

Liberia Fragility Assessment- Final Draft **September 5, 2012**

Executive Summary:

Liberia has made remarkable progress since the end of hostilities in 2003 in consolidating peace and rebuilding a government shattered by over a decade of war. After holding two relatively peaceful and credible national elections, maintaining peace in the face of regional instability particularly from neighboring Cote D'Ivoire and retaining a steady increase in economic growth Liberia is a nation on the rise.

At the same time, empirical data indicates that recovery from conflict is often far more challenging and more fraught with potential reversals than we would like. In order to ensure Liberia stays steadily on a path towards recovery, peace and prosperity the government is investing in both national and international conversations around new approaches to supporting countries struggling with challenges of peacebuilding and statebuilding.

The *New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States* was endorsed at the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in 2011 by forty countries and multi-lateral agencies, including Liberia. The *New Deal* calls for a new paradigm for approaching and addressing situations of fragility through focusing on the key causes and manifestations thereof. The *New Deal* specifies five Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals as necessary areas for fragile states to focus on in order to reinforce their resilience. These are:

- PSG 1: Legitimate Politics – Foster Inclusive Political Settlements and Conflict Resolution
- PSG 2: Security – Establish and Strengthen People's Security
- PSG 3: Justice – Address Injustices and Increase People's Access to Justice
- PSG 4: Economic Foundations – Generate Employment and Improve Livelihoods
- PSG 5: Revenue and Services – Manage Revenue and Building Capacity for Accurate and Fair Service Delivery

The *New Deal* also focuses on key commitments that the government and their international and local partners, including civil society, must make in order to achieve success. These include supporting political dialogue, national visions, transparency and strengthening of capacity.

As agreed to at the High Level Forum, seven countries have agreed to be on the forefront of taking the *New Deal* forward through a process of piloting. The first step in the piloting process is to carry out an assessment of fragility for each country. The following represents the Government of Liberia's Fragility Assessment.

Methodologically this assessment took a different approach than is being done in some of the other pilots. Namely, Liberia has over the past several years carried out and invited in several assessments on areas highly relevant to fragility. Rather than undertake yet another consultative assessment process, as is being done in several countries, in Liberia the approach used was to

gather information from assessments already completed. The information below, therefore, is all culled from Government material. Where external material has been referenced it has been clearly referenced. It is believed that this approach is both more reflective as it represents several years of investigation rather than a one-off workshop as well as being more cost-effective and respecting human resource constraints. The results of this assessment will lead directly into Liberia determining its location on the so-called Fragility Spectrum, which is the second stage in piloting the *New Deal*.

Introduction:

The effects of Liberia's fourteen year civil war cannot be understated. Over seventy-five percent of the population describe themselves as victims of the wars through displacement, destruction of property, direct violence, and/or abduction. An estimated 270,000 people were killed in a nation of only 3.5 million pre-war. Real progress has been made in addressing some of the causes and consequences of Liberia's civil wars since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2003. On the political front, the country moved from a transitional government, through two elections deemed generally credible. Although there have been and continue to be sporadic outburst of violence across Liberia, the government and people have worked hard to maintain overall peace and stability. Foreign investment has once again started flowing into Liberia and members of the diaspora are returning to engage in both private business as well as the business of government.

With these successes, very real challenges remain. Various factors contributed to the violence that ravaged Liberia, including contestations over land, youth unemployment and disempowerment, mismanagement of natural resources, fractured relationship between state and citizen (in particular stemming from historical disenfranchisement), the lack of a national vision, and regional dynamics. Many of these are complimentary and overlapping, requiring simultaneous progress in multiple areas in order for real peace consolidation to be realized. Whereas progress has certainly been made in rehabilitating infrastructure and institutions of the state, more limited progress has been seen in the areas of reconciliation and development of a mutually supported social contract. Without this, even positive government reforms can be seen as illegitimate and contribute to undermining Liberia's progress away from fragility.

Given the preponderant role that center-periphery relations have played historically in agitations towards violence the lack of progress in addressing this divide is highly concerning. Liberia will continue to be fragile until it makes more concerted progress in reducing the divide between the center and the periphery. Progress must be both geographic (i.e. extending the services of the state outside of Greater Monrovia) and in terms of identity and perception. The National Visioning exercise clearly reveals a continued sense of marginalization of the majority by a national-level elite with strong roots in a highly dominant history.¹ This must be addressed not

¹ Communities met with during the National Visioning consultations expressed some degree of skepticism regarding the government's sincerity given plans and consultations of day's past and the limited impact upon their lives. There does appear to be a growing "consultation fatigue" amongst communities who see a lot of information going out, but very little improvements coming in. Five regional and 156 district consultations were held as part of the National Visioning exercise.

only through consultation, but also through real action to expand opportunities, devolution of power to local levels, and consideration for majority views into political decision making.

Optimistically, at this moment the Government is well position to leverage reforms made already and build upon them in a way that will facilitate needed reconciliation and national cohesion. The Government of Liberia's second poverty reduction strategy paper, the Agenda for Transformation, is laid on the foundation of the first PRS (2008-2011). PRS 1 focused on four broad areas: Expanding peace and security; revitalizing the economy; strengthening governance and the rule of law; and rehabilitating infrastructure and delivering basic services. In a 2011 evaluation of PRS-1 the following results were found: Maintenance of macroeconomic stability with low inflation, maintenance of a balanced budget, reduction in external debt were found to be fully satisfactory. Health, water, sanitation, business and private sector, and civil service reform were found to be partly satisfactory. Transition of security to Liberian agencies, delivery of basic education, improvement of roads, environmental concerns, labor protection and crime prevention were marginally positive. Finally, listed as unsatisfactory were progress in the areas of electric power, prompt delivery of justice and decentralization.

The AfT recognizes that much work of PRS-1 was preparatory in nature, focused on strategies, plans, policies and the development and passage of new laws. Less progress was demonstrated in terms of concrete outcomes for the average Liberian citizen. It is for this reason that the second PRS intentionally seeks to move from frameworks to action with a specific intention to focus on results. The AfT's primary goal is for Liberia to become a more prosperous and inclusive society with a focus on four main pillars: Peace, Security and Rule of Law; Economic Transformation; Governance and Public Institutions; and Human Development.

Legitimate Politics – Foster Inclusive Political Settlements and Conflict Resolution

As the New Visioning exercise points out, upon the founding of the Republic in the 1847 several different forms of governance prevailed in the area that would become the modern nation of Liberia. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report indicates these indigenous governing systems were consolidated under a variety of “oligarchic, autocratic, militaristic and authoritarian governments” that the people of Liberia have to endure citing over a century of state suppression and insensitivity. The elite imposed their own norms and values on the indigenous Liberians who they saw as inferior, deliberately attempting to erase traditional values and replace them with their own. As is often the case, however, tendencies towards original governance systems and cultural traditions have prevailed. These differential systems contribute to the challenge of defining a clear governance system with full buy-in from the broadest constituency. This historical context embeds much of the current debate into highly contentious perceptions that continue to this day.

The transition from post-conflict fragility to a unified nation focused on peaceful, prosperous development is never an easy task. Liberia must not only recover its institutions and infrastructure, but must develop an entirely new social contract to replace a pre-conflict context in which there was explicit marginalization of the majority by an elite minority. Whereas the United Nations talks of “recovery” as a restoration of pre-crisis conditions, this would be an oversimplification in the Liberian context that many Liberians would reject (Interaction 2010). In order to see real progress Liberia will need to confront an abusive and marginalizing history not only in rhetoric, but in practice.

There is immense opportunity to re-fashion the national debate on what it means to be Liberian. But with opportunity comes risk. Encouraging a dialogue on national identity will not only be politically and logistically challenging, it will also bring to the fore long standing tensions and enmities that will require sophisticated management in order for dialogue to be productive and non-violent. For these reasons and others progress in this area has been limited at best and not on stride with progress in other areas. As improvements in governing capacity are to be welcomed, they must be interpreted through the eyes of a population who has real historical reasons for being weary of a strong state. An increase in state capacity without a concomitant investment in the area of legitimate politics has the potential to inflame any perceptions of state-capture. While it’s not likely that this will lead to a recurrence of violence in the short term, this does present a very real grievance that could be manipulated by spoilers in the longer term. Progress in the area of legitimate politics, therefore, is perhaps the most important to ensure real consolidation of the gains made in the other areas.

1.1 – Political Settlement

Since the end of its civil war Liberia has successfully held two relatively peaceful democratic elections. The 2011 election, however, demonstrated the fragility of the political system beset as it was by inflammatory rhetoric, sporadic violence and political jockeying by various parties, including the CDC boycott of the runoff. That the violence was not more widespread and that it was generally contained highlights progress made in prioritizing peace, although it also likely is a condition of UNMIL presence. Police response to the November 7, 2011 protests, during which

one person died and several were injured, demonstrates cause for concern with UNMIL's transition that the police may be unable to contain similar outbreaks in the future.

In 2012 the government approved and launched the National Policy on Decentralization and a Local Governance Act is being prepared for submission to the National Legislature. The policy aims to improve popular participation, local initiative, transparency and accountability, in particular with regard to service provision at the local level. However, overall the government remains highly centralized. Additionally, the 1986 constitution does not provide for a legal framework for decentralization nor for modes of citizen participation in decision making. Nor does the National Elections Commission currently have the capacity to manage sub-national elections. The legislative stalling, the lack of constitutional clarity and the capacity limitations all mean that a rush towards decentralization is both highly aspirational as well as fraught with the potential to surface new tensions.

That said, improvements have been made through the establishment of county-level-branches of key service delivery ministries, such as Education, Health and Social Welfare and Public Works as well as County Development Offices. That said there is significant socio-economic as well as political inequality between Greater Monrovia and the rest of the country. Populations outside of the capital area were two to three times more likely to have no education and belong to the poorest asset group (Vinck pg 3). A government focus on investing in a "development corridor" of five counties representing the greatest population numbers has resulted in limited assistance going to more remote areas, in particular the southeast. This part of the country faces the most serious rates of food insecurity, health and education achievements. At the same time, recent insecurity in Cote D'Ivoire in this very area should give cause for concern about the very real implications for stability if the area continues to be neglected.

The establishment county service delivery ministries represent more de-concentration (i.e. giving decision making power to government employees appointed by the central government) rather than decentralization (devolution of decision making power to locally-elected officials rather than centrally appointed). Additionally, capacity remains extremely limited at the working level across the government, whether in Monrovia or the counties, and is more pronounced in the counties. Capacity building, support and education will require significant investments for real decentralization to take place. County Superintendents, for example, during a 2010 workshop sponsored by the Woodrow Wilson International Center lamented that policy coherence and coordination is lacking at the county level. They spoke to the challenges of working with the central government, how to engage with traditional leaders, appropriate use of community development funds and much more.

There also exists an overall lack of civic education at the community level regarding how to engage in the process of governance. Ensuring accountability of government officials is and will continue to be important at both national and county/local levels in order to constrain any attempts to utilize power for personal or group gain (as has been done in the past). However, this will require appropriate demand actions on the part of the public. These are not currently being articulated in an effective fashion.

Further, there exists a fragmentation at the local level among political leaders that will challenge the process of decentralization. Some of this fragmentation is demonstrated as disputes over county and district boundaries. Without a clear mandate for the various political units support for fiscal devolution remains unsupported. Additionally, as indicated in the AFT, “Politically diverse identities in Liberia have led to social cleavages and conflict at community and national levels, and proponents of incremental change may face possible national fatigue with the referendum process, or initial steps of reform may create interest groups that oppose further steps” (Agenda for Transformation, 110).

In addition to the political challenges, as the decentralization process continues there is very real potential for a clash of norms and traditions. Results from the National Visioning district consultations demonstrated a demand at the local level for better integration of traditional systems and values. This includes the restoration of the role of traditional chief in local governance, but also a re-examination of traditional Liberian values, which many saw as threatened by imported norms. The report points out a “conflict of cultures” in which norms and values are at competition with one another and people feel as though the state is non-representative. The consultations found real hostility towards work of some NGOs, in particular around human rights (especially for women, children and gay rights) as contravening traditional Liberia values. Indeed, many complained that it was difficult to properly discipline their children in the face of “foreign” values. Similar sentiments have been expressed in other consultations, including the joint UN/Interpeace consultations in 2010 during which some Liberians lamented the promotion of children’s rights as contributing to breaking down family structures.² While this does not necessarily argue in favor of ceasing human rights work, it does demonstrate some of the fissures within society that require deliberate dialogue and patience to address.

The National Visioning exercise also demonstrated significant feelings of resentment against prevailing symbols of the state. “Put otherwise, the institutions and symbols of the state were clearly designed to marginalize and alienate an indigenous majority perceived as ‘primitive and uncivilized’” (Dunn and Tarr, 8). Clearly there remains resentment over policies of the past, including the exclusion of ninety-five percent of the population in having a say in government or serving in the military up until the 1970s. Indeed, it wasn’t until 1904 that indigenous populations were granted the title of citizen and while adult suffrage was granted in 1946, the ability to vote was only provided to those who paid hut taxes, which limited rights for the majority.

1.2 – Political Processes and Institutions

There remains a patronage system within the civil service that is perceived as protecting a loyal entourage. This results in a sense of disenfranchisement for those unable to access the system. During the first Johnson Sirleaf administration great efforts were made by the President to form an inclusive cabinet that featured both members of rival political parties as well as former civil society representatives. This extended to representation along gender, tribal, religious, political and regional lines. While this move likely helped to open the government for some, others saw the placement of opposition and minority groups as doing more to reconcile individuals than the wider society (Crisis Group 2011, 2).

² Joint Programme Unit for United Nations/Interpeace Initiatives, *Peace in Liberia: Challenges to Consolidation of Peace in the Eyes of the Communities* (September 2010).

Many believe that political alliances in Liberia are more about maintaining positions of power than they are about overlapping policy priorities (Crisis Group, 6). This creates an environment in which negotiation is challenging and coalitions very fluid. Additionally, a history of elites using political power to polarize society remains a very real risk, whether through actual manipulation or perceptions thereof based upon historical practices. Further, the results of the 2011 voting demonstrated the overlap between political preference and ethnic identity (Crisis Group, 3).

The track record regarding impunity is mixed. Accusations by the European Commission and ECOWAS of theft by government officials during the Transitional Government led to arrests, but no convictions as the accused were eventually acquitted on all charges relating to “economic sabotage” (Crisis Group 2011, 1). That said, the government has set up various offices, including the Liberian Anti-Corruption Commission, the Public Procurement and Concessions Commission (PPCC), the Internal Audit Secretariat, the reconstituted GAC, and the Liberian Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative to try to address and prevent misuse of resources.

The 2011 election, although generally peaceful and credible, also witnessed various attacks on media houses. This reduces the overall enabling environment for open political participation and freedom of information. There were also attacks on party members again limiting the political space and creating an environment of fear and intimidation (Crisis Group, 3). While access to information has improved since the end of the civil war, reliance on informal sources of information remains high for some key groups, including women and populations based in the south-east portion of the country.

1.3 – Societal Relationships

While modest progress has been made in terms of reconciliation, it remains one of the greatest threats to long-term peace and stability. As the recent Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) review stated, “A disconcerting disparity exists between progress made regarding the rule of law and security sector reform and that achieved in national reconciliation efforts. This merits serious attention, as a faulty social contract that resembles the discriminatory pre-civil war contract appears to be being re-established. If this is the situation, efforts to build justice and security State institutions are based on a faulty social contract, which could call into question the legitimacy of these institutions” (PBC Review, 15). Similarly, a 2011 OECD survey spotlighted concerns by some that Liberia was taking an overly institutional and technical approach to peacebuilding with insufficient attention being paid to the more complex issues of identity, reconciliation and social contract.³

The National Visioning District consultations identified several specific areas of social cleavages between particular groups in need of attention. The consultations indicated that people felt reconciliation of these tensions should come from high political levels first as it is there that

³ OECD, *International Engagement in Fragile States: Can't we do Better?* (OECD, Paris, 2011).

manipulation of tensions is most often exploited for political purposes. A recent survey found that community cohesion seems to be deteriorating as social cleavages become more defined.⁴

Forty percent of respondents interviewed for a survey in 2010 indicated that identity and tribal differences caused the conflict in Liberia (Vinck et al, 4) while seventy-four percent indicated that in order to build peace uniting the various tribes in Liberia would be necessary. Curiously, only four percent of respondents indicated that ethnic divisions or tribal violence were current factors of insecurity, although this rate was higher in some locations, including Lofa and Grand Gedeh. (Vinck, et al, 5). This perhaps presents a moment of opportunity to open dialogue.

One of the greatest obstacles to harmony and peaceful co-habitation among groups remains tensions regarding natural resources use and ownership. Fissures occur along inter-religious, inter-ethnic and inter-generation lines. Although progress is being made to try to address these tensions through, in particular, regulatory reform and harmonization of statutory and customary norms with regard to land, non-violent resolution mechanisms remain inadequate at the local level resulting in maintaining the status quo of distrust and hostility.

In November 2011 President Johnson Sirleaf announced a national peace and reconciliation initiative to be led by Nobel Prize winner Leymah Gbowee. The President did not, however, clarify how this initiative would be connected to expectations regarding implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations, many of which have languished. Some indicate skepticism over this process given lack of movement on the TRC (Crisis Group 2012, 8). With the initiative still in its early days it's too soon to determine its impact. It could create real opportunity for expanding dialogue and advising on issues such as impunity and prosecution for previous crimes committed during the war. Indeed there have been recent signs of progress with the forward progress on implementing the Palava Hut processes recommended by the TRC through coordination by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Further progress on reconciliation includes the formation of a task force and the development of a reconciliation roadmap which will be taken for nationwide consultations The GoL has demonstrated commitment by appropriating five million dollars in the FY 2012/2013 national budget for reconciliation activities.

⁴ Robert Blair, Christopher Blattman and Alexandra Hartman, *Patterns of Conflict and Cooperation in Liberia (Part 1): Results from a Longitudinal Study*, Yale University and Innovations for Poverty Action, 2011.

Security – Establish and Strengthen People’s Security

The National Security Strategy of 2008 remains the foundational document for the Liberian security sector. It identifies internal, regional and international factors of greatest risk to Liberian security – including lack of respect for rule of law, poor natural resource management, deactivated servicemen, corruption, robbery, illicit trafficking, land and property disputes, ethnic tensions, and citizenship among others. While the Strategy helps to orient specific objectives, progress in this area remains hampered by weaknesses in coordination, financing and civilian oversight. The National Security Council meets regularly under the Chairing of the President of Liberia. The 2011 National Security Reform and Intelligence Act lays out the membership and responsibility of the Council.

Although the Government of Liberia has made great strides in setting up and developing its internal security apparatus, no-one can deny to significant role played by the international community in helping to preserve peace in Liberia since the end of the conflict in 2003. The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has not only helped to preserve peace by intervening in instances of small-scale violence, it has also been responsible for much of the training for Liberian police forces. Additionally, the United States has provided significant support in the re-building of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) after the national army was completely disbanded post-conflict and reconstituted from scratch. 2012 – 2015 represents a significant timeframe for Liberia as UNMIL prepares and begins to draw down. As this assessment is being done much of the emphasis is on ensuring an orderly transition for Liberia to take on full responsibility for its internal and border security. While caution must continue to be exercised, real progress has been made and must be built upon.

While building upon the work done to date, it is worth bearing in mind that much of the work done to date has focused on increasing the size and quality of the Liberian security services, namely the AFL and the LNP, even if confidence levels in police performance still appear to be low. Security has been less well defined in public security terms, including understanding individual and community security mechanisms, access to information, education and food security as critical components of well-being. A greater focus on these areas will be necessary to ensure that the goals of the Agenda for Transformation around human development will be realized.

2.1 – Security Conditions

According to the PRS-1 Assessment perceived rates of criminality have decreased in recent years. However, only a minority saw security as improving remarkably. Crime such as mob justice, rape and robbery are still very present threats. Indeed, although the perception is that crime is on the decline, according to the Liberian National Police actual crime rates have been increasing. Caution must be used in interpreting this data, however, as it could be more indicative of increased reporting and data maintenance rather than actual increases in crime. A very real concern remains the inability of police to respond when minor incidents of violence escalate into larger scale clashes, which is a recurring reality in certain countries. These outbreaks are very difficult to predict and therefore challenging to prevent or respond to rapidly.

Outside of the police, a 2010 survey asked respondents who provides security in their areas. Thirty-four percent indicated “nobody” while thirty-three percent indicated the police, followed by community watch teams at twenty-six percent, God at seventeen percent and ourselves at fifteen percent.⁵ Domestic violence is a frequent occurrence in Liberia with thirty-six percent of women and sixteen percent of men reporting being a victim of domestic violence (Vinck et al, 4). The MoJ’s SGBV Crimes Unit represents a realization of the need for specialized support to address this challenge; however it remains inadequate given the scale of the challenge.

Regionally, Liberia is risking becoming a transshipment point for international narcotics and other illicit trafficking, including in people and arms, although rates are not as high as several of their West African neighbors. The government has, with international support, been pro-active in attempting to increase their capacity to handle these challenges through, for example, the establishment of the Transnational Crime Unit and signing onto the West Africa Coast Initiative (WACI). Many believe that UNMIL has served a valuable deterrent effect with regard to organized crime and that their draw-down could result in an increase in Liberia as a transshipment point. Should this occur, government agencies will be hard pressed to cope with Bureau for Immigration and Naturalization (BIN) staff, for example, stationed at borders unarmed, with limited training and often deployed in isolation limiting their ability to provide effective border security. The lack of a national drug law to govern illicit drugs and weak capacity of the DEA to tackle trafficking and other related challenges present difficulties for the GoL.

Many of the illegal networks that exploited Liberia’s natural resources during the war years remain, using international borders to traffic products. Additionally, many former combatants have maintained their contact with co-combatants and commanders. Some have participated as mercenaries in regional fighting in Cote D’Ivoire whereas others have devolved into criminal groups. Although the reintegration program led by UNMIL demonstrated real success, some critics have lamented that its focus on supply-side economic support rather than on community reintegration limited prospects for real reintegration and leaves the country vulnerable.

Liberians have been implicated in violence both in Guinea and Cote D’Ivoire, as populations from these neighboring states have also been implicated in the violence in Liberia. Grand Gedeh County, according to the International Crisis Group, has been fertile recruitment ground for mercenaries to participate in Cote D’Ivoire’s recent electoral violence given the high number of former combatants and unemployed youth. It also remains host to 67,000 Ivoirian refugees

Overall, borders remain porous and both people and arms move easily across the region. In addition, there are strong group ties across national borders, ties that have helped to foster alliances and contributed to violence in the past. The fragile peace and political situation in both Guinea and Cote D’Ivoire represent potential challenges for Liberia, as could the upcoming Sierra Leone election.

2.2 - Capacity and Accountability of Security Sector Institutions

⁵ Vinck, et al, pg 54.

The Liberia National Police has been increased to a total of more than 4,000 trained and deployed personnel. This represents a police to citizen ratio of 683, whereas the UN generally recommends a ratio of one police officer per 450 citizens. UNMIL and the GoL have estimated that the total police force needs to be increased to 8,000 to ensure public security and that this needs to occur prior to full UNMIL departure. The Public Expenditure Review completed by the World Bank and UN identified real progress being made in relation to the LNP, including among others, introduction of standard operating procedures for LNP stations; established systems and procedures for case file management; formalization of registration of criminal complaints nationwide; harmonization and streamlining of payroll systems; community police as standard practice; and improvements in investigative capacities. In addition, the National Police Training Academy has taken over teaching responsibilities and can train 600 new recruits per year. While this number is insufficient to hit the growth goal, it still represents progress from the previous 300 recruits trained per year.

The existing ranks remain, however, both quantitatively and qualitatively insufficient. More training, resources and infrastructure support is needed to enable the LNP to be effective. Additionally, the LNP remains over-represented in urban areas, particularly in and around Monrovia while deployment throughout the country continues to lag. Liberians remain unsatisfied with limited police presence, slow police time and high rates of corruption among the ranks.

With regard to the army, again, real progress has been made with a completely reformed force consisting of new recruits. The current force strength stands at over 2,000 and is expected to be fully operational by 2014. The AFL has recently achieved responsibility – both financial and functional – for its own training having taken over from the US Army Training and Evaluation Program. However, gaps in the strength of the force remain, including high rates of attrition, and gaps in discipline and professionalism (Public Expenditure Review, 7).

Outside of the army and police, it is important to consider the broader context. Historically politicization of the military has helped to drive conflict and therefore requires urgent attention. There continues to be weakness in civilian oversight of the security sector, coupled with a public and civil society that does little to hold the sector to account. Although there are various legislative committees set up to provide oversight, they remain weak and ineffective. While some steps have been taken to enhance civilian capacity, these remain insufficient. In addition, the lack of effective civilian oversight impacts upon public confidence in the armed forces.

Additionally although public spending on the security sector has been increasing, a recent Public Expenditure Review found a financing gap of USD\$86million. Filling this gap will be more critical during the 2012 – 2015 timeframe as the government takes over costs from UNMIL's draw down. Security agencies need to improve their planning and budgeting capacities in order to develop credible and effective budgets. Additionally, demonstrating improved practice in this area will improve accountability and transparency thereby limited perceptions of and actual corruption that remains a grievance for many Liberians.

2.3 – Performance and Responsiveness of Security Sector Institutions

There is a culture of impunity and lack of accountability that continues to plague the security sector resulting in continued lack of popular confidence in or reliance on the state security sector. Over half of respondents in the Vinck, et al survey indicated having to pay something to the police (fifty-six percent), in order to initiate action on, for example, initiating an investigation or to file their complaint. The PRS-1 survey indicated variance in the level of trust in the police with roughly a third of respondents indicating no-one provided security in their locality with another third indicating police protection was present. Behind these numbers is a broad regional variation. Given the preponderance of police presence in the greater Monrovia area, as well as the relatively higher population density around the capital it is important to consider these two factors as they relate to one another.

The establishment of so-called justice and security hubs – supported by the UN - in five locations should help to increase service outside of Monrovia, which is currently severely lacking. These hubs will house police, immigration and naturalization, corrections and court facilities to ease the coordination within the justice system. One important plan for the hubs is to staff them with Public Services Officers who can receive complaints of misconduct from the public to help address concerns of misconduct, corruption and ill-treatment. To date, one hub has been partially completed in Gbarnga and planning for the next two is underway. In Gbarnga progress on construction has been mixed track as have plans for command and control of security actors. Progress has been more limited, however, in terms of application of case management, training, and public outreach.⁶

⁶ UN Peacebuilding Commission, *Review of progress in the implementation of the statement of mutual commitments on peacebuilding in Liberia*, First Progress Report, March 2012.

Justice – Address Injustice and Increase People’s Access to Justice

Every conflict assessment that has been recently completed in Liberia points to deficiencies in the justice system as a real cause for concern with regard to potential for future violence. There are multiple reasons for this, including that without judicial recourse communities and individuals may seek violent forms of redress that could easily spin out of control. Additionally, there continues to be a lack of harmonization in Liberia between the evolving statutory system and traditional systems of justice. Although some progress has been made in trying to reconcile these, stalled progress not only creates technical challenges of adjudication, but also represents a continuation of a center-periphery divide. As indicated earlier manifestations of this divide remain crucial to address in order to foster government legitimacy and broader national reconciliation. It is important, therefore, that Liberia not look only at increasing technical and functional capacity, but also at the very process of enshrining norms and values into a legal framework acceptable to the majority of the population.

3.1 – Justice Conditions

Liberia continues to struggle with weak justice institutions resulting in, among other things, cases of arbitrary arrests and detention, harsh prison conditions, and pro-longed pre-trial detention. As the justice sector struggles to cope, external means are utilized, including ritual killings and mob violence.

Overall the judiciary remains inefficient and plagued by corruption. There is broad agreement among actors in Liberia on the need to extend justice services throughout the country as well as to improve capacity from both a substantive as well as administrative perspective. The Ministry of Justice has been piloting a magistrate mobile court project, probation project and has created a Pre-Trial Detention Task Force in order to address the issue of high rates of extended pre-trial detention. These initiatives and others have helped to decrease the number of pre-trial detainees. The reach of these initiatives have been, however, relatively limited in scope.

In addition to gaps on the government side, the public lacks a clear understanding of the judicial system or what their own rights and responsibilities are in terms of interacting with the system. This is further hindered by the coexistence of formal and traditional forms of justice, which raises the need for harmonization to ensure the two systems complement each other. . Additionally, there is a substantive disconnect between the way many rural Liberians perceive justice, in terms of group interests and social relationships, and the much more individualistic statutory orientation. Harmonizing these differing conceptualizations of the very concept of justice means remains a key challenge. It is not only important to address from the scope of increasing overall judicial effectiveness, but this is yet one more representation of the center-periphery divide that has long plagued Liberia.

3.2 – Capacity and Accountability of Justice Institutions

Real progress has been made in the justice sector. Budgetary independence for the judiciary has been secured. Progress has been made on rationalizing staffing and personnel. In 2011/2012 the budget for the justice sector has been increased demonstrating ownership of the need to increase investment in this critical sector. A judicial institute has been established and is developing

training programs for judicial and support staff. This has allowed for the development of standardized curricula. For the first time in twenty years, Liberia reconstituted the ranks of trained magistrates; 61 were graduated in 2011 from the Institute together with 15 probation officers. The GoL has also developed a national and county-level case management system and deployed public defenders throughout the country, although case management remains inconsistent and ad-hoc.

This progress, however, must be seen in light of the scale of the challenges. The judicial system remains highly susceptible to corruption, which increases public discontent with the system. Complaint systems are not clear, limiting recourse in the face of corrupt or unprofessional behavior. Liberia ranked sixty-second out of sixty-six states globally, and seventh out of nine states regionally on the World Justice Programme's index of 'absence of corruption.' The justice and security hubs are working to address this issue with the staffing of public outreach officers to help increase availability of complaints and reporting mechanisms, however, this remains a band-aid on a very large wound.

In the World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index 2011 Liberia scored 0.14 out of 1.0, the lowest ranking globally, regionally and among countries in similar income groups. "Liberia's rank reflects the non-publication of laws, limited opportunities for the public to participate in legal reform, restricted access to draft laws and opaque laws" (PBC 2012 Review). In order to address some of these issues the Law Reform Commission recently launched a 2011 – 2016 strategic plan.

3.3 Performance and Responsiveness of Justice Institutions

According to the PRS-1 Assessment perceptions of police and judicial fairness and access to justice was evenly split (forty-six percent positive and forty-six percent negative). However, most agree that justice services, such as those proffered through public defenders, legal aid centers and prosecution services, are both limited and inefficient. This leads to a large backlog of cases and extremely long pre-trial detention patterns. Many courts do not have sufficient facilities or equipment, particularly outside of Monrovia. Human resource systems are outdated and need to be improved in order to recruit and retain qualified staff, in particular for deployment outside of urban areas.

A special court and SGBV Prosecution Unit have been set up to hear sensitive cases involving SGBV out of recognition of the scale and scope of the problem and need for specialized services.

Economic Foundations – Generate Employment and Improve Livelihoods

The Government of Liberia has demonstrated its ability to manage economic shocks, at least in relation to the global food price increased in 2008. At that time the government took proactive measures to limit rice exports and control mark-ups on rice, an essential foodstuff in Liberia. Indeed much of the positive economic progress achieved in Liberia post-conflict has been on the macro management of the national budget. That said, progress on the more mezzo and micro level has been more stalled, with continuing low levels of employment or prospects thereof. Real progress needs to be made with regard to poverty reduction and per capita economic growth for a number of reasons. For one, the presence of economic opportunity will demonstrate real signs of hope for the average Liberian and indicate that the government is working for them. Secondly, but just as importantly, nationally-led growth with little impact on the population will remind some of the years pre-conflict, when government revenues benefitted from natural resource extraction with marginal popular benefit. Such historical references could be easily manipulated by politicians and others opening up fissures that could lead to a re-emergence of tension and violence.

4.1 – Productive Resources and Prospects for Growth

Liberia remains today one of the poorest countries in the world. Liberia's GDP per capita is USD **\$366**.⁷ According to the AfT roughly 64 percent of Liberians live on less than USD\$1 per day, broken down as 68 percent in rural areas and 55 percent in urban areas. About 300,000 households have been classified as being in extreme poverty. However, according to the PRS-1 Assessment, people's perceptions indicate improvement regarding whether they see themselves as living in poverty down from fifty-one percent in 2007 to thirty-seven percent in 2010.

The Liberian economy is heavily reliant on the extraction of natural resources, in particular minerals such as iron ore. However, many of these industries, while generating revenue for the government, do not generate large scale employment figures. In addition, primary reliance on commodities increases vulnerability to price swings, as happened in the late 1970s prior to the Doe coup. Liberia needs to foster greater economic diversity not only to promote increased employment, but also to increase the resilience of the economy in the face of potential future downturns. Currently Liberia imports roughly three times as much as it exports. Challenges in accessing export markets include inadequate transportation infrastructure, limited knowledge about available international markets and insufficient regulatory environment for international trade.

It has been noted that some men in Liberian society see advancements as a zero-sum game, resulting in a perception that advances in women's rights will result in decreases in their access to productive opportunities. Although women drive economic advancements, for example comprising sixty percent of all small scale fishers, the overall prejudice they face in Liberian society constrains their ability to advance their businesses.

The period from 2008–2011 saw USD\$50m of direct investment in Liberia resulting in renovation and rehabilitation of key infrastructure, including the main airport, port and some

⁷ AfT pg 2.

roads. Liberia's road network measures 9,860 kilometers of which less than 8 percent is paved. Even what is paved is often inadequate with potholes and other dangers. During the PRS -1 timeframe 2,500 km of paved and laterite roads were reconstructed or rehabilitated. However, ninety-five percent was on laterite routes, which require high maintenance costs (over one-third of initial investment) and result in slower travel than paved roads. The costs of transportation are particularly high in areas of low population density and/or economic activity, further undermining prospects for emerging out of poverty. Public transportation is limited throughout the country and especially weak outside of the capital. The public acknowledges that efforts are being made, however. According to the PRS-1 Assessment sixty percent of respondents answered positively to the question of whether the government done any road construction or repair in their community (with thirty-eight percent responding negatively). However, there was a wide geographic variation among respondents with more negative responses in Bomi, Bong, Bassa and Cape Mount counties.

In addition to roads, electricity remains a real concern for Liberia. An increase from nearly zero to 23 megawatt (MW) capacity of electrical generation has been realized and 48 km of power transmission and distribution lines were constructed or renewed. However, electricity deficiency is at roughly 95 percent with state-provided power primarily enjoyed in parts of Monrovia. Capital tariffs on power are three times higher than the average for sub-Saharan Africa. Most businesses must rely on private generators for power, which run at extremely high cost and deplete profits. Some effort has been made over the PRS period to boost electricity supply to approximately 30MW.

4.2 – Jobs and Livelihoods

Only 37.5 percent of working-age Liberians are considered to be employed. Of this the majority, 68 percent are employed in the informal sector without regular wages. While there has been some improvements in job creation, both actual and anticipated, since the start of the last PRS in 2008 it has not been sufficient to meet demand. The education sector needs to do a better job of preparing Liberian children and youth for employment in the marketplace, looking particularly at opportunities in the expanding extractive sector. This will help to increase domestic job growth as well as limit perceptions of foreign and elite capture of emerging formal sector jobs.

More than half of Liberia's population can be categorized as youth; that is between the ages of 15 – 35. The second largest cohort is the population under age 15, indicating the strain on the economy to find productive education, training and work opportunities will not lessen in the years to come. This population is increasingly urbanized as well as increasingly educated, however significant gaps remain in their ability to locate and retain productive and sufficient means of employment. According to the AfT there is a roughly even divide between Liberians living in urban versus rural areas, with the trend moving in the direction of urbanization.

Only 19 percent of Liberians over the age of 15 have attained some level of primary education, whereas only 15 percent have some level of secondary education. However, progress is being made in this area and the numbers of students completing primary and secondary education is growing. This is due, in large part to the government's "free and compulsory primary school" policy, which calls for six years of primary and three years of junior secondary education. Roughly 500,000 students are expected to graduate in the next 5 – 10 years and the job market is

not presently prepared to absorb them nor are they necessarily prepared to enter the job market. Youth face significant constraints in accessing labor opportunities due to low investment in this area as well as limited coordination in youth-focused activities.

In addition to economic challenges, youth are increasingly frustrated by limited opportunities for them to voice their concerns or engage in political or productive processes. This leaves many vulnerable to manipulation and involvement in political violence and/or criminal behavior. A demonstration of this occurred in December 2011 when vacationing students employed by the Monrovia City Corporation rioted, including damaging state property and attacking individuals, over delayed payments (Crisis Group, 7). The National Visioning exercise also identified that people perceive there to be a social cleavage between youth and the elders in society, which can exacerbate feelings of marginalization or distance from traditional social cohesion and norms.

In the agricultural arena value chains remain extremely weak with gaps recognized from farm (including necessary inputs such as fertilizer), to transport (lack of roads or affordable transport options), to storage and marketing. While the sector grew at six percent annually in 2008-09, it dropped down to 4 percent in 2010 – 2011. Less than half the Liberian population today is food secure.

The majority of the labor force in rural areas is engaged in small scale agriculture and traditional work rather than cash crop production. Less than five percent of land in Liberia is under permanent cultivation and less than one percent is being irrigated. Prior to the war agriculture was more commercially-oriented and has suffered significant backsliding. Additionally, many of Liberia's natural assets, such as tree plantations, are past their productive lives and beyond rehabilitation. Instead areas require clearing and new planting, which is both resource and labor intensive and for which most do not have the financial means to afford.

The PRS-1 stakeholder survey found that sixty-two percent of rural respondents and fifty-six percent of urban respondents completely disagreed with the statement that, "Government interventions since 2008 have increased agricultural production." In a similar range, forty-two percent of rural respondents completely disagreed with statements regarding a positive impact of the PRS on their food security situation demonstrating that clear progress is still yet to be achieved in this area on the part of the government.

4.3 - Private Sector Development

There are a variety of constraints to doing business in Liberia. The World Bank's *Doing Business* survey of 2008-2009, identified electricity, transportation and lack of finance among the top constraints to doing business in Liberia. The Government has been very open about recognizing these constraints and trying to plan around them. While progress still needs to be made, proactive measures taken to date have demonstrated real achievement.

MSMEs continue to face high costs particularly with regard to getting permits and paying taxes, whereas all businesses face high costs from endemic petty corruption. The creation of a One-Stop-Shop has eased the process of registration and customs clearing, although Liberian-owned businesses remain in the minority in terms of new registrations. While there has been an increase in Liberian-registered businesses, it has not been as much as hoped during the period of the first

PRS (annual registration grew from 5,000 in 2006-07 to over 8,000 in 2010-11). Even with these improvements regulations are both onerous and ineffective, resulting in diminished quality and substantial opportunity for corruption by officials.

On the financing side, only 10 percent of Liberian firms used banks to finance investments in 2009. The challenge is on both the supply and demand side. Most Liberian have low financial literacy while many banks are highly risk averse and don't provide the loans needed for micro, small, medium enterprises (MSME). From the period 2006 – 2012 the number of micro-finance lenders increased from three to eight with the number of deposits and borrowers increasing from 300 to 50,000. However, in general micro-finance interest rates remain high. The average Liberian has one-quarter the value of capital stock that he/she had prior to 1980.

Finally, regulations currently do not ensure adequate standards and reliability of products for either the domestic or the international marketplace. Businesses also complain that a lack of trade support services impairs their ability to exploit potential regional and international markets.

4.4 – Natural Resource Management

In 2012 less than 20 percent of Liberia's total land is privately registered. "...(L)and rights remain poorly defined with many rural lands having overlapping and unresolved ownership."⁸ Liberia is ranked 176th out of 183 countries in terms of ease and cost of registering property according to the World Bank's 2012 *Doing Business*. In 2011 the GoL established the Commercial Court in order to help address the backlog of cases and improve the enforcement of contracts.

Historically disputes over land ownership and concession management have been a major source of conflict. According to some new research there is an increase in traditional village land disputes. Land cases remain among the most difficult to resolve with roughly half of land-grabbing cases resolved since the end of the civil war as compared to roughly eighty-three percent of non-land disputes (Vinck, et al, pg 61). Systems are further strained by a mobile population unused to local use rights as well as mineral and agricultural concessions that do not properly reference existing land use. Poor record keeping, lack of harmonization between statutory and customary land systems and limited access to judicial services all contribute to limitations on the effective ability to resolve land disputes.

The national land policy is still in the process of being updated, meanwhile existing laws are unable to cope with demands, both local and with regard to foreign direct investment. The Land Commission, established in 2009, is working to address the disparities in access to land and property rights, including through establishing alternative land dispute resolution, which is currently being piloted. The Commission is also working on revising the country's legal code relating to public land and has also helped to resolve two of ten critical county boundary disputes.

In terms of broader natural resource management, the informal forestry sector remains generally un-regulated while government monitoring and regulatory capacity remains weak. There is

⁸ AfT pg 6.

insufficient understanding of or support for sustainable forestry practices. Recent discoveries of oil have the potential to be significantly beneficial to the economy, but also raise concerns regarding transparency and use of funds. A 2011 General Auditing Commission report documented lobbying fees paid by the National Oil Company to legislators and recommended the government cancel the contracts, a recommendation that was not taken up by the government (Crisis Group, 11). It will be essential for the government to work hard to ensure the highest level of transparency and integrity in the oil sector so as not to fall victim to the challenges witnessed by many other African states.

The government's information and monitoring systems and capabilities remains generally weak in the mining sector, made even more challenging by the absence of uniform regulations and standardized enforcement mechanisms. While exploration regulation exists, there is limited enforcement capacity by the Liberia Geographical Survey. Additionally, there is a dispersion of small scale and artisanal mining makes monitoring also challenging.

Concessions also are not providing transparent information nor are there effective mechanisms to monitor compliance with agreements, whether by CSOs or government. Concession holders tend to have a monopoly on data and there are no local hearings to validate terms or determine compliance. Nor have sector ministries (health, environment, etc) developed standards applicable to concession holders or have clarity on their specific roles and responsibilities. There is, therefore, very little information on the positive or negative benefits of concessions for local communities. Additionally, in some areas local residents have complained that they have been denied access to communal land by some concession owners. This results in undermining public confidence in the process of granting and managing concessions. There have been instances of tension between concessions and the local population, for example in Grand Bassa County or the perception of a land grab by Sime Darby in Cape Mount. Sime Darby has also been accused by community members of poor work, low pay, inadequate living conditions and intimidation by management (Crisis Group, 10). Communities have indicated their interest in being involved in negotiations with concessions as well as having a role to play in monitoring whether the concession owners are living up to their agreements.

Most mining concessions remain separated from local communities, with the majority of employees consisting of ex-patriots and majority importing daily needs resulting in limited secondary benefits to local communities. As indicated in the Economic Corridors report, foreign direct investment in concessions tends to raise both export levels and overall national growth but does not significantly affect rural employment. The report recalls that, "Economic growth without development characterized the Tubman era of the 1960s," a past that many hoped to move away from towards more inclusive and widespread development opportunities. That said, in some cases such as Firestone investments, greater community level benefits can be seen. Firestone employs over 6,500 Liberian workers and purchase from independent farmers, increasing the secondary benefits to non-plantation areas.

While requirements are laid out for mining companies to invest in local Social Development Funds, this does not help to stimulate local markets to the extent that real economic trading and employment relations would. There also remain concerns regarding how the Social Development

Funds are utilized. The PRS-1 Assessment found that forty-six percent of respondents completely disagreed with the statement, “Your community is directly benefiting from the concessions agreements signed and ratified by the government since 2008.”

Revenue and Services: Manage Revenues and Build Capacity for Accountable and Fair Social Service Delivery

As in other areas, real progress has been made by the Government of Liberia in reinforcing its systems and policies with regard to revenue management and service delivery. Economic shocks have been relatively well managed, macro-economic trends are generally positive and the government has set itself on a path of reform and improved transparency. Additionally, real significant gains have been realized in people's lives, most particularly in terms of providing health services to the population.

As in other areas, however, similar challenges of translating policy into action remain. Service delivery remains dependent in large part on where one lives as the more remote and marginal areas continue to face staggering gaps in service. Similarly, although efforts are being made to tackle corruption and transparency, Ministries, civil society, and other government agencies must do a better job of working together in light of the scale of the challenge. This needs to be prioritized at the highest level in order to demonstrate to the population that government exists for them rather than for the enrichment of those who have the ability to access positions within it. As is the theme, the risk is that otherwise this will continue to feed into a perception of a government of elite hostile to the interests and values of the majority population.

5.1 – Revenue Generation

The Government of Liberia has invested significantly in revising economic and revenue management policy frameworks to be more pro-growth. The Tax and Investment Codes have been revised and tax revenues have increased as a percentage of overall GDP, although still hovering only around twenty percent. While this represents progress, implementation of a new tax administration system and migration from a general sales tax to a value added tax remain incomplete. As overall revenue collection remains weak, Liberia suffers from variable aid flows as development partners struggle to maintain consistency in assistance. A major success, however, was recently achieved when the government gained USD \$4.9 billion of cumulative debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. Liberia has also seen impressive growth rates, averaging seven percent between 2006 – 2010.

Revenue generation – as in other areas of governance – continues to suffer from deficiencies in accountability mechanisms and corruption. The PRS-1 assessment found that fifty-five percent of respondents believed the government needed to do more to address the issue of corruption. However, civil society and the existing judicial systems remain too weak to adequately mobilize pressure to promote anti-corruption reform.

5.2 – Public Administration

While significant progress was made under PRS-1 and prior in terms of reform initiatives - including the 150 Action Plan (2006), the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy (2007), and the *Lift Liberia* Poverty Reduction Strategy (2008-2011) - there was no comprehensive framework to integrate them or link planning with budgetary processes. This has limited effective coordination of the reform process. There is additionally low performance and motivation among civil service blamed in part upon low salary scales commensurate with cost of living. During the first PRS

key ministries went through mandate and function reviews and there was a “right sizing” and rationalization of the civil service. HR practices were improved and civil service standards, policies and procedures were renewed. In 2009-2010 civil service ranks were reduced from 45,000 to 34,000. However, human resource management in the civil service law has not been updated since 1973 and there remain problems such as ghost workers on payroll.

The Government has acknowledged the challenge of corruption and is working hard to increase transparency. During the first PRS timeframe an internet-based tracking tool was developed to monitor deliverables. The Ministry of Finance is currently working on increasing transparency of expenditure, including through making information available at the county level, and have prioritized government transparency generally.

A public financial management strategy for 2011-2014 was developed and the process of implementation continues. However, much effort is required to ensure that MACs comply with policies governing PFM. There remains a lack of clarity in defining rights and responsibilities when it comes to PFM.

5.3 Service Delivery

Although some improvements have been made in the area of service delivery, overall systems remain highly vulnerable to corruption with bribes sought in exchange for services. Mechanisms of accountability to sanction such behavior are limited. This not only limits access, but also reflects poorly on government ability to provide for a population in significant need.

That said, real gains have been made. During PRS-1 the number of functioning health facilities increased from 354 to 550, while the approximate number of health workers increased from 5,000 to more than 8,000.⁹ Indeed, under the first PRS sixty-three percent of sector deliverables were realized through the National Health Policy Plan, which focused on restoring basic health services such as under-five mortality, malaria and functional health facilities. Even with these improvements, access remains skewed in favor of urban populations and those who can afford private health care.

Overall, there remains inadequate coverage and use of health services throughout the country. According to the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, “Some very small capacity hospitals are serving large catchment populations with inadequate resources, while some hospitals are too large for the populations they serve resulting in limited access, inefficient outreach and low motivation for staff.” Even with considerable improvements in the health sector thirty-four percent of urban and forty percent of rural respondents indicated that they had no health clinic in their area (PRS-1). That said, it’s important to recognize the very real strides made in the health sector due in part to the strength and leadership of the Minister of Health himself. Progress in this area has shown real impact in the lives of many Liberians and should not be underestimated.

There is heavy demand for greater education opportunities for the children and youth of Liberia, as demonstrated by the results of the National Visioning exercise. People desired, in particular,

⁹ AfT pg 5.

greater diversity in educational opportunities, including vocational training as well as inclusion of traditional values into the classroom, including through utilization of oral histories. The centralized education system is inefficient and unaccountable to students and their families. Making advances in the education sector even more challenging is the lack of school readiness among many students (sixty percent of Liberian students are over-aged learners) and the lack of available alternative education. Strikingly, only eleven percent of adults have completed secondary school.

PRS-1 Assessment reports that most primary school-aged children remain out of school and primary net enrollment actually declined from 2007-2010. However, net enrollment rates for females improved over rates for males resulting in higher net rates at primary and secondary schools for girls. At the same time, women were more likely to have no education at forty-five percent compared to twenty-five percent for men (Vinck pg 3). That said, the stakeholder survey indicated appreciation for government investment, with sixty-eight percent responding positively to teacher training and eighty-three percent positively responding to investments in school buildings.

School curriculum has been aligned with West African standards. However, remote areas are underserved in terms of both trained teachers and educational resources. The National Visioning consultations found that in several Districts people believed that they were being deliberately excluded from benefiting from service delivery due to prejudice and/or retaliation. Liberia's 2008 census found that Rivercess County had the highest level of un-met basic needs (82 percent), followed by Grand Kru, Gbarpolu and Rivergee Counties (at 78 percent, 75 percent and 75 percent respectively).

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