

UNITY PARTY PLATFORM 2023

BUILDING LIBERIA FOR PROSPERITY AND WEALTH CREATION

Refocus and Rebrand to Rescue Liberia



Think Liberia, Love Liberia and Build Liberia

AN ACCOUNT OF UNITY PARTY 12 YEARS STEWARDSHIP

In 2006, the Unity Party inherited a nation largely reduced to rubble as a result of many years of civil strife. Liberia's economy collapsed, contracting to historical negative growth and insurmountable debt burden of US \$4.7 billion, constrained the physical space to agenda economic growth and development. Institutions were dysfunctional including integrity institutions that were virtually nonexistent. Our government inherited a bloated civil service that paid an average US \$15.00 a month, and irregularly. The roads in our capital and others part of the country were impassable. Due to destruction of our hydroelectric plant, transmission and distribution system, there was no electricity grid. Liberians lacked access to basic social services. Schools, hospitals, and clinics were in ruins. Only a fraction of our children were in schools and taught by unqualified volunteers. An estimated 51 doctors served a population of 4.5 million people. The capital cities water and sanitation systems were destroyed. The state-owned University Of Liberia was virtually closed as were other institutions of higher learning. During the Unity Party 12 years leadership, we changed the situation by improving the environment locally and internationally. Liberia's international image as a pariah state changed to a nation recognized for playing an important role in regional and global matters.

Infrastructures Development: We reconstructed the Mount Coffee Hydroelectric Plant and constructed 38 Megawatt of Heavy Fuel Oil Plants providing electricity to provide several communities in greater Monrovia. We expanded the electricity grid and made power available to five counties Nimba, Grand Gedeh, Maryland, Montserrado, and Margibi to the electricity grid. We secured additional funding and works expanding the electricity grid to Bomi, Bong, River Gee, with prospect to Grand Bassa counties for an additional 100,000 connections for homes and businesses. Our government paved, rehabilitated and constructed over 800 kilometers of primary, secondary and tertiary roads, and concluded substantial arrangements doubling the amount. Our government has completed the pavement of more roads than all past administration combined. Our primary road from Monrovia, Montserrado to Ganta, Guinea border, Nimba county. We completed the pavement from ELWA, Montserrado to the Port City of Buchanan and from Harper City to the Ivorian Border, Pleebo to Karloken to Fishtown. We secured funding for pavement of the first lot of the Gbarnga to Manikorma Highway Project, Gbarnga to Konia Bong and Lofa counties.

We also constructed primary bridges to replace the collapsed or aged ones and made significant progress paving several kilometers of streets in the capital city, Monrovia, several communities and street of counties capitals. Today, the Freeport of Monrovia, which was closed to collapse in 2006, is now an international shipping and port security ISPS certified port. The Freeport of Monrovia can now boast of a brand new marginal wharf of 600 meters long, as well as a new fuel unloading facility at the Liberia Petroleum Refinery Corporation (LPRC). Buchanan and Sinoe ports, once nonfunctional, similarly underwent significant improvements. The existing facilities of the Roberts International Airport were rehabilitated and a new terminal building constructed which it brought it up to international standard with the rehabilitation of the runway and the installation of an improved landing equipment.

Our government invested in the rehabilitation of the White Plains Water Treatment Plant bring it back to prewar status with the capacity of producing 16 million gallons of piped water per day to residents in the capital city. Similar water facilities were made operational in the following counties: Kakata-Margibi, Buchanan-Grand Bassa, Zwedru-Grand Gedeh, Voinjama-Lofa, Sanniquellie-Nimba, and Robertsport.

Education: The Unity Party constructed over 300 new schools and renovated hundreds. The three rural teacher training institute we made operational again training over 6000 professional teachers to replace unqualified volunteers. To address the dire need for quality education, we have renovated and renewed Tubman University in Maryland county, which serves as a regional institution of higher learning and constructed new facilities at the Universities of Liberia's Fendell campus and a new state of the art Monrovia Vocational Training Center (MVTC) and the modernization of the Klay Agricultural (KAVTC) Vocational Training Center in Bomi County. Our government established five community colleges in Nimba, Lofa, Bomi, Grand Gedeh, and Grand Bassa counties and instituted an innovative partnership with private institutions with support from international foundations. By 2017, over two million students are now enrolled in school compared to 600,000 in 2006.

Teacher Payroll vetting was completed in several counties with 1,300 ghost names removed from the payroll and additional 500 new teachers hired. Over 2 million textbooks and supplementary readers including learning materials were distributed to all public and community schools from Grades 1 to 12, benefiting over 495,842 students and 22,137 teachers in the 15 counties across the country. ¹

¹ Ministry Education Annual Report 2015/2016

Healthcare: We left 712 functioning health facilities, many with auxiliaries of preventive action. By the end of 2017, with additional certified by the reactivated WOT School of Medicine, took us to 298 medical doctors. We renovated the John F. Kennedy referral hospital in Monrovia, constructed a state of the art hospital in Tappita, Nimba county, renovated and updated all county referral hospitals. Primary healthcare was made fee throughout the entire country. A first state of the art eye clinic established in partnership with Lions Club of Liberia/LV Prasad Eye Center of India was established and is currently functional and performed the first ever cornea transplant in West Africa.

Security, Justice & Rule of Law: In the area of security, justice, and the rule of law, we created a new and professional army, and more than 7,000 police officers, and other security personnel were trained and deployed across the entire country. We made significant effort to decentralize government making services more accessible to citizens that led us to build 15 service centers, one in each county, and a dozens of courthouses in the various counties, including the state of the art facility in Nimba County. Additionally institutions such as the Public Procurement and Concessions Commission (PPCC), the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC), the General Auditing Commission (GAC), the Internal Audit Agency (IAA), the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA), Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI), the National Fisheries & Aquaculture Authority (NaFAA), the Law Reform Commission (LRC), the National Road Fund (NRF), the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) were all established and or strengthened to enhance governance and better protect our national resources. Our government enhanced the dignity of civil servants increasing their salaries by over 600% and become regular.

Agriculture: Our government developed the agriculture Sector Development including the Liberia Agriculture Transformation Agenda (LATA) the second generations of Liberia Agriculture Sector Investment plan (LASIP) was transitioned to the National Agriculture INVESTMENT Plan (NAIP). We established the National Agriculture Identification Registry recording 5,000 farming households comprising 1,000 upland rice farming households; 500 lowland rice farming households; 3,000 cassava farming households; and 500 vegetable farming households across the country using this data-base. We distributed 70 kg of assorted vegetable seed (pepper, eggplant, cucumber, cabbage, etc.) and 100 bags of sweet potato vines to 500 farming households across the country.

Provided agricultural inputs (rice, corn and vegetable seeds as well as assorted hand tools) to 19,504 farmers; Aquaculture: Employment was created in Bong, Margibi, Grand Bassa and Cape Mount counties through the development of four Aquaculture parks (32 ponds and 8 hatcheries).

We provided technical and material support to 57,657 smallholder food crop farmers (10,179 in lowland ecology, 20,165 upland ecology, 18,798 in cassava cultivation, 8,515 in vegetable production), and 20,192 cash crop farmers; and 64,847 smallholder livestock farmers (30,534 in poultry production; 31,273 in small ruminant rearing; 2,568 in piggery production; and 472 in cattle rearing) to enhance their productivity. Facilitated training for about 1,400 farmers in Good Agriculture Practices in crop, livestock and fisheries production. Provided support (tuition & allowances) to 37 undergraduate students studying general agriculture at the College of Agriculture and Forestry of the University of Liberia (33 students) and Cuttington University (4 students) and conducted staff development support (instructor recruitment and capacity building).

The Unity Party government constructed a soil and crop laboratory for the College of Agriculture & Forestry of the University of Liberia in Montserrado and the College of Agriculture & Food Sciences of the William V.S. Tubman University in Maryland counties. We provided technical support to eight (8) Farmer Coops, three (3) Farmer Associations, and 48 Farmer-Based Organizations in Bong, Nimba and Grand Gedeh counties and rehabilitation is ongoing on 1,800 hectare of cocoa and 184 hectare of coffee. The Unity Party government invested in the revitalization of small-scale oil palm of the Dube Oil Palm Plantation in Konobo District in Grand Gedeh run by smallholders; including support to rehabilitation and replanting of 600 hectare, built the capacity of the existing cooperatives, and develop intermediate processing technologies; and promoting an out growers' scheme (600 ha) around a concessionaire, EPO-LIBINCO in Grand Bassa county.

We also invested in smallholder tree crops revitalization with focus on Cocoa/Coffee Revitalization: rehabilitating, replanting and extension of cocoa/coffee farms 7,500 hectare in Bong, Nimba, and Grand Gedeh counties; technical and management advice to smallholders and their farmer organizations (FOs); quality promotion and market linkages; enhancing access of cocoa and coffee farmers and FOs to adapted financial services; and development of small scale processing. Rubber Revitalization was done through the planting and the extension of rubber farms 2,600 hectare in Margibi and Montserrado Counties in partnership with two main concessionaires and one large Liberian estate. Additionally, our government revitalized about 15,000 hectare Cocoa and Coffee Plantations.²

² Ministry of Agriculture Annual Report 2015/2017

THE LIBERIA WE WANT

Preamble

Towards Elections 2023, the Unity Party has put together this Platform as our Vision for our country. It presents the Core Values that will guide our relationship with our people, and the work we will do after the good people of Liberia have given us the mandate to serve them. It defines our hopes and aspirations for our people, and offers our proposed national programs for maintaining our hard-won peace, reinvigorating shared economic growth and development, and moving our country forward over the next six years (2024-2029).

Our Party believes much was achieved during our 12 years of stewardship of our country. Liberia achieved peace and stability, reclaimed its prominent place in the comity of nations, and laid a firm foundation for economic growth and development, the restoration of hope for our people. Indeed, Liberia was set on the path of prosperity and wealth creation for our people, and ensuring security and dignity of life for all in our society. But today, most of the gains realized under the leadership our party have been derailed during the past five years of the CDC regime. We now live in a society where our resources have been placed in the hands of the privileged few with corruption at its peak; the security of our citizens are no longer guaranteed with many suspicious deaths without justice, while our judiciary have become marred by allegations of corruption. There is therefore much work to be done (as quickly as possible) to rescue our country and begin to rebuild and strengthen our institutions, and fast-track development in all sectors of our economy. We must therefore, as a nation and people, *Refocus and Rebrand to Rescue* our sweet Land of Liberty from the hands of self-seeking individuals who have dragged our nation back into a state of pariah over the past five years.

Given the current state of affairs of our country, we must prepare ourselves for the challenges ahead of us. We must be determined to take firm actions to restore the dignity of our country and begin to again build a better future and improve the quality of life of our people—**all our people, not just a few**. We remain confident that working together as one people, we can accomplish this national task. We believe in the resilience of the Liberian people. And we are convinced of our individual and collective capacities for national renewal and our ability to take a quantum leap for the good of all our people.

Liberians everywhere want better lives for themselves and their country; and Liberians deserve nothing but the best. With this platform, we as UP partisans, collaborating political parties, auxiliary groups, sympathizers and well-wishers do proclaim a Liberia where every citizen can achieve and actualize his or her potential; a Liberia where rule of law and civil liberties are guaranteed; a Liberia where accountability has no exception; a Liberia grounded in a merit-based system; a Liberia with functional institutions driven by participatory democracy; and a Liberia that prioritizes investments in human capital and public infrastructure. Essentially, the Liberia to which we aspire shall improve the wellbeing of all. Ambassador Joseph N. Boakai can help make the Liberia we envisage become a reality.

The policies that underpin this platform require meaningful investments in public infrastructure such as road and energy/electricity as well as agriculture and human capital to guarantee economic growth and development. Our citizens shall enjoy the direct relationship between economic growth and access to improved school system, healthcare and reduction in poverty level. They shall also enjoy increase in literacy rates and benefit from the dividends of economic development, including an increment in life expectancy.

This platform maintains that the foundation upon which we can achieve the realization of all these people-centered goals is to collectively ***Think Liberia, Love Liberia, and Build Liberia***.

First, Think Liberia. We must challenge ourselves to think Liberia foremost in our national endeavors, and put our country and people's interest first above everything else. We must defiantly think our situations; that is, think outside of the conventional wisdom box. We must dream big, dare impossibilities, think beyond narrow interests, and think forward.

Second, Love Liberia. Love of country should transcend words and define all well-meaning leaderships. It should permeate every fabric of our society and be demonstrated in all aspects and at all levels of our national life. We must instill in ourselves a common resolve to fundamentally and qualitatively change the lives of our people. We must cultivate and exhibit the highest sense of patriotism in all that we do. Accordingly, loving Liberia must begin in families, local communities, and cut across schools, churches, mosques, sporting grounds, farms, marketplaces, offices, manufacturing plants, and every place where there are Liberians. Love is a mindset. Love is actionable. Love does not always take. Love gives. Love Liberia must give back to community and country.

Third, Build Liberia. We must build Liberia in the same manner as the contemporary developments we see evolving around us in Africa and in the world. We cannot just patch up, renovate and make do. It cannot just be business as usual--the old Liberian way. There should be standards, designs, and road-maps that are forward-looking; we must be purposeful and strategic in our thinking and actions. Development is about people and, as such, we must truly transform the quality of life of our people. We

must develop rational human advancement programs and utilize the latest technologies and state-of-the-arts in areas such as education, health, youth empowerment, communications and transportation, energy and the environment, agriculture and food security, and housing and human settlements. We must attend to the critical issues of power (electricity), clean pipe-borne water and roads without which private investments will not be attracted. We must transform our rural communities, rebuild trusting communities, contain the rapid rural-to-urban migration of our youthful population, and reinvent our towns and cities. We must accentuate science and technology in a manner that enhances and speeds up our national progress.

We must strive to have a critical mass of our best, talented and dedicated sons and daughters, old and young, who are willing to be creative in their thinking about Liberia; passionate and patriotic in their love for country; deliberate and purposeful in their actions to build Liberia; and committed enough to lead Liberia at this critical point. We must also build a strong middle class as we strive to empower the underserved. Anything less is unacceptable.

Investment Focus For Social and Economic Development

Pillar One (1)

Macroeconomic Stability
and Infrastructural
Development

- *Ensure Efficient Economic Management*
- *Engage in Prudent Fiscal Management*
- *Restore Confidence in Our Monetary and Financial Sectors*
- *Promote Agriculture, Forestry Management & Fisheries Development*
- *Promote sustainable Job Creation*
- *Improve Commerce and Industry*
- *Promote Commerce and Trade Regulations*
- *Establish Special Economic Zone*
- *Enforce implementation of the Liberianization Policy*
- *Develop Road & Bridge Infrastructures*
- *Ensure Prudent Management of the National Road Fund*
- *Develop Air & Sea Ports Transport Networks*
- *Improve Nationwide Access to ICT*
- *Prioritize Energy Sector Development Improve*
- *Mineral & Natural Resource Management*

Pillar Four

Governance & Rule of
Law

- *Improve Foreign Relations & Strengthen Global Engagement*
- *Strengthen National Security to Ensure Security for all Residence*
- *Improve Rule of Law and Ensure Justice for all Residence*
- *Strengthen Integrity Institutions and Ensure Accountability in Public Service*
- *Strengthen Election Governance to Ensure Transparency and Integrity in Electoral Process*
- *Promote Peace and National Reconciliation*
- *Pursue & Defined Legislative Agenda*

Pillar Two (2)

Health, Wash, The
Environment & Climate
Change

- *Strengthen Healthcare Delivery System*
- *Restore Confidence in Health Sector Leadership*
- *Ensure a Patient-centered Health Workforce*
- *Strengthen and Restore Integrity in Healthcare Financing*
- *Strengthen Health Information System (HIS)*
- *Ensure Availability of Medicines & Medical Supplies*
- *Improve Mental Healthcare Delivery*
- *Improve Water & Sanitation Services*
- *Promote Development of Healthy Environment*
- *Promote and Support Climate-Change Mitigation Initiatives*

Pillar Three (3)

Human Capacity
Development

- *Strengthen Education System to Improve Outcomes*
- *Strengthen Early Childhood Education*
- *Improve the Quality of Primary Education*
- *Strengthen the Outcomes of Secondary Education*
- *Strengthen and Improve the Quality of Tertiary Education*
- *Diversify & Promote Technical & Vocational Education Training*
- *Improve Educational Systems and Governance*

Pillar Five

Gender, Youth, Children &
Social Protection

- *Prioritize Gender and Women Empowerment*
- *Support the Physically Challenged and Provide Social Protection*
- *Support Child Protection Initiatives*
- *Promote Sports and Recreation*
- *Promote Youth Development*
- *Ensure Economic Empowerment of our youth*
- *Strengthen Institutional Frameworks for the Support to Youth Development*

1.0 PILLAR ONE: MACROECONOMIC STABILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

1.1 Improve Economic and Financial Governance to Spur Economic Growth and Development

Background

When Liberia had its first peaceful political transition of government in seventy years in 2018, Liberians and friends of Liberia were hopeful that sustained peace would also lead to a transition from one stable and well-managed economy to another. Instead, the last six years have witnessed the country backsliding into the abyss of economic despair. The Liberian economy has been performing poorly during this period resulting to decline in the purchasing power, increased vulnerability of employment in the private sector, and insecurity of tenure for civil servants and other public servants. Real GDP declined by 1.2% in 2018 and further contracted by 2.5% in 2019 (*according to the IMF World Economic Outlook-April 2023*). While the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 contributed to a worldwide economic slowdown, the performance of the Liberian economy in that year cannot be totally attributed to the pandemic. The government's unpreparedness and sluggish response strategies also contributed to the decline. As a result, an economy that was predicted at worst to witness zero growth in 2020 actually declined by 3% during the period due to the lack of appropriate mitigation policies and strategies, and the misapplication of the social and economic stimulus package designed by the government to cushion the economy and reduce the impact of the shock on the lives of ordinary Liberians.

Unity Party remains committed to building an economy that fulfills the goals of the Vision 2030 in which Liberia aspires to become a middle income country. This means creating a country in which the government makes efforts to increase the number of citizens who can take care of themselves from their own pockets, and creating a country with thousands of people who become rich from using what they have learned and from their own business activities. The Unity Party also believes in tying our development plans to the United Nations development agenda called the *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*, and the African Union's development plan called *Africa Agenda for Action 2063*. That is why during our regime, we ensured that these three domestic, regional and global development agendas were harmonized so that the implementation of our plan will not stop us from achieving the goals of the others. The Unity Party-led government will be required to take appropriate actions to resuscitate the economy and restore dignity to our people. Our agenda would therefore include, ensuring efficient management of the economy to restore its growth potential, engaging in prudent fiscal management to ensure efficient utilization of the available budgetary resources, and restoring confidence in our monetary and financial sectors management programs.

1.1.1 Ensure Efficient Economic Management

Context

The last five years have seen substantial increases in the price of essential commodities in the face of declining output and prospects for income generation. From 2016 to 2023, food prices increased by only 4.6%. But the people of Liberia got a serious shock in 2018 when prices of food and related items went up by 25%. Things got even worse in 2019 when food prices jumped again by 30% and another 15% in 2020. Cost of basic healthcare and education services also continue to rise and became unaffordable for the average Liberians. In 2018, for example, the cost of healthcare in Liberia was 20.5% higher than what it was in 2023, 14% in 2019, 53% in 2020 and 30% in 2021. The cost of education, which is an essential citizenship right, has also become unsustainable. Since 2019, the cost of education has been on the rise, increasing by 13% in 2019, 36% in 2020 and 30% in 2021. For households and individuals, the continuous rise in the prices of basic goods and services beyond their purchasing power continue to pose serious challenge to livelihoods and threaten household stability. These adverse price increases have been triggered by domestic policies that have had negative effects on economic performance. For instance, the imposition of insensitive taxes on petroleum imports and communication services have resulted to increased cost of transportation and communication services across the country, and made it costly for producers to transport their produce to markets and thus triggered increased prices for even commodities domestically produced.

Commitment

Unity Party-led government is committed to creating an enabling environment for all Liberians to enjoy a decent living. While we will need to generate revenue to provide basic social services, our tax policies will not lead to increased burden for our people. Our government will implement policies and strategies that enable our people earn income that support a decent standard of living, and meet the needs of their families.

Agenda

The Unity Party government will pay serious attention to the economy and its related issues based on shared economic growth and development of our country as follows:

1.1.1.1 Create a Stable Political and Socio-economic Environment to Ensure Private-sector Participation in economic development

A stable political environment will provide opportunities for appropriate investment in infrastructures such as roads, energy and information communications technology (ICT) to support the small domestic manufacturing sector expand its activities, and generate economic growth. Without improvement in the manufacturing sector, Liberia will continue to use its foreign reserves to finance importations increasing our balance of trade deficit.

1.1.1.2 Support and Promote Free Enterprise System

Unity Party led-government will support, the type of business policies that promotes healthy competition and innovation in doing business. While we will remain committed to the free, competitive private enterprise system; we will pay keen attention to social and economic justice by preventing big businesses from overshadowing small and medium-sized businesses that make up majority of the businesses in the economy. Our government will create a vibrant private-sector that will enhance jobs creation for Liberians; supporting small and medium-size businesses, large companies and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) to once again become the key employers through agriculture, manufacturing and the services sectors.

1.1.1.3 Ensure Creation of Shared and Inclusive Economic Growth that Benefits Liberians

The economic goals of the Unity Party will not only be about increasing production in key economic sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing and services. Instead, the goods and services produced will be used to create the necessary conditions so that everybody has the opportunity to benefit from their labour and the time and resources they put in. To do this, the Unity Party-led government will introduce social policies that use the benefits of economic growth like taxes to reduce poverty by ensuring that schools, health facilities, roads, water and other social services are available in every part of the country. We will make it easier for all Liberians at home and abroad, who are interested in investing have the chance to participate in all sectors of the economy, making them players and not spectators in their own economy.

1.1.1.4 Facilitate the Creation of a Knowledge-based Economy

The Unity Party government will create a knowledge-based economy, where there are educated, smart and trained workers to attract local and foreign investors and not just their attraction to the available natural resources, but to the required and available skills sets. Because an educated and well-trained workforce can easily move from jobs in one sector to another, Liberia will be able to keep up with the rest of the world by attracting investments not only in natural resources extraction but other services sectors. So when the rest of the world become less interested in rubber, logs, palm oil, iron ore, diamond, or gold our workers can still get gainful employment in other areas beyond our borders. To achieve this, we will re-design the curriculum in our schools, universities, and vocational training institutions, make available the appropriate allocation, trained instructors and provide modern facilities to significantly improve learning outcomes in areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

1.1.1.5 Promote and Support Diversification of our Economy

The Party will implement economic policies and programs to reduce total dependence on the traditional extractive sectors. The economy will be diversified by encouraging increased investments in the agriculture sector. Furthermore, our government will create an enabling environment that supports the establishment of factories and other facilities to transform some of the agricultural produces such as livestock, coffee, cocoa, palm, fish, etc. This approach will change the profile of the economy from being extractive to an agricultural and manufacturing based economy by creating valued-addition products that are consumed home and abroad. This will remodel our economy from being an import-based economy to an export-based economy, thereby significantly reducing our balance of trade deficit.

1.1.2 Engage in Prudent Fiscal Management

Context

Every government is expected to implement a prudent public financial management program so that it can provide the shock absorbers in times of economic recessions. The CDC-led government has shown no strategy gear toward the implementation of prudent fiscal management. It is also not interested in any form of transparency in the ways they

use our resources and how much they spend. If the current system is not changed the Government of Liberia will not be able to handle most of its expenditures in the next few years. Since 2018, the debt to revenue ratio stands at eleven percentage for total revenue (domestic revenue plus external resources) and thirteen percent for domestic revenue (tax and non-tax revenue). This means for every hundred that government collects as revenue, it borrows thirteen dollars which becomes a debt burden for present and future generations.

On the expenditure side, things have been equally bad. For the first time in Liberia's recent fiscal history, debt repayment exceeded capital expenditure as a percentage of government expenditure. From 2018 to 2021, repayment of loans and interests nine percent of total expenditure. This is more than twice the four percentage of expenditure on infrastructures and equipment. This is a complete contradiction of the empty boasts by the CDC-led government and its supporter that they are the most infrastructure-oriented government in Liberia's history.

The pressure on the government resources will start to increase in 2024 and onwards as the Unity Party government redesign the spending policies and adopt priorities that benefit more Liberians and providing incentives for capital investment in projects like roads, electricity and other infrastructure that bring about development in agriculture, manufacturing, trade and services.

Commitment

The Unity Party-led government will adapt strategies to manage public resources, employ measures that help the economy to grow. We will ensure an improved macroeconomic coordination between both the monetary and fiscal authorities to encourage investments, boost employment, provide targeted fiscal incentives, and improve public services to enhance the standard of living of our people.

Agenda

Our fiscal policy management strategic will be characterized by the following actions:

1.1.2.1 Reform Tax Administration Policies to make them more Investment and Production Friendly

The starting point is to convert and consolidate indirect taxes on inputs to sales tax, effectively postponing payment of indirect taxes on inputs (any material requiring further processing before consumption or final utilization) from production to the point of sales.

1.1.2.2 Provide Targeted Fiscal incentives to Stimulate investments in Agriculture and Light Manufacturing

Incentives can play critical role in motivating private-sector investment in food crop production, processing, marketing and fisheries to reduce the country's reliance on importation. Appropriate incentives could also encourage investment in agro-tourism and other sub-sectors in which ordinary Liberians are engaged and need support to succeed in business creating employment opportunities.

1.1.2.3 Enhance Efficiency in Revenue Administration to Reduce Administrative Costs to the Economy, and the Resulting Leakage from Rent-seeking

The UP-led government will adopt the combination of human capacity development through targeted training and incentives to improve performance, customer satisfaction and greater compliance. We will adopt electronic and digital technology to improve transparency and accountability, and make tax payment processes more convenient.

1.1.2.4 Operate a Balanced Budget Policy and ensure that Revenue and Expenditure Estimates are Evidence-based

The UP-led government will regularly reconcile and adjust government accounts on cash basis as frequently as required to ensure that government expenditure demands are aligned with resource availability.

1.1.2.5 Implement the Treasury Single Account (TSA) to Strengthen Cash Management in the Public Sector

TSA will ensure cash availability for current expenditure pressures, reduce interest accrued on idle balances, and minimize the temptations to mismanage temporary excess funds.

1.1.2.6 Introduce Program Budgeting System to Shift the Focus from just Wages and other Recurrent Costs to Programs and Projects that Directly Impact Economic Growth and Social Services

Adopt a realistic medium-term budgeting framework that relies on making realistic forecasts of government revenue intake over a number of years along with the corresponding projections for development priorities and outcomes. This would enable government make sustained investment priority in areas such as agriculture and food security, roads, education, sanitation and tourism to expand economic growth and job creation. Program budgeting will shift expenditure allocation decisions from historical baseline funding to a more accountability-focused and result-oriented planning and budgeting.

We will fully support the Public Procurement and Concessions Commission (PPCC) to enforce all of its rules and regulations. Among other policies, the UP-led government will strengthen engagements with contractors and other providers of goods and services to the government and its auxiliaries to prevent either default or poor performance. Toward this end, we will require contractors to pre-finance projects in whole or in parts depending on the execution and deliverable structures of contracts.

1.1.2.7 Ensure Transparency in Public Debt Management

We will improve oversight and public awareness on the management and utilization of contracted loans to reduce the risk of debt distress. Liberia currently has a moderate public debt levels relative to total output which is substantially risked by drop in domestic revenue, with this, the government will employ measures to structure the country's debt portfolio in line with current economic realities. For us, having prudent debt management strategy would ensure that in the face of macroeconomic and other financial constraints, the cost and risk profile of our public debt portfolio remain within acceptable limits over time. Our objective is to maintain a prudent balance of Liberia's debt portfolio with regard to cost-risk tradeoff that juxtaposes the government's preferences; and to ensure that domestic securities market is improved. Furthermore, in line with Liberia's PFM Act, the government will development and implement (with well-consolidated practices) a robust public debt issuance and management strategy.

1.1.2.8 Ensure Efficient and Effective Management of Public Corporations

The management of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) have been in complete contradiction of the purposes of their creation and the requirements as prescribed in the Public Financial Management Act 2009. We will strengthen oversight and guarantee controls of all SOEs by making them efficient and effective in providing the services to the Liberian people. We will conduct periodic reviews of SOEs functions to assess their viability and, where necessary, privatize inefficient ones.

1.1.3 Restore Confidence in Our Monetary and Financial Sector Management Systems

Context

The Liberian economy remains heavily dollarized with the U.S. Dollar estimated to account for about 90 percent of money supply. This has left the country with limited control over monetary policy. The challenges associated with monetary policy in a dual currency economy have become even more complicated in the last five years with the autonomy of the Central Bank of Liberia seriously compromised. Monetary authorities have not demonstrated robustness in exercising control over money supply. The fiscal authorities and other non-monetary actors have influenced the excessive printing of Liberian currency to the extent that the Central Bank of Liberia cannot accurately account for the amount of local currency in circulation or in banks. This, in addition to reduce foreign exchange inflows, has led to fluctuations of the exchange rates between the Liberian and US Dollars currencies. The increased depreciation of the local currency has been accompanied by increase in the general price level in the economy, and reduced the purchasing power of our people.

Commitment

Unity party-led government is highly committed to restoring confidence in our monetary and financial sector management system by ensuring greater autonomy of the Central Bank of Liberia. The intent is to ensure performance of its mandates inscribed in the Act authorizing its establishment.

Party Agenda

The government will pursue the following actions to restore confidence in the monetary governance of our country and ensure efficiency in monetary policy management:

1.1.3.1 Ensure Independence of Monetary Authorities

The UP-led government will allow monetary policymakers freely perform their responsibility without interference from the Executive Branch, and ensure that the Central Bank has greater autonomy to perform the mandates as prescribed by Act establishing it.

1.1.3.2 Encourage Import Substitution by Supporting Domestic Production of the Basic Commodities

The heavy consumption of imported goods means there will continue to be high demand for US dollars and therefore a constraint on our foreign reserves. To deal with this, we will encourage import substitution by locally producing some of the basic commodities that we import, particularly food.

Appropriate management of our monetary policy will restore the confidence of our development partners, and change perceptions that undermine the prospects for foreign investment into our economy. We will ensure that monetary authorities strictly adhere to the mandates of the Central of Liberia as inscribed by the law.

1.1.3.4 Increase Confidence in the Financial Sector to Encourage households and Businesses Utilize Financial Services

Our government will introduce prudent policies and instruments to make use of financial services that are attractive to households and businesses, and encourage the commercial banks to improve lending terms (Interest rate & Repayment period) and saving rates for businesses to spur economic activities.

We will support the digitization of the economy by encouraging the usage on online banking services, mobile money services, debit cards in businesses and households transactions.

1.1.3.5 Implement the Roadmap Developed for the De-dollarization of the Liberian Economy

Due to Liberia's long history of having in circulation both the Liberian dollar and the United States Dollars, caution must be taken in de-dollarizing the Liberian economy in order to protect businesses from possible shock. We will therefore implement the roadmap developed in 2012 for the de-dollarization of our economy to make monetary policy implementation more effective. To support full de-dollarization in the medium-to-long-term, the Unity Party administration will also pursue the following interim options that increase demand for the Liberian dollars:

- Develop a domestic financial market by introducing Liberian dollar-denominated securities;
- Improve the quality and increase the denominations of Liberian dollar bank notes;
- Increase the use of Liberian Dollars as a unit of account through targeted payment and disbursement strategies;
- Begin casting our national budget in Liberian Dollars, and use Liberian Dollars more in government revenue and expenditure transactions;
- Provide incentives for more people to use the Liberian dollars for payments for goods and services within the country;
- Implement the de-dollarization roadmap to mitigate the adverse impacts of the dual currency on the Liberian economy;

1.2 Promote Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Development to Support Wealth Creation

1.2.1 Invest in Agriculture Development to Support Food Security and Wealth Creation

Context

Agriculture is the foundation of Liberia's economy and plays a critical role not just in the national food economy but also serves as the main driver of economic development and source of employment for a large proportion of the Country's labor force. It is a key source of foreign exchange earnings to drive growth and serves as the main source of food security and poverty reduction. The country has a comparative advantage in agricultural production with arable land comprising about 41 percent of the total land area. In addition to its rich freshwater resources, the county enjoys an abundant rainfall that naturally supports two production seasons. Its primary agro-ecological zones are characterized by coastal plains and upper highlands, and lower tropical forests that make it suitable for both food and cash crops production. The farming system is primarily forest-based and largely concentrated in the central belt of the country, which accounts for almost half of the Country's total land area and almost 90 percent of the arable land.

The suitability of the agro-ecology of the country has long sustained agriculture's dominant role in the economy. The sector accounted for more than half of Liberia's gross domestic product in pre-war era and remains the dominant driver of growth and export earnings in post-conflict period. The agriculture sector is also the most significant livelihood source for an estimated 70 percent of the total labor force with women constituting an estimated 75 percent of that workforce. Agriculture remains a key source of foreign exchange earnings to drive growth, and a critical means of attaining national food security and poverty reduction. The sector contributed about 31 percent of RGDP in 2020, and was projected to contribute similar share in 2021 (CBL, 2021). Most farming households grow, at subsistence levels, the country's staple food crops: rice (71 percent) and cassava (60 percent). Besides these main food crops, farming households also engage in the production of a variety of legumes (cowpeas, peanuts), vegetables (chili peppers, tomatoes, "bitter ball", eggplant, okra, cabbage and plantain), roots and tubers (sweet potatoes, yam, eddoes), grains (maize), and fruits (oranges, grape fruits, mango, banana etc.) to strengthen household food access. However, recent reports have stated that of the approximately 52 percent poverty-stricken Liberian population, 77 percent are in rural areas where agriculture is the primary source of livelihood, and that 79.6 percent of households where the head is self-employed in agriculture are poor (World Bank, 2018a).

Given the importance of agriculture to the Liberian economy, successive governments have made tremendous efforts in formulating policies and institutions to develop the sector and fully utilize its potential. However, the sector remains largely dominated by traditional subsistence farming characterized by smallholder farmers with limited access to production inputs as national agriculture outputs remains low. For instance, domestic rice production of the country's staple, rice, remains far below consumption requirement, and food insecurity and poverty remains high among farming households. In 2020, domestic rice production (milled equivalent) was estimated at 180,090 metric tons (MT) cultivated on 240,000 hectares of farmland (FAO, 2021). For the same period, the country recorded a rice balance of 555,000 MT, of which import constituted about 52 percent while the combined values of feed and seed accounted for less than 6 percent. In addition to low domestic rice output, yield per cultivated area of the crop remains below regional and global averages. According to an estimate from MOA, rice yield per hectare in Liberia in 2020 was reported at about 1.15 MT (GOL, 2019), which is substantially below the global average yield of 3.9 MT/Ha, and the 1.6 MT/Ha average yield recorded in the Mano River Union countries.

Commitment

The post-conflict governments of Liberia over the past years have made tremendous efforts in developing policies and institutions intended to enhance development of the agriculture sector. In spite of these efforts, the sector remains underdeveloped with low productivity and output as a result of the numerous existing constraints, and food security remains a major challenge for most of our people. The Unity Party-led government under a Joseph N. Boakai administration will fully implement all agriculture sectorial policies and address the constraints to the agriculture sector so that our people can produce more to feed themselves and generate sufficient income to send their children to schools and health facilities.

Party Agenda

Addressing the constraints to agriculture development and food security and eventually achieving food sovereignty will be our priority. Our agenda will be to:

1.2.1.1 Strengthen the Capacities of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI) to Conduct Appropriate Research to Discovery Innovations

- Appoint specialist to appropriate positions at the Ministry of Agriculture and place qualify staff in positions to effectively implement the mandates of the Ministry;
- Take stock and assess existing agriculture-sector policies to determine gaps in their implementations;
- Implement agriculture policies to fill existing gaps, and assess their impact on the sector.;
- Reform and appoint qualify and experienced Liberians to lead CARI, in specialized fields to enhance effective and innovative researches;

1.2.1.2 Promote Agricultural Mechanization and Improve Farmers Access to Production Technologies

- Invest in the procurement of appropriate farm equipment and establish three machinery hubs in our food basket counties (Bong, Lofa, and Nimba) to support our people grow more of their own food;
- Use the hubs to provide land preparation services for farming groups and cooperatives as well as large farmers intending to engage in large-scale production of our staple food crops;
- Work through a public-private partnership and our development partners to provide improved seeds, pesticides, fertilizers, and small farm machines such as powered tillers, and harvesters for farmers who will engage in rice production;

- The Ministry of Agriculture and CARI will identify and work with existing farmer groups and large individual farmers to engage in large-scale seed multiplication for distribution to smallholder farmers;
- Support local businesses (entrepreneurs) to engage in the large-scale manufacturing of farm tools adaptable to the local conditions to supply to our smallholder farmers;
- Support Liberia businesses to partner with foreign entrepreneurs to establish manufacturing plants in Liberia to produce fertilizers, agrochemicals and locally assemble small farm equipment to make these inputs cheaper for our farmers;

1.2.1.3 Support Farmers to Increase Production of the Country's Main Staple Food Crop

- Design specific projects to support farmer develop more lowland for rice production;
- Provide tax incentive and create the enabling business environment to encourage local and international private-sector actor to invest in large-scale commercial production of rice and cassava in the country;
- Initiate concrete public investments in the infrastructures irrigation canals, storage and processing facilities to support increased rice production and full development of the rice value chain
- Develop a national irrigation program to annually develop at least 5,000 hectares of lowland for rice production;

1.2.1.4 Promote and Strengthen Development of the Rice Processing Industry

- Strengthen rice production cooperatives for increased paddy production and productivity;
- Construct rice milling plants in all major rice production districts throughout the country;
- Construct grain storage facilities in all major rice milling districts throughout the country;
- Invest in energy generation, particularly alternative sources of energy, for sustainable operation of milling plants;
- Facilitate access to affordable financing for the private sector to set up milling plants in peri-urban and urban location to facilitate commercial rice milling;
- Improve the state of feeder roads leading to major production and processing areas;

1.2.1.5 Strengthen Agriculture Extension and Advisory Service Delivery System

- Train extension technicians in the various fields of agriculture (crop production, soil science, animal husbandry, pests and disease management and control) to strengthen their capacities to provide effective advisory services to our farmers;
- Assign agriculture extension technicians to every clan in the main production counties of Liberia under the supervision district agriculture office (DAO);
- Establish demonstration farms in communities where trained technicians can transfer knowledge to farmers through practical field work supported by clan agriculture technicians;
- Develop and support specialists at the national agriculture research institute to engage in innovative research and disseminate information that enhance our farmers' knowledge of appropriate production techniques.;
- Work with development partners to train our farmers to adopt new patterns of irrigation management, harvesting, and post-harvest management;
- Develop and broadcast radio programs in targeted local languages and focus specifically on the dissemination of appropriate information on agricultural production and marketing;

1.2.1.6 Regulate and Standardize Units of Measurement used in Commercialization of Agricultural commodities

- Adopt kilogram as the unit of measure in the commercialization of agricultural commodities in agriculture retail markets, and take measures to discourage the current traditional measurement practice in trading agricultural commodities
- We will carry out nation-wide awareness in the use of kilogram as the unit of measurement, and devise appropriate programs for training our agriculture market retailers in the use of the unit
- UP-led government will standardize pricing system in agriculture retail markets to align with unit of measurement to ensure efficiency in the agriculture commodity market.

1.2.1.7 Develop National Strategy for Agriculture Development Based on Regional Comparative Advantage

- Conduct a nation-wide assessment and develop a zonal plan agricultural activities throughout the country based on regional soil patterns and production capacity;
- Farmers in will be supported to specialize in livestock or crop production in accordance with the comparative advantage of each production area or region;

- Adopt a one-crop-per-county policy, and support large-scale production of that crop in each of the crop-production counties based on the significance and suitability of that crop in the county;
- Promote and enforce out-grower schemes in agricultural concessions areas to enable communities share in the knowledge of local concessions, and strengthen production of targeted tree crops to expand the country's export capacity and support indigenous wealth creation;
- Promote and support livestock production in designated regions to increase domestic supply and reduce the country's dependence on importation of livestock and livestock products;

1.2.1.8 Support Agribusiness Enterprise Development to Enhance Agriculture Value Chains

Take actions to strengthen agribusinesses participating in the development of agriculture value chains to support job creation for our people and expand gain from agriculture activities. Specifically, our government will:

- Make appropriate investment in production, agro-processing, distribution, and marketing mechanisms as well as create the enabling environment for local agro-processors to participate in export market;
- Promote and support the participation of small and medium enterprises in domestic and export markets through the provision of business development services to enterprises along agriculture value chains;
- Provide special financing support for local entrepreneurs engaging commercial ventures in cattle ranching, fish farming and poultry production;
- Focus on promoting citizen participation in agri-business development and enhancing their capacity to take control of the local market as well as linking them to regional and international value chains;
- Make efforts to strengthen market linkages between primary production areas and processing centers to reduce costs of the final product to make competitive in the domestic and regional markets;
- We will establish agro-processing parks in designated location to support the processing of primary agricultural products into value added products;
- Our government will implement the Food Law of Liberia and establish the National Food Authority to ensure standardization and quality assurance in the food processing industry;

1.2.1.9 Improve Access to Agricultural Value Chain Financing and Enhance Financial Literacy of Farmers

- Our government will initiate national efforts that support creation of a special-purpose credit facility dedicated to agriculture development;
- UP-led government will explore the possibility of reviving and rebranding the Agriculture and Cooperative Development Bank to perform its pre-war tasks in a more efficient way, or create a new agriculture financing bank to provide agriculture credits;
- UP-led government will also explore the possibility of providing appropriate incentives, such as guarantees and interest-rate subsidization, that motivate private-sector involvement with the creation of specialized financial services for agricultural development;
- Our government will work with its development partners to improve the financial literacy levels of actors in the agriculture value chains through capacity strengthening activities;

1.2.1.10 Promote Diversification of Agriculture Production

- Our government will focus on agricultural diversification in crops, fisheries, and livestock products based on comparative and competitive advantage of each product and agro-ecological zone;
- UP-led government will encourage and support smallholder farmers to diversify agriculture production to ensure income stability and food security;
- We will facilitate smallholder farmers' activities through increased access to suitable technologies for agricultural diversification aimed at enhancing livelihood and nutritional security;
- Our government will assess and characterize farm animal, fisheries resources, and disseminate suitable technologies for improving production and integration into the existing farming system;
- Our government will develop and adopt appropriate technologies and strategies to provide alternate livelihood opportunities through agricultural diversification;
- We will focus on developing off farm activities through value addition and traditional handicrafts for income diversification in semi-urban agricultural communities;

1.2.2 Promote Sustainable Forest Resources Management

The importance of Liberia's rich forests, which make up around 43% of West Africa's remaining rainforests, should not be underestimated. The country possesses the largest cover of the tropical rain forest in the sub region. Over the years, the forests have provided important social and economic security to local communities that depend on these landscapes for their culture, sustenance, and even survival.

Party Agenda

Recognizing the importance of Liberia's rich forests for local communities benefits, the UP-led government's forest management policy will include:

- Promote and support value addition to timber and non-timber forest products;
- Exploit Liberia's rich forest resources in a sustainable way that meet current demands and ensure security for future generations;
- Strengthen conservation-related guidelines and approaches to avoid a lopsided management and utilization of the country's forest resource;
- Facilitate creation of community beekeeping production clusters for income generation in rural communities;
- Promote and undertake applied research on forests, forest products and the environment to inform proper use of our forest resources;
- Conserve national parks, protected areas, natural and cultural authority reserves to support tourism development;
- Ensure Liberians own shares in all new forest management contracts to support indigenous wealth creation;
- Hold concessionaires accountable to deliver on the terms of the agreements to promote community harmony;
- Ensure Liberian companies have fair chance of competing for concession agreements to enable them play key roles in the development of our economy;
- Pursue decentralization emphasizing participation of local communities in resource management to strengthen their ownership;

1.2.3 Ensure Sustainable Development of the Fisheries Sub-sector

Liberia has 350 miles of an unbroken coastline and a rich fauna of fishery resources that are of high value and demand in the world market. Its continental shelf averages 34 miles in width and has a large fishing ground of over 70,000 square miles. The country is traversed by more than 1500Km of rivers and a host of tributaries and low lands, which provide an ideal opportunity for aquaculture development as well. Liberia also has two large lakes (lagoon) and many artificial lakes which are endowed with rich aquatic fauna. The Marine fisheries potential of the country is estimated at 126,000 metric tons. However, illegal fishing and unauthorized transships in the industrial fisheries sector and open access in the artisanal fisheries sector due to the lack of co-management arrangement and system of governance are causing overexploitation of Liberia's fisheries resources leading to the inability of the biomass levels to sustain fish harvest at maximum sustainable yield levels.

Commitment

The UP-led government commits to ensuring sustainable management of fisheries resources and associated ecosystems with the objective of ensuring fish production is carried out on a sustainable basis to meet national socio-economic needs.

Agenda

The UP-led government under Joseph Nyuma Boakai will ensure sustainable management of our fisheries resources and associated ecosystems through the following actions:

1.2.3.1 Restore Fish Biomass Capacities to Produce at Maximum Sustainable Yield Levels

The UP-led government will prioritize sustainability of fish production and restore key indicative fish species to biomass capacities to enable fisheries resources meaningfully contribute to local economies through the following strategic interventions:

- Elaborating and adopting a National Action Plan for fishing capacity management in line with the FAO International Plan of Action;
- Establishing priorities for routine in-depth monitoring and assessment of fisheries management units as well as preparing, implementing and routinely updating fisheries management plans to include measures to restore production to maximum sustainable yield levels;
- Strengthening the licensing and vessel registration regime to conform to the fisheries management units, and ensuring that fishing capacities that are in excess of sustainable, economically viable and optimal levels in the management areas are avoided;
- Prioritizing and protecting access of legitimate small-scale fishers to fisheries resources that are shared with industrial fleet by ensuring that allocation of allowable catches or fishing effort to the industrial sector takes into account the needs of small-scale fishers; and

- Establishing a national committee on fishing licensing in consultation with organized stakeholder associations for fisheries management units to determine access and restrictions as well as multi-year licensing schemes that ensure inclusion, and prioritize security of local stakeholders;

1.2.3.2 Improve Aquaculture Policy to meet Local Fish Demand Deficits, and Export for Foreign Exchange Earnings

In spite of the important role of the fisheries sector in the development of the economy, the aquaculture sub-sector, which includes marine-culture, is poorly developed and weakly organized thereby resulting to limited benefits not just to the food economy but also to livelihood improvement. Given Liberia's vast potential in fresh water resources, a fully developed sectoral policy on developing a safe, responsible, hygienic and economically viable farming of fish and crustaceans should be developed. This policy would contribute not only to local food supply but also stimulate local and national economies through the export of suitable fish species as well as generate employment for fishing communities. The UP-led government will thus take the following actions to develop the aquaculture sub-sector:

- Establishing legal framework for the development of responsible aquaculture sub-sector by reviewing existing fisheries legislation and providing appropriate definitions of aquaculture to enable implementation of the provisions of the fisheries and aquaculture policy;
- Strengthening the institutional framework for development of aquaculture by further upgrading the capacity of NFAA to be able to deliver technical support and aquaculture services to farmers at county and district levels, and promoting public investment in aquaculture infrastructure to support expansion of the aquaculture sub-sector;
- Creating an enabling environment for the development of aquaculture business for growth of the sub-sector, and providing financial services and incentives to promote development of smallholder aquaculture businesses;
- Improving capacity for aquaculture development through human resource development and training, and improved on the current curriculum to incorporate aquaculture training and education at all levels;
- Offering practical and tailored training opportunities in collaboration with non-state actors for individual, groups and fish farmers;

1.2.3.3 Enhance Value Addition, Marketing, Fish Trade to Improve Foreign Exchange Earnings and Provide Employment Opportunities

The UP-led government is committed to adopt appropriate technologies for fisheries value addition, and target appropriate remunerative foreign markets to maximize benefits from fisheries which will contribute to revenue generation through the following strategies and interventions:

- Improve economic returns on fisheries through the establishment of post-harvest infrastructure such as fish landing clusters at all sites to improve hygiene and sanitary conditions to enhance marketing;
- Improve import and export terminals in the Mesurado and fish landing site clusters to promote fish export and enhance earnings from artisanal and industrial fisheries;
- Provide ice storage facilities on-board artisanal craft to support artisanal fisheries and increase the value of fish;
- Provide tax incentives to attract foreign investments in fishery value addition to expand the sources of economic growth;

1.2.3.4 Establish National Safety and Quality Assurance System, Promote Value Addition to Enhance Fish Marketing and Facilitate Trading Opportunities

Our government will ensure quality assurance in the harvesting and processing of fish products to enhance quality and increase the country's chance to participate in international marketing. The strategies to attain the following goals are as follows:

- Adopt, sensitize and implement capacity building programs on quality and safety assurance systems based on HACCP and Total Quality Management (TQM) procedures;
- Encourage the establishment of value addition enterprises at Mesurado, and build capacity that meets international standards and allows the country gain entry into foreign remunerative fish markets;
- Support the national Standard laboratory for certification of fish, and encourage the development of fish products and packaging for value addition to increase export to major international markets;

1.3 Promote Sustainable Job Creation and Ensure Job Security

Context

The overall performance of the economy has led to a steady decline in meaningful employment for people of working age (15 to 64 years). Whereas 75 percent of persons in this age bracket had some kind of employment in 2017, the ratio had fallen. Though the decrease may not be significant in nominal terms, it is a serious social challenge in a society where 43 percent of the population or 2.2 million people comprising children from 0 to 14 years and elderly people from 65 and above depend on the working-age population to survive as reported in the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) 2018 Annual Report.

Agriculture and manufacturing are the key sectors that should drive and sustain real GDP growth, improve income to create wealth. However, these key sectors are not creating new jobs as expected. According to the CBL 2018 Annual Report, since 2017, agriculture's contribution to employment has remained around 40 percent compared to between 50 and 70 percent in the past. Manufacturing and industry contribute just around 10 percent of employment.

The fallouts from this is that the public sector has become the last resort for politically driven job creation, instead of adopting innovative policies for sustainable private-sector jobs. This is clearly a situation that should not be allowed to persist because making the public sector the biggest and most attractive employer discourages diversification within the workforce, which, in turn, becomes a disincentive for the concept of a knowledge-based economy.

Commitment

The Unity Party government's policy focus is to create more jobs that don't just pay substance wages, but generate livable incomes. We will adopt policies and provide conducive conditions for job creation across all sectors, while at the same time making sure that the government does not remain the single largest employer. Policies such as investments in economic infrastructures, access to finance, provide incentives for businesses to include special incentives for rural-focused investment, among others will be used to spur job creation.

Agenda

1.3.1 Take Appropriate Actions to Enhance Job Creation in the Economy

UP-led government will take the following actions to create more sustainable jobs for our workforce. The following strategies will be implemented to achieve this objective:

- Develop and strengthen the tourism sector to drive employment opportunities in the economy;
- Develop and enforce an integrated national job creation policy/program that guarantee all companies and businesses operating in Liberia to give first hiring preference to qualified Liberians;
- Adopt policies and allocate resources to the diversification of agriculture;
- Reactivate cooperatives along agriculture value chains to make the sector the main driver of job creation in rural and peri-urban areas;
- Plan and execute a national stakeholders conference on job creation to explore options for expanding stakeholder capacity to create new jobs;
- Develop programs to train Liberians to be able to provide services in semi-skilled jobs such as manufacturing, repairs works and maintenance and other jobs which do not require high level of education and training;
- Ensure that investment projects, including FDIs, create employment, develop agro-based industry, small scale manufacturing and the traditional cottage to absorb more of our unemployed youth;
- Provide tax incentive and access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs);
- Review and revise the curriculum and standard operating procedure (SOP) of all vocational training institutions so that their courses and programs are relevant for the needs of employers in the job market;
- Expand Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) opportunities nationwide to provide technical and vocational trainings that equip our young people with employable skills;

1.3.2 Exploit our Quality Timber Species to Develop the Furniture Production Industry to Create more Jobs for the Young People

The UP-led government is committed to transforming the old Liberia Mining Company (LMC) site into a furniture manufacturing park. To achieve this goal, the following actions will be taken leading to the creation additional job opportunities for our young people:

- Organize the young people into furniture production cooperatives to operate from the park;
- Construct training facilities for the young people to enhance their technical and entrepreneurial skills to enable them engage into high-quality furniture production and marketing;
- Ensure the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) and Ministry of Commerce & Industry (MoCI) to certify the quality of the furniture products to ensure quality meet standards for domestic and export markets;
- Promote access to markets for certified furniture to enable the cooperatives generate income from their business activities;
- Institute a national policy to promote certified Liberian-made furnitures as mandatory for government use locally in all public offices;
- Create access to finance through a revolving fund for youth cooperatives to invest in equipment and other requisites for expansion of their business activities;
- Continue to invest in stable, reliable and affordable energy sources for sustainable operations of youth furniture manufacturing cooperatives;
- Encourage extractive companies through special tax incentive to engage in local value addition of their output to expand foreign exchange earnings, and create job opportunities;

1.3.3 Improve Labor Administration to Ensure Vibrancy and Protection in the Labor Market

While we will focus on creating jobs for our people, the UP-led government will also take the following actions to make labor administration vibrant and the protection our people against unfair labor practices:

- Enforce the Liberianization policy to prevent non-Liberians from occupying jobs for which there are qualified and competent Liberians;
- Prioritize workers rights by ensuring all work environments for workers in Liberia are acceptable, decent, safe and dignified;
- Promote partnership between the laborers, private, and public sectors for achieving social protection and social dialogue to guarantee greater economic equity, peace, and industrial harmony;
- Ensure that all international labor standards, national legislations, and appropriate ILO conventions are ratified to promote decent work environment;
- Strengthen the role of the Ministry of Labor (MoL) in coordinating employment policies across all sectors, including INGOs, concessionaire, and businesses, to ensure compliance with the regulatory provisions for employment in Liberia;
- Create a database to establish an accurate number of jobs in the country, and take appropriate actions to considerably increase that number;

1.3.4 Reform Civil Service to Ensure Quality Productivity in Public Service

In an endeavor to ensure quality productivity in public service; the UP-led government will reform and strengthen Civil Service Agency (CSA). The Agency's capacity will be strengthened to take the following appropriate actions to achieve the government's civil service reform agenda:

- Pursue the creation of the Civil Service Commission as enshrined the constitution of Liberia;
- Create a policy that guarantees jobs placement in the civil service irrespective of political affiliation;
- Re-orient the civil service and increase its effectiveness and efficiency through training, and provision of better incentives;
- Ensure the implementation of professional development plans to facilitate career growth, enhance professionalism within the Civil Service;
- Strengthen the performance capability of the civil service by creating a career-based, non-political civil service to serve the country irrespective of political party affiliation;
- Develop and institutionalize a national program to develop and construct housing facilities for health and education workers to encourage and support them in taking up assignments in rural communities;
- Institutionalize an annual civil service award program to recognize and reward civil servants with outstanding performance across the public service;
- Improve service delivery and human resource management in the public sector, and ensure gender equity in the civil service;
- Improve social safety-net for civil servants through the National Social Security and Welfare program, and institute a more dignified and merit-based retirement and pension program;
- Reform pay and pension systems across ministries, agencies, commissions and public corporations;
- Institute a National Limited Power of Attorney (LPA) Program to enable civil servants access credit for personal investment;

1.4 Improve Commerce and Industry to Support Wealth Creation

Context

The Liberian economy has increasingly become dominated by the extractive sectors as concessionaires while the commerce and trade sector remain dominated by foreign businesses. The Unity Party-led government will consider commerce and industry as the vital driver of the economy and key channel for private-sector jobs and wealth creation for Liberians. The government will be committed to utilizing the sector as a means of stimulating economic growth and facilitating wealth creation. The government will also improve a commerce and trade policy that create business-friendly climate to enhance the participation of local entrepreneurship and expand wealth creation. Such policy should guarantee secured access to credit for Liberian businesses engaged in manufacturing enabling them compete adequately with their foreign counterparts. The government will also prioritize development of a special economic zone (SEZ) to strengthen the country's manufacturing capacity and facilitate exportation of locally manufactured commodities. The SEZ will further serve as commercial and financial center not only for the Mano River Union Basin, but the West African Sub-region.

Commitment

The UP-led government commits to improving the commerce and industry of the country by revitalizing and increasing support for the manufacturing sector to robustly promote industrial development. The government is committed to fully implementing the Liberianization policy to put the economy in the hands of Liberians.

Agenda

1.4.1 Promote Commerce and Trade Regulations that Support Local Entrepreneurship Development

The government will take the following actions to develop local entrepreneurs to actively participate in the growth and development of the economy:

- Accelerate the restoration of public utilities such as electricity, water & sewage, telecommunication networks, and review tariff structures to ensure that the cost of subscribing for these utilities is not prohibitive;
- Review the current policy environment to enable trade promotion, development of the manufacturing sector, and strengthening entrepreneurs involvement into value addition;
- Work with the Liberia Business Association (LIBA) to strengthen its capacity, to promote trade and commerce of locally made products;
- Establish regional commercial hubs around the country as a means of decentralizing trade and commerce outside of Monrovia;
- Encourage the innovative use of local raw materials to develop our manufacturing industry for value addition;
- Facilitate the integration of the economy into the global supply chains, and increase rates of return on investment in the domestic economy;
- Strengthen capacities of institutions responsible for formulating and implementing trade policies to ensure actors in the commerce sector enjoy the benefits of free trade;
- Prioritize the domestication of the World Trade Organization's trade facilitation Agreement to ensure Liberia reaps full benefits;
- We will promote Liberianization of industrials by granting tailored incentives to Liberian businesses to make them competitive with foreign firms

1.4.2 Enforce Implementation of Liberianization Policy to put the Economy in the Hands of Liberians

Liberian businesses continue to operate at the fringes and margins of their own economy. Many of these businesses fall within the realm of small and medium-scaled businesses, while the majority are within the informal sector without stable incomes to cover operations, and are incapable of expanding. The government will aggressively implement the Liberianization policy. To ensure that Liberians commence taking charge of their own economy, the Unity Party-led government shall undertake the following strategic actions:

- Continue to strengthen and enforce government policies in the procurement sector that mandates that a certain portion of all government procurements be directed to Liberian businesses;
- Set aside a Special Liberian Business Development Fund to be managed by an autonomous agency to provide access to finance;
- Support Liberian businesses development skills by setting up training incubators to enhance their managerial skills;
- Provide the necessary enabling environment for the enforcement of existing legislation and special incentives to put the retail business sector in the hands of Liberians;

- Require companies in the extractive industry to ascribe to the local content policy to heighten the local content value of their operations by involving Liberians in equity participation;

1.5 Develop Economic Infrastructures to Support Growth

Context

The availability and quality of infrastructure remain a significant factor in achieving sustainable economic development. Paved roads, railroads, airports, seaports, telecommunication networks, electricity, etc. are key infrastructures that support the productive sector of the economy. The quality of these infrastructures directly affects the operational activities of multi-national, small and medium enterprises, and the economic growth potential of the nation.

Commitment

The UP-led government 12-year reign saw some levels of investment in infrastructures across the country. However, there remain significant challenges especially in connecting the rest of the country. The UP-led administration will exert the necessary efforts to connect the country through the construction of additional roads and bridges, investing in other infrastructures as well as managing the appropriate mechanisms for the maintenance of existing ones.

Developing a long-term strategy for infrastructure development in Liberia requires careful planning and consideration of various factors. As a party that has a good understanding of national development, it is essential to trackback to the root of the previous plans and strategies. After review of the implementation of current and past development plans it becomes necessary to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the current and future infrastructure needs of the country. This includes analyzing existing infrastructure to: Identifying bottlenecks, Assessing population growth, Economic development plans gathering an in-depth understanding of the demands of various sectors such as: 1) service 2) industry 3) agriculture 4) tourism

Based on the comprehensive review and assessment mentioned above, the second immediate action is to **develop a Infrastructure Development Plan** that outlines the long-term: vision, goals and objectives for the country's infrastructure system. The approach considers all economic infrastructures including: roads, bridges, vertical structures, railways, seaports, airports, energy, telecommunication and technology.

Sustainable and Resilient Infrastructure: Considering urgent need to incorporate sustainable and resilient practices into infrastructure development to mitigate climate change in Liberia. The strategy cover: efficiency, Renewable energy sources, climate change adaptation measures, and disaster risk reduction. It is important to embrace green transport options, and invest in resilient infrastructure that can withstand natural disasters.

Investment Prioritization: the need for prioritization of investments based on the identified needs and available resources will be thoroughly considered. And major factors such as population centers, economic corridors, connectivity to rural areas, and support for regional integration will drive the top-down decision-making process.

Agenda

The Unity Party-led government infrastructural investment program will focus on improving road quality, increase access throughout the country to enhance economic and social activities. The following actions will be taken to achieve this objective:

1.5.1 Reinforce Appropriate Investment in Roads and Bridges

- Continue the pavement of primary roads connecting county capitals to have easy access to all regions of the country;
- Pave all primary roads connecting the country to neighboring countries in the region to enhance cross-border trade and interactions with our neighbors;
- Construct secondary and feeder roads throughout the country to facilities farmers' access to local markets to enhance local agriculture development;

1.5.2 Ensure Proper Management of the National Road Fund

- Establish the National Road Authority and give it oversight for implementation of the national road fund to realize its mandates of:
 - Road infrastructure construction;

- Road infrastructure maintenance;
- Road infrastructure upgrading and rehabilitation
- Ensure transparency in the implementation of the Road Fund to restore donor confidence to recommit their support to the fund;

1.5.3 Develop Transportation Networks and Air and Sea Ports

Context

While some investments have been made in infrastructures across the country to improve air and sea ports to facilitate sea transportation, significant challenges remain in accessing some parts of the country particularly during the wet season. Despite the existence of over 300 miles of coastline and the abundance of rivers traversing the country, there is no water transport system that could serve the people as an alternative to road travel and boost tourism.

Commitment

The UP-led government will strive to diversify the transport sector to make all parts of the the country accessible.

Agenda

1.5.4 Improve Access to Public Transport System to Facilitate Travel

The government will work with the private sector to improve transportation access to all parts of the country by taking the following actions:

- Acquire buses to provide public transport services across the country, thereby creating new network of public transport routes linking Monrovia to county capitals;
- Make public transport system available and affordable to students throughout public and private institutions across the country;
- Provide incentives to private investments that will decentralize public transport service delivery;
- Invest in public transportation infrastructures such as roads and bridges to guarantee quality service delivery within public transport management system;

1.5.5 Improve Air and Sea Port Facilities to Ensure Effective Service Delivery

To improve access to all parts of the country using air and sea transport services, the government will execute the following actions:

- Ensure the upgrading of the Robert International Airport (RIA) to develop it into a regional hub of the West African region;
- Establish a national airline to operate across the West African region to support the development of RIA into a competitive regional hub;
- Develop the capacity of the national civil aviation sector to attract and train national pilots, aviation engineers and service staff;
- Rehabilitate and establish domestic airstrips in counties, and institute a management and maintenance system to facilitate domestic air travel;
- Strengthen the management and infrastructure capacities of the James Sprigs Airfield to serve as a national hub for domestic air travel;
- Continue the development of the National Port Authority (NPA) by improving not only the facilities at the Freeport of Monrovia but also other ports.
- Rehabilitate the infrastructures of all out-stationed ports to include the landing-berth, container parks, navigation systems to enhance their competitiveness;

1.5.6 Develop Maritime and Inland Waterways to Facilitate Water Transport Service Delivery

To facilitate sea and inland water travels, the government will take appropriate measures to develop the water ways to facilitate water transport travels across the country, which positively impact the movement of goods and services to support business and tourism. The following actions will be taken by the government:

- Construct canals to facilitate the establishment of inland water transport system as viable alternatives to road transport;

- Construct modern harbor infrastructures at designated locations to facilitate the movement of people, goods and services;
- Provide incentives to encourage private investment in water transport services;
- Establish and operate a national ferry system to facilitate water transportation service delivery along the sea coasts and inland waterways;
- Encourage and facilitate joint ventures through public-private partnership arrangements to attract investment in the development of water transport network;

1.5.7 Construct and Rehabilitate Railways to Improve Rail Transport Access

Railway infrastructures remain a valuable transport asset in many developing economies which facilitates transportation from production sites to export. Liberia as a country has not made any significant investment in rail transport infrastructure except for investments made by concessionaires. The UP-led government sees this gap in the transport sector as key to economic growth and will therefore take the following actions:

- Construct, rehabilitate and modernize existing and new railway networks to facilitate passenger/cargo transportation to facilitate accessibility to all parts of country;
- We will work with concessionaires to construct greenfield rail spurs that accommodate passenger and cargo transportation in their operational areas;
- Connect railway to inland ports which will improve in-country movement of goods and services to rural destinations, and develop trans-shipment facilities to improve cross-border trade;
- Establish a National Authority to develop and manage the railway sector;

1.5.8 Improve Nationwide Access to Information Communication Technology Network

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become a catalyst for socio-economic development through its ability to promote competitiveness as well as serve as an enabler of good governance. However, there are several challenges regarding access to and utilization of ICT in Liberia. ICT infrastructure, both public and private, is inadequate and fragmented, resulting in poor connectivity and communication. Furthermore, the public sector, in particular, lacks adequate human resource in the area of computing and information technology to effectively deliver public services. The UP-led government will continue to consolidate investment, and utilize the existing fiber optic cable as a core national infrastructure to facilitate broadband connectivity for affordable and reliable access for e-healthcare, e-commerce, education (distance learning) and e-government programs.

Agenda

1.5.9 Improve ICT Infrastructure Nationwide to Facilitate Efficient Service Delivery

The UP-led government will take actions to improve ICT infrastructure, by investing in and upgrading telecommunications networks, data centers, facilities and access devices to improve the flow of information within and amongst government's institutions, enterprises, and citizens to bring about social and economic benefits. The government will achieve this through the following actions:

- Develop an ICT interconnectivity infrastructure to improve network coverage across the country;
- Expand broad band infrastructure to boost internet access to every parts of the country;
- Establish ICT an innovation park to create an environment for the incubation and cultivation of local talents;
- Facilitate ICT skills training for civil servants to increase public sector productivity;
- Develop and accelerate the mainstreaming of ICT services in the educational and health sectors;
- Provide sustainable internet access to students in public, private, and tertiary institutions of learning;
- Create an enabling environment for private-sector investment in ICT infrastructures;

1.5.10 Establish and Enhance Existing Electronic Platforms to Improve Public Service Delivery

The UP-led Government will improve its mode of public service delivery from sole dependence on traditional face-to-face interactions to guarantee transparency, accountability, and efficiency in public service provision through the following actions:

- Increase online transactions of government functions to enable the population and business entities access services anywhere and at anytime;
- Strengthen the capacities of the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA) and the Liberia Business Registry (LBR) to ensure tax payments and business registrations are initiated and completed online;

- Develop a national ICT network using the fiber technology to connect counties service centers to facilitate online transactions;
- Complete the Digital Migration Platform to enhance a national television and radio broadcast across Liberia;

1.5.11 Prioritize Energy Sector Development to Drive Economic Activities

Energy availability remains a constraint to the development of the industrial potential of our economy. Its limited supply has not only resulted to an exorbitant cost of electricity in the country, but also higher cost of domestic production and doing business. The UP-led Government will increase the production, transmission and distribution of electricity by expanding access to a large proportion of the population. In addition to the current regional efforts through the Cote D’Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone & Guinea (CLSG) project and the cross-border initiative, we will take the following actions:

- Review and improve the CLSG commercial framework document comprising of the transmission service agreement (TSA) and power purchase agreement (PPA) to facilitate affordable and available distribution of electricity;
- Create the enabling environment to encourage private-sector investment into the energy sector to expand generation, transmission, distribution, and increase access to affordable energy;
- Provide incentives to facilitate domestic and international private-sector investments to develop off-grid mini-hydro plants to generate and supply affordable energy in rural communities;
- Facilitate investments in renewable energy solutions to increase generation, facilitate transmission and distribution of energy at the household and industrial levels;
- Diversify and strengthen our energy resources management programs to quantify and harness not only hydroelectric power, but also solar power, wind power and biomass energy;

1.6 Improve Mineral and Natural Resource Management

Liberia is abundantly endowed with natural resources such as: iron ore, gold, diamond, varieties of timber species, arable agricultural soil, approximately 43,000 square mile of coastline, abundant ground and surface water with hydroelectric power potentials, and probably oil and natural gases. Known mineral deposits exist while there are potentials for new discoveries. However, harnessing these potentials have been undermined by many challenges.

Agenda

The Unity Party-led government will focus on developing the domestic capacity of Liberians to participate in mining exploration, processing, promoting and export. The government will ensure portion of the revenues generated from the industrial minerals and gemstone is invested in other sectors of the economy, such as agriculture, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) to guarantee economic diversification.

The government will take the following actions to strengthen the governance and economic contribution of the natural resource sector:

1.6.1 Promote Local and Foreign Participation in Mining Value Chains Development

- Improve the capacities of small-scale miners to increase productivity which will impact economic growth;
- Facilitate mining-based value-addition which will improve manufacturing industries capacities to produce inputs for other sectors;
- Support capacity enhancement of artisanal miners to strengthen their capacities to participate in the development of the sector;
- Increase access to finance which will enable small-scale miners to acquire tools and equipment to fully participate in the mining sector value-chain development;
- Institute policies and reforms to encourage and promote investments in value-addition;
- Develop and enforce small-scale mines regulatory framework for artisanal miners;

1.6.2 Strengthen Policy Implementation and Regulatory Enforcement to Protect our Natural Resources

- Improve natural resource governance by making fundamental changes to existing legislations to preserve equity stakes for participation of Liberians;
- Create institutional framework to build administrative and managerial capacities aimed at meeting emerging demands;

- Build the capacity of resource management institution to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the nation's mineral resources;
- Invest adequately in a comprehensive national resource programs such as: topographic mapping, geological and hydrological surveys;
- Promote a culture of conservation to exercise caution in the exploration and exploitation of nature and natural resources;
- Institute a National Policy to ensure mining companies adhere to internationally accepted standards of mining, occupational, environmental and health standards;
- Strengthen the capacity of the National Bureau of Concessions (NBC), Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI), Ministry of Mines & Energy (MME) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to ensure mining companies adhere to internationally accepted standards;
- Conduct geological survey to generate information on the locations of the country's mineral deposits;
- Set up mechanisms to attract investments in the development of mineral processing technology;
- Conduct strategic environmental assessment and risk management for industrial mining;

1.6.3 Develop Culture and Tourism to Facilitate Job Creation and Income Generation

Context

Liberia is endowed with natural habitats scenic spots that make it suitable designation for tourism in many counties. Notable amongst these include: Lake Piso in Grand Cape Mount, Lake Shepherd in Maryland, Kpatawee Waterfall in Bong, Sapo National Park in Sinoe, the Nimba Reserve in Nimba, the Magical and dynamic Gibi Mountain in Margibi, and even the coastline and natural vegetation. Additionally, there is a need to harness the warm hospitality of our people and cultures of Liberia to provide reasons for tourism development.

The historical Providence Island associated with the transatlantic slave trade and the repatriation of free slaves from the Americas, Edina associated with AMERICO-Liberian, Hotel Africa with connection to African Union (AU) meetings and the Ducor Hill among other sites could serve as unique sites of attraction to more tourists in the country.

Liberia's culture and heritage sites and attractions are all potential for the development of the industry. Liberia also has remarkable historical and cultural assets. There is great ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity in the country. Sixteen (16) major tribes coexist in Liberia, each with its own traditions and religious beliefs. The history of Liberia as associated with the transatlantic slave trade and free slave settlement make the case for tourists attraction to Liberia.

1.6.4 Promote Liberia Culture to Preserve Our Cultural Identity

Liberia needs to appreciate its collective cultural identity. The process of consolidating such a cultural identity begins with conducting researches and compiling data on all aspects of the cultures that are common to all ethnic groups. There is a challenge to preserve many cultural practices, which have existed for centuries and are integral part of our indigenous life.

Agenda

In an effort to attend to our cultural situation and challenges, the Unity Party-led Government will undertake to undertake the following strategic actions:

1.6.4.1 Encourage Research and Publication of Materials on Liberian Culture

The UP-led Government will support cultural research through the Civic Engagement and National Visioning mandate of the Governance Commission to conduct research and compile data on positive aspects of the cultural, traditional and social practices of Liberians that are common to all ethnic groups as well as unique to certain groups. The goal is to publish materials on various aspects of the Liberian Culture.

1.6.4.2 Introduce the Study of Liberian Culture in School Curriculum

Teach Liberian culture in elementary and junior high schools as parts of our national educational curriculum. When knowledge of our collective culture is researched, compiled and taught at these levels in our schools, it will sustain peace, social cohesion and stability and cultivate a sense of national pride and oneness in our people.

1.6.4.3 Promote Liberian Folklores in our School System to Preserve our Culture

The Government having researched, compiled and preserved our folklores, it will be obligatory for the educational system to teach our folklores in all schools. We will embark on establishing an electronic platform to grant access to Liberian kids living abroad.

1.6.4.4 Legislate and Teach a Liberian Languages in School

The Unity Party-led Government will adopt an indigenous national language and start a national conversation around the need to build consensus on teaching one (1) of the dominant languages as part of the educational curriculum. The goal is to encourage students who migrate to those areas to understand and speak at least the dominant language in the county in which they reside. This concept is also derived as a result of happenings during the civil crisis, where many people were killed simply because they were not able to speak a local language. The Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Governance Commission will collaborate in leading this process.

1.6.4.5 Integrate Herbal Medicine into Health Services

The UP-led Government will commission the Ministry of Health to conduct research that will integrate complimentary medicine into its structure, practices and operational mechanisms. Also, establish an herbal medicine research and resource center to conduct research on traditional medicine; using the appropriate technology to develop “*approved*” herbal medical services.

1.6.5 Promote and Support Tourism Development Sector

The landscape of Liberia remains largely untapped and underdeveloped, yet it maintains a natural beauty for a thriving tourism industry.

Agenda

The UP-led government will promote tourism by taking the following actions:

- Establish a National Tourism and Culture Authority (NTCA) to develop and manage the tourism sector a robust plan for tourism and culture (covering contemporary art, music and film);
- Designate Grand Cape Mount County as a national tourism center due to its natural endowment;
- Strengthen collaboration between NTCA and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) in rehabilitating old cultural and historic landmarks sites, churches, schools, traditional shrines;
- Invest in the tourism industry and promote Liberian culture to create jobs;
- Provide incentives to attract local and foreign investments in the tourism sector to enhance economic growth;
- Develop the needed infrastructure to create access to important tourism sites to enhance growth in the sector;

2.0 PILLAR TWO: HEALTH, WASH, THE ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE

Background

It is an established fact that improved healthcare, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services are critical for human capital development. However, our health system faces various systemic challenges which continues to affect efficient healthcare delivery and the provision of basic WASH facilities. While some efforts have been made in health promotion, preventive and curative health services along with some investments in health facilities, the system remains challenged by low health professional-to-patient ratio, inadequate medical and surgical equipment, and low-quality drugs at most facilities. WASH services remain a major challenge with the vast majority of people in rural areas lacking decent toilets and latrines and have to defecate in the bushes around towns and villages. Majority of our people also lack access to safely managed drinking water and sanitation services. Limited access to safe drinking water, lack of basic sanitation services and poor hygiene practices negatively impact the overall health status and development of our people and leads to an inability of children to learn and increased school absenteeism. Recent trends in the environment and climate-change have also witnessed dramatic effects, such as flooding in urban communities, and drought which are negatively impacting farming. Improving access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities for our people should be a priority. Actions aimed at reducing the rate of infection, diseases and death will be taken to alleviate the above mentioned adverse situations.

2.1 Strengthen Healthcare Delivery System

Context

Liberia's health system is divided into three (3) tiers: primary, secondary, and tertiary. Health care services are provided at each level of the healthcare system which include: primary (community, clinics, health centers), secondary (15 county referral hospitals) and tertiary (Johns F. Kennedy Medical Center in Monrovia and Jackson F. Doe Hospital in Nimba County), including faith-based and private-for-profit medical centers.

Before Now: In the immediate aftermath of the Ebola epidemic in Liberia, in 2015 the Unity Party-led Government developed an "Investment Plan" for Building a Resilient Health System in Liberia. Considering the colossal effect of the epidemic, the main goal of the investment plan was to rebuild the health system in a manner that reforms and restructures it, to ensure that NEVER AGAIN, shall it fail to respond effectively to similar threats. From 2015 to 2018 significant progress were documented in every facet of the health sector.

Today: Under the CDC led-government, the health sector leadership has crumbled. There is practically no functional leadership in the health sector. Poor leadership has led to a sharp decline in partner's confidence. Donor's funds are being diverted on several occasions. For example, on April 8, 2022, the Global Fund for Aids/TB and Malaria Office of Inspector General released a report indicating fraudulent and abusive practices in Global Fund grants in Liberia. There was systemic fraud and misappropriation by staff of the Ministry of Health (MoH), a Principal Recipient of Global Fund grants in Liberia. The investigation found non-compliant expenditures highlighting various types of wrongdoings in 91% of the expenditures reviewed. Non-compliant expenditures totaled US\$1.1 million, of which we recommend recovery of US\$0.99 million. This is across all donors in the country including the disappointment expressed by the United States Ambassador on 15th March 2022 about drug diversion by health workers in the counties. Due to these attitudes, the donors no longer trust the MoH. They are, therefore, reverting to NGOs to run health projects. Example is the MoH losing the Principal Recipient status of the Global Fund for Malaria to NGOs.

Commitment

The Unity Party-led government is committed to ensuring that all Liberians irrespective of their geographical location, age, gender, socio-economic or political status will have access to high quality, efficient and cost-effective health services. This health system will leverage on a fully functional community health platform that is linked to an efficient and vibrant primary, secondary and tertiary system. This will be achieved through strengthening the existing healthcare system by providing effective leadership and governance in healthcare.

The Unity Party strongly upholds and subscribes to the concepts that a "healthy nation is a wealthy nation". We believe that, there's also a strong correlation between countries with improved healthcare and strong prosperous micro-economy.

Agenda

Under the Unity Party-led government, rebuilding the healthcare services will be a key priority. We will fully implement all existing health-sector policies and plans, and make appropriate investments in building a resilient health system that encompasses emergency preparedness, health security and response. The government will focus on building healthcare workers' capacities to have more trained health workers at all levels, including tertiary healthcare, and adequately compensate them. Increasing financing to the health sector, and improve the quality of healthcare that underpins universal health coverage and primary healthcare will be a priority. The Unity Party-led Government will vigorously undertake the following actions to realize its healthcare system development agenda:

2.1.1 Restore Confidence in Health Sector Leadership

- Respond to the leadership gaps in the MoH by appointing experienced and competent Liberians to head key appointed positions;
- Prioritize healthcare in the national budget with a view to increase the health budget to 15% or more of the national budget in conformity with the Abuja Declaration;
- Rebuild donor confidence in the health sector by regaining the Global Fund Principal Recipient status;
- Support decentralization of healthcare services to strengthen service delivery at the community level;
- Train and utilize services of community health volunteers, community base pharmacies and medicines stores to enhance preventive health services;
- Establish a National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) to provide healthcare to our people, especially the elderly, regardless of their status in society;
- Strengthen referral systems through creation of an active link between each tier of the health system beginning at the community level;

2.1.2 Ensure a Patient-centered Health Workforce

- Provide sustainable compensation to health workers based on qualification, experience, competence, and assignment;
- Develop non-financial incentive packages to recruit and retain needed health workers, particularly in underserved areas, to include: housing facilities, electrification, running water, cable tv and furnitures;
- Develop and strengthen continuing educational programs to meet the professional needs of the health-sector workers;
- Sustain scholarship programs to reduce students' drop-out, and encourage the enrollment of students from underserved areas to enhance geographical representation for training health workers;
- Improve the physical facilities, instructional and learning environments at various medical and paramedical training institutions such as: A. M. Dogliotti College of Medicine (AMDCM), School of Pharmacy (SP), School of Public Health (SPH), Tubman National Institute of Medical Arts (TNIMA), Liberia College of Physicians & Surgeons (LCPS), to strengthen the quality and quantity of the health workforce;

2.1.3 Strengthen and Restore Integrity in Healthcare Financing

- Ensure resources made available for healthcare delivery are appropriately expended;
- Develop effective control mechanisms to strengthen and improve the financial management programs at the national, county, district and hospital levels;
- Ensure a percentage of sin tax on alcohol and tobacco products, including any form undesirable products are deposited into an established Escrow Account as additional source to fund healthcare;
- Adopt a bottom-up approach to healthcare budgeting that involve the development of health program from county health teams to the central administration;
- Institutionalize a robust financial monitoring system for all health resources to transparently account for funds receipt, amount spent, and activities financed to ensure efficient utilization;

2.1.4 Strengthen Health Information System (HIS)

- Provide continuous support to the Health Management Information System (HMIS) for the provision of improved health services data to enhance decision making;
- Strengthen the Electronic Logistics Management Information System (eLMIS) software to enhance transparency and accountability in the management of commodities at all levels of the supply chain;
- Support the utilization of the Transaction Management System (TMS) software to improve inventory management at the central, county and facility levels;

- Ensure effective communication channels for the interoperability of these systems to aid stakeholders and health logisticians in decision making;

2.1.5 Ensure Availability of Medicines and Medical Supplies for Effective Healthcare Delivery

- Engage donor partners to support the procurement, storage, and distribution of medicines, diagnostics, medical supplies, and other health related equipment;
- Provide the appropriate budgetary support for the procurement and uninterrupted supply of essential medicines and supplies throughout the country's healthcare system;
- Ensure that the National Drug Service/Central Medical Store (NDS/CMS) provides the leadership, logistics and operational competence to improve the procurement and supply of drugs throughout the healthcare system;
- Construct regional satellite warehouses in Grand Gedeh County to support the Southeast, and in Bong County to support North-central region;
- Renovate all existing storage facilities at the healthcare centers and county levels;

2.2 Improve Mental Healthcare Delivery

Context

Recent data indicates significant substance abuse and mental health needs in Liberia. World Health Organization (WHO) sponsored mapping exercise in 2008 showed that Monrovia is rife with areas where drugs such as heroin and cocaine are inexpensive and can be easily purchased and used. Substance use disorder is a significant problem that is becoming increasingly prevalent among young people. While no recent study has been done, many persons with mental illness are known to lose their lives. Many victims are left unattended because of stigma, mainly fear of contagion, lack of services, maltreatment, and traditional beliefs. While national prevalence studies have not been completed, various multi-county epidemiological studies point to high-risk major depression (40%), exposure to sexual violence (42-73%), post-traumatic stress disorder (44%) and high rates of substance abuse (12-44%) (National Health Policy, 2021). Other than a limitedly capacitated E.S. Grant Mental facility, Liberia still lacks full functional rehabilitation facilities for substance users, ex-convicts and others requiring rehabilitation services.

Commitment

The UP-led government is committed to ensuring that individuals with mental health conditions and mental illness have access to services and support to address their conditions. This will be achieved through the development of a comprehensive mental health system with robust community-based services. The mental health strategy will strengthen inter-sectoral collaboration for the management and rehabilitation of mentally ill persons. This will ensure that substance abusers, ex-convicts, victims of sexual abuse, and physically challenged people have unhindered access to quality health care services.

Agenda

The Unity Party-led government will address mental health and all forms of abuses that lead to mental illness through the following actions:

- Improve mental health services by integrating mental health into our primary healthcare delivery system and providing services for mental health conditions;
- Re-enforce and establish service delivery facilities and improve processes to mitigate substance abuse that leads to mental health issues;
- Design and develop special programs for persons living with epilepsy, even though it is not a mental health illness, but could trigger mental health issues;
- Adopt multi-sectorial approach to reduce access to control substances, and rehabilitating victims of substances abuse;
- Construct functional rehabilitation centers to care for substance abusers, ex-convicts, sexual and gender-based violence victims;
- Provide subsidies to private-sector initiatives that are involved with programs to care for substance abusers, ex-convicts, sexual and gender-based violence victims;

2.3 Improve Water and Sanitation Services Delivery

Context

Safe drinking water, proper sanitation and hygiene present a tremendous asset to the survivability of any society, whether in a high, middle, or low-income country. Nearly the entire population of Liberia lacks access to properly managed Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH) programs as targeted by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Under the previous UP-led administration, the WASH Commission was created to develop and manage the sector. While access to improved water sources has risen in Liberia from 62.4% in 2000 to 76.5% in 2015, less than 4% of Liberians benefit from pipe-borne water and only 17% of the population has access to improved sanitation (WHO and UNICEF, 2023). Therefore, the WASH Sector remains a priority for major investment.

Commitment

The Unity Party-led government remains committed to improving the WASH Sector in Liberia to increase access to safe drinking water, sanitation services, and hygiene practices which will alleviate infections, diseases and deaths amongst Liberians.

Agenda

The Unity Party-led government will work to improve WASH services in Liberia by taking the following actions:

- Support and strengthen the National WASH Commission to effectively perform its statutory mandate;
- Reintroduce sanitary and hygiene inspections at community levels, in keeping with the Public Health law of Liberia which requires the enforcement of hygiene practices at household and community levels;
- Ensure that municipal governments enforce proper waste management collection and disposal as well as sewage management within their jurisdictions;
- Develop programs to ensure urban and rural communities are provided sustainable safe drinking water and sanitation services;
- Support the private sector in developing programs for recycling solid waste into producing renewable energy;
- Ensure Liberia Water & Sewage Corporation (LWSC) develops and implements programs in line with its statutory mandate to increase productivity through adequate service delivery;

2.4 Develop and Maintain a Healthy Environment

Context

The environment in which we live is a major determinant of our health and wellbeing. We depend on the environment for energy and other human needs such as: clean air, safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, stable climate to sustain lives. Environmental protection, therefore, remains critical for the survival of our nation and humanity. As such, the UP-led government will be more sensitive to the issue of environmental protection and would take appropriate actions in this regard.

Commitment

The Unity Party-led government is committed to strengthening the statutory and regulatory frameworks to manage and address environmental problems, by implementing all international agreements and protocols on climate change.

Agenda

The Unity Party-led government will strengthen the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) financially and technically to implement its mandates. As such, the following specific actions will be taken to protect the environment:

- Empower EPA to co-ordinate, integrate, harmonize, and monitor implementation of environmental policy;
- Support integration of environmental concerns at all levels of national planning and implementation processes;
- Promote environmental awareness through public participation using formal and informal education channels about the protection and sustainable management of the environment;
- Initiate and coordinate actions required in case of environmental emergency or any other situation which may pose serious threat to the environment and public health safety;
- Enforce environmental laws, guidelines, regulation, and policies across the countries and hire competent people at the EPA to manage our environmental regulatory regimes;
- Support communities' participation in environmental management programs and encourage them to engage into forest and bio-diversity conservation;
-

2.5 Promote and Support Climate-Change Mitigation Initiatives

Context

Climate change is real! Changes in the frequencies of weather, such as extreme precipitation, flooding, droughts, and storms, can threaten the lives of people during and after a disaster. Extreme climatic conditions can affect human existence by reducing the availability of safe food and drinking water. Additionally, these conditions can damage roads and bridges, disrupt access to hospitals and pharmacies, interrupt access to communication facilities and utilities, disrupt healthcare service delivery, and create or worsen mental health impacts such as depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Besides natural extreme climatic events that affect human lives and activities, the use of generators which contributes to carbon monoxide poisoning, posing serious threats to human lives.

Commitment

The Unity Party-led government is committed to taking concrete actions to combat climate change, by putting measures in place to protect climate and nature; and curbing greenhouse gas emission and pollution.

Agenda

The UP-led government's agenda for mitigating climate change and its effects on the nation will include, but not limited to the following actions:

- Re-enforce the Climate Change Secretariat to implement its mandate working with the EPA and other climate change related institutions;
- Align the country's plan of action in accordance with the United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26);
- Develop strong relationship with international partners and climate-right groups to implement programs aimed at addressing challenges associated with climate change;
- Support community-based actions to protect their environment against the harmful effects of emerging climate-change disaster;
- Implement Liberia's National Mitigation Actions (NAMA) to address climate change effects, and the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) to protect coastal areas;

3.0 PILLAR THREE: HUMAN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Background

During the Unity Party-led regime, Liberia made significant interventions aimed at addressing the challenges in the educational sector to increase access to education. Educational facilities were restored and new ones established throughout the country to give children opportunities to enroll in schools. Several community colleges were established to offer opportunities for post-secondary education.

However, under current government, the imperative ingredients of quality, equity, management and relevance that characterize an effective education system remain weak. Liberia's human development outcomes remain comparatively low (153 out of 157), with an HCI score of 0.31 according to the World Bank's 2020 Human Capital Index (HCI)³. These outcomes are results of numerous challenges the educational sector faces.

Our educational system is replete with many challenges that affect not just access but also quality. There is an acute shortage of trained teachers in basic and secondary education, which reflects the low output of Rural Teachers' Training Institutes (RTTIs). While the pupil-teacher ratios remain modest in basic and secondary schools, the trained teachers are in low supply. For instance, the share of trained teachers is 35% in Early Child Education (ECE), 45% in primary, 31% in junior high and 26% in senior high schools (Liberia ESA, 2021). The shortage of trained teachers in basic and secondary education puts the pursuit of quality education in serious jeopardy, as the pupil-qualified-teacher ratios are soaring across the four levels of the educational sector. One of the main causes of teacher attrition is poor compensation package as compared to the income level of other sectors in the economy.

Non-prioritization has hampered efforts to operationalize policy commitments for children with disabilities. Educational services for children with disabilities (CwD) are largely delivered by Development Partners (DP), or through the government grants allocated to institutions for students with specific disabilities. But government financial commitment has declined in recent years with just over 90,000 USD (less than one percent of the overall education budget) spent in 2019 on institutions providing educational services to children with specific needs.

³ A composite index based on measures of health, education and nutrition.

3.1 Strengthen National Education System to Improve Education Outcomes

Context

The Lack of the availability and utilization of the standard curriculum, teaching materials, and facilities in most schools affects learning outcomes of our school system. Information gathered from the Ministry of Education indicates that the new national curriculum is not available in most schools, especially in rural Liberia. Also, only 1 in 5 primary schools, 1 in 3 junior high schools, and 4 in 10 senior high schools have staff-rooms or designated rooms where teachers can plan lessons and foster collaboration among themselves to improve instruction (MoE School Census, 2019/20). Regarding textbooks, the 2019/20 annual school census reveals that regardless the school type, the pupil-to-textbook ratio in primary schools remains high, with the worst cases observed in public schools. Up to six learners share a single language arts textbook, and in community schools where more than 10 learners share a science textbook.

The out-of-school children (OOSC) population in our society is also increasing, especially for poor and rural children. The highest proportion of OOSC is seen in the 15-17 age group (at 20 percent, followed by the 6-11 age group at 19%. The lowest rate of students who have never attended formal education is seen in the 12-14 age group, while it is highest among children 6-11 age group. The poorest population has 34 percent of children aged 6-11 not enrolled in formal education. Regarding geographical location, rural populations in the 6-11 age group are more than 2 times more likely to be OOSC than their urban counterparts. The highest proportion of OOSC are seen in the north-west and north-central regions in both the primary and secondary age groups (ESA, 2021).

Commitment

The UP-led government is committed to addressing the risks, inequality, and vulnerability across the society to ensure that every child growing up has access to quality education. The government will invest in systems, programs, and services that increase access to quality education and improve educational outcomes. We shall be committed to ensuring that every child has the required textbooks to enhance learning outcomes, and create conducive conditions for teachers by providing them proper remuneration as motivation for efficient service delivery to students.

Agenda

- Increase enrollment number and improve the quality of learning outcomes of early childhood education to lay a firm foundation for our educational system;
- Provide inclusive education for all, including marginalized population, and children with disabilities;
- Introduce systems for learning and school-readiness assessments to inform appropriate curriculum design and improvement;
- Develop system to produce textbook, improve remuneration and recruit trained and qualified teachers to ensure the effectiveness of teaching and learning outcomes;

3.1.1 Strengthen Early Childhood Education

Context

Early Childhood Education (ECE), the foundation of our educational system is not free and compulsory, even though basic, and higher education are free, though a lot more improvement are required. The gross enrollment ratio for ECE has decreased from 134 percent in 2015 to 123 percent in 2020, while 82 percent of all ECE students are overaged for this level of education (Liberia ESA, 2021). There are high rates of overaged populations across socio-demographic groups. Rural populations are also more likely to be overaged than their urban counterparts, demonstrating the disadvantage this population group faces. The greatest barrier to age-appropriate enrollment by parents is fees, with 52 percent of parents citing that this was why they did not enroll their children in pre-primary education (ESA, 2021). Besides, low enrolment and high overaged population, 65 percent of all ECE teachers are considered untrained, or lack a minimum “C” teaching certificate while 59 percent of ECE teachers are not on payroll, leaving majority of teachers at ECE level serving as volunteers (EMIS, 2020). There is also a lack of school-readiness assessment system in school system to assess the school readiness of students for grade one to inform curriculum revision, implementation, teaching practices, and overall quality improvement.

Commitment

Recognizing that enrolment into quality ECE is fundamental to students' retention, system effectiveness, and overall learning outcomes, a UP-led government is committed to increasing the enrolment of the ECE population, especially in rural areas, and reducing overaged enrolment both in urban and rural areas. Our government commits to institutionalizing a system of school-readiness assessment and teachers' effectiveness to improve ECE education and lay a firm foundation for the development of our educational system. We are committed as a government to designing appropriate programs for training ECE teachers to provide quality services to our kids.

Agenda

The UP-led government will improve early childhood education by taking the following actions:

- Make ECE free and compulsory, and provide appropriate learning environment and materials in all primary public schools;
- Design programs to reduce overaged enrolment by 90 percent in the first-term, and ensure age appropriate enrolment through family and community approaches to reduce the out-of-school numbers;
- Strengthen the Teachers Training Institutions (TTIs) to provide innovative pre and in-service programs to train more teachers, and increase the number of trained ECE teachers to 90 percent in the first-term;
- Absorb more teachers on the payroll through a reform of the pay and grade scheme, and increase the number of ECE teachers on payroll to 90 percent in the first-term;

3.1.2 Improve the Quality of Primary Education

Context

According to 2015 and 2020 Education Management Information System (EMIS) data, total enrolment has decreased by 50,000 students at the primary level. This is accompanied by a drop in the proportion of primary students enrolled in public institutions from 52 percent to 46 percent. Male and female students are seen to have parallel levels of access to the first grade, but the gap extends between the genders for ascending grades. Locality is further seen to be a strong determinant of access, with rural students 11 percent less likely to access the first grade. The children from less fortunate backgrounds are also 21 percentage points less likely to access grade one than the children from middle-class families. This gap widens over time, with the greatest drop seen between the first and final grade of primary school, leading to a 60-percentage point gap in the final year of senior secondary school (ESA, 2021).

Commitment

The UP-led government is committed to increasing enrolment in our primary and reducing the gender disparity in enrolment and retention to afford every child, irrespective of sex, to have equal opportunities to acquire education and improve their lives.

Agenda

The UP-led government will improve primary education access and outcomes through the following actions:

- Build more classrooms and adopt innovative approaches to scaling up access to primary education;
- Allocate more resources for students with special needs, and improve the institutions' capacity to address issues of special needs to ensure quality service delivery;
- Strengthen the home-grown school feeding program as a means of increasing enrolment from especially homes of less-privileged families;
- Increase primary school enrolment by 20 percent and reduce the number of out-of-school children by 40 percent in the first-term;
- Design and implement special programs and policies to increase girls' enrolment and retention in primary school, and discourage every traditional practices that prevent them from completing school;

3.1.3 Strengthen the Outcomes of Secondary Education

Context

Challenges in the implementation of a standardized curriculum makes it difficult to achieve the desired learning outcomes from the educational system. For instance, just about 6 in 10 candidates who sat the WASSCE in 2020 had at least a pass with the results revealing large variation across subjects, with sciences registering the least success rates. While the quality of public schools has deteriorated over the years, the number of public secondary institutions is insufficient. At the junior and senior secondary levels, public institutions are surpassed by private institutions both in terms of enrolment and total proportion of schools. There are 22 percent senior public secondary schools as compared to 48 percent private senior secondary schools, while faith-based and communities represent 28 percent and 2 percent respectively (EMIS, 2020).

Survival rates and learning outcomes are low in secondary schools. For instance, of the 105,000 students enrolled in Senior Secondary School (SSS) in 2015/2016, about one-third (around 30,000) sat for the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) but many students repeated the exam (IRISE, 2019). In 2023, at the junior and senior secondary levels, pass rates on the national exams (Liberia Junior High School Certificate Examination (LJHSCE) and Liberia Senior High School Certificate Examination (LSHSCE)) offered at the end of these levels were 58 percent and 59 percent, respectively – with student’s performance higher amongst those attending private schools than public schools. Out of the more than 30,000 students who sat for the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC)’s 12th grade examinations in 2018, almost none received a score in the 1st (excellent) or 2nd (good) division (IRISE, 2019). Dropout rates in secondary schools remains a critical and pressing issue, especially for girls. This gap is widen in the senior secondary, with boys 14 percentage point more likely to access senior secondary than girls. This gap seems to widen with higher grades, growing to a difference of 25 percentage point between the two population groups for the final year of senior secondary. Challenges associated with girl’s participation include a lack of support at school and/or at home to continue their education. The lack of school safety and limited access to appropriate gender’s facilities (latrines) early pregnancy, and early marriage serves as an impediments to girl’s retentions.

Poor learning environment also characterizes our school system. More than one-quarter of Liberia’s SSS do not have proper infrastructures with the figure reaching 50 percent in some counties. In such schools, heavy rainfall, lack of safe water supply, non-working or non-existent latrines compromise the students’ learning environment while also exposing them to potential health risks. In addition to poor learning environment, there is also insufficient qualified and needed teachers in the secondary schools. Teacher recruitment, deployment and management is severely imbalanced among secondary schools. Most of the teachers, particularly the qualified ones, are teaching in private schools or urban areas (Montserrado or other larger county capitals). In 2015-2016, Montserrado county registered 4,224 teachers serving in SSS, while River Cess and River Gee (among the poor counties) had only 16 and 14 teachers, respectively (IRISE, 2019). Students in Liberia have limited opportunity to acquire the most basic digital skills. Generally, teachers do not provide any instruction in information communication technology (ICT) nor do schools, with exception of a handful in Monrovia. Access to the required infrastructures to make available these skills including computer science programs, computer laboratories, electricity, and/or connectivity are very limited to secondary schools.

Commitment

The UP-led government is committed to increasing the number of secondary schools in the country based on evidence of need, especially in populated cities and rural districts. We will Construct, renovate, expand and equip secondary schools classrooms across the country to facilitate quality teaching and learning outcomes. We will reduce disparities in access to secondary education, and ensure equal gender access. Our government will be committed to strengthening secondary education by incorporating relevant market driven skills in secondary schools’ curriculum.

Agenda

The UP-led government will increase access and improve the quality of our secondary school system by taking the following actions:

- Conduct supply and demand analysis to determine where we need to provide secondary schools and teachers;
- Strengthen the internal efficiency of the system and increase retention and completion by 40 percent in the first-term;
- Introduce retention and completion programs, especially for poor rural girls through incentive schemes, public information campaigns, and community engagement to increase girl’s completion of secondary school by 40 percent in the first-term;
- Strengthen the capacity of science teachers in every public secondary school across Liberia, and ensure private schools are in compliance;
- Develop special incentives to attract and retain qualify science teachers in rural secondary schools to improve the quality of science education throughout the country;

- Include technical skills training programs in secondary school curriculum to enable students acquire market-driven skills;
- Improve the current teaching and learning environment for teachers, students especially girls, to ensure quality learning outcomes;

3.1.4 Strengthen and Improve the Quality of Tertiary Education

Context

The tertiary educational system is generally ineffective and characterized by weak internal and external efficiency. The system is marked by limited relevant programs, limited qualified faculty, poor access to information and communication technology, poor quality of learning infrastructure, and poor remuneration system. The system faces constraints which impedes the development of Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM) education. The lack of equipped laboratories, inadequate qualified faculty, laboratory technicians in specialized courses, inadequate infrastructures poses serious challenge to the development of the tertiary educational system. Also, most programs are currently not relevant to the demand of the labour market, as these programs were developed and revised over 20 to 30 years ago.

The system also faces limited qualified faculty because of the lack of interest by qualified Liberians with graduate and postgraduate degrees to enter the teaching profession due to the comparatively low income and incentives in the sector. For instance, only 13 percent of the teaching staff at the undergraduate College of Agriculture and Forestry of the UL hold PhDs, and 82 percent has a master's degree. The remaining 5 percent are bachelor's degree holders who serve as Teaching Assistants for introductory courses, and a significant percent of instructors work as part-timers in two or more institutions (Zinnah and Jackollie, 2020).

Commitment

The UP-led government is committed to enhancing the effectiveness of tertiary education to ensure internal and external efficiency within the system. The formulation and implementation of programs and policies to attract, train and retain qualified faculties in all disciplines shall remain a core policy objective. Also, we will seek to standardize the system to prepare potential graduates for job placement in the labor market. We are committed to taking appropriate actions to make STEM attractive to students, by improving the learning environment for specialization.

Agenda

- Conduct a comprehensive review of the pay and grade schemes and institute mechanisms for salary standardization based on qualification, tenure, academic rank, and scope of work;
- Renovate and construct learning academies and administrative buildings for quality teaching and learning;
- Conduct a comprehensive review of existing programs to improve the overall quality of teaching and learning, to ensure internal and external efficiency;
- Strengthen the system and capacity of post-graduate programs around responsiveness market-driven demands;
- Strengthen the relevance of programs in all disciplines through the revision of curricula to reflect market demands, standardize content, research and support to public policy formulation;
- Strengthen post-graduate program in the health sciences by providing adequate budgetary allocation to ensure the development of specialized health practitioners;
- Provide subsidies to private tertiary institutions to enhance the quality of learning outcomes;

3.2 Diversify and Promote Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET)

Background

The provision of TVET remains weak and inefficient. There are insufficient programs, and quality of delivery affects employment prospects, as linkages between training providers and employers are weak (Liberia ESA, 2021). Inadequate funding and the low attractiveness of TVET among young people explain why implementation has been so ineffective. Additionally, the lack of national coordination mechanism results to the fragmentation of TVET provision, and limited coherence and accountability within TVET program deliveries. This is further complicated by the lack of a regulatory body to ensure quality assurance of the TVET system.

Key challenges to quality TVET delivery include, but not limited to: (i) weak linkages between TVET curricula and the productive sectors of the economy, (ii) poorly equipped demonstration facilities, (iii) inadequate trained technical faculty, (iv) lack of state-of-the-art in-country training opportunities for training TVET teachers; (v) lack of adequate gender-sensitive activities to address the obstacles girls and young women face in accessing TVET, (vi) prevalence of damaged infrastructures for the provision of TVET across the country; (vii) inadequate and obsolete training tools and equipment, and (viii) insufficient funding for TVET programs.

Commitment

The UP-led government remains committed to strengthening TVET programs and ensuring that programs delivery is made efficient to response to the skills requirements of the job market. We are committed to ensure the effective implementation of the TVET programs by strengthening the regulatory framework and making appropriate budgetary allocations. The UP-led government will commit the needed resources to the rehabilitation of infrastructures, and to develop competent training staff to strengthen the program.

Agenda

The UP-led government is committed to strengthening and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the TVET program by implementing the following actions:

- Designate BWI as a first-class Training Center in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) in technical skills, and equip with the appropriate equipment, facilities and technical experts to train technicians in all technical and professional fields;
- Evaluate TVET programs nation-wide and ensure efficiency and appropriate alignment between market demand and skills provision to strengthen employment prospects for graduates;
- Develop curricula for TVET institutions that are aligned with skills needed by concessionnaires and other industries;
- Include technical skills development in secondary school curriculum and make it mandatory for students to take one TVET course as elective to provide them marketable skills having graduated;
- Establish regulatory mechanisms to ensure proper coordination, accountability, coherence, and relevance of the various TVET Programs;
- Strengthen apprenticeship programs to encourage concessions/industries to recruit students at TVET institutions to help sharpen their skills in order to make them employment ready;

3.3 Improve Educational System and Governance

Background

The current centralization approach of fees payment, recruitment, personnel management, budget planning and execution undermines the educational system and governance. The effective implementation of the decentralization policy on education has not been executed. The existing chain of command is overly bureaucratic and inflated, leading to many levels of approval which delays implementation of educational programs. County Education Systems have no operational and program budgets; school boards are non-functional, and the five-professional staff (Planning, Finance, Procurement, Human Resource, and Monitoring & Evaluation) positions for each county systems are mostly dormant.

The educational system is hampered by inadequate accountability and leadership with no systematic approach to ensure teachers' accountability. Assessing workforce performance and management accountability at decentralized levels have been a challenge. There is further weak governance system at decentralized levels as County School Boards are non-functional and characterized by insufficient professional staff. Additionally, county systems lack resource allocations for operational effectiveness, while there exists little or no planning at county levels.

In addition to weaknesses in the administration, overaged enrolment across out-of-school population remains high with vast disparities between urban and rural populations. There are limited trained teachers in the school system at all levels, especially in the sciences in rural areas. This is further complicated by poor remuneration system that discourages quality professionals from pursuing career in the teaching discipline. Inadequate implementation of curriculum characterized by limited availability of support materials in schools further highlights the weaknesses in the governance of the educational system.

Commitment

The UP-led government commits strongly to improve the quality and management of the educational system. This commitment will be demonstrated by providing the appropriate budgetary allocations to support educational monitoring and management responsibilities at all levels. The government will ensure the strengthening of educational governance, management system, planning and curriculum development are effective.

Agenda

The UP-led government is committed to improving and strengthening the educational system and governance by implementing the following measures:

- Institute programs and incentives with full community participation to reduce overage enrolment by 40 percent in the first-term;
- Re-constitute and strengthen County School Boards (CSBs) to oversee the management of County Educational Systems;
- Develop and implement accelerated learning and communities-based programs to reduce the out of school population by 70 percent in the first-term;
- Institutionalize school quality assessment systems to ensure productivity and accountability at all levels;
- Expand school leadership qualification and certification by 90 percent in the first term;
- Increase the percentage of trained teachers by 25 percent in the first term by strengthening the teachers' training institutes;
- Design programs geared towards prioritizing teachers' motivation, compensation, and wellbeing to attract teachers in rural communities;
- Strengthen curriculum implementation in every school and provide textbooks in all public schools at a ratio of 1:1 for effective teaching and learning;
- Produce and deliver curriculum materials to all public schools and ensure orientation of teachers to the learner-centered approach adopted for using the curriculum;
- Review and amend policies and programs on Early Childhood Development (ECD) to conform to international standards;
- Establish the Center of Education Management (CEM), and strengthen the Centers of Excellence for Education Curriculum, and Licensing (CEECL);
- Develop and implement a "Reading Culture" with a strong focus on Liberian literature and prioritize Liberian history and reintroduce civic education;

4.0 PILLAR FOUR: GOVERNANCE AND RULE OF LAW

Background

The Unity Party began the process of rebuilding Liberia after assuming power in January 2006 through the prism of good governance and the rule of law. The commendable gains made on the governance and justice fronts were only possible because of the UP-led government's commitment to ensuring that Liberia becomes a better place for all. Unfortunately, six years of poor governance has reversed those gains and the country continues to deteriorate in the dungeons of bad governance. As the Party gears up to retake state power, there is a need for a renewed and vigorous commitment to revive the governance and justice systems for a better Liberia.

Proper governance discharge of justice require time and commitment from leaders who understand the benefits of aligning every level of efforts to produce desired results. Good governance ensures that the governing environment is fair and transparent and that everyone can be held accountable for his or her action(s). Good governance and justice are capable of delivering a sustainable economic growth and development. Governance plays a key role in the development and prosperity in preserving the sanity of the nation. With good governance, it is possible for any country to develop effectively and enjoy prosperity. However, without good governance, a society can not achieve development and prosperity.

Commitment

Despite inheriting a failed system in 2006 which undermined Liberia's progress on the governance and rule of law fronts, the Unity Party was committed to 12 years of building a nation premised on governance and the rule of law. However, having heavily invested in governance and the rule of law in 12 years, the last 6 years witnessed a complete breakdown in governance and the rule of law. In spite of the current breakdown in systems, the UP-led government commits to restoring good governance and the rule of law. We will resume compliance with international conventions and protocols that will drive the nation forward. All aspects of good governance and the rule of law will be promoted with no deference to favoritism for any social status, but for the good of every Liberian. The Unity Party-led government will avoid and discourage elitism to governance, by using the resources to foster and promote values such as, individual and collective freedom, tolerance and equality to avoid marginalization and alienation that trigger disgruntlement and insecurity.

Agendas

The Unity Party-led government shall implement policies to enhance good governance, justice and the rule of law and engender a foreign policy regime based on Liberia's strategic national interests. We will seek to improve our governance process and ensure the rule of law is adhered to in the following areas:

- Pursue a foreign policy that protects Liberia's national interest while collaborating with regional and global partners on issues of mutual interests;
- Seek to create a secured environment for all Liberians and ensure that national security agencies treat citizens and residents with justice and fairness;
- Restore confidence in the judiciary and ensure transparency in the administration of law and justice;
- Strengthen and support anti-graft institutions to ensure integrity and accountability in the governance process;
- Ensure the electoral processes are strictly in accordance with the elections laws and the Constitution of Liberia;
- Institute review of concession agreements to ensure the terms and conditions stated therein are fully adhered to by the parties, and where applicable to make recommendations for amendments and or nullifications;

4.1 Improve Foreign Relations and Strengthen Global Engagement

Context

In pursuit of Liberia's foreign policy goals and objectives, the UP-led government will continue to improve the country's foreign relations by strengthening bilateral, multilateral, regional and global cooperation. We shall seek to pursue our foreign policy objectives, and develop the means to pursue those objectives. The UP-led government will maintain her traditional relationship with the United States America and continue to uphold the One-China Policy, while strengthening her relations with other allies.

Commitment

As the Chief Foreign Policy Architect of Liberia, the President shall ensure prestigious representations of our foreign missions with qualified and competent diplomats. The government, through the presidency, shall ensure that Liberia's national values, strategic economic interests and national security strategy inform the country's foreign policy. The foreign policy decisions will be codified to avoid discrepancies and double standards that are counterproductive. Liberia shall maintain good relations with her neighbors and the international community as long as said relationship is not detrimental to the country's national security and economic interests.

Agenda

The following actions shall remain guiding principles of the UP-led government's Foreign Policy to re-establish and strengthen Liberia's regional and global presence:

- Strengthen partnership in economic, security, cultural and democratic governance by upholding the implementations of treaties;
- Strengthen integration efforts within the Mano River Basin and that of ECOWAS through cooperation in the areas of peace and security;
- Establish strategic ties with regional economic blocs such as BRICS, and industrialized nations such as G20 and the G7 group of nations;
- Improve and strengthen partnership and involvement in the South-South Corporation;
- Institute affirmative actions to prioritize state capacity building in the areas of economic, military, and institution exchanges to best position the country for optimum gains from international engagements;

4.2 Strengthen National Security to Guarantee Safe Environment

Context

Though the UP-led government inherited a failed system in 2006, the government was committed to restoring peace, security and the rule of law. During the 12 year rule, the UP-led government worked assiduously to build a nation premised on good governance and the rule of law. There were huge gains made in restoring national security to enhance democratic governance before transitioning to the CDC-led government. In recent years, security has deteriorated with a number of unexplained deaths taking place around the country. The instances of security brutalities continue to be prevalent, which sometimes lead to death of citizens. Due to the CDC-led government's inability to guarantee a safe environment, the citizens are left with the dilemma to provide security for themselves. As a result of the unsafe environment created by the CDC-led government, many Liberians including security personnel have lost their lives under mysterious circumstances. It is also evident, that some state security apparatus are under-funded, unequipped and untrained to effectively discharge their duty of ensuring security for the nation.

Commitment

The UP-led government commits to creating a secured environment for Liberians by ensuring national security agencies are well funded, trained and equipped to provide a safe environment for citizens and foreign residents. We are committed to adequately fund the rule of law and security sectors to enhance their capacities to effectively discharge their duties and responsibilities to the state.

Agenda

To secure a safe environment for Liberians and foreign residents, the Unity Party-led government shall implement the following actions:

- Strengthen performance of national securities agencies by providing the appropriate budgetary allocations;
- Continue reform of the security sector by strengthening the institutional capacity, manpower development and logistical capabilities to enhance operational efficiency;
- Increase the presence of trained police officers across the country, and provide the needed logistics, benefits, incentives and housing facilities where applicable for effective performance;
- Guarantee the equal distribution of the country's wealth to engender a peaceful and harmonious environment which discourage uprising that leads to instability;
- Promote religious and ethnic coexistence amongst Liberians across the country guarantee stability;
- Strengthen alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and enforce the Land Rights Law (2018) to deal with potentially incendiary issues as land or property disputes, which usually result to insecurity at community levels;
- Adopt a zero-tolerance policy on corruption, armed robbery, ritualistic killings, rape and other forms of grave abuses and uncompromisingly implement judicial decisions arising from such cases no matter who is involved;
- Train, equip and deploy professional military and law enforcement personnel across the country;

- Deploy the technical and professional battalion of the Arm Forces of Liberia to partake in civic duties as required;

4.3 Improve Rule of Law and Ensure Justice for All

Context

During our reign between 2006 to 2017, significant gains were made by institutionalizing the rule of law, fight against corruption and impunity, and strengthening transparency and accountability to improve service delivery within the justice system. As of 2018 upon the inception of the CDC-led government, Justice and human rights systems have deteriorated significantly, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) has increased, predominantly targeting young girls and women. There exists widespread of abuses amongst young girls and women across the country. These abuses are as the result of not instituting appropriate mechanisms for citizens to acquire justice, especially in the remotest part of the country. Also, the judiciary system remains challenged in areas of human resource capacity, budgetary allocation, and infrastructural constraints, resulting in a backlog of cases that undermines access to justice. Accordingly, 80 percent of Liberians now rely on traditional leaders, guided by customary practices, to resolve disputes. A public perception survey of security and justice institutions (UNDP, 2021) conducted showed that the public has higher trust and confidence in the informal justice system (69 percent) as compared to the formal justice system (31 percent).

Commitment

Having a responsive justice system in place based on good governance, the Unity Party-led government shall remain committed to a law-and-justice mantra of ‘Equal Justice for ALL’. We, therefore, commit to creating an environment in which every Liberians is treated with fairness and equality.

Agenda

- Robustly pursue the application and enforcement of existing laws and regulations without any discriminations;
- Place premium on strengthening the independence of the judiciary by adopting a completely hands-off approach in judicial decision making;
- Reform the criminal justice system, and ensure that all citizens and residents and all-party litigants are subject to equal treatment before the law;
- Guarantee that the policing and judicial systems provide equal protection and rights for all persons irrespective of the status and position in society;
- Ensure the courts are manned by qualified, competent and reputable judges and magistrates to professionally dispense justice to citizens;
- Uphold the supremacy of the constitution by protecting fundamental human rights and civil liberties to ensure socio-political and economic rights;

4.4 Strengthen Integrity Institutions To Guarantee Accountability in Public Service

Context

Liberia was ranked 137th out of 180 countries in the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index in 2020. According to a US Department of State report (ICS, 2022), government corruption is a fact of daily life for Liberians and businesses alike. Corruption in Liberia continues to rob the citizens of access to vital services, including healthcare, public safety, and education. Corruption degrades the business environment, subverts economic opportunity, exacerbates inequality, erodes the integrity and independence of democratic institutions, fuels a growing distrust between government and society, feeds political division and unrest, and increases national insecurity. In addition to the misuse of most-needed funds for national development, distrust deriving from corruption discourages Liberians from paying the taxes they should pay as citizens and entrepreneurs. Bad governance practices including corruption are key factors responsible for Liberia’s continuous ranking as one of the poor countries in the world.

Commitment

The UP-led government is absolutely committed to the uncompromising fight against corruption to restore integrity and accountability in the governance system. We shall uphold integrity in the economic management of the country’s natural resources to ensure wealth generated from their exploitations benefit to our people. The government shall commit all public servants and officials to a high standard of transparency and accountability, and ensure efficient management of public resources across government ministries and agencies.

Our government shall be committed to a strong and independent judiciary and justice system to enforce the laws and regulations, and hold both public and private actors accountable for their actions. UP-led government shall pursue a clean governance process that will be based meritocracy, inclusiveness, proper asset management, and strong cultural and ethical principles.

Agenda

The UP-led government shall strengthen and support the integrity institutions to ensure integrity and accountability in the governance process through the following actions:

- Adopt a zero-tolerance policy on corruption across government, civil society and the private sector, and will not compromise the fight against corruption on the “altar of reconciliation”;
- Actualize the fight against corruption by creating a dedicated court to fast-track corruption cases;
- Enforce asset declaration for all appointed public officials, and institute lifestyle and performance audits of all such officials;
- Create an environment where every Liberians are given equal opportunities to advance up the social ladder, and reward everyone based on skills and capabilities, not on ethnicity, religion or connection of any kind;
- Revise the Code of Conduct to give clearer and more precise public servants and official responsibilities, citizens’ expectations of the government, and provide guidance for enforcing and upholding high cultural and ethical standards in government performance;
- Strengthen and provide adequate resources for existing anti-graft institutions such as, the General Auditing Commission (GAC), the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC), the Internal Audit Agency (IAA) and the Public Procurement and Concessions Commission (PPCC) to enforce transparency and accountability in the governance processes;
- Ensure that public official accused and indicted for corruption by integrity institutions are suspended to allow them face their indictment in a court of competent jurisdiction;
- Establish and support the Office of the Ombudsman to enforce compliance with the National Code of Conduct for public officials;
- Insist that all officials found guilty for corruption will not only serve prison terms required by the law but be made to retribute fund illegally acquired, or assets obtained are confiscated by the state;

4.5 Strengthen Election Governance to Guarantee Transparency and Integrity in the Electoral Process

Context

Free, fair and transparent elections are not just the ingredients for healthy democracy, but a source of national peace and harmony. The constitution and law of Liberia provide citizens the ability to choose their government in a free and fair elections held by secret ballot and based on universal and equal suffrage. While Liberia has made progress in ensuring democracy through the electoral process, recent elections in our country has been marred by instances of vote tampering, intimidation, harassment, and sometimes election violence. The electoral body, the National Elections Commission (NEC), which is expected to be politically neutral has been skewed toward party politicking in recent times, and has virtually lost its neutrality.

Commitment

The UP-led government will remain committed to free, fair and transparent elections in line with the constitution, and will ensure the absolute neutrality of the electoral body. The leadership shall remain committed to continuous electoral politics in strict adherence to the Constitution of Liberia and the elections law that is executed by the NEC.

Agenda

The UP-led government shall ensure the sanity of the election process and the democratic system at large by pursuing the following measures:

- Undertake a comprehensive reform of electoral process in the first year of administration and strengthen NEC to adequately and fairly discharge its duties to the Liberian people;
- Appoint NEC Board of Commissioners through a rigorous vetting process by a core group of civil society organizations (CSOs) to include: Inter-religious Council, the National Bar Association, Press Union of Liberia and the Federation of Liberian Youth;
- Establish an independent elections hearing body to adjudicate all elections-related complaints;
- Seek support from the relevant bilateral and multilateral partners to fund capacity-building programs aimed at strengthening political parties’ capacity;

- Provide financial autonomy to the NEC to enable it perform its legitimate role free of political interference and intimidation;

4.6 Promote Peace and National Reconciliation to Create and Maintain a Harmonious Society

Context

Liberia has experienced nearly two decades of uninterrupted peace and the absence of war, but bad governance practices including corruption continue to threaten genuine peace, national healing, and true reconciliation. Although the horrors of the war and extreme violence are in the past, the positive attributes of peace—social harmony, mutually beneficial inter-ethnic coexistence, trust in institutions, and productive citizen–state relations—are still not present while the main perpetrators of wartime violence escaped punishment and the victims of violence are still being denied justice. Land and boundary disputes, lawlessness, and concession-related tensions have become the main triggers of conflicts, with aggrieved communities in some concession areas feeling their livelihood sources have been taken away by government. Continuous disputes in concession areas resulting from overlapping boundaries, rightful ownership, conflicting claims and accusations of land grabbing are the main sources of conflict between concessions and communities, and the major obstacles to peace and stability.

Commitment

The UP-led government remains very committed to strengthening the hard-earned peace, and genuinely promoting reconciliation amongst the Liberian people. We commit the government to taking all actions that will make Liberians feel and see themselves as part of the governance of their country. The government is committed to reviewing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Report and adhere to recommendations where applicable to facilitate genuine peace and reconciliation.

Agenda

The UP-led government agenda for peace-building, reconciliation and national healing will draw from the work of the TRC process, and the roadmap for reconciliation. The government will engender to pursue the following actions:

- Promote transparency, good stewardship, and accountability in public resource management, and establish and promote social accountability, including the use of community accountability forums and tools to increase the confidence of Liberians in the governance of the state;
- Promote transparency in land management and property dispute resolution and ensure full implementation of the Land Rights Acts and support development of comprehensive land title documentation processes to guarantee ownership rights of our people;
- Prioritize issues and challenges affecting young people and create opportunities that empower them to secure sources of livelihood through capacity building;
- Develop and institutionalize peace education and awareness programs in schools and communities to pursue a culture of peace and harmony;
- Promote intercultural communication and exchanges through the identification and development of cultural connectors to strengthen intertribal peace and harmony;
- Research and integrate best practices from traditional legal systems into the governance system, and strengthen the capacities of chiefs to foster peace and harmony through the dispensation of equitable justice and fairness in rural communities;
- Ensure community involvement in policy formulation and implementation through stakeholders engagements to guarantee trust and foster cooperation between the government and the people;
- Muster the political will to fund peace and reconciliation initiatives throughout the country, and provide the requisite political leadership at all levels;
- Organize a National Peace and Reconciliation Conference to pursue a genuine path for total reconciliation and recovery for victims, survivors, families, communities, ethnic groups and citizenry as a result the civil crisis;

4.7 Engage the National Legislature with a Defined Legislative Agenda

Context

The Legislative function of the government is critical to the affirmation of the doctrine of the separation of power and essential for strengthening the democratic process. The last five years have witnessed a blurred line of the separation of power which often leads to the manipulation of the Legislature by the Executive Branch. This manipulation heightened to the level where an associate justice of the supreme court was unlawfully removed from office through a majority vote of both houses of the Legislature.

Commitment

The Unity Party-led government shall uphold the doctrine of the separation of powers as enshrined in the Constitution of Liberia as coordinate, but separate branches of government. We shall commit to ensuring that that each branch is allowed to function independently by restoring the principle of non-interference. We shall work with the Legislative Branch to review existing legislations and enact new laws that help to improve the governance system, and create wealth and security for the citizens.

Agenda

The UP-led government legislative engagement will focus on the review of existing laws, passage of bills in committee rooms, and the revision and amendments where applicable of existing concession agreements to serve the interest of the citizens.

- Engage the Legislature to review and make amendments to existing concession agreements as may be required;
- Work with the Legislature to establish a specialized court to fast-track cases of corruption and economic crimes;
- Engage the Legislature to review and institutionalize recommendations of the Constitution Review Committee (CRC) on the establishment of a constitutional framework for sustaining decentralization;
- Amend the amended and restated Act to re-establish the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) to restore confidence and the independence of the commission;
- Work with the Legislature to establish a claims court to fast-track cases of claims for both private and public sector actors;

5.0 PILLAR FIVE: GENDER, YOUTH, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Background

Liberia made progress to reduce disparities in gender participation in governance process with the election of the first female president on the continent of Africa. During the UP's regime, laws were legislated to protect women and girls against domestic violence and crimes, such as rape and other sexual-based violence. Other efforts made by the UP-led government resulted into the legislation of the child protection law and the development of programs to support young people. However, recent years have seen increased risks of inequality and vulnerability in the society, especially for the vulnerable population, such as children and at-risked youths. The rights of women and girls have come under increasing threats of violation as the gender-inequality gap continues to increase in the Liberian society. According to the UNDP 2020 Human Development Report, Liberia has a gender inequality index (GII) value of 0.650, ranking it 156 out of 162 countries in 2019, compared to 154 out of 162 countries in 2023. This indicates a drop in Liberia's strides to achieving gender equality. The number of out-of-school children (OOSC) population in our society is also increasing, especially for poor children and girls who have now become breadwinners for their families. This further sets the stage for future increment not only in gender gaps, but the gap between the poor children and those from affluent families. Furthermore, in spite of the fact that the President of the current regime came to prominence through soccer, Liberia's participation in all major sporting competitions, including football, remains poor as the country lacks any major program for youth and sports development.

Commitment

The UP-led government remains committed to prioritizing and addressing risks of inequality and vulnerability across the society to ensure that everyone, especially vulnerable populations, has an improved livelihood. The UP-led government will develop the necessary programs and structures, and enacts laws and formulate policies that ensure the empowerment of women, girls, youth, children, and persons with special needs, including the elderly. Our government will commit to ensuring that all public sector ministries, agencies, and commissions concerned with women, youth, children, and social protection are fully empowered and decentralized to serve Liberians at all levels of the society. As a government, we will commit to taking appropriate actions needed to restore dignity to sport and entertainment industries. We will create an enabling environment where young people will live in

safety with the utmost security. The government will provide equal opportunities for young people to realize their dreams, aspirations and cultivate the necessary skills to explore their maximum potential.

Agenda

The UP-led government agenda for reducing inequalities amongst Liberians and ensure youth empowerment and social protection for the vulnerable in the Liberian society shall include the following actions, but not limited to:

- Ensure gender and women empowerment to enhance their participation in the governance process;
- Design and implement tailored programs to support physically challenged youths and provide social protection for vulnerable groups in the society;
- Design and promote special programs that support children development and protection;
- Develop and promote sports and recreation programs by empowering actors in the sector;
- Prioritize youth development to create opportunities for young Liberians to have a secured future;
- Reintroduce the assignment of Military personnel at secondary schools to facilitate the teaching of the Reserved Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program as a civil duty for young Liberians;

5.1. Prioritize Gender and Women Empowerment

Context

Gender equality is a fundamental human right which creates the foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable society. Years have passed since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2003. During the UP-led government regime, several inclusive national frameworks were developed, such as Liberia Rising Vision 2030 (a post-conflict vision for an equitable, diverse and democratically stable country), the Strategic Roadmap for National Peace-building, Healing and Reconciliation, and the Liberia Peace-building Plan (LPP). These framework were intended to reduce gender inequality and strengthen women's participation in the governance process. Additionally, there exists a draft of a Second Phase National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security (NAP on WPS) 2019-2023.

Even though these efforts have led to some progress in reducing gender inequality in the country over the last decades, inequality is still an enduring and extremely serious impediment to Liberia's sustainable development as the country was ranked 156th out of 162 countries in the 2019 Gender Inequality Index. Discriminatory laws and social norms remain pervasive, and women continue not just to be underrepresented at all levels of political leadership but also experience different kinds of violence. The starkly reality that just 18% of adult women reach secondary level education compared with 40% of their male counterparts further amplifies our understanding of the informal barriers to participation in government and economic activities as well as the nexus of drivers impacting women's ability to raise their voices in civic and political life in our society. The consequences of these barriers to women participation governance and the economy of our country have been Low standard of living for women-headed households; limited access to social services; lack of collective voice; restricted upward mobility; less income security and decision-making power in households and communities; inability to access credit to start a business or to improve agriculture productivity, and lower social status, among others.

Commitment

The UP-led government will be committed to upholding the rights of women, girls and engaging in strategic partnerships to achieve the overarching goal of ensuring equitable access, opportunity and benefits for women and girls in the society. Our government will also commit to zero-tolerance on all forms of gender-based violence, gender-based discrimination, and gender stereotypes that continue the cycles of violence against women and girls.

The UP-led government is committed to promoting women's economic empowerment, empowering adolescent girls, and supporting underserved and marginalized women to freely exercise their constitutional rights void of intimidation, harassment, discrimination and violence.

Agenda

The UP-led government will endeavor to reduce gender inequality and enhance support for women empowerment by taking the following actions:

- Appoint women to at least 30 percent of our senior cabinet, commissions and agencies positions and at least 35 percent of junior cabinet-level positions;
- Implement 30 percent quota for women participation and provide support for women candidates in electoral processes;

- Enact laws and develop policies to address barriers faced by women and girls in education, reproductive health, employment, and other engagements;
- Support women through economic empowerment by strengthening their capacity to effectively participate in cooperatives, upholding their land ownership rights to enhance their entrepreneurial capabilities;
- Provide equitable opportunities through access to finance exposing them to local, regional and global market opportunities that enhance their profitability;
- Construct regional skills-training centers to provide employable skills for vulnerable and underprivileged women and girls;
- Provide 40 percent quota for women and girls through international scholarships and foreign training programs to competitively develop themselves;
- Provide the appropriate support for victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), strengthen awareness and ensure prosecution of perpetrators;
- Design programs and policies to address the structural causes of violence and discrimination against women and girls;

5.2. Support Physically Challenged and Provide Social Protection

Context

According to the LISGIS 2008 census, physically challenged people make up 14 percent of the total population of Liberia. This segment of the population is often left behind in the society. Citizens in this category usually faced several challenges, including the lack of access to basic social services, marginalization, discrimination, and negative public attitude towards them, such as bullying. Additionally, those with physical disabilities, elderly people have been neglected and many have become beggars in the streets while others have become homeless with no caregivers.

Commitment

The UP-led government commits to creating a society where people with special needs will be looked after. We will review all existing laws and policies on social protection to appropriately incorporate the interest of people with special needs. We are committed to improving inclusiveness in public spaces to appropriately accommodate those with special needs. Additionally, we will provide them opportunities to develop special skill that enable them participate in economic activities to create wealth. We will also cater to the needs of the elderly population through enacting legislations and developing policies that strengthen social protection.

Agenda

The UP-led government will support the elderly and physically challenged people by taking the following actions:

- Create a support system that provides medical and livelihood assistance to the elderly population;
- Renovate public facilities to include access for people with special needs at all levels;
- Strengthen the Liberian National Commission on Disabilities (LNCD) to implement specialized capacity building programs for people with special needs;
- Provide support to associations of people with special needs that focus on the welfare of persons who are physically challenged;
- Construct National Headquarters for people with disabilities to enable this segment of the population appropriately engage and address issues of their community;
- Develop the appropriate training programs to enhance the capacity of people with special needs, thereby enabling them to participate in gainful economic activities; Strengthen the national education curriculum to include specialized programs tailored for people with special needs or disabilities, and ensure that formal education is made accessible by having a pool of specialized teachers for such program;
- Equip public institutions with appropriate technology that allow physically challenged students to access instructional materials without barriers;
- Create an environment for qualified physically challenged Liberians to have unhindered access to public services and job opportunities to enable them contribute to nation building process;
- Build specialized institutions that cater to citizens with physical and mental disabilities across the country;
- Guarantee that physically challenged people have opportunities as non-disabled people to participate in civic life;

5.3. Support Child Protection Initiatives to Attain Safe Child Development Environment

Context

According to the 2008 Census Report, Liberia has a youthful population with children accounting for 42 percent of the population. Children experience insidious forms of violence and abuses which includes neglect, exploitation, trafficking, labor and street selling. According to a United Nation International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) Report published in 2015, 89 percent of rape survivors were children, with 39 percent recorded in the age range of 12 years and below. Additionally, sexual harassment in schools in relations to 'sex for grades' and 'sex for school fees' remains a serious challenge for young people. Also, violent disciplinary action is a prevalent practice amongst families. Moreover, at least 31 percent of children (2-14 years of age) are engaged into labor abuses, while the number of street children vendors in urban cities continues to rise. Over the last 3 years, street children vendors have been put at significant risk and vulnerable to other forms of abuses including child trafficking, rape, teen age pregnancy, child prostitution and school drop out.

Commitment

The UP-led government is committed to protecting children from all forms of violence, ensuring that the necessary opportunities are provided for their development. We shall prioritize programs to ensure that family value system is restored, and families are empowered to provide the basic needs for their children. We shall as well ensure that parents or guardians are held accountable for their well-being.

Agenda

The UP-led government will make concerted efforts to address cases of all forms of abuses against children and create a healthy environment for their development. We will achieve this agenda by taking the following actions:

- Institute an integrated approach using a special task-force inclusive of concerned ministries, agencies and commissions to fast-track child-abuse cases and provide adequate support for victims;
- Strengthen social services, and enhance protection for children experiencing neglect and persistent non-support;
- Provide legal and psychosocial support for sexual abuse victims, and ensure perpetrators are speedily brought to justice;
- Reactivate/strengthen safe home facilities for women and children who are victims of SGBVC and trafficking;
- Strengthen SGBV network and child trafficking secretariat to increase public safety awareness on the various forms of abuses and risk mitigation measures;
- Ensure laws and policies are enforced to protect underage (below 18 years) children from sexual abuse, especially in school environment, and early marriage;

5.4. Promote Sports and Recreation to Develop the Talents of Our Young People

Context

Sports and entertainment are leading contributors to economic growth and development globally, and have had great influence on our politics in recent years. It is also one of the forceful elements of conflict prevention and peace-building and reconciliation. Sports and entertainment has the power to change, inspire and unite people of all races, tribes and religions even in the mist of conflict.

Commitment

The UP-led government remains committed to cultivating the talents of the young people through sports development to tap in their full potentials, and improve their chances of developing lifelong careers. Our government is also committed to exploring opportunities to introduce a variety of structured sports and recreation opportunities in various communities across Liberia. Our strategic approach to sports development will seek to groom young talents in sports activities of their interests, while providing opportunities of recreation to enhance their health and physical fitness.

Agenda

The UP-led government will enhance sports and recreation development by taking the following actions to create opportunities for young people to realize their full potential:

- Design and strengthen programs aimed at developing and promoting various sporting disciplines (eg. Football, kickball, volleyball basketball, amongst others) to develop young talents for participation in national and international competitions;
- Extend sporting competitions from county levels to clan and district for the scouting of young and local talents from across the country;
- Strengthen the national county meet and include other disciplines to showcase young talents that enhance unity and recreation;
- Strengthen and institutionalize support for the entertainment industry (Movie, Music, Drama, Cultural performances, etc.);

5.5. Promote Youth Development to Create Opportunities for Young People

Context

Liberia has a youthful population with over 70% of its estimated 4.8 million people below the age of 35, but only an estimated 3.5 percent of youth ages 15-24 have stable jobs in the formal sector (World Bank, 2020), while most of the young people lack formal education. According to UNESCO, only 54.5% of Liberian youth are literate with 64.7% for males and only 44% for females. Limited education coupled with the pervasive lack of job opportunities leads to high level of vulnerability among youth. In the society today, most youth face daily life disruptions due to security issues (crime, corruption, safety). Girls who are economically vulnerable are especially at risk of violence, rape, and sexual coercion in the home, at school, in the street, and in the workplace. Linked with the issue of crime and violence is the pervasive substance abuse problem which has become prevalent in the society. Youth on drugs are the main perpetrators of drug-related violence which are more present in urban cities. In rural areas, majority youth are employed in the informal sector either as unpaid family workers or self-employed with limited access to productivity-enhancing assets and skills.

Commitment

The UP-led government is committed to educating young people to boost their capacities to contribute to the sustainable growth and development of the country. We will ensure that young people across the country have access to quality, affordable, and accessible education and training opportunities home and abroad. We will develop their potential to become responsible participants in the governance of the state. Our government will create a safe environment for young people, especially girls, to live and enjoy the benefit being a Liberian. We remain committed to providing equal opportunities for young people to realize their dreams and aspirations, and cultivate the necessary skills and moral uprightness to explore their maximum potential.

Agenda

The UP-led government will prioritize youth development through youth capacity enhancement, economic empowerment, and institutional strengthening to effectively implement programs and policies that guarantee the development of young people into becoming productive citizens. This agenda will be implemented by taking the following actions:

5.5.1 Enhance the Capacity of Young People to become Productive Participants in the Governance Process to Guarantee Sustainable Development

- Establish state-of-the-art vocational training programs in all the fifteen (15) counties and equip them with needed manpower and logistics to train young people in specialized skills;
- Provide scholarships (local and foreign) and financial aid to young people to acquire special expertise in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) as well as agriculture;
- Provide support for vocational and technical education in public secondary schools so that young people acquire basic employable skills leading to a career path;
- Establish a national sports academy and formulate appropriate policies to enhance sport development across the country to allow young people develop their talents; Integrate entrepreneurship training in vocational skills training curriculum, and establish a dedicated national youth development fund to support youth entrepreneurs;
- Strengthen the national service program and enforce mandatory 12-24-month service for university graduates to acquire public sector experience before taking up employment;
- Reintroduce the National Student Exchange Program and National Internship Program for students to understand global diversity and acquire workplace experience before pursuing formal career;
- Create national awareness to end drug abuse and establish 15 Youth rehabilitation centers in the 15 counties linked to vocational training centers to give victims a new beginning;

- Expand youth-friendly voluntary family planning programs to increase family planning awareness and utilization among youth to reduce the risks of unprepared family creation;
- Erect public libraries, career development centers and science/computer laboratories in the fifteen counties to enhance the capacity of youth in the sciences and technological advancement;
- Establish a National Leadership Conference to annually to highlight achievements of young people in all fields of national interest, and award national prizes to outstanding performers to motivate other aspiring youths;

5.5.2 Guarantee Economic Empowerment of Young People to Become Active Contributors to the Growth and Development of Liberia

The UP-led government will take the following actions to economically empower young people:

- Increase youth earnings in the informal sector by offering them the appropriate skills, increase their access to production assets, and support initiatives to obtain a sustainable source of income through self-employment in the informal sector;
- Pursue interventions to promote the growth of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), especially in the agriculture sector, to create employment opportunities for youth;
- Increase access to finance through enhanced financial literacy for young people and the introduction of flexible loan products or targeted value-chain financing to support business startups for graduates from vocational training institutions;
- Develop and enforce a local-content policy that gives enterprising Liberian youths favorable space to compete with foreign nationals and take charge of the country's development;
- Pursue and encourage public-private partnership arrangements that support youth entrepreneurship development to increase employment opportunities;
- Establish a national headquarters for motorcyclists and keke riders, and build repairs and service centers in 15 counties to facilitate efficient service delivery and income generation;

5.5.3 Strengthen Institutional Frameworks to Effectively Implement Programs and Policies to Develop Young People into Productive Citizens

The UP-led government will provide targeted budgetary supports to the following institutions to enhance their capacities to champion the cause of young people:

- Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS)
- Federation of Liberian Youths FLY
- Liberia National Student Union (LINSU)
- Mano River Youth Parliament (MRYP)
- National Muslim Youth Structure (NMYS)
- Young Men Christian Association (YMCA)
- Young Women Christian Association (YWCA)

THE LEADERSHIP WE NEED

Liberians need a national leadership that will **Think Liberia, Love Liberia and Build Liberia**.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF AMBASSADOR BOAKAI, THE LEADER WE NEED

It is against this background that we present to you Ambassador Joseph N. Boakai:

- He is a humble public servant.
- He is a people centered leader.
- He loves Liberia and has loyalty to no other country.
- He shows no sense of arrogance.
- He is honest and possesses an excellent public service record.
- He is a nation builder.
- He is competent.
- He is a leader and thinks of the greater good of our country.
- He is a patriotic statesman with clean hands (from war and corruption)

- He relates to all Liberians in the same way.

OUR STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The Unity Party National Strategy is based on a strong commitment to execute the 2023 Unity Party Platform bringing on board well-meaning and competent Liberians regardless of political affiliation, sex, or any other background. Our implementation strategy will be guided by five (5) approaches as stated below:

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** An intensive and authentic collaboration and engagement with stakeholders, including multilateral, bilateral, private sector entities, civil society organizations, and local communities. Seek inputs, address concerns, and ensure that the National Development strategy aligns with the needs and aspirations of the people. Adopt a people-centered approach that focuses on all Liberians and utilizing their enormous potential. Furthermore, encourage and support public-private cooperation in the provision of basic services to all disadvantaged Liberians. Restructure the social welfare delivery system which includes improving the social infrastructures, social welfare services by ensuring social security programs. Develop a coordination framework between the welfare sector to operationalize the devolution of welfare functions to local government to promote increased access to social services;
- **Capacity Building and Institutional Strengthening:** One of the key pathways to develop is the necessary infrastructure to develop the capacity of Liberians, and this was a mantra though the UP-led government. This strategy placed more competent people to lead the country development efforts and made it glaring that public institution must be staff with the right people with the knowledge and skills. This is a strategy that the UP-led government must return to. The government must invest in building the capacity of Ministries, Agencies and Commissions (MACs) responsible for planning, resource mobilization, projects and programs development and management. Enhance skills and knowledge in areas such as development planning, project development and financing, policy development, and the development and implementation of the appropriate regulatory environment frameworks. We will promote hard-work, honesty, and diligence as a national traits. Combine the creativity and team-spirit inherent in Liberians with international best practices to guarantee improved productivity in governance.
- **Policy and Regulatory Framework:** At the top of this UP-led national strategy is the establishment of clear policies and regulatory frameworks to ensure fair competition, promotes safety and environmental standards and encourages sustainable best practices. This must be the mandate of the leadership team in the execution and performance of the functions of MACs. The policies will be rigorously followed without compromises. The strategy will aggressively review the mandates and functions of government ministries, agencies and commissions to ensure efficiency and minimize waste in the governance system. Our national pursuit is to prudently manage resources generated from domestic and external sources in line with the both public financial management and procurement law to enhance economic and social development.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** UP-led government is required to develop a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the progress of implementation, track key performance indicators, and make necessary adjustments. Regularly review the execution processes of programs and projects as a matter of must and update the government long-term development plan adapting to the changing needs and emerging trends will be at the forefront of achieving set national goals.
Furthermore, responsible sector ministries, agencies and or commissions are required to develop methodology coordinating with the legislature where applicable to achieve national development outcomes. MACs are required to use a Systematic Result Oriented Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to track progress.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** the strategy envisions investments by exploring opportunities for public-private partnerships (PPPs) to attract private sector investments and expertise needed to support the national development agenda by closing the resource gap for the needed investments in major infrastructures.

In short, the UP-led government's strategy for progress is based on your endorsement of a social contract that the Unity Party is expected to sign with Ambassador Boakai working with all auxiliary groups, well-wishers, sympathizers and collaborating parties by holding us accountable to this platform. One action that is required of the Liberian people is to elect Ambassador Boakai October 10, 2023 to lead Liberia into prosperity!!

KEY INVESTMENT FOCUS:

The UP-led government will invest in the following to raise our people out of poverty and deprivation of all kinds:

Propriety Areas (ARREST)

Agriculture

Agriculture is the foundation of Liberia's economy and plays a critical role not just in the national food economy but also serves as the main driver of economic development and source of employment for a large proportion of the Country's labor force. Empowering farmers, providing the supportive infrastructures and facilities for developing our national staple as well as spur economic prosperity through agricultural development.

Roads

Roads remain critical infrastructure for the development of our country. The availability of quality paved roads and railroads will unlock the potential of both our agriculture and tourism industries and spur commerce and industry. We will make major investment in road network as a key infrastructure to support our overall economic development.

Rule of Law

During our regime, we made critical gains during its twelve years regime by institutionalizing the rule of law, to aggressively fight corruption, reduce impunity with the justice system. The Justice and human rights systems remain weak, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), targeted at women, is widespread. Our judiciary system remains challenged by human resource, financial and infrastructural constraints resulting in a backlog of cases that undermines access to justice. We will continue to make investments to improve the rule of law with emphasis on the justice systems, the fight against corruption and SGBV.

Education

Education is critical for the development of any nation, but our educational system remains replete with many challenges that affect not just access but also educational quality and outcomes. We will take specific actions to address the challenges in our educational sector.

Sanitation

Better sanitation is a critical area for human capital development; but our healthcare service delivery system continues to face various systemic challenges that affect efficient healthcare delivery and the provision of basic water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services. We are committed to ensuring that all Liberians irrespective of their geographical location, age, gender, socio-economic or political status have access to high-quality, efficient, and cost-effective healthcare services.

Tourism

Our tourism industry remains largely underdeveloped despite the fact that our nation is endowed with natural habitats and scenic spots that make it a suitable designation for tourists from worldwide. We will designate Grand Cape County as the Country's national tourism center, and undertake specific initiatives to exploit the tourism potential of our country:

PLATFORM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

No.	Name	Position
1	J. Alexander Nuetah	Chairman
2	Gbeme Horace Kollie	Co-Chair
3	Anthony Myers	Secretary
4	David W. Baysah, Sr.	Member
5	Nathaniel Kwabo	Member
6	Pewu Subah	Member
7	Benedict Harleyson	Member
8	Frederick Cooper	Member
9	Dehpue Zuo	Member
10	Mahamed B. Boakai	Member
11	David Sumo	Member
12	Stephen R. Johnson	Member
13	Kula Bona Nyei Fofana	Member
14	Neealah Varpilah	Member
15	Smith Sulunta	Member
16	James Kanneh	Member
17	Kpakama L. Kromah	Member
18	Ruston Yarnko	Member
19	Caroline N. Wonokay	Member
20	Isaac Flomo	Member
21	Roland Lafayette Giddings	Ex-officio (Chair, Program & Policy)