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**Joint field visit to Liberia**

## **Report of the joint field visit to Liberia of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Food Programme,\* 25 February-5 March 2007**

### **Executive summary**

1. Recovering from a long period of war, Liberia is still a fragile State in transition from an emergency relief situation to development. It continues to rely on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) for its security and will do so for the foreseeable future. It also continues to count on donor support to provide basic social services and to rebuild the local economy.
2. In this context, a delegation of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Food Programme (WFP) visited Liberia from 25 February to 5 March 2007. This delegation met all stakeholders in Liberia, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), UNMIL, the United Nations Country team (UNCT), Liberian government officials at national and community levels, United Nations agencies, representatives of the private sector and civil society, and development partners. The team also made on-site county visits to observe ongoing projects at county level.
3. This visit provided the delegation with the opportunity to take note of the needs, challenges and accomplishments of the Government and the people of Liberia and of the United Nations agencies during this particular period in the areas of peace and security, gender, education, health, capacity-building, governance reform and infrastructure.

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\* This document will also be submitted to the Executive Board of the World Food Programme at its annual session of 2007, as document WFP/EB.A/2007/INF/6.

*Note:* The present report was submitted late because of the need for consultation between the team members.

## I. Introduction

4. A delegation of 19 members of the Executive Boards<sup>1</sup> of UNICEF, UNDP/UNFPA and WFP made a joint visit to Liberia from 25 February to 4 March 2007.

5. The purpose of the visit was to gain insight into the interface between UNMIL, the members of the United Nations Development Group Executive Committee and the specialized agencies. It was also expected that the visit would provide an opportunity to better understand both the existing and potential cooperation between the United Nations, international financial institutions, civil society actors and the private sector, the coordination between various multilateral and bilateral donors, and the challenges and opportunities of integrated missions, including the question of sustainability.<sup>2</sup> The visit was also expected to provide the members of the Executive Boards with an opportunity to gain insight into the subregional context and challenges.

6. The joint field visit included six elements: (a) a briefing by the SRSG, with the UNCT and UNMIL; (b) meetings with Liberian government officials at national and community levels; (c) briefings by the respective United Nations agencies; (d) meetings with representatives of the private sector and civil society; (e) on-site county visits to observe ongoing projects at county level; and (f) meetings with development partners.

7. The team wishes to sincerely thank the Government and the people of Liberia for their generous hospitality and for the extensive and fruitful discussions. The delegation would like also to express its deep appreciation to the SRSG, UNMIL and UNCT for their dedication and excellent organization of this mission, as well as their invaluable input to the discussions.

## II. Background

8. Since the inauguration of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in January 2006, steady progress has been made in rebuilding Liberia, with the support of the United Nations, bilateral partners and multilateral donors. The mission had the opportunity to meet with President Johnson Sirleaf on 27 February 2007. During this important meeting, the President underlined, *inter alia*, the challenges facing the new Government of Liberia in the areas of peace and security and governance reform, including the judicial system. She emphasized the importance of the regional dimension and recommended that in the context of the United Nations reform, the United Nations should consider assigning regional objectives to the UNCT.

9. At the height of the conflict, more than 800,000 people were displaced both within and outside the country. Over 320,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) are

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<sup>1</sup> The team leader of the mission was H. E. Ms. Paulette A. Bethel (Bahamas), the chief rapporteur was Mr. Issa Konfourou (Mali) and the group rapporteurs were Ms. Diedre Mills (Jamaica), Mr. Jose Briz Gutierrez (Guatemala) and Mr. Nevin Orange (Canada).

<sup>2</sup> Particular attention will be paid to issues relevant to the recommendations presented for consideration by Member States in the High-level Panel on System-Wide Coherence, once the Secretary-General's report is made available and Member States have had an opportunity to respond, discuss and take a position.

now back in their villages and more than 84,000 refugees have been repatriated from neighbouring countries with the help of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; some 101,000 children, women and men have gone through the disarmament and demobilization programme; and over 75,000 are in reintegration programmes. Children are back in school and immunization programmes are reaching most parts of the country. Despite considerable progress, Liberia still confronts formidable reconstruction and development challenges including high maternal and child mortality rates, high illiteracy and unemployment rates, extreme poverty, weak governance systems, food insecurity, lack of access to basic social services and a debilitated infrastructure, compounded by the significant lack of reliable and updated data in the overall national statistical system. These challenges further compound the fragile situation on the ground, thus requiring appropriate and targeted policy responses and interventions, and sustained engagement between the Liberian people and international partners. Private sector revival, job creation, infrastructure development and needed investments in the education, health and agriculture sectors have to happen simultaneously.

10. The interim Poverty Reduction Strategy (iPRS) marks an important step forward. It represents a collaborative strategy and a starting point for the Government and its partners to work towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals. By all accounts, the iPRS will also set the course for Liberia to move from the immediate post-conflict phase to the path to development. At the same time, Liberia has a double challenge — to fund and implement emergency humanitarian interventions while also funding and implementing sustainable development strategies and programmes. There is grave concern about funding between 2007 and 2009, as emergency-oriented non-governmental organizations (NGOs) leave Liberia before the Government has the capacity to service the basic needs of its people. As the Common Country Assessment reports, it is estimated that the United Nations, NGOs and civil society organizations today are directly funding 85 per cent of activities in the areas of health, education and water and sanitation.

11. Expectations of the new Government are extremely high but its capacity to deliver the most basic social services remains low. The international community therefore needs to remain fully engaged with Liberia in order to build on the progress made to date, with the full ownership and leadership of the Government and people of Liberia.

12. The proposed priorities of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Liberia for 2008-2011 are as follows:

- (a) Capacity to ensure security, respect human rights, manage conflict and prevent violence exists at national and local levels by 2011;
- (b) National economic policies and programmes implemented to support equitable, inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development;
- (c) Democratic, accountable and transparent governance advanced in a participatory and inclusive manner and in accordance with human rights standards by 2011;
- (d) Improved health and education, with an emphasis on reduced maternal and child mortality and increased learning achievement by 2011;

(e) An enabling environment in place and organizational capacities enhanced to improve access to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support as well as addressing stigma and discrimination by 2011.

13. The challenges related to the work of the United Nations in this environment are making the transition from relief to development, moving from an integrated mission to a country team, addressing concerns related to transaction costs and capacity demands and ensuring coherent programming while addressing the fragmentation of funding.

### **III. Findings**

14. The joint field visit provided an opportunity for the respective Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP to exchange views with the representatives of the United Nations Integrated Mission, the Government, civil society, key development partners, the private sector and NGOs, and to assess the implementation of United Nations projects and programmes throughout the country and the challenges which persist.

#### **UNICEF**

15. UNICEF has continued its work as the focal point for the promotion of the overall welfare of children in post-conflict Liberia. In this leading role, the objective of UNICEF has been the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by supporting government efforts in the areas of child health and nutrition, basic education, access to safe water and sanitation and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, HIV/AIDS and other preventable diseases. Given the limited resources — both financial and human — of the Government at this point in time, UNICEF is playing a vital role in addressing a wide range of the needs of the country's children. The depth and extent of UNICEF engagement in Liberia was readily apparent in many of the encounters that the mission team had with various officials and entities during the visit.

16. Liberia has the world's fifth highest under-five mortality rate (235 per 1,000 live births) and one of the highest maternal mortality rates. Under these circumstances, the country is unlikely to meet the 2015 Millennium targets in the areas of child mortality, maternal health, HIV/AIDS and malaria. However, with the support of UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO), Liberia is well on track to be polio-free. An aggressive immunization programme increased coverage of three doses of combined diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus vaccine to 88 per cent in 2006. An equally aggressive programme for measles vaccination for children under five years of age, undertaken in January 2007 with support from UNICEF, UNMIL, WHO, other agencies and NGOs and integrated with a package of other child survival interventions (vitamin A, de-worming and insecticide treated nets), resulted in coverage of 97 per cent.

17. Other health-related initiatives spearheaded by UNICEF in 2006 included a national tetanus vaccination campaign that reached almost 300,000 women of child-bearing age; the establishment of five centres for prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV; the distribution of approximately 77,000 mosquito nets to pregnant women and children under five year of age; and the treatment of over 1,600 severely malnourished children in therapeutic feeding centres.

18. Currently, fewer than one in four Liberians has access to safe water, resulting in endemic cholera and diarrhoea being responsible for 22 per cent of deaths of children under age five years. In an effort to help alleviate this problem, in 2006 UNICEF provided wells, handpumps and latrine facilities to 1,000 schools, benefiting approximately 220,000 students, and also provided hygiene skills training sessions for some schools.

19. Although the gender gap in education has been reduced since 1989, the ratio of boys to girls is 3:2 at the primary level and 3:1 at the tertiary level. Prevailing cultural and social conditions, including pressures for girls to work and high rates of teenage pregnancy, are among the reasons for the disparities. It is anticipated that these disparities will decrease following the launch of the Government's Girls' Education National Policy by President Johnson Sirleaf, in April 2006. The Policy calls for meeting Millennium development Goal 2 by, inter alia, providing free and compulsory primary schooling and recruiting and training more female teachers.

20. UNICEF was able to support the Government's education programmes in 2006 by: providing essential learning materials and other supplies to 400,000 students at 2,000 public schools; training 500 government school teachers; and fully rehabilitating 16 public elementary schools that serve about 3,200 children.

21. Gender-based violence continues to be a major problem; according to the 2004 IDP camp surveys and other surveys and programme data, 75 per cent of women and girls experienced some form of sexual violence during and after the war. Despite the adoption in 2005 of a Rape Law that sentences convicted rapists to life imprisonment, the number of reports of sexual violence against women and children continues to be high, posing a very serious problem for the country. In an effort to develop comprehensive services for victims and survivors of sexual violence, UNICEF supported a safe home which provided 175 survivors, of whom 96 per cent were girls aged 7-18 years, with medical and psychosocial care and access to legal aid and other rehabilitation facilities.

22. In cooperation with UNMIL, other UNCT members and NGOs, UNICEF provided many children associated with fighting forces with protective and rehabilitative programmes, including access to basic formal primary education, through the Community Education Investment Programme, and to skills training. UNICEF also provided a large number of these children with psychosocial support for reintegration into their families and helped to train teachers to address the children's needs as they return to the school environment. In the same vein, UNICEF supported child welfare in 260 villages across the country in 2006.

## **WFP**

23. The presence of WFP in Liberia dates from the 1970s. After 14 years of conflict, today the country is beginning to enjoy the dividends of peace and relative stability. In consequence, WFP is shifting progressively from emergency food aid, including general distributions, to a more development-focused food security programme.

24. A major challenge is the significant lack of reliable data. This has led WFP, in partnership with other stakeholders, to coordinate the recent Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey. It is viewed as a major tool in terms of policy-setting and will complement the Government's efforts to develop a food security policy.

25. The food security situation in Liberia is precarious. The major findings of the Survey are that 11 per cent of households are food-insecure, 40 per cent are highly vulnerable and 41 per cent are moderately vulnerable to becoming food-insecure. Some 39 per cent of children under age five years are stunted (too short for their age), indicating problems of chronic malnutrition, and 7 per cent of children aged five years are wasted (too thin for their height), a sign of acute malnutrition. In addition, 27 per cent of children are underweight. The country is burdened by very low agricultural productivity, resulting in a significant food deficit.

26. Further, the country finds itself in a transitional recovery phase. The reality of this translates into minimal government capacity in virtually all sectors of society, further compounded by extremely high levels of unemployment (85 per cent), poor infrastructure and very poor health services.

27. The consistent message from representatives of the United Nations, NGOs, government officials and beneficiary groups has been clear and constant: despite the official discussions indicating that the country is on the road to development, when it comes to food, Liberia clearly faces continued insecurity and remains in humanitarian and recovery mode. However, because of the impression that the emergency phase is over, humanitarian donor funding is drying up and many NGOs have begun making plans to leave imminently.

28. WFP contributes to the Government of Liberia's efforts to achieve universal primary education and attain sustainable food security, while supporting institutional capacity-building and infrastructure development, in line with the following strategic objectives: general food distributions; food for recovery (as an investment to rebuild and protect human and productive assets); maternal and child health interventions (to improve the nutrition and health status of children, mothers and other vulnerable groups); school feeding (see below for more detail); and building the capacities of national institutions (to ensure timely and efficient response to food security challenges faced by the Government).

29. One of the most important and striking WFP interventions is its "food for education" programming, which designed to support equitable access to education among the most vulnerable and food-insecure populations. The provision of hot meals (school feeding) and/or take-home rations for pupils helps to achieve universal primary education. As a result, school enrolment has increased, the drop-out rate has been reduced and the improved nutrition and full bellies help children to concentrate on their school work. In addition, the provision of take-home rations to girls encourages parents to enrol and keep their girls in school. As such, in support of the Government's "back to school" efforts and based on the Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey, WFP currently is targeting food assistance to 600,000 students in 2,300 primary and community schools in highly food-insecure counties with low enrolment rates and where the vast majority are IDPs.

30. However, due to the increasing focus on development activities and the perception that serious humanitarian needs have diminished, some within the donor community have indicated that they are no longer prepared to support the school feeding programmes. As a consequence of this expected underfunding, in addition to a scaling down of other interventions, WFP will be forced to reduce the reach of its school feeding programme from 600,000 to 450,000 children. The team believes that this would be a serious setback to the recovery process, would discourage refugees from returning and/or staying in their areas of return and further erode the

increases in school attendance and the Government's gains towards its education recovery priorities. In addition, progress made in terms of girls' enrolment and attendance could be compromised.

## **UNDP**

31. The mission received an update on the various programmes being undertaken by UNDP under six programme pillars (disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration; community-based recovery; governance; HIV/AIDS; human rights and protection; the environment) in support of the Government's iPRS and other national development objectives. It was clear that UNDP had a strong presence on the ground and that it was one of the most visible United Nations agencies in the country. The UNDP was commended for its efforts in the field.

32. One of the visible successes of UNDP assistance to the Government of Liberia has been with its respect to disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration. In partnership with UNFPA, UNICEF, UNMIL, WFP, WHO and NGOs, UNDP support has resulted in over 103,000 ex-combatants being disarmed and over 100,000 demobilized. Over 75,000 opportunities have been created with the subsequent provision of skills training to former combatants and other war-affected children as part of an attempt to generate much-needed employment, especially among youth. UNDP has also provided vital assistance through capacity-building support, especially in the areas of governance, rule of law and the civil service, all of which have been identified as key priorities of the Government.

33. Despite these successes, UNDP continues to be constrained by challenges related to capacities (human and otherwise), data, resources and demand, given the enormity of the reconstruction and development challenge. Liberia was a pilot country for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) cluster system, and UNDP convened the early recovery cluster. Because of these challenges and the particular situation of Liberia as a post-conflict nation with limited government capacities to deliver services, UNDP often undertakes "gap-filling" activities in order to support programmes and projects in the field. This situation has both aided and compounded the challenges of coordinating the entire United Nations system, with UNDP, by virtue of its strong presence, being the most capable of mobilizing resources and delivering assistance during the transitional phase. Many other United Nations agencies do not have the capacity to generate such resources both in qualitative and quantitative terms.

34. While mindful of the important contribution of UNDP in Liberia, the mission was conscious of the need for greater attention to be given to how UNDP can better assist the Government in the development of more conflict-sensitive policies and programmes to ensure better access and equity for the Liberian people, given that these were contributing factors to the protracted civil war. The mission also learned of ongoing support being extended by the United Nations to build capacities at the county level through the County Support Teams (CSTs).

35. The issue of a "One United Nations" programme for Liberia was raised by UNDP in its discussions with the mission as a means of better coordinating and integrating the entire United Nations system in the country.

36. While the mission saw some evidence of excellent joint work by the United Nations agencies, demonstrating what can be achieved with strong leadership across

the UNCT, meetings with the country representatives of UNDP and other agencies revealed a need for better coordination among them. During the discussions, in a number of cases it was apparent that improved coherence could have been achieved through greater focus on comparative advantage.

37. The issue of funding featured prominently in discussions, with particular concern expressed over continued insufficient and fragmented donor funding. It is the view of the mission that this has made it difficult for sustained and strategic interventions, in particular in the more remote parts of the country.

38. The mission was informed of the need for capacity-building at the country level, within the Government, civil society and the private sector, in order to enhance the prospects for sustained economic growth and development in Liberia. As a result, there is an increased expectation and consequent demand on the United Nations system to support and provide capacity-building throughout the country. UNDP needs to consider where it can show comparative advantage, given the constraints on resources. The impending departure of many international NGOs and the eventual departure of UNMIL have raised serious concerns about the prospects for maintaining much of the existing support being extended at the local and national levels, in particular in the areas of health and education. Integrally linked to the issue of capacity-building is that of data collection and statistics and the implications for further policy formulation and planning.

#### **UNFPA**

39. Since 1979, UNFPA in Liberia has been guided by its overall goal to improve the quality of life of women, men and children based on a human rights-based approach and culturally sensitive programming. With a total of 24 staff members, including project staff, UNFPA has focused on its comparative advantages stemming from the agenda of the International Conference on Population and Development: reproductive health; population and development; and gender and advocacy. The depth and extent of the UNFPA engagement in Liberia was readily apparent in many of the encounters that the mission team had with various officials and entities during the visit.

40. In the area of reproductive health, taking into account the unacceptably high rates of teenage pregnancy and maternal mortality in the country, UNFPA has been instrumental in providing logistical, technical and financial support to the Government and local NGOs, with a view to improving the availability, access to and use of quality reproductive health services, and of information focusing on emergency obstetric care, family planning and reproductive health commodity security. UNFPA has also strengthened reproductive health programme management in Liberia and built the capacities of health personnel in life-saving emergency obstetric care, while at the same time providing them with drugs and equipment through reproductive health kits.

41. In addition to in-country capacity-building, notice was taken of the promotion of South-South cooperation with countries in the region (Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Sierra Leone). Examples included training programmes for doctors and paramedics in surgical fistula repair and emergency obstetric treatment and care; training for staff from the Institute of Statistics to carry out a population census; and training for the gender-based violence secretariat that has been set up in the Ministry of Gender and Development.

42. UNFPA has also been instrumental in implementing a subregional Manu River Initiative aimed at stopping spread and preventing HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), targeting IDPs, refugees, returnees and their host communities in Liberia and the bordering countries of Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone. This exemplary subregional initiative could be replicated in other parts of Liberia to address cross-border issues related to HIV/AIDS and STIs.

43. It was also noted that reproductive health care commodities are widely spread in the counties although their availability would need to be improved and secured in the near future.

44. The population and development component was highlighted by the UNFPA contribution to addressing the lack of data through its technical and financial support to the 2006-2007 Demographic and Health Survey, the results of which will be available this year. UNFPA also supported the development of a road map for the 2008 Population and Housing Census and also supported the Ministry of Education in the integration of life skills and population life education into the school curriculum from the primary level.

45. On gender and advocacy, UNFPA led the IASC subcluster on gender-based violence and also supported the Ministry of Gender and Development, through the above-mentioned secretariat, for the formulation, launching and implementation of the gender-based violence Plan of Action. The Mission also acknowledged the support of UNFPA to NGOs in the fight against such violence.

46. The mission was impressed with the quality of the support and impact of the work of UNFPA, and of its interaction with the other members of the UNCT and the Integrated Mission, especially given the constraints of its small staff and the multiple demands it faces. It was also acknowledged that UNFPA-Liberia benefits from its strengths, identified as the ability to forge close working relations with the Government and local NGOs to promote national ownership and leadership, and its ability to deploy its regional advisors in the areas of reproductive health, population and development and gender when and as needed. However, the mission is of the view that the challenges facing Liberia require more support from UNFPA through reinforcing the staff and increasing funding for the country office, to consolidate its positioning at the central and county levels.

47. The team witnessed the important contributions of United Nations Volunteers to the work of UNFPA in Liberia.

## **IV. Observations and recommendations**

### **General observations and recommendations**

48. Country programmes such as those in Liberia, a country in transition from relief to development, need regular resources beyond the conventional allocations. Consideration should be given to revising the formula for calculating regular resources to take into account the transition factors, so that higher ceilings can be allocated to respond to the additional resource needs of offices trying to provide strong support to Governments with weak capacities until the development process has been firmly established.

49. During the transition from relief to development, country programmes of cooperation are likely to resemble “double programmes” in which life-saving service delivery continues through government and NGOs, decreases gradually while development programming begins and gradually increases and builds the capacity of the Government to take over its full responsibilities. Both elements are essential so that there is no disruption of service provision and the progress made during the relief period is consolidated so that it may be sustained.

50. Similarly, donors should be made aware of the special circumstances found in scenarios like Liberia’s and further encouraged to realize and address the programmatic gaps that exist due to the lack of funding envelopes for transitional and recovery programming. In post-conflict situations, budget support as appropriate may help to empower public institutions to start taking control of basic social services and can facilitate capacity-building of these institutions.

51. Although the situation in Liberia is relatively stable, its transitional phase from relief to development and its unacceptably high debt burden have made it difficult to attract and sustain much needed financial and other support. Consequently, greater support will have to be extended by the United Nations system and by bilateral and multilateral donors in order to sustain these programmes. The issue of how best to provide support from the relief to the development phases will remain an issue of concern not only to the United Nations but also to the international community so they may have the flexibility to respond to the challenges on the ground. The mission believes that better coordination is needed in the mobilization of resources.

52. There is a significant role for the United Nations to play in the follow-up to the Liberia Partners’ Forum, held in Washington, D.C. in February 2007, particularly in the areas of capacity-building and data collection. Capacity-building has to be comprehensive and will take time. United Nations agencies should continue to play the role of “trusted friends” during that period and accompany the Government throughout the process.

53. Nevertheless, it was observed that the joint efforts of the UNCT members to work together, based upon General Assembly resolution 59/250 of 2 December 2004 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development, could be more effective in terms of breaking down programmatic silos and encouraging coordination, collaboration and harmonization. However, it was viewed and discussed with the UNCT that overall, continued effort should be made regarding working together at the country level. Examples that were discussed and that might be considered for further exploration include structural adjustments to staffing, usage of capital assets and the development of common programmatic methodologies, indicators, benchmarks and other areas that could lead to economies of scale, increased programmatic effectiveness and other efficiencies. However, coordination needs to be guided by respect for the mandates of all the UNCT agencies, taking into account the importance of the outcomes of all major United Nations conferences and summits for the achievement of the development goals.

54. Leadership and political will, both inside and outside the United Nations, can make a difference. The United Nations has demonstrated this through the effectiveness of the measles immunization campaign, which could not have happened without strong coordination and cooperation between the United Nations agencies. As a general observation, some coordination gaps were noted between the work of the UNCT and the programmatic activities of UNMIL. This is an area that

could benefit from a useful discussion by the Peacebuilding Commission and the Economic and Social Council.

55. Coordination of all stakeholders is essential at all levels to ensure that the efforts made during the humanitarian phase are not lost before the developmental phase is reached and to increase the opportunities of resource mobilization.

56. In January 2006, Liberia was designated as one of the pilot countries for the cluster approach for humanitarian coordination, bringing together United Nations agencies, NGOs, donors and the Government with clear leadership assigned to particular agencies in specific sectors. The idea is to have clearly defined humanitarian priorities, action plans, strategies and benchmarks for Liberia in case the need arises, while at the same time improving accountability. This approach can also provide, through the joint assessment of needs by CSTs, a way for the mandates of smaller agencies to be reflected even though they might not be present. In addition, the UNDAF, which constitutes a useful tool for determining joint programmes or collaborative actions, should take advantage of the joint assessment approach.

57. The CSTs constitutes an innovative mechanism not only to strengthen the capacities of local administration but also for the UNCT to coordinate the United Nations approach and to support the Government's decentralization efforts, based on the needs identified by the people at the community level. Such initiatives could prove useful for increasing the leading role of civil authority at the local level and coordinating with UNMIL and humanitarian agencies as they draw down their presence. There is still scope for further collaboration and coordination among the different agencies and with the Government, in order to deepen the impact of the work of the entire United Nations system on the ground, including through the CSTs. The mandates of all agencies should be reflected in the work of the CSTs through the joint gap analysis approach. National ownership and leadership should be built into the CST mechanism.

58. The engagement of civil society and the private sector should continue to be pursued by the UNCT.

59. South-South cooperation with countries in the region (including such regional and subregional groupings as the Economic Community of West African States and the Mano River Union) should continue to be pursued by the UNCT.

#### **Specific observations and recommendations**

60. Given the scale and intensity of technical assistance required to support capacity development, UNICEF Liberia will need to maintain an optimal staff for the period that the "double programme" is needed.

61. Consideration must be given to an increased budget that will allow UNICEF to simultaneously provide service delivery and enhance the capacities of the Liberian people during the crucial transition phase from recovery to development. Additional funds may be sought through the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) and other appropriate mechanisms.

62. Given the Liberian experience, UNICEF may wish to consider initiating a special focus on adolescent development and protection in a post-conflict situation.

63. UNICEF may wish to consider taking the initiative in addressing the special needs of children in transition from refugee and IDP status to “regular/resident” status, in consultation with other concerned agencies and organizations.

64. UNICEF must continue its activities as part of the UNCT, while supporting the national ownership of those programmes by the people and Government of Liberia.

65. Country programmes that find themselves in the transition from relief to development may need to make adjustments to the traditional definitions with regard to WFP programmes in order to sustain programming for critical basic needs beyond the traditionally defined emergency relief phase.

66. A premature phase-out of food security programming such as school feeding would be a serious setback to the recovery process, discouraging refugees from returning and/or staying in their areas of return and further eroding the increases in school attendance and the Government’s gains towards its education recovery priorities.

67. The special circumstances found in situations such as in Liberia should be considered in terms of raising funds through the CAP. It should be recognized that the CAP is viewed by donors as a primary source of direction with regard to humanitarian needs. As such, a given country’s inability to launch its own separate appeal (as opposed to a regional appeal) significantly lessens the degree to which it can attract funding.

68. Given the scale and intensity of the technical assistance required in Liberia and the proven comparative advantages of UNFPA, the professional staffing levels and funding for UNFPA would need to be increased significantly and used as seed funds to leverage needed resources to vigorously address, in partnership with other stakeholders, the unacceptably high rates of teenage pregnancy and maternal mortality and the very high incidence of obstetric fistula, and to continue to spearhead national efforts to fill 23 years of vital gaps through the conduct of the much needed 2008 Population and Housing Census, while reinforcing its leadership role in combating gender-based violence.

69. UNFPA must continue to take advantages of its multisectoral teams of experts stationed in the region to bring technical assistance to the Government, while pursuing national capacity-building through South-South cooperation.

70. UNFPA should take advantage of additional funds from the Central Emergency Response Fund, the CAP and other appropriate mechanisms to support reduction of maternal mortality and gender-based violence in Liberia.

## Annex 1

### List of participants in the joint field visit by members of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP to Liberia (25 February to 5 March 2007)

Regional Group/Country	Name and title	Representing Executive Board
<b>African States</b> Benin  Mali Tanzania, United Republic of Uganda	Ms. A. Fernande Hougbedji, Second Counsellor, Permanent Mission  Mr. Issa Konfourou, Counsellor, Permanent Mission H.E. Mr. Wilfred Joseph Ngirwa, Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania to FAO/WFP and IFAD Mr. Benedict L. Lukwiya, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission	UNDP  UNICEF WFP  UNFPA
<b>Asian and Pacific States</b> Bangladesh Bhutan Myanmar Pakistan	Mr. Mahmudul Karim, Minister, Permanent Mission Mr. Sangye Rinchhen, Counsellor, Permanent Mission Mr. Aung Lynn, Counsellor, Permanent Mission Mr. Aamir Ashraf Khawaja, Counsellor	UNDP UNFPA UNICEF WFP
<b>Eastern European States</b> Croatia Russian Federation Ukraine	Ms. Jasminka Dinic, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission Mr. Denis Piminov, Third Secretary, Permanent Mission Mr. Ihor Ivanchenko, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	UNICEF UNDP UNFPA
<b>Latin American and Caribbean States</b> Bahamas  Guatemala Jamaica Peru	H.E. Ms. Paulette A. Bethel, Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York Mr. Jose Briz Gutierrez, Deputy Perm. Rep., Permanent Mission Ms. Diedre Mills, Counsellor, Permanent Mission Mr. Roberto Seminario, Minister, Embassy of Peru to Italy and FAO/IFAD/WFP	UNICEF  UNFPA UNDP WFP
<b>Western European and other States</b> Canada Japan  Netherlands United Kingdom	Mr. Nevin Orange, Programme Officer, CIDA Mr. Ken Ota, Officer, Global Issues Cooperation Division, International Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ms. Loes van den Elzen, Policy Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mr. Dan Silvey, Senior Conflict Adviser Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs, DFID	WFP UNFPA  UNICEF UNDP

The mission was accompanied by:

- Mr. Ado Vaher, Secretary *ad interim* of the UNICEF Executive Board
- Ms. Rekha Thapa, Secretary of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board
- Mr. Kwabena Osei-Danquah, Chief, Executive Board and External Relations Branch, UNFPA
- Ms. Claudia Von Roehl, Secretary of the WFP Executive Board
- Ms. Kirsi Madi, Assistant Secretary of the UNICEF Executive Board
- Ms. Françoise Coupet, Administrative Assistant, UNICEF Office of the Secretary of the Executive Board

## Annex 2

### Summary of the programme of the field visit

#### Monday, 26 February

1. Security briefing
2. Welcoming remarks by the Heads of Agencies
3. Meeting of the Executive Board members
4. Briefing by SRSG with UNCT and UNMIL staff
5. Lunch with Agency Representatives/Senior Staff/Staff Association representatives
6. Courtesy call to the Minister of Foreign Affairs
7. Meeting with Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs on national priorities
8. Welcome reception with UN/Liberian senior officials/diplomatic community

#### Tuesday, 27 February

1. Briefing for the Executive Board members by their respective agencies
2. Meeting with the President of the Republic of Liberia
3. Meeting with representatives of the private sector
4. Meeting with representatives of civil society
5. Cocktails with representatives of civil society/private sector

#### Wednesday, 28 February

##### County Visits: Participants split into two groups-Team 1

1. Visit to Voinjama
2. County support team meeting with the Superintendent and local administration
3. Visit to Tenebu Elementary School (UNDP/UNICEF/WFP)
4. Transit Centre
5. Briefing by the Pakistani Battalion of UNMIL and UNHCR
6. Visit to Foya Hospital (Foya Health Centre UNPA/UNICEF/WHO)
7. Briefing on the measles campaign

##### Team 2

1. Visit to Ganta
2. County Support Team meeting with the Superintendent
3. Presentation of children affected by the fighting factions (CAFF) project
4. Visit of two sites of CAFF project (masonry, carpentry, tailoring) (UNICEF)
5. Presentation and welcome by Bangladeshi Battalion of UNMIL Commander
6. Mano River Union HIV/AIDS project (UNFPA)

7. Rehabilitation Centre (FAO/UNICEF/WFP)
8. Visit to Ganta Hospital (UNDP/UNFPA/WFP)

**Thursday, 1 March**

**County Visits: Participants split into two groups-Team 1**

1. Visit to Star of the Sea Health Center (UNFPA/UNICEF/WFP)
2. Monrovia Vocational Training Center, Skills Training for Ex-Combatants (UNDP)
3. Meeting with County Support Team (CST) members
4. Fistula Programme (UNFPA) National Drug Service annex and drug store (UNDP)
5. Police: Women & Children Protection Unit, meet with the Inspector General (UNICEF)

**Team 2**

1. Therapeutic Feeding Center (UNICEF/WFP)
2. Visit to Sass Town Clinic and Community Health Centre (UNICEF/UNFPA)
3. Visit to Tubmanburg
4. CST meeting with the Superintendent and local administration
5. Visit to Bomi Hospital including regional drugs depot (UNDP/UNFPA)
6. Visit to Gbah ALP/Community School (NRC/UNICEF/WFP)

**Friday, 2 March**

1. Breakfast meeting with the Minister of Gender
2. Internal meeting of the Executive Boards
3. Press briefing
4. Internal meeting of the Executive Boards
5. Meeting with sector Ministers and Governance Reform Commission
6. Reception hosted by Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs

**Saturday, 3 March**

1. Breakfast meeting with the Minister of Finance
2. Meeting with key development partners (European Union, United States, Sweden, Germany, Economic Community of West African States, African Union, African Development Bank, China, World Bank and International Monetary Fund)
3. Debriefing with RC and Heads of Executive Committee agencies

**Sunday, 4 March**

1. Drafting of the field visit report
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