The Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund

Liberia

United Nations Peacebuilding

MARCH 2020

PBF Investments in

TOTAL APPROVED $73 M

CURRENT PORTFOLIO $12.6 M

Focusing on

- Women's empowerment
- Youth political engagement and socio-economic empowerment
- Rule of law, transitional justice and human rights
- Peaceful management of land-related conflicts

Partners

UNDP, FAO, UN Women, UNFPA, United Nations Human Rights, ILO, WFP World Food Programme, IOM UN Migration

PEACEBUILDING CHALLENGES

Liberia has made remarkable peace gains over the past 15 years. The election of President George Weah in December 2017 marked an important milestone with the peaceful transition from one democratically elected government to another. However, many of the root causes of Liberia's conflict remain unaddressed. The concentration of power in Monrovia and the imbalance in the provision of public services persist as sources of discontent in the country. Land disputes, corruption, and concession-related tensions continue to be the main triggers of violence.

PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION ENGAGEMENT IN LIBERIA

The UN Peacebuilding Commission's Liberia configuration, chaired by Sweden, has long supported efforts to ensure that the international community's support to Liberia is sustained and coordinated and focused on national peacebuilding needs. This has included supporting the Government's submission of a peacebuilding plan to the Security Council in 2017, pursuant to Security Council resolution 2333 (2016). Between 2017-2018, the Peacebuilding Commission convened meetings in New York to seek inputs to the plan and then monitor its implementation, as well as provide a platform for UN leadership in Liberia to identify with Member States financing and expertise gaps expected following the departure of UNMIL in 2018. In January 2019, the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) for 2018-2023 was presented to the Commission by the Government of Liberia, linking peacebuilding priorities to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In June 2019, in view of tensions in Liberia, including large-scale protests on 7 June, aggravated by an increasingly difficult economic situation, the PBC met to highlight and reaffirm the importance of inclusive, transparent and continued dialogue amongst all stakeholders, and to focus attention on addressing the country's pressing economic issues and development goals.

In October 2019, the PBC met for an update on the country-level political situation, development of the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework that will begin in January 2020, and work of the PBF in Liberia. Based on the principle of national ownership, the PBC has remained engaged in supporting Liberia to address peacebuilding priorities, including reconciliation and issues of social cohesion and

inclusivity, as well as continuing to explore the value of regional experiences, further affirmed through the PBC's visit to the Mano River Union in November 2019. A strong regional approach – evidenced by the regular support of the AU and ECOWAS, as well as UNOWAS – is also highly relevant to the Liberian context and regional peacebuilding issues.

PEACEBUILDING FUND IN ACTION

In support of Liberia's peacebuilding priorities and to help avoid a significant gap in support following UNMIL withdrawal, the PBF approved an allocation of $25 million in the period 2017-2019, including towards:

1. **Women's empowerment:** the PBF has supported the strengthening of gender taskforces in the military and police and operation of women peace huts as local dispute resolution venues. The PBF has enabled women filmmakers to depict the role of women in the Liberia peace process. The PBF support has also contributed to the release of the Second National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security, which is now being taken forward through support on innovative financing and gender responsive budgeting, for greater sustainability.

2. **Youth political engagement and socio-economic empowerment:** the PBF has supported a large-scale effort to involve youth in the 2017 elections and post-elections, contributing to a peaceful environment during the contested election. The PBF is also supporting socio-economic empowerment of ex-combatant and marginalized youth in Monrovia and in targeted rural areas including through their involvement in local dialogue fora, psycho-social support, and livelihoods support.

3. **Rule of law, transitional justice and human rights:** the PBF is supporting the implementation of Liberia's community policing policy, improving access to justice for the most vulnerable, and providing support for the ongoing presence of OHCHR, which continues to build national human rights monitoring capacity after UNMIL's closure. PBF also supports legislative reform processes and frameworks protecting human rights and the functioning of the transitional justice, as a key step towards reconciliation.

4. **Prevention and peaceful management of land-related conflicts:** the PBF has brought national and local government institutions, affected communities, civil society and the concession companies together in concession areas to discuss and resolve land issues, one of the root causes of conflicts in the country, through an innovative multi-stakeholder platform approach and targeted livelihoods activities. The PBF is now supporting the Government to implement land decentralization strategies and strengthen land conflict resolution mechanism, while empowering women and youth within the communities.

5. **Cross-border cooperation with Cote d'Ivoire:** the PBF has supported a project of community and security sector cooperation in border areas between Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia, leading to better security sector collaboration. The PBF is now funding a second phase of the project, extending it to other communities along the border.

LIBERIA MULTI-PARTNER TRUST FUND

In terms of institutional mechanisms for peacebuilding support, following the end of the peacekeeping mission, the PBF has helped the UN and the Government to put in place and operationalize the Liberia Multi-Partner Trust Fund (LMPTF). The LMPTF was established in 2018 to address the remaining root causes of fragility in Liberia in support of the country's efforts to sustain peace and implement the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The LMPTF brings together the Government, development partners, the UN system, and relevant stakeholders. The architecture of the LMPTF is designed to support and accelerate the implementation of the PAPD through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The LMPTF provides a coordination mechanism both financially and programmatically by improving aid effectiveness, increasing alignment among stakeholders and reducing transaction costs for donors and implementing partners, in close consultation with the Government of Liberia. Since 2017 PBF support to Liberia has been coordinated through the LMPTF.

ABOUT THE PEACEBUILDING FUND

The UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund is the organization's financial instrument of first resort to sustain peace in countries or situations at risk or affected by violent conflict. The Fund may invest with UN entities, governments, regional organizations, multilateral banks, national multi-donor trust funds or civil society organizations.

The Fund works across pillars and supports integrated UN responses to fill critical gaps; respond quickly and with flexibility to peacebuilding opportunities; and catalyze processes and resources in a risk-tolerant fashion.