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## LIBERIA PROGRAM OVERVIEW

# Partners in Reconstruction

Since the Accra Peace Agreement in 2003, the United States and Liberia have cemented their “special relationship” working together to advance stability, democracy, and economic development.

### SUMMARY

U.S. Government humanitarian, development, and security assistance has totaled approximately \$570 million since the end of the conflict in 2004 (not counting funding provided through assessed contributions to the UN Mission in Liberia). A further \$207 million in assistance is requested for 2007-2008. This funding has enabled the USG Mission—the largest bilateral mission of any donor—to support the peace process, humanitarian efforts, disarmament and demobilization, reintegration, and other aspects of Liberia's reconstruction. The \$200 million in International Disaster and Famine Assistance funding provided by Congress in early 2004 enabled the USG to take a leadership role in the reconstruction of Liberia after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), and Liberia continues to benefit from a host of USG funding including Economic Support Funds (ESF), Development Assistance (DA), Child Survival Health Funds (CSH), Global HIV/AIDS Initiative (GHAI) funding. Some of this funding has come in the form of Supplemental appropriations approved by the Congress.

Mission strategy is based on staying deeply engaged on a variety of issues including reintegration of war-affected populations, reform of the security sector, establishing peace and security, community reintegration and development, encouraging rule of law and respect for human rights, promoting transparent government, expanding health care and education, and providing for humanitarian concerns in order to assist the Liberian people in building a democratic and peaceful society.

At this time, Liberia has no functioning country-wide electrical system, no piped water system, no land line telephone service, minimal health care and educational systems, a crumbling road system and little in the way of public sanitation. In addition to rebuilding infrastructure, social relationships need to be reconciled, and social and economic institutions need to be reestablished in order to help the Liberian people come to terms with the atrocities of the war, and to become a fully functioning nation once again.

U.S. Government assistance in Liberia encompasses a broad range of activities including security sector reform, justice sector reform, strengthening of legislative and executive branches, community reintegration and development, health, education and humanitarian assistance. A USDA Forestry Officer has assisted Liberia in passing a new Forestry Law, which has resulted in the lifting of UN sanctions on timber. A U.S. Geological Survey representative arrived in January 2006 and assisted the GOL in becoming compliant with the Kimberly Process, enabling UN sanctions on diamonds to be lifted in April 2007. The five-person Justice Sector Support team arrived in February 2006 and complements USAID programming to increase access to justice by all Liberians. On February 22, 2006, President Bush reinstated Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) benefits for Liberia and Overseas Private



Investment Corporation (OPIC) coverage soon followed. In December 2006 Liberia was declared an eligible country for benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), and Liberia and the U.S. signed a TIFA agreement in early 2007.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Today, Liberia is no longer the epicenter of violence in West Africa, and U.S. government assistance has made a significant contribution toward maintenance of stability and continued reconstruction. Specific accomplishments which have supported Liberia's reconstruction, including priority actions laid out by the Sirleaf Government, include:

- Demobilization of 14,000 former Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), vetting of 1,000 Recruits, and graduation of 110 members of the new AFL.
- Successful staffing and implementation of Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program resulting in improved financial management systems and increased captured revenue under GEMAP. The GOL budgeted 150% more in the current year (2006/07) budget than the prior year.
- Overall economic and social reintegration support provided to an estimated 25,000 ex-combatants and war-affected persons, with psycho-social counseling and reconciliation resources and activities conducted in over 792 communities in eight counties.
- Reestablishment of electricity services and streetlights to portions of Monrovia under the Emergency Power Program (EPP)—a GOL and multi-donor effort—by Liberian Independence Day, thereby assisting the new President to meeting a key public commitment of major political importance.
- Consolidation of Liberia's new democracy through direct support of its 150-day development plan, support to the development of Liberia's Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), support to the organization and policy-level discussions of the Liberia Reconstruction and Development Committee (LRDC).
- Expansion of education programs to provide education to out-of-school and overage youth.
  - Through USAID/Liberia education activities, approximately 1,387 Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) Trainers were trained to provide basic education instruction. This contributed substantially to the efforts of all donors involved in ALP (UNICEF, Norwegian Refugee Council, and UNHCR).
  - USAID also played a lead role in ensuring that the Ministry of Education employed an ALP focal point, and as a result overall ALP services in Liberia are well coordinated and available nationwide.
- Support to the Ministry of Education (MOE) with two expert education consultants, who helped them identify impediments to effective service delivery, as well as critical strengths and weaknesses within the education system.



- Repatriation of remaining Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and the return of 40,000 refugees from neighboring countries.
- Reintegration of farmers and increased food production through the provision of seeds and tools.
- Completed rehabilitation of five (5) administrative buildings, nine (9) schools, four (4) health centers, while fifteen schools benefited from deep well/borehold program.
- Completed rehabilitation of 10 roads, 4 bridges, and construction of 24 latrines.

## **STRATEGY**

### **U.S. Government priority objectives for assistance in Liberia are:**

- Promoting Peace and Security;
- Advancing Good Governance and the Rule of Law;
- Expanding Access to Essential Social Services;
- Supporting Economic Growth; and
- Providing for Continuing Humanitarian Needs.

Programs are designed to be integrated within and between sectors. This includes promotion of good governance activities which support sustained economic growth, such as the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program; efforts to incorporate energy services in education, health, or economic growth projects; and education and employment programs that are targeted to the at-risk youth cohort, which is critical to maintaining stability. Mission programs are seeking to build linkages between government and local communities, as well as to develop the capacity of civil society. More detail on activities in priority areas is discussed below.

### **PEACE AND SECURITY: ENSURING ENDURING STABILITY IN ORDER TO ENABLE FUTURE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

The U.S. leads Liberia's security sector reform program, which is in the process of recruiting, vetting, training, and equipping a 2,000 person army, as well as an entirely new Ministry of Defense staff. The Liberian National Police will receive U.S. management mentoring, training, and basic infrastructure and equipment. Other U.S. contributions are intended for the President's protective detail, the Immigration Bureau, and to improve the conditions in the corrections system.

The Security Sector Reform program is a three-year program funded by the Department of State aimed at building a high quality, professional security force of 2,000 troops—a figure established in recognition of the limitations of Liberia's national defense budget. In addition to SSR, a Rand Corporation study, commissioned by the Liberian President, looks at the security sector (police, army, and intelligence agencies) in an attempt to rationalize the whole sector.

Demobilization of the old Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) was concluded in December 2005.



Recruitment for the AFL began in January of 2006 and has been conducted both in Monrovia and the counties. Currently there are nearly 1,000 applicants that have passed the vetting process, including tests for aptitude and physical fitness, and rigorous human rights background check. Currently, only 18 percent of the applicants that begin the recruitment process make it through to be considered for training.

Training of the first basic recruit class consisting of 110 recruits has been completed along with the first classes of Officer and Non-Commissioned Officer training. The first officers in the AFL were commissioned Second Lieutenants on 8 May 2007. At the completion of individual training new members of the AFL are transferred to their operational base and formed into units. During this formation process the soldiers are under the supervision of a mix of contractor and active duty U.S. military mentors. The Department of Defense committed to the support of SSR with eight military mentors for a three year period.

In addition to leading on security sector reform, the USG is supporting UNMIL in restructuring the national police. Recruitment and training for the Liberian National Police (LNP) have been ongoing since mid-2004. The USG has provided substantial financial support to restructuring and retraining the LNP including a contribution of approximately 40 U.S. civilian police (CIVPOL) advisors through July 2006. The USG has maintained a level of 10 U.S. Civilian Police trainers since August 2006.

## **PROMOTING GOOD GOVERNANCE AND THE RULE OF LAW**

Improved governance will enhance Liberia's stability, help prevent renewed conflict, help address the needs and aspirations of Liberians, and create the foundation for investment and growth. A critically important multi-donor initiative to improve economic governance, the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program (GEMAP) is ongoing, along with support for strengthening oversight and accountability of public sector authorities. In September 2005, GEMAP was negotiated between the donors and the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) in order to combat the rampant corruption that has plagued Liberia for years and deprived its citizens of much needed resources.

Through GEMAP, the USG has placed advisors in key government ministries and state-owned enterprises to help to change Liberia's culture of corruption and impunity and ensure that government revenues are captured by the Treasury to be used for the benefit of the Liberian people, and not for individual advantage or to promote regional instability. U.S.- GEMAP advisors were in place in eleven ministries and state-owned enterprises, including Roberts International Airport (RIA), the Liberia Petroleum and Refining Corporation (LPRC), the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), the Bureau of the Budget (BOB), the Ministry of Land, Mines, and Energy (MLME), the General Services Administration (GSA), and the National Port Authority (NPA).

Programs in the justice sector will help to increase access to justice through provision of basic legal services and alternatives to formal courts and concurrently, build capacity in the formal legal system. The USAID Access to Justice program is providing support to Arthur Grimes Law school, and has established a legal aid clinic in order to provide free legal advice and services. The program is slated to expand into other counties. The Justice Sector Support for Liberia is providing assistance to build capacity in the formal justice sector, through a team providing technical assistance to the prosecutors, public defenders, and court administrators.



USAID/Liberia is initiating new political processes strengthening program, that builds on USAID-provided support for the 2005 election in the form of technical assistance to the National Elections Commission (NEC); assistance to build a more representative and competitive multiparty system in Liberia; and voter education and development of domestic civil society participation in the elections process. The current program is aimed at strengthening democratic political processes, including legislative strengthening, political party development, strengthening the capacity of electoral institutions, and building civic awareness.

The Mission's current program in the area of civil society focuses on a community development and institutional capacity building approach, through the five year Community Peace Building and Development Program (CPBD), which facilitates community revitalization and recovery. USAID designed the CPBD to support the development of local capacity to undertake service delivery; promote conflict resolution and peace building; economic livelihood, and develop community communications systems. Moving forward, civil society programs The civil society program will shift from the traditional institutional capacity building approach toward sector-based advocacy one, to be led by national NGOs, and align to the mission's anti-corruption, health, and education programs.

## **EXPANDING ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL SOCIAL SERVICES**

U.S. assistance to create increased human capacity is building on the significant humanitarian efforts undertaken during the conflict and immediate post-conflict period, in order to achieve durable solutions for former combatants, internally displaced persons, and refugees returning to their communities.

USAID/Liberia's education activities are geared toward expanding access and enhancing the quality of basic education through teacher training, rehabilitation of schools and training facilities, and support for the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP). The education portfolio has also provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Education to enhance its strategic planning, management and data collection/analysis capabilities, thereby improving its overall ability to provide services to the Liberian people.

ALP condenses the usual six years of primary education into three, for the benefit of older youth who missed the opportunity to participate in formal schooling. The program will also integrate life skills, such as parenting classes (integrated with child care), conflict resolution and civic education. In addition, ALP has a significant community mobilization component to create and engage local PTAs, and through service learning encourage program graduates to conduct community development projects.

The Liberia Teacher Training Program (LTTP) will address improvements in institutional and staff capacity of the University of Liberia and rural teacher training colleges; develop enhanced standards for teacher accreditation; and institute competency-based criteria to evaluate the skills of current and future teachers. Teachers will also be trained in new child-focused methodologies and student monitoring techniques to improve the quality of instruction. Renovation of two teacher training institutes located in Kakata and Zorzor will also contribute to revitalizing Liberia's education sector.

Challenges in the education sector include inadequate teacher compensation, extremely limited government resources for improvements in the sector, and the need to de-centralize the education system.



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climate as a critical ingredient in Liberia's economic growth, including:

- Supporting GOL establishment of sector policy and regulatory frameworks;
- Assisting the host government to expand its outreach to smallholder farmers and small and medium entrepreneurs in order to increase the volume of food production; and
- Promoting improved marketing techniques, and improve the competitiveness of the agricultural sector.

Micro-credit initiatives will be supported to promote small businesses. Through training and artisan programs, the United States will strengthen the capacity of Liberians, especially youth and women, to become productive employees. Concurrently, activities will build the commercial viability of small businesses, generating the demand for employable Liberians. Support continues to help expand access to needed energy sources throughout Liberia. A non-emergency food aid program will support agricultural production and food security, in particular for vulnerable groups.

Liberia's vast natural resources have helped fuel civil wars in Liberia and neighboring countries. To help Liberia restructure these two key industries, the USG supports a USDA Forest Service resident advisor, who works closely with the Liberian Forest Development Authority (FDA) to develop a plan for managing Liberia's timber resources. Another staff member has recently been added to work on Community Forestry and Land Tenure issues. In September 2006 the national legislature passed a forestry law that provides the legal framework for timber contracts and concessions as well as establishes chain of custody provisions for timber exports. The UN permanently lifted sanctions on exports of Liberian timber in September 2006; sanctions on diamonds were lifted in April 2007, and Liberia was admitted into the Kimberly Process.

The United States will continue its support through the Liberia Forest Initiative and related activities in GEMAP to improve policies on natural resource commercialization. U.S.-supported community forestry initiatives to establish sound policies and practices to ensure that the Liberian population benefits from its forests and related natural resources. Emphasis will be placed on increasing the transparent and legitimate use, ownership, access, and commercialization of timber, forest products, minerals, fisheries, and other resources.

One of the Mission's most substantial economic growth programs is the ongoing Liberia Community Infrastructure Project (LCIP), a three-year USAID \$50 million task order, which began in March 2004 and ends in August of this year, implemented by Development Alternatives Incorporated (DAI). LCIP II, the follow-on task order, has been awarded to DAI and is funded through June 2008.

LCIP, originally designed to respond to reintegration priorities, is currently collaborating with the Ministry of Public Works on rehabilitation projects high on the Government of Liberia's priority list. LCIP will operate in 12 out of 15 counties in Liberia. Other infrastructure and access projects across the country are being rehabilitated based on collaboration with local governments and local communities. The objectives of LCIP are to:

- Restore the financial self-sufficiency of war affected persons (particularly youth and women), through activities that will provide employment and skills development opportunities;
- Contribute to social cohesion in the communities, particularly through activities to restore



USAID/Liberia's health program is focused on assisting the Government of Liberia (GOL) in establishing/strengthening its institutional framework as well as supporting service delivery, including supporting revision of the national health policy, supporting the government to conduct a demographic health survey (DHS) with HIV testing in order to inform policy and planning for, HIV/AIDS, education, child survival, and obstetric care in Liberia, among other things.

In the area of service delivery, the health program is focused on family planning and reproductive health, maternal and child health, and HIV/AIDS. Much of this programming goes through the Improved Community Health Project (ICHP) being implemented by Africare as an integrated primary health care project supporting 31 health facilities. In addition to providing clinical and preventive services in health clinics, the ICHP has a robust community focused health promotion and disease prevention program that addresses the health challenges in communities they serve.

HIV and AIDS programming is mainly through Community Reach, with Pact as a grant-making organization for small, local, mainly faith-based organizations, addressing HIV/AIDS interventions for HIV-affected groups. USAID/Liberia also supports a blood safety program in Ganta, Nimba County; this is jointly co-funded by USAID/West Africa. Africare also offers VCT services at a number of its clinics in Bong, Nimba, and Montserrado Counties.

Liberia will be a new Presidential Malaria Initiative (PMI) country in FY 2008 and the Mission will support the PMI goal of reducing malaria-related morbidity by 50 percent in the 15 participating African countries. Liberia will achieve this goal over three years by reaching 85% coverage of vulnerable groups with proven preventive and therapeutic interventions.

The greatest challenges facing the program are limited capacity in the Ministry of Health, and limited attention of other donors to developmental health programming.

## **ECONOMIC GROWTH**

Economic growth programs include continuation of employment, infrastructure, training, and reintegration activities, and expansion of activities focused on developing agriculture, providing micro-credit and other support for small business development. Efforts will also continue at sustainable management of the Liberia's forest and mineral resources.

Agriculture sector productivity is a key component to reducing hunger, improving nutrition, and increasing incomes for poor rural farmers. The U.S. program includes both support for institutional strengthening, and assistance to the government to establish policy and regulatory reforms to enable improved productivity and market development, and work at the grass roots level to foster democratic processes, increase food productivity, restore the smallholder agriculture sub-sector, and create employment opportunities. The program is rehabilitating smallholder livestock, tree and food crops sectors with emphasis on small ruminants, cocoa, oil palm, rubber and cassava. Improved breeding stocks from Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Nigeria, etc., are being brought into the country for multiplication and distribution to program beneficiaries. Through Farmers' Field School (FFS), the program also provides training in business management skills, leadership skills, and good governance to farmers' groups and community-based organizations. The program will increasingly focus on the business



community infrastructure and essential services; and

- Link communities to government by rehabilitating and reconstructing key national, county and local level infrastructure (such as administrative buildings, roads, and schools).

USAID/Liberia's reintegration program played a key role in the success of infrastructure activities related to the President's 150-day deliverables project. LCIP projects to be visited in the course of the HELP Commission's trip include the rehabilitation of the Capitol Building, the Zwedru Multilateral High School, the Rehabilitation of Artisans Program (RAP), and the Kakata Rural Teacher Training Institute.

## HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

The Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) provided more than \$31.6 million in earmarked humanitarian assistance for Liberian returnees and communities in FY-2006 and approximately \$10.8 million in earmarked funds for programs providing repatriation support and assistance to the more than 112,000 remaining Liberian refugees in Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, and Sierra Leone. In addition, a portion of PRM's significant un-earmarked contributions to UNHCR (\$54.9 million) and ICRC's (\$32.7 million) Africa programs benefits victims of conflict in West Africa.

USAID/Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) programs in 2006 funded food security and agriculture activities that assisted 385,000 people, as well as the operations of 27 health clinics in three counties. Programs to improve healthcare and livelihoods assisted 168,000 others. USAID/OFDA partners worked closely with the Liberian Ministry of Health to build capacity to test for, prevent, and treat malaria, and supported expanding immunization activities, improving mother-child health, and expanding health education and training for professional and community workers, as well as providing support to returning internally displaced persons to construct and rehabilitate homes.

Since 1990 has provided more than \$105.4 million in humanitarian assistance to the people of Liberia. Since 2003, assistance has totaled \$42.5 million, beginning with deployment of a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) between August and October 2003, to assess the humanitarian situation and coordinate the USG response to the emergency. USAID/OFDA funding to NGOs and U.N. agencies focused on emergency responses in health, food security, nutrition, and water and sanitation sectors. In 2004, as other parts of the USG began to ramp up their operations, OFDA provided more than \$23 million in funding, supporting major interventions across these sectors, including the nationwide UNICEF-coordinated measles vaccination campaign that immunized more than 1 million children. OFDA efforts also contributed to camp management for internally displaced persons (IDPs), emergency rehabilitation, and humanitarian coordination and logistical operations. Programs in 2005 focused on food security, agriculture, nutrition, coordination, shelter, water and sanitation, health, and emergency relief supplies. USAID/OFDA also supported the management of IDP camps in three counties including the management and prevention of gender-based violence in the camps and host communities.