

# **LIBERIA NATIONAL GENDER POLICY**

**REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA  
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**Ministry of Gender and Development**

**2009**

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### **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AFELL	Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BCR	Bureau of Correction and Rehabilitation
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of Child
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DEVAW	Declaration on Violence Against Women
DDRR	Demobilization, Disarmament, Rehabilitation, Reintegration.
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GFP	Gender Focal Point
GMS	Gender Management System
GTFs	Gender Task Forces
HIV	Human Immune Deficiency Virus
ICT	Information Communication and Technology
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IEC	Information Education Communication
LEEP	Liberian Emergency Employment Program
LNP	Liberia National Police
LISGIS	Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo Information Service
LDHS	Liberia Demographic and Health Survey
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MSMEs	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
MoGD	Ministry of Gender and Development
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGP	National Gender Policy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations

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NARDA,	New African Research and Development Agency
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
	PWD Persons with Disabilities
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
SWAAL	Society for Women and AIDS in Africa/Liberia
SDGEA	Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendant
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WACP	Women and Children Protection
WONGOSOL	Women NGO Secretariat of Liberia
ZOES	Traditional Leaders - Teachers of Traditional Values (Women and Men).

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## **FOREWORD**

The National Gender Policy is an instrument for change illustrating the Government's bold step to breaking with the past and moving on with sustainable development for both women and men in Liberia. The Policy demonstrates high political will and commitment by the Government to eliminate all forms of gender based discrimination in order to achieve gender equality.

Despite these commitments, much more remains to be done. Women in Liberia still face discrimination and marginalization in many ways. Women do not share equally in the fruits of production. Gender disparities and unacceptable inequalities persist at all levels. Deeply entrenched attitude against women and girls, perpetuate inequality and discrimination against women in public and private life, on a daily basis. It is important to note that, equal opportunity for all people is essential to the construction of a just and democratic society.

The vision of this NGP is to guide the country towards achieving gender equity and equality, building and utilizing the potential of women and men, boys and girls in pursuing and benefiting from national development goals.

The NGP has emerged from a participatory and inclusive process involving Government Ministries and Agencies, public and private institutions, women's NGOs, religious leaders, cultural leaders and Zoes, Persons with Disabilities, Persons living with HIV and AIDS, the national legislature, media practitioners, other civil society organizations, youth and community based organizations nationwide. The NGP is a powerful tool, calling for the integration of gender perspectives in all policies and programs. It shall be our guide and constant point of reference in mainstreaming gender in all sectors, Government Ministries, Agencies, Public and Private Institutions. I ask that it be disseminated widely nationally and locally. The implementation of its goals, objectives and measures must be actively monitored by all stakeholders.

The NGP places heavy responsibility on line Ministries and Agencies to play a key role in follow-up, implementation and monitoring. As the Minister for Gender and Development, I will ensure that the recommendations directly made to the MoGD are implemented swiftly and effectively. I will work with my colleagues in Line Ministries, Agencies, Corporations, NGOs, CBOs and Development Partners, to ensure that a coordinated system-wide approach is used in mainstreaming gender in our development processes.

We are grateful to the Development Partners, who have provided funding and technical support for the National Gender Policy and sincerely thank those who have spent hours and days in preparing this Document. Let us all work together, to ensure that the equal rights of women and men as guided by the NGP becomes a reality. Let us all work together to implement it.

**Vabah K. Gayflor**  
**Minister of Gender and Development**

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### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The Government of Liberia is strongly committed to gender equality as a means of maintaining peace, reducing poverty, enhancing justice and promoting development in the country. It is in furtherance of this commitment, that a National Gender Policy was developed in 2009 through a wide consultative process with input from various stakeholders. The Policy recommends that gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting should be adopted as a development approach and shall inform the economic reform agenda, medium and long term development planning, value re-orientation, social transformation and other development initiatives of Government.

The National Gender Forum and the Ministry of Gender and Development, the national gender machineries responsible for the coordination of the implementation of the Policy acknowledge with gratitude the financial and technical support provided by United Nations agencies including UNDP, UNMIL-OGA, UNIFEM and UNFPA for the development of the National Gender Policy and the Strategic Results Framework. Our gratitude goes to individuals, institutions and organizations for the interest and commitment shown towards the successful development of the NGP. They include the Ministries of Planning and Economic Affairs, Finance, Commerce, Industry and Trade, Agriculture, Information, Culture Affairs and Tourism, Labor, Education, Health and Social Welfare, Internal Affairs, Justice, Youth and Sports and the Bureau of the Budget. Non Governmental Organizations were not left out. We are grateful to the Forum for African Women Educationist (FAWE), Concerned Christian Community, Women NGO Secretariat of Liberia,(WONGOSOL), Society for Women and AIDS in Africa/Liberia (SWAAL), Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia (AFELL), New African Research and Development Agency (NARDA) and all other civil society organizations too numerous to mention here.

MoGD would also like to acknowledge the technical expertise of the international and national consultants Dr. Akinyi Nzioki and Ms. Etweda Cooper, respectively for leading the drafting team of the Ministry of Gender and Development and for the enormous work they put into the process. The Ministry appreciates the contributions of the Gender Focal Points, the Development Partners, Ministries, Agencies and civil society organizations that participated in the stakeholders' workshop held for the purpose of finalizing and adopting the National Gender Policy and the Strategic Results Framework.

We look forward to your support and collaboration in the onerous task ahead of us in coordinating the implementation process of the National Gender Policy.

**Ministry of Gender and Development**  
**Monrovia, Liberia**  
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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Gender inequalities and women's marginalization in Liberia are maintained by socio-cultural perceptions and practices supporting female subordination and male superiority. Girls and boys, women and men are socialized into taking different roles in society. In turn, these roles are transferred to schools, public life, institutions and work places. The combined women's roles in productive and reproductive work creates excessive burden of workload in the family as care takers and providers and therefore curtails their participation in the formal economy. Women are constantly missing out on opportunities and participation in management and decision-making at all levels of the society.

The Liberia Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRS) lays the foundation for the achievement of gender equity and women's and girls' empowerment, promoting equitable access to resources, through the implementation of gender sensitive macro and micro policies. The National Gender Forum and the Ministry of Gender and Development (MoGD) are set to take the lead in mainstreaming gender in all the sectors of development programs, coordinating partners' activities, monitoring, evaluating, reporting and ensuring that men, women, boys and girls benefit equitably from all development programs.

The goal of the National Gender Policy is to mainstream gender in the national development processes, enhance women's and girls' empowerment for sustainable and equitable development; and create and strengthen gender responsive structures and mechanisms in which both women and men can participate and benefit from development programs on equal basis.

The development of the National Gender Policy (NGP) was overseen by the MoGD. A participatory process was adopted and different stakeholders at national and local levels were consulted to discuss the content of the Policy. These are Government Ministries and Agencies; women's NGOs and networks; other non-governmental organizations; private sector; the Gender committees and Women Caucus in the National Legislature; traditional elders, leaders and Zoes; persons with disabilities and the media. After the consultations, a national validation workshop was held before adopting the final Policy document.

The situation analysis of women in Liberia reveals that women and girls play an essential role in Liberia's economy but face various structural constraints that hinder them from effective participation in economic activities. Gender segregation in the labor market and women's multiple roles in the family and productive responsibilities, limit their opportunities for economic empowerment. Women are major players in the agriculture sector, providing all marketing and trading services, and linking rural and urban markets through their informal networks. Despite women's contribution to this sector, they neither own land nor have secure tenure to the land they work on, compared to men. Furthermore, rural women have less access to credit, training, agricultural extension and information.

Due to the gendered division of labor, women carry out a larger share of unpaid caring family work. Women and men are not equally distributed across the productive sectors, nor are they equally remunerated. Literacy rates for women in rural areas are staggeringly low compared to urban women, rural and urban men. Although gender disparities in primary school enrolment

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have been significantly reduced, large disparities continue to exist at the secondary school level. Possible reasons for girls' school drop-out from school include sexual exploitation, rape, teenage pregnancies, forced or early marriages, poverty, coupled with parents' preference for boys, denying girls access to schooling, as well as gender roles stereotyping in educational curriculum and general discrimination against the girl child.

Unequal participation by men in family planning programs, gender based violence, and overload of work for both productive and family care work, all increase the risk of ill health among women than men. The main health factors contributing to the high level of maternal mortality include the acute shortage of skilled health-workers and extremely high numbers of teenage pregnancies. Liberian women play an important role in promoting sustainable development as consumers, producers, caretakers and educators of their families yet they do not participate in decision making on the implementation of environmental policies.

Sexual and domestic violence, early and forced marriage, wife inheritance, and female genital mutilation (FGM) are the most prevalent forms of GBV in Liberia. Although most of GBV escalated during the conflict, evidence indicates that the GBV still continues even in this time of peace. The destruction of roads and bridges during the war has had a major negative effect on the agriculture sector, not only for marketing activities in which women are traditionally involved but also the delivery of basic services such as health care, water, sanitation, education, and security.

Peace building, reconciliation, and ensuring improved security for all are key challenges that post conflict Liberia faces. Representation of women in the security sector remains limited. The Government security sector reforms are intended to establish mechanisms to protect the fundamental freedoms of all Liberians and to champion human rights and gender equity. The gender imbalance in the Government is a clear manifestation of gender inequity in the society. Women are represented in a few highly visible positions in the Government Sector, but the overall political representation is limited and their participation in leadership and decision making bodies, remains low. The majority of judicial officers are male. At the County level, administrative structures are dominated by male officials, chiefs and elders.

Persons with Disabilities face discrimination from lack of user-friendly facilities, access to services and the job market as a result of social biases and stereotypes associated with disability generally. Women with disabilities suffer double discrimination - first as women and second as persons with disabilities. The elderly face constraints in accessing services and in improving their livelihoods, as well as suffering from old-age related diseases requiring special medical attention. Most of the time health facilities are not within easy reach. The high rate of unemployment coupled with low levels of education and training further make women more vulnerable to HIV infections. In addition to these, cultural and social pressures, economic dependency and fear of violence make women less able to negotiate safer sex. Fear of negative effects, stigma and discrimination prevents many women from sharing their personal experiences, with serious implications in accessing treatment and controlling HIV infections.

However, the political will for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the country is clearly evident. The development and subsequent adoption of a National Gender Policy

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is a reflection of this commitment. The NGP is in line with the Constitution of the Republic of Liberia which is the supreme law of the land, promoting unity, liberty, stability, equality, justice and human rights. Government's commitment to promoting gender equality is also reflected in various sub-regional, regional and international instruments which have been ratified and adopted by the country.

The Policy identifies 19 priority areas for intervention as follows: Gender mainstreaming and Coordination of Partners' Activities/International Partnership for Development; Economic Empowerment; Agriculture, Water Resources and Access to land; Employment, Gender Budgeting, Human Rights and Gender Based Violence; Vulnerable Groups (Girl child, PWD and PLWHA); Political Participation and Decision Making positions for women; Health and Reproductive Rights; Peace and National Security; Media, Information and Communication Technology; Research and Sex Disaggregated Data; Monitoring and Evaluation; Education and Training; Environment & Natural Resources; Access to Justice; Infrastructure and Basic Services; Culture, Family and Socialisation; Trade, Commerce and Industry.

The National Gender Forum is the national machinery for gender mainstreaming, coordinating, advising, monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the Policy. The overall implementation of the NGP will be carried out by all sectors - public and private institutions, and Government Agencies under the coordination of MoGD. Other actors include local community groups, Non-Governmental Organizations, women's organizations, the media, religious groups, youth organizations, cultural and traditional groups, legislative bodies, academic and research institutions, as well as professional associations. The National Gender Forum with MoGD taking the lead shall monitor and advise on gender equality issues nationally.

Finally, the successful implementation of the NGP rests with the Government of Liberia. The NGP recommends the incorporation of Gender Budgeting within the National Budget and the allocation of a minimum of 30% of the national budget for gender mainstreaming within sectoral Ministries, Agencies and public institutions. NGOs, private sector and other actors in the civil society are encouraged to mobilize and allocate resources for the implementation of the NGP within their Organizations. The UN Agencies, Development Partners and Bilateral Donors are expected to assist in the mobilization of funds and the allocation of adequate resources towards the fulfillment of agreed targets in the Policy.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION AND POLICY CONTEXT**

#### **1.1 BACKGROUND**

1. Gender disparities and imbalances are common in every sphere of life in Liberia. In most cases, women are disproportionately and unfairly represented. This leads to a variety of social problems that can be associated with gender inequality and imbalance such as unequal power relations, lack of access to basic services, economic disempowerment, low participation in decision making, lack of access to legal and judicial services as well as HIV and AIDS.
2. Despite progress made since the end of the civil war to put in place structures that will bridge the gender gaps, in many sectors of the Liberian society, women and girls continue to have limited access to education and health services, and the formal economy. Women have been left out of opportunities and participation in management and decision-making positions at all levels of the society.
3. Gender inequality and women's marginalization in Liberia is maintained by traditional and religious perceptions that portray women as subordinate and men as superior. Girls and boys, women and men are socialized and culturally ascribed different and rigid roles, duties and responsibilities with regard to division of labor, access and control over resources and decision-making positions. In turn, these are transferred to schools, the community and the work places. As a result, these translate into gender inequalities, gender biases and discrimination in the whole society, some of which are projected in high incidences of GBV against women and girls; persistent abuse of the rights of women; sexual abuse of the girl child and teenage pregnancy; girls dropping out of school; women's excessive poverty and dependency on men and over-burden of workload on women. All of these limit women's effective participation in society and benefiting from development.
4. This National Gender Policy (NGP) is intended to eliminate all gender related problems in Liberia.

#### **1.2 Rationale for the National Gender Policy**

5. Promoting gender equality is globally accepted as a development strategy for reducing poverty levels among women and men, improving health and living standards and enhancing efficiency of public investments. The attainment of gender equality is not only seen as an end in itself and human rights issue, but as a prerequisite for the achievement of sustainable development.
6. This National Gender Policy for Liberia is an instrument for change, illustrating Government's 'bold step to breaking with the past'. As an instrument of change, the NGP is a sign of high level and strong commitment by Government to address gender equality and women's empowerment issues effectively. The Policy provides an overall context for mainstreaming

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a gender perspective into the national development agenda. In particular, the Policy also provides a mechanism for accountability within the Government itself and also other stakeholders, in eliminating all forms of gender based discrimination.

7. The foundation for the achievement of gender equality and women and girls' empowerment has already been laid by the Liberia Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRS) by supporting equitable access to resources and benefit, gender equality considerations in the development and implementation of macro and micro policies; as well as programs underpinning the overall growth strategy with the goal of promoting women's economic empowerment. The Ministry of Gender and Development is reinforced to take the lead in coordinating, advising, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the National Gender Policy (NGP), the relevant aspects under the PRS, international conventions as well as mainstreaming gender in legal, constitutional and Government reforms. The Government is committed to ensuring that key PRS monitoring data collected are disaggregated by age and sex, which will facilitate MDG monitoring and the development of internationally comparable data.
8. The NGP will be an important instrument for ensuring that commitments made in National Development Plans regarding gender issues are fulfilled. The Policy will:
  - a) Provide a framework for addressing existing gender inequality in all spheres and at all levels (social, economic and political) and the persistent norms and cultural practices that discriminate against and marginalize women especially the urban poor and rural women.
  - b) Promote an active and visible policy of gender mainstreaming into all national development programs, so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men respectively.
  - c) Define national priorities in addressing gender and women's empowerment issues and protection of human rights. In particular, the Policy will highlight laws needed for the protection of women, girls, and other vulnerable groups, and define guidelines for law reforms and enforcement of these laws.
  - d) Define and clarify human resource development strategy in order to redress the existing constraints that inhibit women's full participation in the economy i.e. formal and informal employment and access to development benefits.
  - e) Provide comprehensive guidelines for enhancing the participation of women and men in addressing the negative impacts of traditional perceptions and stereotypes on girls and women.
  - f) Provide guidelines for the institutionalization of gender responsive planning and programming in conformity with national laws, policies and constitution of Liberia as well as sub-regional, regional and international commitments on gender equity, equality and women's empowerment.

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- g) Define guidelines for all stakeholders for a coordinated and integrated process in the development of gender responsive programs, thereby providing a sense of direction in addressing gender as a mainstream agenda within the national development process.
- h) Provide guidelines for monitoring and evaluation mechanisms as well as indicators of progress made in women's empowerment, gender equity and equality.
- i) Highlight guidelines for adequate allocation of resources for mainstreaming gender issues into national programs, sector policies and plans, legislation, budgets and national statistics.

### **1.3 Vision of the Policy**

- 9. A just society where girls and boys, women and men enjoy their human rights on the basis of equality and non discrimination; where the full potentials of all, irrespective of sex, are harnessed towards achieving equitable rapid economic growth and equal access to social, financial and technological resources.

### **1.4 Policy Goal**

- 10. The Overall Goal Of the National Gender Policy is to promote gender equitable, socio-economic development; enhance women's and girls' empowerment for sustainable and equitable development; enhance gender mainstreaming in the national development processes; create and strengthen gender responsive structures, processes and mechanisms for development in which both women and men participate equally, have access to, control and benefit from all the country's resources equally.

### **1.5 Objectives of the Policy**

- 11. The Overall Objective of the NGP is to serve as a framework and guideline in mainstreaming gender and empowering women and vulnerable groups in the national development processes. Other objectives are to enhance women's and girls' empowerment for sustainable and equitable development; improve national capacities for gender mainstreaming in the national development processes, create and strengthen gender responsive structures, processes and mechanisms for development in which both women and men participate equally, have access to, and benefit from all the country's resources.

### **12. The specific objectives are to:**

- a) Establish institutional framework and guidelines for gender mainstreaming and gender-responsiveness for use by all public and private institutions and sectors to strengthen the coordination of gender mainstreaming and build resource capacity for gender analysis;

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- b) Build capacities of all stakeholders on gender, gender mainstreaming and gender analysis to enable them to deliver their part of the Mandate in the NGP and build the skills of MoGD for its coordinating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating roles in the NGP.
- c) Adopt gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting, research and generation of sex- disaggregated data, as core values and practices in social transformation, organizational cultures and in the general polity in Liberia;
- d) Promote the integration of principles of sub-regional, regional and international instruments that support gender equality and women's empowerment in the country's laws, legislative processes, and judicial and administrative systems.
- e) Support women's equal access and participation in development processes, decision making structures and peace building initiatives.
- f) Develop the capabilities of both women and men to pursue equal access and control over productive resources, services and opportunities for the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment.
- g) Popularize the National Gender Policy through awareness creation, information dissemination, education and sensitization of all stakeholders on the centrality of gender equality and women's empowerment to the attainment of overall national development.
- h) Promote human rights and access to justice; including the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and the eradication of GBV.

### **1.6 Guiding Principles**

- 13. Underlying the general policy objectives are the following key principles to guide the policy implementation for all stakeholders.
- 14. The NGP is derived from the Government's commitment to equality for all citizens as enshrined in the **Constitution of the Republic of Liberia** and the human rights instruments - treaties, conventions- that Liberia Government is a party to at the global, regional and sub-regional levels. Liberia has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979) and the AU Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa (2005).
- 15. The National Gender Policy has also been guided by the commitments made at all the United Nations Conferences on Women and in particular to the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action in 1993 and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995. Liberia is party to the African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality signed in 2004. Liberia is also a signatory to the Millennium Declaration. The Millennium Declaration makes it clear that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are underpinned by economic, social and cultural rights.

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16. The NGP subscribes to the development orientation enshrined in the MDGs. The NGP does not only refer to the third MDG goal, 'Achieving Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment' but to all the other seven goals, concerning poverty, education, health, environment and partnerships for development. They have to be gender-responsive. This is because it cannot be presumed that women and men face the same situation in these domains, and that all women and all men face the same situation. When framing strategies and outcomes in these sectors and thematic areas, the gender differences, disparities and issues have to be taken into account.
17. State parties who have made commitments to human rights become duty-bearers who have an obligation to meet their commitments and are accountable for progress made. All sectors need to apply a gender lens to the diagnosis of their sector. They need to consider how the achievement of gender equality supports their own sectoral objectives. They need to put in place mechanisms that ensure their interventions promote gender equality and achieve tangible results. All Ministries and Agencies need to refer to the gender-responsive elements of the Conventions, Treaties, Conferences, MDG goals that are relevant to their sector when developing their strategies, programs, budgets, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks.
18. The MoGD shall aim at promoting all inclusive and multi-sectoral approach ensuring early involvement of all stakeholders, working to obtain commitments by various players and guided by the following values:
  - i) Maximum involvement of all Ministries and Government Agencies;
  - ii) Coordination and consultation among all stakeholders;
  - iii) Public Participation at all levels, in the policy implementation;
  - iv) Involvement of non-governmental organizations and civil society;
  - v) Professionalism in all actions of policy implementation;
  - vi) Transparency and accountability.
19. Establishing these principles will address the main areas of Policy implementation, overcoming administrative complexities, ensuring commitments and ownership by all stakeholders; being sensitive to the changes proposed by the Policy; and ensuring an effective implementation of the Strategic Plan as drawn from the Policy objectives.
20. **The Policy is also inspired by the expressly stated Government's commitment in Paragraph 8.2.4 of the Liberia Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper** as follows: "Government of Liberia is strongly committed to gender equality as a means of maintaining peace, reducing poverty, enhancing justice and promoting development in the country". This commitment to gender mainstreaming as a development approach shall inform the economic reform agenda, medium and long term development planning, value re-orientation and social transformation and other development initiatives of government.

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21. As the **NGP is central to the achievement of national development goals** and objectives, Strategic Partnerships within the three tiers of government and working with new constituencies such as men's organizations and international partners using the Paris Principles on AID Modalities (commitment of resources to Government priorities) and reviewing all Policies to reflect gender equality will be imperative to the achievement of the goals of the NGP.
22. **Gender Mainstreaming** will be adopted and entrenched as the strategy for eliminating gender inequalities in laws and programs; to be implemented by all the sectors, Government Ministries and Agencies. Advancement of women and the achievements of equality between women and men are a matter of human rights and social justice; they are therefore important and necessary goals for development. **The NGP is the Framework and a Guide for Gender Equality** within which all sectors, Government Ministries and Agencies, Public and Private Institutions, Non-Governmental Organizations and other stakeholders will address Liberia's commitments to gender equity, equality, women's empowerment and provide both human and financial resources for its implementation.
23. The NGP affirms that **women's rights are human rights** and upholds affirmative action as a necessary strategy within gender mainstreaming for reducing persistent and glaring gender gaps and imbalances. Research, sex-disaggregated data, gender analysis, gender planning and programming, gender budgeting, gender monitoring and evaluation and gender impact assessment are indispensable tools for monitoring progress in the implementation of NGP and its impact on gender equality.

### 1.7 Methodology

#### 1.7.1 The Policy Development Process.

24. A participatory process was adopted towards the formulation and finalization of the NGP. Different stakeholders were consulted to discuss and contribute to the contents of the Policy, focusing especially on key gender issues, policy priorities and the need for a National Gender Policy. In addition, these consultations were held for building consensus on key recommendations, gender mainstreaming and organizational structure for delivering the NGP. Out of these consultations, a comprehensive NGP was developed providing broad guidelines and a framework for achieving gender equality.

#### 1.7.2 Organization for the Drafting of NGP

##### 1.7.2.1 The Minister

25. The Minister for Gender and Development, being responsible to the Cabinet for the overall formulation of the National Gender Policy, oversaw the process, chaired the meetings of the Reference Committee and was responsible for the final drafting of the Policy for submission to the Cabinet and the National Legislature.

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### **1.7.2.2 A Reference Committee**

26. A Reference Committee was formed to support the NGP-Drafting Team, composed of the following: Ministries and Agencies - Youth and Sports, Planning and Economic Affairs, Labor, Education, Finance, Commerce and Industry, Internal Affairs, Justice, Agriculture, Health and Social Welfare, Budget Bureau, and Civil Service Agency; Women's NGOs and Networks - FAWE, Concerned Christian Community, WONGOSOL, SWAA-Liberia, AFELL and NARDA; and the UN Agencies - UNMIL, UNIFEM, UNFPA and UNDP were part of the Committee as observers and advisors.
27. Terms of Reference was prepared for the Committee's function as follows: To be advisors and oversee the NGP and its development process; identify gaps, provide additional information and make recommendations; ensure that the Policy is linked to the national processes i.e. reform processes and sector policies, and serve as a consensus building group in ensuring that the Policy is validated by stakeholders before it proceeds to the Cabinet and the National Legislature.

### **1.7.2.3 Drafting Team**

28. A team comprising five people - two consultants, the Senior Policy Coordinator, Director and Chief of Section of Policy Division was formed to draft the final policy document. The team served as a link between the Minister (of MoGD), the Reference Committee, and also provided technical and administrative support.

### **1.7.2.4 Stakeholders' Meetings**

29. Consultations with stakeholders on the contents of the NGP were held at different levels: the Reference Committees, key government officials, Non-State Actors including, Civil Society Organizations, Women's NGOs and Networks and the Private Sector. Regional consultations took place with representatives from all the fifteen Counties (i.e. County Officials, Traditional and Religious Leaders, Community Based Organizations, Women and Youth Groups). Workshops were held with media practitioners, Persons with Disabilities, Traditional Elders, Leaders and the Zoes, the Legislative Committees and Caucuses. Regular meetings were held with the Minister, Deputy and Assistant Ministers and senior staff of MoGD.
30. A national workshop was held bringing together approximately 200 people representing different stakeholders to validate the draft NGP. Thereafter, the drafting team proceeded to a retreat to finalize NGP.

### **1.7.3 Structure of the Policy**

31. The policy is organized in six chapters. Chapter One introduces the document by stating the problem, rationale for the Gender Policy, the vision, the goals, objectives, guiding principles, and policy development process and methodology. Chapter Two presents the situation and gender analysis of different sectors and groups, identifying gaps and imbalances. Chapter

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Three looks at the Policy and Legal Framework and commitments made at National, Sub-Regional, Regional and International levels on gender equality and women's rights. Chapter Four identifies policy priorities, objectives and strategies. Chapter Five sets out the institutional structures for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation the NGP. Chapter Six addresses resources for implementing the NGP.

### **1.8. TIME FRAME FOR THE NGP**

32. The time frame for the Liberia National Gender Policy shall be 10 years (2010 - 2020). A mid-term evaluation of the Policy shall be carried out after five years of implementation. Terminal and ex-post evaluations will also be conducted at the end of ten years of implementation of the Policy as appropriate.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0 SITUATION ANALYSIS

#### 2.1 The Economy

33. Women and girls play a central role in Liberia's economy but face various structural constraints hindering them from effective participation in economic activities. These include limited access to inputs and services essential for carrying out their productive functions; lack of enabling environment to contribute effectively to the economy; absence from important key sectors and sources of employment such as public works and infrastructure rehabilitation; and male dominance in timber, mining and rubber, which are key sources of the country's economic base.
34. Customary practices, norms and biases continue to prevent women from obtaining land, credit, productive inputs and information. The agriculture sector, where women predominate, will continue primarily as a subsistence production until these barriers are removed. In particular, gender segregation in the labor market and women's multiple roles in the family combining productive and reproductive responsibilities, constrain their participation in the more profitable sectors and limit their opportunities for economic empowerment. This trend continues to contribute towards poverty 'reflecting a woman's face' in Liberia.

##### 2.1.1 Agriculture

35. Women are major players in the agriculture sector, providing 80% of agricultural labor force, are involved in 76% of cash crop production and 93% of food crop production, conduct 85% of all marketing and trading, a vital complement to crop production for income generation, and play a vital role in linking rural and urban markets through their informal networks. Women are responsible for household food security, fetch wood and water, care for children and homes, undertake transport and marketing activities, and shoulder greater responsibility for care of the family. Exacerbated by the civil crisis, the numbers of female headed households and single parent families have increased, as have the burdens of child and family care.
36. Despite women's contribution to the agriculture sector, women own less land, and mostly depend on male relatives to access land, making their rights in land more insecure than that of men. Secure tenure is associated with improved productivity and investments in land. Although secure tenure is a problem throughout Liberia, lack of title deed places women in more vulnerable positions when faced with an economic crisis, family conflict, marriage breakdown or widowhood. Social customs hinder women's mobility, constrain their participation in decision-making and limit their involvement in productive activities. Traditional norms continue to restrict women from development opportunities. These problems limit the effectiveness of poverty reduction efforts, particularly in rural areas.
37. Rural women have less access to credit, training, agricultural extension, and information. The situation of credit facilities in the rural areas is particularly critical, because it is generally

non existent. As a result, rural communities continue to use traditional forms of community credit, such as susu clubs. Women face serious obstacles in obtaining loans from commercial or public facilities not only because of lack of collateral, but also because of lack of information and know-how.

38. Agricultural extension and training are in short supply throughout the country, and access to training is limited for women. Extension programs for women in the past, have focused on nutrition and food security, neglecting the commercial aspect of agriculture - 'teaching housewives and girls in the communities appropriate methods of homemaking, food preservation and nutrition'. Although, no evidence exist to assess the quality of services received by women farmers, however, evidence from other African countries show gender bias in extension services, with agents focusing exclusively on crop support services to male farmers. Women have limited access to key inputs and technology that are vital for agricultural production and agri-business development in rural areas such as seeds, communication technologies, radios and small scale processing devices.

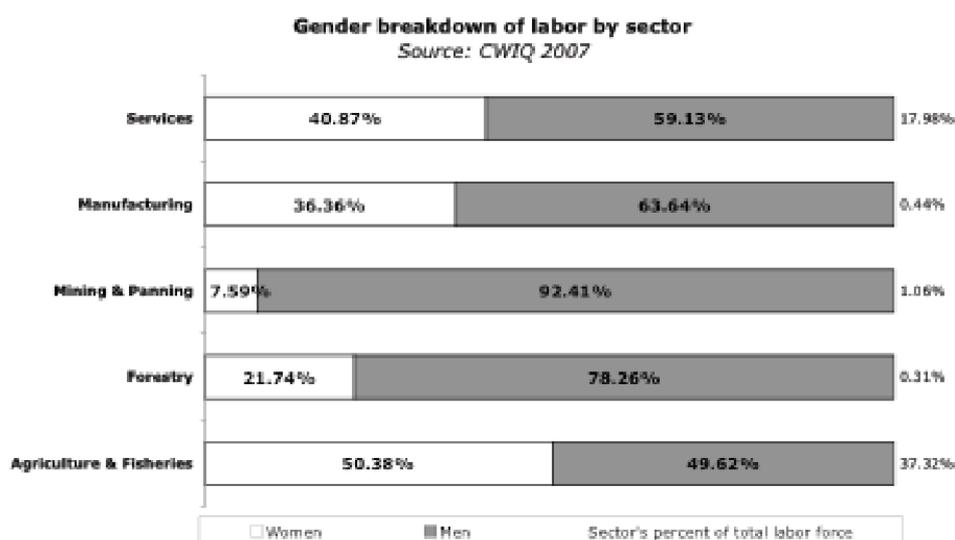
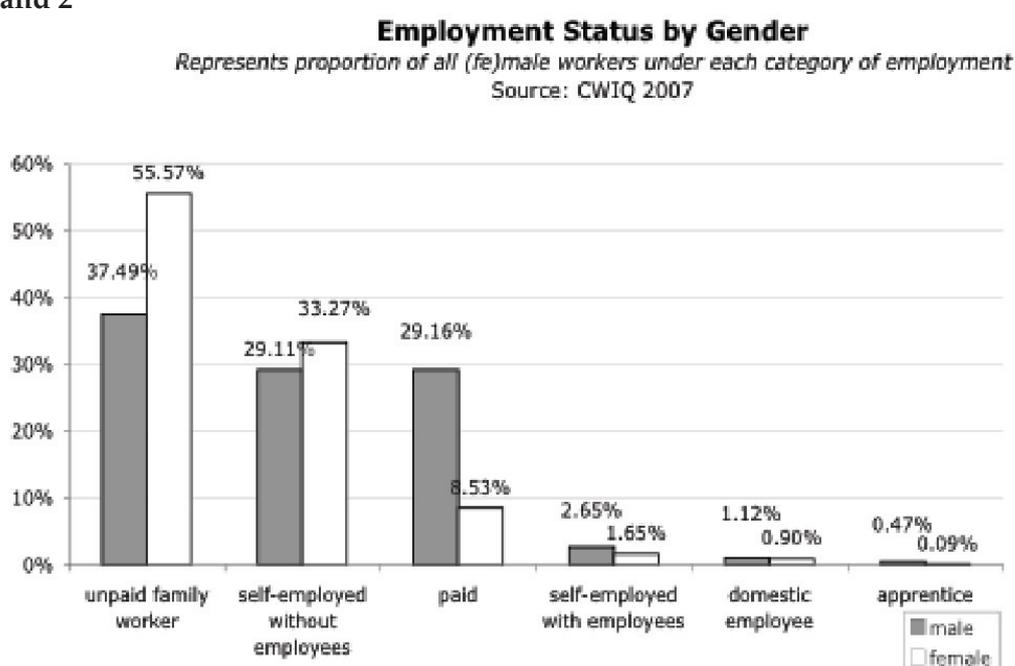
### 2.1.2 Employment

39. In general, women play a major role in Liberia's labor force participation, and household income generation. Including formal and informal workers in Liberia, women make up 54% of the labor force. Yet women and men are not equally distributed across the productive sectors, nor are they equally remunerated. In an economy dominated by agricultural and informal work, women carry the heaviest burden in these sectors and women laborers, across the board, are less likely to be paid for their work.
40. In 2001, the informal sector in Liberia accounted for 30% of employment, and 52% of the employed were self employed in the informal sector. There are about 37,000 market women in Liberia. In the countryside most women are farmers who sell their own surplus while in the city, they engage in petty trade characterized by subsistence enterprises, in used clothing, and food stuffs, beauty saloons, grocery, kiosks, open-air makeshift markets, and cross-border trade with neighboring countries. High participation of women in the informal sector stems from their high levels of illiteracy, lack of employable skills as well as the burden of home and family care imposed upon them through the socio-cultural allocation of gender roles.
41. Due to the gendered division of labor at home, where they carry out a larger share of unpaid family work, more women are less able to remain in full-time employment. While all men and women in the informal sector face similar problems such as absence of social insurance scheme, exploitation, harassment from people in authority, including at border crossings, unsafe work environment, limited finance and business development services, women are more negatively affected due to their over-representation in this sector. For cross-border traders, there is an information gap on migration and customs regulation, making women more vulnerable to exploitation, because they generally lack knowledge about their rights and the laws that protect them.

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42. Women are disproportionately clustered in the least productive sectors with 90% employed in the informal sector or in agriculture, compared to 75% of working men. Men are more than three times likely to be employed by the civil service, NGOs, international organizations or public corporations. The manufacturing sector hires men at a rate of 2 men for every 1 woman. In mining and panning, more than 9 men are hired to every 1 woman. In forestry the ratio of men to women is 4 to 1 and in the services sector it is 3 to 2, men to women respectively. Only in agriculture and fisheries are men and women employed on an equal basis - 1 to 1 ratio (see figures 1 and 2).

Figures 1 and 2



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43. A further breakdown of the sectors shows greater distinctions between women and men's employment. While women make up over two-thirds of workers in wholesale or retail trade, they are less than one-third of service workers in electricity, gas, water, construction, transport, storage, communication, financial and community services. Within the agriculture sector, women make up over half of crop farmers and less than one-third of the workers in livestock, poultry and fishing. Across the economy, working men that are paid wages out-number women by over three to one (i.e. 25.5% of all male workers versus 8.0% of all female workers). Under half of the workers are engaged in unpaid family work, presumably supporting household agriculture and informal economic activities; 56% of female laborers and 38% of male laborers are engaged as unpaid family workers. Although data on the current representation of women in the Civil Service is not readily available, survey reports indicate serious gender imbalances in the representation of women in the public sector. For example, the census of Civil Servants conducted in 2005 covering 33 Government Agencies, only 22% of the 19,635 employees interviewed were females. In 2008, out of 81 Procurement Directors trained from various Ministries and Agencies, only 11 were women. The representation of women shrinks even more at senior levels of the Civil Service as shown on table 1.

**Table 1. Public Service Representation of Women and Men at Higher Level**

Locations	Total	Males	Females	Female
Cabinet	21	15	6	28.5%
Legislature	94	81	13	13.8%
Supreme Court	5	3	2	40%
Civil Service Directors	318	266	52	16%
CSA Directors and above	16	15	1	6%
LIPA Directors and above	8	7	1	12.5%

Source: Civil Service Reform Strategy, 2008

44. **The Government plans to introduce a new National Employment Policy; review and revise the Liberian Labor Code and transform the Liberian Emergency Employment Program (LEEP) into the Liberian Employment Action Plan; develop National Workplace Policy on HIV and AIDS; and launch a Women's Entrepreneurship Program involving MSMEs to develop business skills, and provide access to microfinance and functional literacy. The Civil Service Reform Strategy (2008-2011) shall mainstream gender; devise and implement an affirmative action program; draft and implement a civil service-wide sexual harassment policy; establish Gender Focal Points in each Ministry, Agency And Commission; and ensure that female employees are given special attention in training and in mentoring.**

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### **2.2 Education**

45. Girls' unequal access to schooling is a crucial issue that is responsible for the high rate of illiteracy among girls and women. Literacy rate for women in rural areas is staggeringly low at 26%, compared to 61% for urban women, 60% and 86% for rural and urban men, respectively. The gender gap in secondary school attendance is particularly high in the rural areas with a low 6% net attendance ratio for females and 13% for males. In urban areas this gap is much smaller - 29% for females and 32% for males.
46. Although gender disparities in primary school enrolment have been significantly reduced, large disparities continue to exist at the secondary school level. Possible reasons for girls dropping out of school include sexual exploitation, rape, teenage pregnancies, forced or early marriages, and poverty, coupled with parents' preference for boys, as well as gender roles stereotyping in educational curriculum and general discrimination against the girl child. Gender bias is noted in expelling pregnant girls from school, while the same is not done to the boys who have impregnated the girls. This calls for legislations that will ensure that girls are not dropped out of school and their careers destroyed forever as a result of pregnancy.
47. Literacy among adult women is far lower (41%) than for men (70%). The difference is much larger among the older generations; only 17% of women ages 45-59 are literate, compared to 62% of men. Although the gender difference in literacy rates has declined among the younger generation, there are still large gaps: only 50% of the women ages 15-19 are literate compared to 72% of men of the same age group. The Ministries of Education and Gender and Development have established adult literacy programs exclusively for women and girls. There are other literacy initiatives that are being administered by local and international NGOs. Using the enrollment rates available, women comprise 70% of those adults enrolled in literacy classes.
48. The Government recognizes the need to close this gap and to promote a drastic and rapid increase in school attendance in rural areas by providing universal primary education and implementing the National Action Plan 2004 -2015: Education for All. The Government has also prioritized girls' education through the National Girls Education Policy to ensure, encourage and support the enrolment and retention of girls in school. The Free and Compulsory Education Law is another important step towards women and girls' equality in education; however, it is critical that these policies be implemented to close the gender gap.

### **2.3 Health**

49. Unequal participation by men in family planning programs, lack of control over cash for transport to health facilities as well as treatment for women, gender based violence, including rape, wife-beating and the overload of family care work increase the risk of ill health among women than men.
50. High Infant Mortality Rate is currently estimated to be at 157/1,000 live births. The under-five child mortality rate is also high at 235/1,000 live births. Maternal mortality remains high and

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appears to have increased in recent years from 578 to 994 deaths per 100,000 live births (2000 - 2007). According to the 1999 / 2000 Liberia Demographic and Health Survey (LDHS), 84.4% of pregnant women in Liberia received antenatal care from a nurse, a midwife or a doctor. While 36.2% of pregnant women delivered at a health facility, only 15% of the deliveries occurred in facilities, staffed by qualified practitioners. Moreover, access to skilled maternal care is very low. About 75% of births occur outside the health facilities and TBAs perform about 85% of all deliveries. For the most part, care given during the post-natal period is mainly focused on the newborn and not on the mother. The situation is even more hazardous in communities where there are no skilled birth attendants to address complications that may arise. Additionally, there are no facilities available to handle mental conditions, such as depression, related to the postpartum period.

51. The main health factors contributing to the high level of maternal mortality include the acute shortage of skilled labor - nurses, midwives, doctors, inadequate emergency obstetric care, and extremely high numbers of teenage pregnancies. Other factors which also contribute to maternal and newborn mortality are delays in recognizing problems, deciding to seek care, reaching and receiving care; lack of adequate transport system; inadequate supply of drugs and equipment; poor nutritional status of pregnant women and high fertility rates. Some women who survive these complications develop life-long disabilities such as vesico / recto vaginal fistulae and secondary infertility.
52. Nationally, women who have heard of the various methods of contraception, only 28.3% have heard of pills and 22.4% condoms, ever used them. In the rural areas, only 16.5% who have heard of condoms and 13.8% of pills used them, while in urban areas, it is 42.1% and 31.2%, respectively.
53. Women and girls are the main victims of harmful traditional practices affecting their health, often to the point of permanent physical, psychological and emotional damages, even death. Some of these include son preference, nutritional taboos, early marriages, FGM and GBV. Health facilities remain insufficiently equipped to deal with GBV, and also inaccessible to the majority of survivors. In the DDRR processes, traumatized women and children experienced inadequate access to appropriate counseling and psycho-socio support. The prevalence of GBV and polygamy has serious repercussions including higher risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections among women and girls.
54. The National Health Policy and National Health Plan (2007) recognizes that equity, social justice and good governance are essential for health and social improvement. The Policy states that everyone shall have access to health services, irrespective of socio-economic status, origin, gender, and geographical location. The pro-poor commitment of the Government will be demonstrated by concrete measures taken at all levels of health care provision. Services shall be organized and made user friendly taking into considerations women's concerns and also ensuring that both male and female benefit equitably. The implementation of the policy is to ensure gender sensitivity and respond to the needs of women's reproductive health rights. HIV and AIDS will be integrated within basic health delivery services.

### 2.4 Environment

55. In Liberia, economic growth has been based primarily on the use of its renewable and non-renewable natural resources; forests, soil, water, biomass and other resources. The pressures on ecosystems in Liberia are significant. The destruction of resources, violence, displacements and other effects that are associated with the prolonged civil strife including the phenomenon of climate change have significantly contributed to the degradation of the environment. It is likely that if early and adequate interventions are not made, pressures could build up to create a breakdown of such ecosystems, thereby causing irreversible poverty. The deterioration of natural resources displaces communities, especially women from income generating activities while greatly adding to their unremunerated work.
56. Through their management and use of natural resources, women provide sustenance to their families and communities. As consumers and producers, caretakers of their families and educators, women play an important role in promoting sustainable development through their concern for quality and sustainability of life for present and future generations. It is therefore imperative that women be actively involved in environmental decision-making at all levels; and that gender concerns and perspectives are integrated in all policies and programs for sustainable development. The National Environmental Policy recognizes and acknowledges the vital role that women play in conservation and the sustainable management of the environment and aims to ensure their participation in decision making on the implementation of environmental policies. It further states that gender mainstreaming shall form an integral part of the basic training, social development, environmental and natural resource management. In environmental management, gender sensitivity shall be made a priority for sustainability and development.

### 2.5 Human Rights and Gender Based Violence (GBV)

57. Human rights and fundamental freedoms are the birthright of all human beings; and their protection and promotion, the first responsibility of Governments. The Liberian Government identifies women as the most discriminated against and deprived people in the society. The Constitution in Articles 6 and 8 affirms that women and men are equal. In order to protect the human rights of women, it is necessary to support the domestication and implementation of international human rights instruments. The Government of Liberia has signed, ratified and reported on CEDAW. It has also ratified the AU Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa.
58. Factors that perpetuate GBV within the Liberian context include social, cultural, and traditional constructions that enable it to evolve and persist. Sexual violence, domestic violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, incest, early and forced marriage, wife inheritance, and female genital mutilation (FGM) are the most prevalent forms of GBV in Liberia. Although most of GBV escalated during the conflict, evidence indicate that violence continues even in these times of peace. Rape and other sexual offenses rank among the most common crimes reported nationwide.

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59. The results of the 2007 Demographic and Health Survey provided the following estimations for gender-based violence in the country. For women aged between 15 and 49, 44% have experienced physical violence since they were 15 years old, 29% reported physical violence in the past 12 months and 17.6% have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime. For women aged between 25 and 39, this rate increased to 22% of those experiencing sexual violence; 32% reported it coming from their current husbands or partner; 10.2% from their current or former boyfriend; and 8.1% from a police or a soldier.
60. Although all forms of GBV need to be addressed, specific targeted action must be prioritized for sexual violence and exploitation that is perpetrated against young children, including boys. Challenges remain within the legal, justice, security, and health sectors. In order to build a more effective, responsive and supportive legal, social and political environment, including all aspects of protection and access to justice, health care and education, measures need to be put in place for the prevention of and response to GBV including working towards eliminating it altogether.
61. Already, the Government has formed the National and County GBV Task Forces, as well as a GBV Unit within the MoGD and developed a GBV Plan of Action to provide appropriate skills to health professionals; improve documentation and reporting on clinical evidence; reform the legal system to deal more efficiently and expeditiously with violence; establish outreach services for survivors; and ensure that women and girls have access to economic and social empowerment programs. In addition, a Rape Law was passed in 2005 which explicitly specifies that rape is a criminal offence and also the Domestic Relations Law that incorporates GBV.

### 2.6 Access to Justice

62. Legal and judicial institutions have a shortage of qualified personnel and weak capacity to provide equitable access to justice for the poor. There are significant shortcomings in the protection and promotion of human rights, a lack of equal access to the justice system, and limited public understanding of citizens' rights under the law. This is reflected in the low quality of service of legal institutions, (including for survivors of GBV), the under-representation of women in the justice sector, corruption, and lack of protection of the rights of women and children. Legal aid to the vulnerable and indigent is almost non-existent. The country's 2008 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper emphasizes the need to strengthen and enhance the effectiveness and integrity of legal and judicial institutions, stating that: "The justice system currently suffers from chronic capacity constraints. The lack of human, material, and financial resources has severely hampered the administration and delivery of justice. In order for justice to be served, those who administer justice must be properly trained, equipped, and resourced".
63. To ensure effective access to justice, individuals must have knowledge of their rights and be able to access both the administrators of justice and associated facilities. There should be legal aid mechanisms in place to provide legal services particularly to vulnerable and indigent clients.

64. The capacities of the MoGD and Ministry of Justice are being built to proactively protect the rights of all sexes particularly that of women. A Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) Crimes Unit was established at the Ministry of Justice to provide Government with the necessary capacity to prosecute SGBV Crimes as well as ensure that GBV survivors have access to justice. The Liberian National Police have also established at the National, County and District Levels special units called 'Women and Children Protection Sections' to deal with SGBV cases. Special Courts (Criminal Court E) are also being established within the judiciary with exclusive jurisdiction to speedily try cases of rape and sexual abuse.

### **82.7 Infrastructure and Basic Services**

65. Poor access to safe drinking water and sanitation services are major causes of illness and poverty. The impact of inadequate drinking water and sanitation services is greatest on the poor. Many people, particularly women and children, fetch water from long distances. In addition, water and sanitation-related sicknesses put severe burdens on health services; add to women's burden of care work; keep children out of school and undermine investment in agriculture and other economic sectors. Only 25% of urban and 4% of rural households have safe drinking water and only 5% have access to sanitary facilities. A surveyed population in 1990 found that access to safe drinking water fell from 37% to 17% and adequate sanitation facilities from 37% to 7%. There has always been a severe shortage of dwellings in Liberia, particularly, Monrovia. National Housing Authority was created with a focus on the construction of houses in the urban areas. Providing cheap but good and affordable housing is critical for secure shelters for all especially women and children.
66. The destruction of roads and bridges during the war has had a major negative effect on the agriculture sector, and especially damaged marketing activities in which women are traditionally involved. The delivery of basic services such as health care, water, sanitation, education, security, awareness creation programs, and information dissemination were also affected. In the PRS, it is recognized that as the infrastructure development preference of women and men are often different, both will be involved in the planning, programming and implementation process of the infrastructure projects. Women will also be represented in the ranks of those employed in the construction and rehabilitation of the infrastructure.

## **2.8 Vulnerable Groups.**

### **2.8.1 Children**

67. All children are vulnerable; however they are not a homogenous group and each category imposes unique vulnerability all of which create serious challenges for child development and growth. Street children, orphans, physically disabled children, child laborers, and former abductees require special attention in light of their intensified vulnerability. The girl child in all these categories of vulnerable children is worse off. The root of girls vulnerability are formed very early within the family. These values are reinforced in schools, communities and institutions that support children and their families. Early intervention is necessary to

stem negative consequences, such as inadequate development and damage of the self-esteem of the girl child. Lack of access to education and training is also hampering the growth of children in general and girl-children in particular.

### **2.8.2 Youth**

68. According to the recent census, 77% of the Liberian population comprise youth below the age of 35 years. Generational inequalities impact on the livelihoods of the youth thus creating different vulnerability and opportunities for female and male youth. Generally the youth suffer from lack of education, training, skills, and unemployment. However, as a result of patriarchal cultural practices, boys are more favored to own and benefit from economic assets and opportunities like land, property and training through inheritance, donation or sponsorship. Due to the low value attached to girls in society, their vulnerability extends to harmful practices such FGM, GBV, sexual exploitation, and early marriages. They are more vulnerable to HIV and AIDS than the male youth due to their inability to negotiate safer sex, early engagement in sex, and higher risk of becoming a commercial sex worker as a result of lack of access to free education, school drop out, unemployment and lack of access to information. The youth needs to be empowered with special attention paid to the female youth.

### **2.8.3 Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)**

69. PWDs face discrimination in education and lack of user- friendly facilities and services; as well as in the job market as a result of social biases and stereotypes associated with disability generally. Women with disabilities suffer double discrimination - first as women and second as persons with disabilities and therefore they need special attention. The need to promote friendly environment for PWDs including promoting their full participation in the development of the country is critical for ensuring growth with equity. The Government has established a National Commission for Disabilities through an Act of the Legislature with an objective to protect and promote the rights of PWDs.

### **2.8.4 Elderly Persons**

70. The elderly constitute 3.6% of the population of Liberia. They face constraints in accessing services, in increasing their incomes and improving their livelihoods. They suffer from old-age related diseases requiring special medical attention most of the time lacking from the nearest health facility. Elderly persons, especially women are burdened with care of orphans and other dependants; and are overwhelmed by the social challenges and responsibilities in the wake of HIV and AIDS, poverty and the consequences of the 14 year civil war. This calls for targeted interventions and special programs for elderly women.

### **2.8.5 People Living with HIV and AIDS**

71. Whereas HIV and AIDS data is not disaggregated by sex, evidence indicate that women are more exposed to HIV infections due to several factors, biological, economic and socio-cultural,

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but most significant is the high rate of sexual violence, particularly rape. The National Health Survey shows trends of a higher degree to HIV infection among women and girls compared to men and boys (1.8% versus 1.2%). The high rate of unemployment coupled with low levels of education and training further make women more vulnerable to HIV infections. As a result of cultural and social pressures, economic dependency, and fear of violence, women are often less able to negotiate safer sex.

72. Communities still do not understand issues related to HIV and AIDS and often abandon or isolate relatives living with the pandemic, at a time when they most need their support. Women particularly bear the brunt of the burden of the disease and require a multi level support although presently the country has limited 'safety nets' to assist and support them. Fear of negative effects, stigma and discrimination prevents many women from sharing their personal experiences, with serious implications in accessing treatment and controlling HIV infections. Special attention need to be given to the unique needs of women living with HIV and AIDS. There is also need to make accessible confidential and quality Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) services at all levels to the population with focus on women and youth.

### 2.9 Peace and National Security

73. Peace building and reconciliation, ensuring improved security for all as well as violence are key challenges that post conflict Liberia faces. People who participated in the war as fighting forces met atrocities in various Counties. Among them, women and children are reported to have been subjected to sexual violence and other forms of abuse by their male colleagues and enemy forces; yet most have not been rehabilitated. Evidence indicates that post conflict stress disorders and trauma affects women more than men and the social stigma against women is higher than that of men. Most critical concern is the inadequate access to appropriate counseling and psycho-socio support for traumatized women and children. Their plight needs to be addressed to ensure sustainable rehabilitation for all.
74. Representation of women in the security sector remains limited (at only 4.7% of the Armed Forces of Liberia and 14.6% of Liberia Police Force). Part of the problem is low level of women's education and requirements for employment in this sector. Security sector acknowledges that gender discrimination occurs in attitudes, incentive systems, operational structures, and in the bureaucratic procedures of the institutions. Discrimination against women has a negative impact not only on women joining the institutions but also on the delivery and quality of services provided by the sector at large and in affirming current discriminatory practices against women and girls.
75. The Women and Children Protection Section of the Liberian National Police is a key institution established at the National, County and District levels towards the effective protection of rights of women and children. A Gender Unit has also been established at national level to monitor, advice and report on the implementation of LNP Gender Policy. These units need to be strengthened with human resources, capacity building and logistics. The Government

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security sector reforms are intended to establish mechanisms to protect the fundamental freedoms of all Liberians, and to champion human rights and gender equity. For instance, it is planned to increase the number of women serving in the Liberia National Police to ensure adoption of gender justice and equity as core values; allow for equal access and protection within the institutions and outreach services; improve the quality of services provided to the population at large, especially to women and vulnerable groups and adopt people centered human security approach.

76. An Independent Human Rights Commission has been reconstituted to, besides the promotion of the rights of people; provide an opportunity for victims who suffer human right abuses to seek redress. Liberia subscribes to UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Conflict Prevention, passed in the year 2000 which addresses both the impact of war on women and women's contribution to conflict resolution and sustainable peace. It specifically calls for measures to ensure the protection and respect for women's human rights, measures to integrate women in all steps of peacekeeping, peacemaking and urges peace agreements to integrate gender perspectives. The National Plan of Action on 1325 has been developed by MoGD to address the gender gaps in peace initiatives and security sector.

### **2.10 Governance and the Rule of Law**

77. Governance and the rule of law guarantees women and men equity in the enjoyment of their human rights; enables full and equal access to all citizens; allow for citizens' participation in making decisions and benefiting from the resources of the country. Even though women account for 52% of the population, they are not fully involved in the decision-making processes. Women are represented in highly visible positions in the Government Sector, but the overall political representation in leadership and decision making bodies, apart from presidency remain low. The majority of judicial officers are male. At the County level, administrative structures have been dominated by male officials, chiefs and elders. The unbalanced sharing of power and opportunities means that women's needs and priorities may not be sufficiently reflected in the decision making processes.
78. In the 2005 elections, women accounted for only 14% of the 806 candidates nominated for election though they accounted for 50% of the total registered voters. The elections results showed that 5 out of 30 Senators elected were women, while 9 out of the 64 seats in the House of Representatives were won by women. In the Presidential race, 2005, 2 women against 20 men contested for the position of President, and one woman won. At least one female contested in the senatorial race in each of the 15 Counties; while in the lower House of Representatives 44 women compared to 441 men contested.
79. The Government has made strides to increase women's participation in government, in senior and junior ministerial positions and in key decision-making positions in the public and private sectors as shown on table 2.

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**Table 2: Number of women appointed to positions of trust by the President.**

Appointed/Nominated Positions	# of Positions	# of Appointed/Nominated Males	# of Appointed/Nominated Females	Percentage Female
Minister	23	17	6	28.5%
County Superintendent	15	10	5	40%
Development Superintendent	15	12	3	20%
Chief Justice	1	1	0	0%
Associate Justices	4	2	2	50%
Ambassadors	22	16	6	28.5%

80. The new Liberia presents fresh opportunity for bridging existing inequalities between women and men in all development sectors. The political goodwill and leadership for promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment in the country is clearly evident. Initiatives to increase women’s participation in governance structures at all levels across the public and private sector will be critical in enhancing the quality of decision making and choices that impact equitably on all members of society. Initial steps are being taken through Public Sector and Civil Service Reform by increasing women’s representation to a minimum of 30%. The Decentralization Policy will bring Government decisions and programs closer to the people; support the participation of civil society, including full involvement by women and men in the media, in order to bring accountability to public institutions and in leadership.
81. In addressing the structural inequity and marginalization of women, the Government should develop and adopt policies in all public institutions and government agencies to address gender inequities, including Codes of Conduct and non-discrimination Policies. Increasing the number of women representation is critical, but there is a need to develop a full-fledged gender capacity building program for the different actors at national and local levels.

### 2.11 Culture, Family and Socialisation

82. Many Liberians (women and men) hold rigidly to cultures which cushion traditional gender role relations, and women’s subordinate position in the Liberia society. Significantly, a culture amenable to sustainable development must be dynamic, and responsive to qualitative change. Situation analysis of Liberian cultural groups shows the prevalence of harmful and discriminatory gender-based cultural practices, which impact on the family institution and its socialisation processes.
83. Gender inequality structures still persist, and sometimes, development efforts meant double burden for women e.g. women are over-worked and over burdened when development programs failed to apply appropriate gender diagnostic tools and frameworks. A major

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Policy goal is to eliminate cultural/religious gender-based biases and harmful cultural and religious practices which reproduce inequalities in gender role relations in the Liberian society, and thereby giving a subordinate status to women compared to men.

### **2.12 Media, Information and Communication Technology**

84. The UN Commission on the Status of Women reconfirmed the importance it attached to the principles of freedom of expression from a gender perspective, in particular as related to women's full enjoyment of freedom of expression, equal access to the media, balanced and diverse portrayals by the media of women and their multiple roles, and media information aimed at eliminating all forms of violence against women. Thus, respect for the human rights of women, including freedom of expression, is a fundamental principle of the international community.
85. The role of information and communication in national development cannot be overemphasized. Information fed to policy makers is crucial for making human-centred policies. Information availability is greatly enhanced by efficient communication technology. Marginalization of a segment of the population in access to relevant information deepens gender inequalities. The policy goal for this sector is the respect for the human rights of women and men, including freedom of expression, and the elimination of all negative/stereotypical presentation of gender issues at various levels of information dissemination and communication.

### **2.13 Research and Sex Disaggregated Data**

86. Dearth of organized data or information on gender issues in general have been the blight of development process in Liberia. Gender issues are relatively new in the country and as such, gender-disaggregated data on issues of concerns to gender development are scanty. Therefore, given the importance of current and up-to-date data and information in gender, policy formulation, analysis and effective program planning, availability of appropriate database in various areas of gender concern is the key to the success of any program on gender in Liberia.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### 3.0 POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

##### 3.1 National Commitments on Gender Equality

87. The National Gender Policy is drafted in line with the Constitution which is the supreme law of the land and takes precedence in establishing a framework for Government's purpose of promoting unity, liberty, stability, equality, justice and human rights with opportunities for social, economic and political advancement of the whole society, irrespective of gender.
88. The Constitution guarantees all persons, regardless of sex, the enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms; and although there is no official definition of discrimination and discriminatory practices, Liberia is committed to the promotion of the rights of women through various national laws and policies. The Government's position on gender equality is reflected in the number of Government policies and programs that promote the equality of men and women in Liberia which are in place. These include Result Focused Transitional Framework; National Gender-Based Violence Plan of Action (2006); Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2008-2011) that treats gender as a specific crosscutting issue; Policy on Girl Child Education (2006); HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan of Action (2007); National Health Policy and National Health Plan (2007); Food and Agricultural Policy (2007); Environmental Policy (2002); Civil Service Reform Strategy (2008); Gender Policy of the Liberia National Police; the National Action Plan on the UN Security Council Resolution 1325; Mental Health Policy (2009); Social Welfare Policy (2008); Labor Policy and the Gender Policy of the Liberia National Police.
89. Significant progress has been made in passing major legislations towards establishing equality between men and women. These include the Domestic Relations Law; the Inheritance Act of 1998 (which specifies Equal Rights in marriage and inheritance under Customary and Statutory Laws); the Rape Law of 2005 (which outlaws gang rape and stipulates life-term sentence for aggressive forms of rape); and the Anti-Human Trafficking Act of 2005, prohibiting trafficking in persons. All these policies and legislations affirm the Government's commitment to address gender inequality and to ensure that women are fully engaged in activities that are of benefit to them and to the nation at large.
90. Still a lot needs to be done with regard to law reform. The dual systems of laws (customary and statutory) subject rural women to a wide range of social and legal regimes and make them less protected vis-à-vis their urban counterparts, who are generally protected by and subjected solely to Statutory Law. Customary Law applies mainly to issues of marriage and inheritance and is generally blamed for certain harmful practices, including early marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Although the statutory laws prohibit discriminatory practices, they make no specific provisions for protection against discrimination in the private or domestic spheres.

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91. Women's access to justice, particularly in the Counties and rural areas, is very limited and is further hindered by the destruction of courts, inadequate staffing both in law enforcement and adjudication, inadequate capacity of the existing justice system to process case loads, as well as limited knowledge of rights and negative attitudes of law enforcers. There is a pressing need for a comprehensive law review and a plan for reform and drafting of new laws. Such efforts could include, among others, the enactment of equality laws to address some existing gaps, review of existing laws and the removal of any discriminatory and contradictory laws in the protection of women's fundamental freedoms and rights as enshrined in the Constitution.
92. The Gender and Development Act, 2001 establishes and defines the institutional Mandate of the Ministry of Gender and Development, which is the national machinery for promoting gender equality, women's advancement and children's welfare in Liberia. Specifically, the Ministry:
- i) Advises Government on all matters affecting the development and welfare of women and children;
  - i) Coordinates Government's gender mainstreaming efforts to ensure that both women and men's perspectives are central to policy formulation, legislation, resource allocation, planning and outcomes of policies and programs, focusing on gender equality, empowerment of women and development of children; and
  - iii) Monitors and reports back the impact of national policies and programs on women and children as well as recommend appropriate measures to be taken in mobilizing and integrating women as equal partners with men in the economic, social, political, and cultural development of the country.

### 3.2 International Commitments and Instruments on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

93. Liberia is a party to various international instruments on the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. At the global level, Treaties, Declarations Commitments applicable to Liberia include:
1. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1979;
  2. Optional Protocol on CEDAW;
  3. Convention on the Rights of Child (CRC) (1990);
  4. Optional Protocol to the CRC;
  5. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006);
  6. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966);
  7. International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (1966);
  8. UN Security Council Resolution 1325;
  9. UN Security Council Resolution 1820;
  10. UN Security Council Resolution 1612 (Children and Armed Conflict);

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11. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995);
12. International Conference on Population and Development (1994),
13. United Nations Declaration on Violence Against Women ( 1993);
14. Millennium Declaration and MDGs(2000);
15. Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948);
16. Vienna Declaration and the Plan of Action (1993).

### **3.3 Regional Commitments on Gender**

94. At the regional level, Liberia is a party to the following instruments:
  - i) The African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa which constitutes a milestone in the promotion, protection and respect for the rights of women in Africa. This Protocol reaffirms the principle of promoting gender equality as enshrined in the Constitutive Act of AU as well as the NEPAD.
  - ii) New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), underlines the commitment of the African States to ensure the full participation of African Women as equal partners in African development and states its determination to ensure that the rights of women are promoted, realized and protected in order to enable them enjoy fully all their human rights.
  - iii) Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2004) reaffirms the commitments of the AU and international instruments on human and women’s rights. The AU Conference of Ministers responsible for Women’s Affairs and Gender in 2005 adopted two documents that facilitate the implementation of the Solemn Declaration by member states. These are: Implementation framework and guidelines for reporting on the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa.
  - iv) The ECOWAS Gender Policy represents a new approach and elaborates a set of principles, emphasizing among other things the affirmation of maximum political will on gender policy as a tool of ECOWAS institutions and programs, establishment of gender management systems in all the member states and the adoption of gender mainstreaming as a prerequisite to gender equity and equality.
  - v) Other instruments are the Mano River Declaration, the Maputo Declaration and the Beijing +10 Commitment by Ministers of Gender who met at the Seventh African Regional Conference on Women (Beijing +10, 2004) to review the status of implementation of Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action. These reaffirm commitments made on gender equality, equity and women’s empowerment as stated in Dakar/Beijing Platforms of Action, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994, and related UN and international, regional and sub-regional agreements on gender equality.

### CHAPTER FOUR

#### 4.0 POLICY OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

##### 4.1 Policy Priority Areas

95. The Policy addresses the following 19 priority areas:

1. Gender mainstreaming and Coordination of Partners' Activities/International Partnership for Development;
2. Economic Empowerment
3. Agriculture, Water Resources and Access to land
4. Employment
5. Gender Budgeting;
6. Human rights and Gender Based Violence;
7. Vulnerable Groups - The Girl child, Youth, PWD, PLWHA, the Elderly;
8. Political participation and Decision Making Positions for Women;
9. Health and Reproductive Rights;
10. Peace and National Security;
11. Media, Information, and Communication;
12. Research and Sex Disaggregated Data;
13. Monitoring and Evaluation.
14. Access to Justice
15. Education and Training
16. Environment and Natural Resources
17. Infrastructure and basic services
18. Culture, Family and Socialisation
19. Trade, Commerce and Industry

##### 4.1.1 Gender Mainstreaming and Coordination of Partners' Activities

96. The MoGD, shall develop guidelines for the integration of gender in the planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting by all Government Ministries and Agencies, sectoral programs and policies. This will ensure that gender is mainstreamed in all national and sector development initiatives.

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97. The MoGD shall work in close partnership with all Government Ministries and Agencies, including Civil Society Organizations, the private sector and development partners. The capacity of the MoGD shall be strengthened, by allocating adequate human and financial resources, with attention given to improving coordination of partners' activities at all levels (nationally and locally).

### Objectives:

98. Establish institutional framework and guidelines for gender mainstreaming and gender-responsiveness for use by all public and private institutions and sectors to strengthen the coordination of gender mainstreaming and build resource capacity for gender analysis.

99. **Strategic Action:**

- i) Develop specific *guidelines for coordination and gender mainstreaming* for all sectors (line Ministries, Government Agencies, Public and Private Institutions including Local, International Non- Governmental Organizations, Development Partners); and harmonize programs in line with the NGP;
- ii) Establish Gender Focal Points in all line Ministries, Government Agencies, public and private institutions including local and international Non-Governmental Organizations and Development Partners;
- iii) Develop a *comprehensive gender capacity building plan* (technical and logistical) for all sectors at national and county levels;
- iv) *Institutionalize affirmative action* in all areas and at all levels particularly within the Civil Service Reform, Government Ministries and Agencies and public appointments, political parties, NGOs and business institutions;
- v) Share information - improve and collect reliable data (i.e. qualitative and sex disaggregated) and make it easily accessible to all parties, so that they are able to make informed decisions that are coherent with the National Gender Policy (NGP);
- vi) Facilitate processes to coordinate and rationalize interventions by competent and committed organizations in each specific field;
- vii) Build consensus- on gender issues addressed in the policy through quarterly forums at national and county levels where participants can harmonize and report on their activities and agree on interventions in a structured way;
- viii) Standardize the implementation of the NGP, through, issuance of guidelines, norms and evaluation criteria, to be adopted by all stakeholders at national and local levels;
- ix) The MoGD together with Gender Focal Points (Government Ministries, Agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations) will participate actively in sub-regional, regional and global forums to share information on lessons learned and best practices as well as networking to further gender equality interest of the country;
- x) Mobilize resources (financial, technical and logistical) for coordination and implementation of gender mainstreaming for /by all sectors at national and county levels.

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### 4.1.2 Economic Empowerment

100. Gender analysis and gender mainstreaming shall be promoted in all policies and programs to ensure that all women and men benefit from the national budget; and from increased economic opportunities in agriculture, trade, formal and informal employment, and business.

#### 2. Objectives:

101. To ensure gender mainstreaming in all macro-economic policies and programs and budgeting so as to enable both women and men to equally benefit from the economy.

#### 102. Strategic Action:

- i) Conduct gender analysis to establish facts and figures as a baseline for planning;
- ii) Develop gender budgeting capacity skills of policy makers, statistical officers, planners and budgeting institutions in all the sectors responsible for economic development;
- iii) Undertake legislative and administrative reforms to give women equal rights with men to economic resources such as land and other forms of property, finance, employment opportunities, markets, trade and appropriate working conditions;
- iv) Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks and support traditional savings, credit and lending mechanisms for women;
- v) Periodically, undertake gender-analyses of socio-economic policies in order to monitor their impacts and restructure them in cases where there are imbalances.

### 4.1.2.1 Agriculture

#### 3. Objective

103. To promote the implementation of gender sensitive national agricultural policy; and mainstream gender in all agricultural programs, strategies and activities.

- i) Undertake gender analysis to identify key gender issues in the agriculture sector;
- ii) Implement *Integrated Rural Women's Programs* to enhance women's access to credit, land, extension services, water, energy, health, education, improved technology and market information;
- iii) Intensify research and adaptation programs for labor saving agricultural technologies alleviating women's workload in the sector;
- iv) Increase the proportion of women extension workers in the Ministry of Agriculture;
- v) Train women farmers and leaders in the communities to complement extension staff in service delivery;
- vi) Support the formation of women's groups/cooperatives to improve their access to extension services;

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- vii) Promote women-farmers participation in agro-business training and services;
- viii) Undertake legislative and administrative reforms to give women equal rights with men in access to ownership and control over land, land-based resources, and other forms of property and assets;
- ix) Introduce gender mainstreaming in the curriculum in agricultural institutions;
- x) Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels and integrate gender concerns in all environmental programs;
- xi) Evaluate policies and programs in terms of environmental impact, climate change and women's equal access to and use of natural resources.

### **4.1.2.2 Employment**

#### **4. Objective**

104. To empower women and men economically by providing skill training and information, creating employment and raising incomes.

#### **105. Strategic Action:**

- i) Strengthen the incentive role of the employer (i.e. tax break, national awards) to develop a policy of equal opportunities for men and women;
- ii) Mainstream gender equity in all public and private sectors, Ministries, Agencies, Commissions, Non-Governmental Organization and other Civil Society Organizations;
- iii) Devise and implement affirmative action to bring more women into the public and private sector and give women employees special attention in training and mentoring;
- iv) Work towards eliminating segregation and all forms of employment discrimination;
- v) Enact and enforce laws against gender discrimination in the labor market, in hiring, training and benefits;
- vi) Develop workplace policies with regard to working conditions and sexual harassment; and develop mechanisms to regularly review and monitor such laws and policies;
- vii) Enhance and promote the participation of women in small, medium and large scale enterprise development and cross border trade, including adherence at sub-regional, regional and international protocols and treaties;
- viii) Provide business advisory services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women in the informal sector;

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- ix) Review government regulations, to ensure that they do not discriminate against micro, small and medium scale enterprises owned by women in rural and urban areas;
- x) Enhance the access of women and men entrepreneurs, in rural, remote and urban areas and develop a micro-finance strategy to increase the availability of credit, especially to women;
- xi) Organize national, sub-regional, regional and international trade fairs targeting women's entrepreneurs;
- xii) Ensure incentive and encouragement for men to take parental leave;
- xiii) Ensure compliance with ECOWAS Protocol on Free Trade Movement of Goods and People and provide training to Customs, Security and Immigration Officers at border posts as well as take stringent measures against sexual exploitation and abuse of women engaged in cross-boarder trade.
- xiv) Facilitate women's access to safe and affordable public infrastructure such as rural appropriate transport services, water, electricity, energy in order to reduce drudgery of their workload and enhance their economic empowerment.

### **4.1.3 Gender Budgeting**

106. Gender budgeting shall be incorporated in the national budget system in order to achieve government commitments on gender equity and equality.

## **5. Objective**

107. Facilitate the development and implementation of gender budgeting where women and men will benefit from the national budget equitably;

### **108. Strategic Action:**

- i) Ensure *Gender Responsive Budgeting* and more open budget processes at all levels.
- ii) Allocate a minimum of 30% of the national budget for gender mainstreaming by Governmental Ministries and Agencies for the implementation of the gender equality instruments;
- iii) Undertake capacity development in gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting for policy makers, planners, and budgeting institutions in all sectors, particularly the Ministries of Finance, and Planning and Economic Affairs.

### **4.1.4 Human Rights and Gender Based Violence**

109. Promote and protect human rights through the implementation of all relevant national laws and human rights instruments; and take integrated measures to prevent and respond to GBV.

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### **6. Objectives:**

- a) Adopt, ratify and/or domesticate sub-regional, regional and international instruments on gender equality and women's rights.
- b) Ensure constitutional protection of women and men equally at all levels and create a positive legal and human rights environment for the protection of all Liberians.
- c) Prevent, respond to, and eliminate all forms of gender based violence in the public and private spheres.

### **110. Strategic Action:**

- i) Ensure the domestication of all sub-regional, regional and international instruments and reporting on CEDAW, UNCRC, the AU-Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa and commitments made on ECOWAS Gender Policy;
- ii) Translate and write 'Popular Versions' of sub-regional/regional and international human rights instruments and relevant laws and constitutional provisions in user friendly language for dissemination and creating awareness particularly in the rural areas;
- iii) Provide gender education and human rights training program for all Government, civil society and other agencies/organizations with a focus on law enforcement officers and the judiciary i.e. the Police, Judges and Magistrates.
- iv) Review and/or revise existing laws and enact new laws to eliminate gender insensitive provisions and to harmonize customary and civil laws in conformity with international human rights standards.
- v) Promote, enact and implement laws against all forms of GBV, including but not limited to rape, sexual exploitation and abuse, domestic violence, early and forced marriage and human trafficking;
- vi) Enact and enforce laws against sexual harassment, and abuse in all workplaces;
- vii) Conduct gender sensitization and public awareness campaigns on GBV targeting the whole society - men, women, the youth, boys and girls and all educational institutions for increased recognition and commitment from Government, civil society and citizens to eliminate SGBV;
- viii) Design programs for reaching out to vulnerable groups especially those with disabilities, the elderly and special needs to protect them against GBV;
- ix) Formulate and implement welfare schemes or programs for the rehabilitation, reintegration of GBV survivors;

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- x) Establish and strengthen comprehensive shelters for survivors of GBV and provide psychosocial support facilities and programs, including economic empowerment for women and girls;
- xi) Establish partnerships among the public and private sectors, civil society, local communities, those in leadership positions and other institutions such as the media to implement integrated GBV programs including counseling, legal, medical and protection;
- xii) Enhance the capacity of law enforcement institutions and health care providers to effectively prevent and respond to GBV survivors;
- xiii) Design programs aimed at addressing perpetrators of GBV and other forms of violence against women and children;
- xiv) Regularly conduct investigative research, monitoring and mapping to assess the situation of GBV in the country (for both women and men);
- xv) Coordinate, support, facilitate and monitor the implementation of the *National GBV Plan of Action*.

### 4.17 Vulnerable Groups

#### 4.1.7.1 The Girl Child

111. Create a positive environment for protecting and promoting the rights of the girl child and increase awareness of her needs and potential.

#### 7. Objectives:

- a) Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl-child, especially negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls.
- b) Eliminate discrimination against the girl child in education and the exploitation of girl - child labor in the family and facilitate free and compulsory education, skills development and training.
- c) Work towards eliminating violence against all children especially the girl-child.

#### 112. Strategic Action:

- i) Ensure the full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child through enactment of necessary laws, and adoption of measures that foster an enabling environment for full respect for the rights of children;

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- ii) Develop and implement comprehensive policies, plans of action and programs for the survival, protection, development and advancement of the girl-child to protect the full enjoyment of her human rights and to ensure equal opportunities in the total development process.
- iii) Enact legislation protecting girls from all forms of violence including sexual exploitation and abuse, child prostitution, and trafficking.
- iv) Provide support services including psychological, to assist girls who are subjected to violence;
- v) Develop training and advocacy programs on elimination of all forms of discrimination against girls and generate awareness among policy makers, men and boys, families and communities as a basis for influencing negative socio-cultural practices to overcome the differential treatment of girls and boys;
- vi) Domesticated and popularize the Convention on the Rights of the Child and ECOWAS Education Protocol, and make the girl child, especially those in difficult circumstances aware of their own potential, and rights;
- vii) Advocate for the elimination of harmful traditional and religious practices and customs that have negative effects on the development of the girl child;
- viii) Implement the Education Policy for Girls and Action Plans; integrating gender education in all educational institutions; designing and implementing programs to address sex education; gender responsive curricula in text books, training and learning materials to improve the self-image, lives and work opportunities for girls.;
- ix) Ensure free and compulsory education up to primary level for all children with focus on girl children; and facilitate higher education for girls through the creation of an enabling environment;
- x) Ensure access to appropriate education and skill-training for children with disabilities especially the girl-child for their full participation in life;
- xi) Implement policies and programs to eliminate child labor in order to retain the girl child in school; and establish and monitor a follow-up mechanism for girl school drop-outs.

### **4.1.7.2 The Youth, Elderly, PWD and PLWHA**

#### **8. Objective:**

- 113. To promote and protect the rights of vulnerable groups (Youth, PWD and PLWHA), increase awareness of their needs and potential; and eliminate discrimination against them.

### 114. Strategic Actions:

- i) Identify children and youth under different categories of vulnerability and target them with special and integrated programs i.e. street children, orphans, physically disabled children, and child laborers;
- ii) Facilitate and promote the development of gender sensitive youth programs on vocational training in a variety of fields linked to economic employment especially in the informal sector of the economy and explore new ways of improving job opportunities for the youth;
- iii) Promote friendly environment for PWDs, increase awareness of their needs, with special attention to women with disabilities who experience double discrimination as women and as PWDs;
- iv) Strengthen the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities with human and financial resources to effectively implement their mandate;
- v) Facilitate the development of a National Policy for PWDs;
- vi) Develop social protection programs targeting poor elderly women headed households especially in the rural areas;
- vii) Undertake gender-sensitive initiatives that address HIV and AIDS, other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and sex – education.

#### 4.1.7 Decision Making and Leadership Positions for Women

115. Create an enabling environment and mechanism for women’s participation in leadership and management positions at all levels.

### 9. Objectives:

- a) Take measures to ensure women’s equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making;
- b) Increase women’s capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership through affirmative action and quota systems.

### 116. Strategic Action:

- i) Promote the adoption of affirmative action legislation in all government, private, and public administrative positions by setting specific targets and implementing measures to substantially increase the number of women with a view of achieving equal representation of women and men including enactment of legislation providing reservation of seats for women at all levels;

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- ii) Conduct regular (yearly) collection of data on women and men at all levels in various decision-making positions in the public and private sectors and disseminate the information at the National Gender Forum, for monitoring progress;
- iii) Provide leadership and self-esteem training, career planning, tracking, mentoring, coaching, and re-training to assist women and girls to take decision-making positions;
- iv) Invest in capacity building programs for women in the legislature, the judiciary, political parties, in leadership at county level, in public speaking and self assertion as well as political campaigning to equip women with skills necessary for effective leadership roles;
- v) Develop communication strategies to promote public debate on the new roles of women and men in society and in the family; and develop and implement civic education and national programs to eliminate discriminatory attitudes and practices that discourage women from holding leadership positions at all level;
- vi) Invest in research on determinants, barriers, future trends and conditions required for women's participation in politics and decision-making.

### **4.1.8 Health and Reproductive Rights**

117. Address women's and girls' health needs with focus on sexual reproductive health, right of adolescents and establish mechanisms for eliminating harmful traditional practices and gender inequalities pertaining to access and use of basic health services.

#### **10. Objectives:**

118. Support the implementation of the National Health Policy in mainstreaming and addressing gender inequalities; and make basic and reproductive health services accessible, affordable, and available.

#### **119. Strategic Action:**

- i) Facilitate women's and girls' access to appropriate, accurate and relevant information on sexual, reproductive health rights and services including appropriate mechanisms for exercising those rights;
- ii) Promote adolescent health involvement, participation in sexual and reproductive health issues, accessibility and incorporate them into family planning services programs;
- iii) Address special health needs of women in general and particularly ageing women , PWDs and mentally dependent people;

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- iv) As an interim immediate measure, train the Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) and provide them with all relevant medical support, especially in areas not covered by the existing or proposed referral systems, for use in the services they provide in the community;
- v) Promote institutionalized delivery services in clinics, health centers and hospitals;
- vi) Prepare and disseminate information through public health campaigns, the media and the educational systems designed to ensure that women and men, especially the youth, can acquire knowledge about their health, sexuality and reproduction;
- vii) Provide access to free health and clinical services for rape survivors;
- viii) Provide more accessible, available, affordable primary health-care services of high quality, including sexual and reproductive health care, family planning, and information services by giving particular attention to maternal and emergency obstetrics care;
- ix) Intensify education and community based mobilization to protect females of all ages from HIV and other STIs, and facilitate programs to educate and enable men and boys to assume their responsibilities to prevent HIV and AIDS and other STIs;
- x) Encourage all sectors including the public and private sectors to develop compassionate and supportive, non-discriminatory HIV and AIDS related policies and practices that protect the rights of infected individuals e.g. HIV and AIDS Work Place Policy;
- xi) Advocate for increased budgetary allocation for maternal, child health care (primary health care) and social services with special attention to the reproductive and sexual health of girls and women and give priorities to health programs in rural and poor urban centers;
- xii) Develop sustainable systems at national and local levels for basic health delivery services;
- xiii) Address the nutritional needs of families especially women, girls, and children based on the National Nutrition Policy;
- xiv) Ensure equal access to medical health services for People Living with HIV and AIDS;
- xv) Provide accessible and affordable mental health services.

### **4.1.9 Peace and National Security**

- 120. Take positive steps to ensure peace and security for all Liberian citizens for full enjoyment of their human rights.

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### **11. Objective:**

121. To increase women's effective participation in peace keeping and reconstruction efforts at all levels and take measures to eliminate incidences of human rights abuses.

### **122. Strategic Actions**

- i) Advocate for the inclusion of not less than 30% women in national policy dialogue and legislate for provisions on peace keeping and conflict resolution as reflected in international and regional instruments;
- ii) Design and implement programs to increase the number of women at all levels, including key decision making positions, and post conflict peace-building processes, particularly in security sector reform including de-mobilization, disarmament, and reintegration, as well as democratization, governance processes including constitutional reviews and electoral reforms;
- iii) Appoint Gender Focal Points in all security sector agencies for identifying and providing opportunities for capacity building and gender mainstreaming;
- iv) Formulate and implement welfare schemes and programs for the rehabilitation and reintegration of SGBV survivors;
- ii) Create national peace building centers that promote gender, peace keeping and building, conflict prevention and resolution.
- iii) Establish Women Children and Protection Units (WACP) throughout the country and design and implement gender-sensitive capacity building programs for them and the LNP;
- iv) Ensure that perpetrators of human rights abuses and GBV are brought to justice;
- v) Promote rehabilitation measures for all vulnerable groups to address psychosocial effects of the conflict including GBV, and post war trauma;
- vi) Develop and implement gender-sensitive community policing, problem solving and crime prevention training (on-going and in-service) as well as specialized training on peace and security;
- vii) Design and implement gender-sensitive capacity building programs for women and children protection unit of the LNP;
- viii) Implement mechanisms to disaggregate data by sex and age, in the case management system particularly in Liberia National Police (LNP) and Bureau of Correction and Rehabilitation (BCR);
- ix) Support and facilitate the implementation of the UN Resolution 1325 National Plan of Action.

### 4.1.10 Media, Information, Communication and Technology

123. Create an environment that promotes access to information, communication and technology on all aspects of development and eliminates all forms of negative portrayals of women in the media.

**12. Objective:**

124. To promote gender sensitivity in all media institutions and other forms of communication; and to ensure that women and girls have equal access to training as media professionals and in ICTs.

**125. Strategic Actions**

- i) Advocate for the elimination of all gender stereotypes and negative portrayal of women in the media; and facilitate the participation of women in the development of professional guidelines and codes of conduct to promote balanced and gender sensitive media reporting;
- ii) Adopt measures that promote gender mainstreaming in ICT and media policies, programs and projects;
- iii) Provide opportunities for girls and women to train as media and ICTs professionals;
- iv) Equip the MoGD and all Gender Focal Points with ICT hard/soft wares and provide compulsory training for all stakeholders in the use of ICT for access and exchange of information;
- v) Develop and implement programs that promote the use of ICTs among women, especially in the rural areas, and develop and support functional literacy programs;
- vi) Facilitate the creation of well resourced websites in the MoGD on gender information;
- vii) Promote measures that increase representation and participation of women in decision making positions in the public, community and private media and ensure that women equitably participate in all media services;
- viii) Develop strategies for promoting the role of media in disseminating information on social issues including gender and cultural issues;
- ix) Review curriculum of all media training institutions and facilitate gender sensitive training for media-professionals, including media owners and managers, to encourage the creation and use of non-stereotyped, balanced and diverse images of women in the media;

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- x) Launch a gender and media campaign to increase the number and quality of programs on gender specific topics; and raise awareness on the National Gender Policy.

### 4.1.11 Research and Sex-Disaggregated Data

- 126. Provide guidelines, tools and instruments for gender research, data gathering, qualitative and sex-disaggregated data, and capturing women's productive and reproductive contribution to the economy which is a prerequisite for gender responsive planning in all sectors.

#### 13. Objective:

- 127. Generate and disseminate qualitative and sex-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation.

#### 128. Strategic Actions:

- i. Facilitate the design of a national tool for collecting quantitative and qualitative sex-disaggregated data in all sectors in order to track progress on gender equality;
- ii. Develop an efficient capacity building plan for statistical institutions especially LISGIS on gender analysis so as to ensure that data collection and management methodologies are fully engendered;
- iii. Simplify and make gender data relevant to national and local development of the country;
- iv. Prepare *Gender Equality Facts and Figures* at regular 2 year interval and distribute it widely;
- v. Develop a Gender Management Information sharing system in all sectors at national and county levels.

### 4.1.12 Monitoring and Evaluation

- 129. Define mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the NGP in its goal of achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.

#### 14. Objective:

- 130. To determine progress in the status of women, girls and vulnerable groups in the country.

#### 131. Strategic Actions:

- i. Facilitate the development of a monitoring mechanism and plan taking into account short, medium, and long-term indicators of gender equality;

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- ii. Develop Gender Monitoring Indicators;
- iii. Develop and harmonize reporting format on all gender equality instruments;
- iv. Develop and institutionalize an information exchange system including quarterly meetings of Gender Focal Points and an annual National Gender Forum;
- v. Create a system where outcomes and results of the monitoring and evaluation are followed up and implemented.

### **4.1.13 Access to Justice**

132. Objective: Promote human rights and access to justice and work towards the elimination all forms of discrimination and the eradication of GBV.

133. **Strategic Actions:**

- 1) Institute the culture of respect for the human rights of women and men, including freedom of expression, and the elimination of all negative stereotypical representation of women and girls and presentation of gender issues at various levels of the information dissemination and communication chain
- 2) Promote the enactment and implementation of laws against all forms of GBV, including but not limited to rape, sexual exploitation and abuse, domestic violence, early and forced marriage and human trafficking by 2012. by 2015.
- 3) Eliminate all harmful cultural, religious and social gender- biased practices which reproduce gender inequalities by 2015.

### **4.1. 15 Education and Training**

16. **Objectives:**

134. To mainstream gender in all sectors and at all levels of education;

To close gender gaps in the education sector.

135. **Strategic Actions:**

- 1) Review school curricula to incorporate changing gender roles
- 2) Disseminate the NGP widely across schools
- 3) Test revised curricula in schools and review impact
- 4) Implement revised schools curricula on changing gender roles

### 4.16 Environment and Natural Resources

**17. Objectives:**

136. To promote the active involvement of men and women in environmental decision-making at all levels;

To mainstream gender concerns and perspectives in all policies and programs for sustainable development

**137. Strategic Actions:**

1) Advocacy for the implementation of the National Environmental Policy and the active involvement of men and women in decision making on the implementation.

### 4.17 Infrastructure and Basic Services

**18. Objectives:**

138. Promote access to safe drinking water and sanitation services, cheap and affordable shelter and medical services to men, women and vulnerable persons.

**139. Strategic Action:**

Advocacy for the involvement of men and women in the planning, programming and implementation process of infrastructure projects

### 4.18 Culture, Family and Socialisation

**19. Objectives:**

140. To promote increased gender knowledge, changes in the public perception of the roles of women and increasing respect for women and child rights, and positive culture

**141. Strategic Actions:**

1) Commission popular female and male artistes to write songs and jingles on changing gender roles and on gender equality.

2) Organize ongoing mass media campaigns using vernacular radio, television to popularize songs.

3) Simplify the NGP and disseminate widely

4) Conduct Baseline Study on Harmful Traditional Practices in Liberia.

5) Advocate for the elimination of harmful traditional practices (HTPs) against women and children in Liberia.

### 4.19 Trade, Commerce and Industry

#### 20. Objectives:

142. To strengthened the capacity of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to support gender sensitive trade regime.

To increase productivity of women and men leading to reduced poverty index of women and over all socio-economic development of Liberia.

#### 143. Strategic Actions:

- 1) Hold stakeholders Consultations on gender and trade.
- 2) Advocate for the development of national policy guidelines on gender and trade.
- 3) Provide support to national women entrepreneurs' networks (including Women's Farmers' Associations/Cooperatives), cross border traders and associations to participate in international and national trade fairs.
- 4) Support traditional savings credit and lending schemes for women.
- 5) Organise consultations (private and public sector) on supporting the special fund for women entrepreneurs:
  - a. Management of the Fund
  - b. Criteria for accessing the Fund.
  - c. Private sector involvement.
- 6) Training pilot entrepreneurs on accessing the Fund.
- 7) Advocate for the integration of gender equality into ongoing land reform (equal right for women to economic resources such as land and other forms of property, finance, employment opportunities, markets, trade and appropriate working conditions);

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.0 INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

#### 5.1 The Ministry of Gender and Development

144. The Ministry of Gender and Development (MoGD) is the national machinery for promoting gender equality, women's advancement and children's welfare in Liberia. The Ministry is mandated to advise the Government on all matters affecting the development and welfare of women and children; coordinate gender mainstreaming efforts to ensure that both women and men gain from development programs; integrate women as equal partners with men in the development of the country; monitor and report back the impact and progress on gender equality programs. For these reasons, the MoGD has taken lead in the development of the NGP which began in 2006.

145. The MoGD shall encourage active support and participation of broad and diverse range of other institutional actors, including local community groups, non-governmental organizations, women's organizations, the media, religious groups, youth organizations, cultural and traditional groups, legislative bodies, academic and research institutions, as well as professional associations.

#### 5.2 Line Ministries and Government Agencies

146. The overall implementation of the NGP will be carried out by all sectors (public and private institutions) and government agencies with coordination by MoGD who will also act as a catalyst in developing new programs in areas that are not covered by the existing institutions.

#### 5.3 The National Gender Forum

147. The National Gender Forum shall monitor and advise gender equality issues nationally.

#### 5.4 The National Children's Council

148. In order for the Ministry to fulfill its mandate on development and protection of children, the Children's Council shall be established to monitor child rights issues nationally.

#### 5.5 Coordination

149. Coordination of the NGP is the responsibility of the MoGD. Mechanisms for the coordination are addressed in 4.1.1 of the priority areas of this policy.

150. Partners in the coordination of the Policy:

1. National Gender Forum;
2. Gender Focal Points with Government Ministries, Agencies and Public Institutions;

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3. County and Regional Gender Coordinators;
4. Gender Standing Committees in the Upper and Lower Houses;
5. Gender Task Forces (NGOs, INGOs, UN-Agencies and other Civil Society Organizations);
6. Bi-lateral partners.

### **5.6 Capacity Building for Gender Mainstreaming**

151. The MoGD shall ensure that technical support for gender policy analysis, gender mainstreaming skills and training, training in gender responsive planning, budgeting and monitoring are provided. Partners of the MoGD are Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, Bureau of Budget, together with other line Ministries, Agencies and Public Corporations; Liberia Institute of Public Administration; University of Liberia; Competent NGOs and Training Institutions.

### **5.7 Policy Analysis and Research**

152. The MoGD shall facilitate and undertake research and documentation of gender issues, conduct gender analysis of national and sector development policies, develop and disseminate gender sensitive instruments for gender focused research. Research Partners are LISGIS; Gender Focal Points (GFP); County and Regional Gender Coordinators; Civil Society Organizations; Traditional Leaders, Elders and Zoes; other Research Institutions.

### **5.8. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting**

153. Internal and external monitoring mechanisms shall be developed to ensure high level accountability for meeting the national gender equality, women's empowerment and children development objectives. Overall monitoring, evaluation and reporting of NGP will be the responsibility of MoGD with National Gender Forum and the National Children's Council as key partners. Other players include, Gender Focal Points, County Gender Coordinators, LISGIS, women's NGOs and other CSOs.
154. Key tasks of M&E shall be to develop key gender and development indicators; define M & E Instruments; develop tools and conduct impact assessment for the NGP; disseminate information; and report to the National Gender Forum and National Children Council.

#### **5.8.1. Overall Evaluation Indicators**

155. The following overall indicators, among others, will be used to evaluate the extent to which the purpose of the Policy is achieved as well as assess impact of the Policy on gender equality and women's empowerment. **Baseline data** on the following will be required to measure progress and impact.

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1. Proportion of population below poverty line by sex of household head;
2. Percentage of women in the informal sector;
3. Percentage of population employed by sex and location;
4. Proportion of population with registered land by sex and location;
5. Proportion of population accessing and utilizing credit schemes by sex and industry;
6. Proportion of businesses registered by type and sex of owners/promoters;
7. Percentage of population accessing public services by sex, sector and location;
8. Proportion of women in decision-making by sector and level;
9. Proportion of girls in leadership positions by level;
10. Maternal mortality ratio;
11. Child mortality ratio;
12. Incidence of GBV by region/location;
13. Proportion of girls completing formal education by level;
14. Adult literacy rate by sex and location;
15. Percentage of PLWHA by sex and location;
16. Percentage of PWD by sex and location.

### **5.9 Structure and Organization for the Implementation of the NGP.**

#### **5.9.1 Department of Policy, Research and Technical Services**

156. Among the key institutional recommendations is the strengthened capacity of the Department of Policy and Research of MoGD. This is the department that will prepare the ground for the implementation of the NGP, oversee the transformation process and establish structures (i.e. National Focal Points (NFP) that will own and drive the NGP beyond the MoGD to other Ministries, Agencies (public and private institutions), and other partner organizations. This department will also offer an 'institutional home' for the policy within the MoGD. It is envisaged that the NGP implementation process will involve considerable organizational changes, which will require effective coordination for smooth transition, hence the need for a strengthened capacity of the Department.
157. The Department of Policy, Research and Technical Services will manage the process, and ensure that the policy is implemented in a coordinated and systematic manner, within the set time-lines to reflect the priority of the MoGD which is to deliver the policy objectives. It shall have 5 Divisions:

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### 5.9.1.1 Division of Planning and Policy Coordination

158. This division will be technically responsible for overall, planning, coordination, advising, monitoring and implementation of the NGP based on gender responsive research, lessons learned and best practices. It shall also monitor and document the impact of policies and programs on women and children at all levels, formulate gender analytical policy frameworks, gender profiles, Plans of Action and relevant technical papers to influence the engendering of the development processes. Immediate tasks on the NGP are to:

- i) Develop a 5 Year National Gender Strategic Plan, complete with budgets;
- ii) Develop a framework for the identification, recruitment, training of required personnel, especially Gender Focal Points, for the implementation of the policy;

#### 5.9.1.1.1. Policy Coordination and Gender Mainstreaming Unit

159. The Policy Coordination Unit will be responsible for the coordination of all partner activities and Gender Focal Points. Immediate tasks are to:

- i) Facilitate appointments of Gender Focal Points in all Ministries, Agencies, and partner organizations at national level.
- ii) Develop gender profiles of partners.

#### 5.9.1.1.2. Training and Technical Services Unit

160. The Training and Technical Unit shall oversee capacity development for the implementation of NGP (e.g. identifying training needs of staff, Gender Focal Points and County and Regional Gender Coordinators; organizing trainings and workshops, working with sector Ministries and other key training institutions), and defining and providing the technical support needed in developing gender mainstreaming skills.

161. Immediate tasks for the implementation of the NGP are:

- i) Conduct gender capacity assessment of all the Ministries starting with MoGD, to identify gaps to be addressed.
- ii) Develop a Comprehensive Gender Capacity Building Plan at all levels, together with Gender Focal Points, at National and County Levels.

### 5.9.1.2 Division of Research Monitoring and Evaluation (RME)

162. RME is a crosscutting division for research and documentation, providing up-to date data and statistics for all programs, designing instruments for gender monitoring, evaluation, reporting and impact assessments of sector programs on gender. This division will facilitate periodic and comprehensive gender analysis, and specialized studies on gender, updating national gender profiles, policy frameworks and plans of action. RME shall establish direct and strong working relationship with LISGIS.

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163. Immediate tasks for the implementation of the NGP are to:

- i) Develop a Monitoring Plan complete with Gender Indicators
- ii) Put in place a Gender, Information and Management System

### 5.9.1.3 Division for Protection of Human Rights

164. This Division will coordinate the implementation and reporting on all sub-regional, regional and international human rights and development instruments including CEDAW, MDGs, CRC, and AU-Protocol on Women's Rights. Immediate task is to, together with Ministry of Justice; develop a Law Reform Plan in line with sub-regional, regional and international instruments.

#### 5.9.1.3.1 GBV Unit

165. The GBV unit will be responsible for the coordination, implementation and reporting on the National GBV Plan of Action.

### 5.9.1.4 Division of Information Education and Communication (IEC).

166. This division will be responsible for public relations for MoGD; providing, receiving and disseminating information. It will popularize the NGP proposals and make it acceptable among citizens. The main task will be to develop a Communication Strategy and appropriate instruments for advocacy and targeted information and education to promote significant awareness of the NGP and commitment (buy-in) with regard to gender issues. Immediate tasks are to:

- i) Develop and operationalize a Communication Strategy in consultation with other media practitioners.
- ii) Identify key areas for public sensitization and education;
- iii) Develop a program of implementation for public education and sensitization;
- iv) Develop a stakeholders' network for public education and sensitization strategy;
- v) Prepare IEC materials for dissemination to the public;
- vi) Outline physical infrastructure and human resource capacity requirements;
- vii) Coordinate with other relevant Ministries in implementing the Communication Strategy.

### 5.9.2 Department of Empowerment Programs and Children's Protection

167. The Department of Empowerment Programs and Children's Protection will have three divisions:

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### **5.9.2.1 Division of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**

168. The Division of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment will focus on identifying, implementing, coordinating and reporting on gender equality and women's empowerment programs. Immediate task is to develop a five-year gender equality and women's empowerment program.

### **5.9.2.2 Decentralized Division**

169. The Decentralized Division will coordinate the activities of the Regional and County Gender Coordinators. Under this division, Partners Coordination Unit will be established to:
- i) Facilitate the coordination and reporting on partners' activities at the local level;
  - ii) Organize quarterly meetings for partners at local level.

### **5.9.2.3 Division for Children's Development and Social Protection**

170. The focus will be on the adoption, domestication, monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the Convention on the Rights of Child. The immediate task is to:
- i) Facilitate the domestication of the Convention of the Rights of Child

### **5.9.3 Bureau of Administration, Personnel and Finance**

171. This Bureau will be a support to the MoGD, in dealing with financial controls, assets management, and providing logistical support in technical units (e.g. developing and managing central office filing systems) meetings, training workshops, and managing personnel functions. The Bureau has three Divisions:

#### **5.9.3.1 Administration and Personnel Division.**

172. To deal with all administrative and personnel issues of the MoGD. An immediate task is to draw up a Human Resource and Administrative Plan for MoGD.

#### **5.9.3.2 Finance Division.**

173. The finance division will handle financial controls, auditing and financial management and the assets of MoGD. Immediate to:
1. Review and put in place a Financial Management System;
  2. Together with other departments of the MoGD, develop a long term Budget Plan for programs of the Ministry and the implementation of the NGP.

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### **5.9.3.3 Procurement Division.**

174. This division will handle all the procurement of MoGD. Immediate tasks are:
1. Put in place a Procurement Management System according to the guidelines from the PPCC and the Ministry of Finance
  2. Simplify and disseminate procurement guidelines to all MoGD units, divisions and departments.
175. The Process of the formulation of the policy has been participatory and consultative, involving all stakeholders from Government Ministries and Agencies, County Officials, NGOs, women's networks, and other civil society organizations, the private sector, the Legislature, (its committees and caucuses), religious leaders, traditional leaders and Zoes.
176. The implementation of the NGP will also be multi-sectoral as well as complex and challenging. This is because Policy implementation involves different and all stakeholders' interests, intricate communication function, mobilizing of resources, setting up administrative structures, and meeting time-bound milestones among others. As a result, the implementation process may need to be phased and therefore effective coordination will be paramount. In order for the MoGD to play its role in coordinating, advising, and monitoring the implementation of the NGP, a high level technical capacity and strong organizational structure shall be put in place, together with appropriate placements of Gender Focal Points in all Government Ministries, Agencies and Corporations.
177. Media organizations can play a more proactive role in applying the principles and guidelines of the NGP. They can be key players in changing attitudes and mindsets, in delivering key messages and creating fora for negotiation and dialogue over the transformation of gender relations and questioning stereotypes, in acting as watch dogs to ensure accountability for women's human rights and the effective application of the NGP. Like all organizations, they are invited to develop their own gender policy and collaborate with colleagues and professional associations to develop industry guidelines and encourage their application.
178. Political parties have a special responsibility to fast track strategies and measures to increase the share of women not only as candidates but also as elected parliamentarians and as cabinet ministers, as well as in local government. Across parties and within Parliament, there needs to be a zero-tolerance of language and behavior that is abusive and demeaning to women, and personal attacks on candidates that explicitly reveal an anti-women bias. Manifestoes and programs need to include explicit reference to their position regarding gender equality and women's empowerment, across all thematic and sectoral areas. Candidates (male and female), need to be briefed on policies regarding gender equality and women's empowerment.
179. Civil Society Organizations, particularly women's organizations have been in the forefront of struggles and mobilization to achieve women's rights and setting the agenda for gender equality, to denounce violation of rights and campaign on wide-ranging, sensitive and controversial gender issues. They have an important role to play within the NGP Framework to create a strong vibrant proactive constituency for gender equality.

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### 5.10 The National Gender Forum

180. The National Gender Forum is a multi-disciplinary and policy advisory body to the Government of Liberia on gender issues. It is composed of a range of stakeholders including the following heads of institutions: Government Ministries and Agencies, institutions of higher learning, upper and lower Houses of Legislature, Gender Committees of the Legislature and UN Agencies. The President of the Republic of Liberia is the chairperson. The Secretariat of NGF is housed at the MoGD.
181. The role of the NGF is to advise and monitor Government's fulfillment of national and international commitments made on gender equality and women's empowerment within sectors and development goals. The UN Agencies and bilateral partners are observers and where necessary offer technical support and advice. The NGF has thematic task forces composed of line Ministries and Agencies, professional organizations, community based organizations, women and youth groups, traditional leaders, religious institutions, institutions of higher learning and the judiciary.
182. The National Gender Forum shall meet annually to monitor progress made in the implementation of NGP. It will:
- i) Facilitate the appointment of competent members to the National Gender Advisory Council with MoGD serving as its secretariat;
  - ii) Establish an inter-ministerial policy coordination committee and national task forces to ensure that gender equality issues are coordinated and addressed holistically.

#### **5.10.1 County Gender Forums**

183. In order to facilitate its monitoring role, County Gender Forums will be held to share information, evaluate the effectiveness of women empowerment programs and reach more women at the local level.
184. Immediate actions are to:
- a. Establish County-Based Task Forces to monitor and provide information at that level;
  - b. Hold annual Regional County Forums to feed into the NGF.

### **5.11 National Children Advisory Council**

185. Children's Council shall be established at national level to monitor, evaluate and report on the performance of all the institutions that have responsibility for children's development as well the domestication of the Convention on the Right of Child.

### CHAPTER SIX

#### 6.0 ENTRY POINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

186. The Government's commitment to gender equality and equity is reflected in the number of policies and programs towards enhancing the equality of men and women in Liberia. These are opportunities that can be tapped into. Monitoring and evaluation of the NGP shall be aligned within the frameworks of these instruments, laws and policies. Equally important entry points for reporting on progress by sectors in addressing gender inequality are the periodic sector reviews and public expenditure review.
187. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) (2008-2011) monitoring provides a strategic opportunity and entry point for assessing progress in the promotion of gender equality across sector and levels. Gender equity is a specific cross-cutting issue in the PRSP. This requires that established mechanisms, indicators and benchmarks for tracking PRS performance institutionalize reporting on gender outcomes and impacts. The MoGD will tap into Government's commitment in ensuring that key PRS monitoring data collected are disaggregated by age and sex, which will facilitate MDG monitoring and the development of internationally comparable data.

#### **Sector Investment Plans and Budget Framework paper**

188. Development and review of Sector Investment Plans, Ministerial Policy Statements and Budget Framework papers provide opportunities for strengthening M&E of gender equality, in line with the NGP.
189. The Civil Service Reform Strategy (2008-2011) is expected to mainstream gender; devise and implement an affirmative action program; draft and implement a civil service-wide sexual harassment policy; establish Gender Focal Points in each Ministry, Agency and Corporations and ensure that female employees are given special attention in training and in mentoring.
190. National Health Policy and National Health Plan (2007) recognizes that equity, social justice and good governance are essential for health and social improvement. The pro-poor commitment of the Government will be demonstrated by concrete measures taken at all levels of health care provision. MoGD shall monitor implementation of this Policy to ensure that activities are gender sensitive and respond to the needs of women's reproductive health including reproductive rights as well as integrating HIV and AIDS within basic health delivery services.
191. The National Action Plan on the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 addresses both the impact of war on women and women's contribution to conflict resolution and sustainable peace. It specifically calls for measures to ensure the protection and respect for women's human rights, measures to integrate women in all steps of peacekeeping, peacemaking and urges peace agreements to integrate gender perspectives.

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192. Other policies and Plans that can be targeted by MoGD are the Result Focused Transitional Framework; National Gender-Based Violence Plan of Action (2006); Policy on Girl Child Education (2006); HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan of Action (2007); Food and Agricultural Policy (2007); Environmental Policy (2002); Mental health Policy (2009); Social Welfare Policy (2008); Labor Policy and the Gender Policy of Liberia National Police.
193. International and Regional Commitments on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality: Liberia is a party to United Nations and African Union Instruments and Agreements on the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment. Implementation of the National Gender Policy will translate into Government’s accountability on its international and regional commitments.
194. Data Collection Systems: The collection, analysis, reporting and dissemination of data and information through the already established periodic surveys, participatory poverty assessments and other related activities are critical entry points and opportunities for generating gender and sex disaggregated data and information for M & E on gender equality.

### CHAPTER SEVEN

#### 7.0 RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE NGP

195. The primary responsibility for implementing the strategic objectives of the NGP rest with the Government. In order to achieve these objectives, the Government should incorporate a gender budgeting system in the National Budget for enhancing productive capacity and meeting social needs; and achieving the gender related commitments made at international and regional meetings. For the successful implementation of a NGP, the Government should allocate sufficient resources, including resources for undertaking gender monitoring, evaluation and impact analysis. Immediate actions are:
- i) Facilitate the development and implementation of gender budgeting;
  - ii) Allocate a minimum of 30% of national budget for gender mainstreaming by sectoral ministries and for the implementation of the gender equality instruments;
  - iii) Build the capacity of the Ministry of Finance and Budget Institutions on Gender Sensitization and Gender Budgeting to facilitate in-depth understanding on the importance of gender responsive budgeting.
196. NGOs, the private sector and other actors in the civil society should be encouraged to consider allocating resources necessary for the implementation of NGP. The African Development Bank, other regional business associations, corporate institutions and industries shall be invited to contribute and to help mobilize resources for the NGP.
197. UN regional commissions and other development partners shall within their existing mandates assist in the mobilization of funds for the implementation of the NGP. Adequate resources shall be committed by the bilateral partners to fulfill the agreed targets for the development countries such as Liberia and share in funding for activities towards women's development, peace and security.
198. Resources (financial, human and material) will be required for:
- i) Overall coordination of the implementation of NGP;
  - ii) Gender mainstreaming in all sectors and government agencies
  - iii) Developing a 5 Year National Gender Strategic Plan, complete with budgets;
  - iv) Developing a framework for identification, recruitment, training of required personnel for the implementation of the policy;
  - v) Appointments of Gender Focal Points in all Government Ministries Agencies and Public Corporations;
  - vi) Developing and operationalizing a Communication Strategy

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- vii) Civic Education Program, Mass Media and Public Awareness Campaigns to popularize the NGP;
- viii) Gender capacity assessment of all Government Ministries, Agencies and Public Corporations;
- ix) A Comprehensive Gender Training Program;
- x) Program for gender equality and women's empowerment;
- xi) Review and/or Revision of Laws;
- xii) Protection of Human Rights and GBV
- xiii) Protection of children's welfare and rights;
- xiv) Gender Research, Sex -Disaggregated Data, Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact Assessment; and
- xv) Gender Information Management System.

### GLOSSARY

*“Affirmative action”* means a policy or a program that seeks to redress past discrimination through active measures to ensure equal opportunity in all spheres of life.

*“Care-giver”* means any natural person who provides emotional, physical and social care and support services.

*“Customary/Custom”* This is an action or practice that has taken place since time immemorial, is not regulated by the state or other authority outside the social group, and is reinforced by repeated usage. Local custom may or may not be recognized in the formal legal system.

*“Customary Land Law”* This regulates people’s right to enjoy some use of land arising from customary unwritten practice rather than through written or codified law. An example is when the legitimacy of a set of rules derives from an authority such as a community or a clan.

*“Discrimination”* means any distinction, exclusion or restriction which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, by any person, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

*“Community Managing Role”* Activities undertaken primarily by women at the community level, as an extension of their reproductive role, to ensure the provision and maintenance of scarce resources of collective consumption, such as water, health care and education.

*“Decision-Making”* A key aspect in changing gender relations at individual, household, group, village and social levels

*“Equal Opportunities for Women and Men”* The absence of barriers to economic, political, and social participation on the grounds of sex.

*“Empowerment”* The process of gaining access and developing one’s capacities with a view to participating actively in shaping one’s own life and that of one’s community in economic, social and political terms.

*“Gender Roles”* - means the roles, duties and responsibilities which are culturally or socially ascribed to women and men.

*“Gender based violence”* means all acts perpetrated against women, men, girls and boys which cause or could cause them physical, sexual, psychological, and economic harm, including the threat to take such acts; or to undertake the imposition of arbitrary restrictions on or deprivation of fundamental freedoms in private or public life in peace time and during situations of armed or other forms of conflict.

*“Gender Issue”* Statistical or social indicator of inequality between men and women arising from discrimination and/or marginalization within society.

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**“Gender Division of Labor”** Refers to the allocation of different jobs or types of work to men and women, usually by tradition and custom.

**“Gender Blind”** Ignoring / failing to address the gender dimension as opposed to gender sensitivity or gender neutral.

**“Gender Sensitive”** Addressing and taking into account the gender dimension.

**“Gender equality”** means the equal access to opportunities, including resources, by women and men, as well as girls and boys.

**“Gender equity”** means just distribution of benefits, rewards and opportunities in which relations between women, men, girls and boys are based on respect for differences.

**“Gender Analysis”** The study of differences in the conditions, needs, participation rates, access to resources and development, control of assets, decision-making powers, etc. between women and men and their assigned gender roles.

**“Gender Planning”** An active approach to planning which takes gender as a key variable or criteria and which seeks to integrate an explicit gender dimension into policies or actions.

**“Gender Integration”** Taking into account both the differences and inequalities between women and men in program planning, implementation, and evaluation. The roles of women and men and their relative power affect who does what in carrying out an activity and who benefits. Taking into account the inequalities and designing programs to reduce them should contribute not only to more effective development programs but also to greater social equity and equality.

**“Gender Budgeting”** Gender budgeting seeks to ensure that public resources are used to meet the different needs and interests of women and men, girls and boys equitably.

**“Gender Indicators”** These measure gender-related changes in society over time. They provide direct evidence of the status of women, relative to some agreed normative standards or explicit reference group.

**“Gender Relations”** The relations and unequal power distribution between women and men which characterize any specific gender system.

**“Gender Gap”** The gap in any sector of analysis between women and men in terms of their level of participation, access, rights, remuneration or benefits.

**“Gender mainstreaming”** means the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in any area and at all levels; it is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.

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**“Gender stereotypes”** means the beliefs held about characteristics, traits and activity domains that are deemed appropriate for women and men based on the typical roles of women and men both domestically and socially.

**“Gender Dimension of Poverty”** These are the differences in the ways that men and women experience poverty.

**“Globalization”** means the process whereby the flow of goods, services, capital, people and information are increased and financial or investment markets operate internationally, largely as a result of deregulation and improved communications;

**“Human Development”** Human development is about people, about expanding their choices to lead lives they value, to develop their full potential and lead productive, creative lives.

**“Human Rights of Women”** The rights of women and the girl child are inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights.

**“Human Trafficking”** means the recruitment, transportation, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of threat, abuse of power, position of vulnerability, force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud or deception to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation.

**“Marginalized groups”** means community groups that are negatively perceived as socially and or physically outside the larger community structure, and are prevented from, or are unable to, participate in, or interact with, the mainstream community groups;

**“Multiple roles of women”** means women’s triple roles of reproduction, production and community management;

**“National Gender Machineries”** means national structures with the mandate to execute gender policies, programs and activities.

**“Non-formal education”** means education that has a formal curriculum, but does not take place within the traditional classroom setting;

**“Output”** Deliverables, which are directly attributed to a government program, such as the number of shelter houses build for survivors of GBV or number of trained personnel on gender. Output can therefore be measured on an annual basis.

**“Outcome”** Refers to the results of the deliverables and is not linked to a single government program. For example change in the status of women, will occur after many gender sensitive programs have been implemented. Outcome cannot be seen immediately and on an annual basis. They are nevertheless important to measure as they reflect the overall objective or reason why government undertakes particular activity.

**“Practical Gender Needs”** These relate to women’s traditional gender roles and responsibilities and are derived from their concrete life experiences.

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***“Productive Role”*** Work done by women and men for pay in cash or in kind. It includes market production with an exchange value and subsistence or home-based production with actual use value as well as potential exchange value.

***“Reproductive Role”*** Child-bearing, childrearing responsibilities and domestic tasks performed by women. These include not only biological reproduction but also care and maintenance of the work force (male partner and working children) and future work force (infants and school - age children).

***“Sex”*** means the biological differences between women and men.

***“Sex (or gender) disaggregated data”*** Statistical information that differentiates between women and men; for example, ‘number of women in the labor force’ instead of ‘number of people in the labor force’. This allows to seeing where there are gender gaps.

***“Strategic Gender Needs”*** These addresses issues of equity and empowerment of women. The focus is systematic factors that discriminate against women. This includes measuring the access of women, as a group compared with men, to resources, and benefits, including laws and policies.

***“Sexual harassment”*** means any unwanted, unsolicited or repeated verbal or sexual advance, sexually derogatory statement or sexually discriminatory remarks.

***“Sexual and reproductive rights”*** means the universal human rights relating to sexuality, including the right to sexual autonomy, sexual integrity and safety of the body, the right to sexual privacy, the right to make free and responsible reproductive choices, the right to sexual information based on scientific enquiry, and the right to sexual health care.

***“Socially excluded groups”*** means those groups which are systematically disadvantaged because they are discriminated against, on the basis of their ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, caste, descent, gender, age, disability, HIV status, migrant status or where they live, whether that discrimination occurs in public institutions, such as the legal and education systems or health services, as well as in the household and in the community.

***“Universal access”*** means the ability of all people to have equal opportunity and access, regardless of their ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, caste, descent, gender, age, disability, HIV status, migrant status or where they live.

***“Vulnerable groups”*** means population groups which, as a result of having the least access to public, economic and other resources, or as a result of their sex, are the least capable of maintaining subsistence, and easily fall prey to violations of their human rights.

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- Ministry of Planning
- Ministry of Finance
- Budget Bureau
- Ministry of Commerce
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Internal Affairs
- Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of Youth and Sports,
- FAWE
- Concerned Christian Community
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- SWAA-Liberia
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