



UNITED  
NATIONS  
LIBERIA



# NEWSLETTER

QUARTER 1 - 2024



A woman wearing a blue United Nations cap and a light blue polo shirt is looking down at a colorful, abstract graphic that resembles a rainbow or a stylized map. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a patterned fabric on the left.

# MESSAGE FROM THE RESIDENT COORDINATOR

In the last quarter of 2023, we celebrated the deepening democracy in Liberia through the peaceful conduct of the 2023 Presidential and Legislative Elections. Now, the next phase of Liberia's democratic journey is crucial for nation building, cohesion, and sustainable development national development planning.

The Government of Liberia is leading a consultative process to design a new national plan and sub-national plans, and the UN in Liberia is delighted to partner in this process in a multi-disciplinary approach.

We reaffirm our collective commitment to work along with government as the driver, as well as development partners to foster sustainable development, transformation and prosperity for all Liberians.

Fellow colleagues and UN staff, we have a journey to support the SDGs acceleration in Liberia. But I am confident that our dedication to advancing the SDGs and the core values of the United Nations will yield notable returns.

During this quarter, along with partners, we celebrated International Women's Day and highlighted women entrepreneurs and their remarkable achievements and products.

We also joined partners in a massive cleanup campaign of Monrovia- something that we wish to continue in future!

I conclude by extending my warmest gratitude to the Government and people of Liberia for our very strong collaboration in working towards achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Profound gratitude also goes to all our partners, including the development partners, civil society and private sector, amongst others.





# UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR PAYS COURTESY VISIT TO H.E. PRESIDENT JOSEPH NYUMAH BOAKAI

PHOTO: © EXECUTIVE MANSION LIBERIA

The UN Resident Coordinator Madame Christine Umutoni paid a visit to H.E Joseph Nyumah Boakai at the Executive Mansion.

She reiterated UN's commitment to Liberia's vision. She also committed to coordinate UN's work to deliver as one.

President Boakai, for his part, expressed appreciation for the UN's role in Liberia from peace building to development. He further reaffirmed the country's new pathway.







# LIBERIA CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY AMID CALLS TO INVEST IN WOMEN AND STRENGTHEN GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING

PHOTO: © UN WOMEN LIBERIA

A cross section of women and men in Liberia thronged the Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Ministerial Complex to commemorate International Women's Day (IWD), a day set aside to celebrate the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women everywhere and to strategise on how to break down the barriers to achieving equality for all women.

This year's commemoration was held under the global theme 'Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress,' and the national theme 'Empower Her, Empower All.' The themes emphasized the need to drive financial resources, policy support, and commitments towards achieving gender equality and are aligned with the priority theme of the 68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68), to be held in New York from 11 to 22 March 2024: 'Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective.'

Members of the United Nations Country team led by the Resident Coordinator, Christine Umutoni, members of the Diplomatic Community, representatives from Government ministries, women's organisations, civil society among others, attended the celebrations, characterized by speeches, entertainment and a market exhibition.

In her welcome address, the Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Honourable Gbeme Horace-Kollie stressed the transformative power of investing in women, emphasizing that it not only enhances their decision-making abilities but also boosts their confidence and access to opportunities.

The theme colour for the commemoration was white, symbolizing peace, unity, and reconciliation. It served as a poignant reminder of the invaluable role women play in maintaining peace within their communities and the nation at large.

The keynote speaker, the First Lady of Liberia, Kartumu Yarta Boakai pledged Government support for women's empowerment initiatives including promoting education, health and leadership roles as well as encouraging that both men and women 'walk side by side' for the development of the country. She urged Liberians to unite in relentless determination for sustainable development and the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment.

Ms. Umutoni delivered an International Women's Day statement from the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, stressing the importance of supporting women's organizations, investing in programs to end violence against women, and promoting women's inclusion and leadership in various sectors such as economies, digital technologies, peacebuilding, and climate action.

Echoing the sentiments, Comfort Lamptey, UN Women Liberia Country Representative, emphasized three critical areas essential for addressing poverty-related issues and advancing gender equality: gender-responsive budgeting and planning, investment in women's rights organizations, and the importance of gender-disaggregated data collection. Honourable Moima Briggs-Mensah from the Women's Legislative Caucus and Honourable Nyonblee Karnga-Lawrence, the Pro-temp of the Liberian Senate reiterated the need to have gender responsive budgets.

Representatives of traditional practitioners, rural women, and youth groups emphasized the importance of equal participation, keeping girls in school, and providing empowerment opportunities, particularly for rural women. They stressed the urgent need to invest in women and strengthen gender-responsive budgeting as crucial steps towards achieving gender equality.

As part of the celebrations, the Second Lady of Liberia, Stephenie Dahn Koung, honored three women in public service for their dedication and commitment to serving their communities.

The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection hosted the International Women's Day celebrations with support from the United Nations in Liberia and partners.







# UNFPA DONATES ESSENTIAL MEDICAL EQUIPMENT TO ENHANCE MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH IN LIBERIA

PHOTO: © MINISTRY OF HEALTH LIBERIA

The Ministry of Health received medical instruments and equipment from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to support the ministry's efforts in improving maternal and child health across the nation.

Presenting the donation, Madam Bidisha Pillai, the Country Representative of UNFPA to Liberia, conveyed gratitude to the Ministry of Health for its commitment to providing quality reproductive health services and facilities to women and girls in Liberia and underscored UNFPA's dedication to reducing unplanned and unwanted pregnancies and ensuring safe delivery services.

Madam Pillai highlighted the organization's (UNFPA) active involvement in capacity-building initiatives and the provision of essential medical supplies, including HIV testing kits and life-saving drugs. With an average investment of approximately 1.2 million dollars, UNFPA has significantly contributed to these efforts.

The UNFPA Country Representative to Liberia emphasized the critical importance of reliable contraception supplies in facilitating access to reproductive healthcare, stressing that achieving sustainable development goals hinges on such access. She noted the significance of the ceremony coinciding with the celebration of International Women's Day on March 8th, which highlights access to reproductive healthcare as a fundamental human right for all women and girls.

In response, Dr. Louise M. Kpoto, Minister of Health, spoke on behalf of the President and the Liberian people, expressing gratitude to UNFPA for their ongoing support.

The Minister appreciated UNFPA's contribution in procuring and donating essential medical supplies. She emphasized that the donated supplies will be distributed across several counties, including Rivercess, Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, River Gee, Sinoe, and Maryland.

Reflecting on challenges faced in the operating theater due to inadequate lighting, shortage of beds, and unequipped intensive care unit, Dr. Kpoto emphasized the importance of the donated items in addressing such issues to help ease operations and decrease maternal and neonatal mortality rates in Liberia.

She assured the UNFPA Country Representative of accountability and affirmed that the donated items would be appropriately used and placed in the designated facilities across various counties.

Following the receipt and signing of the handover document by both UNFPA and the Ministry of Health, Michael Nguessan, CMS/WFP Manager, led a tour of the Central Medical Store (CMS), accompanied by the Minister of Health, Dr. Kpoto, the Director of Family Health (MOH), Dr. Nowiah Gorpudolo Dennis, and Madam Bidisha Pillai, the Country Representative of UNFPA to Liberia, and their respective teams.







# MINISTRY OF HEALTH, GAVI, WHO AND UNICEF ANNOUNCE ARRIVAL OF 112,000 DOSES OF MALARIA VACCINE IN LIBERIA

PHOTO: © WHO LIBERIA

The Ministry of Health of Liberia, in collaboration with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, World Health Organization (WHO), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), today announced the arrival of 112,000 doses of the RTS,S malaria vaccine- the first ever in Liberia. Studies have shown that children under five in Liberia experience high rates of malaria infection with a prevalence rate of 10%. The Malaria vaccine marks a significant milestone in the fight against malaria, a preventable mosquito-borne disease that kills a child under age 5 every minute in Africa.

"The arrival of this life-saving vaccine is a game changer in our fight against malaria," said Adolphus Clarke, Director of the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) at the Ministry of Health of Liberia. "We are committed to ensuring that every child in Liberia has access to this vaccine and is protected from this deadly disease."

The RTS,S vaccine was piloted in Ghana, Kenya, and Malawi since 2019 and has been shown to be safe and effective, reducing severe malaria by 30% and malaria deaths by 13%.

"This is a historic moment in the fight against malaria," said Fatima Babiker, the Gavi Senior Country Manager for Liberia. "Gavi is proud to support the rollout of this life-saving vaccine to children in Liberia and across Africa. We are committed to working with our partners to ensure that every child has the chance to grow up healthy and free from malaria."

WHO, UNICEF and Gavi are working closely with the Ministry of Health and other stakeholders ahead of the rollout of the malaria vaccine. WHO is providing technical guidance primarily focusing on epidemiological analysis to determine priority districts for roll out of the currently available doses, integration of the vaccine in routine immunization to boost wider uptake by the target group, and vaccine administration support to the targeted counties and districts, while UNICEF is procuring and delivering the vaccine doses to the Ministry of Health.

"The arrival of the malaria vaccine in Liberia is a testament to the power of global collaboration," said Dr. Clement Peter, WHO Liberia Representative. "WHO is committed to working with our partners to ensure that this vaccine reaches all children who need it."

"This is a day of hope for thousands of children in Liberia and millions in Africa," said Amadou Cisse, UNICEF Representative at the Ministry of Health of Liberia.

"UNICEF is proud to be part of this historic effort to bring the malaria vaccine to children in Liberia and across the continent. We are confident that this vaccine will save countless lives."

The arrival of the malaria vaccine in Liberia is a major step forward in the fight against this deadly disease. With continued collaboration and support, the Government of Liberia will ensure that every child has the chance to grow up healthy and free from Malaria.

The Ministry of Health of Liberia plans to start vaccination in April 2024.







# SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION IN LIBERIA

PHOTO: ©UN WOMEN LIBERIA

## **Liberia joined the rest of the world to commemorate the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation on 6 February.**

The commemoration was held at the Vezela Vocational and Heritage Centre in Lofa County, Liberia.

To mark the day, the Heritage Centre was handed over to the National Council of Chiefs and Elders of Liberia. The centre is one of four established by UN Women with funding from the Spotlight Initiative to provide dedicated learning space to teach former FGM traditional practitioners new skills to enable them to pursue alternative sources of income to replace FGM. Other heritage centres are in Grand Cape Mount, Montserrado and Nimba counties. Over 800 former traditional practitioners of FGM are benefitting from alternative economic livelihood programs such as climate smart agriculture, business, and vocational skills training.

Traditional ceremonies to enforce the ban on FGM were also conducted. Traditional practitioners from Lofa County surrendered their customary tools used in the practice of FGM to Chief Zanzan Karwor, Chairperson of the National Council of Chiefs and Elders of Liberia (NACCEL), signalling an end to the practice of FGM in the county. A year ago, on 6 February 2023, NACCEL made a historic proclamation to ban the practice of FGM in Liberia. Since then, traditional ceremonies to effectively enforce the ban on FGM have been conducted in five out of 11 FGM practicing counties in Liberia, namely Montserrado, Grand Cape Mount, Nimba, Bong and Lofa counties.

The gesture was applauded by various stakeholders, including representatives from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, the Embassies of Sweden and the UK, the European Union, JICA, UN Liberia, civil society organizations and local authorities from Lofa, among others who attended the commemoration. Lofa is the fifth county out of the 11 FGM practicing counties to conduct traditional ceremonies.

Antony Akumu Abogi, the United Nations Resident Coordinator a.i., expressed gratitude to the European Union for their support in reducing cases of violence against women and girls in Liberia.

Comfort Lamptey, UN Women Representative for Liberia, delivered a joint statement from UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women, OHCHR, and WHO, reiterating the UN's commitment to preventing and responding to harmful practices against women and girls. She noted a decline in the prevalence of FGM, highlighting progress achieved over the past three decades.

"We celebrate progress that has been achieved. The practice of FGM has been declining over the last three decades, and in the 31 countries with nationally representative prevalence data, around 1 in 3 girls aged 15 to 19 today have undergone the practice versus 1 in 2 in the 1990s," read the statement.

In addition, Ms. Lamptey expressed hope that an FGM law will be in place soon to compliment the ban and that there will be stronger partnerships between the traditional leaders and civil society to continue the community engagement and education and will see economic empowerment for all women that have given up their tools and are ready to work to build a better Liberia.

Development partners commended Liberia's efforts in eliminating FGM and reiterated their commitment to supporting initiatives aimed at ending the practice in the country.

Anders Arvidsson, EU Deputy Head of Delegation, emphasized the importance of abandoning harmful practices, stating, "When practices may be harmful to individuals, there is a need for change. Let us move towards a future where young girls are not subjected to FGM to transition into womanhood. Every woman or girl has the right to refuse harmful and potentially life-threatening practices."

Johan Romare, Head of Development Cooperation for the Embassy of Sweden in Liberia affirmed the Government of Sweden's dedication to partnering with Liberia to promote gender equality and ensure a life of dignity for women and girls.

In addition, Kate Thomson, Deputy Head of Mission for the Embassy of UK highlighted that the UK Government is funding a local organization, HOPE to support alternative livelihoods to former traditional practitioners of FGM and teaching them skills such as tie and dye and soap making, among others, so that they abandon the practice of FGM.

Queen Juli Endee, Chairperson of the Taskforce on Ending FGM in Liberia, emphasized that traditional leaders would continue advocating for the passage of the FGM bill into law, following the establishment of a traditional ban on the practice. "We now have a traditional ban, but we need a law from the national legislature to compliment the ban." She reiterated that traditional practitioners will continue to uphold their culture and tradition but without FGM and supports the concept of 'Initiation without mutilation.'

The FGM day in Liberia was characterized by vibrant traditional performances, rituals marking the end of FGM in the county, and entertainment provided by the Liberia Crusaders for Peace.

UN Women supported the Government of Liberia and NACCEL in commemorating FGM Day and conducting traditional ceremonies to enforce the ban on FGM, with funding from the Government of Sweden.





PHOTO: ©UN LIBERIA

# UN SECRETARY GENERAL CONVEYS CONGRATULATIONS TO PRESIDENT BOAKAI

The UN Resident Coordinator a.i, Mr. Antony Akumu Abogi, led the UN Country Team to present the Letter of Congratulations from UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres to H.E Joseph Nyumah Boakai, President of Liberia.

Reiterating the SG's message, Mr. Abogi commended the President's call to unity for all Liberians. He also noted that the Secretary General conveyed trust that the President will support the advancement of the Sustainable Development Goals and in achieving gender equality and youth empowerment.

For his part, President Boakai has stressed continued engagement with the UN especially in the areas of food security and agriculture. The meeting took place at the Executive Mansion on February 5th .







# UNDP SUPPORTS ANTI-CORRUPTION INITIATIVE

PHOTO: ©UNDP LIBERIA

With the rate of illegal logging and the abuse of Forest Management Contracts (FMCs), the Integrity Watch Liberia (IWL) has developed Talkay, a digital corruption report platform to enable citizens to participate in the fight against corruption by reporting it in real time.

Like another natural resource-based sector, forestry is affected by various episodes of corruption, as a result, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) signed the Responsible Parties Agreement (RPA) with IWL to support the Community Based Forestry Management project to implement the anti-corruption and accountability portion of the project.

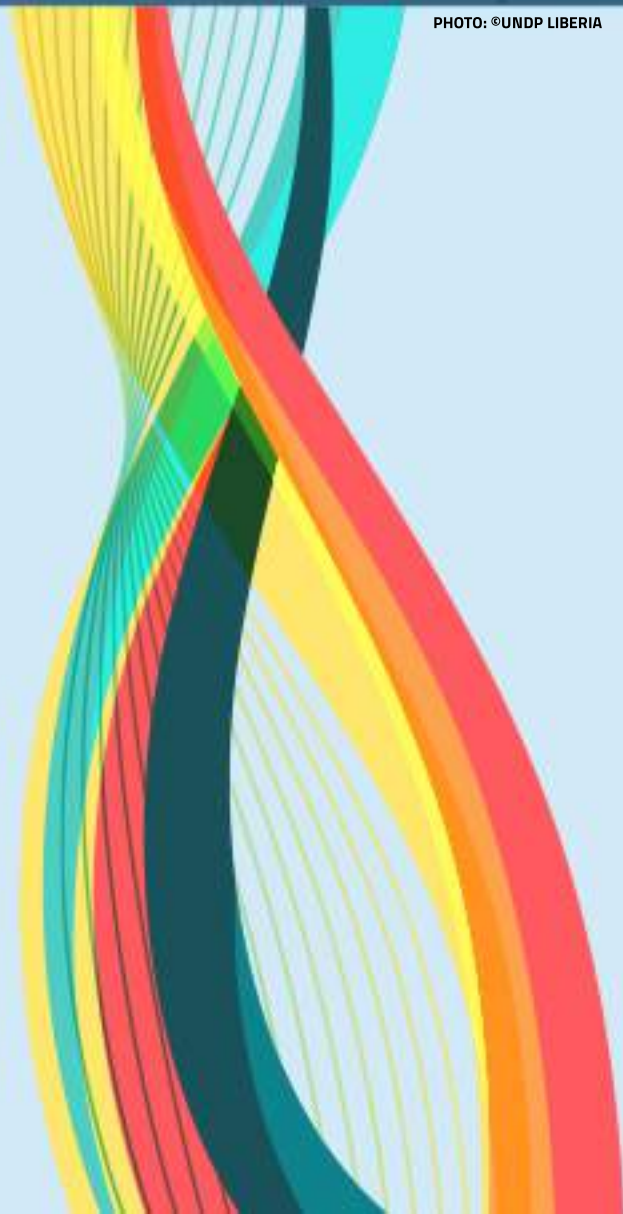
The platform is a mobile application that uses SMSs and the internet to report corruption. According to the IWL Executive Director Harold Aidoo, Talkay permits users to report and document corruption as it happens, and the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) receives the report instantly on the dashboard.

Mr. Aidoo explains that although the SMS platform limits users to reporting the location and the kind of corruption happening, with the mobile application, users go through a 7-step reporting that includes attaching evidence such as photos, videos, audio, and incident documents. He added that the application also gives the user an option to announce their number if they wish to be contacted, their names, or if they prefer to remain anonymous. However, this is not the case with the SMS platform as the user's mobile number appears on the dashboard as the report goes through and the FDA can contact the reporter for more details.

He says although the SMS platform is free, the mobile application requires a user to have internet access. He added that the mobile application enables users to file reports offline and submit them when accessing the internet.

The application developer, IWL presented the use of the application to UNDP to weigh its development and better understand the product ahead of its roll-out.

Subsequently, the developers are to present the application to all relevant stakeholders including the FDA, Liberia Anti-corruption Commission (LACC), Forestry Communities, and the media ahead of its anticipated date to roll out at the end of this month.







# THE SPIRIT OF VOLUNTEERISM - UN LIBERIA JOINS THE REST OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR CLEANUP CAMPAIGN

PHOTO: ©UN LIBERIA

On a sunny Thursday morning, the United Nations family, joined the rest of international community, in a volunteers cleanup campaign exercise in Monrovia.

Local organizations and community members were also present with their brooms, shovels and rakes, as they awaited the commencement of the cleanup.

Speaking before the kickoff, Ms. Christine N. Umutoni, UN Resident Coordinator, underscored the importance of volunteerism and clean environment. "The UN in Liberia is here to support volunteerism, community work, environmental protection, and waste management. We are here as part of the cleanup volunteers' campaign. Our hope is that this becomes part of the DNA of the country and part of the long-term work that is embedded in the work of Liberia. We are so happy you invited us."

She then disclosed the contribution of the UN to this exercise. "In addition to being here in person to clean up, the UN also contributed tools and materials to this campaign. For all of us, we want to link this to long-term environmental protection, waste management, and strategic sort of cooperation goal going forward. We hope to work together most importantly to link this campaign to the principal of voluntarism."

Ms Bidisha Pillai, UNFPA Country Representative, praised the energy of the atmosphere and the number of young people involved in the cleanup campaign. She lauded the youth for coming forward and "building a Liberia that they aspire for... and this campaign is a great start."

Mr. Varney Sannoh, the Public Relations officer of the Campaign initiative, stated that the communities saw the need for cleaning up the dirt in the cities, thus leading to the birth of the cleanup campaign. "We feel so proud of the support from the international community today, and are absolutely elated. This means that we are getting there...", he enthused.

The clean-up campaign initiative, which was launched on November 30th, 2023, has had over 10,000 volunteers signing up.







# UNDP SUPPORTS THE NEC JOURNEY TOWARDS EXCELLENCE IN ELECTIONS

PHOTO: ©UNDP LIBERIA

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and partners' (Ireland, Sweden, the European Union, and the European Partnership for Democracy) held a BRIDGE Train the Facilitators (TtF) workshop from 14 – 24 February, in Ganta, Nimba County for the National Elections Commission (NEC) officials and other stakeholders engaged in electoral processes.

The workshop was part of technical assistance to enhance long-term capacity building and institutional strengthening. Building Resources in Democracy and Elections (BRIDGE) is the most advanced professional development program with a particular focus on electoral processes to develop skills in areas crucial to the effective operation of an institution.

Nineteen (19) participants, including Commissioner of NEC, the Executive Director, Directors, Magistrates, Assistant Magistrates and representatives from civil society and academia completed the TtF together with three university professors whose participation in this workshop will assist in extending this most advanced learning methodology into Liberian education system.

BRIDGE is a comprehensive professional development curriculum developed by election professionals and is intended for knowledge sharing. It is composed of several modules addressing different election topics and components in democracy. Using advanced interactive adult learning, BRIDGE training methodology includes real life scenarios and simulations to facilitate experiential learning process. One of the main components of BRIDGE is a TtF, which delivers advanced facilitation skills and builds local trainers' ability to produce and deliver high-quality capacity-building interventions by using the same tools and resources used in any other developed countries.

This program represents the most advanced methodology and a database of electoral knowledge. The TtF provided the participants with access to international comparative electoral literature and analytical materials to further enhance Liberia's democratic governance knowledge and electoral framework. The BRIDGE methodology aims to immerse the participants in an engaging and rewarding learning process that explores options, lessons learned, benefits and challenges of numerous aspects in the field of electoral administration and sharing best practices from different countries.

During the certificate ceremony, the Chairperson of NEC, Davidetta Browne Lansanah urged the participants to use the facilitation skills acquired to effectively perform their respective duties.

"It is my hope that you all will internalize the knowledge gained to make a meaningful impact. There is real interest in BRIDGE, and we will continue to support more training initiatives," said Lansanah.

Talking about the impact of the workshop, NEC Assistant Magistrate for Margibi County, Deddeh Rita Kollie who partook in TtF said, "I have been facilitating trainings and I was convinced that I am a great facilitator, but this TtF has given me a very different perspective of how to effectively facilitate trainings. Going forward, I will never be the same again. BRIDGE has reinforced my confidence, and it has shaped my career in the right direction".

Through the Liberia Electoral Support Project (LESP), UNDP and its partners are providing technical assistance to enhance institutional capacity and accountability of electoral stakeholders by employing a comprehensive approach in more advanced areas of electoral operations.

"I am thrilled to have attended this workshop with my team. Experiencing the advanced BRIDGE methodology and fostering an enabling environment helps us promote critical thinking and innovative minds. We are dedicated to excellence in elections, and we stand by this promise," noted Anthony Sengbe, Executive Director of NEC who participated in the TtF.

Having completed the TtF, participants are expected to demonstrate modern work ethics and influence their peers and other stakeholders and increase cross-cultural understanding. By that NEC will serve as a generator of innovative work practices, influencing other stakeholders and the Liberia society.

"This BRIDGE TtF provides a vibrant learning opportunity for us to harness valuable skills that will enhance the management of elections" emphasized Commissioner Barsee Kpangbai, a participant in the workshop who further said that developing a research mindset open to innovation will propel the NEC forward and influence a stronger Liberia.

BRIDGE implements various approaches, including coaching, on-the-job training, mentoring, facilitation of the processes, and review of the internal organizational structure, processes, rules, and procedures. The aim is to develop skills in areas important in the participants' work, with emphasis on understanding the relationships between tasks to effectively meet tight deadlines.

Developed in 2000 by the Australian Election Commission, International IDEA, International Foundation of Electoral Systems (IFES), UNDP, and the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division (UNEAD), BRIDGE supports the strengthening of national capabilities in elections. The BRIDGE curriculum undergoes three major revisions and updates. The content is regularly updated and aligned to the latest developments and global lessons learned.





# AGRICULTURAL AND HEALTH EFFORTS ENHANCE IN LIBERIA..AS FAO AND PARTNERS CONCLUDES COLLABORATIVE SOUTHEAST MISSION

PHOTO: ©UN FAO LIBERIA

24 March 2024, Monrovia: A joint delegation led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Representative madam Bintia Stephen Tchicaya, in partnership with USAID, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and Break Through Action (BA), recently conducted a thorough assessment in the southeastern region of Liberia.

The mission, spanning nine days, aimed to evaluate progress and address critical challenges encountered by farmers and animal health workers in the area.

During the visit, various villages, towns, and crucial sites such as poultry farms and slaughter slabs were inspected, complemented by meetings with community health workers (CHAWs) across different locations. Noteworthy interactions took place at the agriculture college of William V.S. Tubman University in Harper, Maryland County, emphasizing knowledge exchange and capacity-building.

The team, consisting of representatives like Mrs. Delou Gonsan-Zeo, Hannax Barlue (IRC), Mr Armando Cotrina (USAID), Madam Sabenzia Wekesa (FAO/ECTAD), Mr Patrick Sibney (Ministry of Agriculture), and Mr. Archie Sesay (BA), embarked on a comprehensive itinerary that included visits to various livestock facilities and educational institutions.

Key highlights of the mission included engagement with students at Gbeapo Multilateral High School in Rivergee County to raise awareness about diseases like rabies, as well as meetings with Community Health Teams (CHT) in Grand Kru County to promote health initiatives. The team's visit culminated in Werteken, Grand Kru County, marking the successful conclusion of their fact-finding mission.

The collaborative efforts showcased a commitment to enhancing agricultural practices, improving animal health protocols, and bolstering community health initiatives in Liberia's southeastern region.

Speaking at one of the gatherings with CHAWs in Fishtown, Rivergee County FAO Representative Mrs. Tchicaya lauded the efforts of the CHAWs and called on them to be more collaborative in addressing health issues in their respective areas of assignment. She said, FAO as a technical institution would continue to provide the needed support that complement efforts that are driven towards fighting diseases which affects both humans and animals.

"We are happy to know that you are making efforts to fight diseases that undermine both the human and animal population. This shows that the one health platform is strengthened and would do more with the needed support. The FAO remains a true partner to this endeavor" The FAO Representative averred.

Madam Tchicaya also encourage farmers and community animal health workers to see the need to remain committed to the work they do, emphasizing FAO's continuous support to address challenges in animals disease prevention and building farmers capacity.

For his part, Mr. Armando Cotrina who represented USAID on the mission, praised community health workers for their resilience and echoed his institution continuous support toward initiatives that promotes disease prevention between animal and human, and also improve agriculture.

"The sharing of information between animal health workers in the field and those who are more concern on human health issues is laudable, but there is still a need for cooperation between the two. More collaboration is needed to track and monitor health issues that are not just unique to humans but animals as well, for swift reporting purposes," Mr. Cotrina intimated.

The partnership between different organizations underscores the importance of working together towards sustainable development and strengthening resilience among rural communities.







# FAO AND MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS COLLABORATE ON US\$499,000 VEGETABLE PRODUCTION PROJECT

PHOTO: ©UN FAO LIBERIA

Monrovia: In a bid to enhance vegetable production in Liberia, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Internal Affairs have joined forces in a groundbreaking initiative. The signing of a grant agreement worth US\$499,000 marks a significant step towards bolstering the capabilities of smallholder vegetable producers across five counties in the nation.

Titled “Strengthening Smallholders’ Capacity for Market-oriented Vegetable Production in Liberia,” the project falls under FAO’s Technical Cooperation Programme with the Government of Liberia. Over the course of 24 months, from January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2025, the project aims to elevate production capacity, smallholder producers in adopting sustainable vegetable production and post-harvest handling practices.

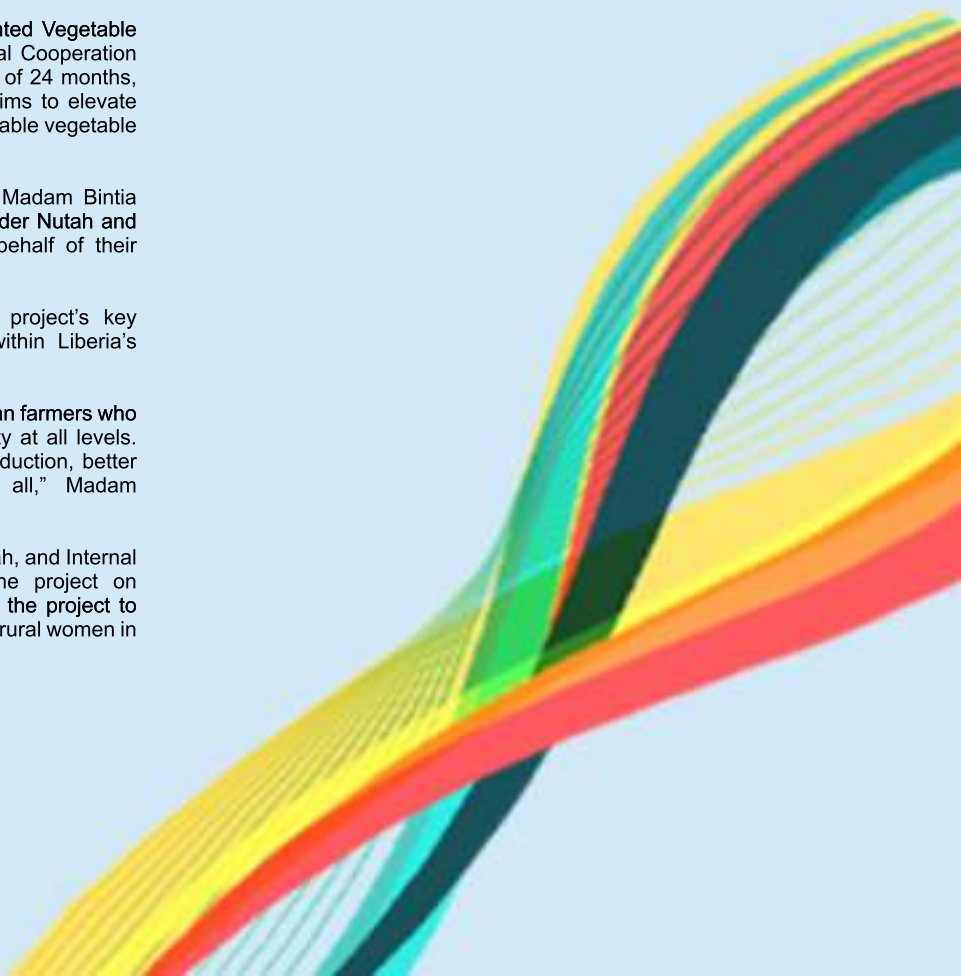
The signing ceremony, graced by FAO Representative a.i. Madam Bintia Stephen Tchicaya, saw the Ministry of Agriculture’s J. Alexander Nutah and the Ministry of Internal Affairs’ Francis Nyumalin sign on behalf of their respective institutions.

Speaking at the event, madam Tchicaya highlighted the project’s key objectives and its potential to catalyze positive change within Liberia’s agricultural landscape.

“This collaboration is in the interest of those smallholder Liberian farmers who needs the requisite support to boost their production capacity at all levels. With our collective efforts, we together will ensure better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life for all,” Madam Tchicaya averred.

In separate remarks, Minister of Agriculture J. Alexander Nuetah, and Internal Affairs Minister Francis Nyumalin lauded the FAO for the project on vegetables, with both ministers highlighting the alignment of the project to President Boakai’s vision for agriculture and empowerment for rural women in the country.

This collaboration between FAO and the Liberian government underscores a shared commitment to empowering local farmers, fostering market-oriented practices, and ultimately contributing to the sustainable development Liberia’s agricultural sector.





Happy  
International  
WOMEN'S  
MONTH

# UN LIBERIA CLOSES OUT INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S MONTH IN STYLE



PHOTO: ©UN WOMEN LIBERIA

The UN in Liberia wrapped up International Women's month with a Women Entrepreneurs Marketplace Event under the theme "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress" and national theme "Empower Her, Empower All! The incredible event was held on March 30th , at the Invincible Park, Sinkor and was supported by UN Gender Theme Group, FUNSAL, and partners like the Orange Foundation, Academy of Women Entrepreneurs and the Growth Accelerator. Let's keep investing in women and celebrating their achievements.

Breast cancer awareness and screening were major highlights of the activities held, with the UN in Liberia clinic and Jahmale Medical Solutions providing the crucial services and awareness.

UN Resident Coordinator, Christine Umutoni expressed thanks to the government ministries, agencies, diplomats and CSOs who actively participated to the IWD and other related activities

She also noted that the event displayed the huge potential of women in fighting against poverty and in promoting business and "Made in Liberia" products..

She concluded, "I am encouraging Women Vendors to be innovative and strong and ready to face challenges in the business set up."







# LIBERIA'S MSMEs TRIUMPH AT MADE-IN-ECOWAS EXHIBITION IN GHANA

PHOTO: ©UNIDO LIBERIA

Dr. Charles Sackey, Maryjane Daniels with Jane's Healthline and Ralph Nemenla Sonkarlay with Evergreen Enterprise GROW-2 supported three MSMEs to join the maiden WACOMP Made-in-ECOWAS exhibition in June 2023. The exhibition was organized by WACOMP-Ghana in collaboration with the Ghana Export Promotion Authority (GEPA) with the main objective of promoting products from ECOWAS and Ghana.

Beyond promotion, the exhibition fostered value chain development, encouraged regional sourcing and a more vibrant regional market. More than 90 MSMEs operating in the processed fruits, cassava, and cosmetics sectors showcased their products and services.

Among them, Evergreen Enterprise Trading Inc., Jane's Healthline, and Bravo Sisters represented Liberia. They presented Liberian products and were encouraged to develop business networks in Ghana and the sub-region.

The MSMEs also participated in workshops alongside regulators, financial institutions, and entrepreneurs; learning how to access funds or certify their products for the global market. Mongar David of Bravo Sisters remarked, "The workshops focusing on finance, certification, branding, and packaging offered practical insights.

This joint endeavor between the EU, GEPA and UNIDO has equipped our team with the knowledge and connections to elevate Liberia's presence and impact within the global food system." After the exhibition, GROW-2 team extended their visit to Fairafric, a prominent multi-million-dollar cocoa processing company in Ghana.

The visit provided the team with an understanding of the challenges within the cocoa value chain in Ghana, facilitating a comparative assessment of similar challenges faced in Liberia. The team visited cocoa farmers and buyers, gaining valuable insights into the cocoa industry in the region.

Furthermore, GROW-2 delved into the intricacies of Ghana's cassava production by embarking on visits to two processing factories. Here, the team was showcased their standard operating procedures and the equipment employed in the processing of cassava.

The MSMEs and participants gleaned several lessons from the experience, which they plan to apply to their businesses in Liberia:

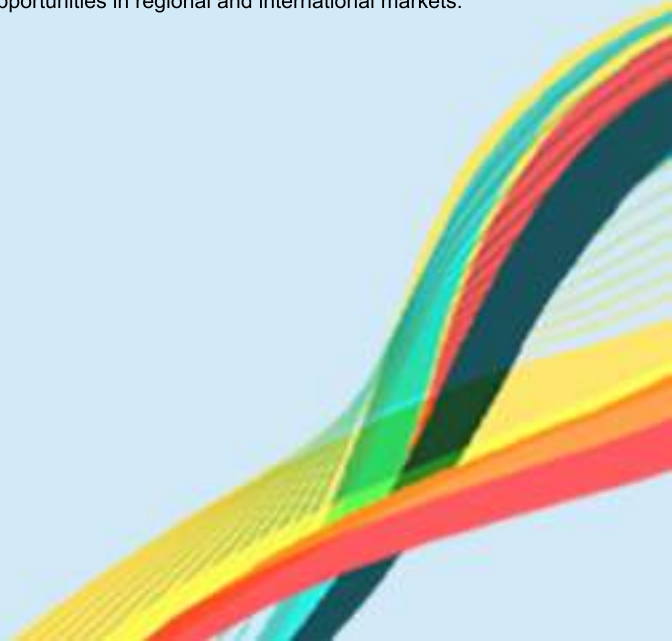
**CERTIFICATIONS** It was established that most of the products of businesses at the fair were fully certified and registered by the Ghana Standards Authority (GSA) and Food and Drug Authority (FDA).

**STANDARDIZATION** The Ghana Standard Labs approved most of the products from Liberia for sale in Ghana and the world. This was a new experience for many of Liberia's enterprises and business owners.

**PACKAGING AND MARKETING** This was one area in which Liberia was well represented and commended for its high quality design and packaging. Though most of their Ghanaian counterparts had unique and exquisite packaging, Liberia's stand was frequently visited by a diverse group of customers and stakeholders.

**COLLABORATING AND PARTNERING** Lastly, the MSMEs anticipate collaborating and partnering with UNIDO. GROW-2 will open more avenues for Liberia in the global market. With UNIDO's support, they can significantly impact the world's food security.

Looking ahead, GROW-2 intends to support more of Liberia's MSMEs to access opportunities in regional and international markets.







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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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