



UNITED NATIONS  
DEVELOPMENT GROUP



Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.

**“ACCELERATING PROGRESS TOWARD THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF  
WOMEN”  
ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT  
REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2017**

|   |  |            |                          |  |                           |            |                      |            |                      |            |                            |  |   |           |   |           |   |
|---|--|------------|--------------------------|--|---------------------------|------------|----------------------|------------|----------------------|------------|----------------------------|--|---|-----------|---|-----------|---|
| <p align="center"><b>Programme Title &amp; Project Number</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programme Title: Accelerating Progress Toward Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Liberia</li> <li>MPTF Office Project Reference Number:<sup>1</sup> 00092003</li> </ul>  | <p align="center"><b>Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results</b></p> <p><i>Liberia, West Africa</i></p> <p>The strategic result is to secure rural women’s livelihoods and rights in the context of sustainable development and the SDGs.</p> <p>Since the start of implementation, the joint programme has directly engaged a total of 7,963 direct beneficiaries (exactly 7,003 females / 960 males) and over 31,000 household members that are indirect beneficiaries (29,305 females / 1,695 males)</p> <p>From January 2017 till December 31, 2017, the joint programme has reached approximately 3,756 new direct beneficiaries (3,278 females / 478 males) and around 15,021 new indirect beneficiaries (13,481 females / 1,540 males)</p> |            |                          |  |                           |            |                      |            |                      |            |                            |  |   |           |   |           |   |
| <p align="center"><b>Participating Organization(s)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FAO, IFAD, UNWOMEN, WFP</li> </ul>  | <p align="center"><b>Implementing Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry of Gender Children, and Social Protection</li> <li>Ministry of Agriculture</li> <li>National Rural Women’s Structure</li> <li>Association of Women in Cross Border Trade</li> <li>VOSIEDA</li> <li>THINK Liberia</li> <li>Farmers Assistance Programme</li> <li>Liberia Marketing Association</li> <li>EduCARE Liberia</li> <li>Agro-Machinery Company</li> </ul>   |            |                          |  |                           |            |                      |            |                      |            |                            |  |   |           |   |           |   |
| <p align="center"><b>Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Total approved budget as per project document:</td> <td align="right">\$ 400,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><b>MPTF Contribution</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>• <i>UN Women Liberia</i></td> <td align="right">\$ 160,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• <i>WFP Liberia</i></td> <td align="right">\$ 125,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• <i>FAO Liberia</i></td> <td align="right">\$ 115,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><b>Agency Contribution</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>• <i>UN Women Liberia – Strategic Dialogue with rural young women on life skills; and</i></td> <td align="right">\$ 19,825</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• <i>UN Women Liberia – ToT with rural young women on women’s political participation</i></td> <td align="right">\$ 19,612</td> </tr> </table> | Total approved budget as per project document:   | \$ 400,000 | <b>MPTF Contribution</b> |  | • <i>UN Women Liberia</i> | \$ 160,000 | • <i>WFP Liberia</i> | \$ 125,000 | • <i>FAO Liberia</i> | \$ 115,000 | <b>Agency Contribution</b> |  | • <i>UN Women Liberia – Strategic Dialogue with rural young women on life skills; and</i> | \$ 19,825 | • <i>UN Women Liberia – ToT with rural young women on women’s political participation</i> | \$ 19,612 | <p align="center"><b>Programme Duration</b></p> <p>Overall Duration 5 YEARS</p> <p>Start Date <i>(15 10 2012)</i></p> <p>End Date <i>(30 04 2018) - Extension</i></p> |
| Total approved budget as per project document:  | \$ 400,000   |            |                          |  |                           |            |                      |            |                      |            |                            |  |   |           |   |           |   |
| <b>MPTF Contribution</b>  |  |            |                          |  |                           |            |                      |            |                      |            |                            |  |   |           |   |           |   |
| • <i>UN Women Liberia</i>   | \$ 160,000   |            |                          |  |                           |            |                      |            |                      |            |                            |  |   |           |   |           |   |
| • <i>WFP Liberia</i>  | \$ 125,000   |            |                          |  |                           |            |                      |            |                      |            |                            |  |   |           |   |           |   |
| • <i>FAO Liberia</i>  | \$ 115,000   |            |                          |  |                           |            |                      |            |                      |            |                            |  |   |           |   |           |   |
| <b>Agency Contribution</b>  |  |            |                          |  |                           |            |                      |            |                      |            |                            |  |   |           |   |           |   |
| • <i>UN Women Liberia – Strategic Dialogue with rural young women on life skills; and</i>   | \$ 19,825  |            |                          |  |                           |            |                      |            |                      |            |                            |  |   |           |   |           |   |
| • <i>UN Women Liberia – ToT with rural young women on women’s political participation</i>   | \$ 19,612  |            |                          |  |                           |            |                      |            |                      |            |                            |  |   |           |   |           |   |

<sup>1</sup> The MPTF Office Project Reference Number are as follows: ETHIOPIA: 00092000; GUATEMALA: 00092001; KYRGYZSTAN: 00092002; LIBERIA: 00092003; NEPAL: 00092004; NIGER: 00092005; RWANDA: 00092006

|  |
|--|
| Government Contribution<br><i>None</i>   |
| Other Contributions (donors)<br><i>None</i>  |
| <b>TOTAL: <u>US\$ 439,437</u></b>  |
| <b>Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.</b>  |
| Assessment/Review - if applicable <i>please attach</i><br><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No   Date:          |
| Mid-Term Evaluation Report – <i>if applicable please attach</i><br><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No   Date: |

|  |
|--|
| <b>Report Submitted By</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Name: Ramon Garway</li> <li>○ Title: National Coordinator</li> <li>○ Participating Organization (Lead): UN Women</li> <li>○ E-mail address: <a href="mailto:ramon.garway@unwomen.org">ramon.garway@unwomen.org</a></li> </ul> |

## **List of Acronyms**

|              |   |  |
|--------------|---|--|
| 1. AfT       | - | Agenda for Transformation  |
| 2. AWICBT    | - | Association of Women in Cross Border Trade                         |
| 3. BDS       | - | Business Development Skills  |
| 4. CACs      | - | County Agriculture Coordinators                                    |
| 5. CGRs      | - | Community Grain Reserves   |
| 6. DAOs      | - | District Agriculture Officers                                      |
| 7. FAO       | - | Food Agriculture Organization                                      |
| 8. FSN       | - | Food Security and Nutrition  |
| 9. GCCs      | - | Gender County Coordinators   |
| 10. GRB      | - | Gender Responsive Budgeting  |
| 11. GRP      | - | Gender Responsive Planning   |
| 12. MoA      | - | Ministry of Agriculture  |
| 13. MoGCSP   | - | Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection                |
| 14. MOU      | - | Memorandum of Understanding  |
| 15. NRWS     | - | Nation Rural Women Structure                                       |
| 16. PBSO     | - | Peace Building Support Office                                      |
| 17. RWEE     | - | Rural Women Economic Empowerment                                   |
| 18. SAA      | - | Standard Administrative Arrangement                                |
| 19. SGBV     | - | Sexual and Gender Based Violence                                   |
| 20. SLA      | - | Savings and Loan Associations                                      |
| 21. SRH      | - | Sexual and Reproductive Health                                     |
| 22. UNCT     | - | United Nations Country Team  |
| 23. UNDAF    | - | United Nations Development Assistance Framework                    |
| 24. UN Women | - | United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women |
| 25. VSLA     | - | Village Savings and Loan Associations                              |
| 26. WFP      | - | World Food Programme   |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This 2017 annual progress report under the Joint Programme “*Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women*” in Liberia covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2017. The report is consolidated based on information submitted by UN Women, WFP and FAO to the JPRWEE National Coordinator seated in UN Women. This report has provided the JPRWEE Joint Steering Committee with a comprehensive overview of key achievements and challenges associated with the implementation of the joint programme.

Two additional storage facilities were constructed in Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties, equipped, stocked with 18 MT of clean rice and 300 rural women leaders from different farming groups trained on the management and sustainability of the facilities. These two (2) storage facilities are operational, bringing the total number of functional grain reserves to five (5) across five of Liberia’s 15 counties, namely Grand Bassa, Margibi, Maryland, Sinoe and River-Gee. 3,756 rural women now have the capacity to overcome seasonal shock and undertake value addition to food products produced by farming group members and non-members / community residents under a reduced labor condition.

Within grain reserves, rural women who took clean rice on loan, paid back the loan by the end of the year which qualified them for another round of access to loan during the upcoming farming season. Local level established grain reserve management teams are ensuring that the paybacks which are in paddy rice are milled and restocked, thus ensuring an un-interrupted availability of the commodity in the targeted counties. In addition, 900 (800 females and 100 males) rural farmers in 5 communities in Grand Bassa, Margibi, Sinoe, River Gee & Maryland counties have been identified and selected for accessing WFP’s P4P programming on market linkages at county level for increasing their income for improved livelihood. This process is ongoing.

The joint programme combined safety net, promoted social cohesion and sustainable agricultural production wherein rural women are now active contributors to household. For example, over 3,000 rural women are now contributing to the payment of their children school fees, and some are even constructing new homes in the community. In addition, local authorities and community leaders are now fully aware about women’s right to access, own and co-own agricultural land. Interestingly, women groups in targeted communities are now purchasing and owning agricultural land for investment to improve their livelihood.

There has been increased access to rural credit for rural women in targeted communities and surroundings. 1,873 rural women are economically empowered because of the provision of conditional cash transfer totaling LD\$ 7,585,650 (equivalent to about US\$ 57,190) and are actively involved in agricultural production to fight hunger and improve food security and nutrition at the community and household levels. 721 rural women have demonstrated their capacity to support the construction and renovation of their homes (from dubbed mud to mud bricks). Some are now even using metal zincs to roof rather than palm raffias/thatches.

The Village Savings and Loan Associations extension agents programming has resulted in increased ownership of JPRWEE’s access to finance programme for rural women. Beneficiaries and rural communities are now owning their respective interventions for increased access to finance for rural women through 150 JPRWEE established VSLAs. This has promoted and continues to promote sustainability of the joint programme interventions at community and district levels and will form a key part of the JPRWEE exit strategy once the programme ends in 2018.

Key knowledge products on the JPRWEE were developed and finalized with support from the JPRWEE Global Coordinator, Ms. Azzurra Chiarini, and other programme colleagues based in WFP Rome offices. These included the finalization of policy briefs on access to finance for rural women and the

situation of women in cross border trade; finalization of factsheets and flyers on business development and financial literacy, adult literacy and numeracy, village savings and loan associations, rural women and mobile money and community grain reserves; lastly the finalization of two (2) research reports, namely “Study on the Status of Women in Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs)” and “Study on the Status of Women in Cross Border Trade” were validated by national government and civil society. In addition, key success stories from JPRWEE beneficiaries were documented as part of increasing the joint programme’s visibility at national and sub-national levels and shared with the Mano River Union Secretariat in Liberia, China, Sweden and France including JPRWEE private sector partners, namely Coca Cola and Orange at country level. This also included key messages on rural women economic empowerment.

The revised National Gender Policy was printed and disseminated. JPRWEE had financed an international consultant to work with the Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in revising the policy. In addition, technical support also came from member of the JPRWEE TAC in providing inputs and feedback to the draft document before its validation. Initial discussions were held with parliament on the implementation of the revised policy. In 2018, there will be a series of strategic dialogues with the Liberian legislature on the implementation of the policy. Specific house committees to be engaged will include gender, agriculture, labor, commerce and trade, agriculture, finance and budgeting, infrastructure and energy, health and last but not the least the Women’s Legislative Caucus.

## I. Purpose

JPRWEE provides significant and strategic support to the government in furtherance of its political reforms and socio-economic development efforts to achieve improved food and nutrition security, increased income to sustain livelihoods, enhanced participation and leadership in rural institutions and in shaping laws, policies and programmes, and improved gender-responsive policy environments. The joint programme is clearly aligned with Liberia’s UNDAF 2013 – 2017 (now extended to 2018), with particular reference to Pillar II Sustainable Economic Transformation, Pillar III Human Development, Pillar IV Inclusive Governance and Public Institutions; and Liberia’s Agenda for Transformation (AfT) 2012 – 2017 (now extended to 2018), with reference to Pillar I Economic Transformation, Pillar III Human Development, Pillar IV Governance and Public Institutions and Pillar V Cross-cutting Issues (i.e. Gender Equality, Youth Empowerment, Human Rights, Labor and Employment, Environment, etc.)

The UNDAF 2013 – 2018 is aligned with the implementation of JPRWEE in support of enhancing access to financial services and markets including for improving value-chain standards for small businesses, particularly those in rural areas. The AFT 2013 – 2018 ensures that government encourage the growth and formalization of MSMEs, and remove constraints affecting them, including constraints related to infrastructure, finance, skills, regulation and property rights. Moreover, the UNDAF Sustainable Economic Transformation supports value-added postharvest food processing, facilities and market linkages for small holder farmer organizations. The AfT on the other hand emphasize the importance of Agriculture, food security and nutrition, with consideration for increasing access to machinery, fertilizer, storage, credit, training, technical assistance, market information, and improved technologies and related services – through farmer groups.

At national level, there are ten (10) strategic global outputs under the JPRWEE implementation framework. These include:

- **Output 1.1:** *Rural women have increased access to and control over resources, assets and services critical for their food and nutrition security;*
- **Output 1.2:** *Rural women have greater capacity to enhance and control local food security reserves and their production;*

- **Output 2.1:** *Rural women have enhanced entrepreneurship skills and value chains to access markets for their products;*
- **Output 3.1:** *Rural women, including young women have enhanced confidence and leadership skills to take an active part in local governance systems;*
- **Output 3.2:** *Rural women have greater organizational capacities to form, sustain and participate into POs, cooperatives and unions;*
- **Output 3.3:** *Rural women, including young women, have increased capacity to engage in and influence relevant policy forums at national and regional levels;*
- **Output 3.4:** *Rural women, including young women, have enhanced awareness on their rights in a more supportive community/local environment;*
- **Output 4.1:** *Policy makers and parliamentarians have enhanced capacities to effectively mainstream gender into land, food, agriculture, nutrition and rural employment policies, laws and budgets;*
- **Output 4.2:** *Greater availability of tools and data to track progress in the economic empowerment of rural women; and*
- **Output 4.3:** *An enabling environment is promoted to reflect rural women's priorities in regional and global policy processes.*

These global JPRWEE outputs are linked to the following key areas under the Liberia JPRWEE implementation framework with the government, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and with Civil Society and the private sector.

In Liberia, there is consideration for rural adolescent girls and their access to primary and secondary chance education. This has been due to increased community demand for such intervention from traditional leaders and rural youth groups in targeted rural communities. This was reflected in the needs assessment conducted during community dialogues in JPRWEE communities. Other considerations have included women's business development and entrepreneurship skills including in the area of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), women's access to marketing and market information with ICT, women's access to credit/finance through VSLAs and mobile banking, provision of extension services to rural women engaged in climate resilient agriculture including support for capacity building in local level gender responsive planning and budgeting in the context of food security and nutrition. In addition, there is capacity building for women on issues related to decision making on the management of natural resources and awareness raising with rural women on their land rights and women's ownership of land for agriculture production. This also includes support for the organizational capacity of key civil society organizations and work around adult literacy and vocational skills, women's leadership and participation in local governance, increased access to Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) education and services including knowledge on SGBV prevention, management and response.

JPRWEE continues to support GEWE priorities and commitments that are identified and led by the government; involve all relevant stakeholders and partners from government, civil society, the donor community, private sector and relevant UN agencies in planning and the decision-making process; to build on ongoing and existing government frameworks and strategies including the AfT, the NGP and Liberia's Economic Stabilization and Recovery Plan (ESRP) amongst others; to strengthen financial support effectiveness through coordination and harmonization of cross-cutting gender interventions under the oversight of the Joint Steering Committee; and to ensure that the funding, operations and implementation modalities provide for full transparency and accountability, involving an active National Joint Steering Committee including for the submission of reports to that committee and other relevant stakeholders and partners. Additionally, the JPRWEE framework and lessons learnt are assisting in making informed decision in preparation for the development of the next UNDAF for Liberia. TAC members are also active in UNDAF pillar meetings and providing the needed information that are being requested in this regard.

## II. Results

### **Outcome 1:** *Rural women have improved food and nutrition security*

#### **Output 1.1:** *Rural women have increased access to and control over resources, assets and services critical for their food and nutrition security*

- Women-headed households' expenditures on food, school fees, medicines and other basic needs increased by an average of around US\$ 30.00 (LD\$ 4,050) per household during the period under review; female headed households' consumption is at 2 meals daily per household member.
- About 1,200 family members from 300 rural women-headed households are consuming highly nutritional produce like pumpkins, potatoes, eddoes, eggplants, tomatoes and other locally produced crops referencing the period under review. The same number of women-headed households are actively engaged in practicing nutrition-sensitive agriculture in Maryland, Sinoe, River Gee, Grand Massa and Margibi Counties. These women continue to share knowledge on the practice and importance of nutrition-sensitive agriculture with other women and men at the community and district levels in 6 of Liberia's 15 counties.
- 3,756 targeted rural women now have the capacity to overcome seasonal shock and undertake value addition to food products produced by farming group members and non-members / community residents under a reduced labor condition. This has been the result of building the capacity of rural women farmers to operate and manage agriculture machineries including for engaging in improved agricultural practices and techniques.
- As of 31 December, a total of 3,197 rural women from different farming groups (approx. 75 women per group) in Sinoe, Maryland and River Gee increased their production of rice by 45% and cassava by 70% because of capacity building they received on improved agricultural practices and techniques. With value-addition, rural women products are currently being sold at local mini-marts in rural Liberia. (e.g. Harper, Maryland County).

#### **Output 1.2:** *Rural women have greater capacity to enhance and control local food security reserves*

- With the construction of two additional storage facilities in Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties in 2017 (fully equipped and stocked with 18 MT of clean rice, including for the training of women in the management and sustainability of the facilities), there is an increased availability of a safe space for food storage where over 3,756 rural women from 2 new grain reserves in Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties have been accessing post-harvest machineries for value-addition and where they have been linked for access to markets for income-generation. Additionally, there is a presence of WASH facilities for better hygiene in all grain reserve communities. The two (2) additional storage facilities that were constructed and are now operational and brings the total number of functional grain reserves to five (5).
- Five (5) potential aggregators (*small holder famers along the rice value chain who collect smaller quantity of paddy from other farmers for milling*) in Margibi, Grand Bassa, Sinoe, River Gee, and Maryland counties were identified for participation in the market promotion process in support of improving rural women farmers' access to market opportunities.

### **Outcome 2:** *Rural women have increased income to secure their livelihoods*

#### **Output 2.1** *Rural women have enhanced entrepreneurship skills and value chains to access markets for their products*

- As of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017, 5,657 women have received business development support for increased income-generation, and this includes their access to financial services through 130 functional Village Savings and Loan Associations (25 members per association). Ministry of Gender and Ministry of Agriculture field assessment reports from Gender and Agriculture

coordinators in Maryland, Sinoe, River Gee, Grand Bassa, Margibi and Montserrado Counties have documented the case of women expanding their income-generating activities for improving their livelihoods and increasing their economic security<sup>2</sup>. In addition, 764 of these women have active bank accounts.

- Of the 5,657 women reached under business development support, 3,197 of them received capacity development in marketing, packaging, labeling and on new market opportunities. These women are correctly labelling and packaging their locally produced and processed products for sale at local markets in the counties including for mini marts in rural urban cities (e.g. Harper, Maryland County).
- During the period under review, 1,171 women are self-employed as entrepreneurs and have created 873 job opportunities for other women entrepreneurs in the formal sector. This has been the result of their engagement with government through the Ministry of Commerce and JPRWEE provision of skills building in literacy and numeracy including business development and financial literacy contributed to this.

**Output 2.2:** Rural women have increased access to decent wage employment opportunities.

- As of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017, 237 women, especially in concession areas in Sinoe and River Gee Counties have gained formal employment with private sector. 90% of these women formally employed with private sector work as record keepers, security guards and field inspectors at plantations in south east Liberia. This has been due to JPRWEE support for building the self-confidence and self-esteem of women through the rollout of adult literacy and numeracy classes including for capacity development in job skills for women. These women make at least the minimum wage of US\$ 6.00 per day.

**Outcome 3:** Rural women have enhanced leadership and participation in their communities and in rural institutions, and in shaping laws, policies and programmes

**Output 3.1** Rural women, including young women have enhanced confidence and leadership skills to participate in local governance.

- There is now increased voice and agency with 80 young rural women leaders who benefitted from 2 strategic dialogues on leadership and participation. This was easily seen in their increased presence and contributions to discussions around the revision of the National Gender Policy with focus on the youth section of the policy, the ongoing constitutional reform, the land reform, and the decentralization process within the context of access to services and participation. These dialogues were supported by JPRWEE at national and sub-national levels. Beneficiaries are now fully participating in decision-making at community and district levels and are engaging local government representatives for strengthening the implementation of policies and strategies relevant to gender equality and women's empowerment. This also includes for decision making on the use and management of natural resources including land in rural areas.
- Local project communities targeted by JPRWEE show women's increased motivation to study and learn further (e.g. 601 rural women and girls returned to formal schooling in 2017); increased access to services and information (e.g. 80% of rural women and girls have the ability to write their name, open a bank account, read road signs and simple posters and leaflets, access government county service centers; These women have increased social capital and feel more respected in society, there is increased self-esteem and confidence with these women and girls because of being able to read and write or even do simple calculation and/or earn income for themselves. This has been achieved because of access to literacy and numeracy skills classes.

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/notes/unwomenliberia/rural-women-lead-the-way-in-addressing-food-insecurity-in-liberia/1787684361528542/>



**Output 3.2** Rural women have greater organizational capacities to form, sustain and participate into POs, cooperatives and unions

- For the period under review, a total of 30 women-based Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) based in Maryland, Sinoe and River Gee have been organized into 6 cooperatives for increased recognition in the formal sector and are accessing rural credit (amounting to LD\$ 1,518,750 about US\$ 11,250) from 2 private banks in Liberia, namely AfriLand Bank and First International bank. The process of organizing the cooperatives was based on the level of investment women had in existing VSLAs. For example, any VSLA that had a total saving of about LD\$ 2,500,000 about US\$ 18,518.51 qualified to be a part of the credit cooperatives that were being organized. Credit cooperatives were organized for promoting thrift and savings among VSLA members and for creating funds to grant loans for increased productivity with JPRWEE beneficiaries.

**Output 3.3:** Rural women, including young women, have increased capacity to engage in and influence relevant policy forums at national and regional levels

- 907 women leaders from local communities targeted by JPRWEE are now trusting and relying on the security sector and have better understanding of proper security, national and regional trade policies, procedures and protocols, especially for rural women traders. In addition, there is increased awareness by policy makers on the contributions of women traders, their challenges, and the opportunities for involving them in national policies and programmes for social and economic growth. For example, during the 2017 Association of Women in Cross Border Trade Annual General Assembly, partnership was strengthened between association and the government represented by key line ministries and agencies. At that event over 107 women leaders voiced out their concerns with policy makers for redress.
- The Liberia National Rural Women Structure continues to effectively represent the needs and concerns of rural women across Liberia. The leadership of the structure remains actively engaged with national discussions on women's access to land for agricultural production and other investments as a source of livelihood. The NRWS has been involved with community mobilization and capacity building on the importance of women's political empowerment and leadership at national and sub-national levels.
- As part of JPRWEE contribution to the revision of the National Gender Policy in terms of international consultancy, an M&E framework was developed as an annex to the revised policy for monitoring its implementation. This Strategic Results Framework was developed and validated by key stakeholders and partners from government, civil society and the private sector which included Governance Commission, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Independent Human Rights Commission, Ministry of Health, EduCARE Liberia, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNOPS, UNDP, UNMIL, UNFPA and the Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia during the NGP review process.

**Output 3.4:** Rural women, including young women, have enhanced awareness on their rights in a more supportive community/local environment

- As of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017, 3,197 women have increased knowledge and the capacity to demand respect for their rights as it relates to land tenure and land use to promote women's equal access to and ownership of land for agricultural production. This also includes for proper community management of land and the natural resources in rural areas. This has been achieved because of community outreach and sensitization methods on the importance of women's participation in decision-making processes at all levels.

- Over 1,039 women reached under business development support are monitoring and reporting cases of S/GBV at the community level for survivors' access to justice. Of this total number, 387 women entrepreneurs are active in sharing knowledge on the revised S/GBV referral pathway through awareness raising exercises during VSLA meetings when social issues are being discussed. For example, a woman participating in the VSLA who becomes a victim of domestic violence can access the social fund in the process of accessing justice. These women have better understanding of their human rights and know what to do when they are abused or sexually exploited. As part of building synergies with other joint programmes, the SGBV Joint Programme led by UN Women with UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF and UNHCR as participating UN agencies is reporting an increase in the reporting of SGBV cases in JPRWEE communities at county level.

**Outcome 4:** A more gender responsive policy environment is secured for the economic empowerment of rural women

**Output 4.1:** Policy makers and parliamentarians have enhanced capacities to effectively mainstream gender into land, food, agriculture, nutrition and rural employment policies, laws and budgets

- A total of 9 gender and agriculture coordinators from 6 of Liberia's 15 counties are engendering county work plans, budgets and implementation strategies for ensuring equal distribution of resources for both women and men, girls and boys during the implementation of government projects supporting food security and nutrition at county level. This has been because of capacity building for Gender and Agriculture county coordinators in local level gender responsive planning and budgeting within the context of FSN. For example, county implementation plans and budgets under Ministry of Agriculture Climate-smart Agriculture project funded by the African Development Bank were engendered in 2017.
- All 9 gender and agriculture coordinators are replicating capacity development training in local level gender responsive planning and budgeting within the context of food security and nutrition for 17 civil servants at county level.

**Output 4.3:** An enabling environment is promoted to reflect rural women's priorities in regional and global policy processes

- As part of an attempt to raise resources for expanding activities of the JPRWEE at county level, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in close collaboration with the joint programme through its Technical Advisory Committee submitted a joint proposal to the Africa Trade Fund for funding a Mano River Union (MRU) Conference on Women in Cross-Border Trade. This proposal is yet to be approved. However, the objective of the conference is to foster inter-regional collaboration on women in cross-border trade within the Mano River Union, leading to tangible recommendations for regional actions on gender and trade. Expected accomplishments include i.) strengthened government accountability to women in cross-border trade; ii.) increased women entrepreneurs' understanding of border procedures, their rights and responsibilities; iii.) enhanced women's involvement in regional policies and processes; iv.) increased capacity on mainstreaming gender into trade and border management; and v.) identified key entry points for a proposed MRU Action Plan on Gender and Trade.

### **Delays in Implementation, Challenges, Lessons Learned & Best Practices:**

Although the joint programme had planned to avoid the effects (i.e. muddy roads, flooding, etc.) of heavy rains during the rainy season, the country experienced an early onset of heavy downpour of rains in 2017. This resulted in some project sites, particularly the southeast of Liberia being difficult to access due to bad road condition and flooding. This made it difficult to transport project supplies and to conduct field missions during project implementation.

UN Women as lead UN agency for the JPRWEE in Liberia experienced an overall change in senior management, with a new Country Representative, Deputy Representative and Operations Manager, in addition to the recruitment of new staff for project implementation at both FAO and UN Women that delayed aspects of the joint programme implementation. This specifically was on difficulty in securing signatures to initiate procurement processes and the signing of contracts with implementing partners in a timely fashion. This has made it difficult for the National Coordinator, especially since he had to orientate a new generation of senior and technical-level persons about the joint programme status and future before they could sign off on paperwork relevant to the implementation of the joint programme. In addition, the resignation and then reappointment of the Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection (Co-chair of the JPRWEE Joint Steering Committee) for a period delayed the approval of project activities at the JSC level, which in turn delayed activities by two (2) months in 2017.

JPRWEE has continued its engagement with advocating for the passage of the Land Rights Bill which provides women the opportunity to freely access land, own and co-own land in respect of their human rights in Liberia; however, the legislature under H.E. Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf decided to pass on this bill to the new legislature under H.E. Ambassador George Manneh Weah. The joint programme will continue its advocacy in close partnership with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and other key stakeholders and partners from national government, civil society and the private sector.

As the 2017 national and presidential elections drew closer, the level of beneficiaries' engagement with JPRWEE interventions slowed as more and more women were involved in running campaigns for other rural women political aspirants running for public offices. JPRWEE's response was its engagement with young women on providing capacity building for a total of 407 beneficiaries on the value of gender equality and women's political empowerment and leadership with strong focus on women's representation in 2017 and beyond.

To keep the equipped grain reserves operational, the women and other farmers benefiting from the food loan scheme<sup>3</sup> should be actively involved in farming to guarantee the availability of the paddy rice, and/or cassava. To be able to undertake this effectively, the farmers should be provided with the requisite skills, which has not been the case of the two newly established CGR's in Bassa and Margibi Counties due to inadequate financial resources. With support from UN Women under its strategic note funded by the Embassy of Sweden, the issue has been addressed. JPRWEE has however also relied on farmers' traditional farming experience and capacity and put in place the grain reserves to be followed by the VSLA training and cash disbursement. Additionally, WFP Internal Grant certification gives a low grant consumption picture, thus affecting candid reporting of activities undertaken.

Using identified synergies between the P4P<sup>4</sup> and JPRWEE implementation, especially the beneficiaries' capacity building and augmentation (i.e. training, and provision of basic productive inputs) is proving helpful; the market linkage aspect will fall in when new targeted groups shall have generated appreciable quantity of surpluses to sell.

There has been issue with JPRWEE communities with regards to land tenure as traditional leaders in Maryland, Sinoe and River Gee were creating bottlenecks (e.g. increased practicing of local tradition that women have no right to own land but their husband; these are very traditional communities, and land rights is a 'No Go' for women) for limiting women's access to land for agriculture production. However, this has been addressed by vigorous awareness through town hall meetings with community and

---

<sup>3</sup> WFP, through its agriculture and market support and purchase for progress (P4P) programme, is providing access to finance in the form of loans to local food producers who form part of an integrated supply chain. In addition, the UN agency under the joint programme is also promoting village savings and loans associations in targeted communities to facilitate credit access among farmers organizations.

<sup>4</sup> The WFP P4P partnership is promoting the connection of 789 smallholder women farmers who are leaders from different farming groups to access markets, giving the leaders of these farming groups an opportunity to grow the investments of their respective groups and to improve their lives and those of their entire communities.

traditional leaders; gradually these community leaders got convinced that women had the right to own and co-own agricultural land. In addition, scarcity of labor was an issue; most of the communities selected especially in Sinoe County are investing in extractive industries (e.g. mining rocks, sand and gold) including transportation business (e.g. commercial motorcycles) instead of agriculture as a source of income and livelihood. Women as well as youths were all trooping to the gold mines daily and the young people were busy with acquiring fast money-motor cycle transport. To mitigate these situation project supervisors had to constantly raise more awareness around the importance of agriculture to food security and nutrition.

Because the JPRWEE National Coordinator continues to ensure that the National Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) addresses implementation challenges, promotes coordination and identifies lessons learned across the various activities and outputs on a regular basis, this has led to increased transparency and accountability with programme implementation. Lessons are always shared with the Joint Steering Committee (JSC), as well as with other ongoing JPs, namely the Joint Programme on Sexual and Gender Based Violence and the Joint Programme on Human Security and the new Joint Programme on Land.

By ensuring the effective participation of Liberia's Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Gender including the UNCT, represented by WFP, FAO, UN Women and the RC's office, there is increased ownership of the joint programme both at the national and sub-national levels.

The lessons from the Joint Programme's management and coordination mechanisms have provided inputs and important lessons learned for the UN and the Liberian Government as they jointly develop new joint programmes in support of strengthening Liberia's development efforts in the context of women's economic and social empowerment and last but not the least women's participation in sustaining Liberia's peace. Lessons learnt<sup>5</sup> from the joint programme were considered during the development of the new Human Security Joint Programme with UNIDO, UNDP and FAO to be funded by the United Nations Human Security Trust Fund. The Joint Programme provided a structure for enhanced collaboration, particularly with WFP, FAO and UN Women including the RC's Office on women's economic and social empowerment, and the lessons learned were also carried forward by UNIDO, UNDP and FAO under the new human Security joint initiative.

There continues to be flexibility with the joint programme to be able to successfully deliver the results required. For example, UN Women has supported the joint programme through the JPRWEE National Coordinator on engaging rural women with a focus on the value of gender equality and women's political empowerment and leadership. Women beneficiaries were actively involved with promoting the concept by engaging and participating in political campaigns for female aspirants running for public offices during the 2017 national and presidential elections. The joint programme also developed a factsheet on women's representation in various branches and levels of government and disseminated it to over 135 rural women leaders for awareness raising on the gender gap in Liberia's 2017 legislature and cabinet including women and men in local governance.

Increased national ownership of the joint programme is being achieved through working closely with local government in the implementation of project activities. The Joint Programme has worked and continues to work closely with government, civil society, development partners and private sector to ensure increased community ownership for sustainability of interventions beyond the joint programme's implementation.

---

<sup>5</sup> Ensuring a joint delivery of a comprehensive, sequenced 'package' of core interventions to support women's economic and social empowerment - through a combination of direct implementation and on-the-ground coordination with other community-level programming have rural women playing a greater role in decision-making in shaping laws, policies and programmes. Women having increased self-confidence and self-respect as a result of new skills and contributions

Men's involvement with the joint programme continues to play a major part in fostering increased ownership of the programme. From the inception of the joint programme and up to present, men have remained engaged throughout implementation. Working with men includes a process of dialogues and consultations during community entry, the HeForShe Campaign awareness raising in communities, use of local male facilitators to support the facilitation of trainings at the community level, and the linking of other programming areas (i.e. men as male champions on ending violence against women – Joint Programme on Sexual and Gender based Violence).

JPRWEE continues to engage at two strategic levels, namely:

- **Community level** - with a focus on the delivery of a comprehensive women's empowerment programme, employing a more comprehensive approach to directly empower women economically, socially and politically; and
- **Policy level** - with a focus on implementation of commitments in the National Gender Policy (NGP) and the engendered National Food Security and Nutrition Strategy (NFSNS) through supporting development of government's capacities to coordinate the delivery of the National Gender Policy and the Food Security and Nutrition Strategy; and

At the community-level, JPRWEE remains focused on ensuring joint delivery of a comprehensive, sequenced '*package*' of core interventions to support women's economic and social empowerment - through a combination of direct implementation and on-the-ground coordination with other community-level programmes.

At the policy level, one key priority area has been engaging in more strategic gender mainstreaming work. Rather than abstract work to "*mainstream gender*". As it stands, JPRWEE was fully engaged with elections through promoting and supporting rural women political participation at the national and sub-national levels.

JPRWEE continues to focus on two key target groups both at community level: a.) the poorest, most vulnerable and excluded rural women, who rarely benefit from economic and social empowerment programmes, and b.) entrepreneurial women with the potential to grow their businesses further and contribute to socio-economic revitalization and growth in the Liberian society.

### **Alignment & Partnership:**

Overall, the joint programme has contributed and continues to contribute to the achievement of the Government of Liberia's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially for Goals 1, 2, 5, 16 & 17 and its Agenda for Transformation 2012 – 2017/18 (Poverty Reduction Strategy now extended till end of 2018).

Significant contributions are being made to the following results within the UNDAF 2013 – 2017/18 (Poverty Reduction Strategy now extended till end of 2018):

#### **1. UN Pillar II: Sustainable Economic Transformation**

- **Outcome 2.1:** Natural Resource and Food Security: Improved sustainable natural resource utilization and food security.

#### **2. UN Pillar III: Human Development Outcome**

- **Outcome 3.1:** Health and Nutrition: The population has increased access to and utilization of equitable, affordable, and quality health and nutrition services.
- **Outcome 3.2:** Education: School-aged girls and boys and youth have increased access to quality education, ECD, Basic, Post-Basic and Alternative Basic Education, especially in counties with education indicators below the national average. **Outcome 3.3:** Social

Welfare: Social welfare systems and services are improved and utilized, especially by the most vulnerable groups and individuals.

- **Outcome 3.4:** Social Protection: Vulnerable households and groups benefit from appropriate social protection services and systems.

Most recently, the joint programme has engaged with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on a strategic partnership to organize rural women who have the entrepreneurship potential to grow into small and medium enterprises (SMEs for achieving sustainable growth in Montserrado, Maryland, River Gee and Sinoe Counties). This also includes for organizing functional Village Savings and Loan Associations with increased savings into cooperatives for increased recognition in the formal economy.

Partnership was strengthened with the Liberia Marketing Association because of a strategic dialogue on organizational development and leadership with its national and county leaders including for the NEXT LEVEL programme that has been reaching market women across the country with access to business development and financial literacy. In addition, partnership was also strengthened with the Ministry of Agriculture through building synergies with its ongoing AfDB-funded flagship on climate-smart agriculture and the submission of a joint proposal to the Africa Climate Change Fund with the ministry in support of rural women engagement in climate resilient agriculture. For the Ministry of Gender, partnership was further strengthened by the provision of technical assistance in the development of the revised National Gender Policy Strategic Results Framework for monitoring and tracking the implementation of the revised policy. This includes for logistical support to the Land Rights Desk where women are accessing information on land use and land rights.

Partnership was also strengthened with the private sector. For example, the partnership with Coca Cola Liberia reached over 250 JPRWEE beneficiaries from across eleven (11) markets with business kits. In addition, JPRWEE and the telecommunication company Orange Liberia launched a new partnership to provide ICT and Mobile Banking Services to over 14,000 women and girls from established networks such as the Association of Women in Cross Border Trade, the Liberia Marketing Association, the National Rural Women Structure and the Peace Hut Women of Liberia. Through the partnership, the women will be trained to utilize various ICT platforms to facilitate financial transactions between rural market women and their suppliers; Facilitate purchase of goods and payment to vendors, as well as become Mobile Money Agents in their communities through the Village and Saving Loans Associations. During the launch of the partnership in Monrovia which was attended by UN Women Liberia Representative Marie Goreth Nizigama, Orange Liberia Vice President of William Saamoi and the Global JPRWEE Coordinator Ms. Azzurra Chiarini witnessed the Orange Liberia Vice President commit to the HeForShe Campaign and the pledge for his company's commitment to supporting women's economic empowerment including for men as champions for Gender Equality.

The joint programme strengthened its partnership with the Liberia National Rural Women Structure through their collaboration and active participation with the NEXT LEVEL programme that introduced adult literacy and business skills classes for rural women and women entrepreneurs respectively. In addition, strategic partnership was also strengthened with the Ministry of Agriculture through the provision of technical assistance in gender responsive planning and budgeting including for work around nutrition-sensitive and climate resilient agriculture with rural women farmers. For the Ministry of Gender, partnership was strengthened also through technical assistance to the revision of Liberia's National Gender Policy and through support to its county offices for monitoring and supervision of some RWEE project activities at county and district levels.

Through community dialogues in the 15 counties, partnership was established with the Ministry of International Affairs. The focus of the Community Dialogue process was to make community members aware about the challenges of participating in local government through a participatory, accountable and inclusive approach (equitable participation of women and men) across all sectors in all of Liberia's 15 counties. RWEE supported the dialogues with the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the RWEE project communities.

## Qualitative assessment

The overall progress of the joint programme is positive. Despite the few delays in 2017 as mentioned in this report, activities were implemented at the field level, although the level of implementation differs from one intervention to the other. The significant results identified in the field are an indication of the effectiveness of the implementation of activities thus far.

In summary, most planned activities of JPRWEE are on track, including the activities managed by implementing partners, namely Ministry of Gender Children, and Social Protection, Ministry of Agriculture, Liberia National Rural Women's Structure, VOSIEDA, THINK Liberia, Farmers Assistance Programme, Liberia Marketing Association, EduCARE Liberia and Agro-Machinery Company. The key challenges that remain to be addressed are management issues within the Ministry of Agriculture, as a new Minister is yet to be appointed by the new government.

With capacity development trainings under JPRWEE, the joint programme has been able to lay both the technical and logistical foundations necessary before the commencement of all trainings. Communities have been engaged, training curricula developed, trainees recruited and training venues identified and used.

This 2017 annual report showcases the level of overall achievement of the joint programme, its contributions to programme outcomes. *Qualitative assessment* here is based on feedback from field missions' *interviews with beneficiaries and other stakeholders* including focus group discussions with beneficiaries including rural men:

### *Improving food and nutrition security with rural women:*

- Knowledge on improved crop production has increased with rural women farmers resulting also in enhanced productivity, thus, improving food and nutrition security;
- High quality seeds and tools that were provided are being used by rural women farmers for easing the workload when it comes to farming activities. They are working along with the men for expanding their agricultural investments;
- Community grain reserves are providing a safe space for women in agriculture to access different services for improving food security at the community and district levels;
- Rural women are heavily engaged with value addition because of having the necessary skills to operate and management agro processing machines (e.g. cassava grater, rice mill, etc.), and are ensuring that their products are going to the local markets for sale. These women are repaying seed stocks; and
- Access to land for women in concession areas and other highly traditional communities is limited, thus, limiting their chances of investing in agriculture as a source of livelihood, especially for those women who do not have the capacity to seek employment with private companies located in the targeted areas.

### *Recommendations based on feedback from KIIs and FGDs:*

- JPRWEE needs to strengthen work at community and district levels to foster changes of gender-based roles. This will eventually ensure equitable access to and control over productive resources in terms of sharing of benefits and workload between both females and males; and
- There needs to be increased awareness around women land use and land rights at county level with county, district and community leaders for ensuring that rural women have increased access to land use and land rights for agricultural production.

### *Increasing rural women access to finance:*

- Women are appreciative of the VSLA initiative that the JPRWEE is offering, commenting that it causes them less pressure than microfinance;
- Village Savings and Loan Associations from 2015/2016 continue to be active and are very appreciative of the recent support from the JPRWEE through the access to finance programme; however, the loans are still inadequate and JPRWEE should look at the possibility of increasing the loan sizes for these groups in 2018 including linking groups to formal banks to access credit; and
- There is strong local ownership of the Village Savings and Loan Associations in targeted counties with community leaders and the women and men targeted by the joint programme.

### *Recommendations based on feedback from KIIs and FGDs:*

- Extension of Village Savings and Loan Associations to other communities should be prioritized in JPRWEE implementation and expansion in the coming months;
- Greater supervision / local monitoring mechanisms should be put in place to strengthen the women's capacity and ensure greater sustainability of the Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs);
- JPRWEE 2018/2019 country work plan should increase support for linking the VSLAs to formal financial institutions;
- VSLA training in JPRWEE 2018/2019 should include rural and urban lending, looking at VSLA as a model for rural market women, farmers, cross border traders and ordinary community women; and
- JPRWEE needs to step up advocacy with the Liberian Government and financial institutions (e.g. AfriLand Bank, GT Bank, etc.) on linking rural women for accessing financial services and products such as savings, credit and insurance including for the promotion of better linkages between informal and formal financial services.

### *Business Development and Financial Literacy for rural women:*

- After six weeks of intervention in JPRWEE counties, the impact of the business development and financial literacy skills classes is clearly expressed by learners;
- The utilization of community women as facilitators is greatly appreciated and an effective model for instruction and the sustainability of project activities;
- Classes are well organized, with dedicated trainers and facilitators and trainees who are anxious to learn and explore their full potential;
- There has been a challenge with some of the learner manuals that were printed out of order, additionally, some of the calculators are malfunctioning; and
- The National Rural Women Structure, the Liberia Marketing Association, the Association of Women in Cross Border Trade, the Alliance of Women in Peace Huts including local implementing partners (e.g. EduCARE and THINK) are very active and supportive of the classes.

### *Recommendations based on feedback from KIIs and FGDs:*

- There is a need for local implementing partners in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection to address the issue of incomplete workbooks distributed to learners before new classes commenced in 2018. Workbooks need to be correctly reprinted and compiled for distribution to learners;
- The business development and financial literacy programme should be extended to other communities in Maryland, Sinoe, River Gee, Montserrado, Margibi and Grand Bassa counties where the demand and need is; and



- The business development and financial literacy programme should be very closely linked to VSLA and adult literacy opportunities future JPRWEE programming.

*Adult literacy and numeracy skills for rural women:*

- Rural women and adolescent girls are greatly appreciative of the opportunity to learn and there is a tremendous impact on women's self-confidence when they can write their name and read numbers (enabling them to use a cell phone);
- Many of the rural women and girls are pushing through challenges and are willing to prioritize learning;
- There is still great unmet demand for literacy and numeracy skills classes in most (if not all) the communities targeted by JPRWEE;
- Implementing VSLA along with the literacy classes has been successful because it provides an economic support to learners;
- Literacy class attendance is much lower in communities where there are no other economic empowerment interventions; and
- The link with farmers has brought enthusiasm for learning, but lighting is necessary to appropriately target rural women farmers.

*Recommendations based on feedback from KIIs and FGDs:*

- Literacy classes should be resumed in the literacy communities where level 1 and 2 have been completed. This will give rural women who have graduated from level 1 and 2 to access level 3 classes;
- In the future, material distribution should be uniform (all classes should receive the same supplies and enough supplies) and sufficient for all students;
- Numbers need to be considered in the next round of training (not all communities will graduate the same number of students to the next level) and materials should be distributed based on these exact numbers;
- A decentralized mechanism for distribution of teachers' allowances must be prioritized during the new literacy program that is scheduled to commence;
- All classrooms should have adequate lighting available, under the responsibility of the community chairlady (if she doesn't participate in the class, an alternative can be developed on a community by community basis);
- Refresher training for teachers should be prioritized before the resumption of literacy classes in the communities;
- JPRWEE in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender should consider adding more teachers in communities with a higher demand for literacy classes; and
- JPRWEE should work on the model of offering literacy classes in conjunction with VSLA training or another economic empowerment programme.

*Decent Wage Employment Opportunities:*

- 90% of rural women formally employed with concession companies within the private sector work as record keepers, security guards and field inspectors. They continue to earn an income above Liberia's minimum wage (at least LD\$ 13,500 or US\$ 100.00 per month); and
- The provision job skills (through the literacy programme) for rural women in areas where there exist extractive industries (e.g. mining of gold, iron ore and rocks), specifically for Maryland, Sinoe and River Gee has given women the capacity and self-confidence to seek employment with private companies from the sector.

*Recommendations based on feedback from KIIs and FGDs:*

- There is an increased demand at community level for communities that have limited access to land for investing in agriculture because of the annexation of land by concession companies for investing in large scale palm and rubber production; and
- JPRWEE needs to consider strengthening the economic security of women in particularly high risk / conflict-prone areas like communities affected by large concession agreements as current concession agreements are raising community tensions, and vulnerabilities for rural women are also increasing (e.g. levels of sexual exploitation and family violence are increasing, access to land is decreasing, and rural women are not equally benefitting from the formal employment opportunities being offered in concession areas where JPRWEE is working).

*Rural women in leadership and participation*

- The National Rural Women Structure has continued to participate in the process of advocating with Government through strategic dialogues for strengthening their commitment for the implementation of gender-sensitive policy instruments on advancing women's land rights, including for the passage of the Land Rights Bill by the 54<sup>th</sup> Liberian legislature;
- Rural women leaders are actively participating in some Land Committees across some JPRWEE communities and discussing issues pertinent to land use and land rights including the effective management of natural resources including land; and
- Rural women have very little information that they understand about Liberia's Land Rights Policy since there is no simplified version of the policy that consider the illiterates and semi-literates.

*Recommendations based on feedback from KIIs and FGDs:*

- JPRWEE needs to engage more with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in working with civil society and other key stakeholders on getting the Land Rights Bill passed by the Liberian legislature;
- More leadership and organizational development capacity building needs to be provided for rural women based structures at the national and sub-national level to encourage women's participation in decision making processes; and
- The Land Rights Policy needs to be simplified as was the case of the 2009 version of the Liberia National Gender Policy. This will give rural women the opportunity to better understand the provisions made in the policy that is relevant to women's rights. JPRWEE is expected to rollout a simplified version of the policy under its literacy programme in 2018.

*Rural women organizational capacities to participate in credit cooperatives*

- JPRWEE have seen the increasing potential of rural women VSLAs with the capacity to form, sustain and participate in credit cooperatives across targeted counties. Thus, work around forming them into cooperatives have started with support from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. This will continue through 2018 and 2019 in moving forward.

*Recommendations based on feedback from KIIs and FGDs:*

- The joint programme needs to expand the work around the formation of credit cooperatives with rural women entrepreneurs. In addition, it is also important to note here that JPRWEE should also focus on also organizing rural women who have the potential to grow into Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) where applicable for achieving sustainable growth in the agriculture sector.

### *Rural women with enhanced awareness on their rights in a more supportive community*

- Most rural women in targeted communities know their rights when it comes to cases of domestic violence and rape. By linking up with local community peace huts, cases are going through the S/GBV referral pathway; In addition, sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) is on the increase for concession areas where male workers are taken advantage of the rural poor, especially rural adolescent girls because of their financial strength. To date, there have been about 19 cases of child prostitution reported by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in JPRWEE communities in the south-eastern part of Liberia;
- Young women and adolescent girls in JPRWEE communities are accessing sexual and reproductive health services from local community clinics. These young women and girls are preventing unwanted pregnancies as many of them are accessing formal schools or some sort of education; and
- HIV & AIDS remain common with young people in concession areas where the JPRWEE is working; thus, work around awareness raising on HIV & AIDS prevention (through literacy classes) has rural women and girls preventing themselves against the HIV virus and other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) by using condoms and in some cases (particularly with older women) practicing abstinence for prevention.

### *Recommendations based on feedback from KIIs and FGDs:*

- JPRWEE needs to scale-up its work around S/GBV & SEA prevention, management and response by building stronger linkages with the ongoing SGBV and Human Security Joint Programmes; and
- With the upcoming U.N. Joint Programme on HIV & AIDS, JPRWEE should consider building synergies to assist in raising awareness around HIV & AIDS with rural women and girls since there is no dedicated budget to fund such an initiative.

### *Rural women have access to a more gender responsive policy environment*

- The high level of commitment from national government, civil society and the private sector to implement the revised National Gender Policy can never be overemphasized. There is increased awareness around the policy with all key stakeholders and partners including for their own role in ensuring that the policy is effectively and fully implemented in Liberia;
- At local level, Gender and Agriculture county coordinators are engendering county work plans and budgets, and this include county level implementation strategies;
- Rural women traders are engaging national and regional policy makers to improve intra-African trade; and
- The Association of Women in Cross Border Trade is now serving as a key entry point for the provision of information, services, finances and skills training.

### *Recommendations based on feedback from KIIs and FGDs:*

- JPRWEE needs to do more advocacy work with the new Liberian legislature on the National Food Security and Nutrition Strategy and that of the National Agriculture Policy for ensuring that that body promotes food security and nutrition in Liberia, considering the provision made in that engendered policy as it relates to rural women in agriculture; and
- Based on the increasing demand from local communities, JPRWEE needs to support exchange programmes for rural women farmers. Wherein rural women farming leaders can travel from Liberia to other JPRWEE countries to learn from other rural women investing in agriculture.

**ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment:**

**This assessment is based on Liberia's approved 2017 annual workplan**

|   | <u>Achieved</u> Indicator Targets   | Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)  | Source of Verification   |
|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Outcome 1 Improved food and nutrition security</b>   |   |  |  |
| <b>Indicator:</b> Increase of agricultural production of women farmers; and Evidence of improvement of rural women dietary diversity and consumption patterns<br><b>Baseline:</b> 15%<br><b>Planned Target:</b> 50% | 47.8% increase in agricultural production of women farmers for the year 2017; 69.2% of rural women and their families are eating a balance diet comprising of carbohydrates (e.g. locally produced rice and cassava) and vegetables (e.g. locally produced pepper, eggplants, bitter balls, corn and cabbage) | Poor weather condition resulted in the target not being met in 2017.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry of Agriculture county reports</li> <li>JPRWEE monitoring reports</li> </ul>  |
| Output 1.1 Rural women have increased access to and control over resources, assets and services critical for their food and nutrition security  |   |  |  |
| Indicator 1.1.1: # of women and men accessing WFP's P4P programme for access to market opportunities<br>Baseline: 2,700<br>Planned Target: 900 ( <i>F: 800 &amp; M: 100</i> )                                       | 900 (800 females and 100 males) rural farmers have been identified and selected for accessing market opportunities in Grand Bassa, Margibi, Sinoe, River Gee & Maryland counties for increasing their income from the sale of locally produced crop   | Due to bad road network because of heavy rain and pre-elections activities at both community and district levels leading up to 2017 national and presidential elections, delayed this intervention. However, completion of activity is expected by 30 <sup>th</sup> April 2018 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry of Agriculture county reports</li> <li>JPRWEE monitoring reports</li> </ul>  |
| Output 1.2 Rural women have greater capacity to enhance and control local food security reserves and their production   |   |  |  |
| Indicator 1.1.2: # of rural women with the capacity to use and manage agro-processing machineries and equipment and are involved in value-addition<br>Baseline: 150 women leaders<br>Planned Target: 1,500 women    | 789 rural women farmers now have the capacity to use and management agro-processing machines and equipment in 5 grain reserves in Grand Bassa, Margibi, Sinoe, River Gee & Maryland including for access to extension services. These women are now involved in value-addition processes                      | Due to bad road network because of heavy rain and pre-elections activities at both community and district levels leading up to 2017 national and presidential elections, delayed this intervention. However, completion of activity is expected by 30 <sup>th</sup> April 2018 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry of Agriculture county reports</li> <li>JPRWEE monitoring reports</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Outcome 2 Rural women have increased income to secure their livelihoods.</b>   |   |  |  |
| <b>Indicator:</b> Income generated by rural women's cooperatives from their sales to markets; and Evidence of better quality of life and status of rural women<br><b>Baseline:</b> LD\$ 4,725,000 (or US\$ 35,000)  | A total of <b>LD\$ 7,593,750 (US\$ 56,250)</b> was generated from women in sales of locally produced crops, considering value-addition because of access to 5 grain reserves and their facilities.<br><br><b>Note:</b> There was additionally <b>LD\$</b>   | Target met for 2017  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry of Agriculture county reports</li> <li>Ministry of Gender county reports</li> <li>Implementing partners</li> </ul> |

|   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p><b>Planned Target:</b> LD\$ 16,200,000 (or US\$ 120,000)</p>   | <p><b>12,150,000 (or US\$ 90,000)</b> in income generated with <b>women in cross border trade</b> including <b>local market women</b> in LMA markets across JPRWEE targeted counties investing in agriculture and non-agriculture products. This brings the total income on the sales of women's goods to approximately <b>LD\$ 19,743,750 (or US\$ 146,250)</b> for year 2017</p>  |  | <p>monitoring reports</p>  |
| <p><b>Output 2.1 Rural women have enhanced entrepreneurship skills and value chains to access markets for their products</b></p>  |   |  |  |
| <p>Indicator 2.1.1: # of rural women in grain reserves communities access rural credit for investing in agriculture for increased income-generation and improved livelihood<br/>Baseline: 1,250<br/>Planned Target: 2,000</p> | <p>2,603 rural farmers were mobilized with 2,109 recruited for WFP's access to finance programme in 5 CGRs. These women are expected to benefit from access to rural credit for investing in agriculture through Agricultural Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) – with rice as primary product</p>  | <p>Pre-elections activities at both community and district levels and the 2017 national and presidential elections delayed the access to finance programme in CGR communities. However, completion of activities is expected by 30<sup>th</sup> April 2018</p>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Agriculture county reports</li> <li>• JPRWEE monitoring reports</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Indicator 2.1.2: # of rural women accessing credit in non-CGR communities and who are replicating VSLA trainings themselves at the community and districts levels<br/>Baseline: 3,000<br/>Planned Target: 3,000</p>        | <p>1,757 are accessing credit under the VSLA extension agents programme and have expanded their respective investments for increased income and improved livelihood. Women are replicating VSLA trainings at community and district levels independently</p>  | <p>Pre-elections activities at both community and district levels and the 2017 national and presidential elections delayed the access to finance programme in non-CGR communities. However, completion of activities is expected by 30<sup>th</sup> April 2018</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Gender county reports</li> <li>• EduCARE VSLA progress reports</li> <li>• JPRWEE monitoring reports</li> </ul>          |
| <p><b>Output 2.2 Rural women have increased access to decent wage employment opportunities</b></p>  |   |  |  |
| <p>Indicator 2.2.1: # of rural women with access to decent work<br/>Baseline: 737<br/>Planned Target: 1,237</p>   | <p>237 women, especially in concession areas in Sinoe and River Gee Counties have gained formal employment with private sector. 90% of these women formally employed with private sector work as record keepers, security guards and field inspectors at plantations in south east Liberia. This has been due to JPRWEE support for building the self-confidence and self-esteem of women through the rollout of adult literacy and</p> | <p>Pre-elections activities at both community and district levels and the 2017 national and presidential elections resulted in target not reached. However, target will be achieved by 30<sup>th</sup> April 2018</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Gender county reports</li> <li>• Ministry of Agriculture county reports</li> <li>• JPRWEE monitoring reports</li> </ul> |

|  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
|  | numeracy classes including for capacity development in job skills for women. These women make at least the minimum wage of US\$ 6.00 per day   |   |  |
| <b>Outcome 3: Rural women have enhanced leadership and participation in their communities and in rural institutions, and in shaping laws, policies and programmes.</b>   |  |   |  |
| <p><b>Indicator:</b> # of rural women who are members of land committees</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 1,218</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b> 3,000</p> <p><b>Indicator:</b> # of rural women participating in strategic dialogues at national and regional levels</p> <p><b>Baseline:</b> 85</p> <p><b>Planned Target:</b> 300</p> | 3,197 participating in land committees at county level. This also includes for proper community management of land and the natural resources in rural areas. 235 rural women leaders have been contributing to strategic discussions key to national development.  | Targets were met for 2017   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Gender county reports</li> <li>• Ministry of Gender county reports</li> <li>• Land Commission county reports</li> <li>• JPRWEE monitoring reports</li> </ul>      |
| <b>Output 3.1 Rural women, including young women have enhanced confidence and leadership skills to participate in local governance</b>   |  |   |  |
| <p>Indicator 3.1.1: # of women participating in local governance in rural areas</p> <p>Baseline: 2,000</p> <p>Planned Target: 3,000</p>  | 3,197 rural women are demanding respect for their rights to land tenure and land use to promote their equal access to and ownership of land for agricultural production through their participation in land committees at county level. This also includes for proper community management of land and the natural resources in rural areas. | Target met for 2017   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Gender county reports</li> <li>• Ministry of Agriculture county reports</li> <li>• Land Commission county reports</li> <li>• JPRWEE monitoring reports</li> </ul> |
| <b>Output 3.2: Rural women have greater organizational capacities to form, sustain and participate into POs, cooperatives and unions</b>   |  |   |  |
| <p>Indicator 3.2.1: # of rural women VSLAs with greater organizational capacity to form, sustain and participate into cooperatives</p> <p>Baseline: 15</p> <p>Planned Target: 25</p>   | 30 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) based in Maryland, Sinoe and River Gee have been organized into 6 cooperatives for increased recognition in the formal sector and are accessing rural credit from 2 private banks in Liberia, namely AfriLand Bank and First International bank.  | Activity remains ongoing and will be completed by 30 <sup>th</sup> April 2018 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Gender county reports</li> <li>• Ministry of Agriculture county reports</li> <li>• JPRWEE monitoring reports</li> </ul>   |

|  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
| <b>Output 3.3: Rural women, including young women, have increased capacity to engage in and influence relevant policy forums at national and regional levels</b>   |  |  |   |
| Indicator 3.3.1: # of rural women participating in strategic dialogues at national and regional levels<br>Baseline: 85<br>Planned Target: 300  | 235 rural women leaders have been contributing to discussions around the revision of the NGP with focus on the youth section of the policy, the ongoing constitutional reform, the land reform, and the decentralization process within the context of access to services and participation  | Pre-elections activities at both community and district levels and the 2017 national and presidential elections resulted in target not reached. However, target will be achieved by 30 <sup>th</sup> April 2018  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Gender county reports</li> <li>• JPRWEE monitoring reports</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Output 3.4: Rural women, including young women have enhanced awareness on their rights in a more supportive community/local environment.</b>  |  |  |   |
| Indicator 3.4.1: # of rural women reporting cases of S.GBV to local authorities for redress<br>Baseline: 2,250<br>Planned Target: 3,250  | 1,039 rural women are monitoring and reporting cases of S/GBV at the community level for survivors' access to justice. 387 women are active in sharing knowledge on the revised S/GBV referral pathway through awareness raising exercises   | Target met for 2017  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Gender county reports</li> <li>• JPRWEE monitoring reports</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Outcome 4: A more gender responsive policy environment is secured for the economic empowerment of rural women</b>   |  |  |   |
| <b>Indicator:</b> Proportion of government budgets and donor funding allocated to programmes benefitting rural women; and<br><b>Baseline:</b> 1<br><b>Planned Target:</b> 1                              | The revised National Gender Policy was printed, disseminated and discussed at national and sub-national levels including with parliament for supporting its implementation; and key knowledge products on the JPRWEE were developed and finalized for dissemination  | Activity was completed; work remains ongoing for the implementation of the revised policy including for increased advocacy with parliament, particularly for the house committees on gender, labor, agriculture, commerce and trade, finance and budgeting, infrastructure, health and lastly the Women's Legislative Caucus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UN Women reports</li> <li>• Women's Legislative Caucus report</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Output 4.1: Policy makers and parliamentarians have enhanced capacities to effectively mainstream gender into land, food, agriculture, nutrition and rural employment policies, laws and budgets.</b> |  |  |   |
| Indicator 4.1.1: # of parliamentarians involved in advocating for strengthening the implementation of the revised NGP at the Liberian legislature<br>Baseline: 1<br>Planned Target: 5                    | There is ongoing advocacy with parliament for strengthening the implementation of the revised NGP with the support of least 3 legislators. In addition, 450 copies of the revised National Gender Policy were printed, disseminated to grassroots CSOs, local NGOs, Government Ministries and development partners, and awareness raising conducted at national and sub-national levels. | Activity is ongoing; advocacy work remains ongoing with parliament, particularly for the house committees on gender, labor, agriculture, commerce and trade, finance and budgeting, etc.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UN Women reports</li> <li>• Women's Legislative Caucus report</li> <li>• Sample copies of the revised NGP and SRF</li> </ul> |
| <b>Output 4.2: Greater availability of tools and data to track progress in the economic empowerment of rural women</b>   |  |  |   |

|   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>Indicator 4.2.1: # of knowledge products developed for use on strengthening the joint programme's visibility at national and sub-national levels.<br/>Baseline: 3<br/>Planned Target: 9 knowledge products</p> | <p>2 policy briefs and 2 factsheets on the status of women in cross border trade and the status of village savings and loan associations; and 5 flyers on business development and financial literacy, adult literacy and numeracy, village savings and loan associations, rural women and mobile money and community grain reserves were finalized with support from the JPRWEE Global Coordinator for increasing the joint programme's visibility at national and sub-national levels. This also included the development of key messages on rural women economic empowerment</p> | <p>Activity was completed; professional printing of finalized key knowledge products in progress</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sample copies of key knowledge products finalized</li> <li>• JPRWEE reports</li> </ul> |
|---|---|--|---|



### iii) A Specific Story

#### Gbawanken Tendeh Women:

Under the leadership of madam Evelyn Karhenye, this group has demonstrated its ability of becoming a shining example of empowered rural women overcoming poverty, having participated in the JPRWEE along with other groups but emerging to be a success story. This has been the result of targeted interventions on linkage to the P4P programming with JPRWEE, access to rural finance through VSLAs, construction of CGRs and capacity building for rural women farmers and leaders on operating and managing agriculture machineries.

With a membership of 30, the leadership has maintained strong cohesiveness, outstanding implementation of the VSLA, operation & maintenance of the Community Grain Bank. The group also engages in the production of cassava and lowland rice as way of ensuring a constant supply of raw materials for the running of their processing equipment. Keeping record of activities is another thing that will claim one's attention while on the group's premises.

Currently, the group produces a brand of cassava flour in addition to rice and have added the raising of chickens. The performance of the group is indeed exemplary and can be used as a "role model" for other groups to follow.

Predicated on their adoption and application of the JPRWEE concept, the group was selected for the visit of the JPRWEE Global Coordinator, in person of Ms. Azzurra Chiarini.



*"I was encouraged by my husband to participate in the JPRWEE trainings, so I did. Today, I am able to grow more rice and cassava because the people taught me how to do agriculture better. I can even use the rice mill and the power tiller when I am at our farming warehouse. It has made me to get more money that I am now able to pay my son's school fees at the community college in Harper"*

- (Rural woman beneficiary and group member, age 47, Gbawanken, Maryland County)

### III. Other Assessments or Evaluations (if applicable)

The two research studies that were conducted with co-funding from JPRWEE in 2016 were validated. One was on a Study on the status of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), and the other was on the Study on the status of Women in Cross Border Trade. JPRWEE has used these reports to develop knowledge products (e.g. policy briefs, factsheets, flyers, et.) based on findings and recommendations from both studies. This process was supported by the Global JPRWEE Coordinator Ms. Azzurra Chiarini and a team of other programme colleagues in the WFP offices in Rome. Additionally, recommendations from the studies will be shared with the relevant policy makers for redress at national and sub-national levels. The findings and recommendations from the cross-border trade study is currently being used by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Ministry of Gender in collaboration with relevant UN agencies in developing a joint flagship programme on women in cross border trade.

Ms. Azzurra Chiarini, the Global Coordinator for JPRWEE based at WFP Head Quarters in Rome conducted a field mission to Liberia between 20th - 24th November 2017. In line with planned itinerary, Ms. Chiarini in close coordination with the JPRWEE Technical Advisory Committee and the National Steering Committees held series of consultative meetings and later travelled to Maryland County where JPRWEE supported women project at Gbawanken was inspected with high level participation from UN agencies, relevant government ministries, amongst others.

The objective the global coordinator's mission was to conduct a joint assessment of the JPRWEE implementation situation to identify approaches to address the potential challenges faced by participating UN agencies; to consider some strategies and methodologies that have had positive results in other participating countries and how to advance programme delivery in Liberia. The coordinator had also focused on the appraisal of the role of UN Women as lead agency, clarification of its terms of reference in this position, the improvement of coordination among participating agencies in Liberia and strengthening of key partners.

General observations were:

- The JP is owned by the national government at all level, from senior leadership to decentralized authorities;
- The JP established partnerships with key stakeholders;
- With the JP, there is good collaboration among participating UN agencies, including at field level;
- The JP is working on value chain development, access to markets and access to finance – key elements of sustainability; and
- The JP is making impact on social cohesion, peacebuilding and reconciliation at national and sub-national levels.

Key recommendations made by the global coordinator were:

- Improve information-sharing and engagement with the two-line Ministries that are primarily involved in implementation. The National Coordinator has stepped up regular coordination meetings with the Government through the two key line ministries involved with the JPRWEE.
- Make sure that dedicated staff of the three agencies can commit sufficient time for programme implementation at a crucial stage. In moving forward, dedicated positions for the JPRWEE at

country level will be advertised to ensure that staff are dedicated to the joint programme implementation only. For example, the JPRWEE National Coordinator position will be advertised.

- Engage senior leadership of all participating UN agencies in supporting the JP and its continuation. The JPRWEE TAC is actively involved with briefing their respective senior management on the JPRWEE.
- Find ways to ensure that all 3 Agencies are present in the 5 counties as per approved workplans. A JPRWEE TAC meeting was called in February 2018, and it was agreed that the 3 agencies will work on the same communities. For example, FAO has begun the process of engaging Grand Bassa and Margibi Counties.
- Make sure it is included in the new Strategic Plans/Country Programmes of the Participating Agencies. During the 2018 work planning sessions with all 3 UN agencies, JPRWEE activities were integrated into the respective 2018 annual workplans for UN Women, WFP and FAO.
- Strengthen joint communication around its implementation. The UNCG has been contacted to support the JPRWEE in ensuring joint communication is improved at country level.
- Participate in the new UNDAF process to make sure key activities/results of the JP are reflected in the outcome areas. JPRWEE technicians have already started the process of contributing to the relevant outcome working groups under the development of the next UNDAF for Liberia.
- Strengthen reporting to make sure it focuses on key results and are presented in a harmonised manner. In April 2018, the JPRWEE National Coordinator is expected to benefit from capacity building in results based reporting.
- Work on number of beneficiaries and data collection for key indicators → better evidence that the approach is successful. Through collective efforts, the National Coordinator and programme officers from both FAO and WFP are currently reviewing the number of beneficiaries reached for better reporting on key indicators.
- Start a conversation with IFAD now that they are restarting activities in the country, to see if there are synergies that can be created. The National Coordinator is waiting on the IFAD initiative that is expected to start in Liberia to start the process of connecting with that body.
- Make sure there is closer control over expenditures to increase delivery
- Start thinking about a comprehensive exit strategy for the JP, which should look at the 4 areas of intervention, with special attention at:
  - *Reinforcing market linkages by using the collaboration with the Liberian Market Association and its decentralised structures*
  - *Further developing value chain (food preservation and better-quality production)*
- Ensure better balance of future allocations among three Agencies, based on comprehensive needs assessment. UN Women as lead agency will ensure that more future allocations are made to UNFAO and WFP for expanding their portfolio under the joint programme implementation.
- Reinforce joint fundraising at country level also looking at opportunities for collaboration with existing programmes (e.g. Feed the Future)

#### **IV. Programmatic Revisions (if applicable)**

Though no major adjustments were made to the programme, some programmatic interventions were undertaken to address the challenges and lessons learnt. For example, due to bad road network, the JPRWEE relied heavily on the county presence of both WFP and FAO unlike UN Women that does not have field offices in JPRWEE counties. Programme officers from UNFAO and WFP field offices

were used to support project implementation on the ground when implementing partners found it difficult to reach the communities. In addition, the JPRWEE scaled up its access to finance programme for rural women because this has been the most successful of interventions that the JPRWEE is delivering on. In this like, UNFAO is involved in conditional cash transfer for rural women farmers; WFP is engaged with access to finance for rural women in grain reserve communities and UN Women is investing heavily on access to finance for rural women farmers including rural women entrepreneurs and cross border traders. This is ensuring increased sustainability of the JPRWEE activities at community and district levels.

## **V. Coordination mechanisms**

### *Programme Planning and Management*

Overall responsibility for strategic leadership and oversight of JPRWEE rests with the Government, specifically with the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection. The Minister of Gender, Children, and Social Protection and the UN Resident Coordinator (DSRSG/RC) both co-chair the Joint Programme Steering Committee (JPSC) with representatives from key ministries, including Agriculture, Finance and Development Planning, Commerce and Industry, and Education; participating UN agencies; and donor representatives. This body guides the programme on strategic matters, exercising oversight of the programme's progress and responsibility for the re-allocation of funds within the programme to different outputs, as may be needed. Decisions of the Steering Committee are made through consensus.

UN WOMEN serves as the lead agency and is responsible for overall coordination of the programme, including supporting the Gender Ministry in its capacity as the lead Government Ministry. UN WOMEN also supports the JPRWEE National Coordinator and ensures the smooth running of the programme. The day-to-day technical coordination of the overall programme is the responsibility of the National Coordinator, who reports to UN WOMEN (lead UN agency) and to WFP and UNFAO (participating UN agencies).

Output level implementation is planned and coordinated by a Technical Committee comprising focal points from all agencies on the Steering Committee, as well as implementing partners, as deemed necessary. The National Coordinator chairs the Technical Advisory Committee at national level.

Individual outputs remain the responsibility of the individual UN organizations as identified in annual work plans. The coordination of components, shared outputs and the overall JPRWEE is the responsibility of UN WOMEN as lead agency.

### *Programme Procurement*

The responsibility for procurement of goods and services rests with each individual UN organization and all procurement must follow the appropriate standards and regulations. In the event of procuring services or hiring personnel, selection committees comprise of both UN and Government of Liberia representatives.

### *Programme Monitoring System*

Monitoring occurs throughout the year by individual agencies / participating ministries. The monitoring activities and evaluations of programme activities follow UNDAF procedures and form part of the UNDAF M&E plan as aligned to the national Aft M&E plan. As is adopted in other joint programmes, participating UN organizations undertake joint field visits when possible, while remaining cognizant of the demands on key government officials. The National Coordinator produces annual reports to the National Steering Committee on progress towards each of the indicators and outputs. Special reviews and assessments are undertaken as required by this steering committee.

The individual project implementing agencies are responsible for data collection and reporting from the activity level. Reports and updates of activity-level implementation are provided at bi-monthly technical committee meetings. The National Coordinator has the overall responsibility for M&E reporting to the steering committee, including the overall tracking of key outcomes and output indicators.

The JPRWEE National Coordinator ensures that the Technical Advisory Committee addresses implementation challenges, promotes coordination and identifies lessons learned across the various activities and outputs on a regular basis. These lessons are shared with the steering committee, as well as with other joint programmes.

## **VI. Resources**

In April 2017, US\$ 400,000 was received from Sweden in support of the joint programme. Under this amount, the following were transferred to UN Women, WFP, and FAO as follows:

|           |              |
|-----------|--------------|
| UN Women: | US\$ 160,000 |
| WFP:      | US\$ 125,000 |
| FAO:      | US\$ 115,000 |

The use of these funds followed the 2017 work plans and budgets, pre-approved by the Government of Liberia and the U.N. through the JPRWEE National Steering Committee in 2017. There has been no additional funding mobilized under the JPRWEE at country level. However, UN Women has contributed some funding to support certain activities as stated in the contributions section.

In building synergies, the ongoing JP on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (JP SGBV) has conducted several assessments missions in RWEE targeted counties in partnership with UN Women, UNFAO and WFP in the case of monitoring and tracking cases of S/GBV including Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, especially in rural communities located in concession areas. This joint programme has expanded awareness raising campaigns on SGBV & SEA prevention, management and response. In addition, the recent U.N. Joint Programme on Rule of Law will be complementing JPRWEE activities in targeted counties by expanding on ongoing peacebuilding initiatives including for community management of conflict under Liberian laws.

### *Human Resources:*

Three United Nations staff members (UN Women, WFP, and FAO) have received financial support from the joint programme since the start of 2016. The joint programme's implementation is also supported by multiple other programmes, operations, and administrative staff within the participating agencies (although these other personnel are not supported by the JPRWEE funds but by core funds

under UN Women, WFP, and FAO including the Government of Liberia represented by the Ministries of Gender and Agriculture).

JPRWEE-supported staff are:

- National Staff:
  - JP RWEE National Coordinator, UN Women
  - National Program/Monitoring Officer (Regional Level), UNFAO
  - National Program Officer, WFP
  
- International Staff:
  - None

*Financial Resources:*

| <b>Total approved budget: \$ 400,000<br/>Norway &amp; Sweden</b> | <b>Budget by<br/>Agency</b> | <b>Expenditure by<br/>Agency Est.</b> | <b>Balance</b> |
|--|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| MPTF Contribution <sup>6</sup> :                                 |                             |                                       |                |
| • UN Women Liberia   | \$ 160,000                  | \$ 159,821                            | \$ 179.00      |
| • WFP Liberia  | \$ 125,000                  | \$ 97,885                             | \$ 27,115      |
| • FAO Liberia  | \$ 115,000                  | \$ 107,866                            | \$ 7,134       |

---

<sup>6</sup> The MPTF or JP Contribution, refers to the global amount (sum of Norway’s and Sweden’s contributions) transferred to the Participating UN Organizations, which is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)