



## Government and UN Joint Programme Gender Equality and Women’s Economic Empowerment

**Republic of Liberia**

### Poverty Reduction Strategy

**Pillar 2:** Revitalising the Economy

**Pillar 3:** Strengthening Governance and the Rule of Law

### UNDAF Outcomes 2 and 3:

- National economic policies and programmes are being implemented to support equitable, inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development
- Democratic, accountable and transparent governance is being advanced in a participatory and inclusive manner and in accordance with human rights standards

### UNDAF Country Programme Outcomes:

**Outcome 2.1:** National mechanisms and capacities for MDG based conflict sensitive planning, analysis and monitoring strengthened.

**Outcomes 2.2:** increased access to productive employment and equal opportunities for expanding sustainable livelihoods especially for vulnerable groups and in consideration of conflict factors.

**Outcome 3.1:** Governance systems reformed to promote and sustain democratic principles with strengthened decentralized capacity and participation of disadvantaged groups

**Outcome 3.3:** National and local mechanisms enhanced to uphold human rights, promote political, religious and ethnic tolerance and provide social protection.

**Joint Programme Outcome(s):** significant and strategic support to the Government of Liberia to in furtherance of its public sector reforms and economic development efforts, (1) institute gender sensitive policies and coordination mechanisms, (2) strengthen its capacity to implement gender sensitive policies and development programmes and (3) implement priority and strategic women empowerment initiatives.

Programme Title: UNCT Joint Programme on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

Programme Duration: 36 months  
(Start/end dates): 1 January 2009– 31 December 2011

Fund Management Option(s): Combination  
(Parallel, pass-through)

Administrative Agent: UNDP

Total estimated budget\*: **USD 15,914,000**

Out of which:

1. Funded Budget: USD **6,890,000**

2. Unfunded budget: USD **9,024,000**

\* Total estimated budget includes both programme costs and indirect support costs

**Names and signatures of national<sup>1</sup> counterparts and participating UN agencies**

| <b>UN Organizations</b> (in alphabetical order) | <b>National Partners</b> |
|---|--------------------------|
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<sup>1</sup> Governmental, and any NGO/civil society, private sector or other partners

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## **Annexes**

- **Time chart and information flows**
- **TOR for Joint Programme Steering Committee**

## Acronyms

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| AA       | Administrative Agent   |
| CCA      | Common Country Assessment  |
| CEDAW    | Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women               |
| CGAP     | Consultative Group to Assist the Poor  |
| CRC      | Convention on the Rights of the Child  |
| CSA      | Civil Service Agency   |
| CFSNS    | Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey   |
| CWIQ     | Common Welfare Indicators Questionnaire  |
| DHS      | Demographic and Health Survey  |
| GBV      | Gender Based Violence  |
| GFP      | Gender Focal Point   |
| GoL      | Government of Liberia  |
| GRC      | Governance Reform Commission   |
| GTG      | Gender theme Group   |
| IAPT     | Inter-Agency Programming Team  |
| ICT      | Information and Communication Technology   |
| ILO      | International Labour Organization  |
| JP       | Joint Programme  |
| JPSC     | Joint Programme Steering Committee   |
| JUNTA    | Joint UN Theme Group on AIDS   |
| LEAP     | Liberia Employment Action Programme  |
| LEEP     | Liberia Emergency Employment Programme   |
| LISGIS   | Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-services Information                            |
| LRDC     | Liberia Reconstruction and Development Committee   |
| M&E      | Monitoring and Evaluation  |
| MDTF     | Multi-Donor Trust Fund   |
| MDG      | Millennium Development Goals   |
| MFI      | Micro Finance Institutions   |
| MoE      | Ministry of Education  |
| MoGD     | Ministry of Gender and Development   |
| MoL      | Ministry of Labour   |
| MSME     | Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises  |
| NEC      | National Elections Commission  |
| NGP      | National Gender Policy   |
| OECD/DAC | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development /Development Assistance Committee |
| PRS –    | Poverty Reduction Strategy   |
| RFP      | Requests for Proposals   |
| SES      | Senior Executive Service   |
| SMWF     | Sirleaf Market Women's Fund  |
| TA       | Technical Assistance   |
| TOKTEN   | Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals                                       |
| UNCDF    | United Nations Capital Development Fund  |
| UNDAF    | United Nations Development Assistance Framework  |
| UNDP     | United Nations Development Programme   |
| UNESCO   | United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization                            |
| UNIFEM   | United Nations Development Fund for Women  |
| UNMIL    | United Nations Mission in Liberia  |
| WLC      | Women Legislative Caucus   |
| WONGOSOL | Women NGO Secretariat of Liberia   |

## 1. Executive Summary

The focus of this Joint Programme is on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment as strategic entry points to break the gender inequality trap in which most of Liberia's women and girls find themselves. The participating UN agencies include ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNIFEM, UNOPS, UNMIL and the World Bank. Key Government partners include Ministry of Gender and Development, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Commerce, and Ministry of Education. The Programme shall be coordinated by the Ministry of Gender and Development with support from the United Nations (The UN Resident Coordinator provides general guidance; UNIFEM is the Lead Coordinating Agency; and UNDP is the Administrative Agent). It is a 3-year programme aligned to the time frame of the PRS (2009-11) and will be implemented under the overall and joint responsibility of the Ministries of Gender and Development and Labour with substantial input from other relevant government ministries and implementing partners, including women's organizations and networks.

The main **Outcome** of this Joint Programme is strategically aligned to key priorities of the Government of Liberia, as stated in their Poverty Reduction Strategy. Specifically, this Programme responds to the priority interventions in Pillar 2 for Economic Revitalization and Pillar 3 for Governance and Rule of Law relating to gender equality. In its plan for economic revitalization, the Government recognizes the challenge to increase the productivity of women in the informal sector and the need to move vulnerable groups, and particularly women, into new opportunities in the formal sector (PRS pp 69 – 71). Under Pillar 2, the Government of Liberia specifically addresses the need to strengthen civil society participation in governance and to address gender inequities (PRS pp 87-89).

The essence therefore of this joint programme is to significantly and strategically contribute to strengthen the government's ability to achieve the above. To this end this Joint Programme has the following three main components:

### **Component (1): Support to Establish Gender Sensitive Policies and Coordination Mechanisms**

Under this component, the programme shall support the creation of an enabling environment for gender sensitive policy development while strengthening the coordination and implementation systems and processes for enhanced accountability, ownership and sustainability. The expected result of this component is *Strengthened coordination and accountability mechanisms for gender sensitive policies and programmes.*

### **Component (2): Capacity Building for the MoGD, line Ministries, and Civil Society**

Under this component the Ministry of Gender and Development, as the key duty bearer, will be supported to develop its own capacity to fulfil its mandate of ensuring that all Government sectors appropriately attend to the needs of women in Liberia. In this effort, support will also be provided to enhance the capacity of selected sector ministries to improve their own abilities to conduct gender analysis and develop gender-sensitive policies and development programmes. At the same time, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), as representatives of the rights holders' shall also be supported to strengthen their capacity and enhance effectiveness in their rightful role of promoting demand driven accountability and participatory democracy. The expected result of this component is *Capacity of relevant government agents and civil society developed for effective engagement and accountability in the implementation of gender sensitive policies and programmes.*

### **Component (3): Support for the Implementation of Priority Initiatives to Empower Women**

Under this component, existing structural barriers to women's economic empowerment will be addressed through targeted initiatives to unleash women's potential for wealth generation and employment creation. The focus shall be on micro-credit, organisational development and related entrepreneurship support for women traders, small and medium enterprise development, vocational skills development, a literacy campaign targeting women, and the building of hostels to address barriers to girls' achievement of secondary education. The expected result of this component is an *increase in women's empowerment through their enhanced earning potential, their increased employment opportunities, and their improved educational achievement.*

Within each component there are a number of outputs needed for the successful achievement of the component outcome and ultimately, the Joint Programme outcome.

This JP is an effort of the UN system to respond to some of the specific needs of women in Liberia. These needs are premised on the priorities identified by women in a resolution emanating from a National Women's Conference in Monrovia in May 2008 and the Government's priority interventions for gender equality within the PRS.

## **2. Situational and Contextual Analysis**

The Government of Liberia has expressed its dedication to achieving gender equality and women's rights as a means to maintaining peace, reducing poverty, enhancing justice and promoting sustainable development. The country has achieved some noticeable progress towards gender equality; notably two key policy documents that will significantly transform the landscape of gender imbalance and enhance women's position in the development of Liberia both as beneficiaries and as participants in nation building. These are the National Gender Policy and the National Action Plan on Implementation on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 both of which are in their final formative stages. Beyond the adoption of these documents remains the challenge of implementing them effectively. An enabling environment is evidently lacking in terms of technical and institutional capacities, weak coordination mechanisms and near inexistent engagement for accountability between the government and civil society.

A cursory look at the status of women in Liberia against the backdrop of global human development indicators will reveal the daunting challenges that confront the government of Liberia in seeking to deliver on its commitments to gender equality. The picture is alarming on most dimensions and sustained efforts are required to address them.

Gender inequality in Liberia was exacerbated by the war, while pre-existing practices and the low status of women also speak to the current gender inequity. According to the draft Gender Profile of Liberia, "despite the absence of sex disaggregated data on numbers of people killed, displaced or refugees, anecdotal evidence suggests that the majority of the victims were women and children." The destruction of infrastructure during the war included housing, roads, electricity, shelter, water, schools, hospitals, among other basic services and institutions, and significantly contributed to limiting women's access to basic services, information and markets.

Relating to women's health, maternal mortality is one of the highest in the world, and is estimated at 994/100,000 births (DHS 2007). According to the 2007 Liberia Demographic and Health Survey, 48% of Liberian women become pregnant by the age of 18, and the unmet need for family planning is over 60%. The health needs in Liberia are significant, with limited access to medical facilities and health care facilities.

The Liberia Demographic and Health Survey 2007 results show that educational attainment is drastically low for most Liberians, with women being much less educated than men. 42% of Liberian women and 18% of men have never attended school. While 19% of men have completed secondary school or higher, only 8% of women have accomplished the same. For both women and men, urban residents are better educated than rural residents.

Literacy rates for women in rural areas are staggeringly low at 26%, compared to 61% for urban women and 60% and 86% for rural and urban men, respectively. The gender gap in secondary school attendance is particularly high in the rural areas with a low 6% net attendance ratio for females and 13% for males. In urban areas this gap is much smaller (29% and 32%, respectively) (LDHS 2007).

In Liberia 40% of the population are highly vulnerable and 41% are moderately vulnerable to food insecurity. Five of the 15 counties have almost no food security. Chronic malnutrition rates are said to be extremely high in all 15 counties, and 39% of children below 5 years old are stunted and 14% of women have low body mass index (CFSNS 2006).

In spite of many constraints placed on rural women, including their lower access to health services and education, they have contributed immensely to the economic survival of the family. The report of the Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey (CFSNS) estimates that 33% of household's income was jointly generated by men and women, 33% by men only and 16% by women. It further revealed that women contributed 52% of the total agricultural production in Liberia.

In addition to food insecurity, other types of insecurity and vulnerability that females are exposed to include gender based violence, sexual exploitation, HIV/AIDS, etc. especially among young girls. There is a linkage between the lack of women's productive work or the availability of decent work, which increases the risk of food insecurity and an increase risk of sexual exploitation.

Vicious and systematic acts of sexual violence terrorized Liberians throughout the years of conflict. According to various assessments done by WHO in collaboration with the Ministries of Gender and Health (2004, 2005, and 2006) 93% of the 2,828 women and girls interviewed from war-affected communities in ten counties (Lofa, Bong, Nimba, Cape Mount, Bomi, Grand Gedeh, Grand Bassa, Montserrado, Margibi, and Sinoe) said they were subjected to one or multiple acts of abuses and/or sexual violence during the conflict. Following the end of the conflict, rape and sexual violence remain an ongoing problem.

Various pieces of legislation establish equal rights and protection before the law between men and women in Liberia, including most paramount, the Constitution. Liberia is also a party to several the international human rights conventions and declarations including CEDAW which promote the rights of women and require specific actions from governments to preserve them. Access to justice however, is limited for most Liberians due to the very low capacity of the judicial branch of government. Moreover, Liberia operates a dual legal system, one that applies modern written law and a traditional system that applies customary law. Women are particularly vulnerable due to the edicts of the customary law as they are generally treated as minors. However, with notable exceptions such as the Presidency, women are not equally represented in decision making positions at all levels, with only 14% represented in the legislature, 8% in the judiciary, 5.3% in national bureaus and agencies and 10.3% in ministries.

In general, women play a major role in Liberia's economy through its labour force, and household income generation. Including formal and informal workers in Liberia, women make up 54% of the labor force (CWIQ 2007) yet women and men are not equally

distributed across the productive sectors, nor are they equally remunerated. In specific terms, Liberian women are disproportionately clustered in the least productive sectors with 90% employed in the informal sector or in agriculture, compared to 75% of working men. In an economy dominated by agricultural and informal work, women carry the heaviest burden in these sectors and women labourers, across the board, are less likely to be paid for their work. Higher levels of illiteracy, lack of formal education, lack of skills for employment, inadequate entrepreneurial skills and severe inequality in gender relations, exacerbated by divisions of class, ethnicity, and religion further reduce the potentials for women's contributions to the economy being recognized or adequately compensated. Again, losses of property, such as homes and other physical assets during the years of conflict have left most women with no means of sustainable livelihoods and exposed their households to a higher risk of malnutrition, shorter lives, illness, illiteracy and insecurity of income.

Women's predominance in the informal economy translates into low productivity, meagre earnings and trade in petty production. Women are vulnerable to issues such as lack of social protection, unsafe working conditions, exploitation and sexual harassment. The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work provides the basis for the drive to create jobs for women and to ensure that the jobs created afford the necessary protection to women e.g. the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation. Women face additional problems such as inadequate access to and control over resources, gender-based violence, and exploitation by people in authority, as they lack knowledge about their rights and the laws that should protect them. For instance, cross-border traders suffer from information gaps on immigration and customs regulations, making them vulnerable to exploitation. They could benefit from opportunities to organize themselves and to sustain linkages with women's advocacy groups or trade unions. These linkages however are not yet developed.

The Liberian Government has prioritized employment generation as a means of reducing poverty. The approach is to integrate employment generation throughout its economic revitalization efforts. However, while employment generation for youth is an important focus of numerous initiatives there is no explicit focus on women's employment. There is also a need to take into account the different employment needs of women and men.

### **Gender Equality and Economic Empowerment of Women in Liberia**

The UN Millennium Project operational framework for understanding gender equality has three main dimensions:

- 1) The *capabilities domain*, which refers to basic human abilities and is measured by education, health, and nutrition. The Joint Programme on Food Security and Nutrition addresses some of the relevant issues under this domain. However some aspects of vocational and skills training are included in this Joint Programme.
- 2) The *access to resources and opportunities domain*. This domain refers primarily to equality in the opportunity to use or apply basic capabilities through access to economic assets and resources, as well as political opportunity. Without access to resources and opportunities, both political and economic, neither women nor men with regard to areas of gender inequity and marginalisation will be able to employ their capabilities for their well-being and that of their families, communities, and societies. Therefore, this Joint Programme relates primarily to this dimension and will strive to assess and redress the relative situation as it relates to both women and men.
- 3) The *security domain* addresses reduced vulnerability to violence and conflict. Violence and conflict result in physical and psychological harm and lessen the ability of individuals, households, and communities to fulfil their potential. The Joint Programme on GBV relates primarily to this dimension.



The three dimensions above are interrelated. The attainment of capabilities increases the likelihood that women can access opportunities for employment and participate in political and legislative bodies, but does not guarantee it. Similarly, access to opportunity decreases the likelihood that women will experience violence (although in certain circumstances, it may temporarily increase that likelihood). Progress in any one domain to the exclusion of the others will be insufficient to meet the MDG goal of gender equality.

The concept of empowerment is important for gender equality and is also distinct from it. The core of empowerment lies in the ability of a woman to control her own destiny, according to Malhotra, Schuler, and Boender (2002) and Kabeer (1999). It implies that to be empowered, women must not only have equal capabilities and equal access to resources and opportunities, but they must also have the agency to use those rights, capabilities, resources, and opportunities to make strategic choices and decisions (such as is provided through leadership opportunities and participation in political institutions). For women to fully and freely exercise agency, they must live without the fear of coercion and violence both in the public and private spheres.

Responding to these strategic priorities is particularly urgent for women in conflict and post-conflict environments. Situations of conflict have disproportionate impacts on women and children, and post-conflict periods present a window of opportunity to reduce gender barriers and create a gender-equitable society, which is more likely to occur if reconstruction fosters the full participation of women.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, it is imperative that human capacity building needs be addressed in terms of organisational development and business skills as well as facilitation around the visible and hidden dynamics of trauma and healing, and gender relations and societal networks at the community level. Addressing empowerment needs of women in Liberia is a key strategy to reduce the high levels of gender inequality described above. It would address directly the economic poverty dimension of inequality that concerns consumption, income and assets. Further, strengthening of women on the economic dimensions will also empower them to improve their situation on the other equality dimensions referred to above.

At the agency level, addressing women empowerment needs may concern the ability of women themselves to define economic goals and to act on them<sup>3</sup>. This recognises that women are economic agents who actively and independently scout for and assess market and household risks and opportunities as a basis for making economic decisions. It may also involve ensuring that markets work for women in the sectors where women are active. This puts issues of policies and institutions on the agenda. Some of the relevant factors that influence women's economic empowerment include:

- Access to inputs and technology
- Access to support services
- Access to land, including secure land tenure
- Enjoyment of their legal rights as citizens equal to men
- Access to finance
- Access to markets, including rural infrastructure
- Equal inheritance rights
- Access to productive employment
- Literacy and business/entrepreneur skills
- Vocational skills
- Gender relations and societal networks that support and enable both women and men in actualising their full potential

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<sup>2</sup> This is drawn from "Taking Action: achieving gender equality and empowering women" (2005) UN Millennium Project.

<sup>3</sup> This draws on "Gender Equality as Smart Economics: A World Bank Group Action Plan", World Bank, 2006.

- Organisational learning and development
- Psycho-social services and processes for healing and improved health and productivity

These factors can be targeted to empower women economically. Various sectors differ in their potential for women to be economically empowered, and obviously the above factors mean different things and matter in different ways to women depending on the sector. In Liberia women are mainly occupied in the informal economic sectors (subsistence agriculture, petty trade and markets, and low-skilled employment).

In agriculture, women constitute the majority of smallholder producers and the agricultural labour force. It is estimated that they produce about 60% of agricultural products, carry out approximately 80% of trading activities in rural areas, and play a vital role in linking rural and urban markets through their informal marketing networks. Women are also heavily engaged with artisanal fisheries along the coast. While it is the men who land the fish, women play the main role in processing, marketing and trading the fish.

A brief status on the situation of women in terms of accessing financing and literacy skills (which is very fundamental for accessing a wide range of other skills (vocational and entrepreneurial) in Liberia is given below:

**Access to finance:** Women dominate among microfinance borrowers in the urban areas of Liberia, but they lack access to larger financing facilities and to any type of financing in rural areas. Generally, however, Liberia has limited experience in the practical application of best practices in microfinance, and though there are an array of microfinance providers in Liberia, ranging from NGOs, Commercial Banks and smaller informal credit providers, the provision of sustainable microfinance services is currently limited. During the fourteen years of conflict, Liberia, unlike other countries in the sub-region was simply unable to sustain or consequently rebuild its microfinance industry. Most of the microfinance services provided are confined to Monrovia in Montserrado County together with interventions in a few neighboring counties. These services are provided by two NGOs specializing in microfinance and one commercial bank which are estimated to serve just over 15,000 active clients.<sup>4</sup> The present Government however has recognized the potential of microfinance and has channeled efforts in support of the sector with the development of a microfinance strategy for the next five years. Women's access to micro-finance has been identified as a strategic priority both in the Ministry of Gender and Development and within the Government's Economic Revitalization Plan.

**Literacy:** Illiteracy levels among women aged 15-49 (60%) are particularly high as compared to men (30%), which in turn put women at a clear disadvantage in engaging in entrepreneurial activities and employment, including accessing vocational training and skills. There is currently no national adult literacy programme or strategy to address this problem.

**Business and vocational skills:** Vocational and business skills trainings are not presently offered nationally and in the past have been offered in a less than effective manner. Vocational skills courses offered for women have generally tended to focus on very traditional skills (tailoring, tie-dye, etc.) where there are no immediate market opportunities and do not therefore offer meaningful empowerment opportunities to women concerned. There is a conscious effort on the part of the Government and partners to improve upon these skills programs of the past by offering skills training

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<sup>4</sup> Distinguishing between the two as follows :(i)Rural finance-Financial services offered and used in the rural areas by people of all income levels.(ii)Agricultural Finance-A subset of rural finance dedicated to financing agricultural activities.(B.Helms Access for All-Building Inclusive Financial Systems –CGAP 2006)

programs tailored to the demands of the labour market and economic activities. One example is the Economic Empowerment for Adolescent Girls Project, a partnership program between the GoL, World Bank, Nike Foundation and Danish Government. However, many programs, such as this one, are focusing on youth and there exists a great need to work with emerging women entrepreneurs, particularly in empowering them with the relevant skills to take advantage of existing opportunities (such as exporting under AGOA) and enhancing cross-border trading activities for those products where Liberia has a sub-regional comparative advantage.

**Employment and income generation:** The Government of Liberia has placed employment and income-generation at the centre of both public and private sector growth. The centrality of employment suggests that it needs to be integrated throughout the work of the economic revitalization pillar of the PRS as well as in other pillars such as those on infrastructure and security.

**Women and the formal sector:** The formal sector in Liberia is small and has been experiencing gradual shrinkage due mainly to the war and the international sanctions on the export of diamonds and forest resources. With 90% of working women employed informally or in agriculture, increasing women's participation in the formal sector is a major concern. Particularly considering that the major sectors driving Liberia's economic growth - mining, rubber and forestry - historically provide few formal jobs for Liberian women.

**Women in the informal sector:** The informal economy is characterized by subsistence enterprises such as petty trading in dry goods, used clothing, peddling domestic foodstuff, makeshift hair and beauty parlours, grocery and food kiosks. Open-air makeshift markets and cross-border trading are rampant. According to the national food survey of 2006, the vast majority of women in greater Monrovia for instance, worked as market vendors and in petty trading (68% of the urban female labour force), and a small proportion held clerical positions (13%). About 80 percent of working women were self employed, almost twice as many as the number of self-employed men (40% of men). Among those who had businesses, women were more likely to own informal ones (only 3% of women had registered business compared to 14% of men). Men were predominant in skilled and professional jobs (25%), or as unskilled, casual or contract workers (20%)<sup>5</sup>. However, the informal economy has limited opportunities with virtually no social protection. Severe lack of employment and economic opportunities particularly for women and youth therefore continues to be a very volatile and pervasive problem compounding the poverty situation in Liberia.

## **National policy and strategic framework**

Government recognises the need to urgently address the issue of gender inequality as a matter of respect to human rights, peace building and promotion of sustainable development. The Liberian Constitution recognises the principle of equality before the law; however, it also recognises the application of customary law, which derogates in many cases to this principle. The GoL has clearly set out its priorities in the PRS, where gender equality is one of the crosscutting issues. Government also recognises that gender inequalities are multifaceted and require the coordinated intervention of many different actors, both national and international, and public and private.

**The Liberian Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS).** The GoL PRS for 2008-2011 represents the national framework for economic development and poverty reduction planning, developed through a widely consultative process. It is also an indicative statement of intended strategic actions to ensure equitable redistribution of wealth

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<sup>5</sup> National Food Security and Nutrition Survey

amongst various categories of its population, including between men and women. The PRS is organised in 4 pillars, namely: (1) Peace and Security, (2) Economic Revitalization, (3) Governance and Rule of Law, and (4) Infrastructure and Basic Social Services. It recognises that development policies have different impacts on men and women as they have different needs and preferences and respond to different incentives. In this regard, it has endeavoured to articulate clearly throughout the PRS document, government intentions in its efforts to address gender inequalities and in responding to particular developmental needs of women.

**National Gender Policy and Initiatives.** The Ministry of Gender and Development (MoGD) has initiated a process to develop and adopt a National Gender Policy that will guide government action to address gender inequalities and to mainstream gender in national policies and development programmes. The Ministry needs support to finalise this process so that it is in line with international best practices and takes into account the particular circumstances of women and men in Liberia, to disseminate the new policy and to develop sufficient capacity to monitor its implementation and to provide support and guidance to other sectors of government for effective implementation on request. In this effort, the MoGD works closely with the National Gender Forum; a multi-sectoral structure headed by the President and comprising, among others, Gender Focal Persons (GFP) from all government ministries, civil society representatives and development partners including members of the UN family.

The MoGD has also supported the establishment of the National Secretariat of Women's NGOs. The GoL has recognised the potential role that civil society can play in promoting demand driven accountability and furthering participatory democracy in general, and in monitoring the implementation of the PRS in particular. Government is also committed to fulfilling its obligations under ratified and signed international treaties, and has established a secretariat to monitor and report on the steps taken to meet these obligations. However, significant capacity development is necessary to report and monitor effective implementation of treaty obligations.

**Employment creation, entrepreneurship, vocational and skills development.** The PRS recognises that economic growth alone will not address the issue of equitable employment creation. Government is therefore committed to shaping the revival of the growth process in a way that promotes to the fullest extent possible the creation of productive employment. The Government of Liberia strongly asserted in its PRS that women need more economic opportunities and that the economy needs the enhanced contributions of women. The three year strategy, along with the National Plan of Action for Women (May 2008), provide the national framework for addressing women's economic empowerment in the sectors in which they are currently clustered (informal and agricultural), as well as for proactively increasing their opportunities in non-traditional and growth-driving sectors (forestry, mining, manufacturing, services). This strategy includes support and skills training for rural and urban MSME entrepreneurs, vocational training and an emphasis on employment creation. One way of supporting the large number of women involved in informal trading is to strengthening these businesses through increased organisational development for women traders and interventions aimed at increasing their profit margins through improved marketing strategies and value added initiatives. This shall be achieved with targeted training in relevant skills to increase their capacity to generate wealth and employment, engage government in advocating for a supportive policy framework and to better their capacity to manage and own business ventures.

## **empowerment**

The Ministry of Gender and Development has been mandated to provide leadership, policy coordination and where necessary to provide technical support to other government structures to ensure effective mainstreaming of gender in government action. To this end, the Ministry is supported by the National Gender Forum, a multi-sectoral body headed by the President. The Ministry is also mandated to produce periodic reports on international and regional treaties on gender and women rights.

As a relatively new ministry operating in a challenging post-conflict environment, there is an evident need for capacity building within MoGD to ensure it can effectively implement and monitor priority actions under the Poverty Reduction Strategy, particularly at a decentralized level. Additionally, the Government recognizes the need to strengthen MoGD's capacity to effectively play its national coordination role and to provide adequate technical assistance support to other sector ministries in critical areas of need including the civil service reform process, and in the implementation of all key national policies and programmes. These include notably the agriculture policy, the national social welfare policy, and the land reform process among several others.

The Ministry has several divisions including a Division responsible for women's empowerment, which has been implementing various economic empowerment initiatives under the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy and based on requests from various government partners and donors.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, the Ministry has also a Policy division responsible for policy development, policy dissemination, lobbying for ratification/legislation of gender sensitive laws and for ensuring good relationship between the Ministry and the legislature on gender issues as well as for regular reporting on treaties' (international and regional) obligations.

The Ministry has received various forms of ad hoc support from its development partners including the UN over the past two years (i.e. to produce initial CEDAW reports, to take an effective part in the PRS development process, to coordinate with women parliamentarians in furthering the gender agenda in Liberia, etc.). As it moves to play an active role in PRS implementation and monitoring, MoGD has prioritized strategic areas for capacity support and currently is receiving technical support from the Scott Fellow program, the Senior Executive Service, and an international policy consultant.

**Gender Focal Points in Line Ministries.** In some sector ministries, staff members have been appointed Gender Focal Persons. The GFPs are expected to play facilitating functions for gender mainstreaming within the particular sector of relevance to the ministry, but the system is not yet fully functional let alone effective. The main constraints include limited capacity of GFPs in gender analysis skills and in gender mainstreaming techniques as well as limited scope and space for influence within the Ministry, as GFPs are not always high-ranking officials in respective ministries. There is a clear need for an assessment of the effectiveness of the GFP system to promote gender mainstreaming throughout government action, in particular to contribute to building a national consensus on the function and bring in best practices experienced elsewhere to inform a policy decision on the matter.

**County and District Levels.** The Ministry of Gender and Development also has County Gender Coordinators who are representatives of the Ministry at the county level and work in close collaboration with the rest of the county level civil service apparatus and decentralised services under the overall leadership of the County Superintendent. Their

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<sup>6</sup> I.e. implementing the adult literacy programme in conjunction with the African Women Development Fund – AWDF; distribution of sewing machines donated to Liberian women by the Chinese government; training of women farmers in the production and use of appropriate farming technologies and tools in collaboration with FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture; implementing micro-credit schemes using 'the entrepreneur funds' made available by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry; funding of small scale economic initiatives through established women centres, cooperatives and groups, etc.

mandate is to coordinate gender-mainstreaming efforts at the county level. However, initial assessments of their effectiveness point to their limited capacity and they have not been able to demonstrate much added value to the work of the Ministry at the local government level. The main challenge has been the inability of the Ministry to attract staff with relevant experience in the rural areas, coupled with a lack of the Ministry's capacity to build their skills and promote their full integration and support by the overall local government structure. The latter has itself been struggling with limited capacity partly due to similar reasons.

**The Ministry of Labour.** The MoL has been pursuing a strategy in line with the GoL PRS aimed at employment creation through a multi-pronged approach. This has included pursuing the following objectives: (1) growth induced job creation; (2) enabling environment for business development, with good work conditions; (3) skills development; (4) area based programmes and interventions for socio economic reintegration of vulnerable groups; (5) labour market and a regulatory framework to support public investment and growth, with due respect to rights at work; and (6) to ensure wide public participation and social dialogue for the policy revision and implementation process.

The strategy has consisted of a two-tiered approach through a short-term programme of quick wins, driven largely by the public sector, and particularly in agriculture coupled with a more medium term (1-5 years) set of largely private sector driven responses. The strategy was further amplified in the Liberia Emergency Employment Programme and the Liberia Employment Action Programme (LEEP/LEAP), launched in July 2006 with the technical assistance of ILO. Current initiatives in the same direction include the Poverty Reduction through Decent Employment Creation, which has undertaken most similar initiatives through primarily intensive labour employment, micro-enterprise development (primarily in the area of waste management) and social dialogue. It is worth noting that PRDEC has made substantial efforts to mainstream gender through effective targeting of women. This provided for a phased approach to employment creation by looking at immediate employment creation and simultaneously setting the foundations of a long-term employment programme. In the short run, the role of the LEEP/LEAP has been to ensure a coordinated, strategic response through 5 key gender sensitive initiatives, including public works investments, skills training, enterprise development, production of statistics and labour market information, and the promotion of social dialogue and strengthening of the labour administration. Cross cutting issues include child labour as well as HIV and the promotion of gender equality.

**Other Ministries.** Several ministries, including the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Finance and possibly others (i.e Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, Justice, Internal Affairs, etc.) are all responsible for relevant aspects to create an enabling environment for the private sector and civil society to thrive in their multiple businesses, for macro-economic stability, security, and the rule of law. They are also responsible for mitigating against market failures by strengthening governance reforms and applying a participatory approach. They also play a role in coordinating private and civil society actions, and in overcoming coordination failure through reducing risks for private investment in critical services for sustained economic development.

**Civil Society and NGOs.** The Liberian women civil society was very active in the peace process that ended more than a decade of war and armed conflict in the country. In addition they played and continue to play a critical role in the development of a culture of democracy and good governance. In political terms, they have particularly played a key role in the election of the first ever African woman President.

Women civil society actors are organised in national networks and umbrella bodies that include notably the Women NGOs Secretariat (WONGOSOL) and the National Rural

Women's Program. They play a coordination role and are supposed to play a catalytic role to promote civil society capacity building, self-regulation and to create a platform for sustainable engagement with government. They are however under-resourced and suffer from very limited capacity. Other limitations that affect the Liberian civil society include the fact that women civil society actors are not yet sufficiently involved in policy making and advocacy processes despite a significantly open space for their participation.

Recently, the Ministry of Gender and Development has facilitated a nationwide process to set up women structures at the grassroots level through the National Rural Women's Program. This process shall eventually culminate into a national convention of Liberian women to elect their national level representative structures. In doing so, the Ministry's intention is to alleviate the representation vacuum that has been created by the lack of capacity within and amongst women at the grass roots. The structures and national program will operate independently from the Government, with MoGD operating solely as the facilitator of the process. Given the clear vacuum of civil society and organization amongst women in the rural areas, this initiative will be crucial to effectively engaging rural women in Liberia's development. In order for the structures to serve their intended purpose, it is understood and accepted that the National Rural Women's Program must be the independent voice of rural women.

**United Nations in Liberia.** The United Nations in Liberia is committed to working in a coordinated manner to ensure greater impact. Drawing on the analysis of the Common Country Assessment (CCA), the UN in Liberia has developed the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2008-2012. The UNDAF provides a collective response to the national priorities set forth in the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). Specifically, the UNDAF outlines five strategic areas of support which correspond with the government's four pillars, as well as HIV/AIDS. To promote efficiency, increase synergy and reduce transaction costs, the United Nations has agreed to work through Joint Programmes in the following areas: Food Security and Nutrition, Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Youth Employment and Empowerment, County Support Teams and HIV/AIDS.

All Joint Programmes, like this one on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment, address other critical crosscutting issues facing Liberia (post conflict, youth, environment, etc.). There are both explicit and implicit linkages amongst these programmes, which have been elaborated in this document. Sustained efforts shall be made to ensure effective coordination and building on synergies between and amongst all other JPs. This will be done primarily through UNDAF thematic and working groups such as the Gender Theme Group (GTG), Inter-Agency Programming Team (IAPT), Joint UN Team on HIV/AIDS (JUNTA) and others.

### **Rationale for a Joint Programme on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment**

The Joint Programme represents a coherent and effective response by the UN family in Liberia to the alarming need for improved gender equality in Liberia and supports government determination to address this issue. Proposed interventions reflect the government priorities stated in the PRS, and particularly Pillar 2 (Revitalizing the Economy) and Pillar 3 (Strengthening Governance and the Rule of Law) and the strategic needs of women that significantly contribute to altering the gender equality picture in Liberia. The Joint Programme outcomes are also in accordance with the Millennium Declaration and Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG 3). Finally, the JP contributes to UNDAF outcomes 2 and 3; respectively (2) Equitable Socio-Economic Development and (3) Democratic, accountable and transparent governance being advanced in a participatory and inclusive manner and in accordance with human rights standards.

### **3. Strategies Including Lessons Learned and Proposed Joint Programme**

#### **Lessons Learned**

For several years the UN in Liberia has been focused on supporting the government through peace-building, security, human rights and humanitarian responses. This was led by UNMIL, due to its combined peacekeeping and humanitarian mandates. However, with the increasing restoration of peace and democratic governance, the major focus is now on supporting national development goals as stated in the PRS, focused on recovery and sustainable development.

Experiences have shown that in general, initial attempts to lift women out of their economic dependency circumstances requires a multidimensional and well integrated approach emphasizing women's particular conditions and challenges. For instance, initial stages of women economic empowerment may lead to increased levels of SGBV. To address this challenge it shall be particularly important to ensure careful coordination between this JP and that on GBV, and to develop a strategy to involve men and boys in the JP, whilst ensuring that women retain substantial leverage to control their economic empowerment initiatives and determine the course without undue influence. Such a strategy shall be developed in the initial implementation period of the Joint Programme and shall take into account input from target beneficiaries to ensure it is context relevant and adjusted to their particular socio-cultural contexts. Main parameters of such a strategy shall be elaborated on in the implementation plan of the JP.

The UNDP Economic Empowerment of Women in Lofa, has learned that men are supportive of women beneficiaries of the project, who in turn are able to contribute to the welfare of the household through provision of food, education of children and contribution to household medical bills. It is also possible that such a trend becomes widely accepted in the community thus starting a gradual positive change in gender relationships within the wider community. However, deliberate efforts must be in place to guide this process.

In addition to the above and taking into account emerging conclusions of the various discussions held during this JP development process, the Joint Programme has been formulated with the following lessons in mind:

- Need to adopt a strategically focused and coherent, but also dynamic and flexible, approach to design and implementation to enable opportunities to be exploited and adjustments to be made based on lessons learned.
- The need for the sake of programme effectiveness, relevance and sustainability of involving key stakeholders in the design as well as the implementation of the programme.
- The need to systematically gather lessons learned and monitor processes and results to enable improvements and important adjustments to be made during implementation of programme.
- The need to consider the context of the post-conflict situation, especially when choices are made regarding allocation of resources and support to specific areas and groups and when involving stakeholders in programme design and implementation.



- The need to work as much as possible based on national priorities, policies, plans and institutions, while adjusting the support to the level and quality of these policies and institutions and assist in developing them in the process.
- The need to factor in the design of programmes the limited national capacity thence the need to allocate extra resources for implementation and oversight whilst building national capacity on the job and the need for flexibility with regards to projects implementation timelines.

### **The Proposed Joint Programme:**

**Based on national policies, strategies and institutions.** As a basic premise, the programme will work in accordance with the OECD/DAC principle that "where Governments demonstrate political will...international actors should seek to align behind Government policies" and "where possible international partners should seek to avoid activities which undermine national institution building" but rather "identify functioning systems within existing local institutions and work to strengthen these."<sup>7</sup> Therefore the programme will work as much as possible based on national priorities, policies, strategies and plans and through national institutions. These include most notably the national Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) 2008-2011, the priorities identified during the Liberian Women's National Conference (2008), and priorities identified in discussions between the Gender Theme Group (GTG) and the GoL. Therefore, areas of support have been identified from government priorities set out in the PRS and also in close consultation with relevant Ministries and taking into account numerous representations made by women leaders particularly during the recent National Women's Conference.

There will be clear challenges as policies are in some cases not yet completed, and there are not in all cases strategies or national programmes in place to operationalise existing policies. It is also recognised that the capacity of key institutions is weak. Nevertheless, where policies are not complete, their completion will be supported, and interventions will be undertaken in a way that does not undermine the long-term vision. Efforts will be made to develop strategies where capacity is so weak that project implementation units are necessary. These will be placed in the ministry and they will have distinct capacity developing objectives aside from ensuring effective implementation. All technical advice/assistance, capacity building interventions and proposed partnerships have been designed to ensure long lasting benefits and strengthened capacity that will remain within the Ministry and beyond (primarily through the National Gender Forum). Moreover, the Joint Programme is aligned to the UNDAF and reviews and re-alignments should as far as possible co-relate and be coordinated within the broader framework of the PRS review mechanisms.

**Overall strategy.** In line with the PRS, the development objective of the programme is reduced gender inequality and strengthened empowerment of women in Liberia. In support of this the immediate objectives are i) to enable Government to institute measures to coordinate the implementation of gender sensitive policies and programmes; ii) to strengthen the capacity of Government to implement gender sensitive policies and programmes; and iii) to achieve strategic women economic empowerment. The latter objective of women empowerment is an affirmative intervention aimed directly at reducing gender inequalities while the two former objectives aim to ensure gender mainstreaming across Government's policies and programmes.

To achieve the development objectives the programme will implement three interlinked

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<sup>7</sup> OECD/DAC, Fragile States: Policy Commitments and Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations. 2007.

components aimed at the following results:

- Strengthened coordination and accountability mechanisms for gender equality and women empowerment.
- Capacity of relevant government agents and civil society developed for effective engagement and accountability in the implementation of gender sensitive policies and programmes.
- Increase in women's empowerment through enhanced earning potential, *increased employment opportunities, organisational capacities and improved educational achievement.*

It is noted that the programme is designed to ensure a clear strategic focus on the immediate objective and coherence across the outputs and sub-outputs. It therefore does not build on or incorporate a set of pre-defined projects, although one predefined project that directly supports the objective of skills and entrepreneurship development has been included, and e.g. in the case of microfinance a pre-existing implementation framework to promote sustainable access to microfinance shall be used to increase reach and penetration of the microfinance services targeting particularly women in the rural areas.

Specific elements of the programme strategy include:

- **Direct inter-linkages and feedback mechanisms** among the three components to ensure mutual reinforcement of the effects on policy development, capacity of the systems and institutions, and women empowerment, and through linking concrete improvements in women's daily lives and women's voices to changes in overall policies, strategies and plans for reconstruction and development
- **Working on the supply and demand side** for government action to reduce gender inequality, and addressing duty bearers as well as rights-holders. Working on the supply side of a conducive framework for promoting gender equality and economic empowerment by duty bearers, through support to government policies and systems, as well as on the demand side, through support to women and other civil society organisations in advocating gender issues and demanding accountability as rights holders
- **A simultaneous focus on producing tangible outputs and on developing policy and system capacity** by actively using the process of delivering the tangible outputs as cases for learning and institution building, as well as critical support to the provision of peace dividends for consolidation of the current peace building efforts
- **Deliver quick-wins** to keep up the current momentum, while activities that target the more difficult and long-term areas will be on-going
- **A programmatic and learning based approach to programme implementation** has been formulated as an overall framework with an emphasis on the description of overall objectives and outputs, a clear and coherent strategy, and indications of main activities, without highly detailed activities defined. This recognises the dynamic and varied situation concerning gender equality and women empowerment in Liberia, which makes flexibility and ability to learn and adjust based on challenges and opportunities highly important for achieving the overall objective. The main elements to support the programmatic and learning based approach are listed in box 4.a.

#### Box 4.a. Activities to ensure a strategic and learning-based approach

- A 1 year inception stage focusing on priority interventions and preparations for detailing of the approach and strategy in Concept Notes and developing baseline data for subsequent monitoring and evaluation;
- Substantial annual review missions to compile lessons learned and suggest strategic revisions after 1 year, which will involve contributing donors and programme partners;
- A strong and adapted coordination management mechanism to ensure that the programme continues to focus on the strategic objectives and responds to challenges and opportunities in a coherent way, whilst significantly contributing to national ownership and capacity development of duty bearers and rights holders;
- A monitoring and evaluation framework, which will be results based and include a baseline to enable generation of lessons learned and best practices, and feed into the national PRS related M&E systems.

be made to ensure that Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials used pass on appropriate messages for HIV/AIDS prevention with reference to appropriate sources and venues where additional information can be found. All trainings in adult literacy, leadership skills, technical know-how in various fields and other learning shall be designed to include messages on HIV/AIDS prevention. Moreover, all possible efforts shall be made by the Joint Programme in collaboration with relevant partners to ensure that condoms (both male and female) are available through its partner networks and advocacy efforts for beneficiary's access to medical and testing services shall be encouraged and supported. The Joint Programme recognises that high levels of gender inequalities and the poor level of economic independence of women are some of the root causes of the heightened SGBV levels in Liberia and constitute exacerbating factors to the risks of contracting HIV/AIDS

**Approach to promoting women empowerment.** Economic empowerment of women, in terms of sustainability of improved income levels among women, and better capability among women to set and act on economic goals, will be achieved by:

*Targeting areas of economic activity which are important to the majority of women.*

Thus, immediate opportunities for significant wealth creation will be pursued by focusing on sectors where women predominate and have existing social capital and a strong knowledge base, but lack support in critical areas to enable them to overcome structural barriers. Women traders (mostly marketers, including cross border traders and those owning SMMEs) in general shall be targeted by this JP to develop their business acumen and create wealth through formalisation of their businesses. Provide organisational and skills capacity development to be able to influence national policies on relevant matters to support them in growing their businesses and where possible to expand them through value addition and employment creation.

*Promoting skills development and increased organisational capacity and leadership skills for women traders coupled with efforts to make accessible financing services for the growth of their businesses, particularly where there are clear comparative advantages for women traders and for Liberia as a country.* Wealth creation will be promoted by specifically targeting the gradual build up of women's capacities and skills to increase value-added components to their current economic activities and where possible preparing them for entry into sectors with which they are not currently very familiar (e.g. carpentry, handicraft making, etc), and which are identified as medium to longer term sustainable opportunities, particularly with the potential for export using the AGOA initiative and facilitating access of women entrepreneurs to sustainable financing.

*Strengthening critical factors that will empower women to move up the value-chain*

*in their respective economic areas and formalisation of their businesses, namely:* Linkages to and access to markets, standardisation of products, improved packaging, improved conservation techniques for perishable products, access to appropriate microfinance facilities, access to adult literacy, access to ICT and business and entrepreneurship skills development initiatives. The strategy is based on a holistic view of business development and wealth creation, whereby support is provided to increase productivity, support value addition and marketing of products, but also focus on the wider set of factors that determine women empowerment and create sustainable jobs (i.e policy framework, infrastructures, etc. through advocacy efforts). Therefore, the JP shall support interventions to build women's capacity in entrepreneurship and vocational skills including integration of adult literacy training, targeting in particular, young women to address the issue of intergenerational poverty and through support to increased outreach of services and diversification of products for women clients of microfinance services targeting particularly rural women entrepreneurs.

In addition to the above, Box 4.b outlines key cross-cutting principles that will guide programme implementation to ensure that it is fully gender sensitive.

**Box 4.b Cross-cutting principles to ensure gender-sensitive programme implementation**

- Strategies will explicitly address women's time poverty by ensuring that enhanced wealth creation does not result in overburdening of women, less time for family and recreation and possibly pushing the girl child out of school to help the family;
- Purposely ensuring that women's economic empowerment maximizes opportunities for improved gender relations through employing strategies to build consensus around the importance of women's empowerment to household, community and national level economic growth and development;
- Employing holistic strategies to support the multi-faceted aspects of structural barriers towards women's empowerment through simultaneous interventions at macro, meso and micro levels, as well as advancing a supportive environment around women's empowerment, and strengthening women's capacities to change their livelihoods while providing specific tools to enable them do so ;
- A Do-No-Harm approach will be ensured to avoid backlash to women's empowerment, especially considering the high level of unemployment experienced in Liberia. It will also focus on strengthening the new roles taken up by and skills acquired by women in public actions and livelihood sustenance due to their increased household burdens during the war and in its aftermath. This is a key opportunity for supporting the gradual change in gender roles and norms.

**Approach to component implementation.** Based on the strategies presented above, the approach to implementation of the three components is set out below:

**Component 1: Support to Establish Gender Sensitive Policies and Coordination Mechanisms.** The main aim of this component will be to strengthen policy formulation processes for gender equality and women empowerment and coordination including the mechanisms for dialogue and accountability with civil society and parliament. There will be several entry-points as outlined below.

At one level, the focus will be on reviewing and revisiting current policy formulation processes, and supporting adjustments where relevant. The review and finalisation of specific policies will be supported through other funding besides this JP and used directly as a case for testing and learning for the policy formulation process. In this process the National Gender Policy and a gender-mainstreamed Civil Service code of conduct, and other gender-mainstreamed policy initiatives; primarily those related to land and the national welfare policy as well as the employment policy, will be produced as outputs in their own right and with funding support beside this JP with substantial involvement of

the Ministry of Gender and Development through the provision of gender mainstreaming expertise and in leading national level consultations with the women constituency and/or securing their effective participation, including Women Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the policy dialogue at both regional and national levels. The mechanisms for gender related policy coordination with other sectors and the local government level will be reviewed for their effectiveness in promoting gender equality and eventually lead to the formulation of protocols related to strengthen the ways of working as well as the administrative and secretarial support to the National Gender Forum.

To this effect, all relevant sector ministries shall be consulted and a buy in process facilitated to ensure that the Forum is well re-positioned to play its coordinating and policy dialogue function around relevant issues of gender equality and women empowerment. Simultaneously the process to deliver these outputs will be used for testing and developing the systems for policy formulation, monitoring, dissemination, and dialogue in relation to civil society and the Parliament. This shall be achieved primarily through a careful documentation of lessons learnt throughout this process and through establishing an effective M&E system to accompany the process. Linkages and feedback mechanisms with the other components will be ensured in the same way; an issue such as e.g. land reform may be identified under the economic empowerment component and taken up as a policy issue for review and dialogue with stakeholders in the policy component.

Installation of a learning-based approach to policy review and analysis and conditions for enabling accountability will also be promoted. To this end, there will be support to the establishment of monitoring frameworks to track progress on gender aspects of the PRS and the implementation of aspirations of the NGP and to the dissemination and communication of results. This shall be achieved through recruitment of regional gender coordinators to support and supervise county gender coordinators, as well as support the recruitment of an M&E staff at the MoGD and through consultancies and technical assistance mainly through the Ministry of Gender and Development and possibly through other relevant ministries with close coordination with the MoGD on gender mainstreaming aspects of related policies.

Policy dialogue and accountability will be further promoted by reviewing and strengthening the mechanisms for civil society engagement and monitoring. This will include support to actual dialogue events and forums. Ways to promote Parliament's role in holding government accountable and to engage with civil society will be considered and supported. Quarterly debates on relevant topics shall be supported and organised primarily through a joint collaboration of women CSOs, the Women Legislative Caucus, the media and involving relevant government officials in the form of breakfast discussions, support for research papers and their presentation, and organising of organisational and development and capacity building initiatives in areas of policy and advocacy skills targeting selected women CSOs that demonstrate potential to engage in focused policy dialogues on relevant issues of gender equality and women empowerment. There would be also targeted support for the women and children committee of the national Legislature within the framework of the Legislature strategic plan for its capacity building and modernization.

**Component 2: Capacity Building for the MoGD, MoL and Civil Society.** This component aims to develop the capacity on the government side to lead and implement policies for gender equality and women empowerment. It forms an integral part of the national efforts in the context of the civil service reforms. In addition the component shall focus on building the capacity of the Liberian civil society to advocate and hold government accountable for its efforts in gender equality and women empowerment and rights.

On the government side and besides this JP, there will be support to development of a

coherent and fully strategic policy implementation framework in the form of a strategy for implementation of the NGP and adjustment of the gender action plan based on the strategy. This shall be done through Technical Assistance from the UN family in Liberia to draw from existing international best practices, including analytical work in the area of gender and economics responding to MoGDs needs and updating existing gender analyses, such as the 2007 Gender Needs Assessment, the Gender Profile, etc. to reflect the results of the most recent survey data. The opportunity shall be utilised to strengthen the Ministry's capacity in policy and programme development through close collaboration between the technical assistance provided to this effect (the long term senior policy coordinator currently being recruited through the SES programme) and the designated senior staff of the MoGD to ensure that such capacity remains within the Ministry. Appropriate consultations shall be also conducted with other sector ministries and CSOs to ensure national ownership and relevance to the particular conditions in Liberia. Outside this JP, but also contributing to the strategic capacity of the Ministry, will be the Technical Assistance fund set up by the Danish Government in support of the realisation of TA needs of the MoGD within the broader context of the Danish support for MDG 3 in Liberia.

Also on the government side, capacity of MOGD will be strengthened to lead implementation of the NGP and to carry out its function of coordinating gender mainstreaming into other sector policies and initiatives. The starting-point will be to build on past discussions and evolving plans within the Ministry in the wider context of the civil service reforms and through a participatory process involving ministry staff and key stakeholders. This will include county level mechanisms and development and implementation of an overall capacity development plan for the ministry. Specific support to MoGD in mainstreaming gender into the agriculture sector policy will be provided through technical assistance in producing a policy note on gender and agriculture in Liberia. Implementation of the Gender Budgeting Initiative as spelled out in the Civil Service Reform Strategy will be launched by organizing a workshop for key Government stakeholders on gender-responsive budgeting and producing a policy note, which includes jointly identified steps towards full implementation of gender analysis of public expenditures.

Finally, support will be provided to strengthen the Government's system of gender focal points to improve its effectiveness to mainstream gender into sector policies and programmes. Targeted support to reinforce the system will be provided in 3-5 ministries to be decided based on combined criteria including the level of need, potential level of impact for the realisation of the NGP and expressed interest by the ministry's leadership to move forward the gender equality agenda. A training programme for the gender focal points will be implemented based on the capacity assessment. Mechanisms - events, seminars - for regular exchange of experiences and discussions between the gender focal points across all the ministries will be supported with the aim to share lessons and experiences and to develop a common vision and mission within the cross-ministerial group. There shall also be targeted support to strengthen the effectiveness and involvement of the county gender coordinators in 6 counties and to recruit regional gender coordinators to support and supervise county gender coordinators.

Comprehensive support to CSO capacity development is not feasible at present; however more limited but strategic measures will be implemented. These include support to strengthen selected civil society's capacity to advocate for issues of gender equality with a dual focus, on grass-roots CSOs and on the national level umbrella organisations. The grass-root organisations will be supported through a combination of organisational development support - to promote sustainability - and on training to monitor, assess, and advocate on issues of gender equality. A small-grant facility will be established to fund concrete advocacy activities that fit into the Joint Programme and promote concrete engagement between government and CSOs. The umbrella organisations will receive assistance to promote professionalism and ethics within the sector. Efforts will be made

to focus the support to advocacy capacity and activities on the specific current and relevant policies and issues.

**Component 3: Women’s empowerment and organisational capacities for wealth and employment creation enhanced.** This component aims to enhance women empowerment. It will be complemented by the UNDP Women Economic Empowerment project in Lofa County and the proposed joint UNIFEM/ILO programme on Gender and Employment Creation which is designed to contribute to sustainable human development through expansion of decent and productive employment opportunities for women and girls (to be funded by the Norwegian government). It targets women entrepreneurs particularly women traders (including marketers and women in cross border trade) and addresses important factors for the growth of their businesses (i.e skills and vocational training, access to micro finance, markets and business development interventions). The support will focus on sustainable income generation and moving women up the value-chain through interventions aimed at improving business and marketing skills and ensuring widening of value addition by women in trade as well as building on their identified comparative advantage. Other factors that shall be addressed by this component include local and international trade policy reforms, literacy, organisational and entrepreneurship skills development in a gender sensitive manner.

Overall the component will target up to 9 counties to be determined through an independent assessment exercise to select particular areas or communities where interventions shall take place.

This component addresses as a first priority the information and support gap for women traders (with an emphasis on cross border traders) by increasing their dialogue with government agencies, including the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on trade policy and regulations and the Ministry of Justice concerning protection issues and immigration/custom officers. This area of need was emphasized by women at the National Women’s Conference in 2008 and is a key activity under the GoL’s National Plan of Action for Women (and its incorporation into PRS activities). Utilizing existing networks of business women, entrepreneurs and traders, including the Liberia Marketing Association, the Women’s Chamber of Commerce and the National Rural Women’s Program, women will become better informed of trade regulations, protocols and newly formed trade agreements.

Information sessions and consultations will be held between government and the women entrepreneurs to discuss official bottlenecks that hinder the development of business operations. These consultations will be facilitated by technical experts and the outcomes assessed to properly distil relevant information to be used in promoting continuous reforms. To enhance cross-border trade and also mitigate the impact of unfair international trade policies, agreements and global economic recession on women, findings from these consultations and assessment will be used to inform advocacy for policy reforms as well as inclusion of women representatives in international trade negotiations/delegations.

Additionally, there will be active promotion of the new opportunities for women business owners through the National Investment Commission and sessions to ensure their effective use of the “One Stop Shop” for businesses. As the Government introduces a SME policy and continues the reform process to encourage the private sector, it will be important to actively engage women business owners and ensure their participation and awareness of the new regulations and opportunities.

The scope for working through and supporting the development of Women's Entrepreneurship Associations will be assessed. Lessons will be drawn from the ongoing UNIFEM and World Bank Results based initiative in Ganta which focuses on production,

processing and marketing of cassava by a women's CBO (the Ganta Concerned Women's Group – GCWG) and reflected under the JP on FS&N. Specific tools such as Get Ahead, Gender Sensitive Value Chains, and Start-Your-Own-Business-materials, will be reviewed and adjusted to the needs of the groups of women targeted, reinforcing the other areas like support in agriculture, forestry, microfinance and literacy. ILO shall lead this aspect of the work. Training of Trainers-Programme will be designed and implemented. Finally, Women's Entrepreneurship Associations and related organisations will be supported to undergo tailored organisational development processes and they shall be supported to advocate for review and enactment of policies in support of women's entrepreneurial development.

The support to increasing the literacy levels will complement the activities aimed at raising incomes among women, as even a limited degree of literacy can be a key factor in reinforcing women's pursuit of economic activities. Literacy classes shall therefore be an integral part of any training so as to minimise the demand of time on women beneficiaries and to ensure that literacy education helps to re-enforce subject matters of other training as functional literacy approaches shall be used throughout all adult literacy trainings. The literacy training will be designed and planned to be coordinated with the support to vocational, entrepreneurship and business development and microfinance interventions. In addition there would be piloting of initiatives to ensure women entrepreneurs' access to ICT.

HIV/AIDS prevention messages and messages that do not stereotype women shall be utilised. Women in the target areas will be offered brief literacy courses, 2-3 times per week, at hours that do not interfere with their work schedules in the fields or markets. Each literacy class shall be limited to a manageable number of attendees to ensure the quality of learning (maximum 30 learners per class) with possibilities of having numerous sessions during the course of the day depending of the level of demand and to accommodate the need for flexibility with time for women beneficiaries. Women members of the groups targeted by the Programme shall be the primary beneficiaries of the literacy education interventions; however those non-members who express the need to participate shall be also accommodated depending on availability of space in the classrooms. In addition, efforts will be made to establish and or reinforce existing adult literacy programmes. Providing community based day care facilities to encourage and allow women to attend adult literacy classes at literacy centres to be established.

These centres would also serve to facilitate intergenerational interaction and interaction with positive role models. Activities would also be undertaken that encourage young people, particularly young girls, to stay longer in school and alerts them to the importance of acquiring education and skill. This will be achieved through mentoring, radio programmes, outdoor activities and written materials, which will be published as part of the literacy programme. Information technology issues will be handled under this component by establishing three pilot ICT villages to provide access to information and to facilitate the provision of computer literacy courses.

A national curriculum will be utilised for the training (adapted based on existing material) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, which will also focus on life and trade skills that are directly relevant to the women targeted. The latter is based on positive experiences of UNESCO that linking literacy and life/trade-skills training can produce a reinforcing effect. The ministry shall be also supported to develop the curriculum and training materials for levels 2 and 3 targeting those that express interest and demonstrate capacity to move ahead in their literacy skills. Currently this group is not catered for and there is significant demand for such level of literacy training. Literacy trainers shall be drawn mostly from primary school teachers and other capable professionals in the area who shall first undergo some training in adult literacy teaching. There are currently numerous initiatives throughout Liberia where the approach has proven to be sufficiently flexible and successful. Such teachers receive a small incentive



for their work and are supervised by officials of the MoE. There are also CSOs involved in similar initiatives including notably the Sirleaf Women Marketers Fund (SWMF) that could partner with the JP to ensure a wide coverage. UNESCO shall lead the literacy education component and shall work very closely with the Ministry of Education, whilst ILO shall lead the component on entrepreneurship skills development.

The women empowerment framework (suggested by the UN Millennium Project highlights the particular challenge of women to access financing and the particular context of Liberia with an almost total lack of collateral for women to access any commercial financing) advocates for deliberate interventions to promote women's access to financing. In the context of this JP particularly with regards to the efforts to promote entrepreneurship, there is need to influence the emerging microfinance industry to target women particularly those in the rural areas. This JP shall therefore work through the existing structures of the micro finance promotion to encourage their expansion into rural Liberia.

Gender-sensitive microfinance services will be supported to complement the other areas addressing women's economic empowerment. The approach will be based on international best-practices and implemented with direct technical support from UNCDF (through UNDP) and it shall be provided through existing structures. Namely, the Micro Finance Investment Committee based at the Central Bank of Liberia. The strategy shall comprise the following critical interventions:

**A National Workshop on Women Entrepreneurship/Rural Microfinance:**

This workshop will bring together eligible microfinance institutions to provide them with the relevant advices and tools to be able to develop low risk rural/entrepreneurship intervention products and enable them to sharpen their focus in the chosen area of intervention. The workshop would also incorporate elements of training in business planning for MFIs. It is anticipated that an International consultant would facilitate the workshop. Similar workshops will be conducted annually.

**Funds for On-Lending and Institutional Capacity Building:** After the proposed entrepreneurship/rural product development workshop. Requests for Proposals (RFPs) will be issued to interested MFIs. The RFPs whilst incorporating criteria for general eligibility for funding based on experience; governance, performance and commitment to sustainability will focus on calls for microfinance interventions in the rural and entrepreneurship sectors. They will allow for options for interventions supporting action –oriented research, piloting of new products, promotion of feasible innovations as well as the expansion of current interventions in the rural sector. Responses to RFPs will be reviewed by an Investment Committee (see management arrangements) for approval. After review by the Investment Committee a decision will be taken regarding the amount of funds that will be provided to the institutions for both on lending to clients as well as strengthening the capacity of the MFIs to deliver the services.

**Technical Assistance for Small and Medium Business Development:**

Institutions whose RFPs have been approved by the Investment Committee will also have the option to receive technical advice and guidance from a short-term technical adviser who will be hired for three months to assist institutions in initiating their proposed interventions and further refine their products. Provision would be made for visits by the TA annually throughout the life of the project.

**Short-Term Training on Entrepreneurship/Rural Product Development:**

Selected institutions including the Ministry of Gender and Development, Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Commerce and Industry will also be provided with support for key personnel from their institutions to attend international training

Programmes and study tours to Programmes, which focus on entrepreneurship/rural product development.

Funds for institutional capacity building and on lending will be channelled through an Investment Committee situated within the Central Bank of Liberia. The Investment Committee, which has the Central Bank as a non-voting chair, comprises donors interested in making a meaningful contribution to microfinance in Liberia. The Committee is designed to function as an effective and conducive mechanism for investors to channel their investments to suitable MFIs. This institutional set up is to ensure that decisions are made on a commercial basis, and not subjected to political or disbursement pressures.

Donor/Investors participating in the Investment Committee have the opportunity to jointly decide on the selection of institutions for investment based on the following:

- Performance based agreements, with key indicators (Outreach: number of active clients; Portfolio quality: PAR @30 days; Profitability/Sustainability: Adjusted Return on Assets AROA) for minimum performance standards; and
- Reporting requirements, using standard terms and definitions as developed by the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP)

UNIFEM, UNDP and ILO will represent the Joint Programme on the Investment Committee and shall use this opportunity to continuously advocate for an expansion of rural outreach and for a coherent legal, fiscal and financial services development policy framework that supports small scale business development with a particular focus on rural women business development.

In addition to MFIs, the possibility for revamping the formerly active Credit Unions (and possibly from progressive "susus") will be assessed. A study will be conducted to this end, which will also include recommendations for strengthening their delivery of savings and loans products. Based on the results of the assessment, the specific support including approach will be detailed in a concept note

The approach should be developed to complement the other economic empowerment activities and be based on gender sensitive practices. Based on the concept note, support will be provided to the piloting of best practice credit union schemes.

## 4. Results Framework

| JP Outputs<br>(Give corresponding indicators and baselines)                                       | SMART Outputs, PRS reference and Responsible UN Organization (or Lead Agency)  | Implementing Partners  | Indicative activities for each Output   | Overall Costs \$ | Available Resources                                  | Funding Gaps |
|---|--|--|---|------------------|--|--------------|
| <b>(A) Coordination and accountability mechanisms on national gender commitments strengthened</b> | (A.01) Policy coordination mechanisms enhanced for gender equality and women empowerment (including gender aspects of the PRS and the NGP)<br><br>PRS pp 93 SO 1; pp 95 SO 3; pp 94 SO 5; pp154 SO 2 & 3 | MoGD/<br>selected line-ministries/<br>LISGIS/ MPEA<br><br>UNDP/UNMIL   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Support the finalization, dissemination and implementation of the National Gender Policy (through different mechanisms like flyers, translations, simplified versions, mass communication initiatives etc.)</li> <li>➤ Support the recruitment and position of a senior policy analyst for MoGD (to be financially supported by the CSA managed SES Programme)</li> <li>➤ In the context of coordination with the national efforts to monitor the implementation of the PRS monitoring, design framework and implement a mechanism for monitoring, reporting and evaluating of the National Gender Policy and gender aspects of the PRS</li> <li>➤ Promote sex disaggregated monitoring and data collection</li> <li>➤ Support the recruitment of M&amp;E specialists (short term - International and long term - national staff) with clear built-in mechanisms for on-the-job national capacity development</li> </ul>   | 800,000          | 205,000<br>(DANINDA)                                 | 595,000      |
|   | (A.02) Strengthened mechanisms for policy dialogue and accountability<br><br>PRS pp 93 SO 1  | MoGD,<br>Government Agencies,<br>Parliament (through the Women and Youth committee and the WLC, Gender committees in both Houses) and CSOs<br><br>UNIFEM/<br>UNMIL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Support and encourage consultations between GoL, CSOs, Parliament, and other leaders using concrete policies as focus of discussions and advocacy efforts for learning, with a focus on 2-3 concrete policies per year e.g. National Gender Policy, land reform process, Civil Service code of conduct, the gender quota legislation, security and protection sectors</li> <li>➤ Support the communication unit of the MOGD in the development or review of a communication strategy and build their capacity to implement it.</li> <li>➤ Provide technical assistance to relevant parliamentary committees to discharge their oversight function on gender equality and women rights</li> <li>➤ Support CSOs to engage with relevant parliamentary committees on gender issues</li> <li>➤ Support CSOs to embark on relevant gender related advocacy initiatives including submission of alternative reports on GoL international commitments (CEDAW, CRC, African Women Rights Protocol)</li> <li>➤ Support CSO and Parliamentary engagement with the public on relevant issues of gender equality and women empowerment e.g. through quarterly breakfast discussions, research papers, etc.)</li> </ul> | 500,000          | 180,000<br>(DANIDA)<br><br>190,000<br>(UNIFEM/Italy) | 130,000      |

|  |   |   | <b>Sub-total</b>   | <b>1,300,000</b> | <b>575,000</b>  | <b>725,000</b> |
|--|---|---|--|------------------|---|----------------|
| <b>(B) Capacity development for accountable implementation of gender sensitive policies and programmes</b> | (B.01) Gender equality mainstreamed into sector policies, national plans and at local government level and within the broader context of the civil service reforms<br><br>PRS pp 93-93 SO 2 | MoGD/MoIA/<br>MoJ<br><br>UNDP/UNMIL<br>UNIFEM, WB | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provision of Technical Assistance (TA) through a Fund to support the needs of the Ministry of Gender and Development (to fund regional officers, a long term Gender Advisor, and short term technical assistance) (DANIDA)</li> <li>➤ Support overall capacity development of the MOGD</li> <li>➤ Support capacity development in gender analysis and mainstreaming through the GFPs in all sector ministries and the GCC of the MOGD (gender mainstreaming tools and capacity on rights based approach will be developed)</li> <li>➤ Support monitoring and reporting on implementation of the gender commitments and measuring of impact from a gender perspective.</li> <li>➤ Support learning, exchange and technical assistance to relevant departments of the MoJ, Parliament and the TRC to ensure gender sensitive security sector reforms.</li> <li>➤ Support assessment of laws and policies from a gender perspective to inform the law reform process.</li> <li>➤ Use technical assistance to facilitate capacity development of County Gender Coordinators and adjust systems/work processes based on existing review (MoGD)</li> <li>➤ Provide targeted support to the counties to mainstream gender equality for learning and show-case purposes</li> <li>➤ Review and develop mechanisms for regular coordination and technical exchange among gender focal points and with MoGD to achieve shared vision and understanding</li> <li>➤ Provide logistical support for new staff recruited (M&amp;E specialists in MoGD)</li> <li>➤ Demand-driven analytical work in the area of gender and economics, with special emphasis on MoGD's needs in the sectoral areas outlined in the World Bank's proposed country assistance strategy for Liberia. Three outputs are targeted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Produce a Gender and Agriculture Policy Note (WB)</li> <li>○ Update the 2007 gender needs assessment on women's economic empowerment with recent data to produce a gender profile (WB)</li> <li>○ Work shop for key Government stakeholders to launch the implementation of Gender Based Budgeting and produce a Policy Note on Gender-Responsive Budgeting (WB)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | 2,400,000        | 150,000 (UNDP)<br><br>961,000 (DANIDA)<br><br>310,000 (UNIFEM/ Italy)<br><br>300 000 (World Bank) | 679,000        |
|  | (B.02) Capacity of Civil Society to network and advocate for gender equality strengthened<br><br>PRS pp 93 SO 1   | CSOs /<br>MoGD<br><br>UNIFEM/<br>UNMIL            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Undertake combined mapping and rapid organisational development needs assessment of key CSOs and CBOs, including those based in rural areas</li> <li>➤ Design OD support programme for CSOs, based on applications, that links organisational development support with small-grants to concrete advocacy initiatives</li> </ul>   | 625,000          | 210,000 (DANIDA)  | 395,000        |

|  |  |  |  |                  |                              |                  |
|--|--|--|--|------------------|------------------------------|------------------|
|  |  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Support rural based CBOs to organize for increased voice and participation in policy making processes at all levels, including how to access public information and advocate</li> <li>➤ Support capacity development for NGOs on monitoring and reporting on implementation of the gender commitments and measuring of impact from a gender perspective.</li> <li>➤ Skills building of women NGOs and CBOs on management systems, strategic planning, resource mobilisation and financial management</li> <li>➤ Support WONGOSOL and other women CS umbrella bodies (Rural women) to organise national consultations of women CS on key policies and law,) particularly the National Rural Women's Program,</li> <li>➤ Strengthen CS capacity to generate information for its members particularly those in the rural area</li> <li>➤ Strengthen "Rural women" and WONGOSOL capacity to support its rural based members to engage national and local government structures on relevant issues</li> <li>➤ Support events for networking and sharing of lessons among CSOs working on gender issue</li> </ul>   |                  | 20,000<br>(UNIFEM/<br>Italy) |                  |
|  |  |  | <b>Sub-total</b>   | <b>3,025,000</b> | <b>1,951,000</b>             | <b>1,074,000</b> |
| <b>(C) Support national priority and strategic women empowerment initiatives</b> | (C.01) Women's participation in the formal economy increased and women entrepreneurs' ability to capitalize on trade markets enhanced.<br><br>PRS pp 82 SO 2 | MoCI/<br>MoGD/Sirleaf Market Women/Liberia women chamber of commerce<br><br>UNIFEM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Inform women traders on trade regulations, protocols and their rights, utilizing existing networks in the Liberia Marketing Association, National Rural Women's Program and Women's Chamber of Commerce. This should include sensitization on the ECOWAS Protocol on the movements of goods and people.</li> <li>➤ Hold consultations between the traders and government to discuss bottlenecks that hinder the development of their business and areas for reforming regulations.</li> <li>➤ Promote women entrepreneurs' effective use of the new "One Stop Shop" through information dissemination and in cooperation with the National Investment Commission</li> <li>➤ Explore and implement relevant organisational development interventions/strategies for improved organisation of women traders in 9 counties.</li> <li>➤ Based on the assessment of challenges/factors inhibiting women in business and women in cross-border trade in particular (already existing with IFC/MoC&amp;I and MoGD/UNIFEM), provide support to implement appropriate interventions to remove factors hindering business growth and formalisation</li> <li>➤ Support Women Entrepreneurs Associations (WEAs) and other structures in 9 counties to advocate for enacting/reviewing of policies and requirements to support women entrepreneurship development</li> <li>➤ Support advocacy and inclusion of women in international trade delegations</li> </ul> | 2,800,000        | 300,000<br>(DANIDA)          | 2,500,000        |

|  |   |  |   |           |  |           |
|--|---|--|---|-----------|--|-----------|
|  |   |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Support trade fair and exchange events for women traders (marketers and those in cross border trade).</li> <li>➤ Support exchange events between women traders (marketers and in cross-border trade) to showcase best practices and emulate successful initiatives</li> <li>➤ Provide gender sensitization of communities including concentration areas for cross border trade</li> <li>➤ With the national institutions, document best practices and produce a paper on the initiative to formalise women businesses for wider sharing and dissemination</li> </ul>   |           |  |           |
|  | <p>(C.02) vocational, entrepreneurial and marketing skills among women enhanced and transformed from subsistence/informal to formal and sustainable businesses</p> <p>PRS pp 82 SO 2</p>    | <p>MoGD/MoL/<br/>MoYSC/MoCI</p> <p>UNDP</p>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop Terms of Reference and procure service providers to start operations in 5 markets, reaching 200 women in each (1,000 women)</li> <li>➤ Implement literacy and numeracy training (in collaboration with UNESCO) and business development skills training for women traders and market women within existing facilities of renovated markets.</li> <li>➤ Monitor the training program and conduct evaluation exercises, receiving feedback from market women on the convenience, value, and effectiveness of the market classes.</li> <li>➤ Identify relevant women entrepreneurship associations (including those involving non women traders) to work with for skills and entrepreneurship development interventions in 9 counties</li> <li>➤ Working with the chamber of commerce develop, capacity for networks of women in business where there exist sectoral gaps in organised networks (i.e women in handcraft making, spices packaging, etc...) in 9 counties with aim of production for export.</li> <li>➤ Target women interested in learning non-traditional skills (i.e carpentry/wooden furniture making, mining related skills, etc...) and in improving their businesses for export markets (such as packaging, marketing and handcraft making) in 9 counties and provide them with relevant training and support</li> </ul> | 2,800,000 | 905,000<br>(DANIDA)  | 1,895,000 |
|  | <p>(C.03) Improved access by women in rural areas of Liberia to sustainable micro finance services to support their engagement in economic activities</p> <p>PRS pp 76 SO 1, pp 81 SO 3</p> | <p>Central Bank<br/>MoGD</p> <p>UNCDF/UNDP</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Financial Service providers (FSPs) and stakeholders' workshop to design the framework for the provision of micro-finance/rural financial services that link to and support the interventions related to women's enhanced participation in the formal sectors, based on best-practices gender-sensitive micro-finance services.</li> <li>➤ Solicit applications from potential FSPs and select organizations capable of best-practice gender sensitive approaches to receive funds for onwards lending to clients. Ensuring linkage to functional literacy of women targeted by the programme.</li> <li>➤ Provide Funds to selected FSSPs for on lending and operational capacity support to MFIs selected to deliver gender sensitive business development products. ensure link to functional literacy of women targeted by the programme</li> </ul>  | 2,739,000 | <p>1,405,000<br/>(DANIDA)</p> <p>834,000<br/>UNDP/DANIDA<br/>A</p> | 500,000   |

|  |   |               |   |           |                     |         |
|--|---|---------------|---|-----------|---------------------|---------|
|  |   |               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Identify credit unions (and "susus") for strengthening their delivery of gender sensitive savings and loan products as well as the introduction of insurance products.</li> <li>➤ Pilot initiatives for extending the delivery of gender sensitive business development products through Credit Unions (and possibly qualified "susus").</li> <li>➤ Conduct review, collect lessons, and adjust approaches after 1 year of operations</li> <li>➤ Provision of micro finance support to community corporative credit unions and for the establishment of Village Savings and Loan Associations</li> <li>➤ Support MFIs to provide micro finance support to women</li> <li>➤ Micro finance support for GBV survivors</li> </ul>  |           |                     |         |
|  | (C.04) Women and girls are more informed and knowledgeable through increased literacy and access to appropriate learning and information<br><br>PRS pp 123 SO 7 | MoE<br>UNESCO | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Support the MoE to make national policy and strategy to address adult literacy and non- formal education, including national strategy for gender sensitive adult literacy, and responsive to local contexts (link to A)</li> <li>➤ Review existing level 1 curriculum and provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Education to design curricula for levels 2, 3, 4, &amp; 5, including validation, pilot testing and printing.</li> <li>➤ Work with Ministry of Education to design literacy training programmes and courses that include relevant life-skills, business skills and economic activities and which link with the support to the agricultural, business development, and all other economic empowerment</li> <li>➤ Prepare the relevant curriculum including for level 2, 3 and 4</li> <li>➤ Implement a national campaign on literacy targeting women in particular</li> <li>➤ Provide technical assistance for the training of Ministry of Education staff in management of the literacy programmes, including training of trainers for 222 instructors and field supervisors, including females.</li> <li>➤ Implement literacy training programmes/classes wherever the programme engages communities (skills development, community sensitisation, etc...) in coordination with the MoE (targeting 6,000 women in total)</li> <li>➤ Provide equipment, basic instructional and other related materials for implementation of the literacy programme.</li> <li>➤ Pilot the set up of 3 ICT village centres</li> </ul> | 750,000   | 420,000<br>(DANIDA) | 330,000 |
|  | (C.05) 600 young girls have access to secondary education as a results of the provision of lodging facilities in the  | MoE<br>UNOPS  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Based on GoL commitment to finance hostel running costs, conduct initial consultations for the building of hostels for girls.</li> <li>➤ Construct 3 pilot hostels for girls attending secondary schools in three areas to close gender gap; ensuring girls' security, wellbeing and the sustainability of the hostel model.</li> <li>➤ Provide basic equipment and furniture for the hostels</li> </ul>   | 1,000,000 | 500,000             | 500,000 |

|  |  |            |   |                   |                  |                  |
|--|--|------------|---|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
|  | proximity of the schools<br>PRS pp 122 SO 4  |            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Follow up to ensure that hostels are operational.</li> <li>➤ Support to GoL to provide necessary support for the sustainability of the initiative and for the safety of girls in boarding</li> </ul>   |                   | (DANIDA)         |                  |
|  | (C.06) increased incomes and opportunities for decent and productive employment for women and youth with access to capital markets<br>PRS pp 82 SO 2 | UNIFEM/ILO | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Assessment of the factors inhibiting the participation of women, girls and youth in trade and commerce</li> <li>➤ Development and publication of a guide on business registration requirements</li> <li>➤ Entrepreneurship training provided for SME development</li> <li>➤ The start your business (SYB), expand your business (EYB) and improve your business (IYB) training modules developed and introduced to women entrepreneurs.</li> <li>➤ Provision of appropriate social finance, credit and/or grants for business start up and insurance schemes.</li> <li>➤ Training in agricultural production and food processing include value-chain and agro-business training</li> <li>➤ Activities targeted to foster savings culture in women and youth</li> <li>➤ Establishment of savings and credit cooperatives and modalities for guaranteeing access to credit.</li> </ul> | 1,050,000         | nil              | 1,050,000        |
|  |  |            | <b>Sub-total</b>  | <b>11,589,000</b> | <b>4,364,000</b> | <b>7,225,000</b> |
|  | <b>Total Programme cost (in millions)</b>  |            |   | <b>15,914,000</b> |                  |                  |
|  | <b>Total Available Resources</b>   |            |   | <b>6,890,000</b>  |                  |                  |
|  | <b>Total Gap</b>   |            |   | <b>9,024,000</b>  |                  |                  |



## 5. Management and Coordination Arrangements

The Ministry of Gender and Development has a general mandate to coordinate government action to promote gender equality and women rights. The ministry shall coordinate with other relevant government ministries to secure their involvement and ensure effective implementation of this Joint Programme. The Ministry of Labour is envisaged to play a similar role for the joint UNIFEM/ILO project that is being included in this JP and will be an important actor in the management of this Joint Programme as in the overall inter-ministerial committee on MDG 3. On the UN side, UNIFEM will be the lead coordinating agency with a certain set of responsibilities (see below).

Government has also instituted a National Gender Forum (NGF), a multi sectoral structure chaired by the President. Its function is to provide strategic guidance and support to the Ministry of Gender and Development in its efforts for the promotion of gender equality and respect of women rights. The MoGD provides for the Secretariat of the NGF. Members of the NGF include gender focal persons in all government ministries, civil society representatives, donor community representatives and the UN.

The UN Country Team and UNMIL Office of the Gender Advisor (OGA) have established a Gender Theme Group (GTG), which coordinates and leads UN action on gender equality and the promotion of women rights. It is chaired by UNIFEM, co-chaired by UNMIL and comprises a technical level group of gender focal points representing all agencies, and meets quarterly at the senior level of heads of agencies. The UN recognises that success in the implementation of the Joint Programme rests in starting with core activities, some of which are enabling in nature and others that are more focused on delivery, through cautious expansion of interventions. The ILO/UNIFEM project has in this sense been a precursor to this JP in a number of aspects, and experience drawn from its pre-implementation phase will be used to further design the implementation plan. Through ongoing programmes and projects in the field, UN agencies and the mission are familiar with the overall landscape and direction of the UN's total response. Relative ongoing activities form the core of initiatives to be taken forward under the Joint Programme, with agencies taking the opportunity to facilitate value added operations through joint planning and implementation.

### Programme Planning and Management

The multi-sectoral nature of gender inequalities and women empowerment, overall responsibility for strategic leadership and oversight of the Joint Programme is with the government and for this JP specifically, with the Ministry of Gender and Development. The Minister of Gender and Development and the UN Resident Coordinator (DSRSG/RC) shall co-chair the **Joint Programme Steering Committee** (JPSC) with representatives from key ministries, including Labour, Commerce and Industry, Education, and participating UN agencies, donor representatives, and relevant non-government stakeholders (see TOR in annex). This body will guide the programme on strategic matters. Decisions of the Steering Committee will be made through consensus. The Steering Committee should also exercise oversight and be responsible for making necessary arrangements for assurance functions and re-allocation of funds within the programme to different outputs as may be needed.

Micro-finance support will be provided under the guidance of the **Investment Committee** (IC) that will issue requests for business plans and funding proposals from Micro-finance Institutions (Commercial Banks, NBFIs, Credit Unions, NGO-MFIs), and other institutions interested in providing sustainable financial services to low-income clients. These requests will also be vetted by the Joint Programme Steering Committee to ensure that proposed target group is in conformity with that of the target group

identified by identified in the joint programme. Representatives of UNIFEM and the Ministry of Gender will be expected to participate in the IC deliberations.

**National MDG3 Steering Committee.** In 2008, the Government of Liberia formally established a National MDG3 Steering Committee to ensure high level coordination and focus on gender equality and women’s economic empowerment. The MDG3 SC reviews all programmatic support in these areas to ensure a comprehensive, strategic and coordinated approach to women’s economic empowerment that is in line with national priorities. The Committee has been actively engaged in the development of GEWEE.

UNIFEM will be responsible for overall coordination of the programme, including supporting MoGD in its capacity as the lead Ministry. UNIFEM will also support the Joint Programme Manager and ensure smooth running of the programme. The day-to-day technical coordination of the overall programme will be the responsibility of the **Joint Programme Manager, who** will report to the DSRSG/RC and sit in the MoGD, within the department of Planning and Technical Services. In addition to ensuring effective implementation of the programme, the JP Manager will also have a distinct capacity development role in relation to the MOGD to be specified in details within the ToRs for the position. The Programme Manager will be responsible for the consolidated reporting on progress of the programme as well as those general administrative functions necessary for the orderly running of the programme. Since the main function of the Programme Manager will be to facilitate the technical coordination among the outputs, the key tasks will also be to consolidate and coordinate activities under each output into Programme level work plans and budgets, and to prepare consolidated progress reports based on contributions from each agency. The Programme Manager will work closely with the ILO/UNIFEM joint initiative for leveraged and efficient coordination.

**Table 6.1. Management Arrangements for the Joint Programme**

| Entity                                   | Functions/roles  | Member(s)  | Indicative tasks  |
|--|--|--|---|
| Joint Programme Steering Committee (JSC) | Programme Strategic Leadership and oversight               | Co-chair:<br>MOGD/DSRSG/RC<br><br>Members:<br>MOL, MOE, MOC&I, UNIFEM, ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, WB<br>CSOs representatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes high level decisions and gives strategic direction to JP implementation</li> <li>• Reviews and approves regular reports on implementation progress; major issues arising</li> <li>• Oversees JPMCC</li> </ul>  |
| Coordination Leads                       | Overall Strategic Coordination                             | MoGD<br>UNIFEM   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide coherence and guidance to the programme as a whole</li> <li>• Coordinates strategies for implementation</li> <li>• Ensures timely programme monitoring / management</li> <li>• Liaise with AA on timely funding</li> </ul>   |
| Overall Joint Programme Management       | Management and technical coordination of JP implementation | Programme Manager + support team<br><br>(Recruited by the JP lead UN agency and MOGD)                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical coordination of implementation</li> <li>• Regular reporting on implementation progress to the JPSC</li> <li>• Facilitates joint work planning</li> <li>• Supports implementation coordination at county and community levels</li> <li>• Proactively seek coordination with other relevant initiatives (JPs and others)</li> <li>• Provides information/support documentation for funds management</li> </ul> |
| Output level implementation              | Implementation of Outputs and activities                   | GOL+UN agency  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of TA for output level implementation</li> <li>• Delivery of an activity (or set of activities within an output)</li> <li>• Reporting implementation status</li> </ul>   |

## 6. Fund Management Arrangements

### Overview

In line with the integrated programme design and implementation, the Joint Programme will rely mainly on **pass-through funding**. However, parallel fund management will remain for the component of the joint ILO/UNIFEM project funded by the Norwegian Government, the World Bank's inputs and for other interventions with existing funding or disbursements directly to one agency. In general terms however, and for possible subsequent contributions that may be needed, the UN preference is for the simplest financial arrangements possible, using the pass through mechanism.

### Financial Management and Accountability

As with all donor-funded UN programmes, programming and financial accountability rests with participating UN organisations for their respective outputs under the Joint Programme. Annual work plans will be developed in consultation with government counterparts and development partners.

UNDP will act as the **Administrative Agent** (AA) under the pass-through fund management option as applied to this programme. Under this modality UN participating organisations agree to channel funds for the Joint Programme through the AA. A common work plan reflecting the programming and sequencing of work will be developed by the participating agencies to clearly indicate the activities to be implemented by each of the participating UN organisations. The UN recipient organizations and the AA are required to maintain accurate records on all financial transactions. To this end, all accounting, financial reporting and auditing procedures will be as stipulated within the UNDG joint programming guidelines.

The AA, the UNDP MDTF Office, will be responsible for the following activities:

- Sign MOU with the Participating UN Organization
- Sign the standard SAA with donors that wish to provide contributions to this Joint Programme.
- Receive, administer and manage contributions from donors
- Disburse funds to Participating UN Organizations based on the JP document duly signed by all the Participating UN Organizations and /or as per decision by the JPSC
- Consolidate financial reports and narrative reports received from Participating UN Organizations for submission to the JPSC for review/approval and thereafter to donors

Report to the JPSC, Participating UN Organizations and donor on the sources and uses of donor contributions received.

### General Requirements and Procedures

Each participating UN organisation will sign a standardized Memorandum of Understanding with UNDP. Under such MOU, each participating UN organisation assumes full programmatic and financial accountability for the funds disbursed to them by the AA. In parallel, the contributing donor signs a standardized Letter of Agreement with the AA, setting out terms and conditions governing the receipt and administration of the contribution.

#### Budget Preparation and Reporting

Each participating UN organisation will prepare a separate budget consistent with its procedures, covering mutually agreed outputs or sub-components with other partners, and which it will manage. Responsibility will be assigned to the Joint Programme

Manager for preparing a consolidated programme budget showing the budget components or sub-components of each participating UN organisation incorporating their implementing partners' budgets. This consolidated budgeting will permit the JPSC to be informed by the Programme Manager of the projected flow and utilisation of funds, and of any potential funding shortfalls or new requirements.

The AA, will be responsible for reporting on the status of the pass-through fund, incorporating the reports of individual UN organisations funded in this way. Where UN organisations have received programme-related funding through a parallel mechanism such as is the case with ILO and UNIIFEM, each will prepare and submit a regular financial management report to the relevant donor(s) and the JPSC, and the Programme Manager, in a manner that ensures coherence for consolidated financial reporting by the UN Joint Programme overall. Financial reporting of the overall joint programme will be the responsibility of the PM who will provide consolidated financial management reports, at a frequency to be determined by the SC (minimum once a year, for the purposes of the annual review).

#### Disbursement of Funds

Disbursement arrangements follow each UN organisation's regulations and rules as appropriate.

#### Accounting and Audit

Each UN organisation will account for the income received to fund its programme sub-components or outputs in accordance with its financial regulations and rules. Consistent with current practice, each UN participating organisation will be responsible for auditing the sub-component or outputs of the programme for which it is responsible, in accordance with existing UN rules, regulations, and procedures. Audit opinions and recommendations of the individual UN organisations must be communicated to the JPSC within four weeks for joint discussion and agreement on appropriate management response.

#### Balance of Funds

The disposition of any balance of funds remaining at the end of programme will be in accordance with the MOU between participating UN organisations, the AA where applicable (pass through) and the donor(s).

## **7. Feasibility, Risk Management and Sustainability of Results**

### **Feasibility and Major Risks**

- As with all programmes or projects of similar size in Liberia, there is a risk that the government may be distracted as it deals with the many issues and events facing it. Policy formulation, government coordination and timely decision-making, followed up by action at the key ministries and at county level, may not always occur.
- Donors may not remain committed to providing sufficient funds to cover all planned activities.
- Major complementary programmes such roads and other infrastructure, basic services, reform process initiatives may not be funded or undertaken in a timely manner, thus decreasing the impact of the Joint Programme.
- There is a risk of inability to appoint, recruit and retain competent staff.
- There is a risk of inability to deliver capacity building and technical expertise inputs in a coherent and timely manner.

### **Risk Management**

Careful pre-implementation planning and clarity with each of the JP stakeholders in terms of expected deliverables in a timely fashion coupled with regular meetings to review progress and agree on timely corrective measures where necessary shall be instituted and led by the two co-chairs of the JP. However some of the above risks, amongst others, may or may not be managed. Hence, overall management of risk will primarily be mitigated through employing a step-by-step roll out coupled with regular reviews and adjustments as needed. For outputs that require interventions in many parts of the counties, a gradual approach shall be adopted to draw from lessons learnt, to build confidence and strong partnerships.

Additionally, by utilizing the support and coordination of the National MDG3 Steering Committee, the Programme will ensure the coordinated and dedicated involvement of the Government of Liberia in all matters related to the Programme and its implementation.

### **Sustainability**

Initiatives in the areas of business development and skills development have been designed to include in-built sustainable requirements. They shall also build upon on going initiatives, arising opportunities and resources that already exist within beneficiaries and communities that shall be selected to benefit from the JP interventions. Hence, provided the Joint Programme interventions, coupled with other developments in the areas such as infrastructure development, continued peace and security and gradual general economic recovery shall come on stream on a prioritised basis then there is the potential for real opportunity to address gender inequalities and promote sustainable women empowerment.

The Joint Programme has selected interventions in strategic sectors where beneficiaries have already a comparative advantage and where there is potential for growth and value addition through better marketing, quality services, improved standards and access to

sustainable financing. The employment opportunities to be created should be a win-win situation. Overall the JPSC will be responsible to monitor and adapt interventions and strategies to respond to any changes that may affect the sustainability of interventions.

## **8. Accountability, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting**

### **Accountability and Responsibility**

The hierarchy of Programme responsibilities is as follows:

- Individual outputs are the responsibility of individual UN organisations as identified, and as developed in the matrix the workplan;
- Coordination of components, shared outputs and overall Joint Programme is the responsibility of the lead agency.

It is expected that the capacity building of government partners on both national and local levels will enable these to assume an increasing responsibility in the implementation of activities over the three years. The training of trainers under a number of activities will yield, it is hoped, a cadre of competent personnel to continue the activities started during the GEWEE and to apply the introduced methodologies.

### **Progress and Financial Reports**

Each participating UN organisation will prepare progress reports and financial reports in accordance with its policies and procedures. Reporting practices and formats should be harmonized to the extent possible. Consolidated progress reporting to the JPSC will be the responsibility of the JP Manager. However, due to the two funding mechanisms being used (parallel and pass-through), responsibilities will be as follows:

- The AA will be assigned the preparation of a consolidated financial report for agencies and outputs funded by the pass-through modality, for submission to the JPSC and the funding donors.
- For those agencies and outputs funded by the parallel funding modality, the JP Coordinating Agency, and possibly with AA assistance, will be responsible for consolidating these reports for wider information sharing with stakeholders.
- Overall, the JP Manager will be responsible for preparing JP consolidated progress reports and financial reports.
- The aggregated/consolidated financial report should be clearly identified as a compilation of the UN organisations' financial reporting and be presented "for information purposes only" to all JP stakeholders.

Stakeholders reviewing consolidated reports must be able to disaggregate the data as presented, so as to promote incisive reviews and informed decision-making. Attempts should be made to ensure disaggregation of indicators, e.g. by sex, age, type of households, geographical or social clusters (taking into account minorities and indigenous groups as appropriate) and alignment to the overall PRS monitoring framework. The UN organisations will agree to a validation mechanism for data being presented in reports, so that stakeholders and funding donors can be confident that the picture presented is accurate, coherent and consistent.

Formal progress and financial reports will be submitted to the JPSC and the funding donors on an annual basis. In addition, the JPSC will receive updates on a six-monthly basis.

## **Monitoring**

Monitoring will occur throughout the year, and in accordance with good practice there will be an annual review of the Joint Programme, which is consolidated and includes component implementation plans. The planned monitoring activities and evaluations of the Joint Programme will follow the UNDAF (Section VI applies) procedures, and will form part of the UNDAF M&E plan as aligned to the national PRS M&E plan. As is adopted in other Joint Programmes, participating UN organisations will undertake joint field visits when possible, while remaining cognizant of the demands on key government officials. The PM will produce annual reports to the JPSC on progress towards each of the indicators. Special reviews and assessments will be undertaken as required by the JPSC.

The individual project implementing agencies will be responsible for data collection and reporting from the activity level. The PM will have the overall responsibility for M&E reporting to the SC. This will help provide a clear picture of progress toward programme goals by tracking key outcomes and output indicators.

Such a mechanism is essential for successful implementation of the GEWEE, as it enables the SC and the various implementing agencies to quickly make adjustments to projects and activities and keep them on track. While the ultimate goal of M&E is to monitor the *impact*, the immediate focus of M&E will be to track programme *outputs* to ensure smooth implementation. To the maximum extent possible, all baselines will be established using data disaggregated by gender, age, and county, and taking into account the fact that youth are a heterogeneous group.

Baselines will be established using data collected by the implementing UN Agencies in their recent activities. In addition, several important surveys have recently been conducted, including the Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire (CWIQ), the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), the Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey (CFNS), and a Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA). GoL has conducted its first national census in more than 20 years.

## **Annual Reviews, Workplan and Budget**

The Government and the participating UN organisations shall jointly conduct annual planning and review meetings for all activities covered in the results framework (Section 4 above), monitoring and evaluation plan and work plans covered by this Joint Programme. The JPSC will have its first annual review meeting in November 2009. This meeting will review the progress of activities, potential need for re-allocation of pass-through funds and the progress in raising new funds. This will include an assessment of the risks and assumptions to determine whether they are still holding true or not.

A new annual work plan and budget will be produced with the necessary adjustments made based on the lessons learned from a review of the risks and assumptions and implementation progress achieved. The new work plan will be approved by the JPSC. (A detailed timeline is attached in the annex to illustrate the flow of management and coordination of the JPYEE)

The following annual reviews will be held in November 2010, where a detailed exit strategy will be presented and discussed, and finally one in November 2011. The final review will produce a set of recommendations for the sustainability of GEWEE activities in particular and a globally applicable set of best practices for UN-wide knowledge-sharing.

There is no requirement for the Joint Programme Document to be signed every year.

However, any substantive change in the Joint Programme scope will require revision of the Joint Programme Document. Major amendments are to be determined at the discretion of the JPSC and will be signed by all parties to the JP.

## **9. Ex Ante Assessment of Crosscutting Issues**

As stated above, the UN clearly supports the government's efforts to address gender inequalities and women's empowerment needs as a means to reduce poverty, maintain peace, enhance justice and promote development. In responding to government plans, the UNCT has taken into account the PRS priorities and proposes this Joint Programme in recognition of the staggering level of gender inequalities and the imperative need to act decisively to alter the current picture of gender equality in Liberia. Other crosscutting issues as well as synergies between programmes are addressed in UNCT response through the Food Security and Nutrition Programme, the Youth Employment Programme, and, the Gender Based Violence Programme. Whereas the Food Security and Nutrition Programme supports enhanced participation and benefit of women from agricultural food production, this programme takes an approach which links the macro, meso and micro levels of women's empowerment, including supporting enhanced wealth creation through engendering the sectoral policy implementation and strategy development, capacity building of women traders to advance their economic rights and role in decision making in shaping key sectors, and supporting their role in value-addition, commercialisation and marketing of their products. The Programme shall ensure complimentary interventions and avoid overlap through strategies employed, identification of target groups and sectors.

In respect to the Youth Employment Programme, this Programme sees itself as an intervention geared towards advancing women's immediate employment opportunities as presented in the GoL's growth strategy focus on the private sector as an immediate driver of growth, making use of gains achieved through the employment programme in terms of building the capacities of young women.

Linkages between this Joint Programme and the Joint Programme on **SGBV** are evident, as high levels of economic dependence by women are known to be one the major root causes of entrenched SGBV, and specifically sexual exploitation and abuse of women and young girls. This is a major factor in entrenching women's vulnerability to remain in relationships in spite of extreme levels of domestic violence. Through the GTG and MoGD, implementing agencies shall ensure that there is effective coordination between the two Joint Programmes, and that this programme specifically targets women and girls potentially vulnerable to, as well as survivors of SGBV. In addition, the implementing agencies shall ensure that a strategy to involve men in this Joint Programme shall be developed within the first year of programme implementation.

In turn this Joint Programme explicitly addresses a number of key crosscutting issues. They include SGBV, Youth, Persons with Disabilities, Environment and Sustainable Development, Capacity Building, HIV and AIDS, and, Peace Building.

**Young Women** will be significantly involved in Programme interventions, and will also be recipients of functional adult literacy and other trainings. Particular attention shall be to ensure that productive young girls remain in and contribute to the revitalisation of the rural communities. They shall therefore also receive the necessary means of production, access to productive assets and small-scale mechanisation, skills and means for value-addition and commercialisation of economic activities.



**Persons with Disabilities** face unique forms of discrimination in the enjoyment of their rights and suffer from direct or indirect forms of discrimination as a result. Persons with disabilities face violations of human rights, including violations against their dignity and inhumane treatment. This Joint Programme shall therefore address a number of key issues related to persons with disabilities to enhance the enjoyment of their rights on an equal basis with others.

In terms of **Environment and Sustainable Development**, the ethos and approach adopted in the Joint Programme is to contribute to developing and sustaining the appropriate regeneration of trade and formal enterprise development for the benefit of all Liberians in an equitable fashion. The Joint Programme may be hoping for quick wins but is not seeking quick fixes that are unacceptable.

Under **Capacity Building**, the Programme intends to increase both capacities and competencies of the gender machinery at both the national and county level, as well as providing advice and training to communities in strategic areas of economic growth that represent real opportunities for women to evolve from unsustainable subsistence exploitation to sustainable wealth creation exploitations. Moreover, the Programme addresses the capacity needs of women's civil society to significantly contribute to a strong demand driven accountability for women's rights and equitable representation of women in decision making at all levels. Conducive policy and legal frameworks for the promotion of gender equality and women's rights shall also be in place to ensure that both public and private actions contribute adequately to addressing gender inequality gaps.

**HIV and AIDS** victims and vulnerable women and girls are specifically targeted through the empowerment and women's rights initiatives at macro, meso and micro level to ensure that the Programme can account for the differences in the experiences, capacities and priorities of women in rural Liberia

**Peace Building Initiatives** include strategies to ensure a No-Harm approach to avoid unintended negative consequences on gender relations at household, community and national investments through targeted investment in women's empowerment initiatives as this one. Such strategies shall engage explicit efforts to foster dialogue and advance positive collaboration between men and women on women's empowerment towards improved livelihoods for families.

## 10. Legal Context or Basis of Relationship

**Table 3: Basis of Relationship**

| Participating UN organization | Agreement  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| UNDP                          | The JPYEE shall be the instrument referred to as the Project Document in Article I of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between the Government of Liberia and the United Nations Development Programme, signed by the parties on April 27, 1977.   |
| ILO                           | ILO Project Office was established in 2007 and is covered by the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between the Government of Liberia and the United Nations Development Programme, signed by the parties on April 27, 1977.  |
| World Bank                    | Liberia is a member of the World Bank Group since 1962.  |
| UNIFEM                        | UNIFEM Partnership with the Government of Liberia is based on the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between the Government of Liberia and the United Nations Development Programme, signed by the parties on April 27, 1977.   |
| UNESCO                        | Liberia is one of the member states of UNESCO with a National Commission (NATCOM) established in each member country as agreed during the 1978 General Conference through a provision enshrined in Article VII of the Constitutional framework. The UNESCO Office is mandated to collaborate with NATCOM and provide support in meeting the educational, scientific, cultural and other related needs of the member state, Liberia, through the Ministry of Education. |

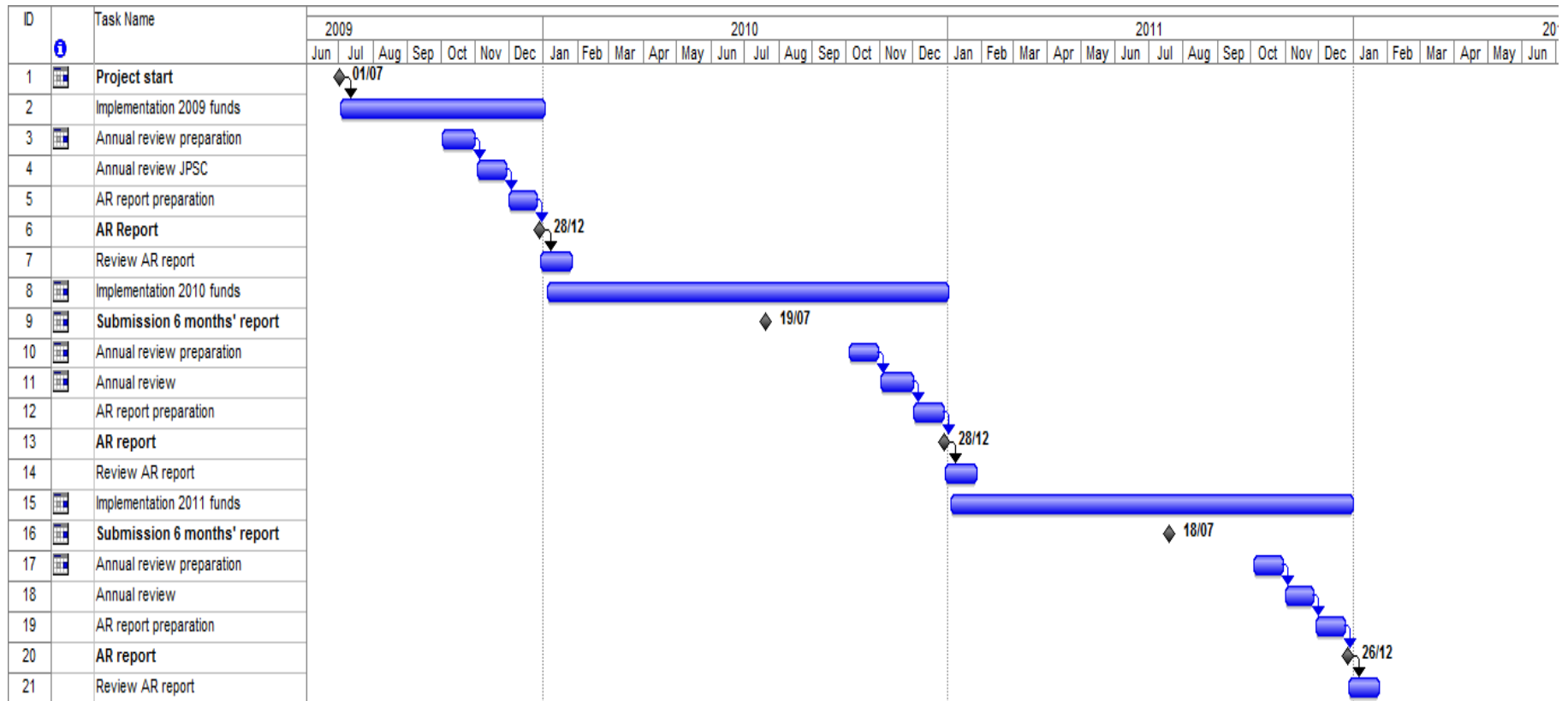
This section will confirm that the cooperation or assistance agreements<sup>8</sup>, which are the legal basis for the relationships between the Government and each of the UN Organizations participating<sup>9</sup> in this Joint Programme, will apply. It should state clearly that each agency's activities under this Joint Programme will be governed by the respective applicable basic and other agreements of the agency.

<sup>8</sup> Such as: the Basic Cooperation Agreement for UNICEF; Standard Basic Assistance Agreement for UNDP, which also applies to UNFPA; the Basic Agreement for WFP; as well as the Country Programme Action Plan(s) where they exist; and other applicable agreements for other participating UN organizations.

<sup>9</sup> Including Specialised Agencies and Non Resident Agencies who are participating.

# Annex 1

## Time Chart and Information Flows



## **Annex 2**

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

#### **UN Joint Programme for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (JPGEWEE)**

##### **Purpose**

The overall goal of the Joint Programme Steering Committee is to guide the implementation and provide oversight and accountability to the JPGEWEE.

##### **Chairs**

Minister of Gender and Development and DSRSG/UN Resident Coordinator

##### **Members**

- Ministry of Gender and Development, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Commerce and Trade, Ministry of Education
- Heads of signatory agencies: ILO, UNDP, UNIFEM, UNESCO, WB and UNMIL
- Donor partners (i.e Denmark)

##### **Secretariat**

- Programme Manager and UNIFEM as the Coordinating Agency

##### **Key Tasks and Responsibilities:**

- To review and approve the work plan, and update and/or modify it, as necessary.
- Provide direction and guidance to the implementation of the Joint Programme
- To review and approve the periodic progress reports (programmatic and financial) consolidated by the PM and the Administrative Agent based on the individual activity reports by participating agencies
- To ensure appropriate consultative processes take place with key stakeholders and UN agencies in Liberia working in the area of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
- Foster collaboration with, and make linkages to, other Joint Programmes
- Guide PM in the development, and annual up-dating, of a resource mobilization strategy for the programme; undertake resource mobilization
- For funds earmarked by donors to specific outputs or agencies, review and ensure the alignment of the allocations with the joint programme and national priorities;
- Allocate new, un-earmarked pass-through funds to JPGEWEE activities in line with national priorities.
- To provide oversight, ensure accountability and audit control
- Share information, and coordinate as appropriate, with media
- At Annual Review meetings, review progress of outputs within the JP and reallocate funds from outputs that are either not performing effectively or less of a priority, to those that need additional resources.

##### **Decisions:**

The Steering Committee makes decisions by consensus. Decisions of the Steering Committee shall be duly recorded. The Secretariat will prepare minutes following each SC meeting

**Frequency of meetings:** Quarterly. Annual reviews in November each year.

**Mechanism for implementing SC recommendations:** The PM is responsible for coordinating with agencies and monitoring the progress, to be presented at the annual review.