-table for the principal devolution actions, that is, voting on the Local Government Law, Mayoral and Chieftaincy elections, the Constitutional Referendum and Local Government Elections.
- We have noted that there are a number of institutional constraints to a better functioning and more efficient decentralization policy making and implementation structure. We believe that the IMCD should become more active (see step 2 below) and that the Governance Commission should be better integrated into the MIA. Either separately in collaboration with other DPs, USAID should push for a more coherent effort on the part of the GOL in moving the process forward with an improve policy making and implementation team.
- As noted above, we believe a joint strategic planning exercise with concerned DPs, i.e., WB, UNDP, IMF, SIDA, the EU, and GiZ, to fashion a longer-term common strategy and approach to support political decentralization, in order to ensure that a common position, to the extent it is possible, be reached on how to support decentralization, including a timeline with priorities and with a division of labor and resources agreed-upon to the identified action.
- A related recommendation would be to create a pooled, basket fund or similar common financing mechanism that would support the implementation of priority actions identified in the joint

strategic plan. With a division of labor identified in the strategic plan, not all priorities would pass through a pooled funding mechanism, as each DP has its own priorities as well. Clearly, the DP strategic plan would be refined with the GOL and serve as the basis for long-term support to decentralization.

## **Step 2: Support to Targeted GOL Institutions and Champions of Reform – Short- to Medium-term**

This is a two-track recommendation as it promotes both a supply and demand-side approach to achieving political decentralization objectives: 1) support to improving the capacity of concerned GOL Ministries, Agencies and Commissions involved in political decentralization (the supply-side); and, identifying and supporting champions of reform both inside government and in civil society (the demand-side. More specifically:

### ***The Supply-Side: Build Capacity for Implementing Reform***

- Consider support to key MACs involved in decentralization in concert with other concerned development partners. In this regard, there is a major opening for USAID/Liberia vis-à-vis the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Decentralization, which is the overall body responsible for the implementation of the decentralization and local government policy. This body has been, from our discussions, largely passive to date. It is our opinion that it could and should play a larger role in mobilizing government and the civil service to focus on the fundamental implementation actions that need to take place over the short to medium term to end in democratically elected local governments. No DP is currently providing any direct support to the IMCD and therein lays USAID's opening.
- As we noted in Chapter 3.4 , several DPs are currently providing technical assistance the MIA's Decentralization Implementation Secretariat, the Law Reform Commission and the Governance Commission. These are the key MACs involved in the implementation of decentralization policy. USAID/Liberia has no current support to them and, for whatever reasons, the lack of presence in these bodies has meant a lack of information coming from them (e.g., no knowledge of the GC's analytical studies or vetting meeting of the first four studies) and likely an inability to influence more directly the course of decentralization in the country. We recommend in this regard, discussions with other DPs concerning their future plans of support to these three MACs and to look for gaps where the Mission could support their technical needs. One immediate possibility is the likely conversion of the Law Reform Commission to a Constitutional Reform Commission that will be writing the new amendments to the constitution. Equally important, is the Governance Commission, which is, at this point, the principal brain trust of the MIA. Two of the member, at least, are former USAID heads of Implementing Partners (back in the 1990s) and are disposed to a more robust USAID support role.
- Given the increasing importance of administrative and fiscal decentralization to the efficiency and viability of local governments, both in the current configuration as extensions of the unitary state as well as in the future as democratically constituted and autonomous bodies, support to the MOF and CSA would critical interventions in the medium to long-term, particularly in addressing the range of actions noted in Table 1, above. This would require coordination with both the IMF (MOF) and World Bank (CSA), but there is currently little support for either MAC, and particularly the CSA.
- USAID has considerable experience in support of elections and has provided considerable assistance to both of Liberia's national elections. Much depends on whether or not the government is able to take the necessary steps outlined in this report that will lead to the election of mayors and chiefs in 2014, the holding of a constitutional referendum in 2014 and local government elections in 2017. Support to elections are medium to long-term steps in the broader decentralization process. The

focus in the short to medium-term should be on those actions that will lead to these elections and referendum.

- Once a better idea of how the GOL will proceed on decentralization, including the validity of the action timeline, **targeted assistance** to specific actions and institutions would be in order, preferably in concert with DPs, including support for:
  - ✓ Rationalizing and consolidating territorial boundaries with support to MIA;
  - ✓ The constitutional amendment process, including the Law Reform Commission and NEC;
  - ✓ Devising a formula for the equitable distribution of national and public resources;
  - ✓ Public sector reform including a review of MAC mandates and functions.

### ***The Demand-Side: Support Champions of Reform***

- It is critical that civil society play a greater role in both the policy and legislative debate over decentralization than it has to date. While we discuss this support in considerably greater detail in Chapter 6.0, suffice it to note here that there are a number of very capable civil society specialized support organizations (see Chapter 3.5, above) that have demonstrated a capacity to undertake policy research and fashion policy positions and advocate for them in a number of policy forums. USAID's current civil society projects are working with many of these CSOs, but not on specific aspects of the decentralization policy reform agenda. One of the principal targets of this demand-side capacity would be individual legislators and the legislature more broadly.
- The principal constituency for reform is the Liberian citizenry. We strongly recommend support for a massive grassroots campaign of civic education to create a **demand** for political decentralization. Our premise is that active citizens are informed citizens, thus making the purpose of this initiative one of ensuring that the information required to empower citizens around the subject of decentralization is readily available. We go into more detail on this particular recommendation in the concluding chapter of this report.
- Within the Liberian Government, we see the principal champions of reform to reside in the MIA (the Deputy Minister and the newly created decentralization secretariat), Governance Commission (virtually all the technocrats) and Law Reform Commission as well as several of the principal line ministries and particularly the Ministry of Health. It is for this reason that we believe providing technical assistance to one or more of these MACs along with the IMCD not only supports improved quality in their areas of responsibility, but makes good strategic sense in building a broader reform constituency within government.
- For every champion there is an opponent of reform ... or two. As we have noted in this Chapter, we see the Legislature as real constraint to decentralization reforms. We thus recommend that for the remainder of USAID's **Legislative support** program, activities should be reconfigured to issues and actions related to decentralization and sensitizing House and Senate members to them (improvements to supply-side). A specific focus should be directed to the concerned committees, particularly the **Governance Committee**, in each House. Consideration should be given to support for open hearings on decentralization and related reforms; research on the various issues that will be addressed in the LG Law; conducting in-house education and learning related to decentralization; and, promoting constituency outreach. This is both a demand- and a supply-side recommendation designed to improve the ability of those legislators with an interest to respond to the interests of their constituents; for those without such a concern, exposing them to their constituents would likely have more positive effect on their future actions in relation to decentralization.

- In the short-term and addressing the reality of the current local government situation, we recommend promoting actions that increase accountability, transparency & responsiveness by County leaders under existing local governance structure (e.g., posting of CDF, SDF expenditures, local auditing, broadening participation on concerned decision making bodies to civil society and other interests; proper role of legislative caucus). This can be accomplished through on-going projects under each of the DOs, particularly the DG SO and the several projects (IREX, Carter Center, Tetra Tech, etc.).

## V. DECONCENTRATION – SERVICE DELIVERY

In chapter 5.0 we turn to an analysis of decentralization as deconcentration and its impact on the delivery of public services. In section 5.1, we provide an analysis and principal findings related to deconcentration. In 5.2, we examine in detail how deconcentration is playing out in both the education and health sectors as they are the two most advanced in terms of transferring power and resources from Monrovia to the Counties, and they represent two of the largest of USAID’s investments under the CDCS. In Section 5.3, we present our principal conclusions and recommendations.

### Box 4: Deconcentration Scope of Work Questions

- As a part of the decentralization process, the GoL will need to ensure that functions and responsibilities, especially those related to decision-making powers, are clearly delineated at each level. How can USAID/Liberia support this important functional review and definition process, paying particular attention to its own on-going activities and portfolio?
- How can USAID support the GoL in order to ensure that a *realistic long-term capacity building plan*, at each administrative level, is in place as a part of the overall decentralization process?
- What are USAID/Liberia's key point(s) of entry for influencing how service delivery is standardized across Counties, thus ensuring a more equitable process whereby a Liberian's physical location does not determine the quality of service received?
- How can information flow on the roles and responsibilities of citizens, civil society, and government be maximized as a part of the GoL's Decentralization Policy as well as within USAID/Liberia's existing programs and activities?
- How can USAID assist in managing expectations and still facilitate civic engagement / participation (especially regarding the constitutional amendment process in the aftermath of the recent referendum)?

As noted in Chapter 3.0, deconcentration is one element in the GOL’s overall decentralization strategy. While the ground work for political decentralization will take the better part of a decade to achieve, improved service delivery through deconcentration is possible with a minimum of legal reform and, equally important it already has significant funding within the regular sector budgets. While there are certainly financial implications for deconcentrated service delivery as we discuss below, the underlying principal of deconcentration is to simply move existing resources, i.e., human, material and financial, down the organizational hierarchy, with the added benefit that they will also be more efficiently utilized.

### 5.1 The Analysis and Principal Deconcentration Findings

The following analysis and principal findings cut across the various sectors:

- Four Ministries form the vanguard in the government’s pilot deconcentration efforts: The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOHSW), the Ministry of Education, MOE, the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) and the Ministry of Public Works (MPW). The MOHSW is considered by the majority of our respondents to be the most advanced as we will discuss below, followed by the MOE. While the MOA has begun the process, it is still well behind the first two Ministries and

MPW is yet to move beyond the planning stage. The Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy and the Ministry of Water and Sanitation are in discussions with the IMCD on their future participation in deconcentrated service delivery. Each the four pilot Ministries has *Decentralization Implementation Support Units* embedded in their headquarters office. Coordination of these Support Units is expected to come from the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Decentralization but our discussions with the two concerned line ministries indicate that there has been no practical coordination coming from this high-level coordination body.

- The overall Decentralization Policy and its Implementation Plan view this first three years of the ten year plan as phase one in which the deconcentration of principal line ministries is the primary focus, including building their internal capacity from headquarters to the Counties.
- As noted earlier, a number of MACs have established regional offices, including Land Coordination Centers (Land Commission), RTTIs, Peace and Security Hubs, the FDA and the CSA which is now represented in four regions serving all 15 Counties;
- Deconcentration has largely been an ad-hoc undertaking and now needs to be harmonized with local governments;
- Two of the most appreciated decentralization institutions are the County Community Colleges and growing number of Banks opening branches in the Counties;

**Box 5: What we heard in the field**

- We need Monrovia to trust that our County Health Team knows what it is doing
- Teachers can be champions democratic reform
- If you want full political decentralization or even deconcentration then you need to give full responsibility to get full accountability
- How much decentralization does a small country like Liberia really need
- All the best schools, jobs and job opportunity, health care are in Monrovia ... all roads lead to Monrovia ... few lead out
- Plans, policies and programs are made in Monrovia and sent to the Counties for implementation
- Things are working well for our hospital under decentralization
- Participation without empowerment is manipulation.
- Decentralization will lead to competition for the best people / public servants and it will take inducements / incentives to get them

- Energy small hydro-electric schemes already demonstrate a decentralized form of self-governance as do the community forest management initiatives. As discussed in the concluding chapter, there positive lessons from these types of initiative that can built upon.
- The MOE, with MOF approval, has agreed to provide direct funding to RTTIs from the Treasury, thus providing an example of a public entity to achieve a significant degree of autonomy in the management of its own affairs. In our discussions with the head of the Zorzor RTTI, the first tranche of funding is expected in August 2012.
- Freedom of Information requests still require that the initiator go to Monrovia as there are no regional offices and in the majority of Counties, there is not yet an Information Officer capable

of handling FOI requests. The fact is that even if the relevant documents could be obtained in the Counties, the actual response is issued directly from Monrovia;

- Education and Health Policies both stress incremental transfer of functions and resources to the concerned County teams, which in terms of lessons learned from other decentralization efforts in Africa (e.g., Senegal, Ghana and Mali) are a reasonable to proceed;
- Local taxes and fees are collected by local governments and sent to Monrovia, which then reallocates these revenues to the Counties. It is rare that the amount collected is returned to the County in Toto.
- Education and health areas of operation are not in alignment with County or District administrative boundaries. There is no harmonization of administrative units (e.g., Counties and districts) with either health or education operating units. For instance, Nimba has 12 education districts but they do not align with its administrative districts.
- County Councils are operational and providing some oversight and making decisions on the use of CDF and SDF funding.
- Public Financial Management reform is expected to soon lead to the establishment of County Treasuries (devolution) and all concerned Ministries and Agencies are expected to deconcentrate responsibilities for certain expenditures to their County-level offices. The MOHSW is the only Ministry to transfer funds to its County Health Team for local management.
- Discussions are currently underway concerning the deconcentration of land acquisition functions (e.g., surveys, land titling) to the Counties.
- CSA has clarified that all teachers and health workers are part of and subject to national civil service rules and regulations;
- Both County Education Boards (CSB) and County Health Boards have been created under the relevant Ministerial policies to manage the education and health programs in their respective counties;
- The principal constraint to administrative decentralization is the lack of qualified staff; and
- There is no involvement of Superintendent and local government more broadly in matters related to the allocation and management of natural resources, including forests, land and water.

## **5.2 Deconcentrated Service Delivery: The Cases of Health and Education**

The following two sections provide an in-depth examination into how deconcentration works in two sectors, i.e., education and health, examining issues of administrative and fiscal decentralization. These two sectors were chosen because they are the most advanced in terms of the deconcentration to the Counties of their service delivery functions. They are also two of the three Development Objectives – the other being agriculture – in which the Mission has made considerable investments under the CDCS.

### **5.2.1 A Special Focus on Decentralization in the Education Sector**

#### ***Background and Context***

Since independence, Liberia's educational sector has been centralized with the Monrovia-based Ministry of Education overseeing all aspects of education policy-making and implementation in the Counties. However, problems arising from the centralized structure, further exacerbated by protracted civil war, necessitated drastic reforms. The vestiges of prolonged conflict had disastrous

consequences for the country's education system and further dramatized the grossly unequal access to education and poor quality of schools in the Counties. Post-secondary educational opportunities were virtually non-existent outside of Monrovia prior to recent deconcentration initiatives. A low estimate concludes 30 percent of schools were either damaged or destroyed in the war. Moreover, the war depleted the pool of qualified and trained teachers, especially in the rural areas.

The centralized system required that everything originate from Monrovia, including the disbursement of school supplies, salaries, even fuel allotments that were often consumed in the efforts to collect supplies from Monrovia. In our discussions with the Principal of Central High School in Nimba, he lamented on the fruitless trips to Monrovia he was obliged to make in order to receive chalk, desks and chairs woefully insufficient for the severely over-crowded school that has to sit in shifts to accommodate running a primary and secondary school in one building. Furthermore, with teachers recruited from Monrovia and then assigned in rural localities, schools often received ill-trained teachers who did not align in terms of skills with the vacancies in the rural schools. There are few incentives for qualified teachers to accept rural assignments given the living conditions, lacking electricity, water and suitable housing. Moreover, under the current system with salaries set by the MOE without regard to experience or assignment, there is little incentive to retain competent teachers.

Even basic functions such as locating sites for school construction were mandated from Monrovia, leading to poor geographic distribution of schools and gross regional disparities that resulted in a cluster of schools situated in one area and vast expanses of Counties without adequate government or private education. With all budgeting for schools handled centrally within MOE HQ, rural locations were often left to make do with what little they received, whenever they received it, if they received it at all. Again, in Nimba, educators remained unable to access monetary allotments, even though the PTA and County Councils continually appealed to the central ministry.

In direct response to problems arising from the centralized scheme, former Minister of Education Othello Gongar convened 250 educators at Cuttington University for the National Education Consultative Conference in April 2011. The conference drafted the New Education Act which adopted decentralization as its ultimate goal. A precursor to full-fledged decentralization is the deconcentration of the education sector which began in 2007 with the appointment of County Education Officers, who have the overall authority within the deconcentrated education system at the County level to implement the Ministry's education program.

The New Education Act of 2011 elaborates the structure of decentralization to be achieved in phases. Initial reforms will first occur at the County level, and are later envisioned to trickle down to the district level. Relying largely on the model of the Monrovia Consolidated School System (MCSS), established in 1964 by President Tolbert, the long term goal is for County School Boards to manage County education through effectively decentralized management, administration and budgeting. CSBs perfectly mimic the MCSS which is managed by a seven-member Council, chaired by a Presidential appointee who oversees all administrative functions of school management. The chairmanship of the MCSS is a part-time position. The Council in turn appoints a Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Controller, Personnel Director and three Instructional Directors. The Superintendent appoints principals and teachers, and can dismiss teachers on the recommendation of the principal. The Controller prepares the budget and defends it at the MOF who sets a ceiling. The Controller then re-submits the budget within the ceiling to the Deputy MOF for inclusion in the

national budget. The Superintendent receives monthly allotments and can spend money but every check must contain a signature from the Council chair. Teacher salaries are set by the GOL.

Additionally, educational deconcentration paved the way for branch campuses of the University of Liberia in three Counties, Lofa-agriculture, Nimba-technical and Grand Cape Mount-tourism. Community colleges with Nimba fully functional and Lofa slated to open this year are extremely well received decentralizing endeavors. In our discussions with students, many praised the new community colleges as one of the most successful and revered aspects of the country's decentralization efforts. For those unable or unwilling to migrate to Monrovia, the new branch campuses represent the first post-secondary educational opportunities in the Counties. Finally, three new rural teacher training institutes in Kakata, Zorzor and Webo are aimed at ensuring a steady stream of qualified teachers available to staff rural posts. Our findings from the field indicate, however, that the presence of rural teacher training institutes is not yet fully utilized; for example, Zorzor is currently at half capacity, with 216 enrolled out of a total 400 spaces available. Of the current student body, only 16 are women.

### ***Analysis and Principle Findings***

In the absence of budgetary allocations expected in August of this year, deconcentration exists primarily on paper. Though deconcentration of the educational sector is in full swing and marching towards a decentralized system, the failure to empower County educational staff through budgetary allotments minimizes their ability to deliver and fulfill their mandate. The lack of financial support prevents oversight and monitoring of schools. Salaries are still paid in a few centralized locations that result in absenteeism from schools by teachers collecting pay. Moreover, there is no direct link between performance, remuneration and output of teachers. Principals are powerless as salaries are set, irrespective of experience, by Monrovia.

The New Education Act, like its MCSS model, created a seven member CSB chaired by an MOE appointee and staffed by a membership nominated by County Superintendents, Traditional Authorities and prominent people from the various educational districts in the County. The CSB is mandated to facilitate, monitor and oversee operations of all school activity in the County, handle all educational matters, including paying salary and hiring/firing staff as well as preparing the budget for the MOE.

While CSBs have been constituted and their membership named, their efficiency varies greatly based on locality. They are supposed to meet monthly but in the absence of operational budgets or any logistical support, meetings are only achieved when members bear the costs. Not only are they not provided operational budgets, they have no access to budget line item allocations in the larger MOE budget, thus significantly limiting their ability to plan and function as a board.

Under the deconcentrated system, given the existence of a County Education Officer at the County level, the reporting structure is confused and duplicated with the CEO currently reporting to both the MOE and the CSB, often overlooking the Superintendent. The CSB structure created at the County level by the New Education Act is supplanted in the County alongside the County Education Officer who serves as secretary to the CSB, a direct MOE representative at the County level.

The CEOs were originally appointees of the MOE stationed at the county level who collected information from DEOs about schools and teachers and reported directly to the central ministry in Monrovia. Under the deconcentrated system, the CEO is slated to manage a five person staff

including finance, planning, management, monitoring and evaluation and logistics officers. Information collected by District Education Officers is transmitted to County Education Officers who then forward to the central ministry and the CSB with no clearly defined and established provisions for the inclusion of the office of the Superintendent. Moreover, specific responsibilities and functions governing the operational interaction between the CSB structure and the CEO installation are non-existent.

Crippling issues concerning staffing and payments continue to hamper all efforts at improved performance of schools and severely compromise the quality of education received. Though CSBs are supposed to have the authority and mandate to handle staffing, teachers are still assigned from Monrovia though in some proactive Counties like Grand Cape Mount where board members have taken the personal initiative to recommend competent individuals for scholarship study at the rural training institutes fare better, but do so at personal cost. In Nimba, principals complained of receiving ill-trained teachers much later than needed with often no personal ties to the location they are assigned. In Bomi, the CEO acknowledged not personally knowing many of his own staff.

Additionally, centralized payment of salaries, even under deconcentration, proves problematic to the overall functioning of schools. Payment centers and banks have not sufficiently decentralized from Monrovia to alleviate the absenteeism that accompanies collecting pay. For example in Nimba, Bomi and Grand Cape Mount, there are no banks in the County capitals, thus requiring rural teachers to continue missing on average one day a week in collecting their pay. In Grand Cape Mount where there are two payment sites, teachers in some districts must walk on average two to three days to collect their pay.

Larger problems surrounding retaining qualified teachers in the rural areas persist and necessitate a system that ensures teachers assigned to rural areas are incentivized sufficiently to fulfill their obligation. Moreover, there is a critical need for teachers with higher level qualifications than the current certificated graduates of rural training institutes. Lastly, though every school has a Parent Teacher Association (PTA), they are overwhelmed with supporting teachers to the detriment of their ability to provide oversight and other quality control functions. PTAs often provide housing for new teachers until they are officially placed on the payroll.

### ***Principle Conclusions and Recommendations***

While deconcentration is intended as a precursor to political decentralization, the impact to-date in Liberia has not produced the anticipated results, at least in the education sector. In the absence of fiscal control, CSBs and CEOs are unable to function, monitor or oversee the functioning of their schools. In all five Counties visited, CEOs recounted to us their inability to make site visits and oversee the quality of education because they lack vehicles and fuel. Additionally, the duplicated structure of CSBs and CEOs is a drain on limited resources and reduces output and clarity of role and function. The MOE is expected to hire the five-person County staff sometime in July 2012. Ultimately, given the lack of trained teachers committed to rural assignments, the deconcentration efforts have not produced the anticipated results. A more thorough analysis of the existing structures before drafting the New Education Act would have revealed this costly and confusing fact, an exercise that may well benefit other sectors as they deconcentrate services to the counties. Finally, while Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) and CSOs possess the passion to advocate for improved educational opportunities for their children, they often lack the organization and savvy to effectively translate that push into political will and results.

Decentralization is intended to reduce corruption and improve the quality of education as elected Superintendents and their administrations, which would include the County School Board, will be directly accountable to the citizenry. This direct check will minimize instances of corruption and non-performance as parents and students can hold the CSB directly responsible for actions, or the lack thereof. Moreover, realizing the pervasive inclusion of “ghosts” – individuals on the payroll who are not actually working, if they are even alive – will likely dissipate or decrease when County officials are held accountable for the performance of schools in their Counties.

It is recommended that USAID support the strengthening of PTAs’ capacity so that they can transition from their current support role into a more advocacy-oriented oversight body leading to the improved quality of instruction and ultimately improve the quality of rural education. Similarly, we recommend that the Mission use its considerable influence to promote election of County School Boards rather than the current system in which the CSBs are appointed by the County Superintendents. Even under a deconcentrated system of governance, citizens generally and parents specifically should have the right to elect the bodies that are going to manage their children’s education and spend their tax dollars.

Alongside these recommendation is the need to strengthen monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation under decentralization to ensure enhanced performance by schools and students. PTAs and CSOs with enhanced capacity will hopefully result in more effective advocates.

Undoubtedly, the largest challenge to fully implementing a decentralized education system in Liberia is the need to train, recruit and retain qualified staff at the County level. Moreover, in furtherance of USAID’s commitment to quality, as opposed to quantity, incentives to lure qualified teachers to rural areas must be considered. Otherwise the output of a decentralized school system will not differ greatly from the current model.

This is specifically true as it relates to women’s inclusion in rural training institutes which to date has lagged far behind men primarily due to the lack of competitive salary and opportunity. According to the Director of the Zorzor facility, women who would qualify to become teachers seek more lucrative employment opportunities with professional development and growth included like office support staff and bank functionaries in Monrovia. Additionally, there is a lot of mis-information concerning women who have children or are pregnant and their eligibility to apply and enroll that has discouraged women. Thus it is recommended that financial incentives or some value for service accompany rural appointments and the recruitment of women.

It is recommended that USAID make every effort to focus resources on rural teacher training to decrease or at least eliminate regional disparities. Currently, there is a vast difference between counties on their overall productivity and work culture that require narrowly tailored initiatives in all programming initiatives. Regional disparities must be eliminated to ensure a diverse enrollment in rural training institutes that graduate qualified teachers more likely to remain in a location where they have long standing familial ties. Such would also presumably reduce the need to assign teachers hired in Monrovia to far flung rural outposts they more often than not desert.

It is further recommended that USAID capitalize on the opportune moment to support the inclusion of a robust civic education component in the national curriculum. In advance of decentralization, sustained efforts to improve the political aptitude of rural Liberians will ultimately facilitate the

transition from a unitary state to a decentralized system with a functional local governance structure that effectively responds to citizen demands.

### **5.2.2 Special Focus on Decentralization in the Health Sector**

#### **Background and Context**

As with education, the war decimated the country's health infrastructure and human resource base. Prior to the war, more than two-thirds of the country's health services were delivered by NGOs and faith-based organizations in particular. The Christian Health Association of Liberia, an apex NGO representing the Churches working in health care, was a de facto parallel MOH. The war, and earlier disagreements with the Taylor regime, however, significantly decreased the major role that churches played in the provision of health services, similar to the fate of Church-run educational institutions.

In 2006, President Johnson-Sirleaf made her first pronouncement on decentralization by encouraging her government to move closer to the people. This signaled, to those who heard it, a significant break with the past. Centralization had not only been found to be ineffective in delivering services and contributing to the welfare of Liberians, it was inefficient because it raised the cost of delivering these services as virtually every administrative and financial function was undertaken in Monrovia.

The MOHSW was the first MAC to respond to the President's call and after two years of preparations, it began, in 2010, to deconcentrate its service delivery efforts to the counties through a series of administrative and fiscal decentralization actions. The rationale was as simple as it was fundamental: by ensuring equitable access to and improved quality of health services there would be a commensurate increase by Liberians in the utilization of these health services. The policy and institutional framework which guided the MOHSW's approach to deconcentration was a five-year Concept Note, a 10-year National Health and Social Welfare Decentralization Policy Strategy, and the National Health Policy and Plan (2007-2011). The institutional and policy framework included:

- The conduct of functional assessments by HQ to determine which functions to deconcentrate to the Counties and which ones to retain in Monrovia, including a strong emphasis on shifting functions, authority and resources to the County and District levels. This was complimented more recently by capacity assessments of County Health Teams in Bong, Lofa and Nimba Counties;
- Provisions for a number of County and District health structures and positions, including County Health Boards (CHB), County and District Health teams (CHTs and DHTs), and at the local level Community Health Development Committees (CHDC). The new positions created included County and District Health Officers and community health workers (CHWs) who were to nominated by the CHDCs;
- Promotion of citizen participation in decision making around service delivery issues and monitoring the performance of the various entities and positions created, this latter function an element in the development of an accountability framework that held the providers of health services responsible for their performance in the delivery of these services; and
- Accreditation of health facilities on an annual basis.

### ***Analysis and Principal Findings***

- CHBs, like CEBs, are chaired by Superintendents who appoint its members including DCs NGOs, and youth and women’s representatives;
- Eighty percent of health services are being managed by international NGOs (INGOs), who have essentially replaced the major role that churches played through the early 1990s;
- Structurally and functionally, the health sector has already achieved a significant degree of deconcentration with the principal divisions at the HQ level, (e.g., nutrition, child survival, monitoring and evaluation), now represented at the County level;
- Contracting of health services, that is, the 80 percent that are being managed by INGOs, is undertaken by either the Pool Fund supported by several DPs, including the DFID, UNICEF, Irish Aid and Swiss Development Cooperation, or RBHS, which is USAID- or EU-funded. In either case, input from County Health Teams is minimal although they do participate to some degree in selecting the NGOs and they also provide technical supervision to the NGOs;
- Quarterly allotments are now made directly to the CHSWTs; budgets are made locally, sent to HQ, revised as necessary and then sent to House of Representatives for approval;
- County Health Boards are responsible for monitoring the use of funds transferred from HQ to the CHTs and are also supposed to monitor health facilities under their jurisdiction;
- Performance-based contracting (PBC) has led to direct allocations to CHSWTs in seven Counties being managed under the RBHS program.
  - The RBHS approach was mainly focused on contracting out to NGOs in seven counties. Options for “contracting in” (health facility management by the CHT itself) or “contracting out” (the CHSWT contract health facility management to INGOs) are also options. Bomi County, the first of three pilot Counties supported by RBHS offers an excellent example of what the system is capable of in terms of delivery quality health services through deconcentration. MOHSW wants to scale up contracting to in to other counties namely Bong and Grand Bassa Counties.
  - A condition of the direct funding of CHSWTs under PBF is the requirement that they report on 19 indicators (14 health-related and 5 process-oriented) each quarter in order to receive performance bonuses;
- Financial records for health facilities have been turned over to the concerned County Health Teams by Monrovia, an indication that fiscal decentralization is being taken seriously by the MOHSW;
- Salary payments to health staff are better than before the devolution of resources to the counties and the opening of bank accounts but only where banks are in proximity to health facilities which is not many as we noted in the previous discussion of the education sector;
- Quarterly allotments are often late and budget requests are often a fraction of what was requested;
- Health Staff are divided between MOHSW-employed and MOHSW-contracted. These two categories of employment, which are the same throughout the Liberia civil service MOHSW, also has two different remuneration systems: government employees in the civil service are paid a core salary in Liberian Dollars which is “topped-off” by payments made in US Dollars while contract employees are paid in US Dollars only. Dollar funding, whether for incentive payments for health workers in the civil service; or, to pay the pay incentives for contract employees of, is made available through either RBHS or the Pool Fund. A good example of how these two

systems operate side by side is the Saniquille Referral Hospital in Nimba County. In our discussions with the Hospital Administrator, he noted that of the 100 employees employed by the hospital only six are government employees versus 94 who are contracted utilizing pooled funds.

- County Health Boards' oversight of CHSWTs is mixed at best. In Voinjama, for instance, the CHT told us that they had not had a CHB meeting since 2008; and,
- Community Health Development Committees (CHCD) are responsible for the management and oversight of health facilities and CHWs.

### ***Principal Conclusions and Recommendations***

It is clear why the MOHSW is the most advanced of all MACs in the deconcentration of public service delivery and why it is considered Liberia's flagship Ministry. From our meetings with CHSWTs in each of the five Counties we visited, but particularly in Bomi, the enthusiasm of team members was palpable and their ability to effectively and efficiently deliver health services had improved significantly since 2010. Where RBHS, in particular, was able to institute a performance-based contracting system with an established set of performance indicators tied to the continued receipt of performance bonuses, the anticipated health results, as measured by the performance indicators appeared to be both real. Whether they are lasting and the system itself is a sustainable one is open to question.

The role of DPs in the financing and hence success of health service delivery has obviously been critical, particularly in the ability to promote innovations in the delivery of services with an emphasis on developing incentives for good performance. Having said that, the bifurcated employment system, i.e., civil servants and contractors, including dual payment structures (core and incentive payments; LD and USD), made possible by the DPs, is clearly unsustainable and poses a challenge to decentralization in both its forms.

At the very least, it is our recommendation that from wherever the source of funding, a common fund should be established from which the payment of salaries for whatever class of employee is made. And, while it is understandable that keeping the wage bill down by keeping most staff off the books is something that is desired by both the Liberian government and its development partners, it is really little more than a fiction creating uncertainty and low morale for contract staff. While we understand that the MOHSW plans to rationalize its staff and bring all 7000 (at last count) under one payment structure for long-term sustainability, been conducting a pay, remuneration, and staff satisfaction survey to get at morale and sustainability issues, we are in no position to know how are whether these actions will have an impact on addressing the issues we raise here.

As is the case with education, we saw little coordination between the Superintendent and the CHSWTs, either in the areas of planning and budgeting or service delivery oversight. For instance, we saw no evidence of taking MOHSW resources and County resources (SDF/CDF) and using them rationally to achieve common County results related to health care outcomes. USAID, through RBHS or its follow-on, should begin exploring ways to promote joint efforts, particularly in health system planning and monitoring of health services in the Counties.

While there was evidence that the County Health Board was working as intended in Bomi County, our discussions with the other four County teams indicated that the Boards met only sporadically if they met at all. Equally important, we heard virtually nothing about the role of Community Health Development Committees (CHDC) in the management of health service delivery in any of the five

counties. Like the PTAs in the education sector, these community-based committees should play a greater role in the monitoring and oversight of health facilities in their areas of operation and in supervising and supporting the work of community health workers. We believe a major part of the problem is that members of CHBs are appointed by the Superintendent thus taking ownership away from those who are most affected by health care providers. We thus make the same recommendation as we did in the preceding section on education, that is, USAID should use its good offices to encourage the MOHSW to revise its policy on CHBs and rather promote elections of its members.

A uniform complaint heard across the Counties was the strong desire of CHSWTs to have a larger say in who manages their health care system. The current model, which utilizes INGOs as intermediaries to manage donor funding is not, when examined closely, as innovative as it could be if it used Liberian NGO implementing partners, which is what our recommendation is to USAID. While there is the oft heard rejoinder that there are few if any capable NGOs to take on such a responsibility (the negative feedback loop), USAID Forward specifically addresses this issue. We suggest that more attention be paid to how such a strategy could be put into place, even if there is no immediate possibility to contract local NGOs.

The key challenge in the health sector, like it is in all sectors, is to train and retain staff. One obvious answer to this problem as we noted in Chapter 4.0, is to begin moving Monrovia-based staff, many with the best qualifications, to the counties. Again, this is not something that can happen quickly, but developing a well thought-out strategy, including resource requirements, and preferably with other DPs, is an action that should take place now or effective deconcentration is likely to be delayed longer than might be the case with such a plan.

Finally, we believe that CHSWTs' responsibilities and authorities should be more quickly increased as they prove their effectiveness, perhaps on a County by County basis. As the Bomi County Health Officer stated, "*We need Monrovia to Trust Us.*" Several of the CHSWTs made recommendations where they thought greater responsibilities could be transferred to the County Teams include: (i) payment of salaries directly by the County Health Teams; (ii) procurement of drugs and other medical supplies; (iii) management of their training requirement while ensuring that each County has equal access to training opportunities at concerned institutions; and, (iv) Encourage allotments to be provided at the beginning of each fiscal year.

### **5.3 Overall Deconcentration Conclusions and Recommendations**

The two sector cases presented above provide significant evidence that deconcentration can work to improve service delivery, is working rather well in the health sector, and through comparison with each other, where improvements can be made. Before moving to a discussion of our overall conclusions and recommendations, we turn for a moment to examine in a summary fashion some of the findings that we extracted from our readings and interviews related to (a) natural resource management and particularly community forestry management; and (b) small scale hydro-electric programs.

Natural resource management (NRM) has several areas of importance to deconcentration and none more so than the area of conflict management, addressing such issues as the role of traditional authorities in resolving conflict, the use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) techniques and mechanisms, the growing abuse of Private Use Permits, and harmonizing customary and statutory law. USAID has considerable experience in this area and its current implementing partners, including

TetraTech, the Carter Center and IREX are all ably managing a number of projects that address these issues.

Given this existing expertise, our interest takes us to an examination of community forestry and the concept of self- or co-governance. As a result of the war and the embargo that was placed on Liberian timber, new and more flexible ways of thinking emerged about how to allocate and manage Liberia's considerable forests and the resources contained in them. The 2009 Community Rights Law With Respect to Forest Lands (CRL) provided for communities entering into a forest use contract with the Forest Development Authority (FDA) to manage and exploit in a sustainable manner the forests that have been part of their patrimony since time immemorial. Concerned communities could register with FDA as a Community Forest Management Body (CFMB) and then negotiate a contract for the management of the concerned forest. These voluntarily formed, self-governing associations were thus given the right to co-manage a given forest and benefit from its exploitation. Self- or co-governance is more aptly considered the devolution of power from the central state to an autonomous non-state actor acting in the public interest (the management of a public or common good, i.e., a forest).

Similarly, in our discussions with Winrock International staff around their energy sector project, they pointed out that one of their activities was the creation of a rural electrification type self-governing association that would manage electricity generated from a mini-hydroelectric facility for a public purpose. The Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy agreed that the self-governing association created to manage this facility could undertake the effort independently as long as it remained within the existing laws governing the generation and sale of electricity. This is another example of an association having power devolved to it to undertake a public function normally reserved for government.

Both the examples cited above of self-governance indicate that devolution of power also takes place within sectors and not just in the more "political" domain, which brings us back full circle to our discussion of deconcentration in the health and education sectors. There is a view among many donors, and not a few CSOs, that the primary job of civil society is to act as a countervailing force to the state, provide oversight of its performance of the public good and generally to demand that the state supply good governance defined as formulating good policy and delivering good public services. This conception of civil society's role in a democracy is true, but it only focuses on the part of the equation of a "public" actor working within a system of democratic or shared governance.

One of the principal conclusions of our review of public service delivery and deconcentration is that there is a greater role than has been the case for CBOs such as PTAs and Community Health Development Committees in co-governing alongside, rather than replacing, concerned state institutions involved in the delivery of health and education services. These CBOs should be a key partner with the County Education and Health Boards respectively, working with them to improve the quality of health and education in their Counties with an additional focus on the schools and health facilities that they support in their communities. The reality is, based on our above analysis, neither the County Boards nor the relevant CBOs seem to have a meaningful role in health and education governance matters in the Counties. The issue is that there is not any meaningful linkage between the deconcentrated line Ministry staff at the county level who are still responsible to their headquarters, and the appointed Country Administration under the MIA. While the PTAs and CHDCs do have a demand-side role in these matters, they have an equally important role on the supply-side working to improve the welfare of the children and neighboring community members.

In summary, CBOs and some intermediary CSOs that are membership-based, including federations of CBOs working at higher levels of governance, have, depending on what their purpose is, either a self-governing (CFMC) or a co-governing (PTA) role in their communities and merit support from USAID through its sectoral programs. This would include promoting sectoral policies (laws and regulations) as well as political decentralization laws that permit CBOs and intermediary CSOs to undertake self- and co-governance functions.

## VI. SYNTHESIS AND OVERALL DECENTRALIZATION CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This concluding chapter provides a brief synthesis of the two principal SOW objectives, i.e., political decentralization and devolution along with several overall conclusions and recommendations that transcend those found in the two preceding chapters.

### 6.1 Overall Conclusions and Recommendations

The ten-year Decentralization Implementation Plan shows the synergy between and interconnectedness of deconcentration and devolution. Deconcentration is intended to create the foundation for devolution by improving service delivery through the transfer of certain authorities, functions and resources from a line ministry's headquarters in Monrovia to its branch office in the Counties, while County Administrations gain some new powers and resources but remain tethered to central government with their own elected representatives. Deconcentration, it is hypothesized, will increase the legitimacy of government at all levels as citizens gain better access to public services whose quality has improved and which is more equitably distributed than in the past. Over time, the critical actions that are necessary for a politically autonomous County government to be created will be implemented culminating in elections for local government leaders. This is a reasonable scenario but comes with certain caveats and risks:

- There is a need to begin harmonizing the efforts of deconcentration with devolution, keeping a very clear eye on the ultimate goal which is devolution. For USAID, and other DPs, this means ensuring that its sectoral DOs look at how their programs can simultaneously promote sectoral objectives while contributing to political decentralization.
- The risk in focusing on deconcentration is that it continues the pattern of Executive domination, identified in the recent DG Assessment (Tripp and Grossman, 2012) as the principal democracy and governance problem, albeit in a democratic context, which in some ways is more insidious than good old plain authoritarianism with which Liberians are intimately familiar. As a consequence, deconcentration and improved service delivery will likely lessen the urgency for devolution of power and resources to democratically elected County governments, particularly when overcoming the many hurdles to devolution makes it easier to delay than to act. When Liberians talk about “Danger in Delay” this is how it translates in the political decentralization process.
- The key to an incremental approach to achieving devolution will be to create “facts on the ground” that deconcentrated services work and that County Administrations have begun to prove their ability to plan, manage and monitor/evaluate the resources that are provided to them (CDF/SDF). Creating facts on the ground also means that each and every devolution action as discussed in Chapter 4.0 is itself critical to the achievement of another action and that reaching a critical mass of such actions makes demand for devolution irreversible. The devolution timeline shown in Figure 3 above (4.2) gives the impression that devolution is a linear series of discrete events that culminate in the promised land. Unfortunately, neither life nor decentralization is quite so orderly. USAID, along with other DPs and reform champions in government and civil society, will need to maintain pressure on Liberia's leaders to achieve as many devolution actions as it can, in whatever order makes most sense.

## 6.2 Cross-cutting Strategy Guidance

To support the deconcentration to devolution continuum in a way that actually leads to devolution and not just strengthened line Ministries and weak county administrations, we recommend a two-pronged strategy:

The first prong is to undertake what might be called a “small DG” strategy in which both devolution and deconcentration actions are undertaken simultaneously within the technical DOs, that is, health, education and economic growth (natural resource management). As the DOs work with their government counterparts to improve their capacity to deliver services (deconcentration supply-side) they are also working to strengthen both local level civil society actors and the intermediary CSOs that support them (devolution demand-side). As noted in the preceding section, each sectoral DO should balance its deconcentration efforts with devolution actions. For instance:

- Build up the demand-side by working with CBOs such as PTAs, community health development committees, farmers associations, resource user groups to:
  - get a seat at the **policy making** table; provide oversight of their respective service providers (e.g., schools, health facilities, extension services) or concessionaires;
  - participate in performance-based contract **reviews**, citizen score cards, evaluations, etc.
- Encourage concerned MACs to include intermediary NGOs and CBOs in the design, planning, management and evaluation of their programs and service delivery performance; and, to participate on committees that decide on the allocation and management of public resources, including the SDF and CDF.
- A good principle that should guide the deconcentration – devolution balance is subsidiarity, or whatever can be done at the lowest level of governance, either by deconcentrated MAC or County government or a CBO. The question that should be asked by USAID, its implementing partners and concerned GOL MACs, is who is best placed to sustainably undertake the provision of a good or service: is it central government through a deconcentrated MAC? Local government through a Health or Education Board? Or, is it a CSO, such as a PTA or natural resource user group. These are questions that are as pertinent in Liberia as they are in the US today.
- Encourage concerned MACs to better coordinate their activities with the County Administrative Team, including participation planning exercises for CDF and SDF.

While the first prong of the strategy is a combination of demand and supply-side interventions designed to get government to undertake those actions for which only it has a mandate, the second prong is purely demand-side in nature and is more akin to a traditional “big DG” strategy managed by the DG DO team. In this regard, we have recommended throughout this assessment that the push of government must be met by the pull of civil society. As such, we propose a more coherent strategy for increasing the effectiveness of the demand-side than was presented in Chapter 4.0:

We recommend that USAID, through its DG DO, and preferably with like-minded DPs, support a long-term and coherent program to first strengthen local level civil society or as we noted in Figure 3, the primary level of association and secondly to strengthen the linkages between it and intermediary CSOs and ultimately Specialized Support Organizations at the national level. The

purpose of such a program is not just as a means to “demand” good governance from local government, but to begin the supply of good governance through co-governance and self-governance efforts that enhance the quality of social and economic life as it builds democratic practice by citizens participating in collective efforts that they voluntarily choose to associate around. Consistent with earlier recommendation on the need for a massive civic education campaign on decentralization (development and democracy) the following specific actions are put forth:

- Use an “all-of-the-above” strategy to educate citizens about their democracy, the role of decentralization in promoting it and sustainable development which in turn mobilizes them to act in promoting and defending their interests, particularly as relates to decentralization. Elements of the strategy include: ramping up and expand support to community radio stations; supporting intermediary CSOs to provide capacity building to CBOs; supporting the proposed youth democracy or civic action corps (see below) as the principal on-the-ground strategy for education communities; considering assistance to support regional CSOs to create regional CSO hubs to support the initiatives of County-level CSOs/CBOs and to engage in supra-County advocacy efforts; supporting the development of civic education materials for use in the widespread dissemination of information of all sorts (e.g., health, forestry, etc.) and community forums that bring their legislative representatives before their constituents to discuss issues of concern.
- Consider creating a **youth democracy (or civic action) corps** with at least two volunteers, one male and one female, preferably per chiefdom, but at a minimum at the District level with a resource center that can be used for sectoral program information and dissemination as well as serving as the focal point for moving the devolution reform agenda along at the grassroots level.
- Target CBOs, both traditional and more modern ones, as communication channels to reach citizens throughout the country. Provide capacity building for internal CBO democratic self-governance and advocacy and oversight skills with intermediary CSOs being the principal technical assistance and training providers. A necessary first step in this regard and one that is strongly recommended is to conduct an *Associational life Mapping Exercise* to get a better understanding of the contours of associational life at the County level and below.
- USAID’s several civil society projects should recalibrate their approach and focus on strengthening civil society from the ground up to support decentralization and local governance efforts. Such a strategy does not simply end with CBOs but looks at how both the intermediary and tertiary levels of civil society can be strengthened to create a strong sector with strong foundation of CBOs.
- Consider (strongly) joining with other DPs and INGOs to develop a basket fund in support of civil society bottoms-up decentralization strategy.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: SCOPE OF WORK

### **Part II Decentralization Assessment**

#### **A. Decentralization Overview**

In early January 2012, Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf launched the National Policy on Decentralization and Local Governance, stating it was “meant to send a strong signal, strong and clear, to the Liberian people of my determination to ensure that they are active partners with government in the delivery of services and in the governance of their communities and counties.” In support of implementing this policy, the Governance Commission with the Ministries of Finance and Internal Affairs, has established a working group of key ministries, agencies and commissions (MACs) and donors to develop a three-year Deconcentration Plan meant to be the first step in the long-term process of decentralization. This process, although in its infancy, envisions deconcentrated service delivery by ten pilot ministries in 3-5 pilot counties within three years. Lessons learned during this test period will be incorporated into future advances in deconcentration. These lessons will also lend themselves to the decentralization process during the development of the legal, administrative and fiscal framework for implementation.

USAID/Liberia’s draft Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) does not envision a separate decentralization program but proposes an approach which follows the central government lead while anticipating the necessary steps for implementing each stage of the decentralization and deconcentration process. For example, before local elections can take place, constitutional changes/amendments are required. The decentralization assessment should enumerate the requisite steps required for these constitutional changes (i.e. legislative process, referendum, enactment, etc.), timeline, and follow-up actions that are necessary. For deconcentration of service delivery, the analysis will need to take into account how USAID is approaching this within the context of health, education, and agriculture, infrastructure, and natural resource management and what, if any, program modifications will be required to align these programs with likely GOL policy direction within the timespan of CDCS implementation. (For additional background information see Annex B.)

#### **B. Decentralization Assessment Methodology**

This assessment will inform the development and implementation of USAID/Liberia’s decentralization strategy including the design of future and implementation of on-going activities across USAID/Liberia technical teams (i.e. Education, Health, Economic Growth, and Democracy and Governance) through a country-level analysis and will enable USAID to make planning and implementation decisions, and inform future activities for decentralization and deconcentration across the Mission. A successful and operationally useful assessment will be evidence-based with analysis and conclusions drawn from systematically gathered data and will be reflective of the needs of the Mission. The assessment will be cognizant of the institutional structures, political dynamics, stakeholders, interests, and incentives that influence and affect development outcomes within Liberia.

Questions to be answered include:

### *Political Decentralization*

- What challenges and opportunities do current decentralization strategies and directions bring to current programs in health, education, agriculture, infrastructure and DG in order to meet immediate and future needs?
- What type of donor assistance will be required to address immediate and potential challenges and opportunities related to decentralization?
- What are the largest gaps in meeting these immediate and potential needs that are not being covered or supported by USAID or other donors?
- What is USAID's role given other donors' approaches to date?
- What are the most likely challenges/pitfalls given both the mix of high level political and implementation action required?
- What major results should USAID expect to deliver through a mid-to-long-term decentralization strategy?

### *Service Delivery*

- As a part of the decentralization process, the GoL will need to ensure that functions and responsibilities, especially those related to decision-making powers, are clearly delineated at each level. How can USAID/Liberia support this important functional review and definition process, paying particular attention to its own on-going activities and portfolio?
- How can USAID support the GoL in order to ensure that a realistic long-term capacity building plan, at each administrative level, is in place as a part of the overall decentralization process?
- What are USAID/Liberia's key point(s) of entry for influencing how service delivery is standardized across counties, thus ensuring a more equitable process whereby a Liberian's physical location does not determine the quality of service received?
- How can information flow on the roles and responsibilities of citizens, civil society, and government be maximized as a part of the GoL's Decentralization Policy as well as within USAID/Liberia's existing programs and activities?
- How can USAID assist in managing expectations and still facilitate civic engagement/participation (especially regarding the constitutional amendment process in the aftermath of the recent referendum)?

The assessment will include four phases (literature review, data collection, analysis, and recommendations) and will serve as an analytical tool for developing a cross-cutting decentralization and deconcentrated service delivery strategy. It will also provide recommendations on how that strategy best may be embedded across technical teams.

The literature review will, at a minimum, consider: the National Policy on Decentralization and Local Governance, the Governance Commission's National Deconcentration Program Plan, USAID/Liberia's CDCS, the draft DG assessment (anticipated during the decentralization assessment field work), USAID/Liberia's annual Performance Plan and Report, the GOL's Medium Term Economic Growth and Development Strategy 2012-2017, and Liberia Rising 2030.

Building on the literature review, the next step of the assessment will include discussions with key stakeholders, including USAID staff across all teams to gain an understanding of decentralization and deconcentration activities as these affect service delivery and program implementation. This will include gaining a full understanding of USAID's

interests, assistance programs, resources, and comparative strengths and weaknesses. This information will serve as a filter that will remove strategic or programmatic options that fall outside the focus or capabilities of the mission, and highlight those that are a good fit for the mission. . The assessment team should also seek out key informants in Africa Bureau and relevant pillar Bureaus in Washington.

The data collection phase will also include engaging both the government of Liberia ministries and agencies charged with implementing the national policy as well as a range of civil society actors, and the donor community to learn what efforts that have already begun or are planned to support the GOL's efforts. This data collection will include consultation with, but not limited to, the Governance Commission, Civil Service Agency, District Commissioners, NEC/IFES, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministries of Finance<sup>8</sup>, Internal Affairs, Health, Education, and Justice, Agriculture, Public Works, as well as the Law Reform Commission, and the Legislative Committee on Elections. Donors to meet with would include the World Bank and UNDP and non-governmental organizations are Interfaith Religious Council and the Traditional Council and others as determined by information provided by key informants.

### **Detailed Scope**

#### *1. Preparatory Phase - Washington, D.C. and/or Contractor HQ*

The team will conduct and draw on a literature review covering relevant strategies and policies. The team will also review key documents such as Liberia's Operational Plans and Performance Reports, and any other relevant materials. They will have a team planning meeting to begin the process of organizing their work. The USAID mission in Liberia will be responsible for collecting background information on USAID's strategies, budgets, and programs for the assessment team in advance of the field work. The contractor is required to gather and provide to the team outside studies, analysis, articles, etc. to orient the team to Liberia. USAID/Liberia should also prepare a preliminary list of contacts for donors, civil society, and government officials for the team prior to their travel to Monrovia. There will be a conference call including team members and USAID/Liberia prior to beginning the field work portion of the assessment.

#### *2. Field Work*

The team leader and country expert will meet with the local expert and USAID/Liberia team member (if possible) to integrate them into the process, brief them on what they learned in Washington, and share documents. The Mission in Liberia will brief the team on their perceptions of political dynamics and will discuss any special parameters for the field work. This will include, but is not limited to: concerns about security, recommendations on who the team should interview, and briefings on current political issues of concern. In advance of field work, a preliminary list of contacts for government representatives, civil society actors, and the donor community will be provided by USAID/Liberia. The team will conduct key informant interviews based on contact provided and other sources identified as data collection progresses. Contacts with GOL ministerial leadership will be made pending USAID advance approval. USAID/Liberia focuses its work within six of Liberia's 15 counties. They are as follows: Nimba, Bong,

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<sup>8</sup> At this time of this writing, the GOL plans to merge the Ministries of Planning and Economic Affairs and Finance. If this merger has not taken place at the commencement of this assessment, the Ministry of Planning should be consulted.

Lofa, Montserrado, Grand Bassa, and Margibi. The contractor should select 5 focus counties for field visits, giving consideration to regional variation<sup>9</sup>.

The assessment Team Leader will confer with the assessment COR on a weekly basis to provide substantive updates and discuss procedural and logistical matters as they may arise. The team will debrief the mission on its initial findings, conclusions, and recommendations three working days before the end of the field visit. The mission will provide oral feedback and may submit written comments. The team subsequently will give debriefings for others (U. S. Embassy, development partners, NGO consortia), as requested by USAID. The team will provide a draft outline of the final report to the mission before departing Liberia.

The team will debrief the mission on its findings, conclusions, and recommendations three working days before the end of the field visit. The mission will provide oral feedback and may submit written comments. The team subsequently will give debriefings for others (U.S. Embassy, development partners, NGO consortia) as requested by USAID. The team will provide a draft outline of the final report to the mission before departing Liberia.

### *3. Follow Up*

The contractor will submit a draft report to USAID no later than three weeks after completing the field work and USAID will provide written comments on the draft within three weeks of receiving the draft report. After receiving all comments, the team will have two weeks to finalize the report, incorporating and responding to comments. While the report can be organized in whatever manner best suits Liberia's circumstances, the major questions and concerns laid out in the assessment framework must be addressed. The main body of the report should not exceed 45 pages. There should be an executive summary that can be detached and used separately, whenever a briefer document is required, which does not count against the page limit. The mission also recognizes that some of the material that may result from the assessment is sensitive, but unclassified and should be treated as such. The lead author has responsibility for ensuring that the final report is complete and reads in a holistic manner.

### **C. Decentralization Assessment Strategy Development**

Once USAID has confirmed in writing that the assessment's findings and conclusions are sufficiently relevant and valid to proceed to the strategy development phase, the assessment will then provide strategic and programmatic recommendations for USAID/Liberia's decentralization strategy. Recommendations should include an assessment of the likelihood of the successful implementation of the strategy within the Liberian context and across USAID/Liberia's technical teams to ensure desired outcomes. Once the data collection is completed, the team will analyze the data in order to develop recommendations for an optimal strategy. The recommendations should reiterate the key findings from data collection, and based on USAID's needs and interests, GOL priorities, and donor community support, formulate one or more recommendation for embedding the strategy across the mission. Additionally, the team

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<sup>9</sup> Regional Groupings are-- Southeast: Maryland, Grand Kru, and River Gee; South Central: Grand Gedah, Sinoe, and River Cess; North Central: Nimba, Lofa, and Bong; Central: Montessardo, Margibi, and Grand Bassa; North: Bomi, Grand Cape Mount, and Gbarbolu.

will list any assumptions underpinning the success of the strategy and note any sequencing issues related to the recommendations.

**D. Decentralization Assessment Proposed Level of Effort**

Implementation of the strategic assessment calls for a team of three specialists; one expatriate Team Leader, one expatriate Country Expert and one local logistician for the following level of effort:

Senior Program Development Specialist/Team Leader (expat):

22 days work in-country  
2-4 days travel  
5 days U.S. preparation  
15 days follow-up and report finalization

Political Scientist/Political Economist/Country Expert (expat):

22 days work in-country  
2-4 days travel  
5 days U.S. preparation  
10 days follow up and report finalization

Local Logistician: 26 days

A six day work week is authorized. The Assessment Team will coordinate and work closely with USAID/Liberia's DG Technical Team. In addition to contractor-provided team members, USAID will furnish one participant as a full member of the assessment team: Louis Fahnbulleh, a local DG expert from USAID/Liberia

**E. Decentralization Assessment Team Member Experience:**

Team Leader (Senior Program Development Specialist Labor Category): The Team Leader for each assessment shall meet the minimum level of academic and work experience qualifications outlined in Section B.5(a)(2) of the IQC. The candidate should be a political or social scientist with an advanced degree in a relevant discipline. At least ten years' experience in DG research and/or programming is very required. Experience in assessing political change, barriers to democratization, and strategy development is critical. Knowledge of DG decentralization literature would be useful. Regional experience and/or country knowledge is required. A thorough knowledge of USAID and a specific understanding of DG policy guidance (to be provided with background documents) will be helpful. Ability to conduct DG program analyses and write analytical results quickly are required.

Country Expert: The Country Expert for each assessment shall meet the minimum level of academic and work experience qualifications outlined in Section B.5(a)(2) of the IQC. The candidate should be a political or social scientist, preferably with an advanced degree. At least five years' experience in DG research and programming required. Experience in conducting assessments and developing strategies is required. Regional experience and specific Liberia country knowledge is required. Knowledge of USAID and specific understanding of DG policy guidance (to be provided through background documents) will be helpful. Ability to conduct DG analyses and write analytical results quickly are required.

Logistician (local): At least 2-5 years of experience in of administration and/or logistics required. Strong English language skills are required.

**F. Decentralization Assessment Time Line**

The field work called for in this scope will be completed in approximately 3 weeks. At least one of the expatriate team members may stop in Washington, D.C. for interviews with key USAID officials and other organizations before and after the field work in Liberia. The team will debrief the USAID Mission in Liberia prior to departure. The Mission will give oral comments at the debriefing and may submit written comments. The team will submit a draft report no later than three weeks after the completion of the field work and USAID will provide written comments within three weeks of receiving the draft report. Once the team receives all written comments, it has two weeks to finalize and submit the final report. The final report will be submitted to the Mission for its final review and dissemination. The report belongs to USAID, not to the consultants or contractors, and any use of the material in the report shall require the prior written approval of USAID.

Decentralization Assessment Approximate (Notional) Timeline

Preparation Phase Washington, DC (2-3 members): Collection and review of key DG literature documents <i>Mission will provide a preliminary list of contacts for NGOs, donors, , GOL, and others for use by the Logistician for scheduling and setting meetings</i>	To Be Determined
Written summary of literature review ( <i>no more than 5 pages</i> )	To Be Determined
Orientation Meeting with USAID/Liberia	To Be Determined
Meetings with USG representatives, government officials, and donors	To Be Determined
Debrief USAID/US Embassy staff	To Be Determined
Submit draft report to USAID for comments	To Be Determined
USAID provides feedback on draft report	To Be Determined
Submit Final Report to USAID	To Be Determined

**G. Decentralization Assessment Deliverables**

- A team comprised of 2 international expats and 1 local logistician.
- Based on the preliminary list provided by USAID/Liberia, the team will provide a final interview list representing a wide range of in-country informants, including government officials at all levels of government; representatives of political parties, media, and civil society; and academics, amongst others during the initial meetings with USAID/Liberia staff.
- Draft report for USAID review and comment
- A final assessment report of no more than 45 pages (SBU if necessary).
- A final executive summary of no more than 5 pages (unclassified).
- Presentation to USAID and other USG officials, as required.

## APPENDIX B: ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED

Name of Organization	Contact Person	Position	Telephone Number	Email Address
Associates For Global Change	Andrew Gilboy	Senior Partner	18286990558	<a href="mailto:agchange@agchange.com">agchange@agchange.com</a>
Bomi	Samuel Brown	Superintendent	0886-589997	<a href="mailto:Yaweh20032003@yahoo.com">Yaweh20032003@yahoo.com</a>
Bomi	Rebecca Benson	Asst. Superintendent for Development	0886-558711	<a href="mailto:omeplicom@yahoo.com">omeplicom@yahoo.com</a>
Bong	Selina Polson	Superintendent	0886-523692	
Bong	Anthony Sheriff	Asst. Superintendent for Development	0886-721125	
Catholic Justice and Peace Commission	Mr. Pilate Johnson	Chairman	0886540521	
Center for Media Studies and Peace Building (CEMESP)	Alfred Wreh	Representative	0886434782	
Common Action	Matthew Siakor	County Director	0776644535	
Crisis Management Initiative	Gama Roberts	Adviser, Statebuilding	0886605455	<a href="mailto:gama.roberts@cmi.fi">gama.roberts@cmi.fi</a>
EU-Institutional Support & Capacity Building Programme	Mike Meyer	Decentralization Expert	0886337339	<a href="mailto:devzone@yebo.co.za">devzone@yebo.co.za</a>
European Union to Liberia	Francesca Varlese	Attaché Governance	0777731777	<a href="mailto:francesca.varlese@eeas.europa.eu">francesca.varlese@eeas.europa.eu</a>
FLY-Lofa County	Jallah Kamara	County Coordinator	0886693595	
Frederation of Liberian Youth (FLY)	Mohammed Nasser	President	0886537175	
Gbarpolu	Allen M. Gbowee	Superintendent	0886-522178	
Gbarpolu	Yassah K. Fallah	Asst. Superintendent for Development	0886-550768	
Governance Commission	Yarsuo Weh-Dorliae		0886951263	
Governance Commission	Elizabeth Sele Mulbah	Commissioner, Civil Engagement/ Nat'l Visioning	0777517901/ 0886517901	<a href="mailto:lizsmulbah@gmail.com">lizsmulbah@gmail.com</a>
Grand Cape Mount	Imam M. Passawe	Superintendent	0886-517418	
Grand Cape Mount	Tenneh Karbadeh	Asst. Superintendent for Development	0886-687338	
Grand Gedeh	Christopher Bailey	Superintendent	0886-567489	<a href="mailto:chrisbailey@yahoo.com">chrisbailey@yahoo.com</a>

Name of Organization	Contact Person	Position	Telephone Number	Email Address
Grand Gedeh	Nyonbio Seoh	Asst. Superintendent for Development	0886-560609	
Green Advocate	Francis Colee	Director for Planning and Decentralization	0777077206	
IBI International	Wilbur Thomas	Chief of Party	0886883502	<a href="mailto:wthomas@gemsliberia.ibi-usa.com">wthomas@gemsliberia.ibi-usa.com</a>
IBI International	Victoria Cooper-Enchia	Technical Coordinator	0886562719	<a href="mailto:vcooper@gemsliberia.ibi-usa.com">vcooper@gemsliberia.ibi-usa.com</a>
Internatinal Foundation For Electoral System (IFES)	Florim Purova	Country Director	0776578258	<a href="mailto:fpurova@ifes.org">fpurova@ifes.org</a>
Internatinal Foundation For Electoral System (IFES)	Jonathan Zalkind	Operations Officer	0776244531	<a href="mailto:jzalkind@ifes.org">jzalkind@ifes.org</a>
International Monetary Fund	B. Kubai Khasiani	Resident Public Financial Management Advisor	0880835663	<a href="mailto:bkhasiani@imf.org">bkhasiani@imf.org</a>
IREX	Tilly Reed	Chief of Party	0777458706	<a href="mailto:treed@irex-liberia.org">treed@irex-liberia.org</a>
IREX	Lyn Gray	Senior Civil Society Specialist	0886540538	<a href="mailto:lgray@irex-liberia.org">lgray@irex-liberia.org</a>
IREX	Troy Johnson	Program Coordinator	0880441291	<a href="mailto:tjohnson@irex-liberia.org">tjohnson@irex-liberia.org</a>
IREX	Cerue Konah Garlo	Program Office	0777758771	<a href="mailto:cgarlo@irex-liberia.org">cgarlo@irex-liberia.org</a>
Jhpiego - RBHS	Marion Subah	Senior Technical Advisor	077870090	<a href="mailto:msubah@jhpiego.net">msubah@jhpiego.net</a>
Law Reform Commission	Pro. Jallah A. Brabu	Counselor-at-Law & Chairperson	0886511367/ 05405071	<a href="mailto:barbulaw@yahoo.com">barbulaw@yahoo.com</a>
Law Reform Commission	Sie-A-Nyene G. Yuoh	Counselor-at-Law & Commission	0886528727/ 0776924255	<a href="mailto:sgyuoh55@hotmail.com">sgyuoh55@hotmail.com</a>
Liberia Media Center (LMC)	Lawrence Randall	Executive Director	0886400206	
Liberia Teacher Training Program (LTTP)	Michael V. Blundell	Chief of Party	0886121209	<a href="mailto:mblundell@fhi360.org">mblundell@fhi360.org</a>
<u>Liberia Women Media Action Committee (LIWOMAC)</u>	Estella Nelson	Executive Director	0880810536	
Lofa	Galakpai W. Kortimai	Superintendent	0886-579592	<a href="mailto:weaykortimai@hotmail.com">weaykortimai@hotmail.com</a>
Maryland	Gbleh-bo Brown	Superintendent	0886-518054	<a href="mailto:koriogh@yahoo.com">koriogh@yahoo.com</a>
Maryland	Melita Gardiner	Asst. Superintendent for Development	0886-800434	
Ministry of Education	Dr. Kadiker Rex Dahn	Deputy Minister for Planning,	0880649101	<a href="mailto:yenpuu@yahoo.com">yenpuu@yahoo.com</a>

Name of Organization	Contact Person	Position	Telephone Number	Email Address
Ministry of Education	Dr. Albert B. Coleman	Research and Development Senior Policy Advisor	0776358980	<a href="mailto:coleman3@bellsouth.net">coleman3@bellsouth.net</a>
Ministry of Finance	Bernard Jappah	Coordinator, Public Financial Management Reform & IFMIS	0777512463/ 0886512462	<a href="mailto:bernardjap@gmail.com">bernardjap@gmail.com</a>
Ministry of Health & Social Welfare (MOH)	Justine Korvayan	Director for Planning and Decentralization	0886585498	
Ministry of Internal Affairs	J. Tiah Nagbe	Deputy Minister for Planning, Research and Development	0777603505	<a href="mailto:tnagbe@aol.com">tnagbe@aol.com</a>
Ministry of Internal Affairs, Decentralization Implementation Technical Unit	Gaurav Laroia	Carter Center Law and Policy Fellow	0880908109	<a href="mailto:gaurav.laroia@gmail.com">gaurav.laroia@gmail.com</a>
National Democratic Institute	Thomas Du	Program Manger	0886523361	<a href="mailto:tdu@ndi.org">tdu@ndi.org</a>
National Democratic Institute	Leo Platvoet	Senior Program Manager	0880813723	<a href="mailto:lplatvoet@ndi.org">lplatvoet@ndi.org</a>
National Democratic Institute	Aubrey McCutcheon	Senior Resident Director	0880813713	<a href="mailto:amccutcheon@ndi.org">amccutcheon@ndi.org</a>
National Democratic Institute	Mr. McCutcheo	Chief of Party	0880813713	
National Elections Commission	Elizabeth Nelson	Chairperson	0886512804	
New African Research and Development Agency (NARDA)	Lancedell Matthews	Executive Director	0777020338	<a href="mailto:umbra54@yahoo.com">umbra54@yahoo.com</a>
New African Research and Development Agency (NARDA)	Chanesa N. Taylor	Accountant	0886561515	<a href="mailto:chanesa-weah@yahoo.com">chanesa-weah@yahoo.com</a>
Nimba	Christiana Dagadu	Superintendent	0886-405120	
Nimba	Teeko Yorlay	Asst. Superintendent for Development	0886-412216 /- 0777221169	<a href="mailto:tyorlay@gmail.com">tyorlay@gmail.com</a>
Peace Building Resources Center	Stanley K. Beyan	Director	0886470698/ 0777470698	
Rebuild Africa	Williams Masaquoi	Executive Director	0886532075	
Rotary Club of Sinkor	Elizabeth Sele Mulbah	President	0886517901	<a href="mailto:lizsmulbah@gmail.com">lizsmulbah@gmail.com</a>
Tetra Tech ARD	Steve Reid	Chief of Party		
Tetra Tech ARD	Laurie A. Cooper	Chief of Party	0886645737/ 0777645737	<a href="mailto:lcooper@ardliberia.com">lcooper@ardliberia.com</a>
The Carter Center	Thomas K.	Associate		<a href="mailto:tcrick@emory.edu">tcrick@emory.edu</a>

Name of Organization	Contact Person	Position	Telephone Number	Email Address
	Crick	Director, Conflict Resolution Program		
The Carter Center	Chelsea Payne	Country Director	0886452022	<a href="mailto:chelsea.payne@cartercen-terliberia.org">chelsea.payne@cartercen-terliberia.org</a>
The Carter Center	Pewee S. Flomoku	Senior Project Coordinator	0886516232	<a href="mailto:pewee.flomoku@carterce-nterliberia.org">pewee.flomoku@carterce-nterliberia.org</a>
The World Bank	Inguna Dobraja	Country Manager	0886606967	<a href="mailto:idobraja@worldbank.org">idobraja@worldbank.org</a>
The World Bank	Raymond Muhula	Public Sector Specialist	0880697717	<a href="mailto:rmuhula@worldbank.org">rmuhula@worldbank.org</a>
The World Bank	Jariya Hoffman	Senior Economist	0886977503	<a href="mailto:jhoffman@worldbank.org">jhoffman@worldbank.org</a>
United Nation Development Program (UNDP)	Dominic Sam	Coutry Director	0880605605	<a href="mailto:dominic.sam@undp.org">dominic.sam@undp.org</a>
United Nation Development Program (UNDP)	Nessie Golakai	Asst. Res. Rep/Programme		
United Nation Development Program (UNDP)	KNS Nair	Chief Technical Advisor, Liberia Decentralization & Local Development Program	0886618921	<a href="mailto:kns.nair@undp.org">kns.nair@undp.org</a>
USAID/Liberia	Daniel Terrell	Senior Rule of Law Advisor	0776734679	<a href="mailto:Dterrell@usaid.gov">Dterrell@usaid.gov</a>
USAID/Liberia	Finley Y. Karngar	Rule of Law Specialist	0777872591/ 0886522023	<a href="mailto:fkarngar@usaid.gov">fkarngar@usaid.gov</a>
Villager Development Fund	Albert M. Cole	Executive Director	088653354	
WINROCK International	Russell C. Brown	Chief of Party	0880686715	<a href="mailto:rbrown@winrocklessp.org">rbrown@winrocklessp.org</a>
WINROCK International	Bhola Shrestha	Deputy Chief of Party	0880650788	<a href="mailto:bshrestha@winrocklessp.org">bshrestha@winrocklessp.org</a>
Women NGOs Secretariat of Liberia (WONOGSOL)	Marpue M. Speare	Executive Director	0886538043	
Lofa County	Barkolleh Galakpaye	Paramount Chief	0880408038	
Lofa County	Momo Sheriff	Clan Chief	0886653841	
Lofa County	Boakai Kanneh	Chan Chief	N/A	
Women Organizations of Lofa	Jeremiah Seakei	Chairperson/Head	0880419880	
Lofa County	Morah S. Taylor	Paramount Chief	0886546936	
Lofa County	Jallah Manjoe	Paramount Chief	0886120027	
Lofa County Forest Forum (LCFF)	Offranco B. Sele	Chairman	0886454574	

Name of Organization	Contact Person	Position	Telephone Number	Email Address
Foya District Women Association, Lofa County	Cecelia T. Hallie	Chairlady	0886852346	
Lofa County	Tennyson Falkornia	Statutory Superintendent	0886560503	
Lofa County	Momo Ndombu	Paramount Chief	0880640228	
Foya District Maketing Association, Lofa County	Finda Morquoi	Marketing Superintendent	0886852711	
Lofa County	Abacus Jallah	County Agricultural Officer	0886264471	
Salayea District Women Association	Pala Moiwen	Chairlady	0886528278	
Lofa Rural Women Association (LRWA)	Varbah Kollie	President	0880545787	
Federation of Liberian Youth, Lofa Branch	Losene A. Dukuly	Youth Leader, Lumol District	0776691792	
Federation of Liberian Youth, Lofa Branch	Karmoh M. Fofana	Sports Director	0777299205	
Federation of Liberian Youth, Lofa Branch	Varbullah Kromah	Asst. Sports Director	0777970474	
Federation of Liberian Youth, Lofa Branch	Frank M. Karmoh, Sr.	Planning and Develoment Chairman, Voinjama District	0886516322	
Federation of Liberian Youth, Lofa Branch	Boakai V. Kamara	County Coordinator	0886847802	
Federation of Liberian Youth, Lofa Branch	Mohammed V. Kamara	Sports Development Officer	0886620185	
Lofa County	Yargazuo Gbusimin	Project Planner	0886597949	
Lofa County	Edward Akoi Jallah	District Commissioner	0886449038	
Lofa County	Forkpa Boakai	Clan Chief	0886951138	
Lofa County	Baysah Telleusayan	Paramount Chief	0886858025	
Voinjama District Women Association, Lofa County	Kormassah Z. Jallah	Chairlady	N/A	
Lofa County	Beyan Kollie	Clan Chief	0886197620	
Lofa County	Patric Menjoe Sr.	Protocol Officer	0886923847	
Lofa County	Prince K. Sesy	County Administrator	0886810442	
Lofa County	Stephen Akoi Karnue	County Youth Leader	0886952787	

Name of Organization	Contact Person	Position	Telephone Number	Email Address
Lofa County	Susan Marlu	County Women Youth Chairlady	0886663299	
Ministry of Internal Affairs, Lofa County Branch	Edwin V. Kollie	Representative	0886237758	
Lofa County	Bayroh Tellavoyan	Paramount Chief	0886853026	
Environmental Protection Agency, Lofa Directory	Ambrose Jamia	County Inspector	0880694882	
Lofa County	J. Koweh Farbalee	Culture Inspector	0777916849	
Lofa County	Robert Z. Flomo	Secretary - LEDCU	0880305078	
Lofa County	Ballahwola Kollieblee	Representative - LEDCU	0886409783	
Ministry of Labour, Lofa County Branch	Peter T. Kormah	County Representative	0880593298	
Lofa County Women Association	Krobo Seinia	Co-Chairlady	0886588417	
Lofa County Women Association	Keibeh Zoboi	Asst. Chairlady	0886567422	
Ministry of Internal Affairs, Lofa County Branch	Anthony Kamara	Commissioner	0886836614	
Ministry of Finance Bong County	Jimel Kamara	County Inspector	0776543833	
Bong County	Edward T yakpawoe	District Commissioner	0886439950	
Bong County	Mary Lanteh	District Commissioner	0886108650	
Bong County	Jospeh N. Bondo	Clerke to the county Insrector	0886376989	
Bong County	Francis keneh	Clan Chief	0886310568	
Bong County	Arthur B. Wennah	Paramount Chief	0886462294	
Bong County	Henry G.kleeme	County Agricultural Officer	0886463826	
Bong County	Esther C.Wenneh	Superintendent's Secretary	0886672603	
Bong County	Nat.M.Queei yme,sr	Project Planner	0886656570	
Bong County	Selena polson Mappy	Superintendent		
Bomi County	James J.walkins	County Inspector	0776596643	
Bomi County Ernest Gray Davis Asst supt.for Development	Ernest Gray Davis	Assistant Superintendent for Development	0886578734	

Name of Organization	Contact Person	Position	Telephone Number	Email Address
0886578734 Bomi County	Edward A. Montgomery	M&E Assistant /Acting County Development Office	0886761198	
Bomi county	Taweh C.Joshonson	Administrative Assistant - Bomi County	0777155562	
Bomi county	James K.Tarpal	District Commissioner	0886517695	
Bomi County	Samuel F.Brown	Superintendent	0886589997	
Bomi County	Abraham Combey	Adminstrative Assistant-City Mayor	0880904892	
Bomi County	Amos A.Fussy	County Educational Officer	0886657643/ 0777657643	
Bomi county	Bomiah Gbots	Paramount Chief		
Bomi County	Varney Gbellary	Gen. Town chief		
Bomi County	Varney Geayeah	Gen. Town chief		
Bomi County	Varney Gba:	Gen. Town chief		
Bomi County	Mohammed Massaley	County Chief Accountant	0776415816	
Bomi County	Abraham Jones(Bs)	County Coordinator Land commission	0886-559-167	
Bomi County	Momo Esay	Clan Chirfe Zopeh/sanjeh clan		
Bomi County	D. O. Moses	Hospital Administrator, Ministry of Health	0886362319	
Bomi County	Isaac Williams	Secretary Traditainal Council	0880302858	
Bomi County	Christopher D.Momo	County Agricultural Officer	0886695226	
Bomi County	Sua K.Boley	Secertary FDA-Region-1	0886991728	
Bomi County	Eujay W.Zoegar	Contract Adm./FDA	0886402141	
Bomi County	Sam C.Pifor	Forest Mngt.Officer	0886920531	
Bomi County	Palil F.Duo	Regional forester	0886581922	

Name of Organization	Contact Person	Position	Telephone Number	Email Address
		FDA Region 1		
Bomi County	Omasco Kammara	Regional coordinator	0886-886-951	
Nimba County	F.Moham kromah	Pol&LiAsion OfficiarActing)	0886440772	
Nimba County	THOMAS Q.Suah	County Inspector	0886592591	
Nimba County	DR.Pauel T.Wesseh	County Health officer	08886518427	
Nimba County	James S.Zeago	Dev.Secretary	0886531211	
Nimba County	Pauel K.Kamara	secertary/sup office	0886832362	
Nimba County	whittington N.kurt sr	Budget officer	0886-476-141	
Ninba County	Evang,Joe G,wallace	Religious Adv	0886-326708/0777-31250	
Nimba County	G.Samber Gbarlon	District Commissioner	0886821475	
Nimba County	Nya Messom	Personnel Analst	0880519005	
Nimba County	Emmanuel k.DAHN	Act. County Education Officer	0886465517	
Nimba County	Moses G. Bella	County Agricultural Officer	0886945271	
Grand Cape Mount	Sando laitamba	Secertary	0880537978	
Grand Cape Mount	Mohammed B.Mabande	T/Ship Commi	0886849027	
Grand Cape Mount	Law rence Brown	Dist CommissionerPor ka	0880871261	
Grand Cape Mount	Mohammed Kiazolu	Extension Agriculture Agent	0886724575	
Grand Cape Mount	Thomas O.Gonda	Township Commissioner	0886668078	
Grand Cape Mount	Andrew S.Massaley	Poitical Officer	0886556060	
Grand Cape Mount	A.Tome Randall	Staff-officer sup	0886520028	
Grand Cape Mount	Alfried V.Gbanya	Protocal officer	0880741896	
Grand Cape Mount	Garmai D.Davies	Executive Secertary	0886949573	
Grand Cape Mount	Tenneh S.Kpedebah	ASD	0886-687338	
Grand Cape Mount	Mohammed A.Paasewe	Superintendent	0886517418	

Name of Organization	Contact Person	Position	Telephone Number	Email Address
Grand Cape Mount	James Naiga Muworge	USAID	0880666541	
Grand Cape Mount	Jane White	T/ commissioner	0888695751 0	
Grand Cape Mount	Botoe B. MASSAQUOI	County Agriculture coordinator	0886-682222	
Grand Cape Mount	Lassana Cuma	Biologist, FDA	0886-473204	
Grand Cape Mount	Steve Miopah	Chief Park Warden(F.)A)	0886403503	
Grand Cape Mount	Timothy Volar	Revenue Agent	0886490672	
Grand Cape Mount	Abel B.Kromah	Sr.Labour inspector	0886499738	
Grand Cape Mount	Karmbor Doe	Fishinery inspector	0886437093	
Grand Cape Mount	S.Siafa Sombai	Moc Inspector	0886945784	
Actions for Genuine Demtoric Alternative (AGENDA)	Jasper cummeh	Chief Executive	088-654-2933	<a href="mailto:jascum2001@yahoo.com">jascum2001@yahoo.com</a>
Center for Media Studies and Peace Building (CEMESP)	Malcolm W.Jospheh	Chief Executive	088-651-4357	<a href="mailto:centerforpeacebuilding@yahoo.com">centerforpeacebuilding@yahoo.com</a>
Center for Justice and peace studies(CJPS)	Jospheh D. Howard	Chief Executive	088-658-7343;	<a href="mailto:cipstudies@yahoo.com">cipstudies@yahoo.com</a>
Development Education Network-Liberia(DEN-L)	Dorothy Toomann,	Chief Executive	088-655-7593	<a href="mailto:dev-edunet@justemail.net">dev-edunet@justemail.net</a>
Catholic Justice and peace comission(JPC)	Rev. Fr. Patrick M. Kabba	Chief Executive	088-650-0800	<a href="mailto:justiceandpeacecommission@yahoo.com">justiceandpeacecommission@yahoo.com</a>
Aiding Disadvantaged and Traumatized Women and Girls (ADWANGA)	Amelia M.Cooper	Executive Director	088-651-1979	<a href="mailto:adwangaproject@yahoo.com">adwangaproject@yahoo.com</a>
Association of Liberian Community Radio Stations(ALICOR)	Williams M.Quire	President	088-659-3090	<a href="mailto:alicorradio@yahoo.com">alicorradio@yahoo.com</a>
BAWODA	Martha F.Karnga	Executive Director	088-684-5349	<a href="mailto:bawodabucn@yahoo.com">bawodabucn@yahoo.com</a>
BUCCOBAC	David S.Mehdeh	Executive Director	077-735-6748	<a href="mailto:buccobac@yahoo.com">buccobac@yahoo.com</a>
Bong Youth Association (BYA)	Gerald S.Dolo	Executive Director	088-644-0594	<a href="mailto:byassociation2004@yahoo.com">byassociation2004@yahoo.com</a>
Children Assistant program	Dero A.Weeks	Executive Director	088-651-7134	<a href="mailto:daweeks2002@yahoo.com">daweeks2002@yahoo.com</a>
Common Action	Matthew Siakor ,Jr.	Executive Director	088-688-8849	<a href="mailto:siakolism1@yahoo.com">siakolism1@yahoo.com</a>
Ears for the Masses	Darius Dan	Executive	0886449818	<a href="mailto:earsforthemasses@yahoo.com">earsforthemasses@yahoo.com</a>

Name of Organization	Contact Person	Position	Telephone Number	Email Address
	Wehyee	Director		<u>.com</u>
Inter-visionary Artists(IA)	Emmanuel A. A. Sarty	Executiv	088-644-6485	<u>emmanuel<span>sarty</span>@yahoo.c</u>
Liberian Democtric Instiute (LDI)	Dan T. Saryee, Sr.	Executive	088-651-4348	<u>dsaryeeldi@yahoo.com</u>
Rural Agricultural Alternatives	Toms Koenig,sr.	Executive	0886549319	<u>tikoenigi99@yahoo.com</u>
Monrovia Consolidated School System	Mr. Joshua Lavala	Coordinator	0886685236	
Governance Commission	Dr. Dorliae	Commissioner, Planning and Decentralization	0886951263	
The Carter Center, Bong County	Mr. Johnny	Chief Program	0886598545	
Forestry Development Authority	Paul Duo	Region 1 Coordinator	0886581922	
Grand Cape Mount, Sam Dabi Plantation Worker Union	Mr. Edward Tamba	Head, Worker Union	0880530152	
Monrovia Consolidated School System	Jerry Nyangpeh	Act. Superintendent	0886531529	

## APPENDIX C: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

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Cohen, Neal P., Charles Mohan, Kpedee Woiwor, James Whawhen, Sheku Daboh and David Snelbecker. June 2010. United States Agency for International Development (USAID): “Final Evaluation of USAID GEMAP Activities (Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program).”

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Snyder, Wes, Khalipha Bility. August 2010. United States Agency for International Development (USAID): “MCSS Assessment: Decentralization and MCSS Model Report.”

Snyder, Wes. May 2, 2011. “Capacity of Liberian Education System.”  
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