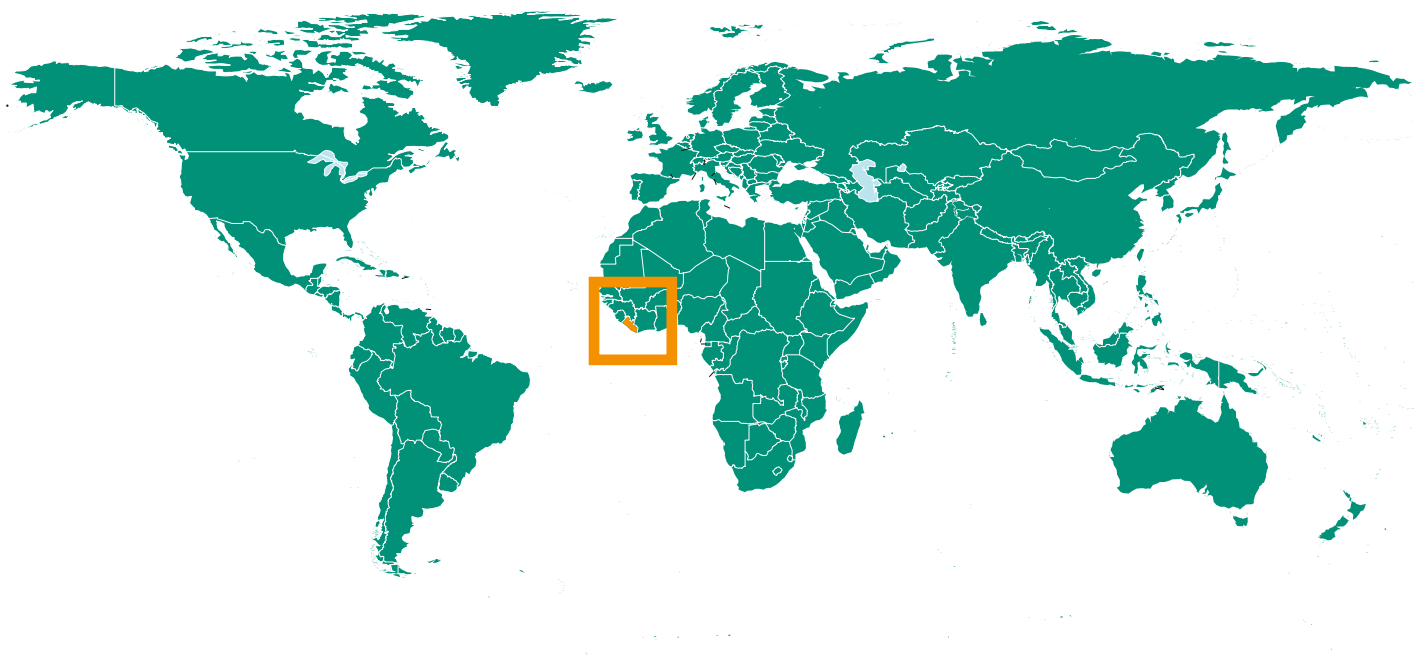


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## FOREWORDS

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



In April 2007, the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT approved our 2008-2013 Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan. This plan seeks to promote the alignment of UN-HABITAT normative and operational activities at country level.

The UN-HABITAT Country Programme Documents are tangible components of this Plan, as well as a genuine endeavour by UN-HABITAT to better coordinate its activities in a consultative and inclusive way involving UN-HABITAT's in-country focal points, UN-HABITAT Programme Managers, national governments, UN country teams, sister-UN agencies, development partners and all divisions of our Agency. The UN-HABITAT Country Programme Documents are strategic tools meant to guide all UN-HABITAT activities over a two-year period. A major dimension of the UN-HABITAT Country Programme Documents is to advocate UN-HABITAT's mandate and address the urban challenges facing developing countries.

The UN-HABITAT Country Programme Documents identify national urban development goals and priorities including shelter, urban governance, access to basic services and credit. Important cross cutting issues such as the environment, gender, response to disasters, and vulnerability reduction are also addressed. The UN-HABITAT Country Programme Documents focus on UN-HABITAT country programming. They serve as

a work plan for UN-HABITAT Programme Managers and a reference tool for national and local actors involved in sustainable urban development. According to the Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Action Plan adopted by the UN-HABITAT Committee of Permanent Representatives on 6 December 2007, twenty UN-HABITAT Country Programme Documents were completed in 2008, including the One-UN Pilot countries where UN-HABITAT is active.

In line with the UN reform process, the UN-HABITAT Country Programme Documents seek to strengthen the role of the UN and to demonstrate its commitment. I wish to thank our UN-HABITAT Programme Managers for their input and dedication and for compiling these UN-HABITAT Country Programme Documents under guidance of the Regional and Technical Cooperation Division and with the support of all branches and programmes of the Agency.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Anna K. Tibaijuka'.

Anna K. Tibaijuka

Executive Director, UN-HABITAT

## MINISTER



Liberia's national recovery, development processes and programs are confronted with many challenges. Among these include weak urban governance, lack of decentralization policies and strategies, poor land administration and management, lack of national urban policy

framework and regional planning, housing and shelter delivery policies, rapid pace of urbanization, increased urban poverty and inadequate minimum basic social services are serious challenges that need to be addressed. These challenges and their attendant spillovers now lead to the urgency of addressing the mandates of the Habitat Agenda and the UN-HABITAT Medium Term Strategic Implementation Plan (MTSIP) in as far as these two instruments will impact the future trends of human settlements in Liberia.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) have informed the Liberia UN-HABITAT Country Program Document. Both documents have identified the national vision, priorities, strategies, have set the development agenda, and defined key project interventions including supportive and complementary interventions that deal with achieving the objectives of the HABITAT Agenda in Liberia.

Indeed, this first Liberia HABITAT Country Program Document is not only necessary; but, also timely. The document comes at a time of the launch of Liberia's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) - 2008-2011. Issues of the Habitat Agenda are underscored in the PRS. The program outlined in this UN-HABITAT are direct project components and abstractions of the PRS and their implementation will require political will of the Government and support of Liberia's international partners and the mobilization of resources to achieve the objectives. These objectives are buttressed by the aspirations of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, to improve the living conditions and standards of Liberians.

Minister Amara M. Konneh

Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs

## SITUATION ANALYSIS

### NATIONAL URBAN POLICY CONTEXT

Liberia has a population of approximately 3.73 million inhabitants, with an 'urban' population of about 2.21 million and an urban population growth rate per year of 5.65 percent. Settlements with more than 2000 inhabitants are considered 'urban' settlements. This suggests that over 50 percent of the population now live in dispersed urban settlements pointing to rapid urban population growth, migration and a shift in urbanisation trends from rural to 'urban', and from 'urban' to urban. Moreover, urban definitions, functional criteria, classifications and characteristics of human settlements in Liberia appear to reveal a wide range of weaknesses in the management of urban areas, such as in the following various sectors: urban governance, urban policy and project formulation, urban management, administration and finance. Existing policies, regulatory and legal frameworks and instruments for human settlements and urban development issues are fragmented, distributed among poorly coordinated ministries and agencies.

Significant urban problems have emerged as a result of this rapid urbanisation. More than 80 percent of housing stock has been either destroyed during the years of conflict and/or are in various states of disrepair. Other problems include a multiplicity of urban settlements in the hierarchy of human settlements (hierarchy of settlements means classifications of categories of settlements from lowest to highest), weak urban policy and governance (administration and management) structures and environments, the lack of effective decentralisation policies and strategies, weak human settlements planning, no national land and housing policies and shelter delivery strategies and in-adequate urban finance. Moreover, slums are mushrooming and no slum upgrading interventions are being undertaken. More than 1.4 million inhabitants live on less than USD0.50 cents per day. Widespread urban poverty has a visible gender feature. Unemployment has affected about 84 percent of the work force. There are pressures on the poor. Inadequate urban infrastructures need attention and there are weak national and local capacities to deliver basic public services. Solid waste management is uncontrolled reflecting a lack of official dumpsites, and uncontrolled and irregular garbage collection and disposal.

Poverty, congestion and overcrowding are impacting on the nation's health: leading to a rapid increase in the spread of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, and an increase in the levels of crime.

Life expectancy is a mere 47 years, malnutrition is prevalent, and vulnerability, especially among women, girls, the elderly and the disabled, are particularly visible. There are not enough resources to solve Liberia's problems. The level of resources available to solve Liberia's urban problems are mostly unavailable, inadequate or misdirected, and interventions so far have been unsustainable. In effect, there are critical gaps in Liberia's human settlement and urban policies, and they have been virtually powerless to stem the tide of the rapid and haphazard sprawl of urban settlements. Urban policy and governance function in line with a highly centralised government structure that has poor or nonexistent links between macro-economic and spatial planning policies.

Economic growth and urbanisation are two interactive components requiring interactive policy responses. Government needs to undertake immediate action to plan long term policies and strategic measures and interventions to manage its urbanisation challenge. It needs to establish the appropriate legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks and urban management

#### STATISTICAL OVERVIEW

##### Urbanisation (2008)

- Total Population: 3.9 m
- Urban Population: 2.3 m (60%)

##### Annual population growth rates(2005-2010)

- National: 4.50%
- Urban: 5.65%

##### Population of major cities (2008)

- Monrovia: 1 m

*Source: UN DESA*

##### Slum indicators

- Slum to Urban Population: 56%

##### % urban population with access to:

- Urban Population with access to safe water: 98%
- Urban Population with access to improved sanitation: 45%

*Source: UN-HABITAT, 2001*





structures. It needs to address urban financing issues and the capacities of local government. It needs proper human settlements planning, legislation of security of tenure, proper housing and shelter delivery policies and strategies, accelerate delivery of basic services, provision of local economic development possibilities, strengthening of the institutional framework for urban administration and management and the development of a national land and housing policy.

Unregulated urbanisation and development by private capital is not easily amended by strategic planning and policy-making. These structural challenges inhibit innovative planning policies and restrict the instruments to coordinate urban development. A profound re-conceptualisation of the role of the urban sector is the most likely solution – one that highlights the broader framework of development aspirations. Premised on the government's objectives to decentralise - underpinned by UN-HABITAT's Good Urban Governance and Security of Tenure Campaigns and complemented by the poverty reduction objectives of the government and its partners - this re-conceptualisation could have an immense impact on the nature of urban and regional development planning, as well as on institutional and governance structures and the systems that regulate them.

Part one of the Liberia HCPD is divided into four of the five mutually reinforcing focus areas of UN-HABITAT's Medium-Term Strategic Institutional Plan for 2008-2013, as approved by the Governing Council in 2007.

## FOCUS AREA 1: ADVOCACY, MONITORING AND PARTNERSHIPS

### CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The Liberian government and its partners have realised the daunting nature of the development and capacity building challenges it faces and they are committed to transforming the public sector including its various institutions to support the private sector's role in the country's economic recovery. Efforts are already underway in this regard. The government, with the assistance of the UN and other international partners, is supporting and complementing ongoing initiatives in the development of the Poverty Reduction Strategy. Consequently, a number of public sector reform measures have been taken including institutional restructuring and strengthening. These reforms include, governance reforms and public sector capacity building and training, rebuilding the public and private sectors to improve knowledge and develop skills; addressing corruption; decentralisation of

political governance and basic social service delivery; strengthening the rule of law and respect for human rights; conflict policy formulation, implementation and management; land and property rights administration and management; strengthening economic and social policy management; establishing a reliable data base; addressing gender inequities; strengthening environmental rules and regulations; involving broader participation in the governance process and enhancing youth development and involvement in the development process.

The key areas that UN-HABITAT can intervene if resources are made available are in the areas of decentralisation, urban and regional development, formulation of housing policies, land administration and management, urban governance and capacity building of local governments, water and sanitation provision and establishing an urban data base.

## VULNERABILITY REDUCTION

The 2006 Global Human Development Report placed Liberia at the bottom of a list of countries with the lowest human development indices. In 2005, Liberia's human development index was 0.319 far below the 0.515 for sub-Saharan Africa in 2003. Years of conflict have devastated the social infrastructure, destroyed or seriously weakened capacities and eroded pre-war gains made in improving living conditions. The Poverty Profile Study indicates that about 80 percent of the population suffers from income poverty, living below the universally established poverty line of USD1 per day. Poor households live on USD11.32 per month to feed an average of six persons - meaning, that vulnerable urban households live on less than USD.50 cents per day, unable to meet their daily nutritional needs or to educate their children. In urban areas, 75 percent of households are poor, while 40

poor, help strengthen the national management and implementation frameworks and develop capacities for pro-poor policies. It hopes to increase access to employment and sustainable livelihoods opportunities, especially for vulnerable groups and to improve household food security. Under the Liberia Poverty Reduction Strategy Pillar 2, Revitalising the Economy, government will undertake to design appropriate policies and build the requisite economic management capacities to revitalise the economy. The programme will address skills training, and build capacities of the informal sector with a special focus on women, improve urban services and local economic development through labour intensive public works, boost the small and medium enterprise sectors, decentralise community reconstruction efforts, improve access to finance and improve access to land. In essence, incorporating the needs of the vulnerable and undertaking targeted interventions as part of the process of macro-economic policy reform.

## FOCUS AREA 2: PARTICIPATORY URBAN PLANNING, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

### GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONS

Liberia has a highly centralised government. Limited decentralisation (de-concentration and delegation) to local authorities does exist. The Local Government Law stipulates that local municipalities have the power to elect mayors and council members, make laws and promulgate ordinances, levy fines and taxes and hold real properties, sue and be sued in a court of law. However, there is no decentralisation policy. Authority-dependent relationships and interference in local

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