

## OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-LBR\_D\_1.2

**By 2024, people in Liberia especially the vulnerable and disadvantaged, benefit from strengthened institutions that are more effective, accountable, transparent, inclusive and gender-responsive in the delivery of essential services at the national and sub-national levels.**

In 2023, Liberian citizens benefitted from the more transparent, inclusive and gender responsive conduct of elections by the National Elections Commission (NEC) and of key electoral stakeholders including those in the Liberia early warning, early response network. The biometric voter registration (BVR) process, carried out for the first time in Liberia contributed to a record number of Liberians registering to vote. As a result of significant efforts to engage women in electoral processes, women comprised just over 50% of the 2,471,617 total registered voters (50.06% or 1,237,257 are women as compared to 49.94% or 1,234,360 men). In addition, 12,399 (0.052%) identified as voters with disabilities. Remarkably, this was being the first election where timely gender-disaggregated data (GDD) for the candidate and voter registration and elections workers was provided by the National Elections Commission (NEC), and the first time the NEC provided GDD for registered voters at the district level and candidates by political party during the candidate nomination period. This data allowed for improved delivery of civic and voter education, advocacy and campaigns. The NEC collected four types of sex-disaggregated data for the 2023 elections: information on voters, poll workers, observers, and candidates. Women were just 159 of the 1029 (15.5%) accepted candidates. Out of the total 6,269 workers hired by NEC, 31% were women, with 27% of them serving in supervisory roles. Women made up 30% of the total registered observers for the 2023 elections (29.17% or 4371 were women as compared to 70.83% 6265 men). Although these figures are not gender balanced, GDD on temporary elections workers and voter turnout, as well as lessons learned from policy and legislative reform efforts will also improve inclusion and gender equality in future electoral processes. Although most political parties, alliances and coalitions generally did not demonstrate gender responsiveness when it came to increasing the percentage of women on their candidate listings, 26 of them signed the Revised Farmington River Declaration, reaffirming the Protocol between the National Elections Commission (NEC) and Political Parties to address Violence Against Women in Elections and Politics (VAWE/P Protocol), committing signatories to address electoral violence, including VAWP, in the 2023 Presidential and Legislative Elections. This demonstrated greater commitment of political parties to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. The engendering of political will to address VAWE, together with strengthened capacities on VAWE including in documenting and reporting as well as nationwide awareness raising interventions on VAWE contributed to an enabling environment for women's safe participation in politics ahead of the 2023 election, as evidenced by low recorded incidences of VAWE which benefitted women engaged in electoral processes as voters, elections workers, women's rights defenders, campaign staff and volunteers, and women candidates. Security sector and justice institutions were also strengthened to more effectively protect against VAWE and to investigate and pursue legal redress for VAWE cases through the formal justice system using the existing penal code as there is no specific law which refers to VAWE. Legal aid providers were also strengthened to provide gender sensitive legal services to women aspirants and women experiencing violence and discrimination due to their participation in politics and public life. While UN Women and UNDP supported targeted capacity building of the Peacebuilding Office (under the Ministry of Internal Affairs) and of the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection (MGCSP), UN Women's civil society partner, the Organization for Women and Children (ORWOCH) also targeted key institutions responsible for responding to VAWE including the Liberia National Bar Association (LNBA), NEC local

magistrates, Liberia National Police (LNP) including Women and Children Protection Sections, magistrates, county attorneys, trial judges, prosecutors, public defenders, Sexual Gender Based Violence Unit personnel from the MGCSP in and the National Commission for Human Rights (INHCR). These interventions strengthened knowledge and capacities to recognize, report, and provide a more coordinated response to cases of VAWE. Similarly, while the electoral reform bill with a mandatory 30% gender quota for candidate listings did not receive Executive Approval in 2023, significant experience was gained and a broader coalition to advocate for electoral law reform including temporary special measures (TSMs) for women in politics in the future, and for a more gender responsive, effective and accountable legislature and executive branch. Additionally, UN Women worked to strengthen the accountability and inclusiveness of political parties with the NEC and civil society partners medica Liberia and POWER Liberia, working alongside the Coalition of Political Party Women in Liberia (COPPWIL) and women's auxiliaries in political parties. Although only two of 31 political parties, alliances and coalitions submitted candidate nomination lists with over 30% women, some of the parties engaged demonstrated an openness to change and contributed to a guidance note for gender responsive parties and participated actively in other interventions and advocacy meetings. This demonstrates some progress towards political parties taking on reforms to promote women as leaders within their ranks and as candidates.

#### OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-LBR\_D\_1.3

##### **By 2024, the UN system in Liberia coherently and systematically contributes to progress on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls**

This outcome is in progress as a result of the activities and interventions and support provided by UN Women to UNCT Liberia since 2020. From the last 3 years (2021, 2022, 2023), UNCT Liberia has had the UNCT-SWAP Gender equality scorecard certified with more than 93.3% of performance indicators scoring "meets or exceeds expectations" especially the increased number of joint programmes implemented and 98% Gender Marker 3+. UNCT GTG developed annual workplans since 2020 which were all implemented up to 80% by all agencies and some key activities co-funded by other agencies. This is a significant improvement compared to the years before 2020. Based on last year's progress, UNCT emphasized on the need to increase the number of joint programs from 0 in 2020, to 8 in 2022 and 12 in 2023 all with a high value of Gender marker, more and their implementation went well as well as evaluation. UNCT GTG also led the organization of the 16 days of activism against GBV 2023 and other advocacy campaigns successfully in a coordinated manner with Ministry of gender, children and social protection and with other stakeholders including development partners, CSOs and CBOs. UNCT GTG also developed progressively CCA review capacity and reviewed the CCA in 2021, 2022. UNCT GTG members were actively present during the SDG review national workshop for all stakeholders in Liberia.

#### OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-LBR\_D\_2.2

##### **By 2024, Liberia has sustained, diversified and inclusive economic growth driven by investments in agriculture, food security and job creation and is resilient to climate change and natural disasters.**

In Lofa, Bong, and Nimba Counties, seven agricultural cooperatives, comprising 874 rural women, successfully implemented the Land Law with UN Women's support. The National Adult Education Association of Liberia (NAEAL) facilitated this initiative on gender-responsive literacy, civic education, and advisory services. The goal was to ensure equitable distribution of benefits and promote gender equality in land governance, empowering women and youth in agriculture. Collaborative efforts with NAEAL strengthened the impact and reach of the initiative, making significant strides in fostering fair land application and gender equality within targeted communities. UN Women, in collaboration with the Liberian government, UN

agencies, and civil society, supported gender-responsive measures in Liberia's Land Law. This legal framework benefited 874 women in targeted counties, leading to their active involvement in land improvements, credit access, and poverty reduction. The gender-inclusive approach not only enhanced women's economic status but also boosted agricultural productivity, contributing to improved food production and local food security. UN Women's advocacy campaigns, using community radios and the Buy from Women platform, further promoted gender equality in land ownership and sustainable agricultural practices within communities. Through UN Women's support, 874 rural women and youth farmers gained business development and management skills, resulting in successful businesses, expanded opportunities, and increased employment. Access to finance through Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) empowered women with financial resources, reducing vulnerability to poverty. The VSLAs not only provided financial services but also created a platform for collective problem-solving and community development, making significant contributions to poverty alleviation in targeted communities. Collaboration between UN Women, Orange, and NAEAL transformed the lives of 1,200 female farmers. Comprehensive capacity-building support included digital literacy, business skills, civic education, and health awareness. Initiatives like the Solar Suitcase project and digitized VSLAs advanced financial access, gender equality, and community resilience, contributing significantly to sustainable development. UN Women's disaster resilience initiatives, in collaboration with NDMA and MoA, empowered 1,200 female farmers. Smart devices and digitized VSLAs enhanced disaster preparedness and reduced vulnerability to environmental hazards. This comprehensive approach, including education in disaster risk reduction, resource governance, and environmental preservation, positioned women as leaders in agriculture and economic development. Digital literacy training by UN Women and Orange benefited over 300 young women, fostering personal growth, academic success, and access to online resources. Capacity-building sessions on social media usage for HIV/AIDS prevention and gender equality empowered women as change-makers. The Women's Digital Centers and Buy from Women digital platform provided essential skills, market access, and increased income for women in agri-business, aligning with the government's Digital Economy Strategy. UN Women's support for farming cooperatives resulted in positive outcomes, improving agricultural practices, economic empowerment, and climate resilience for over 3,000 women. The Women's Digital Centers transformed the lives of 300 young women, providing digital literacy skills and creating opportunities for entrepreneurship and social connections. The Buy from Women platform broadened market access, leading to increased sales and income for 1,200 women, with \$163,376.30 in revenue generated in 2023. The collaboration with the Central Bank of Liberia formalized financial activities, integrating 15 VSLAs into formal mobile banking services. Empowered Buy from Women Champions and strengthened disaster risk reduction preparedness contributed to increased financial access, resilience, and economic empowerment for women smallholder farmers. UN Women initiated a gender audit of Liberia's Labor Practices Law. The audit, conducted in collaboration with ILO and MoL, was successfully completed and validated in October 2023. The findings provided valuable insights for strategic interventions to advance gender equality in the labor sector. The recommendations in the final report guided actions to improve Liberia's labor practices.

#### OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-LBR\_D\_3.2

**By 2024, the most vulnerable and excluded groups have improved quality of life with rights-based, gender sensitive ,inclusive, equitable access and utilization of essential social services in an environment free of discrimination and violence including in humanitarian situations.**

Further to awareness activities conducted by UN Women, CSO partners, and grassroots level grantees in communities of five counties (Lofa, Nimba, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Gedeh and Montserrado counties), CSO tracking and reported cases of VAWG led to an increase in the number of survivors who sought essential services. According to the below table, a total of 68 SGBV cases were tracked and reported by CSOs, including 37 rape cases, one sodomy case, 21 domestic violence/ physical assault cases 8 cases of persistent non-support, and one child trafficking case. Nevertheless, 40 of these cases (34 rape, 1 sodomy, 4

domestic violence/ physical assault, 1 persistent non-support) have been sent to court awaiting trial; three (3) alleged perpetrators of persistent non-support and three (3) domestic violence/ assault are on the run from police arrest, and two (2) rape accused persons have been released on bill. Moreover, 19 cases which include 14 domestic violence/ physical assaults, four (4) persistent non-support, and one (1) trafficking have been resolved in the interest of all parties, as one rape case was tried and the perpetrator found guilty and sentenced to five (5) years of imprisonment in Voinjama. For the lone trafficking case, a young girl was resettled with her family back in Sierra Leone with support from the Montserrat CSOs SGBV Secretariat. It was reported that survivors from the 37 rape cases are all alive and stable with the exception of one (1) who is undergoing serious medical attention in Monrovia. SGBV training and awareness activities had reached 5,900 community members. 800 former practitioners of FGM from 11 counties have abandoned the practice and embraced alternative sources of income (including agriculture, livestock, VSLA skills) and alternative rites of passage Program for the Initiation of girls into womanhood without the FGM component. 270 of these women benefitted from a training of trainers (TOT) in VSLA. The training aimed at improving financial and business development skills of participants and support them with a post-training start up micro-grant of US\$320 per country to kick start the savings and loans process. VSLA groups were also provided with 32 VSLA toolkits (one kit per group), each comprising a metal box, two top security locks, a calculator, a ledger, 25 pass books and a counting rubber bowl. VSLA groups have started a processes for legal registration and eight of these VSLAs have started the digitalization process. Each VSL has received technical support to prepare Articles of Incorporation which will be used for business registration upon completing the notarization process. Additional 110 female traditional practitioners participated in a training of trainers (TOT) in Climate Smart Agriculture in three counties bringing together 10 participants from each of the 11 target counties. The 110 participants to TOTs were assigned the task to trickle down the training to the 800 women former practitioners of FGM who have already started engaging in farming activities. The training was tailored to the needs identified in a baseline assessment undertaken to understand the existing knowledge and practices of participants regarding agriculture and climate-related issues. Participants were encouraged to share their experiences, challenges, and success stories. All these trainings were delivered in close collaboration with the National Council of Chief and elders of Liberia, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, and agronomists from the Center for Agriculture Research Institute (CARI). At the end of the training, participants to the project from the 11 counties were provided with agricultural inputs, assorted agriculture tools or equipment, and seedlings for 22 farms (2 farms per county. Materials distributed to women farmers included cutlasses, hoes, shovels, rakes, water pump machines, fertilizers, cassava grinders, packing and labelling machines and accessories, etc. Farmers were also supported with complementary livestock of choice including chicken, goats, sheep, pigs and fish. Beneficiaries of the project have also increased access to alternative income and market opportunities to replace FGM as a source of income. A three days trade fair was organized and took place in Gbarnga City, Bong County where Muslim Women Zoes and other Female Zoes from Bong showcased the products of their hands since quitting the practice of FGM. The trade fair was organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Gender, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs the National Council Chief Elders of Liberia and Liberia Crusaders for Peace. During this trade fair, supported female zoes were able to show case their new source of income. The beneficiaries were able to show case tidying, sawa milk, African slippers, African lappers, African bags, Soap, locally made air freshener, palm oil, pumpkin, honey, plantain, African photo frame, and many others. Goods were also exhibited and sold at the One UN building during an event to commemorate the role of women's human rights defenders's day during the 16 Days of Activism celebrated under the theme "Invest to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls".

#### OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-LBR\_D\_4.2

**By 2024, women, girls, men and boys in Liberia experience more sustained peace, inclusive and sustainable growth and development through strengthened formal and informal institutions providing access to effective and equitable justice and security services; promoting and protecting human rights; and strengthening social**

## **cohesion and reconciliation.**

In 2023, the Government of Liberia continued its efforts towards the achievement of a gender-sensitive service delivery including the provision of equitable and effective justice and security services. As a result, a Gender Policy and a five-year Implementation Plan for the Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation (BCR) at the Ministry of Justice was developed. This policy was validated by a wide range of stakeholders including Civil Society, women's rights advocates, and experts from the Ministry of Gender Children, and Social Protection and provides the framework for mainstreaming gender in the BCR. This was done with the technical and financial support of UN Women. The High Command of the Armed Forces of Liberia has revoked its policy that barred unmarried female soldiers from getting pregnant. This action is a result of continuous advocacy and engagement of the Gender and Social Inclusion Department (GSID) of the force relying on the Gender Policy as a reference. This latest move demonstrates the enhanced capacity of the Department to ensure full implementation of the policy. Meanwhile, the GSID continues to roll out awareness sessions amongst the ranks and files of the Force on the procedures for reporting harassment.

### **OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-LBR\_D\_6.1**

#### **The capacity of the GoL, gender equality advocates and other national stakeholders strengthened to assess progress and accelerate the implementation of continental and global normative and policy frameworks**

The Government of Liberia has adopted a coordinated approach to reporting under the human rights treaties which envisages the development of the CEDAW report in parallel with the other treaty reports and seeks to highlight the linkages between the treaties including the common provisions aiming at the elimination of discrimination against women in their enjoyment of all human rights. In this regard, UN Women strengthened the Government's existing reporting mechanism as per the treaty signed and is supporting the Government to develop the ninth and tenth CEDAW State Party reports for submission to the CEDAW committee. Furthermore, the capacities of the Human Rights divisions at the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, the Ministry of Justice, and focal points in different Line Ministries were enhanced, particularly in report writing and monitoring of Human Rights conventions with a focus on CEDAW.