



Integrated Country Strategy

Liberia

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1. Chief of Mission Priorities

Our strategic interest in Liberia builds on the foundation of historic ties and shared values with one of our most loyal partners in Africa. A democratic, stable, and prosperous Liberia enhances regional security and offers the potential to be a gateway for American investment in, and exports to, West Africa. U.S. diplomatic engagement and development assistance have enabled institutional reform in the Liberian military and civilian security sectors and strengthened capabilities critical to maintaining internal security and deterring extremist groups and terrorism. As a result of our assistance, Liberia is on the front lines of detecting and containing bio-threats such as Ebola at their source, providing us a forward base for biomedical research and innovation to eradicate other diseases and potential pandemics. Our cooperation benefits the United States by thwarting terrorist attacks, supporting regional peacekeeping, facilitating the interdiction of drug traffickers, extraditing fugitives, and disrupting transnational criminal organizations and international human trafficking rings.

Liberia has passed two significant milestones in its journey toward self-reliance and sustainability: The peaceful, democratic transition to an opposition party and the closure of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) peacekeeping operation on March 30, 2018 after nearly 14 years. Legislative and presidential elections in 2017 proceeded peacefully and were found by international and domestic observers to be generally free, fair, and transparent. Candidates relied on the rule of law to resolve election disputes and citizens patiently awaited the legal rulings to challenges. Overall, Liberia's institutions, painstakingly reconstructed since 2003 with substantial donor support, showed improving maturity, capacity, and independence. UNMIL's departure was predicated on Liberian security institutions assuming full responsibility for domestic security, which was completed in July 2016. The successful conclusion of UNMIL yields a significant decrease in UN assistance to Liberia and in related costs to U.S. taxpayers.

Liberia's new government faces significant challenges. The most pressing is the country's dire economic situation, at odds with voter expectations of jobs and improved prosperity promised by President George Weah. President Weah has ambitious plans to initiate large-scale infrastructure projects. However, return on such an investment will require financing for these projects be accompanied by efforts to reduce corruption, pursue institutional reforms, and restrict official expenditures. Reforms are needed to improve the business climate to attract foreign investment and increase exports. However, many voters who supported Weah based on his "pro-poor" agenda are apprehensive of foreign actors, seen as taking jobs from Liberians. We will work with the Government of Liberia (GOL) to show how well-regulated foreign and Liberian private investment can accelerate inclusive growth, diversify the economy, and create jobs for Liberians. The GOL must also pass critical legislative reforms, including those

concerning land rights and local governance, pending for years, to enable effective policy implementation.

Liberia has benefitted from generous donor assistance since the end of the civil wars in 2003. Increasingly, the GOL will have to rely on domestic revenues from private sector growth to fund development. Although the country remains poor, there is potential for sustainable economic development that could lift the Liberian standard of living. We will engage with the GOL to boost trade, enhance food security, and improve management of Liberia's abundant natural resources to end aid dependency. Similarly, we will help build infrastructure, including in the transport, information technology, and energy sectors to provide a platform upon which the private sector can expand and diversify. This in turn should increase domestic tax revenues and open new markets for American and other international investors and exporters.

U.S. influence in Liberia remains strong. Our diplomatic engagement can leverage this trust to protect U.S. interests in Liberia and in international fora, while also supporting Liberia's economic development and evolution towards democratic maturity. President Weah is committed to close U.S. ties and is receptive to dialogue and technical assistance. Through our work with Liberia's military, civilian security forces, and judiciary, we will continue to help Liberia remain an inhospitable environment for terrorism and transnational crime. Reflecting our strong law enforcement partnership, the United States and Liberia have accelerated repatriation of criminals from the United States, and Liberian law enforcement agencies have been instrumental in locating and detaining fugitives wanted in the United States. Our health programming has made the world safer by improving global understanding and management of emerging infectious diseases through cutting-edge research, while at the same time saving lives of vulnerable Liberians. Our support for education programs is improving the quality of public education and increasing access to education. These are priorities in a country with rapidly growing youth population, low literacy, and an under resourced education system.

While the positive outcome of the elections lessened Liberians' fears of a return to conflict, progress remains fragile. Through oversight of our programs, we will continue to ensure sound management of U.S. taxpayer-funded assistance, including periodic reviews of established indicators, as well as strengthening accountability and transparency in governance institutions of Liberia. Corruption continues to drain the government of its meager resources and undermines public trust in its institutions. A new government offers new opportunities to institute reforms to combat corruption. We will seize this opportunity to push for reforms that protect the progress that has been made with extensive U.S. and international support.

2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: A secure, stable Liberia with effective rule of law, good governance, and strengthened human rights protections for all

Mission Objective 1.1: Liberia's military forces, civilian law enforcement services, and justice sector become more professional, effective, and protect the rights of all. (CDCS DO 1 IR 1.2)

Mission Objective 1.2: More effective accountable, transparent, responsive, and inclusive governance. (CDCS DO1)

Mission Objective 1.3: Consular, RSO, INL, and DHS coordinate activities to strengthen U.S. border security, deter violations of U.S. immigration laws, protect the lives and interests of U.S. citizens, and facilitate legitimate travel.

Mission Goal 2: Inclusive economic development and two-way trade and investment

Mission Objective 2.1: Sustained, market-driven economic growth to reduce poverty and promotion of opportunities to create jobs and encourage mutually beneficial economic ties for Americans and Liberians. (CDCS DO 2 IR 2.3)

Mission Objective 2.2: Improved national infrastructure opens new opportunities for investment, economic diversification, and private sector growth.

Mission Goal 3: Liberia's human development status improves

Mission Objective 3.1: Better educated Liberians. (CDCS DO 4)

Mission Objective 3.2: Improved health status of Liberians. (CDCS DO 3)

Management Objectives:

Management Objective 1: ICASS customer satisfaction in housing and residential maintenance increases as a result of managerial efficiency and communication, operational effectiveness and diversity of service provision, and enhanced and more targeted training opportunities.

Management Objective 2: Employee and family morale increase through recreational initiatives addressing quality of life for all Mission community members.

Management Objective 3: With OBO, create masterplan for Old Embassy compound.

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1: A secure, stable Liberia with effective rule of law, good governance, and strengthened human rights protections for all.

Description and Linkages: This goal reflects U.S. interests in line with Pillar I of the 2017 National Security Strategy, the State-USAID 2018-2022 Joint Strategic Plan Goal 1, Objectives 1.3 and 1.4, the USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategy Development Objective 1 Intermediate Result 1.2, and the State-USAID AF/AFR Joint Regional Strategy Goal 1, Objective 1.2. We will endeavor to counter the instability, transnational crime, and violence that threaten U.S. interests by strengthening citizen-responsive governance, security, democracy, human rights, and rule of law. We will also work to increase capacity and strengthen the resilience of our partners and allies to deter aggression and other threats posed by state and non-state actors that impact mutual interests.

Mission Objective 1.1: Liberia's armed forces, civilian law enforcement agencies, and justice sector become more professional, effective and protect the rights of all.

Justification: Peace, stability, and good governance are prerequisites for the long-term success of Liberia's democracy and provide the base for economic growth and justice in Liberia. U.S. assistance will help Liberia become more stable and secure by strengthening the professionalization of security institutions, improving access to formal legal remedies, supporting formal and informal dispute resolution systems, and strengthening citizen-responsive governance. The U.S. government will support Liberia's efforts to establish effective, accountable, and inclusive governance; eliminate systemic corruption and impunity; and foster a growing economy that protects human rights and benefits all Liberians.

Since the peace accords were signed in 2003, the United States has played a critical role by demobilizing and rebuilding the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), and training and equipping the Liberia National Police (LNP) and other civilian law enforcement agencies. The government of Liberia assumed full responsibility for security in July 2016 from the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), but continues to have resource gaps and vulnerabilities. Embassy Monrovia is changing U.S. assistance to the AFL and civilian security agencies from a focus on broad-based force generation to targeted investments designed to enhance critical areas. Programs will continue to be carefully calibrated to conditions on the ground and well-coordinated with other security sector donors. While Liberia's security agencies have made great progress, continued U.S. assistance is critical to protect U.S. investment in the security sector, consolidate gains, and ensure that malign influences do not weaken the professionalization of the security institutions.

Objective 1.2: More effective, accountable, transparent, responsive, and inclusive governance.

Justification: Effective, accountable, transparent, responsive, and inclusive governance is fundamental to citizen-focused democracy and a free market economy. Such characteristics of governance are the stepping stones to building the capacity of the Liberian government to improve the lives of its citizens. Achieving these goals in Liberia requires the U.S. government to support Liberia's efforts to establish effective, accountable, and inclusive governance; eliminate systemic corruption and impunity; and foster a growing economy that benefits all Liberians. Embassy support for these objectives will focus on improving GOL ministries', agencies', and commissions' transparent and accountable use of public resources, strengthening the GOL's capacity to hold transparent and fair elections processes, and strengthening Liberia's civil society and media.

This reflects the State-USAID 2018-2022 Joint Strategic Plan Goal 1, Objective 1.3.2, the USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategy Development Objective 1 Intermediate Results 2 and 3, and the State-USAID AF/AFR Joint Regional Strategy Goal 3, Objective 3.1. We will contribute to strengthened democratic governance through targeted assistance to improve citizen engagement, strengthen civil society, increase transparency, and protect human rights.

Objective 1.3: Consular, RSO, INL, and DHS coordinate activities to strengthen U.S. border security, deter violations of U.S. immigration laws, protect the lives and interests of U.S. citizens, and facilitate legitimate travel.

Justification: A consular officer's fundamental responsibility is to protect American citizens, both by assisting them overseas and by preventing mala fide actors from entering the United States. In Monrovia, the Consular Section provides the full range of consular services: services to American citizens, non-immigrant visa (NIV) adjudications, and immigrant visa (IV) adjudications, including Diversity Visas and adoption visas. There are an estimated 4,000 U.S. citizens in Liberia; the majority are dual citizens, with significant numbers of United Nations employees, NGO workers, and missionaries also present. CONS Monrovia supports the activities of other USG sections and agencies in pursuit of the shared Mission Goals by facilitating legitimate travel to and from the United States through such programs as the International Visitor Leadership Program. In addition, the Consular Section's careful screening of all travelers upholds the 2017 National Security Strategy's focus on strengthening border control and immigration policy.

This reflects the State-USAID 2018-2022 Joint Strategic Plan Goal 1, Objective 1.5, under which we will endeavor to strengthen U.S. border security and protect U.S. citizens abroad.

Mission Goal 2: Foster inclusive economic development and mutually beneficial trade and investment

Description and Linkages: This goal reflects the State-USAID 2018-2022 Joint Strategic Plan Goal 2, Objective 2.2, the USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategy Development Objective 2 Intermediate Result 2.3, and the State-USAID AF/AFR Joint Regional Strategy Goal 2. We will work to promote a healthy, educated and productive Liberian population to drive inclusive and sustainable development, boost the private sector and open new markets, and support U.S. prosperity and security objectives by increasing mutually beneficial economic growth, trade, and investment.

Mission Objective 2.1: Sustained, market-driven economic growth to reduce poverty and promotion of opportunities to create jobs and encourage mutually beneficial economic ties for Americans and Liberians.

Justification: Decades of mismanagement and fourteen years of civil wars destroyed Liberia's economy, devastated Liberia's human and institutional capacity, demolished the country's physical infrastructure, and fundamentally damaged productive agriculture. After some years of steady growth, the 2014-2015 Ebola outbreak and historically low prices for key export commodities then halted post-war recovery. According to the World Bank, 50.9 percent of the population is classified as poor and more than half of all households are either food insecure or vulnerable to food insecurity.

Liberia's high levels of poverty and food insecurity will not decline without sustainable, inclusive economic growth. IMF studies suggest that diversification of Liberia's economy is essential to increase its resilience and create jobs. Agriculture accounts for over 70 percent of employment in the country, much of it in subsistence farming, and sustainable broad-based growth will depend on improving smallholder productivity to increase food production, create jobs, and generate income from on-farm and off-farm businesses. Biodiversity conservation and sustainable forest management will also be critical for ensuring the long term survival of

Objective 2.2: Improved National Infrastructure opens new opportunities for investment, economic diversification, and private sector growth

Justification: Despite some areas of improvement, Liberia still ranks close to the bottom of the World Bank Doing Business Index. The poor state of Liberia's infrastructure continues to be a binding constraint to new investment and trade and impedes sustained private sector growth. Ultimately, without a thriving business sector to supply inputs, market products, and eventually diversify into higher value-added production, smallholders cannot generate the jobs and income needed to promote and sustain growth.

Access to electricity in Liberia is among the lowest in the world, with less than five percent of the population having access to grid-supplied electricity. For those few who have access, the cost of \$0.39 per Kilowatt hour is among the highest costs in the world. Lack of access to affordable electricity deters new investment and undermines the sustainability of many small and medium sized enterprises.

Similarly, with less than 750 miles of paved roads in the country, many parts of Liberia are inaccessible during the six-month-long rainy season. Trade is inhibited due to the onerous cost of transportation, and farmers and small producers cannot easily access markets and expand production. Inadequate information, communications, and technology (ICT) infrastructure adds a further burden as small businesses are unable to access financial services and are forced to use cash for virtually all transactions. Improved energy, road, and ICT infrastructure will enhance the competitiveness of the Liberian private sector, encourage new investment, support economic diversification, and lead to more jobs and inclusive growth.

This reflects the State-USAID 2018-2022 Joint Strategic Plan Goals 2 and 3, Objectives 2.3 and 3.1, as well as the State-USAID AF/AFR Joint Regional Strategy Goal 2, Objective 2.3. We will work to advance U.S. economic security by ensuring energy security, combatting corruption, promoting market-oriented economic and governance reforms, and expanding Liberia's capacity to participate in global markets. This work will help transition Liberia from an assistance recipient to an enduring diplomatic, economic, and security partner.

Goal 3: Liberia's human development status improves

Description and Linkages: This goal reflects the State-USAID 2018-2022 Joint Strategic Plan Goals 2 and 3, Objectives 2.2, 3.1, and 3.4, the USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategy Development Objectives 3 and 4, and the State-USAID AF/AFR Joint Regional Strategy Goal 4. We will work to support better educated Liberians with an improved health status in order to foster a populace who can drive inclusive and sustainable development. In doing so, we will project American values and leadership by preventing the spread of disease and providing humanitarian relief.

Objective 3.1: Better educated Liberians.

Justification: Liberia's education system has not yet recovered from the damage sustained during the protracted civil wars. Most schools were destroyed or severely damaged and stripped of infrastructure and learning materials. The human and institutional capacity of the government to manage the education system was severely diminished, as teachers and administrators fled and/or the systems and operating procedures were lost. An entire generation was left with severely disrupted schooling, if any. In Liberia, 47 percent of the

population has no education (Education Sector Analysis, 2016). At the primary grade level, only 49 percent of primary age children are in school. The quality of education is so poor that, according to one assessment, no students in the upper primary grades can read and understand a grade-level text. Additionally, the majority of public school teachers are not capable of passing required competency tests, which has led to teacher and student strikes. According to preliminary assessment data from a representative sample of teachers, 41 percent failed the exam.

U.S. programs assist by improving access to quality education services, with an emphasis on primary education, and systemically strengthening the instruction, management and oversight of the educational system.

Objective 3.2: Improved health status of Liberians.

Justification: Liberia's health sector suffers from years of conflict superimposed over a skewed and rudimentary health system that failed to meet most basic needs of the largest share of the population even before the civil wars. The 2014-2015 Ebola outbreak exposed these problems and underscored the need to reinforce health systems in Liberia to mitigate potential future outbreaks. The Mission's health sector engagement approach includes strengthened capacity in the human, animal, and environmental health sectors with strong coordination among these sectors.

Liberia's exceptionally high stunting rate of 32% in under-five children in 2013 is associated with poor nutrition and diarrheal disease, which is in turn associated with unsafe drinking water and poor sanitation and hygiene practices. According to a 2015 WHO/UNICEF report, 15% of the urban population and 37% of the rural population in Liberia do not have access to an "improved source" of drinking water. The Mission is engaged in improving the quality of the water supply and sanitation services.

Detecting and containing bio-threats at their source is a priority action in the 2017 National Security Strategy (NSS) Pillar 1. To address this, the NSS notes that "we will work with other countries to detect and mitigate outbreaks early to prevent the spread of disease." Embassy Monrovia is actively implementing this strategy in Liberia. Through the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA), CDC, USAID, DOD, State, and NIH provide assistance to Liberia's health sector to improve its ability to prevent, detect, and respond to endemic or emerging infectious disease threats such as Ebola, malaria, meningitis, Lassa fever, and other Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR) priority diseases. Over the next four years, CDC, USAID, DOD, State, and NIH will work to improve Liberia's disease surveillance capabilities, strengthen health systems, conduct joint clinical research, improve the health status of all Liberians including the most vulnerable, and jointly support the construction of Liberia's premier public health and

research laboratory. Without continued programming in these areas and others, the significant gains made since the U.S. government began to implement the Global Health Security Agenda in Liberia may be lost. Liberia's health system, while significantly improved since the devastation of the Ebola outbreak, is fragile. By continuing to implement targeted health programming, the mission can ensure that Liberia's critical disease surveillance and response capabilities remain on high alert, and the country's population receives critical health services.

This goal reflects the State-USAID 2018-2022 Joint Strategic Plan Goals 2 and 3, Objectives 2.2 and 3.4, the USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategy Development Objective 3, and the State-USAID AF/AFR Joint Regional Strategy Goal 4, Objective 1. We will work toward the transformation of the Liberian health system to accelerate reductions in mortality and promote a health populace that can lead inclusive growth. By endeavoring to prevent the spread of diseases that could potentially harm the United States, this goal upholds Pillar I of the National Security Strategy.

4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1: ICASS customer satisfaction in housing and residential maintenance increases as a result of managerial efficiency and communication, operational effectiveness and diversity of service provision, and enhanced and more targeted training opportunities.

Management Objective 2: Employee and family morale increase through recreational initiatives that address quality of life for all members of the Mission Community.

Management Objective 3: Create a master plan in conjunction with OBO to best utilize the Old Embassy properties

Justification: Years of civil strife devastated Liberia's infrastructure, including the real estate market, leaving most family-sized residences in Monrovia in ruins and inhabited by squatters. Until recently, new construction targeted the United Nations or NGO population (largely single) by building smaller two-bedroom units. As the Mission staff grows, Management's challenge continues to be to identify appropriately-sized housing that is well-maintained, safe, secure, and functional with easy access to the Embassy and recreational facilities. Additionally, a lack of local infrastructure capacity forces the Embassy to provide maintenance and utility service provision for many residential properties. New leases require landlords to provide those services with varying degrees of success. As housing and its maintenance remains a major concern at Post, Management will use a holistic approach, to include an expanded and more targeted training for Embassy Facilities staff to enhance both services. The dearth of local capacity extends to recreational activities as well. Monrovia has limited indoor shopping opportunities, and one movie theater. Beaches, while beautiful, are prone to crime and face ocean waters into which sewage drains from Monrovia. Offices such as the Community Liaison Office and Monrovia Employee Association play key roles in maintaining community morale and well-being.

The Mission moved to the NEC in 2012. Nonetheless, staffing already exceeds NEC capacity due to unanticipated agency growth such as MCC, CDC, and NIH. Current state-of-the-art infrastructure systems within the NEC also require specialized and proprietorial technicians from the United States, which are both cost prohibitive and unreliable.