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**“ACCELERATING PROGRESS TOWARD THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT
OF RURAL WOMEN IN LIBERIA”
ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT
REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2018**

<p align="center">Programme Title & Project Number</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme Title: Accelerating Progress Toward Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in <i>Liberia</i> MPTF Office Project Reference Number:¹ 00092003 	<p align="center">Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results</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 in 2015, the joint programme has directly engaged a total of 8,193 direct beneficiaries (exactly 7,233 females / 960 males) and over 31,600 household members that are indirect beneficiaries (29,995 females / 1,695 males)</p> <p>From January - December 2018, the joint programme has reached approximately 857 direct beneficiaries (850 females / 7 males) and around 2,553 indirect beneficiaries (2,103 females / 450 males)</p>												
<p align="center">Participating Organization(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAO, IFAD, UNWOMEN, WFP 	<p align="center">Implementing Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Gender Children, and Social Protection Ministry of Agriculture National Rural Women’s Structure Association of Women in Cross Border Trade VOSIEDA THINK Liberia Farmers Assistance Programme Liberia Marketing Association EduCARE Liberia Agro-Machinery Company 												
<p align="center">Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Total approved budget as per project document:</td> <td align="right">\$ 800,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MPTF Contribution</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>• UN Women Liberia</td> <td align="right">\$ 300,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• WFP Liberia</td> <td align="right">\$ 250,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• FAO Liberia</td> <td align="right">\$ 250,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL:</td> <td align="right">\$ 800,000</td> </tr> </table>	Total approved budget as per project document:	\$ 800,000	MPTF Contribution		• UN Women Liberia	\$ 300,000	• WFP Liberia	\$ 250,000	• FAO Liberia	\$ 250,000	TOTAL:	\$ 800,000	<p align="center">Programme Duration</p> <p>Start date: 1 October 2014 – 31 October 2017; MoU is extended until 30 June 2020 with implementation span until 30 September 2019</p> <p>Overall Duration: 5 YEARS</p>
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<p align="center">Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.</p> <p>Assessment/Review - if applicable <i>please attach</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Date:</p> <p>Mid-Term Evaluation Report – (<i>Report under development</i>)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date:</p>	<p align="center">Report Submitted By</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name: Ramon Garway Title: National Coordinator Participating Organization (Lead): UN Women Email address: ramon.garway@unwomen.org 												

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

List of Acronyms

AfT	-	Agenda for Transformation
AWICBT	-	Association of Women in Cross Border Trade
BDS	-	Business Development Skills
CACs	-	County Agriculture Coordinators
CGRs	-	Community Grain Reserves
CSR	-	Corporate Social Responsibility
DAOs	-	District Agriculture Officers
FAO	-	Food and Agriculture Organization
FGD	-	Focus Group's Discussions
FSN	-	Food Security and Nutrition
GEWE	-	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GCCs	-	Gender County Coordinators
GRB	-	Gender Responsive Budgeting
GRP	-	Gender Responsive Planning
JP	-	Joint Program
KII	-	Key Informants Interviews
MoA	-	Ministry of Agriculture
MoCI	-	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
MoE	-	Ministry of Education
MoGCSP	-	Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection
MOU	-	Memorandum of Understanding
MT	-	Metric Tone
LD	-	Liberian Dollar
LMA	-	Liberia Marketing Association
LNRWS	-	Liberia Nation Rural Women Structure
JPRWEE	-	Joint Programme on Rural Women Economic Empowerment
PAPD	-	Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development
SAA	-	Standard Administrative Arrangement
SGBV	-	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SRH	-	Sexual and Reproductive Health
UNCT	-	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
UNDAF	-	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNFPA	-	United Nations Fund for Population
UN-Women	-	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
VOSIEDA	-	Volunteers to Support International Effort in Developing Africa
VSLA	-	Village Savings and Loan Association
WFP	-	World Food Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This 2018 Annual progress report under the Joint Programme “Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women” in Liberia (JPRWEE) covers the period from January to December 2018. The progress report is a consolidation of information gathered by UN WOMEN, UNFAO and WFP in Liberia in close collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) and submitted to the JPRWEE National Coordinator based at the UN Women Liberia Country Office.

The technical program team (UNFAO, WFP, MoA, MoGCSP, UN Women) has provided the JPRWEE Joint Steering Committee (Co-chaired by the MoGCSP and the United Nations Resident Coordinator) with a comprehensive overview of key achievements and challenges associated with the implementation of the joint programme during the period under review.

In Margibi, Grand Bassa, Montserrado, Sinoe, River Gee and Maryland Counties, households in rural areas headed by women beneficiaries continue to spend money on food items, medication, school fees and other basic needs at an average of around US\$ 30.00 (about LD\$ 4,800) per household every week. This is about 10 dollars more from when JPRWEE first started back in early 2015. In addition, female headed households in JPRWEE targeted communities are still consuming at least 2 meals a day per household member for the reporting period compare to 1 meal a day before JPRWEE intervention.

With JPRWEE Community Grain Reserves that are currently contributing to the stabilization of grain prices at the community and district levels and as a loan commodity for rural women investing in agriculture, there was a total of 67.47 MT of clean rice in stock for use. Of this amount, a total of 65.87 MT of clean rice was loaned out to members of the grain reserve. The stock expected as loan repayment was around 135.8 MT, and the total stock repaid as of December 2018 was 98.7 MT with the current percentage of loan payment till date at 81.6%. Finally, the profit margin is at 42 MT. In JPRWEE counties, grain reserves have been used to protect farmers from grain (e.g. rice) production shortfalls and to provide a buffer against unusually sharp price movements at local level.

Follow-up capacity building trainings in organizational development and leadership skills, financial management and agri-business skills were provided to one hundred and twenty-five (125) new beneficiaries from Worhn and Harbel in Margibi County. In addition, these 125 new beneficiaries were also organized into five (5) Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) for accessing sustainable financial services through these newly established associations.

A total of 783 rural women and adolescent girls from Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties have been identified, selected and profiled by JPRWEE for accessing primary and secondary education including vocational skills trainings in Cosmetology and tailoring in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection. In addition, another 783 rural women and adolescent girls from Maryland, River Gee and Sinoe Counties are expected to be finalized for accessing JPRWEE interventions on primary and secondary education coupled by vocational skills trainings.

Over 700 new women beneficiaries as of December 2018 have increased capacity to demand respect for their rights as it relates to land tenure and land use and for their own economic empowerment. In addition, these rural women are advocating for better implementation of the Land Rights Policy using the Liberia National Rural Women Structure (LNRWS) as a platform for voicing out their concerns. The structure has remained active in engaging national government and development partners for ensuring a gender responsive policy environment for the economic empowerment of rural women in Liberia.

Through strengthened advocacy with grass-root women, parliamentarians, the Liberia Land Authority, decentralized officials and other relevant stakeholders, the Liberian Senate finally concurred with the House of Representatives to pass the ‘Land Rights Act’ which was eventually signed into law by President

George Weah on September 19, 2018. The joint programme had supported 10 key Liberian Civil Society networks (e.g. Liberian National Rural Women Structure, the Women in Peace Huts Association, WONGOSOL, etc.) through Rights and Rice Foundation (RRF), an implementing partner of JPRWEE, to advocate for the passage of the Land Rights Act and for a more gender responsive implementation of Liberia's Land Rights Policy. This also included advocating and working with the House & Senate Committees on Land and the Land Authority to promote women's land ownership, tenure and use rights. Lastly, the joint programme worked with RRF in targeted communities to raise awareness about land tenure and land use rights to promote women's equal access to and ownership of land within the context of the implementation of the Land Rights Act in Liberia. The Act is now expected to strengthen rights over customary land regardless of gender and will reinforce government's commitment to advance women's land rights, including granting of titles to land, joint titling and the equal distribution of land.

A total of 63 rural women leaders (beneficiaries) from Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties are actively involved in local level land committees contributing to decision-making relevant to the management of land and other natural resources for community development. They are playing an essential role in advocating at the district and community levels with local government for the implementation of the National Land Rights Act (LRA). Moving forward, the JPRWEE is now working with the House Committee on Land and the Liberia Land Authority through Rights & Rice Foundation (implementing partner) to put in place the required and needed strategic measures for ensuring that women's land ownership, tenure and use rights are respected throughout implementation of the Act.

Through the partnership with Orange Liberia, an additional 5 mobile money kiosks have been constructed bringing the total number of mobile money kiosks to 35. These new kiosks were turned over by the end of December 2018. A total of 35 women mobile money agents are registering mobile money clients, programming the mobile money platform on customers phones and engaging in mobile banking as an innovative and sustainable approach to saving money across 35 project sites in Montserrado, Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties.

The above result was achieved because 35 JPRWEE beneficiaries from 35 targeted communities in Montserrado and Margibi have received refresher training in business development and mobile banking and remain organized into mobile money agents actively providing financial services to the public in the targeted counties. These women are also benefitting from employment opportunities with Orange Liberia through the operations of the mobile money kiosks.

18 County development officers, particularly the Agriculture and Gender County Coordinators including District Agriculture Officers (DAOs), are continuing to engender county work plans, budgets and implementation strategies for ensuring the equal distribution of resources across local population (disaggregated by age; gender, etc.) in JPRWEE targeted counties. There remains strengthened partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture in this regard, and JPRWEE will continue to support the ministry throughout the implementation of the joint programme.

I. Purpose

The JPRWEE continues to provide strategic support to the Government of Liberia through the MoA and the MoGCSP in furtherance of the Government's finalization and implementation of its poverty reduction strategy, the Pro Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) for achieving meaningful growth for empowering the lives of women and girls in rural areas through food and nutrition security, access to increased income to sustain livelihoods, better participation and leadership with rural women and adolescent girls and lastly a vibrant gender-responsive policy environment for the social and economic empowerment of rural women and girls.

The joint programme outcomes and outputs remain fully aligned with the ongoing United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF 2013 - 2017), 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 (Extended 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 JPRWEE also closely aligns with Liberia's PAPD on Pillar I: Power to the People and Pillar II: Economy and Jobs which the new UNDAF (under development) is being aligned with.

To further elaborate, the ongoing UNDAF (extended 2019) is aligned with the implementation of JPRWEE in support of strengthening Gender Equality in Liberia, enhancing access to financial services and markets including for improving value-chain standards for small businesses, particularly those in rural areas. The UNDAF's Sustainable Economic Transformation component supports value-added postharvest food processing, facilities and market linkages for small holder farmer organizations. Liberia's poverty reduction strategy (AfT/PAPD) on the other hand emphasizes the importance of agriculture for food and nutrition security, with consideration for increasing access to machinery, fertilizer, storage, credit, training, technical assistance, market information, and improved technologies and related services – through farmer groups.

The JPRWEE in Liberia is part of the global United Nations Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress toward the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women. In this regard, the joint programme in Liberia has considered ten (10) strategic global outputs under its implementation framework for ensuring compliance with the global JPRWEE framework. These prioritized outputs continue to include:

- 1) **Output 1.1:** *Rural women have increased access to and control over resources, assets and services critical for their food and nutrition security.*
- 2) **Output 1.2:** *Rural women have greater capacity to enhance and control local food security reserves and their production.*
- 3) **Output 2.1:** *Rural women have enhanced entrepreneurship skills and value chains to access markets for their products.*
- 4) **Output 3.1:** *Rural women, including young women have enhanced confidence and leadership skills to take an active part in local governance systems.*
- 5) **Output 3.2:** *Rural women have greater organizational capacities to form, sustain and participate into POs, cooperatives and unions.*
- 6) **Output 3.3:** *Rural women, including young women, have increased capacity to engage in and influence relevant policy forums at national and regional levels.*
- 7) **Output 3.4:** *Rural women, including young women, have enhanced awareness on their rights in a more supportive community/local environment.*
- 8) **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.*
- 9) **Output 4.2:** *Greater availability of tools and data to track progress in the economic empowerment of rural women.*
- 10) **Output 4.3:** *An enabling environment is promoted to reflect rural women's priorities in regional and global policy processes.*

The above-mentioned outputs remain linked to key result areas under the JPRWEE implementation framework.

The joint programme continues to work to support Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) priorities and commitments that have been identified and led by national government. It continues to ensure that all relevant and key stakeholders and partners from government, the United Nations, public and private sectors are involved in strategic planning and decision-making processes for strengthening implementation and maximizing results. The JPRWEE continues to build on existing development frameworks (e.g. National Agriculture Policy, National Gender Policy, National Food Security and

Nutrition Strategy, National Trade Policy, National Land Rights Policy, the Land Rights Act, etc.) and strategies for ensuring that women and girls in rural areas are economically and socially empowered.

The joint programme remains committed to strengthening the effectiveness of financial support through coordination and harmonization of cross-cutting Gender interventions (e.g. Liberia Flagship Programme on Climate-smart Agriculture and the new UN Women BuyFromWomen² initiative; these programmes are closely aligned with the JPRWEE national priorities and will buttresses ongoing efforts for the economic empowerment of rural women) under the oversight of the JPRWEE National Joint Steering Committee (JSC). This ensures that the JPRWEE's funding, operations and implementation modalities provide for full transparency and accountability, that it involves an active National JSC and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) including for the timely submission of reports to that committee and other relevant stakeholders and partners. Moreover, the JPRWEE framework and lessons learnt are continuing to assist in making informed decision in the drafting of the new UNDAF 2019 - 2022 that is currently being aligned with Government's PAPD. JPRWEE National TAC members from UN Women, UNFAO and WFP continue to be active in UNDAF and PAPD sector meetings (e.g. education, agriculture, infrastructure/ICT, etc.) and in providing the needed information during both processes.

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*

- Rural female-headed households' expenses on food items, school tuition, medication and other basic needs remained at an average of around LD\$ 4,800 (currently about US\$ 30.00 as per the exchange rate) per household every week from January - December 2018; this is about 10 dollars more from when JPRWEE first started back in early 2015. In addition, the consumption of female headed households remained at 2 meals a day per household member compare to 1 meal a day before JPRWEE intervention.
- JPRWEE completed the procurement of hand tools and power tillers for farming activities in targeted counties; in addition, the joint programme identified and selected a total of 22 hectares for lowland development for rice production in Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties.

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

- There was a total of 67.47 MT of clean rice in JPRWEE funded Community Grain Reserves³ that are currently contributing to the stabilization of grain prices at the community and district levels and as a loan commodity for rural women investing in agriculture. Of this amount, a total of 65.87 MT of clean rice was loaned out to about 367 CGR female members. The stock in loan repayment was approximately 135.8 MT, with total stock repaid as of December 2018 being 98.7 MT. The current percentage on loan payment to date is 81.6%. To conclude, the profit margin agreed by the women beneficiaries stands at 42 MT as of December 2018. The profit margin is being invested in existing rural women-led loan associations for their increased economic security and improved livelihood.
- In JPRWEE counties, grain reserves are being used to protect farmers from grain (e.g. rice) production shortfalls and to provide a buffer against unusually sharp price movements at local level. Thus, JPRWEE aims to strengthen the resilience of poor households to seasonal food insecurity, economic shocks and natural disasters by establishing women-managed grain "banks" in food-deficit smallholder farming communities. In this context, the JPRWEE through WFP provides an initial capital stock of 30 metric tons—more than 66,000 pounds—of milled rice. Thereafter, community members can access grain on loan at a low interest rate during times of scarcity and repay in cash or in-kind after the harvest.

² <http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/3/buy-from-women-platform-brochure>

³ <https://www.wfpusa.org/countries/liberia/>

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

- JPRWEE identified and selected the planned 10 rural women VSLAs comprising of a total of 247 rural women in Margibi and Grand Bassa for cash injection to expand their business portfolio for increased income through investing in agriculture as a source of livelihood.

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

- A total of 35 JPRWEE women mobile money agents who are registering mobile money clients and programming the mobile money platform on customers phones have now accessed employment opportunities with Orange Liberia as they are being compensated by the private sector company for facilitating mobile financial transactions for the company's many customers located in Montserrado and Margibi Counties.

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.

- 63 JPRWEE beneficiaries from Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties are actively contributing to decision-making relevant to the management of land and other natural resources for community development. They are playing an essential role in advocating at the district and community levels with local government for the implementation of the National Land Rights Policy and that of the Land Rights Act recently enacted in September 2018 into law by the Liberian president.
- Because of capacity building trainings in organizational development and leadership skills, financial management and agri-business skills, a total of one hundred and twenty-five (125) new women beneficiaries from Worhn and Harbel in Margibi County are actively engaged in decision-making processes at the district, community and household levels. Rural women are accessing their rights to land for agriculture production for their economic empowerment. Rural women entrepreneurs are better understanding their businesses and are realizing increased profit and experiencing growth. They are bank account holders and are making strategic decisions for their own empowerment. These new women beneficiaries join a host of other JPRWEE beneficiaries from Grand Bassa, Sinoe, River Gee and Maryland in having voice and agency as it relates to land rights and the management of natural resources at community level.
- As of December 2018, over 700 women beneficiaries from south-east (Sinoe, River Gee and Maryland) have increased knowledge on their land rights and are demanding 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 and for their own economic and social empowerment. In addition, these rural women beneficiaries are advocating for better implementation of the Land Rights Act using the Liberia National Rural Women Structure (LNRWS) as a platform for voicing out their concerns in this regard. The structure has remained active in engaging national government and development partners for ensuring a gender responsive policy environment for the economic empowerment of women and girls in rural areas.
- As a result of partnership with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, a total of 783 rural women and adolescent girls from Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties have been identified, selected and profiled by JPRWEE for accessing primary and secondary education including vocational skills trainings in Cosmetology and tailoring. In addition, another 783 rural women and adolescent girls from Maryland, River Gee and

Sinoe Counties are expected to be finalized for accessing JPRWEE interventions on primary and secondary education coupled by vocational skills trainings.

- 35 women beneficiaries are operating 35 mobile money kiosks across 35 project sites as women mobile money agents as a source of income for improved livelihood; all these women have capacity to manage and utilize mobile money as an innovative approach to saving and managing money for increased economic security in the ICT sector. In addition, the women mobile money agents are heavily engaged in mobile money transaction with clients across the targeted locations. Through a grant received under the joint programme, these agents have expanded their mobile money investments and are also engaging private banks and microfinance institutions on their own for increased access to finance for increased growth and improved livelihood. Lastly, the mobile money agents are managing both United States Dollars and Liberian Dollar mobile money accounts. Each mobile money agent has a ceiling of LD\$ 40,000 in her Liberian Dollar account and a ceiling of US\$ 250 in her United States Dollar account as support to startup capital through JPRWEE with support from Orange Liberia.

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

- The five (5) newly established women-based VSLAs comprising of 125 new rural women beneficiaries have boosted their savings and have increased their income from their small businesses and interest generation because of access to sustainable credit for the expansion of their respective businesses. In addition, 700 existing women beneficiaries are accessing rural credit from 28 other active VSLAs across south-east Liberia.

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

- Through JPRWEE's strengthened advocacy with grass-root women, parliamentarians, pressure groups, the Liberia Land Authority, decentralized officials and other relevant stakeholders, the Liberian Senate finally concurred with the House of Representatives to pass the 'Land Rights Act' which was eventually signed into law by President George Weah on September 19, 2018. The Law is now expected to strengthen rights over customary land regardless of gender and will reinforce government's commitment to advance women's land rights, including granting of titles to land, joint titling and the equal distribution of land.

Moving forward, the JPRWEE will be working with the House Committee on Land (policy level, through strengthened advocacy via strategic dialogues with parliamentarians for implementation of gender commitments in the Act) and the Liberia Land Authority (community level, through strengthened advocacy with CSOs and community based organizations via the dissemination of simplified key messages on women's land rights for awareness raising on gender commitments in the Act) to put in place the required and needed strategic measures (e.g. setting in place a monitoring mechanism within the Gender Unit at the Liberia Land Authority) for ensuring that women's land ownership, tenure and use rights are respected throughout implementation of the Act.

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 18 County development officers, particularly the Agriculture and Gender County Coordinators including District Agriculture Officers (DAOs) from Maryland, River Gee, Sinoe, Grand Bassa, and Margibi Counties are continuing to engender their county annual work plans, budgets and implementation strategies for ensuring the equal distribution of resources across the local populations (*disaggregated by gender, age, etc.*) For example, the Gender and Agriculture County Coordinators jointly played a key role

during county and district levels consultations for the development of Liberia's Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD), advocating with technicians and policy makers at local level to ensure that gender commitments on land, food, agriculture and nutrition were included in the country's new poverty reduction strategy.

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

Initially, the proposed JPRWEE work plan for Liberia implementation which should have started in April 2018 did not start as planned as there was a delayed in securing funding. In addition, the change in Government has been challenging in moving activities forward as the new government appointees needed to learn about JPRWEE in detail before giving their endorsement for the implementation of project activities at the national and sub-national levels. For example, the Ministers of Agriculture and Gender were replaced with new ministers. Both ministers are members of the JPRWEE joint steering committee with the Minister of Gender Co-chairing with the United Nations Resident Coordinator.

To address the case of the political transition that has affected the delivery of the joint programme in Liberia, the JPRWEE National TAC begun the process of debriefing new Government ministers and programme technicians at the national and sub-national levels. The goal here has been to ensure that newly appointed ministers and programme technicians have better knowledge of the JPRWEE national framework and are fully on board with the delivery of the joint programme.

The development and finalization of the Government's PAPD also delayed JPRWEE activities as the joint programme had to align its priorities with national priorities (*e.g. youth development in agriculture, job creation, etc.*) moving forward. In addition, the process in the development of the next UNDAF has resulted in some delays as the National TAC has been quite involved with aligning JPRWEE with two pillar areas, namely **Pillar I: Power to the People** (*to empower Liberians with the tools to gain control of their lives through more equitable provision of opportunities in education, health, youth development, and social protection*) and **Pillar II: Economy and Jobs** (*economic stability and job creation through effective resource mobilization and prudent management of economic inclusion*) of the next UNDAF.

JPRWEE key focal points in FAO, WFP and UN Women have been fully represented at the UNDAF sector and pillar meetings ensuring that the JPRWEE framework is fully aligned with the relevant UNDAF's outcomes and outputs. To ensure that the UNDAF development process also does not interfere with the delivery of the programme, the JPRWEE National Coordinator will work with alternate programme officers in both FAO and WFP (*under the guidance of the key focal points in both UN agencies*) to deliver on the joint programme activities while the JPRWEE key focal points in both FAO and WFP will continue their active participation in UNDAF sector and pillar meetings in support of finalizing Liberia new UNDAF and ensuring that the joint programme's results-framework is closely aligned with that of the UNDAF's.

The rainy season presented challenges to the delivery of project activities as certain targeted communities especially in south-east Liberia remained inaccessible due to very bad road condition. To address this issue, JPRWEE will attempt to implement most of its activities in this region of Liberia during the dry season moving forward to avoid such challenges with bad road.

Planning for and the rollout of the JPRWEE 2018 evaluation also contributed to delays as members of the National TAC were involved in the process of supporting efforts in that regard. To ensure that any future evaluation does not interfere with the implementation of the joint programme, the JPRWEE National TAC will ensure that it considers better planning in terms of rollout and timelines.

Rural women access to land in traditional communities remains limited, thus, preventing their chances of investing in agriculture as a source of livelihood. This is due to Liberian tradition where women land rights are prohibited. As a result, JPRWEE is working here to address the issue of tradition regarding women land rights by changing perception through increased awareness raising on the respect for gender

commitments as reflected in Liberia's Land Rights Act. This also includes for awareness raising on peacebuilding and conflict mitigation regarding land issues and that of the referral pathway/mechanisms for women's access to justice when they experience land rights violations.

There continues to be an increased transparency and accountability with the joint programme implementation because the JPRWEE National Coordinator based in UN Women continues to ensure that the National TAC is addressing implementation challenges, promoting coordination and identifying lessons learned (e.g. knowledge of women's rights and gender principles has strengthened rural women's self-confidence and respect; women farmers are engaging policy makers at local level to have increased access to extension services and technology, which in turn limits agricultural output when lacking, literacy and numeracy skills have given rural women and girls greater respect in their communities and improved their ability to participate, etc.) across the various activities and outputs on a regular basis. Lessons learnt are shared with the JPRWEE JSC, as well as with ongoing United Nations Joint Programme on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (JP on SGBV).

The U.N. Resident Coordinator has called for successful elements (e.g. business development skills and access to finance) of JPRWEE be incorporated into the development of the Liberia Spotlight Initiative⁴ which is funded by the European Union for ensuring greater impact. As a result, UN Women as the technical lead agency incorporated key economic empowerment interventions (e.g. access to literacy, business development and finance for rural women, etc.) during the development of the Liberia Spotlight Initiative.⁵ Thus, JPRWEE beneficiaries will receive support for business development and financial literacy, adult literacy and numeracy skills building, access to rural credit including for SRH education and related services. One key category of rural women beneficiaries to be reached by the Spotlight Initiative will be female traditional practitioners (e.g. sande bush/society), victims and survivors of harmful traditional practices including victims and survivors of SGBV. JPRWEE has stressed that the Spotlight Initiative may be stronger in addressing violence against rural women if the initiative itself added as a core goal, the economic empowerment of women and girls in rural areas.

With regular debriefings on the status of JPRWEE to the UNCT through the Gender Theme Group (GTG), to the government through the MoA and MoGCSP and with private sector through Orange Liberia and Coca Cola Liberia, the joint programme continues to show increased national ownership. It has further prioritized working closely with the government, civil society, development partners and private sector to ensure increased ownership at the national and sub-national levels for the sustainability of the joint programme's interventions beyond 2019.

JPRWEE is continuously networking with male networks for mobilizing them to promote the economic empowerment of women and girls in rural areas. Again, men's involvement with the joint programme is playing a vital role in fostering increased ownership of the programme at local level. Since JPRWEE initiation, men and boys have remained engaged directly and indirectly throughout the joint programme's implementation. Working with men and boys includes a process of strategic 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 (e.g. men as male champions for women's economic empowerment and on ending violence against women).

VSLAs are highly community-owned and community-driven and has proven to be a best practice for ensuring the sustainability of JPRWEE beyond its lifespan. These structures are groups of 25-30 women who save together and are able to take small loans out from those savings. The joint programme helps to establish and mentor the structures, providing initial financial input. Again, they are, self-sustaining and self-managed groups. For example, the positive effects of VSLAs on the lives of children are striking. The

⁴ Liberia is one of eight countries at the African continent participating in the global EU and UN SPOTLIGHT Initiative: <http://www.un.org/en/spotlight-initiative/index.shtml>

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/news-and-events/eu-un-spotlight-initiative-ending-violence-against-women-and-girls_en

joint programme has observed that food poverty amongst VSLA members falls after just one year of saving. More rural girls of female-headed households in JPRWEE communities are attending school. Families are also better-able to cope with health costs when challenged by such. Being part of such a successful community group has led to impressive gains in women's social status. They are being allowed to start their own businesses and take part in community decision-making. In addition, being able to contribute financially within their families has put these women on a more equal footing with their husbands. JPRWEE VSLAs not only help rural families to save their money, or to access money in emergencies. They also help them earn.

Liberian market women are saving money as mobile bank account holders which is an innovative approach to saving money. In addition, they are serving as mobile money agents rendering financial services to the general public as a source of livelihood. With JPRWEE, Orange Money is providing several benefits for users which include reducing exposure to cash losses during deliveries and collection of money; reducing cost of processing fees; enabling reception of funds and the instant payment of traders and suppliers from rural areas which do not have internet access; more convenience – as mobile payment is made in a click which results in shorter time for processing payments; transacting in both Liberian and US dollars with women mobile money agents and their customers; and the securing of transactions and purchases even in the case of phone loss or theft.

The joint programme remains engaged at two strategic levels, namely:

- **Community level** - delivery of a comprehensive women's empowerment programme, employing a more comprehensive approach to directly empowering rural women and girls economically and socially; and
- **Policy level** - implementing commitments in the revised National Gender Policy, the National Food Security and Nutrition Strategy and the joint programme's contributions in the development of the PAPD from women's economic empowerment perspectives. At this level, the programme is also supporting the development of the government's capacities to coordinate the delivery of these policy frameworks for the economic empowerment of women and girls in rural areas. Similarly, the joint programme is also deeply engaged in the preparation of the next cycle of UNDAF, bringing in the experiences and the lessons learned from the JPRWEE implementation.

At the community-level, JPRWEE continues to ensure 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 programmes (e.g. JP SGBV, UNDP JP on Land, etc.). For example, JPRWEE uses the National SGBV Referral Pathway for awareness raising with its beneficiaries at county, district and community levels. This has resulted in rural women beneficiaries having increased knowledge on SGBV prevention, management and response. The national SGBV pathway has been revised and disseminated by the SGBV JP with funding from Sweden. In addition, JPRWEE through UN Women has played a key advocacy role alongside UNDP and other relevant UN agencies for ensuring that the implementation of the Land Rights Act is gender responsive and that key messages on women's land rights are developed for dissemination and awareness raising at national and sub-national levels. JPRWEE implementing partner Rights and Rice Foundation is supporting the development of gender responsive key messages on women's land rights for dissemination in project counties.

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

Alignment & Partnership:

JPRWEE contributes to the achievement of the Government of Liberia's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially for Goals 1, 2, 5, 16 & 17. This includes for the alignment of the joint programme's outcomes and outputs with the key pillars of the new government's PAPD, Liberia's next Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Significant contributions are being made to the following results within the ongoing UNDAF and Liberia's ongoing AfT:

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.

JPRWEE has strengthened collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) for organizing rural women who have the entrepreneurship potential to grow into small and medium enterprises (SMEs) for achieving sustainable growth. This also includes for organizing functional VSLAs with increased savings into cooperatives for increased recognition in the formal economy.

The Liberia Marketing Association (LMA) remains a strategic partner working with the JPRWEE in rolling out the Next Level Business Programme for Market Women, the construction of mobile money kiosks under the partnership with Orange Liberia and for the association's capacity development at national and sub-national levels in strengthening organizational development and leaderships skills to effectively deliver on its mandate in an accountable and transparent manner.

JPRWEE has also held strategic discussions with the French company TOTAL on linking rural women beneficiaries with its service stations in Maryland, River Gee, Sinoe, Montserrado, Grand Bassa and Margibi Counties with regards to employment opportunities (e.g. petrol pump managers, securities and cleaners) under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme. Talks remain ongoing for piloting the proposed initiative in at least two (2) JPRWEE counties in 2019.

Qualitative assessment

The joint programme in 2018 experienced several delays that were due to a number of challenges. Again, these included:

- Change in political leadership was challenging for JPRWEE as it stalled the process of moving project activities forward. The new government appointees and technicians needed time to familiarize themselves with the joint programme's activities at country level before giving their approval. For example, the Ministers of Agriculture and Gender were replaced with new ministers. Both ministers are members of the JPRWEE Joint Steering Committee (JSC) with the Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection Co-chairing the JSC with the United Nations Resident Coordinator;

- The development and finalization of the Government's PAPD also delayed JPRWEE activities as the joint programme had to align its priorities with national priorities (*e.g. youth development in agriculture, job creation, etc.*). In addition, Liberia's new UNDAF development process also required the attention of key focal points in FAO, WFP and UN Women that are managing the joint programme activities; thus, this resulted in a delay with implementation of activities; and
- Due to the heavy onset of rains from April 2018, there were also many cases of remote project communities remaining inaccessible for months due to very bad road networks. The fact that the UN even discontinued flight to southeast Liberia presented a serious problem for delivering on the project. Moreover, both WFP and FAO experienced a recall of staff from the region. On the other hand, UN Women does not have a regional office in the southeast. The long-term goal is to have a joint office with WFP, FAO and UN Women between 2019 – 2020.

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

- CGRs continue to offer a safe space for rural women farmers to access different services for improving food security at the community and district levels and have also provided a space for VSLA meetings to be held, wherein the latter has resulted in increased access to sustainable financial services for rural women;
- Rural women farmers continue to be engaged with value addition as they now have the necessary skills to manage and maintain the agro processing machines (*e.g. cassava grater, rice mill, etc.*). These women in the grain reserves are ensuring that their finished products are going to the local markets for sale and that they are also repaying seed stocks taken on loan for expanding their existing business ventures; and
- Rural women access to land in traditional communities remains limited, thus, preventing their chances of investing in agriculture as a source of livelihood. With the Land Rights Act now passed into law and increased mobilization and awareness raising, this will eventually provide the means of addressing women's limited access to land.

Recommendations based on feedback from KIIs and FGDs

- The joint programme needs to continue strengthening the 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 and assets in terms of sharing of benefits and workload between both rural women and men farmers; and
- Increased awareness around rural women land use and land rights at county level with county, district and community leaders for ensuring that rural women farmers have increased access to land use and land rights for agricultural production needs to be further strengthened, particularly for the targeted counties where concession companies are heavily engaged (*e.g. Margibi, Grand Bassa, Sinoe and Montserrado Counties*).

Increasing rural women access to finance

- The VSLA initiative is just one of many JPRWEE initiatives that rural women beneficiaries continue to appreciate because of its effectiveness in providing sustainable financial services for rural communities targeted by JPRWEE;
- Microfinance institutions are suitable for some, but VSLAs are offering greater flexibility and access to services. They are offering sustainable, relevant solutions by adding value to a traditionally known and trusted model of saving; thus, the financial independence gained through VSLAs increases women's participation in decision-making at local level;

- Through the partnership with Orange Liberia, more women now have the capacity to use and manage a mobile money account and 30 women are serving as mobile money agents, thus, creating job opportunities for themselves;
- VSLAs are highly community-owned and community-driven and has proven to be a best practice for ensuring the sustainability of JPRWEE beyond its lifespan; and
- Liberian market women are saving money as mobile bank account holders which is an innovative approach to saving money.

Recommendations based on feedback from KIIs and FGDs

- Linking existing VSLAs with private banks (e.g. AfriLand Bank, GT Bank, etc.) and large-scale microfinance institutions (e.g. BRAC, etc.) for increased access to credit for expanding the best ventures of members is crucial to realizing greater impact in the contexts of increased economic security and improved livelihood for rural women and girls;
- More monitoring and supervision support for VSLAs are needed to ensure that these Associations remain strong for ensuring greater sustainability at the community level;
- JPRWEE should increase support for linking the VSLAs to formal financial institutions through organizing strong VSLAs into cooperatives;
- VSLA training should include rural and urban lending, and VSLA should be looked as a model for rural market women, farmers, cross border traders and ordinary community women; and
- After four weeks of intervention in 30 JPRWEE communities with Orange Liberia, the impact of the business development and access to ICT for mobile banking as an innovative approach to saving money is clearly expressed by beneficiaries who are now mobile money agents;
- The utilization of market women as mobile money agents has been highly welcomed by the Liberia Marketing Association (LMA), the Association of Women in Cross Border Trade (AWICBT) and the LNRWS as an effective model for job creation and women's economic empowerment;
- Mobile money kiosks are well organized, with mobile money agents who are anxious to provide mobile money services to the public as a source of livelihood;
- JPRWEE needs to start strategic discussions with AfriLand Bank and GT Bank on linking existing VSLAs for increased access to credit in support of economic growth for transitioning from the informal sector to the formal sector. This also includes for working with MFIs on women's access to rural credit for investing in agriculture;
- The JPRWEE mobile money initiative with Orange Liberia should be extended to other communities in Maryland, Sinoe and River Gee; and
- The JPRWEE mobile money initiative with Orange Liberia should be very closely linked to the joint programme's VSLA and business development programmes.

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

- Between July - December 2018, approximately nine (9) cases of domestic violence were reported from Maryland (1), Sinoe (3), Margibi (2) and River Gee (3) Counties through functional VSLAs that have members associated with the Liberia Peace Hut Initiative;⁶ and
- There were no cases of teenage or unwanted pregnancies reported with JPRWEE beneficiaries for the period under reporting. Rural adolescent girls are continuing to access Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) education and services from the County Health Centers in the targeted counties.

Recommendations based on feedback from KIIs and FGDs

- JPRWEE should continue awareness raising on SGBV and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse prevention, management and response by building stronger linkages with the ongoing JP on SGBV including with the Spotlight Initiative; and

⁶ <https://frontpageafricaonline.com/county-news/liberia-s-rural-women-say-peace-hut-project-impacting-lives/>

- Similarly, with Spotlight Initiative, provisions should be made through UNFPA for JPRWEE beneficiaries to access SRH education and services at the county and district levels.

ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment:

	<u>Achieved</u> Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
Outcome 1 Improved food and nutrition security			
<p>Indicator: Increase of agricultural production of women farmers Baseline (2017): 15% of women farmers Planned Target (2018): 50% of women farmers</p> <p>Evidence of improvement of rural women dietary diversity and consumption patterns Baseline (2017): 69.2% of rural women beneficiaries Planned Target (2018): 50% of rural women beneficiaries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1.5% increase in agricultural production of women farmers in 2018 ▪ 43.7% of rural women headed-households are consuming a balance diet of carbohydrates and vegetables in 2018 	<p>Change in political leadership and the UNMIL drawdown stalled the process of moving project activities forward;</p> <p>PAPD development delayed activities as the JP had to align its priorities with national priorities (<i>e.g. youth development in agriculture, job creation, etc.</i>)</p> <p>Heavy rains from the onset of April 2019 left many remote project communities inaccessible</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministry of Agriculture county reports ▪ JPRWEE monitoring reports
Output 1.1 Rural women have increased access to and control over resources, assets and services critical for their food and nutrition security			
<p>Indicator 1.1.1: # of women and men accessing WFP's P4P programme for access to market opportunities Baseline (2017): 2,700 women Planned Target (2018): 900 additional beneficiaries (<i>F: 800 & M: 100</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 900 (800 females and 100 males) rural farmers have been selected, profiled and are accessing WFP's P4P programme in JPRWEE counties 	<p>Target was achieved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministry of Agriculture county reports ▪ JPRWEE monitoring reports
Output 1.2 Rural women have greater capacity to enhance and control local food security reserves and their production			
<p>Indicator 1.2.1: # of rural women with the capacity to use and manage agro-processing machineries and equipment and are involved in value-addition Baseline (2017): 150 women leaders Planned Target (2018): 1,500 women</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A total of 1,513 rural women farmers now have the capacity to use and manage agro-processing machines and equipment in the 5 CGR communities in targeted counties. Rural women are actively involved in 	<p>Target was achieved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministry of Agriculture county reports ▪ JPRWEE monitoring reports

	<u>Achieved Indicator Targets</u>	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
	value addition processes		
Outcome 2 Rural women have increased income to secure their livelihoods.			
Indicator: Income generated by rural women's cooperatives from their sales to markets; and Evidence of better quality of life and status of rural women Baseline (2017): LD\$ 4,725,000 (or US\$ 35,000) Planned Target (2018): LD\$ 16,200,000 (or US\$ 120,000)	A total of LD\$ 17,201,527 (about US\$ 107,509.54) was generated from women beneficiaries in the sales of locally produced crops that were processed	The planned target was not met because of the effect of climate change on agriculture production including for inaccessibility of farm to market roads; remaining target carried over to 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministry of Agriculture county reports ▪ Ministry of Gender county reports ▪ Implementing partners monitoring reports
Output 2.1 Rural women have enhanced entrepreneurship skills and value chains to access markets for their products			
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 Baseline (2017): 1,250 Planned Target (2018): 2,000 additional rural women beneficiaries accessing CGRs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 850 new rural women beneficiaries have access to credit through established VSLAs. 	The planned target was not met due to heavy rains from the onset of April 2019 left many remote project communities inaccessible; thus, target will be carried over to 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministry of Agriculture county reports ▪ JPRWEE monitoring reports
Output 2.2 Rural women have increased access to decent wage employment opportunities			
Indicator 2.2.1: # of rural women with access to decent work Baseline (2017): 737 rural women Planned Target (2018): 1,237 additional women beneficiaries for access to decent work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 35 women beneficiaries were reached with capacity building in Orange Money⁷ under JPRWEE's partnership⁸ with the private sector - Orange Liberia and these beneficiaries 	The planned target was not met due to private sector (e.g. Orange Liberia) readjusting its implementation strategy for women's access to employment opportunities under the MoU it has to support JPRWEE beneficiaries. Also, heavy rains from the onset of April 2019 left many remote project communities inaccessible; thus, target will be carried over to 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection county reports ▪ Orange Liberia progress reports ▪ JPRWEE monitoring reports

⁷ <http://www.orange.com.lr/personal/1/26/introducing-orange-money-73.html>

⁸ <http://africa.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2017/11/un-women-and-orange-launch-partnership>

	<u>Achieved Indicator Targets</u>	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
	have accessed employment opportunities with Orange Liberia by operating as mobile money agents for the company.		
Outcome 3: Rural women have enhanced leadership and participation in their communities and in rural institutions, and in shaping laws, policies and programmes.			
Indicator: # of rural women who are members of land committees Baseline (2017): 1,218 Planned Target (2018): 3,000	3,197 rural women participating in land committees at county level. This also includes for proper community management of land and the natural resources in rural areas.	Target was achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection county reports ▪ JPRWEE monitoring reports
Output 3.1 Rural women, including young women have enhanced confidence and leadership skills to participate in local governance			
Indicator 3.1.1: # of women participating in local governance in rural areas Baseline (2017): 2,000 Planned Target (2018): 3,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 168 new JPRWEE beneficiaries from Margibi County are fully active in local level land committees making decision on the management of land and other natural resources for community development. 	The planned target was not met due to delay in the rollout of project activities because of heavy rains that left targeted communities inaccessible; thus, target will be carried over to 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection county reports ▪ JPRWEE monitoring reports
Output 3.4: Rural women, including young women have enhanced awareness on their rights in a more supportive community/local environment.			
Indicator 3.4.1: # of rural women reporting cases of SGBV to local authorities for redress Baseline (2017): 2,250 rural women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Between January - December 2018, approximately 9 cases of domestic violence were reported by 	The planned target was not met due to very limited cases being reported. It could also indicate progress is being made in deterring SGBV cases and reducing cases of VAW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection county reports

	<u>Achieved Indicator Targets</u>	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
Planned Target (2018): 3,250 rural women	women beneficiaries from Maryland (1), Sinoe (3), Margibi (2) and River Gee (3) Counties		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ JPRWEE monitoring reports
Outcome 4: A more gender responsive policy environment is secured for the economic empowerment of rural women			
Indicator: Proportion of government budgets and donor funding allocated to programmes benefitting rural women Baseline (2017): one Planned Target (2018): one	Ministries of Agriculture and Gender, Children and Social Protection annual work plans, budgets and implementation strategies are engendered for ensuring the equal distribution of resources between both women and men, girls and boys in rural areas for their economic empowerment.	Target was achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection county reports ▪ JPRWEE monitoring reports
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.			
Indicator 4.1.1: Extent to which national land, food, nutrition, agricultural and rural development policies and laws make provisions for gender equality and women's empowerment Baseline (2017): 1 Planned Target (2018): 5	Through strengthened advocacy, the Liberian Senate finally concurred with the House of Representatives to pass the 'Land Rights Act' which was eventually signed into law on September 19, 2018; and 9 CACs and GCCs are engaged in Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) within the context of food and nutrition security	Target was achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UN Women reports ▪ Women's Legislative Caucus report ▪ Sample copies of the Revised NGP (2018-2022) and Strategic Results Framework (SRF)

iii) A Specific Story

Mamie Sulonteh (NOT HER REAL NAME)
Mount Barclay, Montserrado County
Republic of Liberia, West Africa

The Story of a JPRWEE Beneficiary - S/GBV Survivor

“Before my participation in the JPRWEE, I used to sell in the local market in Mount Barclay, rural Montserrado County. I had low self-esteem because I had no idea or knowledge about my rights as a woman and as a business woman. JPRWEE changed all of that because it made me to understand my rights as a woman and made me grow into the business woman I am today.

After I completed my business skills classes and became a part of the local Savings and loan Association (SLA), I travelled to Guinea for the first time to buy goods to sell in Liberia. On my return from Conakry, I was stopped at the border (between Liberia and Guinea) by a Liberian Immigration Officer who told me that he could not let my goods to cross over. I begged him over and over, but he refused. He later asked me to follow him inside his office where he locked the door behind us and told me he was in love with me. I laughed and thought he was playing. He later attempted to remove my blouse. I instantly screamed, but he held on to my mouth and said that if I did not have sex with him, he would seize my goods and not give them to me. I was afraid because I had spent every cent I had just to buy my goods for my market that I had plan to sell to get my profit.

The immigration officer kept trying to undress me, so I kept screaming till another border security guard came knocking on the door. He stopped and opened the door and told the officer that he was busy and that I was shouting to complain, as we (women) always do. The officer laughed and told him to continue. By this time, I was already crying and shaken by fear. I instantly knew then that the other officer was aware of what was going on, but he protected his fellow officer. I started to fight and scream loudly. Luckily, some other women traders heard me and came rushing in, breaking down the door. By this time, almost all my clothes had been torn off my body. The women who rescued me had to wrap a lappa around me to hide my half naked body. I was shaking like a leaf and could not stop crying.

I did not recover any of my goods that day, and I had to return home empty-handed. Actually, If I managed to go home at all, it is thanks to the other women traders who put some money together for me to take the bus home. As soon as I arrived in my community, I went to the local clinic the next day to treat the minor injuries I sustained from the fight between the border security officer and myself. I knew I had to do this, because my teacher from the JPRWEE class always told us the first thing to do when abused was to go to the clinic or hospital. I knew what to do and I knew my right. After the hospital visit, I visited the Women and Children Protection Section of the local Liberia National Police in my community and told my story to the police officers present. The officers in the Section registered my case and told me they would look into it. I was then referred to a local Safe Home (funded by the UNFPA) for victims and survivors of SGBV operated by THINK Liberia, one of the JPRWEE implementing partners where I was provided psychosocial counseling services free of charge. When the police concluded their investigation about two weeks after the incident, the Immigration Officer and his colleague were both brought down to Monrovia and sent to court. I was lucky that I got to access justice unlike so many other women because I had so many witnesses to testify against both officers. As a woman and a survivor, I feel more confident now because I know how and when to exercise my rights. I have been given a voice to speak out, and this is all because of the knowledge the JPRWEE imparted into me during the classes that I took”. I am still with JPRWEE and will always be a part of the program so that I can grow more as a Liberian business woman.



A JPRWEE beneficiary in Mount Barclay Market displays the S/GBV referral pathway

III. Other Assessments or Evaluations (if applicable)

The JPRWEE 2018 Mid-term Evaluation Inception Report and data collection were completed and the First draft of the Final Evaluation report was submitted on 19 Dec 2018 for feedback and finalization. The finalized Report with incorporated comments is expected to be submitted by end of February 2019. In general, the overall outcome of the evaluation's assessment of impact the JPRWEE has made on their lives of rural women has turned out to be seemingly positive. The JPRWEE now looks forward to a good evaluation report with lessons learnt and best practices that will be used for the development of key knowledge products for supporting ongoing resource mobilization efforts at both the county and global levels.

A JPRWEE Liberia Learning Visit to Ethiopia was held with participants from Liberia between 22 - 25 October 2018. Participants included:

1. Mrs. Kebbeh Monger
National Chairlady
Liberia National Rural Women Structure
Republic of Liberia
2. Mrs. Evelyn Karhenye
Chair Lady, Gbarwanken Women Association
Gbarwanken Community, Maryland County
Republic of Liberia
3. Moses Kelleh
Programme Officer, UN Women Liberia
Republic of Liberia

The main objectives of the learning mission were 1.) To facilitate participants learning from the successes and challenges of the JPRWEE in both Liberia and Ethiopia; 2.) To establish networking among the JPRWEE beneficiaries in both Liberia and Ethiopia to support the process of facilitating independent information exchange between both countries; 3.) To facilitate participants to reflect and assess how the visit will help them to do things differently in their respective Country Programmes; and 4.) To document good practices, innovations and successful approaches in each JPRWEE country, which could be utilized by other development initiatives focusing on women's economic empowerment and drawing a set of general recommendations to contribute towards knowledge sharing of innovative approaches in WEE.

From the Learning Exchange mission to Ethiopia, one key knowledge product that is under development is a factsheet on highlighting best practices and lessons learnt from Liberia and Ethiopia and what in Ethiopia can be replicated in Liberia. In addition, an experience-sharing exercise led by Madam Kebbeh Monger from the National Rural Women Structure and Madam Evelyn Karhenye from the Gbarwanken Women Association, with support from JPRWE, is expected to be carried out with JPRWEE beneficiaries from Maryland, River Gee, Sinoe, Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties in October 2019.

IV. Programmatic Revisions (if applicable)

There have been no programmatic revisions to the JPRWEE country programme in 2018.

V. Coordination mechanisms

Programme Planning and Management

Overall responsibility for strategic leadership and oversight of JPRWEE rests with the Government, specifically with the MoGCSP. The Minister of MoGCSP 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 continues to guide 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 JPSC are made through consensus.

UN Women continues to serve as the lead UN Agency and is responsible for overall coordination of the programme, including supporting the MoGCSP 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 (Joint Programme Manager), who reports to UN Women (lead UN agency) and to WFP and UNFAO (participating UN agencies) including other relevant partners and stakeholders.

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

Individual outputs remain the responsibility of the individual UN organizations as identified in their respective 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 is undertaken 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 JPSC on progress towards each of the indicators and outputs. Special reviews and assessments are undertaken as required by this Committee.

The individual 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 TAC meetings. The National Coordinator has the overall responsibility for M&E reporting to the JPSC, including the overall tracking of key outcomes and output indicators.

The JPRWEE National Coordinator ensures that the TAC 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 JPSC, as well as with other joint programmes.

VI. Resources

The use of funds usually follows approved JPRWEE implementation plans and budgets, pre-approved by the Government of Liberia and the UN through the JPRWEE JPSC.

Between July - December 2018, the Liberia country programme had no resources secured at country level for implementing and expanding project activities. Nonetheless, the JPRWEE participated in the drafting of the Liberia flagship programme on climate-smart agriculture with a donor conference scheduled for early 2019. The expectation is that this flagship programme will assist in sustaining the gains already made by the JPRWE beyond 2019 when funding ends.

Human Resources:

Three UN 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.

JPRWEE-supported staff are:

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

Financial Resources:

Total approved 2018 budget: \$ 800,000 RWEE-MPTF	Budget by Agency	Expenditure by Agency Estimated	Balance
MPTF Contribution ⁶ :			
<input type="checkbox"/> UN Women Liberia	\$ 300,000	\$ 83,167	\$ 216,833
<input type="checkbox"/> WFP Liberia ⁹	\$ 250,000	\$ 37,809	\$ 212,191
<input type="checkbox"/> FAO Liberia	\$ 250,000	\$ 68,682	\$ 181,318

⁹ Due to heavy rains, road infrastructure affected WFP's delivery; applies also to FAO and UN Women