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Joint Program on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women

**MPTF OFFICE GENERIC ANNUAL PROGRAMME¹ NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT
REPORTING PERIOD: 1 OCTOBER 2014 – 31 MARCH 2015**

<p align="center">Programme Title & Project Number</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Title: Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women • Programme Number: 00092266 • MPTF Office Project Reference Number:³ 00092003 	<p align="center">Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results²</p> <p><i>Liberia, West Africa</i></p> <p>National Rural Women’s Conference with the Liberia Rural Women’s Structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Increased profile and voice of rural women through the Liberia Rural Women’s Structure; and</i> ▪ <i>Improved cohesion and support to the Rural Women’s Structure in line with national priorities in the Agenda for Transformation (AFT).</i> <p>Strategic Mapping and Assessment of Women’s Farming Groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Baseline Information available on women’s farming groups and communities selected in the 3 targeted counties for JP RWEE intervention(s); and</i> ▪ <i>Communities and farming groups selected for JP RWEE support</i> <p>Initial Organizational Development and leadership trainings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Women’s farming groups formally organized and functional in selected communities in the 3 targeted counties.</i> 	
<p align="center">Participating Organization(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Women Liberia • WFP Liberia • FAO Liberia 	<p align="center">Implementing Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Gender Children, and Social Protection • Ministry of Agriculture • National Rural Women’s Structure • Development Education Network of Liberia 	
<p align="center">Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</p> <p>Total approved budget as per project document: \$245,482.00</p> <p>MPTF /JP Contribution⁴:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>UN Women Liberia</i> \$197,308.00 • <i>WFP Liberia</i> \$ 48,174.00 	<p align="center">Programme Duration</p> <p>Overall Duration: 12 Months</p>	

¹ The term “programme” is used for programmes, joint programmes and projects.

² Strategic Results, as formulated in the Strategic UN Planning Framework (e.g. UNDAF) or project document;

³ The MPTF Office Project Reference Number is the same number as the one on the Notification message. It is also referred to as “Project ID” on the project’s factsheet page the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

⁴ The MPTF or JP Contribution, refers to the amount transferred to the Participating UN Organizations, which is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

Agency Contribution • <i>None</i> Government Contribution <i>None</i> Other Contributions (donors) <i>None</i> TOTAL: \$245,482.00	Start Date ⁵ <i>14.10.2014</i> Original End Date ⁶ <i>30.09.2015</i> Current End date ⁷ <i>30.09.2015</i>
Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval. Assessment/Review - if applicable <i>please attach</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date: Mid-Term Evaluation Report – <i>if applicable please attach</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date:	<p style="text-align: center;">Report Submitted By</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Name: Ramon G. Garway ○ Title: National Project Manager ○ Participating Organization (Lead): UN Women Liberia ○ Email address: ramon.garway@unwomen.org

⁵ The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MPTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

⁶ As per approval of the original project document by the relevant decision-making body/Steering Committee.

⁷ If there has been an extension, then the revised, approved end date should be reflected here. If there has been no extension approved, then the current end date is the same as the original end date. The end date is the same as the operational closure date which is when all activities for which a Participating Organization is responsible under an approved MPTF / JP have been completed. As per the MOU, agencies are to notify the MPTF Office when a programme completes its operational activities.

NARRATIVE REPORT FORMAT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 28th January 2014, UN Women Liberia in collaboration with Liberia's Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection and the Ministry of Agriculture hosted an official and national launch of the Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women with the National Rural Women's Structure, WFP Liberia and FAO Liberia including the public and private sectors. The UN Country Team was represented by the Resident Coordinator's Office in person of Madam Adama Diop-Faye, Country Representative of WFP Liberia. The Ministry of Agriculture was represented by Hon. Charles N. McClain, Deputy Minister for Planning and Development and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, represented by Hon. Julia Duncan-Cassell, the Minister. The joint programme had been launched at the national level across all sectors of Liberia with media coverage from the United Nations and local media institutions. The event resulted in increased awareness on the JP's country programme with the National Rural Women Structure, the Government of Liberia, Civil Society, and the private sector.

From March 4th – 6th, 2015, a National Rural Women's Conference with the Rural Women Structure (225 rural women delegates) was hosted by the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County in collaboration with Liberia's Ministry of Agriculture, UN Women Liberia, FAO Liberia, and WFP Liberia including targeted training in leadership and democratic representation, consultations on governance reforms (Constitutional Review and Decentralization), and consultations for the adoption of a 2015 – 2017 Strategic Roadmap for JP RWEE and its expanded support for women's agricultural production through the Rural Women's Structure.

In collaboration with FAO Liberia, UN Women Liberia, Ministry of Agriculture, and Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, a strategic mapping and assessment of 19 rural communities and 18 women's farming groups through the Subah-Belleh Associates was conducted in 3 counties, namely Maryland, River Gee, and Sinoe for securing required statistics and information on the needs of existing women's farming groups in targeted communities and counties (by agricultural production area, geographic distribution, size and gender of farming groups, and prioritization of capacity building needs). The mapping and scoping of communities and farming groups revealed that most of the women's groups were recently established. They were primarily established for the purpose of pooling labor through the traditional "Kuu System" to increase agricultural production. A secondary objective common to most of the groups is the mobilization of informal savings and loans for the purpose of enhancing farming and other economic activities of individual members. Both purposes are seen as vehicles to the economic empowerment of group members, their households, and communities.

I. Purpose

- To launch the Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women (JP RWEE) at the national level across all sectors through the hosting of a National Rural Women's Conference with the Liberia Rural Women's Structure, Civil Society, and the Government of Liberia including targeted training in leadership and democratic representation, consultations on governance reforms (Constitutional Review and Decentralization), and consultations for the adoption of a 2015 – 2017 Roadmap for the joint programme and its expanded support for women's agricultural production through the National Rural Women's Structure.

Outcomes:

- *Increased profile and voice of rural women through the Liberia Rural Women's Structure; and*
- *Improved cohesion and support to the National Rural Women's Structure in line with national priorities in the Agenda for Transformation (AFT) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF 2013 – 2017).*
- To conduct a strategic mapping and assessment of rural communities and women's farming groups in 3 counties, namely Sinoe, River Gee, and Maryland for securing statistics and information on the needs of existing women's farming groups in targeted counties (by agricultural production area, geographic distribution, size and gender of farming groups, and prioritization of capacity building needs).

Outcomes:

- *Baseline information available on rural communities including existing women's farming groups in the 3 targeted counties for JP RWEE intervention(s); and*
- *Potential communities and farming groups selected for JP RWEE support.*
- To conduct initial Organizational Development (OD) and Leadership trainings to support leadership structures and development of by-laws for targeted women's farming groups identified from the mapping and assessment in 3 counties.

Outcomes:

- *Women's farming groups formally organized and functional in selected communities in the 3 targeted counties.*

II. Results

From October 2014 to December 2014, there were no significant achievements made under the joint programme in Liberia. This was primarily as a result of the Ebola Virus Disease Outbreak and the fact that the County Office suspended project activities and field missions. However, key partnerships were made with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection including the National Rural Women Structure and the Liberia Marketing Association. The National Steering Committee became functional and the Joint Steering Committee was established to convene joint steering committee meetings. Also, a rural woman, Mrs. Annie Kruah, from the National Rural Women Structure was selected as Liberia's representation to the International Steering Committee.

Nonetheless, as of the first quarter of 2015, the National Rural Women Structure including the Government of Liberia (through the Gender and Agriculture Ministries, the Liberian Legislature, Civil Society, and the private sector) have increased knowledge on the overall goal of the 3-year joint programme which is focused on securing women and girls' economic rights and livelihoods in the context of sustainable development and the post MDGs, referencing the four outcome areas: improved food and nutrition security; increased income to secure their livelihoods; enhanced leadership and participation in rural institutions and in shaping laws, policies and programmes; and gender responsive policy environments for the economic empowerment of rural women. This was achieved as a result of the launch of JP RWEE Country Programme on 28th January 2015 and the 4th – 6th March hosting of the National Rural Women's Conference which created increased awareness on the joint programme's overall goal.

As a result of increasing awareness on accelerating progress towards the economic empowerment of rural women through the launch of JP RWEE in Liberia and the hosting of a National Rural Women's Conference, the National Rural Women Structure has assisted in mobilizing approximately 150 grassroots rural women groups at the community level in readiness for the JP's interventions in targeted communities. The enthusiasm of rural women in targeted communities for the JP's rollout remains noticeable at the community level. In addition, rural women-based civil society organizations have resulted to providing support in the determination and finalization of training venues and targeted farming groups for trainings in organizational development and leadership skills for increased capacity of farming groups and the National Rural Women Structure in Maryland, River Gee, and Sinoe Counties respectively. The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), civil society and general public have been made aware of the joint programme's overall goal and its strategic interventions and have also begun tracking progress in the midst of the many challenges and/or constraints due to the Ebola outbreak in Liberia.

The private sector has committed to establishing partnership with the joint programme, especially at the community level. Targeted rural communities located in concession areas are likely to benefit from this partnership. For example, one strategic and major concession company is Golden Veroleum (Oil Palm), located in Sinoe County, a targeted county under the joint programme. Another partnership has included discussion with one mobile phone company, Cellcom GSM, to support the joint programme's communication strategy in terms of messaging for support to the JP's visibility through Information Communication Technology (ICT). This company remains committed in partnering with UN Women in this area.

The JP in 2015 will be focused on efforts to accelerate agricultural activities in Sinoe County for increased agricultural produce despite the tremendous level of expansion of the palm plantation by Golden Veroleum and the effects of limited farming activities on the part of locals at the county, district, and community levels. The JP has begun to form synergies with existing projects at the country level specifically with the Peacebuilding Fund Project and the Joint Programme on Sexual and Gender based Violence.

Another key focus will be on the JP's involvement with rural women in the context of natural resource management, an area of strategic focus under the current UN Women PBF Project, especially in concession areas (i.e. Sinoe County, etc.) where there is a tendency for conflict with concession companies and rural women involved in agriculture – those affected by the loss of farmlands to private/concession companies.

Civil Society, the United Nations, GoL, and the private sector's participation and/or engagement at the National Rural Women's Conference paved the way for the development and adoption of a most strategic 2015 – 2017 Roadmap for the implementation of the Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment in Liberia. The views of rural women, civil society, GoL, the UN and the private sector were all considered under the conference for reaching a holistic approach to project execution and for achieving the most strategic results under rural women's empowerment.

In addition, targeted trainings in leadership and democratic representation during the hosting of the March 2015 National Rural Women Conference resulted in increased knowledge and awareness on leadership skills and rural women's political participation, taking into account the current governance reforms which includes Constitutional Review and Decentralization. It is also crucial to acknowledge that the 225 rural women delegates including 3 representatives from WFP and FAO and 8 representatives from 4 other stakeholders (Ministry of Agriculture, Liberia Marketing Association, Association of Women in Cross Border Trade, Cellcom GSM) expressed their

commitment to the JP's expanded support for women's economic security and rights through the National Rural Women's Structure with a strong focus on achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.

At the conference, a representative from the Constitution Review Committee (CRC) explained the relevance of the constitutional review process and urged the 225 rural women delegates to influence other rural women from their districts and/ or counties to participate actively in order to ensure their voices are heard and that their views are captured within the new constitution. The speaker made specific reference to the just ended Constitution Review Forum that was held in Gbarnga, Bong County on March 28, 2015. Participants had been encouraged to be a part to ensure the old laws are repealed and new ones are made to reflect gender equality and women's economic empowerment. The national leadership of the National Rural Women Structure including its National President, Madam Kebbeh Monger, attended and participated in the Constitution Review Forum.

The Rural Women's Conference created the opportunity for the delegates to understand the global and national frameworks of the Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment as well as the targeted thematic areas, namely Improved food and nutrition security; Rural women's increased income to secure their livelihoods; Enhanced leadership and participation, and a Gender responsive policy environment. Lessons learnt from previous joint programmes were discussed in the Liberian context taking into account the relevance of joint programming and the delivery of a holistic package of assistance to beneficiaries.

Consultations with the rural women delegates at the conference reveal that women farmer cooperatives are viable entry points, but small farmer groups should be targeted alongside to ensure greater trickle-down impact. In addition, delegates explained that ggreater impact can be achieved by focusing on social cohesion.

Potential communities and farming groups identified under the joint programme are amongst the most vulnerable communities and strategic for programme delivery because these are communities and farming groups that have met the criteria for selection for JP RWEE's intervention(s). From the mapping and assessment of communities and farming groups, findings show that women and men that are working together in groups on agricultural activities at the community level seem to show considerable interest in working with the JP. The NRWS at the community level has played a major role in sensitizing these communities ahead of the full rollout of key interventions (i.e. Organization Development and Leadership trainings, literacy and numeracy skills including business skills, and women's access to finance).

The joint programme was launched in Liberia in partnership with WFP, FAO, Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, and the National Rural Women Structure on 28 January 2015 for 225 rural women delegates from the 3 targeted counties under JP RWEE, namely Maryland, River Gee, and Sinoe. In addition, 12 rural women delegates from the remaining 12 counties participated in the conference and benefited from targeted trainings in leadership and democratic representation, consultations on governance reforms (Constitutional Review and Decentralization), and consultations for the adoption of a roadmap for JP RWEE and its expanded support for rural women's agricultural production through the Rural Women's Structure. Representatives from the GoL, Civil Society, the private sector and other stakeholders were present and participated in activities at the conference.

In February of 2015, a study was undertaken by Subah-Belleh Associates, a Liberian owned and managed consulting firm, hired by WFP under the joint programme. The study covered 18 women

groups (a minimum of 100 women and men per group) and 19 communities with a clear focus aim at the strategic mapping and scoping of communities and women farming groups for JP RWEE's intervention. The research report was submitted to WFP by the research firm and is currently being finalized based on comments made for validation and launch. The research had considered approximately 2,000 women and men involved in agricultural activities as outlined in the Country Programme document.

The research study also revealed that most of the groups are informal associations. These are not cooperatives and, as such, although a few of the groups are involved in joint productions, most have individual members working their own farms and producing and marketing their own products. The common linkage among them seems to be the pooling of labor through the traditional "Kuu System" to make larger farms and the savings and loans facilities through which they save and access needed financial resources for farming, business, and meeting household needs. As should be expected, the membership of most of the groups is largely women. Only two groups (Kenwenken and Wessitoken) have an all-female membership. Enrolment is generally voluntary and open, although one's character in the community is an implicit, common criterion. Membership is permanent, except someone decides to leave on his/her own accord, which is not so often. But when this occurs, it is usually on account of poor health and/or family engagements. However, members can be expelled from these associations on account of bad character, disrespect towards group members and leaders, and blatant refusals to honor group decisions.

The main income generating activity of most of the groups is rice, cassava and vegetables production and marketing. Only one group (Kanwenken) grows corn and beans, in addition to rice and cassava. A very few members have secondary income generating activities in the form of petty trading and livestock rearing. Also, the women are still using rudimentary farming practices. The most common is the "slash and burn" method. Men usually brush the bushes and fell the trees, while the women scratch the land, plant the seeds, harvest the produce and market them. Most groups lack access to agricultural extension services such as improved farming methods. Training in modern agriculture practices is most needed across all the groups.

Initial Organizational Development (OD) and Leadership trainings for 80 women leaders; and 2,000 women and men in targeted farming groups to support leadership structures and development of by-laws for targeted women's farming groups are pending the finalization of the selection of implementing partners under the joint programme in collaboration with partner UN agencies government institutions. The Ebola outbreak was the initial cause for delay of this activity. Trainings are expected to rollout in June 2015 with full completion set for end of July 2015.

Increased awareness and knowledge of the joint programme within the context of accelerating progress towards the economic empowerment of rural women for 225 rural women delegates including an additional 12 persons through the hosting of the 2015 National Rural Women's Conference were realized. The 225 rural women delegates targeted under the planned hosting of a rural women's conference were met in addition to 12 other rural women delegates from the remaining 12 counties of the 15 counties in Liberia. Approximately 250 other persons participated in the conference, bringing the total number of participants at the conference to around 487 persons. A 2015 - 2017 JP RWEE Roadmap was carved and adopted for implementation by the National Rural Women Structure with support from UN Women, FAO, and WFP including the Gender and Agriculture Ministries. Thus, this output was 100% completed.

Baseline information is available for programming under JP RWEE as a result of the February 2015 strategic mapping and assessment of rural communities and rural women farming groups in 3

targeted counties, by agricultural production area, geographic distribution, size and gender of farming groups, and prioritization of capacity building needs. The research study recommended that the JP focuses on three key things ahead of the full launch of other gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives, and these include Organizational Development, Support System, and Decision-Making in Groups. The mapping and scoping had covered a total of 18 women groups in 19 communities.

Organizational Development and Leadership trainings are pending.

The JP RWEE Country programme was approved on 1 October 2014, and the transfer of funds was completed as of 14 October 2014. Due to the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease in West Africa including Liberia in 2014, the country programme was suspended temporarily as UN Women, the lead UN agency, under JP RWEE was prohibited from field work – as one of UN Women's national staff fell victim to EVD in nearby Sierra Leone. UN Women HQ had cautioned the Liberia Country Office to limit field work, thus, JP RWEE activities were seriously delayed as there could be no mobilization of women, rallies, conferences, workshops, and trainings due to the restrictions on these in an attempt to curtail the EVD infection as advised by the World Health Organization (WHO) and Liberia's Ministry of Health (MoH)

The joint programme has managed to complete two of the three planned activities under the agreement with Norway – Norwegian Funds. These include the Launch of the Joint Programme in Liberia through hosting of a National Rural Women's Conference (two separate events) with a Roadmap adopted and targeted trainings conducted for 225 rural women delegates at the Conference; and the completion of a baseline study for JP RWEE's programming in Liberia. Initial Organizational Development and Leadership trainings are pending for 80 women leaders and 2,000 women and men in targeted farming groups, as identified from the research study.

As of May 1, 2015 UN Women finalized 3 key partners from Civil Society for the implementation of the joint programme activities in Liberia. These include DEN-L, EduCARE, and THINK.

ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment:

	<u>Achieved</u> Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
<p>Outcome 1⁸ Increased profile and voice of rural women through the Liberia Rural Women’s Structure and improved cohesion and capacity building support to the Rural Women’s Structure in line with national priorities in the Agenda for Transformation (AfT).</p> <p>Indicator: Targeted trainings in leadership and democratic representation for 225 rural women delegates completed; consultations on governance reforms (Constitutional Review and Decentralization) and for the adoption of a roadmap for the JP RWEE and its expanded support for women’s agricultural production through the National Rural Women’s Structure held with 225 rural women delegates at the conference.</p> <p>Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 225 rural women delegates</p>	<p>225 rural women delegates participated in a National Rural Women’s Conference including targeted trainings in leadership and democratic representation; participated in consultations on governance reforms (Constitutional Review and Decentralization) and consultations for the adoption of a roadmap for the JP RWEE and its expanded support for women’s agricultural production through the Rural Women’s Structure. In addition, 12 other rural women delegates from the remaining 12 of Liberia’s 15 counties attended and participated in the conference; including 175 other persons from Civil Society and the private sector in attendance. Hence, there was a total of 412 participants at the conference.</p>	<p>As part of creating more awareness and knowledge on the overarching goal of the 3-year RWEE joint programme on securing rural women’s livelihoods and rights in the context of sustainable development and the post MDGs, Liberia’s Gender Ministry including UN partners and the Ministry of Agriculture saw the need to include 12 additional rural women delegates from the other 12 counties in Liberia including 250 representatives from Civil Society and the private sector ensure increased awareness on the JP and to get the buy-in at a national level.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2015 National Rural Women’s Conference Report; 2. Draft 2015 - 2017 JP RWEE Roadmap document; and 3. Minutes from the Conference
<p>Output 1.1 Increased awareness and knowledge on accelerating progress towards the economic empowerment of rural women for 225 rural women delegates including an additional 12 through the hosting of the 2015 National Rural Women’s Conference.</p>	<p>Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women launched nationally and through the hosting of the 2015 National Rural Women’s Conference with targeted trainings in leadership and</p>	<p>225 planned and achieved; additional 187 participants reached</p>	<p>2015 National Rural Women’s Conference Report available; Draft 2015 - 2017 JP RWEE Roadmap document; and Minutes from the conference</p>

⁸ Note: Outcomes, outputs, indicators and targets should be **as outlined in the Project Document** so that you report on your **actual achievements against planned targets**. Add rows as required for Outcome 2, 3 etc.

<p>Indicator 1.1.1 225 rural women delegates from the 3 targeted counties including 12 representatives from the remaining 12 counties participated in the conference and adoption of the 2015 – 2017 JP RWEE Roadmap.</p> <p>Baseline: 0</p> <p>Planned Target: 225 rural women delegates from Maryland, River Gee, and Sinoe Counties</p>	<p>democratic representation, consultations on governance reforms (Constitutional Review and Decentralization) and consultations for the adoption of a roadmap for the JP RWEE and expanded support for women’s agricultural production through the Rural Women’s Structure for 412 participants.</p>		
<p>Outcome 2 Baseline Information available on 18 women’s farming groups and communities selected in the 3 targeted counties for JP RWEE intervention(s); and 6 communities and farming groups selected for access to OD, literacy and numeracy skills, and business skills trainings including access to finance and agricultural support.</p> <p>Indicator: 9 farming groups and communities</p> <p>Baseline: 3</p> <p>Planned Target: Approximately 2,000 women and men involved in agricultural activities</p>	<p>Strategic mapping and assessment of rural communities and women’s farming groups for future JP RWEE support in targeted counties (by agricultural production area, geographic distribution, size and gender of farming groups, and prioritization of capacity building needs) completed in 18 rural communities in Maryland, Sinoe, and River Gee Counties</p>	<p>The mapping and scoping completed for a total of 18 women groups (minimum of 100 women and men per group) in Maryland, Sinoe, and River Gee Counties.</p>	<p>Baseline study report for strategic mapping and assessment of communities women farming groups in Maryland, Sinoe, and River Gee Counties available; Training of researchers report available; Minutes from training of researchers</p>
<p>Output 1.2 Baseline information available for programming under the JP RWEE Country Programme through the strategic mapping and assessment (by agricultural production area, geographic distribution, size and gender of farming groups, and prioritization of capacity building needs) of rural communities and rural women farming groups in 3 targeted counties under JP RWEE</p> <p>Indicator 1.2.1</p> <p>Baseline: 0</p> <p>Planned Target: Approximately 2,000</p>	<p>Conducted a strategic mapping and scoping of 19 rural communities and 18 rural women’s farming groups (minimum of 100 women and men per group)</p>	<p>2,000 planned and achieved</p>	<p>Baseline study report; Training of researchers report; Minutes from training of researchers</p>

women and men involved in agricultural activities			
<p>Outcome 3 Women’s farming groups formally organized and functional in selected communities in the 3 targeted counties.</p> <p>Indicator: NA</p> <p>Baseline: 0</p> <p>Planned Target: 80 women leaders; and 2,000 women and men in targeted farming groups</p>	Pending	NA	NA
<p>Output 1.3 Women’s farming groups formally organized and functional with increased capacity in selected communities in the 3 targeted counties.</p> <p>Indicator 1.3.1 NA</p> <p>Baseline: 0</p> <p>Planned Target: 80 women leaders; and 2,000 women and men in targeted farming groups</p>	NA	NA	NA

iii) A Specific Story (Optional)

- As it stands, there is no key success story.
- Photos of the launch and National Rural Women Conference as seen below:



- See link to story on UN Women's support to the Gender Ministry:
<http://www.unwomenwestandcentralafrica.com/news/1/un-women-supports-rural-womens-economic-empowerment>

Problem / Challenge faced:

The JP RWEE baseline study revealed that rural women farming groups are generally at a very low level of organizational development and capacity. In fact, in the true sense of the word organization, many of the groups fail to qualify. There seems to have been little effectiveness in the planning and organization of the establishment of the groups across all targeted communities. For example, in terms of population and the availability of an agricultural labor force, some communities profiled lacked the desired agriculture labor force. Glaring examples of these are found in town targeted communities, namely Gayteh Town (Sinoe) and Jaytoken (River Gee).

Programme Interventions:

The problem or challenge of rural women farming groups being at a low level of organizational development and capacity is yet to be addressed under the joint programme. The JP was scheduled to conduct initial organizational development and leadership skills trainings for the National Rural Women Structure and rural women farming groups, but due to the EVD breakout in the West African region (Liberia included), this activity was stalled. Hence, in the coming months, OD and leadership trainings will be rollout to eligible farming groups in the 3 targeted counties, namely Maryland, River Gee, and Sinoe Counties.

Result (if applicable):

In terms of change, not much has happened. However, there has been increased awareness and knowledge built for the National Rural Women Structure including Civil Society, and both the private and public sectors in terms of understanding the JP's overall goal through the JP's launch and the hosting of the 2015 National Rural Women's Conference. The private sector has been engaged, and there commitments from the sector in support of the joint programme.

The fact that the voices of rural women were considered including that of the private and public sectors during the drafting and adoption of the 2015 - 2017 JP RWEE Roadmap for implementation by the GoL and the UN, full participation was achieved, thus, ensuring a holistic approach to the entire process.

Lessons Learned:

It is critical to note that due to the fact that there were targeted trainings in leadership and democratic representation, consultations on governance reforms (Constitutional Review and Decentralization), and consultations for the adoption of a roadmap for the joint programme at the rural women's conference, the adopted roadmap is a complete reflection of the views and voices of rural women from all around the country, specifically all 15 counties of Liberia. The conference presented some key recommendations from rural women that have proven quite strategic for the JP's consideration under the current country programme. These include:

- Rural women's access to skills trainings;
- Rural women's access to improved road conditions for the reduction in transport cost;
- Rural women's access to fish dryers (processing plants) and opening of more market facilities;
- Rural women's access to seeds and tools;
- Rural women's access to credit for the expansion of agricultural production;
- Rural women's access to improved farming activities by introducing modern/new methods
- Rural women's access to technologies (i.e. rice mills, cassava processor, dryer and packaging systems, etc.
- Rural women's access to capacity building initiatives

III. Other Assessments or Evaluations (if applicable)

WFP led the joint programme's baseline study in partnership with a local research firm, Subah Belleh Associates. This was done in collaboration with UN Women, FAO, MoA, and MGCSP. The baseline study report is being finalized for validation and launch at the country level.

IV. Programmatic Revisions (if applicable)

There has been no mayor adjustments in strategies, targets or key outcomes and outputs.

V. Resources (Optional)

The joint programme received a total of US\$245,482.00 from Norway with a breakdown as follows:

UN Women - \$197,308

WFP - 48,174.00

FAO - \$0.00

UN Women, under its funding, setup a JP RWEE Project Management Unit (PMU) at the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, the lead government institution under the JP in Liberia. The PMU is fully staffed with a national Coordinator, Administrative Assistant/Finance Officer, an M&E Officer, and driver. Office supplies were provided for the PMU and a vehicle secured as support to the

Gender Ministry to strengthen monitoring and evaluation from the government's end. In addition, Technical Assistance to the Ministry of Agriculture has been provide to support work in gender responsive planning and budgeting for the ministry including monitoring and supervision under JP RWEE.

At the country level no resources have been mobilized for the JP; however, the JP is expecting to fundraise at the county level with FAO taking the lead to fund some activities under the JP's 2015 annual work plan. US\$ 1,042,744.00 was received from Sweden in support of the JP's expansion in 2015. Discussions are underway with the Swiss and USAID on funding the expansion of agriculture extension services under the joint programme.