



# USAID | LIBERIA

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## OVERVIEW OF USAID PROGRAMS IN LIBERIA

Peaceful elections held in October and November 2005 and the inauguration of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the first elected female Head of State in Africa, in January 2006, ushered in a period of hope and high expectations for recovery and development after decades of poor governance and conflict. Nevertheless, the consequences of 14 years of civil war (1989-2003) constitute huge challenges to Liberia's recovery, reform and rebuilding process. Central and local governments that collapsed require support to secure law and order, administer justice, provide basic services such as water, electricity and road maintenance, restore health and education systems, and generate employment.

The government of Liberia with the aid of international partners, of which the US is the largest bilateral donor, is endeavoring to simultaneously restore public confidence in political, social, economic and judicial institutions while addressing the regional disparity and bad governance that contributed to the conflict. Liberia emerged from the war with shattered administrative, economic, health and education capacities due to the flight of qualified professionals and widespread damage to infrastructure. The majority of the population, outside limited areas of the capital city, has no access to electricity and sanitation. Prospects for sustainable development rely on the resiliency of the Liberian people, governance reforms, and the natural endowment of the country with tremendous agricultural potential and iron ore, rubber, timber, precious minerals, and potentially, offshore oil reserves and bauxite.

## USAID PROGRAMS REVITALIZE COMMUNITIES AND CONSOLIDATE PEACE

Working across nearly all fifteen counties of Liberia to aid the transition from relief to development, USAID has focused on the creation of economic and social conditions at the community level to reintegrate internally displaced people, ex-combatants and the general population affected by the war through job creation, reconstruction of roads, schools, and hospitals, reviving and initiating agricultural production, expanding access to schooling for overage and primary school children, training health, education and other government personnel, and delivering an integrated package of essential health services for child survival, maternal health, malaria and HIV/AIDS. To help consolidate the foundation for peace and economic development, USAID's democracy and governance program supports the justice system, human rights, and economic governance as well as the strengthening of the multi-party electoral system. Other US government assistance supports the development and training of new military and civilian police forces as well as strengthening the justice sector.





## GOVERNING JUSTLY AND DEMOCRATICALLY

USAID provided support for the 2005 presidential and legislative elections and continued support for political party development, capacity building for the legislature and anti-corruption reforms, is helping to build a more representative and competitive multi-party democracy. The program supports electoral systems and preparations for local, and municipal and by-elections, as well as refurbishment of buildings to house the national and local electoral commissions. USAID also contributes to strengthening local government capacity, including through the rehabilitation of County Administrative buildings in ten counties. Civil society organizations receive support to increase their public advocacy capacity. In 2008, USAID is planning new programs that will build on earlier support to judicial, legislative, and electoral processes and place greater emphasis on cultivating respect for human rights, increasing access to justice, strengthening the capacity of legislators and magistrates, and expanding and deepening civic education and participation in all sectors of the country's development in cooperation with other USAID programs.

### COUNTRY FACTS

- Comprehensive Peace Agreement 2003
- Legislative/Presidential elections 2005
- Population: 3.4 Million
- Life Expectancy: (2005) 44.7 years
- Literacy: 37%
- HIV/AIDS Prevalence (2007) urban 2.5, rural 0.8
- Growth Rate (2006) 7%
- Income per capita (2005) \$130

*Sources: World Bank, UN, and LISGIS Data*

USAID contributions to rule of law and economic governance help create the necessary conditions for the economy to grow and complement other US support for judicial sector reform. The Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program (GEMAP) builds the Liberian government's capacity in financial management and accountability, procurement practices and granting of concessions, and effective processes to control corruption. USAID technical assistance is supporting reforms to strengthen policies and operations at major state-owned enterprises including the international airport and the port, Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy, Bureau of the Budget and General Services Agency.

## ECONOMIC GROWTH: AGRICULTURE, NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, ENERGY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE TO REINTEGRATE COMMUNITIES



Liberia's agriculture sector, including forestry, is critical to the economic development of the country and provides livelihoods to some 70% of the population. The USAID program focuses on the rehabilitation of smallholder tree crop farms of rubber, cocoa, and oil palm, restocking of decimated food animals with improved species, farm to market road construction, and training in business and marketing skills including micro-credit and small enterprise initiatives. PL480 Title II Food for Peace funds provide non-emergency food



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aid to vulnerable groups, including over 134,000 returned refugees and unemployed youth, and also support nutrition improvement through food-for-work initiatives among rural communities in the 15 counties.

Energy is critical to improving economic livelihoods and to economic growth and also to restoring public confidence in government. USAID supports an Emergency Power Program to extend electricity to sections of the capital city. USAID supports longer term power generation throughout the country through energy sector reforms designed to attract private sector investment. Additionally, USAID is piloting renewable, alternative energy projects in rural settings, such as installation of solar panels to light health clinics, markets, and street lamps.

In cooperation with the USDA Forest Service, USAID is providing support to improve policies on natural resource management and increase the transparent and legitimate use, ownership, and commercialization of timber, forest products, and minerals, and the protection of Liberia's unique biodiversity. USAID funding also promotes community forestry as well as conservation initiatives, notably a pilot Civilian Conservation Corps in the area of the Sapo National Park and a Land Rights and Community Forestry Project.

### USAID Assistance in Liberia FY 08 Estimate

- Governing Justly and Democratically \$22,281,000
- Investing in People: Health \$30,984,000
- Investing in People: Education \$20,557,000
- Social and economic services and protection for vulnerable populations (PL480) \$2,979,000
- Supporting economic growth \$28,075,000

## INVESTING IN PEOPLE: EDUCATION

Decades of poor governance and civil war interrupted and devastated Liberia's formal public education system and created a tremendous need for informal, accelerated learning opportunities for ex-combatant and noncombatant youth and young adults. Major investments in education, including assistance from the US President's Africa Education Initiative and International Education Initiative, are increasing school enrollments and improving the quality of education through sector planning and restructuring, teacher training and the provision of needed equipment, material and infrastructure rehabilitation. USAID support for workforce development aims to fill gaps in human resource capacity, as many professionals have not benefited from advanced



training and skills development in more than 15 years. In 2008, capacity-building support is extending to tertiary level institutions. USAID provides technical assistance to the Ministry of Education to enhance the institution's monitoring and evaluation capabilities.





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Since 2005 to date, an accelerated learning program has reached over 11,000 students and established six learning resource centers that provide teachers access to computer instruction, learning materials and updated skills training. Nearly 4,000 girls who lived too far from schools or who could not pay fees have received scholarships and, in 2008, the first group of boys receives scholarship support. Close to 6000 adults are learning to read and write. Schools and libraries will have received 1 million new and used books by the end of 2008. USAID's teacher training program involves upwards of 1,500 teachers, including women in this traditionally male-dominated profession.

## INVESTING IN PEOPLE: HEALTH

Devastated health facilities and a diminished health care workforce are major challenges to the Government of Liberia in providing basic health care and organizing services. Women and newborns are at particular risk due to high fertility, the threat of malaria, HIV/AIDS, poor sanitation and hygiene, and lack of safe birthing services. These are evidenced by the very high rate of maternal mortality, frequent disease outbreaks, and the endemic prevalence of HIV/AIDS. USAID is supporting and strengthening public and nongovernmental providers to deliver a basic package of essential health services—covering maternal and child health, malaria, reproductive health and HIV/AIDS—to underserved areas of the country. USAID supports some 80 clinics which are just over 20% of the total of 350 operating clinics, serving at least 750,000 persons.



Other USAID health sector support contributes to national health planning, training of health professionals, refurbishing facilities including the Tubman National Institute of Medical Arts (TNIMA), Liberia's largest training institution for non-physician health workers. Due to the high incidence of malaria, Liberia is a focus country for the US President's Malaria Initiative that will provide malaria drugs and bed nets.