

Priority Plan for Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)

LIBERIA

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Republic of Liberia



United Nations
LIBERIA

1. BACKGROUND

Liberia is in a pivotal transitional recovery phase. The Government of Liberia (GoL) and the United Nations (UN) in Liberia recognize that a focus on peacebuilding is a cornerstone of national development and crucial for ensuring that the nation never returns to war. While it is clear that an overall state of security has been maintained in Liberia since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in August 2003, as in any post-conflict country, challenges remain that require attention to ensure there is no relapse to violent conflict. History has proven that peace agreements do not always result in a lasting peace.

Against this background, the United Nations Secretary-General has declared Liberia eligible to receive funding under the second window of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). This decision was based on a concept note prepared by GoL and the UN summarizing the current post-conflict situation and the need to firmly bolster the 'hard-won' peace in Liberia with concrete, rapid action. Since the Sirleaf Government took office in early 2006, the GoL, UN, civil society and partners have made progress in analyzing the causes of instability, identifying challenges to developing a durable peace and articulating strategic measures to address 'conflict factors'.

Consultative working group evaluations of peacebuilding issues have included the GoL's interim Poverty Reduction Strategy (iPRS), the UN's Common Country Assessment and Development Assistance Framework (CCA/UNDAF) and efforts by the Peacebuilding and Conflict Sensitive Working Group (PBCSWG) of the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). The PBCSWG (led by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, including civil society) evaluates peacebuilding issues in Liberia and works to ensure that lessons lead to more effective policies and programs in the GoL and UN.

The UN paper entitled 'Agenda for Peacebuilding in Liberia' analyses peacebuilding needs and presents initial ideas on harmonizing and strategically focusing efforts in Liberia. Related assessments, mostly undertaken jointly with the GoL, include; the CCA/UNDAF; Joint Security Assessment Teams (JSAT); DDRR residual caseload and cross-border surveys; an IDP evaluation; Liberia's 2006 Human Development Report; district-based consultations; and civil service capacity assessments with the Liberian Institute of Public Administration (LIPA).

The analysis the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) for Consolidation, Drawdown and Withdrawal (CDW) also incorporates benchmarks linked to peace and stability. Consultations included a Technical Assessment Mission (TAM) to Liberia in September 2007, which brought together a broad cross-section of stakeholders, including GoL, donors, political parties, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society. The Secretary-General's 15th Progress Report on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (August 2007) summarizes the main findings.

Through these processes and others, the GoL and partners have come to a widely-shared understanding that peacebuilding and conflict-sensitive development are pivotal to the consolidation of peace in Liberia. This Peacebuilding Priority Plan, draws on these analyses and lays out, as a framework, critical areas to immediately address insecurity and to catalyze the establishment of key processes essential for broader development in Liberia. Resources from the PBF will be used to bridge immediate gaps in, and contribute to, Liberia's Poverty Reduction Strategy (2008-2011).

The Government is committed to a reconstruction and development agenda based on principles of greater inclusion, equity and stability. However, significant peacebuilding needs exist. This priority plan offers a strategic approach to address specific needs through a series of catalytic measures that draw on Liberian mechanisms and tools for sustainable peace. The GoL and the UN

are committed to ensure that PBF resources are programmed in a manner that is sensitive to the causes of conflict and that actions undertaken build the peace in Liberia.

"Funding provided by the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund will be programmed and managed within the overall framework of the PBF Terms of Reference, the priority plan, the Memorandum of Understanding between the UN/PBSO and the UNDP/ Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF), the Letter of Understanding with PBF donors and the Memoranda of Understanding between the recipient UN organizations and the UNDP/MDTF. UN 'recipient' organizations are responsible for the management of the Funds and regular reporting on the use of Funding.

2. FROM ANALYSIS TO PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS

Liberia's history of conflict largely defines the challenges faced by Government, citizens and development partners for recovery and sustainable development today. A wide range of GoL and UN publications identify the following seven interrelated 'conflict factors':

1. **Poor leadership and the misuse of power** (both central and local levels). The failure of previous leaders to create inclusive, transparent, accountable governance, political mobilization along ethnic lines, and the absence of trust of leadership.
2. **Weak justice systems:** Constraints on the formal justice system with a lack of infrastructure, materials and an acute shortage of qualified personnel and general capacity; undue delay or no prosecution of matters and a need to regulate traditional dispute resolution mechanisms; especially those involving gross violations of human rights.
3. **Lack of shared vision:** Social and economic inequality between identity groups, competition over resources, exclusion and deep-rooted hostilities – aggravated by contradictory customary, statutory and historical claims to land ownership.
4. **Poverty and food insecurity:** Both drivers and consequences of conflict, this factor is aggravated by disruption to agriculture and livelihoods during the war, resulting in children being exposed to abuse to support family food needs and a reduced education.
5. **Mismanagement of natural resources:** The illegal exploitation of natural resources, coupled with the lack of real dividends for communities, has been at the heart of conflict in Liberia. This requires transparent resource management founded in sound environmental management practice and good governance. Land is also considered a natural resource and disputes over it are wide-ranging.
6. **Pressure on reintegration / Lack of absorption capacity in areas of return:** With limited infrastructure, services and job opportunities, the return of the displaced adds pressure and exacerbates tensions. Gender Based Violence (GBV) is increasing, as is a perceived threat to the physical security of adolescents - particularly girls.
7. **The regional dimension:** Instability in neighbouring countries that exacerbated and facilitated conflict within Liberia's borders in the past, and current unaddressed political issues in Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire remain a source of concern. Ethnic group contiguity across national boundaries, poor to non-existent border security, and the movement of displaced populations in and out of bordering countries may also pose risks.

Similar conflict issues or factors appear in Liberia's draft PRS and other documents - identifying the same issues, sometimes articulated slightly differently.

In examining such factors and developing strategies to address them, special attention must be paid to youth and the gender dimension. The war exacerbated gender inequality in Liberia; a significant number of women and girls suffered various types of violence, including sexual abuse

and gender-based violence. Mainstreaming gender issues into national policies and frameworks, and into the high-impact interventions proposed under this Plan, is essential to achieving equal participation and full involvement of women in the maintenance and promotion of peace.

While Liberia has become a generally stable country in a volatile sub-region, peace is still in its formative stage¹. Limited capacity on the part of key national institutions prevents the GoL from delivering to all citizens the promised peace dividends. Liberia has sustained impressively high economic growth (8% in 2005/6), but economic issues remain a large factor of insecurity, particularly massive unemployment - especially for the youth. Ethnic and social cleavages still present a source of tension, as does the perception by some opposition political parties that the Government is not genuinely pursuing national reconciliation.

With limited state capacity, particularly within the security and justice sector, Liberia remains susceptible to lawlessness. Immediate threats to stability include: increasing violent criminal activities, especially armed robbery and rape; limited capacity of the security sector to curb violent crime; very weak justice systems; and the existence of disaffected groups such as some unemployed and deactivated uniformed personnel. Developing interventions that target critical threats and address problems before they escalate is essential to maintaining the current path of progress.

The security presence of UNMIL has been and will continue to be, in the near-term, a crucial element of stability in Liberia. With UNMIL undertaking the first stages of its drawdown, Liberia is at a critical juncture where key investments in capacity must be made to ensure that national institutions are able to perform their security functions. In light of the foregoing, and in consultation with stakeholders in Liberia, this Priority Plan outlines three broad strategic focus areas for PBF support in Liberia: Fostering national reconciliation and conflict management; critical interventions to promote peace and resolve immediate challenges and conflict; and strengthening state capacity for peace consolidation.

The PBF is an important resource for meeting the peacebuilding needs of Liberia but it cannot address all of the challenges - many of which are beyond the scope of the Fund. By focusing on these three areas, the PBF would respond to the most urgent peacebuilding needs of poor governance and capacity, ineffective justice systems and entrenched social divisions at the same time as strengthening some of the structural dimensions of peace. Restoring the state's mediating role throughout Liberia, addressing the needs of youth and the war-affected, and tackling deep-rooted societal divisions through processes of healing and reconciliation, are essential.

2.1 FOSTERING NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Facilitating national reconciliation, including managing ethnic division, is fundamental to laying a solid foundation for long-term peace and stability. Acknowledging the historical cleavages that characterized the political evolution of Liberia and developing an onward shared vision for the nation is essential - as is institutionalizing mechanisms for peacefully settling conflicts. Efforts to create a broad, inclusive society, where all citizens can participate and enjoy the benefits of progress, must be supported within overall efforts for 'good governance' in Liberia.

To bridge the many cleavages in Liberian society – ethnic, economic and geographic – Liberians will have to overcome distrust and animosities of the past and build unity around one national identity. The GoL, together with its partners, must facilitate a **national dialogue**, to remove

¹ For a concise summary of participation and findings of the TAM and JSAT see the Fifteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia - ref S/2007/479 United Nations Security Council, August 2007

formal and informal discriminatory barriers and minimize unjust disparities. The dialogue must include Liberians from all walks of life - advancing the development of a shared vision for the future through transparent, participatory processes. Social and political cohesion must be promoted with all citizens in a process including joint reflection on the challenges facing their communities and the nation, generating consensus for onward peace and development.

While the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is leading important discussions to facilitate national healing and address human rights violations, with Liberians both inside and outside of the country, its efforts are significantly under-resourced and achievements limited. Immediate support to both enhance and expand the work of the TRC is required.

The mandate of the TRC will end in August 2008, though this mandate may be extended for a maximum of one more year. In anticipation of the conclusion of the TRC, it is necessary to establish structures that will maintain the momentum created by that body and also ensure the implementation of its recommendations. In this regard, a strategy should be put in place to ensure the speedy establishment of the Independent National Human Rights Commission, which will not only be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the recommendations but in itself constitutes an important conflict management process.

For all of the above to be effective and produce meaningful results, peacebuilding practices of civic dialogue and conflict management must be **institutionalized**. The GoL, together with UN and partners, will have to enact new policies and programs to support the above-mentioned activities and invest resources to enhance the capacity of government and civil society to facilitate dialogue, manage conflicts and enhance peacebuilding.

Required efforts to promote reconciliation include support to:

- **Dialogue** at national and community levels, proactively involving women, youth, and excluded groups through:
 - Enhanced and expanded Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).
 - Enhanced participation of the population and civil society organizations in decision making processes and national visioning processes
 - Capacity-building for representative and civil society organizations to better reflect the voice of the population, and for Government officers to improve their communication with the population and to facilitate the participation of the population and representative organizations in decision-making.
 - Ensuring that the expectations of marginalized groups are better reflected in policy.
 - Education in Peace, Human Rights and Citizenship for all citizens.
- **Institutionalize** dialogue and conflict management processes through:
 - Capacity development for government officials at all levels (national, regional and local, and traditional leaders) and civil society organizations in conflict sensitivity and a human rights-based approach.
 - Development of GoL frameworks for managing conflicts.
 - Active engagement with the National Legislature and political parties to promote conflict sensitive approaches in shaping the debates of leaders and constituents.

The risks of inaction on the above agenda include deepened cleavages within society across ethnic, political and economic lines; accumulation of unresolved land disputes, loss of confidence in peace; and ultimately, a potential return to organized conflict as opportunistic leaders capitalize on growing tensions and discontentment.

2.2 CRITICAL INTERVENTIONS TO PROMOTE PEACE AND RESOLVE CONFLICT

Specific groups present challenges to upholding security and peace in Liberia. These are largely groups of war-affected youth and many young people including street kids. Many remain unemployed or are engaged in illegal activities in natural resource-rich areas. Many former commander / subordinate chain-of-command structures remain in place on personal, economic and political lines. Current activities of the youth include illegal mining, chainsaw logging, hunting, illegal rubber tapping and sale, and organized, gang-style crime. Earnings from these activities are unreliable, and the youth remain susceptible to recruitment by dissidents for potential armed activities in the sub-region.

A joint GoL-UN strategy to engage at-risk individuals will include short-term employment in community-building projects, coupled with civic education, health education, GBV training, peace education and the provision of psycho-social care. The GoL will facilitate community-level dialogues, bringing together war-affected individuals and community leaders, to promote integration. Provision of land and the mechanisms for allocation will be considered as part of the reintegration program as is necessary psycho-social counseling, civic education and training to prevent gender-based violence throughout.

While some bi-lateral donors and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) have expressed interest in assisting with interventions of this kind, funding will not become available until late 2008 at the earliest. The risks of inaction on will allow time in which many of these noted problems will coalesce into more significant threats.

2.3 STRENGTHENING STATE CAPACITY FOR PEACE CONSOLIDATION

The post-conflict rehabilitation process is still in its early stages in Liberia. The capacity of the state and civil servants to provide services to citizens is extremely limited. In the counties, tough conditions of service (lack of infrastructure, development, communications, etc.) make it difficult to recruit qualified employees. A lack of roads means that it is not possible to extend state services and authority to remote areas. These constraints affect not only development but also peace, as confidence in the state's ability to provide better security, justice and non-discriminatory services to all citizens is essential to maintaining stability in Liberia today.

Operational support is needed to implement practical, high-impact results for the immediate expansion of state authority. While partners are providing longer-term support to develop the capacity of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and to strengthen the rule of law (long-term development goals), a critical gap exists for practical solutions that can be adopted immediately country-wide.

In the central government, every effort is needed to build a culture of peace and respect for the human rights of all and to ensure that development initiatives are framed and planned in a manner that promotes peace and reconciliation, rather than conflict and division. A team of dedicated civil servants should focus on mainstreaming peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity into all government policies and programs and on ensuring the government responds in a timely fashion to emerging threats to peace. Partners will need to be identified to support this critical capacity development and to provide training to government officials in conflict sensitive planning and management.

Needs include (but are not limited to):

- Mainstreaming Peacebuilding / Conflict Sensitive in Government capacity and policy:
 - Support to a Peacebuilding Office within the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

- Legislation and constitutional reform to underpin further development of rule of law, harmonize parallel legal codes (statutory, traditional).
- Training for civil servants in conflict sensitive policy and program planning and implementation, including the gender dimensions.
- Establishment of a Law Reform Commission to revise current laws and ensure harmonization with international human rights treaties.
- Support to the establishment and initial functioning of a Land Commission for developing a system to deal with land tenure and ownership.
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- Strengthening and Expanding State Authority, especially in rural areas:
 - Capacity building in terms of training and logistics (equipment, supplies, communications) for staff to effectively discharge their functions in public administration and justice.
 - Training on human rights and gender for public administration and judicial staff.
 - Support to the living conditions of public servants to reside in remote areas.
 - Infrastructure development (with emphasis on Rule of Law and vocational training)
 - Reinforced delivery capacity for the MoJ in expanding activities to underserved areas and increasing number of cases reviewed.
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- Strengthening the capacity of Paramount chiefs and traditional leaders:
 - Capacity-building in terms of human rights, conflict sensitivity and gender mainstreaming for Paramount chiefs and traditional leaders

The risks of inaction on the above agenda include lack of government focus on peacebuilding issues; inadvertent implementation of policies and programs that exacerbate existing tension and conflicts; continued disenfranchisement of citizens in non-urban areas; and ultimately an erosion of confidence in the government and the new found peace.

3. SUMMARY OF INITIAL PROJECT IDEAS

3.1 FOSTERING NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Up to US\$ 4 million	
\$2.0 million	National Dialogue: National dialogue, including women, youth and other under-represented groups, to heal the wounds of war (TRC), to catalyze civic debate, encourage better leadership, and create shared vision for the future. Civic, human rights and peace education to provide knowledge and tools to help establish common terms of participation in development of a peaceful, unified society. Pilot intensive literacy and numeracy campaign with a focus on empowering women.
\$1.0 million	Conflict Management: Community-based reconciliation, reestablishing sustainable, community-centered mechanisms for dialogue and resolution and early warning systems to prevent escalation of conflict; Specific peace education efforts. Training and education for national-level thought/political leaders who shape public dialogue.
\$1.0 million	Institutionalize Processes: Training and capacity building of ministry staff, local officials and traditional leaders, and civil society organizations to facilitate conflict management; improved communication infrastructure at all levels (from village to national); fostering conflict sensitivity in the legislature, the executive, political parties and CSOs.

3.2 CRITICAL INTERVENTIONS TO PROMOTE PEACE AND RESOLVE CONFLICT

Up to US\$ 6 million	
\$2.0 million	Alternative Livelihoods for war-affected in natural resource management: Skills training, Apprenticeship and job placement and referral with on-the job training. Supporting GoL capacity.
\$3.0 million	Short-term labor intensive employment projects targeting young men and women in rural and urban areas: Rehabilitation projects with potential for cooperatives and sustainable income. Build capacity in ministries of Labour and Public Works (tools, techniques, logistics and management know how). Support to government planning and operating procedures for sustainable labor-intensive maintenance plans. Community-based activities through civil society and the media.
\$1.0 million	Rural housing development pilot, with skills training in brick / masonry, construction, while providing immediate income opportunities, build communities, and create much-needed living space for themselves and others returning (especially in high return areas with youth).

3.3 STRENGTHENING STATE CAPACITY FOR PEACE CONSOLIDATION

Up to US\$ 5 million	
\$1.5 million	Peacebuilding and Conflict Sensitive Capacity Development: Establishment GoL peacebuilding office, with national experts and staff, elevating peacebuilding in the executive branch; review legislative regulations of immediate relevance to conflict issues; reform Hinterland Regulations; sensitization of traditional leaders to national law; support to a Land Commission; projects to build Government collaborative capacity to plan and implement conflict sensitive policies.
\$3.5 million	Strengthening and Expanding State Authority: security sector reform, justice strategies with restructured security architecture including decentralized security to support the rule of law; extension of legal services, public lawyers in rural areas, with sensitivity for issues affecting women, youth and under-represented groups; construction / rehabilitation of protection and rule of law infrastructure.

Funds will be channeled to UN ‘recipient’ organizations - who will remain accountable for funds in country. Recipient organisations will work with Government and non-governmental organisations as implementing partners. Project funds must be used to build capacity of national institutions. Actual partners and stakeholders will be defined in project concept notes.

4. COORDINATION AND PROJECT SELECTION

The responsibility for coordinating and managing the PBF in Liberia will lie jointly with the Government of Liberia and the UN’s Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), as Co-ordinator of UN Operations in Liberia. The overall focal point for liaising with the Peace Building Support Office (PBSO) and PBF will be the SRSG - possibly delegated to the DSRSG for Recovery and Governance. Periodic review of the plan will be undertaken with the SRSG.

A Joint Steering Committee (JSC), combining both policy review (steering) and project review and approval functions, will be established and chaired jointly by the Minister of Internal Affairs and the United Nations DSRSG (R&G). Other Governmental representatives on the JSC may be drawn from various ministries at the discretion of the Co-Chairs. Partners to be invited will include civil society organizations, the Liberian business community, and representatives of the major donors and the World Bank.

Secretariat support to the JSC will be provided through PBF-Funded staff and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The services of a Technical Advisory Panel, largely related to current groups working on PRS issues, will be called upon to ensure technical integrity of PBF concept notes and projects for JSC consideration. The Secretariat will ensure that the technical review process is undertaken, evaluate and prepare proposals and related documents and information for the JSC².

² Please refer to the full JSC TOR and Rules of Procedure for details.

Project review will take the form of group review of applications against criteria including:

- Relevance to addressing the three areas of concern as detailed in this priority plan.
- Strategic understanding of peacebuilding at grassroots, regional and national levels.
- Time-frame, costs (net and as cost benefit for the proposed population to be covered).
- Proven programme delivery (track record) of the proposed implementation partners.
- A clear demonstration of good-practice in conflict-sensitive understanding and ability to effectively undertake projects in these terms.
- Development of collaborative partnerships with other organizations to avoid duplication.
- Contributions to building capacity within national institutions, including civil society.
- Joint UN approach demonstrating linkages to related on-going efforts.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Existing mechanisms, including the PRS and UNDAF, contain processes for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of projects and wider policy and outcome aims and objectives. Drawing on these mechanisms and frameworks, assessment tools will be developed to monitor and evaluate approved projects to ensure a deeper analysis of peacebuilding efforts – and their effectiveness and sustainability in the longer-term. By aligning monitoring and evaluation with the PRS framework, duplication will be avoided, and the system for monitoring and evaluation in government bodies will be reinforced rather than creating parallel processes. Activities implemented under the priority plan will be considered as contributions to the PRS.

Indicators will be founded upon key principles that the UN has adopted to underscore peace and human development globally, namely: inclusion and tolerance, transparency and accountability, equality and access to opportunity and protection under the law. Specific factors in Liberia, as highlighted through county consultations and the PRS process, will be used as a baseline - with recourse to the same related processes to monitor progress and the impact of the PBF. Indicators will also relate to Consolidation, Drawdown and Withdrawal (CDW) plans of UNMIL and related UNCT planning. CDW is the means by which the Mission assesses fulfillment of mandate and provides insight into other potential conflict areas requiring the attention of a wider array of actors including the people and Government of Liberia, UNCT, civil society and international partners.

The JSC will call for evaluations of aspects of the Fund in Liberia, including independent evaluations for select projects. To ensure that the necessary information is gathered in the implementation of the various PBF projects, data gathering, baseline surveys and contextual analysis will be built into projects *ex ante*. The formulation of measurable indicators of impact - beyond pure ‘output / delivery indicators’ will be a key task of the programme participants (including communities) during the initial stages of application of the Fund in Liberia.

An overall external evaluation of the PBF in Liberia may be called for by either the JSC or the PBSO to document the lessons learned, the effectiveness and value-added of the Fund. Such an evaluation would take place no later than two years after approval of the Priority Plan.

Success in peacebuilding will be illustrated by the ways in which Liberians develop skills and mechanisms to manage and prevent future conflicts, and acquire new attitudes that build a culture of peace. The JSC will remain committed to learning which interventions produce the highest peacebuilding impact and dividends for the people of Liberia.
