

# UN FOCUS



united nations liberia | at work together

## New Graduates Boost Police Capacity

Refugee Repatriation Extolled

AFL Prove EOD Capable

# CONTENTS

**4**      **New Graduates Boost  
Police Capacity**

**6**      **AFL Explosive  
Ordnance Disposal  
Response Proves  
Capable**

**8**      **Liberia Hosts High  
Level Disaster Response  
Meeting**

**10**      **Women Demand Major  
Role in Decentralization**

**12**      **Women Political  
Forum Reactivated**

**14**      **FAO Encourages Snail  
Farming in Grand  
Gedeh County**

**15**      **UN Women Supports  
Quality Media  
Reporting on Women's  
Issues**



**4**

**16**      **Tripartite Commission  
Extols Ivorian Refugee  
Repatriation**

**18**      **Preventing Ebola in  
Refugee Camps**

**20**      **Mobile Coverage Brings  
New Hope to Ivorian  
Refugees**

**22**      **Another Ivorian  
Refugee Camp Closes**

**23**      **Change of the Guard at  
Border Outpost**

**24**      **Transcending Land  
Disputes in Liberia**

**26**      **Land Surveyors Trained**

**28**      **Strengthening Law-  
Making Process in  
Liberia**



**6**



**8**



**12**

## UN FOCUS

### CHIEF OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

Isabelle Abric

### STAFF WRITERS

Stefanie Carmichael  
Daylue Goah  
James S. King

### PHOTOS

Staton Winter   Emmanuel Tobey

### EDITOR AND HEAD OF PUBLICATIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA

Mathew Elavanalthoduka

### DESIGN & GRAPHICS

Thomas S. Blidi  
Thomas G. Karyah

### CONNECT WITH US

[www.unmil.unmissions.org](http://www.unmil.unmissions.org)  
[www.facebook.com/unmil2003](https://www.facebook.com/unmil2003)  
[www.twitter.com/unmilnews](https://www.twitter.com/unmilnews)  
[www.youtube.com/unmiltv](https://www.youtube.com/unmiltv)  
[www.flickr.com/unmil](https://www.flickr.com/unmil)

UN FOCUS is published quarterly by the Public Information Office, United Nations Mission in Liberia | Printed by Buck Press Ltd., Accra, Ghana

# Message from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General



**L**iberia entered its second post-conflict decade in significantly improved con-

dition from the time when UNMIL deployed in 2003. While the country is on a broadly positive course, considerable challenges remain, which must be addressed to

consolidate Liberia's hard-won peace and to maintain the stability achieved over the past 10 years.

Supporting the Government to implement critical reforms associated with the underlying causes of past conflict in Liberia and with its future stability remain at the core of UNMIL's mandate. The Mission's priorities continue to include the reform of the security and justice sectors, as well as constitutional reform, decentralization and national reconciliation.

In the Constitution Review process, consultations were conducted in a number of counties. A national conference to validate constitutional amendment proposals is foreseen for July, before the submission of the proposed amendments to the President later this year. The Government has also taken further steps to implement its decentralization policy, including the establishment of health and education boards at the county level and the creation of decentralization units in the 12 selected ministries and agencies. The allocation of funding to 10 national reconciliation projects by the Peacebuilding Fund should also enable progress in this area.

The Government has made significant commitments to strengthening the security sector. This has included scaling up the presence of the Liberia National Police (LNP) throughout the country, and of Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization (BIN) officers in the border areas. With the recent graduation of 291 officers, the LNP now stands 4,864 strong. The Government has allocated specific funding to support security transition, which is expected to make a significant contribution to addressing the operational requirements of the national security agencies. The Government has also taken important steps to professionalize the LNP. Following last year's joint Baseline Assessment of the LNP, the LNP and UNMIL Police have drawn up a Joint Development Framework (JDF) to sharpen our shared effort to address gaps in individual and organizational capacity, integrity and performance. Greater priority is also being given to training senior and mid-level LNP and BIN managers, of whom 81 will have undergone training at the Ghana Institute of

Management and Public Administration by June 2014.

These efforts are critical for an effective security transition, as the UNMIL military drawdown continues.

In order for the security sector to function more optimally, it must work with a functioning justice system that inspires public trust. Liberia has made some progress in increasing access to justice. In April, the 9th Judicial Circuit Court was inaugurated at the Gbarnga Regional Justice and Security Hub, making the Hub fully operational. However, service delivery and operations have been affected by the lack of resources for core operational costs. The importance of prioritizing service delivery over expensive new construction, where this can be foregone, is an important lesson learned from the Gbarnga Hub, as the Government and partners plan for the next two regional justice and security hubs in Zwedru and Harper.

Transparency and accountability to the public are also essential for the governance that anchors stability. Liberia and its partners have committed to deepening progress in the transparent and accountable management of natural resources, including through consultation with affected communities. Promising work has already been done by the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission and the Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

The closure of UNMIL's sister Mission in Sierra Leone on 31 March was an opportunity to reflect on the welcome stability that has returned to West Africa, and the ever-closer engagements among the countries of the Mano River Union and ECOWAS, including on shared security concerns. The UN will continue to support bilateral and multilateral efforts to keep borders secure and combat transnational crime in this region.

The outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease in Liberia this March was an unexpected challenge. The swift response helped to contain the outbreak and educate the population about containment and prevention measures, showing what can be achieved when the Government and international community collaborate across sectors and borders.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karin Landgren'.

Karin Landgren  
Special Representative of the  
Secretary-General and Coordinator of  
United Nations  
Operations in Liberia

# New Graduates Boost Police Capacity



UNMIL Photo/Staton Winter

*New LNP graduates stand proud on graduation day*

By Daylue Goah

*As the UN Mission in Liberia gradually draws down, the Liberia National Police (LNP) is enhancing its capacity to safeguard law and order in the country. With 291 trainees, among them 41 females, graduating in May from the LNP Training Academy, the strength of the LNP has now gone beyond 5,000.*

Carrying both the Liberian and UN flags, the new graduates put on a spectacular display of their skills during the graduation ceremony. Finance Minister Amara Konneh, who was the keynote speaker, said the national vision of Liberia to become a middle income country, characterized by inclusive economic growth and development cannot be achieved without the input of the LNP. He said the country depends on the police to create an enabling environment within which busi-

nesses can expand; an environment where parents can allow their children to play in crime and drug-free neighborhoods; an environment where people can reach their highest potential for productivity because they are no longer traumatized by violence and frustrated by weak justice systems that cannot defend them.

Konneh also urged the police to help create an environment where investors are not scared away by instability, but are confident enough to scale up their investments without fear of high risks to their personnel and property. He noted that the LNP has a moral responsibility to change the image of the police by upholding the core principles of honor, integrity, humility, selflessness, fairness, courage and obedience to authority.

The Finance Minister told the graduates that as UNMIL draws down, the responsibility is now with the Government to help fill the gap that will be created by the departure of UNMIL.

"When we developed our five-year development strategy in 2012, the Agenda for Transformation, we demonstrated the urgency we attach to the development of the Security Sector by making it the first pillar. In that document, we have committed to building the capacity of our law enforcement institutions to effectively handle national security after the full withdrawal of UNMIL forces in the next few years," he said.

"Since 2003, the United Nations Mission in Liberia has been here, significantly supporting the provision of security throughout the country. In the 11 years of their service to us, our country has experienced consistent economic and political growth. Within the last two years, UNMIL has begun to pull out their troops for assignments in other difficult areas around the world. To date, they have vacated

12 camps in Grand Cape Mount, Gbarpolu, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Bong, Grand Kru, Nimba, Sinoe and Rivercess counties. This big reduction in the presence of UNMIL leaves our security institutions, specifically the LNP, with the major task of deploying adequate manpower in those areas vacated by UN troops, to provide security for our country.

"But as it is, the LNP is constrained in both manpower and logistics, and we must invest in effectively deploying officers to these areas, to minimize any negative impact of the UNMIL drawdown on cross border trade between Liberia and her neighbors, and other law enforcement issues," the Finance Minister said.

He pledged the Government's commitment in ensuring that the police are adequately equipped to respond to crime as UNMIL peacekeepers leave.

"I want to assure you all today that we too, as a government, are committed to professionalizing the police. As I stated before, we will invest in the welfare of our officers so that officers assigned in rural areas can have decent housing beginning in the new fiscal year. We will invest in logistics to reduce response time and to ensure that officers are not at high risk when they respond to crimes. We will work with the leadership of the LNP to reform the incentives and pay structure of the LNP and the security sector as a whole, so that we can continue to attract qualified and

**"We too, as a government, are committed to professionalizing the police."**

competent young professionals like you into the police force. We will continue to provide adequate support to the Training Academy so that our training programmes are run according to plan," he said.

Over the next three years, the Government has committed itself to increasing the size of the LNP to 8,000 trained officers deployed throughout Liberia with the required logistics. To achieve this, Konneh noted the Government has put together an ambitious work programme that requires training and deployment of 900 officers yearly, beginning July 2014.

"A further testament to the Government's commitment to improve and sustain the quality of LNP's service to the Liberian people, we have opened an escrow account in the amount of US\$2million to fund our programme with the LNP. Funding for the completion of the training of this class and the organization of this programme was sourced from this account."

*New LNP graduates demonstrate their physical fitness regime*



UNMIL Photo/Staton Winter

# AFL Explosive Ordnance Disposal Response Proves Capable

By Stefanie Carmichael

**J**ust over one year later and the AFL have reached a significant milestone, leading eight explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) tasks. With 32 carefully selected candidates from the AFL Engineering Unit trained

When the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) arrived in Liberia in April 2013, it anticipated two years to fully train and equip the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) and Liberia National Police (LNP) to safely assume responsibility for the destruction of explosive remnants of war (ERW). Indeed, with 147 items of ERW recovered in 2013, the threat from such explosives remains real across the country.

*The AFL EOD Engineer unit meets at the scene of a task to discuss the demolition plan*



UNMAS Photo/Lindsay Harkness



*The AFL EOD operators, UNMAS staff and technical advisors and William Harris along with William Harries and his family after the dangerous item was destroyed*

and graduated by UNMAS in EOD, the AFL has for the first time proved capable of effectively responding to the ERW threat in Liberia.

Sheila Black, UNMAS Programme Manager in Liberia, suggests the milestone is significant of the AFL's capacity to assume greater responsibilities in this domain.

"The AFL EOD team is performing admirably and safely in all aspects of task completion and are proving their commitment to taking on these duties," said Black. "So far, we have only seen very good examples and demonstrations of the results of UNMAS EOD training, and we hope to be able to continue reducing the threat of these dangerous items to all Liberians."

As of June 2014, seven of Liberia's 15 counties will no longer host UNMIL military units. By 2015, it is anticipated that only one UNMIL military engineering unit will remain to support EOD tasks in Liberia. That is why UNMAS has been working to

increase both AFL and LNP capacity to take these tasks on themselves.

A six-week course qualified 32 AFL officers in EOD. Nine LNP instructors have also been trained at the National Police Training Academy to provide training on ERW identification and reporting to new LNP recruits.

The training is proving life-saving for people like William Harris, who was digging behind his house in Monrovia on 1 March when his hoe hit an item. Realizing it may be dangerous he reported the item to the nearby AFL EBK Military Barracks, who immediately put their training into practice.

The AFL sent the military police to cordon off the item while waiting for the disposal teams to arrive. Once on the scene, the AFL EOD operators evacuated the area, assessed the item and prepared it for destruction, placing it in a hole in the ground surrounded by sandbags. They then prepared the explosive charges and

safely destroyed the item, much to the relief of Harris and his family.

As AFL and LNP capacity to respond to the ERW threat in Liberia grows, Black highlights the need for continued support to build their confidence. The UNMAS programme in Liberia, however, is under threat of shutting down due to lack of funding.

"What we are doing here is life-saving work, and there is no price you can put on the value of a human life," says Black. "Unfortunately, there is a price on the programme we are in the middle of implementing here and without greater donor support, we will be forced to abandon it and lose the progress we've made thus far."

Despite extensive efforts by UNMAS, current programme funding will run out by 30 June 2014. The funding required to fulfill its initial goals is \$1.7m. If steps towards this goal are not met, Liberia's capacity for a sustainable, efficient and safe response to the ERW threat is at risk.



*Participants gather for the National High Level Disaster Relief Response Meeting*

# Liberia Hosts High Level Disaster Response Meeting

By Daylue Goah

"Disaster is not a maybe; it is sure and only requires time. The urge to seek deeper understanding and draw lessons from the experiences of others, is a display of wisdom in itself. We cannot therefore but fully acknowledge the National Disaster Relief Commission's efforts at formulating a proposed policy framework for our disaster management system."

**T**hose were the words of Vice President Joseph Boakai when he formally launched the Government's High Level Disaster Response Meeting in Monrovia in April.

Boakai reminded the participants that disaster has no discrimination and can affect anyone,

urging them to effectively bolster the country's relief capacity, saying it is through a well formulated response strategy that Liberians can prevail against disaster.

"As we explore the most efficacious measures of preparation, let us all be reminded that disaster does not discriminate. When a raging storm

“

As we explore the most efficacious measures of preparation, let us all be reminded that disaster does not discriminate.

”



UNMIL Photo/Staton Winter

erupting into wild flood hits a locality, there is no picking and choosing of its victims, whether rich or poor, partisans or opposition, weak or strong. The menace just rolls where nature allows it," Boakai noted.

Making specific reference to a disastrous situation in Liberia, Boakai reflected that, "When the infamous Camp No-Way landslide disaster of long past memory came down rumbling upon our brothers and sisters in Cape Mount County, it buried whoever stood in its way. The ghastly and gruesome impact it exacted on our people on that fateful day in October 1982 revealed our unpreparedness to deal with mass disaster."

He said bitter experience has abundantly taught the nation that sporadic and knee-jerk responses to situations of disaster usually lead to high casualty rates.

Hosted by the Government of Liberia, organized by the United States Africa Command and supported by the Center for Disaster and Humanitarian Assistance Medicine (CDHAM), the disaster response meeting was designed to examine the issues associated with governance, organizational structures, and the capabilities of the Republic of Liberia's National Disaster Relief Commission. Participants included senior Liberian officials from key ministries,

members of the National Legislature and civil society organizations.

The meeting provided guidance for the future organizational structure of disaster management within the country, identifying mechanisms to coordinate the activities of government ministries, agencies and other stakeholders during a major disaster event and identifying requirements that need further research and action to improve the ability of the Liberian Government to effectively manage disaster.

Also speaking at the meeting was United States Ambassador to Liberia Deborah Malac, who highlighted the important

phase of partnership between the Republic of Liberia and the US Government through the US Africa Command's Disaster Preparedness Programme.

She said the meeting was very significant because "it brings us together to examine the wide range of issues associated with an inter-agency and multinational response to a major disaster. The task at hand is for us to examine the Liberian Government's disaster management plans."

The Ambassador informed the participants that their participation in the meeting and the hard work that has been done over the years to draft Liberia's National Pandemic Disaster Response Plan underscores the strong commitment to be prepared to meet natural disasters and pandemic threats before they arise.

"We look forward to continued strong cooperation and collaboration with the Liberian Government as well as with other inter-agency and multinational partners as we help Liberia continue to develop its disaster response unit. Together we can achieve success," she said.

“

The task at hand is for us to examine the Liberian Government's disaster management plans.

”



The meeting gets underway in Monrovia

UNMIL Photo/Staton Winter

# Women Demand Major Role in Decentralization

By Daylue Goah

**J**ames Mugo Muriithi from the Office of the Gender Adviser spoke on behalf of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). He noted that UNMIL is aware that for the decentralization process to move forward, constitutional changes are required.

“The recommendations from the study call for greater engagement of women in the decentralization process. This is also reflected in the draft Local Government Act. The Governance Commission and the Ministries of Gender and Development and Internal Affairs have a greater responsibility to steer this forward. UNMIL will continue to support women’s participation in governance and peacebuilding initiatives as part of implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325,” noted Muriithi.

He said decentralization is often presented as an important vehicle for increasing women’s political participation and ensuring that their needs and priorities are reflected in laws, policies and budgets developed by local governments. However, he noted that there are “significant structural and institutional barriers including

Discriminatory cultural and traditional practices related to ownership of property and land titles have also further exacerbated unequal power relations between men and women, the report highlights.

*The Governance Commission, in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender and UN Women, in early May launched a research report on Gender Responsive Decentralization Programming in Liberia. The launch was held in the James Fromayan Conference Room at the National Elections Commission in Monrovia.*

deeply entrenched traditions, customs and stereotypes” that hinder women’s participation in politics and governance at all levels in Liberia.

The Governance Commission, recognizing that the decentralization process in Liberia presents an important opportunity to further promote gender equity and equality in the development of the country’s sub-national governance system, has identified the need for a comprehensive review of gaps and opportunities for women in the decentralization process and requested support from the United Nations in Liberia.

The Governance Commission report noted, “In response to this request, UN Women, in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender and Development and UNMIL, commissioned this study in order to support the Government of Liberia, and in particular the GC and the Ministry of Internal Affairs in their efforts to ensure that a gender perspective is integrated throughout the decentralization reform process.”

The report titled, “From Sidelines to the Fore Front: Ensuring a Gender-Responsive Foundation for Liberia’s National Decentralization Process” details, among other things, women’s participation in decision-making and an important role in the



decentralization process.

The report said for women in Liberia, who remain marginalized in many aspects of Liberian society, including at the institutional, political, economic and social levels, the decentralization reform process is truly revolutionary and holds enormous promise.

“If implemented in a gender-responsive manner, decentralization provides an unprecedented opportunity for women to compete for positions in local government and to influence planning, policy and budget decision-making process. The

Decentralization Policy and Draft Local Government Act include gender equity measures which set out two seats in every County Council exclusively for women,” the report noted.

Traditional norms and values about women and gender roles were also key factors that were highlighted in the report: “While local government has the potential for greater engagement with women because of its closeness to society, local government institutions are often more influenced by traditional authorities and patriarchal values and norms, which in

some instances serve as significant barrier to women’s inclusion and participation in decision-making processes and structure.”

Discriminatory cultural and traditional practices related to ownership of property and land titles have also further exacerbated unequal power relations between men and women, the report highlights.

“Participation in governance and politics is often regarded by women and men as “man’s affairs,” even in the cases where women have the requisite educational skills to participate in local governance,” the report said.

*Decentralization provides unprecedented opportunities for women*

*UNMIL Photo/Christopher Herwig*





High level women gather to launch the Women Political Forum

UNMIL Photo/Staton Winter

# Women Political Forum Reactivated

*"This programme sets the stage for women to begin engaging stakeholders to present their positions on any programme, policy on gender integration and empowerment."*

By Romeo Juwle Togba

**R**uth Caesar is the Coordinator of the Women Political Forum, recently reactivated to, among other things, create an active women's involvement in the national decision-making process by mobilizing women to contest public offices.

"We are joining other efforts of lobbying and networking to achieve the objectives of increasing the number of women in political parties, leadership and decision-making, as well as the effective implementation of UN Resolution 1325,"

added Caesar as she further outlined the goals of the organization.

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf attended the launch event, saying, "This should also serve as a forum to mobilize the women involvement in the Constitution Review Process. This forum should spur our women to actively engage the Constitution Review Process to ensure that the decision emerging out of the exercise promotes fairness, equity and equal opportunities for everybody.

"We hope this forum will also reverse the trend we saw in the last elections when the number of women in the Legislature

reduced. Let's turn a positive corner for women's involvement in national decision making."

Special Representative of the Secretary-General Karin Landgren also praised the efforts as an important step towards rejuvenating the Women Political Forum.

"Congratulations on breathing life into the organization," said Landgren as she applauded the organizers.

"This forum is going to be an important way of advancing women in politics. It is also going to be an important way for getting equity in the electoral law and

The Official Launch of the  
 "Liberian Women National Political Forum" and  
 "The Liberian Women Dollar Campaign" in Liberia  
**Theme: "WOMEN RUNNING AND WINNING": A CALL TO ACTION**  
 Venue: The Theatre, Monrovia City Hall  
 Date: April 9, 2014 @12noon



*President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf speaks at the launch of the Women Political Forum*

*UNMIL Photo/Staton Winter*



*Women perform a traditional dance at the launch event*

increasing the participation of women in the upcoming senatorial elections."

Landgren went on to praise the Ministry of Gender and the women of Liberia for developing a women's manifesto.

"The manifesto sets out an agenda that seeks to raise women's voices in the

political process and increase and sustain their representation in civil society and in national decision-making."

Landgren added that the manifesto was a product of unity of purpose amongst the women of Liberia.

"Women need to use the same galva-

nizing power to achieve even greater things," noted Landgren.

For Maryland County Senator John Ballout it is time for men to join forces with women to promote an increased women's participation in the governance of the country.

"I think we need to give women the motivation to enter the political stage. We as men need to encourage our women to take a bold stand in politics," said Ballout.

Caesar ended the launch event with a call to Liberian women everywhere.

"As we embark on a process to increase our participation in the national decision-making process, let us reach out to every woman – be it the lady in the market or the woman on the farm. This makes our organization broad based and people-centred."

Women need  
to use the same  
galvanizing  
power to achieve  
even greater  
things.

# FAO Encourages Snail Farming in Grand Gedeh County

By Wellington Railey, Jr.

As part of a cross-border initiative to enhance food security and nutrition, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is supporting community dwellers in Senewehn Town in Grand Gedeh County to engage in snail farming.

snails. He encouraged beneficiaries of the project to support the programme as it would help to better their lives.

Jolo G. Dukah, a Farmer Field School (FFS) Facilitator and beneficiary of the programme said the introduction of snail farming will greatly reduce the hunt for bush meat in the county.

Dukah said the current stocking of snails is about 980, placed in the different cages suitably built for the keeping of snails.

"We are noticing some eggs in those cages and we are going to take care of them and make sure we continue the production, for Senewehn is conducive for snail production," said Dukah.



UNMIL Photo/Wellington Railey, Jr.

*At the FAO-backed snail farm in Senewehn Town*

**P**roject Manager Albert Kpassawah says the programme, which was launched recently by FAO is one of the income generating activities intended to build self-sustenance among the border communities.

Kpassawah said the beneficiaries, most

of whom are Liberians as well as a few Ivorian refugees, have shown great interest in the programme. He said income generated from the sale of the snails will be used to sustain and expand the project.

The Project Manager noted that some 25 beneficiaries have been trained in the production, maintenance and breeding of

He noted that from juvenile stage to marketing or consumption, snails take approximately 12-24 months.

The FFS Facilitator thanked the FAO for the level of support given to the programme, stressing that it was unique to farmers in Liberia, who are more familiar with food crop production.



UN Women hands out awards for Women's Rights Reporting

UN Women Photo

# Enhancing Quality Media Reporting on Women's Issues

By Winston Daryoue

Outstanding Liberian female journalist Mae Azango of Frontpage Africa newspaper was the proud recipient of the UN Women-sponsored Women's Rights Reporting Award at the Press Union of Liberia (PUL) 2014 annual awards ceremony.

Azango's award-winning story, *"Teen Pregnancy and Bush Schools Hurting Efforts to Educate Girls,"* highlighted the difficult experiences of 24-year-old Hannah who lives in Rivercess County, one of the most impoverished regions of Liberia.

The mother of one, Hanna was 17 when she got pregnant. She dropped out of school to take care of the baby while the child's father, a high school graduate, went to work in the gold mines to support his son.

"I blame my parents because they didn't guide and advise me. Our parents don't tell us about sex and the dangers ahead when we start to receive our period," Hannah was quoted in the story.

Most recent data on Liberia from the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) shows that teenage pregnancy stands at 38 per cent, unmet needs for family planning stand at

36 per cent, while use of contraceptives is as low as 11 per cent.

Nine out of ten girls aged 15-19 who give birth are already married, while 32 out of 100 girls are pregnant or have given birth by age 18.

These are the stark statistics. But sadly, stories about women's issues as highlighted by Azango barely make it to the media in Liberia.

UN Women's partnership with the PUL and its sponsorship of the Women's Rights Reporting Award are part of efforts to broaden its engagement with the media for the promotion of gender equality and to help enhance a "positive portrayal" of women in the news.

Women in the news are more likely to be featured in stories about rape or domestic violence than in stories about their professional abilities, expertise or talents.

UN Women congratulated and presented this award to Azango, urging journalists to go beyond the 'normal' way of reporting, where women are negatively portrayed, and encouraged the media to spotlight women's potential and their efforts to make Liberia and the world a better place.

By throwing light on the lives of women through her journalistic work, Azango has made a name for herself in Liberia and on

the global media landscape. She is a holder of the International Press Freedom Award and her latest recognition adds to her accolades.

Apart from the glamour and merriment that characterized the 2014 PUL Awards night, a major highlight of the event was the extraordinary accomplishment of the only other female award winner, Evelyn Kpardeh of the Liberia Women Democracy Radio.

Kpardeh won two awards - the Human Rights Reporter as well as the Development Reporter of the Year in the Broadcast Category.

Other winners were Peter Quaqua, Journalist of the Year; Roland Perry, Development Reporter in the Print Category; Varmah Kamara, Sports Reporter of the Year; Anthony Stephens, Environmental Reporter of the Year; In-Profile Daily, Newspaper of the Year; Liberia Broadcasting System, Radio Station of the Year; Power TV, TV Station of the Year and Super Bongese, Community Radio Station of the Year.

The PUL annual awards recognize journalists with the best media reports and media institutions that demonstrate commitment to quality and professionalism.



*UNHCR plans to voluntarily repatriate 16,000 Ivorian refugees this year*

# Tripartite Commission Ivorian Refugee Repat

By Sulaiman Momodu

*The ongoing voluntary repatriation of Ivorian refugees from Liberia, uprooted from their homes some three years ago when violence broke out following disputed presidential run-off elections in late 2010, has been commended by both the Governments of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire.*

**T**he ongoing voluntary repatriation of Ivorian refugees from Liberia, uprooted from their homes some three years ago when violence broke out following disputed presidential run-off elections in late 2010, has been commended by both the Governments of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire.

Some 8,600 refugees were repatriated in less than three months this year, from January to March, and over 18,000

in 2013. The UN refugee agency, in collaboration with partners, plans to voluntarily repatriate 16,000 Ivorian refugees this year. More than 42,000 Ivorian refugees, mostly women, children and the elderly, were in camps and communities in Liberia at the end of April.

At a two-day meeting held at the end of March at the Ministry of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Ivorian capital, Abidjan, the Tripartite Commission for the

# Extols riation



UNHCR Photo/Sulaiman Momodu

Voluntary Repatriation of Ivorian refugees, which comprises the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, as well as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), expressed satisfaction over the significant progress made in the implementation of the provisions contained in the Tripartite Agreement which was signed in August 2011 in Abidjan.

Ivorian and Liberian government officials extolled the significant decrease in the number of Ivorian refugees in Liberia from about 220,000 at the peak of the influx in 2011 to the remaining population of less than 25 per cent. Liberia's Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, Varney A. Sirleaf, described the decrease in the Ivorian refugee population as "a huge achievement."

UNHCR reminded the Ivorian and Liberian governments of the necessity to take all the appropriate measures to ensure an enabling security environment in the areas of return in order not to slow down the momentum on voluntary repatriation. The UN refugee agency also reminded the two Governments of their commitment to respect international protection principles, in particular the cardinal principle of non-refoulement, to which all the parties agreed.

UNHCR Representatives Mohamed Toure of Côte d'Ivoire and Khassim Diagne of Liberia reiterated the need to continue the voluntary repatriation process ahead of the rainy season to avoid significant logistical challenges.

Liberia's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cllr. Boakai Kanneh; the Executive Director of the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC), Cllr. Abba G. Williams; the Director of the Service for Aid and Assistance to Refugees and Stateless Persons (SAARA), Ambassador Timothée Ezouan, and other officials made significant contributions to the deliberations.

The outbreak of the Ebola virus in Liberia in March and April with confirmed cases and reported deaths, and a security incident in May in Fete Village in Côte d'Ivoire in which some people were killed temporarily dampened the repatriation process with a break for about two months.

"We are delighted that the repatriation process has resumed and hundreds of refugees are registering to return home. It is our sincere hope that the momentum that picked up in the first few months of 2014 will continue uninterrupted," remarked Representative Diagne.



UNHCR Photo/Sulaiman Momodu

*The Tripartite Commission meets in Abidjan*

Ivorian and Liberian government officials extolled the significant decrease in the number of Ivorian refugees in Liberia from about 220,000 at the peak of the influx in 2011 to the remaining population of less than 25 per cent.



*UNHCR is taking measures to prevent Ebola in Ivorian refugee camps*

# Preventing Ebola in Refugee Camps

By Sulaiman Momodu

**G**enevieve, 38, gently opens the tap fitted on a plastic bucket and thoroughly washes her hands with soap and water. "I don't want to catch Ebola. Ebola can kill people quickly," says the mother of three at the PTP Refugee Camp situated at the former prime timber production site in Grand Gedeh County. Liberia's largest refugee camp has more than 15,000 Ivorian refugees.

Genevieve is among some 42,000 Ivorian refugees remaining in Liberia after fleeing from Côte d'Ivoire more than three years ago as a result of post-election violence. "In addition to the washing of hands, we are also told to avoid touching dead animals and avoid eating monkeys and bats," she adds.

With the deadly haemorrhagic fever claiming lives in Guinea and Liberia, and with neighbouring Sierra

Leone also confirming cases in late May, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in collaboration with the Government of Liberia and health partners, is taking all measures to prevent an Ebola outbreak in the three remaining Ivorian refugee camps in Grand Gedeh, Maryland and Nimba counties.

Fear of the deadly Ebola virus has been intense and understandable. Ebola is one of the world's deadliest viruses. Since the outbreak of the disease was reported in Guinea in March, UNHCR has been attending coordination meetings at the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW) in Monrovia to ensure the refugee agency was part of the national response and refugees were included in the preparedness plan for the country.

As part of its support to the battle against Ebola, UNHCR has donated various items to MoHSW includ-



UNHCR Photo/Sulaiman Momodu

ing: light weight tents, tarpaulins, buckets, and several cartons of Ringer Lactate, Sodium Chloride, and Disposable Gloves.

At the field level, UNHCR Sub Office in Zwedru and Field offices in Saclepea and Harper continue to work closely with partners to support the various County Health Teams to develop and support contingency plans in refugee host counties. As part of preparedness for any outbreak, Isolation Centres in Bahn and PTP refugee camp clinics have been equipped with Personal Protective Equipment from the World Health Organization including facemasks, boots, and gloves. UNHCR has also procured 18 megaphones and printed thousands of brochures and posters for awareness campaigns in camps. Other measures to prevent the disease are: minimizing unnecessary movements of refugees in and out of camps, carefully monitoring any new arrivals, and the handling of burials and management of waste disposal system. Ebola awareness messages are also disseminated in French on community radio stations for the benefit of the French-speaking refugees. In addition, trainings for health workers in clinics and communities have been conducted centering on what to do if someone shows symptoms of Ebola.

Dr. Elias Mammo, Medical Coordinator for Africa Humanitarian Action, a UNHCR health partner covering Bahn Camp, says there has been no outbreak of any diseases in Ivorian refugee camps in the country since they were established in 2011. "Mass sensitization to prevent diseases is an ongoing activity with the active involvement of the refugees themselves," he explains. The International Rescue Committee is a UNHCR health partner covering PTP and Little Wlebo refugee camps. It also undertakes similar sensitization activities. CARE is a partner responsible for water, sanitation and hygiene.

In addition to reaching refugees through mass sensitization meetings, going to schools and markets, religious gatherings and more, UNHCR personnel and staff of partners are also being sensitized and provided regular updates on the Ebola outbreak. "We have done a lot of sensitization and have provided water and soap for hand washing purposes, as well as provided Hand Sanitizers in UNHCR offices," says Hilary Kagume Njenge, a UNHCR public health staff.

"We will continue to work with our partners to create awareness among refugees. It is our fervent hope that no case of Ebola will be reported in any refugee camp

in Liberia and that the region will be soon declared free of the disease as a result of the collective efforts of all," remarks UNHCR Representative Khassim Diagne.

Ebola awareness messages are also disseminated in French on community radio stations for the benefit of the French-speaking refugees.



UNHCR Photo/Sulaiman Momodu

*A view of Liberia's largest refugee camp*

# Mobile Coverage Brings New Hope to Ivorian Refugees

By Sulaiman Momodu

*Liberia's largest refugee camp that hosts over 15,000 Ivorians was agog with celebration in April as mobile telecommunication coverage was extended to their camp located at the former Prime Timber Production site in Grand Gedeh County. The mobile telecommunication coverage brings new hope to the refugees as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) embarks on voluntary repatriation.*

Since its establishment in September 2011, one major challenge refugees, humanitarian workers, and visitors to the camp, including UN peacekeepers, usually contended with was the lack of effective mobile communication coverage.

"We danced for several hours on the day we had very clear mobile communication coverage in our camp," said Jaine, 36, a mother of two. Jaine said when violence broke out in Côte d'Ivoire she was separated from her husband and one of her kids as they were not together at the time.

“Because we now can make telephone calls from the camp, I have been able to make contacts and to know that my husband and our other child are in Ghana. I am very happy that I have spoken to them,” she said, hopeful of one day reuniting with her family.

The refugees say before a tower was erected in the camp, they usually went to high altitude by climbing trees and hilly areas in search of signal. “From where I come from in Côte d’Ivoire you can have mobile network wherever you go, even in the

forests. We can now talk with our people and get reliable information about home,” said Pierre, who was among the first batch of refugees to arrive at the camp.

Humanitarian workers say previously they had to rely mainly on using radio communication which can be cumbersome, especially during emergencies. UNHCR Head of Sub-Office Fatima Mohammed describes the mobile coverage as “a remarkable achievement,” pointing out that it will enhance security in the camp, the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the general

protection of refugees. “We are happy that we have no more ‘no network.’ Today, we can even access the Internet in the camp – UNHCR staff, partners and refugees,” she added.

Lone Star Cell MTN completed the installation of the telecommunication tower at the camp located some 15 km from Zwedru, the Grand Gedeh County capital, on the request of UNHCR with support from the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC).

Corporate Affairs Executive of the telephone company Laurence Konmla Bropleh reiterated that his company will continue to support UNHCR’s humanitarian endeavours. He noted that thousands of Liberians were once refugees in Côte d’Ivoire and other neighbouring countries and telecommunication was very useful in enabling them contact friends and family members.

“Although Lonestar Cell MTN was set up to make profit for its shareholders, profitability was not a considered factor in making the decision to erect the tower at PTP camp. Instead, it was the interest of refugees and national and regional security,” said the company’s Chief Executive Officer, Tebogo Mogapi.

Making a call for the first time from PTP camp, UNHCR Representative Khassim Diagne expressed satisfaction and gratitude for the erection of the tower. He pointed out that as the UN refugee agency’s operation now focuses on the voluntary repatriation of refugees, “the mobile telecommunication coverage will give the opportunity to refugees to communicate with their families and friends in Côte d’Ivoire in order for them to get credible information and make informed decisions about voluntarily returning home.” Liberia currently hosts more than 42,000 Ivorian refugees.

*A new mobile tower gets erected at the camp*



UNHCR Photo/Sulaiman Momodu

“We can now talk with our people and get reliable information about home.”

# Another Ivorian Refugee Camp Closes

*School buildings were among assets UNHCR handed over to the Solo Town community as Solo Refugee Camp was closed*



UNHCR Photo/Sulaiman Momodu

By Sulaiman Momodu

In an effort to provide better protection and humanitarian services to more than 42,000 remaining Ivorian refugees in Liberia, and in view of the high cost of running a refugee camp, the Solo Refugee Camp in Grand Gedeh County was closed on 21 March.

The camp is the third that has been closed over the past two years. Ziah and Dougee Camps, also in Grand Gedeh County, closed in 2012 and 2013 respectively.

In 2011, six refugee camps were established to accommodate thousands of Ivorian refugees in Nimba, Maryland and Grand Gedeh counties. Three Ivorian refugee camps now remain in three counties in Liberia: Bahn Camp in Nimba, Little Wlebo Camp in Maryland, and PTP Camp in Grand Gedeh.

At its peak, Solo camp hosted about

6,000 refugees but more than 3,000 of them voluntarily repatriated to Côte d'Ivoire while others relocated to the PTP Refugee Camp in the same county. The PTP camp now hosts more than 15,000 refugees.

At a ceremony witnessed by Government and UN officials, local authorities, and members of the host community, the UNHCR Representative Khassim Diagne symbolically handed over the key to Solo camp signifying the turning over of 85 acres of land back to the Government and the local community. "The closure of Solo camp is part of the joint strategy by the Government of Liberia and UNHCR to consolidate refugee camps and provide targeted interventions especially in an environment where resources are scarce," he said, expressing gratitude to the Government and the people of Liberia for their generous hospitality.

As a token of appreciation for hosting

Ivorian refugees, UNHCR and partners handed over assets including buildings that once served as primary school, clinic, offices, police station, warehouse, and distribution halls. Other assets included four hand-pumps, 27 latrines, nine bath-houses and three laundry slabs. In addition to the assets, the UN refugee agency had provided 91 houses with three bundles of Zinc each and other assorted construction materials to Solo Town community residents as a way of identifying with their development efforts. Local authorities thanked UNHCR for the assets and reiterated that the existence of the camp created job opportunities for especially unemployed youths.

The Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC) Executive Director, Cllr Abba G. Williams, urged the community to make maximum use of the assets and add value to them.



Pakistani peacekeepers complete their tour of duty in Zwedru

UNMIL Photo/Wellington Railey, Jr.

# Change of Guard at Border Outpost:

## *Exit PakBatt, Enter NiBatt*

By Wellington Railey, Jr.

*After the successful completion of their peacekeeping tour in Grand Gedeh County, the Pakistani Contingent left the UN Mission in Liberia in March this year.*

**"W**e completed our assignment in Sector B and have handed over surveillance of the area to Nibatt 34 (Nigerian Battalion)," said Major Asif Shahzad, Acting Commander of PakBatt in Zwedru, as his men packed their bags. "In a soldier's life, such a day comes very rarely. And you leave with a sense of victory, of accomplishment."

Following nine months on the ground, the Pakistani Contingent

handed over the area of operation to their Nigerian counterparts.

Major Shahzad said as peacekeepers in UNMIL, it was a great experience for him and his troops as they contributed to Liberia's peace process.

Paying tribute to colleagues who lost their lives while serving with the UN mission, Major Shahzad prayed that their souls rest in peace.

As the Pakistani flag was lowered at the UNMIL Zwedru HQ of Sector B3 and

the Nigerian flag raised in its stead, NiBatt Commanding Officer, Col. Fu Ozoemena, promised that like their Pakistani predecessors, the Nigerian Contingent will ensure that the peace and security being enjoyed in the southeast of Liberia is consolidated.

The Head of the UN Field Office in Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County, Thomas Mtaiisi reiterated that the drawdown, repositioning and restructuring of the Mission's Force do not mean UNMIL was leaving. Rather, it was reorganizing itself to respond to the security needs of Liberia as the situation improves.

Recognizing the efforts of the Pakistani Contingent, the HoFo said the peace process wouldn't have progressed this far without their effort and enthusiasm.

He welcomed the Nigerian Contingent and expressed optimism that their presence will further help to achieve UNMIL's mandate in Liberia.

Grand Gedeh County Superintendent Peter Solo said the Pakistani Contingent contributed immensely to the welfare of Liberians. Solo said since the inception of UNMIL following the signing of the Accra Comprehensive Peace Accord, the people of Grand Gedeh have enjoyed genuine peace and reconciliation.

"On behalf of the people of Grand Gedeh, we want to assure the Pakistanis that their presence in Grand Gedeh will never be forgotten. We want to convey to you our highest appreciation. We continue to adore you for the sacrifices you rendered us," the Superintendent said.



UNMIL Photo/Bwewusa William

*The Land Commission has trained 103 volunteer local dispute practitioners*

# Transcending Land Disputes in Liberia:

## The Case of Maryland County

By Bwewusa William

*Land is a natural resource and an economic asset which, if optimally utilized, yields positive results for livelihood. At the same time, land has been one of the root causes of violent conflicts in various parts of the world.*

**O**n its road to post-conflict recovery, mitigation of land-related conflicts in a non-violent manner is important. It is for this reason that the UN Peacebuilding Fund provided funding through UN-Habitat for the Liberia

Land Commission to establish a land dispute resolution programme. The idea was implemented through the establishment of Land Coordination Centers (LCC) as pilot projects in selected counties where the incidence of land conflict was high. These include Nimba, Bong, Margibi, Maryland

and Lofa Counties.

LCCs are mandated to strengthen the capacity of local land dispute practitioners to mediate land disputes through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and to educate the public on the procedure to buy land.

In Maryland County, the LCC pilot project started operations in April 2013. The presence of LCCs has had enormous benefits. Community members resolve conflicts amicably without any financial stress, reducing the number of land-related cases going to court. Instead, the courts refer cases to the LCC. Citizens are enlightened on the procedures for formal and legal acquisition of land through outreach sensitization programmes; local land dispute practitioners mediate land disputes in their communities hence making steady progress in finding solutions to the conflicts.

In support of successful implementation of the programme, the Land Commission conducts conflict resolution seminars. Recently, land dispute resolution practitioners were trained in collaborative land dispute resolution at the Pleebo City Hall and in Barraken Town. The training included skills in arbitration, negotiation, mediation and the Constitution of Liberia.

The Coordinator of the LCC in Maryland County, Gregory Monokpanyen Mieh, says the Land Commission through its partners has trained 103 volunteer local dispute practitioners in the two piloted districts (Pleebo and Harper) on Alternative Dispute Resolution. As a result, a commendable

number of community members have sought the services of the LCC in the County.

Mieh says since its inception in Maryland County, the LCC has documented 57 land disputes, 40 of which were brought by the disputants, while 12 were documented by the Case Intake Monitor in Harper and Pleebo Sodoken Districts. Most land disputes are caused by double land sale, boundary conflict, encroachment and claiming land falsely.

During a recent visit to the Maryland LCC, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Karin Landren, said, "In the court decision, usually one person is happier and the other one is very unhappy. In mediated settlement, everyone is part of the process. It's very transparent. Maybe both are not 100 per cent happy but not usually not 100 per cent disappointed either. So I think the need for this work will only increase."

The UN envoy assured continued support to the programme. "I know you are receiving support funds from the Peace-building Fund and UN Habitat and we are also encouraging the government to put resources into the land work. So, we will continue to advocate for this work. It's important to the future of peace in Liberia

it is so fundamental," she said.

In Maryland County, the LCC in conjunction with the County authorities resolved a 34-year-long land dispute between the Jacksonville and Waa-Hodo Townships in Harper District. Boundary demarcation exercises conducted by the Maryland County Surveyor team took place on 30 August 2013 following a series of mediation meetings facilitated by the Maryland County LCC.

The two townships agreed to divide the contested land into two equal parts to find a common boundary. Furthermore, parties agreed to jointly contribute funds for construction of a monument at the boundary as a gesture of reconciliation. Meanwhile, the County Surveyor advised the Township Commissioners to halt any sale of land until his office completes drafting a layout for the area.

Despite efforts by the LCC, various challenges remain to its effective performance. These include ignorance of the law on land acquisition in Liberia, the possession of documents such as cash receipts, tribal certificates, or land deeds which are not probated, and unscrupulous land dealers engaging in double selling of land. There is also the unavailability of licensed land surveyors and the lack of competent professional staff.

Mieh recommends that the international community consider funding the Land Dispute Resolution Programme of the Land Commission as this will enable it to provide more support to LCCs to augment the capacity of local land dispute resolution practitioners to operate more efficiently and effectively, and to extend services to other areas when the need arises.

LCC in conjunction with the County authorities resolved a 34-year-long land dispute between the Jacksonville and Waa-Hodo Townships in Harper District.

#### *Mitigation of land-related conflicts in a non-violent manner is important*



UNMIL Photo/Staton Winter

# Land Surveyors Trained

By James S. King

*Land tenure management in post-conflict Liberia has been marred by disputes across the country, a legacy of the prolonged civil war. Liberia's development partners, including the World Bank, see this problem and the lack of trained cadastral surveyors as major challenges to the country's recovery. To alleviate the problem, the World Bank in collaboration with the Government of Liberia (GoL), USAID and Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) earlier this year provided equipment to train 33 Liberians on cadastral survey technique.*

*Students gather at the Cadastral Survey Training Center*



During the commissioning of the Cadastral Laboratory Training Center at the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy in Monrovia in April 2014, World Bank Senior Agricultural Specialist Abimbola A. Adubi called for “effective collaboration” with the Government in order to create and sustain functional land administration system in Liberia. The World Bank’s support includes provision of 33 computers and accessories, air conditioners, furniture, software and surveying equipment as well as structural cabling of the building for installation of fiber optic internet services which was done through the Liberia Land Rights Reform and Rehabilitation Project (LRRRP).

In 2009, the Government of Liberia established the Land Commission charged with the responsibility to reform land policy laws and programmes following a series of violent land conflicts throughout Liberia. The Commission’s span is five years, with no adjudicatory and implementation authority. It was mandated to develop a comprehensive national land tenure and land use system that will provide equitable

UNMIL Photo/James S. King



*The next generation of cadastral surveyors are trained.*

access to land and security of tenure so as to facilitate inclusive, sustained growth and development, ensure peace and security, and provide sustainable management of the environment. The Government of Liberia and other donor agencies including USAID, World Bank, UN-Habitat, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), among others are providing support to the Commission.

It is hoped the Cadastral Survey Training Center will continue to serve as training ground for Liberia's next generation of cadastral surveyors, an initiative which Adubi termed an "important milestone in the creation of a functioning land administration in Liberia."

Liberia, with a population of 4.19 million has a total number of 70 registered surveyors, many of whom are past the age of 60 and lack basic skills in modern survey

technology. The use of archaic survey methods that do not properly demarcate property boundaries contribute to the many challenges facing land tenure administration and management according to a report by Liberia's Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy.

Authorities at the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy said trained surveyors and cartographers are important elements for land reform in Liberia. Last year, the Ministry recruited 33 young Liberians who were trained under a project called "Train-the-Trainer." They were trained on the collection, interpretation and management of spatial information, survey and cartography. Land cadastral infrastructures include a unique identification of parcels deriving from cadastral surveys. They facilitate sustainable use of land as well as protect land rights.

In 2009, the Government of Liberia established the Land Commission charged with the responsibility to reform land policy laws and programmes following a series of violent land conflicts throughout Liberia.

# Strengthening Law-Making Process in Liberia

By James S. King

**T**he need to reform and strengthen the process of law-making in Liberia is central to effective implementation of the Government's development programmes, participants at a dialogue on the law-making process in Liberia agreed in late April. Co-hosted by Liberia's Governance Commission (GC) and the Law Reform Commission (LRC) in order to identify problems responsible for delays in implementing development programmes, the dialogue received financial and technical support from The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The participants identified several chal-

lenges affecting development programmes initiated by the Government and its donor partners. These included lack of coordination, institutional tensions, inefficiency, inadequate information sharing, delay in enacting laws and passage of bills, implementation of laws once passed, and failure by institutions to comply with prescribed process for enactment of laws.

The Legal Advisor to the President of Liberia, Seward Cooper, and the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hans Barchue, in separate statements committed themselves to strengthening coordination and cooperation in handling bills emanating from their respective offices. Cooper said future bills sent to his

office will be forwarded to members of the LRC for review before submission to the Legislature while Barchue said the House of Representatives will consider bills "only" emanating from the Office of the President. Participants agreed on recommendations that private bills should be circulated amongst government institutions for review as a "first step" approach.

The process of identifying ways to strengthen law-making in Liberia ended with the constitution of a technical team composed of members from the LRC, GC, the Legislature, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Office of the Legal Advisor to the President. The team was tasked to develop a policy framework



*Participants at the dialogue*

*Governance Commission Photo*

Constitutional law critics have described the current Liberian Constitution as archaic and one that contributed to the outbreak of the civil conflict that lasted more than a decade.



*Governance Commission Photo*

*Governance Commission Chairman Dr. Amos C. Sawyer addresses the dialogue*

that will govern law-making, including a clearing house and tracking mechanism for legislation.

Results of work from the “Stake Holders’ Dialogue” and the technical team are expected to form part of the National Law Reform process. The Government, in collaboration with development partners, has initiated a review the current Constitution of Liberia through a national referendum with a view to addressing current social, political and economic realities in the country.

Liberian women at a Constitution Review gathering last year in Monrovia called for a review of the current Constitution to

allow women greater political participation. Select laws requiring reform are the laws on elections, the laws on the tenure of the Offices of the President of Liberia and members of the Legislature, land reform laws, and laws on decentralization of governance and administrative processes among others.

The current Liberian Constitution was adopted in 1986 following a reform of the previous one that was adopted on independence in 1847. Constitutional law critics have described the current Liberian Constitution as archaic and one that contributed to the outbreak of the civil conflict that lasted more than a decade.

The Government, in collaboration with development partners, has initiated a review of the current Constitution of Liberia.

# Should Liberia Have a



**Alfreda Railey-Steward**

Resident, Old Matadi Estate, Sinkor

I prefer the usage of the Liberian dollar as legal tender rather than United States dollar. Firstly, the usage of the Liberian dollar will signify true nationalism as a nation and secondly, it will lead to control of our economy in terms of commerce, capital flight and eventual infrastructural development because Liberian dollar cannot be exported to the United States or elsewhere as is the case with the United States dollar.



**Folley Kiatamba**

Legal Dept., Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Capitol Hill, Monrovia

For the purpose of commerce, I would propose the usage of a single currency the Liberian dollar. For import purpose I would like for the Central Bank of Liberia to control the issuance of the United States dollars only to importers of commodities and people involved in infrastructure development who would have to import certain construction materials into the country. The Liberian dollar should only be the sole currency in circulation for revenue and domestic commerce.



**Deddeh Tokpa**

Resident, New Georgia Estate  
Monrovia

I think it would be a wise decision for Liberians to use their own currency which is the Liberian dollar rather than use the United States and Liberian dollars simultaneously as it is the situation currently. The usage of the Liberian dollar would bring about rapid infrastructural development because Liberians with properties abroad would not be able to syphon large amount of American dollars out of the country to maintain those properties which is one reason why our economy is performing poorly. We need the American dollars for our national reserve.



**Lydia S.F. Johnson**

Resident, Ashmun Street, Snapper Hill  
Monrovia

I think the usage of the Liberian and American dollars together will help boost our economy because Liberia lacks infrastructures to attract foreign investments and trade. For this reason I support the continue usage of both currencies as legal tenders. The American dollar is a blessing for Liberia. It is helping with the sustainability of our economy.

# Dual Currency System?



**Victoria Johnson-Williams**

Resident, Paynesville, Monrovia

The usage of the dual currency does not mean well for our economy. It devalues the Liberian dollar, and causes inflation and capital flight. For this reason, I will suggest that the Liberian dollar be made the only medium of exchange for goods and services. Travelers to Liberia should be asked to exchange their foreign currencies at designated forex bureaus monitored by the Central Bank of Liberia. This would help curtail the fluctuations in exchange rates.



**Amjad Nyei**

Student, Foreign Service Institute  
Monrovia

I am against the usage of the dual currency in Liberia. The concurrent usage of both Liberian and United States dollars as legal tenders undermine our sovereignty and nationalism. The dual currency system poses problems for both domestic and foreign trade due to fluctuating rates against the Liberian dollar which affect profit margins. Let those responsible for the economy address the problem of dual currency.



**Henry Gborlie**

Kukatornon Forex Bureau, Broad Street  
Monrovia

I think the Liberian dollar should be the currency for transaction in Liberia rather than to use both the Liberian and United States dollars for transactions. If we must use both, let the Central Bank of Liberia set and monitor the rate of exchange between the Liberian and United States dollars to control the quantity of United States dollars leaving Liberia.



**Charles Jarsor, Jr.**

Textile shopkeeper, Broad Street  
Monrovia

I support the usage of the Liberian dollar because it will help reduce the outflow of the United States dollars which is the order of the day. This situation puts pressure on the Liberian dollars in terms of exchange rates because the United States dollars is limited on the market. The Central Bank of Liberia should play its role to centralize forex bureaus and monitor the outflow of the United States dollars.

