



GENDER POLICY AND ACTION PLAN 2021–2025

For the Liberian Ministry of National
Defense and the Armed Forces of Liberia



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Gender Policy and Action Plan 2021–2025

For the Liberian Ministry of National
Defense and the Armed Forces of Liberia



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	4	THE GENDER POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS	15
SUMMARY	5	Methodology	17
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	6	Key findings of the institutional gender assessment	17
Background	7	Capacity and training	17
Gender equality	9	Access to services	17
Women's participation	9	Data on gender-related crime	17
Structure of the Ministry of Defense and the Armed Forces of Liberia	10	Laws, policies and planning	17
Ministry of Defense	10	Gender-responsive operations	18
Armed Forces of Liberia	10	Community relations	18
Existing legal and policy framework	10	Civil society	18
International laws and standards	11	Accountability and oversight	18
Regional laws and standards	11	Personnel	18
National laws and standards	12	Institutional culture	19
		Leadership	19
		Validation of the gender policy and action plan	19
		OVERVIEW OF THE GENDER POLICY	21
		Scope	22
		Purpose	22
		Mission	22
		Ministry of Defense	22
		Armed Forces of Liberia	22
		Goal	22
		Objectives	22

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS	23
Strategic priority 1 – Capacity and training	24
Actions	24
Strategic priority 2 – Leadership and accountability	24
Actions	24
Strategic priority 3 – Gender experts	24
Actions	24
Strategic priority 4 – Recruitment and retention	25
Actions	25
Strategic priority 5 – Gender-related crime	25
Actions	25
Strategic priority 6 – Institutional culture	26
Actions	26
Strategic priority 7 – Coordination	26
Actions	26
Strategic priority 8 – Policy and procedure	26
Actions	26
Strategic priority 9 – Monitoring and evaluation	27
Actions	27

FRAMEWORK FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION	29
Policy implementation	30
Monitoring, reporting and evaluation	31
Reporting mechanism	31
Budget estimates	32

ANNEXE	
Five-year action plan (2021–2025)	34
Example terms of reference for a Monitoring and Evaluation Unit	46
Role	46
Recruitment criteria	46
Responsibilities	46
Definitions	47

FOREWORD

On behalf of the Government of Liberia, it is my pleasure to present the first gender policy and action plan for the Liberia Ministry of National Defense and the Armed Forces of Liberia.

This policy and action plan was developed as a result of the important collaboration with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in supporting the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security in Liberia. It acts as an important instrument to ensure commitments made in the National action plan on women, peace and security 2019–2023 come to fruition.

Produced collaboratively with the Ministry of Defense and the Armed Forces of Liberia Gender Unit, this policy and action plan aims to promote equal opportunities for all personnel and advance gender equality within the institutions.

The Government of Liberia acknowledges the importance of realizing women’s full and meaningful participation to achieving gender equality. This policy and action plan confirms the Ministry’s commitment to take action and bring about meaningful change through increasing the participation of women in our armed forces, and to protect the human rights of women and girls in Liberia and globally.

We must now take this policy and action plan and work to accomplish the strategic priorities and actions. This is a crucial step in advancing gender equality in the institutions, to drive better outcomes for women and men in our armed forces and in the communities we serve.

Hon. Daniel D. Ziankahn, Jr. (Rtd. Maj. Gen.)
Minister of National Defense
Republic of Liberia

SUMMARY

Gender equality forms an important pillar of the human rights framework and is essential for sustainable development. Gender inequality is prominent in Liberia, with women continuing to face discrimination socially, politically and economically due to strong gender stereotypes, customary inequalities, high rates of sexual and gender-based violence, insufficient access to justice, a lack of accountability for human rights abuses and harmful traditional practices. Women’s meaningful participation in peace and security in Liberia is low, with women making up only 4.4 per cent of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL). Dominant traditional and cultural perceptions that women belong at home and that matters such as security are a man’s domain exacerbate the exclusion of women from peacebuilding processes and discredit their contribution, hindering a sustained peace.²

This gender policy and action plan forms an important part of the Government of Liberia’s effort to increase gender equality and implement a number of key existing legal and policy frameworks, including the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and the National Gender Policy of Liberia.

This gender policy and action plan was developed in close partnership with the Government of Liberia, as a recommendation from the conduct of an institutional gender assessment of the Ministry of Defense (MoD) and AFL. The assessment established a baseline for how gender has been integrated into the institutions and provided recommendations to inform this gender policy and action plan. Despite positive steps, the assessment found that gender is not yet mainstreamed throughout the MoD and AFL, and more work needs to be done to make the institutions gender responsive and gender sensitive.

The purpose of the gender policy and action plan is to act as an internal guidance document, outlining the strategic priorities and actions for achieving gender equality and integrating a gender perspective into the MoD and AFL over five years, from 2021 to 2025. The strategic priority areas span across training and capacity-building, leadership and accountability, recruitment and retention, gender-related crime, institutional culture, institutional frameworks for coordination, institutional policy frameworks and monitoring and evaluation. The gender policy action plan implementation is envisaged to cost USD1,555,000.

1 Government of Liberia, *National Action Plan on Women, Peace And Security 2019–2023* (Monrovia, Government of Liberia, 2019).
2 Ibid.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia
BPfA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CSO	civil society organization
GSSNT	Gender and Security Sector National Taskforce
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MoD	Ministry of Defense
SSI	security sector institution
ToR	terms of reference



BACKGROU

BACKGROUND

Established in 1962, the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) had a primary mission to defend the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Liberia. During the civil war, the AFL became engaged in internal security, a role usually conducted by the national police force. A lack of training on how to support civil authorities resulted in numerous complaints against military personnel of human rights violations.¹ Women in Liberia have historically faced barriers to participating in education and employment, leading to disproportionate rates of poverty when compared to men and, as a result, a high number of women combatants during the civil war.² Women and girls made up an estimated 30–40 per cent of the total combatants.³

1 Christine Whitmer, “Security sector reform in Liberia: uneven progress”, *United States Marine Corps Command and Staff College* (2011).

2 Imra Specht, Crisis Response and Reconstruction, *Red Shoes: Experiences of Girl-Combatants in Liberia* (Geneva, International Labour Organization, 2006).

3 Christine Whitmer, “Security sector reform in Liberia: uneven progress”, *United States Marine Corps Command and Staff College* (2011).

The 14-year conflict had devastating social, economic and political impacts. Women were particularly impacted by the conflict, with the World Health Organization estimating that 82 per cent of Liberian women were subjected to multiple forms of violence, and 77 per cent experienced rape.⁴ As well as combatants, women served as peacemakers during the conflict. Liberian women’s groups played a significant role in the peacemaking process, famously protesting during the presidency of former President Charles Taylor and during the peace agreements in Ghana.⁵ The country’s first post-conflict and first female President, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, played a key role in the women’s movement, highlighting the importance of women’s contribution to peace and security.

To assist the transition of Liberia to a post-conflict state, the United Nations Mission in Liberia was formed in 2003 under United Nations Security Council resolution 1509. The mission had two specific security sector reform tasks – to restructure the police force, and to form a new and restructured military.⁶ “The greatest challenge for [security sector

reform] in Liberia is rebuilding trust in the emerging security apparatus after a history of violence and government predations on the population.”⁷ Part 4 of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement addressed security sector reform by ensuring that the future force would be ethnically balanced without political bias, and members of the AFL would be screened for prior human rights violations. President Sirleaf Johnson recognized the role women played in the crisis and the importance of their inclusion in the security sector reform process by ensuring women were integrated into the new government and security sector institutions (SSIs).⁸

In 2005, the United States funded private military contractors to train a new Liberian military. Training for the AFL during this time focused on “international humanitarian law and the law of war, separation of army and police responsibilities and the centrality of civilian control of the military.”⁹ Recruiting women into the AFL was a security sector reform priority, and President Sirleaf Johnson set an initial target of 20 per cent women. By 2009, women represented 5 per cent of the AFL. In 2016, the United Nations Mission in Liberia handed over security responsibilities to the Government of Liberia and,

4 Government of Liberia, *National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2019–2023* (Government of Liberia, Monrovia, 2019).

5 Ibid.

6 Christine Whitmer, “Security sector reform in Liberia: uneven progress”, *United States Marine Corps Command and Staff College* (2011).

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

in 2018, the peacekeeping mission departed after 14 years in the country.

Border closures due to the 2014 Ebola outbreak and the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic have had a significant impact on the livelihoods of Liberians, hampering trade and travel and increasing tensions for border communities such as those within the Mano River Union.¹⁰

Gender equality

Liberia's human development remains low, ranking 176 out of 189 countries in the 2019 Human Development Index¹¹ and 155 out of 162 countries in the 2018 Gender Inequality Index.¹² While Liberia has succeeded in sustaining peace, the government's *Strategic roadmap for national healing, peacebuilding and reconciliation* (2013–2030) identified several existing key conflict triggers, including:

- Suppressive cultural practices against women
- Sexual and gender-based violence
- Distrust in institutions
- A sense of injustice
- Perception of widespread corruption
- A culture of impunity¹³
- There are also various structural barriers to Liberian women's participation in peace and security processes, including:
- An inadequate representation of women in national and local decision-making processes
- Insufficient and unequal access to natural and economic resources
- Gender discriminatory relations within society
- A poorly developed community infrastructure¹⁴

10 Government of Liberia, *National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2019–2023* (Monrovia, Government of Liberia, 2019)

11 United Nations Development Programme, "Human Development Index" (New York, UNDP, 2019), <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/LBR>.

12 United Nations Development Programme, "Gender Inequality Index" (New York, UNDP, 2018), <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII>.

13 Government of Liberia, *National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2019–2023* (Monrovia, Government of Liberia, 2019).

14 Ibid.

In addition, women in Liberia continue to face discrimination socially, politically and economically because of:

- Strong gender stereotypes
- Customary inequalities
- High rates of sexual and gender-based violence
- Insufficient access to justice
- A lack of accountability for human rights abuses
- Harmful traditional practices¹⁵

Women's participation

Women's political representation in Liberia is low, with only 11.7 per cent of the seats in the Legislature held by women in 2018.¹⁶ Dominant traditional and cultural perceptions that women belong at home and that matters such as security are a man's domain exacerbate the exclusion of women from peacebuilding processes and discredit their contribution, hindering a sustained peace.¹⁷

In 2017, the Gender and Security Sector National Taskforce (GSSNT) reported that only 3 per cent of the AFL were women, the lowest when compared with other Liberian SSIs such as the:

- Liberia National Police – 19 per cent women in 2018
- Liberia Immigration Service – 29 per cent in 2018
- Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency – 15 per cent in 2018¹⁸

The *National action plan on women, peace and security 2019–2023* sets a target of 10 per cent women in the AFL by 2023.¹⁹ In December 2020, the AFL reported that, of 1,858 members, 81 (4.4 per cent) were women, which includes 4.3 per cent female officers (6 female and 134 male) and 4.4 per cent female enlisted personnel (75 female and 1,643 male).²⁰

15 Ibid.

16 United Nations Development Programme, "Gender Inequality Index" (New York, UNDP, 2018), <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII>.

17 Government of Liberia, *National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2019–2023* (Monrovia, Government of Liberia, 2019).

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Liberia Ministry of Defense, "Sex-disaggregated data for AFL" (Monrovia, MoD, 2000).

The Government of Liberia endorsed the *National action plan on women, peace and security 2019–2023*, released in November 2019, which includes a specific component aimed at increasing the number of female personnel in SSIs (also see '[National action plan on women, peace and security](#)').

Structure of the Ministry of Defense and the Armed Forces of Liberia

Ministry of Defense

The Minister of National Defense is the principal administrator of the Ministry of Defense (MoD), subject to the authority and direction of the President as Commander-in-Chief of the AFL. The Minister is assisted by the Deputy Minister of Administration and the Deputy Minister of Operations. There are five assistant ministers within the Ministry:

- Administration
- Public affairs
- Coast guard affairs
- Civil works and plans
- Policy and operations

Armed Forces of Liberia

The AFL comprises:

- One brigade
- Two infantry battalions
- A service support company
- A military police company
- A logistics command
- The Liberian National Coast Guard

Existing legal and policy framework

The Government of Liberia is guided by several international, regional and national laws and standards focused on gender equality. Specifically, the work of the MoD and the AFL on gender equality are guided by the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325, the *National action plan on women, peace and security 2019–2023*, the *National gender policy 2018–2022*, and the *Pro-poor agenda for prosperity and development 2018–2023*.

International laws and standards

Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly, CEDAW is described as the “international bill of rights for women” – a convention designed to lay out an agenda for action for countries to ensure women’s equality and right to live a life free from discrimination.²¹ The Government of Liberia ratified the CEDAW in 1984 and the most recent concluding observations were in 2015 on the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports.²²

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA)

The 1995 BPfA identified 12 key areas for action to ensure gender equality:

- Women and poverty
- Education and training of women
- Women and health
- Violence against women
- Women in armed conflict
- Women and the economy
- Women in power and decision-making
- Institutional mechanisms
- Human rights of women
- Women and the media
- Women and the environment
- The girl child²³

In the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Liberia (2015), CEDAW called on Liberia to use the BPfA in its efforts to implement the provisions of the convention.²⁴

²¹ United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, “Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women New York, 18 December 1979” (CEDAW) (New York, OHCHR, 1979).

²² United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, “UN Treaty Body Database” (New York, OHCHR), https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/countries.aspx?CountryCode=LBR&Lang=EN.

²³ UN Women, “12 critical areas” (New York, UN Women, 2021), <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw59/feature-stories>

²⁴ United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, “UN Treaty Body Database” (New York, OHCHR), https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treaty-bodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fLBR%2fCO%2f7-8&Lang=en

The Women, Peace and Security Agenda

On 31 October 2000, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1325, marking the first time the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security addressed the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women.²⁵ An additional nine resolutions have since been adopted – 1820 (2008), 1888 (2008), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019) and 2493 (2019), forming the international policy framework and Women, Peace and Security Agenda.²⁶ In 2017, the United Nations Security Council President called upon Liberia to ensure that the October elections included the full participation of women.²⁷

General recommendation 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations (GR30)

In October 2013, CEDAW adopted GR30, affirming and describing its linkages with resolution 1325. In the concluding observations on the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Liberia, the CEDAW urged Liberia to consider GR30 by ensuring that the *National action plan on women, peace and security 2019–2023* is regularly reviewed, and that women be fully involved in all stages of the post-conflict and reconstruction process.²⁸

Regional laws and standards

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

Established in 1975, Liberia is one of 15 countries that make up the ECOWAS. In 1999, the ECOWAS adopted the *Protocol relating to the mechanism for conflict*

prevention, management, resolution, peacekeeping and security,²⁹ which is regarded as one of the most ambitious instruments on the regulation of collective security.³⁰ In 2008, the ECOWAS adopted a Conflict Prevention Framework (ECFP), which includes Component 10 on women, peace and security. In 2010, Liberia, as part of ECOWAS, adopted the Dakar Declaration and ECOWAS Plan of Action for the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820 in West Africa.³¹ In 2017, ECOWAS also adopted an ECFP action plan for the women, peace and security component.³²

Mano River Union (MRU)

Established in 1973 to promote regional cooperation, the MRU comprises Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire. In 2000, the Mano River Women's Peace Network was formed to promote women's participation in the process of restoring peace in Africa and subsequently participated in formal peace negotiations that ended Liberia's civil war in 2003.³³ In 2019, the United Nations Development Programme worked with the MRU to establish a memorandum of understanding to strengthen regional integration to advance peace and security, to which the third objective focuses on increasing women's participation.³⁴

25 United Nations Security Council, "resolution 1325" (New York, UNSC, 2000).
26 Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, "About women, peace and security in the Security Council" (New York, WILPF, 2021), [https://www.peacewomen.org/security-council/WPS-in-SC-Council#:~:text=The%20Security%20Council%20has%20adopted,%2C%20and%202493%20\(2019\).](https://www.peacewomen.org/security-council/WPS-in-SC-Council#:~:text=The%20Security%20Council%20has%20adopted,%2C%20and%202493%20(2019).)
27 United Nations Security Council, "Statement by the President of the Security Council – The situation in Liberia" (New York, UNSC, 2017).
28 United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, "UN Treaty Body Database" (New York, OHCHR), https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treaty-bodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fLBR%2fCO%2f7-8&Lang=en.

29 Dorina Bekoe and Aida Megnistu, *Operationalizing the ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security* (Dakar, International Peace Academy, 2002).
30 Isabel Meyer, *ECOWAS: The Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping And Security* (Munich, GRIN Verlag, 2009).
31 Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, "Regional action plans: ECOWAS" (New York, WILPF), <https://www.peacewomen.org/action-plan/regional-action-plan-ecowas>.
32 UNOWAS Magazine, "The ECOWAS Commission has made considerable efforts to ensure that women are at the heart of socio-economic development the region" (Dakar, UNOWAS, 2020), <https://unowas.unmissions.org/%E2%80%9C-ecowas-commission-has-made-considerable-efforts-ensure-women-are-heart-socio-economic-development>.
33 Centre for Security Sector Governance, "Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET)" (Geneva, DCAF, 2021), <https://issat.dcaf.ch/Share/People-Organisations/Organisations/Mano-River-Women-s-Peace-Network2>.
34 United Nations Development Programme Sierra Leone, "Historic agreement signed between UNDP and Mano River Union to work jointly on peace, security and development" (Freetown, UNDP Sierra Leone, 2019), <https://www.sl.undp.org/content/sierraleone/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/undp-signs-mou-with-mano-river-union-to-work-jointly-on-peace--s.html>.

African Union

Liberia is one of the 53 members of the African Union, which aims to improve human life, finances, infrastructure and security in Africa. Although the African Union does not have a dedicated action plan for implementing resolution 1325, it has ensured that its principles are included in a range of key conventions, policies and protocols, including the 2004 Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa and 2009 Gender Policy.³⁵

National laws and standards

Liberian Constitution of 1986

Chapter three ‘Fundamental rights’, article 11 of the Liberian Constitution of 1986 states that discrimination based on ethnic background, race, gender, place of origin or political opinion is prohibited and that all persons are entitled to equality.³⁶ The Constitution does not provide an official definition of discrimination or discriminatory practices. In 2012, the Constitutional Review Committee was established to lead the process of constitution review; however, this has not yet proceeded.

The National Gender Policy of Liberia

The National Gender Policy of Liberia was first released in 2009. A second revised version covering 2018–2022 was released in 2017. The policy focuses on two key approaches:

- Targeted interventions for women and girls or men and boys aimed at creating greater gender equity
- Gender mainstreaming within policies and programmes

The policy states that it should act as a framework and a guide for integrating gender equality into all ministries, agencies and commissions, non-governmental organizations, embassies, and public and private institutions.³⁷

National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security

35 Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, *Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa* (New York, United Nations, 2016).

36 Government of Liberia, *Liberia’s Constitution of 1986* (Monrovia, Government of Liberia, 1986).

37 Government of Liberia, *National Gender Policy 2018–2022* (Monrovia, Government of Liberia, 2018).

Liberia adopted the first national action plan on women, peace and security in May 2009 for 2009–2013. In November 2019, the *National action plan on women, peace and security 2019–2023* was released. The goals of the plan are that “women and girls’ safety, physical and mental health and security are assured; and are fully protected under legislation and policies that promote their empowerment and full participation at all levels, in building sustainable and inclusive, peace and security in Liberia”.³⁸ Output 3.3 of Pillar 3 in the plan calls for the increased participation and leadership of women and young women in SSIs, including a target of 10 per cent women in the AFL by 2023. In 2017, the GSSNT reported that women comprised only 3 per cent of the AFL, the lowest when compared with other Liberian SSIs (see ‘[Women’s participation](#)’).³⁹ Activity 3.3.1.1 calls for the “GSSNT to enhance advocacy efforts to increase women’s participation in SSIs including capacity-building for the GSSNT on [women, peace and security] issues and encouraging [the ministries of Defense and Justice] and to draft gender policies similar to the LNP”.⁴⁰ The MoD and GSSNT are listed as two of the responsible ministries and coordinating partners, with a budget of USD500,000 over four years for implementation.⁴¹

National security strategy of the Republic of Liberia (2008)

The National Security Strategy identifies human security as a prerequisite for national stability, peace and security. One of the strategies specific national security objectives is to ensure “gender mainstreaming at every level of security policy making and practices. Thus, gender awareness and sensitivity should be incorporated into training curricula of security agencies”.⁴²

Pro-poor agenda for prosperity and development (PAPD)

38 Government of Liberia, *National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2019–2023* (Monrovia, Government of Liberia, 2019).

39 Government of Liberia, *National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2019–2023* (Monrovia, Government of Liberia, 2019).

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid.

42 Government of Liberia, *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Liberia* (Monrovia, Government of Liberia, 2008).

The PAPD is a national development plan, aimed at promoting sustainable and inclusive development. The plan acknowledges the inequalities women and girls experience and aims to allow them to reach their full potential. Pillar Three of the PAPD focuses on sustaining peace:

- Ending fragility and root causes of conflict
- Ensuring access to justice, rule of law and human rights
- Complying with international, regional and national human rights
- Improving security service delivery⁴³

Gender-responsive planning and budgeting policy mainstreaming gender into public financial management (2019–2023)

Liberia's Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting Policy is led by the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning. The policy aims for all institutions and departments to mainstream gender in their planning and budgeting processing, equating in equitable expenditure and resource allocation to eliminate gender inequality.

⁴³ Government of Liberia, *Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development 2018–2023* (Monrovia, Government of Liberia, 2018).



THE GENDER POLICY
DEVELOPMENT
PROCESS

THE GENDER POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

This gender policy and action plan was developed in close partnership with the Government of Liberia, as a recommendation of the institutional gender assessment of the Ministry of Defense (MoD) and the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) published in 2021. The assessment established a baseline for how gender has been integrated into the institutions and provided recommendations to inform this gender policy and action plan.

The gender assessment, along with this gender policy and action plan, is as a result of the Government of Liberia endorsing the *National action plan on women, peace and security 2019–2023*. It will also contribute to the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Liberia (2008)⁴⁴, the revised National Gender Plan (2018-2022)⁴⁵, the Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (to which Pillar Three focuses on Sustaining the Peace)⁴⁶ and the ECOWAS Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security.⁴⁷ It will also contribute to a number of Liberia’s international commitments, including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW; specifically general recommendation 30 addressing women in conflict, post-conflict and conflict prevention), and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995.

The conduct of the institutional gender assessment, and subsequent development of this gender policy and action plan, was led by Sarah Brown, international consultant for United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) Liberia, with the support of UN Women Liberia.

The institutional gender assessment aimed to:

- Understand the extent to which gender mainstreaming has been internalized and acted on by MoD and AFL staff
- Assess the extent of gender mainstreaming in terms of the development and delivery of gender sensitive products and services
- Identify and share information on mechanisms, practices and attitudes that have made a positive contribution to mainstreaming gender in the organizations
- Assess the level of resources allocated and spent on gender mainstreaming and gender activities
- Examine the extent to which human resource policies are gender sensitive
- Examine the staff sex balance at different levels of the organizations
- Set up the initial baseline of performance on gender mainstreaming in the MoD and the AFL, with a view to introducing an ongoing process of benchmarking to measure progress in promoting gender equality
- Measure progress in implementing action plans on gender mainstreaming and recommend revisions as needed
- Identify areas for improvement and suggest possible strategies to better implement the action plan

44 Government of Liberia, *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Liberia* (Monrovia, Government of Liberia, 2008).

45 Government of Liberia, *National Gender Policy 2018–2022* (Monrovia, Government of Liberia, 2017).

46 Government of Liberia, *Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development 2018–2023* (Monrovia, Government of Liberia, 2018).

47 Dorina Bekoe and Aida Megnistu, *Operationalizing the ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security* (Dakar, International Peace Academy, 2002).

Methodology

The *Gender self-assessment guide for the police, armed forces and justice sector*⁴⁸ was the methodology used to conduct the gender assessment and draft the subsequent gender policy and action plan.

Data-collection methods for the assessment component included:

- **Surveys.** Using the online survey tool SurveyMonkey, 46 in-depth surveys were conducted by the MoD and AFL Gender Unit over three days at the Edward Beyan Kessely Barracks in Margibi County, the Liberian Coast Guard Base in Monrovia, Camp Sando Ware in Todee, and Rural Montserrado County Barracks. Those surveyed included women and men of the AFL at the enlisted rank level, from a range of different job categories.
- **Interviews.** 13 semi-structured interviews were held in Monrovia with senior government officials; AFL leadership, human resources and training staff; female AFL officers; and individuals from local civil service organizations (CSOs).
- **Focus group.** A focus group was conducted in Monrovia, at the MoD headquarters with the members of the MoD and AFL Gender Unit.
- **Desktop review.** A desktop review of 20 current MoD and AFL policy and legal frameworks was conducted, as well as other United Nations and CSO assessments and reports, and other Government of Liberia ministries' policies.

Key findings of the institutional gender assessment

Despite positive steps, the assessment found that gender is not yet mainstreamed throughout the MoD and AFL, and more work needs to be done to make the institutions gender responsive and gender sensitive.

Capacity and training

Most (89 per cent) of the AFL-enlisted personnel who participated in the survey component of the assessment stated that they had received training on human rights, including women's human rights. Gender Unit and Legal Department staff are

showing good practice by co-delivering training about equal opportunities and sexual harassment during the 'back to basics' component of the new recruits course. Despite this, more awareness is needed about the work of the Gender Unit, with only 37 per cent of survey participants stating that they knew who their local gender officer was and how to contact them.

Access to services

Impunity for cases of gender-based violence in Liberia is high, with rape being the most reported crime in the country. But, rape also has the lowest rates of justice for survivors, with less than 2 per cent of cases resulting in a conviction. Although informal referral pathways exist for survivors of gender-based violence from the AFL health centres to local CSOs, more work needs to be done to ensure survivors can access services and justice.

Data on gender-related crime

Gender-based violence remains a significant issue in Liberia and the prevalence rate for rape is high. Despite this, rates of reporting of gender-related crime are low within the institutions, with no cases of gender-based violence reported at the MoD since the Gender Unit was created. Leadership within the AFL takes an active role in addressing gender-based violence; however, CSOs have urged the institutions to consider filing data on gender-related crime through the national Gender-Based Violence Information Management System.

Laws, policies and planning

The Government of Liberia is guided by several international, regional and national laws and standards focused on gender equality; specifically:

- CEDAW
- the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325
- *National action plan on women, peace and security 2019–2023*
- *National gender policy 2018–2022*
- *Pro-poor agenda for prosperity and development 2018–2023*

At an institutional level, the MoD and the AFL do not yet have action plans or policies to address gender

⁴⁸ Megan Bastick, *Gender Self-Assessment Guide for the Police, Armed Forces and Justice Sector* (Geneva, Centre for Security Sector Governance, 2011).

equality or implement the *National action plan on women, peace and security 2019–2023*. Despite this, the MoD and AFL Gender Unit have made significant strides since the establishment of the unit in 2017. Despite not having an allocated budget, gender has been integrated into several policies and procedures of the AFL, including the Initial Entry Training Soldier’s Handbook, the Uniform Code of Military Justice and the AFL Code of Conduct. Within the MoD and the AFL, by law, women or particular groups of men and women are not to be excluded from any roles. Restrictions on women serving in the infantry were lifted shortly after the United States Army removed their restrictions in 2013. Coordination with the Gender and Security Sector National Taskforce is strong; however, more work is needed to ensure the Office of the Inspector General is equipped to handle issues of gender-based violence.

Gender-responsive operations

According to the survey component of the assessment, the consideration of gender in operations is high, with most of the AFL-enlisted personnel surveyed stating that they consider gender during the conduct of operations, planning and mission reporting. Despite this, more work is needed to formalize specific procedures, especially those relating to sexual exploitation and abuse.

Community relations

Most members in the MoD and the AFL believe public perceptions of the institutions is highly positive. Recent national surveys on Liberian citizens’ perceptions of security sector institutions (SSIs) listed the AFL as the most trustworthy security agency in Liberia.

Civil society

Civil society participation focused on peace and security is strong in Liberia, with several dedicated women’s networks working on the issue of gender including the:

- Liberia Female Law Enforcement Association
- medica Liberia
- Global Network of Women Peacebuilders
- Women’s NGO Secretariat of Liberia
- Kofi Annan Institute for Conflict Transformation

These networks provide public awareness, accountability and links between SSIs and the community, including projects to encourage more women to join the AFL.

Accountability and oversight

Procedures for lodging complaints of gender-based violence, sexual harassment, sex discrimination or other human rights abuses against a colleague in both the MoD and the AFL exist, although reporting rates are low and more awareness is needed both on the complaints procedure and what constitutes unacceptable behaviour. Military police handle any external complaints of gender-based violence that present to AFL health centres. Informal coordination exists with local CSOs such as medica Liberia; however, more work is needed to formalize this process and provide a more transparent approach to the public on the military justice process. The Inspector General’s Office does not provide internal oversight on issues of MoD, gender equality or the *National action plan on women, peace and security 2019–2023*.

Personnel

In early 2021, the MoD Human Resources Department reported that the Ministry has 261 employees, of which 64 (25 per cent) are women and 197 (75 per cent) are men. Numbers of women in leadership are increasing, with 7 of the 17 (41 per cent) director positions and 5 of 12 (42 per cent) deputy director positions filled by women. The MoD has made informal efforts to boost women’s meaningful participation in leadership roles; however, more progress is needed to support women to achieve and retain these positions.

In December 2020, the AFL reported that, of 1,858 members, 81 (4.4 per cent) are women, which includes 4.3 per cent female officers (6 female and 134 male) and 4.4 per cent female enlisted personnel (75 female and 1,643 male). Although female representation in the AFL is low, there are positive signs in institutional culture, with most AFL-enlisted personnel surveyed stating that it is important to increase the number of women in the armed forces, including in leadership roles.

The recruitment criteria, process and physical fitness standards for both women and men seeking employment at the MoD and the AFL is the same.

Despite physical fitness being the number one barrier listed to increasing female participation, most members interviewed were against changing the standards for women due to issues of lack of respect.

Women at the MoD and the AFL receive 12 weeks of paid maternity leave; however, men do not receive paternity leave at either institution.

Women and men at the MoD and the AFL have equal salaries, although several barriers were listed to women's retention and promotion. Informal mentoring programmes for women exist with AFL leadership; however, there is a want and need to formalize these initiatives. Training, workshops and seminars for uniformed women facilitated by local CSOs are seen as good practice. Issues of personnel welfare – such as appropriate accommodation, housing facilities and access to schools for dependents of military personnel, including safe transportation – was mentioned regularly as the main challenges that the AFL faces to achieving gender equality.

Institutional culture

Most MoD and AFL employees that participated in the assessment believed that there are respectful working relationships between women and men within the institutions. Expressions of gender inequality, gender stereotyping, gender discrimination and sexual harassment are normalized within the institutions, with many participants stating that this does not occur, despite listing various examples of inequality and discrimination such as women being responsible for the cooking and cleaning on operations due to their gender. Members from CSOs voiced that “sex for work” is common practice, and young women, women new to armed forces or women in lower ranks are particularly vulnerable. Low rates of reporting make data-collection and analysis difficult. The AFL zero-tolerance policy on sexual harassment has been strongly communicated within the institution.

Leadership

MoD and AFL members that participated in the assessment spoke highly of leadership and their commitment to gender equality. In particular, the AFL Chief of Staff and Deputy Chief of Staff are perceived as strong gender champions and are highly

active in the gender-based violence complaints process. Despite this, leadership in both the MoD and the AFL would benefit from more training on gender and human rights.

Validation of the gender policy and action plan

Validation workshop

After the drafting the gender policy and action plan, a validation workshop was held in Monrovia to socialize the policy and action plan, and receive feedback and recommendations from workshop participants.

A list of workshop participants is available at annex B.

A large, stylized white number '5' is the central graphic element, spanning across the blue and teal background sections. The top horizontal bar of the '5' is positioned in the blue section, while the rest of the number extends into the teal section.

OVERVIEW OF THE GENDER POLICY

OVERVIEW OF THE GENDER POLICY

Scope

The gender policy is to act as an internal guidance document, outlining the strategic priorities and actions for achieving gender equality and integrating a gender perspective into the Ministry of Defense (MoD) and Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL). The policy applies to all MoD and AFL staff, with implementation oversight from the Minister of Defense, AFL Chief of Staff, and the MoD and AFL Gender Unit.

The gender policy and action plan covers 2021–2025, and is designed to provide guidance to increase the institutions' gender-responsiveness through nine strategic priority areas:

- Capacity and training
- Leadership and accountability
- Gender experts
- Recruitment and retention
- Gender-related crime
- Institutional culture
- Institutional frameworks for coordination
- Institutional policy frameworks
- Monitoring and evaluation

The gender policy action plan implementation is envisaged to cost USD1.555 million.

Purpose

The purpose of the gender policy and action plan is to serve as a tool to guide the MoD and the AFL on implementing a gender perspective and increasing gender equality in the institutions. It provides a framework for gender mainstreaming by addressing gaps, challenges and barriers to realizing gender equality and increasing women's meaningful participation.

Mission

Ministry of Defense

To provide the military forces needed to ensure the protection of Liberia's national interest and

territorial integrity, and to protect the citizens and residents within the borders of Liberia from internal and external aggression and in extremis, to respond to natural disaster.⁴⁹

Armed Forces of Liberia

To defend the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Liberia against external aggressions, insurgency, terrorism and encroachment. The AFL is also mandated to respond to natural disasters and engage in other civic work.⁵⁰

Goal

To promote gender equality in the MoD and AFL, and increase the institutions' capacity to be gender responsive and gender sensitive.

Objectives

To:

- Provide a framework for mainstreaming gender equality into the institutions' policy, procedures, programmes, budget, management and practices
- Establish mechanisms to promote the meaningful participation of women in the MoD and the AFL, with a focus on women in leadership roles
- Strengthen the capacity of the MoD and the AFL in gender mainstreaming
- Improve opportunities for women and men, within the MoD, the AFL and the communities in which they serve
- Strengthen data management, documentation and dissemination of gender-related information, particularly sex-disaggregated data
- Promote and build partnerships and networks with CSOs and other institutions for effective implementation of the gender policy and action plan

⁴⁹ Liberian Ministry of National Defense, "Contemporary structure of the Ministry of National Defense" (Monrovia, Government of Liberia, 2020), <https://mod.gov.lr/about-the-mod/>.

⁵⁰ Centre for Security Sector Governance, *The Security Sector and Gender in West Africa: A Survey of Police, Defence, Justice and Penal Services in ECOWAS States* (Geneva, DCAF, 2011).



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES
AND ACTIONS

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

Strategic priority 1 – Capacity and training

Increase institutional awareness of gender equality and the importance of implementing a gender perspective in military operations.

Actions

1.1 Conduct institution-wide surveys on gender awareness to create a knowledge baseline and inform training development.

1.2 Integrate gender equality principles into all Ministry of Defense (MoD) and Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) education and training, including the “back to basics” training for new AFL recruits and induction training for new MoD staff. Ensure this training is developed and delivered in coordination with the MoD and AFL Gender Unit, and influenced by other relevant stakeholders such as the Ministries of Gender, Children and Social Protection and relevant civil society organizations (CSOs).

1.3 Conduct mandatory annual awareness training to all staff on gender equality, the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325, sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and sexual exploitation and abuse.

1.4 Conduct specific training for operations personnel on implementing a gender perspective in military operations.

1.5 Ensure appropriate evaluation is conducted on each training to assess whether participants knowledge of gender equality and of resolution 1325 has increased because of the training.

Strategic priority 2 – Leadership and accountability

Enhance the leadership and accountability commitment of the MoD and the AFL for gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Actions

2.1 Strongly convey to all members of the MoD and the AFL a clear, consistent and unequivocal commitment to gender equality, including the right for every staff member to have equal opportunities for career advancement, and a safe and empowering work environment.

2.2 Strongly convey to all members of the MoD and the AFL a zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment, gender discrimination, gender-based violence or other human rights violations.

2.3 Ensure all commanders and members of leadership receive, at a minimum, annual training on gender equality, sexual harassment, gender discrimination, sexual exploitation and abuse, and resolution 1325.

2.4 Promote gender responsiveness in accountability mechanisms by delivering training and developing policy for the Office of the Inspector General on gender equality and how to appropriately receive and process matters of gender-based violence.

Strategic priority 3 – Gender experts

Increase the capacity of the institutions’ gender experts and support their work.

Actions

3.1 Approve appropriate terms of references (ToRs) for the MoD and AFL Gender Unit.

3.2 Upgrade the Gender Unit to a Gender Department, with a specific budget allocation.

3.3 Integrate a system of gender advisers and gender focal points at all levels of the MoD and the AFL, including tactical, operational and strategic to support the work of the Gender Unit/Department.

Ensure each MoD department and AFL unit appoints a gender focal point.

3.4 Develop appropriate ToRs for gender advisers and gender focal points.

3.5 In coordination with local and international CSOs, develop and deliver a gender adviser and gender focal point training course.

3.6 Ensure all MoD and AFL gender experts are supported by leadership, and allocated appropriate time to conduct their role if it is assigned as a secondary duty.

3.7 Coordinate with local and international CSOs to encourage capacity-building, coordination and training with the MoD and AFL Gender Unit/ Department.

Strategic priority 4 – Recruitment and retention

Ensure gender-sensitive recruitment and the retention of women by implementing appropriate mentoring and support programmes.

Actions

4.1 Develop a policy on gender-sensitive recruitment procedures.

4.2 Conduct training for human resources staff on non-discrimination in recruitment and how to promote women's meaningful participation.

4.3 Conduct anonymous exit surveys with staff that have resigned from service.

4.4 Ensure that sex-disaggregated data on staff retention and turnover are compiled.

4.5 Ensure that sex-disaggregated data on the allocation of assignments, deployments, promotion and remuneration of serving women and men are collected.

4.6 Increase the current 12 weeks of paid maternity leave to 14 weeks, in line with the Republic of Liberia Decent Work Act 2015 (chapter 20, section 1). Include

women who have had pregnancy complications such as miscarriage or stillbirth as part of this policy.

4.7 Introduce one-week paternity leave for men, in line with the Republic of Liberia Decent Work Act 2015 (chapter 20, section 3).

4.8 Introduce a policy that allows couples who both serve in the AFL to choose how they will use their paid parental leave as a way to increase gender equality, provide support to women who are serving military members and encourage men to undertake more caring responsibilities (i.e. one partner takes paid parental leave for the first six weeks, and the other partner take paid parental leave for the next eight weeks).

4.9 Remove the policy stating that pregnant women must be married to continue employment within the MoD or the AFL.

4.10 Develop a policy on "nursing breaks" for women who are breastfeeding in line with the Republic of Liberia Decent Work Act 2015 (chapter 20, section 6). Create a work environment that is conducive for breastfeeding by providing a safe and private space, as well as flexible working hours.

Strategic priority 5 – Gender-related crime

Ensure instances of gender-related crime in the MoD and the AFL are appropriately addressed through the development and implementation of policies, procedures, training, coordination and access to services.

Actions

5.1 Formalize coordination with local women's organizations to ensure survivors of gender-based violence have appropriate access to support services.

5.2 Collect and analyze sex-disaggregated data on gender-related crime including sexual harassment and gender discrimination under the national Gender-Based Violence Information Management System.

5.3 Collaborate with CSOs to establish a specific mechanism to receive complaints of gender-based

violence against Ministry of Defense or AFL personnel by members of the public, ensuring coordination with the national Gender-Based Violence Information Management System.

5.4 Review the effectiveness of current procedures and develop a policy for reporting, investigating and addressing complaints of gender-related crime, including sexual harassment, gender discrimination and gender-based violence within the MoD and the AFL.

Strategic priority 6 – Institutional culture

Create a work environment and institutional culture that supports gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Actions

6.1 Conduct anonymous surveys with MoD and AFL personnel to better understand the prevalence of sexual harassment, gender discrimination, gender-based violence and other human rights violations.

6.2 Ensure that all MoD and AFL personnel are aware of what constitutes sexual harassment and discrimination, and how to file a complaint.

6.3 Formalize mentoring programmes for women to connect serving women with female members of leadership, the Gender Unit/Department, gender advisers and gender focal points.

6.4 Provide leadership training programmes for serving female AFL members to increase their capacity to take on leadership roles.

6.5 Continue to support female staff associations such as the Liberia Female Law Enforcement Association, and encourage and support serving female members to participate.

6.6 Improve living conditions for both women and men serving in the AFL and their families.

6.7 Provide incentives and support to families of serving AFL members, including access to schools and safe transportation for children.

Strategic priority 7 – Coordination

Strengthen institutional frameworks for the coordination of gender mainstreaming both internally and externally.

Actions

7.1 Coordinate with local CSOs to conduct surveys on public perceptions of the MoD and the AFL, particularly from the female perspective.

7.2 Ensure regular, formalized coordination with local CSOs and women's groups, as a mechanism to receive feedback and advice on advancing gender equality in the MoD and the AFL.

7.3 Coordinate with civil society to establish mechanisms for formal consultation with communities, particularly women in communities.

Strategic priority 8 – Policy and procedure

Strengthen institutional policy frameworks to ensure all policies and procedures are gender sensitive.

Actions

8.1 Support the MoD and AFL Gender Unit/Department, in conjunction with relevant civil society partners, to conduct a gender audit of national laws and standards relating to the MoD and the AFL to assess to what degree the laws, policies and regulations are gender sensitive.

8.2 Work with relevant ministries to implement the results and recommendations from the gender audits.

8.3 Support the MoD and AFL Gender Unit/Department to conduct a gender audit of institutional policies and standard operating procedures, and develop instructions for how gender should be mainstreamed at the strategic, operational and tactical levels of the institutions.

8.4 Remove gendered language within the MoD and the AFL, such as the term "manpower" when referring to staffing or employee relations.

8.5 Develop a communication plan that includes gender equality and women's empowerment as an integral component of internal and public information dissemination.

Strategic priority 9 – Monitoring and evaluation

Strengthen gender research, and monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms for gender equality and accountability.

Actions

9.1 Establish a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit at the MoD.

9.2 Develop appropriate ToRs for members of the M&E Unit (see annex C for an example).

9.3 Work with CSOs to conduct training for members of the M&E Unit.

9.4 Conduct reviews of the progress of the gender policy and action plan in accordance with the reporting mechanism (see ['Monitoring, reporting and evaluation'](#)).

9.5 Establish a functional electronic M&E management system (database) and framework.

9.6 Develop an M&E framework with monitoring and reporting guidelines.



FRAMEWORK
FOR POLICY
IMPLEMENTATION

FRAMEWORK FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Policy implementation

Implementation of the gender policy and action plan will be the responsibility of all MoD and Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) staff. The ultimate responsibility sits with the Minister of Defense and the AFL Chief of Staff. Specific departments and units will have designated responsibilities and actions under the strategic priorities (Table 1, and detailed in annex A).

Oversight for policy implementation will be carried out by MoD and AFL leadership, namely the Minister of Defense and AFL Chief of Staff.

The policy will be **coordinated** and guided by the MoD and AFL Gender Unit/Department.

TABLE 1:
Roles and responsibilities of Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces of Liberia staff

Personnel	Responsibilities
MoD and AFL Chief of Staff	<p>Ensure effective coordination of the implementation of the gender policy and action plan</p> <p>Disseminate the gender policy and action plan, ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities</p> <p>Mobilize the necessary resources for implementation</p> <p>Liaise and network at the national, regional and international levels</p>
MoD Directors and AFL Commanders	<p>Assist in developing annual work plans, institutional mechanisms, programmes and procedures for gender policy implementation</p> <p>Assist teams to review and refine gender targets or activities, and prepare detailed implementation plans to align gender action plan activities with organizational outputs</p> <p>Prepare an annual plan and budget for gender-related activities and integrate these in the overall annual plans of the MoD and the AFL</p>
Gender experts (Gender Unit/ Department, gender advisers and gender focal points)	<p>Facilitate implementation of gender in all relevant project outputs</p> <p>Develop and deliver training to staff on gender issues, and explain gender policy objectives and the strategic priorities</p> <p>Work with leadership to maintain oversight of gender policy implementation, identify constraints and prepare strategies to overcome them</p>
Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit	<p>Develop a detailed framework for monitoring implementation of the gender policy and action plan, including standardized monitoring and reporting templates, tools and M&E capacity-building plans for all units and departments</p> <p>Guide the development of a comprehensive M&E system (database)</p> <p>Promote the collection of sex-disaggregated data and identify baseline data needs</p> <p>Monitor progress of the gender policy and action plan with regular on-site visits and quarterly reporting of progress and results</p> <p>Hold units, departments and leadership accountable for reporting timelines and scrutinizing progress reports</p>

Personnel	Responsibilities
Finance	<p>Ensure gender is mainstreamed into the planning and policy review processes</p> <p>Work with leadership to mobilize and allocate necessary resources for implementation</p> <p>Coordinate gender-responsive budgeting to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated in a gender-responsive manner</p> <p>Implement gender-budgeting guidelines to serve as guide for developing MoD and AFL budgets that are compliant with gender equality standards</p>
Civil society organizations and partners	<p>Develop mechanisms of collaboration with the MoD and AFL</p> <p>Provide financial and technical support for implementation, and M&E</p>

AFL, Armed Forces of Liberia; M&E, monitoring and evaluation; MoD, Ministry of Defense

Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

An effective monitoring, reporting and evaluation framework is critical to the success of the gender policy and action plan. To track and benchmark progress, appropriate tools, templates and systems will need to be developed to facilitate performance review. In line with strategic priority 9, an M&E Unit will be established and trained as professionals to lead this process and advise MoD and AFL leadership and other staff. The unit should be gender balanced – ideally 50 per cent women and 50 per cent men.

In addition to monitoring progress, the M&E Unit will be responsible for identifying challenges and barriers to implementation and working with leadership to establish the way forward. The M&E Unit will advocate for the timely and effective implementation of the policy and action plan by holding staff and leadership accountable for reporting timelines. A lack of sex-disaggregated data is detrimental to enhancing gender equality and promoting women’s meaningful participation in the institutions; thus,

the M&E Unit will assist in collecting sex-disaggregated data and developing appropriate systems to store and analyze the data. A close partnership and the involvement of civil society in M&E will ensure active cross-sector commitment and enhance collaboration between civil society organizations and the Government of Liberia.

Reporting mechanism

The reporting mechanism of the gender policy and action plan is aligned to Government of Liberia financial reporting, which is done quarterly and annually (Table 2). Each relevant unit will report quarterly to their relevant department or command. The department or command will then collate and send the report to the M&E Unit, who will produce an annual report to the Minister of Defense and AFL Chief of Staff. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women will conduct an external midterm and end-of-policy review (Table 2).

TABLE 2:

Reporting requirements for the gender policy and action plan

Level of reporting	Frequency	To whom	Responsible party	Timing
Unit	Quarterly	Relevant department	Designated unit (as per action plan)	Every 15 June, September, December and March in 2021–2025
Departmental	Quarterly	M&E Unit	Designated department (as per action plan)	Every 30 June, September, December, March in 2021–2025
Institutional	Annual	Minister of Defense, AFL Chief of Staff	M&E Unit	Every 30 June in 2021–2025
National	Midterm and end-of-policy evaluation report	MoD and AFL	UN Women	30 June 2023 and 30 June 2025

AFL, Armed Forces of Liberia; M&E, monitoring and evaluation; MoD, Ministry of Defense; UN Women, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Budget estimates

Table 3 shows the budget estimates for each strategy priority.

TABLE 3:

Strategic priorities and budget estimates

Strategic priority	Budget estimate (USD)
1	95,000
2	40,000
3	332,000
4	166,000
5	120,000
6	376,000
7	60,000
8	170,000
9	196,000
Total	1,555,000



ANNEX A FIVE-YEAR ACTION PLAN (2021-2025)

Strategic priority	Actions	Indicators		
Strategic priority 1: Increase institutional awareness of gender equality and the importance of implementing a gender perspective in military operations				
Capacity and training	1.1	Conduct institution-wide surveys on gender awareness to create a knowledge baseline and inform training development.	Number of surveys conducted	
	1.2	Integrate gender-equality principles into all MoD and AFL education and training, including the “back to basics” training for new AFL recruits and induction training for new MoD staff. Ensure this training is developed and delivered in coordination with the MoD and AFL Gender Unit, and influenced by other relevant stakeholders such as the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and relevant CSOs.	Number of training events with gender-equality principles integrated	
	1.3	Conduct mandatory annual awareness training to all staff on gender equality, UNSC resolution 1325, sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and sexual exploitation and abuse.	Percentage of MoD and AFL staff by sex participating	
	1.4	Conduct specific training for operations personnel on implementing a gender perspective in military operations.	Number of trainings conducted Percentage of MoD and AFL staff by sex participating	
	1.5	Ensure appropriate evaluation is conducted on each training to assess whether participants knowledge of gender equality and resolution 1325 increased because of the training.	Percentage of training reports completed for training conducted	
Strategic priority 2: Enhance the leadership and accountability commitment of the Ministry of Defense and AFL for gender equality and the importance of implementing a gender perspective in military operations				
Leadership and accountability	2.1	Strongly convey to all members of the MoD and AFL a clear, consistent and unequivocal commitment to gender equality, including the right for every staff member to have equal opportunities for career advancement, and a safe and empowering work environment.	Number of communications released on leaderships commitment to gender equality	
	2.2	Strongly convey to all members of the MoD and AFL a zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment, gender discrimination, gender-based violence or other human rights violations.	Number of communications released on the institutions’ zero-tolerance of sexual harassment, gender discrimination, gender-based violence or other human rights violations	
	2.3	Ensure all commanders and members of leadership receive, at a minimum, annual training on gender equality, sexual harassment, gender discrimination, sexual exploitation and abuse, and resolution 1325.	Number of training events conducted Number of MoD and AFL staff by gender participating	
	2.4	Promote gender responsiveness in accountability mechanisms by delivering training and developing policy for the Inspector General’s Office on gender equality and how to appropriately receive and process matters of GBV.	Number of training events conducted Number of staff by gender participating	

	Baseline	Target	Means of verification	Responsible party	Timing	Budget (USD)
Gender equality in military operations						
	Institutional gender assessment 2021	1 survey per year	Published annual survey findings	Gender Unit, M&E Unit	Annually 2021–2025	20,000
	Training on “equal opportunities and sexual harassment” presented by Gender Unit and Legal Department during the AFL “back to basics” training	At least 3 trainings per year	Gender-equality principles published in training curriculum and outcomes	Gender Unit, AFTC, Training Department	3 times per year 2021–2025	25,000
	0%	100% of staff	List of participants	Gender Unit, AFTC, Training Department	Annually 2021–2025	15,000
	0	At least 2 training events per year	Training report	Gender Unit, AFL CoS, AFTC	Twice yearly 2021–2025	25,000
	0	At least 60% of operations staff	List of participants			
	0%	Training reports completed for 100% of training conducted	Training report including evaluation (pre- and post-training surveys)	Gender Unit, M&E Unit, AFL CoS, AFTC	2021–2025	10,000
Gender equality and women’s empowerment						
	1	At least 2 communications per year	Official MoD and AFL communications	Minister of Defense, AFL CoS	Twice yearly 2021–2025	5,000
	1	At least 2 communications per year	Official MoD and AFL communications	Minister of Defense, AFL CoS	Twice yearly 2021–2025	5,000
	0	At least 1 training per year	Training report	Minister of Defense, AFL CoS, Training Department, AFTC, Gender Unit	Annually 2021–2025	15,000
	0	100% of AFL commanders and MoD directors	List of participants			
	0	At least 1 training per year	Training report	Inspector General, Training Department, Gender Unit, M&E Unit	Annually 2021–2025	15,000
	0	100% of Inspector General Office staff	List of participants			

Strategic priority	Actions	Indicators		
Strategic priority 3: Increase the capacity of the institutions' gender experts and support their work				
Gender experts	3.1	Approve appropriate ToRs for the MoD and AFL Gender Unit.	Time frame for ToR approval	
	3.2	Upgrade the Gender Unit to a Gender Department, with a specific budget allocation.	Money allocated to Gender Department	
	3.3	Integrate a system of gender advisers and GFPs at all levels of the MoD and AFL, including tactical, operational and strategic to support the work of the Gender Unit. Ensure each MoD department and AFL unit appoints a GFP.	Number of appointed gender advisers and GFPs	
	3.4	Develop appropriate ToRs for gender advisers and GFPs.	Time frame for ToR approval	
	3.5	Coordinate with local and international CSOs to develop and deliver a gender advisers and GFP training course.	Number of training events conducted Number of MoD and AFL staff by gender participating	
	3.6	Ensure all MoD and AFL gender experts are supported by leadership, and allocated appropriate time to conduct their role if it is assigned as a secondary duty.	Percentage of gender experts surveyed that feel supported by leadership to conduct their role	
	3.7	Coordinate with local and international CSOs to encourage capacity-building, coordination and training with the MoD and AFL Gender Unit/Department.	Number of meetings held with CSOs about gender Number of training events conducted by CSOs on gender	

	Baseline	Target	Means of verification	Responsible party	Timing	Budget (USD)
	Not available	ToR approved by end of 2021	Approved and published ToR for MoD and AFL Gender Unit	Minister of Defense, AFL CoS, Human Resources	December 2021	1,000
	USDo	USD250,000 allocated to Gender Department	Institution-wide communication informing personnel of upgrade and budget allocation	Minister of Defense, AFL CoS, Human Resources, Finance	June 2022	250,000
	o	At least 1 GFP per MoD department and AFL unit	Institution-wide communication informing personnel of newly established positions	Gender Unit, Minister of Defense, AFL CoS, Human Resources	December 2022	5,000
	Not available	ToR approved by December 2022	Approved and published ToRs for gender advisers and GFPs	Gender Unit, Minister of Defense, AFL CoS, Human Resources	December 2022	1,000
	o o	At least 1 training event per year At least 4 gender advisers or GFPs trained per year	Training report List of participants	Gender Unit, Minister of Defense, AFL CoS, Human Resources, Training Department, AFTC, CSO	Annually 2022–2025	50,000
	Not available	100% of gender experts feel supported by leadership to conduct their role	Survey results from gender experts	Gender Unit, Minister of Defense, AFL CoS, Human Resources	Assessed annually 2021–2025	5,000
	o o	At least 1 per month At least 4 per year	Minutes from meetings conducted List of participants	Gender Unit, Minister of Defense, AFL CoS, CSOs	Monthly 2021–2025 Annually 2021–2025	40,000

Strategic priority	Actions	Indicators		
Strategic priority 4: Ensure gender-sensitive recruitment and the retention of women by implementing appropriate mentoring and su				
Recruitment and retention	4.1	Develop a policy on gender-sensitive recruitment procedures.	Number of planning meetings held Number of policies drafted	
	4.2	Conduct training for human resources staff on non-discrimination in recruitment and how to promote women's meaningful participation.	Number of training events conducted Number of MoD and AFL HR staff by gender participating	
	4.3	Conduct anonymous exit surveys with staff that have resigned from service.	Number of anonymous exit surveys conducted with staff that have resigned	
	4.4	Ensure that sex-disaggregated data on staff retention and turnover are compiled.	Number of data sets that have been sex-disaggregated	
	4.5	Ensure that sex-disaggregated data on the allocation of assignments, deployments, promotion and renumeration of serving women and men are collected.	Number of data sets that have been sex-disaggregated	
	4.6	Increase the current 12-weeks of paid maternity leave to 14 weeks, in line with the Republic of Liberia Decent Work Act 2015 (chapter 20, section 1). Include women who have had pregnancy complications such as miscarriage or stillbirth as part of this policy.	Number of planning meetings held to discuss Number of communications from MoD and AFL leadership to staff on the updated policy	
	4.7	Introduce one-week paternity leave for men, in line with the Republic of Liberia Decent Work Act 2015 (chapter 20, section 3).	Number of planning meetings held to discuss Number of communications from MoD and AFL leadership to staff on the new policy	
	4.8	Introduce a policy that allows couples who both serve in the AFL to choose how they will use their paid parental leave as a way to increase gender equality, provide support to women who are serving military members and encourage men to undertake more caring responsibilities (i.e. one partner takes paid parental leave for the first six weeks, and the other partner take paid parental leave for the next eight weeks).	Number of planning meetings held to discuss Number of communications from MoD and AFL leadership to staff on the new policy	
	4.9	Remove the policy stating that pregnant women must be married to continue employment within the MoD and AFL.	Number of planning meetings held to discuss Number of communications from MoD and AFL leadership to staff on the removal of the policy	
	4.1	Develop a policy on "nursing breaks" for women who return to duty after delivering a child and are breastfeeding in line with the Republic of Liberia Decent Work Act 2015 (chapter 20, section 6). Create a work environment that is conducive for breastfeeding by providing a safe and private space, as well flexible working hours.	Number of planning meetings held to discuss Number of communications from MoD and AFL leadership to staff on the new policy Number of safe areas designated for breastfeeding employees	

	Baseline	Target	Means of verification	Responsible party	Timing	Budget (USD)
d support programmes						
	o	At least 1	Minutes from meetings conducted	Gender Unit, Human Resources	July 2022	5,000
	o	A drafted gender-sensitive recruitment policy	A published policy on gender-sensitive recruitment procedures			
	o	At least 1 per year	Training report	Gender Unit, Human Resources, Training Department, AFTC	Annually 2021–2025	15,000
	o	100% of MoD and AFL human resources staff	List of participants			
	o	100% rate of surveys conducted with staff that have resigned	Deidentified survey results	Human Resources, M&E Unit	2021–2025	20,000
	o	100% of data sets sex-disaggregated	Sex-disaggregated data held in database on staff retention and turnover	Human Resources, M&E Unit	2021–2025	10,000
	o	100% of data sets sex-disaggregated	Sex-disaggregated data held in database on allocation of assignments, promotion and remuneration of serving women and men	Human Resources, M&E Unit	2021–2025	10,000
	o	At least 1	Updated maternity leave policy published and formally communicated to staff by leadership	Gender Unit, Human Resources, Minister of Defense, AFL CoS	June 2022	25,000
	o	At least 1				
	o	At least 1	Paternity leave policy published and formally communicated to staff by leadership	Gender Unit, Human Resources, Minister of Defense, AFL CoS	June 2023	25,000
	o	At least 1				
	o	At least 1	Parental leave policy published and formally communicated to staff by leadership	Gender Unit, Human Resources, Minister of Defense, AFL CoS	June 2023	25,000
	o	At least 1				
	o	At least 1	Policy removed and formal communication sent out to staff by leadership	Gender Unit, Human Resources, Minister of Defense, AFL CoS	December 2021	1,000
	o	At least 1				
	o	At least 1 per establishment	Breastfeeding policy published and formally communicated to staff by leadership	Gender Unit, Human Resources, Minister of Defense, AFL CoS	June 2023	30,000
	o		Safe area set up for breastfeeding employees			

Strategic priority	Actions	Indicators	
Strategic priority 5: Ensure instances of gender-related crime in the MoD and AFL are appropriately addressed through the developer			
Gender-related crime	5.1	Formalize coordination with local women’s organizations to ensure survivors of gender-based violence have appropriate access to support services.	Number of planning meetings with local women’s organizations Number of SOPs developed and agreed on by local women’s organizations
	5.2	Collect and analyze sex-disaggregated data on gender-related crime including sexual harassment and gender discrimination under the national GBVIMS.	Number of planning meetings held Percentage of incidents involving gender-related crime that were reported through the national GBVIMS
	5.3	Collaborate with CSOs to establish a specific mechanism to receive complaints of gender-based violence against MoD or AFL personnel by members of the public, ensuring coordination with the national GBVIMS.	Number of planning meetings held with CSOs Percentage of complaints received by members of the public reported under the national GBVIMS
	5.4	Review the effectiveness of current procedures and develop a policy for reporting, investigating and addressing complaints of gender-related crime including sexual harassment, gender discrimination and gender-based violence within the MoD and AFL.	Number of planning meetings held Percentage of current procedures on addressing gender-based violence audited
Strategic priority 6: Create a work environment and institutional culture that supports gender equality and the empowerment of women			
Institutional culture	6.1	Conduct anonymous surveys with MoD and AFL personnel to better understand the prevalence of sexual harassment, gender discrimination, gender-based violence and other human rights violations.	Number of surveys conducted
	6.2	Ensure that all MoD and AFL personnel are aware of what constitutes sexual harassment and discrimination, and how to file a complaint.	Number of awareness sessions held Percentage of staff attendance by unit or department Percentage of awareness sessions evaluated to confirm knowledge
	6.3	Formalize mentoring programmes for women to connect serving women with female members of leadership, the Gender Unit/Department, gender advisers and GFPs.	Number of meetings held to draft programme design Number of formal mentoring sessions held
	6.4	Provide leadership training programmes for serving female AFL members to increase their capacity to take on leadership roles.	Number of trainings held Percentage of female staff attendance
	6.5	Continue to support female staff associations such as the LIFLEA, and encourage and support serving female members to participate.	Number of communications mentioning the LIFLEA
	6.6	Improve living conditions for both women and men serving in the AFL and their families.	\$ allocated to upgrading staff accommodation
	6.7	Provide incentives and support to families of serving AFL members, including access to schools and safe transportation for children.	\$ allocated to supporting the families of serving AFL members Percentage of children of staff members that have access to education including safe transportation to school

	Baseline	Target	Means of verification	Responsible party	Timing	Budget (USD)
Development and implementation of policies, procedures, training, coordination and access to services						
	o	At least 1	Minutes from meetings conducted	Gender Unit, Health Center, CSOs	June 2022	20,000
	o	At least 1	SOP verified and approved by local women's organizations			
	o	At least 1	Policy or SOP developed on how to collect and analyze sex-disaggregated data on gender-related crime under the national GBVIMS	Gender Unit, M&E Unit, health centres, CSOs	June 2023	35,000
	o%	100%				
	o	At least 1	A verified SOP on how to receive complaints of gender-based violence against MoD or AFL personnel by members of the public and record through the national GBVIMS	Gender Unit, health centres, CSOs	June 2023	30,000
	o%	100%				
	o	At least 1	A published policy on reporting, investigating and addressing complaints of gender-related crime within the MoD and AFL	Gender Unit, health centres, Human Resources, AFL CoS, Inspector General	June 2022	35,000
	o	100%				
	Institutional gender assessment 2021					
women						
	Institutional gender assessment 2021	1 survey per year	Published annual survey findings	Gender Unit, M&E Unit	Annually 2021–2025	20,000
	o	At least 4 per year	Training knowledge reports, including pre- and post-training questionnaires	Gender Unit, Training Department, AFTC	Annually 2022–2025	15,000
	o%	At least 70% of staff from each unit or department	verifying knowledge			
	o%	100%				
	o	At least 1	A published mentoring programme for women with dates, locations and activities	Gender Unit, gender advisers, GFPs, AFL CoS/ DCoS	June 2022	20,000
	o	At least 6 per year				
	o	At least 1 per year	Training report	Gender Unit, CSOs	Annually 2021–2025	20,000
	o	At least 50%	List of participants			
	o	At least 4 per year	Institution-wide communication from leadership mentioning the LIFLEA	Minister of Defense, AFL CoS	Annually 2021–2025	1,000
	USD o	At least USD50,000 per year	Newly refurbished or renovated staff accommodation	Minister of Defense, AFL CoS	Annually 2021–2025	250,000
	USD o	USD10,000 per year	Human resources report containing data on children of staff members and their access to education including safe transportation to school	Minister of Defense, AFL CoS, Human Resources	June 2023	50,000
	o	100%				

Strategic priority	Actions	Indicators	
Strategic priority 7: Strengthen institutional frameworks for the coordination of gender mainstreaming both internally and externally			
Coordination	7.1	Coordinate with local CSOs to conduct surveys on public perceptions of the MoD and AFL, particularly from the female perspective.	Number of surveys conducted Percentage of those surveyed women
	7.2	Ensure regular, formalized coordination with local CSOs and women's groups, as a mechanism to receive feedback and advice on advancing gender equality in the MoD and the AFL.	Number of meetings conducted with local CSOs and women's groups
	7.3	Coordinate with civil society to establish mechanisms for formal consultation with communities, particularly women in communities.	Number of formal consultations conducted with local communities Percentage of women in attendance
Strategic priority 8: Strengthen institutional policy frameworks to ensure all policies and procedures are gender sensitive			
Policy and procedure	8.1	Support the MoD and AFL Gender Unit, in conjunction with relevant civil society partners, to conduct a gender audit of national laws and standards relating to the MoD and AFL to assess to what degree the laws, policies and regulations are gender sensitive.	Number of gender audits conducted
	8.2	Work with relevant ministries to implement the results and recommendations from the gender audits.	Percentage of recommendations from gender audit report implemented
	8.3	Support the MoD and AFL Gender Unit/Department to conduct a gender audit of institutional policies and SOPs, and develop instructions for how gender should be mainstreamed at the strategical, operational and tactical levels of the institutions.	Percentage of recommendations from gender audit report implemented Number of instructions developed
	8.4	Remove gendered language within the MoD and the AFL, such as the term "manpower" when referring to staffing or employee relations.	Number of instances of gendered language found during gender audits
	8.5	Develop a communication plan that includes gender equality and women's empowerment as an integral component of internal and public information dissemination.	Number of planning meetings held Communication plan developed

	Baseline	Target	Means of verification	Responsible party	Timing	Budget (USD)
Quality						
	2019 <i>Sixth survey report on Liberian citizens' perception of the quality of governance in Liberia</i> 2015 <i>Afrobarometer round six survey</i>	1 survey per year At least 50% women	Published annual survey findings	Gender Unit, M&E Unit, CSOs	Annually 2022–2025	20,000
	0	At least 4 per year	Minutes from the meetings conducted	Gender Unit, CSOs	Annually 2021–2025	20,000
	0	At least 2 per year	Deidentified report from consultations	Gender Unit, CSOs	Annually 2022–2025	20,000
	0%	At least 70%				
Accountability						
	Institutional gender assessment 2021	At least 1 per year	Report detailing the findings from the audit	Gender Unit, M&E Unit, Minister of Defense, AFL CoS	Annually 2022–2025	30,000
	Institutional gender assessment 2021	At least 80%	Official communication from leadership depicting approved recommendations	Gender Unit, M&E Unit, Minister of Defense, AFL CoS, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection	Annually 2022–2025	50,000
	Institutional gender assessment 2021	At least 80% At least 1 per gender audit	Official communication from leadership depicting approved recommendations and verified instructions published	Gender Unit, M&E Unit, Minister of Defense, AFL CoS	Annually 2022–2025	30,000
	Institutional gender assessment 2021	0	Updated policies removing gendered language communicated to staff by leadership	Gender Unit, Minister of Defense, AFL CoS	June 2022	50,000
	0	At least 1	Verified, approved and published communication plan that includes gender equality and women's empowerment as an integral component of internal and public information dissemination	Gender Unit, M&E Unit, Public Affairs Department	June 2022	10,000
	0	1				

Strategic priority	Actions	Indicators		
Strategic priority 9: Strengthen gender research, and monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms for gender equality and accou				
Monitoring and evaluation	9.1	Establish an M&E Unit at the MoD.	Budget allocated to the M&E Unit Number of female and male staff formally assigned to the M&E Unit	
	9.2	Develop appropriate ToRs for members of the M&E Unit.	Time frame for ToR approval	
	9.3	Work with CSOs to conduct training for members of the M&E Unit.	Number of trainings conducted Number of MoD and AFL staff by gender participating	
	9.4	Conduct reviews of the progress of the gender policy and action plan in accordance with the reporting mechanism.	Number of progress reports generated	
	9.5	Establish a functional electronic M&E management system (database)	A functional and robust M&E database	
	9.6	Develop an M&E framework with monitoring and reporting guidelines.	Number of tools and guidelines developed to support monitoring, reporting and evaluation	
Total USD1,555,000				

AFL, Armed Forces of Liberia; AFTC, Armed Forces Training Command; CoS, Chief of Staff; CSO, civil society organization; DCoS, Deputy Chief of Staff; GBVIMS, Gender-Based Violence Information Management System; GFP, gender focal point; LIFLEA, Liberia Female Law Enforcement Association; M&E, monitoring and evaluation; MoD, Ministry of Defense; SOP, standard operating procedure; ToR, terms of reference; UNSC, United Nations Security Council

	Baseline	Target	Means of verification	Responsible party	Timing	Budget (USD)
Accountability						
	USDo	USD15,000 per year allocated to M&E Unit At least 4 staff (2 women and 2 men)	Institution-wide communication from leadership informing personnel of new unit and budget allocation	Minister of Defense, AFL CoS, Human Resources, Finance	December 2021	75,000
	Not available	ToR approved by end of 2021	Approved and published ToR for M&E Unit	Minister of Defense, AFL CoS, Human Resources	December 2021	1,000
	o	At least 1 training per year	Training report	M&E Unit, Minister of Defense, AFL CoS, Human Resources, Training Department, AFTC, CSO	Annually 2021–2025	20,000
	o	At least 4 members of M&E Unit trained	List of participants			
	o	At least 1 per year	Published and disseminated progress report	M&E Unit	Annually 2021–2025	20,000
	o	1 functional and robust M&E database	Reports generated through database	M&E Unit, Minister of Defense, AFL CoS	June 2022	60,000
	o	At least 4 per year	Tools and guidelines used in M&E reporting	M&E Unit, Minister of Defense, AFL CoS	Annually 2021–2025	\$20,000

ANNEX C EXAMPLE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

FOR A MONITORING AND EVALUATION UNIT

Role

The Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces of Liberia Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit monitors progress made in the implementation of the Gender Policy and Action Plan (2021–2025). The unit is also responsible for identifying challenges and barriers and working with leadership to establish the way forward. The M&E Unit advocates for timely and effective implementation of the policy and action plan by holding staff and leadership accountable for reporting timelines. The close partnership and involvement of civil society ensures active cross-sector commitment and enhances collaboration between civil society organizations and the Government of Liberia.

- Guide the development of a comprehensive M&E system (database)
- Promote the collection of sex-disaggregated data and identify baseline data needs
- Monitor progress of the gender policy and action plan with regular on-site visits and quarterly reporting of progress and results
- Hold units, departments and leadership accountable for reporting timelines and scrutinizing progress reports

Recruitment criteria

- Keen interest in M&E, research, learning and reporting
- Skills in analysis and report writing
- Understanding of the concepts of gender and the importance of gender mainstreaming
- Passionate about gender equality and women's empowerment
- Skills in implementing or managing a database highly regarded
- Formal qualifications or skills in M&E, research, learning or reporting highly regarded

Responsibilities

- Develop a detailed framework for monitoring implementation of the gender policy and action plan, including standardized M&E templates, tools and M&E capacity-building plans for all units and departments

Definitions

Gender. Socially and culturally created differences between women and men. This is distinct from sex, which refers to biological differences. Gender differences vary across cultures and change over time.

Gender analysis. Gender analysis identifies, assesses and informs actions to address inequality that comes from different gender norms, roles and relations; unequal power relations between and among groups of women and men; and the interaction of contextual factors with gender such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, education or employment status.

Gender awareness. State of knowledge about the differences in the roles and relations of women and men, and how this results in differences in power relations, status, privileges and needs.

Gender-based violence. All acts perpetrated against women, men, girls and boys that cause or could cause physical, sexual, psychological and economic harm, including the threat to commit such acts. It also means to impose arbitrary restrictions on, or deprivation of, fundamental freedoms in private or public life in peace time and during situations of armed or other forms of conflict.

Gender bias. The circumstances that permit and support the status of men over women in work, pay, family, economic benefits and cultural beliefs.

Gender blind. Ignoring or failing to address the gender dimension as opposed to being gender-sensitive or gender-neutral.

Gender budgeting. Ensures that public resources are used to meet the different needs and interests of women and men, and girls and boys equitably.

Gender discrimination. Differential or preferential treatment to individuals or groups based on their gender.

Gender equality. Refers to equal chances or opportunities for groups of women and men to access and control social, economic and political resources, including protection under the law (such as health services, education and voting rights). It is also

known as equality of opportunity or formal equality. Gender equality is often used interchangeably with gender equity, but the two refer to different, complementary strategies that are needed to reduce gender-based health inequities.

Gender equity. More than formal equality of opportunity, gender equity refers to the different needs, preferences and interests of women and men. This may mean that different treatment is needed to ensure equality of opportunity. This is often referred to as substantive equality (or equality of results) and requires that the realities of women's and men's lives are considered. Gender equity is often used interchangeably with gender equality, but the two refer to different, complementary strategies that are needed to reduce gender-based health inequities.

Gender gap. The gap in any sector of analysis between women and men in terms of their level of participation, access, rights, remuneration or benefits.

Gender indicators. These measure gender-related changes in society over time. They provide direct evidence of the status of women, relative to some agreed normative standards or explicit reference group.

Gender issue. Statistical or social indicator of inequality between women and men arising from discrimination and/or marginalization within society.

Gender mainstreaming. A strategy for making women's and men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres so that women and men can benefit equally. It also means assessing the implications for women and men of the planned actions in legislative policies and programmes.

Gender-neutral. Having no differential positive or negative impact for gender relations or equality between women and men.

Gender norms. Refers to beliefs about women and men, boys and girls that are passed from generation

to generation through socialization. Gender norms change over time and differ in different cultures and populations. Gender norms lead to inequality if they reinforce mistreatment of one group or gender over the other; or differences in power and opportunities.

Gender responsive. Understanding the differences in the needs and concerns of women and men, and acting to address those needs and concerns when designing policies and planning programmes. A gender-responsive policy and programme considers gender norms, roles and inequalities, and takes measures to reduce their harmful effects.

Gender sensitive. Addressing and considering the gender dimension.

Gender stereotype. Images, beliefs, attitudes or assumptions about certain groups of women and men. Stereotypes are usually negative and based on assumed gender norms, roles and relations.

Sex. The different biological and physiological characteristics of females and males, such as reproductive organs, chromosomes and hormones.

Sex-disaggregated data. Statistical information that differentiates between women and men – for example, the number of women in the labor force instead of the number of people in the labor force. This allows gender gaps to be identified.

Sexual harassment. Any unwanted, unsolicited or repeated verbal or sexual advance, sexually derogatory statement or sexually discriminatory remark.

Women's empowerment. The process of women gaining power and control over their lives. It is a part of a group of efforts that aim to bring equal opportunities for women and men. It involves awareness-raising, building self-consciousness, expanding choices, increasing access to and control over resources, and transforming structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality.



ENDNOTES

ENDNOTES

- 1 Azcona, G., A. Bhatt, J. Encarnacion, J. Plazaola-Castaño, P. Seck, S. Staab and L. Turquet. 2020. From Insights to Action: Gender Equality in the Wake of COVID-19. UN Women. Accessed 14 September 2021. <https://www.UN Women.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/09/gender-equality-in-the-wake-of-covid-19>.
- 2 Azcona, G., A. Bhatt, J. Encarnacion, J. Plazaola-Castaño, P. Seck, S. Staab and L. Turquet. 2020. From Insights to Action: Gender Equality in the Wake of COVID-19. UN Women. Accessed 14 September 2021. <https://www.UN Women.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/09/gender-equality-in-the-wake-of-covid-19>.

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UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities: Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy; All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence; Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



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