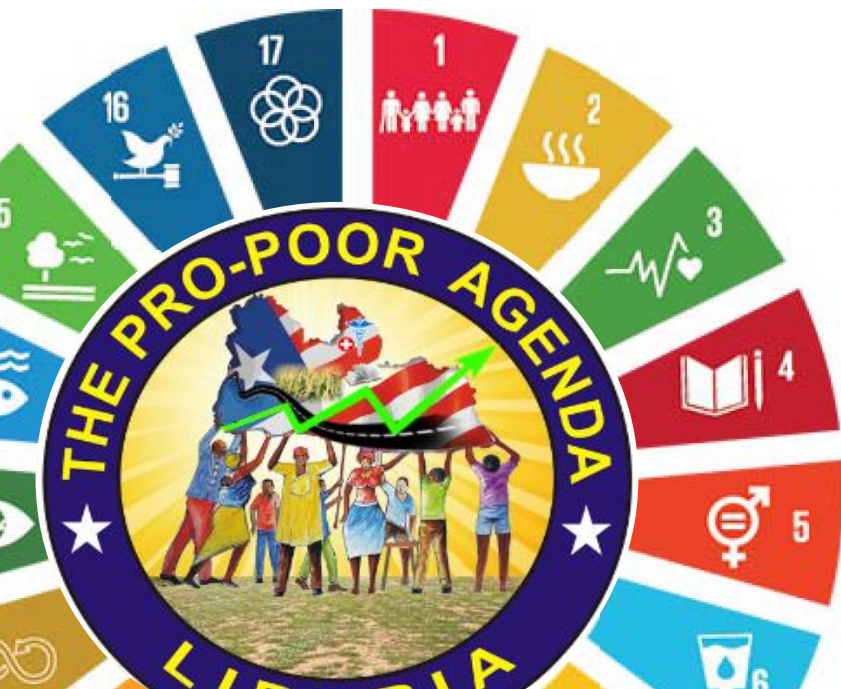




# Liberia: Voluntary National Review of the Goals of the 2030 Agenda

2022



## Message from His Excellency the President of the Republic of Liberia



Liberia played an important role during the development of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). My immediate predecessor, Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf co-chair the United Nations High Panel of Eminent Persons that set the vision and policy perimeters of the 2030 Development Agenda. In January 2016, we officially launched the Agenda for Sustainable Development in Liberia; the launching set the tone on how SDGs would be mainstreamed into the development plans of Liberia.

In July 2020, we conducted our first Voluntary National Review (VNR) of the SDGs. The 2020 VNR report provided us the opportunity to track and measure Liberia's performance and share our experiences on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. We are pleased to present our second Voluntary National Review (2022) of the progress we have made so far, towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Liberia's Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development 2018 - 2023 is second in the series of 5-year National Plans under the Liberia Vision 2030 framework and follows the Agenda for Transformation (2012-2017). The PAPD aligns with the African Union Agenda 2063 and SDGs, particularly its three dimensions—economic, social, and environmental with special emphasis on human rights and peace. The PAPD remains the best expression of our collective ambition to achieve peace, prosperity, and national development and address the binding constraints created by pervasive regional disparity, low human capacity, and the poor distribution of our wealth.

Over the last two years, tremendous efforts have been made through massive investment in road infrastructure, the expansion electricity network in both rural and urban areas, and in education by investment in both secondary and tertiary institutions by means of payment of WASSCE fees as well as tuition fees for all public universities and colleges. However, the PAPD was recalibrated and reprogrammed due to global economic slowdown created by growing competition among key external trading partners and by the recent COVID-19 pandemic. The recalibration and reprogramming are not a deviation from the originality of the PAPD but rather to collectively reposition our resources in prioritizing our priorities in an effective manner for the greater good of the Liberian society.

The focus is now on sub-national development, human capital development, protection of children's rights, and the reduction of systemic biases against women in the social and political arena. We will continue to build a nation on the principles of inclusion and on a rights-based approach to development. We will continue to monitor impact in the remotest areas of the country. The HDI will be used to measure inclusion and inequality. Multidimensional Poverty Index will be used to measure and disaggregate data in health, education, and opportunities to make a decent living. We will also continue to use surveys, censuses, sector assessments, and project evaluations conducted with our development partners to generate evidence-based results across various regions of the country.

**H. E. Dr. George Manneh Weah**  
**President Republic of Libe**

**Foreword**



Due to COVID-19 and other external shocks, which adversely impacted many of the assumptions underpinning the macroeconomic scenarios and the implementation strategy of the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD), the Government of Liberia recalibrated and reprogrammed its national development plan, the PAPD. It is aligned to the ECOWAS Agenda 2020, African Union Agenda 2063, and the Agenda for Sustainable Development. The aim of the plan is to address the basic needs of Liberians for income security, better access to basic services, and greater opportunities for self-improvement in a peaceful, inclusive, and stable environment. To

make progress towards the reprogrammed PAPD and eventually the Agenda for Sustainable Development, the strategies and interventions are built around the same four pillars of the original PAPD:

- 1. To empower Liberians with the tools to gain control of their lives through more equitable provision of opportunities in education, health, youth development, and social protection (women and vulnerable people with special needs)*
- 2. Economic stability and job creation through effective resource mobilization and prudent management of economic inclusion*
- 3. Promoting a cohesive society for sustainable development*
- 4. An inclusive and accountable public sector for shared prosperity and sustainable development*

A mid-term review on the implementation of the PAPD was conducted during the recalibration process. The review provided, an assessment of progress made on the implementation of the PAPD and the impact of COVID-19 on the key targets and priorities outlined in the PAPD; and a gauge of the public perception about the progress, priorities, and targets to be achieved during the remaining years. The review also showed that progress has been made, despite the many challenges. We entered a digital revolution; we now have an e-governance platform for government entities, we improved the Wi-Fi system at the campuses of the University of Liberia, mobile money and online banking services are now being used by commercial banks and telecommunication companies; we are constructing and expanding primary roads both in rural and urban areas to ease traffic congestion and reduce the rate of motor accidents; More health facilities are being constructed and dedicated; recreational facilities for our youthful generation are being constructed; all these plus more are being done in a peaceful environment with our partners and citizens.

The PAPD framework remains the most viable approach to attaining Liberia's long-term development ambition and by extension the SDGs.

As we endeavor to improve our implementation of the SDGs, we hope that other countries will benefit from our experiences as much as we benefit from theirs.

We wholeheartedly acknowledge the contributions and inputs of all stakeholder organizations and individuals in the preparation of this report. To UN Country Team Liberia for not only providing some

financial support for the preparation of this report but also its immense contributions to the country's national development efforts. To the Ministry of Finance and Development planning team which led the process, particular the Office of the Deputy Minister for Economic Management, the Office of the Deputy Minister for Budget and Development Planning, and the entire Division of Development Planning, we acknowledged your level of professionalism in compiling the report.

Finally, let me acknowledge H. E. President George M. Weah, for his leadership and direction to positively change the lives of Liberians.

**Hon. Samuel D. Tweah, Jr.**  
**Minister of Finance and Development Planning**

## Acronyms

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| ADR          | Alternative Dispute Resolution   |
| AFDB         | African Development Bank   |
| AFT          | Agenda for Transformation  |
| ALP          | Accelerated Learning Program   |
| AQE          | Alternative Quality Education  |
| BAU          | Business As Usual  |
| CEDAW        | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women |
| COP26        | 26 <sup>th</sup> Conference of parties                                     |
| CORS         | Continuously Operating Referencing Station                                 |
| CSOs         | Civil Society Organizations  |
| CSR          | Corporate Social Responsibility  |
| CWD          | Children with Disabilities   |
| DRM          | Domestic Resource Mobilization   |
| ECE          | Early Childhood Education  |
| FGM          | Female Genital Mutilation  |
| GER          | Gross Enrollment Ratio   |
| GHI          | Global Hunger Index  |
| GOL          | Government of Liberia  |
| GRPB         | Gender-Responsive Planning and Budgeting                                   |
| IBBSS        | Integrated Biological and Behavioral Surveillance Survey                   |
| IIC          | Independent Information Commission   |
| <i>INCHR</i> | Independent National Commission on Human Rights                            |
| IPoA         | Istanbul Programme of Action   |
| ITN          | Insecticide-Treated bed Nets   |
| IUCN         | International Union for the Conservation of Nature                         |
| IWRM         | Integrated Water Resource Management                                       |
| JHS          | Junior High School   |
| JSE          | Junior Secondary Education   |
| LACC         | Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission   |
| LDHS         | Liberia Demographic and Health Survey                                      |
| LFSP         | Liberia Forest Sector Project  |
| LLA          | Liberia Land Authority   |
| LPD          | Liberia Project Dashboard  |
| LPMUR        | Lake Piso Multi-Use Reserve  |
| LSSN         | Liberia Social Safety Network  |
| MACs         | Ministries, Agencies, and Commissions                                      |
| MFDP         | Ministry of Finance and Development Planning                               |
| MMC          | Monrovia Metropolitan Corporation  |
| MMR          | Maternal mortality ratio   |

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| MoA    | Ministry of Agriculture                                      |
| MoE    | Ministry of Education  |
| MoH    | Ministry of Health   |
| MoJ    | Ministry of Justice  |
| MSME   | Micro, Small Medium Enterprise                               |
| NACCEL | National Traditional Council of Chiefs and Elders of Liberia |
| NCCSE  | National Climate Change Steering Committee                   |
| NCO    | Non-Commissioned Officer                                     |
| NDC    | Nationally Determined Contribution                           |
| NDPs   | National Development Plans                                   |
| NEC    | National Elections Commission                                |
| NER    | Net Enrollment Ratio   |
| NGOs   | Non- Governmental Organizations                              |
| NGP    | National Gender Policy                                       |
| NHO    | National Health Observatory                                  |
| NSC    | National Steering Committee                                  |
| ODA    | Official Development Assistant                               |
| PAPD   | Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development               |
| PPCC   | Public Procurement Concession Commission                     |
| PSEA   | Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse                |
| PTR    | Pupil-Teacher Ratio  |
| RAI    | Rural Access Index   |
| RTTIs  | Rural Teachers Training Institutes                           |
| SDGs   | Sustainable Development Goals                                |
| SEA    | Sexual Exploitation and Abuse                                |
| SHS    | Senior High School   |
| SSE    | Senior Secondary Education                                   |
| TWGs   | Technical Working Groups                                     |
| UNCT   | United Nations Country Team                                  |
| UNDP   | United Nations Development Program                           |
| UNMIL  | United Nations Mission in Liberia                            |
| VNR    | Voluntary National Review                                    |
| VPA    | Volunteer Partnership Agreement                              |
| WHO    | World Health Organization                                    |
| WRTTI  | Webbo Rural Teachers Training Institute                      |

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## Highlights of the Report

Liberia remains committed to accelerating and enhancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), despite being faced with the COVID-19 pandemic and some binding constraints to its economic recovery. Specifically, Liberia has implemented the SDGs through its alignment with the country's national development plan (NDP), the Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD).

Having conducted its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) in 2020, this report constitutes the outcomes of the country's second VNR. Unlike the previous VNR, this review benefited from evidence-based reporting, early planning, and better stakeholders' engagement. The report, among other things, outlines the status of Liberia's SDG implementation as well as best practices, lessons learned, and challenges encountered during the execution of the SDGs.

### The VNR Process

Liberia adopted a strategic approach towards the conduct of the 2022 VNR. The 2022 VNR focused on 11 priority SDGs, including 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 3 (Good Health and Well-being), 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), 13 (Climate Action), 15 (Life on Land), 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), 17 (Partnership for the Goals).

The VNR process was participatory, involving the private sector, academia, development partners, the United Nations, Government institutions, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), women, youth, religious groups, and children. The review was further informed by a readiness assessment and the development of VNR implementation framework.

The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) coordinated the 2022 VNR process in collaboration with other ministries, agencies, and commissions (MACs) of the Government of Liberia (GOL) and the United Nations. The MFDP and partners held several planning and coordination meetings in preparation of the VNR.

## Summary of SDGs progress

### *SDGs 1 No Poverty and 2 Zero Hunger*

The proportion of Liberians below the international poverty line is 51.5 percent, increasing from 49.4 percent in 2019. The prevalence of stunting among children under five years of age reduced from 32 percent in 2013 to 29.8 percent in 2019/2020. Regarding the prevalence of malnutrition among children under five years of age, children who are wasted decreased by 3 percent, while overweight children increased by 1 percent between 2013 and 2019/2020.

In 2020, the proportion further increased to 51.1 percent, and is expected to drop to 50.6 percent in 2021 (Macro Poverty Outlook, 2022).

The GOL's agriculture spending as a percentage of total expenditure has been very low over the decades and has not exceeded 3 percent of total expenditure. Liberia's annual budgetary allocation to the

agriculture sector has been declining over the years, falling from 2 percent in the fiscal year 2010/2011 to 1.1 percent (or \$5.8 million) in 2019/2020.

### ***SDG 3 Good Health and Well-being***

Liberia has made remarkable strides over the years in reducing maternal mortality ratio (MMR) by 31 percent, from 1,072 per 100,000 in 2013 to 742 per 100,000 live births in 2020. However, neonatal mortality rate increased from 26 per 1000 live births in 2013 to 37 per 1000 live births in 2019/2020. Under-five mortality only reduced slightly from 94 per live births in 2013 to 93 deaths per 1000 live births in 2019/2020. Malaria, one of the foremost public health problems in the country, reduced from 392 per 1000 population in 2017 to 358 per 1000 population in 2020. While HIV/AIDS has increased, tuberculosis reduced from 135 per 1000 population in 2017 to 127 per 1000 population in 2020.

### ***SDG 4 Quality Education***

Liberia increased passing rates in the regional West African Exam from 38.8 percent in 2018 to 76.2 percent in 2020. The country also achieved gender parity in gross and net enrolment across all levels of education in 2020. Additionally, Liberia increased ECE enrollment from 539,660 in 2015 to 892,216 (225,520 male and 222,232 female) in 2019. While primary school enrolment decreased from 655,049 in 2015 to 607,558 in 2020, Junior Secondary School (JHS) enrolment increased from 166,921 in 2015 to 168,379 in 2020. Senior Secondary School (SHS) enrolment increased from 105,875 in 2015 to 106,194 in 2020. In higher education, the number of students increased from 51,679 (30,693 males and 20,986 females) in 2017 to 53,405 (33,805 males and 19,601 females) in 2020.

### ***SDG 5 Gender Equality***

Liberia has a National Gender Policy (NGP) that serves as the framework for the reduction and elimination of gender inequality, discrimination, exclusion, and marginalization, and the creation of opportunities for equitable distribution of resources and services. GOL has also ratified and adopted key international and regional instruments for the promotion and empowerment of women, girls, and gender equality. Additionally, GOL has made some efforts aimed at curtailing female genital mutilation (FGM), including placing a moratorium on the practice of FGM and training FGM traditional practitioners to pursue alternative sources of livelihood.

However, inequality and violence against women remain prevalent in Liberia. For example, only 10.6 percent of the members of Liberia's national legislature are females. Sixty percent of women aged 15-49 experienced physical violence and 12.4 percent of rural women and 5.7 percent of women in urban areas experience sexual and gender-based violence in 2019-2020.

### ***SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation***

Liberia increased access to improved water sources from 68 percent in 2007 to 84 percent (95 percent in urban areas and 69 percent in rural areas) in 2019-2020. Additionally, the country increased access to improved toilet facilities from 28 percent in 2007 to 47 percent (66 percent in urban areas and 21 percent in rural areas) in 2019-2020.

### ***SDG 9 Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure***

Liberia remains a low emissions economy by all the critical indicators. In 2018, the country's emission per output was 0.4kgCO<sub>2e</sub> per unit of GDP. Per capita emission in 2020 was 0.25MT of CO<sub>2e</sub>. Sixty-seven percent of rural Liberians lived in an area not more than two kilometers (1.2 miles) from an all-weather road in 2019. Mobile cellular subscription fell from its all-time peak of 3.65 million in 2015 to less than 50 percent in 2020 and subscription rate declined from 82 per 100 people to 33. There were improvements in internet service availability with an increase in the number of secure servers from 4 to 31, fixed broadband subscription from 7,000 to 13,000 and ratio of internet users to the population went up from 10 percent in 2015 to 26 percent in 2020.

### *SDGs 13 Climate Action and 15 Life on Land*

In addition to submitting its first Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in 2019, Liberia completed a Revised Nationally Determined Contributions in 2021 as an adopted two-prong strategy to achieve a target of 64 percent reduction in carbon emission below business as usual (BAU) by 2030.

Regarding SDG 15 (Life on Land), Liberia's forest covers 6,605 million, approximately 69 percent of the total land area. Liberia also has five established Protected Areas (PAs), constituting a total of 476,499 hectares.

### *SDG 16 Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions*

Since the passage of the Freedom of Information law in 2010, Liberia passed the Press Freedom Law in 2019. The Press Freedom Law repealed earlier laws that criminalized speech or writing against public officials, including the President of the Republic. Additionally, Liberia's Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) continued to call attention to violations and other actions that have the potential to lead to violations and denials of rights. Liberia has increased substantially the proportion of children under age 5 whose births are registered with the civil authorities from 4 percent in 2007 to 66 percent in 2019- 2020.

### *SDG 17 Implementation Mechanisms and Partnership for the Goals*

Liberia developed a Domestic Resource Mobilization (DRM) strategy, aimed at funding the PAPD, achieving the SDGs, and propping up national frontline defenses to meet external shocks and emergencies. In the last three periods, FY2019/20, 2020/21 and July-December 2021, domestic revenue's share of budget resources averaged at almost 86 percent.

Additionally, Liberia increased its total government revenue from US\$543.4 million in FY 2019/2020 to almost US\$690 million in FY2020/2021. Net foreign direct investment (FDI) was US\$86.9 million in 2020, representing a slight growth of 0.2 percent over the amount received in 2019. Total disbursement of development assistance to Liberia amounted to US\$386,318,839.12 million in 2020/2021.

### **Integrated, Indivisible, and Interlinked Nature of the SDGs**

Liberia has continued to leverage the integrated and interlinked nature of the SDGs in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. For example, though Liberia has prioritized 11 SDGs for this report, the country still shows a good picture of its progress on the SDGs. The integrated and interlinked nature of the SDGs also

allow the smooth alignment of the PAPD with the SDGs. Grouping the SDGs under five pillars ensures that the implementation of the PAPD captures all dimensions of the 2030 Agenda.

### **Leaving No one Behind**

Liberia has always fostered and promoted a more inclusive and participatory development approach and outcomes by ensuring that all stakeholders are included in the process and that all Liberians and others residing legitimately in the country (including refugees) are impacted by development results, particularly the marginalized and disadvantaged.

Additionally, due to the COVID-19, Liberia has made modifications to some national targets to retain the emphasis on 'reaching the furthest first and leaving no Liberian behind' while reducing vulnerability and continuing the critical aspect of human capital development.

### **Good Practices and Lessons Learned**

Liberia continued to promote partnership as the means of mobilizing and maximizing the resources required to implement the SDGs. Recently, the GOL held the Liberia 2022 Action Dialogue with development partners, CSOs, and the private sector to discuss issues around strengthening development coordination, increasing alignment, improving results, and promoting mutual accountability.

### **Challenges to the Implementation of the SDGs**

Liberia's progress towards the achievement of the SDGs has been challenged recently by the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has increased global economic pressure.

Additionally, Liberia's recovery process has been faced with binding constraints such as a legacy of entrenched inequality in access to development opportunities and basic social services, widespread infrastructure deficits, and pervasive poverty coupled with low domestic productivity, lack of value addition, and the susceptibility to constant external shock. These constraints have been the greatest barriers to sustaining peace and accelerating growth and sustainable development.

## 1. Introduction

In 2020, Liberia conducted its first VNR and presented a report on national progress toward the realization of the SDGs and their targets as well as challenges faced in implementing the SDGs. Having skipped 2021, Liberia submits this 2022 VNR report which reflects progress made against the implementation of the SDGs since the last VNR.

The 2020 VNR, which served as the baseline, was marked by inadequate planning, limited financial resources, weak data management and reporting systems, and limited stakeholders' engagement. While some of these challenges persist, the 2022 VNR benefited from early planning and better stakeholders' engagement. For example, the GOL conducted a readiness assessment and developed an implementation framework for the conduct of the 2022 VNR almost a year before the conduct of this VNR. However, financial constraints faced by the GOL caused delay and partial implementation of the framework.

### 1.1. Objectives and Focus of the 2022 VNR

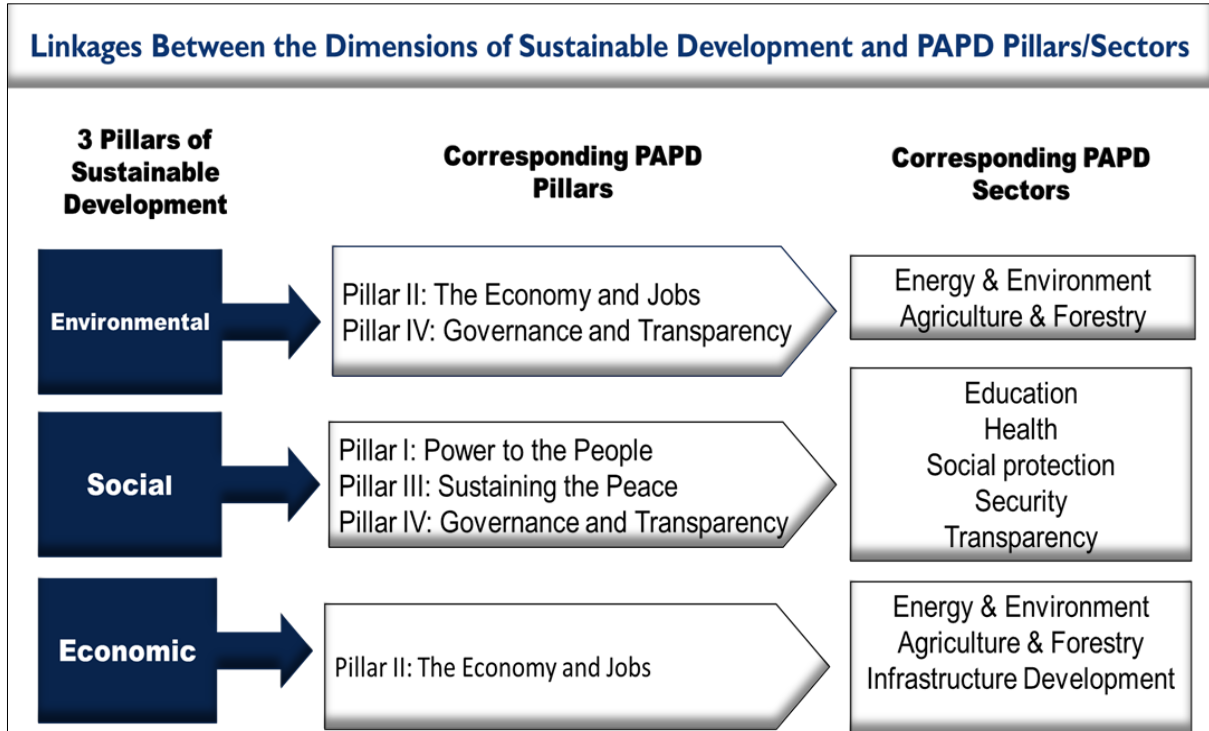
The primary objective of the 2022 VNR was to ensure that, for the second time, Liberia is able to report on its progress, shared experiences, lessons learned, and challenges encountered during the implementation of the SDGs.

Unlike the 2020 VNR, the 2022 VNR followed a more strategic approach. It prioritized 11 SDGs: 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 3 (Good Health and Well-being), 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), 13 (Climate Action), 15 (Life on Land), 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), 17 (Partnership for the Goals).

### 1.2. Alignment of National Development Aspirations with the 2030 Agenda

In 2018, the GOL successfully harmonized its national and international development objectives when it aligned the PAPD with the SDGs. This alignment was achieved at the pillar, targets, and indicator levels.

The outcome of the alignment was that the PAPD pillars and their constituent sectors were linked to one of the three SDG pillars, economic, social, and environmental, as well as the five critical dimensions (people, planet, peace, prosperity, and partnership) of the 2030 agenda. This process concluded the domestication process of the SDGs to Liberia's development planning context. The domestication exercise was followed by the development of Liberia's Domestic Resources Mobilization Strategy (DRMS) as a buffer to mitigate future financial challenges.



The PAPD is further aligned to other international and regional development frameworks and protocols, including the African Union’s Agenda 2063, Paris Agreement on Climate Change, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Samoa Pathway, Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA), ECOWAS Agenda, and G7+, among others.

### 1.3. Organization of the Report

Chapter 2 discusses Liberia’s policy and enabling environment for implementing the SDGs, while Chapter 3 lays out the Methodology and process for preparation of the VNR. The fourth chapter contains an explanation of the progress made towards the achievement of the SDGs, while Chapter 5 discusses the means of implementation

Unlike Liberia’s previous VNR report, this report in Chapter 6, describes the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the GOL response as well as other new and emerging challenges encountered during the implementation of the SGDs. Chapter Seven deliberates on conclusion and next steps. The annexes are included in Chapter 8.



## 2. Policy and Enabling Environment

### 2.1. Ensuring Ownership of the SDGs and the VNRs

Over the years, Liberia has made significant efforts to ensure ownership of the goals of the 2030 Agenda and the VNR through fostering and strengthening partnerships as well as promoting and maintaining an inclusive and participatory environment for all stakeholders during the SDGs implementation. Three years after the nationwide SDGs awareness, an assessment was conducted on the awareness of SDGs and the VNR across the country. The assessment considered stakeholders' knowledge and understanding of the SDGs and VNR, institutional arrangements in place to effectively support progress toward realizing the SDGs, capacities of the government officials and technicians to coordinate, monitor, and report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, involvement of key stakeholders (CSOs, NGOs, Women, Youth, Disabled, Children, etc.), and United Nations' efforts in supporting, investing in, and strengthening local partners to achieve the goals. Based on the findings of the assessment, a comprehensive framework was developed to facilitate the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda and conduct of VNRs drawing from experience and building upon identified opportunities and momentum with a specific focus on Leaving No One Behind as well as ensuring and promoting ownership among all stakeholders, including the marginalized and disadvantaged.

As a result, government and development partners are now fostering ownership of the SDGs through a joint implementation approach to achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda. Furthermore, the country has now moved toward evidence-based VNRs by embedding evaluation. As such, data used for the VNR are collected from multiple sources and existing evaluation reports that are prepared by all stakeholders involved in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This indicates that the country's VNR report is a representation and reflection of both government and development partners, which symbolized ownership at both national and sub-national levels. Finally, with support from development partners, the government is now aiming at strengthening ownership for the VNR by promoting joint monitoring of the SDGs, providing resources needed for evidence gathering, supply, and use; as well as promoting evaluation as an essential and needed requirement for development planning and implementation at all levels.

### 2.2. Integration of the Sustainable Development Goals in the National Framework

The country's national development plans (NDPs) have been aligned with the SDGs. This represents Liberia's obligation to implement global commitments concerning a wide range of global issues integrating national development goals and targets with the SDGs and targets primarily focused on lifting the poor out of poverty and reducing the inequality gap. In addition, such integration shows government and development partners' commitment to achieving the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda.

The PAPD is positioned as the second in the series of five-year NDPs toward the national aspirations expressed in the Vision 2030 framework developed in 2012. The national vision statement emerging from that process is multidimensional and simultaneously addresses the social, economic, political, environmental, cultural, and technological aspirations of the Liberian people. Therefore, the high-level goals of the PAPD align with and address all these dimensions as well. Moreover, it draws heavily on the implementation experience of the Agenda for Transformation (AfT) and incorporates lessons from the

implementation of the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy 2007 as well as the Poverty Reduction Strategy (2008-2011). The PAPD is aligned to the ECOWAS 2020, Africa Agenda 2063, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The objectives of the PAPD include:

- 1. To build capable and trusted state institutions that will lead to a stable, resilient, and inclusive nation embracing its triple heritage and anchored on its African identity*
- 2. To provide greater income security to an additional one million Liberians, and reduce absolute poverty by 23 percent across 5 out of 6 regions--through sustained and inclusive economic growth driven by scaled-up investments in agriculture, infrastructure, human resource development, and social protection*

To make progress toward the PAPD and eventually the Vision 2030 goals, the strategies and interventions are built around four pillars that will form the pathways for the next five years:

- 1. **Power to the People** – To empower Liberians with the tools to gain control of their lives through more equitable provision of opportunities in education, health, youth development, and social protection (women and vulnerable people with special needs)*
- 2. **The Economy and Jobs** – Economic stability and job creation through effective resource mobilization and prudent management of economic inclusion.*
- 3. **Sustaining the Peace** – Promoting a cohesive society for sustainable development.*
- 4. **Governance and Transparency**—An inclusive and accountable public sector for shared prosperity and sustainable development.*

The integration of the SDGs in the national planning framework occurred at four levels. Vision and principles form the first, goals the next, priority interventions/pillars at the third level, and indicators for subnational decomposition of measurements at the fourth level. For the first time in the country's history, targets of the national development plan and the 2030 Agenda are disaggregated to the regional level. The themes of unity, peace, inclusion, and stability under a democratic political dispensation are embraced by all visions and principles. Furthermore, recognition, appreciation, and respect for cultural diversity penetrate the goal-level aspirations—as well as shared prosperity and a deliberate effort to leave no one behind. This is particularly evident at levels III and IV, where the people are at the center of the national development process and efforts are being made to track their progress at the subnational levels.

### **2.3. Integration of the Economic, Social, and Environmental Dimensions**

The outcomes of the country's development agenda are intended to empower Liberians with the tools to gain control of their lives, create a stable macroeconomic environment that will enable private sector-led economic growth, greater competitiveness, and diversification of the economy, as well as create and maintain a more peaceful and unified society, and ensure environmental sustainability. In addition, through the implementation of an integrated national development plan, government and development partners have a shared desire to promote and achieve economic transformation, human development

outcomes, and an inclusive and accountable public sector for shared prosperity and sustainable development.

Liberia launched its PAPD in October 2018, which is the second national development plan since the launch of the 2030 Agenda. The PAPD is a five-year national development plan guided by the fundamental premise of addressing extreme poverty, inequalities (income, and gender), regional disparities, and infrastructure deficits. The overarching aspiration is inclusion, more equitable distribution of our national wealth, and a rights-based approach to national development, which is aligned with both the agendas 2030 and 2063. The PAPD focuses on bringing growth back to the economy by increasing productivity through value chains with an emphasis on agricultural processing and marketing, particularly in rural communities. Additional attention is drawn to taking urgent actions to combat climate change and its impacts; and addressing the infrastructure deficits, which catalyze economic growth and national development. The implementation approach of the PAPD considers multi-sectionalism with share features of participation, de-concentration, and multi-discipline with the multi-sectorial approach. To achieve this, the government and partners are delivering on multiple goals that are affecting all regions of the country through demand-driven initiatives, especially for rural communities that are behind in access to energy, safe drinking water, food security, and income generation opportunities.

**In the Economy**, government and development partners have been able to establish a sound foundation for macroeconomic stability; reduced inflation (13.1 percent to 6 percent); increased fiscal space for investment in critical infrastructure and programs; and rationalized and consolidate public debts. Currently, the recovery in the price of main export commodities, on the back of renewed international demand, has boosted the value of exports and improved the trade balance. In addition, massive efforts are underway to strengthen national institutions and create an enabling environment for inclusive and sustainable growth through transparency and accountability in the public sector, support agriculture value chain development, bridge the infrastructure gaps as well as the boosting of private sector development by improving the business climate and unlocking key investment opportunities in the country.

**On social development, environment, and governance**, the recalibration of the PAPD was done in response to the current challenges and realities. By this, the government and its development partners set new priorities and national targets; shift opportunities and momentum where necessary; and reallocate available resources purposely to increase access to quality education, health care delivery services, social protection, and other basic social services. Over the years, more emphasis has been placed on interventions aimed at fostering a sustainable environment, promoting holistic decentralization; tackling corruption, and building human capital with a specific focus on **“Leaving No One Behind”**. Furthermore, several initiatives have been undertaken and are ongoing for strengthening monitoring and evaluation arrangements of service delivery and new development interventions, ensuring ownership of the 2030 Agenda, making related information more accessible, and increasing the level of participation of local communities and CSOs in the decision-making and implementation processes.

#### **2.4. Leaving No one Behind**

Massive efforts have been put in place to ensure that no one is left behind during the implementation, monitoring, and reporting of the SDGs. This is to amplify government and development partners' continuous commitment to achieving the national vision of unity around a common national identity and progress in the quality of life for all as defined by the 2030 Agenda. Accordingly, the government has

always fostered and promoted a more inclusive and participatory development agenda approach and outcomes by ensuring that all stakeholders are part of the process and that all Liberians and others residing legitimately in the country (including refugees) are impacted by development results, particularly the marginalized and disadvantaged.

The goals of the PAPD, which are aligned to the goals of the 2030 Agenda are focused on capacity building for good governance and on changing public perceptions of the country on key issues that can lead to a more unified nation sharing a common national identity and vision of a shared future of prosperity. Moreover, the focus is also on improving national security largely through peacebuilding and the reduction in the factors that drive intra-communal conflict. These are directly supported by the sets of programs, interventions, projects, and initiatives contained in the national development plan, which includes human capital formation and sustainable economic growth, and diversification of production and markets. As the SDG's implementation progress, outcomes of these programs are expected to contribute significantly to the reduction in pervasive poverty and vulnerability and rapid reduction in regional inequalities while improving the ability of all Liberians to take control of their own lives. Importantly, because of the COVID-19, modifications have been made to some national targets to retain the emphasis on 'reaching the furthest first and leaving no Liberian behind' while reducing vulnerability and continuing the critical aspect of human capital development which is essential for the future stability of Liberia given its demographic dividend.

In addition, the government has ensured that the VNR is a true representation of all stakeholders. The country VNR is comparative by the usage of disaggregated data to provide an objectively measurable picture of the reported SDGs indicators in closed-form and quantitative dimensions with a specific focus on the country's demographic, socioeconomic, and other important characteristics needed to demonstrate progress made towards the achievement of the SDGs at both national and sub-national levels. Furthermore, the VNR seeks to understand the successes and barriers to achieving the SDGs from stakeholders' perspectives by providing evidence on how all stakeholders interpret their experiences and construct reality about the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact of development programs and policies; and how they feel about government efforts to ensure the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

## **2.5. Institutional Mechanism**

The PAPD laid out a clear implementation and coordination framework to ensure that programs are aligned with each target, avoid duplication, and encourage joint implementation with all partners for transparency and accountability. Drawing on lessons learned during the implementation of the Aft, in 2018, PAPD National Steering Committee (NSC) replaced the Liberia Development Alliance Steering Committee established in 2012 as the top-level coordination and decision-making body. This new structure provides for a steering committee to be more responsible for overall coordination and leadership to be strongly supported by the cabinet for policy decision-making.

Accordingly, the NSC is the highest decision-making body chaired by the President of the Republic of Liberia. A Champion, whose primary role is to convene quarterly meetings to deliberate on progress towards the development outcomes and resource requirements from a multi-sectoral perspective, leads each pillar of the PAPD. Eleven Technical Working Groups (TWGs) comprised of technicians and specialists from government institutions, development partners, civil society, and business representatives

organized around the development priorities to support the pillars. The MFDP is serving as a secretariat to the Steering Committee and Pillar Working Groups. MFDP is involved with the technical planning, coordination, monitoring, and reporting of the PAPD and the 2030 Agenda and is supported by routine pillar and sector working group meetings. At the sectoral level, multi-sectoral/Regional Planning Working Groups comprised of the heads of planning departments of government institutions and County Development Committees support the MFDP.

Over the years, with support from its development partners, the government has undertaken several initiatives including the development of policies, strengthening development cooperation, and existing systems purposely to enhance the institutional mechanism of the development framework. Two key policies (National NGOs and Aid policies) have been developed and supported by the Liberia Project Dashboard. Moreover, there are existing structures and procedures in place at both national and sub-national levels. There exist a National Statistical System, National Projects System (government and donor-funded projects), National M&E Framework, National Expenditure Monitoring System, Performance Management and Compliance System, and the Citizen Feedback Mechanisms. All these initiatives are intended to enhance the country's preparedness to monitor and assess the progress of the PAPD, and contributions toward the achievement of the SDGs.

## **2.6. Systemic Issues and Transformative Actions**

There are several systemic issues faced by government and development partners in the implementation of the PAPD and the 2030 Agenda. The 2020 VNR exposed the lack of baselines on the national development plan and SDGs indicators, limited documented progress information or data on the 2030 Agenda, and the unsystematic approach to monitoring and evaluation, particularly at the sub-national level. There exist weak national statistical and evaluation systems, limited credible and updated data gathering platforms at various levels as well as severe challenges in collecting the limited available data for reporting and demonstrating results. Furthermore, there are limited technical capacity and weak evaluation infrastructure in most government agencies, which makes conducting evaluation, and using evidence from evaluation a challenge.

In terms of using evidence from evaluation to promote evidence-based policymaking, there is no evidence to prove that evaluative evidence is used by government policymakers in the decision-making processes. This is due to the limited or lack of understanding and awareness among public officials of how using evidence from evaluation reports can assist public sector managers and decision-makers make evidence-based decisions. Also, one severe issue is the lack of regulatory and mandatory requirements to ensure a commitment to using evidence from evaluation to promote evidence-based policymaking. That is the lack of a national evaluation policy that is needed to set the standards for evaluative practices.

However, the government and development partners are taking key transformative actions. The government and partners have deepened their commitment to achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda through transformative actions to promote a more inclusive and participatory development approach for the achievement of development results. Accordingly, the government, development partners, CSOs, and the private sector have committed themselves to the signing of the Liberia 2022 Action Dialogue Joint Statement purposely to:

**Strengthen cooperation:** Establish a multi-stakeholder platform under the PAPD National Steering Committee to advance the effectiveness of development cooperation in Liberia. This platform will be

chaired by MFDP and co-chaired by the Liberia Cooperating Partners Group (CPG). It will also have a clear road map and timeline for engagements, initially meeting quarterly; and will receive technical support from development partners.

**Increase Alignment:** Improve and strengthen the capacity, accountability, and transparency of country systems to overcome barriers to the use of country systems; and increase the alignment of development partners' programs and activities to the PAPD at policy, program, and activities. Specifically, this includes:

- Promoting and supporting national ownership; and generating perspectives of development partners on alignment to strengthen country systems, particularly improving reporting.
- Holding quarterly development coordination meetings and jointly participating in the Sector Working Group (SWG) meetings in the framework of the PAPD coordination mechanism ensuring that relevant MACs and development partners, including CSOs and private sector participants are contributing to the PAPD results framework as indicated in the National NGOs and Aid Policy.
- Improving coordination of information before program development and appraisal to promote better alignment. This is to ensure that quality pipeline programs and activities are strongly considered and discussed among parties to increase development outcomes and minimize challenges that could hinder results for the people of Liberia.
- Supporting appropriate capacity enhancement initiatives to pave the way for effective planning, execution, supervision, and comprehensive reporting that link with national budget execution across all spectrums of development.

**Improve Results:** Enhance implementation and achievement of high-level results by following up and monitoring PAPD and the Sustainable Development Goals indicators as well as jointly verifying, and sharing lessons learned to overcome common challenges, to boost development effectiveness. This involves the conduct of joint monitoring field visits of development projects yearly, led by MFDP with sector leads, development partners, CSOs/NGOs, and the private sector; and the tracking, collection, and reporting of monitoring data as evidence of results regarding PAPD and the SDGs.

**Promote Mutual Accountability:** Further, develop national framework tools like the National Aid and NGO Policy of Liberia (NAPL) and the Liberia Project Dashboard (LPD). It will include periodic monitoring the implementation of the NAPL, provision of high quality and timely data to the LPD, use of the data in GOL/development partners coordination to support key decisions on new initiatives and programs. This also includes regular follow up of commitments in the PAPD by the GOL as well as Development Partners; and annual reporting by GOL on PAPD.

### 3. Methodology and Process for Preparation of the Review

#### 3.1. Conduct of 2022 VNR Readiness Assessment and Development of 2022 VNR Implementation Framework

In preparation of the 2022 VNR, the GOL conducted a readiness assessment to help it understand the weaknesses of the country's first VNR. The readiness assessment covered a gap analysis of the 2020 VNR report, a county level rapid assessment, and an assessment of the central government capacity and readiness to conduct the 2022 VNR. Specifically, the gap analysis focused on key selected perimeters of the 2020 VNR report. The county-level rapid assessment gauged the level of awareness, priorities, coordination, and reporting on the SDGs in the counties. On the other hand, the assessment of the

Government's capacity and readiness to conduct the 2022 VNR covered several key domains, including organization, coordination, resources, stakeholder engagement, and the availability of data.

The findings and recommendations of the 2022 VNR readiness assessment informed the development of a 2022 VNR Implementation Framework. The purpose of the Framework was to provide customized guidance for the preparation and implementation of Liberia's 2022 VNR. It contains a coordination structure, an implementation plan, a stakeholders' engagement plan, a data collection plan, and a summary financial plan.

### **3.2. Consultation and Data Collection**

Consultative meetings were held with various stakeholder groups in May 2022. The first consultative meeting was held with the private sector, academia, CSOs, NGOs, women, youth, religious groups, and children. Another meeting was held with GOL's MACs and the United Nations. The consultative meetings provided these stakeholders the opportunity to get a status update on the VNR process and their roles in the data collection process. The meetings were also used to gather relevant information from stakeholders about the VNR and implementation of the SDGs in Liberia. In this regard, the consultative meetings included three sessions. During the first session, participants shared their contributions, experiences, challenges, lessons learned, and other factors influencing the attainment of the SDGs during the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The second segment of the discussion addressed participants' perspectives on government and donors' efforts in promoting, supporting, improving, and accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Specifically, it focused on ownership, coordination, stakeholders' participation, and the enabling environment. In the final session, participants deliberated on actions and next steps needed for enhancing and accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Liberia.

Additionally, a two-day stakeholder workshop was held to validate the draft comprehensive 2022 VNR report. The workshop was attended by development partners, the United Nations, CSOs, MACs, business, women groups, and youth groups. During the validation workshop, stakeholders reviewed the draft report and made changes to the report. The suggested changes were incorporated into the final 2022 VNR report.

In addition to the information gathered through consultation, the data that informed the VNR report was largely collected through the review of relevant documents, including national survey and special studies reports, national plans and strategies, sector analysis reports, and the reports of Liberia's development partners. The data collection for the VNR also benefitted from several recent reviews such as the mid-term review of the PAPD, and the PAPD steering committee meeting.

### **3.3. Coordination of the VNR Process**

The MFDP led the coordination of the 2022 VNR process. It planned and executed the VNR in collaboration with UN agencies and MACs. The MFDP and the United Nations held several planning and coordination meetings in preparation of the VNR.

### **3.4. Limitation of the VNR Process**

The 2022 VNR Framework was not fully implemented due to financial constraints. For example, the county level consultations were not held as planned. Consultations were limited to national level consultations with various stakeholders in Monrovia. However, the MFDP VNR Team was able to gauge the views of stakeholders at the county level during the 2022 VNR readiness assessment conducted in 2021.

Additionally, the 2022 VNR focused on 11 priority SDGs. The 11 SDGs were selected based on the level of interest expressed for them among various stakeholder groups as reflected in key national and international documents, as well as the availability of data on them.

As during the previous VNR, this VNR was also challenged by the GOL weak data ecosystem, which undermined the tracking and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda implementation. This was a major challenge as the VNR was planned to be conducted through desk review of relevant documents.



#### 4. Progress Made Towards the Achievement of the SDGs

### 1 NO POVERTY



#### 4.1. Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

##### 1.1.1. Proportion of population below the international poverty line, by sex, age, employment status and geographical location (urban/rural)

**Table 1: Proportion of population below the international poverty line**

| Year   | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Proportion of population below the international poverty line <sup>1</sup> | 44   | 46.5 | 45.7 | 49.4 | 51.1 | 50.6 |

Source: World Bank's Macro Poverty Outlook for Sub-Saharan Africa 2020 and 2021.



Poverty, in all its forms, is widespread across Liberia, and has been increasing over the past few years. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to the increasing trend of poverty in Liberia. In 2016, the proportion of Liberians below the international poverty line (\$1.9 in 2011 PPP) stood at 44 percent.<sup>2</sup> As shown in the table above, more Liberians have fallen into extreme poverty over the past few years. The World Bank's Macro Poverty Outlook (2020) reports that the proportion of Liberians below the international poverty line increased to 46.5 percent in 2017 and

reduced slightly to 45.7 percent in 2018. In 2019, the proportion of Liberians living on less than \$1.9 a day increased to 49.4 percent. In 2020, the proportion further increased to 51.1 percent, and is expected to drop to 50.6 percent in 2021 (Macro Poverty Outlook, 2022).

The World Bank estimates that extreme poverty will reduce slightly to 49.4 percent in 2022. The 2021 United Nations multidimensional poverty index establishes 52.3 percent as multi-dimensional poor, which translates into 2.6 million poor. In 2019, the number of multidimensional poor was estimated at 2.5 million. The United Nations estimates that the population in severe multidimensional poverty is 24.9 percent and population vulnerable to multidimensional poverty is 23.3 percent.<sup>3</sup>

In terms of distribution, the incidence of extreme poverty is most widely spread in Liberia's rural areas. Per the HIES (2016), the incidence of poverty in rural Liberia was 71.6 percent, compared to 31.5 percent in urban areas. However, the rural-urban distribution of poverty has been shifted by COVID-19.

<sup>1</sup> Dis-aggregated data on extreme poverty by sex, age, employment status is not available.

<sup>2</sup> Government of Liberia. 2016. Household Income and Expenditure Survey Report

<sup>3</sup> United Nations. 2021. Common Country Assessment Report

**Table 2: Distribution of poverty by urban/rural**

| 2016          |              | 2021 <sup>4</sup> |              |
|---------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Rural poverty | 71.6 percent | Rural poverty     | 68 percent   |
| Urban poverty | 31.5 percent | Urban poverty     | 59.9 percent |

Source: HIES 2016; GOL/UN Rapid Assessment

In 2020, a rapid assessment conducted by the GOL and United Nations indicated that the impact of the COVID-19 shock is expected to be greater in urban areas. The study estimated that urban poverty will increase by 10.9 percent in contrast to a 4.7 percent increase in rural areas, and that majority (59.9 percent) of the new poor will be in urban areas of Liberia, especially in Montserrado County.<sup>5</sup>

#### **1.4.1 Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services**

**Table 3: Proportion of population with access to basic services**

| Indicator  | 2013       | 2019-2020  |
|--|------------|------------|
| Proportion of population with access to electricity                | 10 percent | 24 percent |
| Proportion of population with access to improved drinking water    | 73 percent | 84 percent |
| Proportion of population with access to improved toilet facilities | 17 percent | 47 percent |

Source: LDHS (2013; 2019-20)

Liberia has made improvement in access to basic services with access to electricity rising from 10 percent in 2013 to 24 percent in 2019-2020. Additionally, access to improved drinking water rose from 73 percent in 2013 to 84 percent in 2019-2020. Access to improved toilet facilities moved by 30 percentage points, from 17 percent in 2013 to 47 percent in 2019-2020.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The 2021 data is based on projections from a joint GOL and United Nations rapid assessment on the impact of COVID-19

<sup>5</sup> Montserrado County hosts Liberia's Capital City – Monrovia

<sup>6</sup> LDHS 2013; 2019-2020



4.2. Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

1.1.1 Prevalence of undernourishment

**Table 4: Prevalence of undernourishment**

| Indicator                      | 2000 | 2006 | 2012 | 2021 |
|--------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Prevalence of undernourishment | 48.1 | 40.0 | 35.0 | 33.3 |

Source: Global Hunger Index Report (2021)



The 2021 Global Hunger Index report ranks Liberia 110th out of the 116 countries with sufficient data to calculate 2021 GHI scores. With a resulting GHI score of 33.3, Liberia is deemed to have leaped one step in the global Hunger Index threshold rating from “Alarming” to being deemed “serious”. This steady decline in Liberia’s GHI score correlates with a general decline in chronic food insecurity among the people of Liberia from 49 percent of

households deemed food insecure in 2012 to 18 percent in 2018.<sup>7</sup>

2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (height for age <-2 standard deviation from the median of the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age

**Table 5: Prevalence of stunting among children under 5 years of age**

| Indicator  | 2013       | 2019-2020    |
|--|------------|--------------|
| Prevalence of stunting among children under 5 years of age | 32 percent | 29.8 percent |

Source: LDHS 2013, LDHS 2019-2020

At the time of the 2013 LDHS, 32 percent of children were stunted. In 2019-2020, the prevalence of stunting among children reduced slightly to 29.8 percent. Liberia has made some progress towards reducing stunting, but 29.8 percent of children under 5 years of age are still affected, which is lower than the average for the Africa region (30.7 percent).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Liberia CFSNS Report 2018

<sup>8</sup> <https://globalnutritionreport.org/resources/nutrition-profiles/africa/western-africa/liberia/>

2.2.2 *Prevalence of malnutrition (weight for height >+2 or <-2 standard deviation from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age, by type (wasting and overweight)*

**Table 6: Prevalence of malnutrition among children under 5 years of age**

| Indicator  | 2013      |            | 2019-2020 |            |
|--|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
|  | Wasting   | Overweight | Wasting   | Overweight |
| Prevalence of malnutrition among children under 5 years of age | 6 percent | 3 percent  | 3 percent | 4 percent  |

Source: LDHS 2013, LDHS 2019-2020

In 2013, 6 percent of children under 5 years of age were wasted, while 3 percent were overweight. The LDHS 2019-2020 showed a decrease in children who are wasted (3 percent), and an increase in overweight children (4 percent). Liberia is 'on course' for the target for wasting, with 3 percent of children under 5 years of age affected, which is lower than the average for the Africa region (6.0 percent).<sup>9</sup>

Liberia's progress in improving nutritional status is indicative of strong commitments, collaboration, and partnership. In 2014, Liberia became the 47<sup>th</sup> country to commit to scaling up nutrition with the SUN Movement which is comprised of sixty-five countries leading a global movement to end malnutrition in all its form. As a SUN member country, Liberia remains committed to reducing malnutrition through multi-sectoral strategies aimed at tackling and addressing the immediate and underlying causes of malnutrition. Liberia has also effectively harnessed other coordination mechanism and multi sectorial platforms such as the United Nations Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and Under-nutrition (UN-REACH) for improving nutritional outcomes. The UN-REACH movement is a country-led approach aimed at improving multi-sectoral nutrition governance for addressing child undernutrition through the partnership and coordinated actions of UN agencies, civil society, donors, and the private sector, under the leadership of national governments.

**2.a.1 The agriculture orientation index for government expenditures**

**Table 7: Agriculture orientation index for government expenditures in 2010/2011 and 2019/2022**

| Indicator   | 2010/2011 | 2019/2020   |
|---|-----------|-------------|
| The agriculture orientation index for government expenditures | 2 percent | 1.1 percent |

Source: Oversea Development Institute. 2020. External finance for rural development. Country case study: Liberia

The GOL's agriculture spending as a percentage of total expenditure has been very low over the decades and has not exceeded 3 percent of total expenditure. Specifically, Liberia's annual budgetary allocation to the agriculture sector has been declining over the years, falling from 2 percent in the fiscal year 2010/2011 to just 1.1 percent (or \$5.8 million) in 2019/2020.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Oversea Development Institute. 2020. External finance for rural development.

## ***Status of Hunger in Liberia***

The increasing levels of poverty in Liberia compel many Liberians to go to bed hungry. Hunger remains a serious policy challenge in Liberia. The most recent data on hunger indicates that hunger remains high in Liberia. In the 2021 Global Hunger Index (GHI).<sup>11</sup> Liberia ranks 110<sup>th</sup> out of the 116 countries, with a score of 33.3 points out of 100. The ranking and corresponding score implies that Liberia has a level of hunger that is serious.<sup>12</sup>

On April 7, 2022, the Global Hunger Index report was released by Welthungerhilfe and Concern Worldwide in Monrovia. The report revealed that even though Liberia's GHI score has decreased by 14.8 points since 2000, hunger is still categorized as serious in the country. It estimates that hunger will increase, because the GHI decline seen since the beginning of the century is slowing down.<sup>13</sup>

## ***Food Security and Nutrition***

The serious nature of hunger is as a result of food insecurity. In Liberia, food insecurity remains a chronic challenge due to problems of post-conflict social rehabilitation, volatile food prices, change in food supply, low-scale merchandise farming and potential health crises, one of which is the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>14</sup> Like other countries, COVID-19 has disrupted all four pillars of food security in Liberia - food availability, food stability, food utilization and food accessibility. The share of Liberia's population who consume fewer than 2,400 calories per day, the minimum threshold for per capita intake, is approximately 39 percent.<sup>15</sup>

In 2021, the GOL provided preventive nutrition services across 514 health facilities in 2021 (up from 228 in 2020 nationwide). In total, 244,273 caregivers of children aged 0–23 months received infant and young child feeding counselling; 140,676 pregnant women received iron folic acid (IFA) supplementation; and 171,616 children aged 6–23 months received micronutrient powder supplementation.<sup>16</sup> For the first time, an adolescent nutrition program was introduced and piloted in 124 schools. The package included weekly IFA supplementation, twice yearly deworming, and nutrition education for adolescent girls. The reopening of schools in January 2021 enabled acceleration of the school adolescent nutrition program, which reached 30,077 adolescent girls (above the 18,080 target).

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<sup>11</sup> The Global Hunger Index is a peer-reviewed annual report, jointly published by Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe, designed to comprehensively measure and track hunger at the global, regional, and country levels. GHI scores are calculated each year to assess progress and setbacks in combating hunger

<sup>12</sup> Scores between 20.0 and 34.9 signify “serious” hunger

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.alliance2015.org/2021-ghi-liberia-launch/>

<sup>14</sup> Forkpah Pewee and Helena Mulbah. 2021. COVID-19, Food Insecurity and Health in Liberia

<sup>15</sup> <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/236071597273341403/pdf/Project-Information-Document-Integrated-Safeguards-Data-Sheet-Additional-Financing-for-Liberia-Social-Safety-Nets-Project-LSSN-AF-P173145.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> UNICEF Liberia. 2021. Annual Report

### 4.3. Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

#### 3.1.1 Maternal mortality ratio

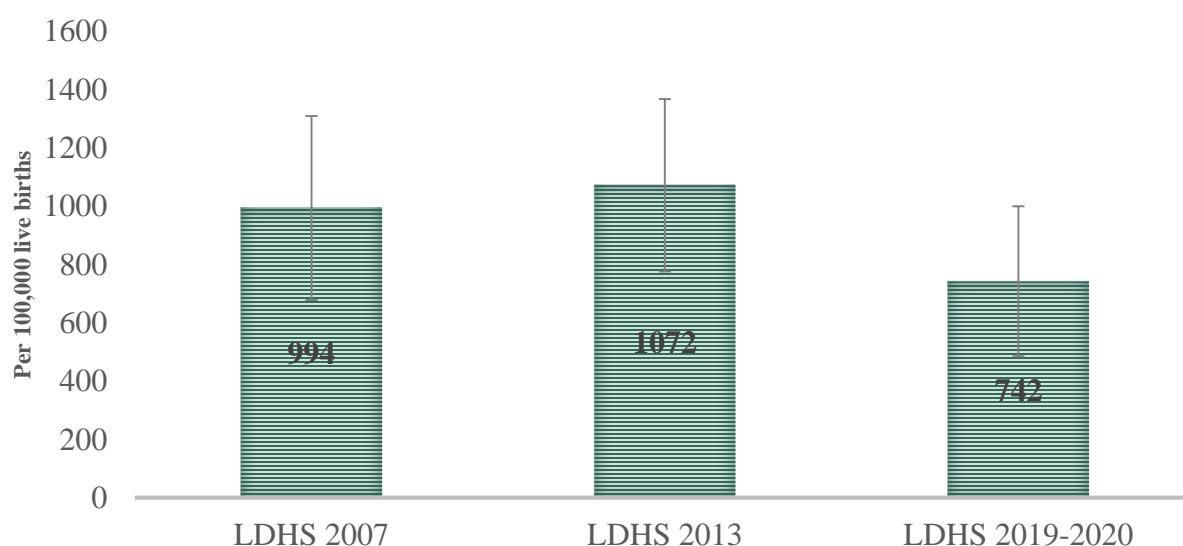
**Table 8: Maternal mortality ratio in 2013 and 2019/2020**

| Indicator                | 2013              | 2019/2020       |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Maternal mortality ratio | 1,072 per 100,000 | 742 per 100,000 |

Source: LDHS 2013 and LDHS 2019-2020

Liberia has made remarkable strides over the years in reducing maternal mortality ratio (MMR<sup>17</sup>) by 31 percent, from 1,072 per 100,000 in 2013 to 742 per 100,000 live births.<sup>18</sup> The reduction in MMR is as a result of improving access to quality maternal healthcare services; promoting knowledge on reproductive health; and bolstering the capacity of local and national authorities to link community level care with formal healthcare services. The Figure below mirrors the above table.

**Figure 1: Trend in maternal mortality ratio**



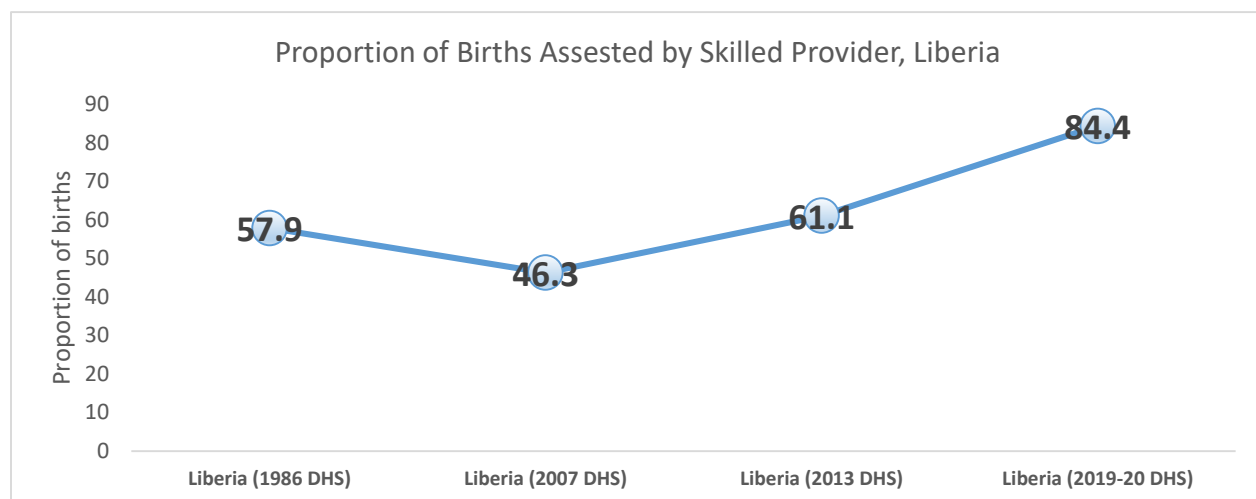
#### 3.1.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel

The proportion of birth within the population that were attended to or assisted by a skilled provider is an important quality marker as much as it does assure of reduce risk of adverse outcome for the mother and unborn baby. The proportion of birth attended to by a skilled provider have increased overtime from 46.3 percent as was reported by LDHS 2007 to 84.4 percent in 2019-2020 (LDHS) and notably increased by 23.3 percent between the last two successive LDHS.

<sup>17</sup> MMR is defined as women who died when pregnant, during delivery, or within 42 days of delivery or the termination of a pregnancy, except when death was due to an accident or violence

<sup>18</sup> Government of Liberia. Demographic Health Survey 2020

**Figure 2: Proportion of birth assisted by skilled providers in Liberia**



### 3.2.1 Under-five mortality rate

**Table 9: Under-five mortality rate**

| Indicator                 | 2007                     | 2013                    | 2019/2020               |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Under-five mortality rate | 110 per 1000 live births | 94 per 1000 live births | 93 per 1000 live births |

Source: LDHS 2019/2020

The LDHS (2019-2020) found that under-5 mortality rate reduced from 110 per 1000 live births in 2007, to 94 per live births in 2013, and 93 deaths per 1000 live births in 2019/2020. Child mortality decreased from 43 to 33 deaths per 1000 live births. Existing data reveals that infant, child, and under-5 mortality are lower in urban areas (57, 30 and 85 deaths per 1000 live births respectively) than in rural areas (69, 36 and 102 deaths per 1000 live births).

### 3.2.2 Neonatal mortality rate

**Table 10: Neonatal mortality rate**

| Indicator               | 2013                    | 2019/2020               |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Neonatal mortality rate | 26 per 1000 live births | 37 per 1000 live births |

Source: LDHS 2013 and LDHS 2019-2020

The LDHS (2019-2020) indicates a worsening neonatal mortality rate at 37 per 1000 live births in 2019/2020, compared to 26 per 1000 live births in 2013.

### 3.3.1 Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex, age and key populations

**Table 11: New HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex, age, and key populations**

| Indicator: Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex, age and key populations | 2013 | 2021 |
|--|------|------|
| Men who have sex with men  | 19.8 | 37.9 |
| Uniform service personnel  | 5.0  | 17.6 |
| Female sex workers   | 9.8  | 16.7 |
| People who inject drugs  | 3.0  | 14.4 |
| Transport workers  | 4.8  | 9.6  |

Source: IBBSS 2021

HIV remains a major public health challenge in Liberia. In September 2021, the WHO released an Integrated Biological and Behavioral Surveillance Survey (IBBSS) report on HIV/AIDS and other diseases. The report revealed an increase in HIV prevalence in almost all the population groups, compared to the 2013 figures.

The IBBSS study found 37.9 percent (19.8 percent in 2013) HIV prevalence in men who have sex with men, followed by transgender women with 27.6 percent (not included in 2013 IBBSS), uniformed service personnel, 17.6 percent (5.0 percent in 2013), female sex workers, 16.7 percent (9.8 percent in 2013), people who inject drugs, 14.4 percent (3.9 percent in 2013), transport workers, 9.6 percent (4.8 percent in 2013), and inmates, 5.6 percent (not included in 2013 IBBSS). Only mobile traders and miners showed slight declines in HIV prevalence from 4.5 percent in 2013 to 3.8 percent, and from 3.8 percent in 2013 to 3.0 percent, respectively.

It is likely that the increase in HIV prevalence is as a result of limited knowledge on prevention methods. The LDHS (2020) found that, among women, there has been little change in knowledge of HIV prevention methods since 2013. However, knowledge among men has increased. In 2013, 68 percent of men knew that consistent use of condoms and limiting sexual intercourse to one uninfected partner can reduce the risk of HIV, as compared with 77 percent in 2019-2020.

In 2021, the GOL trained 204 health professionals from 54 health facilities and 15 county health teams and 300 other participants (students, teachers, and school administrators from 30 schools) to provide pediatric HIV care and basic HIV/AIDS awareness/prevention, and life skills.

### 3.3.2 Tuberculosis incidence per 1,000 population

**Table 12: Tuberculosis incidence per 1,000 population**

| Indicator                                   | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|---|------|------|------|------|
| Tuberculosis incidence per 1,000 population | 135  | 133  | 130  | 127  |

Source: World Bank. See link: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.TBS.INCD>



From 2017 to 2020, the incidence of tuberculosis in Liberia reduced slightly. However, Liberia ranks as one of the top 30 countries with high tuberculosis infection rates globally and is one of nine highly endemic countries in the Africa. There are 370 health facilities that provide tuberculosis services in the country. In 2020, the National Tuberculosis Program confirmed and treated 6,990 patients and 7,446 patients in 2021, representing an improvement in the treatment outcomes.<sup>19</sup> The LDHS (2020) notes that knowledge of tuberculosis is high in Liberia as 91 percent of women and 92 percent of men ages 15-49 who participated in the survey said that they have heard of tuberculosis.

### 3.3.3 Malaria incidence per 1,000 population

**Table 13: Malaria incidence per 1,000 population**

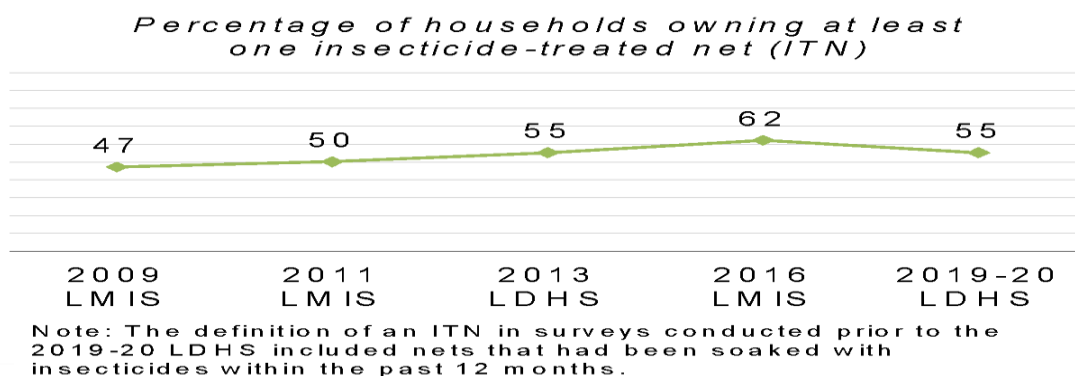
| Indicator                              | 2017  | 2018  | 2019  | 2020 |
|--|-------|-------|-------|------|
| Malaria incidence per 1,000 population | 392.3 | 383.2 | 369.6 | 358  |

World Bank: See link: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.MLR.INCD.P3?locations=LR>

Malaria is endemic in Liberia and remains one of the foremost public health problems in the country, which takes a toll on children under age 5 and pregnant women. Based on the data presented above, the incidence of malaria has gradually reduced from 2017 to 2020. In part, this is due to the increasing use of treated mosquito nets across the country.

As the LDHS (2019-2020) reports, several households are using mosquito nets to prevent malaria. Fifty-six percent of households in Liberia have at least one mosquito net, while 55 percent have at least one insecticide-treated bed nets (ITN). Twenty-five percent of households have achieved full household ITN coverage, meaning that there is at least one ITN for every two persons who slept in the household the night before the LDH survey. The remaining households either have no ITNs (45 percent) or do not have enough ITNs for all household members (30 percent). After increasing from 47% in 2009 to 62% in 2016, ownership of ITNs dropped to 55% in 2019-2020.

**Figure 3: Percent of households owning at least one insecticide-treated net**



<sup>19</sup> <https://www.afro.who.int/countries/liberia/news/all-i-needed-was-love-care-and-treatment-my-journey-tuberculosis-survivor>

In addition to using ITNs, many women reported that they took preventive malaria drugs. Ninety percent of women with a live birth in the 2 years before the survey reported taking one or more doses of fansidar during their last pregnancy; 70 percent reported taking two or more doses, and 40 percent reported taking three or more doses.



#### 4.4. Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

4.1.1 Proportion of children and young people: (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex

**Table 14: Total Enrolment by Level and Provider Type, 2015 and 2020\_Primary & Jr High**

| Layers of Learning | School ownership | 2015           | 2020           |
|--------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Primary</b>     | <b>Total</b>     | <b>655,049</b> | <b>607,558</b> |
|                    | Community        | 37,159         | 27,937         |
|                    | Faith-Based      | 86,472         | 107,916        |
|                    | Private          | 194,042        | 193,612        |
|                    | Public           | 337,376        | 278,093        |
|                    | % of Public      | 52%            | 46%            |
| <b>JHS</b>         | <b>Total</b>     | <b>166,921</b> | <b>168,379</b> |
|                    | Community        | 5,114          | 5,669          |
|                    | Faith-Based      | 31,435         | 40,802         |
|                    | Private          | 61,415         | 68,743         |
|                    | Public           | 68,957         | 53,165         |
|                    | % of Public      | 41%            | 32%            |
| <b>SHS</b>         | <b>Total</b>     | <b>105,875</b> | <b>106,194</b> |
|                    | Community        | 2,035          | 1,734          |
|                    | Faith-Based      | 30,037         | 30,714         |
|                    | Private          | 41,125         | 47,680         |
|                    | Public           | 32,678         | 26,066         |
|                    | % of Public      | 31%            | 25%            |

Source: Education Sector Analysis in Liberia, 2021

As shown in the table above, primary school enrolment decreased from 655,049 in 2015 to 607,558 in 2020. On the other hand, Junior Secondary School (JHS) enrolment increased from 166,921 in 2015 to 168,379 in 2020; and Senior Secondary School (SHS) increased from 105,875 in 2015 to 106,194 in 2020.

4.2.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by sex.

**Table 15: Enrollment in Early Childhood Education (ECE) by Sex**

| Enrollment in ECE | Male    | Female  |
|-------------------|---------|---------|
| 2019              | 225,520 | 222,232 |
| 2015              | 539,660 |         |

Source: PAPD @ A GLANCE, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning

In 2015, the total ECE enrollment was 539,660,<sup>20</sup> while in 2019 the ECE enrollment rose to 892,216 (225,520 male and 222,232 female).<sup>21</sup> ECE enrolment in Liberia is some of the highest in the sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>22</sup> This is, however, driven by two factors: 1) the high proportion of overaged children observed in pre-primary classrooms (i.e., age 6+) and 2) the late enrolment or registration of children at the appropriate age.

Liberia formally recognized ECE as a vital part of its educational system (Education Reform Act, 2011). This recognition led to the establishment of a Bureau for Early Childhood Education which is responsible for designing, developing, implementing, coordinating, monitoring, and reviewing all early childhood education programs.<sup>23</sup> It also supports the registration and quality assurance of all ECE programs and provides oversight to teachers.

Since this development, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has made progress since the 2020 VNR as ECE progressed from policy formulation to policy implementation. The MoE commenced training of ECE teachers at the Webbo Teachers Training Institute (WRTTI) for the ECE C Certificate program for the first time. This is a giant step in developing a cohort of ECE teachers who specifically received such training offered by the MoE for the first time. The MoE has now also incorporated the monitoring and evaluation of ECE activities as part of its school supervision across the country with county and district education officers leading on the monitoring activity.

#### **4.3.1 Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex**

##### **Alternative Basic Education (ABE) and Accelerated Learning Program (ALP)**

**Table 16: Total Enrolment ALP by County, 2015 and 2020.**

| County             | 2015   | 2020   |
|--------------------|--------|--------|
| Bomi               | 157    | 13     |
| Bong               | 1,548  | 1,762  |
| Gbarpolu           | 0      | 39     |
| Grand Bassa        | 581    | 1,238  |
| <b>Grand Gedeh</b> | 272    | 0      |
| <b>Lofa</b>        | 2,092  | 1,778  |
| <b>Margibi</b>     | 1,463  | 2,200  |
| <b>Maryland</b>    | 482    | 0      |
| <b>Montserrado</b> | 4,325  | 2,713  |
| <b>Nimba</b>       | 1,972  | 3,568  |
| <b>Sinoe</b>       | 60     | 0      |
| <b>Total</b>       | 12,952 | 13,311 |

Source: Education Sector analysis, 2021.

<sup>20</sup> 2015 ECE data was not disaggregated by sex

<sup>21</sup> PAPD @ A GLANCE, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning

<sup>22</sup> LDHS 2019/2020

<sup>23</sup> Liberia 2020 VNR Report

The MoE continued to support the running of the ABE and ALP programs. Through these programs, the MoE continued to address some of the overaged problems of the system since the ALP introduction in 1998. The ABE and ALP programs compress six years of formal primary education into three years. In contrast, ABE offers a three-year non-formal educational program where learners participate in literacy, numeracy, and livelihood skills training. A total of 13,311 (0.9 percent) students were enrolled into the ALP program.

At the end of the ALP program in three years, the learners are transitioned back into the formal education system, whether into the appropriate grade level for their age or to TVET options.

Despite an extensive policy implementation and partnership with education stakeholders, overall enrolment in ALP remains relatively low in Liberia at just under 13,000 students in 2020, representing just over 2% of primary enrolment.<sup>24</sup>

One notable activity the MoE implemented to boost the ALP program was the Alternative Quality Education (AQE) program. The MoE through the AQE worked with approximately 48,000 out-of-school children in Liberia.

Besides, the MoE continues to provide over 21,000 young people in targeted areas of Grand Bassa, Lofa, and Montserrado counties with the skills, experience, support, and relationships to productively engage with their local economies. By the end of this activity in 2021, MoE would have assisted nearly 8,000 youth to transition to employment or start an enterprise.

#### **Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)**

**Table 17: Number of TVET institutions by region and county, 2015-16**

| Region          | County           | Number of TVET institutions |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| North Central   | Bong             | 1                           |
|                 | Nimba            | 15                          |
|                 | Lofa             | 4                           |
| North -Western  | Bomi             | 1                           |
|                 | Grand Cape Mount | 1                           |
|                 | Gbarpolu         | 1                           |
| South Central   | Montserrado      | 28                          |
|                 | Margibi          | 8                           |
|                 | Grand Bassa      | 1                           |
| South-Eastern A | River Cess       | 2                           |
|                 | Sinoe            | 1                           |
|                 | Grand Gedeh      | 2                           |
| South-Eastern B | River Gee        | 0                           |
|                 | Grand Kru        | 0                           |
|                 | Maryland         | 0                           |
| <b>Total</b>    |                  | <b>65</b>                   |

Source: MoE EMIS data

<sup>24</sup> USAID.GOV/LIBERIA Education Sector Fact Sheet, January 2021

TVET is a primary means the government uses to ensure that the country's youth acquire work-related skills. Of overall student enrollment, only 1 percent (14,315) are enrolled in TVET programs across the country. This low enrollment figure for the TVET level is partly as the result of many TVET school not participating in the 2019/2020 school data collection as a result of COVID - 19.

While the TVET sector is facing several challenges, there have been a number of significant achievements by the MoE including the creation of an Inter-Ministerial TVET Taskforce, which demonstrates commitment for reform within the sector. Other achievements include the development of the first National TVET Policy, the development of guiding principles for the TVET system, the development of a detailed operational and costing plan, and a TVET legal framework. These formed the basis for implementing TVET activities and it ensures uniformity throughout the country especially since these instruments are used by every actor in the sector. The MoE EMIS 2019/2020 report revealed that there are 65 TVET institutions in Liberia. Most TVET schools are in the South Central (37) and North Central (20) regions. The other regions are largely underserved with barely three TVET institutions in the North-West, five in South-East A and none in South-East B (Table 17). Twenty-eight (43.1 percent) TVET institutions are in Montserrado County.

Despite the gains, many TVET institutions lack modern training facilities to provide the job-ready skills demanded by employers. Moreover, most TVET schools do not have conducive learning environment for students.<sup>25</sup>

However, the MoE is carrying out activities that support the sector. For example, in April 2021, the MoE launched the Improving Results in Secondary Education (IRISE) project. The US\$47 million project aimed at renovating 156 schools and constructing three more throughout the country. The project will also elevate 35 junior high schools to secondary institutions in rural Liberia as well as provide scholarships for 3,000 girls in four counties with high rate of female secondary school dropouts. The program is also supporting the training of TVET teachers abroad.

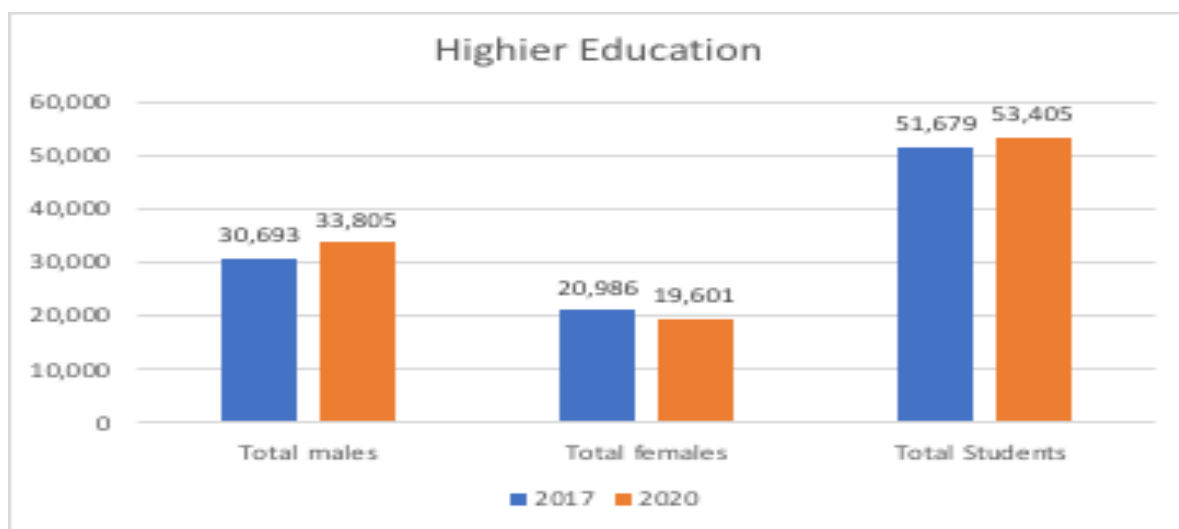
## **Higher Education**

In higher education, the number of students has increased from 51,679 (30,693 males and 20,986 females) in 2017 to 53,405 (33,805 males and 19,601 females) in 2020.

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<sup>25</sup> Education Sector Analysis, 2021

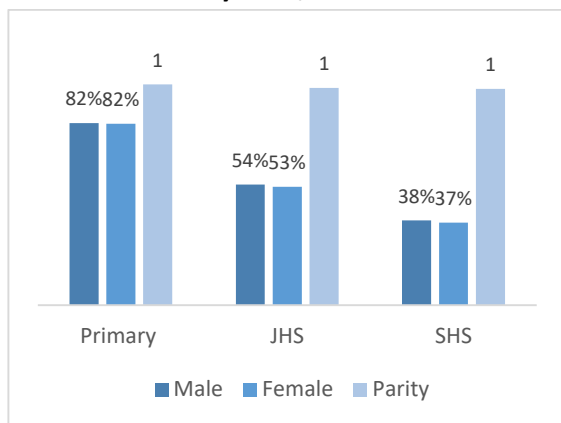
**Figure 4: Enrollment in Higher Education**



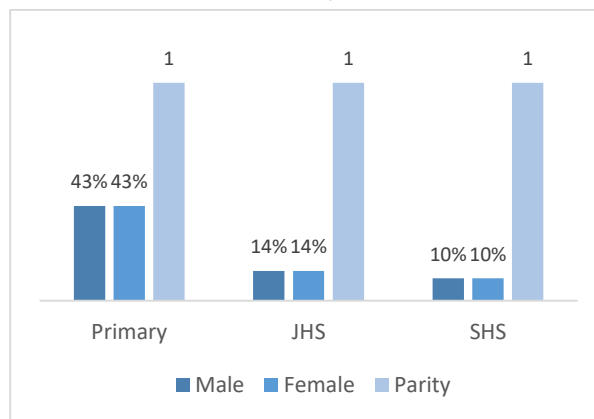
*4.5.1 Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated*

**Gender parity index (GPI)<sup>26</sup>**

**Figure 5: Gross enrolment and gender parity by level, 2020**



**Figure 6: Net enrolment and parity by gender and level, 2020**



Source: EMIS, 2020

<sup>26</sup> A GPI of 1 indicates parity or equality between male and female school participation ratios.

The MoE analysis of EMIS, 2020 data showed evidence of gender parity in gross and net enrolment across all levels of education in 2020. According to the MoE, its emphasis on awareness of issues that hinder girl’s education such as earlier marriage, male preferment over female, unfriendly school spaces for girls and limited gender sensitive WASH facilities among other help to improve the parity.

### Characteristics of Children 0 – 5 years old by Wealth Quintile and Locality, 2019

**Table 18: Characteristics of Children 0-5 years-old by wealth quintile and locality, 2019.**

|  | Wealth quintile |         |        |        |        |         | Locality |       |
|--|-----------------|---------|--------|--------|--------|---------|----------|-------|
|  | Overall         | Poorest | Poorer | Middle | Richer | Richest | Urban    | Rural |
| Stunted  | 30%             | 38%     | 35%    | 31%    | 24%    | 14%     | 25%      | 35%   |
| Wasted   | 3%              | 2%      | 3%     | 5%     | 5%     | 2%      | 3%       | 3%    |
| Underweight  | 11%             | 14%     | 10%    | 11%    | 12%    | 6%      | 9%       | 13%   |
| Who received Vit A supplement in the past 6 months   | 52%             | 46%     | 53%    | 48%    | 55%    | 58%     | 52%      | 52%   |
| All slept under a mosquito net last night  | 40%             | 36%     | 50%    | 42%    | 39%    | 32%     | 39%      | 41%   |
| With a fever in the last 2 weeks who had blood taken for testing (proxy measure of diagnostic testing for malaria) | 49%             | 46%     | 54%    | 52%    | 51%    | 54%     | 47%      | 51%   |

*Source: Education Sector Analysis, 2021 (Authors calculations, DHS 2019).*

Young children in Liberia are more likely to be stunted than wasted or underweight, indicating a lack of access to nutritious and diverse food. Stunting is also most strongly correlated with wealth status and locality, with more affluent and urban populations being less at risk. Of note, less than 50 percent of children aged 0-5 were reported to have slept under a mosquito net the night proceeding the survey (LDHS, 2019). In comparison, around 50 percent had similarly been tested for malaria in the past two weeks, demonstrating a prevalence of the virus and lack of access to or use of preventative measures in the country<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Liberia Education Reform Act, 2011



## Inclusive Education (Disability Factor)

As reported by the MoE, it was estimated in 2014 that 92 000 out of the 600 000 school-aged child had disabilities or 15.3 percent. However, as seen in **Error! Reference source not found.19**, less than 1 percent of students enrolled in 2020 were reported to have a disability across all levels, with this highest at 0.74 percent in junior secondary.

| Level          | Total Students | Proportion of Total |
|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <b>Primary</b> | 2635           | 0.44%               |
| <b>JSS</b>     | 1245           | 0.74%               |
| <b>SSS</b>     | 461            | 0.43%               |

Source: Education Sector Analysis, 2021

In terms of disability type, there is an even spread between children with visual, physical and hearing impairments as well as learning difficulties across levels. The proportion of CwD with learning difficulties decreases from 31 percent in primary to 19 percent in senior secondary suggesting that these students are more likely to drop out as they proceed through the levels. The small proportion of students with disabilities observed across all levels suggests an under representation of this population in the student population, indicating continued barriers to enrolment<sup>28</sup>

| Visually Impaired | Physical Handicap | Hearing Impaired | Learning Difficulty |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Primary</b>    | 24%               | 22%              | 31%                 |
| <b>JSS</b>        | 22%               | 27%              | 20%                 |
| <b>SSS</b>        | 28%               | 33%              | 19%                 |

Source: Education Sector Analysis, 2021

The Liberia children’s law of 2011 is firmly in place. It preserves children with disabilities’ (CwD) right to education in Liberia, stating “every child with disabilities shall access and benefit from an inclusive education system offering education that is responsive and supportive to the child’s learning needs and talents in a participative and non-discriminatory manner” (GOL, 2011).

The law commits the GOL to initiate and develop special programs to allow individuals with physical and developmental challenges to gain the appropriate skills and knowledge at their own pace, without prejudice. The MoE commitment to providing CwD with equal educational opportunities was highlighted in the “Inclusive Education Policy” in 2018. This commits the MoE to promote attendance of CwD, other marginalized and vulnerable children in age-appropriate classes in local schools. The policy acknowledges “that when children are not accessing, participating in or achieving in education, it is not their fault, rather it is a problem with the system” (Ministry of Education, 2018).

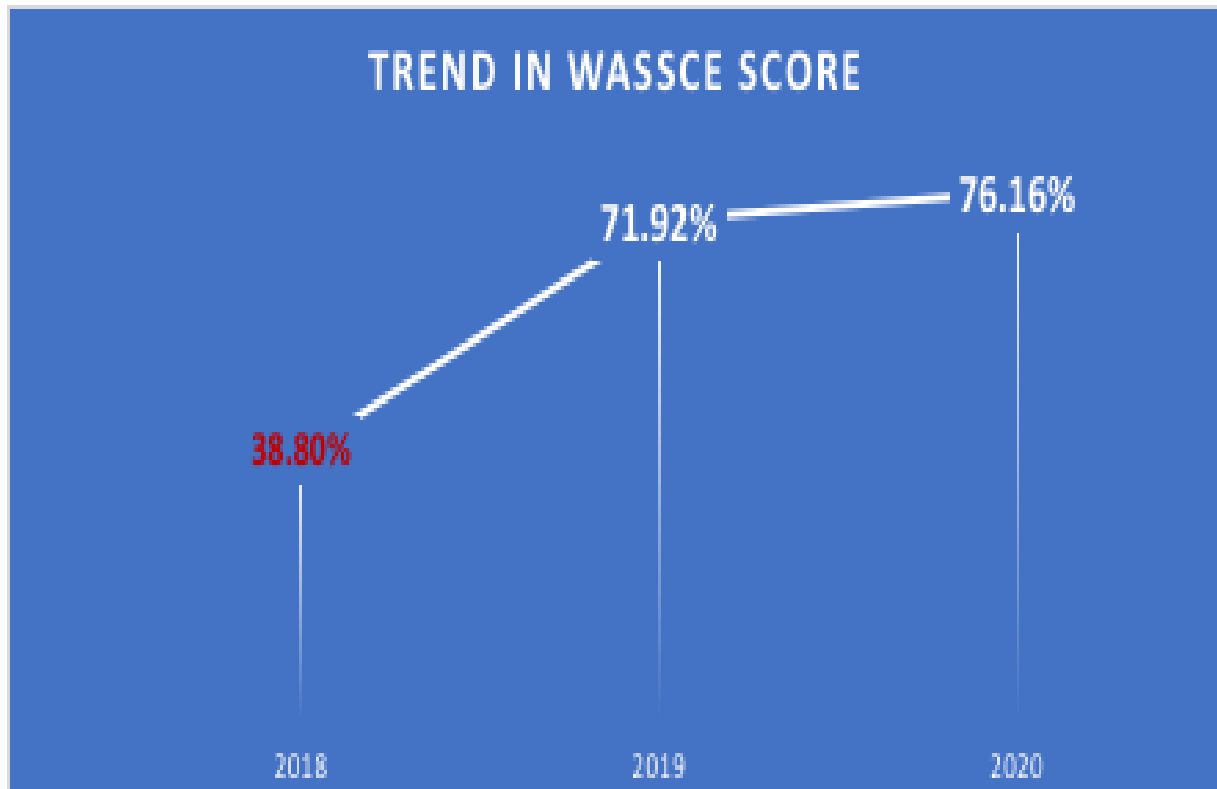
<sup>28</sup> Ibid

**4.6.1 Percentage of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex**

**WASSCE results (percentage by gender, public/private schools, division and county)**

A key national indicator to assessing learning outcome is the number of students passing the regional West African Exam. This indicator has increased from 38.8 percent in 2018 to 76.2 percent in 2020.<sup>29</sup>

**Figure 7: Trend in WASSCE Score**



This nearly 100 percent increase in the passing rate is as a result of key policy measures and interventions by government which include:

- i. Early preparation of students, teachers as well as the educational facilities.
- ii. Payment of WASSCE fees for all junior and senior high school students.
- iii. Free tutorial programs for all students in the junior and senior schools in public institutions.
- iv. A buttressing effort was the payment of transportations reimbursement to nearly all students that participated in the examination process.

<sup>29</sup> PAPD @ A GLANCE, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning

**Table 41: Distribution of proficiency level by sub-domain and ownership**

| Sub-Domain            | Proficiency Level | Government | Community | Mission | Private | Church |
|-----------------------|-------------------|------------|-----------|---------|---------|--------|
| <b>Literacy</b>       | 1                 | 4%         | 7%        | -       | 8%      | 13%    |
|                       | 2                 | 40%        | 35%       | 20%     | 26%     | 29%    |
|                       | 3                 | 39%        | 47%       | 80%     | 43%     | 43%    |
|                       | 4                 | 18%        | 11%       | -       | 23%     | 15%    |
| <b>Numeracy</b>       | 1                 | 14%        | 26%       | -       | 20%     | 29%    |
|                       | 2                 | 24%        | 34%       | 10%     | 22%     | 19%    |
|                       | 3                 | 50%        | 29%       | 80%     | 40%     | 40%    |
|                       | 4                 | 12%        | 11%       | 10%     | 18%     | 12%    |
| <b>Socioemotional</b> | 1                 | 11%        | 10%       | -       | 8%      | 12%    |
|                       | 2                 | 1%         | -         | -       | 1%      | -      |
|                       | 3                 | 61%        | 66%       | 70%     | 61%     | 57%    |
|                       | 4                 | 27%        | 24%       | 30%     | 31%     | 31%    |
| <b>Overall</b>        | 1                 | 2%         | 7%        | -       | 9%      | 15%    |
|                       | 2                 | 41%        | 44%       | 10%     | 27%     | 30%    |
|                       | 3                 | 43%        | 38%       | 70%     | 43%     | 39%    |
|                       | 4                 | 13%        | 12%       | 20%     | 21%     | 16%    |

Source: Education Sector Analysis, 2021 (Author's calculations, MEQLO data, ELSP, 2018).

According to the MoE, socioemotional sub-domain had the highest proportions of students scoring in the highest proficiency level with all school ownership types having around 27-30 percent of students scoring in this category. Numeracy had the highest proportion of students scoring in the lowest proficiency level, ranging from a low of 14 percent in government schools to 29 percent in church schools.

In sum, government, community, and church schools have similar proportions of students scoring in the third and fourth proficiency levels, while private and mission schools have significantly higher proportions scoring in the fourth proficiency level. Private schools have a greater proportion of students scoring in the highest proficiency level than both government and community schools across all sub-domains.

*4.c.1 Proportion of teachers in: (a) pre-primary; (b) primary; (c) lower secondary; and (d) upper secondary education who have received at least the minimum organized teacher training (e.g. pedagogical training) pre-service or in-service required for teaching at the relevant level in a given country*

#### **Trained Teachers in Pre-School, Primary and Secondary Education**

The MoE runs a series of teachers training activities in the various teachers training institutions across the country for all levels of the education system as presented in Table 22.

**Table 22: Trained Teachers at all levels**

| Gender         | Male         |              | Female       |              | Total        |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|                | Count        | %            | Count        | %            |              |
| <b>ECE</b>     | 9828         | 66.7%        | 4896         | 33.3%        | 14724        |
| <b>Primary</b> | 4491         | 20.0%        | 17997        | 80.0%        | 22488        |
| <b>JSE</b>     | 1571         | 11.8%        | 11774        | 88.2%        | 13345        |
| <b>SSE</b>     | 926          | 9.6%         | 8720         | 90.4%        | 9646         |
| <b>TVET</b>    | 117          | 34.5%        | 222          | 65.5%        | 339          |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>16933</b> | <b>28.0%</b> | <b>43609</b> | <b>72.0%</b> | <b>60542</b> |

Source: EMIS 2019/2020

There are about 60,542 teachers in Liberia. There is a significant gender disparity among teachers at all levels of education in Liberia. Generally, 28 percent of all the teachers in Liberia are females. While 66.7 percent of the teachers at the ECE level are females, only 20 percent, 11.8 percent, and 9.6 percent of teachers at the Primary, JSE, and SSE levels, respectively, are females.<sup>30</sup>

### Pupil-Teachers Ratio – Pre-Primary

**Table 23: Pupil Teacher Ratios by County, 2020 (Pre-primary).**

| County           | PTR   |
|------------------|-------|
| Bomi             | 1 :39 |
| Bong             | 1 :39 |
| Gbarpolu         | 1 :38 |
| Grand Bassa      | 1 :49 |
| Grand Cape Mount | 1 :38 |
| Grand Gedeh      | 1 :31 |
| Grand Kru        | 1 :32 |
| Lofa             | 1 :42 |
| Margibi          | 1 :42 |
| Maryland         | 1 :39 |
| Montserrado      | 1 :33 |
| Nimba            | 1 :35 |
| River Gee        | 1 :30 |
| Rivercess        | 1 :45 |
| Sinoe            | 1: 31 |
| Total            | 1 :37 |

*Source: Education Sector Analysis, 2021*

When we put this number of teachers in context with the student population, there is an average of 1 teacher per 37 students in pre-primary classrooms. This represents many students per teacher, especially when considering the young age of pre-primary children who generally require more supervision. The pupil-teacher ratios (PTRs) vary across counties, ranging from a higher of 1:49 in Grand Bassa to a low of 1:30 in River Gee suggesting an uneven distribution of teachers.

The 2021 MoE report showed there is an acute shortage of trained teachers in basic and senior secondary schools, a reflection of the low output from rural teachers training institutes (RTTIs), with the share of trained teachers ranging from 35 percent in ECE, 45 percent in primary, 31 percent in junior high and 26 percent in senior secondary. With an average of 45 percent of teachers trained, this places Liberia below the Sub-Saharan Africa average of 68 percent.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> EMIS, 2019/2020

<sup>31</sup> USAID.GOV/LIBERIA Education Sector Fact Sheet, January 2021

**4.5. Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**



**5.1.1 Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex**

**Table 24: List of New Key National Legal and Policy Frameworks Developed**

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 1. | National Gender Policy (NGP) – 2018-2022                      |
| 2. | Legal Aid Policy for marginalized population (2021)           |
| 3. | Gender-Responsive Planning and Budgeting (GRPB) Policy (2019) |
| 4. | Gender policies for government institutions (2021)            |
| 5. | Anti-SGBV Roadmap (2020-2022)                                 |

The GOL has ratified and adopted key international and regional instruments for the promotion and empowerment of women, girls and gender equality. Some of these include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol, United Nations Declaration on Violence Against Women (1993), Beijing Platform for Action in 1995, the SDGs (2030), and others. At the Regional level, Liberia is a party to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights, its Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2004).

To help implement the above international and regional commitments, Liberia has in place a National Gender Policy (NGP). The revised NGP (2018-2022) serves as the framework for the reduction and elimination of gender inequality, discrimination, exclusion, and marginalization, and the creation of opportunities for equitable distribution of resources and services. To complement the NGP, Liberia has a National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security – to guide the prevention of violence against women, their protection, and their participation in the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts.

In 2021, the GOL approved a Legal Aid Policy to help improve access to justice for “marginalized women, widows, children, pretrial detainees and indigent Liberians”<sup>32</sup>. During the period under review, 32 women-led civil society organizations were trained on the provisions of the Legal Aid policy. Also, the GOL validated an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Policy to provide alternative means for conflict resolution at the community level. Following the development of the ADR policy, the GOL developed and finalized a Traditional Leaders Training Manual on the ADR policy. In the coming years, it is expected that implementation of the legal aid and ADR policies will help improve access to justice for women and other vulnerable groups in Liberia.

<sup>32</sup> <https://frontpageafricaonline.com/legal-issues/liberia-justice-ministry-carter-center-un-women-afell-validate-legal-aid-policy/#:~:text=The%20Legal%20Aid%20System%20is,fees%20are%20not%20denied%20justice.>

In 2019, the GOL developed a gender-responsive planning and budgeting (GRPB) policy. The policy guides the GOL on how to advance gender equality and contribute to equitable service delivery and inclusive growth.<sup>33</sup> It outlines the tools and actions for Public Financial Management (PFM) reforms to be gender responsive for a more gender-equal outcomes. In 2021, the GOL provided capacity building trainings to PFM stakeholders at national and county level on how to mainstream gender in planning and budgeting processes to respond to the differentiated needs of women. To support implementation of the GRPB Policy, the GOL allotted USD\$380,000 in the FY 2022 national budget to support the institutionalization of gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) in nine ministries.<sup>34</sup> The GOL trained 34 CSOs on the links between the FY 2022 National Budget, a policy implementation tool that complements the revised National Gender Policy (2018-2023), and the GRPB Policy.<sup>35</sup>

Along this line, the GOL developed gender policies for several institutions in 2021 to guide the institutions in incorporating gender-equality considerations and principles in the discharge of their functions along with the setting up of Gender and Social Inclusion Units.

The Government along with civil society organizations and international partners developed the Country Gender Equality Profile, first of its kind in Liberia. It provides an in-depth analysis that enhances the understanding of the differences in the conditions, needs, participation rates, access to resources and property rights, development planning and control of assets, decision-making powers between girls, women, boys, and men in their assigned gender roles.

Additionally, the Government along with national and international partners developed the Second Phase National Action Plan (NAP) of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace, and Security. The Government also developed a three-year implementation plan along with training manuals and reporting templates for implementing the NAP.

Also, in 2021, the GOL drafted a Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Policy to ensure protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA). The GOL aims to end SEA in the public sector with a view that the policy will be cascaded to the private sector.<sup>36</sup>

### *5.2.2 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence*

**Table 25: Percentage of women and girls subjected to sexual violence 12 months prior to the LDHS of 2019-2020**

| Indicator  | Age   | Over the past 12 months |
|--|-------|-------------------------|
| Percentage of women and girls subjected to sexual violence 12 months prior to the LDHS of 2019-2020. | 15-19 | 3.4                     |
|  | 20-24 | 5.9                     |
|  | 25-29 | 2.5                     |
|  | 30-39 | 4.7                     |
|  | 40-49 | 5.8                     |
|  | Urban | 12.4                    |
|  | Rural | 5.7                     |

Source: LDHS 2019-2020

<sup>33</sup> Government of Liberia. 2019. Gender-responsive Planning and Budgeting Policy

<sup>34</sup> United Nations. 2021. Annual Report – Liberia Spotlight Initiative

<sup>35</sup> Ibid

<sup>36</sup> United Nations. 2021. Annual Report – Liberia Spotlight Initiative

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) remains a challenge in Liberia. As the LDHS (2019-2020) shows, women and girls across different age groups were subjected to sexual violence 12 months prior to the survey. The LDHS further revealed that 60 percent of women aged 15-49 experienced physical violence, 7 percent of whom experienced physical violence during pregnancy.

In 2020, as COVID-19 containment measures were put in place, the country experienced alarming increase in SGBV cases. In the first quarter of 2020, the MGCSP reported a total of 803 SGBV cases, with 605 of those cases involving children less than 17 years old. By August 2020, SGBV cases rose above 900. This prompted a three-day protest in Monrovia that brought thousands of Liberians on the street to call for tougher national response to GBV. In response, President George Manneh Weah declared rape a national emergency and set up a task force to address the issue of rape. The taskforce immediately developed a roadmap to address SGBV at all levels of the society.

The 2021 SGBV Statistical Report of the MGCSP states that a total of 1,761 SGBV cases were reported, of which 1,199 accounted for rape cases with 1,187 female and 12 male survivors. The survivors benefitted from medical, psychosocial, legal and protection services from Government and Civil Society initiatives. To support implementation of the roadmap, the GOL procured two DNA machines to facilitate DNA testing and samples collection in Liberia. The DNA machines RHID 0487 and RHID 0631 will be used to strengthen access to justice for survivors of SGBV by ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable through the forensic investigation of DNA samples (identification of perpetrators of rape/sexual abuse and related crimes based on the sample from tissue or blood).

Further, to provide evidence in the prosecution of SGBV and other violent crimes, the National Diagnostic Division (NDD) of the Ministry of Health (MOH) assessed laboratories in the five counties in collaboration with key line ministries, including the MGCSP and MoJ to develop and validate a Standard of Operations (SOP) for collection, storage, transportation, and processing of forensic samples. The NDD also collaborated with the Forensic Department of the John F. Kennedy Medical Center to build capacities for lab technicians in the application of the forensic and DNA examination, collection, and handling of specimen preservation and proper investigation.<sup>37</sup>

### ***5.3.2 Proportion of girls and women aged 15-49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting, by age***

Even though there is no conclusive data on this indicator, GOL has made some efforts aimed at curtailing female genital mutilation (FGM). In 2021, the GOL partnered with the leadership of the National Traditional Council of Chiefs and Elders of Liberia (NACCEL) to sustain the moratorium on the practice of FGM throughout the 15 counties of Liberia. The Policy Statement signed between NACCEL and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), which expired in June 2020, was extended for one year, to enable the GOL to finalize the Anti-Female Genital Mutilation Bill for submission to the Liberian Legislature for passage into law. Additionally, the Government and partners trained 300 female Zoes/FGM traditional practitioners in farming and various areas alternative sources of livelihood.

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<sup>37</sup> United Nations. 2021. Annual Report – Liberia Spotlight Initiative

### 5.5.1 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments and local governments

**Table 26: Percentage of women in Liberia’s National Legislature and local governments**

| Indicator  | House of Representatives | Senate | County Superintendents | City Mayors |
|--|--------------------------|--------|------------------------|-------------|
| Percentage of women in Liberia’s Legislature and local governments | 12.3                     | 6.66   | 20.0                   | 33.3        |

Source: Author’s calculation

Liberia has a bicameral parliament, with an Upper House of 30 senators and a Lower House of 73 representatives. Out of 30 senators, there are only two female senators (6.66 percent), and 9 female representatives out of 73 members of the House of Representatives (12.3 percent). Twenty percent of county superintendents are females and 33.3 percent of city mayors are female.



In 2021, the Government along with CSOs and International Partners engaged with aspiring young women and female political leaders, including Representatives and Senators, in an event called **“Mock Parliament Session”**. This process was intended to share knowledge on addressing women’s full participation in elections and politics. It provided the opportunity for women to understand the procedures and processes of the Legislature, as well as understand the key issues affecting women. At the end of the session, two females were elected in the House of Senate and one female in the House of Representative

in the 2021 Legislative Bi-Election.

The proposed New Elections Law, section 4.5 which emphasizes 30 percent gender quota in political parties’ representation listing, was presented to the House of Legislature with recommendations for possible legislation. It has been passed by the House of Representative, awaiting passage at the House of Senate.

### 5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial positions

**Table 27: Proportion of women in cabinet positions (2021)**

| Indicator                                 | Cabinet Positions | Deputy Minister Positions |
|---|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Proportion of women in the cabinet (2021) | 15.8              | 24.5                      |

Source: UN Women



According to a gender profile of Liberia, recently released by the GOL and UN Women, Liberia has a limited number of women in managerial positions in the public sector at both national and sub-national levels. Currently, women hold 15.8 percent of cabinet positions (heads of ministries, agencies, and commissions), hold 24.5 percent of deputy minister positions, and 25.9 percent of assistant minister positions. Out of 15 county superintendents at the sub-national level, only three are women, and out of 30 mayoral positions, only ten are held by women. Additionally, two (40 percent) of the five justices of the Supreme Court of Liberia are women.

### *5.6.1 Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care*

**Table 28: Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions**

| Indicator   | Percentage |
|---|------------|
| Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care | 58         |

Source: LDHS 2019-2020

According to the LDHS (2019-2020), 58 percent of women aged 15-49 years make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use, and reproductive health care. The LDHS reports that almost all women and men aged 15-49 in Liberia know at least one modern method of contraception. The pill, injectable, implants, and male condoms are the most well-known methods. Overall, women know an average of 7.9 contraceptive methods, while men know an average of 7.1 methods.

### ***Institutional Framework for gender equality***

All MACs in the GOL have roles to play in empowering women across different domains. To achieve this, the MGCSP coordinates with other MACs to mainstream gender into their work. In line with this effort, the MGCSP works with MACs to develop gender policies that guide the integration of gender into the mandate areas of different MACs.

Along this line, the MGCSP and its partner, UN Women Liberia, have developed gender policies for several institutions. In 2021, a gender policy for the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) was developed and validated to guide the ministry in incorporating gender-equality considerations and principles in the discharge of its functions.

Across the GOL, the MGCSP works with different institutions to achieve specific gender-related outcomes. For example, the MGCSP works with the MoJ to improve women’s access to justice, works with the MFDP to enhance GRPB, and coordinates with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) to empower women in agriculture. The MGCSP works with the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) to protect and promote the rights of women, works with the National Elections Commission (NEC) to improve women’s political participation, and coordinates with the Liberia Land Authority (LLA) to promote women’s land rights.

### ***Women's participation across sectors***

Historically, women have played limited roles in public life in Liberia due to years of discrimination and marginalization. One area where women's representation remains very low is in elected positions. In the absence of affirmative action laws to boost women's representation, men continue to dominate Liberia's legislative branch of government. According to the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap report (2021), women constitute only 11 percent of Liberia's legislature, as compared to 89 percent men. In 2019, 38 percent of women were employed in agriculture, and 74.9 percent of women who did not work in agriculture had cash-only income. The labor force participation rate of women stands at 73.4 percent in 2021, as compared to 55 percent in 2018.<sup>38</sup>

### ***Women's empowerment***

Throughout 2021, the GOL continued to expand opportunities for the empowerment of women at all levels. The government's approach to women's empowerment is multi-sectoral. This is intended to help address binding constraints that are limiting the abilities of women to improve their welfare.

During the period under review, the GOL continued implementation of the \$50 million ECOWAS-funded project to enhance the capacity of female entrepreneurs in accessing business and non-business information. The project is training women on how to start, promote and grow businesses, and will provide financing and other capacity-building opportunities for women entrepreneurs.

The GOL also provided alternative livelihood opportunities for female traditional leaders. Three hundred former female traditional practitioners benefited from alternative sources of income through conducting climate-smart agriculture and Village Savings and Loan (VSLA) schemes, which generated over LD\$5,173,820.00 in 2021 as compared to LD\$2,149,775.00 in 2020. The GOL provided two sets of agro-processing machines (rice mills and vegetable dryers) to project beneficiaries in Lofa County to improve their climate-smart agriculture outputs and established 12 VSLAs to grow their capital from LD\$2,149,775.00 in 2020 to LD\$5,173,820.00 in 2022.

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<sup>38</sup> World Economic Forum. 2021. Global Gender Gap Report

**6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION**



**4.6. Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all**

**6.1.1 Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services**

**Table 29: Percentage of households have access to an improved water source**

| Indicator  | Percentage |           |
|--|------------|-----------|
|  | 2007       | 2019-2020 |
| Percentage of households have access to an improved water source | 68         | 84        |

Source: LDHS 2019-2020

According to LDHS 2019-2020, 84 percent of households have access to an improved water source (95 percent in urban areas and 69 percent in rural areas). The percentage of households with an improved source of drinking water has increased over time, from 68 percent in 2007 to 84 percent in 2019-2020.



The most common sources of drinking water in urban households are hand pumps, tube wells, or boreholes (48 percent); bottled water or mineral water in sachets (30 percent); and protected dug well (6 percent). Rural households obtain their drinking water mainly from hand pumps, tube wells, or boreholes (63 percent) and protected dug wells (2 percent).<sup>39</sup>

The Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation (LWSC) working along with partners helped to increase access to safe drinking water when it revitalized the water treatment plants in three rural cities: Buchanan, Kakata

and Zwedru including Monrovia under its Integrated Water Resources Management (IRVM).<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> LDHS 2019-2020

<sup>40</sup> Water Resources Profile Series found at [https://winrock.org/wpcontent/uploads/2021/08/Liberia\\_Country\\_Profile-Final.pdf](https://winrock.org/wpcontent/uploads/2021/08/Liberia_Country_Profile-Final.pdf)

The project targets urban and peri-urban settlements as well as schools, markets and health centers in Monrovia, Buchanan, Kakata and Zwedru. The IRVM interventions in Liberia contribute directly to the achievement of GOL's development objectives aimed at providing basic services to the population.

The direct beneficiaries are 580,000 residents in Monrovia, 45,400 in Buchanan, 39,300 in Kakata and 27,000 in Zwedru; the LWSC and the Monrovia Metropolitan Corporation (MMC). The outcomes of the project are increased coverage and functioning of water and sanitation services in the project area, and improved performance of LWSC.

The residents/retail customers of the water utilities are intended to offer better service, both in terms of access and quantity delivered. The capacity building component targets small-scale service providers of water and sanitation services (management of kiosk and public sanitation facilities), mainly targeting women groups. The adoption of improved hygienic practices and use of sanitation will lead to improved sanitary environment benefiting all the residents of the four cities.<sup>41</sup>

### 6.2.1 Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, including a hand-washing facility with soap and water

#### Access to Improved Toilet Facilities

**Table 30: Percentage of households with improved toilet facilities**

| Indicator   | Percentage |           |
|---|------------|-----------|
|   | 2007       | 2019-2020 |
| Percent of households with improved toilet facilities | 28         | 47        |

Source: LDHS 2019-2020

Forty-seven percent of households in Liberia use improved toilet facilities (66 percent in urban areas and 21 percent in rural areas). According to LDHS 2019-2020, flush or pour flush toilets that flush to a septic tank are the most common type of improved sanitation facility. About 2 in 10 households (17 percent) use unimproved toilet facilities. Overall, 63 percent of rural households have no toilet facility, as compared with 16 percent of urban households.<sup>42</sup> The data trend showed the percentage of households with access to improved sanitation increased from 28 percent in 2007 to 47 percent in 2019-2020.

According to the United Nations, WASH programs in 2021 concentrated on community-led total sanitation with the aim of ending open defecation (OD). Activities were implemented in 161 rural communities, and 104 communities were declared OD free, benefiting 37,371 people. School and communal latrines constructed were all gender-sensitive and disabled-friendly.<sup>43</sup>

WASH supplies were distributed to people, including the most vulnerable women and children. Some 11,763 persons received family hygiene kits, and another 147,716 received critical WASH supplies and services. About 65,795 persons were provided knowledge of good hygiene and reached with a handwashing behavior change program<sup>44</sup>. Some 1,550 community members were trained to manage

<sup>41</sup> Liberia - Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Project found at <https://projectsportal.afdb.org/dataportal/VProject/show/P-LR-E00-003>

<sup>42</sup> LDHS 2019-2020

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/liberia/water-sanitation-and-hygiene>

<sup>44</sup> Ibid

WASH facilities, and menstrual hygiene management activities implemented in 45 schools benefited 1,006 adolescents.<sup>45</sup>

### *6.b.1 Proportion of local administrative units with established and operational policies and procedures for participation of local communities in water and sanitation management*

With LWSC restoration of safe drinking water to Robertsport, Grand Cape Mount County; Sanniquellie, Nimba County; and Voinjama, Lofa County, access of residents of the three rural cities has improved. The solar-powered water treatment plants and public distribution systems now provide approximately 31,000 residents in those cities with access to piped water. With kiosks placed within 500 meters of homes, the time families spend collecting water has now been reduced to less than 30 minutes.

Following substantial completion of the construction work, LWSC oversees operations and project activities to build a foundation for long-term and successful facility management. As a result, LWSC operations and maintenance procedures that detail requirements, revenue collection, accounting, water quality testing, and system monitoring. LWSC uses these procedures to provide critical guidance and build the capacity of the water utility and local operators to effectively play their role maintaining the treatment and distribution networks from a technical and financial standpoint. The LWSC designed of a road map to cost recovery that ring-fences revenue within the target cities and will enable future expansion to household connections. The operations and maintenance procedures also extend to management capabilities to improve transparency through record-keeping and accountability.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, LWSC recruited members from the community in Local Steering Committees to maintain communication with LWSC and engage with the community to promote water sales and improve public health.

Local management of the water systems in the three cities further improved access to safely managed water. For example, community-based management of the water systems in the three cities provided access to clean, safe drinking water supplied to more than 35,000 people living in the three cities currently. According to a 2019 survey, more than 70 percent of households use the kiosks as their primary drinking water sources and two thirds of which report a significant reduction in waterborne illness. LWSC continues to expand access to communities and has completed 26 private connections out of 406 applications.<sup>47</sup>

Similarly, the LWSC interventions in four cities of Monrovia, Buchanan, Kakata and Zwedru also provide administrative units with established and operational policies and procedures for participation of local communities to provide direct oversight of the management of the water system especially of the capacity building component in the four cities.

The capacity building component targets small-scale service providers of water and sanitation services (management of kiosk and public sanitation facilities), mainly targeting women groups.<sup>48</sup> The adoption of improved hygienic practices and use of sanitation also lead to improved sanitary environment benefiting all the residents of the four cities. LWSC implements these activities under its Integrated Water Resources Management (IRVM) project.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid

<sup>46</sup> Liberia Municipal Water Project II found at <https://www.tetrattech.com/en/projects/liberia-municipal-water-project-ii-quality-assurance-and-institutional-reform>.

<sup>47</sup> Liberia Municipal Water Project II found at <https://www.tetrattech.com/en/projects/liberia-municipal-water-project-ii-quality-assurance-and-institutional-reform>.

<sup>48</sup> Liberia - Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Project found at <https://projectsportal.afdb.org/dataportal/VProject/show/P-LR-E00-003>





## 4.7. Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

### 9.1.1 Proportion of the rural population who live within 2 km of an all-season road

In 2019, the World Bank's rural access index (RAI)<sup>49</sup> showed that on average, 67 percent of rural Liberians lived in an area not more than two kilometers (1.2 miles) from an all-weather road. A breakdown of this data, however, shows a mixed picture for different types of road access. The proportion is only 39.2 percent for access to primary and secondary roads, 77 percent when tertiary roads are included, and 84.3 percent with tracks/footpaths.<sup>50</sup> With increasing rural-to-urban migration leading to greater shared socioeconomic pathways, the ratio of RAI was projected to fall to 20 percent in 2020 and stay roughly constant for the subsequent decade.<sup>51</sup>



### 9.2.1 Manufacturing value added as a proportion of GDP and per capita

Manufacturing value added as a share of per capita GDP remained resilient at 4.7 percent despite the economic impacts of Covid-19 and the restrictive response measures. There was a significant rebound in 2021 with manufacturing contributing 23 percent of GDP, one percentage point lower than 2020, and equivalent to 4.4 percent of per capita GDP.<sup>52</sup>

### 9.2.2 Manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment

Employment in industry accounts for 10 percent of total employment. This makes the manufacturing sector's share of employment the smallest compared to agriculture 43 percent and services 47 percent.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>49</sup> proportion of rural population withing two kilometers of all-season road

<sup>50</sup> Assessing Rural Accessibility and Rural Roads Investment Needs Using Open Source Data page 18, <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/759461550242864626/pdf/WPS8746.pdf>

<sup>51</sup> Ibid page 4

<sup>52</sup>United nations Industrial Development Organization <https://stat.unido.org/SDG/LBR>

<sup>53</sup> World Bank Data <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.SRV.EMPL.ZS?locations=LR>

### 9.4.1 CO2 emission per unit of value added

Liberia remains a low emissions economy by all the critical indicators. In 2018, the country's emission per output was 0.4kgCO<sub>2</sub>e per unit of GDP.<sup>54</sup> Per capita emission in 2020 was 0.25MT of CO<sub>2</sub>e.<sup>55</sup>

### 9.a.1 Total official international support (official development assistance plus other official flows) to infrastructure

**Table 31: Infrastructure as Proportion of Aid**

| Aid Type                               | FY2019/20  | FY2020/21  | 2021<br>Transition<br>Budget | FY2022     | Cumulative<br>Flows |
|--|------------|------------|------------------------------|------------|---------------------|
| Infrastructure Grant                   | 41.4       | 62.7       | 26.1                         | 47.0       | 177.2               |
| Infrastructure Loan                    | 37.5       | 21.9       | 5.1                          | 21.3       | 85.8                |
| Total (Infrastructure)                 | 78.9       | 84.6       | 31.2                         | 68.3       | 263.0               |
| Total Aid                              | 166.6      | 313.7      | 156.9                        | 590.8      | 1,228.0             |
| <b>Infrastructure-to-aid<br/>ratio</b> | <b>47%</b> | <b>27%</b> | <b>20%</b>                   | <b>12%</b> | <b>21%</b>          |

Source: Ministry of Finance & Development: National Budget Documents

In February 2022, the Liberian government and the African Development Bank (AfDB) agreed additional \$12.13 million for Fish Town – Harper highway project which is an ongoing project. New activities funded by the additional resources were development of additional socio-economic infrastructure, including upgrading about 11.5 kilometers of road and supporting women and youth associations to promote local products. The road project was part of a 160.5 km rehabilitation work along the Ganta-Harper highway running from northeastern to southeastern Liberia.<sup>56</sup>

Altogether, bilateral and multilateral contributions to infrastructure in Liberia between mid-2019 and the end of 2022 is US\$263 million or 21 percent of overall external resource flows, including official development assistance (ODA). The average for the four-year period is 26 percent, ranging from 47 percent in FY2019/20 to 12 percent projection for 2022.<sup>57</sup> Table 33 shows the proportion of aid earmarked for infrastructure in four successive fiscal periods.

### 9.c.1 Proportion of population covered by a mobile network, by technology

<sup>54</sup> World Bank Data. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.ATM.CO2E.KD.GD?locations=LR>

<sup>55</sup> Knoema World Data on Environment, <https://knoema.com/atlas/Liberia/CO2-emissions>

<sup>56</sup> African Development Bank Group <https://www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/press-releases/liberia-african-development-fund-approves-1213-million-savings-fund-additional-works-under-bank-sponsored-fish-town-harper-road-project-49326>

<sup>57</sup> Annex 3 to the reference fiscal year budgets, Ministry of Finance & Development Planning; <https://www.mfdp.gov.lr/index.php/docs/the-national-budget>

**Table 32: Cellular and Internet Coverage 2015 vs 2020**

| Mobile/Network Coverage                      | 2015  | 2020   | Change |
|--|-------|--------|--------|
| Mobile cellular subscriptions (millions)     | 3.7   | 1.7    | -55%   |
| Mobile cellular subscriptions/100 people     | 82    | 33     | -60%   |
| Fixed telephone subscription                 | 9,000 | 6,000  | -33%   |
| Fixed telephone subscription/100 people      | -     | -      | -      |
| Secured internet servers                     | 4     | 31     | 675%   |
| Secured internet servers/1 million people    | 1     | 6      | 500%   |
| Internet users as proportion of population % | 10    | 26     | 160%   |
| Fixed broadband subscription                 | 7,000 | 13,000 | 86%    |
| Fixed broadband/100 people                   | 0.16  | 0.26   | 63%    |

Source: World Bank Data

There were mixed outcomes for mobile network telecommunications sector in Liberia between 2015 and 2020. While basic cellular services appeared to be slowing or declining, internet-based communication witnessed an upsurge in both the numbers of service providers and users.

Mobile cellular subscription fell from its all-time peak of 3.65 million in 2015 to less than 50 percent in 2020 and subscription rate declined from 82 per 100 people to 33. There were improvements in internet service availability with an increase in the number of secure servers from 4 to 31, fixed broadband subscription from 7,000 to 13,000 and ratio of internet users to the population went up from 10 percent in 2015 to 26 percent in 2020.<sup>58</sup>

The other dimension to the indicator for internet and mobile technology is the socioeconomic distribution. According to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), Liberia remains in the median stage of digital development with an average score of 40 out of hundred for the mix of indicators such as mobile phone ownership, internet usage, data consumption, broadband coverage, and proximity to networks.

The proportion of Liberian households with at least one mobile phone in 2021 was about 70 percent, with 84 percent in urban areas versus 50 percent in rural areas. The average monthly data consumption rate was 1.8 gigabytes per user. Though the minimum cost for a smart phone was as low as US\$20, only 40 percent of the population could afford one. Mobile broadband coverage between 2016 and 2020 was much higher than fixed broadband with 63 percent of people having access in the five-year period. Overall, some 75 percent of people are within network coverage. However, those within this category are at least 10km of network. This means 25 percent of Liberians remain outside of any kind of transmission network.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>58</sup> World bank Data <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS?locations=LR>

<sup>59</sup> International Telecommunications Union: Connectivity in the Least Developed Countries Status report 2021



**Table 33: Network coverage in 2021**

| Distance from Network | Proportion of Population within reach |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 10 Km                 | 9%                                    |
| 25 Km                 | 12%                                   |
| 50 Km                 | 18%                                   |
| 100 Km                | 36%                                   |
| All distances         | 75%                                   |

Source: ITU, 2021

## 13 CLIMATE ACTION



### 4.8. Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

#### *13.2.1 Number of countries that have communicated the establishment or operationalization of an integrated policy/strategy/plan which increases their ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change, and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development in a manner that does not threaten food production (including a national adaptation plan, nationally determined contribution, national communication, biennial update report or other)*

In 2015, Liberia submitted its first Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) intended to meet its long-term zero carbon emission target by 2050. In 2020, Liberia initiated the revision process in preparation of the 26<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP26) which was held in Glasgow, Scotland.

Moreover, the *Liberia Revised Nationally Determined Contributions (2021-2025)* was completed in mid-2021 with a two-prong strategy to achieve a target of 64 percent reduction in carbon emission below business as usual (BAU) by 2030. The first is an unconditional<sup>60</sup> reductions of 10 percent that lowers absolute emissions level to 12,430Gg CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2030. The other is an additional 54 percent conditional reduction through partnerships, which would result in a further reduction in absolute emissions level of 4,537Gg CO<sub>2</sub>e.<sup>61</sup>

As an economy wide strategy, the NDC strategy spreads the emission reduction target among nine major sectors or zones of environmental impacts: agriculture, forests, coastal zones, fisheries, health, industry, energy, waste, and transport. The major emissions reduction targets are expected to be achieved in energy, consumption, and agriculture 40 percent each; coastal zones 50 percent and transport 15 percent.

#### *13.3.2 Number of countries that have communicated the strengthening of institutional, systemic and individual capacity-building to implement adaptation, mitigation and technology transfer, and development actions*

The GOL has adopted several measures and plans towards the achievement of the 64 percent reduction target for 2030, including signing up to the Global Methane Pledge before the Glasgow COP26 summit, removing all import tariffs on off-grid photovoltaic (solar power) electricity generation equipment, and setting up the NDC Implementation Secretariat at the Environmental Protection Agency.

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<sup>60</sup> Unconditional measures national commitments funded from national resources

<sup>61</sup> Liberia's Revised Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), pages 13-22

### ***13.a.1 Mobilized amount of United States dollars per year starting in 2020 accountable towards the \$100 billion commitment***

The cost of the emissions reduction target is estimated at US\$490 million. Of this amount, 15 percent will be funded by the GOL for unconditional reduction actions while 85 percent will be sourced from bilateral and multilateral sources and through public-private partnerships. The financing strategy developed to support the NDC implementation with the following objectives: i) mobilization of funds from domestic and international public finance sources; ii) mobilization of funds from domestic and international private finance sources; and iv) enhance access to innovative financing sources (green bonds, carbon markets)

While recognizing current and future resource constraints, the strategy outlines measures for maximizing available financing through synergies, internal efficiencies in use of public resources, consolidation of resource mobilization policies, and streamlining implementation mechanism across sectors. Specifically, the measures seek:

- Strengthen the National Climate Change Steering Committee (NCCSC) for greater synergies and efficiency in the policy formulation and use of available technical capacities and resources.
- Strengthen ministerial capacities to integrate climate-sensitive targets in strategic and operational plans in order to reduce the overall carbon footprint for both public and private sectors.
- Align the national budget with the NDC targets by integrating climate change policies into sector and county development strategies and budgets.
- Operationalize the climate finance tracking system to provide information on all national, bilateral, and multilateral resource allocations, disbursements and expenditure for climate-change activities and projects.
- Set up a project preparation facility to identify, develop, and market profitable climate change ventures that would attract domestic and international private sector finance.
- Create a national climate fund as a multi-stakeholder investment facility to be funded by government, development partners and private sector.
- Showcase the opportunities for private actors, including the opportunities in eco-tourism, agro-tourism and other profitable ventures that simultaneously provide incentives for investors, conserve the environment, and reduce net emissions.
- Strengthen the financial sector.
- Leverage COVID-19 recovery programs by using the current engagement with development partners by making climate-friendly development as part of their post-COVID recovery plans.



**4.9. Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss**

**15.1.1 Forest area as a proportion of total land area**

**Table 34: Proportion of forest and non-forest areas**

|                   | Area (1 000 ha) | Percent Area |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| <b>Forest</b>     | 6,605           | 69%          |
| <b>Non-forest</b> | 2,986           | 31%          |
| <b>Total Area</b> | <b>9,591</b>    |              |

Source: Liberia Forest Inventory 2018/19

As the above table shows, Liberia’s forest covers 6,605 million hectares, approximately 69 percent of the total land area. This value estimate was made using the new forest definition, and it is also to-date the most comprehensive assessment of forest cover in Liberia. In 2018, Liberia established for the first time a definition of forest, which was developed and validated by the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) as an area of land that has a canopy cover of minimum 30 percent; contains trees with a minimum of 5 m height or the capacity to reach it; and covers a minimum of 1 hectare of land.<sup>62</sup>

Liberia’s forest area is the largest in the upper Guinea forest region. This comprises 43 percent of the remaining forest cover from Guinea to Togo.<sup>63</sup> The forests of Liberia have been designated for various uses as follow: about 28 percent for commercial forestry, 18 percent for current and proposed protected areas six percent for oil palm and rubber plantations.<sup>64</sup>

**15.1.2 Proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, by ecosystem type**

**Table 35: Proportion of protected areas**

| Protected Area               | Size (Hectares) |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Sapo                         | 180,363         |
| East Nimba Nature Reserve    | 13,500          |
| Lake Piso Multi- Use Reserve | 97,500          |
| Gola Park                    | 88,000          |
| Grebo-Krahn National Park    | 97,136          |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>476,499</b>  |

Source: Liberia Forestry Development Authority

Liberia has five established Protected Areas (PAs): Sapo (180,363 ha), East Nimba Nature Reserve (13,500 ha), Lake Piso Multi-Use Reserve (97,500 ha) Gola Park (88,000 ha), and Grebo-Krahn National Park (97,136 ha) which constitutes a total of 476,499 hectares. Wonegizi awaits the preparation of the final

<sup>62</sup> Liberia Forest Inventory 2018/19 page 35

<sup>63</sup> IBID page 2

<sup>64</sup> Liberia Forest Note 2018, World Bank Report 2018.

gazettement package. Five Proposed Protected Areas (PPAs) are currently in the process of gazettement (Foya, Krahn- Bassa, Kpo Mountain, Cestos Sankwen, and Grand Kru -River Gee.

Liberia has other important sites, including national parks which are mainly forest areas set aside for conservation, ecotourism, and biodiversity research: There are four sites in this category, Cestos-Sankwen in Rivercess and Sinoe counties, Lofa-Mano in the northwest, Sapo (the most famous) in Sinoe County and Tienpo in Grand Gedeh.

There are three *nature conservation units* in Liberia's list of protected areas: Cape Mount conservation area in western Liberia, Wologisi in the northwest near the Sierra Leone border and Wonegizi, also in the same region. The Cape Mount conservation area is a combination of mangrove, coastal forest, and lake ecosystem. Wologisi and Wonegizi are highland forests.

Additionally, there are 15 national forests in Liberia. Thirteen of these have been surveyed and demarcated while the other two have been geodetically identified but not yet surveyed. The largest national forests are Krahn-Bassa national forest (513,962 ha) central-eastern to southeastern region, the Grebo (260,326 ha) in the southeast near the Ivory Coast border, Gola (202,000 ha) in central western region, and Kpelle (174,828 ha) in central Liberia.

There are numerous wetlands along the coastal region such as the ones around Lake Piso, Mesurado wetlands around Monrovia, the Marshall wetlands, and the ones along the coast areas of Grand Bassa and Sinoe. However only one of these, Lake Piso Multi-Use Reserve (LPMUR) is a legally protected *wetland of international importance*. The Marshall wetlands around the estuaries of the Junk and Farmington rivers has been earmarked for protected area status. The (LPMUR) covers to 97,159 hectares, equivalent 339km<sup>2</sup>, while the proposed Marshall proposed protected area 23,813 hectares.<sup>65</sup>

Liberia has only one *cloud forest* area, the East Nimba forest. This covers more than 9,500 hectares on the eastern slopes of Mount Nimba, the highest elevation in Liberia at over 4,500 feet above sea level.

### **15.2.1 Progress towards sustainable forest management**

Liberia Forest Sector Project (LFSP) is a multi-stakeholder partnership of the FDA, the World Bank, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The objective of the LFSP is to improve the management of targeted forest areas and increase the benefits to stakeholders, i.e., loggers, communities, conservationists, and government.<sup>66</sup>

The project is implemented in two parts. One part consists of "Strengthened Regulatory and Institutional Arrangements for Implementation of the Liberia's REDD program. This involves providing financial and technical assistance to strengthen legal and regulatory regimes around forest management, and to improve technical capacities of participating institutions. The second part is to support the required legal reforms that will empower the government to undertake REDD more effectively. Some of the outputs of this components are the harmonization of the Community Rights Law, National Forest Reform Law (2006); the Land Rights Policy (2013).<sup>67</sup>

Liberia signed a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the European Union (EU) to ensure that only legally licensed logging companies can extract and export timber. This bilateral performance-based agreement ensures that logging is done in not only a legitimate basis, but also in a sustainable manner because it prohibits illegal logging which is often responsible for indiscriminate deforestation.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> CI-GEF PROJECT AGENCY Project Document (Conservation International 2016)

<sup>66</sup> World Bank <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P154114>

<sup>67</sup> REDD+: Liberia Forest Sector Project <https://redd.fda.gov.lr/general/liberia-forest-sector-project>

<sup>68</sup> Forestry Development Authority <https://flegt-vpa.fda.gov.lr/>



**4.1. Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels**

**16.3.1 Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms**



Between 2007 and 2020, the proportion of women who experienced physical violence after turning 15 rose from 44 percent to 60 percent. The same survey also recorded 69 percent of women and girls between the age of 15 and 49 experiencing sexual violence, with 5 percent reporting their last experience in the previous year.<sup>69</sup>

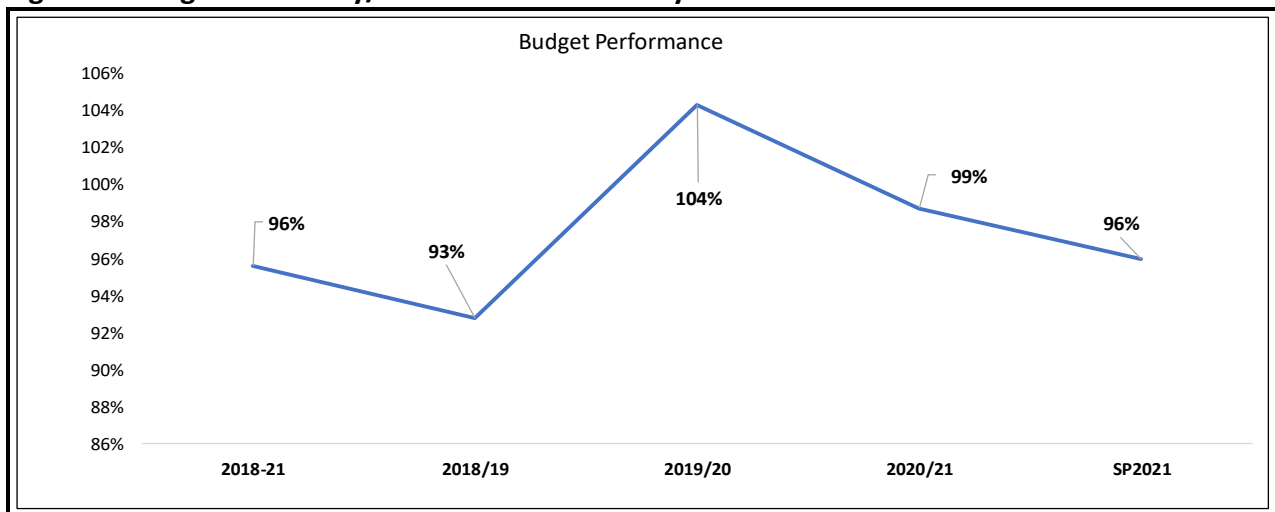
For the younger female population, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) remains prevalent.

Among women aged 45 to 49, 60 percent have had FGM and the ratios are higher remained high among teenagers and women between the age of 15 and 30.

At the social level most indicators continue to show that women and girls are still being subjected to unfair treatment. In the LDHS 2019-2020, 60 percent of women aged 15-49 reported experiencing physical violence, with 33 percent experiencing physical violence in the 12 months preceding the survey.

**16.6.1 Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector (or by budget codes or similar)**

**Figure 8: Budget Credibility/Performance Ratio July 2018 - Dec 2021**



Source: MFDP: Consolidated Financial Reports and National Budgets

<sup>69</sup> UN Liberia Common Country Analysis 2021 pages 24-25

The overall government expenditure as a proportion of approved budget (budget performance or budget credibility<sup>70</sup>) for the period from July 2018 to December 2021 was 96 percent. This means for every dollar of expenditure forecast; ninety-six cents were actually spent. On a yearly basis, the highest performance measure was recorded for the six-month transition budget of July-December 2021 at almost two hundred percent of approved budget and the lowest in 2019/20 at 91 percent.

**Table 36: Budget Credibility Index July 2018 - Dec 2021**

| Sector                          | Budget Credibility Index (1=100%) |             |             |             |             |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|                                 | 2018-21                           | 2018/19     | 2019/20     | 2020/21     | SP2021      |
| Public Administration           | 0.94                              | 0.85        | 1.05        | 0.88        | 0.99        |
| Municipal & Local Government    | 0.84                              | 0.84        | 1.50        | 0.42        | 1.25        |
| Transparency & Accountability   | 0.97                              | 0.99        | 1.14        | 0.82        | 1.02        |
| Security & Rule of Law          | 1.03                              | 0.94        | 1.16        | 0.97        | 1.12        |
| Health                          | 1.13                              | 2.38        | 0.75        | 1.23        | 0.82        |
| Social Development Services     | 0.92                              | 0.71        | 1.51        | 0.86        | 0.81        |
| Education                       | 0.95                              | 0.88        | 1.04        | 0.89        | 1.02        |
| Energy & Environment            | 0.91                              | 0.91        | 0.84        | 1.20        | 0.92        |
| Agriculture                     | 0.87                              | 0.79        | 1.28        | 0.67        | 0.92        |
| Infrastructure & Basic Services | 0.68                              | 0.49        | 1.34        | 0.62        | 0.58        |
| Industry & Commerce             | 1.08                              | 0.94        | 0.91        | 0.99        | 1.91        |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>0.96</b>                       | <b>0.93</b> | <b>1.04</b> | <b>0.99</b> | <b>0.96</b> |

Source: MFDP: Consolidated Financial Reports and National Budgets

The consolidated index for 2018 to 2021 and the indexes for fiscal years 2018/19, 2020/21 and the special transition budget of July-December 2021 were within the acceptable five to 10 percent margin of deviations between budget forecast and performance, The high-over-performance rate for FY2019/20 was due to revenue over-performance that led to increases in spending above the budget forecasts. There was higher-than-appropriated spending in three of the eleven budget sectors: Municipal and Local Government 2.4 percent; Security and Rule of Law 3.2 percent; and Infrastructure and Basic Services 107 percent. This was influenced by and general revenue over performance of 4.6 percent driven by 12.5 percent over-performance in tax receipt compared to forecast and 1,4 percent in non-tax revenue.

**Table 37: Sectoral Forecasts and Actual Expenditure 2018-2021 in US\$ Millions**

| Sector                        | FY2018/19 |        | 2019/20  |        | 2020/21  |        | SP2021   |        | Budget US\$ Mill. |        |
|-------------------------------|-----------|--------|----------|--------|----------|--------|----------|--------|-------------------|--------|
|                               | Approved  | Actual | Approved | Actual | Approved | Actual | Approved | Actual | Approved          | Actual |
| Public Administration         | 177.4     | 150.2  | 190.4    | 200.4  | 211.1    | 185.8  | 143.5    | 141.5  | 722.4             | 677.9  |
| Municipal & Local Government  | 21.1      | 17.8   | 11.5     | 17.3   | 27.6     | 11.5   | 9.9      | 12.4   | 70.1              | 59     |
| Transparency & Accountability | 21.9      | 21.6   | 21.4     | 24.3   | 26.2     | 21.4   | 10.3     | 10.5   | 79.8              | 77.8   |
| Security & Rule of Law        | 86.1      | 81.1   | 77.3     | 89.6   | 80       | 77.2   | 44.1     | 49.4   | 287.5             | 297.3  |
| Health                        | 31.7      | 75.3   | 86.9     | 64.8   | 70.4     | 86.9   | 40.9     | 33.7   | 229.9             | 260.7  |
| Social Development Services   | 11.8      | 8.4    | 7.2      | 10.9   | 8.4      | 7.2    | 12.2     | 9.9    | 39.6              | 36.4   |
| Education                     | 85.4      | 75.4   | 71       | 74.1   | 79.4     | 70.9   | 40.2     | 41.1   | 276               | 261.5  |
| Energy & Environment          | 12.3      | 11.2   | 15.9     | 13.4   | 13.3     | 15.9   | 15       | 11.1   | 56.5              | 51.6   |
| Agriculture                   | 7.8       | 6.2    | 4.3      | 5.5    | 6.4      | 4.3    | 2.4      | 2.2    | 20.9              | 18.2   |

<sup>70</sup> Budget credibility is a measure of the performance of actual revenue and expenditure against forecasts or targets.

|                                 |       |       |       |       |      |      |       |      |        |        |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|-------|------|--------|--------|
| Infrastructure & Basic Services | 57.2  | 28.3  | 24.4  | 32.8  | 39.6 | 24.4 | 25.1  | 14.5 | 146.3  | 100    |
| Industry & Commerce             | 7.2   | 6.8   | 7.5   | 6.8   | 7.6  | 7.5  | 3.5   | 6.7  | 25.8   | 27.8   |
| Total                           | 519.9 | 482.3 | 517.8 | 539.9 | 570  | 513  | 347.1 | 333  | 1954.8 | 1868.2 |

Source: MFDP: Consolidated Financial Reports and National Budgets

### **16.7.1 Proportions of positions (by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups) in public institutions (national and local legislatures, public service, and judiciary) compared to national distributions**

Women continue to struggle adequate representation at the highest level of government. They are unrepresented at the highest level in all three branches of government. In the executive branch, only three of nineteen cabinet ministers (slightly more than 15 percent) are women. In the Legislature, there are only two of the thirty seats (6 percent) are held by female senators and in House of Representatives, ten of the seventy-three seats or 13.6 percent are occupied by women legislators. The five-member Supreme Court has two women justices.<sup>71</sup>

### **16.7.2 Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group**

Gender inequalities continue to be an issue in Liberia despite recent successes in the political sphere. Though there has been the first female African head of state and a first female vice president, these breakthroughs have not created improvements in the overall social, economic, and political power of women.

Participation in decision is slightly better compared to employment and property ownership, but still below full parity between men and women. Voice and participation for women vary according to social and economic circumstances. 83 percent of women with income from employment participate in all domestic decisions compared to 71 percent of unemployed women. Slightly more rural women, 69.9 percent, participate in domestic decision making compared to 68.2 percent for urban women.<sup>72</sup>

In property ownership, women continue to lag men. While 70 percent of Liberian residents do not own their own house, this indicator weighs against women: 76 percent of women do not own a house compared to 65 percent for men. While almost 16 percent of men own at least one house and 13.9 percent own at least one lot of land, only 6.6 percent of women own their own house and 4.2 percent own at least one lot on their own. For joint property ownership (along with spouse, family, or others), 17 percent of women have co-ownership of houses and 9.5 percent of land. Comparatively, 19 percent of men have joint ownership of houses and 17 percent joint ownership of land.<sup>73</sup>

There remain disparities in social outcomes for women and gains deriving from their socio-economic backgrounds. The Common County Analysis for 2021 reports that “Women from households at the top of the income distribution enjoy ample opportunities in both the public and private sectors, and Liberian women have risen to top positions in the government. However, girls and women in rural areas and poor urban communities have very little access to quality education, healthcare, and employment options. Forty-one (41) percent of females and 30 percent males aged 6 and older have no formal education (a declining trend among females from 56 percent in 2017 to 41 percent in 2020 but still very high), and girls

<sup>71</sup> Cited from various open-source resources.

<sup>72</sup> Liberia Demographic and Health Survey 2019-20 page 314.

<sup>73</sup> Liberia Demographic and Health Survey pages 305-306



in rural areas have a net attendance rate of 35 percent for primary education and 13 percent for secondary level, compared to 53 percent and 34 percent for girls in urban areas respectively.”<sup>74</sup>.

Economic and social constraints to women empowerment remain challenges to the full actualization of social cohesion and resilience. In the period to 2020, only 52 percent of employed women received payments in cash, 12.6 percent a mix of cash and in-kind and a staggering 33.6 percent were unpaid. This compares unfavorably to employed men, 67.9 percent of whom were paid in cash 11 percent cash and in-kind and 17 percent doing unpaid work.<sup>75</sup>

### **16.9.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age**

**Table 38: Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority**

| Indicator   | 2007      | 2019-2020  |
|---|-----------|------------|
| <b>Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority</b> | 4 percent | 66 percent |

Source: LDHS 2019-2020

Sixty-six percent of children under age 5 have their births registered with the civil authorities. About one in three (30 percent) of these children have birth certificates. Children in urban areas are more likely than rural children to have their births registered (69 percent versus 63 percent). The proportion of de jure children whose births are registered has increased substantially from 4 percent in 2007 to 66 percent in 2019- 20.

### **16.10.2 Number of countries that adopt and implement constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information**

The Freedom of Information Act was signed into law in September 2010. It gives everyone the right to access public information. The Independent Information Commission (IIC) was established the same month to implement the requirements of the FOI law. The IIC continues to receive applications for information from the public and to formally notify the concerned public institutions about their legal obligations to respond.

The most significant legislation since is the 2019 Press Freedom Law or Kamara A Kamara Act. The law repealed earlier laws that criminalized speech or writing against public officials, including the President of the Republic. It publishes an annual list of institutions ranked by their level of compliance with the FOI law.

### **16.a.1 Existence of independent national human rights institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles**

The Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) was created in 2005 before the first postwar elections. The INCHR has the legal authority to promote and protect human rights in all its forms consistent with the Constitution and other laws and regulations. The Commission regularly calls attention to serious violations and other actions that have the potential to lead to violations and denials of rights. Some notable actions taken by the INCHR are the erection of memorial monuments to victims of Liberia’s civil war and calls for the setting up of war and economic crimes courts.

<sup>74</sup> United Nations Liberia Common Country Analysis page 24

<sup>75</sup> Liberia Demographic and Health Survey 2019-20 pages 301-302

## 5. Means of Implementation and Partnership for Development (SDG 17)

### 17.1.1 Total government revenue as a proportion of GDP, by source

**Table 39: Indicators of macro-fiscal relationships**

| Source           | FY2019/20       |      | FY2020/21       |      | Jul-Dec 2021    |      |
|------------------|-----------------|------|-----------------|------|-----------------|------|
|                  | Amount US\$Mill | %    | Amount US\$Mill | %    | Amount US\$Mill | %    |
| GDP (Nominal)*   | 3,146.0         |      | 3,070.0         |      | 3,084.0         |      |
| Total Revenue    | 543.4           | 17.3 | 685.5           | 22.3 | 361.0           | 11.7 |
| Domestic Sources | 455.1           | 14.5 | 547.4           | 17.8 | 335.7           | 10.9 |
| External Sources | 88.3            | 2.8  | 138.1           | 4.5  | 25.3            | 0.8  |

\*Applicable to 2019, 2020 and 2021 calendar years

Source: Ministry of Finance & Development Planning: National Budget Documents

Total government revenue between July 2019 and December 2021 was almost US\$1.6 billion, more than 50 percent of average GDP for that period.<sup>76</sup> Domestic resources accounted for increasingly higher shares of both resource envelopes and GDP. See details in Table 39.

In FY 2019/20, total revenue from all sources was US\$543.4 million, 17.3% of GDP. Of this amount, US\$455 was domestic revenue, accounting for 15.5% of annual GDP in 2019. Of the almost US\$690 million, 22 percent of 2020 GDP, generated as revenue in FY2020/21, domestic revenue was US\$547.4 million or 14.3 percent. While the government prepared to transition from midyear to calendar-year budget format, an interim budget of US\$365 million (11.7 percent of 2021 GDP) was prepared for July to December 2021. This was funded largely by domestic revenue of US\$335.7 or 10.9 percent of GDP.

### 17.1.2 Proportion of domestic budget funded by domestic taxes

**Table 40: Domestic revenue as proportion of budget**

| Source            | FY2019/20       |                 | FY2020/21       |                 | Jul-Dec 2021    |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                   | Amount US\$Mill | Share of Budget | Amount US\$Mill | Share of Budget | Amount US\$Mill | Share of Budget |
| Domestic Revenue  | 455.1           | 84%             | 547.4           | 80%             | 335.7           | 93%             |
| External Resource | 88.3            | 16%             | 138.1           | 20%             | 25.3            | 7%              |
| Total Budget      | 543.4           |                 | 685.5           |                 | 361             |                 |

Source: Ministry of Finance & Development Planning: National Budget Documents

In the last three periods, FY2019/20, 2020/21 and July-December 2021, domestic revenue's share of budget resources average at almost 86 percent. As Table 40 shows, external resources (grants, direct

<sup>76</sup> Nominal GDP since the budget is quoted in current dollars

budget support and loans) in any of these periods did not exceed 20 percent of domestic budget resource requirements.

Liberia developed a domestic resource mobilization (DRM) strategy, aimed at funding the PAPD, achieving the SDGs, and propping up national frontline defenses to meet shocks occasioned by a fall in international commodity prices and emergencies. The DRM is mainstreamed in the PAPD as Chapter 7 of that document, which would inform the MTEF and then into the annual fiscal budget.

### *17.3.1 Foreign direct investments (FDI), official development assistance and South-South Cooperation as a proportion of total domestic budget*

**Table 41: Five-Year Net FDI Inflows**

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Net FDI<br/>(US\$Million)</b> | <b>Growth</b> |
|-------------|----------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>2016</b> | <b>301.70</b>                    |               |
| <b>2017</b> | <b>247.80</b>                    | <b>-17.9%</b> |
| <b>2018</b> | <b>129.10</b>                    | <b>-47.9%</b> |
| <b>2019</b> | <b>86.70</b>                     | <b>-32.8%</b> |
| <b>2020</b> | <b>86.90</b>                     | <b>0.2%</b>   |

Source: World Bank Data

Net foreign direct investment inflows into Liberia have been rapidly falling. The US\$86.9 million received in 2020 represented a slight growth of 0.2 percent over 2019. Before that FDI was declining by significantly high rates.<sup>77</sup> Comparing Table 40 to Table 41, FDI was equivalent to 19 percent of domestic revenue in FY2019/20 and 15.9 percent in FY2020/21.

During the 2020/2021 fiscal year, the GOL received development assistance from both multilateral and bilateral development partners. Multilateral Development Partners total disbursement amounted to US\$386,318,839.12 million, while the total disbursement from Bilateral Development Partners amounted to US\$187,969,989.45 million.<sup>78</sup> The table below shows the total disbursement for each type of development partner.

<sup>77</sup> World Bank Data

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.KLT.DINV.CD.WD?contextual=default&end=2020&locations=LR&start=1970&view=chart>

<sup>78</sup> MFDP Annual Development Assistance Report, December 2021

**Table 42: Disbursement by Development Partner Type (US**

| DP by Type          | FY 2020/2021             |              | FY 2020/2021<br>Total<br>Disbursements (USD) |
|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------|--|
|                     | Grant                    | Loan         |  |
|                     | Total Disbursement (USD) |              |  |
| <b>Bilateral</b>    | 184.3                    | 3.7          | <b>187.9</b>                                 |
| <b>Multilateral</b> | 181.9                    | 204.5        | <b>386.3</b>                                 |
| <b>Total (USD)</b>  | <b>366.1</b>             | <b>208.2</b> | <b>574.3</b>                                 |

Source: Liberia Projects Dashboard

### 17.3.2 Volume of remittances (in United States dollars) as a proportion of total GDP

**Table 43: Ratio of remittances to GDP**

| Year | Remittance<br>(US\$Million) | GDP<br>(US\$Million) | Ratio to<br>GDP |
|------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| 2015 | 654                         | 3,200                | 20%             |
| 2016 | 580                         | 3,400                | 17%             |
| 2017 | 404                         | 3,390                | 12%             |
| 2018 | 460                         | 3,490                | 13%             |
| 2019 | 346                         | 3,320                | 10%             |
| 2020 | 333                         | 3,200                | 10%             |

Remittances received (or inward remittances) have constituted at least 10 percent of Liberia's current dollar GDP in the last decade. The highest annual inflow was recorded in 2015 at US\$654.4 in 2015, when remittances was 20 percent of GDP, and remains both the highest annual inflows remittances-to-GDP ratio to date.<sup>79</sup>

Though remittance inflows have been in decline since then, its contribution to GDP has remained high (Table 43). This is partly a statistical outcome due to declining GDP; remittances assume an increasing significance as a source of income and funding for personal consumption.

<sup>79</sup> World Bank Data at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.CD.DT?locations=LR> and other sources

## 17.4.1 Debt service as a proportion of exports of goods and services

**Table 44: Debt to Export Ratio - 2020-2021**

| Description                        | Amount<br>US\$Million | % of<br>Exports |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Export (Dec. 2020-Nov 2021)        | 801.8                 |                 |
| Debt Service (Jul 2020 - Dec 2021) | 141.80                | 18%             |
| Domestic Debt                      | 103.8                 | 13%             |
| External Debt                      | 38.0                  | 5%              |

Sources: Data from Ministry of Finance & Development Planning and Trading Economics

Debt services for the eighteen-month period to December 2021 was just under US\$142 million or 18 percent of export value which amounted to US\$802 million in nominal dollars<sup>80</sup>. This was FY2020/21 and the transition budget semester of July to December 2021.<sup>81</sup>

As shown in Table 44, domestic debt service constituted the bulk of debt repayment making up 13 percent of export value compared to external debt payment of only 5 percent of export. However, considering the foreign exchange constraints in the domestic markets, and fluctuations in export demand occasioned by COVID-19, this still constitutes a significant outflow.

## 6. New and Emerging Challenges

### 6.1. The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic and Government Response

COVID-19 has profoundly affected socioeconomic development and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Liberia, undermining SDG progress and exacerbating the country's already challenging economic environment. The mid-term review of the PAPD revealed that the informal Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises (MSME), the backbone of Liberia's economy, experienced a sharp decrease in revenue due to their reduced economic activity because of Covid-19.<sup>82</sup> Additionally, the pandemic exposed vulnerabilities across the health sector, highlighted poor access to water and sanitation, and exacerbated sexual and gender-based violence, especially for girls. In the education sector, the pandemic worsened the already risky issue of poor access to education. The population of out of school children (estimated at 50 percent) was pushed over the limit by the addition of school children who are not attending school.<sup>83</sup>

The agriculture sector was affected mainly by supply chain disruptions of key food commodities, inputs (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, tools, etc.), imports, and labor shortage due to the restrictions on movement including cross-border movement imposed as a response to contain the virus. Additionally, dwindling incomes contributed to lowered demand. The reduced economic activity from lockdown measures also

<sup>80</sup> Trading Economics <https://tradingeconomics.com/liberia/exports>

<sup>81</sup> FY2020/21 Budget, Ministry of Finance & Development Planning

<sup>82</sup> GOL. 2021. PADP Mid-term Review

<sup>83</sup> UNICEF Liberia Country Office Annual Report 2020

effected food purchases with 40.9 percent of respondents during a recent LISGIS survey reporting food supply reduction.<sup>84</sup>

In response to the pandemic, the GOL developed and has been implementing a Covid-19 response plan, which addresses community engagement and risk communication, epidemiological surveillance, case management and psychosocial care, laboratory services and infection prevention and control, and water and sanitation in health facilities. Additionally, according to WHO, Liberia has administered 1,996,703 vaccine doses so far.<sup>85</sup> With United Nations support, County Health teams across Nimba, Grand Gedeh and Maryland counties, administered Covid 19 rapid antigen tests in advance of travel for all the refugees and asylum seekers who met the mandatory age requirements and who voluntarily repatriated to Cote d'Ivoire between July 2021 and 30 May 2022.

To address economic recovery, the GOL developed a Liberia Economic Recovery Plan (LERP), which aims to protect emerging economic recovery by sustaining the gains under the External Credit Facility (ECF) and minimize revenue collapse arising from the economic disruptions wreaked by the pandemic and protect the fiscal space. The LERP also seeks to among other things, provide stimulus relief for key sectors hardest hit by the pandemic and those that have the greatest impact on recovering growth and identify post-COVID-19 priority investment paths and sectors under the PAPD.

The Liberian economy is gradually recovering from the adverse effects of the pandemic. According to the World Bank, the Liberian economy showed a growth momentum of 3.6 percent in 2021 and is expected to rebound further at 4.9 percent in 2022 – 2023, following two consecutive years of slump in economic activities (-2.5 percent in 2019 and -3.0 percent in 2020) mainly due to the pandemic.<sup>86</sup> This recovery is notably projected to continue in 2023 and over the medium term. Growth is driven by increased business optimism, rise in the global prices of the country's key export commodities (rubber and iron ore) and an increase in capital spending. Moreover, the global economic recovery was projected to have positive spill-over to the Liberian economy through increased cross border trade and the resumption in activities in the services sector particularly air travels, hotel, and restaurants, including accommodations, as more people get vaccinated despite the spread of new variants.

## **6.2. Rising Prices of Basic Commodities**

As the current Russia-Ukraine crisis unfolds, price of fuel continues to surge on global markets. Liberia, consequently, increased the pump price of diesel and gasoline by US\$1.47 and US\$1.16 respectively. This hike in fuel prices has already impacted price of goods and services on the local markets in Liberia. The GOL observed that rising prices could have an extended impact on food security and agricultural productivity in Liberia and intends to develop a collaborative policy action on how to manage external shocks on the local markets. In the short-term, President George Manneh Weah, has instituted a number of Executive Orders aimed at bringing relief to citizens amid the economic constraints.

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<sup>84</sup> GOL. 2021. PADP Mid-term Review

<sup>85</sup> <https://covid19.who.int/region/afro/country/lr>

<sup>86</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/liberia/overview#1>

## 7. Conclusion and Next Steps

In addition to long-standing constraints such as inequality in access to development opportunities and basic social services, widespread infrastructure deficits, and pervasive poverty, Liberia's progress towards the achievement of the SDGs has been challenged recently by the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has increased global economic pressure.

Despite these challenges, GOL with the support of development partners has made progress in the implementation of the PAPD and, by extension, the SDGs. Access to quality education, health care delivery services, social protection, and other basic social services have increased. Liberia has also sustained the peace and maintained an independent judicial system. Additionally, the Liberian economy has been expanded by 3.6 percent from the 3 percent in 2020 and is projected to expand by an average of 4.9 percent in 2022-23. This improvement is largely due to the establishment of a sound foundation for macroeconomic stability; reduced inflation; increased fiscal space for investment in critical infrastructure and programs; and rationalizing and consolidation of public debts. Currently, the recovery in the price of main export commodities, on the back of renewed international demand, has boosted the value of exports and improved the trade balance.

Even though some of the problems encountered during the 2020 VNR persist, this 2022 VNR is better than the previous in many ways. For example, the results presented in this report is more evidence-based. The 2022 VNR also benefited from early planning and better stakeholders' engagement.

### Summary of Key Challenges

- I. Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting in the public sector remain weak in providing the necessary data to track national development results and the SDGs.
- II. The PAPD indicators are not properly aligned with SDGs indicators and targets, especially with the various disaggregation types. This situation limited the use of government reports for measuring the SDGs through the required indicators.
- III. The resources for the VNR process were extremely inadequate and came late to allow all needful activities of the process as contained in the 2022 VNR implementation framework.
- IV. The development of critical infrastructure (energy, water and science and technology, etc.) to boost the private sector remains a challenge.
- V. Low domestic productivity and a weak private sector dominated by the informal economy limit domestic revenue mobilization, which is crucial for accelerating growth and sustainable development.
- VI. CSOs are constrained with the required technical and financial resources to increase their contribution to national development and the 2030 Agenda.
- VII. The COVID-19 pandemic posed a major challenge to the achievement of Liberia's development results and the SDGs.

### Lessons Learned

- I. Cooperation and partnerships with development partners, civil society, and the private sector remain vital for accelerating national development and the implementation of the SDGs.
- II. Increasing capacity for domestic resource mobilization is essential to the protection of the economy against external shocks.

- III. Improving the national data ecosystem is paramount to reporting on national development and the SDGs.
- IV. It is crucial to the success of the VNR to start early with the requisite financial resources so that data collection, analysis and reporting can be concluded in time.

### **Recommendations**

- I. Scale up the implementation of the country's domestic resource mobilization strategy.
- II. Increase support for monitoring and evaluation, and the national statistical system
- III. Scale up the implementation of the recommendations from the PAPD Mid-term review and recalibration
- IV. Strengthen collaboration with the civil society
- V. Increase participation at the sub-national level for the implementation of the SDGs and VNR
- VI. Conduct a proper alignment of the PAPD indicators with the SDGs indicators.

### **Next Steps**

- I. Develop a comprehensive framework for reporting on the SDGs
- II. Organization post-VNR stakeholder engagement on lessons learned and planned actions from the just concluded VNR.
- III. Review and update the VNR framework to guide the next review



## 8. Annexes

### 8.1. SDGs Indicators Reporting Table

| Indicator   | Last Available Data and Year (LYr)                                 |             | Current Available Data and Year (Cyr)                              |                 | Percent Change<br><br>[(CYr less LYr)/LYr multiply by 100] |
|---|--|-------------|--|-----------------|--|
| <b>Goal 1: End Poverty In All Its Forms Everywhere</b>  |  |             |  |                 |  |
| Proportion of population below the international poverty line   | 51.1 (2020)  |             | 50.6 (2021)  |                 | 0.978  |
| Distribution of poverty by urban/rural  | Rural poverty  | 71.6 (2016) | Rural poverty  | 68 (2021)       | -5.027   |
|   | Urban poverty  | 31.5 (2016) | Urban poverty  | 59.9 (2021)     | 90.1   |
| Percent of population with access to basic services   | Proportion of population with access to electricity                | 10 (2013)   | Proportion of population with access to electricity                | 24 (2019-2020)  | 140  |
|   | Proportion of population with access to improved drinking water    | 73 (2013)   | Proportion of population with access to improved drinking water    | 84 (2019-2020)  | 15.068   |
|   | Proportion of population with access to improved toilet facilities | 17 (2013)   | Proportion of population with access to improved toilet facilities | 47 (2019-2020)/ | 176.470  |
| <b>Goal 2: End Hunger, Achieve Food Security and Improved Nutrition and Promote Sustainable Agriculture</b> |  |             |  |                 |  |
| Prevalence of undernourishment  | 35.0 (2021)  |             | 33.3 (2021)  |                 | -4.857   |
| Prevalence of stunting among children under 5 years of age  | 32 (2013)  |             | 29.8 (2019-2020)   |                 | -6.875   |
|   | Wasting  | 6 (2013)    | Wasting  | 3 (2019-2020)   | -50  |

|  |   |                         |                                     |               |                             |
|--|---|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Prevalence of malnutrition among children under 5 years of age   | Overweight  | 3 (2013)                | Overweight                          | 4 (2019-2020) | 33.3                        |
| The agriculture orientation index for government expenditures  | 2 (2010/2011)   |                         | 1.1 (2019/2020)                     |               | -45                         |
| <b>Goal 3: Ensure Healthy Lives And Promote Well-Being For All At All Ages</b>   |   |                         |                                     |               |                             |
| Maternal mortality ratio   | 1,072 per 100,000 (2013)                                      |                         | 742 per 100,000 (2019/2020)         |               | -30.7 per 100,000           |
| Under-five mortality rate  | 94 per 1000 live births (2013)                                |                         | 93 per 1000 live births (2019/2020) |               | -1.063 per 1000 live births |
| Neonatal mortality rate  | 26 per 1000 live births (2013)                                |                         | 37 per 1000 live births (2019/2020) |               | 42.307 per 1000 live births |
| Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex, age and key populations                                    | Men who have sex with men                                     | 19.8 (2013)             | Men who have sex with men           | 37.9 (2021)   | 91.414                      |
|  | Uniform service personnel                                     | 5.0 (2013)              | Uniform service personnel           | 17.6 (2021)   | 252                         |
|  | Female sex workers  | 9.8 (2013)              | Female sex workers                  | 16.7 (2021)   | 70.4                        |
|  | People who inject drugs                                       | 3.0 (2013)              | People who inject drugs             | 14.4 (2021)   | 380                         |
|  | Transport workers   | 4.8 (2013)              | Transport workers                   | 9.6 (2021)    | 100                         |
| Tuberculosis incidence per 1,000 population  | 130 (2019)  |                         | 127 (2020)                          |               | -2.307                      |
| Malaria incidence per 1,000 population   | 369.6 (2019)  |                         | 358 (2020)                          |               | -3.138                      |
| <b>Goal 5: Achieve Gender Equality And Empower All Women And Girls</b>   |   |                         |                                     |               |                             |
| Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex | National Gender Policy (NGP) – 2018-2022                      |                         |                                     |               |                             |
|  | Legal Aid Policy for marginalized population (2021)           |                         |                                     |               |                             |
|  | Gender-Responsive Planning and Budgeting (GRPB) Policy (2019) |                         |                                     |               |                             |
|  | Gender policies for government institutions (2021)            |                         |                                     |               |                             |
|  | Anti-SGBV Roadmap (2020-2022)                                 |                         |                                     |               |                             |
| Percentage of women and girls subjected to sexual violence 12 months prior to the LDHS of 2019-2020.                             | Age   | Over the past 12 months |                                     |               |                             |
|  | 15-19   | 3.4                     |                                     |               |                             |
|  | 20-24   | 5.9                     |                                     |               |                             |
|  | 25-29   | 2.5                     |                                     |               |                             |
|  | 30-39   | 4.7                     |                                     |               |                             |
|  | 40-49   | 5.8                     |                                     |               |                             |
|  | Urban   | 12.4                    |                                     |               |                             |
| Rural  | 5.7   |                         |                                     |               |                             |
|  | House of Representatives                                      | Senate                  |                                     |               |                             |

|   |                   |                           |                           |                   |
|---|-------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Percentage of women in Liberia's Legislature  | 12.3              | 6.66                      |                           |                   |
| Proportion of women in managerial positions (2021)  | Cabinet Positions | Deputy Minister Positions | Superintendents Positions | Mayoral Positions |
|   | 15.8              | 24.5                      | 20.00                     | 33.3              |
| Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care   | Percentage        |                           |                           |                   |
|   | 58                |                           |                           |                   |
| <b>Goal 6: Ensure Availability and Sustainable Management Of Water And Sanitation For All</b>   |                   |                           |                           |                   |
| Percentage of households have access to an improved water source  | 68 (2007)         | 84 (2019-2020)            |                           | 23.529            |
| Percent of households with improved toilet facilities   | 28 (2007)         | 47 (2019-2020)            |                           | 67.857            |
| <b>Goal 16: Promote Peaceful And Inclusive Societies For Sustainable Development, Provide Access To Justice For All And Build Effective, Accountable And Inclusive Institutions At All Levels</b> |                   |                           |                           |                   |
| Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority  | 4 (2007)          | 66 (2019-2020)            |                           | 1550              |

## 8.2. Liberia 2022 VNR Main Messages

1. Since 2019, the world is still experiencing and feeling the impacts of the highest level of a health emergency (COVID-19 pandemic). The disaster has evolved into global public health and economic crisis that has affected the global economy; overshadowed gains made, and hampered numerous efforts geared toward sustainable development, and growth. Moreover, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has increased the global economic pressure, and thus decreased any hope for post-COVID-19 pandemic economic recovery. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Liberia was still recovering from the Ebola epidemic that caused thousands of lives and overwhelmed the already post-war economy.
2. **Liberia's recovery process was faced with** binding constraints such as a legacy of entrenched inequality in access to development opportunities and basic social services, widespread infrastructure deficits, and pervasive poverty (which has been on the rise since 2014) coupled with low domestic productivity, lack of value addition, and the susceptibility to constant external shock. These constraints have been the greatest barriers to sustaining peace and accelerating growth and sustainable development. As a result, more than half of the population 50.9 percent are living below the national poverty line and 52 percent below the international poverty line, having limited access

to basic services such as electricity, water, roads, sanitation, etc. Moreover, gains made in Human Development Index (HDI), and life expectancy at birth have been unsustainable.

3. However, over the years, progress has been made with the support of development partners through the implementation of the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) despite the economic pressure and challenges brought by the Covid-19 pandemic. To date, the economy has been expanded by 3.6 percent from the 3 percent in 2020 and is projected to expand by an average of 4.9 percent in 2022-23. This is an improvement, which is due to the establishment of a sound foundation for macroeconomic stability; reduced inflation (13.1 percent to 6 percent); increased fiscal space for investment in critical infrastructure and programs; and rationalizing and consolidation of public debts. Currently, the recovery in the price of main export commodities, on the back of renewed international demand, has boosted the value of exports and improved the trade balance.
4. Furthermore, access to quality education, health care delivery services, social protection, and other basic social services have increased. In addition to sustaining the peace, an independent judicial system has been built and maintained, which will continue to be strengthened by ongoing judicial reforms with a particular focus on increasing access to justice and the rule of law, and reducing corruption. The government and partners have deepened their commitment to achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda through the creation of an enabling environment to promote a more inclusive and participatory development approach for the achievement of development results. In so doing, the government, development partners (DPs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and the private sector have committed themselves to the signing of the Liberia 2022 Action Dialogue Joint Statement purposely to establish a multi-stakeholder platform to advance the effectiveness of development cooperation; increase the alignment of DPs programs to the PAPD; enhance implementation and achievement of high-level results by following up and monitoring of the PAPD and 2030 Agenda; and promote mutual accountability.
5. Finally, going forward, there will be continuous and increased efforts in strengthening national institutions and creating an enabling environment for inclusive and sustainable growth through transparency and accountability in the public sector, support for agriculture value chain development, and bridging the infrastructure gaps. In addition, the government will continue to boost private sector development by improving the business climate and unlocking key investment opportunities in the country. By this, the government and partners will continue to set new priorities and national targets in response to the current realities; shift opportunities and momentum when necessary; reallocate resources; promote holistic decentralization; tackle corruption, build human capital; promote business climate reform; and increase access to basic social services with a specific focus on **“Leaving No One Behind”**.

