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# LIBERIA DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOVERNANCE ASSESSMENT

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# Map of Liberia



## ACRONYMS

ACS	American Colonization Society
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
CDC	Congress for Democratic Change
GAC	General Auditing Commission
CBL	Central Bank of Liberia
CBO	Community Based Organization
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CDC	Congress for Democratic Change
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CDF	County Development Funds
DRG	Democracy, Human Rights and Governance
DDRR	Disarmament Demobilization Rehabilitation and Reintegration
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ELWA	Eternal Love Winning Africa
FIND	Foundation for International Dignity
FLY	Federation of Liberian Youth
IDP	internally displaced persons
LACC	Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission
LPC	Liberia Peace Council
GAC	General Auditing Commission
GEMAP	Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program
GEMS	Government and Economic Management Support
INCHR	Independent National Commission on Human Rights
INPFL	Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia
IGNU	Interim Government of National Unity
LACC	Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission
LEITI	Liberia Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative Law
LINNK	Liberian NGOs Network
LINSU	Liberia National Students Union
LMC	Liberia Media Center
LMTU	Liberia Motorcycle Transport Union
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
LP	Liberty Party
MRU	Mano River Union
MAROWPNET	Mano River Women's Peace Network
MODEL	Movement for Democracy in Liberia
MOJA	Movement for Justice in Africa
MPLI	Movement for the Protections of Liberian Interests
NARDA	New African Research and Development Agency
NDPL	National Democratic Party of Liberia
NEC	National Election Commission
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NOCOL	National Oil Company of Liberia
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia

NTAL	National Teachers Association of Liberia
PAL	Progressive Alliance of Liberia
PPP	Peoples Progressive Party
PUL	Press Union of Liberia
SDF	Social Development Funds
SI	Social Impact
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
ULIMO	United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy
ULIMO-K	United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy-Kromah faction
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UPP	United Peoples Party
UP	Unity Party
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
WIPNET	Women in Peacebuilding Program
WONGOSOL	Women's NGO Secretariat of Liberia



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Liberia enjoys considerable freedom of expression and association and a significantly improved human rights environment. It has experienced greater stability and security since 2005. All of this allows USAID some important opportunities from a democracy, human rights, and governance perspective. However, progress in terms of improving government accountability, rule of law as well as political accountability and competition appears to have been stalled. The fundamental democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG) problem has to do with governmental accountability and effectiveness. The consequences of the lack of accountability manifest themselves in continued corruption at every level of government. Problems with rule of law have resulted in corruption and inefficiencies in the court system, lack of capacity, and the persistence of a culture of impunity. Lack of political accountability and competition have resulted in continued executive dominance and the inability of the legislature and judiciary to act as a check on the executive. The citizenry remain uninformed while civil society remains weak, making it difficult for society to address these constraints. There is, therefore, a need to strengthen the demand for government accountability in order to break the stalemate.

What USAID does now lays the basis for the future. It is necessary to break the current impasse and look beyond 2017, when President Johnson Sirleaf steps down and to think about the institutions that are going to be in place to balance the executive. Given the history of executive dominance, there is a very real danger that it will persist, along with entrenched patronage, corruption and impunity, unless greater efforts are made to address these issues.

### **Defining the Democracy, Human Rights and Governance Problem**

There are at least three major constraints on democracy, human rights, and governance in Liberia, of which the first is the most significant:

#### **1. Administrative Accountability and Effectiveness**

Corruption has been endemic throughout Liberia's history to the extent that those who did not engage in it were considered the exception. In spite of Liberia's efforts to improve accountability by establishing an anti-corruption commission and by reorganizing the General Auditing Commission, accountability remains a serious problem. Unchecked corruption creates disincentives for voice and participation, it undermines meritocracy, and makes it difficult to deal with problems of social exclusion. These exclusions can lead to insecurity. Today, some of the biggest tensions revolve around land conflicts, terms of concessions, the large number of disaffected youth who are unemployed, divisions between various groups, as well as the marginalization of women.

The World Bank's World Governance Indicators for Liberia show improvement since 2005. These numbers reflect the political will to create and pass laws addressing corruption, but there is little in the way of implementation. If the laws are implemented, they are applied inconsistently. To the extent that there is increasing momentum to curb these tendencies, it has come primarily from civil society, the media and donors.

## 2. Rule of Law

The inability to take action against perpetrators of violence and corruption more generally creates a sense of a lack of rule of law and a lack of accountability. This has the potential to spiral into retribution against individuals through mob justice and even against entire ethnic or social groups. Stronger formal and informal legal structures are needed to mediate conflicts. There is a desperate need for recourse to justice at the local level. It is impeded by corruption and inefficiency of the court system and by a weakness in capacity.

## 3. Political Accountability and Competition

There are two elements in the lack of competition in government that are of particular importance in Liberia: a lack of competition within government and weak pressures for governmental accountability from society.

The first important challenge to further democratization in Liberia has to do with the lack of competition within the government. This manifests itself in the persistence of an executive that prevails over a weak judiciary and legislature. Governance is frequently exercised through the use of patronage, although not to the extent that it was in the past. The president has appointed relatives and friends to senior government positions, leading to concerns about nepotism and cronyism.

The other dimension of the lack of competition in government has to do with growing, but nevertheless weak, pressures for accountability from civil society and the media. Part of this can be attributed to the low information environment. Citizens lack knowledge of their rights and what they can demand of representatives and other public officials.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of these conclusions, we recommend that USAID focus on four areas: **1) continuing support for institutions promoting government accountability; 2) continuing support for rule of law through both formal and informal justice mechanisms; 3) strengthening civil society and the media; and 4) support for initiatives to improve information access.** The fact that the Liberian government appears committed to all these goals should bode well for such efforts. Although this is a country with a hybrid political system, which is neither fully democratic nor fully authoritarian, it does not appear resistant in principle to improving democracy, human rights and governance. Moreover, it actively advocates for these reforms. Where it falls short is in implementation. In that sense, the country is at a stalemate and is not moving forward in a meaningful way in addressing the key democracy, human rights and governance issues. We see important opportunities for USAID to strategically address these problems in the following areas:

### ***Development Objective 1: More Effective, Accountable, and Inclusive Governance***

It is critical that continued support be given to improve the functioning of the government through training, systems development, improvement of service delivery, management of public resources, and organizational strengthening.

***Development Objective 2: Enhance Rule of Law***

There are enormous needs for legal justice at the local level. Formal and informal justice mechanisms both need to be strengthened to address weaknesses in the criminal justice system that have to do with corruption, capacity and infrastructure. Without significant improvements, the country will continue to be subjected to mob violence and other forms of insecurity because of a lack of faith in the legal system.

***Development Objective 3: Strengthen Civil Society's and the Media's Effectiveness in Advancing Reforms***

Many of USAID's efforts have been focused on improving the government supply side of providing services and public goods. This may have been justified in the first decade since the civil war because of the need to rebuild the basic capacity and functioning of the state. There needs to be more demand to continue with reforms and pressures from below to create more momentum for institutional change, not simply supply side service delivery. The only societal forces capable of creating such momentum at this time are civil society and the media, in spite of their own weaknesses.

***Development Objective #4: Improve Information Environment***

We propose that improving the information environment will help citizens make demands on government. This can be accomplished through, for example, civic education campaigns, community legal advisors, and support for community radio stations.

## I. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings and recommendations of a Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG) assessment conducted for USAID Liberia by a team assembled by Social Impact (SI). The purpose of this DG assessment is to identify major trends and challenges with regard to democratic politics and governance in Liberia in order to inform the design of USAID Liberia's DG strategy and programs.

The SI team consisted of team leader Aili Mari Tripp, Professor of Political Science and Gender and Women's Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Shelby Grossman, PhD Candidate, Department of Government, Harvard University. We conducted this assessment applying USAID's Strategic Assessment Framework alongside a parallel assessment focusing primarily on the issues of decentralization carried out by Leslie Fox (team leader) together with Frances Muwonge. Professor Tripp and Ms. Grossman are the principal authors of this report. None of contents of the report should be interpreted as representing the views of USAID or the US government.

The team visited Liberia from May 26 to June 19, 2012. Approximately two weeks were spent interviewing relevant US government personnel, USAID implementing partners and key Liberian officials and politicians, civil society and community based organization (CBO) leaders, women's groups, chiefs, government officials, legislators, local government, parties, media, and donors. Team members conducted research in Monrovia, Nimba, Bong, Bomi, Sinoe and Grand Bassa. All together over 125 people were interviewed.

The team greatly appreciated the interest and support shown by Michael Arietti, US Chargé d'Affaires in Liberia, and Patricia Rader, Mission Director, USAID Liberia. The team's work was assisted by the generous support provided by the members of USAID Liberia's Democracy and Governance Team, including Kristin Joplin and Louise Fahnbulleh. We also thank Nelson Klede for his logistical support.

This assessment builds on a prior DG assessment (DGA) conducted in 2004, which formed an important point of comparison for our report. This DGA was conducted prior to the 2005 elections by Paul Fitzgerald, Robert Herman, Gilbert M. Khadiagala, and Madeline Williams.

## II. CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

**Political History:** Liberia was originally settled by former slaves in the 1820s under the auspices of the American Colonization Society (ACS), which advocated the repatriation of former slaves in Africa. The settlers declared the Republic of Liberia independent in 1847. The local population did not support the creation of the nation and resisted the ACS and government throughout the 1800s. The group of settlers came to control the political, economic and social life of the country even though they never exceeded more than 5% of the population in number. Their party, the true Whig Party, dominated Liberian politics until 1980, when Samuel Doe took over the country in a violent coup, bringing the first indigenous led government into power. The dominance of the Krahn ethnic group in this period resulted in the Gio, Grebo and other groups feeling sidelined and repressed. This period saw the ascendance of the Mandingo, who were perceived by others as outsiders from Guinea. Doe held elections in 1985, but it is widely believed that he rigged them in his favor. As a result, former Army Commanding General Thomas Quiwonkpa mounted an invasion of Liberia from Sierra Leone to overthrow Doe, but the attempted coup was suppressed and Quiwonkpa was executed. This resulted in retribution against his supporters in Nimba County.

Charles Taylor launched an uprising to overthrow Doe in December 4, 1989, as leader of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). This resulted in the first 7-year war. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) sent its military peacekeeping troops (ECOMOG) in 1990 to Liberia to keep Taylor from taking over Monrovia. Meanwhile, Prince Yormie Johnson broke off from Taylor's forces to form an Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL). He killed Doe on September 9, 1990. An Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) was formed in October 1990 with the help of ECOWAS and Dr. Amos Sawyer became interim President. Taylor refused to accept the IGNU government and continued fighting.

Seeking to revenge the killing of Doe, the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO), led by Alhaji Kromah, was formed by a merger of four groups. ULIMO eventually split into the Mandingo-led ULIMO-K led by Kromah and Krahn-dominated ULIMO-J led by Roosevelt Johnson. Other fighting forces included the Nimba Defense Council, the Movement for the Redemption of Liberian Moslems, the Krahn-based Liberian Peace Council, and the Lofa Defense Force. During the war, people were killed on any pretext: on suspicion of being or looking like

Krahn, Gio, Mano, Mandingo or some other group, for not being able to speak an indigenous language, or for some other cause.

Several peace accords were signed and Taylor eventually agreed to a five-person transitional government in negotiations between the US, UN, the Organization of African Unity and ECOWAS. The fighting ended with the 1996 Abuja Accords, which paved the way for disarmament and elections. In the meantime, Madam Ruth Sando Perry headed the Liberian National Transitional Government III, which presided over the legislative and presidential elections. National presidential elections were held in 1997, which Taylor and his National Patriotic Party won, capturing 75.3% of vote against Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's Unity Party, which won only 9.6%. Many voted for Taylor because they feared that the country would return to war if he did not win. Although the elections were seriously flawed, they were seen by many international observers as being Liberia's best hope for peace. Taylor's rule was very repressive. The war resumed in 1999 as challenges to his rule were mounted by Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), led by Sekou Conneh, which made an incursion from Guinea, and, later by the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), led by Thomas Nimely-Yaya, which made an incursion from Côte d'Ivoire.

Taylor was forced into exile in August 2003, while his vice president Moses Blah took over. In June 2003, peace talks began in Akosombo, Ghana, and were attended by South Africa's Thabo Mbeki and Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria. In the midst of the negotiations, the chief prosecutor of the UN-mandated Special Court for Sierra Leone issued a warrant for the arrest of Charles Taylor, indicting him for complicity in crimes committed during Sierra Leone's civil war. The next round of peace negotiations were held in Accra, Ghana, to negotiate a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). The war escalated and the negotiators came under intense pressure from thousands of women peace activists both inside Liberia and at the talks in Accra to conclude the agreement. As a result of such pressures, the CPA was signed in August 2003, paving the way for the formation of a transitional government, which was led by Gyude Bryant, and the holding of elections in October 2005.

The factors that contributed to the conflict, in brief, had to do with the historic dominance of the Americo-Liberian people over the indigenous people; the politicization of ethnicity more generally; the entrenchment of corruption and patronage; the lack of dispute resolution mechanisms; a weak and corrupted judiciary; and unresolved conflicting land claims. As a result of the war, an estimated 250,000 people are said to have died out of total population of 3 million and over half the population was forced to flee either internally or abroad. Political, economic, and social institutions were decimated; Liberia's infrastructure was destroyed; and the lives of individuals, families and communities were irreparably shattered. One cannot overstate the extent to which the violence violated societal norms beyond recognition: Children became killers; teenage girls, in particular, were subject to rape; religious sanctuaries became sites of mass atrocities; the vanquished were often dismembered and body parts like the heart were eaten to embolden combatants; and the traditionally revered elder Zoes were targeted.

The 2005 elections were held under the framework established by the CPA. Popular football star George Weah of the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) party was poised to win, coming first with 28.3% of the vote. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and her Unity Party came in second with 19.8% of the vote, while Charles Brumskine's Liberty Party (LP) gained 13.9% of the vote. Winston Tubman, running with the National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL) gained 9.2% of the votes.

However, in the second round, Johnson Sirleaf beat Weah, claiming 59.4% of the vote to his 40.6%. Thus, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf became the first elected woman president in Africa. Although Weah claimed fraud, the courts threw out his petition and international observers, similarly, did not observe any significant irregularities.

The 2011 presidential and legislative elections were the first to be held under the 1986 constitution, since the 1997 and 2005 elections were held under special legal dispensations. The 2011 elections were the first elections since the civil war to be organized by the National Election Commission (NEC). The elections were particularly challenging since they required constituency demarcation and the holding of a national referendum on August 23, 2011. Following a runoff election, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf emerged once again as the presidential victor.

**US Relations with Liberia:** US history has been intertwined with that of Liberia for centuries. US commercial interests have shaped US relations with Liberia going back to the leasing of land to Firestone in 1926, when the auto industry was booming and demand for rubber for tires was on the rise. Firestone not only failed to help build up Liberia's infrastructure, but it was implicated in a forced labor scandal in the late 1920s and early 1930s that was tantamount to slavery.

The US and Liberia forged a military relationship in 1942 with the building of a military base, and in 1959 the US and Liberia signed a mutual defense pact, which provided for US intervention in the case of an attack on Liberia. Liberia voted with the US in most issues relating to the Cold War in the United Nations and was regarded as an ally in the fight against communism in Africa. Liberia became the highest recipient of US per capita aid in sub-Saharan Africa under Doe, who remained eager to protect US military facilities and investments. President Reagan supported Doe, even though it was evident he was targeting certain ethnic groups, perpetrating serious human rights violations, and was engaged in corrupt practices. With the ouster of Doe, US cut ties with Liberia and evacuated its citizens in 1990. The US stayed out of the 1989-97 conflict.

The US renewed its involvement in Liberia in 2003, when it deployed 200 marines and warships along the coast as part of a UN multinational stabilization force. In 2004, USAID started working in Liberia again and today administers a \$205 million portfolio in the country, which according to Chargé d'Affaires Michael Arietti includes "strengthening the security sector; reforming and strengthening the education and health sectors; supporting efforts to build human capacity; improving governance; supporting civil society; rule of law and other elements of the democratic process; encouraging growth of the private sector, especially agriculture; and expanding people to people contacts through the Peace Corps and exchanges of scholarships." The US has put considerable resources into helping restructure the security sector and into keeping UNMIL in Liberia. It has done a great deal to build schools, roads, court houses and other infrastructure. Relations between the US and Liberia have been very strong since Ellen Johnson Sirleaf took over as president.

**Reconstruction:** The Liberian government under Johnson Sirleaf started the arduous process of rebuilding the state and society, rebuilding the civil service and government agencies, reconstructing roads, returning services, including electricity, and reestablishing a military and police force. A massive Disarmament Demobilization Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) process was embarked upon, which was regarded as generally successful. Over the next five years, the Liberian government made important strides in rebuilding relations with the international community, including getting rid of Liberia's debt.

**Security:** Since 2003, the country has relied heavily on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) to maintain peace, but has also built up its own modest security forces. Unlike the past, the army is ethnically balanced and is working to incorporate 20% women. Johnson Sirleaf has also strengthened the police, fire service, the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization and other state institutions. She also sought to rebuild the court system, which was virtually nonexistent when she came to power.

**People:** Liberia is a small West African country of roughly 3.9 million people. It has a population growth rate of 2.6% and population density of 93 per sq. mile. The median age is 18 years and 44% of the population is 14 years and under (by comparison, one fifth of the population is under 15 in the US). Liberia has a life expectancy of 57 and a 5% fertility rate (Africa averages 5.3%). Almost half the population lives in urban areas, with 882,000 living in Monrovia alone. This is largely a consequence of the war, which forced Liberians to flee to urban areas for protection.

Liberia is home to over 20 ethnic groups, none of which constitute a majority: Kpelle 20%, Bassa 13%, Grebo 10%, Gio 8%, Mano 8%, Kru 6%, Lorma 5%, Kissi 4.8%, Gola 4%, and others 20%. English is the official language and there are 20 ethnic languages. Christians comprise 85.6% of the population, while Muslims constitute 12% of the population. Of the Christians, roughly 17% are Pentecostal, 12% Methodist, 9% Baptist, 6% Roman Catholic, 6% Lutheran and the rest divided between various Christian denominations.

**Economy:** The formal economy virtually collapsed during the years of conflict as a result of the destruction of much of the infrastructure and capital flight. Nevertheless, Liberia is wealthy in natural resources and is in the process of reviving its economy. Companies are returning and the country now has the highest ratio of direct foreign investment to GDP in the world. 70% of the population is engaged in agriculture, 22% in services, and 8% in industry. Most farmers are small land holders who cultivate food crops such as cooking bananas, cereals, root crops, and pulses. The country produces rubber, coffee, cocoa, rice, cassava (manioc), palm oil, sugarcane, bananas, sheep, goats, and timber. It exports basic products, primarily raw timber and rubber, as well as diamonds.

The economy has experienced the strongest recovery in two decades with 6.9% GDP real growth rates in 2011 and 9% expected in 2012. The country has enjoyed single digit inflation — the lowest rates in three decades — and inflation is expected to continue to decline. The government's national budget has grown by 400% since 2006. The aggregate revenue increased to \$1.03 billion in five years. Civil servant salaries have increased from \$15 a month in 2006 to about \$100 in 2011 and there have been improvements in the timely payment of salaries. The Central Bank reserves have increased from \$5 million in 1999 to \$293 million in 2010. National debt was virtually eliminated in three years from a high of almost \$5 billion in 2009 by getting the IMF and other major lenders to forgive Liberia's debts. The Liberian diaspora in the US plays a large role in Liberia's economy and politics. Remittances between 2004 and 2010 were between \$32 and \$79 million annually (The Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011). These remittances constitute roughly 7% of Liberia's GDP.

Employment is still a big problem, but President Johnson Sirleaf has tackled this issue aggressively by promoting indigenous entrepreneurship and microfinance loans. She has attracted investments in industry and trade. The infrastructure has been improving throughout

the country as roads and bridges, the port and airport have been constructed and renovated. Basic services like electricity, water and waste disposal have been repaired or restored for the first time since the war began in some parts of Monrovia.

**Health and Education:** Rates of malaria, cholera and anemia have been reduced and a nationwide immunization campaign against yellow fever was carried out. Health facilities have doubled nationwide in recent years. Since 2006, the government has built almost one school a week. They are now expanding the secondary school system. Literacy (over the age of 15) still stands at 57.5%, with a large gap remaining between men (73%) and women (41.6%).

**Democracy, Human Rights and Governance:** The country enjoys freedom of the press; there are no political prisoners and political rights and civil liberties are generally protected. The president has dealt with the endemic problem of corruption by passing key legislation, establishing an Anti-Corruption Commission and by reorganizing the General Auditing Commission. Serious problems remain in this area. The CPA provided for the creation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which made its recommendations in 2009, but they were never implemented because of the controversial nature of some of their recommendations, e.g., Sirleaf be barred from holding public office. Further, the International Center for Transitional Justice has written that the final report, “lacks evidentiary data, coherence between and within sections, specificity, and the unanimous support of all commissioners, two of whom refused to endorse it” (James-Allen et al. 2010).

**Women:** The president has put women’s rights at the forefront of her reconstruction agenda, promoting legislation addressing violence against women and women’s inheritance rights. The government is working with the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) to review the nation’s laws for bias or discrimination against women. The new policy of free primary school education has increased enrollment of girls by 40%. The country has improved microcredit lending to women and improved market place infrastructure. The president has given women top positions in the government.

**Foreign Policy:** In foreign policy, President Johnson Sirleaf has built strong ties with her neighboring countries and has done much to revive the country’s image in the eyes of the West, something that many Liberians are proud of.

## **Conclusion**

In sum, Liberia enjoys significant freedom of expression and association and a significantly improved human rights environment. It has experienced greater stability and security since 2005. All of this allows USAID some important opportunities from a DRG perspective. However, many of these gains have been stalled. Corruption is still rampant as is the culture of impunity. Executive dominance has not fundamentally changed nor has the weakness of the legislature and judiciary as a check on the executive. The citizenry remain uninformed and civil society remains weak, making it difficult for society to address these constraints. What USAID does now lays the basis for the future. It is necessary to break this impasse and look beyond 2017, when President Johnson Sirleaf steps down, and to think about the institutions that are going to be in place to curb corruption, limit impunity and balance the executive.



### III. DEFINING THE DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GOVERNANCE PROBLEM

Our assessment shows that there are at least three major interrelated constraints on democracy, human rights, and governance in Liberia: 1) weak administrative accountability on the part of government, 2) rule of law, particularly as it relates to corruption and the ability of people to seek redress through the justice system; and 3) lack of competition both within the government, but also with respect to a lack of an informed citizenry that can make demands on the government and legislative representatives. While important steps have been taken to improve all these areas since the Sirleaf government took over, presently it appears that these early gains are at a standstill. For example, many of the measures to ensure accountability have not sufficiently curbed corruption. Of the three aforementioned areas, the main problems lay with the first area of weak administrative accountability and effectiveness.

#### A. Weak Administrative Accountability and Effectiveness

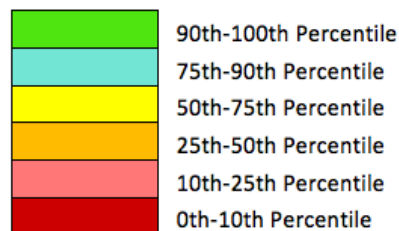
Corruption has been endemic throughout Liberia's history to the extent that those who did not engage in it were considered the exception. So-called upright members of society participated in such activities, which mainly benefited the wealthy. The judicial institutions perpetuated the lack of accountability, as did the police, leaving citizens with little recourse when their rights were violated. Justice favored the wealthy elite. About 70% of Afrobarometer survey (2008) respondents felt that ordinary people who commit crimes rarely if ever go unpunished, whereas only 30% felt this way about government officials. These tendencies were exacerbated during the civil war and led to widespread looting, vigilantism, and retribution against those who they felt had benefited illicitly from the system.

In spite of efforts to improve accountability through initiatives such as the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program (GEMAP) and its successor, Government and Economic Management Support (GEMS) program, accountability remains a serious problem. Unchecked corruption creates disincentives for voice and participation; it undermines meritocracy; and makes it difficult to deal with problems of social exclusion. These exclusions can lead to physical and human insecurity and have resulted in a variety of societal problems. Today, some of the biggest tensions revolve around land conflicts, the large number of disaffected youth who are unemployed, inter-ethnic tensions, as well as the marginalization of women.

Liberia's rankings for Transparency International have improved considerably since 2005, when it ranked 2.2; today it ranks 3.2 (a jump from 137<sup>th</sup> to 91<sup>st</sup> place). The World Bank's World Governance Indicators, which are perhaps the most comprehensive scores, combine the views of a large number of enterprise, citizen and expert survey respondents in a meta-ranking. These indicators show a 30% improvement since 2005 in "government effectiveness"; a tripling of its "regulatory quality" score, and an increase in the "control of corruption improvement" by an order of 2.5 (See Table 1). However, overall government effectiveness remains abysmally low, well behind other elements of governance. Voice and accountability received highest marks, followed by control of corruption, stability, rule of law and regulatory quality with government effectiveness at the bottom. This table reflects our assessment of priorities for USAID: with

Table 1. Governance Indicators for Liberia

Governance Indicator	Year	Percentile Rank (0-100)	Governance Score (range is from -2.5 to +2.5)
Voice and Accountability	2010	40.3	-0.23
	2005	36.5	-0.34
	2000	13.5	-1.21
Political Stability/ Absence of Violence	2010	29.7	-0.46
	2005	10.1	-1.36
	2000	3.8	-2
Government Effectiveness	2010	8.1	-1.24
	2005	6.3	-1.36
	2000	2.4	-1.84
Regulatory Quality	2010	16.7	-1.06
	2005	4.9	-1.55
	2000	4.9	-1.79
Rule of Law	2010	17.1	-1.01
	2005	8.1	-1.38
	2000	0.5	-2.02
Control of Corruption	2010	36.4	-0.51
	2005	14.1	-1.04
	2000	3.9	-1.37



Source: World Bank

government accountability and effectiveness as the most urgent concern, followed by rule of law. Electoral competition, although important, is of lesser concern. The fact that voice is seen as improving, suggests vehicles of voice, like civil society and the media, may serve as useful sources of pressure for reform.

There is a growing culture of naming and shaming as a result of media exposures of corruption and of indictments of some officials. This appears to have had some deterrent effect based on interviews we carried out, but it raises its own set of issues regarding due process since the people named generally have not been proven to be guilty in a court of law. Some key accountability institutions have come into play, namely the General Auditing Commission (GAC) and the Liberian Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC), as well as some ministries like Finance. A series of legislation has been passed: Public Finance Management Plan Act (2009); Liberian Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (LEITI) Law (2009), which requiring natural resource revenue and contract transparency; Freedom of Information Act (2010); and Broadcast Regulatory Act (2008) to strengthen regulation and ensure media freedom. The president issued Whistleblower legislation in 2009 as an executive order, binding all public and private employers. Although legislation has been passed, the government has been slow in taking action on the reports of the General Auditing Commission, and as a result, few criminal charges have been issued. At higher levels, almost no senior government officials have been prosecuted for corruption, despite numerous detailed and rigorously researched reports by the GAC. One exception is the former head of the Liberia Telecommunications Authority, who has been charged for financial improprieties during his time at the LTA. (The status of the case is unclear at the time of this writing).

There appears to be the political will to create and pass laws, but there is little in the way of implementation. If they are implemented, they are applied inconsistently. The “Administrative

Code of Conduct for Members of the Executive Branch of Government” is another example of positive government policy that has lacked much follow-up. Issued by executive order in January 2012, it called for a national code of conduct for all public employees. The bill to establish this code remains before a legislature reluctant to pass anything that might threaten themselves or their staff. In spite of a zero tolerance policy on corruption by the president, individuals who have been accused of flagrant corruption are often moved to other key positions of power rather than being investigated and brought up on charges. Patronage, lobbying and facilitation fees are used to influence outcomes in the legislature and other such bodies. The perception of inconsistency in dealing with corruption at the top sends a message to those in lower ranks that the rules are fungible. This is nothing new in Liberia, but it undermines the zero tolerance policy.

In the past, it seeped throughout society, resulting in a situation where people expected to make payments at checkpoints, to police, various government inspectors, and other civil servants. Over 43% of the respondents in a 2008 Afrobarometer survey felt that most or all government officials and legislators were corrupt. There was also least trust in the police, local government leaders, legislators and the courts. The police, tax officials, legislators, and judges were perceived to be the most corrupt. Traditional leaders were trusted the most and seen to be the least corrupt (Tables 2 and 3).

Corruption has affected key areas of national concern. There had been a UN ban on the export of timber, which was lifted in 2006. Over 40% of the country’s land has been granted to foreign concessions, including logging, palm oil, and rubber and mining companies (Global Witness 2011). Last year Liberia received a paltry \$6 million from logging concessions. It is unclear that

**Table 2. Perceptions of Corruption in Leadership and Government**

	Judges and Magistrates	Police	Legislative Reps	Tax Officials	Government Officials	Local Leaders	Traditional Leaders	Office of Presidency
<b>None</b>	5.10	5.20	5.70	3.60	3.50	5.00	11.90	6.20
<b>Some of them</b>	56.10	40.90	51.30	47.60	54.20	57.00	57.60	60.20
<b>Most of them</b>	26.50	34.40	27.80	35.80	29.30	25.20	19.90	20.70
<b>All of them</b>	12.40	19.50	15.20	13.00	12.90	12.80	10.60	12.90

Source: Afrobarometer, Liberia (2008). Question: How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven’t you heard enough about them to say?

**Table 3. Trust in Leadership and Government**

	Judges and Magistrates	Police	Legislature	Local Leaders	Traditional Leaders	Office of Presidency	National Electoral Commission
<b>Not at all</b>	21.00	30.10	23.60	24.00	21.00	13.50	26.1
<b>Just a little</b>	34.00	36.90	35.20	37.70	31.70	27.80	36.5
<b>Somewhat</b>	23.20	16.30	17.40	17.60	18.20	13.80	17.0
<b>A lot</b>	21.80	16.60	23.80	20.80	29.00	45.00	20.4

Source: Afrobarometer, Liberia 2008. Question: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven’t you heard enough about them to say?

Liberia is getting all that it should from the concession arrangements it is making, in part, because those negotiating them are more interested in personal benefits than how the country will benefit. Concessions are supposed to contribute to Social Development Funds (SDF), while government transfers contribute to County Development Funds (CDF) and UNDP contributes to Local Development Funds. Corruption at all levels, from the ministries to the counties, makes it difficult to ensure that the communities receive these funds or that they are used as intended.

These practices ultimately undermine the well-being and future wealth of the nation. One lawyer who regularly sat in on the National Investment Commission meetings reported that for every concession deliberated by the Inter-Ministerial Committee, the line ministers were more concerned about what kickbacks they would receive rather than the terms of the concession. The discussions were almost exclusively about such payments. As a result of this type of behavior in the past, over half of Liberia's forests have been given to logging companies in concessions without reference to local regulations or laws and without consultation with local populations (Ford 2012a).

When the government's Forestry Development Authority was exposed for having changed the contracts for three logging companies to reduce tax obligations by 96%, the board closed down the investigation rather than holding anyone in the government or companies accountable (Global Witness 2011). The administrative capacity and legal infrastructure are weak, while the accounting procedures are in need of strengthening to prevent irregularities in the signing of concessions with companies. Moreover, there also does not seem to be the political will to go forward with pressing charges.

These concerns have been heightened since an Australian oil company, African Petroleum, found commercial oil off the Liberian coast in 2012. Oil concessions have been awarded to companies like Chevron, Anadarko Petroleum and ExxonMobil. The National Oil Company of Liberia (NOCAL) has a history of mismanagement, outdated laws, and corruption that it is seeking to overcome. It has started including civil society organizations in discussions about reforming the country's oil laws and policies. It will commission an independent audit of its finances; and has submitted its budget to the legislature. These are all positive developments.

However, according to the GAC, NOCAL allegedly paid money to legislators and their staff to get the concessions for Chevron through two intermediary companies, which sold oil exploration rights to the larger oil companies for millions of dollars. In 2009, the legislature ratified the contracts that have the potential value of an investment at \$10.7 billion. Chevron agreed to pay the Liberian government a mere \$15 million in withholding taxes for 2010 and disbursed \$10.5 million in Community Development Funds over five years. The GAC wanted the contracts with the intermediate companies nullified because of the payments to the legislators, which would have required Chevron to rebid (Global Witness 2011). We were told by a former lawyer involved with the National Investment Commission that almost no concession went through without facilitation payments of some sort. Chevron clearly did not wish to make such payments directly and feared losing the concessions. Chevron expressed concern that the GAC allegations might taint the company's reputation with the US Department of Justice and that if it came under scrutiny it might have to back out of the Liberia deal, leaving the field open to Russia and China (Dwyer 2012).

This might have played a role in GAC head John Morlu's contract not being renewed. However, he also had unnecessarily aggravated the executive (calling the government "three times more corrupt than its predecessors"). He often took allegations of corruption straight to the media, instead of working through the legislature's Public Accounts and Action Committee, and he was accused of sexual harassment by an employee (Sandy 2011). The Ministry of Justice pursued only two out of two dozen cases the GAC recommended for criminal investigation. At one point, state security personnel even stormed the GAC offices.



*Wikimedia Commons*

The reasons for the lack of action in tackling corruption are multiple and complex. What is particularly disappointing, but not necessarily surprising, is that it permeates the government at every level. It may persist partly as a result of a fear of retribution, a danger which is real. The Finance Minister's home was firebombed after he sacked employees implicated in a scam. Political deals, mutual favors, and obligations, some of which are election related, keep some individuals from being called to account. A persistent problem has been the weak investigative and prosecutorial powers in the Ministry of Justice as well as the Anti-Corruption Commission.

In other cases, it is simply a problem of capacity and knowhow. To the extent that there is increasing momentum to curb these tendencies, it has come primarily from civil society, the media and donors. Watchdog organizations have pressed for accountability and transparency; civil society representatives increasingly sit on oversight boards and are involved in writing regulatory legislation; and the media have been engaged in exposing corrupt practices.

There is variation across public institutions in the degree to which they effectively perform their role. The GAC, the NEC, and the Ministry of Finance stand out as positive outliers. The General Auditing Commission is taking a stand against powerful elite. According to The Carter Center, the NEC "performed admirably, organizing the election on time and demonstrating its capacity to conduct credible and transparent elections in the future" (2011). The Ministry of Finance has cleaned house in tackling corruption. However, most institutions struggle to perform their jobs effectively.

There is a confluence of factors that explain why public institutions experience difficulties in performance :

- There is insufficient accountability in the hiring process. There are few consequences for those practicing nepotism or delivering political favors. The most qualified individuals are frequently not hired for civil servant positions.
- Poor education quality at the primary, secondary, and university level results in a dearth of skilled workers, both among civil servants and deputy ministers.
- Ministerial incentive structures encourage keeping information to oneself. There is little if any incentive to be forthcoming with information.
- More generally, incentive structures rarely encourage doing one's job well.

- There is an expectation that if you get a job with government, you will use public office to provide favors to others. Acting with integrity comes at great personal cost.
- Whenever there is a change in leadership at a public institution, key officials are replaced. This results in a lack of institutional memory.
- Most public institutions have large discretionary funds that their heads use, of course, discretionally. These funds fuel a culture of favors, as opposed to a culture of responsibilities.

There are additional challenges when diasporic Liberians hold public office. There is often tension between Liberians who have spent time in the US and those who have not, a tension that might outweigh any benefits that come from the needed skills. This tension is exacerbated when the diaspora Liberians are paid significantly more than their counterparts and also when the diaspora Liberians are younger than their counterparts.

Some progress has been made in public administration. Key discussions, like debates over the national budget, are far more transparent than they were during the war or under the transitional government. Additionally, it is easier (although still not easy) to get information from government. Nevertheless, the problems in this area present a fundamental obstacle to further DRG progress.

## B. Rule of Law

The second key area of concern from a DRG perspective has to do with rule of law. Although there are many areas of concern, the areas within this sector that are most pressing have to do with the corruption and inefficiency of the court system and the extent to which people have recourse to justice through the justice system.

**Justice:** The difficulty of obtaining justice remains a key issue for ordinary people. At the local level, small and large crimes often go unpunished. We heard of a murder in Nimba where the murderer went unpunished by paying off both the police and the local community radio station. Announcers at the station created an alternative narrative to explain the murder that did not lay blame with the perpetrator. Incidences like this one are frequent at the local level.

Many who desire justice through the formal system are deterred by the financial and time costs. A USIP report documented the rape of an 83 year-old woman in Lofa. The woman's daughter brought the case to the magistrates' court. After paying 500 LD (about US \$6.75) to the court, the daughter was told she needed to get a second medical report. The case was then referred to a circuit court, which had just concluded its session. When the court resumed session, it was the rainy season and the daughter did not want to transport her mother to the court in a wheelbarrow in the rain. Court officials told the daughter her mother needed to be present for the case to proceed. Meanwhile, the suspect escaped jail and the victim died.

These incidences occur even in urban areas. A Monrovia lawyer related a story to us in which he had waited from 8:45 am to 1:30 pm for the judge to appear for a hearing that was scheduled for 8:45 am. The client became hungry and so they both left for lunch. They returned shortly thereafter after, only to find that the case had been thrown out in a default judgment because the judge had appeared in the meantime, found that they had disappeared, and declared that

“the court’s time is my time.” Such incidences are routine. Stories like these highlight the difficulties in bringing cases through the formal justice system.

Costs are also a serious deterrent for pursuing cases through the formal courts, especially if one needs to hire a lawyer. Poor people tend to think that they will not be treated fairly in the formal justice sector. “I don’t have the right shoes,” is a common phrase, which means, “I can’t afford the fees that I would need to pay if I took this case to court.” When asked about the perceived costs of various dispute resolution forums, respondents ranked courts as the most costly, followed by chiefs, elders, then NGOs (Isser et al. 2009). Even if a court has found an individual guilty of a crime, punishments are often not enforced. Sometimes a perpetrator will be released because the victim cannot afford to continue paying for food for the perpetrator in prison (USIP 2009). USIP has further documented two cases where Supreme Court rulings were not enforced.

A second-order explanation for local impunity is a preference for “restorative” justice, sometimes even among the family of a victim. The USIP report concluded that, “most Liberians would still be unsatisfied with the justice meted out by the formal system, even if it were able to deliver on the basics [...]” (Isser et al. 2009). This is in part because Liberians see the formal system as having a narrow interpretation of responsibility and does not address the root problem of an issue. Liberians tend to believe that the customary system takes a more holistic approach to crime and guilt (Isser et al. 2009). However, women are generally less likely to be in favor of and satisfied with the results of taking a case to the customary system.

One of the consequences of a failure to obtain justice through the courts and a lack of trust in the police is that people resort to mob violence.

**Enforcement of Laws:** Enforcement of laws is inconsistent. When a new law is passed or attention is brought to a law, it is sometimes strictly enforced for about two weeks and then forgotten about. Further, there is a lack of awareness of laws and confusion about the content of laws. As will be discussed later in the report, it is frequently difficult to learn about the content of laws, as people who have access to the laws currently profit from this information and have an incentive to keep the content inaccessible. Thus, it is difficult for citizens to make demands on police to enforce laws when they do not know about the content of the law.

**Human Rights:** Liberia’s human rights situation has improved dramatically since the time of Charles Taylor. The State Department Human Rights report for Liberia found that the principal human rights violations in Liberia are those related to justice. The assessment team agrees with this. There have been more police officers, magistrates, prosecutors and public defenders trained. However the main human rights abuses have to do with the aforementioned concerns of corruption of the court system, inefficiencies, and delays in due process.

Prison conditions are another source of human rights violations. A 2011 Amnesty International report describes prisons in Liberia as dirty, overcrowded and in extremely poor condition. This resulted in the deaths of 20 prisoners in 2011. This is in spite of the building of new prisons in six towns. Pretrial detention is a serious problem, with 79% of incarcerated Liberians in pretrial detention.

The justice system, in general, lacks adequate numbers of qualified judges and public defenders suffer from poor infrastructure. One consequence of the lack of faith in the criminal justice system is mob justice and vigilantism. There have been relatively frequent incidences of mob justice, resulting in deaths, injuries and destruction of property.

Liberia abolished the death penalty in 2005, but reintroduced it in 2008 in violation of the Second Optional Protocol of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. No political prisoners are being held and there have been no politically inspired killings. The freedom of the press is evident, as is freedom for opposition parties to compete. There have been some isolated incidences of government action against media outlets.

There has been recourse when the state has overstepped. The police responded heavy handedly in the case of student protests in March 2011. The president suspended the deputy director of police operations for one month and sent the director of police a warning letter. Law enforcement agents also clashed with CDC members prior to the 2011 elections for holding a meeting without a permit, resulting in one death. An investigation of the incident resulted in the dismissal of the Inspector General of Police.

Rape, domestic violence, and sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) more generally remain serious problems in spite of legislation passed against rape and domestic violence. Other measures have been taken, including the creation of a special court to deal with SGBV cases; the establishment of a safe house for SGBV victims in Monrovia; and the adoption of a national GBV plan. Women's and Children's Protection Section offices were established in 45 locations throughout the country by the Liberian National Police, with 217 officers assigned to them. Our discussions with local women advocates in Bomi suggested that these measures were having an impact. Community leaders and women's groups have received training regarding FGM and efforts have been made to find alternative sources of income for those who carry out these practices for a living. There are no laws restricting sexual harassment and female genital mutilation, yet both remain serious problems. No traffickers have been convicted or sentenced since Liberia banned all forms of trafficking in 2005.

Discrimination, explicit and implicit, remains an issue for many minority groups and women. As one example, people with disabilities do not have equal access to government services as they often cannot physically access government buildings (US Department of State 2012). (See section on women [III.D] for further elaboration of their economic, social and cultural rights.)

**Impunity:** While the conviction of Charles Taylor by the Special Court for Sierra Leone was welcomed by many Liberians, many are anxious that Liberia has not taken steps to prosecute others responsible for atrocities in Liberia. A bill has been proposed by Representative J. Baron Brown to the legislature to set up a war crimes court inside Liberia. However, the fact that there are people who have committed many truly heinous crimes walking freely around, holding parliamentary seats, running businesses, and going on with their lives without consequence, has created a feeling that a culture of impunity persists. The lack of follow-through of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) report reinforces this belief, particularly among ordinary people and victims, who feel especially vulnerable having publicly named people they believed to be perpetrators of violence. The inability to take action against perpetrators of violence creates a sense of a lack of rule of law and a lack of accountability. This has the potential to spiral into retribution against individuals and even entire ethnic or social groups. Stronger formal and



informal legal structures are needed to mediate conflicts within society and with the state.

Part of the problem lies with the report itself and the TRC process that produced it. As Jonny Steinberg writes: "Had the report been rigorous and sound, there is every chance that the popular support it has rallied would have counted a great deal. Liberia's former warlords might have found themselves isolated and weak; the space may have been opened for the country to establish a tribunal to try those who prosecuted the civil war, thus forging a desperately required break between the politics of the present and the politics of the past. As things stand, there is little chance of that. The TRC's final report is unsightly and horribly flawed. Aside from making enemies of its natural allies, the report's recommendations on prosecution and censure are based on shaky and unreasoned foundations, and are surely incapable of surviving judicial review. Its fate will probably be that of a quashed document embraced by many ordinary people but rejected by much of the political elite and the international community" (Steinberg 2010, 136).

As Steinberg argues, the TRC process was deeply flawed. It was poorly funded and composed of commissioners with little political clout and weak legal and investigative capacity. Given the limited opportunities in Liberia, as individuals they needed to ensure that they did not cut off potential opportunities after the TRC was over. The TRC promised immunity to those who testified, but none of the most prominent perpetrators asked for immunity since that would have been an admission of guilt. The warlords used the TRC to grandstand, lie, blame their enemies and declare their innocence. The commissioners did little to press them in cross-examination although they vigorously grilled the victims (Steinberg 2010, 140, Gberie 2008). The TRC report recommended that 98 individuals be prosecuted and 49 be censured. There was no criteria for who should be recommended for prosecution, making the list appear arbitrary. Some who admitted mass murder, torture and rape in the TRC (e.g., Joshua Blahyi, aka General Butt Naked) were not listed even though the TRC act does not permit amnesty for those guilty of international human rights violations and war crimes. The 49 who are censured have no right to due process, appeal, or even to find out why they are included on the list.

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was named in the report as one of the 49 "specifically barred from holding public offices; elected or appointed for a period of thirty (30) years" because she was "associated with former warring factions." This provision was overruled by the Supreme Court in January 2011 (in *Williams v. Tah*), which determined that the TRC's recommendation and any attempt to implement the ban were unconstitutional violations of the right to due process. This ruling applied not only to Johnson Sirleaf, but also to others who ran for office, like Prince Johnson.

In spite of the serious shortcomings of the TRC, the larger issue of widespread impunity remains. The failure to prosecute anyone for war crimes has widened the already deep rift between ordinary Liberians and the educated elite who benefited from the war, regardless of the differences among them. The warlords freely go about their daily lives. INPFL leader Prince Johnson holds a seat in the Senate; ULIMO-K leader Aljahi Kromah is a lecturer at the University of Liberia; LURD leader Sekou Damante Conneh is a businessman as is LPC leader George Boley. General Butt Naked runs a welfare program for former child soldiers. Only Charles Taylor was indicted by the International Criminal Court for crimes committed in Sierra Leone (not Liberia), but his close associates continue to hold prominent positions in politics and business. The rift between the rulers and the governed persists, even though ordinary people were also culpable.

Many of them joined the warlords, often willingly, and participated in mass criminal activity, looting and murder (Steinberg 2010, “Is Setting Up a War . . .” 2012).

Those who testified in front of the TRC were encouraged to talk about the trauma and pain they suffered and to name the perpetrators. They now complain that nothing came of it: no trials, no reparations, no counseling, and no justice. Moreover, they put themselves at risk by naming the perpetrators, who can easily carry out retribution against them.

**Peace and Security:** Countries that have been engaged in war have a 44% chance of returning to conflict within 5 years and are 10 times more likely to return to war right after the war ended when compared with when it started (Collier et al. 2003, 83, 104). This is because the conditions that led to the conflict generally remain. If a country has a low-income population, then these conditions will have worsened. Moreover, the population is harboring the same wounds that have now been exacerbated.

The probability that post-conflict countries revert to war can be mediated, some have argued, by peace agreements (Walter 2001), the use of peacekeeping forces (Sambanis and Doyle 2000), by economic growth (Quinn, Mason and Gurses 2007), better implementation of rebel-military integration agreements (Glassmyer and Sambanis 2008), and through the introduction of foreign aid resulting in local level institutional development (Fearon, Humphreys and Weinstein 2009). Although the UN has generally taken the lead in peacekeeping operations, other actors have played supporting roles, including regional peacekeeping organizations and forces (Fortna 2004, Stedman et al. 2002), the World Bank, foreign donors, and other actors within international and domestic civil society.

**Table 4. Most Important Problem for Government to Address**

Problem to Address	Percentage of Respondents
Management of economy	25.6 %
Wages, incomes and salaries	9.2
Unemployment	23.4
Poverty/ destitution	6.4
Rates and taxes	1.2
Loans/ credit	1.2
Farming/ agriculture	3.1
Food shortage/ famine	10.3
Drought	0.2
Land	0.1
Transportation	2.2
Communications	0.2
Infrastructure/ roads	10.4
Education	3.3
Electricity	0.4
Health	0.3
Crime and security	0.1
Agricultural Marketing	2.6
Total	N=1200 (100%)

Source: Afrobarometer, 2008

Liberia is now almost 10 years free of major conflict and every year the likelihood of returning to conflict is reduced. The role of UNMIL has provided the country with a necessary reprieve to undo the damage of the war. The big question is whether the reasons for the conflict have been sufficiently addressed to prevent conflict from reoccurring. Some of the factors that gave rise to the conflict remain evident: the rift between the elite and the ordinary population; the land conflicts; the large segments of the population not benefitting from the concessions; the crushing poverty of the vast majority of the population; the large number of unemployed youth; patronage; corruption; and the lack of faith in the justice system.

However, there are also steps being taken to address most of these concerns and modest faith in the current government to deal with these issues. At least 169,000 Liberian refugees have

voluntarily returned and by 2012, the UNHCR no longer regarded people who fled Liberia and remained abroad as refugees. The economy is picking up. The situation for women is perceived as improving. All these factors help create conditions to avoid conflict.

There are numerous mechanisms in place to deal with conflict. While Liberians are divided about how to deal with impunity regarding their past, they have nevertheless moved ahead in establishing some mechanisms that might help resolve differences in the future: through legislation, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, the palava hut, elections, elected local councils, and policy dialogues, which are increasingly incorporating members of civil society. They can also go to chiefs, commissioners, engage in interfaith dialogues, dialogue on the radio, participate in neighborhood watch systems, and use conflict resolution mechanism of various NGOs.

The military was disbanded and a new army is being built along professional lines. The army allows only high school graduates to join and college graduates to be officers. The army no longer is made up of one dominant ethnicity; rather the army makes a conscious effort to recruit a military that reflects the country's ethnic diversity. The army has a target of recruiting 20% women and thus far 8% of the forces are women. All of these measures help ensure that the military does not become a source of instability as it had been in the past.

At the same time it is important to recognize there are also many subversions of these same institutions, including lobbying fees, bribes and other such inducements, which serve to distort outcomes and favor the wealthy and powerful or certain factions within the elite.

Because of the historic roots of conflict in Liberia, a lot of attention is paid to land as a potential source of conflict. When asked what are the main problems that the government should tackle in an Afrobarometer survey carried out in Liberia in 2008, the respondents overall identified management of the economy, unemployment, roads, and food shortages as being the most salient issues, with land being identified only by .1% of the population as the most important issue to tackle.<sup>1</sup>

Notably, in our interviews we discovered that land conflicts do not fall into any consistent patterns. They are between ethnic groups and within ethnic groups; within and between clans; between men and women; and between county borders. There have been a number of deaths related to such land disputes. However, considering that the lines of conflict are cross-cutting, we believe they are not likely to feed into a larger more serious conflict in the near future.

We were not able to identify systematic longitudinal data on crime rates in Liberia, however, analysis of news reports and interviews suggests that armed violence appears to have declined since 2006. The state itself does little to guarantee personal safety. If one requires police protection, one must be able to pay for this service. In Buchanan, we heard stories about criminals dropping off letters at households announcing the date and time when they would arrive to rob the house. Household residents were expected to prepare their valuables for the robbers. Sometimes, if one called the police, the police would arrive at the time the robbers said

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<sup>1</sup> Survey question: In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address?. [Do not read options. Code from responses. Accept up to three answers. If respondent offers more than three options, ask "Which three of these are the most important?"

they would arrive, and arrest them. Other times, though, the police were in collusion with the robbers.

### C. Political Accountability and Competition

The third major problem is the lack of political accountability and competition. It results in executive dominance over the other branches, which are significantly weaker and unable to challenge the executive. The lack of competition is evident in political society as well. Electoral competition does not reflect a competition of ideas since parties have weakly formulated platforms and are personality driven. To some extent they reflect different constituencies. In legislative elections they reflect some extent ethnic, sub-ethnic and cross-ethnic differences and alliances. Building up capacity to articulate programmatic interests depends on strengthening civil society as well as information capacities. Yet another dimension of the competition problem is the weakness in the capacity of citizens to make demands on government and their representatives and carry out advocacy. This affects both civil society and the media as well as local communities.

The relationship between political leaders and society is one of personalized favors, not one of demand for public goods. Non-elected political leaders often obtain their position because they represent a constituency that has effectively demanded representation, perhaps an ethnic group, or a person from a key part of the country. Their constituency has, in effect, helped the individual get this position by agreeing that this is their representative. In return, the individual has obligations toward the constituency. There are expectations that the individual will do things like pay for weddings and attend ceremonies and make donations. There are fewer expectations that the individual will provide public goods, like a school or a health clinic, and no expectations about how the individual will perform his/her official function as, for example, Deputy Minister of Health.

A principal recommendation of this report is for USAID to support work that helps citizens make demands on government. A recent cross-national study supports the intuition that these demands can lead to better governance (Botero et al. 2012). The study showed that citizen complaints lead to better quality of government through the mechanism of public officials being afraid of punishment from their superiors. This is, in part, the basis for our recommendation of helping citizens make demands on government, along with public sector capacity building and civil service reform (through continued support for programs like GEMS). Of course the extent to which citizen complaints can improve governance has its limits, but many studies have shown that at the local level complaints can change outcomes.<sup>2</sup>

The Botero et al. study also finds that better educated citizens are more likely to complain about government misconduct. This underscores the point that good governance cannot be thought of in a vacuum. Support that USAID provides in other sectors (like education, or health, just to give two examples) can serve to strengthen governance. Of course, there is to some degree a chicken or the egg problem when it comes to improving governance in these sectors. For

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, a study on parental oversight of schools in Niger:  
<http://www.povertyactionlab.org/evaluation/parent-empowerment-through-primary-school-community-grants-niger>

instance, better performance by legislators would result in better quality laws related to education, which would lead to a better education system and a more educated populace. On the other hand, stand alone foreign aid to the education sector can result in an educated populace, which could ultimately lead to better legislators.

**Executive Dominance:** An important consequence of the lack of competition in Liberia has to do with the persistence of an executive that prevails over a weak judiciary and legislature. The executive is not only strong relative to the other two branches, but it is heavily centralized in Monrovia at the expense of the counties. Governance is frequently exercised through personalized rule and the use of patronage, although not to the extent it was in Liberia's recent past nor to the extent of other countries such as Nigeria, where patterns of patronage are routine and deeply entrenched.

There are four main types of balancing that can check the dominance of the executive: interstate or governmental checks via the judiciary and legislature; a civil society that plays a watchdog role (see below); democratic elections; and decentralization, which will be examined in a companion study on decentralization.

Liberia has a long history of presidential privilege in appointments and the current administration is no exception. The president has appointed relatives and friends, with few checks on these appointments. The appointment of her son, Robert Sirleaf, as chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Oil Company of Liberia (NOCOL) was regarded as particularly egregious by many Liberians. He was also senior advisor to the president. Her other son, Charles Sirleaf, was appointed Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL), while another son Fombah Sirleaf is the director of national security. Until recently, her cousin, Ambullai Johnson, was internal affairs minister, while her cousin Frances Johnson-Morris heads the Liberian Anti-Corruption Commission.

Executive dominance is also maintained through the appointments of unqualified commissioners to key commissions and other bodies that are intended to check abuse and impunity. These individuals often lack gravitas and are inexperienced, rendering the body toothless (e.g., Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Independent National Commission for Human Rights, Liberian Anti-Corruption Commission). The appointment of LeRoy Urey to the Independent National Commission for Human Rights (INCHR) raised the hackles of human rights activists since he is a relative of Benoni Urey, one of Charles Taylor's operatives who stands accused in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report and remains on the UN travel ban, even after many were removed in July 2012. Such an appointment was certain to create rancor in the commission, which not surprisingly appears to be paralyzed. Thus far the INCHR has been silent on clashes between police and students in March 2011 and with the CDC in November 2011. Many observers suspect, rightly or wrongly, that such appointments were intended to limit the effectiveness of these commissions.

The government has taken steps to curtail executive privilege and dominance by strengthening capacity in the legislature and judiciary, encouragement of freedom of expression and association, through holding free elections, through its decentralization efforts, through the passage of anti-corruption legislation and other such initiatives. However, these measures are undermined by simultaneous actions that serve to perpetuate state patronage, appointment of individuals to government positions suspected of having conflicts of interest, and by

appointments of individuals to key ministries and commissions who undermine their ability to function.

**Elections and Electoral System:** The very high turnover in legislative elections suggests that the elections were generally competitive, although the unequal playing field made it somewhat harder for the opposition to compete (See Elections in IV.F). As one example of the competitiveness, the CDC won 73.5% of the presidential vote in Grand Gedeh in the 2011 presidential elections in the first round, while the UP won only 15.2% of the votes. But in the second round the figures were reversed. Johnson Sirleaf got 83.7% and Tubman got 16.3% (NEC website). Observers attribute this in part to heavy UP campaigning between first round and runoff. Even given the CDC boycott of the runoff, this turnaround is indicative of competitive elections. There were reports of irregularities in the runoff elections in Grand Gedeh, however, and this could have also played a role in the dramatic turnaround. Though there was no conclusive evidence of fraud, Carter Center observers reported seeing consecutive ballots with similar markings and an insufficient number of seals on many ballot boxes.

The 2005 elections were the first elections not dominated by the Americo Liberians or by autocrats. Generally, elections are accessible to all groups. We heard reports of Muslim voters being told they weren't allowed to vote, and the Carter Center noted in its election report that the National Muslim Council complained of Mandingos not being allowed to register.

The CDC boycotted the runoffs, in part, because they felt ostracized by the international community due to Johnson Sirleaf's Nobel Prize, which was awarded just prior to the election. They also had overly optimistic expectations about their performance in the first round that were not met, and they saw inaccurate predictions compiled through Ushahidi that said the UP had won more than 50% of the vote in the first round. As a result of all these factors, they thought their best bet would be to immediately declare fraud. A general unwillingness to accept defeat also contributed to the boycott.

The 2011 senate elections saw a chipping away at longstanding regional and ethnic formulas, whereby one senator was elected from upper Bong and another from lower Bong; one from the right bank and left bank of the St. John and Sinoe rivers in Grand Bassa and Sinoe respectively; and from Harper City and elsewhere in the county in Maryland. Subethnic alteration is found in ethnically homogenous districts of Maryland and southeastern Liberia. In Nimba one senator is generally Mano and the other Gio (Sawyer 2008). This tradition, however, was broken in the 2011 elections in Nimba, which brought in two Gio senators. It remains to be seen whether these delicate political balances will be further eroded.

**Civil Society:** There is a small but vibrant civil society in Liberia. Civil society groups engage representatives and press demands when they can, but they are constrained by lack of information, resources, and in many cases education. The low levels of education in Liberia suppress the formation of a middle class, that generally constitute the ranks of the most active elements of civil society vis à vis the state.

Nevertheless, they are one of the few sources of pressure on parliamentarians and government. The Citizen's Forum in Bong, for example, worked to bring parliamentarians back home and account for their actions to the people who elected them. This process involved meetings every three months where the Senator or representative would describe what the government was

doing with the country's resources. There would then be questions put to the Senator from constituents at the meeting. Civil society groups also meet with county development committees to learn about the use of development funds. These are new developments and the culture of advocacy is unfamiliar to many. Civic education efforts that include components on the official channels citizens can use to make demands on public officials could help facilitate advocacy.

Although there are tensions between some civil society groups and ministries, mostly the relations are characterized by cooperation. Women's organizations, for example, have complained over the years that the Ministry of Gender is more interested in obtaining donor funds to carry out projects rather than to facilitate and coordinate the work of local organizations in developing such initiatives. Nevertheless, there is overall a productive atmosphere of building on synergies. One does not find the levels of government suspicion towards advocacy that are evident in other hybrid countries in Africa.

**Media:** Elections are the main forum for citizens to hold their leaders accountable. Liberians voted out many representatives and senators who they were not happy with in the 2011 elections. However, once representatives gain public office, there are few constraints on them. The media has named and shamed individuals and held their feet to the fire from time to time. At one point the LMC produced a score-card for representatives and this had a modest effect. The LMC is now keeping track of 150 deliverables in the government's plan of action to see how well the government makes good on them. On occasion, a government official will be dismissed. In 2010, the president disbanded the entire cabinet in what was regarded by observers as a means of shaking out a few corrupt ministers.

The media remain one of the most important forces challenging corruption and impunity. Liberians have different sources of information, both in print and in broadcasting, with radio being the most important one, particularly in the rural areas where newspapers are not as easy to access because of poor roads and also because of the high illiteracy rate. Popular use of the media for debate has intensified, particularly in the form of call-in shows. These were virtually unheard of in the Taylor years. The legislation that is being passed in relation to the media, unlike many other hybrid regimes in Africa, is primarily with the intent of providing greater media freedom rather than constricting it.

Freedom House scores for Liberia signaled an improvement in media freedom from a rating of 65 in 2007 to 59 in 2012. The rankings also showed a shift from "not free" to "partly free" to account for the 2010 Freedom of Information Law that was passed and a decrease in physical attacks on media workers. All the media workers we spoke to were pleased with the freedom of expression that they enjoyed, in spite of attacks on some of the media during the 2011 elections (see section IV.F on Media).

There is more freedom of press/radio and freedom of expression in spite of excesses at election time. The outcry by press and the fact that the court dismissed the case the government brought shows that there is little tolerance for infringements of this type and there is a willingness to push back against repression. Ownership of the media is open to all and represents a mix of journalist owned papers (e.g., *The Inquirer*), to papers and radio stations owned by politicians, religious organizations, and businesspeople. The media still suffers from

problems of quality of reporting and a vulnerability to being influenced by money, which is used both to suppress stories and to have them written.

**Economic Competition:** There have been significant improvements in the business environment that we heard about repeatedly from small and large business owners in Monrovia and outside Monrovia. It is much easier to get information about government policies and regulations that affect businesses. The government is much more willing and eager to consult with the business community on policy issues. It is much easier to start businesses. Liberia ranked 151 out of 183 countries on an “ease of doing business” index published by the World Bank in 2011, where a lower number is better. This might not seem that impressive, but Liberia ranks as the 35<sup>th</sup> easiest country in which to start a business. However, Liberia ranks very poorly with regard to registering property (176) and enforcing contracts (166). Liberia ranks about in the middle, at 26<sup>th</sup>, when compared to 46 sub-Saharan African countries.

Decentralization of the banking sector has been helpful. One woman in Nimba told us that because there is now an Ecobank branch in Ganta, it is much safer to take out money from her account. She lives outside Ganta, but she knows that if someone tries to steal money from her while she is traveling with it between Ganta and her town, the community members will get the money back. This was not the case when she had to go to Monrovia to take out money from her account; anything could happen with no consequences on the road from Monrovia to Ganta. Finally, there are fewer checkpoints on roads throughout the country, decreasing the number of opportunities for police to ask for bribes.

The business community does not act as a meaningful constraint on good governance, nor as a push for good governance. Rather business groups are able to negotiate with the government for policies that will improve their group’s ability to do business. This often takes the form of negotiating for industry-specific policies, as opposed to increased efficiency in a certain sphere of governance. For example, port officials often open containers to inspect goods when it is raining. The rain can damage the goods, but the port officials do this intentionally so that traders will be quick to pay a bribe to stop the inspection. The Concerned Liberian Business Association lobbies for goods to be inspected in enclosed spaces. They do not lobby for more accountability at the port. Put differently, the goals of business groups do not have positive externalities for individuals outside of the business group.

Predation on and harassment of small business appears to have declined since Johnson Sirleaf was first elected, and it is not a significant constraint on growth for small businesses. Small business owners repeatedly told us that there certainly is corruption. Inspectors visit periodically from various ministries, and if you do not want to waste your whole day you need to give them something small. But the amount that needs to be paid is not onerous, and most people know the amount that needs to be paid. The corruption is predictable; it can be accounted for when planning. Further, if you cannot afford to pay the inspectors, you can wait them out. This is not how it was when one researcher on the assessment team was in Liberia in 2005.

Nevertheless, at higher levels, predation is significant and unpredictable. When legislative approval is required for an investment, or simply with investments that are large, government harassment is a greater obstacle. We spoke with one investor who said that legislators told him their specific price for approving one of his investments, which he estimated came to about US \$200,000. Another investor said that legislators put up many obstacles because he lacked export



permits, when, in fact, they were not required. These are some examples of the significant and unpredictable harassment encountered by large-scale business ventures.

Land ownership remains concentrated among a small group of elite. Often the true owners of land in and outside of Monrovia live in the US. There are frequently many layers of leasing going on, and this makes it difficult to get a loan, even when an individual is involved in a long-term lease. We interviewed one businesswoman who was told she needed a copy of the property deed to be eligible for a bank loan, a document she was unable to acquire.

**Low Information Environment:** A key constraint on political accountability and democracy in Liberia is citizens' lack of knowledge of their rights and what they can demand of representatives. By this we mean that it is difficult for Liberians to acquire the information they need to make demands on government. It can be difficult to get copies of concession contracts so that civil society groups and citizens living on or near concession areas can monitor compliance with contractual provisions. Citizens may not know their rights before a magistrate. Community radio station announcers in the interior find it difficult to get information about national political events. It can be impossible for individuals to determine how their representative voted in the National Assembly. The low information environment has implications beyond citizen rights. It is difficult for foreign companies to acquire information about relevant investment laws, a constraint that has deterred numerous potential investors.

Why has Liberia not emerged from this low information environment nine years after the war ended? In 2010, the legislature passed a Freedom of Information Act, which is intended to lift legal barriers to citizens and media access to information. However, there are individuals who profit from the low information environment, often from the political class. For example, lawyers become more valuable when they are among the few who have access to laws, while magistrates can keep a bond fee when citizens are not aware that they have the right to ask for it back. Sometimes they are low-level civil servants who have little power, except in their ability to act as a gatekeeper to certain information. Moreover, outright corruption also impedes the flow of information, requiring further reform of state bureaucracies and their incentive structures. A recent survey of 13 government ministries and agencies and three corporate entities conducted by the Center for Transparency and Accountability found that corruption was the overriding impediment to access to public information. In addition to the problem of not responding to public requests for information, institutions often don't inform the public about government services, resulting in suspicions, rumors, and false negative perceptions.

One might wonder why increasing the low information environment is a priority if there are not commensurate increases in the supply of access to justice. For example, what use is it if people know they have the right to have their bond fee returned, when there is no ombudsman they can complain to who would inquire into the matter? Within limits, we propose that increasing the information citizens have can make government more responsive *even if* there are not commensurate increases in the formal supply of access to justice. In rural areas especially, public officials are often not outsiders. Even if they are not from the community they serve, for a period of time they are residing in that community. At least to some extent they want to be accepted, and if there is a lot of pressure on them, they will be more responsive.

While the Freedom of Information law marks progress, its impact will be felt most if there are efforts for information to be shared at the local level. An environmental NGO based in Monrovia

is not the only group that should know about the content of a concessions agreement. People in villages near the concession area need to know as well. A women's rights group based in Monrovia is not the only group that should know about the content of the inheritance law. Women in remote parts of the country (perhaps those who are most marginalized) need to know as well. It is impossible for citizens to participate in a meaningful way and advance democracy without access to information.

#### D. Inclusion

The government of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in her first term was built on a broad electoral alliance of people from different parties, civil society organizations and society at large. Her cabinet involved a senior LURD leader and a Taylor government official. Half the members of the cabinet were Americo Liberian while the other half were indigenous. She also placed former government and rebel leaders in key lower level positions. Her new cabinet after the 2011 elections similarly included two opposition leaders but the key opposition party, CDC, was not represented, suggesting new limits to her willingness to embrace a broad alliance. CDC had won 32.7% of the vote in the first round. Many of the appointments seemed to reflect campaign support rather than who was the best for the job. Some saw these appointments as a weakening commitment to creating an inclusive and balanced government.

These are just small indications of the long way there is to go in addressing some of the divisions that plague the country. Much more needs to be done by the government and other political leaders to reach out to disaffected ethnic and religious groups, women, youth, and other groups that were targeted during the civil war.

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on ethnic background, sex, creed, place of origin, disability, or political opinion. In reality, there are groups like women, people with disabilities, LGBT people, and Muslims who experience exclusions of various kinds. Only "Negroes," according to the constitution, can become citizens, which has implications in particular for the small Lebanese community, many of whom have family who have lived in Liberia since the 1800s and consider Liberia the only home they know. Recent efforts to pass legislation and target LGBT people have been especially hostile and discriminatory.

National identification is important for development. Case studies by political scientists suggest that there is a positive and potentially causal relationship between national identity and good development outcomes. For example, narratives of the developmental successes of late industrializers like Japan and South Korea emphasize the role of the developmental state, which took the initiative in coming up with a set of economic goals that had broad national support. The state then supported a small set of industries with economic policies like favorable tax regimes and subsidies. Processes like this have occurred in African countries, but with different outcomes. This is because in Japan and South Korea the process was not corrupted in the same way. The Japanese and Korean governments selected industries to support based on the country's comparative advantage, while in African countries these decisions were normally impacted by nepotism. One compelling explanation for the difference is that Japan and South Korea had greater national coherence and stronger national identity that discouraged corruption and led to consensus on priorities (Chalmers 1982).

How do Liberians feel about their identity? The 2008 Afrobarometer survey asked respondents if they identified more as a Liberian or more as a member of their ethnic group. Of the 1,194 respondents, 25% said they identified solely or more with the nation, 10% said they felt mostly or exclusively a member of their ethnic group, and 65% said they felt equally Liberian and a member of their ethnic group. These responses are encouraging. However, national identity levels in Liberia are far lower than countries like Botswana, where some have argued that government initiatives that encouraged national identity have succeeded in creating a Batswanan identity that has facilitated development goals (Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson 2001). In Botswana, 39% of people say they feel more or only Motswana (Afrobarometer 2008).

While most Liberians identify as citizens, not all feel that others are equal citizens. In our interviews, many still refer to Mandingo as outsiders from Guinea who, as interlopers, have made illegal claims on land that does not belong to them. Americo-Liberians are also regarded as outsiders who “do not belong.” The major cleavages from the years of conflict persist between the Mano and Gio based in Nimba, on the one hand, and the Krahn and Mandingo, on the other, particularly those based in Grand Gedeh. They are divided by issues of access to land, trade and political office. Public discourse to this day focuses on divisions rather than what unites Liberians as a people. The class divide and the division between the political elite and the general population creates feelings of disenfranchisement. This is especially the case when decisions regarding concessions and land are made without consulting local communities to benefit the few in positions that enable them to cut illicit deals. Many would argue that these personal gains are made at the expense of the future welfare of the nation.

At the same time, relations between ethnic groups have improved since the time of the conflict. More people affected by the war — including former internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, marginalized groups, and ex-combatants — are self-employed or farming and are seeing a possibility of a future for themselves, even if it is very challenging. As one Mandingo Muslim leader put it to us: “With the ascendancy of [Sirleaf as] the president, I feel the democratization process is moving forward. There are opportunities for everyone. I cannot rule out pockets of discrimination, but the overall belief is that if you qualify, the opportunities will be there for you.”

According to the World Bank, Liberia’s Gini coefficient measuring inequality stands at .38 (the median for Africa is .42). The poorest parts of the country include the northwest (Bomi, Gbarpolu and Grand Cape Mount counties ) and the southeast (River Cess, Sinoe and Grand Gedeh counties), which have poverty rates that stand at 76% and 77% respectively, while the wealthiest is greater Monrovia, with rates of 48.5%. The poor roads going to the southwest, for example, contribute to the general isolation of these areas. However, the major division lays between the rural and urban populations, with average rates of poverty standing at 68% for rural dwellers compared with 55% for urban areas (PRS 2007).

**Non-elites:** Historically, one of the major forms of exclusion was a product of the extractive nature of the economy. The Americo Liberian elite did little to invest in the citizenry, build up the infrastructure and provide social services. Very little of the income that came from state resources went back to the rural areas. Instead, the resources were used to build up a state-based patronage system, which appointed chiefs and local government leaders based on their ability to secure a labor force. The only means of advancement was military service and migrant labor.

Similar exclusions are occurring once again as the government signs more concession deals with foreign companies. For example, in 2009 a Malaysian Company, Sime Darby was awarded 220,000 hectares as part of a 63-year concession agreement and began operations in the country. Residents in Grand Cape Mount County have protested the loss of farmland and livelihoods in their land that has been stripped bare in agreements they had no input into. Green Advocates, which has been Liberia's lead campaigner on the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), has accused incoming corporations of trying to dupe Liberians with billboard campaigns and empty slogans while falling far short on their production and employment promises. Local resident Alfred Quayjandi accused both the "government and company of presenting a confused and angry population with a *fait accompli*, failing to consult local communities and bypassing or snubbing the local administration and traditional chiefs." Community leaders wrote the authorities that the company is responsible for the "destruction of our sacred sites, destruction of our crops, damming of our creeks and streams, filling in of our swamps and forceful displacement of our people without adequate compensation" (Simpson 2012).

The government has set up social funds and county funds to offset some of these potential problems. It has also embarked on an ambitious decentralization program. The worrisome question is whether these measures will be sufficient to withstand the class cleavage that is emerging in such a small country as a result of the kinds of perks the political elite are deriving from their positions, often at the expense of those who have or will be losing land.

**Mandingo People:** While the Americo-Liberian/indigenous cleavage is one, there are multiple cleavages that create forms of exclusion. Another one that persists has to do with the treatment of the Mandingos. President Samuel Doe replicated many of the problems of the previous governments by politicizing ethnicity and building up patronage along new ethnic lines, particularly through the appointment of Krahn, who dominated government positions and often were underqualified and uneducated. He pitted the Mandingo against the Gio and Mano groups, thus laying the basis for future conflict. Non-Krahn parties were banned from participating in the 1987 election.

Ethnic tensions escalated when Doe launched attacks on non-Krahn. After a failed 1985 coup in Nimba county, Doe launched massive reprisals against the Gio community, which resulted in further retribution against the Krahn and Mandingos with the Taylor insurgency. Monrovia became divided between various factions. Taylor's NPFL targeted Krahns, Mandingos and government officials, while Prince Johnson's INPFL targeted government officials, Krahns and the NPFL and the AFL targeted the Gio and NPFL sympathizers. Thus the legacy of impunity, inflamed by ethnic rivalry, has left a profound imprint on the Liberian polity. Even though these conflicts are over, the underlying causes of the civil war have yet to be addressed adequately.

The Mandingo had migrated to Liberia from neighboring Ghana over the past four centuries but to this day are classified locally as foreigners and are often treated as second class citizens. They were excluded from communities' political affairs and males were excluded from the male Poro secret societies, although Mandingo women could participate in the female Sande secret societies. The majority of Mandingo were exiled during the civil war and had formed two of the warring factions. After 2004, many Mandingos returned but were often prevented from reclaiming their property and denied access to marketplaces and farmland (Fuest 2010). The Gio

and Mano of Nimba, and Kpelle and Loma of Bong and Lofa counties had taken over much of the commercial activity of the Mandingos.

**Muslims:** Some people conflate Mandingos and Muslims, however, Muslims belong to many different ethnic groups in Liberia. Making up 12% of the population, many Muslims feel marginalized, largely due to opportunities that are not afforded to them because of their overall lower levels of formal education, but also as mentioned above in relation to the discussion of the Mandingos, because they are perceived of as aliens and foreigners. Only one superintendent, for example, is Muslim. The prejudice is still felt, but it is slowly turning around, according to Muslim leaders we spoke with. There are some prominent Muslim leaders like Amara Konneh, Minister of Finance, and Asatu Bah Kenneth, Assistant Minister for Administration and Public Safety of the Liberian Ministry of Justice (who had initiated the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace through the Liberian Muslim Women's Organization). There are also two deputy ministers who are Muslim, one senator, five representatives and one county superintendent. Muslims as a rule do not hold many top positions, but they can be found at lower levels of leadership.

The United Muslim Women and the Federation of Muslim Women's Organizations (umbrella organization of 20 groups) have worked to provide women access to education, adult literacy, leadership training, micro finance and other opportunities. Muslim women have been advocating around legislation for women including the Gender Parity Bill. They have also successfully fought to gain access to key positions within the National Muslim Council that has been male dominated in terms of leadership. And some like United Muslim Women president, Marietta Williams, have been conducting dialogue with fellow Muslims to reinterpret the Quran to show that women have rights and can work together side by side with men on a basis of equality.

**Youth:** Another source of exclusion has been the youth. The sense of marginalization is such that a third of the ex-combatants interviewed in a 2009 USIP study said they could envisage a reason to fight again. The war changed the balance of power between the young and the old, but many elders have yet to acknowledge this (Maclay and Ozerdum 2012). The war gave young people more authority and for some, being able to join the fighters provided them with a way to escape hard work and parental expectations. In some parts of Liberia, the secret societies, particularly the male Poro societies, were undermined during years of war, thus removing an important form of generational control (Ellis 1999, Fuest 2010, Richards et al. 2005, Utas 2003). Similarly female genital mutilation has decreased significantly. For some Liberians, the loosening of parental and generational controls was symptomatic of the cultural and moral decay that had occurred during the years of conflict. Among some there has been interest in reviving traditional societies and leaders in order to address problems of prostitution, teenage pregnancy, crime, domestic violence, and anti-social behavior by former fighters. Poro societies were seen as a mechanism to reintegrate fighters into society by ritually cleansing them. They were also regarded as useful for their potential as cross ethnic organizations that might be able to ameliorate intra-ethnic and clan tensions, organize community labor groups, and settle conflicts.

Some donors, INGOs, NGOs and politicians have sought to encourage the re-invigoration of the secret societies, often without considering the exclusions that they create for the Mandingo, women, and youth. Urban youth question whether these societies can help address their employment and education needs. Women and human rights activists are concerned about

their revival of FGM as a practice that violates human rights. According to some reports, FGM had dropped as low as 10% during the war from earlier rates of about 50%. Others are concerned about politicians who court the secret societies for political reasons yet talk about the rights of youth, women's empowerment and reconciliation. These societies create their own gerontocratic hierarchies aimed at regulating non-submissive youth and are based on exclusions of Mandingo. Youth and women already are largely unrepresented in most local level county structures, which are made up of mainly unelected or appointed leaders (e.g., county council, CDF and SDF). Thus, they face double exclusions in both formal and informal local power structures.

These concerns were underscored by one very thoughtful leader of a rural Bomi youth organization. He explained how the youth in his village felt disenfranchised and abandoned by their elders, whom he said had not supported them and did not listen to them. His organization provided social and savings support to its membership of 200, including 75 women, ages 18-35. They had difficulty accessing land to cultivate. They lacked high school and vocational training opportunities and were in desperate need of family planning assistance. Large numbers of girls between the ages of 12-15 were getting pregnant. Most had resorted to engaging in small businesses, making charcoal, selling fish and bitter balls (eggplant), and driving motorcycle taxis.

Leaders of national youth organizations (FLY, LINSU) we interviewed saw the main concerns of young people as having to do with the need for vocational and technical training in schools to address the problems of youth unemployment, the need for vocational guidance, attention to improving the quality of education and quality of teachers, efforts to deal with the buying of grades and other forms of corruption in the schools, as well as programs to address the problem of teenage pregnancy and traumatized youth. They felt encouraged by the government's efforts to revise the youth policy, involve youth leaders in developing it, and take seriously their demands. The seriousness of the youth and student leaders was impressive..

Some of the educated NGO leaders expressed to us their concern that the youth remain a potentially volatile group that can be easily mobilized to take up arms once again. They worried that poverty might drive them to desperation and back into conflict. We did not get this sense from talking to youth themselves and to ordinary people. One newspaper street vendor, for example, who engaged youth on a daily basis, was emphatic that Liberians do not have the stomach to go back to war and that they are too war weary and now sufficiently occupied with making a living and rebuilding their lives to contemplate a return to war. Although aforementioned studies and surveys of youth show a strong sense of marginalization, this is only one element that leads to conflict.

One positive development has been the emergence of the motorcycle transportation phenomenon. After the war, there was a demand for affordable transportation and ex-combatants started getting into commercial motorcycle business, known as Phen-Phen, which are now responsible for over 60% of all transportation needs in Monrovia and even more outside of Monrovia. There are approximately 250,000 motorcycles and half a million motorcyclists in Liberia today according to a 2012 GIZ report. On average they bring in about \$20 a day and make about \$8.15 daily profit. There are three major unions nationwide and the largest is the Liberian Motorcycle Transport Union, with about 40,000 members. Made up of many ex-combatants, the union has given purposes and voice to thousands of youth who prior to their involvement as transporters had been unemployed and remained a potentially volatile

element in society. They still are fairly coordinated and readily come to each other's assistance. They work with the police to improve safety of drivers and have lobbied for spaces where they can park to pick up customers. They provide financial support to families in the event of the death of a member. Members pay monthly membership fees but also pool resources to help new drivers purchase a motorcycle. About 950 Phen Phen drivers rent their motorcycles from the LMTU.

The disaffection of youth, who make up a large percentage of the population, poses particular challenges for democracy and governance in Liberia. They have the potential to become a volatile force if mobilized. On the other hand, the war disrupted generational relations in a profound way. Youth are beginning to find sources of income and are seeking ways to become included in the polity. They need to be included in efforts to strengthen civil society and the media and efforts need to be made to tap into their abilities. Where this has happened, e.g., through the president's development of a youth policy, the results have been positive.

**Women:** There have been serious efforts to change the practices and ideologies of exclusion has been in the area of women's rights. The government of Liberia is strongly committed to promoting gender equality and finding ways to incorporate women's talents, needs, capacities, and contributions in the reconstruction of Liberia. The government is in the process of developing a gender policy and creating a National Gender Forum to lead its policy in this area. Already there are a number of policies in place, including a national gender-based violence plan of action and a gender based violence secretariat within the Ministry of Gender and Development. The legislature passed a rape law in 2005 and an inheritance act in 2003, which allows women to inherit property in both statutory and customary marriages without interference from the husband's family. The Government was also working with the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) to review national laws for bias or discrimination against women.

Liberia has established a national secretariat for women's NGOs to coordinate the work of women's organizations. Peace huts have been established at the local level, where women can meet to discuss their concerns, particularly cases of violence against women. Under the leadership of Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the Ministry of Gender launched a campaign against rape with the slogan "No sex for help. No help for sex. Sex is not a requirement for jobs, grades, medical treatment or other services." Teachers who sexually harassed girls in schools are to be suspended without pay for five years, or indefinitely, depending on the seriousness of the offence. No other country in Africa has had such aggressive leadership at this level in an effort to end violence against women and address other issues affecting women.

Women still have difficulty accessing education, health, and legal services, which limits their participation in the formal and informal economies. There are still areas where the gender gap persists. The gap between girls and boys has been largely closed in education, with enrollments of 38% male to 37% female at the primary level and 16% male to 14% female at the secondary level. However, adult literacy rates outside of Monrovia reveal that only about one-third of women can read, compared to about 60% of men (GOL 2010).



*The photos show the front of the Temple of Justice (Supreme Court), before Sirleaf took office (left), and a few years after. The word “men” has been removed, reflecting new sensibilities. Photos by Matt Jones*

Maternal mortality remains high at approximately 994 deaths per 100,000 live births due to poor health facilities and prenatal care, large numbers of teenage pregnancies, and shortages of health personnel. Even though fertility rates have decreased, women still experience high rates of 5.2 children per woman and even higher rates in rural areas (6.2 children per woman).

The 2003 inheritance law gives women the right to a third of their husbands’ property and they have equal rights with men in inheritance. A married woman may retain any property she brought into the marriage. Nevertheless community norms and practices restrict women’s access to land. Male elders who grant communal land to villagers for cultivation prefer men. Of the women we spoke to, not surprisingly widows were most bitter about their difficulty of accessing land.

Rural women are constrained in other ways in terms of their access to credit and inputs. The GOL and its partners have supported a number of initiatives to assist women. It has assisted women traders through the Cross Border Trade Association; increased financial services to thousands of rural business women through the Joint Program on Gender Equity and Women Empowerment; supported the establishment of 15 Villages Saving Loans Associations; and helped market women gain literacy and business training. It has supported 12,000 rural women farmers with inputs. While these efforts are commendable, there is much more that needs to be done to reach more of the female population. These are invaluable investments, which help not only women, but their children, families and communities to sustain themselves.

Although Liberia has a female president and one third of cabinet ministers and superintendents are women, women remain poorly represented in the legislature, where women make up 13% of the seats in the House and 11% in the Senate. Women activists have had difficulty in getting a gender equality bill passed that would give them a quota of 30% of seats in the legislature and are hoping to gain more support from the president in this endeavor.

In spite of these gender gaps, some of the most palpable changes for women were evident at the local level in interviews with women leaders and group members. As the leader of a Bomi



women's organization said: "During the war we got to know our value because we were forced to find food for the children; men could not go out. When Ellen took over things changed for women. We praise God for the leaders God gave us. Women can speak anywhere [in public] now. In the past, women were in the back and were silent. If we did speak, nothing would happen. Women did not read and write. Now we speak well at meetings. We say what we want. I can speak well in front of men and women. Woman stayed at the back too long, and now we have decided to speak for ourselves. The voice of women should be heard. There are now more girls going to school in Bomi. Adult women can write their names. We have had "climate change. Now more women carry money, more women are in business. Women are now trading in doing business as far as Nigeria and Guinea. In the past they only did business in Liberia."

**Disability:** In the past, disability was viewed as the result of witchcraft and it was regarded as a curse. Even to this day disabled people are shunned. For this reason, there have been high rates of discrimination and neglect of the disabled, who are often kept behind closed doors. The war created a new awareness about disability and a disability movement emerged in the late 1990s and started pushing for a commission for disability in 2000. An act was passed to create the commission, which was established in 2005. Liberia also ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2007 as a result of pressure from disability groups. Daintowon Pay-Bayee, a leader of the Youth with Disabilities Network Liberia, explained to us that some of the main demands of people with disabilities had to do with access to education, which is the only way to independent living and employment; access to public buildings; access to technologies to assist with mobility and other functions; jobs for people with disabilities; and government funding to implement programs and activities.

**LBGT people:** In recent months there have been numerous public attacks on gays in Liberia. A bill was introduced that would make homosexuality a second degree felony carrying a prison sentence of up to 5 years. Senator Jewel Howard Taylor, who is also the ex-wife of Charles Taylor, introduced another bill that would make gay marriage a first degree crime punishable by up to 10 years in jail. Although the president told the press that she would not sign these laws, she does uphold the current legislation, which states that homosexual activity between two men is illegal in Liberia. She said, "We've got certain traditional values in our society that we'd like to preserve." This most recent legislation was prompted by statements by U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, who announced in December 2011 that US foreign aid would promote the protection of gay rights. Her remarks were misinterpreted the media in Liberia, which claimed the US is insisting that Liberia introduce same-sex marriage or else it will stop giving aid to the country.

A group called the Movement Against Gays in Liberia is now passing out death threat leaflets in Monrovia saying, "gay rights should not be given space to get a gulp of air." Some religious leaders are also demonizing LGBT Liberians as un-African, un-Liberian and un-godly. Thus far, it appears that the state will provide security protection for identified LGBT individuals. For example, in one instance a gay person was speaking on the radio, when 600 people mobbed the radio station, the police protected the individual.

## E. Consensus on the Rules of the Game

Although in general there is agreement on the rules of the political game and that elections

should be the primary mechanism through which leadership alternates, there are major differences when it comes to impunity regarding perpetrators of mass violence and human rights abuses during the civil war.

There are strong disagreements over how to move forward regarding the perpetrators of violence during the civil war. Most Liberian warlords have not faced charges. Major former warlords like John T. Richardson have distinctive cars that they drive shamelessly around Monrovia. This daily sight perpetuates the sense of impunity. Charles Taylor and his son Chuckie are two exceptions, though neither was charged in Liberia. Some argue, however, that the prosecution of Taylor has resulted in a subtle change in national consciousness.

Some feel that going ahead and prosecuting the offenders will result in justice and an end to impunity, thus helping ensure that people do not take the law into their own hands to seek revenge and retribution in the future against groups and individuals belonging to particular groups. It thus can serve as a safeguard against future conflict.

Others argue that it will reopen wounds and result in retribution, which might land the country back into conflict: As the *Heritage* newspaper editorial put it: "Let's pause a minute and reflect on the consequences of banning the likes of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Professor Alhaji Kromah, Dr. George Boley, Sekou Damate Konneh, among others, who currently live peaceful productive lives, from politics for 30 years, or as is being advocated, try them on war crimes charges. Will such a move enhance the peace we now enjoy? Will it impel our development agenda? Some Liberians feel definitely not. They say what it will do is to further divide us as a nation and stall the reconstruction and development process, because the victims and their followers will definitely want to fight back or resist."

Liberia's constitution is by most standards relatively democratic. A referendum was held in August 2011 for citizens to vote on four proposed constitutional amendments. These amendments involved shortening the residency requirement of the president and vice president, increasing the retirement age of justices, postponing the date of the presidential and legislative elections from October to November, and changing legislative elections to a plurality system, as opposed to an absolute majority system, which could result in a plethora of run-offs. Voters approved none of the provisions. There was confusion over whether the constitution mandated that changes needed to be approved by two-thirds of all registered voters, or two-thirds of those who voted. The NEC decided it was the latter, and this decision went unchallenged, yet there was again confusion over whether the two-thirds was to include invalid ballots. The NEC decided that it did, and it is because of this decision that none of the amendments were passed (Carter Center 2011).

While there appears to be consensus on the basic principles of governance, there are serious disagreements over how these rules are implemented. The CDC's boycott of the 2011 elections is indicative of one such difference.

## F. Conclusion

It is important to recognize that the three key democracy, human rights and governance problems are interrelated and that solutions to one are relevant to the other factors. Executive dominance thrives through a system of patronage; corruption is difficult to prosecute because

of the culture of impunity and mutual obligation; the culture of impunity is almost impossible to erode because of the pervasiveness of culpability; and the lack of information makes it difficult for the most vulnerable members of society to challenge the status quo.

## IV. KEY ACTORS AND INSTITUTIONS

### A. Introduction

The following section discusses some of the key drivers of political reform and evaluates their strengths and weaknesses in this regard during the Johnson Sirleaf administration. Within the government, the GAC, LACC and some ministries have been forces for improving transparency and accountability. While there have been laws passed and the executive has been vocal about corruption, the follow up has been inconsistent and disappointing. The executive has been a force for upholding freedom of speech and association and other political rights and civil liberties, although admittedly there have been lapses. The legislature and judiciary, however, are generally too weak and unwilling to be able to check the executive.

In terms of societal actors, civil society tends to be fairly weak but it has been a source for reform and has increasingly played a watchdog role. It is regarded by the government as a constructive partner with which useful synergies have been forged. It is not just tolerated but it acts as a key part of the political landscape. The media is also a key source of pressure for reform as radio stations and newspapers have become more critical than they were before. All the editors we spoke with from papers like the *Inquirer* and *New Dawn* as well as media-related organizations like Liberia Media for Democratic Initiatives and Liberia Media Center commented on this as one of the major changes they had experienced with the Sirleaf government and contrasted it with the repression they faced during the Taylor years if they published anything critical of the government. Both the content and quality of the media have improved and critical debates are engaged on a regular basis even at the local level through community radio stations. In contrast, political parties have been too personalized and not sufficiently platform based. They have been too weak to play a constructive role in advancing political reform although their presence helped create the conditions for competitive elections.

Donors also play an important role in underwriting change, particularly in areas that are politically challenging such as in tackling problems of accountability and corruption.

### B. The Legal System

**Substantive and Procedural Law:** The main issue *vis à vis* substantive and procedural law is not the content of these laws, but rather the lack of awareness of the laws. It is virtually impossible to obtain a complete set of the country's legal code. This is due, in part, to former Justice Minister Philip Banks. Banks claims copyright on the country's legal code. He built on efforts by Cornell University, which had codified the laws up until 1978, and he codified the laws enacted

since 1978. He received funds from the US Department of Justice to do this, but when he asked for additional funds from the Department of Justice and did not receive them, he claimed copyright on his efforts. He had reportedly been requesting US\$100,000 from the Liberian government to relinquish the copyright (Moore and Gordon 2009).

There are rumors that the government ultimately paid off Banks for the “copyright.” It is difficult to verify this, and USAID assistance certainly helped get the laws published via the Liberia Legal Information Institute (LiberLII). The popular suspicion, though, was that had Johnson Sirleaf made a couple of phone calls, Banks would have relinquished the copyright at no cost. More generally, there seems to be a small group of elite who benefit from the information they have, and they would benefit less if the information were more widely accessible. Breaking up this monopoly on information—not just with laws, but also with rules and policies—is a first step to allowing ordinary citizens to make demands more effectively on government.

This issue underscores an important theme of this report, namely that a severe lack of information undermines good governance. There are issues that compound lack of information, for example, lack of will to interpret and enforce laws. But as a necessary first step, relevant actors need to have access to the content of the laws they are supposed to be enforcing.

**The Judiciary:** A 2006 International Crisis Group report noted, “Separation of the executive and judicial branches has been almost nonexistent.” It is hard to see how this has changed. The executive controls the budget of the judiciary. This is common in other parts of the world, but the executive frequently arbitrarily decides how to allocate the judicial budget. As a result, the judiciary lacks financial autonomy.

Corruption remains a serious problem throughout the court system due, in part, to low salaries. However, some progress has been made in this area. Salaries have increased, and almost as importantly, Magistrate Court officials no longer have to travel to Monrovia (using almost their entire official salary for transport) to pick up their checks. The decentralization of the banking sector, along with a direct deposit system, means that some civil servants can easily go to their county’s capital to withdraw their monthly salary.

The temptation to accept bribes among magistrates remains high, as there is little or no accountability for such behavior. Many magistrates lack the skills and education needed to do their jobs. The American Bar Association initiated a meritocratic hiring process for new magistrates, and put them through a rigorous training program. Despite delays, these magistrates have recently been placed in courts around the country. Progress like this is encouraging, but systemic issues of nepotism in hiring and a culture of corruption remain obstacles for citizens to access a fair and efficient justice system.

One of the main concerns with the legal system is the slowness of delivering justice. One solution to this has been a recent initiative of the Liberian Government and the United Nations Peace Building office. They are in the process of launching five regional Joint Justice and Security Hubs to dispense fair and speedy justice.

**Informal Justice System:** Though most disputes are resolved between disputants without resorting to a justice system, when disputes are taken to a third party, they are most likely to be

taken to the customary system. The most serious crimes, such as murder and rape, however, are more likely to be taken to formal courts.

The formal system is seen as less fair and as administering harsher punishments. Even if the formal system, were more effective and less corrupt, it would likely still be an undesirable forum for most crimes. As a USIP report noted: “This is because the core principles of justice that underlie Liberia’s formal system, which is based on individual rights, adversarialism, and punitive sanctions, differ considerably from those valued by most Liberians” (Isser et al. 2009).

Most Liberians agree that decisions by traditional leaders should take precedence over formal law. Female-headed households are less likely to agree with this, possibly suggesting that women are less well-served by the informal justice system (Siddiqi 2012).

There is evidence of serious capture of the informal justice system by local elites. Individuals who take disputes with local influential people to the customary system are significantly less satisfied with the results, suggesting that these individuals capture the venue (Siddiqi 2012).

### C. The Legislature

Legislators are elected in a process that, like the elections more generally, is technically free and fair. There was high turnover in both the House and Senate after the 2011 elections, which suggests that the powers of incumbency were not sufficiently great to keep unpopular candidates in office and suggests a high degree of competition.

For the most part, the legislature has been a rubber stamp for the executive, however, in recent years it has asserted slightly more autonomy. For the first time in 2008, during the budget hearings, government ministers and officials were called before the House and Senate committees to testify on the government’s budget, and the hearings were broadcast on national and community radio stations. In 2012, the Unity Party won elections for speaker of the House of Representatives and president pro tempore of the Senate. The election of Gbezohngar Findlay to the latter position gives the government more control of the legislature.



However, for the most part, not much has changed since 2004 when the previous DG Assessment team found that the Assembly had “exercised little authority, shown no initiative, and was handcuffed by internal divisions... many of the representatives who serve in the body have an extremely limited vision as far as exercising legislative authority. Most are consumed with using their positions to advance personal interests and exhibit little inclination for governing. Securing access to official cars and other perquisites of office is a major

preoccupation... the Assembly has almost no institutional capacity in terms of professional staff, legislative drafting knowledge and functioning committees.”

With some exceptions, legislators lack the will, motivation, and incentives to create laws that promote democratic governance and represent the desires of their constituents. They have passed laws initiated by the executive that have met and in some cases exceeded international human rights standards, but have almost never initiated acts along these lines themselves. Some observers have attributed this deficit of initiative to a lack of capacity, saying that legislators lack qualified staff to conduct research, or that legislators need internet access to do their work. This is all true, but these are problems that could easily be solved by legislators themselves. Legislators have allowances to hire staff, but frequently pocket this money. Legislators have allowances that could easily be used to get internet in their offices, but instead frequently choose to retain this money as well, and focus their energies on lobbying for the international community to pay for internet connections.

Legislators rarely hold inquiries into the most pressing issues. Rather they are frequently preoccupied with procedural issues, for example, taking offense if a deputy came to speak to the Assembly rather than an actual minister, or debating whether the House or Senate can call themselves the upper house.

Unless one is physically watching legislators vote on a bill, it is usually not possible to determine how a legislator voted. This is a serious problem for democratic governance. It is very difficult for citizens to make an informed decision about whether to reelect their representative if they do not know how he or she voted.

Further, citizens lack an understanding of the role of a legislator. Demands on legislators that pertain to their actual job descriptions are far less common than requests for a legislator to cover things like a young man's school fees. One legislator told us: "I don't know how many weddings I have sponsored. I've lost count." He has paid for his constituents' divorce fees and has sponsored countless funerals.

## D. The Executive

Liberia is a unitary state AND a republic, with separation of powers and checks and balances between the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government. It has a presidential political system, which is patterned closely along the lines of the US system at the national level. The executive overshadows the legislature and judiciary as in the past, although there have been some signs of independence. When the president sought during the election to close down several media houses due to their inflammatory speech, the courts ultimately ruled against her. The legislature has on occasion clashed with the president (e.g., over the threshold number for constituency demarcation in 2010, the fate of Acting Monrovia City Mayor, Mary Broh in 2012), but generally the executive has prevailed.

The president gains her power primarily from the ballot box, but these gains have been tenuous. In 2005 she won only 19.8% of the vote against George Weah's 28.3%, but did much better in the second round (59.4%). In 2011 she won both rounds in the election but did not get a majority in the first round (43.9%), suggesting not only that the elections were quite competitive, but also that her support was limited. This has forced her to find other ways to maintain power within an elite that is still deeply divided. Having been an assistant minister in

the Tolbert government in the early 1970s and then Minister of Finance from 1979 to 1980 her connections and networks go back far.

Her other source of power is her international reputation and perception of integrity, that was reinforced when she won the Nobel Peace Prize. She has been able to capitalize off her reputation and negotiating skills to get Liberia's debts paid off and other aid flowing in.

The third way in which she maintains power is through a patronage system inherited from her predecessors. The system emerged during the time of Tubman (1944-71), when vertical ties of corruption and illicit economy emerged in the context of the arrival of Firestone Tire and Rubber Corporation in 1926, which generated over 60 percent of the state revenue from 1950 to 1970. This source of revenue helped reinforce the patronage based hierarchy, which had the president at its center of a small group of elites, almost exclusively of Americo-Liberian origin. The revenue relieved the president of having to build a strong tax base, and it provided him with autonomy from the legislature. This system sustained President William Tolbert (1971-1980) and allowed the True Whig party to remain in uninterrupted power for over a century, from 1878 to 1980.

Samuel Doe sought to overthrow this patronage network in 1980 but did not have the same political knowledge of existing clients that Tolbert and Tubman had. After the 1985 rigged elections he also lost confidence and support of the US and his political hold further diminished. What had been a highly centralized system of patronage parallel to the state administration up until Doe took over, now became a decentralized network that was harder to regulate or rein in. Doe built his patronage system and powerbase, in part, relying heavily on commercial networks of the small Mandingo group, but also on foreign illicit businesses. As a result, his government was more vulnerable to coup attempts and ultimately to military takeover as localized interests became more entrenched and warlords emerged as local patrons (Reno 1999, 2008).

Charles Taylor took over this decentralized patronage network and was able to use his office to aggrandize himself. He controlled about \$200 million in annual proceeds from business operations (Reno 2008) and gave himself as president, the "sole power to execute, negotiate and conclude all commercial contracts or agreements with any foreign or domestic investor for the exploitation of the strategic commodities of the Republic of Liberia."<sup>3</sup>

To this day, the diverse interests that emerged during the time of Doe and Taylor are still operative, thriving on the strong familial and clan networks and interests that fuel intransigent patron client ties. For example, Jewel Howard Taylor and Prince Johnson are currently senators and, until recently, Saah Gbollie and Adlophos Dolo were representatives.

The president has taken overt measures that would challenge executive privilege and dominance, the centralization of power in Monrovia, and patronage. Her launching of a decentralization policy, promotion of anti-corruption legislation, restructuring of the military, opening up of positions to women in the cabinet and local government, encouraging participation of civil society, allowing a free press, and many other such measures are all aimed at creating new, more efficient governance structures that potentially can undermine the old power bases.

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<sup>3</sup> 'Annex 1: Strategic Commodities Act: An Act to Designate Certain Natural Resources, Mineral, Cultural and Historical Items as Strategic Commodities', Monrovia: House of Representatives, 2000.

Unfortunately, a perception has emerged both among her supporters and detractors alike, that too many of the features of the old patronage regime persist. The group of elite has broadened from Americo Liberians to non-Americo Liberians, Liberians who have lived in the U.S., women leaders, and to a wider range of clients. Her appointment of family members and friends to key government positions,<sup>4</sup> particularly ones involving commercial interests, gives the appearance of a conflict of interest, leading to divisions within her own party. Her renewal of questionable ties to some of the more unscrupulous members of the Lebanese business community, to the late Colonel Moammar Gaddafi, and other such figures, have raised more than a few eyebrows. She was forced in 2011 to withdraw her appointment of Emmanuel Shaw as the Chairman of the Board of the Liberian Airport Authority. Many questioned why she had made such an appointment in the first place when he was on the UN Security Travel Ban list and asset freeze list. He was not only director of Lonestar Airways, but had been the former Finance Minister of Liberia under Doe and was one of his closest associates. Shaw was implicated in a scandal that involved defrauding the country of \$27 million. Even Johnson Sirleaf wrote of Shaw in a 1989 Association for Constitutional Democracy in Liberia (ACDL) newsletter: "They have converged to pillage the wealth of Liberia. Shaw [and several ministers and public officials] have joined Doe in forming a parasitic cabal that is dedicated to the plunder of Liberia's resources."

Johnson Sirleaf is alleged to have ownership of International Bank, where she is said to have directed major international business (that of Firestone, Mitall Steel, a Nigerian maritime and oil facility, etc.). Her brother in law is a special consultant to Cellcom and many other corporations and her sister is alleged to be involved in promoting the interests of a section of the Lebanese business community. While many of these claims may be nothing more than idle speculation, the fact that there is a growing swirl of such suspicions suggests that there are multiple and conflicting agendas at play.

Even just the appearance that state related patronage networks are alive and well encourages this behavior among others who feel that the anti-corruption rhetoric is nothing more than talk and that in fact the rules of governance have not fundamentally changed. It undermines the very policies she is championing and leaves a legacy that does not bode well for the future of the office of the presidency.

The president herself put it so aptly at a recent USAID forum:<sup>5</sup> "In the end, democracy is all about giving power to the people. We need to build political and governance systems that are transparent and effective, where all voices are heard and respected, where power cannot become overly centralized in the Executive, and where, at the end of the day, a country's leaders are held accountable to the very people that elect them. If we fail to build true democratic governance, we will fail to achieve development."

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<sup>4</sup> Robert Sirleaf, son of the President and Senior Advisor to the President and recently named to the Board of the National Oil Company of Liberia (NOCOL); Charles Sirleaf, son of President Sirleaf, Director of Finance at the Central Bank of Liberia, and senior advisor to the president; Fomba Sirleaf, son of President Sirleaf was National Security Agency Director; until recently, her cousin, Ambullai Johnson, was internal affairs minister; cousin Frances Johnson-Morris heads the Anti-Corruption Commission; Carnie Johnson, brother of President Sirleaf who represents Amlib and other mining companies; Estrada Bernard, Brother-in-law of President Sirleaf, Legal Advisor to the President.

<sup>5</sup> Remarks by H.E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf at USAID Forum on Frontiers in Development, Georgetown University. Washington, D.C., Monday, June 11, 2012



## E. Local Government<sup>6</sup>

On January 5, 2012, the GoL launched the National Policy on Decentralization and Local Governance. Over the past six years several measures have been taken to decentralize the government. These include the establishment of the County Development Fund, the Social Development Fund, community colleges, county agricultural offices and local health centers, among others.

The government of Liberia is committed to decentralization with the intent that it will strengthen citizenship participation in and ownership of government policy formulation and implementation as well as mechanisms of accountability to public institutions and leaders. The lack of equity and participation in government is seen as a significant contributing factor to the civil war. The government therefore sees decentralization as a way of addressing these issues both in terms of changing the structure of government as well as the culture of citizen participation. The government has taken initial steps to shift power from Monrovia to the counties in order to bring government closer to the people, improve democracy and reduce poverty. The goal is to strengthen civil society participation as well as of women and the media and to improve governance, transparency and accountability.

The government intends the process to be owned by the people. It hopes to build on the experiences of other post-conflict countries, and have the process led by the central government and legislature. The Governance Commission, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs are working on a national visioning exercise that is to inform the decentralization policy.

The decentralization process involves passing statutes to establish 15 autonomous county capital cities and the national capital and passing the Local Governance bill, which is being drafted by the Law Reform Commission. The Commission is also drafting amendments to the constitution in order to implement local governance goals, which will have to be passed by referendum in 2014. They are aiming to strengthen the capacity of the National Election Commission to support local elections for superintendents, majors, chiefs, and district commissioners. The process involves clarifying the borders within Liberia and the various subnational jurisdictions through a national boundary harmonization project. It also involves establishing a national biometric identification card system to register all Liberian citizens. This will form the basis for an improved voter registration system. Because of the large numbers of people who have moved to the cities during the conflict, the government also aims to strengthen urban centers and delineate more clearly the responsibilities of national, county and city governments. The government plans to improve urban planning programs to deal with the large problem of unplanned settlement. Civil Service Reform is underway as is Public Financial Management Reform. Law Reform and Land Commissions have been established.

Health, education and agricultural sectors were to be deconcentrated first as pilot initiatives. Thus far, the process of decentralizing health services has seen the most progress, while education and agriculture are lagging. Health facilities are being restored throughout the

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<sup>6</sup> See Report of the 2012 Assessment Team on Decentralization, which focused on issues of Local Government.

country. The Education Reform Act has been passed and local school boards are being established throughout the country. Community colleges are to provide higher education at the local level. County Agriculture Offices are being established with devolution of personnel from the center and similar programs are being implemented by the Ministry of Gender and Development. Security and justice services are to be consolidated into five regional hubs, while postal and banking services have been opened in several counties.

Fiscal decentralization has involved a pilot effort with the transfer of \$200,000 to each county through the transfer of surplus funds from the 2007-08 budget through County Development Funds, which are under county control.

The process is extremely ambitious and has already confronted many challenges. It appears thus far that there is no direct control by the counties over budgets or recruitment of staff. There are inadequate mechanisms to ensure that distribution of resources from the center corresponds to local development needs. It is unclear who is going to fund key pieces of decentralization, including support to principal government agencies responsible for executing decentralization process. There are major problems in lack of administrative capacity, which are compounded by inadequate county budgets. There are challenges in harmonization of county administrative boundaries. There is also a lack of information on and misconceptions of decentralization at the community level. There are questions about how legislators will respond to some of the more contentious issues surrounding resource allocation and boundary issues and whether they have sufficient incentive to pass the Local Government bill. Others question whether local governments will be able to raise sufficient revenue and whether there be equitable distribution from the center. All of these contingencies will affect the legitimacy of local governance and the decentralization initiative.

## F. Parties and Electoral Institutions

**Electoral Institutions:** By most accounts, the 2011 presidential and legislative elections were technically free and fair. While there were potentially some isolated incidences of ballot fraud and some breakdowns in transparency and technical failures, these issues were not systemic nor large. The opposition CDC boycotted the run-off claiming that the first round was significantly flawed, but these claims were unsubstantiated, according to a Carter Center report (2011).

There were, however, longer-term systemic issues that were great in magnitude that plagued the elections. These issues can be grouped under the umbrella of problems that made the playing field unequal. Government officials frequently prohibited opposition parties from using public spaces to hold rallies. Given the limited spaces available for rallies in Monrovia, actions like this can limit the ability of opposition candidates to engage with supporters.

Opposition candidates had far fewer resources than UP candidates with which to campaign. There were several documented incidences of UP candidates using state resources to campaign. Candidates are prohibited from accepting campaign contributions from companies. This presumably well-intentioned law seems to have backfired, providing candidates with few legitimate ways to acquire the resources needed to match the intensity and reach of UP candidate campaigns.

One non-UP affiliated candidate told a story of how Johnson Sirleaf invited many village chiefs to Monrovia, where she listened to their concerns and presented her vision of Liberia for the upcoming 6 years. When the chiefs left, she gave them money that they could use to go shopping for some things for their families. The chiefs left happy. The non-UP affiliated candidate tried to do something similar. He paid for chiefs to come to Monrovia and meet with him. However he couldn't afford to send them home with any money. As a result, the chiefs left disappointed.

Another candidate mentioned that the price for airtime on community radio stations is more expensive when one is a political candidate. Johnson Sirleaf and current legislators could afford lots of airtime. But opposition candidates lacked the resources to pay for hour-long call-in shows, a popular way for candidates to engage with voters. A strength of community radio stations is that they are financially self-sustaining, and some stations that we visited made sure they allocated airtime for all candidates who wanted it. But other community radio stations do not have policies like this.

Table 5. 2011 Presidential Election Results

Candidate	Party	1st round		2nd round	
		Votes	%	Votes	%
Ellen Johnson Sirleaf	Unity Party	530,020	43.9	607,618	90.7
Winston Tubman	Congress for Democratic Change	394,370	32.7	62,207	9.3
Prince Yormie Johnson	National Union for Democratic Progress	139,786	11.6		
Charles Brumskine	Liberty Party	65,800	5.5		
Kennedy Sandy	Liberia Transformation Party	13,612	1.1		
Gladys Beyan	Grassroot Democratic Party of Liberia	12,740	1.1		
Togba-Nah Tipoteh	Freedom Alliance Party of Liberia	7,659	0.6		
Dew Mayson	National Democratic Coalition	5,819	0.5		
Manjergie Ndebe	Liberia Reconstruction Party	5,746	0.5		
Simeon Freeman	Movement for Progressive Change	5,559	0.5		
Marcus Roland Jones	Victory for Change Party	5,305	0.4		
James Guseh	Citizens Unification Party	5,025	0.4		
Hananiah Zoe	Liberia Empowerment Party	4,463	0.4		
Chea Cheapoo	Progressive People's Party	4,085	0.3		
James Chelley	Original Congress Party of Liberia	4,008	0.3		
Jonathan A. Mason	Union of Liberian Democrats	2,645	0.2		
Invalid or blank votes		82,074	6.4	24,587	3.5
<b>Totals</b>		<b>1,288,716</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>669,825</b>	<b>100</b>
Turnout	71.60%			38.60%	

Source: National Elections Commission

Table 6. 2011 House of Representatives of Liberia Election Results

Political Party	Candidates	Votes	%	Seats	+/-	% Seats
Unity Party	72	226,291	17.76	24	2	32.9
Congress for Democratic Change	58	163,592	12.84	11	0	15.1
Liberty Party	68	117,285	9.2	7	3	9.6
National Union for Democratic Progress	43	50,010	3.92	6	6	8.2
National Democratic Coalition	61	73,144	5.74	5	1	6.8
National Patriotic Party	21	42,420	3.33	3	-1	4.1
Alliance for Peace and Democracy	16	26,537	2.08	3	2	4.1
Movement for Progressive Change	38	30,205	2.37	2	2	2.7
Liberia Transformation Party	62	57,734	4.53	1	1	1.4
Liberia Destiny Party	18	13,310	1.04	1	0	1.4
National Reformation Party	9	9,813	0.77	1	0	1.4
Other parties (15)	196	850	10.14	0	0	0
Independents	131	250,412	19.65	9	-1	12.3
Invalid or blank votes	-	84,182	6.61	-		
Total	793	1,274,186	100	73		

Source: National Election Commission

Table 7. 2011 Senate of Liberia Election Results

Political Party	Candidates	Votes	%	Seats	+/-	% Seats
Unity Party	13	164,851	12.85	4	-1	33.33
National Patriotic Party	7	70,260	5.48	4	3	20
Congress for Democratic Change	5	259,161	20.2	2	1	10
National Union for Democratic Progress	4	51,494	4.01	1	1	6.66
Alliance for Peace and Democracy	4	29,777	2.32	1	-1	6.66
Liberty Party	14	134,357	10.47	0	-1	3.33
National Democratic Coalition	6	41,717	3.25	1	1	3.33
Liberia Destiny Party	5	19,993	1.56	1	0	3.33
National Democratic Party of Liberia	2	2,440	0.19	0	0	3.33
Other parties (10)	24	104,898	8.18	0	-4	0
Independents	15	317,265	24.73	1	0	10
Invalid or blank votes	-	86,874	6.77	-		
Totals	99	1,283,087	100	15		

Source: National Elections Commission

While these examples may seem like minor issues, in the aggregate they appear to have played an important role in limiting the campaign reach of opposition candidates for president and the National Assembly. One person we interviewed told us: “No party in Liberia is strong until they win, and you need to be strong to win.” This statement reflects an unfortunate chicken-or-the-egg equilibrium. The benefits of access to state resources are so enormous that they serve to strengthen whatever party is currently in office. But a party cannot access these resources until it is in power.

Exacerbating the problem of the unequal playing field is the fact that there is little support among the public for the idea that opposition parties should regularly examine and criticize government policies and actions. Almost three times as many people felt that opposition parties should concentrate on cooperating with government and help it develop the country compared with those who felt they should regularly examine and critique government policies and actions in a 2008 Afrobarometer survey.

The Carter Center found that the NEC performed admirably throughout the country during the elections, despite reports of bias and a perception that NEC leaders were Johnson Sirleaf allies. There was, however, some confusion about the legal framework governing the elections. There was an abundance of documents governing the NEC, including the Elections Law and the Constitution, along with NEC regulations, and various codes of conduct. There were some contradictions among these documents, along with confusion over their enforcement mechanisms. This provided opportunities for disputes. Relative to other government entities in Liberia, the NEC has a level of competence that extends beyond the most senior staff. This is due mostly to the sustained support by the international community, and ability of the NEC to offer competitive salaries to staff.

One worrying trend was that the 2011 elections had more explicit ethnic overtones than the 2005 elections. This was especially obvious in Nimba and Sinoe counties. The political class in Monrovia tends to talk as if ethnicity is no longer a salient identity among Liberians. This is not the case everywhere outside of Monrovia. In Nimba it was common to hear: “You cannot remove intestines and put in dry banana leaves,” which means, “Don’t vote for an outsider. Vote for a coethnic.”

A cultural challenge for representatives is that campaigning often matters more than behavior while in office. A representative may invest in providing public goods for her district during her tenure, but if she doesn’t hand out sufficient gifts and money when campaigning she may not get reelected. It is common for Liberians to call candidates who do not provide sufficient handouts “mean.”

**Political Parties:** Political parties in Liberia, as in other parts of West Africa, remain weak and personalized. It is difficult to find any example of meaningful, substantive, and systematic stations is that they are financially self-sustaining, and some stations that we visited made sure they allocated airtime for all candidates who wanted it. But other community radio stations do not have policies like this.

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**Political Parties:** Political parties in Liberia, as in other parts of West Africa, remain weak and personalized. It is difficult to find any example of meaningful, substantive, and systematic differences in party platforms. Further, parties tend to be active for only a few months before and during elections, and then fade away. “Parties are for election time,” one man told us. During the assessment team trip, boarded up party offices could be seen around the country.

The ruling party, the Unity Party, was started in 1985. Johnson Sirleaf ran under the UP during the 1997 presidential elections, and has stayed with the party since. The UP received the most votes for president in the first round of the 2011 elections, with Johnson Sirleaf as its presidential candidate and Joseph Boakai as her running mate..

The Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) was formed a year before the 2005 elections. It received the second most votes for president in the first round of the 2011 elections, running Winston Tubman as president and George Weah (the CDC's presidential candidate in 2005) as his running mate. The National Union for Democratic Progress came in third, mostly because of support in Nimba for Prince Johnson, the party's presidential candidate. The Liberty Party came in fourth in the elections. There had been discussions in 2010 for the Liberty Party to ally with the CDC, but these negotiations fell apart. The LP ran Charles Brumskine as their presidential candidate and Franklin Siakor as his running mate. Brumskine was a Taylor ally and President Pro Temp of the Senate in 1997. By 1999 he had fallen out with Taylor and was forced to flee the country. Brumskine is from Grand Bassa and has strong support among people of the Bassa ethnic group. Siakor was a senator from Bong and has strong support among Bong youth.

Political parties are free to organize, with the exception of the challenge of public space use discussed above. We heard repeatedly that there are almost no concerns regarding freedom of speech. The closure of a few radio stations during the elections was an exception, also discussed earlier, but not emblematic of a larger problem.

In 2009 two opposition parties merged with the UP: the Liberia Action Party (the party that most likely technically won the 1985 elections) and the Liberia Unification Party. In 2010, the largest opposition party, the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) led by George Weah, formed an eight-party alliance called the New Coalition for Democratic Change, which appears to have been short-lived.<sup>7</sup> A second opposition alliance was formed by the Liberty Party and the New Deal Movement (NDM) in 2010. Yet another alliance, the National Democratic Coalition (NDC) was established in May 2011 between seven smaller parties under businessman Dew Tuan Wreh Mayson, including the National Patriotic party (NPP) and NDM, both of which had now shifted alliances.<sup>8</sup> There were other failed attempts at coalition building. These mergers may signal a degree of maturation in the political process, however, their tentative nature also suggests a lack of stability and fluidity in the party system.

We do not have data for who voted in the 2011 elections. Afrobarometer data from 2008 regarding the 2005 election revealed that some of the patterns fell along lines of major social divisions, with more disaffected groups like Muslims, youth and women generally voting at lower rates: 62% of all Muslims reported voting compared with 74% of Christians; 69% of youth (18-29 years) voted compared with 86% of the 50-64 age group; 75.5% women voted compared with 80% of men. Interestingly, however, 76% of those with no schooling voted compared with 75% with primary education, 85.5% with secondary education, and 72% with university education. Most parties have youth branches, and some have women's groups, but this has little meaning outside of Monrovia. The relationships that matter outside of Monrovia are

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<sup>7</sup> The New Coalition for Democratic Change (NCDC) was made up of the CDC, NPP, True Whig Party (TWP); Liberia National Union (Linu); the National Reformation Party (NRP); National Vision Party (Natvipol); and the Progressive Democratic Party (Prodemp) and, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD).

<sup>8</sup> This alliance was made up of the NDM, NPP, the National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL), the Liberian People's Party, the United People's Party, the Liberia Equal Rights Party and the Labor Party of Liberia. The NPP and NDPL withdrew prior to the election and Mayson ran for president representing the remainder of the parties.

between individual candidates and these groups, not between political parties and these groups.

Parties drew on different constituencies. The UP (like the LAP when it was in existence) projected itself as a party for businesspeople, technocrats, and the middle class. In the countryside, it sought the support of chiefs and secret societies. Women and groups of women, e.g., market women, were targeted by UP as a new constituency during the 2005 and 2011 elections and vigorous efforts were made by Sirleaf's supporters to get them to vote for her. Many women felt empowered by her victory and it helped them come to terms with their marginalized status for the first time. As a leader of a Lofa women's group explained to us: "After the 2005 election, so many women have come to know themselves and know who to choose for election. Some women got to know that they have the right to choose who they wanted. They now know their rights as a human being. Men have ruled whole country for 150 years. Let us rule for two terms, then the men can fight for another term."

The CDC made populist appeals to large numbers of poor youth in the 2005 and 2011 elections and appealed to the argued that it was time for the uneducated to rule since educated people had failed their country (Sawyer 2008). Prince Johnson's NUDP appealed primarily to Gio and Mano from his home county of Nimba.

The challenge for political parties is, in part, that there is no demand for political platforms. Liberians vote largely based on a comparison of resources distributed to their community during campaigning and loyalty to individuals. There appears to be little party loyalty that transcends loyalty to individuals and there is little retrospective voting, where voters make their decisions based on the performance of the incumbent.

Why is there no demand for political platforms? A political platform is a set of positions on political issues. If voters have no experience with candidates following through on their promises, and no reason to suspect that candidates have incentives to follow through on their promises, then there is no reason to demand more promises. In return, parties and candidates offer what voters do want: handouts during campaigns. A business analogy helps clarify this point. If two traders are operating in an environment where they cannot rely on a third party to enforce contracts, they are unlikely to engage in contractual transactions. Rather, they will do spot transactions; one trader provides a small amount of a good, and the other trader pays for it on the spot in cash. Political campaigns are essentially a series of spot transactions, even though everyone would be better off if a candidate promised to (for example) work to electrify a district. The accountability mechanisms are not yet in place to make the latter feasible.

An additional explanation is that voters do not know what they can demand from candidates, and this ties back to earlier points about the low information environment.

Parties, in general, are not programmatic; they are personality driven; weak and constantly in flux. Their efforts at coalition building further reflect the lack of stability in the party system. For this reason, they cannot be relied on to play a significant role in challenging some of the accountability problems identified in this report in a meaningful way. USAID's resources are better directed toward forces that are attempting to transform the status quo in meaningful ways. Civil society and media are such actors.



## G. Civil Society

Since end of the war, there has been a shift in civil society activities from a focus on humanitarian aid and peace to a focus on issues pertaining to development, advocacy, and interest representation. There are numerous organizations formed to protect the rights of various groups (women, disabled, youth, etc.) as well as to advocate around poverty reduction, accountability, human rights, land rights, peace, environment and other such concerns. There are professional associations, national unions, community based associations, welfare associations, business associations (both formal and informal), and faith based organizations. Local level organizations include women's and youth groups, motorcycle unions, market associations, development associations, cooperatives and rural producers associations, PTAs, community health committees, neighborhood watch and conflict resolution groups, football and other sports clubs, and religious organizations. Developmentally oriented groups are involved in providing credit to rural farmers, vocational training, and other rehabilitation and rebuilding activities. There are also traditional associations, from the national traditional authorities association to the *kuu* reciprocal labor systems, *susu* rotating credit associations, clan based groups, and Poro (men's) and Sande (women's) secret societies. As in other countries, there are also a good number of briefcase organizations that are funded by individuals with the aim of turning a profit.

In addition to the individual organizations, there are numerous networks of civil society organizations at the county level but also at the national level, e.g., Women's NGO Secretariat of (WONGOSOL), New African Research and Development Agency(NARDA). The Inter-Religious Council of Liberia coordinates relations between nearly 40 Muslim and Christian organizations under Liberia Council of Churches and the umbrella group the National Muslim Council of Liberia. A national CSO Advisory Committee was formed in 2004 to coordinate the activities of NGOs.

An NGO policy was first developed in 1988 with the help of USAID, and it was revised in 2001. In 2003, the Liberian NGOs Network (LINNK) was formed to coordinate civil society organization activities. Together with NARDA and the Ministry of Planning and Economic Policy, it revised the NGO policy in 2005, as there was a proliferation of NGOs with the end of the war.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) helped coordinate the creation of the NGO Policy and Guidelines for Operations based on consultations between line ministries, NGOs, donors and the UN. The Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs is responsible for monitoring and evaluating NGOs and promoting cooperation between them and the government. However, the Teachers' Association registers with Ministry of Education, the transport unions register with the Ministry of Transport, women's organizations with the Gender Ministry, etc.

In contrast with the Taylor years when in 1998 civil society organizations were suppressed, today civil society organizations work fairly well with the government and feel they are able to have influence on policy. The women's movement has been able to get inheritance laws passed. Various youth organizations, including the Federation of Liberian Youth (FLY), the Liberia National Student Union (LINSU) and the Mano River Union (MRU) Youth Parliament have

criticized the president on various government appointments (most recently the appointment of the National Youth advisor) and its leadership feels that they were listened to and received an adequate response, something that would not have happened under previous administrations. Under Taylor, students were harassed by military personnel and some forced into exile. As one student leader put it to us: “The president is very receptive, you can talk to the president and disagree. She may admit that she is wrong. That is the essence of democracy. She encourages that we disagree.” Youth leaders have been active in revising the National Youth Policy.

**Challenges Confronting Civil Society:** The largest constraints civil society face have to do with capacity issues, which have been exacerbated by the movement of top personnel to work in better paying jobs for government, international NGOs, or donors, thus depleting domestic NGOs of their best talent. Few NGOs are membership based and most rely on donors for funding (with some important exceptions, e.g., professional associations, faith based organizations, unions). Businesses in Liberia do not fund NGO activity, nor are there many local foundations, thus leaving NGOs heavily donor dependent.

NGOs also tend to be based in Monrovia with weak ties to rural areas due to lack of funding. Some have made a conscious effort to move their base to the rural areas, e.g., the Foundation for International Dignity (FIND), which moved to Gbarnga. Maintaining these ties with the rural areas, however, poses serious challenges to resource depleted organizations.

In the rural areas, NGOs are increasingly becoming networked on a county basis and are trying to play a watchdog role with respect to the activities of local authorities. However, they do not have direct influence on local government and they have had difficulty influencing the use of Social Development Funds and County Development Funds.

Civil society actors felt that more resources should go directly to domestic NGOs to strengthen their capacity rather than to intermediary INGOs, who relied on their expertise. They felt domestic NGOs were better positioned to understand and address local conditions and INGOs would be already relying on their expertise. Some expressed frustration with the fact that they did not have access to resources that would give them the flexibility to be able to be timely in their response to events through advocacy. Pre-determined donor funding priorities limited their ability to pursue their own objectives.

Although civil society is generally weak in Liberia, it has a long history of advocacy and of playing a watchdog role with respect to the state. If strengthened by USAID, they would be able to play a more forceful role in pushing the government to be more accountable.

## H. Media

**History:** Liberia has some of the oldest media outlets in Africa. The first newspaper in Africa, *The Herald*, was established by an Americo Liberian, Charles Forte, in 1826. Liberia also has one of the oldest independent radio stations in West Africa, the Eternal Love Winning Africa (ELWA) owned by the Sudan Interior Mission, which began operation in 1954.

The media has had uneasy relations with the Liberian state for a long time. The harassment of journalists began with the government of Tubman administration (1944-1971), when freedom of expression came to be seen as a privilege rather than a right. The Press Union of Liberia (PUL) came into existence in 1964 to defend the rights of journalists. Given the reach of the radio into the countryside, it was most tightly controlled, with the government holding a monopoly on broadcasting in the 1970s and 1980s through the state-owned Liberian Broadcasting System. The only other stations were run by Protestant and Catholic churches and by the Voice of America. During the Doe administration, the media became even more constricted and was limited almost exclusively to the radio, which was administered through the Liberian Rural Communication Network. It was, nevertheless, in this period that Liberian journalist Kenneth Best started the first daily in Liberia in 1981.

Media freedom became even more constrained with the start of the armed conflict in 1989 as NPFL forces took over existing radio stations. Taylor set up a propaganda station, Kiss FM, at his headquarters in Gbarnga. Prior to the 1997 elections, of the 6 radio stations that were in existence at the time, the only station that escaped looting was owned by Taylor. Not surprisingly, Taylor was the only candidate who was able to use the media to promote his campaign. At this time there were six newspapers circulating. After being elected, Taylor tightened his monopoly on the media and harassed journalists. He closed Star Radio in 2000 and fought Radio Veritas on numerous occasions, giving him a monopoly on the media.

In the period of the peace talks around 2003, as fighting intensified in Monrovia, the Press Union protected the press, which was almost exclusively based in Monrovia and had limited national reach. Journalistic standards were very low and many of the best journalists had fled the country during the years of turmoil. There was no journalism program at the University of Liberia. Immediately after the war about 30 or so newspapers, mostly Monrovia based, sprung up.

Today the media enjoys unprecedented freedom in Liberia, although it has not been entirely free of repression. Journalists are not being beaten, removed from their offices and jailed for what they published as was the case during Taylor's time, but government officials do sometimes influence the media. The quality of media debates has improved as people are now demanding more accountability. But at the same time the government is also showing more tolerance towards opposing viewpoints. Newspapers have become more critical than they were before. They have improved the content and quality by raising critical debates on a regular basis regarding corruption, pollution, school budgets, and other such pressing issues.

Broadcast journalists today are not only talking more to elites, they are getting microphones to ordinary people. There is also a diversity of journalists, and more coverage of issues in the elections not just candidates. In the 2011 elections the media played an important role in maintaining calm and focusing stories on the importance of reconciliation and not resorting to violence.

Nevertheless there are continuing violations of the rights of journalists. During the 2011 election the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism closed down seven radio and TV stations for employing inflammatory language and hate speech (State Department 2012, Carter Center 2012). Although there was reason for concern, the closures were unconstitutional and the courts ordered them reopened a week later, which gave journalists confidence in the legal

system and its willingness to defend press freedom. In January 2012, the Supreme Court ordered Rodney Sieh, editor of *Front Page Africa*, arrested for contempt of court in a case in which the court argued that the paper had published an inaccurate story. The president intervened to release the editor.

It is not uncommon for reporters to receive payment from individuals either to suppress a story or to have it placed in a certain part of the paper. People also use advertising and threatening to withhold advertising as a way of exerting control of media workers.

**Legislation:** Civil society groups, including the Liberia Media Law and Reform Policy Working Group in close consultation with the Press Union Of Liberia (PUL), as well as other civil society organizations, were active in drafting key legislation affecting the media, including the Freedom of Information Act of 2010. Liberia was the first West African country to pass such an act, which gives media workers and the general public open access to public record. In 2008 an Independent Broadcasting Regulator act was passed. These organizations have also been involved in drafting two additional pending bills that would transform the Liberian Broadcasting Service into a Public Broadcaster and the other on community radio laws.

**Radio:** Today there are 15 independent radio stations in Monrovia. Of the 47 community radio stations outside of Monrovia, 30 are functional (Randall et al. nd). The most popular radio station is Radio UNMIL. As UNMIL draws down, it is likely that UNMIL Radio will shut down in the coming years. UNMIL Radio is an important source of news, especially outside Monrovia, as community radio stations rebroadcast many UNMIL Radio programs, including programs on national news.

Other radio stations include Star Radio, which was founded in 1997. Truth FM was founded in 2005 and is thought to be owned to be tied to President Sirleaf-Johnson, although there is no evidence of this. Radio Veritas was founded in the 1980s by the Catholic Church of Liberia. The ELBC, founded in 1954, was owned by the Liberian Broadcasting Service. For most of the stations, advertisement constitutes 70 percent of their revenue while the rest comes from other sources, particularly donor support (Spurk et al. 2010).

A recent survey found that the majority of the population listens to the radio, with over 90% of all respondents in Buchanan, Kakata and Monrovia reporting that they listen to radio. 85% of Monrovia residents indicated that they owned radios. The most listened to programs included news (48.5%), entertainment (31.0%), religious programs (12.2%), and political shows (8.4%) (Spurk et al. 2010).

**Newspapers:** About 43 newspapers are in existence although only 15 publish with any regularity (Randall et al. nd). A recent survey in Liberia found that three quarters of all respondents who were literate also read newspapers, most of whom access papers through friends and acquaintances. Surprisingly, the most read papers are online: *Sportsmax* (21.5%) and *Tidings* (17.5%). The most popular hard copy papers included *Daily Observer* (15.8%), *Inquirer* (12.8%); *New Democrat* (12.2%) (Spurk et al. 2010). *Daily Observer* and *New Democrat* have roughly the same circulation of 3,000 and *Inquirer* has a circulation of 1,000 (Randall et al. nd.).

**Television:** Television came to Liberia at the same time as the formation of the Liberia Broadcasting Service in 1960. Up until 1990, the government owned ELTV, which was the only

TV station in Liberia. In the 1990s, independent commercial television stations were introduced including DC TV in 1996 and LCN TV in 1997. Today there are 6 TV stations. Most of their broadcasts are dominated by foreign-based content, particularly Nigerian dramas and soaps (Randall et al. nd). Roughly 28% of survey respondents in Buchanan, Kakata and Monrovia own TV and 53% watch it. The cost of a TV is roughly the equivalent of one month's salary. Entertainment dominates the programming followed by news, religious and political shows (Randall et al. nd, Spurk et al. 2010).

**Cell phones:** With the end of the Taylor government in 2003, the market for cell phones was liberalized. Lonestar lost its monopoly, and Libercell, Comium, and Cellcom quickly emerged on the scene. The result was a drop in the price of sim cards and air time, which made cell phones more accessible. Over 86% of survey respondents reported having used a cell phone and 70% owned one. There are about 1.6 million users today (Randall et al. nd).

**Internet:** Liberia is home to 7 internet hosts and 20,000 internet users. Of the few people who use the internet, 79% use internet cafes, which 15% access the internet at work and 3% at public libraries and homes. At least 18% of people use the internet for news, 47% for research, 10% for sports news and study materials. Fifteen percent (15%) of people, the survey found out, use the internet for other reasons (Randall et al. nd).

The growing strength of the media and the willingness of key media houses to challenge the government's complacency with respect to corruption, suggest that it is an important partner in the advocacy efforts of civil society to demand greater transparency.

## V. USG'S OPERATIONAL AND PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENT

In the next few years, USAID is going to be working in a new and uncertain environment in Liberia with the drawdown of UNMIL troops, elections to elect a president other than Sirleaf, and less overall donor engagement with the country. These circumstances make the need to tackle key governance and democracy concerns more urgent than ever. The United States is the largest bilateral donor working in Liberia. It has long historic ties to the country and has been a strong and reliable supporter of the country's postwar recovery. USAID's assistance in the area of DRG funding was around \$226.3 million between 2005 and 2013. This is roughly one quarter of all US aid disbursed in Liberia overall in this same time period.

USAID has funded a very broad portfolio in the area of Democracy and Governance, ranging from activities that supported the 2005 and 2011 election processes, to efforts to strengthen civil society organizations and the media and support the rule of law through the training of law students, lawyers, judges and other court personnel. It has also sought to enhance support for victims through legal aid and alternative dispute resolution. It has sought to promote good governance by providing technical assistance to various ministries and commissions to improve financial management, strengthen operations, and tackle corruption. It has supported the National Elections Commission in important ways; helped to strengthen the capacity of legislators; worked to build up the capacities of the civil service and rehabilitate and renovate 10 county administration buildings.

Many of the non-DRG activities directly and indirectly support other elements that feed into DRG objectives, including the training of the Liberian National Police, Armed Forces of Liberia and Coast Guard, support for land tenure reform, the work of the Peace Corps, and studies on land issues, just to mention a few.

Based on our assessment, it appears that the continued DRG goals, as outlined in the CDCS, are generally sound and in tune with the realities of Liberia today. The focus on public resource management is excellent as is the goal of long-term capacity building in government, in local NGOs, the media and community based organizations. The strengthening of Alternative Dispute Resolution systems and public service justice system actors is also welcome. The goals to improve the capacity to implement election processes, provide support for decentralization, and strengthen civil society and media advocacy are very much on target.

The main concern we have with respect to the CDCS has to do with the strategic Development Objective 1 of “More Effective, Accountable and Inclusive Governance,” which we believe should better reflect USAID’s interest in democratization by supporting civil society, the media and the need to create more participatory institutions. Because of the need to strengthen demand side pressures for political reform, we suggest that USAID Liberia change its CDCS Development Objective to include enhancing “democracy” as an objective. These two objectives of democracy and governance are inseparable and reinforce one another. For governance to improve, it has to improve for citizens, but one needs democracy for a relationship to develop in which citizens are participants in change as well as beneficiaries of it. The best accountability mechanisms are worthless if there isn’t the political will to implement them or the demand for them. Democratic advancements in Liberia provide the best hope for this to occur at this time. At this point the primary advocates for such change can be found in civil society and the media.

USAID has carried out its funding in ways that take advantage of its comparative advantage as a global leader in promoting economic and political reform as well as human rights and decentralization. The broader donor community has also played a positive role in supporting political reform, human rights, decentralization and other elements of DRG. It is very likely that this role will diminish with government’s budget increases due to growing resource revenue and improved tax collection. Reliance on donors is likely to influence the decreasing interest of citizens in Western countries to support foreign aid. Whether or not a Sirleaf-like reformer is elected in 2017 will no doubt influence levels of support. As donors cut back their budgets for Liberia, better coordination can help ensure that impact remains strong.

The World Bank's governance support has focused on public financial management, e.g., through support for implementation of the Public Financial Management Law and strengthening financial management training) and civil service reform (through support for the Liberian government's civil service reform strategy). The World Bank is currently working on its new Country Assistance Strategy to cover 2012-2015, and they expect there to be a new additional focus on different ways in which the Bank can help create and maintain a demand for good governance.

The Africa Development Bank has worked with the World Bank over the past three years to support Liberia’s first Poverty Reduction Strategy, which focuses on peace and security,

economic revitalization, governance and rule of law, and infrastructure and basic services. This program has also supported gender equity, peace building, environmental sustainability, HIV/AIDS, children use, and monitoring and evaluation themes.

The European Union provides significant support for civil society activities, civil service reform, the NEC (through UNDP), and the Liberia Institute of Statistics & Geo-Information Services. It has provided technical assistance through the Governance Commission on the decentralization process. The EU has a small program on the media, but largely defers to USAID on support for the media. The EU does not do much rule of law assistance, as this is also something that USAID is seen to prioritize and do well. A cross-cutting approach in EU governance programming is to fund online training for Liberians, as opposed to trainings abroad. The EU has found this to be much more cost effective, and allows more Liberians to benefit from trainings.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has managed aid from many donors to support the NEC. UNDP feels there has been excellent coordination with USAID and IFES on NEC support. Other areas of UNDP support include: support for the governance commission and civil service reform (which the World Bank and USAID have also been involved in), technical support to the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission, support for civil society coordination, technical assistance for the decentralization process including providing advice on the Local Government Act, some support for public defenders, and support for the National Visioning Process. UNDP has helped the government pay the salaries of certain government workers, e.g., from the diaspora, who are especially needed. This is something USAID has supported as well.

Other funders are more focused in their support. UN Women, for example, concentrates on women's leadership and participation; economic empowerment; ending violence against women; peace and security; and gender budgeting. They also do a lot to support women's advocacy.

Concerns of duplication are not very great because the needs are so diverse and many. In fact, if donors are thinking differently and creatively about what civil society support means, that could be a good thing. In other areas, a lack of donor coordination could spell more trouble. For example, competing advice to the NEC would be problematic. But there appears to be strong donor coordination with regards to elections, rule of law and other areas. The recommendations at the end of this report take into account what other funders are and are not doing.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The central DRG problems in Liberia has to do with **improving government accountability**. Other key DRG problems have to do with political accountability and competition as well as rule of law. USAID should focus on areas that have the potential to constrain corruption and the existing patronage system, which permeate government institutions, legal institutions, and impede the capacity of civil society, media and other societal actors to influence the political system. This means focusing on where there is overt resistance to reforms and/or where procedural change is difficult, but also where incremental progress will either reduce opportunities for rents, will change incentive structures, and make prosecution more likely. This

also means that there should be **more emphasis on strengthening demand side forces** that can create pressures to break the impasse the country seems to be facing with respect to democracy, human rights, and governance.

As a result of these conclusions, our recommendations focus on four areas: 1) **strengthening civil society and the media**; 2) **continuing support for institutions promoting accountability**; 3) **support for rule of law**; and 4) **support for initiatives to improve informational access**.

The fact that the government appears committed to all these goals should bode well for such efforts. Although this is a country with a hybrid political system, which is neither fully democratic nor fully authoritarian, it does not appear resistant in principle to improving democracy, human rights and governance and actively advocates for this. Where it falls short is in implementation. In that sense, the country is at a stalemate and is not moving forward in a meaningful way in addressing the key democracy, human rights and governance issues. The country is at a critical juncture as individuals within the elite, even within the president's own party, are frustrated by the lack of progress. The gulf between ordinary people and the elite remains great. People are seeing some of the signs of behaviors that they abhorred in previous administrations, even though the violence is absent. They are anxious that they have come this far and may see their gains lost, especially if another administration comes in and turns back the clock on the fragile reforms that have been instituted. Whether or not these political reforms on paper can be institutionalized is the key question. USAID needs to take advantage of the political space that exists in the country and strengthen those forces that are capable of putting pressure on government to rein in corruption, patronage, nepotism and other practices that limit competition and enervate feelings of exclusion. USAID has done a commendable job in strengthening mechanisms that can promote transparency within the government on the supply side. It is the demand side of accountability that now requires more attention to break the stalemate described above.

#### ***Development Objective #1: More Effective, Accountable, and Inclusive Governance***

In spite of limitations, it is critical that support be given to capacity building to improve the functioning of the government in support training, systems development, improvement of service delivery and management of public resources, and organizational strengthening. We do not elaborate on this objective since we agree with the general approach in the CDCS.

#### ***Development Objective #2: Enhance Rule of Law***

**Assumptions:** The most egregious cases of impunity have to do with the warlords and individuals who carried out mass atrocities and human rights violations during the civil war with no consequence. The TRC process never had much legitimacy and is unlikely to move forward since the political will is not there and the TRC recommendations are problematic from a legal point of view. However, there are possibilities for addressing the broader issue of impunity in moving forward.

There are enormous needs for legal justice and relief at the local level. Some of these needs can be met through informal justice mechanisms, but certainly not all. We are concerned with the shift in focus in the CDCS "focus from the formal justice sector to the informal one, using traditional systems of customary law to establish a more effective approach to resolving



potentially incendiary land disputes.” We are aware of the historical inefficiency and corruption of the formal system, but we question the assumption that a focus on the traditional "system" can meet the need for justice, particularly for marginalized groups like women, who have not historically benefited from traditional systems, or Mandingo and Muslims, who already face prejudice through such systems. Similarly, ADR for land conflict resolution and other serious disputes may require more formal legal recourse. There may be instances where such mechanisms are insufficient, in which case the formal legal system may require strengthening.

We agree that the goal should be to divert as many minor cases as possible from the formal system to the informal one. However, the imperative to do so doesn't in any way lessen the importance of developing a viable formal justice system. Below we offer some ideas in line with USAID's interest in thinking about new ways to support the formal justice sector. The key question is how the formal justice system alternative can be developed in a way that is financially viable AND has proper oversight.

What is needed is balance between both the informal and formal legal sectors. Ultimately improved laws or new laws will be interpreted by the formal structures, necessitating attention to this sector. Moreover, the formal sector plays a pivotal role not only domestically, but it enables Liberia to honor her international obligations. What is needed is the building of constructive bridges between both sectors so that they can complement one another.

**Hypotheses:**

- A functioning formal legal system provides individuals with more options, particularly in difficult land or other disputes. It provides recourse in the case of serious crimes that cannot be adjudicated through informal means.
- Given the legal pluralism that prevails in Liberia, informal and formal legal structures are interdependent and therefore should complement one another.

**Priority Sectors:**

- ADR, Magistrate Courts, Judicial Institute, Community Legal Advisors

**Illustrative Activities:**

- Administrative strengthening: There is a need to support and develop the management role of the Court administrator's office. Currently, it has very little autonomy from the Supreme Court.
- Magistrate Courts: Continuing support to graduates of Professional Magistrates Training Program (information-sharing, remedial training, trouble-shooting). Anecdotal evidence suggests they are having a big impact in their courts. In our view, the use of well trained non-lawyers within the formal system is the only way to develop the cost-efficient formal system alternative. There should also be support for a follow up program at the Judicial Institute, drawing on lessons from the first program.
- Judicial Institute: Continuing institutional development support so gains made are not lost. The JI has been vital in influencing Supreme Court justice reform policy decisions.
- Continued support for the Community Legal Advisor program to help individuals navigate their options in the formal and informal system.

### ***Development Objective #3: Strengthen Civil Society's and the Media's Effectiveness in Advancing Reforms***

**Assumptions:** Many of USAID's efforts have been focused on improving the government supply side of services and public goods. This may have been justified in the first decade since civil war because of the need to rebuild the basic capacity and functioning of the state. Although the government is continuing to forge ahead with legislative reforms, decentralization and other policies aimed at advancing democracy and good governance, its interest in substantial political reform appears more tentative. In some areas, e.g., prosecuting corruption, there appears to be gridlock, and it will take considerable effort to infuse some real meaning into the legislation that has been passed and policies adopted. Even working directly with the judiciary and legislature has limited outcomes at this point in minimizing executive dominance and curtailing patronage. Working directly with the judiciary on issues related to the hearing of corruption cases might be worthwhile in helping them assert judicial independence, but they are hampered by weak investigative and prosecutorial capacities and may be politically constrained, as evident in the few cases that have made it to court. Similarly, the legislature is too weak and compromised and does not have the political will to assert independence from the executive at this time. Focusing on the capacity of institutions that have limited authority and political will (e.g., the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission) to promote effective public accountability is unlikely to produce results and runs the risk of legitimating state intransigence.

The elite have too much to gain from the status quo to seriously challenge it, and while they may assist at various points in time around specific issues they care about, they cannot be consistently relied upon. Thus, while splits among the elite will occur in efforts to advance reform, these divisions can't be planned nor can they be counted upon. Political parties are too focused on individuals and personalities rather than platforms. They are weak and fairly inactive in between elections.

*USAID needs to support a push from below to create more momentum for change.* The main societal forces capable of creating such momentum at this time are civil society and the media, in spite of their own weaknesses. Within civil society, the forces that have been playing this watchdog role include autonomous advocacy organizations like the Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia, Liberia Media for Democratic Initiatives, Liberia Media Center, and Foundation for International Dignity, just to name a few. In terms of sectors, the women's rights organizations have been among the most energized. Women's rights organizations like WONGOSOL, the Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia, WANEP AND WIPNET are continuing to press around women's rights concerns. Similar groups can be found in other sectors. However, the pressures for change at the local level are equally important and for this reason we have highlighted the roles of community radio stations and community organizations that can play an advocacy role with respect to local government. We concur with the companion Assessment of Decentralization and Local Governance in Liberia (2012) that suggests strengthening "some intermediary CSOs that are membership-based, including federations of CBOs working at higher levels of governance."

**Hypotheses:** Focusing on efforts of civil society and the media gives them:

- The necessary means to carry out advocacy around problems of corruption, impunity, and access to information. Access to information, in turn, will also allow civil society to be more effective.

- The ability to play a watchdog role and keep track of concession agreements, the disbursement of community and social funds, and other decisions that affect the public good.
- The ability to bring to light corrupt activities by public officials.
- The ability to create pressure on the legislature and judiciary to take more independent action and serve as a counterweight or check on the executive.
- The ability to create pressures to ensure that the new decentralization processes are accountable to local populations. This particular focus allows for productive synergies with other areas of USAID activity involving health and education and the possibility of creating pressures, especially at the local level for citizens to demand accountability in these areas as the decentralization process unfolds.
- The ability to work across ethnic and religious differences. Civil society is made up of crosscutting interests that can ameliorate more particularistic tendencies when they become divisive. Women's organizations and religious organizations were among the leaders of peace movement during the war and consciously worked across ethnic and religious lines to forge common agendas.
- The ability to build constructive synergies between citizens and their elected representatives, but also push representatives to do more and be more responsive to citizen needs.

Working with the media has additional benefits:

- The media has shown itself to be a useful medium through which to deflate tensions when they occur. They played a constructive role during the 2011 elections in ensuring that the elections were as peaceful as they were.
- Working with the media helps address issues of lack of information, as the media is an important source of information.

Currently civil society groups act as a subcontractor to government. Their lobbying activities are frequently around issues that the government similarly prioritizes, and their criticism is usually lukewarm. There are many possible explanations for this. For one, staff of local civil society groups may hope to get a job in government in the future, and do not want to play an antagonistic role. USAID should work to identify local groups that not only will work with government, but are willing to challenge the status quo as well.

There is a need for creative thinking on civil society support. Trainings and direct assistance for activities have undoubtedly helped, but in the past 7 years the assessment team has seen little change in the strength and motivation of civil society groups. One approach might be to work to increase the prestige of advocacy work, civic education, legal assistance, and other civil society activities. Perhaps USAID could create some sort of competition for the most creative and sustained advocacy campaign, a contest for the most creative civic education endeavor, or a prize for a civil society group that reaches the most remote areas.

#### **Priority Subsectors:**

- National organizations that have a proven track record in challenging corruption, patronage and impunity.

- Community organizations and informal associations at the local level that have a track record in challenging local authorities; these should be membership organizations.
- Given the momentum that has emerged with the women’s movement during the war and after, and emboldened with Liberia having the first elected female president in Africa, it makes sense to build on this energy and support women’s organizations at the national and local level.
- Continued support for newspapers and their websites. We heard repeatedly that community radio stations rely on the websites of Monrovia-based newspapers for information.
- Community radio, which can provide information on local government decisions as well as national concerns; can provide fora for interactions with legislative representatives and local and national officials.
- National radio, especially now that the popular UNMIL radio will likely be discontinued in the coming years.

**Illustrative Activities:**

- Civic education around laws, responsibilities of legislative representatives, local government officials, and bureaucrats, decentralization, the formal and informal judicial system.
- Support for fora to bring together government officials, legislators, academics, CSOs, and others to discuss key issues and concerns facing the nation.
- Supporting policy analysis and advocacy by civil society actors.
- Support initiatives by civil society and media to hold legislators and government officials accountable, e.g., report card for legislator performance.
- Skills and ethics training and mentoring for journalists and editors.
- Business, ethics and public service training for media managers and owners.
- Support efforts to build stronger media associations.
- Support training, mentoring and other investments for investigative journalism, e.g., concession agreements, use of community and social funds, land concerns.
- Support awards for journalistic excellence.

***Development Objective #4: Improve Information Environment***

**Assumptions:** Increasing the information environment, a key theme of this report, should be closely tied to public administration reform. Currently there is no culture of information sharing among civil servants. Ministry staff keep key documents on personal flash drives, which are then lost to the ministry when the staff changes jobs. The Liberia Institute of Public Administration, the institute responsible for training civil servants, should integrate the importance of information sharing into their training programs. The Liberian government should invest in official email addresses for all government staff, and require that these addresses be used for all government communication so that senior ministry staff can access key documents if individuals leave. The government should invest in some type of document sharing service, along the lines of a corporate Dropbox account, where there is a trail of every document, even if an individual tries to delete it. These strategies might seem unrealistic now, given the slow internet

connection, but presumably they will be more feasible once the fiber optic cable has been set up.

There will be non-logistical barriers to increasing the information environment. In information-scarce environments, information is extremely valuable. Taking a document off a flash drive and putting it into a shared folder involves giving up power. There will need to be a concomitant change in institutional culture where individuals get credit for documents they create, and further credit for sharing the document widely. At its core, in the public sector this is a management problem, and many of the projects through GEMS have promise to improve civil service management. The World Bank is considering further management training programs for senior ministry officials, and there could be an opportunity in activities like this to discuss ways in which managers can reward information sharing.

On a different level, community radio stations play a huge role in increasing the information environment in Liberia, and we strongly advise USAID to continue and increase support to them. Community radio station staff (who are usually in high school, work with the station for a few years, then go off to university) transmit national and international news to people in a district. They rebroadcast UNMIL radio, BBC, and VOA, which are otherwise inaccessible to people without shortwave radios. Staff might read the websites of Liberian and international newspapers and get information that way. There are call in shows where listeners discuss some of the most sensitive issues in a community, like an on-going court case. There are call in shows with representatives and political candidates. There are shows in local dialects. In many communities community radio stations are the only source of news, besides word of mouth. Further, community radio stations are financially self-sustaining by selling air time for shout outs, advertisements, and to political candidates.

We propose that increasing the information environment will help citizens make demands on government. However, strategies to increase the information environment should be accompanied by civic education campaigns that help people understand their rights vis-à-vis complaining to public officials and making demands on them. The Carter Center through its Community Legal Advisor program and through its outreach partnership with the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission already does work along these lines. These kinds of efforts should continue to be supported and expanded.

**Hypothesis:**

- When citizens have more information about their rights, laws, and the responsibilities of government officials, they will be more likely to make demands on and complaints to government. When citizens make demands on government, government is pressured to be more responsive.

**Priority Sectors**

- National radio, community radio, newspapers

**Illustrative Activities:**

(See Objective #3)

- Provide free Cellcom and Lonestar phone lines for community radio stations so that community members can call in at no cost. Currently the cost of making phone calls

deters many from engaging with community radio, and thus wealthy individuals are more likely to be able to have their voice heard. This one change would hugely increase the level of dialogue on community radio station programs.

- Continued support for newspapers websites. We heard repeatedly that community radio stations rely on the websites of Monrovia-based newspapers for information.
- Financial support for spare parts for community radio stations. These parts are difficult to find in local markets and expensive. Broken parts sometimes result in community radio going down for days or weeks.
- Sponsor award competitions (adjudicated by an independent panel) for investigative reporting by newspapers and radio stations. Prestige matters, and making desirable activities more prestigious would be a good approach.

### **Additional Thoughts:**

We believe USAID should continue support for the NEC. The fact that the second national post-war elections went so smoothly should not be taken for granted. Multi-faceted support for the NEC from the international community played a large role in the NEC's professionalism and logistical competence. USAID should think about how it can best promote a level playing field for political parties in Liberia, by which we mean a context in which no single party has an overwhelming advantage. We do not offer any specific ideas, but believe that a level playing field for all political candidates is critical for breaking what could potentially become a de facto one-party state.

There should be further research into the legislative branch and political parties. There have been several good analytical reports about rule of law, security, and the economy in Liberia. As best we can tell, there are no analytical reports about the legislature and political parties. As the challenges with the legislature and political parties in Liberia are common throughout Africa, we suggest some sort of comparative analysis. Have there been other countries in Africa that made the transition from personalized parties to more programmatic parties? How did this occur? What implications might these cases have for Liberia?

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: SCOPE OF WORK

### **Part I: DG Assessment**

#### **A. SOW Overview**

The DG assessment calls for the completion of two inter-connected tasks: (1) an assessment of political change and democratization in Liberia; and (2) the development of strategic and programmatic recommendations to address the major barriers to the consolidation of democracy and good governance in Liberia. The assessment ultimately defines the core DG problem(s) in the country, identifies actors and institutions that could support or resist reforms, and considers the USG position and USAID's operational and programmatic environment. The strategy development segment of the assessment then enables the team to develop a comprehensive approach and programmatic recommendations to address the core DG problem(s) identified in the assessment portion. This work plan does not call for a full and detailed program design.

#### **B. DG Assessment Methodology**

The DG assessment team will apply *Conducting a DG Assessment: A Framework for Strategy Development* (revised 2010) (see Annex A) and the supplementary guidance for DG assessment teams in completing its analytical work. It is extremely important that the assessment team closely follow the methodology outlined in the framework.

#### **Detailed Scope**

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

The team will conduct and draw on a literature review covering recent Liberia DG studies, evaluations, and assessments. The team will also review key documents such as Liberia's Operational Plans and Performance Reports, Congressional Budget Justifications, and any other relevant materials. They will also review the Framework for Strategy Development. 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 NGOs, donors, government officials, and others for the team prior to their travel to Monrovia. There will be a conference call including team members and USAID/Liberia prior to the beginning the field work portion of the assessment. The team will also meet with members of the DCHA/DG Strategies team to discuss the methodology of the revised framework. The assessment team should also seek out key informants in Africa Bureau and relevant pillar Bureaus in Washington.

##### *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 within Liberia, civil society, development partners, government representatives and others will be provided by USAID/Liberia. The team will consult with key representatives from USAID, the U.S. Embassy, the Government of Liberia, NGOs, independent Liberian professionals, and other stakeholders. USAID/Liberia focuses its work within six of Liberia's 15 counties. They are as follows: Nimba, Bong, 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.

### 3. *Follow Up*

The contractor will submit a draft report to USAID within three weeks and USAID will provide written comments on the draft within three weeks. 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 50 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 mission does intend to share the executive summary with the GOL, development partners, civil society and other external stakeholders. The Team Leader has responsibility for ensuring that the final report is complete and reads in a holistic manner. S/he may also give a debriefing in Washington to personnel in DCHA/DG, the Office of the Director of Foreign Assistance, regional bureaus at State and USAID, State/DRL, and elsewhere upon their return.

The team is not expected to produce a complete results package with refined intermediate results and indicators. However, the team is expected to recommend higher level objectives or desired changes with recommendations for how those objectives might be achieved. For example, if the desired outcome is to deepen the institutionalization of democracy by making government more responsive to its citizens' needs and expectations, how can this be achieved? Does it make more sense to improve public sector capacity to provide services in response to community-driven needs or increase citizen participation in political processes and decision-making?

What the assessment team outlines as an optimal strategy is only a recommendation to USAID. It is then up to USAID to determine whether and how to address the recommendations and potentially develop a more detailed DG strategy.

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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.



**C. DG 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):

24 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):

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

Local Logistician:

28 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 a local DG expert from USAID/Liberia, Louise Fahnbulleh.

**D. DG Assessment Team Member Experience:**

Team Leader (Senior Program Development Specialist Labor Category): The Team Leader for the 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 required. Experience in assessing political change, barriers to democratization, and strategy development is critical. Knowledge of DG decentralization literature would be useful but is not required. West Africa experience and/or country knowledge is required. A thorough knowledge of USAID and a specific understanding of DG policy guidance (to be provided through background documents) will be helpful. Demonstrated ability to lead DG assessment teams and develop compelling written products on short timelines 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. West Africa experience is required and specific Liberia country knowledge is preferred. Knowledge of USAID and specific understanding of DG policy guidance (to be provided with background documents) will be helpful. Ability to write technical material on short timelines required.

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

**E. DG Assessment Time Line**

The field work called for in this scope will be completed within approximately three and ½ 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 revise the draft 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.

DG 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 government officials, USG representatives, NGOs, and other stakeholders (Urban)	To Be Determined
Meetings with government officials, USG representatives, NGOs, and other stakeholders (Rural)	To Be Determined
Debrief USAID/US Embassy staff	To Be Determined
Submit draft report to USAID for comments	To Be Determined
<i>Consultations with DCHA/DRG, the Office of Foreign Assistance, regional bureaus at State and USAID, State/DRL, and others if requested</i>	To Be Determined
USAID provides feedback on draft report	To Be Determined
Submit Final Report to USAID	To Be Determined

**F. DG Assessment Deliverables**

- A team comprised of 2 international experts 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.
- A draft report for USAID/Liberia review and comment
- A final assessment report of approximately 50 pages (SBU if necessary).
- A final executive summary of approximately 5 pages (unclassified).
- Presentations to USAID and other USG officials.
- Submit copy of final report directly to Development Experience Clearinghouse ([www.dec.org](http://www.dec.org))

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## APPENDIX C: INTERVIEWEES

### **US Embassy**

Linda Thomas-Greenfield, former Ambassador (interviewed in US)

### **USAID Implementing Partners**

Tilly Reed, Chief of Party Civil Society and Media Leadership Program, IREX

Aubrey McCutcheon, Senior Resident Director, National Democratic Institute

Leo Platvoet, Senior Program Manager, National Democratic Institute

Laurie Cooper, Chief of Party, Land Conflict Resolution Project-Liberia, Tetra Tech

Mark Marquardt, Chief of Party, Land Policy Institutional Support Project

Wilbur Thomas, Chief of Party, IBI

Anthony Waddell, IBI

Martine Laney, Director of Project Management, IBI

Chelsea Payne, Country Director, The Carter Center

Florim Purova, Country Director, International Foundation for Electoral Systems

Jonathan Zalkind, International Foundation for Electoral Systems

Alex Mintah, International Foundation for Electoral Systems

Jonathan Zalkind, Operations Officer, International Foundation for Electoral Systems

Senesee G. Freeman, Senior Program Officer, International Foundation for Electoral Systems

Fin Young, American Bar Association

### **Government of Liberia**

Florence Chenoweth, Minister of Agriculture

Thomas Bureh, Commissioner, Independent National Human Rights Commission

Lwopu Kandekai, Land Commission

Jeanette Carter, Advisor, Land Commission, and Director, Institute for Research, University of Liberia

Aaron Weah, Governance Commission

Daniel Tipayson, Chair, Anti Corruption Commission

Romelle Watson, Assistant Minister for Administration, Ministry of Finance

Augustus Zayzay, Deputy Minister of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance

Aliou Konneh, Chief Internal Auditor, General Auditing Commission

### **Local Government**

Alfred Zinnah, Bomi District Commissioner

Daffa Wiles, Port Manager, Greenville Port

Augustine G. Swen, County Inspector, Sinoe County

Selena Polson Mappy, Bong Superintendent

Head of Development Committee, Bong

### **Parties and Elections**

Franklin Siakor, Liberty Party, vice presidential candidate, former Senator for Bong



**Civil Society**

Paul Hinnah, Liberian Democratic Institute  
Bartholomew B. Kollie, Network Coordinator, West Africa Network for Peacebuilding  
Francis Ngame, West Africa Network for Peacebuilding  
Thomas Doe Nah, Executive Director, Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia  
Malcolm Joseph, Executive Director, Center for Media Studies and Peace Building  
Alfred Wreh, Center for Media Studies and Peace Building  
Francis Senkapanie Konyon, Center for Justice and Peace  
Jasper Cumme, Chief Executive, Action for Genuine Democratic Alternatives  
Roosevelt Woods, Executive Director, Foundation for International Dignity  
Maron Siakor, Foundation for International Dignity  
Dan Saryee, Executive Director, Liberia Democratic Institute  
Joseph S. Williams, Liberia Democratic Watch  
John Kollie, Director, Liberia Media for Democratic Initiatives  
Lawrence Randall, Executive Director, Liberia Media Center  
Lancedell Matthews, New African Research and Development Agency  
Joseph Howard, Chief Executive, Center for Justice and Peace Studies

**Religious Organizations**

Rev. Clemens, JCC, Monrovia  
Roosevelt Gould, National Director, Catholic Justice and Peace Commission  
Kabah Mtrawally, Secretary General, Inter-Religious Council of Liberia  
Rev. Bormah Freeman, Director of Good Governance Affairs, Liberia Council of Churches  
Linda P. Tokpah, Catholic Justice and Peace Commission

**Youth**

Daintowon D. Pay-Bayee, African Youth with Disabilities Network Liberia  
Aloysius Seakel, Liberia Motor Cycle Transport, Ganta  
Richmond Neufville, President, Liberian National Student Union  
Winston Fayah, Vice President, Liberian National Student Union  
Daintowon D. Pay-Bayee, Deputy Secretary General, Federation of Liberian Youth  
Thomas D. Seh, Vice President, Youth Association, Klay

**Traditional authorities**

George Golegio, Vice Chairman Administration, National Traditional Council  
Madame Kamara, National Traditional Council  
Varney Massday, Paramount Chief, Klay, Bomi County  
Larjeh Mason, Klay, Town Chief, Bomi County  
Nonoo Bodollar, Assistant to Paramount Chief, Bomi County  
Peter Benson, Secretary to Chief, Bomi County

**Women's Mobilization**

Marpue M. Speare, Executive Director, Women NGOs Secretariat of Liberia  
Agnes Kortimah, Zorzor District Women Care  
Ghoma Karloweah, UN Women, Program Officer  
Lene Cummings, WIPNET  
Marietta Williams, United Muslim Women, chair, (also head of Federation of Muslim Women's Organizations)

Memuna Sherif, Program officer, United Muslim Women  
Jimmy Zinnah, General Secretary, United Muslim Women  
Musu Kardamie, Ganta, and four other women  
Mary G. Varney, businesswomen, used clothes, Bomi Rural Women  
Tenneh Moore, Bomi Rural Women  
Ruth R. Moore, Bomi Rural Women  
Musu Taylor, We are Together, Klay

### **Justice**

Pewee Flomoku, The Carter Center  
Alex Bick, formerly The Carter Center  
Thomas Crick, Associate Director, The Carter Center (Atlanta)  
Poliyon Alphonsus Zeon, The Carter Center, Liberia project coordinator, Access to Information Project  
Gaurav Laroia, Law and Policy Fellow, The Carter Center  
Paul James Allen, Country Director, Trocaire

### **Media**

Clive Dunn, Press Union of Liberia  
Timothy Seaklom, Editor in Chief, *Inquirer*  
Othello Garblah, Editor in Chief, *New Dawn*  
Jallah E. Grayfield III, Love FM  
Ebbie Geego, Voice of Sinoe  
Leroy Kanmoh, Greenville correspondent, *Front Page Africa*  
Nyahn Flomo, director of community radio in Ganta  
William Quire, President, Association of Liberia Community Radios, and Station Manager, Radio Gbarnga  
Ivan Cooper, Producer, Talking Drum Studio, Search for Common Ground  
A staff person of Radio Magic – Buchanan (the man's name has been lost)

### **US Government**

Louise J. Fahnbulleh, Democracy and Governance Specialist, USAID  
Kristin Joplin, Democracy and Governance Officer, USAID  
Finley Karngar, USAID  
Tammy Palmer, Economic Governance Officer, USAID  
Anne Fleuret, Program Officer, USAID  
Daniel Terrell, Senior Rule of Law Advisor, USAID  
Sonata Coulter, Economic Officer, USAID  
Michael Boyd, Economic Growth Officer, USAID  
Sandy Snyer Pew, Political and Economic Officer, USAID  
William McCullough, Chief Political Officer, US Embassy  
And others

### **Business (formal and informal)**

Matt Jones, Country Director, Building Markets  
Farzana Rasheed, CEO, New Africa Technology Company  
J. Darious Kollie, Program Management Officer, Liberia Chamber of Commerce,  
Anthony Flan, Liberia Chamber of Commerce

Morris Saye, businessman, Saclepea  
Fomba Trawally, Concerned Liberian Business Association  
Jon Gant, Global Witness  
Emmanuel Tumbey, Liberia Marketing Association  
Haresh Karamchandani, New Africa Technology Company  
Konah Karnely, Director, Market Association  
Orenan Joseph Saclepea, Nurse, Saclepea Hospital, and bar owner

**Legislators and Senators**

Hon. Edwin J. Clark Jr., Chief of Staff, Office of the Speaker (Alex Tyler)  
Hon. Worlea-Saywah Dunah, Representative Zoe-Geh District, Nimba County  
Nohn Rebecca Kidau, Former Representative, Ganta, Nimba County

**Foreign Donors**

Francesca Varlese, EU, Program Manager for Governance  
Raymond Muholu, World Bank  
Nessie Golakai, UNDP