



UNITED
NATIONS
LIBERIA



NEWSLETTER

United Nations Liberia



UNHCR Donates to Liberia Red Cross

Photo credit: UNHCR Liberia

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has donated a variety of essential materials to the Liberia National Red Cross Society, further enhancing its capacity to respond to humanitarian crises.

Items donated include thermal blankets, sleeping mats, heavy-duty plastic buckets, laundry soap, plastic tarpaulins, hand gloves, mosquito nets, solar lamps, and dry-erase boards, crucial in meeting the needs of vulnerable communities and addressing disaster situations across the country.

Making the presentation recently in Monrovia, UNHCR Country Representative Antony Akumu Abogi, praised the Liberia National Red Cross Society for being the country's emergency face, adding that the donation is aimed at supporting the Red Cross, which has an extensive reach in areas affected by disasters.

He noted numerous emergencies occurring across the country, mentioning the Totota tragedy has claimed many lives and resulted to injuries and property damage.

The UNHCR Country Rep lauded the warm reception of refugees by the people of Liberia, especially host communities. Mr. Akumu Abogi noted that some of the items donated could be used to aid the victims' families.

However, he said the collaborative efforts between the UNHCR and the Liberian Red Cross are essential in addressing humanitarian needs of Liberians.

In receiving the donation, LNRCs Secretary General, Gregory T. Blamoh, expressed gratitude to the UNHCR for the generous gesture.

Mr. Blamoh acknowledged the long-standing collaboration between the Liberian Red Cross and the UNHCR, describing the donation as a timely and perfect intervention.

He revealed that at the moment, the Red Cross is actively intervening in the Totota tragedy, providing support to affected families and hospitals, adding that surgical gowns have been donated to hospitals treating victims, showcasing the ongoing commitment of both organizations to alleviate the suffering of those affected by emergencies.

The UNCHR boss emphasized the critical need for additional support to respond to the increasing complexity of humanitarian needs of communities affected by disaster.

WFP Takes Over Ministry of Health Drug Delivery Services

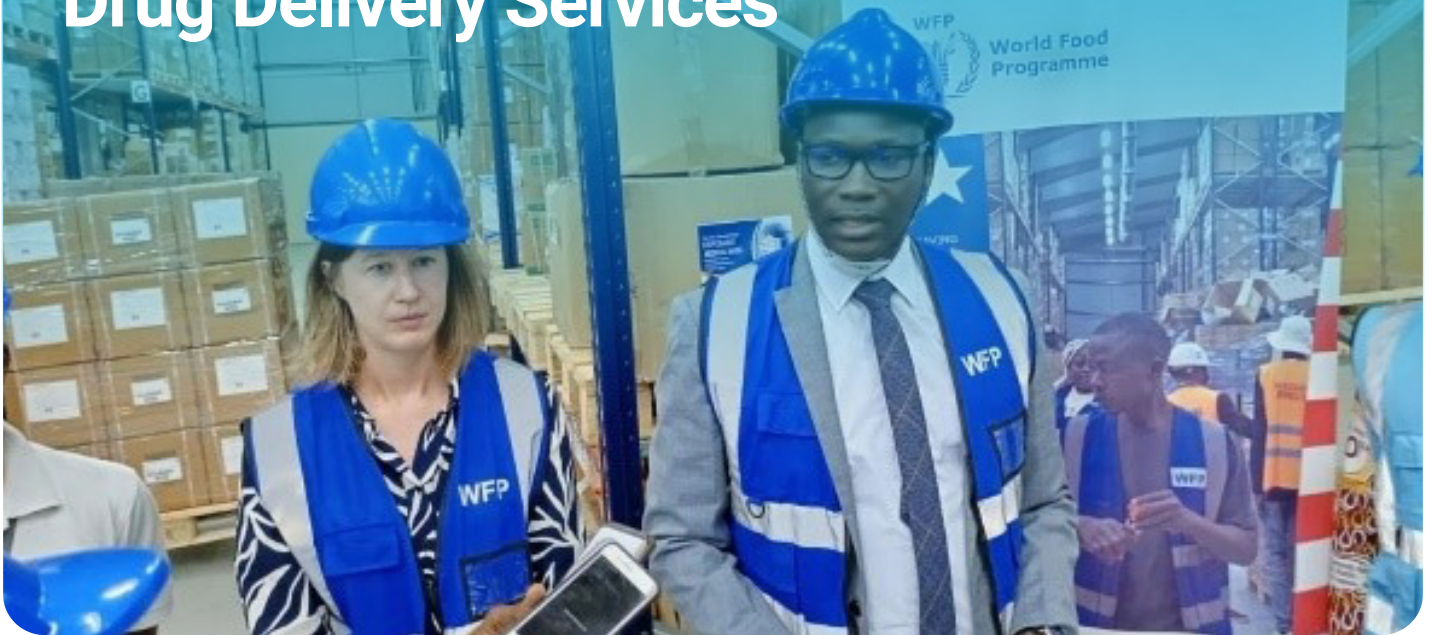


Photo Credit : WHO Liberia

The World Food Program (WFP), in partnership with the Ministry of Health and its development partners, has assumed control of drug delivery across the country and the management of its Central Medical Stores (CMS).

The partnership, which was signed early in July of this year, is supported by USAID and the Global Fund to strengthen the country's healthcare supply chain services across the country through efficiency and reliability.

WFP Country Director to Liberia, Dr. Aliou Diongue, who spoke to reporters on Tuesday at the CMS head office in Samukai Town, Caldwell, explained that the collaboration with the Ministry of Health aims to overcome past challenges in drug delivery to health centers across the country, including delays and drug expiration.

"Through our demonstration and expertise in large-scale supply chain management, the Government of Liberia and its development partners negotiated with us for an expanded partnership whereby WFP takes on additional responsibilities, including managing the government's central medical stores in Liberia," he said.

Diongue highlighted the significance of partnership, indicating, "This strategic alliance stands as a testament to our commitment to supporting not just one but ten essential health programs. It marks a pivotal moment in healthcare logistics, addressing past challenges and ensuring a more effective delivery system to meet diverse healthcare needs."

According to him, the collaboration between the WFP and government through the Ministry of Health has brought significant changes to the healthcare system in Liberia.

Diongue narrated that through its health supply chain the strategic approach will ensure a consistent and timely flow of resources to meet the healthcare needs of communities throughout Liberia.

WFP Liberia's Country Director said the partnership further demonstrates the power of collaborative efforts to address critical healthcare challenges in the country and around the world.

He noted that the collaboration's objectives also include the improvement of warehouse management, commodity security, and the availability of health commodities throughout Liberia.

Diongue said the essential health programs supported by WFP cover a wide array of crucial initiatives, including the essential drugs program, national AIDS control program, reproductive health program, national malaria control program, national leprosy, and tuberculosis control program, neglected tropical diseases, non-communicable diseases, eye health program, mental health program, and the medical supplies program.

According to him, the initiative has already made significant strides, backed by an impressive inventory of 907 units of medicine valued at twenty-one million and a staggering 561 shipments, totalling 159 metric tons of health supplies. This collaborative effort stands as a testament to the impactful alliance between WFP and its dedicated donors.

He said addressing long-standing issues such as delays and drug expiration, the partnership not only resolves historical challenges but also fosters an environment encouraging more donor involvement. He further noted that USAID and Global Funds, among others, play a crucial role in ensuring a substantial inventory to meet the nation's healthcare demands.

Currently operational in 13 out of 15 counties, WFP's extensive coverage demonstrates its unwavering commitment to extending its reach across the entire nation, Diongue concluded.



WHO supports Liberia's 2nd Joint External Evaluation

Photo Credit : WHO Liberia

Monrovia, September 2023 ,10

The Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, and the Environmental Protection Agency in Liberia, with valuable support from esteemed partners including the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank, FAO, UNICEF, USAID, US CDC among others, successfully concluded a five-day workshop from September 4th to September 8th, 2023. This workshop marked the second round of the Joint External Evaluation (JEE) of Liberia's International Health Regulations (IHR) core capacities, utilizing the cutting-edge JEE 3.0 tool.

Liberia's commitment to health security led the nation to voluntarily undertake the second JEE embracing the revised JEE 3.0 tool thus becoming 9th country in the WHO Africa region, following Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Nigeria, and Zanzibar, to conduct a second round JEE. This updated tool incorporates the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The workshop brought together over 200 participants, representing diverse sectors, including the Ministries of Health, Agriculture, Commerce and Industry, Foreign Affairs, Internal Affairs, Ministry of Justice (Liberian National Police, Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, Fire Services), National Defence, National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL), Environmental Protection Agency, Liberia Airport Authority/Civil Aviation Authority, National Red Cross Society, and esteemed partners such as WHO, USAID, World Bank, US-CDC, FAO, UNICEF, IRC/PACS, IOM, AFANET, GIZ, IRC, Jhpiego/STAIP, and Riders for Health.

Dr. O-Tipo Shikanga, leading a team of 15 technical experts in external evaluation from the World Health Organization Zambia, stressed the pivotal role of the JEE outcomes. These outcomes will assist Liberia in identifying critical gaps in its human and animal health systems, facilitating the prioritization of opportunities for improved preparedness and rapid responses to public health risks.

"As a country, we have established a robust one-health platform capable of a multisectoral response to public health events. Our next steps will be guided by the recommendations from the 2023 JEE report," remarked Dr. Shikanga, Team lead of the 2023 Joint External Evaluation team.

He further urged the country to develop a five-year risk-based National Action Plan for Health Security (NAPHS), undertake resource mapping, and establish a robust monitoring and evaluation framework for NAPHS. These initiatives will comprehensively address the health security gaps identified by the second JEE, leveraging lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic and prior public health events in the country.

Representing the World Bank, Mr. Collins Chansa, the Senior Health Economist and Team lead for Health at World Bank Liberia country office, emphasized the critical timing of this exercise, coinciding with a review of the bank's support to Liberia. The results of the JEE will significantly influence the design of upcoming projects aimed at strengthening health security.

During the closing ceremony, the Honourable Minister of Health, Dr. Wilhemina Jallah, expressed her gratitude to the Evaluation experts and support from partners such as the World Bank and WHO throughout the JEE exercise. She further expressed satisfaction with the overall process, whose findings serve as a mirror of reality.

"The JEE has provided valuable insights into strengths and weaknesses of our systems. It is our collective responsibility to act on these findings by implementing the necessary reforms to strengthen our capacities, protect, and promote public health," narrated Dr. Jallah.



WHO supports Liberia's 2nd Joint External Evaluation

Photo Credit : WHO Liberia

Dr. Jallah also encouraged transformative change, innovation, and collaboration for a healthier and safer future for Liberia.

"It's our collective responsibility to seize this opportunity to foster transformative change, embrace innovation, and collaboration, for a healthier and safer Liberia", said Dr. Jallah.

Liberia remains steadfast in building a resilient healthcare system capable of withstanding and responding to health threats while safeguarding the well-being of its citizens and neighbouring regions.

The WHO Representative expressed optimism and that the recommendations provided together with lessons learnt response to COVID-19 and from implementing the first National Action Plan for Health Security (NAPHS) will serve as a roadmap for future improvements, guiding the next five-year NAPHS in building a comprehensive resource mobilization plan to address identified gaps, as revealed through the exercise.

"Public health systems vary from one country to another. We need resources to act swiftly when public health emergencies arise—we should not wait; we need to strengthen our preparedness capacities. With commitment and dedication, most of the immediate, midterm and long term recommendations can be achieved promptly," stated Dr. Peter.

Dr. Peter emphasized the importance of a One Health approach and ensuring the one health steering committee become functional.

"The feedback from the evaluation team is very honest and clear on the One Health approach. We need to make the One Health steering committee functional holding quarterly or semester meetings to evaluate progress made, and bring all partners, the private and faith based institutions around the table will be critical, to be on the same

page", said Dr. Peter. "I also see opportunities from the WHO flagship programs, and the pandemic fund which Liberia should benefit from."

In conclusion, he also thanked the government for undertaking this exercise as it is an opportunity to redirect the national health security agenda in the right direction, and partners, remain committed to providing the necessary support.

This evaluation measures Liberia's progress made in addressing the first JEE recommendations, investments in health security following the Ebola outbreak and during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as identifying new areas for improvement. This proactive stance is essential in preventing, detecting, and rapidly responding to public health threats in the face of global challenges such as climate change, conflicts, displacements, natural and man-made disasters. Liberia's commitment to enhancing IHR core capacities aligns with the goal of improving health and well-being for all, a pivotal pillar for sustainable development and achieving SDG 3 by 2030.

Liberia, a signatory of the IHR (2005), remains dedicated to its commitments under the IHR Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, including mandatory States Parties Annual Reporting (SPAR) and the voluntary Intra and After Action Reviews (IAR/AAR), Simulation exercises, and Joint External Evaluations (JEE). These mechanisms assess the country's specific status and progress in developing the required IHR capacities to prevent, detect, and rapidly respond to public health threats.



Liberia celebrates 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Photo Credit : RCO

On Friday, 8 December 2023, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Liberia in collaboration with Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) and Human Rights based Civil Society Organizations commemorated the International Human Rights Day with an outdoor parade and an indoor celebration took place at University of Liberia Auditorium. At this event, a symphony of voices resonated to mark the International Human Rights Day, a celebration echoing the grandeur of the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The theme, reverberating across the event, was a powerful mantra: "Freedom, Equality, and Justice for All."

The event featured key Human Rights Day statements from the UN Secretary General, Representative of the UN Human Rights Office Liberia, and the President of Liberia amongst others. In attendance were heads of UN Agencies and staff, Board of Commissioners, and staff of the INCHR, members of the diplomatic corps, representatives of the Government, CSOs, academia, students, youth groups and members of the public.

The vibrant parade commenced from the corners of YMCA, Crown Hill, and Broad Street, weaving a tapestry of unity as participants, clad in colors of purpose, gathered for the festivities.

The keynote speaker, Her Honor Justice Jamesetta Wolokolie, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, represented by Atty. Allie Nyei, law clerk of the Supreme court, in a keynote statement gave a profound exploration of the event's theme. Justice Wolokolie's words resonated, weaving a narrative that underscored the essence of "Freedom, Equality, and Justice for All."

Cllr. T. Dempster Brown, Chairperson of the INCHR, set the tone for the event, emphasizing the Commission's dedication to safeguarding human rights since its establishment in 2005. Aligned with the global theme of "Freedom, Equality, and Justice," he underscored the INCHR's focus on national justice issues in Liberia, addressing challenges like impunity and economic mismanagement.

In his statement for Human Rights Day, Mr. Christian Mukosa, the Representative of the UN Human Rights Office Liberia, underscored the profound significance of the day, commemorating the 75th anniversary

of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). He praised the collaborative efforts between the Liberian government and the UN family, particularly the Minister of Justice, in organizing activities and the National Dialogue on Human Rights. The Representative highlighted Liberia's pledges, such as abolishing the death penalty and ratifying international human rights instruments, anticipating their presentation at a high-level event in Geneva from 12-11 December.

In the UN Secretary General's statement delivered by UN Resident Coordinator Christine N. Umutoni at the event, the focus was on the urgent global human rights challenges. The UN Secretary General urged member states to have renewed their commitment to the timeless values of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), especially in the face of escalating conflicts, rising authoritarianism, and threats to civic space and media freedom. The statement emphasized the importance of upholding all human rights, covering social, cultural, economic, civil, and political rights. As the international community works towards enhancing global frameworks, human rights hold a central role, ensuring common values that foster security and stability. The Secretary General called for strengthened commitment on the UDHR's 75th anniversary and encouraged global citizens to promote and respect human rights daily, everywhere.

The atmosphere was kept alive with traditional music, a harmonious interlude celebrating Liberia's rich cultural diversity in addition to acrobatic and dance displays carried out by the cultural troupe. Amidst the melodies, the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the UDHR continued as more distinguished guests including Cllr. Frank Musa Dean-Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Liberia represented by Ms. Oneta Roberts, a Director in the Ministry of Justice, H.E Catherine Rodriguez - Charge d' Affairs U.S Embassy represented by Juan D. Martinez, Esq. Political and Human Rights Officer, Adama Dempster, SG-CSO HR Advocacy Platform, H. E. Josephine Nkrumah- ECOWAS resident representative in Liberia represented by Mrs. Irene Wallace, Secretary, and other representatives of the diplomatic corps read their statements.



Promoting Transdisciplinary Approach on World One Health Day in Liberia | FAO in Liberia | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Photo Credit : FAO

2023/11/06

Monrovia – The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) played a key role in Liberia's commemoration of World One Health Day 2023, highlighting the paramount significance of a trans-disciplinary approach in addressing global health challenges.

The observance of World One Health Day 2023 in Liberia on 3 November emphasized the crucial importance of a collaborative and trans-disciplinary approach to address critical global health challenges.

World One Health Day 2023 in Liberia

The commemoration event, organized by the One Health Coordination Platform and its partners in a hybrid format, brought together government ministries and agencies, development partners, academia, and other stakeholders working across sectors at the nexus of human, animal, and environmental health. Representatives from the government included the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture, the National Fisheries & Aquaculture Authority (NaFAA), the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

One Health is an integrated, unifying approach that aims to sustainably balance and optimize the health of people, animals, and ecosystems. It recognizes the intricate interconnections between human health, domestic and wild animals, plants, and the wider environment.. This year's theme for World One Health Day, "Connecting Air, Land, and Water," underscores the need for cross-sectoral collaboration to address the very nature of health challenges that transcend local, regional, and international boundaries.

"No one person, organization, or sector can address issues at the animal-human-environment interface alone. One Health collaboration allows us to have the biggest impact on improving health for people, animals, plants, and our environment," said Ibrahim Gashash Ahmed, Country Team Leader of FAO Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD) in Liberia, speaking on behalf of Bintia Stephen Tchicaya, FAO Representative ad interim in Liberia.

One Health Approach to Liberia's Health Challenges

The 2023 Joint External Evaluation (JEE) conducted in Liberia provided a comprehensive assessment of the country's health situation. It identified strengths, gaps, opportunities, and recommendations to improve the International Health Regulations (IHR) core capacities across 19 technical pillars. Liberia's readiness score, using JEE v3.0, was 43.9 percent, indicating the need to establish mechanisms for exchanging

relevant information across One Health sectors and to implement multisectoral approaches for improvement.

With technical support from FAO's Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD), the One Health Coordinating Platform spearheads efforts to promote the One Health concept in Liberia, aligning with the global One Health agenda and moving beyond current provincial approaches. The focus encompasses addressing emerging infectious diseases, antimicrobial resistance, climate change, environmental pollution, among others.

Serge Nzietchueng, FAO One Health Specialist, presenting key outcomes of the One Health Profiling for Liberia, emphasized the role of the innovative One Health Monitoring Tool (OHMT), developed with support of the US Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA). This tool helped to identify gaps and facilitates informed solutions using a One Health approach, making the comprehensive One Health Country Profile available to all stakeholders. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Liberia on the other hand shared data and information on the status of selected water bodies in Liberia bringing to the fore the interconnectivity between public health and the environment.

During the celebration, the One Health platform Liberia launched its official website (<https://onehealthliberia.org>). The website hosts a range of One Health-related information, including the initiatives, success stories, news updates, research results. This will allow all the stakeholders to stay informed on key health issues, and promotes transparency, accountability, and collaboration across sectors, ensuring One Healthy approach being effectively implemented.

The shared knowledge and perspectives exchanged during the World One Health Day 2023 celebration in Liberia provide a solid foundation for ongoing collaboration at the intersections of human, animal, and environmental health issues in the country. The event also serves as a strong catalyst for furthering the One Health initiative through the trans-disciplinary network. Moving forward, it is essential for FAO to continue emphasizing the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health in our joint efforts to build a healthier and more resilient world for all.



Certificates for WRHD organizations



WHRD Panelists

UN Liberia Commemorates 16 days of Activism with Women Human Rights Defenders

Photo: ILO

As part of the UN Liberia commemoration of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender based Violence, the UN Liberia held a panel discussion on the importance of investing in women's organisations to prevent violence against women and children.

'Women understand the issues, they are the first responders; they are in the trenches; connected to the issues and see challenges women and marginalized groups face,' concurred panelists comprising of the Deputy Minister of Gender, Children and Social protection, Hon. Alice Johnson Howard, Ms. Caroline Bowah, feminist and former Executive Director of Medica Liberia, Commissioner Tonieh Wiles, Chairperson of the Women's Human Rights Defenders and Ms. Yah Parwon, Director of Medica Liberia, as they spotlighted why women's organisations should be funded.

Twenty nine women human rights defenders also received certificates of recognition from UN Liberia for their incredible efforts and dedication to fighting #GBV. The UN applauded the courageous activists for standing up for the rights of women & girls in #Liberia. A candle lighting ceremony commemorating victims of SGBV rounded out the event.

Special thanks was also given partners including the Government of Sweden for the financial support and the UN Gender Theme Group for coordinating the activities.

Additionally as part of the observance of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, a team from the United Nations in #Liberia visited female inmates at the Monrovia Central Prison, and held fruitful discussions on human rights while sharing several gift items with the inmates in the spirit of #LeaveNoOneBehind.

UN Liberia Resident Coordinator Ms. Christine N. Umutoni emphasized the importance of respecting human rights of all people, including prisoners.



UN Day Commemoration- the UN Recognizes Liberia's Peaceful Transition

Photo Credit : UN Liberia

United Nations Resident Coordinator in Liberia, Christine N. Umutoni, says Liberia is the best example of Transitioning from a Peacekeeping-supported country to a self-dependent country. She notes that the West African nation of less than 6 billion people is carrying out its duties and responsibilities on its own, without assistance from any international bodies, including the United Nations. Madam Umutoni salutes the Government of Liberia (GOL) for its efforts in maintaining peace and democracy while improving livelihoods of the people.

On Tuesday, October 2023, 31, The United Nations in Liberia celebration the 78th United Nations Day (UN- DAY) held at One-UN Plaza in Monrovia. The event was marked by a formal ceremony with the presence of H.E. George M. Weah, President of the Republic of Liberia, the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representative, Cabinet Ministers, members of the diplomatic corps, CSOs, UN Staff, amongst others.

In the wake of the first round of the Presidential and general elections, UN Resident Coordinator Madam Christine Umutoni acknowledged the hard work and courageous efforts of the national security, "for maintaining the peace of the nation, in the midst of confronting challenges."

"As you can see, there was no peace-keeping forces anywhere, no one was responsible for the management of security, during the elections, but the nation, was doing it on its own," she continued, as the audience applauded.

She praised the security apparatus in Liberia for their selflessness in maintaining the peace, saying "You have shown exceptional bravery, dedication, and professionalism, and we must commend you for your service and your sacrifice."

The UN Resident Coordinator reiterated that the country has made significant strides in archiving political stability, since the end of the Civil-War in 2003, noting "We share the joy of sustainable peace in this country and peaceful transition of power through democratic election – a plus to the Government of Liberia."

On behalf of United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, she read out a message in observance of the 78th UN- Day held under the Theme: "Rebuilding Trust and Reigniting Solidarity Accelerating Actions on the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals in Liberia towards, Peace, Prosperity, Progress and Sustainability for all.



Madam Umutoni described the United Nations as a reflection of the world as it is – and an aspiration of the world we know it can be. She reaffirms the UN's commitment to help in building a World of Peace, Sustainable Developments, and human rights while expanding on opportunities and ensuring that no one is left behind

Umutoni also reminded her colleagues of their commitment to the principles outlined in the UN Charter that provides an opportunity

to reflect on their collective journey as they envision a better world for future generations, adding "On this day, we reaffirm our unwavering commitment to fostering peace, development, and human rights."

Subsequently, President George Weah commended the United Nations for its tireless efforts over the years in maintaining Peace and Security and achieving cooperation in solving economic-social and humanitarian problems, globally.

Mr. Weah reaffirmed Liberia's commitment to the UN as a global organization that promotes and maintains peace while improving social economic conditions around the world.

The event concluded with an SDGs exhibition, highlighting the work UN agencies around the respective SDGs and a food exhibition with a Liberian celebrity Chef Aloysius- highlighting Good Nutrition and Zero Hunger(SDGs 3&2)



Enhancing Smallholder Farmers' Expertise and Skills in Sustainable Vegetable Value Addition

Photo Credit : FAO Liberia

2024/01/07

Monrovia - Smallholder farmers are at the forefront of transforming our agri-food systems.

FAO conducted a series of participatory on-farm trainings to empower rural smallholder producers and boost their capabilities in sustainable production, value addition, and marketing capacities,

The first training session occurred at Central Agriculture Research Institute (CARI) in Bong County on 15-12 December 2023, with 21 participations, including 18 vegetable out-growers and staff from the Ministry of Agriculture and CARI staff from the Post-harvest department, joining from Bong, Margibi, and Nimba Counties. The second training session was held from 27 to 30 December 2023 at the Say No to Hunger Farmers Model Garden in Nimba County, together with a total of 20 participants, comprising 15 vegetable out-growers, 3 technicians, and 2 lead farmers.

The training was strategically designed to address critical constraints faced by smallholder producers, emphasizing intensive vegetable production, harvest, post-harvest handling, and effective marketing. Specifically, the hands-on sessions on productive crop husbandry techniques.

Training one topics at CARI included:

- Types of vegetables
- Improving post-harvest practices
- How and when to harvest
- Agriculture marketing information system
- Agriculture information flow
- Price discovery and dissemination systems
- Marketing principle, market segmentation
- Using new Information and communication technologies (ICTs) and Media to link market and agrifood actors

Training Two topics in Nimba included:

- Pre-production considerations
- Site selection for production
- Selection of planting materials
- Germination test
- Nursery preparation

- Land preparation and field layout
- Transplanting operations
- Field maintenance
- Irrigation (watering)
- Weed management
- Pest and disease management
- Agro-Eco-System Analysis (AESA)
- Soil characteristics and soil fertility management
- Plant nutrition
- Fertilizers and composting

As part of the training also focused on composting and compost production, utilizing crop residues and animal wastes for improved and effective nutrient cycling.

Participatory and practical on-farm learning

Importantly, the training employed the farmer field school approach, prioritizing practical demonstrations and experiential learning over conventional lectures. The participatory nature of the training also enabled the participants to interact with each other for mutual learning.

The impacts of the training, synergized with other interventions at both the community and policy levels, are anticipated to extend far beyond the project's duration. They would contribute to the sustainability of the country's agrifood systems, benefiting the livelihoods and nutrition of smallholder farmers.

About the project

The training sessions were organized under the FAO's Technical Cooperation Project "Enhancing the National Abattoir System and Strengthening the Productive Capacity of rural smallholder producers" in line with its Outcome 2, which aims to bolster smallholders' capacities by integrating high-value vegetable production with poultry in model gardens across multiple counties in Liberia. The project targets approximately 1,000 rural women and youth across Margibi County, Bong County, and Nimba County. Since the inception of the project, FAO has extended its technical support for the production of high-value vegetables integrated with poultry at two model gardens – Cinta in Margibi County, and Totota in Bong County, and additional vegetable gardens in Tumutu, Bong County, and Salayea, Lofa County.

Pres. Weah Extols Returning Peacekeeping Soldiers at Dehatting Ceremony

Photo Credit: Executive Mansion Liberia

Monrovia, Liberia - The President of the Republic and Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) has spoken highly of the soldiers of AFL who diligently served in the United Nations Multidimensional Integration Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Speaking Thursday, December 2023 ,21, at the AFL End of MINUSMA Mission Ceremony at the Barclay Training Center (BTC), President George Manneh Weah said Liberia was proud of the soldiers for their dedicated, exemplary, and excellent performances on their noble international mission.

"I have no doubt, following your remarkable achievement in Mali - both at the level of the troops and as Military Staff Officers - that you are on the path to greatness in international peacekeeping," C-I-C Weah stressed. He equally intimated that Liberians owe a debt of gratitude to the troops and all those who have participated and are still doing the same in peacekeeping operations.

"You are now the beacon of hope, not only for Liberia, but the region and beyond," he stressed. "Continue to be of service." He paid special tribute to a fallen personnel, Sergeant Ousman Sheriff, and all others who were wounded in Mali.

It can be recalled that the New AFL was inducted into the Peace Support Operations on June 2013 ,23, as part of the African-led International Support Mission to Mali.

It was later morphed into the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) on July 2013 ,1, under UN Resolution 2100.

This was Liberia's first peacekeeping operations following the end of the civil war and five decades after the country's first involvement in UN Peacekeeping in the Congo.

The UN Resident Coordinator, Madam Christine Umutoni, noted that the UN deeply appreciates Liberia's efforts in supporting peacekeeping in different countries.

She said that "we wish returning Liberian peacekeepers the best as they come to contribute to sustaining existing peace and democracy!"

The occasion was graced by officials of government, AFL leadership, members of the diplomatic Corps, international partners, and friends and family members of the honorees.





Joint UN-EU Spotlight initiative commissions a GBV One-Stop Center at the John F. Kennedy Medical Center in Monrovia

Photo Credit : UNFPA Liberia

The Joint UN-EU Spotlight initiative in Liberia has established a Gender-Based Violence One-Stop Center (OSC) at the John F. Kennedy Medical Center in Monrovia.

The Center was inaugurated on December 2023, 7, making it sixteen the number of GBV OSCs the Spotlight Initiative has helped to establish across Liberia.

The GBV One-Stop Center integrates, under one roof, a full range of care available, including clinical treatment for rape, psychological first aid, counseling, legal support, and other services for the survivors.

According to Dr. Jerry F. Brown, Chief Executive Officer of JFK Medical Center, opening the One-Stop Center at the JFK Medical Center is a dream come true. "Every day, survivors of gender-based violence, including women, young and old, are brought to our facility, needing care. They come with high hopes that they are in the right place. But sadly, we often had to refer them to other facilities because we lacked the capacity to attend to their needs. We are glad about the opening of the OSC; adding to the forensic laboratory already in place, we will be able to provide comprehensive support for survivors of SGBV visiting our facility," he said.

When she officially turned the facility over to the Government of Liberia, UNFPA Liberia Country Representative Bidisha Pillai said GBV has short and long-term consequences for survivors.

"When a woman has been subjected to gender-based violence, it has consequences for her physical, mental, and sexual and reproductive health. Injuries, unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, and gynecological disorders, as well as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and even self-harm, are only some of the impacts of violence that survivors may face. As such, it is critical that support for SGBV survivors is holistic to ensure harm reduction and long-term recovery," says Ms. Pillai.

In remarks, United Nations Resident Coordinator Christine N. Umutooni said it was appalling to see women and girls continue to suffer sexual and gender-based violence in my parts of the world. "We join the UN Secretary-General who is calling for a ceasefire in gender-based violence, which is reaching a high proportion, mainly affecting women and girls," she said.

"Violence against women and girls reflects and reinforces inequities between men and women and compromises the health, dignity, security, and autonomy of its survivors, the UN Resident Coordinator added. Ms. Umutooni lauded the European Union for its support toward reducing the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices and increasing access to sexual and reproductive health and rights by women and girls in Liberia through the Joint UN-EU Spotlight Initiative.

In response, the Deputy Head of Mission and Head of Development Cooperation at the Embassy of Sweden in Liberia, Johan Romare, speaking on behalf of the European Union, said the opening of the GBV One-Stop Center at the JFK Medical Center was a significant milestone in efforts to ensure the quality of care for SGBV survivors in Liberia. He praised the partnership between development partners at one end and the Government of Liberia and Civil Society Organizations at the other end to eliminate sexual and gender-based violence in Liberia. The opening of the JFK Medical Center GBV One-Stop Center brings to twenty-eight the number of One-Stop centers established and supported by the United Nations in Liberia.





United Nations Liberia Resident Coordinator calls on young people in Liberia to raise their voices as they launch a network to advocate for sexual and reproductive health and rights

Photo Credit: UNFPA Liberia

The United Nations Liberia Resident Coordinator, Christine Umutoni, has urged young people in Liberia to raise their voices and collectively advocate against issues that affect their well-being.

According to Ms. Umutoni, every general has a mission, which can only be fulfilled through collective action.

The UN Liberia Resident Coordinator spoke on 05 December 2023 at the launch of a network of young people to advocate for their priorities and needs, including their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The Liberian Youth Voices for Accelerating the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), seeks to harness the voices of young people to realize their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and reduce sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and harmful practices, including female genital mutilation (FGM) and early marriage.

The initiative is part of the Young Voices for Change project by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), with funding from the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Liberia. The Project aims to strengthen the capacity of youth-led grassroots organizations to advocate for evidence-based, accountable, and equitable adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health & rights, including preventing SGBV and harmful practices like FGM through laws, policies, and programmes.

She urged the membership of the group to participate fully in the initiative. "Leadership is about advocating for a cause. The Youth Voices for Change Project is a good vehicle to help raise the voices of the most marginalized segment of society. I want to invite you to continue participating in this initiative with all your energy for the good of your generation," Ms. Umutoni said.

Also, speaking when he formally launched the Project, the German Ambassador to Liberia, Jakob Haselhuber, said, "Germany is proud to contribute to the fight to end violence against women and girls and also to the dialogue between men and women on ending gender-based violence and harmful practices in Liberia."

"The fight to end violence against women and girls will not succeed if it is only led by women because we also need to take men on board," Ambassador Haselhuber said.

Youth and Sports Minister D. Zeogar Wilson, who also attended the launch, called on the network to be the voice of their generation and act with sincerity and accountability to their peers and the young people of Liberia.

"We know you seek to transform policies and programmatic responses to work with and for young people through youth-led action, advocacy, and accountability on sexual and reproductive health and rights. Participation is a fundamental right. Through active participation, young people are empowered to play a vital role in their development and communities, helping them learn critical life skills, develop knowledge of human rights and citizenship, and promote positive civic action and engagement," Minister Wilson added.

In her welcome remarks, the UNFPA Liberia Country Representative, Bidisha Pillai, said the welfare of adolescents and young people is at the heart of the ICPD agenda.

"Liberia's youthful population can propel the desired socio-economic transformation and secure a brighter future for Liberia; this is why the Liberian Youth Voices for Accelerating the ICPD is crucial to providing the platform for them to advocate for the future they need collectively," she said.



Liberia launches 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign

Photo Credit : UN Women Liberia

The United Nations family joined the Government and people of Liberia to launch the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, which kicked off on Saturday, 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and will run until 10 December, Human Rights Day. The launch event was held at the Samuel Kanyon Doe (SKD) Sports Complex in Paynesville.

This year's 16 days of activism campaign is being held under the global theme, 'Invest to prevent violence against women and girls,' and the national theme 'Empower Women, Secure Our Nation: Invest Locally to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls.'

Various stakeholders, including Government officials, members of the Diplomatic community, representatives of civil society organisations, members of the UN family and the media, among others, attended the event.

The Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Honourable Williametta Sayde-Tarr, delivered a special statement and highlighted that the 16 days of activism is a significant moment where the nation and the global community come together to amplify voices and reiterate commitments to eradicate violence against women, girls and the vulnerable in society. She reiterated that the theme underscores the importance of allocating resources and making commitments towards preventive measures. Hon. Saydee-Tarr expressed gratitude to partners working tirelessly to support her ministry to address issues gender-based violence.



Dr. Peter Clement, the Acting United Nations Resident Coordinator for Liberia, delivered the UN Secretary General's message for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. He highlighted that "Violence against women is a horrific violation of human rights, a public health crisis and a major obstacle to sustainable development." He noted that this year's theme calls on all stakeholders to take action to 'Support legislation and comprehensive policies that strengthen the protection of women's rights across the board; Ramp up investments in prevention and support to women's rights organization; Listen to survivors and end impunity for perpetrators everywhere and stand with women activists and promote women's leadership at every stage of decision-making.'

In his keynote address, Councillor Isaac George, Director of the Sex Crimes Unit in the Ministry of Justice, expressed appreciation to the Government of Liberia, the European Union and United Nations Spotlight Initiative and the Government of Sweden, among other partners, for the support to bring perpetrators to justice but acknowledged that violence against women and girls remains a challenge that still has to be eradicated. He called on the Government and partners to invest in the education and establishment of safe homes for women and girls in all 15 counties in Liberia.

Comfort Lamptey, UN Women Liberia Country Representative, launched this year's edition of the 16 Days campaign. She explained that investments towards ending gender-based violence are not only monetary but include strengthening of all sectors. Ms. Lamptey highlighted that prevention is advanced when there are strong women's rights organisations working to support government efforts to end gender-based violence. She emphasized the importance of investing in transforming social norms, stereotypes, persistent discrimination against women, male engagement and investment in interventions that underline joint efforts and collaboration.

Representatives of the Diplomatic community and civil society organisations gave their solidarity messages at the event, characterized by speeches and entertainment from the Crusaders of Peace led by traditional Queen Juli Endee.

The UN in Liberia is supporting the Government to roll out the 16 Days of Activism campaign.



Liberia records another significant milestone in eliminating female genital mutilation - as Nimba County practitioners turn over their “tools”

Photo Credit : UN Women Liberia

Nimba County, Liberia – 30 October, 2023

Liberia recorded another significant milestone in its fight against female genital mutilation (FGM) as former practitioners from Nimba County, in northern Liberia handed over traditional tools they used to perform FGM to signal an end to practice. The traditional ceremony took place on Friday, 27 October 2023, at the Gbanquoi Vocational and Heritage Centre constructed by UN Women under the auspices of the European Union and United Nations Spotlight Initiative.

The ceremony marked a moment of transformation as former traditional practitioners, clad in white headgear and carrying containers draped in white cloths, surrendered their tools to Chief Zanzan Karwor, the Chairperson of the National Council of Chiefs and Elders of Liberia.

Various stakeholders, including representatives from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, the Embassy of Sweden, UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA, civil society organizations, local authorities from Nimba, and traditional practitioners from various counties across Liberia, witnessed the ceremony.

Nimba has become the fourth out of the eleven counties where FGM is practiced to conduct traditional rituals to effectively end the practice. Other traditional ceremonies to end FGM have to date been held in Montserrado, Grand Cape Mount, and Bong Counties. This achievement aligns with Chief Zanzan Karwor's landmark proclamation on 06 February 2023, to ban FGM throughout Liberia.

The ban entails putting an end to the harmful practice of cutting women and girls while upholding positive cultural practices, such as singing, dancing, and weaving, among others. This is now widely known as 'initiation without mutilation.'

Chief Zanzan Karwor reaffirmed traditional leaders' commitment to abandon the FGM practice in Liberia, while Ambassador Juli Endee, Executive Director for Crusaders of Peace and cultural Queen of Liberia, emphasised that traditional leaders chose to end FGM voluntarily, driven by their belief in doing the right thing to accelerate development.

Ambassador Juli Endee expressed her deep appreciation to development partners for the support. She acknowledged the importance of reaching out to the 'real people,' the traditional leaders and the Zoes (traditional practitioners) to ensure the success of this transformative process.

Comfort Lamptey, UN Women Country Representative for Liberia, applauded Chief Zanzan Karwor for his leadership and commitment as well as embracing change, safeguarding the cultural passage rites of women and girls without the harmful effects of FGM.

She highlighted that Nimba County has one of the four vocational and heritage centres established with the support of the European Union and United Nations through the Spotlight Initiative. These centres aim to provide former traditional practitioners of FGM with alternative economic livelihood programs while preserving cultural heritage without FGM.

Nimba county authorities expressed their appreciation for the construction of heritage centres and urged former practitioners to utilize these centres for empowerment activities, ensuring they serve their intended purpose.

In addition, the Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, Hon. Parleh Harris, expressed her gratitude to all stakeholders, including traditional leaders, for their courage in ending FGM. She encouraged everyone to move forward with unwavering determination, as the practice has now been banned. "We will now be telling our story to other countries about how we did it," she said.

UN Women is supporting the roll out of the ban on FGM with funding from the Government of Sweden.



Certification of President elect and vice President elect.

Photo Credit: Vision TV

On December 27th 2023, the National Elections Commission certificated the President- elect, Ambassador Joseph N. Boakai and Vice President- elect, Jeremiah K. Koung. Liberia's partners congratulate Liberia for successful elections , for peaceful transition and demonstration maturity in democracy ! UN Resident Coordinator thanked Liberians for making Africa proud! "This is victory for all of us ", UN Resident Coordinator Christine Umutoni said.



National Steering Committee on 2023 Elections host last meeting

Photo Credit RCO

The last meeting and closure of National steering committee on the 2023 elections (NSCE) was held on December 2023 ,14. UN Resident Coordinator has congratulated Liberians on leading recently concluded elections. Build on opportunities/lessons learnt for future work.

"Post elections peace building efforts are critical," she said.

WHO donates to Fuel Tanker Explosion Victims



On Tuesday, December 26th 2023, a fuel tanker explosion in Bong county claimed the lives of at least 40 people and injured 42 others. In response, the World Health Organization (WHO) stepped up with a vital donation of emergency medical supplies.

"We must ensure timely care for the victims of this tragedy," said Dr. Moses Jeuronlon, WHO Liberia Officer in Charge. "These supplies will help ease the burden on stretched health facilities and alleviate the suffering of those affected."

The WHO donation included essential items like pain medication, antibiotics, fluids, and wound dressing materials. These will be distributed to hospitals in Bong, Nimba, and Montserrado counties, where the majority of victims are receiving treatment.

Liberia's Health Minister, Dr. Wilhelmina Jallah, expressed her gratitude for WHO's swift response: "WHO has always been a reliable partner, and these supplies will be crucial in treating the injured."

So far, over 80 cases have been reported, with 42 suffering severe injuries. Every bit of support counts.

Liberia Commemorates World Aids Day



Photo Credit RCO

World AIDS Day 2023 commemorations were held on December 1 under the theme, "Let Communities Lead". Speakers at the event, including the UN Resident Coordinator a.i., Dr. Peter Clement urged communities, "Let us walk hand in hand with communities and foster an environment where they can indeed lead to an AIDS-free world,".

They also called for removal of remaining barriers that prevent individuals from accessing testing, prevention, treatment, and care services. These services' affordability, availability, and acceptability need to be improved to reach the most marginalized and vulnerable populations, they noted.

The event kicked off with a parade through the suburbs of Monrovia and ended at the national Sports Stadium with an indoor ceremony.



UNDP Liberia supports Donfah with solar-powered borehole through the Accelerated Community Development Programme (ACDP)

Photo Credit : UNDP Liberia

The UNDP team headed by its Resident Representative a.i. Louis Kuukpen completed a one-day inspection of a completed borehole in Donfah, Bong County, Central Liberia.

The solar-powered borehole is one of five infrastructures constructed under the Accelerated Community Development Programme (ACDP), a flagship programme of the Government of Liberia being implemented by UNDP Liberia.

During the inspection visit the inhabitants of Donfah expressed gratitude to the government and its partners, pointing out that for a very long time, they had to rely on water fetched from nearby creeks to take care of their daily needs such as drinking, cooking, washing, and other utilities.

In response, UNDP's Louis Kuukpen thanked the people of Donfah for their warm reception and appreciation of the support UNDP Liberia is providing. He reminded them that what is required now is to put in place a governance system that will not only protect the facilities but will also ensure sustainability. He indicated that such a governance structure must have a dedicated committee with rules and regulations that guide the usage and maintenance of the facilities. He concluded by reassuring the community of UNDP Liberia continued commitment to supporting other initiatives that would improve the lives of the people of Donfah and Liberia at large.

Donfah is also one of the beneficiaries of farming equipment including tractors and other supplies to improve their agriculture practice as they graduate from subsistence to mechanized farming.



IOM supports post-election activities along Liberia's borders

Photo Credit : IOM Liberia

Through the United Nation Peacebuilding Fund, The International Organization for Migration, in collaboration with the Migrants As Messengers Association of Liberia (MAMAL), conducted post-election peace, stability, and reconciliation awareness campaigns in hotspots in three counties (Bong, Nimba and Lofa) bordering Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Sierra Leone. The awareness was conducted under the project titled: Promoting peaceful Electoral Environment and Community Security in Liberia. These activities were done through sport tournaments, town hall meetings and radio talk shows. The initiative seeks to create awareness of reconciliation and post electoral violence in these counties. These activities were carried out from the November 26 to December 2023 ,2.



Liberia Celebrates World Children's Day: Investing in the Hopes and Rights of Every Child

Photo Credit : IOM Liberia

On December 2023 ,7, Monrovia buzzed with the joyous sounds of celebration as Liberia marked World Children's Day. Held at the EJS Ministerial Complex in Congo Town, the event reverberated with the global theme "For Every Child, Every Right" and the local echo, "Investing in Children's Rights."

This year's commemoration held special significance, not only as the 69th anniversary of International Children's Day but also as a testament to Liberia's unwavering commitment to its young citizens. Roosevelt S. Klafleh, Assistant Minister of the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, resonated this commitment, reminding everyone to cherish the laughter, innocence, and boundless potential of children.

He emphasized that World Children's Day transcends mere celebration; it is a global call to action, a reminder to uphold the fundamental rights outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Rights to education, health, protection, and participation – these are not just words on paper but the building blocks of a brighter future for every Liberian child.

The voices of hope and aspiration resonated loudest through representatives from various schools. They eloquently shared their dreams, concerns, and perspectives on their rights. Cyrus K. Wiah, Children's Representative Forum Speaker, urged that children's voices be heard, not just during dedicated days, but woven into the fabric of decision-making, especially when budgets are crafted.

Amadou Alassane Cissé, acting UNICEF Representative in Liberia, acknowledged the challenges still faced by many children – lack of access to education, clean water, and healthcare. He emphasized that "Investing in Children's Rights" is not just a slogan but a call to action. More resources, better policies, and unwavering support from communities and families are critical to ensure that every child in Liberia, and every child across the globe, can thrive and flourish. Liberia's World Children's Day celebration was not just a festive gathering; it was a promise, a vow to cherish, protect, and empower its young generation. In their faces, their voices, and their dreams, lies the future of the nation, and Liberia, with the support of its partners, is resolute in ensuring that every child has the right and the opportunity to reach their full potential.



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This newsletter is the result of the collaborative efforts of the United Nations Communication Group in Liberia, which comprises representatives from various UN agencies, funds and programmes. We would like to express our gratitude to all the contributors who shared their stories, insights and perspectives on the issues affecting Liberia and its people. We also thank our readers for their continued interest and support. We hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter and welcome your feedback and suggestions.

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