



September 2023



PBF Investments in



TOTAL APPROVED: \$98 M

CURRENTLY ACTIVE: \$20.5 M

Focusing on

- Women's empowerment
- Youth political engagement and socio-economic empowerment
- Rule of law, security and human rights
- Peaceful management of land-related conflicts
- Accountability and transparency for improved social contract

Partners



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 between two democratically elected governments. Yet many root causes of Liberia's conflict remain unaddressed and for many people, especially in rural communities, the peace dividends are not yet sufficiently felt.

PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION

The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) Liberia Configuration has mobilized international support for Liberia's peacebuilding priorities since 2010. Chaired by Sweden, the PBC Liberia Configuration has focused on social cohesion, reconciliation, and inclusivity, with a strong focus on gender equality as well as mitigating the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change. More recently, the support has focused on peaceful, transparent, inclusive, free, and fair elections and women's and youth empowerment. The Commission has continuously explored opportunities for strengthening partnerships in support of these priorities, including through the Chair's recurring consultations with international financial institutions and regional organizations.

PEACEBUILDING FUND INVESTMENTS

PBF continues to invest to support Liberia's peacebuilding priorities following the departure of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in 2018. Some of the key results from PBF recent support include:

- 1 Women's empowerment:** PBF's support has strengthened key peacebuilding structures at national and local levels to better integrate and promote women's leadership and security. Through PBF investment, there has been a notable increase in awareness and support concerning women's rights to partake in political activities. PBF support has also been pivotal in supporting legal and policy advocacy frameworks, including legislated gender quotas for candidates and the Violence Against Women in Elections (VAWIE) Protocol, which helps to promote a more conducive environment for women's secure and unhindered participation in political and public activities. Furthermore, PBF has supported the timely generation of data that is disaggregated by sex and disability throughout electoral processes, including on voter and candidate registration, as key steps for more inclusive participation. The PBF has also been a long-term supporter

of community-based Women's Peace Huts, as a key mechanism for community conflict resolution and women's empowerment. The Fund has supported not only the capacity of the Huts, their inclusion of younger women, and their direct peacebuilding work, but also provided funding and business support to seven such Huts throughout the country, whose operations were negatively affected by COVID-19 and the related economic downturn.

- 2 Youth political engagement and socio-economic empowerment:** The PBF support has contributed to empowering young people to play a more active role in peacebuilding, including by partnering with various youth organizations, such as the Messengers of Peace and NAYMOTE (a grassroots organization promoting democracy, peacebuilding, human rights, and civic engagement), as well as by coaching and mentoring young people and changing a general misperception that young men tend to undermine peace before, during and after elections. For example, thanks to PBF funding, a partner youth group of NAYMOTE, Nimba Youth United for Peace and Development, is actively engaged in reconciliation and social cohesion initiatives in their county, having successfully resolved over 10 community disputes utilizing the Alternative Dispute Resolution methodology.
- 3 Rule of law, transitional justice, local security and human rights:** With the withdrawal of UNMIL, the PBF has continued to support judicial and security sector reforms, to ensure more effective dispensation of justice. Upon the request of the judiciary, the PBF is supporting the Supreme Court with training and funding for additional lawyers and law clerks to help ensure the Court meets the legal timeframe of seven days to address any potential electoral disputes during and after the 2023 general elections. Ahead of elections, the PBF has supported the training of 3,000 law enforcement officers, including the Liberia National Police, Fire Service, Liberia Immigration Service, and Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency, in crowd control and human rights. The PBF has also provided support on community policing, strengthening relations between the police and communities during this critical electoral period. The PBF is also supporting human rights monitors to pre-emptively recognize and address any human rights issues arising out of the electoral process. Moreover, for the first time a national policy on reconciliation is being developed for Liberia. A zero draft on the contents and structure of the policy is ready for validation, following consultations in nine counties. The Options Paper for national reconciliation and peace, produced with support of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, has been submitted to the national legislature and to the Office of the President of Liberia for review and endorsement.
- 4 Prevention and peaceful management of land-related conflicts:** PBF assistance in implementing the Liberia Land Rights Act 2018 is helping to reinstate public trust in land governance institutions, and decrease conflicts related to land. Seven community land-related conflicts were resolved in Sinoe, Grand Cape Mount, Nimba and Maryland Counties, using the ADR methodology. PBF support has also reinforced county land offices and boards, ensuring also women and youth representation and working with communities to raise awareness on women and youth land rights. While only 30% of women thought their rights to land were respected at the project start, in 2022 that percentage increased to 79% in PBF-supported communities. PBF support has also resulted in the issuance of land deeds to eight customary communities. These deeds affirm the communities' ownership and legal authority over their respective lands, aligning with the guarantees laid out in the Land Rights Act. This achievement is particularly remarkable as it marks the first instance of its kind since the enactment of the Land Rights Act. In addition, PBF support has focused on zones with high presence of private company concessions, which often lead to land conflict with nearby communities. In these zones, PBF support has established multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms and supported communities to better advocate for their rights with the authorities and to find positive solutions to grievances with the private concession companies, for example in Grand Cape and Nimba counties.

In 2023, the PBF has approved significant additional investment to Liberia, building on earlier results and contributing to jointly agreed priorities of greater public accountability and strengthened social contract; peace dividends for marginalized and excluded young people; and continued investments in land conflict prevention in concession zones.

■ 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.