

GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA



NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS ACTION PLAN OF LIBERIA (NHRAP)

2013 - 2018

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ACRONYMS

ABA	American Bar Association
ACHPR	African Convention on Human and People's Rights
AFELL	Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia
BCR	Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation
CBL	Central Bank of Liberia
CBO	Community Based Organizations
CDA	County Development Agenda
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CERD	Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSA	Civil Service Agency
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DPO	Disabled People Organization
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EPA	Environment Pollution Agency
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FOI	Freedom of Information Act
GAC	General Auditing Commission
GC	Governance Commission
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GOL	Government of Liberia
HRS	Human Rights Survey
HRPS	Human Rights and Protection Section UNMIL
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESC	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ILO	International Labour Organization
INCHR	Independent National Commission on Human Rights
KAICT	Kofi Annan Institute of Conflict Transformation
LISGIS	Liberia Institute of Statistics and GEO-Information Services
LNBA	Liberia National Bar Association
LNP	Liberia National Police
LRC	Law Reform Commission
MCC	Monrovia City Corporation
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs

MICAT	Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOC	Ministry of Commerce
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOGD	Ministry of Gender and Development
MOHSW	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
MOI	Ministry of Information
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MOL	Ministry of Labour
MOLME	Ministry of Land, Mines and Energy
MOT	Ministry of Transport
MOYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
MPEA	Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs
MPW	Ministry of Public Works
MSP	Magisterial Sitting Program
NAC	National Aids Commission
NAIP	National Agricultural Investment Program
NASSCORP	National Social Security & Welfare Corporation
NBC	National Bureau of Concessions
NCD	National Commission on Disabilities
NEC	National Election Commission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHRAP	National Human Rights Action Plan
NIC	National Investment Commission
NUOD	National Union of Organizations of the Disabled
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SME	Small and Medium Sized Business Enterprises
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UL	University of Liberia
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
WHO	World Health Organization

SUMMARY OF MAJOR INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS LIBERIA HAS RATIFIED OR JOINED BY ACCESSION¹

- African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (2007)
- African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (2007)
- Convention Against Discrimination in Education (1962)
- Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (2004)
- Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages (2005)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1984)
- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1950)
- Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti- Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (1999)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2012)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1993)
- Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (1964)
- Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1964)
- ILO C111 Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (1959)
- ILO No. 105 Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (1962)
- ILO No. 182 Convention Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2003)
- ILO No. 29 Forced Labour Convention (1931)
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (but not Declaration Article 14) (1976)
- International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (1976)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (2004)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2004)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (2004)
- Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I) (but not Declaration Article 90) (1988)
- Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II) (1988)
- Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (1980)
- Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the U.N. Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2004)
- Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2007)
- Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (2004)
- Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (2005)
- The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1982)
- The Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949 (1954)
- The Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (1971)
- U.N. Convention Against Corruption (2005)
- U.N. Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (2004)

¹ National adoptions by the Legislature of international instruments, as provided by art. 34 (f) Constitution, are not represented by this list.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Mission Statement

The National Human Rights Action Plan reinvigorates Liberia's commitment to foster and guarantee the overall development of all persons and populations by respecting, defending and promoting their human rights, ensuring the full exercise of civil, political, social, economic, cultural, and environmental rights deemed inseparable, interdependent, and equally essential.

The Republic of Liberia embraces the National Human Rights Action Plan, while recognizing all human rights contained in international declarations and treaties, in the Constitution and in domestic legislation.

Introduction

Fourteen years of war, precipitated by decades of social and economic inequality, devastated Liberia and resulted in many human rights violations. Even though important steps have been taken since 2003 to make improvements in governance, infrastructure, education, and health care, much remains to be done in each of these sectors. Many people in Liberia lost everything they had - possessions, homes, families, security, and employment.

The National Human Rights Action Plan describes, among other things, Liberia's responsibilities in the area of human rights, the long-term objectives of the Government and the roles of various actors regarding work on human rights at the national level. The Plan next highlights issues of high priority where attention is needed to improve the level of promotion and protection of human rights, and indicates how the Government intends to work with issues such as human rights education. Finally it discusses an information strategy, follow-up and benchmark mechanisms of the Action Plan.

Human Rights in Liberia and Background NHRAP

Liberia's Constitution currently includes important protections for civil and political rights, such as the right to life, liberty, property, due process, equality before the law, freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, as well as freedom of expression. Throughout the Liberian conflict, however, these protections were disregarded, and the rights of the Liberian people were routinely violated. Re-establishing protection of these fundamental freedoms in Liberia is an important endeavor and the NHRAP explains how the government of Liberia intends to promote, expand and protect the human rights of its citizens and residents alike from 2013 to 2018 and onward. It touches upon the areas of civil and political rights, social, economic, and cultural rights, women's rights, children's rights and the rights of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.

The NHRAP is a government initiative developed in response to the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. The process began with the establishment of a NHRAP Steering Committee and four subcommittees, which have been created in consultation with the NHRAP Steering Committee, whose members include representatives of government agencies, civil society

organizations, monitors from non-governmental organizations and advisors from international organizations. Preparations were made, in close collaboration with all members of the NHRAP Steering Committee and its subcommittees (i.e., the Human Rights Reporting subcommittee, the Drafting subcommittee, the Data Collection subcommittee, and the Public Awareness subcommittee) to start the development process of the NHRAP, which was given national attention through an official launch by the Vice President of the Republic of Liberia in August 2011. Throughout the development process of the NHRAP, the Human Rights and Protection Section (HRPS) of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) provided technical support and advice. Financial support was also provided through the HRPS with funds from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Data Collection subcommittee collected extensive data on human rights in Liberia in a nationwide Human Rights Survey (HRS) in 2010. The results of the HRS provide details of specific areas of human rights concern through indicative results, which support other quantitative and qualitative data, and set the baseline for the ensuing nationwide human rights discourse. A government and a civil society consultation took place in the capital of Liberia in 2011, and in 2012 all fifteen counties of Liberia were consulted through regional consultations to ensure that national human rights practices and concerns are reflected in the NHRAP. As a consequence, the NHRAP is the result of a nationwide endeavor to determine which human rights are considered most important in Liberia and, thus, deserve priority, identified on the basis of the HRS results, and what actions need to be taken to overcome challenges and to improve human rights conditions throughout the nation. A substantial amount of information has been gathered through regional consultations with civil society, government and NGOs, and has been selectively arranged in the NHRAP according to priority, feasibility and practicality. The NHRAP offers integral handles to overcome human rights challenges in Liberia while not being too bulky, cluttered and consequently hard to consult.

Although many achievements have already been made in fulfilling, protecting and respecting human rights in Liberia, many challenges still remain. The ratification of/accession to important international human rights instruments is an important step in guiding the development and promotion of human rights in Liberia and sets the stage for implementing internationally recognized human rights standards and principles (such as those contained in the Children's Rights Convention and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) in Liberian domestic law.

Other notable activities that took place in recognition of Liberia's commitment towards human rights are the establishment of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights, mandated, among other tasks, to monitor human rights situations in Liberia and to ensure that the government acts in line with recognized human rights standards and principles, and the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, both in 2005. The latter was mandated to document, among other issues, gross human rights violations that occurred between 1979 and 2003. The final TRC report was published in 2009 and contained many recommendations to the government in the field of human rights, including recommendations about reparations, the need for legal and other institutional reform, and the need to hold prosecutions in certain cases where presumably crimes against humanity were involved.

This Action Plan is a continuous engagement in a dynamic environment. While the period is set to five years, it may well be that modifications of the Action Plan may be needed before the end of this period. This may be the case, for instance, with recommendations made by the international community during the Universal Periodic Review, which are included in this Action Plan and which are expected to be implemented by 2015. The right is reserved to modify this document at any time

when deemed necessary and when it falls to the benefit of progressive human rights realization in Liberia.

Purposes

The Liberian National Human Rights Action Plan is a policy document created to help realise the advancement of human rights in Liberia. In the process of developing the NHRAP, government ministries and institutions, and civil society organizations, including those from the private sector, identified and agreed on areas in need of protection and promotion. Working together they form the agents of change that can improve the human rights situation in Liberia. The NHRAP guides this process in the next five years by offering concrete and practical measures with the aim of establishing and entrenching a culture of human rights for the enjoyment of all. It will also be used by the government, civil society and the international community to monitor and assess the respect of human rights in the country.

The NHRAP has several purposes. Primarily, its aim is to promote and protect human rights by identifying human rights issues and/or concerns in Liberia and subsequently to outline/suggest/propose strategies for implementation for state actors and civil society to improve the human rights situation throughout the country. This document will be available to everyone and will be disseminated accordingly; hence it also helps to heighten awareness of human rights issues. Moreover, the NHRAP is specifically intended to promote co-ordination of human rights activities, above all within the national administration. In order for these purposes to be attainable, the NHRAP has to be realistic and practical. Education plays a key role in attaining these goals as well and throughout the NHRAP the importance of human rights education is stressed.

Emphasis shall be given to measures to assist in the strengthening and building of institutions relating to human rights, strengthening of a pluralistic civil society and specific attention to the protection of vulnerable/marginalized groups.

How

In order for the action plan to become effective and that actual implementation is bolstered by the belief that the action plan is necessary to further and promote human rights in Liberia, the NHRAP must be supported not only by the words of the plan but also by the commitment of the relevant actors. The NHRAP Steering Committee will take the lead and ensure liaisons are established with all implementing partners and every agency of government shall make the Action Plan part and parcel of their policy and daily activities. Both public and private institutions, NGOs and civil society shall give maximum publicity to the NHRAP. All shall ensure its implementation to the fullest extent under the oversight of the NHRAP Steering Committee.

No Institution deals with human rights by itself and the participation and cooperation of multiple actors must be ensured. In addition, civic engagement needs to be empowered. Hence, in achieving NHRAP goals and objectives, the agents of change for all the understated action points will be drawn from government institutions as well as civil society organizations and the international community. **Lack of specific reference to an institution/organization as an 'agent of change' does not preclude the role of such actors in the implementation process of each of the action points.**

In consultation with the agents of change, one agency will be identified and appointed per objective to take the lead in its implementation. Agencies responsible for implementing respective action points will report to the lead agency, which in turn will report to the Steering Committee of the NHRAP.

Structure of the NHRAP

The NHRAP is a policy document widely supported by the abovementioned institutions and as such this document will be used as a guide for all relevant agencies to achieve the objectives set out herein. Keeping in mind that the NHRAP needs to be an accessible document it has been formatted in a comprehensive yet easy-to-reference handbook.

The NHRAP is divided into three sections, which deal respectively with civil and political rights; economic, social and cultural rights; and the rights and interests of ethnic minorities, women, children, elderly people and persons with disabilities. A separate section deals with human rights education. The NHRAP is followed up with a monitoring process.

Throughout the NHRAP, organized matrices are used to describe the activities and agents of change responsible for the achievement of the respective objectives. A brief outline of each right or subsection, including pertinent international and national legal obligations, precedes the contents of the matrix.

Referral to international obligations is made by mention of the major international human rights treaties to which Liberia is a party. Notwithstanding other relevant treaties/instruments with similar implications, stated applicable provisions are binding upon Liberia and serve as a guide to Liberia's commitment to comply with its obligations towards its citizens and residents alike to respect, fulfill and protect human rights.

Objectives and activities are listed in no particular order. Due to the indivisibility and inseparability of human rights objectives, proposed activities under a certain right may overlap with the objectives and activities of other human rights.

Performance indicators are essential to monitor the progress of implementation of the stated actions. The more detailed an indicator, the more likely it is to point toward actions that could lead to the fulfillment of the objectives. Hence, performance indicators will be developed specific (to duty-bearers and rights-holders), measurable, attainable, relevant and time-framed. Developed indicators will be annexed and used as part of the monitoring scheme.

UPR

One of the accepted recommendations made during the Universal Periodic Review of Liberia was adoption of the NHRAP. Additionally, the recommendations made during the UPR are reflected in the NHRAP. Since these recommendations are expected to be implemented before 2015, the date that the next UPR review will take place, they will be highlighted in this Action Plan and listed under the header "Action required". Recommendations that have not been accepted by the Government of Liberia are highlighted as well, since they may be accepted during the next review in 2015. These are listed under the header "Attention required".

2. LIBERIA'S INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL OBLIGATIONS

Objective	Comply with international (human rights) obligations and furnish environment for implementation of international (human rights) standards.	
Action Points	Agents of Change	of
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ratify international human rights instruments and create an environment to domesticate and implement these instruments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); • First Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; • Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; • Optional Protocol to the Convention on Discrimination Against Women; • Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; • The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; • African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. 2. Domesticate and implement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; • Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; • Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. 3. Complete the process of examining regional and international human rights instruments to which Liberia is party, so as to revise national legislation and pursue efforts to harmonize national legislation with Liberia's international obligations. 4. Fulfill treaty and periodic human rights reporting obligations/responsibilities; organize a network of government, civil society, INHRC, and nongovernmental organizations to work on reporting to treaty bodies. 5. Engage in relevant consultations to promote ratification of international human rights instruments and publicize those instruments Liberia has ratified or has acceded to. 6. Establish mechanism to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations of the UPR and treaty bodies. 	MFA	

3. CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Respect and ensure the civil and political rights of all appurtenant covenants to all persons within Liberia’s jurisdiction

A. RIGHT TO LIFE

The Government of Liberia is under an immediate obligation to take whatever measures are necessary to respect and ensure the protection and promotion of fundamental rights including the right to life, the prohibition of torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, and the prohibition of slavery. During the Liberian conflict, the right to life of many Liberians was completely disregarded. Liberians were tortured and subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment. They were also abducted and held in slavery by fighting factions. Effective and efficient protections against these abuses must be integrated into all aspects of Liberian national life to ensure non-repetition of these types of violations and to eradicate impunity for those who perpetrate these most severe violations of human dignity.

International obligations:

- *Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
- *Article 6 ICCPR*
- *Article 4 ACHPR*
- *Article 24 CRPD*
- *Article 6 CRC*
- *Article 5 of the African Union Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child*

Constitutional obligations:

- *Article 11 (a)*

UPR Recommendations

Attention required:

- Introduce a permanent *de facto* and *de jure* moratorium on death penalties with a view to adopting a law abolishing the death penalty, and commute without delay all death sentences to terms of imprisonment.

Objective 1	Capital Punishment No individual under the Government of Liberia’s jurisdiction is executed through state sanctioned judicial procedures.	
Action Points		Agents of Change
1.	A permanent <i>de facto</i> and <i>de jure</i> moratorium on death penalties.	CSO, INCHR, MOJ, Supreme Court LNBA, Legislature, MOI,
2.	Repeal provisions of the criminal code, and any other legislation, that authorize capital punishment.	
3.	Immediately commute the death sentences of any inmates to a punishment that complies with international standards.	
4.	Establish institutions (e.g. Zwedru Prison Palace for life long sentencing) to support the complete abolition of the death penalty.	

5.	Advocate, through existing advocacy groups and committees, for domestication of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on the abolition of the death penalty to which Liberia has acceded.	MOE, MIA, MOGD, NCD, CSA, MOYS, NAC, MOHS
6.	Engage in relevant consultations and create more awareness on human rights laws and educate the citizens on their constitutional obligations and rights.	
7.	Develop long term strategies to ensure the availability and affordability of antiretroviral (ARV) drugs for people living with HIV.	

B. RIGHT TO LIBERTY AND SECURITY OF THE PERSON

One major reason that the right to liberty and security of the person is not respected in Liberia is an inefficient/ineffective judicial system infrastructure and security apparatus. The judiciary is unable to dispense justice and maintain the rule of law, and citizens, as a consequence, have the tendency to take the law into their own hands even by misapplying existing laws. Persons may take the law in their own hands and use mob violence.

International obligations:

- Article 9 ICCPR
- Article 6 ACHPR

Constitutional obligations:

- Articles 20, 21

UPR Recommendations

Actions required:

- Strengthen law enforcement by ensuring that clear instructions are given to police forces to always act in compliance with international human rights law;
- Strengthen the Professional Standard Division within the Liberian National Police to investigate and prosecute all allegations of professional misconduct in accordance with international standards, and implement extensive human rights education and training programmes for law enforcement personnel.

Objective 1	Strengthen the integrity of the justice sector and ensure a more consistent application of the law by law enforcement officials.	
Action Points		Agents of Change
1.	Strengthen the capacity of CSOs, through human resource development training, to serve as watchdog and advocate for fair and impartial application of the law.	CSO, INCHR, MOJ, BCR, LNP, MOHSW, MOE, MOJ, Judiciary, Supreme Court, LNBA, Judicial Institute, Legislature, MOE
2.	Enforce laws/establish policies directed at lawyers and judicial personnel to ensure proper management of cases.	
3.	Establish an oversight body to monitor record keeping and case management.	
4.	Provide regular in-service and pre-service training to magistrates, judges and staff.	
5.	Make fully operational and strengthen the effectiveness of the Grievance and Ethics Committee in the judiciary and work with the INCHR.	
6.	Design and implement uniform national record keeping, docket review, case management and tracking systems.	
7.	Assess needs and provide essential equipment, as well as stationery, to all judiciary facilities, prisons and the police as required through targeted funding in budget planning and allocation.	
8.	Educate the police and magistrates on the writ of arrest and summoning of a person.	

9. Set up mechanisms to conduct proper investigations before arrest and to monitor violations of the right to a fair and speedy trial.	
10. Develop and implement education campaigns aimed at preventing mob violence.	

C. ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND LEGAL REFORM

At the end of the civil conflict, Liberia was faced with the challenge of rebuilding a substantially broken down judicial system with negligible budgetary allocation, corruption, and a low level of accountability. Key positions were filled with individuals lacking the requisite level of legal training. Access to justice is a fundamental human right, which refers to the ability of persons to seek and obtain remedy through formal and informal institutions of justice. Access to justice is integral to the enjoyment of basic human rights and is an essential precondition to social inclusion.

International obligations:

- *Article 8 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

UPR Recommendations

Actions required:

- Prepare a comprehensive road map to reform the judiciary sector with timelines and benchmarks and clear tasking for national agencies, and involve development partners in this process;
- Take several measures in the area of the administration of justice to accelerate the reform of the judicial system, to fight against abuses of preventive detention, and to draft and transmit the report expected since 2005 by the Committee against Torture;
- Intensify efforts to strengthen the criminal justice system, especially in view of promoting accountability, and reform the juvenile justice system, which would also lower the high percentage of pre-trial detainees and support the fight against impunity;
- Continue to prioritize the allocation of resources to the key institutions in the criminal justice system and provide extensive training for judges, prosecutors, defence counsel and investigators to ensure safe prosecutions and respect for due process;
- Strengthening of institutional and operational capacities of the Judiciary and develop the capacity of the justice sector to ensure that court cases are brought to trial in a reasonable time;
- Take steps to tackle corruption in the judiciary and the police, including by increasing access to relevant training, increasing oversight of both organizations and taking action when inappropriate behaviour is discovered;
- Address the issues affecting the lack of public trust in the Judiciary and the law enforcement system, as reflected in paragraph 102 of the national report, and strengthen the independence of the Judiciary.

Attention required:

- Repeal regulations permitting trials by ordeal and take appropriate measures to enforce the law criminalizing trials by ordeal;
- Strengthen further functioning of the State enforcement agencies with the aim of combating criminality in the country, and ensure full and unhampered access to justice for all members of society.

Objective 1	Increase and strengthen access to justice by overcoming impediments.	
Action Points	Agents of Change	of
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopt and implement official policy to end and sanction authorities of abuse practices of the application of a bond and complaint fees. 2. Train and assign more public defenders throughout Liberia. 3. Revisit and enforce the Code of Conduct for lawyers, judges and jurors to address the issue of corruption and judicial malpractice. 4. Review corruption findings and recommendations made by the GAC (General Auditing Commission) and press charges against persons or bring suit against institutions, which are found culpable. 5. Responsible state actors follow up on and implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in compliance with Liberia's Constitution, with INCHR promoting and monitoring the implementation and civil society supporting the proper implementation. 6. Complete review of all traditional (e.g. Hinterland Regulations) and formal laws, identify inconsistencies and propose recommendations to resolve all conflicts and to make them compliant with human rights principles. 7. Advocate for the creation of fully functional Claims Courts, pursuant to article 34(e) of Liberia's Constitution, and increase the jurisdiction of magistrates. 8. Review the Judiciary Act for recommended changes and amendments to deliver greater access to justice. 9. Develop and distribute simple informational materials about citizens' and residents' rights, how to access justice and the content of key laws. 	CSO, INCHR, MOJ, Judiciary, LNBA, LNP, LRC Legislature, Community leaders, MICAT, MIA, National Traditional Council, Traditional leaders, NCD	

D. RIGHT OF PERSONS DEPRIVED OF LIBERTY

The Government of Liberia shall support policies to assist prosecutors, when appropriate, in waiving prosecution, discontinue proceedings conditionally or unconditionally, or to divert criminal cases from the formal justice system, with full respect for the rights of suspects and victims. For this purpose, the Government of Liberia should fully explore the possibility of adopting diversion schemes not only to alleviate excessive court loads, but also to avoid the stigmatization of pre-trial detention, indictment, and conviction, as well as the possible adverse effects of imprisonment.

International obligations:

Article 9 ICCPR

Articles 7, 14 ACHPR

Constitutional obligations:

Article 21

UPR Recommendations

Actions required:

- Improve prison conditions and hold accountable all those who are responsible for torture and discrimination in penitentiary facilities;
- Intensify efforts to humanize the penitentiary system, including the identification and closure of all unauthorized prisons and detention centers;
- Give human rights groups full access to detention facilities.

Objective 1	All persons deprived of their liberty are to be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person.	
Action Points		Agents of Change
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enforce standardized proper record keeping in all prisons and detention centers nationwide and train personnel accordingly. 2. Reactivate rehabilitation centers in prisons and assign teachers to provide skilled training for prisoners. 3. Uphold the constitutional provision of 48 hours, starting from the time of arrest or detention, to formally charge a person and present him before a court of competent jurisdiction and to provide such person, with or without criminal charge, with adequate opportunities, time, and facilities to be visited by and to communicate and consult with a lawyer, without delay, interception, or censorship and in full confidentiality. Such consultations may be within sight, but not within the hearing, of law enforcement officials. 4. Establish a monitoring system of persons deprived of their liberty involving CSOs, INHCR, MOJ, MOGD, MOHS and others and adopt a policy to provide human rights groups and other monitoring organizations access to prisons and detention centers. 		CSO, INCHR, MOJ, MOHS, MOE, Courts, LNBA, LNP, BCR

E. RIGHT TO A FAIR AND SPEEDY TRIAL

This right is also linked to the presence of a quality police force; a trained quality police force (police gathers evidence for trial) is required to effectuate and ensure the protection of this right.

International obligations:

- *Article 14 ICCPR*
- *Article 7 ACHPR*

Constitutional obligations:

- *Article 20*

UPR Recommendations

Attention required

- Provide substantial resources to the key institutions in the criminal justice system and extensive training for judges, prosecutors, defence counsels and investigators in order to ensure safe prosecutions and respect for due process, which also entails to bring to trial all defendants within a reasonable time.

Objective 1	Decongest the prison population and increase adherence to the law in justice processing.	
Action Points		Agents of Change
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and expand jurisdiction of the Magistrate Sitting Program (MSP). 2. Strengthen specific taskforces, e.g. the pre-trial detention taskforce, that deal with decongestion of the prison population and develop and support alternatives to detention. 3. Revise bail regulations to ensure no person paying bail is detained if a person who has been bailed jumped bail. 4. Amend criminal and civil procedural law to extend the term for court. Court only has 42 days to operate, which is too short to hear more complicated cases. 5. Advocate for implementation of recommendations made by taskforces, such as the pre-trial detention taskforce. 		CSO, INCHR, Judiciary MOJ Legislature, Supreme Court

F. RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE

A great will exists among persons to participate in decision making within their own community. According to the HRS almost three-quarters of the respondents indicated that they participated in community-level decision-making processes with women reporting slightly less participation overall. Hence, a greater participation of citizens would accord with the citizens’ right to participate.

International obligations:

Article 25 ICCPR

Article 13 ACHPR

Constitutional obligations:

Articles 1, 5

Objective 1	Improve democratic governance through the decentralization of the government’s functions and increase participation of citizens (both political and economic with a focus on gender equality) in decision-making processes through a human rights-based approach.	
Action Points		Agents of Change
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advocate decentralized, participatory governance and the Local Governance Act. People of counties and communities must be able to elect their own: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Superintendent • District Commissioner • City Mayor 2. Lead consultations with the Executive and Legislature to promote adoption of and adherence to a Code of Conduct for public servants and implement the Civil Service Reform Strategy with more emphasis on gender equity. 3. Finalize the development of a policy framework document and promote implementation of a strategy paper for the national decentralization of political governance with social responsibilities, gender and marginalized groups as cross cutting issues. 4. Support and strengthen civil society and community based organizations’ participation in governance. 5. Expand the implementation of the National Gender Policy. 6. Assessment of gaps in women’s engagement across governance institutions at both national and local levels and empower the participation of women. 7. Strengthen citizen participation at the community level in the formulation and negotiation of developmental and concessionary planning processes and agreements. 		CSO, INCHR, LRC, GC, Legislature, CSA, MFA, GC, Executive, MOGD, MICAT, MIA, MOJ, NEC, Traditional Leaders, NCD

4. ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Respect and ensure the economic, social and cultural rights of all appurtenant covenants to all persons within Liberia's jurisdiction.

A. RIGHT TO EDUCATION

According to the HRS, almost half of school-age children who were not currently in school stated 'cost' as being the reason. Over a quarter of these children stated that they could not attend classes because of work. Since 'educational level' was reported to be one of the three most common bases for discrimination in the local community, according to the HRS, priority will be given to free and compulsory primary education. Vocational and technical education that is directly connected to the job market, including the agricultural sector, will also be promoted and encouraged.

International Obligation:

- *Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
- *Article 13 ICESCR*
- *Article 29 CRC*
- *Article 11 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child*
- *General Comment 13 on the Right to Education by the ICESCR Committee*
- *Article 24 CERD*

Constitutional Obligations

- *Article 6*

UPR Recommendations

Actions required:

- Continue to reinforce national programmes in the area of education and seek the necessary technical and financial assistance to accompany Liberia in its integration of human rights education and training into its programmes;
- Develop and implement education campaigns aimed at preventing sexual violence and addressing the attitudes and stereotypes which perpetuate such violence;
- Expand the School Feeding Programme and integrate it with local agricultural production;
- Continue the implementation of programmes and plans for the enhancement of education in Liberia at all levels, as well as earmarking more financial resources for this purpose;
- Promote and deploy further efforts to bridge the gap between boys and girls in completing the primary, secondary and university levels;
- Take steps to effectively guarantee the right to education;
- Make accessible to the general public and teach human rights in school and university establishments, as well as in the professional sector.

Objective 1	Strengthen educational services nationally, with a focus at the community level, and promote both primary and secondary school enrollment of children, with a focus on girls, by addressing external factors leading to truancy and school dropout.	
Action Points	Agents of Change	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A new salary structure has been put in place to match teacher qualifications and experience. Identify constraints that impede the full realization of this policy and work towards implementation of this structure in all counties. 2. Support and monitor existing programs and developments in providing free primary education in line with the Education Law and make secondary education progressively free and accessible to all children under the age of 18 by eliminating school fees. 3. The government must harmonize educational policies and plans to mainstream the right to education of persons with disabilities at all levels (teacher trainings, accessible infrastructure, accessible facilities, assistive devices, etc.). 4. Develop educational campaigns in preventing, and a code of conduct to address, sexual exploitation and violence in schools. 5. Encourage more girls and young women to enroll in institutions of science and technology institutions and encourage the teaching of, and increase support to, departments of science and technology in all community colleges around the country. 6. Amend the Domestic Relations Law to prevent early marriage below the age of 18. 7. Establish effective cooperation between stakeholders to regulate contracts, costs and completion rates to repair/renovate education infrastructure in all counties and districts. 	CSO, INCHR, MOE (Cultural Informal School), MOJ, MOYS, Principals Association of Liberia, National Teachers Association of Liberia, NCD, MOGD, MPW, County Education Boards, Student groups, Legislature, MOL, MIA, LRC	

B. RIGHT TO EMPLOYMENT

Unemployment and poverty are commonplace in Liberia. The vast majority of Liberians do not have decent work to support themselves or their families. Liberia's economy, infrastructure, and social services remain a concern as do security and crime rates, which are exacerbated by high unemployment. According to the most recent Labour Force Survey in 2010 more than three-quarters of the employed population in Liberia were employed under relatively precarious circumstances and were less likely to have formal work arrangements or access to benefits or social protection programs, which puts them at risk when there is a downturn in the economic cycle. Vulnerable employment is predominantly an issue in the rural areas. Moreover, a high level of insufficient remunerative employment opportunities in the state and private sectors causes a high rate of vulnerable employment, which poses a serious threat to the realization of the right to employment. Most employment is characterized by low income and does not lead to self-sufficiency, and there are no social protection mechanisms available for periods of low or unemployment. Workers are marginalized, mainly due to the lack of education, and where applicable there is exclusion of improper functioning of independent free trade unions.

International Obligations:

- *Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
- *Article 6 ff. ICESCR*
- *Article 5 ACHPR*
- *ILO Conventions ratified by Liberia. Some fundamental ILO Conventions, like the ones on minimum age, are yet to be ratified by Liberia.*
- *Article 27 CERD*

Constitutional Obligations

- *Article 18*

- *Article 17 – Right to assemble*

UPR Recommendations

Actions required:

- Strengthen Government oversight of its rough diamond sector, as well as its engagement in collaborative initiatives to enhance the enforcement of the certification scheme in the West African region.

Attention required:

- Continue efforts to promote the rights of workers and to reduce the rate of unemployment among Liberian young people, particularly through the revision of the draft proposed labour law called “Decent Work”.

Objective 1	Empower local human resources and improve labour environment through a human rights-based approach.	
Action Points	Agents of Change	of
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To ensure that employees within the public sector shall have adequate qualifications, specific job requirements will be set, including for appointments within the public and security service where some employees are appointed by the President. 2. Draft guidelines to push gender issues in concession agreements including the use of gender friendly terms. 3. Support initiatives/policies for the incorporation of business and human rights standards and practices in concession/investment agreements and business registrations and for business enterprises to take genuine responsibility to respect and implement human rights standards through management and operational systems of the businesses. 4. Establish and support associations to protect and assist persons engaged in vulnerable employment. 5. The labour code must be adhered to by employers and enforced by the ministry of labour through a monitoring system; employers may not discriminate on the basis of condition (age, tribe, physical condition, etc.). 6. Develop and promote initiatives that support productive entrepreneurship and small and medium sized business enterprises (SME) as well as community-based job creation through labor-intensive public works projects. 7. Develop and strengthen policies and guidelines that identify and prioritize specific development and concessionary jobs for qualified Liberians. 	CSO, INCHR, MOL, House Human Rights committee (to look at concession, immigration, rights of aliens to work), MOGD, Workers Unions, MOC, MOYS, NCD, MIA, MOA, NIC, MOJ, MLME, Independent Trade Unions, EPA, MPEA, CSA, NBC, Legislature	

C. RIGHT TO AN ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING

The right to an adequate standard of living includes the right to food, the right to water and sanitation and the right to housing. All resources that are essential for the realization of this right must be made available and accessible in order for this right to be respected.

International Obligations:

- *Article 11 ICESCR*
- *Article 28 CERD*

Right to Food:

- *Article 25 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights*
- *Article 11 ICESCR*
- *Article 24(2)(c) and 27(3) CRC*
- *General Comment of the UN Committee on the Right to Food (ECOSOC)*
- *Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food developed by the Inter-Governmental Working Group of the FAO*
- *Article 17 of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women*

Right to Water:

Most people in Liberia do not have access to clean and safe drinking water. Access to safe drinking water fell dramatically during the last decade. In 2005, 24 percent of Liberian households had access to clean drinking water, and estimates are that safe drinking water is currently accessible to only about one-third of the population.

- *By implication from Articles 11(1) and (2)(a); 12(1), (2)(b) and (c); and 15 ICESCR*
- *Article 14(2)(h) CEDAW*
- *Only by implication from Article 24 ACHPR on the right to a general satisfactory environment favourable to (peoples') development*
- *General Comment of UN Committee on the Right to Water*

Right to housing:

Housing must provide adequate shelter, which means adequate privacy, space, security, lighting and ventilation, basic infrastructure and location with regard to work and basic facilities, all at a reasonable cost. The HRS indicates that there was no sanitation for almost half of the respondents. Everyone should have sustainable access to natural and common resources, safe drinking water, energy for cooking, heating and lighting, sanitation and washing facilities, means of food storage, waste disposal, site drainage and emergency services. The right to housing is relevant to the right not to be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with one's privacy, family, home or correspondence, in article 17 of the ICCPR, so it covers a right to be free from unlawful forced evictions carried out by the state, as well as a right to receive assistance to access adequate housing in certain situations.

The right to housing is also very gender sensitive as women face the most difficulties in this area. It is imperative to promote the realization of the right to housing for especially women, because the enjoyment of other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, such as the right to equality before the law and equal protection of the law, the right to life, the right to security of the person, the right to work, the right to health and the right to education, depend on it.

- *Article 11 ICESCR*

Right of access to land:

Being able to claim land property rights or a stable access to land is a welfare factor and the precondition to obtaining a house, to running economic activities and creating job opportunities. It is often necessary in order to access water, electricity, and health services. Due to the loss of deeds during the war, many persons lost the evidence to validate claims of land ownership, which has led to land disputes and has affected the enjoyment of the right to respect for private and family life. According to the HRS, the majority of respondents did not own any land.

- *Article 17 and by implication from article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
- *Articles 15 and 16 CEDAW*

UPR Recommendations

Actions required:

- Continue to apply the strategies and socio-economic development plans designed to reduce poverty and unemployment in the country;
- Pursue the effort to increase the standard of living of all Liberians with specific programmes in the areas of accommodation, health, education and other basic social services;
- Take appropriate steps, with the help of the international community, to ensure for the Liberian people an adequate standard of living, and the rights to food, health and education.

Attention required:

- Continue to regard maintaining social stability as a first priority, and make efforts to improve the people’s living standards, providing necessary housing and medical care and increased educational opportunities, and improving electricity services, drinking water and the road network; and streamline the relationship between Liberia’s domestic legislation and the international human rights instruments that it has signed by bringing domestic legislation into line with the requirements of international law.

Objective 1	Adopt measures to make measurable progress for persons to obtain an adequate standard of living, including the right to fair wage, and the highest standard of health, and food and nutrition security for all persons, especially individuals belonging to the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups.	
Action Points	Agents of Change	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prohibit construction of housing upon unsafe or polluted sites, which threaten the lives and health of future occupants. 2. Cease carrying out, sponsoring, tolerating or supporting the practice of unlawful forced evictions. 3. Enhance and implement an equitable national tax system to adequately support social services and job/vocational training. 4. Strengthen and develop a policy that prohibits unlawful seizure of land. 5. Make better arrangements between the government and the community, in constructing low priced housing units. 6. Advocate relocating people living in identified townships and slums into the community with adequate government support in terms of compensation or provision of low-cost housing units. 7. Support the implementation of the National Agricultural Investment Program (NAIP). 8. Conduct strategic planning for equitable access by all to environmentally friendly and sustainable water and sanitation services and hygiene behavior change at scale by developing and implementing a National Solid Waste Management Policy and supporting the activities of the National Water Resources and Sanitation Board (NWRSB). 9. Initiate and support negotiations between communities, landowners, caretakers and the government to dedicate portions of land for agriculture purposes. 10. Enhance agricultural productivity among smallholders for food, nutrition security and marketing of produce. 11. Develop and implement an agricultural strategy to increase yield production and to 	CSO, INCHR, CSA, MOL, MOF, Legislature, NIC, MOA, MOJ, LRC, MPW, MLME, LWSC, MOHSW, MOE, MPEA, Municipalities, MIA, NCD, Judiciary, National Social Security, Housing Authority, Chamber of Commerce, Legislature, EPA, Land Commission, CBL	

<p>encourage mechanized farming.</p> <p>12. Promote and increase access to comprehensive financial services (micro-credits, loan schemes) for small and medium-sized agricultural and business enterprises.</p> <p>13. Advocate and ensure the appropriate relocation of industrial facilities with high levels of environmental pollution in highly populated and exposed communities.</p>	
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D. RIGHT TO SOCIAL SECURITY

The right to social security includes the right not to be denied social security coverage arbitrarily or unreasonably, and the right to equal enjoyment of adequate protection in the event of unemployment, sickness, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond one’s control.

International Obligations:

- *Article 22 Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
- *Article 9 ICESCR*
- *Article 5 CERD*
- *Article 11 CEDAW*
- *Article 26 CRC*
- *Article 18 CRC in relation to working parents:*
- *Article 20 CRC makes provisions for the right to social security of children without parents*

Objective 1	Employees will be beneficiaries of social security, especially work-related injury and unemployment insurance.	
Action Points	Agents of Change	of
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhance the accessibility to and the implementation of the group insurance policy, which covers medical and pension and death, and expand it to include work-related injury, maternity, and unemployment insurance in the state sector and require all private enterprises to provide work-related injury insurance and a minimum of three months’ maternity leave and for enterprises with more than 50 employees/workers to provide the same and medical insurance plan and pension plan. 2. Advocate for improved accessibility to insurance companies in the counties. 3. Develop a policy to increase social welfare benefits for vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, to meet current demands, and to provide access to a social security scheme that provides a minimum essential level of benefits to all individuals and families that will enable them to acquire at least essential health care, basic shelter and housing, water and sanitation, foodstuffs, and the most basic forms of education. 4. Support the establishment of day care centers in all fifteen counties of Liberia. 	<p>CSO, INCHR, NASSCORP, MOHS (has a social welfare department), MOL, MOE, Legislature, CSA, Insurance Companies, NCD, NUOD</p>	

E. RIGHT TO HEALTH

Health care capacity, especially at hospitals, is grossly inadequate. There are not enough beds to treat the population, and inadequate access to obstetric emergency care contributes to the high maternal mortality rate. Many health care facilities lack access to clean water and sufficient electricity to operate full time. The inadequacy of basic health care available to the majority of the population is compounded by the absolute shortage of trained health staff.

The Liberian population suffers from a number of serious health concerns—malaria, acute respiratory infections, worms, diarrhea, tuberculosis, skin infections, malnutrition, and anemia—many of which contribute to high morbidity and mortality and many of which could be prevented with better access to health care, including preventive care. A major source of illness and death in Liberia is diarrhea, which is primarily caused by poor hygiene and a lack of sanitation. Limited access to clean water, poor waste management (leading to household trash, human feces, and hazardous medical waste becoming piled up), and malnutrition caused in part by the breakdown in the infrastructure of food production and delivery all contribute to serious health concerns plaguing people in Liberia.

International Obligations:

- *Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
- *Article 12 ICESCR*
- *Article 16 ACHPR*
- *Article 24 CRC*
- *Article 14 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child*
- *ESC Rights Committee General Comments no. 14 on the Right to Health*
- *Article 12 CEDAW*
- *Article 25 CERD*

Objective 1	Increase commitment to provide adequate support to counties for community health services and improve the effectiveness of services provided by health facilities.	
Action Points	Agents of Change	of
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare shall extend their activities to prisons throughout Liberia to provide health care for inmates. 2. The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare shall extend their activities to persons with mental or emotional illnesses. 3. The government shall commit to increment rises and implementation of the national budgetary allocation for health care. 4. Fully support the implementation of the Environmental Plan of Action and the Health Plan of the Nation for the betterment of the environment, human health and improvement to health care, mental health and rehabilitation services, as well as assistive devices for persons with disabilities. 5. A specialist must be assigned by the government to survey for the digging of disposal pits or to find other solutions for adequate waste management; carry out community-based campaigns to encourage individuals to take voluntary responsibility for clean and safe environmental practices. 6. Ensure that only licensed pharmacists sell drugs to the public and encourage the purchase of drugs by prescription. 	<p>CSO, INCHR, MOHS, EPA, WHO, MOGD, MIA, MOC, NCD, Local governments, Legislature, MOF</p>	

5. GUARANTEE OF THE RIGHTS AND INTERESTS OF ETHNIC MINORITIES, WOMEN, CHILDREN, ELDERLY PEOPLE, PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

Respect and ensure the civil and political, economic, social and cultural rights of all appurtenant covenants to all persons belonging to a vulnerable group within Liberia's jurisdiction

A. WOMEN'S RIGHTS

During Liberia's civil conflict, women were victims of forced displacement, killing, assault, abduction, torture, forced recruitment, and the extensive destruction of property, and were disproportionately targeted for rape, sexual abuse, sexual slavery, and forced pregnancy. In the aftermath of the conflict, women continue to suffer the physical, emotional, psychological and economic effects of the conflict, face high incidence of rape and sexual violence, and confront significant traditional and cultural barriers to enjoying meaningful participation in public and political spheres. According to the HRS, respondents almost unanimously agreed that women's rights needed to be promoted within their community.

UPR Recommendations

Actions required:

- Continue implementing the issues raised and recommendations emanating from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Attention required:

- Incorporate the principle of equality between women and men into the Constitution;
- Adopt appropriate measures to increase women's basic legal training and knowledge of their rights;
- Support the work of and address fully the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in particular to achieve the enjoyment of women and child rights and the implementation of its recommendations, and to do so at a published timetable.

Objective 1	Expose more women to skills training to equip them for a broader range of professions and enhance women's participation in professional positions across all sectors; strengthen women's participation and ownership in income generation and employment opportunities in agriculture, fisheries, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, formal sectors and economic development processes.	
Action Points	Agents of Change	of
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide women with information about market opportunities and price levels by means of community radio, mobile phone, or price bulletins, palava hut, town hall discussions (to be gradually expanded throughout the country). 2. Develop employment schemes, including job training, in partnership with the private sector for women across all sectors and levels. 3. Improve job opportunities for women by increasing women's access to vocational training 	CSO, INCHR, GC, Legislature, MOGD, MIA, MOE, CBL, MOL, AFELL, MICAT, MOF, MOHS,	

<p>and encouraging women to apply for jobs in the public and private sectors through innovative and targeted programs and measures, which shall go beyond hairdressing, dyeing of hair, soap making, plumbing, carpeting, etc.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Put mechanisms in place to monitor payments/salaries to men and women (in governmental institutions and the private sector). 5. Engage chiefs, elders, and Zoes (traditional leaders) to empower women in societies. 6. Organize workshops and consultations to promote the implementation of the National Gender Policy. 7. Upgrade facilities to address the needs of female staff including separate lavatory facilities, space for breast-feeding mothers and child care facility/support. 8. Create awareness on and implementation of Inheritance Law: women should own, rent or inherit land, property, or housing. 9. Sensitize chiefs and Zoes to play a more proactive role of promoting women's participation in decision-making in their communities. 	MOJ, Judiciary
Objective 2	Reduce cultural practices that impede the rights of women and girls to ensure that the principle of gender equality is valued across all sectors in Liberia.
Action Points	Agents of Change
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create awareness of, and sensitize policy makers and community members to, the harmful effects of gender-based discrimination. 2. Provide/promote alternative livelihoods to practitioners of cultural practices that impede upon or violate women's rights. 3. Create awareness of and sensitization to the adverse effects of certain traditional cultural practices, such as FGM, among women through workshops and radio sensitization. 4. Develop, pass and implement legislation/regulations and policies to address cultural practices that adversely affect women's rights. 	CSO, INCHR, Traditional leaders, CBO, Women and Youth Groups, Legislature, MOJ, MOGD, MIA, Chiefs

B. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

During the protracted civil conflict, children were disproportionately affected and suffered the majority of the human rights violations committed. Major human rights violations against children included abduction, assault, forced displacement, forced recruitment, forced labor, sexual violence, rape, sexual slavery, sexual abuse and being forced to witness unspeakable atrocities.

Essential to the upbringing of a child is education. However, external factors inhibit children from access to education.

UPR Recommendations

Attention required:

- Adopt legislative provisions in order to prohibit, sanction and effectively prevent the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (in accordance with international standards and in line with the recommendations contained in paragraph 21 of the 2009 CEDAW report).

Objective 1	Strengthen the provision of basic vital services for all children to reduce their vulnerability and improve their access to quality healthcare, adequate food, safe and clean water, and nutrition.	
Action Points		Agents of Change
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhance specialized medical and psychosocial care in hospitals and medical clinics for children. 2. Include the construction and maintenance of a specified number of children's hospitals in the national budget. 3. Strengthen and support institutions that provide psychosocial care and support to orphans and vulnerable children. 4. Create foster family programs to take care of vulnerable children. 5. Formulate and implement guidelines to improve standards of orphanage homes and facilities. 6. Ensure and improve birth registration and certification programs across the country. 		CSO, INCHR, MOHS, MOE, MOJ, MOGD
Objective 2	Take special measures, especially with respect to female and disadvantaged children, to ensure equal and equitable access to education for such children and to provide a safe and encouraging environment for children in schools.	
Action Points		Agents of Change
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assign roving social workers in each county to prevent and respond to cases of child abuse. 2. Establish a specified number of boarding schools for orphans in partnership with the private sector. 3. Provide specialized assistance for persons with disabilities, in circumstances where children are caring for persons with disabilities, in order to allow those children to attend school. 		CSO, INCHR, MIA, MOE, MOJ, MOHS, Local governments, NCD
Objective 3	Curtail violence against boys and girls in the communities, which, according to the HRS, includes most notably insults, beatings, assaults, child neglect, sexual abuse and harassment, sexual exploitation/prostitution, rape, extrajudicial killings, disappearances, arbitrary detention, and armed robbery and eliminate practices that would violate their rights and well-being.	
Action Points		Agents of Change
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhance the capacity of WACPS and provide them with the necessary logistical support; communities should have a telephone hotline for reporting violations and abuse. 2. Educate town chiefs and community leaders about children's rights and responsibilities. 3. Establish and support a defined procedure for human rights organizations to refer cases to the appropriate authorities when cases are brought to them. 4. Strengthen the capacity of medical staff to provide the appropriate medical services to victims of child abuse and to assist in child abuse cases. 5. Enhance monitoring mechanisms of LNP depots to prevent abuse by persons in positions of authority and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable. 		CSO, INCHR, MOJ, NCD
Objective 4	Recognize and support the development of practices that establish a proper system of juvenile justice.	
Action Points		Agents of Change
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extend the Juvenile Justice Diversion Program to all counties in Liberia. 2. Train and deploy social workers to all counties in Liberia, and assign social workers to the police stations in areas with statistically high numbers of children in conflict with the law. 3. Train magistrate judges to adequately deal with juvenile cases. 		CSO, INCHR, MOHS, MOJ

C. SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Special attention shall be given to the health needs and rights of women in vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, such as migrant women, refugee and internally displaced women, girl children and older women, women in prostitution, indigenous women, and women with disabilities.

Long-term programs shall aim at eradicating misperceptions that victims of sexual abuse are somehow “tainted” and in need of purification. Such perceptions are erroneous and perpetuate harmful stereotypes about women and girls.

UPR Recommendations

Actions required:

- Continue to prioritize and implement policies and legislation to address violence against women and the protection of the human rights of children;
- Prioritize enforcement of domestic legislation, including the Penal Law, the Rape Law and the National Gender-Based Violence Plan of Action, empower the Special Court for Rape and Other Forms of Violence as well as the Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Unit under the Ministry of Justice, and implement appropriate national public awareness programmes to address violence against women;
- Implement legislation and policies aimed at eliminating sexual and gender-based violence, and increase the capacity of Liberian courts specializing in sexual violence to ensure the expedient processing of rape and other sexual assault cases;
- Take further legislative and policy measures to protect the rights of children, including by ensuring that Liberia meets its obligations under the CRC and the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography;
- Continue to combat violence against women;
- Take measures to promote and protect the human rights of women, namely, measures to prevent, to inform and to fight against discrimination and violence against them;
- Take all necessary measures to ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by women and girls, including by way of properly and promptly investigating and prosecuting cases of gender-based and sexual violence;
- Address the high level of female genital mutilation and early marriage through more concerted efforts, involving local levels;
- Increase public awareness campaigns against female genital mutilation (FGM);
- Take measures to guarantee effective access to justice and protection for women victims of gender-based violence;
- Consider the adoption of a legal framework to address violence against women;
- Move forward with efforts to expand the work of the Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Unit, under the Ministry of Justice, and to create permanent SGBV Units around the country;
- Encourage Liberia to strengthen its policies to combat against child trafficking;
- Reinforce actions for the protection of child victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Attention required:

- Take all the necessary measures to eliminate sexual violence in the country, including the full prosecution of all reported cases of sexual violence.

Objective 1	Deter perpetrators from molesting and harming women and/or children and establish new programs as needed to provide victims of sexual violence with medical, psychological, and social assistance by qualified personnel aware of and trained in the specific issues involved.	
Action Points	Agents of Change	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a law with appropriate sanctions for violation of its provisions detailing the set required standards for the construction of bush schools (cultural schools) in rural and urban communities with a focus on removing them from towns/cities to the bush and their not being operational during formal school year. This law shall strictly prohibit force initiation practices including no female shall be forced/coerced to undergo FGM and all females shall be informed about the negative consequences of FGM. 2. Develop and put in place effective sexual harassment and grievance-handling policies and procedures in both public- and private-sector institutions. 3. Provide assistance to victims, including rehabilitation, assistance in child care, treatment, counseling, and health and social services facilities and programs, as well as support structures, and all other appropriate measures to promote victims' safety and physical and psychological rehabilitation. 4. Promote the nationwide availability of and access to reproductive health services to diagnose and treat sexually transmitted infections and to provide counseling on reproductive health issues and for victims of sexual violence. 5. Strengthen CSOs and public-sector institutions to effectively identify and rapidly prosecute all cases of sexual and gender-based violence. 6. Develop a program for rehabilitation of perpetrators to reduce the tendency of recidivism. 	CSO, INCHR, MOGD, MOJ, All security agencies, Legislature, AFELL Donor Group on Justice and Security, ABA, The Carter Center, GIZ, Prison Fellowship Liberia, Community leaders, MOHS	

D. RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

The plight of persons with disabilities has over the years grown and expanded. As the result of man-made and other natural causes and disasters many persons were made disabled resulting in discrimination, segregation from society, economic marginalization and lack of participation in social, political and economic decision-making processes. This substantial group has often been left out of development.

Vulnerable (and marginalized) groups entail the following groups of persons: children, ethnic or religious groups, refugees and internally displaced persons, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV and affected by HIV, naturalized Liberians, the homeless, those struggling with substance abuse, the elderly and persons with a different sexual orientation and gender identity. Due to gender inequality, women are considered to be vulnerable to particular violations based on their sex, such as sexual exploitation or gender-based violence.

UPR Recommendations

Actions required:

- Continue and strengthen measures adopted to increase the participation of and progress achieved by women in all sectors of the life of the country/political life;
- Prioritize action to address the concerns raised by the United Nations human rights treaty bodies regarding the situation of women, particularly in the informal sector, and the lack of rights and social benefits, including maternal protections available to them;
- Encourage stronger promotion of the rights of women and children by meeting their immediate post-conflict needs. These include, for example, the elimination of gender inequalities, the

promotion of equal educational opportunities as well as equal opportunities for socio-economic and political participation, and the elimination of violence against women and children;

- Pay particular attention to efforts aimed at reducing maternal mortality, including through international assistance and seeking good practices;
- Reinforce the protection and promotion of the rights of vulnerable groups, namely, children, especially orphaned and disabled children and child victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation, women, disabled and elderly persons.

Objective 1	Improve accessibility to disability-specific services and reduce stigmatization and discrimination against all vulnerable groups; promote their right to be treated equally.	
Action Points		Agents of Change
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Empower and decentralize the National Commission on Disabilities, by establishing county offices and level up the budget spent on the NCD so that it is on a par with other institutions. 2. Develop a policy geared towards enhancing job opportunities to persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, and promote inclusion of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups in the County Development Agenda (CDA). 3. Employ the Community Based Rehabilitation approach. 4. Establish sign language and Braille literacy programs and train and assign special teachers for vocational education to cater to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in education and rehabilitation services. 5. Conduct a practical review of ways to improve commercial transportation to better accommodate persons with disabilities. 6. Implement the validated strategy on applying provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). 7. Adopt measures and train social welfare workers to provide adequate care for the elderly, including their access to health care and food, water, shelter, and clothing--paying particular attention to elderly women. 		CSO, INCHR, Local governments, NCD, MOJ, MOE, MOHS, MOL, NUOD, NASSCORP, MPEA, MPW, MICAT, MOT
Objective 2	Improve protection for marginalized and vulnerable groups at all levels of the administration of justice (police, prison system, courts) and marginalized groups within society and strengthen capacity for response, referral and follow-up of gender-specific issues.	
Action Points		Agents of Change
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Put in place a fully functional referral system for legal, medical and psychosocial services in all police depots in all fifteen counties of Liberia. 2. Strengthen and increase the services of the Women and Child Protection Units, MOJ SGBV Unit and Criminal Court E. 3. Establish and adopt a national sign language and train police and court officials accordingly for assignment in police stations and courts. Training will be supported by the Disability Strategic Framework. 		CSO, INCHR, MOJ, MOHS, MOGD, AFELL, All security agencies, DPO, NCD, Legislature, GIZ, NUOD, Carter Center, Donor Group on Justice and Security, Prison Fellowship Liberia, MICAT, Community leaders

6. HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

Implicit in the concept of a NHRAP is human rights education. In order to protect and respect human rights, citizens and residents alike, public officials included, must be educated about the human rights situation in Liberia. Only with an understanding of what human rights are can violations be identified and the human rights situation rectified. Hence, training and resources shall be provided to enable organizations and individuals to enact the action points outlined below.

Objective 1	Ensure wide dissemination and popularization of the National Human Rights Action Plan, and all human rights reflected therein, at national and local levels.	
Action Points	Agents of Change	of
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incorporate citizenship, human rights, peace building, and conflict resolution into school curricula and informal cultural education. 2. Include citizenship, human rights, peace building and conflict resolution education in the training programs of civil servants. 3. Support human rights research to develop teaching materials for training in human rights. 4. Promote human rights awareness, publicize human rights information and implement legal literacy programs throughout Liberia through different educational programs/forums, radio shows, community radio and dramas. 5. Encourage academic institutions to offer courses in human rights, support the development of related disciplines and majors, and encourage studies on human rights. 6. Encourage and promote human rights education in both public and private institutions, and promote a business/corporate culture that respects and protects human rights. 	CSO, INCHR, MOE, MOI, MOJ, NCD, National Commission on Higher Education, Association of Liberian Universities, National Teachers Association of Liberia, Monrovia Consolidated School System Teachers Association, KAICT, UL	

7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

“[Human rights objectives] must ... become a permanent component of ... state policy.”²

The NHRAP Steering Committee will take the lead in monitoring the implementation process of the NHRAP. By monitoring activities, the NHRAP Steering Committee will be kept au fait with human rights practices and will subsequently be able to address issues of concern on implementation. Monitoring activities will also raise awareness and enable people to agitate for the observance of human rights by identifying areas that need attention from the government. Citizens and residents alike will be engaged in the process of promoting human rights in Liberia because they will be empowered to discuss human rights-related matters in town hall meetings or palava huts and constructively in local committees, civil society organizations, and/or other public constituencies. This process will enhance the synergy between these bodies and the government, which will positively affect the enjoyment of human rights in all communities in Liberia. Hence, during its activities, the NHRAP Steering Committee will encourage all stakeholders to actively participate in human rights-related dialogue. The Ministry of Information and the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) shall play a primary role throughout the implementation process addressing concerns and reporting on the implementation process.

In order to effectively monitor the implementation of the NHRAP in Liberia, monitoring shall take place at both the government and the community levels, and will be geared towards equity inclusion with a view to realizing the advancement of human rights in Liberia for all. An adequate set of indicators is imperative to conducting successful monitoring of the NHRAP, especially with respect to vulnerable groups in society. To this end, the following guiding principles will apply when undertaking monitoring activities, respectively with a view to equity inclusion and community-based monitoring.

With a view to enhancing equity inclusion:

1. Comprehensive assessment/survey of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups in society.
2. Collect data on disadvantaged youths, street children and those living away from home, and disseminate the data for necessary actions. (www.lisgis.org)
3. GOL should collaborate with civil society for a baseline study on children, and establish and operationalize well-being indicators.
4. GOL should subsidize private schools in areas where there are no government schools, and empower civil society to monitor their development/operations.
 - a. Assess or decide which school receives money (subsidy, or otherwise allotted/budgeted)
5. Clearly define key words in indices (e.g. Wealthy and Poor; vulnerable, community, etc.) in order to determine the status of persons in Liberian society.
6. Nationwide, comprehensive monitoring on equity mapping with LISGIS in the lead.
 - a. Develop guidelines/methodology for equity mapping
7. Government should enable policies to be monitored by child friendly and gender sensitive indicators (e.g. for the purpose of keeping equity between boys/girls in school), measured by disaggregated data.

² Bolivian Human Rights Action Plan

Community Based Monitoring (CBM):

1. Civil society and government should collaborate with local communities regarding monitoring/information sharing and accountability.
 - a. Monitor sensitization awareness and town hall meetings between government, local community and civil society for successful implementation of development projects at the community level.
2. Civil Society and GOL support and empower local communities through capacity building initiatives in the development process and also monitoring budgets.
3. Develop progressive information dissemination mechanism with local communities.
 - a. Set up accessible and legitimate mechanisms to solicit suggestions from actions to be taken.
4. Ensure the development of indicators to measure inclusion and effective participation of local communities in decision making processes that directly affect their lives.
5. Set up an electronic system (repository) for information sharing.
6. CBM approach should be inclusive involving people with disabilities, women and other groups.
7. Develop standardized national level monitoring tools.
8. Civil Society should widely disseminate FOI (Freedom of Information Act) and collaborate with the government for its implementation.
9. National budget needs to be accompanied with a clear plan which includes timeline, quantity, activities and location.
 - a. The national budget should be disaggregated to the county, district and at the facility levels. The budget should be displayed at these different levels for citizens to see.
 - b. Government should raise awareness on (citizen: related to health, education, water, roads and other issues citizens are most interested in) budget allocation by calling recurrent town hall meetings.
10. Set up a secretariat to collect, validate, consolidate local data and to forward to LISGIS for triangulation and public dissemination.

UPR Recommendations

The following UPR Recommendations have been accepted by the Government of Liberia in relation to the implementation of Human Rights standards and monitoring of human rights in Liberia. Actions will be considered to fully implement the recommendations listed below:

- Consider establishing the post of an ombudsman to coordinate and monitor the performance of its institutions, assess the outcome and impact of various initiatives, and provide periodic reports;
- Continue to strengthen the Independent National Commission of Human Rights;
- Encourage the structural strengthening of civil society organizations that advocate the promotion and protection of human rights;
- Continue to strengthen the technical capacity and expertise of Ministries and other governmental organs and other institutions with competence in the field of human rights;
- Strengthen efforts to improve the protection of human rights across the country, capacity-building of local authorities and empowerment of communities, in particular women and girls, ensuring the involvement of the civil society, both urban and rural and across the country, in the follow-up to the review report.