



**UNITED NATIONS
LIBERIA**



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The African Regional Forum on Sustainable development in Niamey, Niger

The forum, organized by the African Union, on February 28-, highlighted SDG 6- Clean Water and Sanitation- leading to a major water conference in late March. Also highlighted were SDGs 7, 9, 11 and 17. All of these will feed into a high-level political forum in July 2023 and the SDG Summit in September 2023.

During the Forum, Resident Coordinator also met with the Deputy Secretary General, Amina J. Mohammed and Regional Directors of UN agencies as well to discuss the UN reform and how best we can work as ONE UN to accelerate the SDGs.



The Doha LDCs 5 Conference

At the margins of LDC5, UN RC Christine Umutoni met with Deputy Secretary General, Amina Mohammed to discuss UN partnership with the government and people of Liberia. She also met with the Liberia government delegation to discuss their mission and ideas on how the country can progress beyond a least developed nation.

“The meeting on the Least Developed Countries and what can be done to graduate- to move from potential to prosperity really speaks to the people of the land, to the government, civil society, private sector, the UN and other bilateral and multilateral agencies on the ground,” Resident Coordinator Umutoni said.

Continuing, she said: “And I think the commitment here is that every government wants to incorporate this in its own development plan. So, for example, Liberia will have its five, ten or fifteen-year development plan. Within that plan, it can be aligned with the Doha Programme of Action. And in that way, it is aligned with the SDGS, and the Agenda 2063.”



“Since Liberia is going to be revising its own development plan at the end of the existing one, I think that’s an opportune moment for the government, the civil society, the private sector to sit together and then during this planning process, agreed on what are the things that they are going to prioritize which will help the implementation of this action plan.

First UNCT Meeting

Resident Coordinator Christine Umutoni chaired her first UNCT meeting on March 15th at the Kofi Annan Conference room, ONE UN offices. She noted that she was proud to work along with all the Heads of agencies as they all work united in action for the SDGs.



UN Resident Coordinator addresses National Bar Association at their General Assembly

United Nations Resident Coordinator, Ms. Christine N. Umutoni has urged the Liberian National Bar Association (LNBA), National Election Commission (NEC), and Judiciary Branch of government to execute free, fair, and transparent elections here saying, they have “no choice but to do it right.”

Delivering the keynote address at the LNBA annual General Assembly held in Monrovia at the EJS Ministerial Complex in Congo Town on March 31st, under the theme: “Beyond Rhetoric and Impunity: Law, Governance and 2023 Elections-The Basis for Democratic Necessity in Liberia” Ms. Umutoni, observed that the coming elections can either advance or push the country backward democratically. She explained that if the country gets the process right it will prove Liberia’s democratic maturity to the outside world.

“In my opinion, the country has no choice, but to do it right. To achieve this, Election must be transparent, inclusive, and accountable and there must exist equitable opportunity to compete,” she added.

Ms. Umutoni also cautioned lawyers to engage in non-partisan activities and commit to maintaining electoral integrity. This said mentioned that lawyers must ensure that electoral disputes are resolved in accordance with the rule of law and in a peaceful manner.



IWD - Liberian Women and Partners Celebrate International Women's Day

Women from all walks of life thronged the Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Ministerial Complex in Congo Town to celebrate International Women's Day on Friday, March 3rd. The celebrations were marked by a parade from SKD Boulevard junction to the Ministerial Complex and a health screening session.

As part of the official proceedings, the Vice President of Liberia, Chief Dr. Jewel Howard Taylor, moderated a panel discussion on 'Innovating with technology to promote gender equality' in line with the national theme. The panelists highlighted the importance of using new technologies for marketing purposes and business transactions; voter registration; working with technologies and promoting women's political participation. The role of the media was also emphasized.

UN Women Country Representative, Comfort Lamptey, delivered the UN Secretary General's message for International Women's Day and highlighted the need to close the digital divide and increase the representation of women and girls in science and technology. "Today, women make up under a third of the workforce in science, technology, engineering, and math. And when women are under-represented in developing new technologies, discrimination may be baked in from the start. That is why we must close the digital divide and increase the representation of women and girls in science and technology," she said.

In his remarks, President George Weah reiterated his government's commitment to empowering Liberian women through technology. "My government will continue to work closely with all partners and stakeholders to ensure that women are empowered by innovating with technology to promote gender



GoL, UNFPA, and Embassy of Sweden Visit SRHRs Programme Interventions in Southeastern Liberia

Swedish Ambassador accredited to Liberia, Mr. Urban Sjöström, the Assistant Minister for Curative Services at the Ministry of Health, Dr. Gorbee Logan and UNFPA Liberia Country Representative, Ms. Bidisha Pillai, visited Southeastern Liberia between February 27 and March 4 to assess how the "Universal Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Programme" implemented in the region including in Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, Maryland, River Gee, and Sinoe counties are delivering results.

According to the health officers of the five counties, there has been at least a 50 percent reduction in teenage pregnancy across their respective counties since the start of the intervention in 2017.

The Programme, funded by the Embassy of Sweden, is UNFPA's support to the Ministry of Health (MOH), providing adolescents and young people access to youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services to prevent unplanned pregnancies.

The Programme uses a three-pronged approach, including schools, communities, and health facilities, to reach adolescents and young people with sexual reproductive and rights information and services, including contraception.



Early Warning Response & Voters Registration launched for 2023 Elections

The Liberia Peace-building Office through the Ministry of Internal Affairs with support from its partners Embassy of Sweden, Irish Aid, European Union, UN Peace Building Fund, UNDP Liberia, UN Women, and others has launched the Early Warning Response (EWER) system designed to collect, manage, and report incidents related to electoral violence across Liberia. The system will help track early signs of possible violence and conflict, assess risks, and respond in a coordinated way to prevent and or de-escalate them and channel the electoral dispute resolution into constructive procedures.

Speaking at the official launch 10 March 2023, the Chairperson of the National Elections Commission (NEC) called on stakeholders including political parties, civil society, international partners, and the citizenry to play their respective roles in a way that will lend credibility to the elections process and ensure a positive and peaceful outcome acceptable to all.

Making remarks, UNDP Liberia Resident Representative stressed that it was paramount to strengthen and expand the EWER system as a multi-stakeholder initiative to prevent and mitigate different threats including gender-based violence and other human rights violations that may occur across Liberia.

The Ambassador of Sweden Urban Sjostrom is hopeful that the Early Warning and Early Response mechanism can make a difference in sustaining peace, democracy, and development in Liberia. Ambassador Sjostrom stressed the need to strengthen systems that prevent and address hate speech and violence against women.

For her part, the Ambassador of ECOWAS in Liberia Josephine Nkrumah reiterated the call for all hands-on deck in the conduct of peaceful elections and sustenance of the peace which she says is also linked to peace in the sub-region, while the Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission of Liberia Counsellor Dempster Brown reminded the NEC of its responsibility to enforce the elections laws.

The Internal Affairs Minister also urged media and politicians to be mindful of what they put out there in the public that could potentially undermine peace and stability.

iVerify is a fact-checking initiative using AI and machine learning to combat the spread of false narratives during election periods was also launched by UNDP on March 14th.

Additionally, UNDP Rep was in the field, along with partners, witnessing civic & voter education agents informing and encouraging eligible voters in their communities to register using Liberia's 1st Biometric Voter Registration system. He also met with National Elections Commission officials regarding preparations for biometric voter registration, & with CBOs working on voter education ahead of the launch.



Liberia officially closes the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) survivors- Men's Health Screening Program

The Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak in Liberia from March 2014 to June 2016 devastated the livelihoods of the population and the country's economy. The third wave of EVD outbreak in 2016 was attributed to sexual transmission, leading to the establishment of the Men's Health Screening Program (MHSP) in July 2015. The program aimed to provide male EVD survivors with semen testing for EBOV RNA by rRT-PCR and behavioral counseling on safe sex practices.

At the closing of the Screening Program, Mr. Joel Maybury, the U.S. Embassy's Deputy Chief of Mission, congratulated Liberia and its partners for sustaining the MHSP and pledged the US Government's continuous partnership to ensure a healthier Liberia through the delivery of adequate healthcare. WHO Country Representative, described the EVD outbreak in Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone as a disease of the marginalized. *"Today is another demonstration that Liberia has won the fight against EVD and written history with the successful screening and follow-up of all the enrolled male EVD survivors in the country,"* Dr. Clement said.

The Honorable Minister of Health, Dr. Wilhelmina Jallah, thanked the survivor's network for their cooperation and said the findings from the program will benefit Liberia and the world. *"Let us make EVD a past today but also remember its devastation and prepare for the future ahead,"* she said.

With funding from the US-CDC, WHO provided technical, logistical, and operational support to the Ministry of Health's MHSP that led to successful counseling and follow-up of all the enrolled 857 participants (100%) recruited in 3 counties (Montserrado, Bong and Lofa) on the risk of Ebola Virus transmission and ensuring each of them was tested and received two (02) negative PCR results with no transmission during the 6 year follow up period.



UNOPS Handover Ceremony to Government

On 17 March, the UNOPS Liberia Office held the closing ceremony for the Japanese-funded project “Building Resilience to Flooding and Coastal Erosion in Liberia”, a project aimed at strengthening the capacity of the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) of Liberia.

Activities began with a tour of the NDMA offices to showcase the procured items. This was followed by a march from the NDMA to the City Hall, where the official ceremony took place. The vehicles procured by the project, namely eleven Toyota vehicles, fifteen YAMAHA motorbikes and one ambulance, participated in the march.

Various authorities attended the ceremony, including the Executive Director of the NDMA, Minister of Interior (who is also the board chair of NDMA), Liaison Officer of Embassy of Japan, UN Residence Coordinator for Liberia and the Director of UNOPS Ghana Multi-Country Office, all of which took the stage to express their appreciation for the project’s achievements and their gratitude to the Government of Japan. The ceremony was successfully closed with the ribbon cutting.



County Peace Committees, EWER Committees youth groups and religious and traditional leaders youth train on human rights-based approach (HRBA) and Early Warning and Early Response

The United Nations Office of the High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR), along with the Liberia Peacebuilding Office (LPBO) and Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) conducted a two-day regional training from March 13-17.

Community peace structures, early warning and early response committees, women and youth groups and religious and traditional leaders from Buchanan, Grand Bassa and Gbarnga, Bong counties participated. This training aimed to improve skills and knowledge about elections monitoring, and violence prevention, utilizing a human rights-based approach. The participants agreed to reinforce existing peace structures, hold regular coordination meetings to assess potential risks, adopt HRBA principles when resolving issues at the community level, and report any issues they find. This event is part of a Peacebuilding project meant to “enhance the peaceful electoral environment and community security” before, during and post the 2023 general/presidential elections in Liberia.



Liberia Hosts 3rd Community Health Workers Symposium

The Government of Liberia, through the Ministry of Health, hosted of the 3rd International Community Health Workers (CHW) Symposium at the Ministerial Complex in Monrovia.

The week-long symposium was from March 20-24, 2023. Over 700 participants from 46 countries attend the symposium, including the Community Health Workers who have voiced the need to recommit to previous global and national goals. Community Health Workers highlighted their plights and challenges, notably how they continue working with resilience despite sometimes not being provided with essential equipment, training or even pay. They also hoped that as an outcome of the symposium, policymakers and leaders will urgently implement changes to improve their conditions.

Speaking at the occasion, UNICEF Representative to Liberia pledged for stronger collaboration with partners and continued support for more robust community health programmes.

WHO Liberia Country Rep. also moderated a session on the need professionalize CHWs - advocate for policies that will take into account salaries, skills, supervision, & provision of supplies for CHWs.

On her part, UN Resident Coordinator, Christine Umutoni noted that impact of the symposium will depend on the implementation of the call to action agreed upon by all stakeholders. She also mentioned that development partners & the UN remain committed to supporting the process.



Students, youth sign peace commitment following Peace Symposium at University of Liberia

The University of Liberia Student Leaders, political parties' youth league representatives, and eight national youth groups have signed a commitment to maintain a peaceful environment and support a violence-free election process in Liberia, regardless of their political differences.

Liberian government officials, the University of Liberia Administration, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the United Nations, the European Union, the South African Ambassador, Liberia's Military, and the Police, witnessed the signing ceremony.

Key takeaways from the symposium were understanding election and the role of youth in a violence-free election, rights-based consciousness, and upholding the rule of law in Liberia. They also included identifying looming threats, with one example being politicians and their supporters' quest to 'win by all cost' in an election process, among others.

United Nations Resident Coordinator in Liberia, Christine Umutoni indicated that peacebuilding among young people is so critical. She urged that the flagship commitment that the young people made should serve as the basis for sustaining the peace.

ECOWAS Ambassador to Liberia Madam Josephine Nkrumah said the symposium provided an opportunity to rethink the role of the youth in nation-building for national transformation, peace, and development.

EU Ambassador to Liberia Mr. Laurent Delahousse stated he did not think that Liberians wanted a repeat of what happened to their country years ago, especially for those who saw the civil conflict.

South African Ambassador to Liberia Prof. Iqbal Jhazbhay, recognized the ultimate sacrifices that many have made in keeping the democratic light on in Liberia. He also congratulated Liberians for upholding the Accra Peace agreement.



Meeting with Political Parties on National Census Results

UN Resident Coordinator, Christine Umutoni co-chaired a meeting of political parties along with ECO-WAS Ambassador, Josephine Nkrumah, to discuss the provisional results of the National housing and population Census .



Government Reviews National Agenda Pro-Poor Agenda for Development & Prosperity

The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning organized PAPD leadership Meeting on March 16, 2023 at the EJS Ministerial Complex. The Theme of the Meeting was “Ending Strong” as the PAPD is in its terminal year.

The goal was to reinforce the current governance structure and include Development Partners into the Pillars pairing with their government counterparts. Also, to brainstorm on the assessment of PAPD implementation.

Madam Christian Umutoni, Resident Coordinator of the UN Development system represented the UN system at the leadership meeting. Madam Umutoni reiterated the UN system support to the government and people of Liberia in achieving the SDGs which is exemplified by the presence of two UN agencies co-chairing two pillars (UNICEF-Pillar One and UNDP-Pillar Four).



RC Field Visit to Voter Registration Centers

Resident Coordinator Christine Umutoni ,UNDPPA & UNDP visited voter registration points in several areas in Monrovia. RC and team interacted with voters and registration officers at these voters registration sites.



Increasing access to employment and livelihood opportunities

Another fifty-two vulnerable Liberians have been trained on business management skills and given start-up capital by the International Labor Organization through the United Nations Human Security Trust Fund Project in Saclepia, Nimba County.

The project is being implemented within the framework of the Human Security Trust Fund Project titled: “Building Resilience of Youth, Women, and Vulnerable Groups through Social Protection Floor in Liberia using ICT.” The project aims to address the complex multi-sectorial and inter-connected challenges of human insecurities particularly food, social, and economic issues for the most vulnerable and neglected populations of the North-Central region of Liberia at the community level.



Raising awareness on forests and health - International Day of Forests

Sustainable forest management provides a path to recovery, good health and a greener future in the country, which hosts approximately 43% of the remaining Upper Guinea forests and whose approximately 79% landmass is covered by forests and is recognized as one of the biodiversity hotspots in the world.

Under this year’s theme “Forest and Health,” a celebration of the International Day of Forests took place in Buchanan city in Liberia on 21 March 2023. The event, organized by the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) of Liberia in collaboration with partner agencies and institutions, brought together the representatives from FDA, local government, development partners, civil society and local students.

“Forests give us food and nutrition. They also give us medicines that support our health. Forests also allow us to release our stress. It is important to recognize the support we receive from forests and at the same time to support them,” said Emmanuel Comehn, Project Management Specialist at FAO Liberia, speaking on behalf of Ms. Mariatou Njie, FAO Representative in Liberia.

“In Liberia, apart from the traditional drivers of deforestation, such as shifting cultivation, unsustainable logging, charcoal production and plantation establishment, governance of the forest sector is a challenge,” said Mr. Moses A. Massah, Energy & Environment Programme Specialist, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Liberia in his keynote speech. “National and international efforts are needed to restore the integrity of Liberia’s forests so that they will provide all the ecosystem services required. Everyone has a role to play.”



Courtesy Visit Resident Coordinator and the Federation of Liberian Youth.

Earlier this month the Resident Coordinator met with the leadership of the Federation of Liberian Youth (FLY) at their temporary office in Congo Town. As the umbrella organization representing the young people of Liberia and having recently elected the first female president, Banica Elliot, this was a leading opportunity for the Resident Coordinator to interact with some of the most dedicated young people in the country. The Resident Coordinator discussed how the work of FLY reminds her of where she began her career, with activism in Rwanda. FLY discussed their aims for 2023 ahead including their plans to establish an Inter Party Youth Council before of the elections this year, while also advocating for a pledge for peace signing by all youth representatives from the political parties in Liberia. Following the discussions, the Resident Coordinator said she would call for increased engagement between the UN Country Team and the leading youth organisations in Liberia, including the Federation of Liberian Youth.



Meet & Greet with the Resident Coordinator & Liberian Youth

On the 23rd of March, the Resident Coordinator met with a variety of inspiring Liberian youth. Seizing the opportunity to celebrate the legacy of the UN Mission in Liberia, while also discussing the work of the UN Country Team in Liberia, the Resident Coordinator highlighted the dedicated work of the UN Agencies towards the development of youth in Liberia. Present at the event were youth representing organisations in education, climate change, TVET students, refugees, members of the LGBTQ+ community, civil society representation, gender equality, to name but a few.

Bidisha Pillai, as chair of the of the Inter-Agency Youth Taskforce, additionally emphasized the work of the UN group that focuses on One UN Youth activities. Included were highlighting the events of International Youth Day 2022, the peer-to-peer exchange with the United Nations in Kenya and the lessons learned on youth, and finally the At-Risk Youth Empowerment Program.

The youth were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the Resident Coordinator and the Chair of the Inter-Agency Youth Taskforce. The discussion that followed was lively and fruitful with youth raising concerns regarding having the voices involved in the development of programs and projects that directly affect young people. Ahead of the elections this year, the young people also advocated for increased civic education with additional calls for support from the UN Country Team for peace and safety amongst youth before, during and after campaign season.



In closing the Month of Women, The UN Resident Coordinator led women heads of agencies and women staff of One UN in Liberia, in a get-together event on March 31st . Inspiring experience sharing session from senior management. See Pictorial below.





UN Liberia

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Photo Credit:

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