
LIBERIA MTR SF REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Liberia’s Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework commenced alongside the global economic crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic. This impacted the MTRSF process in Liberia by restricting the type and number of consultative processes. Nonetheless, the National Disaster Management Agency of Liberia, in collaboration with the UNDRR and the government of Liberia, was committed to fulfilling its mandate of completing the review process.

Apart from limited virtual participation of stakeholders and detailed inputs from all government ministries, an extensive desk review was undertaken of available official documents, data, and reports.

This report presents a critical analysis of institutional and systemic gaps as well as progress against the seven targets of the Sendai Framework.

The progress against the targets has been mixed, but the overall direction of the progress has been strategic, ensuring that key levers of change have been addressed.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused severe downward trends across the economic, social, environmental, and technological sectors. Liberia was already experiencing absolute poverty, entrenched inequality, widespread infrastructure deficits, and economic deprivation, and was one of the hardest hit Sub-Saharan countries during the pandemic.

An overview of an open stakeholder briefing for the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and more specifically stakeholder perspectives on the implementation of DRR in the country, is highlighted herein.

This stocktaking exercise has informed the midterm review and resulted in a national report that synthesizes highlights, challenges, gaps and recommendations, while identifying specific cross-cutting recommendations or themes, as relevant.

The MTR SF of Liberia has retrospective and prospective elements. This report takes identifies emerging issues, uncovers context shifts, and builds coherence with other frameworks, to better address the systemic nature of risk and so realize regenerative and sustainable development in the country.
I. INTRODUCTION

Recognizing that 2023 marks the midpoint in implementing the Sendai Framework, as well as other related agreements, conventions and agendas, in its resolution 75/216 of 21 December 2020, the UN General Assembly decided to “hold a midterm review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework in 2023 to assess progress on integrating disaster risk reduction into policies, programmes and investments at all levels, identify good practice, gaps and challenges and accelerate the path to achieving the goal of the Sendai Framework and its seven global targets by 2030”.

Member States have been encouraged to produce voluntary national reports of the findings of their national midterm reviews. On the 31 January 2022 this year, the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) of Liberia agreed to conduct national consultations in relation to the Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework. UNDRR Regional Office for Africa has expressed full support and guidance to conduct the voluntary national review.

The structure of the Sendai Framework and the indicators for the global targets, as endorsed by the General Assembly, will be the basis for the Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (MTR SF). The MTR SF entails two principal elements of review: a retrospective stocktaking exercise from 2015 to 2022, inter alia appraising the adequacy of progress in implementation in a changing context; and a prospective review of priority challenges to be addressed and actions to be undertaken, accelerated, or amplified between 2023-2030 and beyond.

This report looks at how the Ebola crisis of 2014-2015 led to the adoption of the Sendai Framework and its domestication to a National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy and Action Plan for 2020-2030. It will then describe highlights and main achievements between 2015 and 2022, and the challenges faced during this period. The report will then lay out prospective views on the implementation of the Sendai framework in Liberia via its national strategy from now until 2030, and beyond.

Disaster threat analysis

Liberia is a country that faces many threats such as epidemics, droughts, floods, coastal erosion, and other man-made hazards. Because of climate change, the country is likely to experience more frequent and intense occurrences of these threats that will have profound impacts on the country’s development efforts.

Vulnerability and adaptation assessments have revealed that Liberia is faced with climate change and variability leading to extreme events, which harm agriculture, forestry, health, energy and other sectors. Climate change impacts are marked by irregular patterns of rainfall, flooding, high temperature and coastal erosion.
These factors result in crops and livestock losses that intensify food insecurity and loss of income. For the most part, women and children are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. However, their unique knowledge and perspectives also provide opportunities for inclusive, equitable, and efficient adaptation responses and coping strategies. The limited supporting infrastructures increase the vulnerability of the population.

Liberia is no stranger to epidemics and their disruptive effects on social relations and the economy. Along with the neighboring states of Guinea and Sierra Leone, Liberia had to cope with the most severe Ebola virus outbreak in recorded history between 2014 and 2016. This outbreak was widespread in the Manao River Union Basin and accompanied by significant urban transmission, resulting in a death toll of approximately 5,000 lives in Liberia alone. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern in August 2014. A month later, the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) was set up to assist the respective national governments and international partners in bringing the outbreak to an end. By late November, the concerted efforts of local communities, the national government, and partners resulted in a significant slowdown in EVD cases. By January 2015, 13 of Liberia’s 15 counties reported no ongoing transmission.

Coastal areas in the country are the most populated and economically vibrant areas, and are highly vulnerable to the consequences of climate change. Sea erosion continues to pose increasing threats to the shorelines of coastal cities including major infrastructures and investments. A large proportion of the coastal community lives in temporary and poorly constructed housing with little protection from rising sea levels or storm surges. Many live on very low-lying land, often in unplanned, illegal settlements. The expected rise in sea levels as a result of climate change, combined with increasing storms and sea-surges is expected to have significant negative impacts on the lives and livelihoods of people in coastal areas. Already, major economic sectors like fishing and farming are seriously affected because of the increasing displacement of people caused by flooding and other climate change related disasters.

In terms of food security, the country recognizes inefficient production systems, weak policy and business environment, human resource challenges, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient agricultural funding, subsistence farming, weak natural resources management, and poorly developed agricultural research and development.

Various studies conducted in recent years indicate that Liberia has a comparative advantage in the primary production and value addition of some specific crops in terms of its contribution to food and nutrition security and export earnings. These are oil palm, rubber, cocoa, fisheries (marine/aquaculture), rice, cassava, horticulture (i.e., vegetables), and poultry/livestock.
Producing diverse outputs (including value added products) for domestic and international markets could result in gains in agricultural and economic growth. Five major inter-related components have been identified as strategic in delivering the plan. These components are food and nutrition security; competitive value chain development and market linkages; agricultural extension, research, and development; sustainable production and natural resource management; and improved governance and institutional strengthening.

Liberia is home to globally significant forests and most of its people depend on them for their livelihoods. The country is experiencing deforestation at an average rate of 0.46 per cent per year. The economic costs of forest depletion increased from 0.5 to 32 per cent as a share GNI between 2005 and 2015. Furthermore, a combination of shifting cultivation practices, unregulated chainsaw milling, unregulated charcoal production for urban markets, encroachment by commercial and artisanal miners, and weak governance of forest resources hamper sustainable forest management.

The lack of adequate infrastructure remains the binding constraint to Liberia’s development, particularly road, energy, ICT, and water and sanitation. Lack of access to all-weather roads and basic infrastructure continues to impede the movement of goods and services, equipment, and machinery for production, which directly affects the poor and vulnerable.

II. HIGHLIGHTS

In 1989, when the 14-year civil war broke out, Liberia’s population was 2 million. The country’s infrastructure was destroyed during those years and in 2003 the country started to rebuild. Reconstruction efforts were slowed down by the world economic shock in 2008, the Ebola crisis in 2014-2015, and the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 that led to lower international aid and trade. The country realized that the constant “stop and go” in rebuilding the country since 2003 was due to its high exposure and vulnerability to natural as well as and man-made hazards.

Lessons learned from the EBV crisis and other crises led Liberia to start seriously addressing disaster risk management. The country adopted the disaster management Act in 2016. Since the House of Legislature endorsed the at into law, the country has achieved a few successes.

The Disaster Management Act enabled the creation of the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) and allocated it a yearly budget. Today the entity, an Autonomous Agency, has 51 employees and is very active in supporting the country to better prepare and respond to disasters, and also gradually build national capacities to address risk reduction. In addition, the national platform for DRR was established in 2018 and it involves all sectors and civil society organizations.
The Sendai Framework 2015-2030 offered a timely opportunity to help the country prepare its first national strategy and plan of action for Disaster Risk Reduction 2016-2024. The national strategy and plan of action for disaster risk reduction is fully aligned with the Sendai Framework.

The country has also achieved some successes by implementing a few important programs in terms of health, environment, food security, land use and urban planning, to reduce exposure and vulnerabilities of its population to various hazards and potential economic shocks. All programs clearly consider gender balance and address needs of various vulnerable groups.

As Liberia is still in the post-conflict rehabilitation phase, the Sendai Framework also offered guidance for building the country back better by mainstreaming risk information into the reconstruction process in all sectors. There are serious chances to achieve this if the country could access technical support to conduct proper risk assessment for adequate risk information.

Looking at the implementation of the Sendai Framework in Liberia and the future, especially with effects of climate change that have already been seen with the acceleration of coastal erosion, the worrying world economic situation due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and geopolitical instability affecting economies, the State recognizes an urgent need to mobilize resources to step up the implementation of its national strategy and plan of action for DRR. The priorities will be to:

1. Better understand and use technology to measure systemic risk.
2. Build awareness and capacity for DRR with an all-society and gender approach.
3. Review its governance to enhance its capacity to mainstream “risk reduction measures” into planning in all sectors.
4. Use the opportunity of its ongoing post-civil war reconstruction and rehabilitation programmes to ensure “Build Back Better”.

III. MTR SF METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS

Being a country that is fully engaged with reconstruction and rehabilitation following years of conflict, Ebola epidemic, COVID-19 pandemic, and because the NDMA has limited resources, Liberia was among the few countries selected by the UNDRR office for Africa to facilitate a nationwide process for preparing the MTR SF report. A national stakeholders’ workshop on the Midterm Review was held on the 13-14 July 2022. During the stakeholder consultative workshop, NDMA, along with other relevant Ministries, Agencies, Commissions (MACs), public sector private sector, and the civil society were briefed on their required involvement and
contribution/inputs for the preparation of a national Midterm Report on the implementation of the Sendai Framework (MTR SF).

Prior to the workshop, a questionnaire of guidelines and probing questions regarding the midterm implementation of the Sendai Framework 2015-2030 was sent to participants. The questionnaire was used as a tool for the workshop and other face-to-face interviews.

The Information gathered during the stakeholders’ workshop, as well as information collected through questionnaires, face-to-face interviews and the literature review, constitute the content of this report.

IV. RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW

Since 2015, the country has experienced rapid urbanization due to effects of climate change, especially irregular patterns of rainfall and flooding, but also economic opportunities that are concentrated in cities. The rapid urbanization is taking place in a context of widespread poverty. Growing concentrations of people and economic activities in many cities are seen to overlap with areas of high-risk exposure. For example, the capital Monrovia is more and more affected as it holds 1.6 million of the 5.3 million population of Liberia (worldometer 2022). In addition, coastal erosion is clearly visible and progressing at an alarming speed.

In order to show its commitment to addressing disaster risk in Liberia, the country passed the National disaster Management Act 2016. Subsequently, Liberia has set up the National Disaster Management Agency in 2016.

The National Platform for DRR (NDP) was set up in 2018. Women are well represented within the NDP, a fact that could be witnessed during the stakeholders meeting.

Liberia elaborated a new National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction for 2020-2030 (including a plan of action), and the Sendai Framework 2015-2030 offered a good opportunity to help structure and draft it. This was an important achievement, looking at the priorities for reconstruction in Liberia following 14 years of internal conflict from 1989 to 2003.

The process for establishing the national DRR strategy and plan of action followed a very participatory process with multiple stakeholders including women and various vulnerable groups through civil society organizations. The strategy and plan of action was validated during a multi-stakeholder’s national workshop, including for the media representatives on risk communication.

The process for establishing the national strategy for DRR was an opportunity to build more awareness for the Sendai Framework in Liberia. Following the adoption of the strategy and plan of action by the state, workshops were again held for various groups and stakeholders, as well as
state authorities of various ministries and government agencies in DRR, including an introduction to the Sendai Framework.

The initial efforts in implementing were placed on disaster response, due to the persistent EBV threat. These efforts were quickly rewarded as the country was much better prepared for the COVID-19 pandemic. EBV crisis in 2014-2015 saw over 10,000 cases and 4,809 deaths. The country then stepped up its emergency preparedness and response in the health sector, including the reinforcement of its road infrastructure and transport system to facilitate the response in case of crisis. When the country was hit by the Covid-19 pandemic it reported only 7,883 cases by August 2022 with 294 deaths. It praises the capacity built during the EBV crisis for having kept low COVID-19 mortality, another important success for the country.

Due to increasing pressures of urbanization, Liberia is developing the National Urban Policy, another key success. The policy will provide a platform to address social issues affecting Liberians in urban and rural areas, provide basic needs and livelihoods in human settlements, and ensure that environmental issues and climate change are addressed as the country becomes increasingly urban.

As Liberia is still in the post-conflict rehabilitation phase, the Sendai Framework also offered an opportunity for building back better by mainstreaming risk information into the reconstruction process in all sectors. There are serious chances to achieve this if the country could access technical support to conduct proper risk assessment for sound risk information.

The main challenge in Liberia is the slow pace in implementing the national DRR strategy/SF due to the low technical capacities and lack of budgetary allotment to conduct a primary and comprehensive risk and vulnerability assessment, some pre-existing role conflicts and inadequate coordination to mainstream risk reduction into sectors, as well as political will.

In terms of the alignment of the national DRR strategy and plan of action to the 2030 agenda and other development related frameworks in the country, there is a need to improve the planning process. This is an important challenge for the country, and it can be resolved only when there will be a clear collaboration between the NDMA and the various sectors of the government in mainstreaming risk reduction measures into sectors planning processes.

On the positive side, many sectors are implementing measures that contribute to reducing exposure and vulnerabilities to hazards. However, they are not identified as risk reduction measures and most sectors continue to think that disaster risk reduction is the business of only the NDMA and other disaster management practitioners.

Gradually, DRR is advancing in Liberia, but it is not yet “everybody’s business”. Since 2015, the emphasis was on building capacity for preparedness and response by necessity. For the
remaining period until 2030 in the implementation of the National DRR strategy, and subsequently the Sendai Framework, there is a need for the country to initiate a paradigm shift from “managing disasters” to “managing and reducing disaster risks”.

While the strategy and plan are very comprehensive and cover the full spectrum of the SF, it remains impossible to be fully implemented for the set period due to limited funding.

A. Progress Towards the Outcome and Goal

Outcome of the SF

Besides the civil war that lasted 14 years, the most important disaster was the EBV crisis in 2014-2015 that saw over 4000 lives lost. The EBV crisis triggered a commitment from the country to invest in disaster risk reduction from 2015 using the Sendai Framework as a guiding tool. Results of the first investments in DRR since 2015 could be seen when the Sars-Covid 2 hit the country in 2020. The pandemic was well managed and the country witnessed very little cases and mortality. In addition, the EBV crisis gave a unique opportunity to rebuild the health system of the country as well as the road infrastructure to facilitate rapid response in various parts of the country in case of epidemics or other disasters.

Goal of the SF

As the country is still in the post-conflict rehabilitation phase, while facing a pandemic and increasing threats due to climate change, the Sendai Framework as a guide offers a unique opportunity to Build Back Better the country by mainstreaming risk information into all sectors (legal, social, health, cultural, educational, environmental, technological, political, institutional, etc.). The country has a serious chance to achieve a high level of resilience thanks to a unique opportunity to combine all post-conflict and post-pandemic efforts within an overall and combined approach of mainstreaming both conflict risk and natural hazard risk into rehabilitation and reconstruction plans.

Since 2015, major advances were made at the governance level and in disaster preparedness and response. Liberia has implemented a few institutional reforms to advance disaster risk reduction in the country using the Sendai Framework as a guiding tool. Various sectors have since 2015 established various strategies and plans to reduce the vulnerability of the Liberian population. Most of the efforts clearly contribute to reducing exposure and vulnerabilities to various hazards and threats, and to enhancing the country’s resilience, even if they are not seen, labelled, or accounted under disaster risk reduction.

B. Progress in Risk Assessment, Information and Understanding
The EBV crisis in 2014-2015 was a wake-up call for the country to start thinking about “risk”, its origins and its nature.

In spite of the challenges, the country made a colossal effort to reduce the level of uncertainty by gradually investing in science and technology, and learning from the experiences of countries where the epidemic began earlier as a basis for defining different strategies to address this hazard. Given the unforeseen nature of this event, from a planning perspective, it was of critical importance to identify various types of vulnerabilities, such as shortages of the infrastructure and equipment that the health sector needed to cope with the crisis. The vulnerability of the country to Ebola was exacerbated by inadequate preparedness and coordination.

Another experience lessons can be learned from is the quantification of data and georeferencing as applied to groups that are at risk of health problems, and the identification of groups, sectors and individuals who were especially vulnerable to the economic and social impacts of the disaster. The country had to race to develop national and local strategies and mechanisms to digitalize the collection of data and establish institutional interoperability systems to facilitate the accurate and timely identification of the most vulnerable groups in the population, and the beneficiaries for tailored assistance and aid packages. All the above were achieved in relation to the Ebola crisis response.

Hence, the establishment of the national disaster loss database was an important step for authorities to better understand the impact of disasters on the overall development of the country and to make risk-informed decisions.

Another important aspect mentioned during the consultations is a better understanding in the country of its exposure to external shocks such as global economic shocks, the impact of global warming due to intense human activity in other continents, or the actual war in Ukraine that creates disturbances in accessing sources of energy and other food items.

During the process of developing the national DRR strategy and plan of action, detailed hazard maps and risk hot spots and profiles were developed for the four major hydro-meteorological hazards (flood, windstorm, coastal erosion). This exercise also included defining vulnerabilities and profiles of communities living in hazard prone areas.

The processes of establishing the national DRR strategy and the national climate change adaptation plan are great opportunities to conduct public awareness campaigns for better understanding of disaster risk. In addition, the launch of the Liberia Disaster Loss Database, the National Disaster Communication Strategy, climate change adaptation communication strategy and the climate change knowledge portal of Liberia are equally great opportunities to disseminate disaster risk information.

Moreover, the launch of the new Emergency Operation Center for Liberia that serves as an anchor of early warning and emergency response, recovery and coordination, and is the hub for
dissemination of disaster information and climate change modeling and forecasting in the country, is another huge gain.

While the above-mentioned steps in better understanding basic elements of risk are important, many stakeholders said that NDMA still needs the requisite capacity and logistics for conducting a comprehensive primary national risk and vulnerability assessment (especially when the concept of risk is extended to systemic risk) that would enable better mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction into the country’s development planning processes in all sectors.

C. Progress in Risk Governance and Management

In order to show its commitment to addressing disaster risk in Liberia, the country developed the NDMA Policy in 2012 and passed the National Disaster Management Act in 2016.

The policy seeks to create a foundation for the development of an effective and functional legal and institutional framework and good governance for disaster risk management (DRM), to provide the basis for DRM national and local organizations, capacity enhancement and clear allocation of roles and responsibilities; to provide overall direction for integrating disaster risk reduction into development, recovery and humanitarian response policy and plans; to contribute to national risk management applications for sustainable national development; and to strengthen disaster preparedness for effective emergency and recovery response.

It was enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Republic of Liberia in Legislature Assembled by an ACT that established an autonomous agency to be known as the National Disaster Management Agency with the purpose of implementing the National Disaster Management Policy, coordinating the national disaster management system, incorporating state and nonstate actors at national, county, district and chiefdom levels, and handling disaster-related issues to ensure reduced vulnerabilities to natural and human induced hazards.

However, the NDMA became fully operational in 2018 with its own budgetary allotment and its first executive director at the transition of His Excellences George M. Weah to the Presidency. The Agency thus has the mandate to coordinate all disasters and its related activities, thereby ensuring the implementation of the National Disaster Management Action Plan for disaster preparedness and the national environmental policy, the national food security and nutrition strategy, the national health policy, and other polices as relate to disaster management adopted by the Government of Liberia.

The national platform in DRR was established in 2018. Various government ministries and institutions, as well as the Red Cross and other civil society organizations, have focal points that are members of the platform. Women are also well represented in the national platform, as was witnessed during the stakeholders meeting held during the MTR SF process.
Liberia elaborated the National Disaster Risk and Resilience Strategy (DRRR) for 2020-2030. The development of the strategy was highly participatory, involving multi-stakeholders (MACs, CSOs, private sectors) consultative approach. The strategy and plan of action was validated during a multi-stakeholders’ national workshop. This process served as an opportunity to build more awareness on DRR and guidance for the country’s implementation of the Sendai Framework.

The National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL) was officially established by the NPHI Act of 2016, which the president signed into law in January 2017. This law was passed quickly to address the weaknesses in public health observed during Liberia’s response to the 2014-2015 Ebola outbreak. The NPHIL as an autonomous entity collaborates with and strengthens the Ministry and other institutions in the Health Sector to heighten the infection prevention and control efforts of the Government of Liberia.

The national Nutritional Policy was launched in April 2019, geared toward ensuring improved access to and utilization of a comprehensive package of proven diet and nutritional interventions, to improve awareness and practices of positive nutrition behavior, and to strengthen the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of multi-sectoral nutrition interventions.

Another success was the launch of the National Adaptation Plan of Liberia (NAP). As part of the process, assessments of vulnerabilities and capacities for adaptation conducted in the country revealed that Liberia is already facing extreme events that are harming its agriculture, forestry, healthcare and energy sectors, among others. Climate change is marked in Liberia by irregular patterns of rainfall, flooding, coastal erosion, and episodes of extreme heat.

Civil society organizations, women groups, indigenous people, CBOs, National and International NGOs, policy makers, academic and research institutions played major roles in the development of the National Climate Change Adaptation Plan, as well as in the assessment of impacts, vulnerabilities, and in defining adaptation measures. A series of training/workshop programs were conducted with the involvement of local leaders.

In terms of Gender, Liberia has a national gender policy and program that explicitly address discrimination against women and girls. The policy is referred to as the National Gender Policy (NGP). It is implemented by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection. The initial implementation framework covered 2009 to 2016. Later, the document was revised for another five years (2017-2022).

To facilitate the promotion of gender equality and women’s participation in the security sector, the Liberia National Fire and Rescue service (LNFRS) has made advancements in mainstreaming
gender in its plan. The Liberia National Fire and Rescue Service, with funding from the United Nations Women, officially launched its gender plan on April 1, 2022.

Women's land ownership is one of the major issues related to the empowerment of women and young people. The major achievements made toward this issue are the Draft Land Rights Act that has been sent to the Legislature for ratification through the Liberia Land Authority (LLA).

The government is working closely with UN-Habitat to develop a National Urban Policy to integrate the urban economy into national development policies and help create the conditions for Liberia to achieve its long-term development goal of reaching middle-income status by 2030. In 2018, the National Urban Policy discussion paper was finalized with stakeholders. The second phase of the activity has already started, which involves engaging with a wide range of stakeholders for a more participatory approach. This engagement will be countrywide through mechanisms including the National Urban Forum, and regional visits to ensure ownership of the policy.

To set out the essential elements to support planned and well-managed migration, the Migration Governance Indicator (MiGOF) was validated and launched in 2021. It seeks to present, in a consolidated, coherent and comprehensive way, a set of three principles from which migrants right can be governed and have access to certain social services such as health, education and social security. It also looks at family reunification, access to work, and access to residency and citizenship. The international conventions signed and ratified are also included.

The Decent Work Act launched in 2015 establishes that all persons who work or seek to work in Liberia are entitled to enjoy and exercise the rights and protections conferred by the act, regardless of their immigrant or temporary resident status. These provisions include access to old-age and cumulative service pensions, retirement packages, compensation for injury that leads to disability or death, maternity and parental leave, and paid sick leave, among others.

In terms of concrete collaboration to integrate disaster risk reduction into the country’s various legislation, regulations, policies, plans, budgets, and programmes, very little has been achieved and that is where more work needs to be done, especially now that the country is still engaged in post-civil war reconstruction, which offers a unique opportunity to mainstream risk reduction into reconstruction plans. However, it is clear that the various national strategies of the different sectors do include risk reduction measures, meaning activities that do contribute to reduce exposure and vulnerability. One of the objectives achieved during the stakeholders’ consultation was to capture the implementation of these measures by sectors.

In terms of civil society engagement, the enabling environment for CSOs remains relatively favorable as Liberia’s legal and policy frameworks recognized the importance of civil society to exercise their role as watchdog and to demand accountability from the State.
D. Progress in Investment in Risk Reduction and Resilience

In terms of direct investment into DRR, the government of Liberia has a yearly budget for the NDMA. However, while there is no clear mention in the government budget of direct investments into DRR measures, it is obvious that many risk reduction measures that contribute to reduce exposure and vulnerabilities of people, livelihoods and assets are being implemented through sectoral plans and budgets. This section will highlight achievements in Liberia in reducing exposure and vulnerabilities. Although some of the activities mentioned below were not planned under the national strategy for DRR, they can be accounted for as achievements in DRR of the country.

Health

Following the *Ebola crisis*, Liberia had completely revised its public health laws, adding sections to strengthen emergency operations, biosafety, biosecurity, reporting, and disease tracking abilities. The application of these revised laws in 2017 allowed the country to fast-track the the National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL), with its associated National Reference Laboratory (NRL). This institution was set up to coordinate the country's public health functions and ensure a more efficient and effective system for rapid response to future infectious disease outbreaks such as the SARS-CoV-2.

As Liberia is still very much exposed and vulnerable to epidemics such as Ebola and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the country continues to enhance its capacities in the health sector with the following:

- The “One Health” Governance approach and the creation of technical working groups has catalyzed coordination in antimicrobial resistance and other fields.
- Strong partnerships established for financial and technical support have allowed Liberia to access funds, including the WB's Second Regional Disease Surveillance Systems Enhancement (REDISSE II) project.
- Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR): A strong functional reporting system (eIDSR) operates and is centered on the National Reference Laboratory (NRL), a division of the National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL).
- Eight entry points for managing epidemics have been designated and are associated with health facilities that provide isolation and diagnostic testing capacities.
- Intermediate Field Epidemiology Training Programme (FETP): Liberia has has access to all levels of FETP (advanced FETP available in Ghana), and more than 215 fellows have graduated from the programme.
• Laboratory Testing capacity is available for priority pathogens, with an effective "Riders for Health" specimen courier system, which has transported more than 50,000 specimens across Liberia's 15 counties from over 300 relay stations for rapid diagnosis of priority infectious diseases since 2015.

• A network of national and county emergency operation centers (EOC) allows for a more rapid response to public health threats.

Following the first confirmed positive case of SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) in Liberia, neighboring countries sealed their borders with Liberia at the end of the month. In February 2020, the NRL confirmed that Liberia had sufficient capacity to test for SARS-CoV-2 as part of its national COVID-19 preparedness and response plan. More than 200 laboratory sample collectors were trained at the county level to support national sample collection, using the "Riders for Health" courier system developed during the EBV crisis to ensure timely testing. More than 70 national and subnational laboratory staff were trained on biosafety and biosecurity techniques to ensure that those on the frontline had the knowledge and skills to use their equipment safely, and SARS-CoV-2 testing was decentralized to Phebe hospital in Bong and the Jackson F. Doe Hospital in Nimba counties. In a nutshell, lessons learned from managing the Ebola crisis were instrumental in containing the spread of the covid-19. Proper sectoral coordination and sectoral engagement were key.

In terms of health infrastructure, an energy needs assessment of health facilities including infrastructure, availability of electricity, average hours of interruption and other relevant indicators was conducted throughout the country in 2015. As a result, 13 health facilities in Lofa, River Gee, Gbarpolu, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Bassa, and Bong Counties are about to benefit from solar power facilities (solar equipment has been procured and a budget was submitted for their installation).

Liberia, through the National HIV AIDS Commission and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, in partnership with implementing partners, international and national agencies, and nongovernmental and civil society organizations, has made steady progress in containing the spread of HIV and mitigating the impact of the epidemic on the general population through the implementation of preventing new HIV infections (Clinical and Non-Clinical), preventing HIV in Key Populations (KPs), condom promotion and distribution, treatment, care, and support for PLHIV, critical social and programmatic enablers, rapid testing and awareness.

Since 2010, two National HIV Strategic Frameworks (2010–2014 and 2015-2020) have been developed for ensuring the successful coordination and management of the national HIV response. Over the years, prevention activities, testing, and treatment services have been scaled up and expanded to ensure universal access to HIV and AIDS services. In Liberia, the majority
living with HIV have access to antiretroviral therapy. The involvement of multi-media and civil society organizations in the national response has increased the public’s knowledge and awareness of HIV and AIDS with special emphasis focused on youth and key populations.

**Malaria** is endemic, and the entire population is at risk of the disease. Children under five and pregnant women are the most affected groups. During the period under review, the country’s malaria incidence has been on the rise since 2012 (307.903) and reached a peak of in 2017 before moving downward in 2018. However, the government committed to ensure that 80 per cent of the country’s population is protected by malaria prevention measures by 2023, which is on the way to being achieved.

Between 2008–2018, approximately 11 million ITNs were distributed in Liberia through campaigns, ANC services, and institutional deliveries. Moreover, more service providers in malaria diagnosis and case management have been trained, and the management and leadership of county health teams have been strengthened to oversee and monitor malaria service delivery through updated national clinical standards, support for quality improvement interventions, including regular supervision as well as clinical training, strengthening of the health information system, and improved human resource management.

Overall, basic vaccination coverage among children aged 12-23 months has improved since 2015. This was made possible through community engagement and a vigorous awareness campaign. Routine childhood vaccines include BCG vaccine (tuberculosis), DPT-HepB-Hib or pentavalent vaccine (diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, hepatitis B, and Haemophilus influenza type b), oral polio vaccine or OPV (poliomyelitis), inactivated polio vaccine or IPV (poliomyelitis), pneumococcal vaccine, rotavirus vaccine, measles vaccine, and yellow fever vaccine.

Regarding under-five mortality rate, the government established a high-level national target of reducing under-five mortality ratios to 57 per 1,000 live births by 2023. Presently, under-five mortality is 93 deaths per 1,000 live births, which shows a slightly decreasing trend from 94 deaths per 1,000 live births between 2015 and 2019.

**Community Health Assistants** (CHA’s) are delivering an integrated and standardized service delivery package, which includes curative, preventive, promotive, rehabilitative, and palliative services, to households located more than a one-hour walk (more than 5km) from the nearest health facility. Households located within 5km of a health facility, are receiving a tailored package of services delivered by other community cadres. To date, 76.2 per cent or 2,904 of the overall targeted 4,000 CHAs have been recruited, trained, and deployed in 13 counties. The CHA program is a promising approach that can, potentially, change the narrative around health care delivery in Liberia.
In terms of **Drugs and Medical Supplies**, enormous progress has been made in putting the institutional framework for an effective supply chain management system in place. A temporary quality-testing lab will house the Liberia Medicines and Health Products Regulatory Agency (LMHRA), while the construction of a new testing lab that meets ISO standard is being planned. A new environmental health laboratory to test the quality of drinking water to protect Liberians was dedicated, and a centralized Health Care waste management facility for the management of medical waste from major hospitals in Montserrado County is under construction.

**Health Diagnostic Services** capacity has improved over the years. Molecular diagnostic and microbiology techniques are up and running at the National Reference Laboratory (NRL), and Phebe and Tappita hospitals. About 70 per cent of the laboratory infrastructure at JDJ hospital has been improved. Notwithstanding, capacity for diagnostics is still limited due to a combination of infrastructure deficits, inadequate human resources and technical capacities, and inadequate or lack of modern diagnostic equipment.

The National Health Insurance system design was launched and aims to consolidate potential revenues, not only from within the formal sector population, but also across the informal sector. The advantages of a single or large risk pool, the value of pre-payments and social solidarity, and efficiencies of a government-run health insurance system need to be highlighted to overcome the instinctive tendency of these covered formal sector populations to segregate their risk pools from the rest of the general population. The disinclination of the formal sector to merge into a common, national health insurance risk pool is compounded by skepticism about the government’s capacity to deliver health insurance benefits, particularly with respect to implementation activities, such as member management and claims processing.

**Environmental protection**

To accelerate the implementation of the National Environmental Policy of Liberia, the Environmental Protection Agency has established its presence in 10 of the 15 counties and recruited and trained 60 young college graduates for deployment in the counties as environmental inspectors. In addition, to enhance the government reporting capacities, the Safeguards Information System (SIS) development was funded from the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) to assist Liberia effectively and efficiently to report environmental information to the United Nations Frameworks Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

In its efforts to protect the environment, several organizations that needed to be trained in plastic recycling in Liberia were identified and trained by the government on innovative approaches in plastic recycling, an activity that could benefit both women and youths. During training, stakeholders were especially elated about the business opportunities in plastic recycling after a plastic recycling company displayed their business plan.
The government, in collaboration with the EPA, launched the “Enhancing Climate Information Systems for Resilient Development Project”. The project will increase the resilience of Liberia’s population and infrastructure to climate change. In particular, the project will strengthen the country’s adaptive capacities to integrate better long-term climate risk reduction and adaptation measures in national planning and development through the creation of a well-functioning Multi-Hazard Impact-Based Forecasting and Early Warning System (MH-IBF-EWS). The project will entail training and equipping the existing Liberia Meteorological Service (LMS), Liberia Hydrological Service (LHS), Environment Protection Agency (EPA) and National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) to collect weather and climate data; introduce and maintain modelling, forecast weather events and provide early warnings systems; and scale up evidence-based, climate-informed decision-making, planning, and response actions countrywide. The project feasibility to assess the country’s adaptive capacities to integrate better long-term climate risk reduction and adaptation measures in national planning and development were carried out as a collaborative effort between the GoL, the AfDB, WMO, UK MET and Nigerian MET, with financial support from the AfDB, GoL, and GCF.

In terms of awareness raising, the National Climate Change Adaptation plan, as well as the National DRR strategy and plan, were disseminated throughout the country, especially to local authorities. In addition, “traditional word of mouth early warning” training workshops were held in all 15 counties of the country (soliciting the views and inputs of the indigenous people in early warning information).

Coastal Erosion

Following the approval of 30 million USD by Global Climate Change Fund (GCF) in August 12, 2019 for the Monrovia Metropolitan Coastal Project, a climate vulnerability and risk assessment for the coastal zone of Liberia was initiated under the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan for the Monrovia Metropolitan Area. As a result, three hot spots were identified with one (West Point) likely to receive further GCF funding for risk reduction measures. In addition, a nationwide climate risks and vulnerability assessment for coastal areas was launched and the results were published in 2021 (Greenville, Harper, Cestos, Grandcess). As a result, 1,000 meters of coastal revetments were built in New Kru Town, which now reduced the threats of sea erosion in the Borough of New Kru Town.

The “Coastal Project” launched in 2020 with the aim of helping coastal communities in three counties (Grand Cape Mount, Montserrat and Grand Bassa) to reduce vulnerability and build resilience to withstand threats from climate change, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme and the Government of Liberia. The project demonstrates how low-cost, low-technology, sustainable measures can be adapted to address the effects of climate change in the Liberian context. Through the Coastal Project, the selected communities showcase
sustainable methods of community protection against rising sea levels and storms, as well as how to manage coastal ecosystems.

At present, the UNDP and the Government of Liberia, particularly the Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME), are rapidly implementing the holistic and sustainable solutions, with low-cost, coastal defense interventions through three project elements: (1) 1,200m protection seawall, (2) 6~to~25m beach restoration into the sea, and (3) community improvements, including drainage, waste management, and fishing docking areas.

Food security

Agriculture: In line with the SDGs, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the Regional Agricultural Investment Programme (RAIP), the Malabo Declaration and the Economic Community of West African States Agriculture Policy (ECOWAP), and the Ministry of Agriculture led the process of formulating the second generation of the Liberia National Agriculture Investment Plan called Liberia Agricultural Sector Investment Plan (LASIP II), which builds on past progress and reaffirms the Government of Liberia’s commitment to transforming its agricultural sector.

A food security and malnutrition survey (FSNSS) conducted in 2018 with the help of WFP consisted of three components: (1) market price monitoring, (2) food security and nutrition surveillance system (FSNSS), and (3) comprehensive food security and nutrition survey (CFSNS). This Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey (CFSNS) was the first survey since 2013 to assess the level of household food insecurity and malnutrition. As a result, WFP provided support to the Government in implementing home-grown school feeding (HGSF) as a vital social safety net in Liberia. In coordination with the Government and UN agencies, WFP reached vulnerable communities in nine counties across Liberia with direct food and nutrition support.

In addition to the implementation of school feeding activities and enhancing agricultural value chains through strengthening the capacities of small farmers, WFP provided essential food and logistics assistance for the national emergency response to seasonal flooding between August and October 2018.

Empowering women in agriculture: From June to October 2019, LISGIS conducted a survey with support from UN Women which was aimed at empowering women in agriculture through access to Information Communication Technology (ICT). The project is a joint effort with the “BuyFromWomen” initiative (2019-2021). The goal of the project is to empower rural women farmers economically and to strengthen their resilience through sustainable food systems, greater access to factors of production, and high-value markets.

Fisheries: The government has worked towards increasing production in the fisheries sector and increasing its contribution to the GDP from 3 per cent to 6 per cent by improving harbor facilities
for industrial fishing, increasing efficiency, facilitating local consumption and enhancing exports.

To complement this, the government aimed to establish a robust fishery monitoring and surveillance system and fisheries governance, to tackle Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing. A draft proposal for Mesurado Fishing Pier Expansion has been completed and the government signed a $3.7 million Fisheries Project Preparatory Agreement with the World Bank, which will help increase industrial fishing activities to boost local food security and exports.

**Addressing malnutrition:** Under-five malnutrition stunting or chronic malnutrition remains a persistent public health concern in Liberia. The 2019-20 Liberia Demographic and Health Survey (LDHS)1 results show that 30 per cent of children under age 5 are stunted, while 10 per cent are severely stunted. The stunting prevalence can be classified as ‘very high’ based on the WHO-UNICEF threshold of ≥30 per cent.

To reduce under-five malnutrition, a unit was established and well-equipped with 24 trained staff at the JFK Medical Centre and ELWA Hospital catering to malnourished children.

- The National Nutrition policy and an Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM) guideline was revised and disseminated.
- The children under-five treated for malaria have increased to over 133,782 since 2018.
- Significant improvements in the coverage of nutrition interventions have been achieved.

Based on routine data from the MoH, micronutrient powder supplementation and counseling on Infant and Young Child Feeding are now reaching more than 70 per cent of target population cohorts from baselines of less than 10 per cent for both interventions. The treatment coverage of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) improved from 45 to 57 per cent.

Nutrition services are now provided in over 80 per cent of all public health facilities from baselines of less than 30 per cent.

**Forestry Sector:** According to the Government, the forestry sector contributed between 8-11 per cent of the real GDP from 2012 to 2017 and remains one of the major sources of income, employment, and livelihood in Liberia. The annual revenue generated by chainsaw milling alone is estimated at $31-41 million, or about 3-4 per cent of GDP (Annual Report, 2018)

The government will improve the policy, legal and institutional framework for forestry management; strengthen its monitoring and law-enforcement capabilities, enhance the transparency of its operations, and bolster accountability in the overall governance of the forestry sector. Regulations on drivers of deforestation and environmental degradation will also be enforced. The government will support sustainable fuel-wood and charcoal production while creating alternatives for domestic energy sources and establishing information dissemination
and data management repository system. To reduce deforestation and environmental degradation, alternative livelihoods for forest dependents and local communities will be created in select areas.

Currently, the government is working with a High-Level National Target to Increase the proportion of environmentally protected areas by 30 per cent. Accordingly, the government has launched two National Parks: Grebo-Krahn National Protected area and the Gola National Park, thereby increasing the total hectares of protected areas and national parks to 411,000.

**Education**

The government has committed to delivering Higher Education through a structured approach. In 2018-2019, a comprehensive assessment of Higher Institutions of Learning (HIL) was completed. One positive outcome was the introduction of a syllabus for a graduate program in environment & climate change at University of Liberia.

However, the population of Liberia being very young, most of the investment in education goes towards reducing vulnerabilities of the youth, but also to introducing at a very early stage the notion of risk. This is mainly done at primary and secondary levels. While progress was made in increasing school enrolment, the Primary Net Enrolment Rate (NER) in Liberia is still significantly lower than rates in low-Income countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

To maintain and raise the Net Enrolment Ratio for junior high schools, year one of the PAPD implementations recorded several successes in this direction. They include the provision of the take-home food ration to at least 5,000 adolescent girls, additional take-home ration provided to 14,442 girls in 220 schools in four counties (River Cess, Grand Bassa, River Gee, and Grand Gedeh); and with support from the WFP/Master Card, take-home ration provided to 4,000 girls in 176 schools in additional four counties (Maryland, Grand Kru, Gbarpolu and Nimba).

The government is also trying to increase the proportion of appropriately qualified and trained teachers to 60 per cent and to double the number of female teachers in public school classrooms. To fulfil its commitment to girls' education, the government aims to reduce the out-of-school rate to 10 per cent, to increase the retention rate to >80 per cent, and rise the completion rate by 20 per cent by 2023.

In terms of dealing with the issue of GBV or sexual exploitation in schools, training was provided to 1,920 teachers in sexual education and classroom observation tools for sexual exploitation were provided. Various harmonized materials on sexual education were produced and printed for students. In addition, 10 schools were sensitized in environmental safety, 150 school clubs were established, and training was provided to 466 WASH focal persons. Student vision screening
was done for 34,021 school children in two counties and 63,871 school-age children were dewormed.

**Women empowerment**

The government of Liberia has endorsed many plans, strategies and policies for women empowerment and gender inclusion.

In support of the government’s target to empower 375,000 women across the 15 counties over the next five years, the strategies employed include enabling technology, information and communications technology to promote the empowerment of women. In addition, the government aims to strengthen the implementation of the National Gender Policy to reduce and eliminate the existing discrimination against women and girls by addressing unequal outcomes between women and men, and increase women’s involvement in the National Peace Building and Healing and Reconciliation Plan through practical engagement.

A Joint Programme on Rural Women Economic Empowerment was implemented in six Counties, (Montserrado, Grand Bassa, Sinoe, Maryland, Margibi, and Rivergee Counties). The program benefitted 2,750 women and men living in rural communities in numeracy, literacy, vocational, and business development skills, as well as established 80 village savings and loans associations to reduce poverty and increase women’s participation in decision-making, and provided alternative livelihood training for 180 at-risk girls in Montserrado, Nimba, Lofa, Grand Gedeh, and Grand Cape Mount Counties.

**Addressing Rapid Urbanization**

The government, in collaboration with the Monrovia City Cooperation and with support from UN-Habitat, developed a Greater Monrovia Urban Development Strategy, completed in 2018. The implementation of the strategy has so far achieved the following:

- The profiling of slums in 12 localities of the Greater Monrovia including the organization of slum dwellers forums to enable community level dialogues.
- Increased access to affordable housing through inclusive market approaches for Greater Monrovia.
- An Urban Development Strategy (UDS) and a functional and vibrant city forum for city dialogues in Greater Monrovia.
- Strengthened organization and participation of street and market vendors in city governance and inclusive planning in greater Monrovia.
- A Community Upgrading Fund (CUF) with awards to at least 100 community projects.
- Trainings held on urban management and planning for City officials and leaders.
Slum improvement: The Liberian government has finalized the Slum Upgrading and Affordable Housing framework, which identifies some of the key steps needed to upgrade slum communities. As of the end of 2018, 179 saving groups have been mobilized with more than 4,970 registered members in 35 slum communities. In 2018, a hazard, vulnerability, and risk assessment were finalized to detect the housing challenges for people living in slum communities.

Water and Sanitation Hygiene (wash)
The National Water Resources and Sanitation Board (NWRSB) was established in 2015 and was supported by the National Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene Promotion Committee (NWSHPC). In total, 15,089 water points in Liberia are reported to be improved, and 9,674 (64.1 per cent) are technically fully functional and in use. 1,408 (9.3 per cent) are functional but not in use for drinking water, 1,145 (7.6 per cent) are functional but with problems, and 2,733 (18.1 per cent) are broken down.

Energy Sector
The Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) prepared for the Paris Agreement underlines that the energy sector is the highest contributor of greenhouse gases (GHG) in Liberia, emanating mainly from the use of traditional fuels such as firewood, charcoal and palm oil and the use of fossil fuels, especially petroleum products. Three projects are underway for hydropower plants in Loaf, River Gee, and Nimbi, adding 2.5 MW, 2.13 MW, and 9.34 MW of generation capacity respectively. Also, with support from the EU, the government has conducted a full feasibility study of a 2 MW run-of-river hydropower plant in Sine County. Thirteen rural health facilities will also have solar equipment installed. The increased generation will allow for social services to operate more effectively and rural communities to benefit from clean renewable energy access.

Infrastructure
One of the major challenges for the infrastructure sector has been the timely provision of counterpart funding for road projects. Development partners require the government to cover certain costs road projects, but the tight fiscal position of the government has made these difficult to meet, delaying the construction of primary road projects. Liberia has approximately 11,536 kilometers (km) of primary, secondary, urban, and feeder roads. These comprise about 1,899, 2,479, and 6,263 km of unpaved primary, secondary, and feeder roads respectively. Approximately 622 km of the total are paved roads. Liberia has 2,884 bridges and 7,651 culverts, but approximately half of the bridges and one-quarter of the culverts are in poor condition, limiting accessibility during the rainy season.
Several constraints continue to impede the progress of roads and bridges intervention in Liberia. They include

- A weak domestic contracting and consulting industry which lacks technical capacity.
- Inadequate materials testing facilities.
- Negligible road maintenance interventions.
- Unpredictable weather due to global climate change.
- Low government funding and investment in the road sector and lack of human capacity in the infrastructure sectors (MPW Report, 2020).

**Collaboration, Partnership and Cooperation**

1. **Substantially reduce global disaster mortality by 2030, aiming to lower average per 100,000 global mortality between 2020-2030 compared to 2005-2015**

   Looking at the Ebola Crisis in 2014-2015 that saw over 10,000 cases with 4,809 deaths, which was a 40 per cent mortality, the COVID-19 pandemic, while not as violent as Ebola, has so far witnessed 7,898 cases with 294 deaths, a mortality rate of 3.7 per cent. This mortality rate is still high compared to the 1 per cent average worldwide mortality rate. However, lessons learned from the Ebola crisis, and the capacities that were built into the health sector since 2015, have had a very positive effect in keeping the number of COVID-19 cases low and the mortality rate below 4 per cent.

2. **Substantially reduce the number of affected people globally by 2030, aiming to lower the average global figure per 100,000 between 2020-2030 compared to 2005-2015.**

   Liberia has initiated a few projects to combat coastal erosion and reduce exposure of people, livelihoods, and assets to sea rise level due to climate change. At the same time, many projects in terms of environmental protection and food security, including better management of the fishing industry and forestry, have been implemented in order to reduce poverty and vulnerabilities.

3. **Reduce direct disaster economic loss in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030.**

   Since 2003, Liberia has engaged in rebuilding its national infrastructure and economy post-civil war. The country’s efforts were slowed down by the Ebola crisis in 2015, and by the COVID-19 crisis in 2020-2022. The country’s GDP was severely affected from 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which was the case for every country in the planet. This slowing of the economy was an opportunity to realize that it needed to be less dependent on the outside world. As a result, the country reviewed a few of its policies, especially its food security policy, as it has the potential to be self-sufficient.
4. **Substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, among them health and educational facilities, including through developing their resilience by 2030.**

Critical infrastructures (schools, religious facilities, hospitals, market facilities) have been destroyed due to disaster events like windstorms, coastal erosion, floods, and house or industrial fire. About 75 per cent of this infrastructural loss is due to fire incidences. Though the Ebola and COVID-19 crisis didn’t destroy infrastructures, they did serve as an opportunity for the country to upgrade its healthcare infrastructures.

5. **Substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020**

Liberia has a National Strategy and Plan of Action for Disaster Risk Reduction for 2020-2030. It is fully aligned with the Sendai Framework 2015-2030 along with the National Disaster Loss Database.

6. **Substantially enhance international cooperation of developing countries through adequate and sustainable support to complement their national actions for implementation of this framework by 2030**

The worldwide economic crisis because of the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed the support to the country in many areas including DRR. The NDMA has received some support from UN agencies and other donors, but this has been mainly to develop its disaster response capacities in the health sectors. Other multilateral support was provided to the country prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and that enabled the various sectors of the country to implement projects in urban risk reduction, environmental protection and coastal erosion, as well as in women empowerment, infrastructure, education (especially for women), and food security.

7. **Substantially increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments to people by 2030**

While early warning for the health sector was extensively developed due to the Ebola and COVID-19 crisis, there is still a long way for Liberia to go to develop its capacities for risk assessment and multi-hazard early warning. This is one key priority of the national strategy for disaster risk reduction.

An early-warning system was established in 2017 by the Environmental Protection Agency to collect and deliver weather information from 11 automatic weather stations across the territory. The information collected is transmitted by radio and the National Meteorological Centre website, which was established at the time of the development of
the early-warning system. The country also has the Liberia Early-Warning and Response Network (LERN) – a conflict early-warning system maintained by the Liberia Peacebuilding Office. The LERN platform serves primarily as an archive of conflict and peacebuilding data, but individuals can receive alerts by mobile phone and/or email by registering on the LERN website.

The **ACT new Emergency Operation Center (NEWOC)** is the Early warning center developed at NDMA to reduce vulnerability by providing individuals and communities with the information they need to act in a timely and appropriate manner to minimize the impact of disasters.

The NEWOC is organized to serve as an integrative mechanism for coordination of all government disaster response activities, including monitoring of disaster situations and national bio-surveillance activities, providing effective communications with all levels of government and stakeholders, prioritizing resource utilization and disseminating and enacting the decisions of elected authorities and their delegated representatives.

**Multi Hazard Contingency Plan**

The overall goal of the national multi-hazard preparedness and response plan is to ensure a coordinated, effective and functional preparedness and response mechanism is in place at each level of the government, with the capacity to address all threats to human safety.

Specific objectives and expected outcomes include:

- An effective and coordinated response to disasters at both national and local levels.
- Strengthened and effective seasonal planning to improve readiness for response.
- Reduce suffering among the affected communities by addressing the immediate and life-saving needs with special focus on the most vulnerable groups.
- Based on the risk analysis, develop sectoral response plans and identify key gaps in the humanitarian system.
- Provide an effective forum for collaboration between government and aid agencies in responding to emergencies caused by disasters.
- Provide a validated processes and procedures for overall preparedness and response.

**II. PROSPECTIVE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

An important lesson learned is that while each ministry and government agency has a designated focal point that is part of the national platform, the involvement of the ministries and agencies is limited to the participation of the focal point to DRR activities (trainings and meetings mainly). DRR is still not embedded enough into their thinking and planning processes; DRR is still not everybody’s business. The MTR SF process was very effective in bringing all actors together to
debate the state of DRR in the country. The success of the stakeholders’ meeting is a model that authorities have recommended as a consultation model to be adopted by the national DRR platform.

In addition, Liberia urgently needs to train professionals in various ministries and government agencies in mainstreaming DRR, as well as embark on a resource mobilisation campaign to implement its national DRR strategy after scaling it back to a realistic size that can be fully implemented between 2023-2030.

During the MTR SF review process, the stakeholders realized that the private sector is very much absent of the DRR landscape, and this limits knowledge in terms of risk creation, but also risk reduction measures that may be implemented by the private sector.

The stakeholders also recognized through the process that it will need the United Nations to continue play a key convening role in supporting it to bring together national stakeholders for the implementation of the national DRR strategy and therefore the SF until 2030.

A. Recommendations for realizing the Outcome and Goal of the Sendai Framework

The emerging challenges, issues and changing context discussed in the preceding sections means that Liberia should adapt to the new contexts, such as climate change, and address the challenges brought by the changing social-economic landscape at the global level such as pandemics and wars. In this case, the implementation of its national DRR strategy, once scaled back to a reasonable achievable size, is crucial as it provides the overall framework for advancing DRR in Liberia.

Liberia continues to witness poverty and income disparities among its citizens, besides continuous efforts in post-civil war reconstruction. Its efforts may continue to be challenged in the coming years due to climate change that could result in floods and coastal erosion that already affects its infrastructure; outbreak of diseases, including Ebola and COVID-19 that already affected trade and investment; low productivity and limited growth of primary sectors; limited private sector participation in various development activities; and changes in world energy and other sectors’ prices that already affect the economy.

Liberia has reinforced legislation by adopting many Acts in many sectors, including the Disaster Management Act, to address the risks posed by climate change, pandemics, and poverty. However, there is a need to enhance the understanding of DRR/CCA terminology at all levels, as there are clearly difficulties in grasping basic concepts and the meaning of the terminology of both concepts. This would avoid competition within the country, as DRR and CCA are seen as two separate issues, and that creates confusion.
To reduce dependency on external funding, which is currently challenged by pandemics, war and climate change, a budget for DRR activities should be set aside from internal sources. In addition, a tracking on how the national budget, including sectoral budgets, contributes to DRR should be implemented.

B. Progress in Risk Assessment, Information and Understanding

To enhance risk knowledge and advocacy for investment in risk reduction in Liberia, the main priority is for authorities and communities to better understand risk, especially systemic risk. To achieve this, there is a need to reinforce legislation to ensure that risk assessments need to be performed at regular intervals, and that risk information needs to be used within planning process in all sectors. A structure needs to be officially designated to build competencies, acquire equipment, and get sufficient funding to conduct proper risk assessments and monitor risk. The future risk assessment processes will need to include the way to capture expertise, capabilities, and knowledge held by women, indigenous peoples, young people, and persons with disabilities.

C. Progress in Risk Governance and Management

In terms of risk governance and management, there is a need to put the current plans and strategies into action, including ensuring their budget and funding. The Disaster Management Act, and its follow up National DRR strategy, EPRPs and SOPs should be implemented through capacity building at national, regional, and local government levels. There is a need to further involve Members of Legislature to establish a mechanism for mainstreaming disaster risk into various sectoral laws.

There is a need to further decentralize the NDMA and ensure that various regions and counties have the capacity to independently address DRR in their areas, especially in disaster prone areas. In addition, mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on DRR activities should be in place to track progress and ensure the attainment of the national targets towards the achievement of the SF goal and outcome.

Land use plans and urban planning should be strengthened, including the review of policies and legislations on land ownership and planning to include, for example, more access to land by vulnerable and marginalized groups such as women and youth.

D. Progress in Investment in Risk Reduction and Resilience

Investing in DRR, and resilience in general, will be crucial in achieving the SF goal and outcome by 2030 in Liberia. Thus, DRR activities should be mainstreamed in development plans,
programmes and budgets at all levels, and their progress in implementation tracked. This can be achieved through budget allocation and putting a monitoring framework in place. A key recommendation from stakeholders is to impose a minimum tax with a tracking system on specific commodities transactions, to be deposited in the Multi Trust Fund for DRR.

Advocacy for specific target groups such as House of Parliaments, ministers, councilors, and village leaders to consider DRR issues when discussing budgets for health, food security, water, sanitation and energy, land use, demographics and urbanization, and further inclusion of DRR issues in the education curriculum at all levels is crucial. The Ministry of Finance should be trained, and a guideline established on mainstreaming risk into all sectors’ budgets. In general, trainings should be held regularly for all stakeholders to build better understanding and ownership for DRR.

PPP investments are being done through a careful analysis of the potential of joint ventures between government and private firms to finance infrastructure projects in the form of build, own, operate and transfer (BOOT), or build, operate and transfer (BOT), or build own and operate (BOO). Successful PPPs will reduce pressure on investment expenditures on the government’s budget and create jobs for youth and women under infrastructure investment activities. Going forward, the government will establish a PPP unit and build the capacity of MACs for PPP negotiation, contracting, and management to ensure that the country benefits from these arrangements. This will be an opportunity to ensure that risk reduction is taken into consideration in all projects.

Another priority of the PPP will be on the improvement of infrastructures and the regulatory framework for operators in the sector to double ICT access and coverage. This will provide opportunities for private sector growth and product expansion, particularly for education, services, health, agriculture, and manufacturing industries. Access to technology will boost youth and women's entrepreneurial abilities, improve their skills, and create jobs, thus reducing their vulnerability. The government will expand the fiber optic infrastructure, including industrial installation to cover 30 per cent access to the fiber-optic backbone and ensure universal access and services to marginalized communities, women, rural dwellers, and physically challenged populations.

In terms of health, the recommendations are to continue to improve the infrastructure, and to train more epidemiologists and biostatisticians. There is also a need to sensitize community dwellers and enhance collaboration with community health committees.

A key challenge in Liberia to reducing risks related to epidemics is to enhance capacities in WASH. The priorities are to boost adherence to the WASH Management protocol, to ensure consistent production of good quality water, and to further build community ownership of water facilities as well as community toilets.
To reduce vulnerabilities, food insecurity in Liberia needs to be urgently addressed by setting up proper food banks, facilitating access to food, and improving agriculture techniques, including approaches such as climate smart agriculture.

In terms of environmental protection and energy, there is a need to enforce environmental rules and regulations and invest more in renewable energy sources. With support from the European Union, three studies have been undertaken to develop a detailed understanding of the problem and the strategies possible for waste management. The first will address recycling and composting, looking at issues such as what percentage of the waste can be composted or recycled, and construction feasibility of sorting stations. The second will focus on the vertical and horizontal expansion of community-based enterprises engaged in the primary waste collection beyond Monrovia to Paynesville and the townships of Greater Monrovia. A third will study waste-to-energy initiatives that can be applied to Liberia. Even on a day with perfect weather, primary waste collection is a challenge for the local authorities and residents of Monrovia.

The coastal zone is one of the nation's greatest environmental and economic assets of Liberia. However, the evolution of coastline variations is considered as one of the most dynamic processes affecting this area. Liberia initiated its Technology Needs Assessment (TNA) in 2019. Integrated Coastal Zone Management has been identified as one of the three and the most important technologies priorities for the country along with Flood Early Warning System and Armour or Rock Revetment. This TNA will support the formulation of an Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) policy framework. The ICZM policy formulation will be a dynamic, multidisciplinary, and iterative process to promote sustainable management of coastal zones. It seeks over the long-term to balance environment, socio-economic, cultural, and recreational objectives; reduce ecosystem degradation; and conserve and maintain existing ecosystems from potential climate change impacts. It also involves local communities or stakeholder's participation in decision of sustainable environmental management.

The infrastructure sector is focused on creating transportation and communication capabilities to facilitate economic growth within Liberia. One of the most significant aspects of such infrastructure in Liberia is increasing the proportion of all-weather roads in the country. A Road Safety Action Plan was developed and launched, which will help reduce the number of road traffic accidents and deaths. The amendment of the 2010 PPCC Act on Public, Private, Partnership (PPP) Policy has been completed pending review by the MOJ. The amended act will help bring increased private investment into the infrastructure sector.

In terms of education, the autonomous National Commission on Higher Education intends to create a comprehensive and cohesive group of higher education institutions that will focus on providing the specialized skills needed by priority sectors for national development (e.g., agriculture, infrastructure, health, education, fisheries, and forestry). This presents an opportunity to integrate Risk Reduction in various curricula.
E. Progress in Investment in Emergency preparedness and Build Back Better

Further strengthening of the Early Warning Systems, including the capacity to anticipate, predict and issue up-to-date early warning information should be pursued. This can go hand-in-hand with the update and review of existing EPERPs and SOPs at all levels, as well as preparation of Post Disaster Recovery and Rehabilitation Frameworks.

In terms of post-disaster recovery, basic capacities are to be developed for PDNA and for recovery planning including the concepts of Build Back Better. As the country is still in the post-civil war recovery phase, there is a unique opportunity to ensure that the reconstruction efforts do take into consideration climate and disaster risk.

F. Collaboration, Partnership and Cooperation

Despite the ongoing food-energy-climate crisis at the global level, it is important to foster the existing collaborations and partnerships among DRR stakeholders. At the national level, DRR stakeholders should share DRR experiences through, for example, the DRR National Platform and other sectoral meetings and avenues. This will avoid duplication of efforts and direct the few resources to more important DRR aspects.

There is also a need to establish a forum for discussions at county levels to enhance awareness and knowledge about DRR. This should be supported by a further decentralization of DRR at the county level, where partnerships should be further developed with local NGOs and civil society organizations that are working with communities on a daily basis.

At the international level, the existing regional and international partnerships should be maintained and strengthened and new avenues explored, building on past experiences and collaborations. The African Union and the Regional Economic Commissions such as ECOWAS should be closely engaged with the country to provide support from within the continent.

As Liberia relies heavily on multilateral partners and donors (USAID, EU, United Nations, etc.), there is an opportunity to raise awareness to ensure that DRR is also a topic covered in various programme financing. The country can also utilize these partnerships as a vehicle to sensitize the private sector to contribute to DRR efforts.
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