

LIBERIA



Liberia U.S. assistance to Liberia focuses on creating a stable democracy in a country recovering from 14 years of civil war by strengthening security structures, changing the culture of impunity, systematic corruption and poor governance, closing severe gaps in access to quality education and health care, expanding economic opportunity, and helping to rebuild essential infrastructure. U.S. assistance has enabled slow but steady progress under a reform-focused, democratically-elected government and will also help to prevent a return to conflict in the wake of the drawdown of United Nations (UN) peacekeeping forces.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Liberia has maintained traditionally cordial relations with the West. Liberia currently also maintains diplomatic relations with Libya, Cuba, and China.

Liberia is a founding member of the United Nations and its specialized agencies and is a member of the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Development Bank (ADB), the Mano River Union (MRU), and the Non-Aligned Movement.

During the administration of Charles Taylor, relations between Liberia and its West African neighbors became seriously strained. West African countries backed by the African Union and the United Nations negotiated a peace agreement in Accra, Ghana that subsequently led to the exile of Charles Taylor to Nigeria in August 2003. With the election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Liberia has seen significant improvements in relations with its West African neighbors and the wider world. Relations between Liberia and its immediate neighbors in the Mano River region are back on track, and efforts are underway to strengthen relations with other countries. Liberia currently holds the chairmanship of the reinvigorated Mano River Union. Liberia signed a non-aggression pact with Sierra Leone when newly elected President Ernest Bai Koroma visited in September 2007. Liberia is a major proponent of regional integration.

Liberia has taken steps to forge closer ties with Western countries, especially the United States. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has visited several Western countries, including the United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway, Spain, France, and Germany. President Sirleaf has also visited China and Libya, with whom Liberia maintains close ties.

U.S.-LIBERIA RELATIONS

Congress appropriated \$100,000 in 1819 for the establishment of Liberia (and resettlement of freemen and freed slaves from North America) by the American Colonization Society, led by prominent Americans such as Francis Scott Key, George Washington's nephew Bushrod, Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and Presidents Monroe, Adams, and Jackson. The first group of settlers arrived in Liberia from the United States in the 1820s. The United States, which officially recognized Liberia in 1862, shared particularly close relations with Liberia during the Cold War.

The outbreak of civil war in Liberia and the long dominance of Charles Taylor soured bilateral relations. However, Liberia now counts the United States as its strongest supporter in its democratization and reconstruction efforts. Since the end of Liberia's civil war in 2003, the United States has contributed over

\$750 million in bilateral assistance and more than \$750 million in assessed contributions to the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). In FY 2008, the U.S. was to commit another \$162 million bilaterally and \$179 million through UNMIL. In February 2008, President George W. Bush visited Liberia, where he held his fourth one-on-one meeting with President Sirleaf since Sirleaf's inauguration in January 2006. Peace Corps volunteers returned to Liberia in 2008 for the first time since 1990.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) implements the U.S. Government's development assistance program in Liberia, the second-largest USAID development program in Africa. USAID's post-conflict rebuilding strategy focuses on reintegration and is increasingly moving towards a longer-term development focus. Rehabilitation efforts include national and community infrastructure projects, such as expanding access to electricity, building roads, refurbishing government buildings, training Liberians in vocational skills, promoting business development, and improving livelihoods while protecting Liberia's forests. USAID also funds basic education programs, improving education for children, focusing on girls, and training teachers. In the health area, USAID programs include primary health care clinics, HIV/AIDS prevention, and a large malaria program. USAID supports rule of law programs, establishing legal aid clinics and victim abuse centers, training judges and lawyers, community peace building and reconciliation efforts, and anti-corruption projects to promote transparency and accountability in public sector entities. USAID is also providing support to strengthen the legislature and other political processes. USAID is strengthening civil society's role in delivering services and advocating good governance. Total USAID funding in FY 2008 was \$105 million.

Peace and Security: The U.S. will continue to play a leading role in supporting security sector reform in Liberia during FY 2010, a year when the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) will draw down its forces. Although the U.S. will have completed the intensive training of the new 2,000 soldier army, thus reducing the levels of funding required for peacekeeping operations, assistance will be needed to continue training of Armed Forces of Liberia officers, sustain military-to-military engagement, and support the development of a coast guard. Significant assistance will also be needed to replace the departing UN police units in providing law and order for Liberia's citizens, and thus facilitating the drawdown of the UN peacekeeping force. A police force capable of maintaining law and order is essential to sustaining stability and the revival of economic activity. A major infusion of Department of State resources will improve the effectiveness of the Liberia National Police and help to retrain or replace police, develop senior and middle-level managers, and support the projected civilian oversight board. The U.S. will also continue to provide support to Liberia's Special Security Service.

Governing Justly and Democratically: Continued funding for improvements in governance will enhance Liberia's stability; help prevent renewed conflict; help the Liberian government mobilize the resources needed for effective government and the reconstruction of infrastructure; and address the problems of marginalization, especially for people who live outside the capital, that drove Liberians to civil war. A critically important U.S. initiative to improve economic governance, the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program (GEMAP), will phase out. However, USAID will continue needed financial management capacity building and support for anti-corruption and land reform efforts, along with intensified support to strengthen management oversight and the accountability of public sector authorities. Expanded programs, through USAID and the Department of State, will continue to increase access to justice by providing basic legal services and developing alternatives to formal courts. U.S. programs will also build capacity in the formal legal system by educating judges and other justice sector personnel. A significant infusion of USAID resources will support presidential, legislative, and local elections in 2011, including support to the National Elections Commission. These resources will be critical, especially with the diminished presence and support of UNMIL, which helped to ensure that the historic elections of 2005 were free and fair. USAID programs to strengthen the Liberian legislature, civil

society, and the media will help address key gaps in the country's legal framework, reduce corruption, and strengthen democratic accountability across all sectors.

Investing in People: Education will remain a centerpiece of the U.S. development effort. Resources provided through USAID will continue to focus on higher education and basic reading and numeracy skills for those receiving vocational training. Increased funding will significantly intensify institutional capacity building, teacher training and provision of educational materials in the area of basic education. Continued emphasis will remain on strengthening the Ministry of Education's ability to manage and monitor the national public school system.

U.S. assistance under the Basic Education Component of the President's Initiative to Expand Education (PIEE/BE) will expand efforts to measurably improve early grade competencies such as literacy, numeracy, arithmetic, and basic personal finance; basic scientific concepts; general health, and awareness of malaria and HIV/AIDS. Continued emphasis will remain on improving the quality of teacher training, dramatically increasing the quantity of learning materials appropriate for world's neediest, and monitoring and evaluating the progress of the programs. The FY 2010 request for the PIEE countries may not include final funding for PIEE/BE. Final allocations of PIEE funds will be made when that the FY 2010 operating year budget is set and more detailed background information is available. USAID assistance will also focus on the continued implementation of Liberia's National Health Plan which calls for the delivery of basic health care for all; supporting the training and education of the health workforce; rebuilding health delivery and health management systems; refurbishing and upgrading of selected health clinics; and strengthening maternal, newborn and child health, family planning and reproductive health services, including access to essential drugs and commodities. Building on previous achievements and expanding use of information technology, USAID will provide support consistent with the priorities of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. U.S. assistance under the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) will expand efforts to scale up proven preventive and treatment interventions to achieve 85 percent coverage among vulnerable groups in order to reach the PMI goal of reducing malaria-related morbidity by 50 percent. Liberia will receive funding to support the national HIV/AIDS strategy and the goals of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). With an HIV infection rate of 1.5 percent, HIV/AIDS interventions will be maintained to keep rates down. HIV/AIDS funding will promote appropriate behavior change; prevention of maternal transmission to children; voluntary counseling and testing; and the needs of orphans and vulnerable children. U.S. assistance for Family Planning and Reproductive Health helps to expand access to high-quality, voluntary family planning services and information. The program enhances the ability of couples to decide the number and spacing of births, including timing of first birth, and makes substantial contributions to reduce abortion and maternal and child mortality and morbidity and mitigate the adverse effects of population dynamics on natural resources, economic growth, and state stability

Focus on Performance: FY 2010 funds will focus on activities that will move Liberia towards improved governance. An increase in legislative function and process funds is pivotal to successful elections in 2011. The increase in FY 2010 funding will support a robust legislative strengthening program that will build the capacity of legislators and staff, provide basic functional materials, increase constituency collaboration and push forward key legislation. USAID public sector executive function activities will build on the successes of the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program, and will strengthen major revenue-generating, management and regulatory institutions through targeted capacity building, aimed at improved collection and management of public revenues. USAID will also intensify investments in anti-corruption reforms by promoting key anti-corruption legislation, strengthening institutions such as the anti-corruption commission, strengthening linkages between anti-corruption institutions and implementing anti-corruption measures in public institutions. In addition, USAID will provide significant support to the Land Commission to facilitate titling and investment. The PMI supports a comprehensive national response to malaria, by focusing on the proper use of insecticide-treated bed nets (ITN). 1.2 million ITNs were distributed 2005-2008. Ninety percent coverage by FY 2011 will

require 1,900,000 ITNs. This total will allow the program to replace ITNs and reach new households in order to achieve 85 percent coverage. Information and behavior change campaigns supporting the use of bed nets will use multiple channels, including radio, billboards, cell phones, and schools. Prompt care seeking, along with improved diagnosis and treatment will reduce deaths and complications. Building a “bed net culture” takes time and repeated messages. Indoor residual spraying will reach 100,000 families with U.S. assistance, which is 14 percent of Liberian households. High transmission and population-dense areas will be targeted for indoor residual spraying. Private health services will participate in training sessions for diagnosis and treatment, and private pharmacies will be included to help ensure proper treatment for all patients with effective and affordable drugs. The 2008 target was not met due to setbacks in the renovation of the Webbo Teacher Training Institute by the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). As a result of the UNHCR issues, the USAID-funded Liberia Teacher Training Program was not able to recruit teachers to meet the indicator target. FY 2009 and FY 2010 funding will be used to recruit teachers for the USAID-renovated Teacher Training Institutes. In addition, training for teachers and administrators will be provided under concurrent programs for short and long-term training. FY 2010 resources will also improve the governance of Liberia’s basic education system by utilizing public-private partnerships and executing teacher-training programs to improve the quality of education at the primary level and spur greater student enrollment. Basic education resources will also be used for vocational training in order to create a stronger workforce for Liberia’s reconstruction. This indicator will be tracked with other standard indicators to give a fuller performance picture of the requested increase. The deplorable state of Liberia’s transportation infrastructure, especially farm to market roads, is a major impediment to improving commerce, food security and job creation. USAID’s strategic decision to focus on feeder road rehabilitation in areas where it is also expanding support for agricultural production, will help spur rural economic growth. Approximately half of the funding in infrastructure is devoted to transport, while the other half is devoted to urban and rural electrification. FY09 resources will enable the performance indicator to increase more than 150 percent compared to FY08 results. By focusing on numerous farm to market roads rather than major highways (as was the case with FY08 resources) the U.S. will get a greater return. In FY10, the Mission will hit its stride as a labor-based approach to feeder road development and maintenance will help to drive rehabilitation costs downward. At minimum, 150 kilometers of feeder road will be rehabilitated in key breadbasket counties and will be coordinated with the World Bank’s repair of primary roads. USAID’s leadership in the feeder road sector will enable the Government of Liberia to easily exceed its target of 300 kilometers of road rehabilitated over three years. Improved management practices involve the use of water, land and other natural resources in a way that increases economic returns, but limits detrimental impacts to the environment, and, or reduces production costs. As part of the U.S. Global Food Security Response, beginning in FY 2009, USAID will focus on expanding improved staple food (such as rice) and high value horticulture by enhancing production, processing and marketing. Revised planned targets for expanding the number of hectares under improved technologies (such as oil expellers, improved seed) and management practices (low-tillage cropping) reflect a realistic and sustainable development impact. With the availability of certified rice seed, USAID will be able to make up for FY08 shortfalls. Shortfalls in 2008 were due to the Government of Liberia’s tardiness in rolling out commercial forestry contracts and seed distribution programs. U.S. assistance will also enable USAID to expand improved community-forestry management practices, increase and strengthen the role of the private sector, improve food security and increase the role of agriculture and natural resources in economic development.

Economic Growth: Agriculture sector productivity is a key component of reducing hunger, improving nutrition, and increasing incomes for poor rural farmers. The USAID program supports the Ministry of Agriculture and other Government of Liberia efforts to implement the policy and regulatory reforms needed to improve productivity and market production. A non-emergency food aid program will continue to support agricultural production and food security for vulnerable groups. Microcredit initiatives and business development services will continue to promote private enterprise and expand trade opportunities,

especially for women and youth. Support will expand use of information technology and continue to improve basic infrastructure throughout Liberia to facilitate economic growth, effective governance and the ability to provide security and other basic services. In the energy sector, the United States will continue its support for expanding access to electricity in Monrovia and in rural areas. This will involve the rehabilitation of infrastructure and promoting renewable energy sources. As part of the U.S. Global Food Security Response, USAID will work with Liberian and international private companies, along with local and international non-governmental organizations, farmer organizations, and national and regional agricultural research and trade organizations to increase agricultural productivity and production through deployment of improved technologies and management practices. Regional trade in food staples will be increased through improvements to food staple market structures and in the operation of key trade and transport corridors. Sound market-based principles will be promoted to ensure that staple food systems are working effectively. USAID-supported community forestry initiatives will continue to establish sound policies and practices to ensure that the Liberian population benefits from its forests and related natural resources. Emphasis will be placed on increasing the transparent and legitimate use, ownership, access, and commercialization of timber, forest products, and other resources.