



UNITED NATIONS  
LIBERIA



News Bulletin- February 2023



## The UN in Liberia welcomes the new Resident Coordinator

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appointed Christine N. Umutoni of Rwanda as the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Liberia and she started her duties on 1 February 2023.

Ms. Christine N. Umutoni has served in the UN at leadership positions for over 20 years. Before that she worked for the Rwanda government as a senior official and diplomat. She also has experience as a leader in civil society organizations.

On her arrival at the UN offices, she was received by the staff association, and she had a moment of meet and greet with the UN heads of agencies. She looks forward to work with the UN family to support the government and people of Liberia towards achieving the SDGs.



RC Christine N. Umutoni with UNCT

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RC Christine N. Umutoni with Staff Association Members

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## **UN Resident Coordinator Presents Letter of Credence**

While accepting her letter of credence on 14<sup>th</sup> February, His Excellency President George Manneh Weah noted the cordial ties existing between the United Nations System and the Republic of Liberia which dates as far back as 1945 when Liberia signed the Charter of the United Nations. He assured the UN Resident Coordinator of his personal support and that of the Government and people of Liberia.

The UN Resident Coordinator applauded the work of her predecessors and offered assurance that the UN country team will consolidate and further develop the already excellent partnership between Liberia and the United Nations. She reiterated the importance of maintaining efforts towards lasting peace and sustainable development.







### UN Peace Building Fund in Liberia

The United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (UNPBF), with an office situated in the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator, has continued its support to sustain peace in Liberia, with additional funding support to Liberia. In line with the approved Strategic Results Framework, the Liberia UN Country Team is now starting to actualize the Framework, following the indication of PBF 2023 budget, including an expected allocation of US\$10 million for SRF programming and another US\$2 million for a cross-border initiative with Sierra Leone (for the Liberia side). The United Nations Country Team in collaboration with relevant government ministries and CSOs has developed programmes anchored in the following three SRF strategic areas: (i) Peace dividends, Reconciliation, and conflict resolution (ii) Institutional accountability and strengthened social contract (iii) community access to and use of land. The PBF also implements a ongoing programme, which addresses the areas of peaceful electoral environment and community policing, women political participation, land management and ownership, peace dividends and national reconciliation, women and youth empowerment among others.



### Traditional leaders ban FGM

Liberia made big strides in the efforts to fight female genital mutilation (FGM). On International Day of Zero Tolerance to end FGM, observed every year **on 6 February**. The Liberia's Council of Chiefs and Elders including zoes made history when they took a stand to ban FGM in Liberia. The ceremony was held in Songay Town and was attended by the local population, government officials, partners. UN Women is the lead agency for the Spotlight program to end FGM funded by EU . Speaking at the event the UN Women representative thanked all of elders and chiefs for their efforts in the campaign against FGM in presence of the special envoy on the fight against FGM.



**Lessons learnt conference on small arms and light weapons**

The conference organized by UNDP on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> February in Monrovia, brought together heads of national small arms commissions from ECOWAS Member States and officials from the ECOWAS Commission and partners.

Liberia has domesticated the Arms Trade Treaty by successfully amending the country’s Firearms and Ammunition Control Act 2015 to ensure it is fully aligned with the global Arms Trade Treaty. “Liberia has taken a giant step towards meeting its Arms Trade Treaty obligations by harmonizing existing arms control legislation with the Arms Trade Treaty, and as a result the country now has an Arms Commission with a mandate that expands beyond small arms and light weapons,” said UNDP Resident Representative in Liberia.



**Review and Validation of the National Action Plan on Statelessness**

In a conference organized by UNHCR Stakeholders (Government, UN, CSOs, Faith and Community Based Organizations) reviewed and validated the National Action Plans on Statelessness on 15-16 February 2023 in Monrovia. UNHCR Global Campaign to eradicate statelessness, the Abidjan Declaration of ECOWAS, the Accra Summit, and the Banjul Action Plan elevated the statelessness debate across Ecowas Region.

The workshop mandated the establishment of multi stakeholder platform to develop an Action Plan.

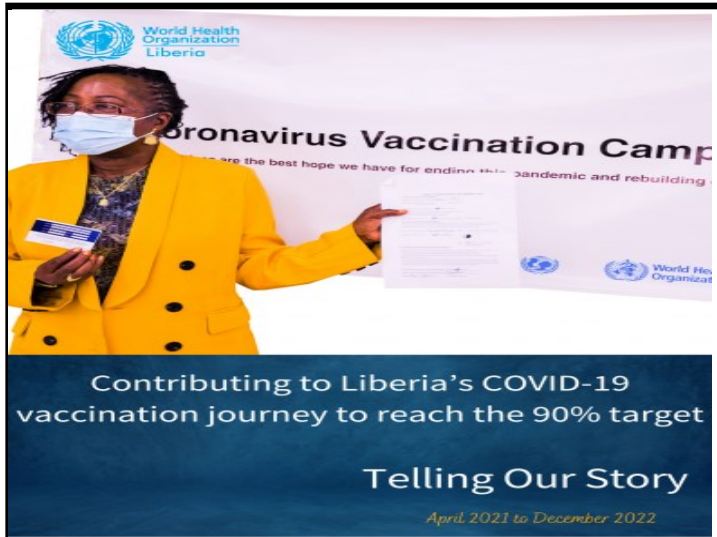
The validated Action Plan will now be forwarded to the Cabinet of the government through the Ministry of Internal Affairs which is the chairman of the board of the Liberia Refugees and Repatriation Commission.

Resident Coordinator, Christine N. Umutoni stated that, “Statelessness continues to be one of the major human right issues. Majority of the stateless people are born in the countries in which they have lived their entire lives. Over the past ten years there has been a steady increase in the numbers of stateless people.”

The UNHCR Representative said “In effect, the National Action Plan reflects the political will of the Government of the Liberia to end statelessness and contains a series of activities that aim at fighting the phenomenon of statelessness and shall be subject to regular updates by the country team.”

The Liberian Government through the various Ministries and with technical support from the LRRRC and UNHCR is putting this statelessness agenda at the top of the national agenda and hope that with your continued support we shall together eradicate statelessness in the short term.





**Community-based response boosts Liberia's COVID-19 detection, vaccination drive**

The community-based testing strategy to decentralize COVID-19 response allowed health workers to conduct door-to-door community sensitization to tackle COVID-19 misinformation, including myths about vaccination. The approach helped the country reach 81% vaccination coverage of the population by the end of 2022.

Isaac Cole, County Surveillance Officer in Nimba, in a recent workshop blamed rampant misinformation surrounding COVID-19 for the initial reluctance among Liberians to accept testing and vaccination. But working with local leaders who are trusted by their communities, he says, is changing attitudes.

“The people now know that once they are tested and found to be positive, they will be taken care of either at the health facility or through the home-based care approach. When we go to communities, health workers also lead by example by being vaccinated first, as one of the ways of dispelling myths about vaccination and its effect on the body,” he adds. This positive impact on vaccination uptake saw Liberia join Mauritius, Rwanda and Seychelles as the only four African countries to achieve the 70% global vaccination coverage target by December 2022.

With financial and technical support from World Health Organization (WHO), mobile health teams administered tens of thousands of rapid tests in Nimba, Margibi and Montserrado counties, which are home to nearly half of Liberia's total population.



**Provisional Results from National Population & Housing Census Announced**

Liberia announced the provisional results of its 2022 National Population and Housing Census. The population was enumerated between November 14 and December 18, 2022. This was preceded by the geographic planning process that included mapping the country into enumeration areas between April 2021 and February 2022.

Speaking on Wednesday, 22 February, at a ceremony in Monrovia, the Acting Director General at the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS), Mr. Lawrence George, said: “The de facto Population in Liberia on Census Night [November 10-11, 2022] was 5.2 million (5,248,621). The total population increased by 1,772,013 (50 percent) [when] compared to the 2008 census. Overall the male population makes up 50.4 percent (2,644,450) of the people, and the female population accounts for 49.6 (2,604,171), given a national sex ratio of 101.5 males for every 100 females.”

Speaking on behalf of the United Nations, the UN Resident Coordinator for Liberia, Madame Christine N. Umutoni, commended the Government and people of Liberia for conducting a successful national population and housing census.

UNFPA is the technical lead agency on data and Census. Speaking at the occasion the UNFPA representative said “We stand committed to working closely with the Government and all stakeholders to ensure that this data is analyzed and used to ensure robust policies and programmes that reach everyone, including those farthest behind. With the analysis of the Census data based on the various thematic areas, there will be updated demographic, social, and economic data to support Liberia's development activities and for tracking the implementation of development goals,” she added.

## Resident Coordinator Christine N. Umutoni's Engagements with National Stakeholders & Partners

### Inter-party dialogue in preparations for elections

On February 21, 2023, the UN Resident Coordinator and ECOWAS Representative facilitated an inter party dialogue. The political parties discussed their role and commitment in ensuring peaceful elections. The meeting participants were briefed on the draft Farmington declaration to be signed by political parties to reaffirm efforts towards peaceful elections.



### Courtesy visit with National Elections Commission

The preparations and conduct of presidential and legislative elections in 2023 will be a crucial test of the progress made in Liberia since the withdrawal of the United Nations Mission in Liberia in 2018. On 17 February, RC Christine N. Umutoni paid a courtesy visit to the National Elections Commission (NEC), in the context of continuous visits to national institutions and ministries in the country.



## NEC launches Civic Voter Education Activities



The UNDP is supporting the National Elections Commission (NEC) through the elections project. NEC launched Civic and Voter Education (CVE) Activities and CVE Cells on the 2023 Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) Process. “We thank NEC and partners for their continued work in preparations for elections in October 2023. Any democracy needs civic and voter education to ensure that its citizens are aware of and engaged in the political process,” says UN Women Liberia Country Rep, Ms. Comfort Lamptey, who spoke today at NEC on behalf of the UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Christine N. Umutoni.

At the event, more than 20 hearing and speech-impaired people joined the Friday, February 24 Civic & Voter Education Launch with a plea for inclusion in the 2023 electoral processes of Liberia.

They came under the canopy of a community-based organization, Total Dignity Institute, which according to them, had fought for their inclusion in mainstream society since the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) Outbreak in 2014.

UNDP is the lead agency with a project supporting the National Electoral Commission NEC. The UN Resident Coordinator’s Office with support of the peace and development advisor and with facilitation from ECOWAS supports the political party dialogue and other diplomatic efforts .

## Briefing by the joint security to the weekly Ambassadorial- and partner’s level Meeting



The Joint Security, led by the Minister of Justice, briefed partners on the role they play during elections. The meeting was co-chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) in the context of usual partner’s meetings and exchange of information. Ensuring security is one of the key aspects of peaceful elections. The joint security continues to work on preparedness and building the different capacities of the various arms of security to be able to handle all security needs. The team will need support from partners in areas of training and logistics.



UN in Liberia staff held a "Meet & Greet" with the new Resident Coordinator (RC) Christine Umutoni , the first female RC of the UN in Liberia, on February 24th at the One UN House in Monrovia. See Pictorial below.





UN Liberia

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**Photo Credit:**

UN in Liberia

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