

UNDP Liberia News Board

Quarterly Journal of UNDP Liberia

Issue 5: April-June 2015



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EU BOOSTS DECENTRALIZATION



Don't stop at the use of the cars, but rather on ensuring that ensuring that Service Centers in these counties are fully empowered to provide the services needed by the people to respond positively to the Decentralization Program" Ms. Intelmann noted.

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The European Union (EU) through UNDP turned over to the Liberian Decentralization Support Program (LDSP) several Toyota High top vehicles to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Eight Counties are benefitting from the 10 vehicles procured for use by the LDSP. EU Head of Delegate Tina Intelmann, said the use of the vehicles was for the bigger purpose of helping the Government of Liberia bring services closer to its citizens, especially those situated in inaccessible communities.

UNDP Deputy Country Director for Programme Cleophas Torori mentioned the efforts made by all partners in realizing a long standing plan to provide services to rural population in Liberia. Mr. Torori pointed out that the donation came at a time, when the Government Economic plan is anchored on coordination and the fast track of programs and services. **"We anticipate that this vision of de-concentration will be realized in the soonest possible time"**, said Mr. Torori.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Deputy Minister for Administration Varney Sirleaf acknowledged receipt of the gesture on the part of the EU, stressing that **"the importance of the vehicles was to stimulate and promote de-concentration in what he termed "tough terrain" within the 15 political subdivisions of Liberia.**

Delegates vote on 25 constitutional proposals

Over 500 delegates from Liberia's 73 Electoral Districts representing the 15 political subdivisions of the Country voted for changes and/ or amendments to Liberia's 1986 Constitution. It happened at a 5-day Constitutional Review Conference.

Under the auspices of the Constitutional Review Committee (CRC) set up by the Liberian Government in 2013, delegates representing various sectors of the Liberian Society decided through vote counts, on amendments that cover tenure, land rights, citizenship, elections of local government administrations, as well as dual currency and marriage among others.

One of the most controversial issues propounded and voted upon was to return Liberia to a Christian Nation instead of being a secular State.

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf promised that the Government will in a timely manner, submit a document to the Legislature that expresses the aspirations of the Liberian people.



“The Government hears you clearly and will act accordingly” said the Liberian Leader at the CRC Conference

Border Surveillance Strengthened

UNDP donated eight (8) shelter tents valued at US\$38,660 to the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization (BIN), as part of efforts to ensure effective monitoring of Liberia's border posts to prevent the resurgence of the deadly Ebola virus disease (EVD) and other cross-border issues.

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Deputy Country Director for Programmes Cleophas Torori said the tents will also facilitate the deployment of officers at various crossing points along the country's borders, and allow the officers to patrol both official and unofficial crossing points.

Torori further indicated that the deployment of BIN officers at these posts will not only prevent the resurgence of the Ebola virus in the country, but also helps deal with crimes and smuggling of small arms and light weapons. BIN Commissioner Lemuel Reeves received the tents on behalf of his organization and thanked the UNDP for the donation and its continuous support to BIN over the years.

In his remarks, Commissioner Reeves said the donation of the tents was also important to ensuring that BIN officers are deployed at border posts especially as the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) draws down.

“The donation is intended to increase robust surveillance at the country’s border posts.” said Torori

“With these tents, our officers will be able to deploy and patrol remote areas along our borders, not only to keep surveillance on EVD, but to prevent other crimes...” the BIN boss noted.

First County Center Opens under Decentralization Programme

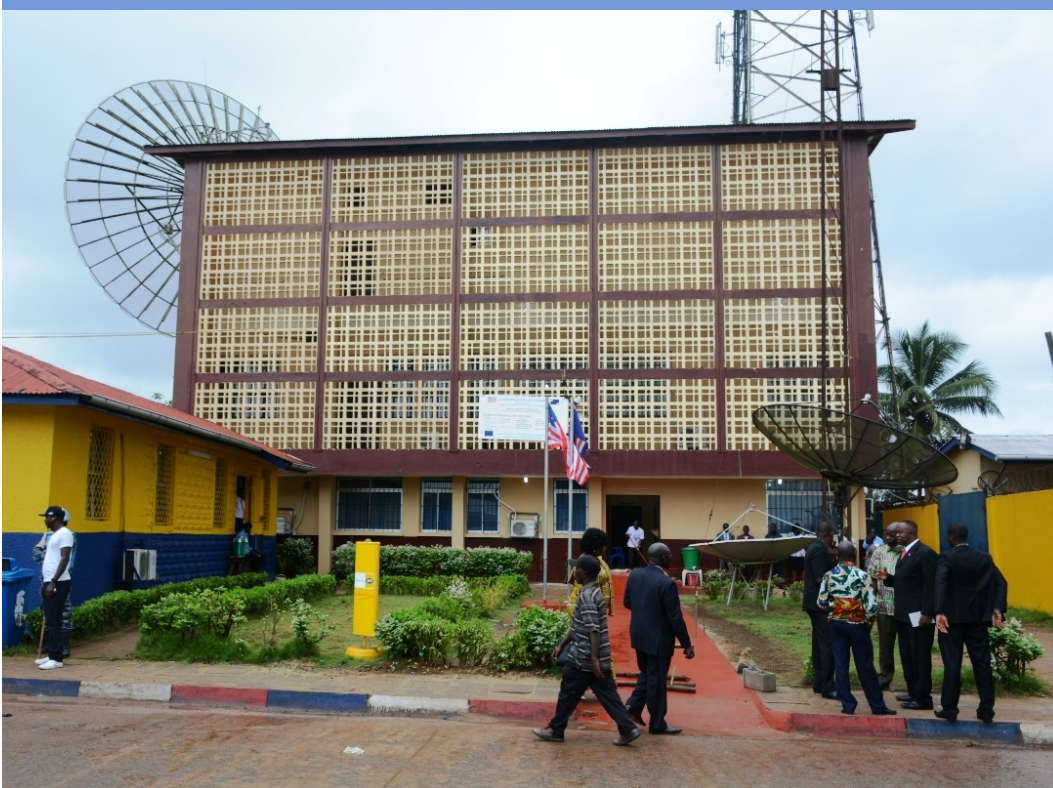
The Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Internal Affairs celebrates a milestone of taking governance closer to the people, with the opening of its first County Service Center (CSC) under the Liberia Decentralization Support Programme (LDSP) on June 30, 2015. Described as a one-stop shop, the center offers services for obtaining different types of documentation, permits, licenses, certificates etc. Set up in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County. The opening of the Center now reduces the struggle faced by many rural residents in accessing services related to obtaining permits, marriage and birth certificates, land deeds, business permits and registration as well as license plates and others. In the interim, it is expected to serve other counties, including Maryland, Nimba, Bong, Lofa, Grand

Gedeh, Bomi and Margibi, respectively.

Liberia’s Vice President Joseph Boakai, Performed the dedicatory ceremony, stressing that the opening of the center further demonstrates the government’s vision of decentralizing the governance system of the country. VP Boakai assured that the Government will not rest until similar facility is made available in every County in Liberia, adding that “services will be of the same quality like what is provided in Monrovia”.

ECOWAS-EU Small Arms Project Launched

In Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County the ECOWAS-EU Small Arms project was launched. It is focused on two clusters covering six (6) countries, namely Northern Niger - Mali; (Sahel) and (Mano River Union) Cote d’Ivoire, Sierra Leone, and Liberia.



This is a \$5.6 million Euro pilot project being funded by the European Union, implemented by the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms (LINCSA) in three south-eastern counties namely; Grand Gedeh, Maryland and RiverGee and managed by UNDP for the next two years.

Delivering the keynote statement at the official launch, Deputy Defense Minister Jerome Labalee emphasized that tackling issues critical to the project will enforce the participation of local leaders and communities.

He noted that the voluntary nature of the project further strengthens peace and security. “This project should be seen as one intended to sustain peace and promote development rather than stigmatizing individuals and/or groups of people who provide information on hidden arms”.

Kokoyah Scores Successes

Residents of Kokoyah Statutory District in Bong are appreciative to the Government and people of Norway through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for successes scored at the Kokoyah Millennium Village Project (KMVP) in the district.

Residents expressed delight over the level of impact made on their community and surrounding areas by the project.

Kokoyah can now boast of 2 elementary schools, 2 clinics, a cellcom tower, access to feeder roads, a fully functional Village Savings and Loans Association Program, Staff quarters for Staff of both schools etc. Other projects to be completed include a market building, a maternal waiting annex for the Gbercoln Clinic, Botota market rehabilitation, Gbarta School Auditorium etc.

Hanson Zolone, the principal of the Kokoyah Public School says the school which just opened, currently has an enrolment of 198 students.

“The school is serving students from more than five towns and nearly ten villages around the area” Hanson said. The Kokoyah Public School was expanded to an eight classroom building with toilet facility.



UNDP Conducts monitoring of projects within the Kokoyah Village

Taking GBV to Ten Communities

The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP), with support from UNDP conducted community sensitization and awareness training workshop for ten communities in Montserrado County.

Communities that benefitted from the training include West Point, Soul Clinic, Bushrod Island, Caldwell, Paynesville, Peace Island and Bernard Farm, among others.

The training was intended to strengthen community members on the prevention and response to gender based violence (GBV) as well as strengthening community structures to take collective action against gender based violence in their respective localities.

Deputy Gender Minister Sieane Abdul-Baki said the increase in gender inequalities and the exacerbation of violence against women and girls continue to be reflected by high statistics of violation from most countries around the world.

According to her, the prevalence of Sexual and Gender-based Violence, including rape poses threat to gender equality, women's empowerment, peace and security in Liberia.

Statistics gathered by the Ministry between January and November 2014 suggests that 560 rape cases were reported by partners including the police, health sector, the court, INGOS and NGOS as well as community members in the 15 counties.

Payment to Ebola Response Workers Continues

The Ministry of Health & Social Welfare (MoHSW) continued back pay hazard payments for at least 1,587 routine healthcare workers in 13 of Liberia's 15 counties.

With support from UNDP, four Teams comprising personnel of the County Health Team (CHT), Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP), Ministry of Health and a bank staff have were deployed to carry out the payments across the targeted counties.

This process is in continuation of a payment scheme, which initially began with the disbursement of salaries and risk benefits to Ebola Incident Management Staff, during the first phase, sometime last year (2014), using a Multi Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) which UNDP manages.

To jumpstart the payment plan, UNDP had conducted an independent audit of the list of workers to verify its authenticity. The audit illustrated poor planning in the recruitment and resource management for these workers, but concluded that the workers had been contracted and working officially in counties for a period of 4 months.

In the far north County of Lofa, one of the worst hit, especially among predominately Muslim farming district of Quadugboni, the Ebola virus disease swept away entire families, including children,



Opening of the County Service Center and EU Boost to Decentralization in Photos

