



**Convention on the Rights
of Persons with Disabilities**

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Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

**Initial report submitted by Liberia under article
35 of the Convention, due in 2014***

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Abbreviations

| | |
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| AIFO | Associazione Italiana Amici di Raoul Follereau |
| AFELL | Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia |
| AOD | Alliance on Disabilities |
| BIN/LIS | Liberia Immigration Service |
| CEDAW | Convention of the Elimination Discrimination Against Women |
| CFUH | Cultivation for Users Hope |
| CPA | Comprehensive Peace Accord |
| CRC | Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| DEA | Drugs Enforcement Agency |
| DPOS | Disabled Persons Organizations |
| GBV | Gender Based Violence |
| HI | Handicap International |
| INCHR | Independent National Commission on Human Rights |
| LISGIS | Liberia Institute of Statistics & Geo Information Services |
| LNP | Liberia National Police |
| MGCS | Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection |
| MOE | Ministry of Education |
| MOJ | Ministry of Justice |
| MRC | Monrovia Rehabilitation Center |
| NCD | National Commission on Disabilities |
| NHRAPSC | National Human Rights Action Plan Steering Committee |
| NUOD | National Union of Organizations of the Disabled |
| PWDs | Persons with Disabilities |
| TCC | The Carter Center |
| CRPD | Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities |
| UNMIL/HRPS | United Nations Mission in Liberia |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Program |
| UNWomen | United Nations Women |
| OHCHR | Office of the High Commission for Human Rights |
| HRPD/MOJ | Human Rights Protection Division-Ministry of Justice |
| AOD | Alliance on Disabilities |

Part I

General introduction

1. The Government of the Republic of Liberia has the honor to submit to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in compliance with Article 35 of Para. 1 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) its initial State Party Report. The report has been prepared in strict adherence to the Committee's guidelines on the form and content of reports to be submitted by the State Parties.

Disability statistics

2. Since the 2008 National Housing and population Census, data on PWDs has not been updated. The official National institution for data collection is the LISGIS, which only conducts census and publish data after every 10 years. Please reference the recent National Housing and Population Census conducted in 2008 (Pages 203 to 229).

Measures taken by the State to implement the outcomes of the UN treaties, conferences, summits and reviews

3. PWDs were discriminated against in Liberia and to this end, Liberia has adopted policies and legal frameworks to ensure the rights of PWDs are respected and protected. The government has taken administrative, legal, and economic measures that indicate the country's commitment to improving the rights of PWDs. These commitments include the implementation of the UNCRPD, which the country signed and ratified in 2012, but has not yet ratified its Optional Protocol. The country has also signed and ratified other international treaties, which demonstrates its commitment to protecting PWDs. These include the Convention on the Rights of the Child, African Charter on Human and People's Rights, Marrakesh Treaty and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Nationally, the country has put in place the Children Law, which criminalizes negative actions against children with disabilities as stated in Section 3.16.11. Children Act 2011.

4. Unfortunately, measures by the State to reverse a law that excludes children with disability at the discretion of the principal have not been successful. The national legislature in 2011 passed a law that states that "a school may exempt a child from free and compulsory education" based on their disabilities (4.6.1.c. IV). Other aspects of the same law assume that when a minister (3.2.4) or a school board member 4.1.1 becomes disabled, this alone is ground for replacement.

5. Administratively, several measures were taken in order to address the issues affecting PWDs. These include the establishment of the Commission on Disabilities in 2005, which affairs are strictly stirred by persons with disabilities. Also, the MGCSP was established in 2015 with a social protection component that deals with disability issues, in collaboration the NCD.

6. Economically, Liberia has instituted measures to address financial matters relating to PWDs. As such, allotment¹ has been made in the national budget both for NCD and MGCSP.

Consultative process followed

7. Consultative and thematic workshops were held across the country to gather and collect information from all relevant stakeholders including ordinary Liberians, particularly PWDs at the local and national levels. In addition, questionnaires were prepared and circulated to the various Ministries and institutions working with PWDs. A technical team was set up comprising of one international consultant (hired by UN Women), OHCHR

¹ Reference the national Budget.

providing technical and financial support and members of the Steering Committee of the National Human Rights Action Plan, the Civil Society Council to collect and compile all relevant information to conclude this report. Also series of focus groups discussions were held.

Definition of disability

8. Liberia has not adopted its own definition of disabilities; however the country relies on the international definition from the World Health Organization (WHO) and that of the Convention. WHO defines disabilities' as an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. Impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual's involvement in life situations. Disability is thus not just a health problem, it is a complex phenomenon, reflecting the interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives. Overcoming the difficulties faced by people with disabilities requires interventions to remove environmental and social barriers.²

9. According to the UNCRPD, to which Liberia is a signatory, "disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others".

Introduction and State's alignment with the General provisions of the UNCRPD as outlined in Articles 1–4

10. This initial Report highlights the national context and measures taken to give effect to the enjoyment and exercise of the rights provided and guaranteed in the UNCRPD.

11. It could be recalled that in 1977 upon the arrival of the late president William R. Tolbert from attending a G-7 Summit, at which time issues of disabilities were discussed, he was inspired to initiate a group named "Group of 77" as the first framework to support and tackle disability related issues in Liberia. This initiative started with the construction of a moderate shelter on Newport Street, Monrovia to host PWDs who were living in abandonment. Government tried to address their plights by providing basic humanitarian items comprising of food, medical and educational assistances. The Group of 77 was administered or supervised by the office of the vice president, which continues to date.

12. In 1989, Liberia erupted into a violent civil conflict, which lasted for over fourteen years and virtually destroyed Liberia's political, economic, social and democratic institutions, and left thousands of Liberians internally and externally displaced and many disabled. On August 18, 2003, Liberian warring factions and key national stakeholders signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Accra, Ghana which paved the way for cessation of hostilities, the holding of general elections and the establishment of a democratically elected government in 2005. As a consequence of years of civil conflict, Liberia continues to face numerous challenges, including among others, pervasive poverty, high level of unemployment, especially amongst the youth (youth with disabilities-many of whom were former combatants), high level of illiteracy, and lack of access to basic social and economic amenities such as electricity, safe drinking water and health care. Notwithstanding and consistent with its historical adherence to the observance of international human rights instruments and treaties,³ Liberia ratified the UNCRPD and deposited the instrument of ratification on 26 July 2012. Since then, Liberia has embarked on vigorous laws and legal reforms, as well as structural and institutional arrangements, comprising administrative measures in furtherance of human rights. These include, in particular the protection, promotion, and fulfillment of the rights of PWDs as recognized in the UNCRPD.

² <http://www.who.int/topics/disabilities/en/>.

³ Liberia is signatory to the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Bill of Human Rights.

13. In the area of institutional and structural arrangements, the Government has established the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR), the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection 2014, the National Commission on Disabilities, the National Human Rights Action Plan Steering Committee (NHRAPSC),⁴(a National Strategy on the implementation of the Convention) the Agenda for Transformation, which are complimented by regulations and Strategic plans and do not only prevent discrimination against persons living with disabilities, but also gives effect to the enjoyment and exercise of rights provided and guaranteed in the UNCRPD, The Government of Liberia Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development 2018.

Part II

Article 5 Equality and Non-Discrimination

14. Apart from The Constitution of the Republic of Liberia (1986), including in particular its' preamble, Chapter 2 on General Principles of National Unity and Chapter 3 on Fundamental Rights, that set the basis for equality, rights and freedom for all, the Government established the NCD in 2005, to supervise, monitor and ensure that the wellbeing and welfare of PWDs are addressed. The INCHR has the mandate to ensure that the rights of all persons in Liberia are protected. Additionally, several policies have been adopted over the years to include the National Health and Social Welfare Policy (2011–2012), which provides for essential medical, habilitation and rehabilitation provisions for PWDs. The Essential Package of Social Services (EPSS) was formulated in 2012 to promote standardized and equitable distribution of social services throughout Liberia.

15. The Act creating the National Commission on Disabilities (NCD) allows for the administration of the commission to be headed by PWDs and it also creates three seats at the Liberia National Legislature and three persons to head the bureau of Special and Inclusive Education Division, Ministry of Education. Unfortunately last two aspects are not being implemented.

Article 6 Women with Disabilities

16. There is no specific legislation or policies.

Article 7 Children with Disabilities

17. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection through the Department of Children and Social Protection and the NCD receive quarterly budgetary allocations from the Government of Liberia to support vulnerable children, including children with disabilities. Currently, there are eleven residential care institutions providing services to children with disabilities and other community based institutions receiving subsidies under this budgetary support. The MGCSP also established Liberia's children's village as a transit home for vulnerable children with focus on children with disabilities.

18. As to the measures adopted to prevent abandonment, neglect, and institutionalization of children with disabilities, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection was established by an Act of the National Legislature in 2014 with the mandate to promote the development, empowerment and protection of women, girls and children as well as the welfare and integration of persons with disabilities, the vulnerable, extremely poor, excluded and disadvantaged. The Children Law Article VII Section 4: 4.1–4.4 address these

⁴ The National Human Rights Action Plan Steering Committee (NHRAPSC) with technical and financial support from The United Nations Mission-UNMIL Human Rights and protection Section and UN Women in Liberia did this initial draft of this report.

concerns. The child protection network is also an administrative framework that advocates and protects the rights of persons with disabilities from neglect, abandonment and others.

19. The MGCSP, at a minimum scale, has established a guideline and initiated the process of encouraging parents of children with disabilities to let the children grow up in family settings. Social Workers are assigned in various communities to monitor the level of care being provided for these children. The Independent Accreditation Committee was set up to accredit, monitor institutions, assess, and where necessary, close all child welfare institutions that are providing services for vulnerable children including children with disabilities.

20. The Division of Children Development and Protection of the MGCSP, along with Child Protection Network (CPN) has carried out several actions to address the rights of children with disabilities through awareness-raising. Trainings have been conducted on the rights of children with disabilities for social workers, coordinators and supervisors from government ministries, civil societies and local communities.

21. Enshrined in the Amended Tools, Regulations to Operate in the Disadvantaged sector of 2016, The Liberia Children Law section 4: 4.1–4.4 and inclusion of children with disabilities on Liberia Children Representative Forum are all concrete measures adopted to ensure that children with disabilities have access on an equal bases with others, to community based programs and services provided by the public and private sectors.

22. The act that created the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in 2014, The Act that created the National Commission on Disabilities of 2005, the Children Law of 2011, the Essential Package for Social Services of the then Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, the Mental Health Policy of 2016, the Amended Tools, Regulations to Operate in the Disadvantaged sector of 2016, etc. are legislative measures adopted to ensure that the principle of the best interests of the child is integrated in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of legislation and policies concerning children with disabilities. The Liberia Education Reform Law 2011 prohibits academic institutions (state the Legal from discriminating against students with disabilities and denying disabled students admissions into schools based on their disability status. Educational institutions and other facilities are creating mobility access to cater to students and PWDs. This is in harmony with one of the objectives under the Agenda for Transformation “Ensure equitable access to free basic education for all children and youth, including girls and the disabled, with improved outcomes”.

23. The Liberia Children Representative Forum is a platform created for children to discuss and express issues affecting their wellbeing through engagement with national and internal stakeholder, as well as holding discussions with their at national and local levels in society. These include education, health, social protection, recreation, etc.

24. To ensure that children with disabilities can freely express their views on all matters affecting them, the Ministry of Gender and Development, Children and Social Protection established the Liberia Children Representatives Forum in 2011 to allow children to voice out there concerns concerning issues affecting children in Liberia. Currently, children with disabilities were incorporated into the national leadership of the Forum. MGCSP, NCD, in consultation with other Line Ministries, Agencies and Partners established a coordinating body like the Child Protection Network, Disability Network, where their respective organizations can meaningfully participate in decision-making processes concerning them.

Article 8

Awareness Raising

25. Since the establishment of the NCD in 2005, the subsequent ratification of the Convention as well as the Strategy on the implementation of the Convention, the Government has undertaken and implemented a number of public sensitization and awareness programs at the national and community levels on the Convention and its provisions. Every year December 3rd is celebrated as International Day of Persons with Disabilities, and October 15 is also celebrated as White Cane Safety Day with support from the Ministry of Health. The Ministry of Gender and Development, Children and Social Protection, is also involved in the awareness raising campaigns through their social workers that are assigned in the fifteen political sub-divisions. In 2017, the Ministry of Gender

trained fifteen Gender Coordinators and fifteen Social Welfare Supervisors from the fifteen counties of Liberia but have not been deployed across the country. In the same year, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection trained focal persons from all government line ministries and agencies in Montserrado County on the rights of persons with disabilities for the purpose of establishing disabilities desks at these institutions... In addition, the observance of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the White Cane Safety Day, World Mental Health Day and World Albinism Day, coupled with several on-going consultations and discussions are examples of awareness raising activities. Moreover, in 2018 the national theme for the observance of “the Day of the African Child” was “Despite Disabilities; Every Child has Inclusive Rights to Liberia’s Development”. These occasions are marked by celebrations yearly with marches through the principle streets of Monrovia and other counties, with wide media publicity, indoor programs and nationwide conferences. Several trainings and workshops on the rights of PWDs are also held in different parts of the country as part of these celebrations.

26. The National Union of Organizations of the Disabled (NUOD), an umbrella organization comprising of 30 DPOs as well as other organizations continue to raise awareness on the rights in the convention along with the above, reference paragraph 25.

27. The Liberian government’s efforts have been complemented by international partners namely: Handicap International, Sight Savers International, The Carter Center Mental Health Program, Associazione Italiana Amici di Raoul Follereau (AIFO), LION’s Clubs in Liberia, United Nations Mission in Liberia-Human Rights Protection Services (UNMIL-HRPS), the United Nations Development Programs (UNDP), the Alliance on Disabilities, as well as awareness raising activities across the country. For example, in 2016, the Steering Committee of the National Human Rights Action Plan, with support from UNMIL-HRPS printed stickers to publicize the rights of persons with disabilities. The Child Protection Network also developed messages to address the protection of children with disabilities from abuse.

Article 9 Accessibility

28. The accessibility and services remain a challenge for PWDs. There is a need for further concentration in these areas.

29. Article 5 of the Blue Print for the Construction of Public facilities signed by the president of the Republic of Liberia in September 2013, states that “All universities, schools and other public buildings be inclusive to accommodate persons with disabilities”. However, enforcement and awareness on this Blue Print have not been effective. Moreover, the lack of disable friendly Public transportation, absence of traffic indicators or road signs specific to PWDs. There is also a limited access to information and communications services. All of which, pose huge challenge to full enjoyment of the rights under article 9 of the Convention. However, because of awareness, efforts such as the building of ramps at some government institutions to include health facilities, schools, government Ministries and Agencies have been made. Notable examples include the dedicated pathways on streets sidewalks in Monrovia, the MOH, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, the new Ministerial Complex, Monrovia City Corporation, and the Monrovia Rehabilitation Center buildings.

Article 10 Right to life

30. The Children law 2011, Art. 3 Section 3.1; further, the law provides that every child shall have the right to life. The child protection network comprising of Government Ministries and Agencies, is responsible to enforce this law.

31. Measures adopted for the early identification, combat and eradication of any practice(s) which shall infringe on the right to life of PWDs in the form of neglect, abandonment, concealment, destitution and starvation are provided for under Liberian Children Law of 2011 and the National Child Welfare and Protection Policy.

32. As to measures adopted to promote the understanding that the life of PWDs is of equal value to that of others and eradicate attempts to disseminate ideas that life of PWDs is “not worth living”, awareness is being conducted by government and non-governmental institutions, which is key to promoting and understanding that the life of PWDs are of equal value to that of others.

33. Under our health regime, in the case of mental incapacity, determination is left with the next of kin or guardian.

Article 11

Situations of Risk and Humanitarian Emergencies

34. Liberia has experienced two humanitarian emergencies over the past 50 years; on October 6, 1982, the No-way Camp mudslide occurred in Grand Cape Mount County which claimed the lives of at least 200 Peasant Miners and the 2014 Ebola Virus Disease Outbreak. As a result of these emergencies, Liberia adopted a risk management Policy in October 2012 with full participation of all stakeholders in particular women and other vulnerable groups of the society (children, elderly and the disabled). It was developed to enhance national and local capacities to minimized vulnerabilities and disaster risk, prevent, mitigate and prepare for adverse impacts of hazards within the context of sustainable development. Due to the Ebola Virus Disease outbreak in 2014, The Incident Management System was established in 2014 to manage and oversee the management of the Ebola related activities.

35. Coordination with PWDs consultation and participation, remain low specially relating to plans, strategies and protocols in disaster risk reduction and humanitarian emergencies.

36. To ensure that children are protected from neglect, abuse and exploitation during emergencies, MGCSP provided interim care center, social assistance (food & non-food items) and cash grant to vulnerable children and families which include persons with disabilities who were affected during the emergencies. The total number of children documented during the Ebola response across the fifteen counties was approximately eight thousand plus children. Among the total eight thousand plus children, seven thousand (7,000) children benefitted from the UNICEF one off cash grant in the fifteen countries. The social cash transfer program also covered persons with disabilities, the elderly in four counties and Ebola affected children in two counties. The Ministry of Health also provided medical services to all Ebola affected survivors which included PWDs.

37. There are no measures to ensure that post-emergency rehabilitation; resettlement, reconstruction and rebuilding processes are based on risk assessments inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities, among others, through the application of universal design and build-back-better principles.

Article 12

Equal Recognition before the law

38. The Constitution of the Republic of Liberia and statutory laws of Liberia, all persons living within the territorial borders of Liberia, without discrimination, have equal recognition before the law and are entitled to equal protection of the law.⁵ This protection is available to PWDs. A number of Human Rights Organizations in the country do routinely provide advice and legal services to PWDS on pro bono basis to ensure the protection of their rights and defensible interests. The Liberia National bar Association in collaboration with the American Bar Association is providing pro-bono services through legal aid clinics where party litigants seek justice, while the Association of Female Lawyers provides legal aid.

39. As to legal capacity consistent with the constitutional provision, chapter 3 Article 11 (c), “all persons are equal before the law and are therefore entitled to equal protection of the law” provides for the equal protection of all residing within the territorial borders of Liberia, without discrimination.

⁵ Constitution of Liberia, Chapter III, Article 11(c).

40. The Constitution of Liberia under Article 20 (a) also provides for amongst others, that justice shall be done without sale or denial. PWDs enjoy these rights as well the same as other members of the public. There is no legal discrimination towards PWDs under the Liberian Constitution. Despite these legal provisions, there are inherent socio-cultural practices which prohibit and prevent PWDs from enjoying the equal rights and privileges which are guaranteed under the Constitution. For example, in the community setting a local credit club will easily lend money to non-disabled person seeing as being capable of repaying the loan than to PWDs whose capacities are defined by their disabilities.

Article 13 Access to Justice

41. Significant progress has been made to ensure access to Justice in Liberia. Police stations, circuits and magistrate courts have been established in each of the 15 Political sub divisions in the country to ensure that rights are protected and where violated, that investigations are conducted and those found culpable are brought to justice. The NCD upon request from the court provides sign language interpreters to assist PWDs who are involved in litigation either as defendants or as complainants.

42. To enhance access to justice and to avoid delays in trials, the Government has put in place a number of initiatives over the years. Specialized Courts have been established to deal with cases of rape, sexual abuse, and human trafficking; violent crimes such as armed robbery; felonies such as murder, manslaughter and crimes against the state; as well as cases related to property, and commercial transactions. These initiatives do not discriminate against but are available to all persons including PWDs. To facilitate access to all, the Judiciary has put in place a Public defenders program with lawyers who routinely provide pro-bono services to persons who cannot afford to hire lawyers to protect their rights and defensible interests within the justice system. The Association of Female Lawyers (AFELL) provides advice and legal services to women and girls to ensure access to justice and protection of their rights and defensible interests. In addition, the Liberian National Bar Association, and several NGOs including Human Rights Organizations routinely provide advice and legal aid to persons in an effort to ensure access to justice.

43. Notwithstanding, PWDs face enormous barriers to the enjoyment of this right including information and communication barriers, inaccessibility of courts facilities, limited judicial capacity to deal with disabled specific legal needs, as well as the absence of a national policy and action plan of access to justice for PWDs.

Article 14 Liberty and security of the person

44. The amended Public Health Law title 33, page 11 section 2.6 addresses the issue of involuntary admission and treatment.

45. There are regulations that guide clinical research, experimentation and treatment. To address institutionalization and the issue of traditional and religious practices against persons with mental disorders, the Government of Liberia developed a Mental Health Policy 2016–2021 and the Mental Health Act 2017 to address institutionalization, treatment and care of persons with mental illnesses. Additionally, public awareness is being conducted throughout the country which has significantly reduced these practices.

Article 15 Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

46. Due to negative perceptions, religious beliefs and cultural practices coupled with lack of education in some areas PWDs have suffered torture, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment. Families sometimes take their relatives who are mentally ill to healing centres, and in the process, some are chained, while the legs of children with clubfoot were placed in mortar and pounded with the aim to straighten the legs. To address

these vices, Article 21 (e) no person inclusive of PWDs shall be subject to torture or inhumane treatment. The Ministry of Justice Human Rights Division in line with its mandates conducts regular monitoring exercises to ensure compliance with Human rights standards and prevent the occurrence of torture in these facilities. In addition, the LNP has its own standard operating procedure (SOP) in investigations and the punishment thereafter. There is also a strong coordination between the LNP and the Mental Health division of the Ministry of Health which allows for the Police to serve as first responders.

47. The National Research Ethics Board (NREB) provides that the sponsor should obtain clinical trial authorization from (LMHRA) Liberia Medicine and Health Product Regulatory Authority. The sponsor must also ensure that the principle investigator obtains ethics committee (EC) approval from his or her institution followed national approval from the Liberia Institute of Biomed Research (LIBR) National Health Science Research (NHSREC), (U.L-PIRE) (IRB) or the National Research Ethics Board (NREB) prior to initiating a study.

48. The E. S. Grant Memorial Mental Home provides inpatient Services to persons with mental illnesses. It has the capacity of eighty (80) in-patients consultations and also provides out-patients consultations. It also caters to person with conditions of substance abuse, by-polar disorder, schizophrenia, anxiety and epilepsy. To prevent torture and degrading treatment of mentally ill patients, the administration of JFK medical Hospital has renovated the E. S. Grant Memorial Hospital to an appreciable standard. In addition, the Ministry of Health has formulated a plan to construct a modern psychiatric hospital.

49. Other measures and strategies to prevent torture in Liberia specifically against PWDs include (the Mental Health Law, Article 1 (E), while thence conducted several trainings for youths, traditional leaders and raised awareness to prevent torture against PWDs consistent with the convention. Additionally, the MOH with support from The Carter Center has trained 236 Mental Health clinicians; 166 General Mental Health clinicians assigned in all fifteen counties in Liberia, 66 Child and Adolescence Mental Health Clinicians assigned in schools and communities to identify, prevent abuse or torture and to create awareness.

50. There are general measure put into place by (GOL), the Human Rights Division MOJ to monitor all prison facilities against torture and report from these monitoring are forwarded to the requisite authority for onward action against would be perpetrators of torture. In addition, the LNP has its own Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) in investigating issues of torture and the punishment thereafter.

Article 16

Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse

51. As a result of Liberia being bound by the principles and obligations set forth in the Convention to ensure that the rights of freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse of PWDs are guaranteed, the government has taken a number of concrete measures including: (i) amended Rape law of 2005; (ii) establishment of Criminal Court E with exclusive jurisdiction over sexual offenses (iii) t National revised Gender policy of 2015; (iv) Domestic violence act of 2017; (v) Children Law,; (vi) Setting up the Sexual Gender Based Violence Unit at the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection; (vii), setting up of One Stop Centres at all health facilities; (viii) establishment of Women and Children Protection Section at the Liberian National Police-LNP; (ix) establishment of a Gender Based Violence (GBV) Crimes Unit at the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), and (x) the adoption of a National Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy of 2010 and Training on Sexual and Reproductive Health for Women with Disabilities. Others include continuous awareness raising on exploitation, violence and abuse of PWDs, and special programs in 16 days of activism, a campaign on sexual violence against women and children including PWDs, immediately preceding International Human Rights Day.

52. The Women and Children Protection Section (WACPS/LNP), Liberia Immigration Service (LIS) Gender Unit, the Human Rights Division of the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), etc... are institutions that are established to swiftly address exploitation, violence and abuse of women and children.

53. Measures have also been adopted including appropriately resourced Complaint Mechanism to effectively investigate instances of exploitation, violence and abuse against women and children and to provide them support. For example, the Persistent Non-Support unit and Gender Based Violence Division of the MGCSP along with the Human Rights Protection Division of MOJ conduct regular mediation conferences so as to avoid litigation. There are also measures employed which include Rape Referral Pathways to investigate exploitation, violence and abuse, where appropriate, to prosecute perpetrators. Components of the Rape Referral Pathway include medical counselling, documentation, investigation and prosecution. However, there is a need for continuous awareness for PWDs to be fully informed about these services.

54. Obtaining statistics of physical or sexual harassment of PWDs remains a challenge. Statistics of victims of physical or sexual harassment are generalized and are not disaggregated to indicate PWDs specific statistics. With reference to psychological recovery, rehabilitation and social reintegration services and programs, a lot needs to be done to address especially but not limited to, sensitive, physical and cognitive recovery.

55. There are no established standardized measures by families of PWDs to recognize and prevent occurrence of all forms of exploitation, violence and abuse against PWDs.

56. Monitoring authorities/institutions are not well resourced.

Article 17

Protecting the integrity of the person

57. Section 16.3 of the Penal Code criminalizes, as abortion, where a person purposely or unjustifiably terminates a pregnancy. However, when there is a substantive risk to the life of the mother, or evidence that the child to be born could face grave physical or mental defect, or the pregnancy resulted from rape, incest or other felonious intercourse, a licensed physician may be justified to terminate the pregnancy. The National Health Policy-National Mental Health Policy also indicates that in life threatening situation and with the consent of the patient, a medical doctor could carry out an abortion.

Article 18

Liberty of movement and nationality

58. All persons in Liberia including PWDs enjoy the right to acquire or change their nationality and not be deprived of it on the bases of any physical impairment; to exercise the freedom of movement including the right to choose their place of residence and to enter or leave the country. Article 13 (b) of the Constitution of Liberia states that “every Liberian citizen shall have the right to leave and to enter Liberia at any time. Liberian citizens and non-Liberian residents may be extradited to a foreign country for prosecution for a criminal offense in accordance with the provisions of an extradition treaty or other reciprocal international agreements in force”. Non-Liberian residents may be expelled for cause from the republic of Liberia.

59. Liberia recognizes this issue in the Alien and Nationality law⁶ which limits the classes of aliens that are eligible to receive visa and excludes from admission to Liberia: aliens who are feeble minded, or insane. However, Liberia has not taken measures to address it.

60. Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities face added risk during displacement. Up to the reporting period, Liberia does not have mechanisms and data in place to report on this challenge.

⁶ Alien and Nationality law, Sub-Chapter (a), Requirements for admission, Section 5.1. ‘Grounds for exclusion’.

Article 19

Living independently and being included in the Community

61. In Liberia, PWDs enjoy the right to choose their place of residence and to live with whom they want to, as spelled out under Chapter 3, Section 13(a) of the Constitution of Liberia, every person lawfully within the Republic of Liberia shall have the right to move freely throughout Liberia, to reside in any part thereof, and to leave there from, subject however to the safeguarding of public security, public order, public health or morals or the rights of freedom of others. In addition, Section 7.1 of the Children Law states in part that, “institutionalization of any child shall be a last resort, and in any case, policy, decisions, and actions on alternative care shall be oriented towards the realization of the child’s right to live in a familiar environment with his or her parents”. In addition, the Children law provides that, “a person who neglects, abandons, abuses, deprives, otherwise discriminates against a child with disabilities on the bases of the child’s disabilities or ethnicity is guilty of felony of second degree”. However, Parents of persons with disabilities and Persons with disabilities must be aware of this provision to abolish the abandonment of children with disabilities. As to social support and security, the Rehabilitation unit of MGCSP and the NCD have the mandate to provide these services, but they are not adequately resourced to address these issues.

62. Refresher trainings for staffs of eleven residential welfare institutions and one transit home are conducted bi-annually by MGCSP on a regular basis.

Article 20

Personal Mobility

63. The MRC was established to provide mobility services. However, during the period 2000–2015, international partners such as Handicap International, the Church of Jesus Christ Latter-day Saints and Christian Aid Ministry have provided support through the provision of wheel chairs to MRC for PWDs in Liberia. The government of Liberia has not provided direct budgetary support to MRC for the provision of these services. In addition, Liberia School for the Blind occasionally receives and provides assistive devices such as sunglasses, reading glasses and white canes from partners and Liberia Revenue Authority.

64. The Monrovia Rehabilitation Center (MRC) provides orthopedic devices as well as the requisite trainings and counseling to increase mobility autonomy of PWDs. In 2015–2016 the MRC conducted training for more than thirty PWDs from Montserrado, Grand Bassa, River Gee, Sinoe, Lofa and Nimba Counties on the assembly and usage of mobility devices.

Article 21

Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information

65. The Constitution of Liberia (1986),⁷ provides for the enjoyment of the right to freedom of expression, and the right to hold opinions, being fully responsible for the abuse thereof. It provides that these right shall not be curtailed, restricted or enjoined by government save during an emergency declared in accordance with this constitution. As a result of the government’s commitment in ensuring that all its citizens have free and unhindered access to information and the freedom of expression, she signed into law on September 16, 2010 the Freedom of Information Act, which provides all persons the right of access to public information. Moreover, on July 21, 2012, the former President of the Republic of Liberia, Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, signed the table mountain declaration, joining a global movement to advance a free press and freedom of expression. It is envisaged that PWDs enjoy these provisions of the Constitution on equal bases with others. However, as of the date of reporting, the availability of information provided to the general public by both Government and private sector including the mass media, is not readily accessible to PWDs in readable formats and technologies appropriate to the different kinds of impairments. Notwithstanding, the government, through the Ministry of Information,

⁷ Constitution of Liberia(1986), Chapter 3, Article 15 (a) and (b).

Cultural Affairs and Tourism, is contemplating on making available national platforms, such as the weekly press briefing, the New Liberia News Paper and webpage, to the National Commission on Disabilities (NCD) to propagate the needs and aspirations of PWDs.

66. Measures adopted to recognize sign language(s) as an official language of the deaf and hard of hearing has been reflected by the presence of sign language interpreters during official functions and court proceedings. Government has also adopted additional measures including budgetary allocations for the employment of sign language interpreters at the NCD to bridge the interpreting of the deaf and hard of hearing and the National Educational system, thereby promoting the learning of, and usage of sign language. This action is taken to ensure the availability of qualified sign language interpreters and the usage of sign language in all settings, particularly in the educational and health sectors. Currently, the government of Liberia, through the NCD, the Department of Children and Social Protection of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, subsidizes eleven deaf institutions in four of the fifteen counties. Montserrado County has eight deaf institutions, while Bomi, Grand Bassa and Margibi Counties each has one deaf institution.

Article 22

Respect for Privacy

67. Article 16 of the Constitution of Liberia states that “no person shall be subjected to interference with the privacy of the person, family, home or correspondence, except by order of a court of competent jurisdiction”. The Penal Code⁸ of Liberia-also provides protection for family, privacy, correspondence and any bridge thereof constitutes a criminal offense of the first degree misdemeanor.

68. In Liberia, there are several institutions including the INHCR, the LNP, Ministries of Justice (Human Rights Division), Internal Affairs, Gender, Children and Social Protection(MGCSP), Health (Mental Health Unit) and NCD have the mandate to ensure privacy of PWDs are respected.

69. There are measures adopted to ensure that service providers and professional caregivers are aware of PWDs rights including rights to private and family life. These measures are put in place to avoid arbitrary interference of PWDs’ privacy, to mention a few: the accountability to a code of ethical conduct among caregivers, including the adoption of the Tools, Regulations and Guidelines for service providers to operate in the Disability sector was developed with support from AIFO, NCD, NUOD and validated by the MGCSP. The 2017 National Mental Health Law of Liberia amongst others provides for and protects the civil, social and health rights of persons with mental disabilities (MOH Mental Health Unit), while the National Commission on Disabilities, established by an act of national legislature in 2005, has a mandate to ensure that the wellbeing and welfare of all PWDs in Liberia are protected, and The establishment of the Disability Network, comprising of line ministries and agencies as well as service providers.

Article 23

Respect for Home and Family

70. Article 16 of the Constitution of Liberia states that “no person shall be subjected to interference with his privacy of person, family, home, or correspondence except by order of a court of competent jurisdiction”. It also provides protection for family, privacy, correspondence and any bridge thereof constitutes a criminal offense of the first degree misdemeanor.

71. The Domestic Relations Law of Liberia⁹ eludes to marriage on the bases of age 21 for males and 18 for females with their mutual consent. These provisions did not specifically mention PWDs. However, they are perceived to be included in these provisions

⁸ Penal Code of Liberia, Chapter 19, Sub-sections 1, Paragraphs a, b and c.

⁹ Domestic Relations Law, Chapter 2, Sub-sections 1–16.

and that these provisions in no way prohibit marriage and family life for PWDs; as such, there are many PWDs who are married, and happily living together and having children.

72. Access to information on sexual reproductive health services is available to PWDs as a result of ongoing awareness activities, trainings, advocacies and workshops. Such trainings are conducted regularly by the Plan Parenthood Association of Liberia; however, trainings have affected the lives of women in the capital city.

73. The Draft Public Health Law of Liberia Article 42 session 2 addresses sexual and Reproductive Rights for all its citizens. Under this there may not be direct measures to safeguard the rights of PWDs also including forced involuntary sterilization and abortions; particularly women and girls with disabilities. The practices of forced and involuntary sterilization are not common in Liberia; except in extreme and life-threatening emergencies as provided for in the Penal Code¹⁰ of which there are no reported cases.

74. Measure adopted to ensure that PWDs exercise their rights and responsibilities regarding guardianship, adoption of children or similar institutions on an equal basis with others are: the Liberia adoption law 2015, Standard Operating Procedure and the Justice system/ the court system which was amended to regulate adoption services by accrediting adoption agencies and adoption services to all children including children with disabilities.

75. The Liberia Children Law of 2011, the Child Welfare and Protection Policy of 2017, the Foster Care, Kinship Care and Independent living guideline of 2014, Tool and Regulations on Appropriate Use of Alternative Care for Children 2010 were measures adopted to address these concerns.

Article 24

Education

76. Liberia has established a Special and Inclusive education Division in the Ministry of Education. The MOE, consistent with the Agenda for Transformation developed its five year (2012–2017) learning agenda, inclusive of the needs of PWDs. Achieving this objective, the Special and Inclusive Education Division of the Ministry of Education has developed the National Inclusive Education Policy in collaboration with other line ministries/agencies of government and relevant Civil Society organizations. Moreover, The Children Law, states that “every child with disabilities shall access and benefit from an inclusive education system, offering education that is more responsive and supportive to the child’s learning needs and talents in a participatory and non-discriminatory manner”. However budgetary allocation to appropriately implement these activities remains a challenge.

77. Steps taken to enable all Children with Disabilities to attend inclusive educational settings and decrease the number of children with disabilities not attending regular schools, the Ministry of Education along with Handicap International (HI) – an international NGO, launched a five year pilot project (2012–2017) working with public and private schools. This has been done in two phases. The first phase took into account the mapping of targeted communities and selection of institutions. The second phase of the project began in 2015; teachers were trained to work with PWDs, ramps were built at these facilities, sanitation were improved to meet the specific needs of PWDs. Also, awareness is being conducted among community and family members on the educational needs of these Children living with Disabilities. Six districts in three Counties, Bomi, Montserrado and Margibi, have benefited from this project. On the onset, only four children with disabilities were enrolled in the schools; currently, the enrolment has increased significantly to above one hundred and four PWDs. Moreover, under this pilot project, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection is providing educational support such as payment of fees for some children with disabilities.

78. In 2008 the Special education Division was established to address the educational needs of PWDs, to enhance and strengthen this division, on August 8, 2011, Liberia signed into law an Education Act creating a Special and Inclusive Education Division, which has the responsibility to implement and evaluate educational policies for PWDs. Furthermore,

¹⁰ Penal Code of Liberia, Chapter 16, chapter 16, paragraph two (2).

with support from Handicap International and Sight Savers an Inclusive Education policy was developed in 2018, additionally, a training manual for teachers working in inclusive and educational settings, in order to identify children/students with special needs.

79. The Ministry of Education through the Special and Inclusive Education Division with support from Handicap International undertook a pilot project in six schools in three counties which led to the creation of ramps, enlargement of toilet facilities and training of teachers to meet the educational needs of PWDs. In order to increase the enrolment of PWDs in these schools, the Special and Inclusive Division raised awareness in communities of piloted schools.

80. As of the date of this report, the government Liberia recorded eleven institutions that provide special education to PWDs. Out of the eleven the total number of students from six of the eleven schools; three provide special education for the Deaf, while three of these schools provide special education for the Blind. The total number of students attending these Deaf schools amount to one hundred ninety two out which seventy one are girls, while one twenty one are boys. The total number of students attending these schools for the Blind are fifty eight, out of the this number, to be added up... schools for the blind.

81. Nine teachers from six educational facilities including two teacher training institutions have been trained in inclusive education in partnership with other non-governmental organizations like Sight Savers; to ensure that educational needs of children with disabilities are met.

82. The Constitution of Liberia provides that the Republic shall direct its policy towards ensuring for all citizens, without discrimination, opportunities for employment and livelihood under just and humane conditions, and towards promoting safety, health and welfare facilities in employment.¹¹

83. In regards to measures taken for access to inclusive, quality and pre-primary, primary education and secondary education, Liberia developed and adopted an Inclusive Education Policy in 2017. This policy was developed with support from Sight Savers International and Handicap International. Additionally, a five year Strategic Plan was developed to address same. However, PWDs are yet to benefit from the implementation aspect.

84. The Ministry of Education through budgetary allocation from government, supports eleven special schools: Namely; Liberia School of the Blind, United Blind Training Academy, Maryland School for the Blind, Arwonho School for the Blind, School for the Orphan and Deaf Ministry, Hope for the Deaf, Monrovia School for the Deaf, Oscar & Viola Stewart School for the Deaf, Oscar Romero School for the Deaf, Liberia School for the Deaf and Christian Association for the Blind.

85. The Ministry of Education in collaboration with Handicap International established six inclusive pilot schools in three counties. Namely: Bomi County: Samuel D. Hills Public School and Sumo Town Public School Sueh Mecca. Margibi County: KRTTI Demonstration School Duarzon Public School Montserrado County: Paynesville Community School, Nyenh Public School. The Ministry of Education (Special and Inclusive Education Division) in collaboration with Sight Savers and Handicap International developed an inclusive education policy in 2017. The policy is geared towards activities for the promotion for the rights of persons with disabilities.

86. The Ministry of Education in collaboration with Handicap International has trained twenty teachers from six pilot schools. These included regular and special education in inclusive education for schools in Montserrado, Margibi and Bomi counties respectively. Additionally, Sight Savers International trained twelve teachers inclusive of three teachers from the special schools in Grand Gedeh for the two pilot schools.

¹¹ Constitution of Liberia (1986), Chapter Two, General Principles of National Policy Article 8.

Article 25

Health

87. Public Health Services are mostly accessible and affordable. The issues of cultural sensitivity and quality remain a challenge, more so for PWDs. There are no existing regulations for the provision of assistive and adaptive technology.

88. Health Promotion materials are readily available but not in formats and languages adapted for PWDs.

89. The national budget does not allocate any specific lines to accessibility of health service for PWDs.

90. While medical practitioners may be able to detect early deformities, this is yet to be included into training curricular at nursing training institutes.

91. Sexual and reproductive health services are free of charge for all persons; however, no particular legislation exist to force PWDs to accept any form of health services without their consent.

92. Work insurance schemes are yet to be fully developed even for non-disabled persons. Therefore, streamlining disability issues in areas of insurances is yet a challenge.

93. No specific measures are in place, however access to all health services are without discrimination on any basis.

Article 26

Habilitation and Rehabilitation

94. Rehabilitation services for physical and mental disabilities and done by the Monrovia Rehabilitation Center (Physical Rehab) and the Step-down Rehabilitation project in Pipeline Road, Paynesville Red light (Mental disabilities among females). Their goal is to help the clients gain maximum independence, full or partial physical and mental recovery. There is a huge challenge in the social and vocational aspects as well as their full inclusion and participation in all aspects of life.

95. There are three major Rehabilitation Service Centers in the country, the MRC at the JFK in Monrovia, Step-Down in Paynesville Montserrado county and Ganta T.B and Leprosy Rehab in Nimba county.

96. No specialized training schools and curricula are established on habilitation and rehabilitation in Liberia. Our professional staffs are trained in recognized schools in other countries.

97. Liberia has adapted few measures to promote the availability, knowledge and the use of assistive devices by establishing the rehabilitation centers. Reference paragraph 95. Additionally, the recognition for the need of training professional outside of Liberia is highly welcoming. PWDs were involved and participated in the development of the 2016–2020 Mental Health Policy and Strategic Plan. Clinicians’ assistants, nurses and medical midwives have been trained in understanding the needs of PWDs in these areas. For example, MOH with support from The Carter Center has trained 236 Mental Health clinicians; 166 General Mental Health clinicians assigned in all fifteen counties in Liberia, 66 Child and Adolescence Mental Health Clinicians assigned in schools and communities.

Article 27

Work and Employment

98. The Government of Liberia through legislative enactment has taken steps to ensure that PWDs have opportunities to work and employment. Section 5 of the NCD Act states that for every hundred non-disabled employees, four percent must be qualified PWDs who are gainfully employed or funds be provided for their employment elsewhere As of the date of reporting, twenty four PWDs, six females and eighteen males, are gainfully employed in twenty two government ministries and agencies assessed by the NCD. However, these legislations are not being enforced.

99. For more information, please refer to the Decent Work Act (Sec. 2.5 – Right to Equal Remuneration and Sec. 2.7 – Prohibition of Discrimination).

100. There has been no mechanism put in place for statistical data on the number of complaints of violation of employment right of PWDs. Notwithstanding, the NCD is currently working closely with the Ministry of Labor and other stakeholders to ensure that employment policies are reviewed and revised where necessary to meet the standard set in the CRPD. However, there are instances of Human Rights abuses for persons becoming disabled on the job, example Cyril George (Liberia National Bar Association) and Daniel Dagbe (General Auditing Commission).

101. There is no legislative or budgetary allotment to support continued vocational training for PWDs. However, the NCD, with support from the UNDP is currently undertaking livelihood programs for PWDs in three counties in the Southeastern region aimed at reducing poverty and dependency syndromes among PWDs. This initiative will be extended to cover the entire country based on the level of support provided by the UNDP and the government of Liberia.

102. As of the date of reporting, twenty four PWDs, six females and eighteen males, are gainfully employed in twenty two government ministries and agencies assessed by the NCD. However, these legislations are not being enforced. (NCD assessment report, 18 August 2016).

Article 28

Adequate Standard of Living

103. Several efforts and initiatives as indicated in this report highlight government’s commitment to fulfilling its responsibilities relative to implementing Article 28 under the Convention. The NCD was established with the primary responsibility to improve the general welfare and wellbeing of PWDs. Under its social protection scheme, the NCD provides quarterly subsidies to twenty five DPOs organization, NUOD, fourteen counties, and fourteen coordinators. It also gives micro loans to four hundred and ten PWDs, and provides school-aid to one hundred eighty six students from primary to tertiary levels. In addition to that, MGCSP provides quarterly subsidies to DPOs for the purpose of empowering PWDs and educational support. The Transit home under the MGCSP caters to children with special needs.

Article 29

Participation in Political and Public life

104. As of the date of this report, there is no survey to inform adequate response to the proportion of population who believe decision making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, and disability and population group. The Constitution of Liberia guarantees the political rights of all persons including PWDs, and as it stands, there is no restriction or legal impediment on the participation of persons with physical, psychosocial or intellectual disabilities.

105. The NEC voters registration regulation August 12, 2016 Article 3, 3.1 Eligibility (who may register) a Liberian citizen who attained the age of 18 or older, may register as a voter except one who has been judicially declared to incompetent, or of unsound mind, or who has been disenfranchised as a result of a conviction of an infamous crime and has not been restored to citizenship.

106. The National Elections Commission (NEC) introduced tactile ballots and hired the services of sign language interpreters with funding from IFES throughout the 15 counties during the 2005 elections and adopted a policy on disabilities, which further strengthens the participation of PWDs in the national electoral processes. The NEC Reform Law 2004, section “5.8” casting of ballot: a voter who is physically incapacitated may request assistance of a person of his or her choice to mark his or her ballot in secret, provided that the person shall be a registered voter. The clerk shall enter on the register opposite the name of the assisted voter, the reason for such assistance. During the 2017 elections, the electoral guideline provides for PWDs to be accompanied by a trusted person of their choice who is

an eligible voter, to assist them in the process and their decision should be kept secret in line with the provision.

107. As for accessibility to the environment the NEC election reform law of 2004 section 8:3.2 (c) “the location and arrangement of the registration centers shall, to the extent which is reasonably and practicably possible, be accessible to PWDs”.

108. Additionally, the Government of Liberia through the NEC has made provision for the use of tactile ballots during the elections. (To form part of the recommendation).

109. The NCD Act November 23, 2005 provides for the holding of three seats in the Liberia National Legislature.

110. Even though the provision in this act has not been directly implemented there are indications of the results of 2017 presidential and legislative elections that two females with physical disability participated in the 2017 elections and one won a seat in Rivercess County and is now a sitting representative, while the other was not successful. Additionally, in 2018 a physically challenged male has won a primary election in the ruling political party to be elected as a representative.

111. NCD and MGCSP as stated in paragraph 41 as of this Report provide support to PWDs for the establishment and maintenance of their organizations to represent their rights and interests. The MGCSP has ensured the inclusion of children with disabilities in the Children’s Representative Forum, which now has one child with visual impairment appointed in the office of the speaker of the forum.

112. The NCD provides quarterly financial support to DPOs/PWDs through the national budget for the establishment and maintenance of their various organizations across the country.

Article 30

Participation in Cultural life, Recreation, leisure and Sport

113. Measure adopted, aimed at ensuring participation, in cultural life, recreation, leisure, tourism and sporting as indicated in the organization and activities of the Liberia National Amputees Soccer Team and the Deaf Lone star Soccer team. These teams have been in existence since 2007 and they have represented Liberia in several international sporting festivals; in 2012 London Paralympics games Liberia’s sole representative was James Bobby Siaffa who is a PWD. At the game he finished seventh place in the men’s 82.5 kg category. The Liberia National Amputee Soccer Team has won the African Cup of nations in Monrovia in 2008, in Ghana 2011 and in Kenya 2013. These has also been to countries including the United States of America, Europe, and other African countries. However, on the contrary, and in general, Liberia has limited cultural, tourism, recreation and sporting facilities. Where available, accessibility remains a challenge for PWDs.

114. The Liberia Cultural Ambassador has a program that promotes PWDs especially visually impaired children in developing their creative and artistic potentials in the music industry. Example: Seimah Weifur 11 years old visually impaired boy who met a Nigerian musical artist Flavour Nabania who is a super star through Ambassador Julie Endee and up to date Seimah Weifur is singing along with The Nigerian Super star. They have produced several songs such as “Most High, No One Like you, And All Power and glory” Moses Swaray won the first UNMIL Youth Annual Award titled (A Star Is Born) and he has inspired a lot of other young PWDs in the Music Industry in Liberia there also a visually impaired barber, Wilfred Gewon who is currently serving as inspiration to many PWDs in Liberia, has devoted some of his time to train young people in barbing and as well as creating awareness on disability issues.

115. The formation of the Amputee football Federation and the national Amputee football Team success in winning the African Nations Cup three times in successions as well as the formation of Liberia Deaf Lonestar Team.

116. Out of the total of 2,105,762.00 United States dollars allotted to the Ministry Youth and Sports for sports services, 15,250.00 is allocated to the Liberia Deaf and amputee federation, representing 1,379%.

Article 31

Statistics and Data Collection

117. The Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-Information services has established the board of commissioners for the implementation of the plan for the collection data for census. This body includes the NCD with the sole purpose of having decision made to affect PWDs. In accordance with international standards the request for the inclusion of the Washington Group sets of questions are proposed for the collection of data on PWDs.

118. Reference to paragraph 117, additionally, the NCD has benefitted from training on the collection of data for PWDs in Senegal 2017 and has proposed for the knowledge to be transferred to LISGIS field workers to be used in the collection.

Article 32

International Cooperation

119. A number of Policies and programs are in place for the implementations of the SDGs on the Human rights based approach in projects directed to PWD developed by efforts of International cooperation, which Civil Society organizations across the country remain involved with. Monitoring and accountability framework to assess the impacts on PWDs of international cooperation programs, projects and policies are carried through appropriate monitoring tools, enforced by follow-ups and review processes.

120. Italian Association Amici di Raoul Follereau (AIFO), Handicap International (HI), Leonard Cheshire foundation, The Carter Center, USAID, and The World Bank have implemented programs catering to PWDs in Liberia in partnership with NCD and NUOD.

121. The Government, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning has established a department (International Cooperation and Regional Integration) to address the issue of regional and international cooperation and development, such as Mano River Union, ECOWAS, AU and the UN, which is not inclusive and accessible to PWDs. For instance, the Inter Governmental Ministerial Meeting held at Farmington Hotel in Margibi County, strong recommendations and comments were made for the inclusion of PWDs with reference to the SDG motto: "Leaving No One Behind" reference report UN ECA.

122. The NCD monitors and supervises projects and programs of International partners developed for the improvement of the lives of PWDs.

123. Due to economic constraints, budgetary allotments are not forthcoming for the participation of the NCD in international conferences. However, support for professional organization membership such as the International Society of Prosthesis and Orthosis (ISPO), Federation African Pour les Techniciens Orthoprothesis (FATO), etc. are not budgeted. The Liberia Albino Society also participates in international conferences.

124. Training programs to build the capacity of PWDs and technicians in data collection with support from UNICEF.

125. Leonard Cheshire Foundation supported a research project on the effective poverty reduction for PWDs in Liberia in 2014, The Carter Center supports the Monitoring of the rights of persons with psychosocial disabilities, and the World Bank has also conducted studies of disability in post conflict countries including Liberia and Africa at large.

Article 33

National Implementation and Monitoring

126. The Government of Liberia has established appropriate institutions (the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Ministry Education (special and Inclusive Education Division); and the National Commission on Disabilities) whose functions cover all disability related affairs. These other situations are the focal points for all disability issues in Liberia, including accreditation of disability institutions, their proper management, operations and even closure where necessary. They seek after the educational and social protection of PWDs. These institutions also ensure that addressing disability challenges are

mainstreamed into policies across government operations and activities including the national budgeting process. The Ministry of Justice as co-chair of the steering committee of the National Human Rights Action Plan of the Republic of Liberia plays a significant coordination role on the implementation of the Human Rights Based Approach to disabilities, amongst various line ministries and agencies.

127. The Government of Liberia established a coordination mechanism through a resolution adopted April 28, 2018 to ensure among others that Liberia prepares and within the government comprising of MGCSP, NCD, and the Ministry of Justice Human Right Division Consistent with its enabling legislation, the Independent National Commission on Human Rights is poised with the responsibility to independently promote and protect the rights of all persons including PWDs in Liberia. Additionally, a network comprising of government ministries and agencies, service providers and DPOs has been setup to monitor the implementation of the CRPD and other policies and legislations to affect the lives of PWDs.

Part III

Achievements

128. Since the signing and ratification of the UNCRPD, the Government of Liberia has made some progress in furtherance of the protection, promotion, and fulfillment of the rights of PWDs as recognized in the UNCRPD through the drafting of laws and legal reforms, institutional and structural arrangements, as well as policies and strategies development. The establishment of NCD in 2005 is a significant achievement for the advancement of the rights of PWDs in Liberia. In collaboration with AIFO-Liberia, the NCD launched the Community Base Rehabilitation (C.B.R) for PWDs which has and continues to provide much needed services to PWDs. The Ministry of Health also provides Mental Health service for habilitation and rehabilitation including mental illness, mental disabilities and physical rehabilitation, while the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection addresses their physical needs.

129. Significant progress has been made through Governments intervention in the areas of right to life, equality before the law, access to justice, enjoyment of liberty and security of PWDS including in particular freedom from exploitation and abuse. Progress has also been noted in the areas of Education, accessibility for personal mobility, acquisition of advocacy skills by PWDs to advocate for their rights and voice out their needs.

130. The establishment of National Human Rights Action Plan Steering Committee and the drafting of Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP), which ensures that rights of all persons (including PWDs) are respected. In addition, the development of the five year (2018–2022) National Action Plan for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities is also a major achievement.

Challenges

131. Challenges to the effective protection, promotion, and fulfillment of the rights PWDs as recognized in the UNCRPD includes:

(a) Discrimination and inaccessibility to information and the environment are the overarching challenges that hinder the effective promotion, protection and fulfillment of the rights of PWDs. Examples: employment sector, health care system, and housing still remain a challenge;

(b) PWDs, ineffective and unreliable data collection system, which makes it difficult to ascertain the number of PWDs and to conduct needs assessment to ensure all PWDs, are captured for benefits and rights they are entitled to;

(c) Although, the Country has laws of general application under which the rights of PWDs can be protected, promoted and fulfilled, there are few laws, policies and mechanisms to directly address issues affecting PWDs, impacts on the effective protection, promotion, and fulfillment of the rights of PWDs as recognized in the UNCRPD;

(d) PWDs do not enjoy equal opportunities in political representation and decision making positions. Although there are some qualified PWDs, the fact that they have some form of disability, discrimination against them hinders their chances of being elected to occupy public offices including Legislative and presidential offices;

(e) Inadequate budgetary support to address the needs of PWDs including logistical and technical support.

Recommendations

132. That Liberia be provided with financial, logistical and technical support to facilitate the development of mechanisms for quality, accurate and reliable data collection on PWDs to ensure that they are included in all national activities and participate in vital decision making processes, like the Constitutional Review Committee.

133. Considering the current economic condition of Liberia, agencies and ministries of government should be financially and technically supported to engage in active national awareness raising programs at the national and local levels, such as conducting activities in local dialects in all 15 counties on the rights of PWDs. This will educate stakeholders/duty bearers and rights-holders that PWDs are not a burden on the society rather, a part and contributors.

134. A five year Nation Action Plan for the Inclusion of Persons with disabilities (NAP) has been developed with support from the United Nations Development Programs (UNDP). Implementation of the action plan remains a serious challenge. We therefore recommend that the NCD and collaborating ministries and agencies be supported to effectively implement the action plan.

135. That the international community makes inclusive all programs for PWDs, with emphasis on the UN agencies.
