

LIBERIA'S VNR 2020 KEY MESSAGES

1. Liberia's Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development 2018 - 2023 is second in the series of 5-year National Plans under the Liberia Vision 2030 framework, and follows the Agenda for Transformation (2012-2017). The PAPD aligns with the African Union Agenda 2063 and SDGs, particularly its **three dimensions**—economic, social, and environmental with special emphasis on human rights and peace. Established technical groups, with a diverse membership from government, CSOs, bilateral and multilateral partners, and business representatives, are leading and advising the process of implementation of the national plan to achieve the SDGs.
2. Despite many years of conflict followed by the Ebola outbreak, Liberia has made remarkable progress on key national aggregate indicators - such as per capita income growth (550.00 USD), the Human Development Index (0.465), life expectancy at birth (63.7), and mean years of schooling (9.6%). Since the new national plan began in 2018, the education sector has better access to the internet along with free education in all public schools and universities. The health sector has seen upgradation of equipment and doctors' qualifications in specialized medical fields. Additionally, over 75km of primary roads and 43km of urban roads have been constructed, and 65km of water pipeline has been laid. More than 40 institutions have now graduated to e-governance platform to improve performance. However, absolute poverty has been on the rise since 2014. The legacy of entrenched inequality, widespread infrastructure deficits, and economic deprivation remain barriers to sustainable peace, growth, and sustainable development, which may be further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Therefore, the government and its development partners are now focusing more on accelerating economic growth. To this end, roads and other infrastructure development are prioritized to create physical corridors along with the implementation of a new integrated and multi-sectoral approach to spatial development. This, along with increased social spending in the neglected regions of the country will lift large majorities out of extreme poverty and food insecurity, strengthen local value chains, create local markets where they do not exist, raise labor productivity in agriculture and forestry, artisanal mining, and fishing, and increase access to basic social services across the country.
4. Now, the decade of Action towards achieving the SDGs has commenced with the Covid-19 pandemic, which is exposing structural fragilities in countries across the world and Liberia is no exception. This emergency calls for both an immediate health response and a longer-term socio-economic recovery response. Liberia brings to this challenge its long-term partnerships with regional and inter-governmental bodies - such as the Economic Community of West African States, the African Union, Economic Commission for Africa, and the Mano River Union. A robust national response mechanism is currently in place structured around key pillars, particularly case management and investigation, infection prevention and control, laboratory testing, vigorous contact tracing, and psychosocial support, etc.
5. Despite the economic shocks caused by COVID-19, Liberia remains deeply committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda and achieving the SDGs. Therefore, the post-COVID-19 recovery engagements will play out in a major way in accelerating actions to achieve the

SDGs. The focus will be on sub-national development, human capital development, protection of children's rights, and reduction of systemic biases against women in the social and political arena with greater emphasis on social cohesion and sustaining the peace. Moreover, Liberia will continue to build a nation based on the principles of inclusion, harnessing its human capital of young people who comprise more than half the population, towards equitable distribution of revenues generated from natural resources, and on a rights-based approach to development. The eradication of extreme poverty, which is central to the SDG agenda, will be most urgent.

6. As per the philosophy, “Leaving No One Behind”, the Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index will be a key measurement. To monitor impact in the remotest areas, statistical systems will be ramped up to capture citizens’ feedback. To measure inclusion and inequality, the HDI will be used. Subnational disaggregation on access to health, education, and opportunities to make a decent living will be measured through the Multidimensional Poverty Index. Surveys, censuses, sector assessments, and project evaluations conducted with development partners, will be used to generate evidence of outcomes and impact across various regions of the country.