



LIBERIA'S REPORT

ON

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**MINISTRY OF GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT
MONROVIA, LIBERIA**

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATION

AFELL -	Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia
AIDS -	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ALP -	Accelerated Learning Program
BPFA -	Beijing Platform for Action
CDA -	Cooperative Development Agency
CEP -	Community Empowerment Program
CPA -	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CPI -	Consumer Price Index
CEDAW -	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CFSN -	Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey
CHWS	-Communities Health Survey
ECOWAS -	Economic Community of West African States
ELBC -	Eternal Liberia Broadcasting Corporation
EPA -	Environmental Protection Agency
FAWE-	Forum for African Women Educationist
FGM -	Female Genital Mutilation
FPAL -	Family Planning Association of Liberia
GFPs -	Gender Focal Points
GBV -	Gender Based Violence
GC -	Governance Commission
HIV -	Human Immune Virus
ICT -	Information, Communication and Technology
INCHR -	Independent National Commission on Human Rights
IEC -	Information, Education, Communication
INGOS-	International Non-Governmental Organizations
IPRS -	Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy
JIU -	Joint Implementation Unit
LACE -	Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment
LET -	Liberia Education Trust Fund
LDHS -	Liberia Demography & Health Survey

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I. INTRODUCTION

Liberia has just emerged from 14 years of civil crisis, devastating its infrastructure, the economy, and the corresponding political institutions. The virtual collapse of the economy, and what amounts to the near withering away of the state, seemed to initially make reconstruction impossible. Successive transitional Governments which tried to re-establish the rule of law, and by extension, the promotion and protection of human rights were either too weak, perhaps not totally committed, or seemingly lacked the capacity to carry through.

However, under the current administration, efforts are not only being taken to get the necessary reforms and policies right, as well as the initiation of physical reconstruction of basic and productive infrastructure, but also the restoration of the rule of law, and particularly the protection of the inalienable rights of all citizens.

The Government, under the leadership of Her Excellency Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has, therefore, taken on a more intense and analytical look at the population for the purpose of identifying the most deprived of the citizens, and has come to the conclusion that women as an aggregate are the most discriminated against and deprived people in the Liberian society.

To this end, several policies and programs for the purpose of addressing women's rights including the provision of equal opportunities for women regardless of their status have been initiated.

It must not, however, be construed to mean that women's rights are not being trampled upon and that they have gained parity with men. This report, therefore, represents the status of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the initiatives being taken by the Government in collaboration with its Partners and other stakeholders to address women's rights issues. As a consequence, this imposes upon the Government an obligation and duty to hasten the removal of those social and economic hurdles that impede the progress of women.

PART ONE: Overview of Achievements and Challenges in Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

1: Has a national policy on gender equality and the empowerment of Women been adopted and at what level?

The Government through the Ministry of Gender and Development is making all efforts to develop a National Gender Policy that will reflect the gender concerns obtaining in the Country. In order to carry out this process, the Ministry requested and received technical support from UNECA, which resulted into the development of a framework for the National Gender Policy. Further assistance was also sought from the UN System in Liberia to finalize the Policy. An international consultant was hired to work with the Ministry to finalize the NGP. At the moment there is a draft Policy that is going through the process of being validated, after which it will be finalized and submitted to the Cabinet for endorsement. When endorsed by Cabinet, the Policy will then be forwarded to the National Legislature for enactment into law. The Policy when completed will address the following priority areas: Gender mainstreaming, Economic Empowerment, Women's Rights, the Girl Child, Gender based Violence, Decision-making and Leadership positions for Women, Reproductive Health Rights, Peace and National Security, Media, Information, Communication Technology, Gender Disaggregated data, Monitoring and Evaluation and Coordination.

2. Was a strategy or plan of action developed to support the implementation of the policy?

A detailed plan of action has been developed to ensure the implementation of the Policy when finalized. This implementation strategy provides that the Ministry of Gender and Development carries out its coordination, monitoring and supervisory role, while all Government Ministries and Agencies being complemented by the Non-Governmental Organizations operating in Liberia will serve as Implementers of the Policy.

3. What mechanisms were established for monitoring and how are different actors held accountable for its implementation?

The following mechanisms have been established to ensure the monitoring of the National Gender Policy:

- **The Ministry of Gender & Development**, established in 2001 is the Government's Agency that has the Mandate to ensure the protection, wellbeing and advancement of women and children. The Ministry is to ensure the formulation, monitoring and implementation of gender policies in all Sectors.
- **The National Gender Forum**, a Policy Advisory Body whose Secretariat is situated at the Ministry of Gender and Development has been established to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in all policies, plans and programs of the Government. The Forum is chaired by the President of Liberia and comprises of Heads of Government Ministries and Agencies, Institutions of higher learning, the Judiciary and Legislative Branches of Government, Heads of Local and International NGOs,

as well as the UN Agencies. Also, the Gender Desk Officers/Gender Focal Points at the Line Ministries and Agencies are members of the NGF. They are to ensure that gender issues are prioritized in the programs and policies of their respective Ministries and Agencies. The different actors will be held accountable for the implementation of the Policy based upon their statutory Mandates.

4. Is there a national coordination mechanism at the highest level to ensure that the policy is implemented in all sector area?

The national coordination mechanism is the Ministry of Gender & Development. However, the Ministry through the National Gender Forum's Secretariat which is housed at the Ministry of Gender and Development and operates within the Division for Policy will ensure the will be technically responsible for the overall coordination, advising, as well as monitoring the implementation of the National Gender Policy. The framework also includes the Gender Focal Points of Sector Ministries and Agencies, and Task forces comprising of Local and International NGOs and the UN Agencies. The Ministry's national coordination mechanism is structured to ensure that the policy is implemented in all sector areas.

b)

1. What impact does the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the concluding comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, has on the promotion of gender equality?

The impact the CEDAW and its concluding comments have on the promotion of gender equality is as outlined below: The Government through its sector Ministries and Agencies has designed programs and developed policies to ensure the implementation of the Convention. Some of the efforts being made by the Government and its Development Partners towards implementation of CEDAW are:

- There has been a marked increase in women's participation in governance and decision making. For example, there are 361 women officers out of 3,664 in the Liberia National Police; 23 top positions in the Liberia National Police are occupied by women – including the Inspector and Deputy Inspector General; there are 28 women out of 148 officers in Correction Officers; 14 out of 94 members of the Legislature are women; 5 out of the 15 County Superintendents are women, and 2 out of 5 members of the Supreme Court Judges are women. Women also head key Ministries, including Foreign Affairs, Commerce, Youth and Sports and Gender and Development. Women also hold key positions as Deputy and Assistant Ministers in Government as well as the private sector.
- The Government has also undertaken critical legal reforms for the protection and empowerment of women, among which are the amended **Rape Law** (2005), which has a stiffer penalty for rape including gang rape; **an Act to Govern the Devolution of Estates and Establish the rights of Inheritance of Spouses for both Statutory and Customary Marriages (or the Inheritance Law)**.

- The Government has also ensured that the Ministry of Gender & Development's is actively involve in reform processes, including being on the land commission as well as the **Constitutional Reform Taskforce**.
- The establishment of the Governance Commission.
- The development of a **National Plan of Action for the Prevention and Management of Gender Based Violence** in Liberia.
- The development of a **National Health Commodity Security Strategy and Operational Plan** (2008 – 2012) through which quality contraceptives and other reproductive health commodities can be accessed by every person.
- The Development of a draft **National Gender Policy** currently in the process of being validated and finalized.
- Sustained efforts were also made to **Mainstream gender in the Poverty Reduction Strategy** which outlined Liberia's plans for national development in four key areas or pillars: 1) Consolidating Peace and Security, 2) Revitalizing the Economy 3) Strengthening Governance and the Rule of Law and 4) Rehabilitating Infrastructure and Delivering Basic services. Liberia has also established the national MDG Steering Committee that is responsible for the overall MDG agenda and the Committee commenced work in 2008.
- The creation of a Legislative Standing Committee on Gender, Equity and Child Development (October 2003);
- The passage of a free and compulsory primary education Act, as well as a Girls Education Policy;
- The Development of a National Health Policy and HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan;

How is implementation of the Convention progressing?

The implementation of the Convention is gradually progressing. The Ministry of Gender & Development is playing its coordination and supervisory role to ensure that the Convention is adhered to. The key sector Ministries and Agencies, being complemented by the civil society organizations and women groups are implementing the Convention. The following are some of the activities and programs being implemented under the Convention:

- Sensitization and education campaigns have been conducted to educate and inform women about their rights under the CEDAW Convention. Women are now speaking out on issues that affect them.
- More women are being appointed to decision making positions at both the national and international levels.
- Women are taking advantage of the adult literacy programs around the country.

- Training programs have been designed for Women to empower them economically, as well as for them to take up leadership roles in their communities and organizations.
- In education, scholarship programs have been designed for girls to enable them enter into those fields that are normally considered non traditional.
- In the areas of health the Government has made tremendous strides in developing programs to provide health care delivery for women and girls, as well as increase access to health services- Basic package of health Services Program.
- The first State Party Report on CEDAW has been submitted and will be defended in July, 2009;

c)

1. What are the main legislative and policy-making achievements in the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment over the past decade?

The Government of Liberia has made tremendous strides when it comes to efforts aimed at promoting gender equality. It has developed several policy instruments reflecting its commitment to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment among which are as follow:

Legislative Achievements:

- The establishment of Gender Equity and Health Committees within the National Legislature to ensure that women and children issues form a part of the legislative agenda.
- The establishment of a Women Legislative Caucus within the National Legislature to highlight and advocate for the issues of women;
- The amendment of the Penal Code Chapter 14 Section 14.70 and 14.71, which is now the New Rape Law, which has a stronger penalty for rape including gang rape.
- The Passage of the Free and compulsory education Law;
- The amendment of the Devolution of Estates Law (Inheritance Law);
- The establishment of the Ministry of Gender & Development;

Policy making Achievements:

- The development of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, which has mainstreamed gender in the four pillars.
- The restructuring of the security sector, which has taken gender into consideration and has included gender as part of their training modules.
- The development and launch of a National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325, which addresses women peace and security.

- The Development of a National Action Plan on GBV to respond to and prevent GBV;
- The establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission;
- The establishment of a Governance Commission;
- The establishment of a Land Commission;
- The establishment of an Anti-trafficking Commission;
- The establishment of the Constitutional Reform taskforce to review the Constitution to ensure that the constitution is harmonized with the international conventions and treaties;
- The development of a Girls Education Policy to design programs to ensure the increase of girls' enrollment as well as retention in school.
- The development of a National Health Policy.
- The development and launch of the Civil Service Reform Strategy, which addresses the issue of gender mainstreaming in the civil service reform processes;
- Setting up of a National HIV/AIDS Commission;

d)

1. To what extent have gender perspectives and the concerns of women been taken into account in preparation of budgets at national, regional and local levels? Has this resulted in increased resources for gender equality?

Over the years, the Government has ensured an increase in the budget of the Ministry of Gender & Development to address gender perspectives and the concerns of women. There was a 5% increase in the 2008/2009, as compared to 1.5% during the past year.

2. Describe efforts to increase and track budgetary allocations related to achieving gender equality and empowerment of women.

A major effort was the mainstreaming of gender in the four pillars of the Poverty Reduction Strategy. The Ministry in collaboration with its Partners participated in the processes that led to the development of the PRS. The Ministry was a member of the PRS Core Team and also chaired the Gender Equity working group. In addition, the Ministry actively participated in the County and Regional consultations that were held, as well as conducted women-only consultations which contributed greatly to ensuring that the concerns of women were taken into consideration during the development of the PRS.

3. Have gender-responsive budgeting procedures been introduced and to what effect?

Gender-responsive budgeting procedures have not been fully introduced; only minimal training has been provided to staff of the Ministry of Gender & Development and Key sector Ministries and Agencies. There is a need to ensure that Key sectors, including the Legislative Branch of Government are targeted for introducing gender-responsive budgeting procedures.

e)

1. To what extent are the Millennium Declaration Goals (MDGs) utilized as the national framework for development?

The election of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has brought renewed hope to Liberia and improved prospects for the rapid progress to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Government's main vehicle for achieving the MDGs is the PRS, which was launched in 2008. A national MDGs Steering Committee that is responsible for the overall MDGs agenda has been formed and commenced its work in 2008. In addition, the 2008 progress report on the implementation of the MDGs has just been launched.

2. What attention is given to Goal 3 on gender equality?

Liberia has been considered as a pilot country for the implementation of MDG 3. In addition, the MDG 3 Torch was delivered to the Minister of Gender & Development during which time she committed to ensuring gender equality and the advancement and empowerment of women. To this end, the Government and the UN System in Liberia have designed the following programs:

- Joint Government/UN program on GBV;
- Joint Government/UN program on Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment;
- Joint Government/UN Food Security and Nutrition;
- The establishment of the model village on MGD 3;

3. Is national-level data available to effectively monitor the achievement of the targets under MDG3?

There is inadequate data to effectively monitor the achievements of targets under MDG 3. The data that is available is not disaggregated by sex. However, the Government through the National Statistical Office-LISGIS is working with sector Ministries and Agencies to set up a National Statistical Development System (NSDS) which will be central point for all national data. It is anticipated that when the NSDS is established the relevant data to monitor the achievement of MDG 3 as well as the PRS targets would be available. The Government is committed to ensuring that key PRS monitoring data collected are disaggregated by age and sex, where relevant, which will facilitate MDG monitoring and the development of internationally comparable data.

4. Are gender perspectives and the concerns of women considered in all other MDGs?

Yes, gender perspectives and the concerns of women are considered in all other MDGs. The government is committed to ensuring that gender perspective and concerns of women are considered in all of the MDG goals. This is evident in the PRS and other initiatives undertaken by the Government and Development Partners, among which are:

- Take home ration for girls;
- The Accelerated Learning Program;
- Supply of School materials for girls;

- Scholarships and Grants for girls;
- Employment Policies and Strategies;
- Provision of basic health services and access to health care delivery;
- Training of health care providers in obstetrics care;
- Combat HIV/AIDS and its related diseases;
- Programs to reduce poverty and increase agriculture production;
- Training of women in agro processing;
- Provision of farm implements and seeds to women;
- Increasing women access to extension services;

f)

1. Provide information on major government policy discussions and/or parliamentary debates where gender perspectives and the concerns of women have been taken systematically into account and resulted in policy and/or programmatic changes.

Major government policy discussions and/or parliamentary debates:

- The Fairness bill introduced by the Women Legislative Caucus which is advocating for 30% women representation within the Political Parties;
- The development, launching and implementation of Liberia National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325;
- The introduction of the Threshold Bill to allow for the demarcation of the counties to prepare for the holding of National elections in 2011. The bill calls for 45,000 residents per county.
- The campaign against Gender-based violence, particularly rape;
- The reparation for women affected by the civil crisis;
- Women's participation in governance and decision making;
- The just-ended International Colloquium and National Dimension, and the implementation of the Monrovia Resolution;

2. What recent major reforms have taken place in the country where these perspectives were taken into account?

The Government of Liberia as part of its commitment to protecting and promoting the rights of women has instituted the following reforms:

- The establishment of criminal court E at the Temple of Justice to specifically adjudicate sexual offense cases. The court was formally opened in February 2009;
- The establishment of a Sexual and Gender based violence Unit at the Ministry of Justice to persecute sexual offenses.
- The enactment of two important pieces of legislation including the New Rape Law which outlaws gang rape and stipulates life term sentence for particularly aggressive forms of rape and the Equal Rights of the Customary Law of 1998, which extends rights of inheritance to women married under Customary Law (the Inheritance Law).
- The formulation of a National Gender-Based Violence Plan of Action (2006),
- The National Health Policy (2007),
- The Policy on Girls Education (2006),
- The HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan of Action (2006),
- The Poverty Reduction Strategy (2008-2011)

- The development and launching of Liberia National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325.
- The setting up of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission;
- The setting up of an Anti-trafficking Commission;
- The setting up of a Constitutional Reform Taskforce;

3. What major problems are being debated in the country where the perspective of women and gender equality are considered as an integral part of the overall debate?

Among problems that are being debated in Liberia are the following:

- The issue of rape and post-conflict violence against women;
- The trafficking of women and children;
- Reparation for women affected by the war;
- Women's participation in decision making and leadership;
- Economic empowerment of women;
- Restructuring of the security sector;
- Civil service reform;
- Public sector reform;
- Strengthening of the Ministry of Gender & Development;
- Peace and security;
- Governance and the rule of law;
- Women's access to and provision of basic health services;
- Compulsory and free education;
- Retention of girls in school;
- Link between HIV/AIDS and violence against women;

1. In countries emerging from armed conflict, to what extent were women involved, and gender perspectives and women's concerns included, in peace negotiations and in Planning of reconstruction efforts?

In the initial stage of negotiated peace to end the crisis in Liberia, women were not involved, neither were their perspectives taken into consideration. The women of Liberia realizing that they were the ones, who were being violated, insisted that they be included at all peace negotiations. They formed various pressure groups and advocated for the return of peace and their representation at the peace conferences. This resulted into their active participation and contribution to the peace process. Women's involvement in the reconstruction process is minimal. However, the Ministry is advocating for the inclusion of women in the reconstruction and development programs.

1. How has globalization (for example, the use of ICT, market liberalization, changes in trading patterns, etc) affected the empowerment of women and girls and the promotion of gender equality?

Globalization has affected the empowerment of women and girls and the promotion of gender equality both negatively and positively. The negative effects can be attributed to the civil war, which has destroyed nearly all basic infrastructures. Since the end of the cold war, countries like Liberia that have been in conflict are of no strategic interest to the world powers and there is no incentive.

Specific Negative Effects:

Some negative effects of globalization are

- lack of protection for consumers
- inflation
- Inaccessibility of ICT in most part of Liberia, and where accessible, most women can not afford to pay the cost, and some are not ICT literate.

Positive Effects:

- The expansion of businesses
- Availability of foreign exchange
- Access to IT
- Enhancing/facilitating women's participation in trade and
- Availability of new products and ideology

2. What efforts are being made to reduce potential risks and to build on opportunities for women?

Efforts are being made by the Government to reduce potential risks and to build on opportunities for women in the following areas:

- The Joint UN and GoL program to address the issue of Gender-Based violence;
- The food security and nutrition program;
- Organizing rural women to establish Agriculture Business Units (ABUs) throughout the country, as means to increasing food production and accessing markets.
- The showcasing of women's products during the International Women's Colloquium in March 2009, as well as networking and linking them up with other women from around the world;
- The setting up of a National Rural Women's structure;
- The holding of a Rural Women's Conference;
- The establishment of the President Sirleaf Market Women's Fund to benefit market women;
- The Spanish-NEPAD fund for African Women Project is to provide micro-credit, leadership and business skills training to vulnerable women survivors of GBV and construct safe home;

1. In which sector areas have specific policies, strategies and/or action plans for promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment been developed and implemented?

Sectors in which specific policies, strategies and /or action plans for promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment have been developed and being implemented are:

Education:

- Free and compulsory primary education for children between 6-11years;
- The Victoria A. Tolbert Girls Education Program;
- The Each One Teach One Program of the Ministry of Education;
- The School Feeding Program sponsored by WFP which has helped to increase enrollment of girls in schools;
- The Accelerated Learning Program and Accelerated Extension Program

- Adult Literacy program;

Health:

- National policies that have been developed in recent time include the Health, HIV/AIDS, Nutrition, Reproductive Health, Women' Health and Development;
- Basic Package for Health Services (BPHS)

Environment:

A National Environmental Policy provides a broad framework for the implementation of national objectives and plans. The policy aims at ensuring a sound management of resources and the environment, and will attempt to avoid any exploitation of these resources in a manner that might cause irreparable damage to the environment, particularly the policy will provide for:

- Integration of environmental considerations in sectoral, structural, regional, and socio-economic planning at all levels;
- Sound management of the environment and natural resources;
- Protection and maintenance of human habitats, the ecosystems, and ecological processes essential for the functions of the biosphere;
- Guidance for national action plan and for healthy environmental practices on the national development effort;
- Sustainable development;
- Common approach to environmental issues.

2. To what extent are gender perspectives and the concerns of women routinely taken into account in legislation, policy making and programme development in other sectors, so that inequalities and gaps are identified and addressed?

To a large extent, gender perspectives and the concerns of women have been taken into account in the formulation of policies, Programs and Legislation. All sector policies formulation and program designs take into consideration a participatory process, wherein representatives of non-governmental organizations, the civil society, donor communities, the UN system as well as sector Ministries and Agencies formed part of the process. This allows for the inequalities and gaps to be identified and addressed.

j)

1. What types of significant partnerships have been established with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society groups, as well as the private sector and other stakeholders, in support of different aspects of national efforts on gender equality and empowerment of women – through for example, advocacy, participation in planning, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes and service delivery?

The Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Gender and Development has established very good working relationship with civil society organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations around the promotion of women issues, particularly the campaign for gender equality and the advancement of women. The Government believes that the issue of gender equality and the empowerment of women can be addressed through the collective efforts of all stakeholders involved in the campaign. Some of the Institutions and Organizations that the Government works closely with are:

- The Women NGOs Secretariat, established in September 1998, to serve as an umbrella organization for all women NGOs to complement the efforts of Government to promote gender equality and the advancement of women.
- Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia (AFELL) provides free legal services to women who are victims of sexual and domestic violence and advocates for women's rights.
- Foundation for International Dignity (FIND) provides legal services for those who cannot afford them. It also advocates and promotes the human rights of citizens, including women.
- Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) works to advance the education of women and the girl child.
- The Community Empowerment Program provides skills training to economically empower women;
- The Concern Christian Community caters to GBV survivors and also provides skills training to women.
- The Women in Peace building Network advocates for women peace and security. This Organization also trains women in peace building and is also involved in reconciliation activities.
- Liberian Women Empowerment Network (LIWEN), is an organization of women living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. This organization advocates for the issue of women living with HIV/AIDS to be addressed. They are also involved in providing skills training to its members.

These Organizations collaborate with the Government in advocating for gender equality. They also participate and are part of the planning of all women's rights programs and global events. Private Institutions also support activities of the Ministry, specifically during the celebration of Global Events and campaigns centered on women's rights issues.

k)

1. What efforts have been made to actively engage men and boys in the promotion of gender equality, including for example in eliminating violence against women and combating HIV/AIDS?

The Ministry of Gender and Development has conducted series of education and sensitization campaigns to involve men and boys in gender related activities. Training workshops have been carried out on the CEDAW, AU Protocol and the Beijing Platform for Action. In addition, a Gender based violence Interagency Coordination Taskforce has been established. The Taskforce is headed by the Ministry of Gender and Development and draws its membership from International and local non-governmental organizations, the UN Agencies, as well as Government Ministries/Agencies involved in GBV related programs.

This Inter-Agency Network is used as a conduit to get community members and all stakeholders involved in the fight against gender based violence, including HIV/AIDS.

A program code name “male involvement” was launched in 2007 by the International Refugee Committee (IRC). This program trains men to serve as agents of change in their communities in advocating for the ending of violence against women and girls.

The Government and Partners have made tremendous efforts to actively engage men and boys in the promotion of gender equality, including eliminating violence against women and combating HIV/AIDS. Specific actions include but are not limited to:

- Legal sanctions for violence against women;
- Enacted legislation to punish offenders and support women subjected to violence with justice and legal services;
- Involving men in programs and women rights campaigns;
- Encourage the media to examine the impact of gender role stereotyping including those encouraged by commercial advertising;
- Encouraging males to make anti-VAW messages which are broadcasted around the country and to participated at the highest level in women’s rights programs;

2. What successes have been achieved and what constraints have been identified?

Successes:

- The setting up of a SGBV Crimes Unit at the Ministry of Justice to prosecute sexual offense cases;
- The establishment of Criminal Court E to adjudicate sexual offense cases;
- Several male organizations have expressed their desire to the Ministry to join in the campaign to stop violence against women and girls;
- The establishment of men’s clubs in some communities to educate other men on the need to stop violence against women and girls;
- The participation and involvement of men in global events and other women’s rights activities.

Constraints:

- Lack of awareness and education on preventing violence against women and girls from the community to household level in parts of the country;
- Parents compromising GBV cases due to family/community pressure;
- Lack of resources to cope with GBV cases;
- Lack of education on the part of security to handle GBV cases;
- GBV survivors being stigmatized and ostracized in their communities;
- Lack of access to justice for GBV survivors;

l)

1. What is the impact of climate change and food and energy crises on the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women?

An assessment conducted indicates that climatic risks pose a serious challenge to emerging development priorities in agriculture, fisheries, forestry and public health. According to the report, the recent change in rainfall pattern has increased vulnerability of farmers particularly women farmers as it is becoming increasingly difficult to identify the

optimal time to plant crops which is resulting into low yield. This has had negative effect and has hindered the economic livelihood of women who largely depend on farming to sustain their families.

It is estimated from the few studies available that the combined effect of changing water temperatures and rainfall patterns are adversely affecting fish stock in terms of declining levels of certain species.

2. What steps are being taken to reduce the potential risks for and impact on women and to engage women effectively in prevention and mitigation processes?

The Government has setup a National Disaster and Relief Commission (NDRC) with the responsibility of putting in place appropriate mechanisms to reduce the potential risks for disaster manage and prevention in the country. Its role is to prevent and manage disaster and mitigate processes through the planting of trees which serves as carbon sink and wind-breaker. There is also a draft Policy on Disaster Management that is being validated.

3. Have social protection measures been put in place to reduce the impact on women

The National Disaster Relief Commission, (NDRC) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have been mandated by Government to take on the responsibility of taking measures to reduce environmental impact on women. This is done through awareness raising and sensitization in targeted communities and the provision of relief assistance to victims of disasters.

Have measures been adopted to support women farmers?

The Government through the Ministry of Agriculture with support from its Partners provided technical support to women in the agriculture sector through the following interventions:

- Training of trainer in agro-processing. The prime objective of this initiative was to make available women trainers in all counties;
- Training of women (rural women) in value change initiative;
- The program on food security for the commercialization of agriculture;
- Establishment of Farmers Field Schools intended to help women farmers make sound decisions in farming for higher production at lower labour costs (2007/2008), as well as access market for their products;
- The setting up of Agriculture Business Units within the Rural Women's Program;

m)

1. What is the impact of the financial crisis on the promotion of gender equality?

At the moment the impact the global financial crisis on the promotion of gender equality has not been felt. However, we believe that it may have an adverse effect on the promotion of gender equality, as this may create some form of donor fatigue.

2. What measures have been taken to reduce the negative impact on women's access to resources, income and social protection?

Some measures have been taken to reduce the negative impact on women's access to resources, income and social protection both at the national and international levels. At the International level, the Government represented by the President participated in an outreach meeting held in London ahead of the G20 meeting scheduled for April 2009. During this meeting, the President was keen in influencing the need for urgent disbursement of committed funds, in flexibility on performance benchmarks and triggers under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiatives (HIPIC) Program as well as the need to identify measures that would counter the decline in private capital and foreign direct investment particularly for poor and conflict countries. If the world economies were to scale back on their commitments because of the global financial crisis, it would adversely affect the economy of Liberia mainly employment, infrastructure and human resource development.

Also, the Government with support from its Partners has taken the below measures at the national level to counter the negative impact on women access to resources, income, and social protection:

- Training of trainers in agro-processing; the prime objective of this initiative is to have women trainers in agro-processing throughout the country;
- Training of women (rural women) in value added chain;
- The Food Security Nutrition Program;
- Establishment of Farmers Field Schools intended to help women farmers make sound decisions in farming for higher production at lower labour costs (2007/2008), as well as access market for their products;

3. To what extent have measures to revive growth mobilized women's economic potential?

To a large extent women's economic potential has been revived through the following measures:

- Micro-credit for women entrepreneurs;
- Women in agriculture; training women (rural women) in value added chain;
- Providing professional technical backstopping to women groups;
- Working with women farmers to established Farmers Field Schools and Agriculture Business Units;
- Establishing Adult Literacy Programs for women;
- Engaging Banking Institutions to provide credit to women;
- Training women in small medium enterprise;

Part Two: Progress in implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action and the further initiatives and actions identified in the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

a) 1. In relation to the critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action and other key issues, what successful actions (such as legal measures, policy reforms, media campaigns, and pilot programmes or projects) have been taken by the Government or other actors (NGOs, civil society, the private sector) to achieve these objectives.

The new Liberia presents fresh opportunities for bridging existing inequalities between women and men in all sectors and all spheres. The political goodwill and leadership for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment and advancement in Liberia is clearly evident

The election of a female President certainly represents great progress for a society that has been historically plagued by political discrimination against women. As further described below, the Government has taken additional successful actions / measures to address the critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action in the areas of legal, policy reforms and pilot programs as follows:

(i) Legal Measure:

- An Act to Amend the New Penal code Chapter 14 Section 14.70 and 14.71, which is now the new rape law. The law was approved December 29, 2005 and subsequently passed into law on January 17, 2006;
- The Inheritance Law (October 7, 2003);
- The establishment of criminal court E to speedily try GBV cases;
- Free Legal Aid Assistance to try/prosecute all GBV cases;
- The establishment of a Sexual and Gender based Crimes Unit at the Ministry of Justice (February 2009) to try all sexual offense cases.
- FIND, ARC AND AFELL all provide free legal aid assistance to GBV survivors.
- The establishment of the anti-trafficking Commission to deal with all forms of human trafficking;
- Liberia National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 developed and launched March 2009;
- Women and Children Protection Section established within the Liberian National Police (LNP) across the country (2007) to cater to women and children who have been violated.

(ii) Policy Reform:

- The Poverty Reduction Strategy (2008-2011) mainstreamed gender into its four pillars;
- The National Elections law reform (2005);
- The National Girls Education Policy (2006) intended to increase the enrolment rate of girls in the primary and secondary levels.
- Girls education trust fund intended to provide scholarship opportunity for 2000 girls in both primary and secondary schools
- The National Health Policy (2007), considers gender equality as the core principle of health care delivery;
- The Free and Compulsory Education Law gear towards women's and girls' equality in education.
- National Reproductive Health and commodity Security Strategy and operational plan (2008-2012);
- Formulation of Agriculture Policy (2008); enshrined in the policy document is to mainstream gender in all agricultural related programs/projects. Design social protection tools, gender-sensitive safety nets in favor of women and girls;
- Ministry of Education/UNICEF back to school program launched in 2003;

- The establishment of a Constitutional Reform Taskforce;
- The establishment of the Governance Commission;
- The development of the Civil Service Reform Strategy;

(III) **Media campaign:**

- Launch of the anti-rape campaign nation-wide(2008)
- Dissemination of the Beijing Platform for Action;
- Training of media personnel in reporting on rape and other forms of violence as well as women rights;

(IV) **Pilot programs:**

- Sireaf Market Women Fund (2007) established to empower market women;
- Agro processing program supported by FAO provided trained 10 women per county across the country;
- Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (EPAG): Nike Foundation World Bank supported project intended to provide skills training for adolescents' girls.
- GoL/UN Joint Program for Youth Economic Empowerment supported by the Danish Government;
- GoL/UN Joint Program for Gender and Women Economic Empowerment in support of MDG3;
- GoL/UN Joint Program on Sexual and Gender-based Violence;
- Spanish-NEPAD fund for African Women project is intended to provide micro-loan to 3,000 indigent women and GBV survivors, constructing safe-homes, and equipping 5 existing women in 5 counties.
- Adult literacy program specifically targeting women to become functional literates;

b)

1. To what extent have specific commitments on the critical areas of concern – for example in terms of resource allocation, legislative change and policy and programme development - made by the Government at the Fourth World Conference on Women or in other contexts, been met?

The Ellen Johnson Sirleaf led Government has demonstrated its commitment to prudent reforms, transparency and accountability in the management of Government and public resources. This has provided a better opportunity to addressing these commitments due to the political will that is existing and the goodwill of the donor community.

The Ministry of Gender and Development, with support from its International and UN Partners, has a draft National Gender Policy, that will ensure the issues and concerns of women are addressed. In addition, gender has been mainstreamed in the four pillars of the PRS.

A National Women's Conference was held in May 2008, which came out with recommendations for programs and activities to be implemented by women related organizations and groups and coordinated by the Ministry of Gender & Development.

In October 2008, a National Rural Women's Conference was held, which brought together rural women from across the country to discuss and strategize on programs to address their concerns. Prior to the holding of the Conference, a Rural Women's Leadership Structure was established in each of the County in support of the Rural Women's Program.

Resource Allocation:

The National Machinery, which is the Ministry of Gender & Development (MoGD) receives budgetary support from the Government of Liberia. Budget allocation for the Fiscal Year 2006/2007 was US \$767,994; US\$ 995,436 was allocated for Fiscal Year 2007/2008 and US\$ 1,084,447 for 2008/09.

The Ministry received technical and capacity support from its development partners in the amount of US\$350,000.00 2007/2008. In addition logistical support is also provided to the Ministry by its Partners to enhance its work. Special projects are also developed and supported by donor agencies.

Policy and Programme Development:

As part of its commitment to the critical areas of concern, the Government of Liberia has formulated the following gender-sensitive policies and programs:

- A draft National Gender Policy;
- Holding of a National Women's conference (2008);
- Holding of a National Rural women's conference (2008);
- Development of The Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS);
- Training of women trainers in agro-processing,
- Establishment of Farmers Field Schools intended to help women farmers make sound decisions in farming for higher production at lower labour costs (2007/2008), as well as access market for their products;
- Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (EPAG): Nike Foundation World Bank supported project intended to provide skills training for adolescents' girls.
- GoL/UN Joint Program for Youth Economic Empowerment supported by the Danish Government;
- GoL/UN Joint Program for Gender and Women Economic Empowerment in support of MDG3;
- GoL/UN Joint Program on Sexual and Gender-based Violence;
- Spanish-NEPAD fund for African Women project is intended to provide micro-loan to 3,000 indigent women and GBV survivors, constructing safe-homes, and equipping 5 existing women in 5 counties.
- Adult literacy programs specifically targeting women to become functional literates;
- The proposed Fairness Bill that would establish a 30% quota for women's political participation;

c)

1. Describe the obstacles, gaps and challenges encountered in implementation of the critical areas of concern and other key issues identified.

Despite the multiplicity of players involved in women's rights activities, there are serious gaps and challenges in terms of the availability of human resource capacity to effectively mainstream gender in sectoral policies, plans, and programs. Translating Government's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment in Liberia requires capacity strengthening in gender analysis, planning and implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation at all levels.

Obstacles:

Insufficient funding, inadequate human resources and infrastructure/facilities are some of the obstacles.

Gaps:

Although the country has a female President, there are still a need to increase women's representation in power and decision-making in all sectors. Though the Government is making efforts to provide opportunities in the areas of employment, education, health and protection, there is still a high unemployment rate; high level of illiteracy among women, high maternal mortality rate, teenage pregnancy, prostitution, violence such as, rape and sexual abuse and exploitation of women and girls.

Challenges:

The challenge include the sustaining the peace, ensuring good governance, decentralization of power and the implementation of policies aimed at eliminating discrimination and cultural attitudes and practices against women.

1. Provide information on the main lessons learned in implementation in relation to each of the critical areas of concern and other key issues identified.

Violence Against Women

Women are still experiencing multiple forms of violence though the crisis has ended in Liberia. In order to tackle the issue of violence an Inter-Agency Taskforce has been set up which is chaired by the Ministry of Gender & Development. The members of the Taskforce consist of key sector Ministries and Agencies, Local and International NGOs and the UN System. In addition, a National Gender-based Violence Action Plan was developed and launched and is being implemented. As part of the strategy to operationalize the Action Plan a Joint UN/GoL Program was designed. The intention is to use the one team, one leader, one program strategy, as well as to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated approach in addressing the issue of violence against women. In implementing the activities, the Team has learned that in order to address the issue of violence against women, there is a need to involve men at all levels. In addition, massive education and sensitization campaigns need to be carried out at all levels. The regular training of personnel in the justice system cannot be over emphasized. Also, Stakeholders need to re-strategize and

design programs along with community members to ensure their participation and that such interventions directly benefit women who are violated.

4. Women and Health:

The health sector was seriously affected by the crisis. The infrastructures were destroyed and most of the doctors and health service providers fled the country. Most of the health facilities were being managed by international and local NGOs or church related organizations. However to address the appalling health situation in the Country, a National Health Policy was developed, which will take a holistic approach to address the health situation in the Country with special emphasis on maternal and child health. The Ministry of Health has put in place mechanisms to ensure women's access to health. The health care delivery system is being improved; health care providers are being trained and health care has been made affordable as a means of ensuring women take advantage of the services. In addition, the Ministry is also focusing on preventive primary health care rather, than the more expensive tertiary care to improve women's health.

Women in Power and Decision-making:

This Government has made strides to increase women's participation in governance. Women hold senior and junior ministerial positions and are also in key decision-making positions in the public and private sectors.

- There are four female Cabinet Ministers, compared to seventeen male Ministers, constituting 21% of the total Cabinet positions (Youth and Sports, Commerce, Gender, and Foreign Affairs). Women comprise approximately one-quarter of the President's appointments into positions of trust (see Table 6).
- At the local government level, women are also very visible. Five of the fifteen county superintendents are women.
- Women feature significantly on Special Commissions constituted in the country. On the National Elections Commission which has seven members, the total number of women is three, thus constituting 43% of the total membership. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has nine members, four of whom are women.
- On the Supreme Court Bench, two out of the five Associate Justices are women.

Women are found in nearly every sector of Government including the security agencies: the Director of Police, the Deputy Director of Police and the Deputy Commissioner for Immigration and Naturalization are all women. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has nine members, four of whom are women, which includes the Co-Chair, while on the Supreme Court Bench, two out of the five Associate Justices are women

Education and Training of Women:

The Government realizing the need to educate and train women has set up scholarship schemes that will directly benefit women thereby increasing their enrollment in vocational and academic institutions. In addition, special measures have been put in place to ensure women are trained in areas considered as non-traditional areas; this is geared towards supporting their advancement. Programs, such as school feeding or take home rations have also been initiated to contribute to the retention of women or girls in school. Adult literacy programs are being established in the markets to encourage women take advantage of the opportunity to become functional literate.

Women and the economy:

In general, women play a major role in Liberia's economy, its labor force, and household income generation. Yet women and men are not equally distributed across the productive sectors, nor are they equally remunerated. In an economy dominated by agricultural and informal work, women carry the heaviest burden in these sectors and women laborers, across the board, are less likely to be paid for their work.

Liberian women are disproportionately clustered in the least productive sectors with 90% employed in the informal sector or in agriculture, compared to 75% of working men. Men are more than three times as likely to be employed by the civil service, an NGO, international organization or Public Corporation (CWIQ 2007).

The Government is making all efforts to provide training to women in the informal sector as well as ensuring that they have access to credit. In addition, programs are being designed to link women to markets as a means of ensuring their active participation in the economy.

Women and Armed conflict:

During the civil crisis, women's rights were violated. Women were used as sex slaves, raped, and forced into sex in exchange for food and survival, as well as forced into marriage. Some women joined the fighting forces to protect themselves and their family members. On the other hand, women were great peace ambassadors during the Liberian armed conflict. The Liberian women stood in the vanguard to search for peace by advocating for the cessation of hostility. They played a pivotal role prior to and during the Accra Peace Conference that led to the signing of a comprehensive peace plan for Liberia. Involving women in peace negotiations and processes contribute to lasting peace. Women can be great peace makers when given the opportunity, as they have the courage to transcend all barriers. Language difference and not taking women's issues into consideration can cause unnecessary delays in the quest for peace.

Women and the environment:

The involvement of women in environmental management and utilization of natural resources is very crucial. Women's participation must be developed and supported by building the capacity of individuals, groups, and communities. Additionally, public education about environmental matters, as well as creating the condition whereas the women can participate in decisions that affect their environment and working with NGOs, CBOs, and Youth clubs should be considered. The private sector and the business community have a role to play as well, and their involvement is needed. Only if people are involved, informed, and trained about environmental matters will they appreciate the importance of nature and natural resources.

Women and Media:

Liberian women are hardly visible when it comes to leadership in the media. In addition only very few women in the media are involved in women issues. However, the ascendancy

of a woman to the highest office in the country, in addition to an increase women representation in the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary Branches of Government and Political parties has made the women to pay a little more attention to women issues.

Human Rights of Women:

The Ministry of Gender & Development and its Partners have been involved in carrying out a massive education and sensitization campaign in addressing women's rights. Women's groups and Organizations have received training in various women's rights issues and have participated in workshops to educate them on the local laws and international conventions on women's rights. Also, the Government, through the Ministry of Gender & Development has ensured the involvement of all stakeholders in programs design to address women's rights, which has led to their support in advocating for the rights of women. There is a need to ensure that all sectors are a part of the campaigns that are geared towards educating and sensitizing the public on the rights of women.

The Girl Child:

As Liberia emerges from the trauma of conflict, the Government has realized that one of the surest ways to stop the circle of violence and discrimination against the Girl Child in the Liberian society is to make education, peace, and security a priority issue on the agenda for a new secured and more equitable society. The need for the Government to accelerate its efforts and initiatives aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goal-Education for all by 2015 cannot be overemphasized, because education is a fundamental right and not a privilege for a few. As a means of addressing the issue of the Girl Child, the Government has put the following measures in place: A Girl Education Policy has been developed and being implemented. Also, there is a free and compulsory education policy which provides access to basic education in the framework of education for all, with focus on the girl child. Also, as an incentive to ensure that the girls attend school, the Government has set up a scholarship scheme for girls; there is also a school ration program and the accelerated learning program intended to retain girls in school. These are all special measures designed to address issues concerning the girl child in ensuring increase enrollment and retention in school.

HIV/AIDS:

The issue of HIV/AIDS needs to be addressed holistically. HIV/AIDS is spreading rapidly and people are still in denial that the virus does exist. Though the virus is spreading, there is inadequate data or information on the prevalence of the disease. People are not taking advantage of the voluntary counseling testing services being provided. A program has been put in place for every pregnant woman to be tested. In addition, people who apply for immigrant visas are required to be tested. More women are being infected and there is a need to design more gender-sensitive programs and increase education and information on HIV/AIDS. In addition, people living with HIV/AIDS should be involved in the design and implementation of programs targeting them if the programs are to succeed.

e)

1. Provide concrete examples of successful interventions and explain why these were judged to be successful? Describe any effort to replicate these efforts.

Concrete examples of successful interventions include but are not limited to:

- Education: education interventions have been successful, as the Government of Liberia in collaboration with local and international partners, formulated and launched the Education Law (2001), the National Girls Education Policy (2006) and the Free Compulsory Primary Education Policy (2006/2007). It introduced the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP), a parallel intervention designed to address the basic education needs of young adults who missed out on education. This program seeks to improve enrolment, attendance, and retention through its school feeding program, with support from the World Food Program.
- Gender Mainstreaming in the PRS: The PRS of Liberia which covers the period July 2008 – June 2011 and lays the groundwork for the achievement of gender equality, women's and girls' empowerment, and equitable access to resources and benefits. In the economic realm, the PRS incorporates gender equality considerations in the development and implementation of macro-and microeconomic policies, as well as programs underpinning the overall growth strategy, with the ultimate goal of promoting women's economic empowerment. It intends to build a more effective, responsive, and supportive legal, social and political environment
- National Employment Strategy- A national strategy for employment creation in Liberia launched by Her Excellency the President on 15 July, 2006 provides for immediate emergency employment and lays the foundation for a longer-term sustainable employment strategy. The program presently being implemented under the Liberia Emergency Employment Program (LEEP), a national public works program, and the Liberia Employment Action Program (LEAP), aims to stimulate employment creation in the country. At present, a little over 83,000 jobs have been created under the LEEP/LEAP between 2006-December 2007 and about 900 women benefited
- Establishing of the Rural Women's Program and setting up of Rural Women structures nationwide – The setting up of these structures across the country makes it easy for the Government through the Ministry of Gender & Development and its Partners to address the needs of the rural women as well as work with them in designing programs to target their specific needs.

Part Three: Institutional development:

a)

1. What national mechanisms exist for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women – for example, ministry, national commission, parliamentary committee or commission?

The following national mechanisms for the promotion of gender quality and the empowerment of women exist:

- Ministry of Gender and Development created in 2001 by an Act of the Legislature which amended the existing executive law by giving the Ministry of Gender and Development the Mandate to ensure the advancement and welfare of women and the growth and development of children.
- The National Gender Forum (NGF), which is the Policy Advisory Body on gender issues, is chaired by the President of Liberia. The NGF Secretariat, which is the operational arm, is seated at the Ministry of Gender & Development.
- National Aids Commission (2002) was created to address the issues of people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS;
- Governance Commission (2003) was established to ensure good governance in the public sector, as well as carry out public sector reform.
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission established to provide the opportunity for the population to report the crisis and their involvement.
- The National Elections Commission (NEC)
- Constitutional Reform Taskforce
- The Women Legislative Caucus;
- The Committees on Gender, Health and Children in the National Legislature;

2. What mandates and resources does each body have and have these increased in the review period? How do these bodies work together?

Mandate of the Ministry of Gender and Development

The Mandate of the Ministry of Gender and Development is to advise Government on all matters affecting the development and welfare of women and children as well as any other matters referred to it by the Government of the Republic of Liberia and Coordinate effectively the Government-wide gender mainstreaming efforts to ensure that the perspectives of the both men and women are central to policy formulation, legislation, resources planning and outcomes of policies and programs focusing on gender equality, the empowerment of women and development of children; monitor and report on the impact of national policies and programs on women and children as well as recommend appropriate measures to be taken in mobilizing and integrating women as well as recommend equal partners to men in the economic, social, political and cultural development of the Country.

Resources:

Budgetary allotment is made through the Government budgetary process and through Partners' support. Over the period, resources for the Ministry of Gender & Development have been increased in line with the Government mainstreaming efforts through the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS).

Mandate of the parliamentary committee:

In furtherance of the national campaign for enhancing women's empowerment and children development, a standing committee on gender equity and child development was established at the legislature. Its mandate is:

- Maintenance of legislative oversight
- It shall be referred all messages, memorials, petitions, proposed legislation and other relevant matters pertaining to women and children generally;

Resources:

There is no budgetary allotment for the Parliamentary Committee for passing bills. However, there is a debate on going for budgetary allotment for the Committee.

All other commissions listed do have budgetary support from the Government and its development Partners;

4. Describe the location of the national mechanisms and the access to decision-making processes.

The location of the national machinery, Ministry of Gender & Development is within the Executive Branch of Government. The head is a Cabinet Minister, who attends cabinet meetings and has direct contact with the President.

The National Gender Forum, which is a multi-disciplinary and policy-advisory body to the Government of Liberia on gender issues, is chaired by the President of Liberia. Its Secretariat is based at the Ministry of Gender and Development and runs day to day affairs of the Forum. It comprises of Heads of Government Ministries and Agencies, Heads of Institutions of Higher Learning, and the United Nations Agencies. Other members of the National Gender Forum are the Heads of the lower and upper houses of the Legislature and Chairpersons of the Gender Committees in both Houses of the National Legislature, as well as Gender Focal persons and local and International NGOs involved in gender activities.

4. What networks have been established and how effective are these networks? What resources do the national mechanisms have in terms of staff and financial support?

Some successful networks have been established at the local, international and sub-regional levels which include:

- Women NGO Secretariat;
- National Children’s Parliament
- GBV Inter-Agency Network
- Child Protection Network
- National Gender Forum
- Women’s Coordination Network
- National Rural Women’s Structure
- Women Advocacy Network
- The ECOWAS Gender Development Centre

Resources in terms of staff and financial support:

The national machinery is headed by a Cabinet Minister appointed by the President. The Minister is assisted by two Deputy Ministers, two Assistant Ministers, Directors, Coordinators, and Section Heads, Planning and Research Officers and other professional personnel. Currently, the Ministry is understaffed, and lacks adequate trained staff and logistics to effectively carry out its Mandate.

There are fifteen Gender County Coordinators assigned to the fifteen political sub-divisions. Each County Coordinator is supported by two additional staff members. Logistics for effective implementation of the Ministry's Mandate at the central and local levels remain a great challenge for the Ministry.

The effectiveness of these networks hinges on:

- Ready access to Government machineries;
- Sharing of information and resources;
- Collaborative advocacy;
- Need for substantial financial support so as to mainstream gender;
- Holding of regular partners' meetings, etc.

5. What percentage of financial resources comes from international or bilateral donors or other external sources?

It is estimated that 65.2% of gender resource allocation comes from international or bilateral donors or external sources.

b)

1. Have focal points for gender equality and empowerment of women been established within line ministries, and in which ministries?

The Ministry has succeeded in establishing Gender Focal Points (**GFPs**) in the following line Ministries/Agencies: Ministry of Finance, Commerce, Justice, Education, Information Cultural & Tourism, Labour, Lands, Mines and Energy, Health and Social Welfare, Transport, Defense, Agriculture, Youth and Sports, Planning and Economics affairs and Internal affairs; Agencies: Forestry Development Authority, National Housing Authority, National Elections Commission; Monrovia City Corporation, Governance Commission and Liberia Refugees Repatriation and Resettlement Commission.

2. What support is provided from within the ministries?

The Ministries and Agencies are receptive when it comes to gender programs implementation. The form of support received by gender focal points from the line Ministries and Agencies consist of salaries/allowances, office space, stationery and other logistics such as desk top computer and desk.

3. What support (training, advice etc.) is provided by the national machinery? How effective are these focal points?

The national machinery has started training for GFPs. In 2005, with support from UNMIL Gender Office, a three-day training in gender concepts and gender mainstreaming was conducted for Gender Focal Points in key sector Ministries and Agencies. The ECOWAS Gender Development Centre has also been involved in training key actors in gender mainstreaming in Liberia. In addition, the World Bank provided some minimal training in gender-responsive budgeting. In addition, the national machinery ensures that the gender focal points participate in all global and national events, as well as local and international gender trainings. Though these gender focal points have had some form of training, there is a need to provide adequate gender training to enable them effectively perform as GFPs. The Ministry is negotiating with its Partners for training support for training of Gender Focal Points. By the end of the training it is expected that Focal points will be effective in carrying out their functions in gender mainstreaming and analysis to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in national policies, plans, and programs.

1. What monitoring mechanisms have been established to measure progress in implementation – in relation to national policies, strategies and action plans as well as international commitments?

Efforts are under way for monitoring progress in the implementation of national policies, and strategies and action plans as well as international commitment. Currently the national machinery has established an M & E Unit within the Ministry. However the Unit is understaffed, needs to set up and the staff trained to carry out effective monitoring. Meanwhile the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs has put in place a monitoring mechanism to monitor the implementation of the PRS.

2. How is accountability for promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women established across all ministries? How is coordination achieved?

The medium through which sector Ministries promote gender equality and empowerment of women is through the Gender Focal Points. Currently, Gender Focal Points have not been established in all line Ministries/Agencies. However, efforts are being made to ensure that Gender focal points are in each Ministry and Agency. The Civil Service Reform Strategy is an effort to ensure accountability for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The Ministry of Gender & Development is responsible to ensure coordination. Coordination is achieved through regular meetings where information is shared and best practices learned. The Gender Focal Points are the conduit through which gender mainstreaming efforts and appropriate strategic direction for planning and budgeting processes at the sectoral level are coordinated. The Gender Focal Points also serve as members of the National Gender Forum task forces.

In addition, they function as in-house gender advisers and serve as the link between the national gender machinery and sector Ministry and Agencies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in national policies, plans, and programs.

3. What role does the highest level of Government play?

The President chairs the National Gender Forum which is the policy advisory body on gender issues. She has mandated the Sector Ministries and Agencies to ensure that their programs are gender sensitive. She ensures the allocation of resources across sector Ministries and Agencies to address gender issues.

1. What levels of capacity for promoting gender mainstreaming have been achieved?

Much has not been achieved as it relates to capacity building for gender mainstreaming. Negligible levels of capacity have been achieved. In 2005, with support from UNMIL Gender Office, three day training in gender concepts and gender mainstreaming was conducted for Gender Focal Points in key sector Ministries and Agencies. The ECOWAS Gender Development Centre has also been involved in training key actors in gender mainstreaming in Liberia.

5. What are the remaining challenges in the area of capacity building?

It cannot be overemphasized that capacity building is a crucial requirement for ensuring success in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The remaining challenges include:

- the maintenance of sustainable peace,
- resource mobilization, infrastructure, strengthening and/or establishment of partnerships at the local, regional and international levels,
- human resource development,
- logistics,
- ratification of the Optional protocol to CEDAW,
- Construction of safe homes for GBV survivors and juveniles.
- Support to GBV survivors and the operation of the Safe homes;

1. Has a core set of indicators been established and where is responsibility for monitoring located?

As mentioned earlier, efforts are underway to establish a core set of indicators by the M/E Unit at the Ministry in collaboration with LISGIS to measure progress in implementation. The responsibility for monitoring is located at the national machinery.

6. What gaps and challenges remain in relation to data and statistics?

A major gap is that data collected is not disaggregated by sex to facilitate planning and programming. There are lots of data collected by Partners and the National statistics house (LISGIS) most of whom have not been sex-disaggregated. The latest data available is the national housing and population census-2008.

There are still challenges that cannot be avoided:

- Inadequate resources to facilitate data collection and statistical works,
- Low capacity of data collectors and clearing house;
- Lack of resource storage facilities.

3. In which area is lack of sex-desegregation still a problem?

There are still problems in the collection of sex-desegregated data in every area due to the low capacity of data clearing house. However the under the PRS, LISGIS is mandated to develop an in-services statistical training program for junior-and mid-level staff within LISGIS and Line Ministries and train at least 100 staff over 3 years.

4. In which areas do new types of data need to be collected?

Data are useful in policy-making and planning. New data are needed in the following areas:

- Gender-based violence;
- HIV/AIDS;
- women associated with the fighting forces;
- Teen prostitutes;
- Data on women in decision-making;
- Women entrepreneurs;
- Women Professionals;

4. To what extent are the national statistical office and the statistical units in the line ministries aware, committed and capable of providing the required data?

To some extent national statistical office, LISGIS has trained personnel but with low capacity and statistical units in line ministries and agencies do not have trained personnel. LISGIS has few of the technical skills needed to operate at the various stages of the data management process. Accordingly, during the PRS period, considerable investment will be needed to build capacity within LISGIS and other data-producing sectors

In which sectors, and to what extent, is sex-disaggregated data being used effectively to inform policy-making and planning?

As mentioned earlier, line Ministries/Agencies do not have the trained manpower, appropriate equipment and statistical techniques to accomplish their task. Therefore, there are no sex disaggregated data; many surveys and assessments have been carried out by Government and its Partners but there are no sex-disaggregated data available.

f)

1. Provide information on the roles of different stakeholders. For example, what role does Parliament play in the promotion and monitoring of gender equality and women's empowerment?

- **Role of the Legislature:**

The nation legislature is responsible for legislation-pass bills intended to protect women's human rights and empower women to reach their full potential

This role can be strengthened through:

- Increase participation for women in the Legislature,

- Gender awareness among law-makers/legislators,
 - Enhanced capacity for law-makers in issues of gender equality and
 - Increased resource allocation to facilitate the Legislative Standing Committees on Gender, Equity and Child development;
- **Role of the Gender Desk Officers:**
The role of Gender Desk Officers/Focal Points is to:
 - Articulate the issues of gender in their institutions and ensure that gender is mainstreamed in all programs and policies,
 - And serve as advisors to the Heads of those Institutions.
- **Role of Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs):**
The following actions constitute the role of NGOs in planning and implementing the follow-up activities. They are:
 - Intervention, prevention, and complementing the efforts of Government in the successful implementation of activities or programs;
 - Fill gaps, and carry out assessments, advocacy, and lobbying.
 As non-state actors, they complement Government's efforts, filling gaps through their interventions.
- **The role of UN Agencies:**
Funding and technical advisory services are provided by international stakeholders such as the UNDP, UNFEM, WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, UNMIL, UN-ECA, and USAID.

2. How could this role be strengthened?

The roles could be strengthened through transparency and the sharing of information about funding that is available for programs; build the capacity of stakeholders through workshops, training in gender related courses to improve skills and competence.

3. Describe the role of NGOs in planning and implementing the follow-up activities.

The following actions constitute the role of NGOs in planning and implementation of follow-up activities. They are:

Intervention;

Prevention;

Complementing the efforts of government in the successful implementation of activities, lobbying etc. As non-state actors, they complement government's efforts, filling gaps through their interventions.

4. Do NGOs participate formally in the mechanisms established to follow up the Fourth World Conference on Women and support reporting on and implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)?

The NGOs play a significant role in working with the Government through the Ministry of Gender to establish mechanisms to follow up on the Fourth world Conference on Women

as well as preparing the country's CEDAW Report. They participated in the national women's conference and the rural women's conference. In addition, they also formed a part of the gender equity working group during the preparation of the PRS. They participated from planning stage and will also form a part of the implementation.

Part Four: Remaining challenges and actions to address them

Provide information on areas requiring future action.

Even though some strides have been made towards implementation of the (12) Critical Areas under the Beijing Platform for Action, main challenges remain to be addressed. Future actions are required in the areas of set-disaggregated data and statistical information, socio-economic data and special sectoral studies.

- a) List any further actions and initiatives which the Government intends to take to fully implement the Platform for Action and outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly beyond 2010.*

Legislation:

There is a need for legislative action for the ratification of the Optional Protocol on CEDAW and the harmonization of the CEDAW with the National laws and Constitution.

- b) Describe the priority areas that have been identified for improving implementation in the next five years.*

The priority areas identified are:

- Capacity building training for staff of the National machinery and all actors/stakeholders for the implementation of Platform for Action. In addition,
- Dissemination/ popularization of the BFPA;
- Conducting sensitization and education campaigns;

- c) Give examples of measures (with targets and timeframes) which will be taken in each of these areas.*

Measures	Targets	Timeframe
• Popularization of the BPFA	– General public/key actor	2009-2010
• Sensitization	- Key MACs, Legislature & Judiciary	- 2009-2011
• Training	- NGF Secretariat, GFPs, Task force	- 2009-2012

d) Outline explicit new commitments that will be made to accelerate implementation?

The following are new commitments for further implementation

- The implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 Action Plan (2009); and
- Wholesome adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as national framework for development.