

**REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
LIBERIAN NATIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE
TO
COMBAT DESERTIFICATION**

**FIRST NATIONAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF
THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT
DESERTIFICATION
*IN THOSE COUNTRIES EXPERIENCING SERIOUS DROUGHT
AND/OR
DESERTIFICATION, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA***

**Monrovia, Liberia
West Africa**

April 15, 2002

FOREWORD

Liberia is committed to the implementation of the terms and conditions contained in the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa (UNCCD).

While the extent of desertification and drought is still relatively minimal in our country, Government realized, even before the advent of the UNCCD, that it must take steps to control land degradation and all anthropogenic activities that may lead to desertification. Thus shortly after the end of the civil crisis and subsequent democratic elections, it acceded to the Convention in March 1998.

The preparation of this National Report which measures the extent of Liberia's compliance to the UNCCD, is a joint effort of a cross-section of public and private agencies, institutions, NGOs, the civil society and other stakeholders.

Shortly, the National Coordinating Committee to Combat Desertification will spear-head the formulation and elaboration of a National Action Program to Combat Desertification and Drought in Liberia. Government is supportive of this process and is committed to the implementation of the action plan that will come therefrom.

However, given Government's current precarious financial situation and the UN Sanctions which are causing further hardships, we are appealing to the Developed Country Parties, the Global Mechanism and other friends to assist Liberia with its CCD activities.

On behalf of the Government of Liberia, we wish to thank the UNCCD Secretariat for the assistance and support it has provided in preparing this report and facilitating the participation of our country in meetings related to the CCD.

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Chairman
Senate Standing Committee on Lands, Natural Resources and the Environment
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PREFACE

This document presents Liberia's First National Report on the Implementation of the UNCCD. It reflects actions taken at the national and local levels to implement the Convention.

While this report will be reviewed by the COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION (CRIC), it is hoped that Developed Country Parties to the CCD and other donors will use it as a guide to assist our country with the implementation of the Convention.

The Help Guide on the National Reports on the UNCCD Implementation provided by the CCD Secretariat was useful in the preparation of this report.

On behalf of the Liberian National Coordinating Committee to Combat Desertification, we would like to thank all agencies, institutions, the civil society and other stakeholders who participated in the preparation of this report.

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SUMMARY

- **Liberia and The CCD**

Liberia acceded to the CCD on March 3, 1998. The following pages present a summary of its first National Report.

- **The Strategies and Priorities established within the framework of sustainable development plans and/or policies**

From December 1989 to October 1996, Liberia experienced a civil crisis which disrupted socio-economic activities, caused a destruction of infrastructure and made the citizens poorer.

Since democratic elections in 1997, two plans have been formulated. The POST- WAR NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAM (1998-2000) focused on priority reconstruction activities in the first two years of recovery after election with emphasis on the sustenance of peace by promoting the economic activities and social stability of the country. The MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT (2002-2007), which is in its final stage of completion will accelerate the transition from reconstruction to sustainable development.

Drafts of a National Environmental Policy, Environmental Protection and Management Law and an Environmental Agency Act have been submitted by the President of Liberia to the National Legislature for enactment. Over the years, Liberia has operated with fragmented policies and regulations and weak institutional arrangements in environmental matters. After the passage of these acts, a National Environmental Action plan will be formulated.

Prior to the CCD, there were national strategies to combat the effect of desertification. The Forestry Act of 1953 ensured the establishment of natural parks, reserves and the minimization of land degradation resulting from logging. To boost productivity, ensure efficiency and minimize land degradation in the agriculture sector, Government formulated numerous strategies among which are decentralization of agriculture programs, construction of farm to market roads, development of agriculture extension systems, and promotion of the use of modern farming methods.

The objectives of the National Energy Strategy formulated in 1984 included providing reliable services at reasonable price and reducing national dependence on imported petroleum through development of domestic energy resources.

The National Water Strategy consisted of the establishment in 1981 of the National Water Resources and Sanitation Broad charged with the responsibility of coordinating activities of agencies involved with water resources development and delivery, and drafting a National Water Policy and Legislation.

- **Institutional Measures to Implement the Convention**

The Liberia National Coordinating Committee (LNCC), charged with overseeing the implementation of the CCD, was constituted by an Inter-ministerial Declaration on October 4, 1998. A National Focal Point was chosen and together with The LNCC have full control over matters dealing with the CCD. The LNCC has adequate human resources but is lacking financial and material resources to execute its tasks. County and other coordinating committees have also been established.

The LNCC is composed of public and private institutions, NGOs, and some members of the civil society. The cross-cutting and multidisciplinary nature of the LNCC is reflected in the academic background, training and experience of personnel at the various institutions and groups that take part in the work of the CCD in Liberia.

Liberia is in the initial stages of formulating a National Action Program (NAP) to Combat Desertification and has accordingly informed the CCD Secretariat of this intention.

A New Minerals and Mining Law was approved on April 3, 2000, and a New Forestry Law on April 6, 2000. Both of these laws contain sections that deal with the sustainable management of the environment. Additionally, the President of Liberia has submitted to the National Legislature several bills on the Environment and Petroleum Development. The formulation of National Land and Water Legislations will shortly commence.

- **Participatory Process In Support of Preparation and Implementation of Action Programs**

The civil society, including NGOs, women groups and community-based organizations (CBOs), have taken interest in desertification matters. The local coordinating committees have been informed through county focal points of the intention to prepare a national action program.

The response of local stakeholders is encouraging.

- **Consultative Process in Support of the Preparation of the National Action Program**

There are no international partners involved with the CCD process in Liberia. The little aid coming to the country from bilateral and multilateral sources is used mainly for humanitarian activities.

- **Measures Taken or Planned Within the Framework of National Action Programs**

In diagnosing past experiences in desertification control, it is important to note that there is a moderate risk of desertification in about 5-7% of the Liberian Territory, mainly in Lofa County, Northwestern Liberia.

Prior to the CCD, the Government of Liberia embarked upon several projects to improve soil conservation, minimize land degradation and improve agricultural production. These included GTZ-sponsored agriculture development projects in Southeastern Liberia and in Nimba County; IFAD-sponsored agriculture and rural development projects in Lofa and Bong Counties and the AGRIMECO Project; and USAID-sponsored CARI Project and the Soil Conservation Program of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Although Liberia is in the initial stage of formulating its NAP, there are sectoral programs which aggregate towards the mitigation of the effect of drought and desertification and which will be incorporated into the NAP.

The New Minerals and Mining Law requires the submission of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) before the commencement of operations and periodic assessments thereafter. A proposal has been submitted to the President to reconstitute the National Water Resources and Sanitation Board which will regulate water resources development in the country. These provisions shall be incorporated into the NAP.

There are plans to formulate a National Energy Policy and empower the National Energy Committee to efficiently administer the energy sector.

There is also a planned action in land resources management which shall include the formulation of land use policy, drafting of land legislation and the strengthening of institutional arrangements in land administration.

Implementation of the Forest Resources Management Plan, correlation of forestry and other land use practices, involvement of local population in the management of forest and associated resources and the conducting of education and awareness programs, are among the planned actions in Forest Resources Management in Liberia.

The planned action in Agriculture shall include organizing farmers at the grass-root level for improved agriculture practices, strengthening the non-agriculture support services such as roads, market centers and credit facilities and encouraging cooperative management.

Several measures are being taken to improve institutional organization. Prior to 1990, Government Administration was moderately decentralized. Since the elections of 1997, Government has endeavored to re-establish this structure throughout the country. The NAP will take advantage of this structure and ensure that local communities are involved in the decision-making process through the "bottom-up" approach.

There is a strong link between poverty and land degradation. Among the measures to improve the economic environment the NAP will address are: re-settling people displaced by the civil crisis; improving farm to market roads; practicing integrated rural development; improving educational and health services and providing alternative means of livelihood for local communities in degraded areas.

- **Financial Allocations from National Budgets in Support of CCD Programs**

Since the civil crisis, the Government has been faced with severe economic constraints. With a budget of about just US\$90m for all sectors and activities in the country, only a limited amount is allotted for general environment work.

The limited amount of assistance from bilateral and multilateral sources is geared towards emergency and humanitarian services such as caring for displaced people and refugees and providing support in the health and water sectors.

- **Review of Benchmarks and Indicators to Measure Progress and Implementation Thereof**

National environmental monitoring and observation capacities and information system on desertification are still inadequate.

National hydrometeorological networks and other weather observing and reporting facilities remain partially rehabilitated since the end of the first cycle of the civil crisis.

The Hydrological Service which before the CCD generated valuable data and information, is not operating at its full capacity and needs rehabilitation.

The coordination among agencies, institutions and NGOs involved in environmental management in Liberia will improve information gathering and dissemination and thus enhance the national capacity to assess resource degradation.

1.0 STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES ESTABLISHED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND/OR POLICIES

1.1 National Plans and Strategies Available in Other Social and Economic Areas

1.1.1 National Development Plan

For most part of the decade of the 90's, Liberia experienced a civil crisis, which brought all socio-economic activities to a virtual standstill.

Since democratic elections in 1997, two plans have been formulated, namely:

1. POST-WAR NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAM (1998-2000) and,
2. MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT (2002-2007)

1.1.1.1 POST-WAR NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTURE PROGRAM (1998-2000)

The National Reconstruction Program (NRP) focused on priority reconstruction activities in the first two years of recovery after democratic elections in 1997, which ended seven years of civil war. The objective of the priority reconstruction program was to sustain peace by promoting the economic activities and social stability of the country. It also focused on the integration of those Liberians whose lives have been disrupted by the civil conflict.

The guiding principles of the NRP were:

1. Reinforcing interdependence between peace and security on one hand, and poverty-reducing growth on the other hand
2. Promoting national reconciliation and the consolidation of democracy through inclusive, good governance, tolerance for political difference, restoration of transparent legal processes and respect for human rights
3. Providing community-based assistance with appropriate targeting of vulnerable groups and
4. Mainstreaming environmental protection in reconstruction programming

Short term Priority Program under the NRP included the following:

1. Security, Governance and Civil Service Reform
2. Economic Management
3. Repatriation and Resettlement
4. Education
5. Health
6. Productive Capacity and Sustainable livelihood and
7. Infrastructure

1.1.1.2 MEDIUM TERM PLAN FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT (2000-2007)

The Five-Year Medium Term Plan for Reconstruction and Development (MTP) which is nearing its final stages of completion, will succeed the National Reconstruction Plan discussed above.

The overall goals of the plan will be to:

1. Accelerate the transition from reconstruction to sustainable development
2. Consolidate peace, reinforce the democratization process and strengthen mechanisms for conflict prevention
3. Restore and develop the country's economic and social infrastructure in order to support adequately, social and economic recovery
4. Provide the requisite enabling environment for private sector growth and development
5. Pursue broad-based development and poverty reduction and
6. Enhance competitiveness of the Liberian economy to facilitate the country's effective participation in the global economy

In order to achieve the above goals, the following objectives will be pursued:

1. Rebuild and reinforce governance institutions
2. Maintain a stable and balanced macroeconomic environment by the end of the plan period
3. Raise the annual average growth rate of the real GDP to between 5-8%
4. Reduce poverty to 64% from the present 76% and
5. Increase the rate of employment equivalent to at least the rate of growth of the labor force per annum

The programs to be implemented under the MTP include the following:

1. Good Governance for Sustainable poverty-reducing Growth and Development
2. Macroeconomic environment for accelerated economic recovery and poverty reduction
3. Strategic Resource Management
4. Agriculture and food security
5. Private Sector Development, Trade and Investment promotion
6. Infrastructure rehabilitation and development
7. Education and human resources development
8. Health, Population and Reproduction
9. Poverty reduction
10. Gender and Development
11. Environmental Protection and Regeneration, and
12. Economic Integration and Aid Coordination

1.1.2 National Environmental Policy

Over the years, Liberia operated fragmented environmental policies, with each public agency being governed by its own policies it has set. However, under the auspices of the National Environmental Commission of Liberia, established in 1999, a National Environmental Policy of the Republic of Liberia was prepared and submitted to the Office of the President on August 1, 2001. The President has subsequently forwarded it to the National Legislature for its review.

The cardinal objectives of the National Environmental Policy are the following:

1. Ensuring the improvement of the physical environment
2. Improving quality of life of the people and
3. Ensuring reconciliation and coordination between economic development and growth with sustainable management of natural resources.

The policy addresses the following issues:

1. Poverty alleviation
2. Environmental impact assessment/studies
3. Development of human settlements
4. Occupational health and safety
5. Establishment and management of recreational space
6. Population management
7. Environmental information
8. Conservation of nature
9. Desertification and biological diversity
10. Management of water resources
11. Environmental Economics
12. Sustainable management of sectoral system of
 - a) Land use
 - b) Forest and wildlife
 - c) Energy
 - d) Waste management
 - e) Marine and coastal zone management
 - f) Mineral resources
13. Capacity building
14. International treaties and protocols
15. Public awareness and training
16. Gender issues, and
17. Policy implementation

1.1.3 National Environmental Action Plan

The President of Liberia has submitted to the National Legislature for enactment, an Environmental Management Bill. This bill is to establish an Environmental Protection Agency and an Environmental Policy Code. After the approval of these codes, a National Environmental Action Plan will be formulated.

1.1.4 National and Local Agendas 21

Under the auspices of the National Environmental Commission of Liberia, the national and local plans to implement Agenda 21 will shortly be launched formally. Nevertheless, programs on UNCCD and UNCBD are currently being implemented.

1.2 National Plans or Strategies in the Field of Combating Desertification Developed Prior to the UNCCD

1.2.1 Forestry Policies

The Forestry Act of 1953 ensured the establishment of National Parks and reserves to protect endangered tree species and minimize land degradation resulting from logging.

The National reforestation program started in 1971 in Grand Cape Mount, Montserrado, Bong, Nimba and Grand Gedeh Counties.

To ensure the sustainable management of forest resources, a forest management plan was formulated by the Forestry Development Authority in the 1980's.

1.2.2 Agriculture Policies and Strategies

Between 1981 and 1989, agriculture accounted for about 36.4% of GDP. During this period, there were five broad production systems that characterized agricultural output in the country. These are traditional smallholder farms, Liberian-owned commercial farms, parastatal corporations, large foreign-owned plantations and the concession plantations.

The traditional subsistence agricultural sector was a source of livelihood for about 75% of the population prior to 1990. This was however characterized by a low level of productivity and practices employed under the cultivation system led to land degradation.

To boost productivity and ensure efficiency in the agricultural sector, Government propounded several policies and formulated numerous strategies among which are the following:

1. No importation of rice, Liberia's staple food after 1980
2. Decentralization of the administration of Agricultural Programs
3. Organization of farmers into cooperatives
4. Construction of farm to market roads throughout the country
5. Development of agriculture extension system
6. The Green Revolution
7. Government declaration of war on Ignorance, Disease and Poverty
8. Government Policy of "From Mats to Mattresses"
9. Promotion of the use of modern farming methods

1.2.3 Land Policy

Key Government Policy issues on land are the following:

1. The land belongs to the people and shall be administered on their behalf by the Government
2. The Government has the right of eminent domain over all lands and
3. Only persons of Negro descent may own land in Liberia

Prior to 1990, there were plans to review institutional arrangement in the land sector, formulate land legislation, policies and regulation, establish appropriate records and cadastral through an adjudication program and continue mapping of the country at different scales.

1.2.4 National Energy Strategy

The National Energy Committee (NEC) was constituted by the Government in 1981 prior to the birth of the UNCCD to administer the energy sector. It consisted of the Ministry of Lands, Mines & Energy, the Liberia Electricity Corporation, the Liberia Petroleum Refining Corporation, Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Rural Development, and the Forestry Development Authority.

In 1984, the NEC identified the following long-term primary national energy objectives:

13. Providing reliable energy services at reasonable prices throughout the country
14. Reducing national dependence on imported oil through development of domestic energy resources and
15. Encouraging the development of institutions that provide efficient Liberian management of energy activities

1.2.5 National Water Strategy

Prior to 1990, there were many agencies and institutions in the country charged with the responsibility of managing its water resources. Since each agency promulgated its own sectoral regulation, there arose problems such as duplicity of efforts.

To sustainably develop and manage its water resources, the Government in 1981, constituted the National Water Resources and Sanitation Board to coordinate all activities in the water sector, to review sectoral regulations and draft a comprehensive Water Legislation and Policy. This process was unfortunately disrupted by the civil crisis in 1990.

2.0 INSTITUTIONAL MEASURES TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT THE CONVENTION

2.1 Established and Functional National Coordinating Body

2.1.1 Legal Status

The Liberian National Coordinating Committee (LNCC) on the UNCCD was constituted by an Inter-ministerial Declaration on October 4, 1998 after Liberia acceded to the convention on March 3, 1998.

This body is charged with the responsibility of overseeing the implementation of the CCD. The LNCC does not have a secretariat. Its work is coordinated by the National Focal Point at his statutory office and at the National Environmental Commission of Liberia.

The LNCC and the Focal Point have full control over matters dealing with desertification and drought, and CCD in particular.

As already mentioned, the Office of the President has submitted to the National Legislature a bill for the establishment of an Environmental Protection Agency. It is hoped that the secretariat of the LNCC will be based there when the agency is established.

2.1.2 Resources

The Liberia National Coordinating Committee on the CCD has adequate human resources to oversee the implementation of the Convention. Each member institution and agency has the relevant manpower, which when pooled, will constitute an excellent and adequate human resource base to formulate and implement the National Action Program and other CCD activities.

Unfortunately, the LNCC does not have the requisite financial and material resources to perform its function.

Due to acute economic crisis, Government has not set aside any budget for the function of the LNCC.

Each institution and agency of the LNCC has access to a very limited amount of funds for general environmental work from the budget allocated to the agency by Central Government. Consequently, the financial and material resources available for desertification control activity are negligible.

Due to the lack of the requisite financial and material resources, Liberia has not begun the formulation of its National Action program.

2.1.3 Cross-Cutting and Multidisciplinary Characters

The cross-cutting and multidisciplinary nature of the LNCC is reflected in the academic backgrounds, training and experiences of personnel at the following institutions that constitute the LNCC.

1. The Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy, besides its pivotal role in mineral resource development, is charged with the national responsibility of administering and regulating public and private lands within the Republic. This includes land tenure, land policy, land reform, land use, planning and all other aspects of land administration. The ministry is also charged with development and regulation of the alternative energy sub-sector. The National Hydrological Service is housed in the ministry. This section deals with water resources development and hydrometeorology.
2. The Ministry of Agriculture deals with soil protection and conservation, regulation of the forestry and agriculture sectors, including fisheries, plantations, and animal husbandry.
3. The Ministry of Rural Development is one of the agencies of national Government, which concerns itself straightly with matters concerning the welfare and development of rural Liberia. The Ministry is in constant touch with the rural inhabitants.
4. The Ministry of Internal Affairs controls county and local Governments. It was Chairman of the then Inter-ministerial Committee on the Environment. This Ministry is also in constant touch with the rural population which it administers.
5. The Ministry of Transport, beside its role in land, sea and air transport, has a section that deals with aeronautical meteorology.
6. The Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, by the statutes which established it, is a major stakeholder in general environmental and developmental matters.
7. The Forestry Development Authority grants logging and forest concessions and is involved in reforestation and wildlife programs.
8. The Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation is charged with the responsibility of supplying pipe borne water to the urban and rural communities.
9. The University of Liberia's College of Agriculture and Forestry is a research center for soil science, forestry, wood science, and Agriculture. In addition to its traditional educational role, the University continues to play an important role in national socio-economic development, including environmental affairs.
10. Pollution Control Association of Liberia (POCAL) is an environmental NGO. Among the NGOs, it has shown the most interest in the CCD even before Liberia became a party to the Convention. It has branches throughout the country.
11. Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL). The SCNL is an environmental NGO. It is involved in various nature conservation projects, such as the maintenance of parks, wildlife conservation, etc.
12. The Liberia Marketing Association (LMA). The LMA is an umbrella organization of all local market associations in the country. More than ninety percent (90%) of the

membership are women of which about ninety (90%) are illiterate. Yet they are very important to the economy and environmental matters. They often interact with farmers of which some of them are.

13. The National Environmental Commission of Liberia (NECOLIB) NECOLIB was established to review the role of all agencies involved in environmental activities in Liberia and of existing environmental regulations and legislation with the aim of harmonizing them and ensuring that all environmental conventions and protocols are ratified.

14. The UN Environmental Theme Group has been involved in the formulation and implementation of various programs of environmental dimension.

The LNCC maintains close contact with the focal points on other UN Conventions. The closest relation is with the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Liberia is a party to the Convention on Wetlands and will shortly become a party to the Climate Change Convention and the Kyoto Protocol.

The Focal Points of the CCD and CBD are presently formulating a proposal on National Self Assessments of Capacity Building Needs to be submitted to the Global Environment Facility for funding.

2.1.4 Composition and Mode of Operation

To facilitate coordination among the members of the National Coordinating Committee, the heads of agencies and other groups designated personnel to serve as focal persons within their institutions. Local Focal points have also been selected at the County level. There are 15 counties.

The LNCC is composed of the agencies, institutions, and organizations indicated in Section 2.1.3 above.

2.1.5 Status of Information/Data

The advent of Internet Services to Liberia has brought a relief. The LNCC and Focal Point have access to the website of the CCD Secretariat and websites of environmental agencies, institution, NGOs, etc., worldwide.

We are in the process of organizing the relevant database. Recently, two senior personnel from the Ministry of Lands, Mines & Energy returned from Nigeria where they participated in a nine-month training course on the use of the Geographic Information system (GIS). They are presently assisting the LNCC to compile and analyze desertification database such as topographical maps, geographic maps, land use planning maps, and other requisite data. A proposal has already been formulated to use GIS to analyze critical desertification parameters and update existing database.

A project entitled: Re-assessment of Forest Cover, Updating of Protected Forest System, Improvement of Environmental Education in Liberia and a National Biodiversity Strategy Plan to address forest management in Liberia, is underway.

2.1.6 Institutional Framework For Coherent and Functional Desertification Control

Desertification and Drought Control measures were undertaken in Liberia even before the advent of the CCD. Fortunately for Liberia, desertification and drought have not posed serious environmental problems for the country.

The local population in villages and towns are now involved in desertification and control activities. It is the plan of the LNCC to continue to train and increase public awareness so that the locals can become effective in application of desertification control mechanisms. The lack of funds and logistics is the handicap in the discharge of this plan.

2.1.7 NAPs as Part of the National Economic and Social Development and Environmental Protection Plans

Liberia is in the initial stage of formulating a National Action Program to Combat Desertification (NAP). It has accordingly informed the CCD Secretariat of this intention.

The NAP will determine the factors that contribute to desertification in affected areas of the country and put forward concrete measures to combat the phenomenon.

The Liberia NAP will be coherent with other environmental strategic and planning frameworks, provide awareness and secure active participation of the various stakeholders, develop a network for early warning, and be incorporated in all levels of the National Economic and Social Development and Environmental Protection Plan.

2.1.8 Coherent and Functional Legal Regulatory Framework

In August 2001, a draft National Environmental Legislation of Liberia was completed and forwarded to the office of the President for his review and onward transmittal to the National Legislature for ratification.

All along, each environmental agency operated on its own regulations. This has led to conflict and duplicity in many instances. The new National Environmental Legislation will minimize this problem and ensure efficiency in the discharge of environmental functions. On April 3, 2000, a new Minerals and Mining Law was adopted and approved by the President of Liberia. On April 6, 2001, a new Forestry Law was also approved. A National Water Legislation and Policy is part of the legislative agenda for this year. The formulation of National Land Legislation and Land Policy will shortly commence. A new Petroleum Code has been presented to the National Legislature by the President for its review.

The formulation of these legislations has always involved the participation of a cross-section of the population, both urban and rural, and all stakeholders.

3.0 PARTICIPATORY PROCESS IN SUPPORT OF PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION PROGRAMMES

3.1 Participatory Process Involving Civil Society, Non-governmental Organizations and Community-based Organizations

In recent years, the civil society has taken interest in environmental matters in Liberia mainly because of four stimulating factors; namely:

1. The country is getting warmer.
2. There is an increase in logging activities and the massive cutting down of trees to produce charcoal that accounts for over ninety percent (90%) of the energy demands for households.
3. The solid waste situation in Liberia has gone beyond control and
4. The Coastal erosion phenomenon is serious.

Consequently, the civil society including NGOs, women groups and community based organizations, have taken interest in desertification matters.

3.2 Effective Participation of Actors in Defining National Priorities

As indicated above, the civil society has taken interest in the CCD. On record, the following groups have indicated interest or participated in activities related to the CCD.

1. Farmers Associated for the Conservation of the Environment
2. The Pollution Control Association of Liberia
3. The Marketing Association of Liberia
4. Youth for Promotion of Productive Activities
5. The GrandCess Youth Organization
6. The West Point Development Association
7. Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia
8. Association of Environmental Journalists
9. Chemical Association of Liberia
10. Liberia Peace Building Network
11. Liberia Stress Corp
12. Media for Environmental Protection and Awareness
13. Green Liberia

Aside from these groups, individuals from the civil society have also participated in CCD forum.

The LNCC, which is the national steering committee, has declared its intention to begin the preparation of the National Action Program. The CCD Secretariat has accordingly been informed.

The local coordinating committees have been informed through the County Focal Points of the intention to prepare the NAP. They have in turn informed the village, town, clan and paramount authorities that have disseminated the information.

The Pollution Control Association of Liberia has been very instrumental in creating awareness and sensitizing the population. They continue to use radio dramas that reach a cross-section of the rural population.

Unfortunately, the National Coordinating Committee is beset with a lot of problems to elaborate and formulate the NAP.

Firstly, there is an acute lack of funds to host workshops and seminars periodically to bring together the various stakeholders from around the country.

Secondly, due to infrastructure problems such as lack of roads in certain parts of the country, reaching to those areas have been difficult.

Furthermore, dissident activities continue to plague certain parts of the country. The Foya District in the North Western Part of Liberia, which is the most affected by desertification, has been subject to rebel activities for several years now. Therefore, there is no access to this area.

A lot of stakeholders, the farmers, market women, members of the civil society from the embattled areas are in displaced camps. It is therefore unrealistic to include them in discussion concerning NAP for desertification.

Furthermore, while there is commitment at the highest political level to implement the CCD, other national priorities tend to overshadow the financial contribution of the National Government, most especially national security in the face of continuous rebel attack.

Bilateral and multilateral assistance to the country is minimal and tend to be geared towards the provision of food to displaced people and refugees, and to health and basic sanitation.

3.3 Response of Local Stakeholders

The various stakeholders, even at the village level, are quite aware of the dire consequences of desertification. Some of the local subsistence farmers, who practice slash and burn in making their farms have realized the negative impacts of this practice, as there has been a reduction in the productivity of their lands. Because of this and other factors, there has been an overwhelming response from the various stakeholders towards the CCD.

4.0 CONSULTATIVE PROCESS IN SUPPORT OF THE PREPARATION OF NATIONAL ACTION PROGRAM AND PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS WITH DEVELOPED COUNTRY PARTIES AND OTHER INTERESTED ENTITIES

Presently there are no international partners involved with the CCD process in Liberia. During the initial process of consultation for the constitution of the National Coordinating Committee, the GTZ made an input into the initial discussion. However, it was soon bulked down with emergency projects, as desertification matters were not part of its mandate in Liberia.

There is little aid coming from bilateral sources. This goes solely to humanitarian activities such as assisting refugees and displaced people from the civil war in the Country and other parts of the sub-region.

For example, recently, the European Union pledged 25,000,000 (Twenty-five million) euros to assist Liberia, through international NGOs, with humanitarian work in the health, water, food and security sectors.

The Liberian National Coordinating Committee on the CCD has communicated with many countries through their embassies, but the majority of the responses have not been favorable: humanitarian life-saving projects are their main focus because of the civil crisis.

The UNDP in Liberia is involved in environmental works on a limited scale. Its principal assistance is in health, water and sanitation.

However for about 2 (two) years now, the UNDP has provided limited amount of support to the National Environmental Commission of Liberia, which is a member of the LNCC. Direct funding for activities towards the implementation of the CCD has not been received from the UNDP Office.

Nevertheless, we are very hopeful that in the near future, bilateral and multilateral institutions will shift their focus in the Country to include development projects.

It is worth mentioning that the World Meteorological Organization has been a source of literature and other valuable information on desertification.

CILSS has always expressed its willingness to assist Liberia with the NAP process. Modalities for its involvement are being discussed.

5.0 MEASURES TAKEN OR PLANNED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF NATIONAL ACTION PROGRAMMES, INCLUDING MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT, TO CONSERVE NATURAL RESOURCES AND PROMOTE THEIR SUSTAINABLE USE, TO IMPROVE INSTITUTIONAL ORGANIZATION, TO ENHANCE KNOWLEDGE ON DESERTIFICATION AND ITS CONTROL TO MONITOR AND ASSESS DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT

5.1 Diagnosis of Past Experiences

Desertification is environmental degradation that has its roots in a multiplicity of factors and may lead to situations of irreversible environmental damage.

Some of the most obvious manifestations in Liberia include rapid soil erosion, an increase in surface run-off due to the reduction of soil water retention, a reduction in the diversity of both plant and animal species, and a reduction in productivity, leading to impoverishment of the human communities dependent on these ecosystems.

There is a moderate risk of desertification in about 5 to 7% of the Liberian Territory, mainly in Lofa County, Northwestern Liberia.

Before the CCD, the Government of Liberia embarked upon several projects to improve soil conservation, minimize land degradation and improve agricultural production. Unfortunately, the civil crisis disrupted and ended most of these programs which were producing good results.

Some of the programmes and projects are summarized below.

5.1.1 Southeastern Liberia Rural Development Project (SLRDP)

Commissioned in the early 1980's and sponsored by the GTZ, the SLRDP's cardinal objective was to discourage the use of shifting cultivation by demonstrating that swamplands were more agriculturally productive and sustaining than uplands. The project which operated in the rural parts of Maryland, Grand Gedeh and Sinoe Counties, laid out swamplands, assigned plots to local farmers, taught them modern farming techniques and provided farm implements.

The farmers realized that production from similar size of farms upland was far inferior quantitatively and qualitatively.

5.1.2 AGRIMECO Project

The main objective of the AGRIMECO Project was to clear farmland by mechanized means and turnover the land ultimately to farmers. This was intended, inter alia, to increase food production and minimize land degradation that would otherwise result from artisanal method of farming.

The project was established in 1975 and sponsored by the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD).

5.1.3 Agriculture Development Projects

5.1.3.1 The Bong County Agriculture Development Project (BCADP)

The BCADP was established in 1978 and supported by IFAD. Its main objective was to improve the production of cocoa, coffee, and other agriculture products by introducing innovative techniques in soil management and farming methods. The project was also concerned with soil management, rice production and construction of farm to market road. The Small Holder Rice Seed Project was a component of this program. It was based in Bong County, Central Liberia.

5.1.3.2 The Lofa County Agriculture Development Project (LCADP)

Like the BCADP, the LCADP was supported by IFAD and concerned mainly with cocoa and coffee production. It also assisted farmers in order to boost the production of rice. Established in 1977, it was based in Lofa county, Northwestern Liberia.

5.1.3.3 The Nimba County Rural Development project (NCRDP)

The NCRDP, supported by the GTZ, was established in 1980 to boost agricultural production by producing tools and other farm implements locally. It was also involved in the construction of farm to market roads.

5.1.4 Soil Conservation Program

In 1981, with assistance from USAID, the Ministry of Agriculture embarked upon a project to map the soils of each county to determine their suitability and applicability to various farming projects so as to improve soil quality.

5.1.5 Kpatawee Rice Project

Established in 1978 and sponsored by IFAD, the project utilized the Kpatawee Waterfalls to install an irrigation system for about 6,000 acres of lowland to produce rice in the Kpatawee Area, Bong County.

5.1.6 Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI) Projects

Established in 1980 with support from USAID, the CARI focused on research in a variety of areas, inter alia, soil management and conservation, plants and animals production and new and innovative farming methods. The project provided tremendous assistance to farmers, from boosting agricultural production, to minimizing land degradation.

5.2 Established Technical Programmes and Functional Integrated Projects to Combat Desertification

The planned actions by the Government in resource management and desertification control which will be incorporated into the NAP process are summarized under section 5.3.

Some of the projects and programs implemented by NGOs are summarized below:

5.2.1 Seedling Production for Sustainability

These projects were carried out by communities to help with the afforestation and reforestation programs especially in communities that are at risk. Products from these initiatives were also used in greening programs in the urban areas. These programs were mainly successful in the Northern, Southern and Eastern regions. These projects were supervised by the Forestry Development Authority and the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia.

5.2.2 Full Scale Tree Planting Project

This project was implemented by the UN Environmental Theme Group comprising of Environmental NGOs and was supervised by the Environmental Commission of Liberia (NECOLIB). Activities included community sensitization, tree planting and monitoring. It was meant to increase awareness and knowledge of trees and associated benefits and to empower communities to own seedlings and trees. This was experimented in Montserrado County.

5.2.3 Soil and Water Conservation

These projects were carried out in Bong County by the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) to encourage and support rural extension services. In the northern region small scale irrigation schemes were established. Condition activities aimed at defending water courses and work to clean and preserve them were also undertaken. The MOA Project also reinforced support for family and part-time farming.

5.2.4 Conservation through Dissemination of Information

Information on desertification were disseminated to local populations particularly to women and the youth. This was mainly done in Bong, Lofa and Nimba Counties by the Environmental Foundation for Africa (EFA) and POCAL. The main objective of the Program was to promote public awareness.

5.2.5 Woodlots and Land Management

This project was intended to promote sustainability in wood energy production by means of village and community tree planting. Concurrently, a second project, Construction and Distribution of Improved and Efficient Stoves called the ECO-STOVE, was intended to reduce the use of ligneous energy for household and institutional uses and the distribution of energy efficient stoves. During its execution, the first project gradually evolved into an agroforestry development project with the objective of restoring agricultural production, while the second was more strongly oriented towards the well being of women by reducing the burden of wood collection. Other benefits included improved health and safety from carbon inhalation, burns and suffocation. These projects were implemented in three counties: Nimba with project located in Ganta City. Rural dwellers from nearby villages participated in the project; Grand Cape Mount where, projects were concentrated around the Senje Refugee Camp and Montserrado County, with projects located in Zuana Town Refugee and Displaced Camp and in VOA#1 Refugee Camp.

5.2.6 Farmers Against Hunger

Coincidentally the name of this project carries the name of the implementing organization, Farmers Against Hunger (FAH).

One of the main objectives of this project is to organize farmers throughout Liberia to farm and produce sufficient food in a sustainable manner. Others include the conducting of training programs for farmers for efficient and increased production, to engage in food economy and to engage in community development and Youth Integrated Programs. This Program is being implemented in Montserrado County.

5.2.7 Reintegrated Agricultural Program

This project is being implemented by the Sustainable Development Promoters (SDP) and the aims are to provide agricultural services to farm families displaced due to the civil war. These returnees benefited from agricultural inputs including new and innovative farming methods, the supply of variety of rice seeds, the supply of modern agro machines to process cassava and rice, the provision of extension services to the target population, the establishment of seed multiplication projects and the provision of income generation activities such as rice mills and goat restocking. The secondary objective is to help sustain these families through integrated methods of production and lastly to discourage them from engaging in activities that contribute to drought and desertification.

5.2.8 Environmental Conservation and Sustainable Development

The purpose of this project is to link environmental conservation and sustainable development through the rural inhabitants in Cape Mount, Bong and Bomi Counties.

Activities include the introduction of agroforestry techniques and alley cropping. These projects are also aimed at ensuring the conservation and sustainable utilization of the forest and mountain landscape. Land reclamation techniques and new methods of irrigation were also taught as part of the program. Farmers Associated For the Conservation of Environment and the Liberia National Vision (LNV) are implementers of these projects.

5.2.9 Integrated Indigenous Knowledge

The integration of indigenous knowledge with forests, forest lands, range lands and natural vegetation in research activities is being undertaken by the Survival Indigenous People of Liberia (SIPOL). This program supports local community participation, particularly women and indigenous groups. This is a national program but is at present being implemented in Montserrado County.

Another project of interest that is earmarked by SIPOL is the Surveying of local/indigenous knowledge of trees and forests and their uses.

5.3 ACTION PROGRAMS IMPLEMENTED IN COMPLIANCE WITH PRIORITY FIELDS SET OUT IN THE CONVENTION

Although Liberia is in the initial stage of elaborating and formulating its NAP on Desertification, there exist sectoral programs in natural resources management, nature conservation, institutional capacity building, poverty alleviation and general sustainable development which aggregate towards the mitigation of the effect of drought and desertification.

Furthermore, there are actions the Government is contemplating to adopt towards the realization of the objectives of the UNCCD.

5.3.1 Measures for Natural Resource Conservation

5.3.1.1 Water Resources Management

There are many institutions in the country which are involved in the management of water resources. Consequently, there exist numerous sectoral regulations in water resources development. This often leads to conflicts and duplicity of efforts.

In order to solve this administrative problem, in 1981, the Government of Liberia constituted the National Water Resources and Sanitation Board to coordinate all activities in water resources development, review sectoral regulations and draft a comprehensive Water Legislation and Policy. Unfortunately, this process was disrupted by the civil crisis in 1990.

In response to the humanitarian crisis that evolved during the civil crisis, the Water and Sanitation Committee (WATSAN) was formed. This comprised of all government agencies, corporations, local and international NGOs and UN agencies involved in the provision of water. This ad-hoc arrangement still exists but is very weak due mainly to its lack of statutory mandate.

Planned Action

A proposal has been submitted to the Office of the President to re-constitute the National Resources and Sanitation Board which will formulate a National Water policy and draft Water Legislation for Parliamentary ratification and Presidential approval.

5.3.1.2 Mineral Resource Management

The management of the mineral resources of the country is by statutes designated to the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy.

Mining (both small and large-scale) has led to land degradation. Four former iron mining sites have been abandoned and the degraded land left unreclaimed. There are numerous old and active alluvial small-scale gold and diamond mining sites all over the Country. These sites have been severely degraded.

To minimize this land degradation and other environmental problems arising from mineral resources development, a New Minerals and Mining Law was approved on April 3, 2000. The Law and resulting Policy, inter alia, calls for restoration of the land to its previous state as much as possible, after mining activities. All medium to large-scale mining concerns are to submit Environmental Impact Statements. Environmental audits and periodic assessments will be undertaken to ensure compliance.

5.3.1.3 Energy Resource Management

Energy is essential to economic and social development and thus poverty alleviation. The harvesting, processing and use of energy sources and their derivatives have dire environmental consequences including land degradation; these are important concerns to the UNCCD.

The National Energy Committee (NEC) comprising agencies such as the Ministry of Lands, Mines & Energy, the Liberia Electricity Corporation, the Liberia Petroleum Refining Corporation, etc., administered the energy sector in Liberia prior to the 1990 civil crisis. Presently, the committee exists only in name. In 1984, the NEC identified the following long-term primary national energy objective:

1. Providing reliable energy services at reasonable costs throughout Liberia
2. Reducing the national dependence on imported oil through development of domestic energy resources and
3. Encouraging the development of institutions that provide efficient Liberian management of energy activities.

During the 1990 civil crisis, the 64 MW Mount Coffee Hydroelectric Plant was destroyed. The 114MW thermal plants are not functioning. Because these two sources

through which the Liberia Electricity Corporation provided electric power to the country prior to the 1990 are non-functional, a severe energy crisis is facing the nation.

Statistics gathered from 1982 to 1986 showed that fuel wood and charcoal accounted for 70 to 75 percent of total national energy consumption. Due to the problem with the hydroelectric and thermal plants discussed above, it is estimated that fuel-wood and its derivatives now account for more than 90% of national energy consumption.

Consequently, there is tremendous amount of pressure on forests as trees are being cut down on an unprecedented level to produce biomass energy resources. This has led to land degradation.

Planned Action

1. To improve the institutional framework in energy resources management by building the capacity of the National Energy Committee
2. Formulate National Energy Policy
3. Develop sustained and clean energy sources
4. Reduce the dependence on fuel-wood and charcoal and
5. Develop appropriate technology to reduce wastage of conventional and non-conventional energy sources

5.3.1.4 Land Resources Management

Land resources management is at the heart of the implementation of the CCD. The planning and implementation of policies, regulations and laws for land use are among the most effective measures to prevent and mitigate the effects of desertification. By statutes, land administration in the country is designated to the Ministry of Lands, Mines & Energy. However, there is a Land Commissioner's Office at the Ministry of Internal Affairs. This sometimes causes problem in land administration.

Planned Action

1. Formulation and implementation of land use policy
2. Drafting, approval and ratification of land legislation
3. Strengthening institutional arrangement in land administration and clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of agencies and institution involved in land management and
4. Codification of existing laws.

5.3.1.5 Forest Resources Management

Forestry related activities have contributed immensely to the economy of Liberia. Forestry accounted for about 13 percent of GDP in 2000. Logging is the third largest contributor to GDP.

Rubber production is a major economic activity in Liberia. Private Liberians own about 100,000 acres of rubber farms while foreign concessions account for about one and half million acres.

The Forestry Development Authority and the Ministry of Agriculture play major roles in managing the forest resource sector. Forest cultivation is one of the principal factors leading to land degradation in Liberia.

On April 6, 2000, a New Forestry Law was approved. This law and related policy addresses several issues, to include:

1. Assessment and inventory of forest resources
2. Regular revision and updating of forest management plan
3. Involvement of local population in the management of forest and associated resources
4. Implementation of existing forest management plan
5. Conduction of education and awareness programs on forest resources conservation and management
6. Correlation of Forestry and other land use practices
7. Conducting research in the conservation of forest resources
8. Undertaking reforestation and afforestation programs
9. Making environmental impact studies and audits integral part of forest resources management and
10. Addition of value to products by encouraging local processing through introduction of incentives
11. Establishing Protected Areas

Presently, a project entitled: Re-assessment of Forest Cover, Updating of Protected Forest System, Improvement of Environmental Education in Liberia and a National Biodiversity Strategy Plan to address forest management in Liberia, financed by The European Union and the Global Environment Facility is underway.

5.3.1.6 Agriculture

Agriculture, including fisheries, livestock and forestry, remains the mainstay of the Liberian economy.

About 46% of the total land surface constitutes upland while 10% are swamplands. There is a potential pastureland of 182,999 hectares. Before the civil conflict, some 635,000 hectares (13.8 percent of total arable land) were cultivated mainly with rice and cassava, the two national staple food crops.

Five broad production systems characterize agricultural output in the country. They are:

1. Foreign commercial plantation producing perennial crops (rubber, oil palm)
2. State-owned plantations which produce palm, cocoa and coffee
3. Domestically owned, medium-sized commercial farms producing crops for export and livestock for local market
4. Small traditional household farms using primitive production techniques
5. Concession plantations

Before the civil crisis, farmers produced about 65% of the country's domestic food requirements. By 1993, total food production has decreased by 30% due to the civil crisis that does not permit farming in several areas.

Most of the Liberian local farmers use shifting cultivation, one of the principal factors leading to land degradation. Besides leading to desertification, the traditional method of farming without modern inputs keeps a majority of the rural population below the poverty line.

5.3.1.7 Relief Food

The humanitarian situation that followed the outbreak of hostilities during the Liberian civil crisis from 1990 to 1996 witnessed the coming into the country of many humanitarian organizations and international NGOs. There has also been an upspring of numerous local NGOs.

The World food Program, the Catholic Relief Services, CARITAS, Save The Children-UK, AFRICARE and USAID are among the agencies and NGOs that provided food to the Liberia population during the heat of the civil crisis.

Presently, the provision of food is now restricted to displaced people in refugee camps. These international and local NGOs also have programs through which rice seeds and other farm implements are distributed to local farmers as a means of empowering and re-settling them so as to achieve self-sufficiency in food production and alleviate poverty.

Planned Action

1. Increasing agriculture production and diversification and work towards self-sufficiency in food production
2. Organizing farmers at the grass root level for improved agriculture practices
3. Strengthening the non-agriculture support services such as roads, market centers and credit facilities
4. Ensuring cooperative management for marketing and input acquisition, for overall improvement of rural areas and
5. Developing and strengthening the manpower base of the Ministry of Agriculture to enhance the productive capacity of farmers, particularly the subsistence farmers.

5.3.2 Measures to Improve Institutional Organization

Prior to 1990, Government Administration was moderately decentralized. There were 13 counties, headed by superintendents who controlled their own budgets. The Superintendents were the head of local governments. The superintendent's office had project planners responsible for planning and overseeing the implementation of development projects. There were paramount, clan and town chiefs and city mayors who cooperated with the Superintendent in running the various counties.

In short, there was a structure in place through which local communities were informed of various issues

Since the elections of 1997, the Government has tried to re-establish this structure throughout the country. Poor infrastructure and the breakdown of social fabric of society have made this task difficult.

Government is still endeavoring to put in place a complete local government structure throughout the country. The National Action Program to combat desertification will take advantage of this structure and ensure that local communities are involved in the decision-making process in natural resources management through the "bottom-up" approach.

5.3.3 Measures to Enhance Knowledge on Desertification and Its Control

Various institutions, agencies and services have been involved in training, research and collection and processing of information on desertification, directly and indirectly. These include the University of Liberia, Cuttington University College, Rural Development Institute, the Ministry of Lands, Mines & Energy, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry Development Authority and various bilateral and multi-lateral projects that were implemented in natural resources prior to the 1990 civil crisis.

The National Medium Term Development Plan (2002-2007) on National Resources Management and the resulting national action plans will address, inter alia.

1. Improving the research capability of the College of Agriculture and Forestry and the resurrection of the Rural Development Institute of the Cuttington University College.
2. Empowering Government Agencies to conduct field activities and Laboratory research on issue related to desertification and drought.
3. Improving meteorological networks countrywide

5.3.4 Monitoring and Evaluation Measures for Effect of Desertification and Drought

When formulated, elaborated and adopted, the NAP will incorporate the following:

1. Assessment of areas threatened by desertification and drought. Field activities will include reconnaissance surveys and field mapping
2. Rehabilitation of the meteorological sector, especially hydrometeorological network and other climate observation and monitoring systems
3. Assessing the activities of subsistence farmers, especially those who use the slash/burn methods and
4. Providing assistance to small-scale farmers to prevent land degradation and alleviate poverty.

5.3.5 Measure to Improve the Economic Environment

There is a strong link between poverty and land degradation. Among the issues the National Action Program will address include the following:

1. Resettling people internally displaced by the civil crisis
2. Providing incentives to displaced people
3. Providing financial incentives to farmers and local fisherman
4. Improving farm to market roads
5. Providing alternative means of livelihood for local communities in degraded areas
6. Improve educational, health and sanitation services in rural communities
7. Resurrecting the late President Tolbert's policies on integrated rural development through self-reliance

5.4 Linkage Achieved with Subregional and Regional Action Programs (SRAP & RAP)

Liberia has participated in a number of regional and sub-regional programmes towards environmental protection, sustainable development and other priority programmes set out in the CCD.

Liberia has also participated in discussions, negotiations and formulation of a number of regional and sub-regional integrated projects in energy, water resources, telecommunications, aviation and meteorology among others.

Liberia is in contact with CILLS and will count on it for assistance with the formulation and elaboration of the NAP.

5.5 Partnership Agreements Applied

No Partnership Agreement on the CCD has yet been developed between Liberia and bilateral and multilateral donors. Most of the present programs of these donors are geared towards emergency and humanitarian projects.

We hope that the situation will change soon, especially with the formulation of the Five-Year Medium-Term Development Plan.

6.0 FINANCIAL ALLOCATIONS FROM NATIONAL BUDGETS IN SUPPORT OF IMPLEMENTATION AS WELL AS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION INCLUDING THEIR INFLOWS; PROCESSES TO IDENTIFY THEIR REQUIREMENTS, AREAS OF FUNDING AND SETTING PRIORITIES

The Liberian Government has had and continues to have financial problems. There are several agencies/ entities that address environmental matters.

The Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy , the Ministry of Agriculture , the Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation, the Forestry Development Authority and recently, the National Environmental Commission of Liberia are some institutions addressing land and environmental issues.

In the past (before the crises of the 1990s), the combined national budget allocations to these institutions amounted to over US\$ 25M per annum while the EEC, ADB, UNDP and USAID together contributed over US\$ 60M over a period of ten years.

Since the crises of the 1990s, technical cooperation funding has been in the form of health care delivery and human resettlement through non-governmental organizations.

Meager Government funding is mainly geared at reconstruction, resettlement and other basic humanitarian services.

As mentioned previously, the funding that comes to the country from bilateral and multilateral sources is for emergency and humanitarian services. The need for technical cooperation assistance for environmental and other developmental programs is crucial.

7.0 REVIEW OF BENCHMARKS AND INDICATORS UTILIZED TO MEASURE PROGRESS AND ASSESSMENT THEREOF

Benchmarks are used as monitoring mechanisms in determining the level and characteristics of desertification. Desertification indicator parameters may not readily be observable or measurable as they vary from place to place and region to region. Indicators may be changes in rainfall pattern and traditional farming practices.

The Liberian Government has established several institutions engaged in addressing environmental issues. The Liberian Hydrological Service has over the years been actively involved in water table level changes determination which data have been valuable information in locating water wells for rural communities and of late for internally displaced people in camps around the country.

The Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation is engaged in groundwater studies especially in the urban areas to determine the levels of city pollution versus the quality of water being supplied to the urban dwellers. The programs also include the rainfall and erosion patterns and sediment transport of the catchments areas of the Mount Coffee Hydro Dam which information is now being utilized for the design of the new hydroelectric dam on the St. Paul River.

The Liberia Domestic Airport Authority, the Division of Meteorology at the Roberts International Airport and the Firestone Rubber Company gather weather information that is utilized by the relevant agencies.

The Ministry of Agriculture over the years has initiated rural farmers' training programs in swamp rice cultivation in order to minimize the soil erosion due to upland farming.

The Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy correlates studies in land management and the environment and has divisions involved in the collection of data in the entire country. The database is used, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Forestry Development Authority, in measuring progress in desertification and drought matters.

The coordination of relationships in agencies involved in environmental management studies has greatly enhanced a better understanding of early desertification parameters in Liberia.

APPENDIX I

▪ **Background Information on Liberia**

Located on the West Coast of Africa, Liberia has a total area of approximately 111,370 sq. km, consisting of 96,320 sq. km land and 15,050 sq. km water.

Liberia is well endowed with natural resources, most of which have not yet been significantly developed.

The economic structure comprises a traditional, low productivity subsistence sector and a monetized sector. The traditional and subsistence sector is predominantly agriculture and rural and continues to be the source of livelihood for about 75% of the population. Prior to 1990, the major activities in the monetized sector included mining of iron ore and alluvial minerals and production and export of rubber, logs, cocoa, coffee and palm oil.

From 1990 to 1996, Liberia experienced a civil war. This caused a loss of lives, external and internal displacement of people and destruction of infrastructure and the socio-economic fabric of the society. This has brought untold suffering to the people and regression in development.

The current population is estimated at about 2.7 million with per capita income of US\$ 199.30 which is far below the poverty line estimated at approximately US\$360.00.

About 41% of the population has access to health services and life expectancy at birth is only 47.7 years. The adult literacy rate is estimate at 37%. The current level of unemployment in the formal sector is 85%.

Despite logging activities, Liberia still contains about 43% of the Upper Guinea Forest. It has a great potential for agricultural development which includes adequate rainfall, sunshine, natural pasture, swamps, lakes, rivers and water courses and associated fertile alluvial flats and other plains.

The effect of drought and desertification in Liberia is still minimal.