

POLICY NOTE FOR LIBERIA

IMPLEMENTING THE NEW URBAN AGENDA THROUGH NATIONAL URBAN POLICY

A NATIONAL URBAN POLICY FOR LIBERIA: POLICY NOTE

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Initiated by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Government of Liberia and the Monrovia City Corporation, the Cities Alliance Liberia Country Programme aims to strengthen the organisation and meaningful participation of slum dwellers and working poor organisations in city governance, improve climate-resilient and inclusive urban planning, slum upgrading and incremental housing strategies as well as enhance the national enabling environment for Liberian cities. The Programme is a joint partnership between Comic Relief, Department of Human Settlements, Government of South Africa, Habitat for Humanity International, Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI), StreetNet International, United Cities and Local Governments Africa (UCLGA), UN-Habitat, UNOPS, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), and the YMCA.

Sustainable urban development in Africa is a key priority in UN-Habitat's normative and operational work. In this context, Booyoung Co., Ltd provides financial support over a period of ten years from 2012 to 2021, to support the development of UN-Habitat urban planning projects in African cities and countries. In Liberia, a National Urban Forum convened in June 2015 brought together urban stakeholders to initiate a road map for a National Urban Policy process. In July 2015, President Johnson-Sirleaf launched the NUP process in Monrovia.

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CONTENTS

Country Profile: Key Figures and Facts	4
Executive Summary	5

A National Urban Policy for Liberia

Policy Recommendations	8
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Chapter 1

Demography Dynamics	13
1.1 Population Size	13
1.2 Population Growth Rate	14
1.3 Population Distribution	16

Chapter 2

Land Management and Housing	17
2.1 Land Tenure	17
2.2 Housing and Slums	18
2.3 Environment and Coastal Erosion	20

Chapter 3

Roles and Responsibilities of Government	21
3.1 Ministries, Agencies and Commissions	21
3.2 Government Institutions' Urban Duties	22

Chapter 4

Urban Related Sectoral Policies23

4.1 Sectoral Policies Relevant to Urban Development	23
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Chapter 5

Urban and Territorial Development25

5.1 Education and Employment	25
5.2 Poverty and Economy	28
5.3 Infrastructure and Basic Services	29

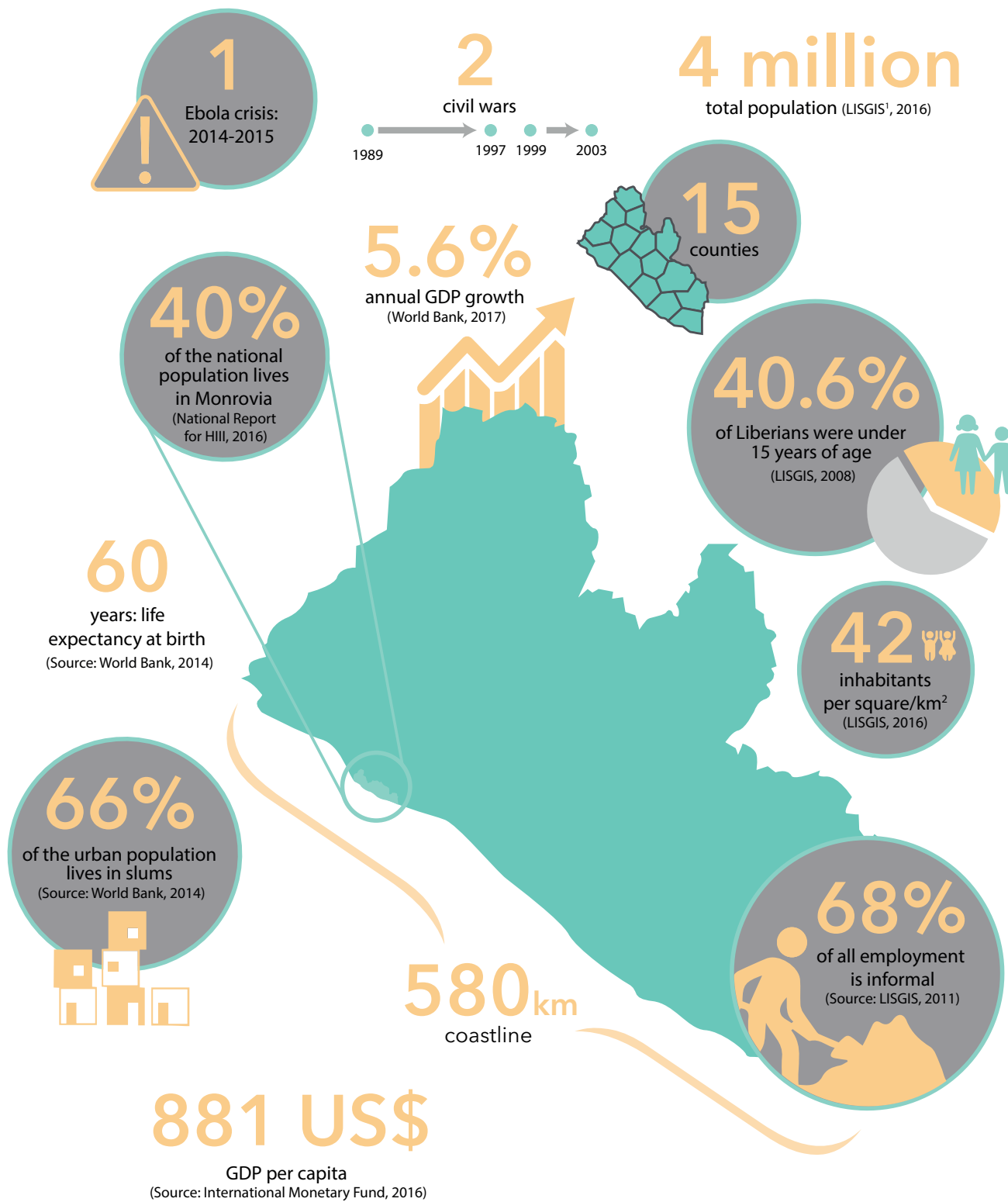
Chapter 6

Jurisdictional Coordination33

6.1 Aligning Sectoral Policies	33
6.2 Urban Governance and Collaboration	33
6.2 Devolution of Governance	35

Bibliography36

COUNTRY PROFILE: KEY FIGURES AND FACTS



¹ Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Liberia has recently witnessed its first peaceful transfer of power since 1944, marked by president George Weah's historic inauguration on 22 January 2018 following a successful election. President Weah stressed in his inauguration speech, the need to clarify on fundamental issues including land, and shifting national resources and responsibilities from capital to counties. He also highlighted the importance of equality and unity, pointed out the need to narrow the gap between rich and the poor, and acknowledged the crucial roles that youth and women play. The pivotal importance of United Nations and international development partners in facilitating investments in agriculture, infrastructure, human capital and technology was underlined.

The majority of challenges highlighted by President Weah are rooted in the human settlements of Liberia, pronounced in the context of urbanisation and rural-urban migration. After 14 years of destructive civil conflicts, Liberia's proactive efforts to revive its economy and development are reflected by the improvements and reconstruction taking place in its cities. With a return to democratic rule have come notable progressive strides towards economic recovery, rehabilitation of public infrastructure services, and inclusive governance. There has also been a disproportionate rate of urbanisation and urban primacy; Monrovia, the capital, is home to 40 per cent of the national population and a commercial, international, trade and economic nucleus of the country. As a result, challenges generated by unplanned urbanisation are significant and threaten to impede national development.

If Liberia is to achieve inclusive economic growth and sustainable urban development, it urgently needs an enabling framework to provide coordination among different sectors and ministries, address urban challenges, and maximise the opportunities offered by urbanisation, while mitigating potential adverse externalities. A National Urban Policy (NUP) is such a framework and mechanism for coordination.

A NUP is a coherent set of decisions derived through a deliberate, government-led process of coordinating and rallying various actors for a common vision and goal that will promote more transformative, productive, inclusive and resilient urban development in the long term. Developing the NUP for Liberia is expected to coordinate the work of different sectors, establish incentives for more sustainable practices, and spur a balanced system of cities and towns through strengthening urban-rural linkages and equitable resources

allocation. This will not only help reduce urban and territorial disparities within and among regions, but also promote institutional collaboration and policy coherence towards achievement of the Liberia National Vision 2030.

As the United Nations focal point for sustainable urbanisation and human settlements, UN-Habitat has been supporting the NUP development process in Liberia launched by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf at the first National Urban Forum in 2015. Since 2016, UN-Habitat has further renewed its commitment to promote NUP as a mainstream tool for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially target 11.b. The ongoing policy development in partnership with the Ministry of Internal Affairs is part of a broader endeavour to support poverty reduction by integrating the urban economy into national development policies and the development of sustainable, resilient Liberian cities.

UN-Habitat suggests five phases for the NUP development process to ensure the quality of to the policy: 1) feasibility, 2) diagnostic, 3) formulation, 4) implementation, 5) monitoring and evaluation. To initiate development of a NUP for Liberia, this Policy Note, summarising the key findings of the feasibility phase and the subsequent Discussion Paper, explains the context in which the policy will operate. The Note is the result of a wide range of research and consultations on the demographic, socio-economic, and physical environment aspects of the country. It also provides preliminary policy recommendations for further analysis in the subsequent NUP development processes.

Different from the encompassing Discussion Paper, the updated, simplified and restructured Policy Note targets at executives to brief on major urban challenges and preliminary policy recommendations for informed decision-making. It also aims to stimulate political support for further diagnostic, policy formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the NUP for Liberia. To better realize the country's commitment to implement the New Urban Agenda, the Policy Note has been structured in close alignment with the Action Framework for Implementation of the New Urban Agenda (AFINUA), with six main dimensions of NUP on demography, land, governance, sectoral policies, territorial development and jurisdictional coordination (Figure 1).

Development of the NUP for Liberia is designed to complement and operationalise Liberia's long-term

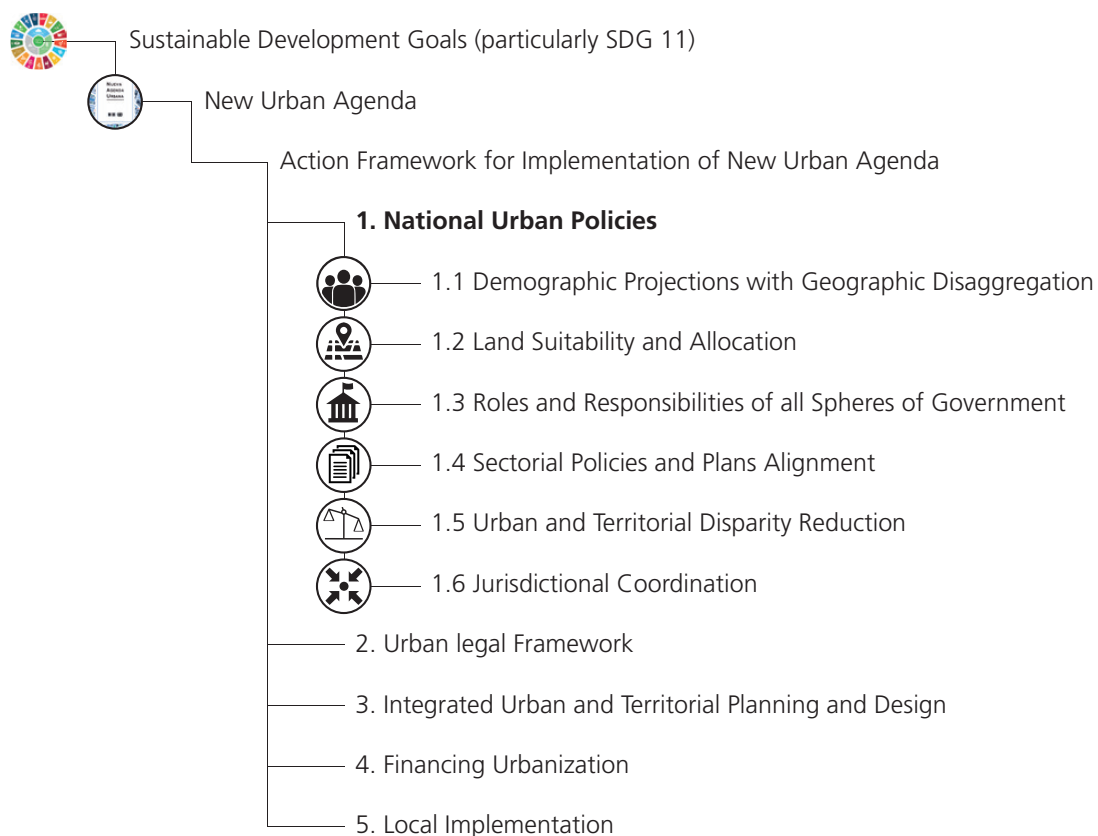
national development framework Liberia National Vision 2030, which seeks to propel Liberia to middle-income status by 2030. It is also expected to help achieve goals set out in the Vision 2030 by creating conditions that will make the desired urban future a reality.

This Note especially emphasises that crafting a NUP for Liberia must directly involve all actors responsible for urban affairs – central government, local authorities, ministries and agencies, civil society, private sector and academic institutions. This participatory spirit resonates with the proposals by major global agendas such as the African Agenda 2063 Framework which advocates, as one of its seven aspirations, development that is people-driven and relies on their potential. Consultations have been, and will continue to be, organised to ensure wide stakeholder participation to safeguard an open, collaborative, peaceful policy-making process.

As a result, ten policy focus areas are proposed to promote a NUP for Liberia that is forward-looking, focused on poverty reduction, and considers cross-cutting issues:

1. Strengthening small and intermediate cities
2. Focusing on the Greater Monrovia District
3. Encouraging spatial development strategies
4. Restoring infrastructure and basic services
5. Prioritising education and employment
6. Emphasising on land and housing
7. Recognising the significance and relevance of environment
8. Reinforcing demographic planning, regulation and monitoring
9. Promoting jurisdictional coordination and policy coherence
10. Institutionalising political, financial, technical and participatory mechanisms

FIGURE 1
Action Framework for Implementation of the New Urban Agenda & National Urban Policies



UN-HABITAT & NATIONAL URBAN POLICY

UN-Habitat is a leader in supporting the development and implementation of NUPs globally, and has developed tools to aid countries with undertaking a NUP. It currently supports 39 countries with the development of NUPs (Figure 2) and manages an active portfolio for NUP development with a budget over US\$ 12 million. In 2015, UN-Habitat joined the Cities Alliance Liberia Country Programme, which is an umbrella framework that brings together a network of development partners in the country. One of the programme's three pillars is enhancing the national enabling environment for resilient, inclusive

urbanisation that benefits local governments, economic growth, and the urban poor.² This collaboration has further strengthened the capacity of UN-Habitat as the international partner best positioned to support development of a NUP that fits Liberia's context. This Note is based on review of a wide range of documents. It builds on the national development framework Liberia Vision 2030 and the complementary five-year strategic development plan Agenda for Transformation. This study also draws on the guiding principles of major global agendas such as the SDGs, the New Urban Agenda, the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework, and the African Agenda 2063 Framework.

FIGURE 2
UN-HABITAT Supporting Countries on National Urban Policy



² Cities Alliance. (2017, 06). *The Liberia Country Programme*. Retrieved from Cities Alliance Official Website: <http://www.citiesalliance.org/Liberia-CP-page>

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The process of developing a NUP involves research, analysis, consultation and consolidation to translate political will into programmes and implementable actions towards a more prosperous urban future for Liberia. This requires the formulation of the policy to be a deliberate government-led process during which urban actors from both public and private sector can establish a shared vision for the desired urbanisation. To ensure the quality of the policy, UN-Habitat suggests five phases for the NUP process:

1. Feasibility;
2. Diagnostic;
3. Formulation;
4. Implementation; and
5. Monitoring and evaluation.

The first stage of the NUP development process in Liberia has thoroughly covered the feasibility phase. The second stage of UN-Habitat activities in Liberia intends to incorporate both the diagnostic and formulation phases (Figure 2). This chapter provides customised and implementable recommendations to the second stage based on the findings described in the previous chapters.

A. Proposed Focus Areas and Overarching Interventions

Based on the analysis of the preceding chapters, **ten focus areas** have been distilled as the crucial gaps

that the NUP for Liberia could bridge and prioritise. However, further screening and analysis of the focus areas will be conducted in the next development phase through a deepened diagnostic to narrow down specifics for effective ministerial coordination and strategic implementation. In principle, the crafting of the ten focus areas aligns with the Liberia National Vision 2030 and major global agendas such as the New Urban Agenda, which is agreed by all member states as the new framework that prescribes how cities could be planned and managed to best promote sustainable urbanisation.

6. **Strengthening small and intermediate cities** by implementing integrated, polycentric, and balanced territorial development policies and plans, along with capacity building for municipal governments. Promoting administrative and financial devolution, and encouraging connectivity and cooperation between cities and towns.³ Such measures will increase the role of small and intermediate cities and towns in enhancing food security and nutrition systems, securing access to sustainable, affordable, adequate, resilient, and safe housing, infrastructure, and services, while reducing urban and territorial disparities. Impartial national development process will enhance “balanced growth countrywide” by the Liberia National Vision 2030.⁴
7. **Focusing on the Greater Monrovia District** given its unequivocal significance and contribution to the political, economic and cultural realms of the country. Emphasis could be on employment and job creation, poverty reduction and urban economy, infrastructure, housing and slums, land

³ UN-Habitat. (2014). *The Evolution of National Urban Policies: A Global Overview*. Nairobi. Page 81.

⁴ Government of Liberia. (2012). *Agenda for Transformation: Steps Toward Liberia RISING 2030*. Monrovia.

tenure, and coastal erosion that were identified as massive urban development challenges to the metropolis. The peripheral expansion of Monrovia could be managed in the interests of encouraging higher density and more integrated urban development.⁵

8. **Encouraging spatial development strategies** that consider the need to guide Liberia's urban extension, prioritising urban renewal by planning for the provision of accessible and well-connected public spaces, infrastructure and services, sustainable population densities, and compact design and integration of new neighbourhoods in the urban fabric while preventing urban sprawl and marginalisation.⁶
9. **Restoring infrastructure and basic services** could be recognised as a pillar of action during Liberia's urban rehabilitation to ensure the effective functioning of cities, and allows for cost and resource efficiencies. Providing equal access for all to sustainable and resilient infrastructure and adequate services could be the pursuit, with special focus on making great strides in transport, energy, water, waste management, sanitation and health, food security, historic and culture presentation. The interventions to improve the health of people living in informal settlements could be emphasised as an active, effective approach to trigger bottom-up willingness and initiatives for improving health and living conditions.
10. **Prioritising education and employment** as an ultimate solution to lift people out of urban poverty by empowering them with knowledge, skills and decent work. This can be approached by improving education attainment, informal employment and addressing underemployment, regulating rural-urban migration, stopping gender inequality, and child labour. Additionally, improving training in urban planning is fundamental to ensuring sustainable urbanisation across the country.
11. **Emphasising land and housing** as the fundamentals of urban composition to secure land tenure and reposition housing at the centre of urban development as an

opportunity rather than a burden. This will involve institutionalising the mechanisms for land identification, administration and management, as well as mobilising multi-sectoral collaboration to revolve the complicated challenge of housing and informal settlements, and promote the operationalisation of a National Housing Policy. It is bound to be more cost-effective and less socially disruptive to plan ahead for urbanisation than having to redevelop or relocate informal settlements after they have been established.⁷

12. **Recognising the significance and relevance of the environment** to Liberia's urban economy and overall prosperity. More emphasis could be given to natural resource constraints, ecological vulnerabilities of cities and towns, climate change mitigation and adaptation, potentially destructive national and man-made environmental deteriorations in Liberia such as coastal erosion, sea-level rise, flooding, water degradation and deforestation.
13. **Reinforcing demographic planning, regulation and monitoring** to moderate the fertility rate, urban population growth rate, dependency ratio, composition and distribution. This could contribute to realising and harnessing the demographic dividend and accelerated national urban economic growth. The existing allocation of population need to be respected. Meanwhile, analysis of each county's constraints and potential could provide feasible recommendations on how to tactically guide and manage the distribution of population and resources. Data collection needs to be strengthened, with reinforced communication mechanism between the census departments and the actual users of data to improve the procedure of information requesting and sharing.
14. **Promoting jurisdictional coordination and policy coherence** by setting out clear roles and responsibilities for all spheres of government and for public participation as applied to effective and transparent urbanisation and urban management. Supporting institutionalised mechanisms for sharing and exchanging data, information,

⁵ UN-Habitat. (2014). *The Evolution of National Urban Policies: A Global Overview*. Nairobi. Page 80.

⁶ United Nations. (2016). *New Urban Agenda*. Quito. Article 52.

⁷ UN-Habitat. (2014). *The Evolution of National Urban Policies: A Global Overview*. Nairobi. Page 81.

knowledge and expertise to formulate, implement, enhance, integrate, manage, monitor, and evaluate public policies for sustainable urban development. Private and public partnership could be strengthened as a practical urban financing mechanism to fill the gap of resource provision.

15. **Institutionalising political, financial, technical and participatory mechanisms** for developing, discussing, disseminating and implementing the NUP for Liberia. It is suggested to provide a permanent framework for urban dialogue such as regular National Urban Forums to involve all urban development actors in public consultation, capacity development, and sharing of good practices, which are conducive to systems improvements and institutional learning.

While framing a focused and selective NUP for Liberia under the guidance of the ten recommendations above, **three overarching interventions** could centre on:

- I. The Policy must be **forward-looking**, taking into account of medium and long-term demographic projections with geographic disaggregation and their potential impact on future urban growth.
- II. The Policy must focus on **poverty reduction** by promoting urban livelihoods and employment in cities and towns, aiming to eradicate the persistence of multiple forms of poverty, and the growing inequalities and environmental degradation.
- III. The Policy must always consider **cross-cutting issues** including climate change, gender equality, human rights and youth that are relevant to all aspects of sustainable development.

B. Proposed Development Process and Roadmap

To transform urbanisation activities and outcomes into prosperity for all, the process shall be guided by short, medium and long-term measures. In the context of the NUP for Liberia, there are three major stages:

- i. **Stage 1 – (2015-2017): Feasibility (short term)**
Expected Accomplishments:
 1. Making the case for the policy
 2. Identifying key facts and figures
 3. Sourcing support for undertaking

the policy

4. Understanding the context

- ii. **Stage 2 – (2018-2021): Diagnostic and Formulation (medium term)**

Expected Accomplishments:

1. Mapping and analysis of key actors and stakeholders
2. Screening the issues the policy will address
3. Defining policy goals
4. Evaluating different policy options (for achieving the goals)
5. Formulating policy proposal (for ways forward) and strengthening consensus
6. Assessing human, financial and institutional capacity
7. Considering the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework

- iii. **Stage 3 – (2021-2050): Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation (long term)**

Expected Accomplishments:

1. Undertaking implementation analysis of the legislative and administrative landscapes
2. Developing implementation plan (including timeline, delegating roles and responsibilities)
3. Facilitating the decentralisation and devolution of financial and governance power to ensure capacity of the local governments in implementing the policy
4. Streamlining M&E in the policy
5. Ensuring M&E exists throughout the policy process
6. Clarifying the difference between evaluating outcome and process
7. Considering how policy evaluation can lead to institutional learning

C. Institutional Setups and Steps

The following institutional setups and steps are proposed to safeguard the political and technical support in developing the NUP for Liberia:

1. **Setting up a National Steering Committee** as a part of the National Habitat Committee (set up in June 2016), which plays a key role

in realising the much-desired collaboration, coordination, coherence and networking for maximum resources utilisation and impact. The Steering Committee could be chaired by the Minister of Internal Affairs and include the Permanent Secretaries of other relevant ministries as well as representatives of urban stakeholders from various areas to safeguard its participatory nature. The role of this Committee is to act as the political supervision and decision-making organ throughout the development process of the policy. The Committee could limit the number of members to ensure effective communication and decision making, and meet at least three times in the beginning - for a mid-term review and before the final validation conference of the policy.

2. **Establishing a Technical Support Team** functionally linked with the National Habitat Committee (established in August 2016). The Team could be coordinated by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and supported by UN-Habitat, and compose technical focal points as nominated by members of the National Steering Committee. The technical focal points could comprise qualified professionals and experts (both nationals and internationals) working either part-time or full-time on the formulation of the policy through conducting data collection, reviewing relevant documents and sectoral policies, conducting interviews and missions, drafting the Policy collaboratively and reporting the results to the National Steering Committee in a progressive manner.
3. **Submitting the final NUP to the Cabinet** by the Chair of the National Steering Committee for final review and approval, after integrating inputs received from the validation of the national consultation.

D. Capacity and Consensus Building

The development process of the NUP could enlist the participation of all Liberians, to provide essential training and ensure that the policy is accepted by all. Having people participate in formulation of their own policies creates a strong sense of ownership for them to promote and implement the policies. With sufficient engagements from local communities during consultations, the policy stands for a better chance of reflecting the actual needs of the people,

FIGURE 3
Roadmap for the Development of a NUP for Liberia



thereby achieving extra attention and support. Key events for capacity training and consensus building are:

1. **Organising at least three national consultations (e.g. National Urban Forums)** including all relevant urban stakeholders. The first consultation was undertaken in the beginning of the policy by launching

the formulation process (June 2015). The second is expected to take place at the end of the Diagnostic Phase to validate the Diagnostic Paper. The third consultation should be at the end to validate the final draft of the policy. Regular National Urban Forums to maintain the dialogue on urbanisation is recommended.

2. **Organising thematic and sectoral workshops/seminars** for training, debate, and dialogue during the preparation and formulation process of the policy, to enhance capacity of urban actors and consult horizontally and vertically to draft policy that reflects the reality and people's expectations. Media (e.g. TV, radio and social media) attention could be attracted throughout the process to raise public awareness, participation and support.

By promoting a more participatory policy formulation process, the first feasibility stage of the NUP created abundant activities for public involvement in the forms of national urban forum, awareness raising campaigns, training sessions, policy dialogue and consultative workshops.

Additionally, three special sessions (listed below) with diverse participants ranging from mayors to young planners and urban poor community representatives were arranged for validation. Selective meeting results are captured in Appendix 2.

1. Friday, 21 April 2017:
Discussion Paper/Policy Note Validation by **City Mayors** at the 2nd General Assembly of the Association of Mayors & Local Government Authorities of Liberia
2. Tuesday, 30 May 2017:
Discussion Paper/Policy Note Validation by **Urban Poor Community and Urban Working Poor Associations**
3. Thursday, 1 June 2017:
Discussion Paper/Policy Note Validation by **Network of Young Professionals**

E. Implementation Strategy

The main risks in the development process have been identified, including difficult implementation, unstable financial support, complicated policy, inadequate political support, and inadequate human resources. It is particularly important to take political and social risks from the Liberian general election in October 2017 into account. These uncertainties could pose considerable

risks to the development of the policy for Liberia (Figure 3). To mitigate the risks and safeguard the effective implementation of the policy, it is recommended that the implementation plan consider three empirical and pragmatic aspects that are in accordance with the Three-Pronged Approach,⁷⁴ including: 1) legal framework; 2) urban planning and design; and 3) financial framework and governance.

Urban planning and design refers to the physical plan and design of urban areas which could secure adequate space for streets and efficient street network, sufficient density that is the premise of effective resource-sharing, mixed land-use for urban economy and social mix, and necessary zoning specialisation.

The second essential pillar for executing the policy is a sound financial plan with proper budgeting, revenue generation and expenditure management. Municipal finance authorities (e.g. the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning) could take the lead in translating urban development policies and plans into applicable financial strategies with revenues required for implementation, while considering the political and financial capacity of Liberia.

Main sources of funding to be explored include:

- i. Traditional financing approach through taxes, fees, levies and short-term private savings. On the other hand, there are funds from development partners and minor investments of private sector.
- ii. Use of insurance and pension funds, trust and private equity funds, public-community's collaboration, public-private partnerships, diaspora, medium- and long-term private savings, sovereign bonds and sovereign wealth funds.

The third pillar is an enabling legal framework, which provides rules and regulations that have the power to shape the form and character of cities by directly influencing the implementation and evolution of urban development plans. Therefore, special attention must be given to legal feasibility and implementability of all components of the policy.



DEMOGRAPHY DYNAMICS

Population is the pivotal element of a country's development, perceived as both an asset and the root of sequential urban issues. Population increases pose massive sustainability challenges in terms of housing, infrastructure, basic services, food security, health, education, decent jobs, safety and natural resources, among others. They also bring collective knowledge, capital, and multidimensional resources which endow cities with the capacity to mitigate and solve emerging problems.

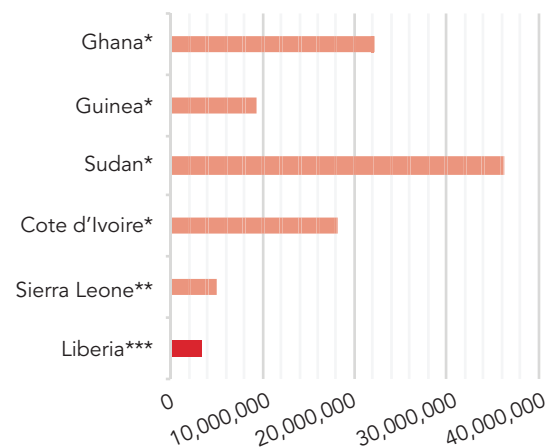
For this reason, if well managed, urbanisation can unleash a nation's development potential. The Action Framework for Implementation of the New Urban Agenda⁸ recognises the importance of demography by mandating that current and future trends of population composition, distribution, and medium and long-term demographic projections with geographic disaggregation must be taken in account while formulating a people-oriented national policy on urban development.

1.1 Population Size

According to the 2008 national census on population and housing conducted by the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS)⁹, the country's total population in March 2008 was 3,476,608. Compared to other post-conflict countries in the region, the population size is relatively small (Figure 4).

Historically, population growth in Liberia was repressed by the first civil war between 1989 and 1997. Towards the end of the conflict, the population being growing, and that growth continues today despite minor fluctuations (Figure 5).

FIGURE 4
Populations of Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa



Data Source:

* United Nations World Population Policies 2005

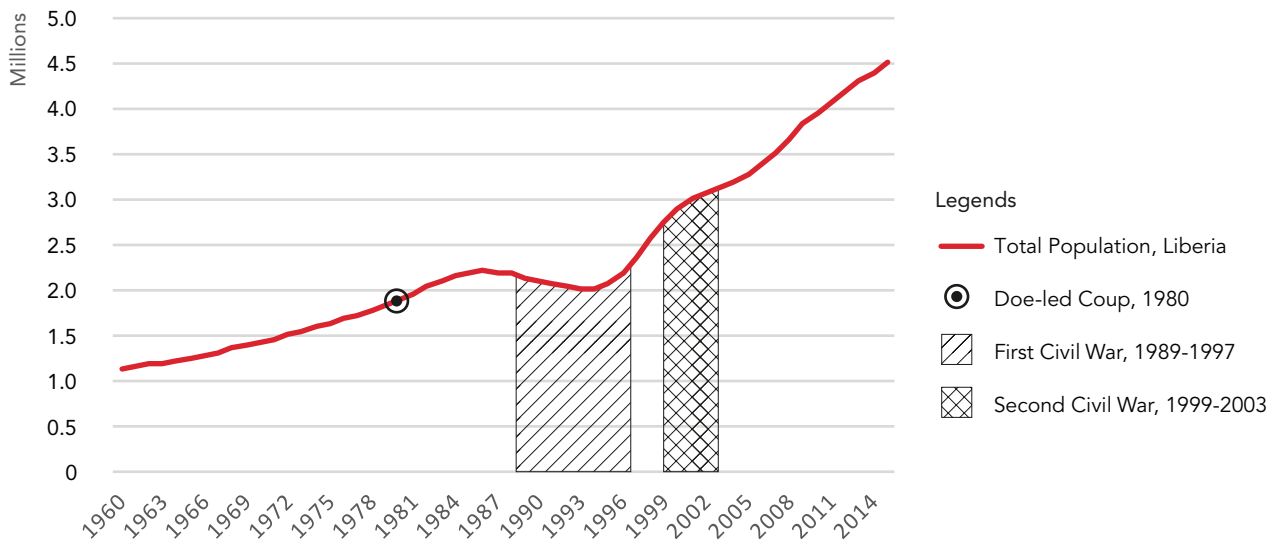
** Sierra Leone 2004 Population and Housing Census

*** Liberia 2008 National Population and Housing Census

⁸ UN-Habitat. (2016). *Action Framework for Implementation of the New Urban Agenda*. Nairobi. Item 1.1.

⁹ Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS). (2009). *2008 Population and Housing Census: Final Results*. Monrovia.

FIGURE 5
Total Population of Liberia, 1960-2014



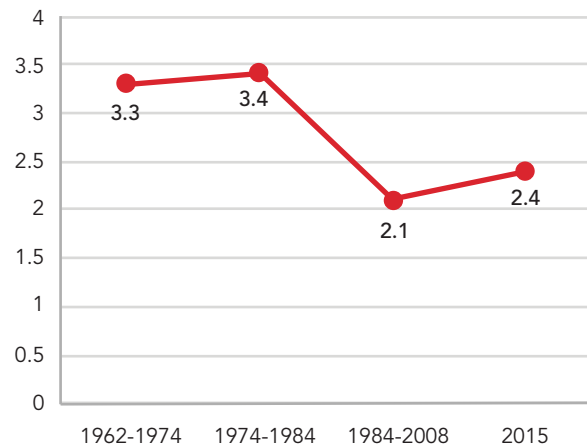
Data Source: World Bank Open Data

1.2 Population Growth Rate

Despite its relatively small population, high growth rates mean Liberia has the potential to grow its population significantly. Despite having dropped significantly from 3.4 to 2.1 per cent (Figure 6) between 1989 and 1997, due to the population exodus and losses during the first civil war, the yearly population growth rate of Liberia is on the high side compared to similar post-conflict countries in Africa. According to an estimate by the World Bank, Liberia’s annual population growth rate reached 2.4 per cent in 2015, signifying a resurgent population boom after the civil wars.¹⁰ The high population growth rate will continue to impact Liberia’s urban settlements and fundamentally determine its urbanisation features – making the development of a NUP to assess Liberia’s current urban capacity and fill the demand and supply gaps in the foreseeable future increasingly urgent.

Map 1 breaks down the previous analysis of population growth rate by county. It shows that currently depopulated areas such as Grand Gedeh, Gbarpolu, River Gee, Rivercess and Sinoe are most likely to bear a much heavier population burden in the coming decades. Such urban agglomeration trends suggest that urban growth in these counties will continue to accelerate, whether in a planned manner or simply spread that aggravates urban sprawl.

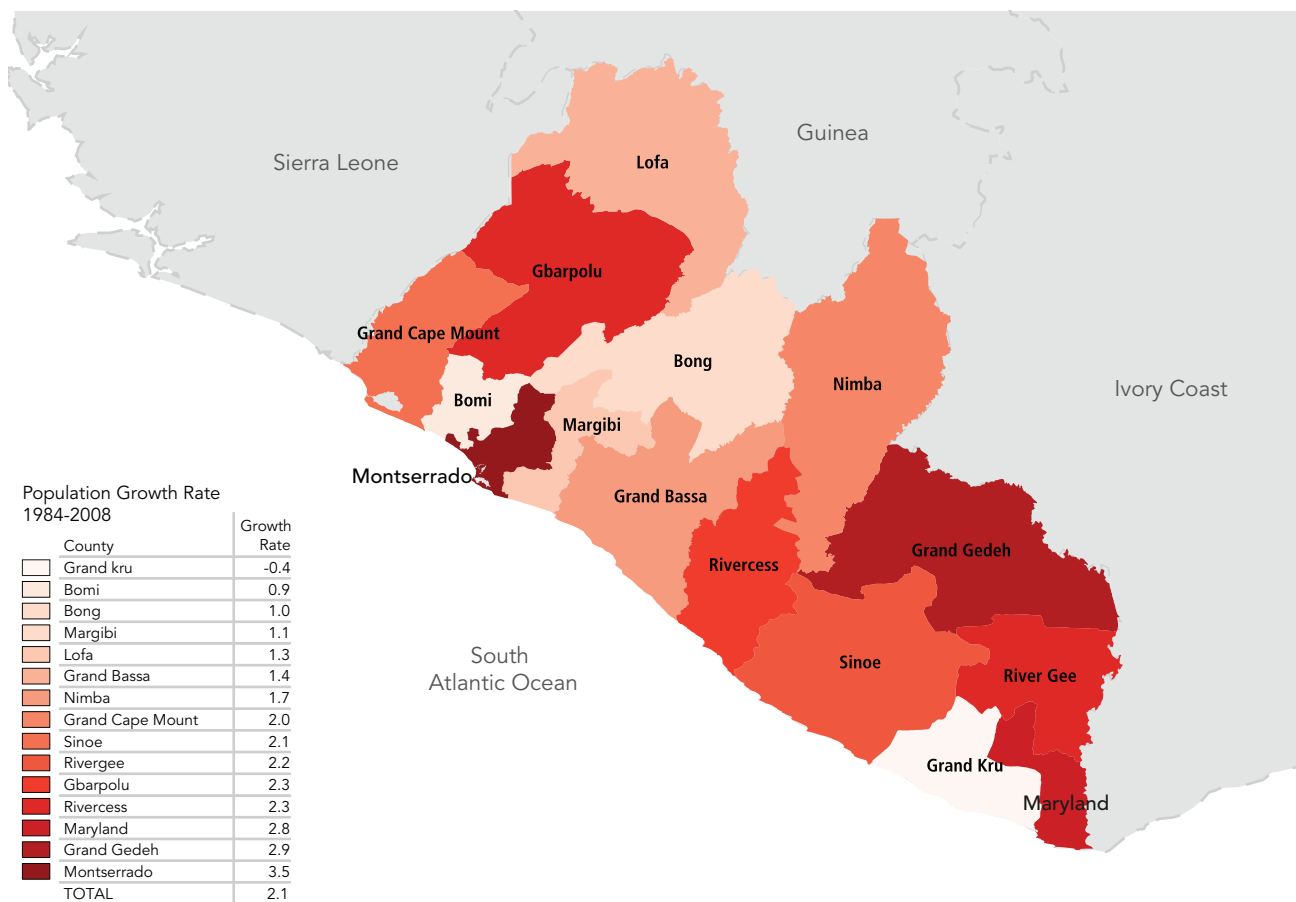
FIGURE 6
Average Annual Rate of Population Growth in Liberia



Data Source: Agenda for Transformation: Steps Toward Liberia RISING 2030 (1962-2008) & World Bank (2015)

¹⁰ World Bank. (2015). *Population growth (annual per centage) Liberia*. Retrieved 02 03, 2017, from World Bank Open Data: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.GROW?locations=LR>

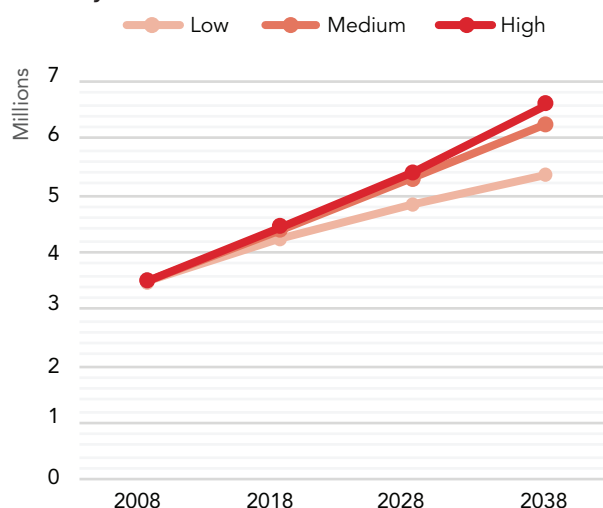
MAP 1
Population Growth Rate by County, Liberia



Data Source: 2008 Population and Housing Census

As the key determinant of population levels and trends, the pace of fertility primarily determines the corresponding needs of resources in the decades to come. Resonating directly with the Action Framework for Implementation of the New Urban Agenda¹¹ and SDG Indicator 11.a.1, the Liberia Vision 3030 strategically simulates various scenarios of demographic projection (Figure 7) to enable evidence-based demographic planning and sequential supply of resources. Whether the fertility rate of 5.2 in 2008 drops to the low scenario rate of 2.4, the medium scenario rate of 3.5, or the high scenario rate of 4.2 could mean the difference between 53, 79 or 90 per cent population growth in 30 years.¹²

FIGURE 7
Total Population Projections of Liberia under Three Fertility Scenarios



Data Source: 2011 Retrospective Analysis of the Liberian People

¹¹ UN-Habitat. (2016). *Action Framework for Implementation of the New Urban Agenda*. Nairobi. Item 1.1

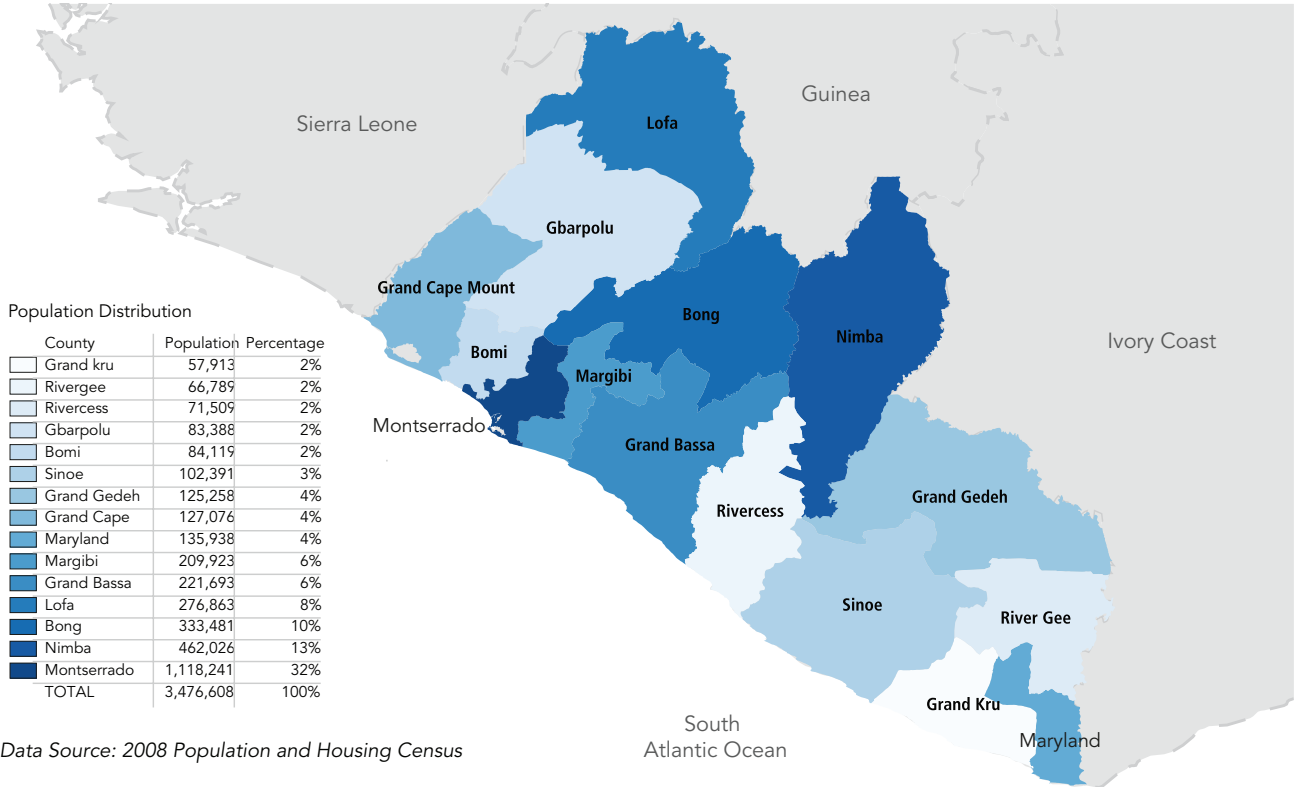
¹² Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, Liberia. (2011). *Retrospective Analysis of the Liberian People*.

1.3 Population Distribution

The population spread living in Liberia's geographic subdivisions requires spatial interpretation to enable informed and county-specific analysis. Map 3 illustrates the unevenly

distributed population among 15 counties. The 'big six' counties include Montserrat, Nimbo, Bong, Lofa, Grand Bassa and Margibi, which hold 75.4 per cent of the total population. On the other end of the spectrum, the 'small five' counties together hold only 10.5 per cent of the national count.¹³

MAP 2
Distribution of Population Aggregates, Liberia



Data Source: 2008 Population and Housing Census

¹³ Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS). (2009). *2008 Population and Housing Census: Final Results*. Monrovia.

2 LAND MANAGEMENT AND HOUSING

Worldwide, land is being prioritised as the most fundamental element of national development. How land gets identified, assembled and put to effective utilisation is crucial in enabling proper housing, environmental protection, among others. Data on land and evidenced-based decision-making about the land system is the first imperative.¹⁴ The core function of land in development is especially true in Liberia, because disputes related to land are widely recognised as one of the key drivers of conflicts. The land issue is seen both as a cause and a consequence of Liberia's civil war, with the potential to fuel renewed frictions. In this view, prioritising land issues is of national political and socio-economic significance.

2.1 Land Tenure

To address the serious land issue that the country faces, the Governance Commission of Liberia has held consultative sessions to identify difficulties and possible solutions.¹⁵ Results of the consultation reveal that many Liberians consider land to be one of their few possessions. However, due to poor authenticity of tribal certificates and land deeds, securing ownership of land is a lengthy and unreliable process for many citizens. Liberia is

ranked 176th out of 183 countries in terms of ease and cost of registering property, according to the indicators from the *Doing Business 2012* by World Bank. Less than 20 per cent of the country's land is privately titled and registered.¹⁶ While many suffer from overcrowded living condition and insecurity of land tenure, unutilised land parcels and land magnates are prevalent especially in the urban areas. Poverty and insecure tenure together contribute to illegal land occupation, which needs to be carefully addressed while taking into account the squatters' contributions to the complex urban economy to avoid forced eviction. Boundary disputes are widespread between counties, communities and units.¹⁷ People are unmotivated to invest in the land market due to poor security of tenure.

Resolving the land issue in Liberia requires establishing an accountable land management system to address land documentation and registration, speculative occupation, land rights and more. For instance, the paper-based deed registration system needs to be simplified and digitised to avoid fraudulent documents and disarray, and improve the efficiency of land management.¹⁸ Eventually, the land system could provide conclusive decisions on land disputes and be protected by legislation to increase its

¹⁴ Cobbett, William. (2017, February). *Opening remarks: Toward a city development strategy*. Presented at the Greater Monrovia City Forum, Monrovia, Liberia.

¹⁵ Governance Commission of Liberia. (2008). *Reigonal Constultative Report on Land and Property Right*.

¹⁶ Government of Liberia. (2012). *Agenda for Transformation: Steps Toward Liberia RISING 2030*. Monrovia. Page 6.

accountability, thus attracting higher rates of property registration and tax. Between 2013 to 2015, the Government of Sweden supported UN-Habitat through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) to undertake the Tribal Certificate Inventory (TCI) process in four counties: Bong, Bomi, Grand Cape Mount and Montserrado. The fieldwork established a total of 4,751 vetted tribal certificates covering 26 districts (94 clans). The NUP for Liberia could facilitate high-level consensus-building that economic growth and tenure security are complementary rather than conflicting in national development. It could also recognise the emergence of a Land Authority as a step towards addressing the institutional challenges.

2.2 Housing and Slums

For any nation to achieve sustainable urban development, people must have the right to decent housing. The New Urban Agenda promotes the development of national, sub-national, and local housing policies that support the realisation of the right to adequate housing. This is expected to foster local integrated housing approaches by addressing the strong links between education, employment, housing, health, and preventing exclusion and segregation.¹⁹ The development of integrated, age and gender responsive housing policies and approaches spans all sectors and levels of government. It incorporates the provision of adequate, affordable, accessible, resource-efficient, safe, resilient, well-connected, and well-located housing with special attention to proximity and strengthening the spatial relationship with the rest of the urban fabric and the surrounding functional areas.²⁰

In 2014, UN-Habitat published the *Liberia Housing Profile*,²¹ which decodes the factors influencing housing provision in Liberia. This fundamental tool paves the way for designing sustainable, inclusive urban and housing strategies and the formulation of a National Housing Policy. The *Liberia Housing Profile* argues that institutionally, housing has

been mandated to many ministries, agencies and commissions with unclear demarcation of responsibilities. The National Housing Authority (NHA), which was set up in 1962 to be the main agency for housing, has received insufficient government support for capital investment to fulfill its mandate. In addition, capacity-building components on pro-poor housing could be arranged for NHA and housing-related institutions. Furthermore, there are only a few legal and regulatory frameworks governing housing and urban development, of which the building code and zoning law have both fallen into disuse because of low public credibility and enforcement.

Using the Liberian government's medium population growth scenario, the profile estimates that by 2030 the urban population will grow by 1.8 million, with half living in Monrovia. It rationalises the need for twice as many housing units in Monrovia and half as many in minor cities in order to alleviate overcrowding. Achieving such goal would require a portfolio of strategies, including more accessible finance for housing (and derived options such as rental), restoration of infrastructure, sustainable and affordable construction method and materials, localised building standards and materials, better regulation of the housing market, among others. Importantly, Monrovia and other cities need to take on more responsibilities in meeting the foreseeable demand for housing in an affordable and sustainable way.

The average number of persons per household is an essential indicator that reflects the basic household composition. For Liberia, this figure remains high despite having declined from 6.1 in 1984 to 5.1 in 2008.²² Since average household size normally drops in the process of development, the current high average persons per household implies a massive housing need as Liberia continues to urbanise. In the eastern counties (Map 10) such as Maryland, Grand Gedeh and Rivercess, where each household accommodates more people, additional housing provisions are required to actively respond to demand for more space. This inevitable trend will take place either in the form

²⁰ United Nations. (2016). *New Urban Agenda*. Quito. Article 31 & 32

²¹ UN-Habitat. (2014). *Liberia Housing Profile*. Nairobi: UN-Habitat.

²² Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS). (2009). *2008 Population and Housing Census: Final Results*. Monrovia.

MAP 3
Average Household Size, Liberia



of well-planned and affordable housing units, or spontaneous settlements which could be mitigated with some guidance on location, density, material selection and other sustainable measures.

The prevailing construction of middle-income aspirational housing as single-household villas on quarter-acre serviced plots is not an appropriate way forward for most of Liberia’s urban population. It takes unnecessarily large amounts of land, creating an unsustainable demand for new land, services and roads. Even as incomes might improve, the threshold costs of such housing are unaffordable for most Liberians. The most effective developers in the low-income sector are households working with small contractors. Public-private partnerships without careful consideration and arrangement usually only attract partners for higher-cost housing and are unsuited to supplying

housing for the majority. Assistance given to households is more likely to help the low-cost provision system.²³

Besides the demand for new accommodations, existing housing units are also in need of repair and sometimes reconstruction. According to the 2008 Population and Housing Census, 26 per cent of housing units require rehabilitation, while 18 per cent need to be reconstructed. The housing situation in the informal sector can be more rigorous but often less understood due to social segregation and inadequate data. Concerning general housing policy recommendations, the NUP for Liberia could aim to enable the supply of new housing for 512,000 households by 2030, and their cost should be revised as of 2014 estimates of US\$ 7,500 at the median, or less than US\$ 60 per month at the 2013 price level.²⁴

²³ UN-Habitat. (2014). *Liberia Housing Profile*. Nairobi: UN-Habitat.

²⁴ UN-Habitat. (2014). *Liberia Housing Profile*. Nairobi: UN-Habitat.

Despite the problems and controversy that slums generate in Liberia, what must be understood first is the reason for the proliferation of slums across the country. Radical campaigns to simply remove and replace slums in peripheral sites and service plots without understanding their roots only serves to dislocate a large number of economically active urban residents away from their local networks and resources. Forced evictions must be stopped, and reference could be made to international law in order to secure people with proper compensation and transitional shelters when eviction is the last resort. Resilient upgrading of informal settlements and providing localised affordable housing are often seen as more implementable methodologies. In the context of Liberia, the term 'affordable housing' could reflect the affordability for the lower socio-economic tier of the population, which is often neglected.

What needs to be instilled in both the government and the people of Liberia is the idea that that housing is an opportunity not than a burden. Building housing can generate significant employment opportunities. Since construction jobs are more likely to be taken by the poor and youth, both jobs and adequate training will be provided to these vulnerable groups, eventually enhancing the nation's prosperity in the short and long term. Repositioning housing at the centre of national urban development as an integral part of economic development will foster future economic, environmental, cultural and socially inclusive cities. It will also demonstrate the Liberian government's capacity to seize opportunities and provide effective, productive responses.²⁵ Finally, inadequate data on the rate of household formation in national statistics is a setback in projecting housing demand, and could be considered in a future LISGIS population and housing census for planning and policy formulation purposes.

2.3 Environment and Coastal Erosion

The extraction-based industries (e.g. timber, mineral, rubber, oil) and agriculture fundamentally shape Liberia's economic landscape and link it closely with environment and natural resources. This dependence on natural ecosystem for livelihood is especially important for people living in poverty. Unsustainable development would mean not merely environmental degradation, but depletion of resources and possible disaster that could destruct the ecosystem on which many depend to make a living.²⁷ Numerous environmental challenges such as deforestation, biodiversity and water degradation, flooding, coastal erosion, unprocessed waste disposal all have the potential to derail the nation's development and economy.

Coastal erosion has been identified by many communities as one of the most pressing matters endangering cities along the 580 km coastline.²⁸ In West Point, one of Monrovia's most densely populated informal settlements that is home to 75,000 people, erosion is causing the shoreline to recede, inevitably leading to the destruction of the local economy and relocation. Other coastal cities and townships including Robertsport, Buchanan, Greenville and Harper face the same challenge. As a direct impact of climate change and sequential sea-level rise, the rate of coastal erosion can be lowered by curbing unsustainable human activities that exacerbate climate change. In addition, strict control of sand mining can be effective along with other erosion control methods. A resettlement plan is also necessary for communities in urgent need of relocation.



Low standard residential units in Monrovia's coastal area that are susceptible to sea erosion, Feb 2017 © UN-Habitat/Runze Wang

²⁵ UN-Habitat. (2017). *Liberia Housing Profile*. Nairobi: UN-Habitat.

²⁶ Cities Alliance Liberia Country Programme. (2017). *4th Programme Steering Committee Meeting Report*. Monrovia.

²⁷ Government of Liberia. (2012). *Agenda for Transformation: Steps Toward Liberia RISING 2030*. Monrovia.

3

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF GOVERNMENT

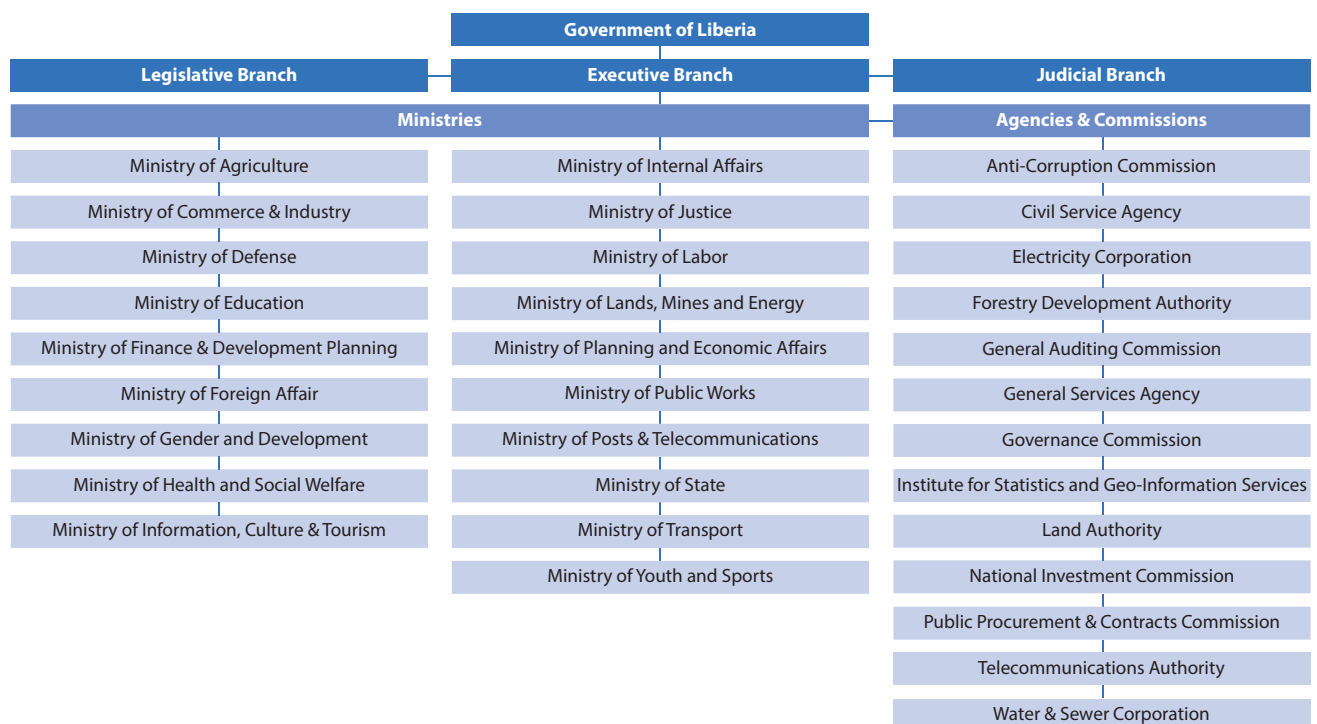
Crating a NUP for Liberia requires a thorough analysis of its legislative and administrative landscapes. This means mapping and interpreting Liberia’s institutional structure. The complex nature of urbanisation entails urban actors developing joint strategies and actions in addressing common issues. This requires understanding of the functions and responsibilities that ministries, autonomous agencies, commissions and other actors have in the urban development process.

Liberia follows the principles of power separation with legislative, executive and judicial powers of government vested in separate bodies (Figure 8). The system consists of 19 functional ministries, a few autonomous agencies, and commissions created to specifically address major issues during development. For example, the Governance Commission (previously known as Governance Reform Commission) was formed to oversee the architecture of governance, monitor and assess the performance of governmental institutions.

Autonomous agencies and commissions are appointed organisations in the government, responsible for oversight and administration of

3.1 Ministries, Agencies and Commissions

FIGURE 8
Liberia’s Institutional Arrangement: Ministries, Selected Agencies and Commissions on Urban Issues



specific functions. These highly specialised and focused agencies produce data and research outputs that are prerequisites for further studies and activities. For instance, the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS)²⁹ was mandated to survey and compile statistical data on demography and other socio-economic indicators to fill the void of data in the post-conflict period. The resulting statistics enable informed decision making and articulated governance. Detailed analysis of the roles of the agencies and commissions in the urbanisation process is synthesised in Appendix 3: Agencies, Commissions and Function in Urban Development.

3.2 Government Institutions' Urban Duties

Cooperation among different institutions is built on the premise of thorough understanding of key urban actors' responsibilities in urban development. Benefits of such collaboration include pooling resources, which amplifies the output in a way that is larger than the sum of its parts in achieving common urban goals. Figure 9 condenses the primary functions that ministries, key agencies and commissions perform in the urban development process of Liberia.

FIGURE 9
Institutions' Urban Duties, Liberia

MINISTRIES		
MoAgriculture - poverty reduction/climate change - coastal communities promotion - urban agriculture/food security	MoCommerce & Industry - street vendors coordination - small enterprises/informal urban economy - urban poor productive livelihoods	MoDefence - urban health emergencies/urban violence control - military barracks facilities/coastal pollution defense - civil works construction/urban waste removal
MoEducation - education attainment improvement - education facilities reconstruction - education system management	MoInformation, Culture & Tourism - awareness building/urban heritage - social mobilization/public education - standards for private beach operations	MoFinance & Development Planning - alignment of spatial planning with socio-economic p - resource allocation/block mapping - national investment budgeting/sectoral planning
MoGender and Development - participation of vulnerable groups - capacity training - awareness building	MoLabor - urban workforce planning and research - human capital development programs - overall employment monitoring	MoForeign Affair - international collaboration coordination - foreign investment mobilization - basic services restoration/coordination with ministries
MoPosts & Telecommunications - internet regulations - addressing/postal - IT/GSM Technology	MoTransport - transport fares regulationtransport - policy coordinationurban - transport planning	MoJustice - urban land and property adjudication - urban legislation/violence control/mass evictions - rule of law/public safety/traffic control/immigration
MoPublic Works - housing standards/zoning - construction standards - infrastructure & services	MoState - overall public sector coordination - highest decision making	MoInternal Affairs - spatial planning (not performed since the civil war) - urban governance and management - manage urban disaster
MoPlanning and Economic Affairs - overall development planning	MoLands, Mines and Energy - land regulation - energy research and development - coastal area management	MoHealth and Social Welfare - urban open defecation free (ODF) promotion - urban water quality monitoring - urban health/sanitation standards and compliance
MoYouth and Sports - custodian of youth and education - capacity training - participation of youth		
AGENCIES/COMMISSIONS		
Civil Service Agency -recruitment and selectionhuman -resources management, services -civil service	Electricity Corporation -street lighting/block mapping -household connections -city power grid	Forestry Development Authority -fire hydrants -garden & parks -urban afforestation
Governance Commission -Decentralization Policy -Government Reform	LISGIS -authoritative source provision -national population & housing census	Land Authority -urban land management & administration -land reform -urban land inventory
National Housing Authority -data provision on land -custodian of National Housing Policy -urban housing and shelter policy	National Investment Commission -diversification /employment -manufacturing industry promotion	Liberia Water & Sewer Corporation -household connections -sewer treatment -urban water supply

²⁹ LISGIS. (2017). *About LISGIS*. Retrieved from Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) Official Website

4

URBAN RELATED SECTORAL POLICIES

A variety of discrete sectoral policies are relevant to urban development for the encompassing nature of cities. The chapter identifies and summarize policies that are contributing to the urbanization process in Liberia. Being a cross-cutting theme, urbanization in turn offers the opportunity to bring the attention to the relationships between policies and consideration on possible alignment through crafting Liberia’s National Urban Policy. This will be further explored in chapter 6 on Jurisdictional Coordination.

4.1 Sectoral Policies Relevant to Urban Development

Ministries are entitled to issue nationwide policies to declare the guiding principles and plans in thematic areas. These sectoral policies intend to extensively capture the problem domains and possible solutions. Table 1 summarise the roles that ministries play in developing and managing cities, as well as the sectoral policies that they are leading and the respective objectives of the policies.

TABLE 1: Summary of Selected Sectoral Policies and Responsible Ministries

MINISTRIES	SECTORIAL POLICIES	OBJECTIVES OF POLICIES
Commerce & Industry	National Micro Small Medium Enterprise Policy	To stimulate the informal urban economy, set standards small-scale enterprises, promote local economic development, influence pro-poor banking policies (financial inclusion), mediate conflict between street sellers & municipal authorities, etc.
Education	National Policy on Girls' Education	To consolidate national and international laws to promote girls' education and to advance priorities that will accelerate progress in improving girls' education
Foreign Affair	National Environmental Policy	To ensure a sound management of resources and the environment, and will attempt to avoid any exploitation of these resources in a manner that might cause irreparable damage to the environment.
Gender and Development	National Gender Policy	To serve as a framework and guideline in mainstreaming gender and empowering women and vulnerable groups in the national development processes. Other objectives are to enhance women's and girls' empowerment for sustainable and equitable development; create and strengthen gender responsive structures, processes and mechanisms for development in which both women and men participate equally, have access to, and benefit from all the country's resources.

MINISTRIES	SECTORIAL POLICIES	OBJECTIVES OF POLICIES
Health and Social Welfare	National Health Policy	To improve child health, maternal health; to increased equitable access to quality health care services; to improve prevention, control and management of major diseases; to improve nutrition status; to increase access to quality social welfare services
Internal Affairs	National Decentralisation Policy	*To promote transfer of authority, duties and responsibilities from the central to the local for inclusive and participatory governance and effective and sustainable basic urban infrastructure and service provision
	National Solid Waste Management Policy	To prescribe conditions for organised domestic/ household/non-hazardous waste collection and disposal, set criteria for managing waste disposal sites (landfills, transfer stations, etc.), recommend choice of equipment, etc.
	National Disaster Management Policy	To enhance national and local capacity to minimise vulnerability and disaster risks, prevent, mitigate and prepare for adverse impacts of hazards within the context of sustainable development.
Labour	National Employment Policy	Has limited (technical & logistical capacity)
Lands, Mines and Energy	Water Supply and Sanitation Policy	To provide guidance and direction in institutional, economic and legal reforms that will lead to improved water governance at national, local and community levels, and improved access to safe water supply and adequate sanitation, in an affordable, sustainable and equitable manner, to all the peoples of Liberia.
	National Energy Policy	To lay the foundation for the creation of an enabling environment to attract private sector capital to the energy sector, to restructure and reform energy institutions, to decentralise energy service administration, to fully utilise domestic energy resources and, most importantly, to ensure that all parts of Liberia have access to affordable and modern energy services.
Planning and Economic Affairs	National Capacity Development Strategy	To integrate effective approaches to assessing current capacities, identifying required capacities and investing in collaborative initiatives to capitalise upon and further develop capacities in a sustainable manner across the core work of all sectors in Liberia.
	NP on Population for Social and Economic Development	To contribute towards improvement in the quality of life of the people of Liberia. This will be achieved by ensuring a balanced relationship between population factors (growth rate, age and sex composition, migration and urbanisation) and the national capacity to achieve desirable levels of social and economic development.

5

URBAN AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

A National Urban Policy for Liberia contributes to reducing territorial disparities and inequalities, promoting an inclusive and productive system of cities and human settlements, and strengthening urban-rural linkages.³⁰ This chapter captures the key urban and rural challenges that were identified and prioritised during the numerous consultative sessions and research undertaken as part of the NUP development process in Liberia. This chapter echoes the advocacy of “a matrix that clearly articulates sectoral development plans (including energy, transport, housing, etc.)” by the Action Framework for Implementation of the New Urban Agenda.³¹ Extensive analysis was conducted on key urban issues identified as priorities: education, employment, poverty, economy, infrastructure and basic services.

5.1 Education and Employment

35 per cent of Liberia’s population comprises young adults between 15 and 34 years of age.³² Of these, 33 per cent have no education, 31 per cent have only primary education, and 36 per cent have secondary and tertiary educations. As education is the best and most effective vehicle for changing mindsets, the need to improve Liberia’s educational system has been repeatedly emphasised as a way to help achieve urban harmony, increased productivity and shared prosperity in cities and human settlements.

For higher and tertiary educations, curricula need to be structured in an evidence-based manner to reflect market demand while maintaining the overall balance. A clear example is in the urban planning profession, which has a shortfall of over 800 urban planners to drive sustainable urbanisation in Liberia due to insufficient planning education in the country. Such human capital gaps require regular communication mechanisms between academic and employment institutions, as well as guidance for senior secondary and university students in undertaking informed and strategic choices as per the labour requirements in the country. A study of school distribution and population growth patterns highlights the need for more schools across Liberia. Map 4 summarises school distribution compared to the population distribution in different counties. Synthesis of the two layers of information indicates insufficient schools in the fast-growing counties. Increasing the provision of schools in these regions could be given high priority in Liberia’s NUP, which would resonate with the promotion of “safe and healthy journey to school for every child as a priority” as is inscribed in article 113 of the New Urban Agenda³³ and the strategy of reducing distances to school by the Ministry of Education.³⁴ It would also contribute to improving overall low educational attainment as identified in the Agenda for Transformation.³⁵

³⁰ UN-Habitat. (2016). *Action Framework for Implementation of the New Urban Agenda*. Nairobi.

³¹ UN-Habitat. (2016). *Action Framework for Implementation of the New Urban Agenda*. Nairobi. Item 1.3

³² Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS). (2009). *2008 Population and Housing Census: Final Results*. Monrovia.

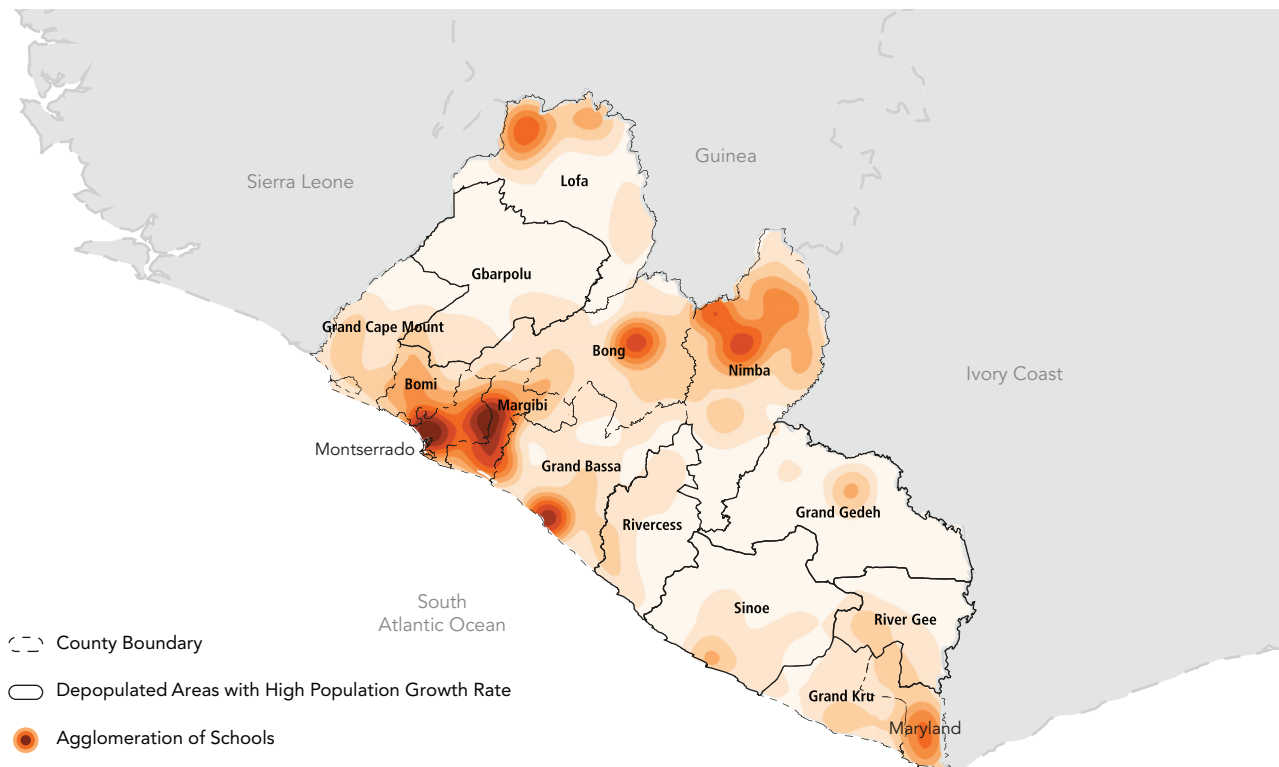
³³ United Nations. (2016). *New Urban Agenda*. Quito. Article 113.

³⁴ Ministry of Education, Liberia. (2015). *Education for All*. Monrovia. Page 9.

³⁵ Government of Liberia. (2012). *Agenda for Transformation: Steps Toward Liberia RISING 2030*. Monrovia. Page 6.

MAP 4

Depopulated Counties with High Population Growth Rates and Agglomerations of Schools, Liberia



Data Source: 2008 Population and Housing Census, GIS data from Cities Alliance Liberia Country Programme

At the height of the civil war in 1991–92, Liberia’s unemployment rate reached 85 per cent. More recently, the 2010 Liberia Labour Survey conducted by LISGIS and the Ministry of Labour estimated the unemployment rate at 3.7 per cent.³⁶ Compared to the unemployment rates of Liberia’s neighbours – Burkina Faso 2.4 per cent (1998), Côte d’Ivoire 4.1 per cent (1998), Ghana 10.4 per cent (2000), Mali 8.8 per cent (2004), and Sierra Leone 3.4 per cent (2004) – Liberia’s figures seem moderate, which tends to disguise larger labour issues of informality and underemployment. The 2010 Labour Survey found that 68 per cent of employment was informal, which means that over three-quarters of workers are in informal sector without basic job security. Informal employment often means compromised wages and productivity, and it can threaten overall social impartiality, satisfaction and stability.

Employment is relevant to a wide range of socio-economic sectors, including education, poverty reduction, economic growth, gender,

and youth. For instance, better education levels increase employment readiness, thus improving employment rate and creating job opportunities. This enhances overall economic performance, which in turn contributes to poverty reduction and regulating rural-urban migration. Adequate employment policies could further shield people against gender inequality and child labour and create more employment opportunities, particularly for youthful population and other vulnerable groups. Most Liberians consider reducing unemployment to be the most trustworthy indicator for improved household living standards,³⁷ and an unequivocal avenue towards raising people out of poverty and giving them a stake in overall national development.³⁸

The nexus of employment requires joint efforts to create more and better jobs. Table 1 exemplifies how key ministries could lead actions to generate employment opportunities in their respective areas of focus while collaborating with the Ministry of Labour.

³⁶ LISGIS. (2011). *Report on the Liberia Labour Force Survey 2010*. Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS).

³⁷ World Bank. (2010). *Core Welfare Indicator Questionnaire survey*.

³⁸ Government of Liberia. (2012). *Agenda for Transformation: Steps Toward Liberia RISING 2030*. Monrovia. Page 41.

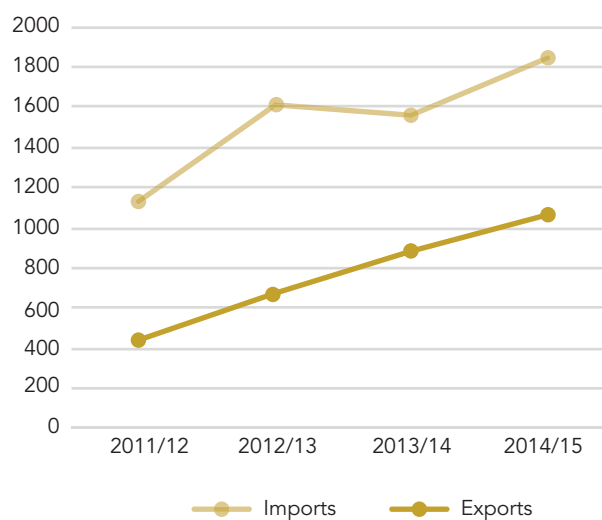
TABLE 2: Key Ministries and Lead Actions in Employment Generation

AREA OF FOCUS	RESPONSIBLE MINISTRIES	LEAD ACTIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT GENERATION
Security	Ministry of Defence	Rapid training of security forces; training and job placement for ex-combatants in urban health emergencies, urban violence control, coastal pollution defence, civil works constructed and urban waste removal; innovative north-south partnerships to scale-up training and human resource development; job creation.
Economic Revitalisation	Ministry of Finance	Priority to rapid expansion of food crop production, the revision of key legislation (investment code; small and medium enterprises strategy, micro-finance law, and the tax code). Expansion of community credit unions and consideration of an Agricultural Development Bank.
Governance and Rule of Law	Ministry of Planning	Rapid training of governance personnel and public servants through short intensive courses for clerks of court, bailiffs and sheriffs for urban and rural areas, as part of ongoing governance programmes.
Infrastructure and Basic Services	Ministry of Public Works	Priority to scaled-up construction of rural roads and primary schools using labour-intensive methods. Enhanced efforts to standardise qualifications for vocational training in housing and construction standards, zoning and basic services, and rapid skills training in areas of labour demand.

Source: Ministry of Labour. (2009). Adapted from the Employment Policy. Government of Liberia.

Besides enhancing ministerial collaboration to improve employment, optimising the industrial setup to revitalise production is also key in generating economic activity. Figure 10 shows that Liberia imports about two to three times as much as it exports, which reflects the potential work opportunities that could be provided by strengthening production power. This is expected to lower Liberia’s heavy reliance on external resources and foreign economic market through “improved satisfaction with Liberian products by domestic consumers”.³⁹ It will also turn Liberia’s single product economy into a durable industrial portfolio for greater international competitiveness. In the process of urbanisation and industrialisation, Liberian cities must play a more prominent role in promoting full and productive employment and decent work for all, given the aggregation of resources and human capital in metropolises.⁴⁰

FIGURE 10
Estimated Values of Exports and Imports of Liberia



Data Source: Agenda for Transformation: Steps Toward Liberia RISING 2030

³⁹ Government of Liberia. (2012). *Agenda for Transformation: Steps Toward Liberia RISING 2030*. Monrovia. Page 64.

⁴⁰ United Nations. (2016). *New Urban Agenda*. Quito. Article 14b.

5.2 Poverty and Economy

Improvements in education and employment share often aim to lift people out of poverty. Consecutive years of civil conflicts turned Liberia into one of the poorest countries in the world, with an estimated GDP per capita of US\$ 556 in 2015, despite having recovered notably from its lowest level of US\$ 66 in 1995 (Figure 11). It is estimated that approximately two thirds of all Liberians live in poverty, which is expressed in terms of low income and consumption, poor nutrition and food insecurity, poor health, inadequate education and infrastructure provision.⁴¹ An acute expression of poverty is the significant increase of child labour. It is estimated that 300,000 children, equal to 40 per cent of the total population of children aged 5-14 years in 2010, were driven to work at an early age by extreme poverty and the dysfunctional education system.⁴² This social phenomenon is more pronounced in cities such as Monrovia, where

economic activities, a young population, and urban poverty concentrate.

The Liberian Poverty Reduction Strategy launched in 2008 provides a framework for addressing the widespread poverty in the country. It proposes four pillars of action:

1. Ensuring secure and peaceful environment;
2. Revitalising pillar industries (Figure 12) such as forestry, manufacturing, agriculture and fisheries;
3. Building efficient and effective institutions and systems; and
4. Providing better infrastructure and basic services.

To oversee implementation of the framework, the Liberia Reconstruction and Development Committee chaired by the president was formed with members ranging from ministries to international development partners.

FIGURE 11
GDP Per Capita (US\$) of Liberia and Civil Conflicts

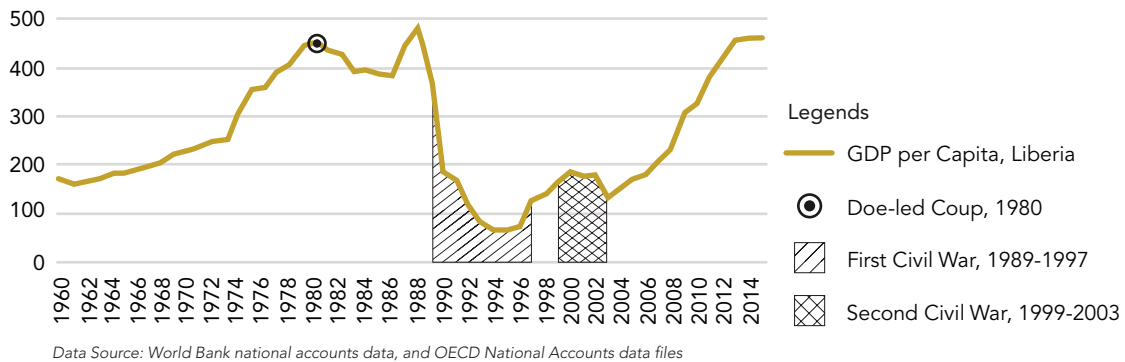
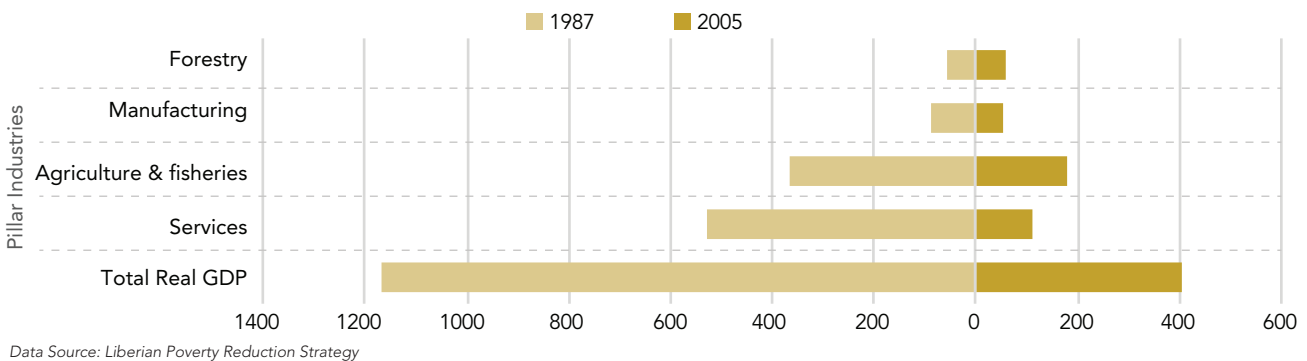


FIGURE 12
Value Added by Sector in Liberia, 1987 & 2005 (Million, US\$)



⁴¹ Government of Liberia. (2008). *Liberian Poverty Reduction Strategy*.

⁴² Ministry of Labour. (2009). *Employment Policy*. Government of Liberia.

While addressing poverty, it is important to stress the crucial role of Monrovia, which hosts one third of the nation's population and contributes two thirds of the national GDP. Citizens of smaller cities and rural areas should also be considered to ensure that the benefits of poverty reduction, growth and development are spread equitably throughout the urban areas. This complies with the New Urban Agenda, which aims to end poverty in all its forms and dimensions by ensuring equal rights and opportunities and integration in the urban space.⁴³

5.3 Infrastructure and Basic Services

The Liberian Poverty Reduction Strategy strategically places "rehabilitating infrastructure and delivering basic services" as one of the four pillar actions towards restoration of the urban areas in Liberia.⁴⁴ Similarly, the New Urban Agenda Implementation Plan also promotes administrative strategies for minimum standards in efficient and affordable services and infrastructure delivery for urban development. This contributes to achieving equitable, affordable access to sustainable basic physical and social infrastructure for all without discrimination.

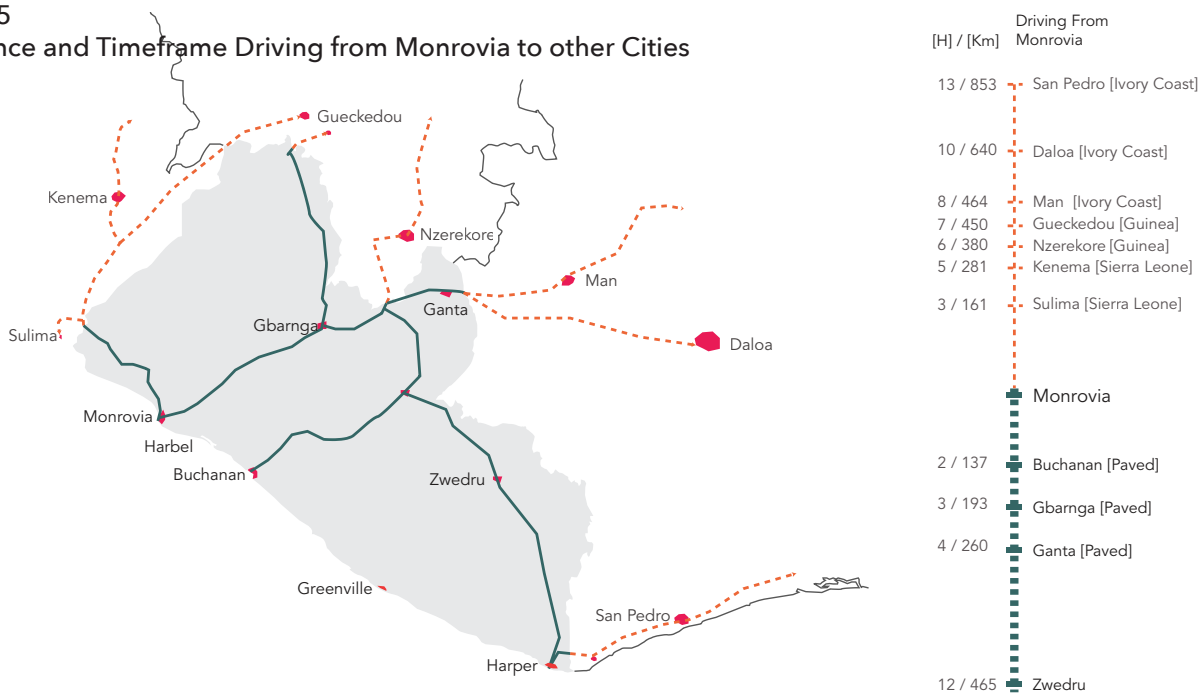
Liberia's 14-year civil crisis damaged much of its infrastructure, especially in Greater Monrovia. In addition, facilities that escaped severe damage

have deteriorated due to poor maintenance. Weak infrastructure in urban and rural areas has led to limited accessibility to electricity, water, health and sanitation facilities, which contribute to high cost of goods and services and weakened food security. Such shortages have largely affected vulnerable groups including women, children, and persons with disabilities.

TRANSPORTATION

Of all Liberia's infrastructure problems, roads - the most vital element - require urgent attention. In the post-conflict period, Liberia faces the challenge of 1,600 km of unpaved roads and 700 km of paved roads that require urgent repair.⁴⁵ During the rainy season from May to October, poor road conditions cut off regular transfer of goods and services among cities and between urban and rural areas. It is essential to restore the road system, which plays an indispensable role in poverty reduction and is critical for economic development. Similarly, other infrastructure networks such as bridges, railways, seaports and airports that are in an equally poor state also need renewal if the national transport network is to be thoroughly revitalised. Improved transport services could better link cities and human settlements in Liberia by reducing the travel time and cost between Monrovia and other county capitals (Map 5). This would facilitate the flow of human and physical capital that is crucial to the urban economy in both domestic and foreign markets.

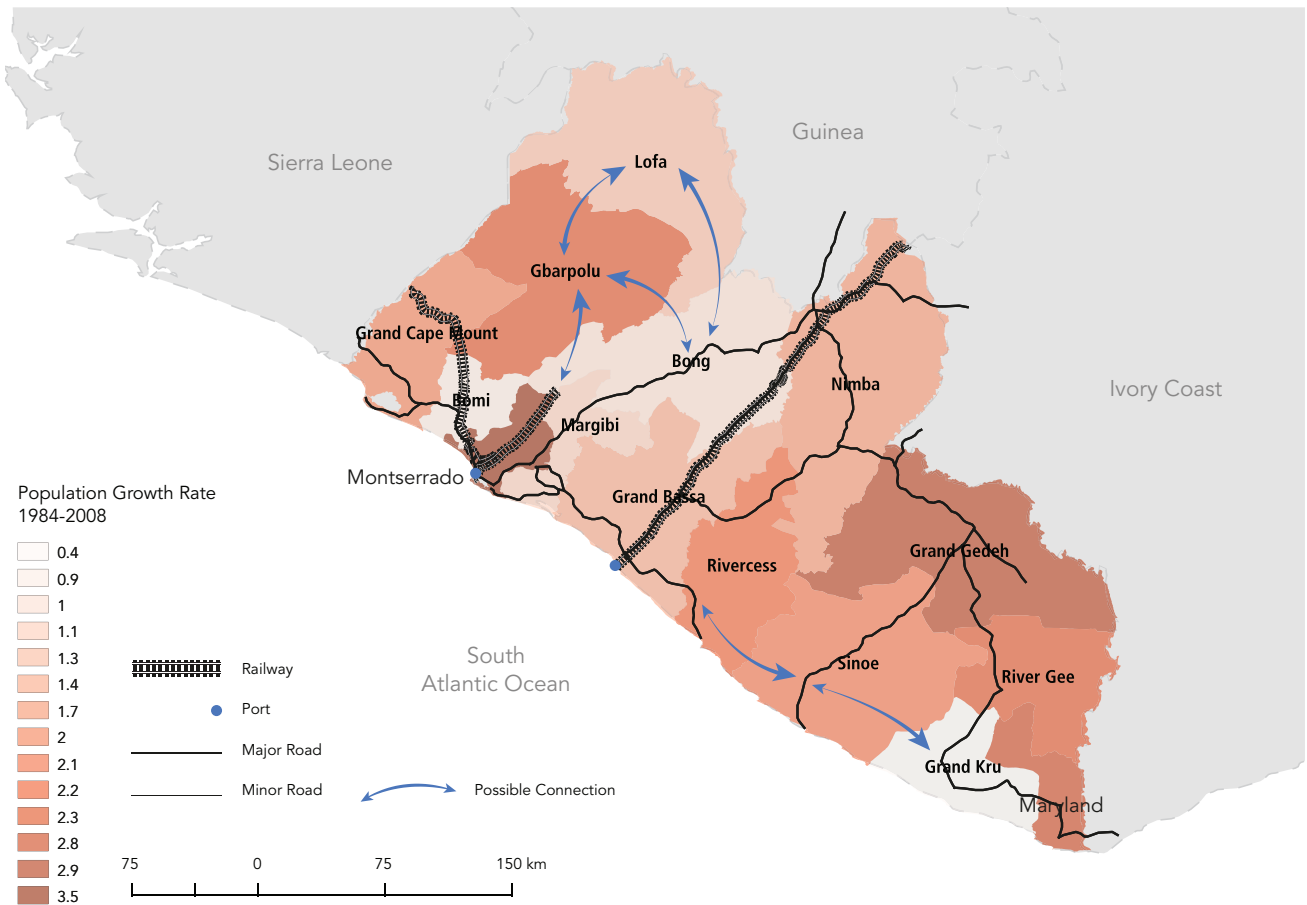
MAP 5 Distance and Timeframe Driving from Monrovia to other Cities



Source: UN-Habitat Planning and Design Lab

⁴³ United Nations. (2016). *New Urban Agenda*. Quito. Article 14a.
⁴⁴ Ministry of Transport. (2012). *National Transport Master Plan of Liberia*.
⁴⁵ Government of Liberia. (2008). *Liberian Poverty Reduction Strategy*.

MAP 6
Population Growth Rate and Transport System, Liberia



Data Source: 2008 Population and Housing Census, GIS data from Cities Alliance Liberia Country Programme and Natural Earth (www.naturalearthdata.com)

The five-year strategic development plan of the Liberia Vision 2030, the Agenda for Transformation,⁴⁶ confirms the vital role of roads in linking people, places, goods, services and economic opportunities,⁴⁷ and cites a 2012 World Bank survey of Liberian firms which finds that 39 per cent identify transport as a major constraint to business development.⁴⁸ Map 6 combines the population growth rate of each county and the overall road and railway coverage. Counties with the fastest population growth rates, such as Grand Gedeh and Gbarpolu, have inadequate connections to the main transport networks. Such a disconnect could significantly delay and constrain the development of these regions. To address the issue, the anticipated population growth could be taken into consideration while formulating a

coherent transport strategy as part of the NUP for Liberia.

ENERGY

As an essential basic service with a profound impact on all aspects of life, energy fosters Liberia’s economic, political and social development. Household energy sector dominates the nation’s energy consumption. It was estimated that in 2004, over 95 per cent of the population depended on firewood and charcoal for cooking and heating, while palm oil, kerosene and candles were used for lighting.⁴⁹ Given that modern energy services such as electricity and petroleum products are crucial in ensuring an affordable and sustainable

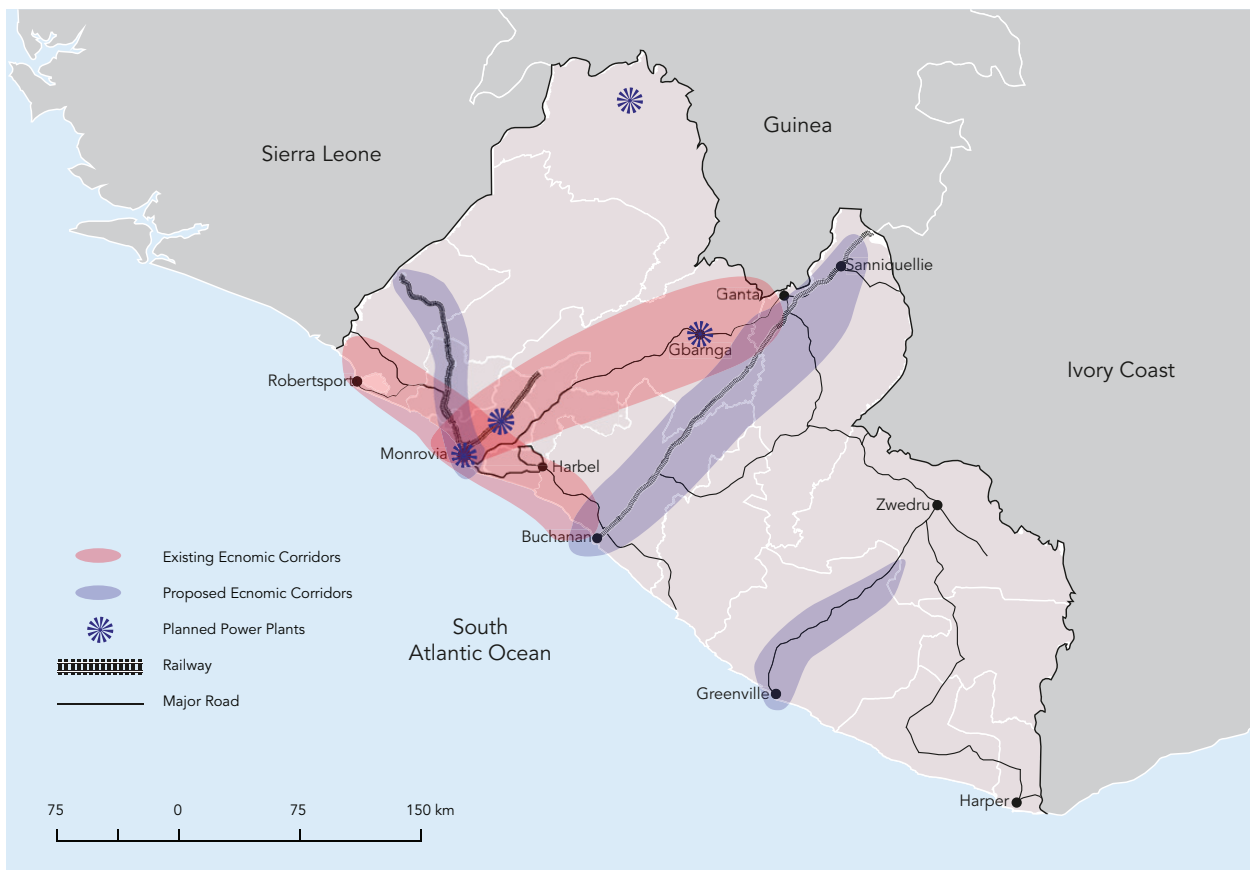
⁴⁶ Government of Liberia. (2012). *Agenda for Transformation: Steps Toward Liberia RISING 2030*. Monrovia.

⁴⁷ United Nations. (2016). *New Urban Agenda*. Quito. Article 13 (f).

⁴⁸ World Bank. (2009). *Doing Business 2012 Survey*. Retrieved from Enterprise Surveys: <http://www.enterprisesurveys.org/data/exploreeconomies/2009/liberia>

⁴⁹ Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy. (2009). *National Energy Policy*.

MAP 7 Existing and Proposed Economic Corridors, and Planned Power Plants



Data Source: Liberia 2010 Development Corridor Desk Study⁴⁷, GIS data from Cities Alliance Liberia Country Programme and Natural Earth (www.naturalearthdata.com)

energy supply, universal access to such provisions is much needed (as proposed in Liberia's National Energy Policy). Energy sector reform that calls for transparent governance and the right institutional framework is expected to facilitate private sector investment and improve the accessibility and quality of energy supply while lowering the cost.

Energy also plays an irreplaceable role in facilitating industrialisation, which is key to achieving a prosperous urban economy and subsequent improvement of employment opportunities. Map 7 shows current and proposed economic corridors, and the power plants that have been planned accordingly, which further demonstrate the high correlation between economy and energy.

WATER

Water is another imperative needed to safeguard life and sanitation dignity for Liberians. The SDGs and the New Urban Agenda both stress how essential access to water is in cities and human settlements. Despite significant improvement since the end of the civil conflicts, 75 per cent of Liberians are estimated to be without access to safe drinking water.⁵⁰ The scarcity and poor quality of water negatively impacts sanitation, health, food security and economic opportunities.⁵¹ The NUP for Liberia could recognise the high and diverse multi-sector returns offered by investment in the water sector.

⁵⁰ Government of Liberia. (2008). *Liberian Poverty Reduction Strategy*.

⁵¹ Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy. (2009). *Water Supply and Sanitation Policy*.

FOOD INSECURITY

Closely tied to water is food security and health. Due to water scarcity and the poor transport network, agricultural production has been repressed, which adversely impacts food security and health. Consequently, an estimated two out of five children in Liberia are growth-stunted and underweight. Some 40 per cent of the population is susceptible to food insecurity, especially those living in geographically isolated counties.⁵²

Another contributor to food insecurity is limited irrigated land. Less than five per cent of Liberia’s land is under permanent cultivation, and less than one per cent is irrigated. This is related to inadequate machinery, knowledge and techniques of cultivation, transport, storage and marketing. The uncertainty of land tenure also discourages investment, which leads to the absence of food processing industry to prepare products for domestic and international markets. To remedy the development of the agriculture sector, the government adopted enabling institutional and legal frameworks, Cooperative Development Act 2010 and an accompanying Liberia Cooperative Development Regulations of 2010, to facilitate the development of demand-driven cooperative organisations.⁵³

HEALTH

Insufficient healthcare facilities and professionals combined with limited access to healthcare have contributed to the poor health status, especially in rural areas and urban slums. Interventions to improve the health of people living in informal settlements should be given a higher priority, and slum dwellers require essential training and sensitisation on health issues.

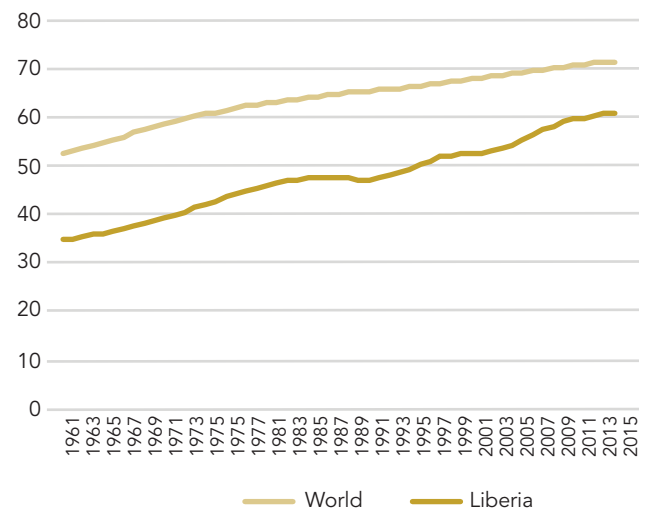
According to the World Bank (Figure 13), the gap in life expectancy between Liberia’s and the world average is reducing but still significant. Food insecurity, malnutrition and poor healthcare in turn result in low agricultural productivity.

This forms a vicious cycle that continually deteriorates the overall social well-being of Liberians.

OTHER SERVICES

In addition to the abovementioned challenges, there are other basic service issues that need to be addressed. For instance, only 15 per cent of the population has access to waste collection disposal facilities.⁵⁴ Most residents do not treat or boil their drinking water, which has a negative implication on health and nutrition. Mechanisms for responding effectively to health crises need to be operationalised to avoid a repetition of the 2014 Ebola outbreak with its chain of social implications. Open defecation is still far from being eliminated because of inadequate availability of toilets and insufficient awareness of hygiene.

FIGURE 13
Life Expectancy at Birth (years) in Liberia



Data Source: World Bank Open Data: <http://data.worldbank.org>

⁵² Government of Liberia. (2008). *Liberian Poverty Reduction Strategy*.

⁵³ Government of Liberia. (2012). *Agenda for Transformation: Steps Toward Liberia RISING 2030*. Monrovia. Page 76.

⁵⁴ Government of Liberia. (2008). *Liberian Poverty Reduction Strategy*.

6

JURISDICTIONAL COORDINATION

A shared shortcoming manifested in many policies is a unilateral approach with poor multi-institutional coordination. Given the financial and technical constraints that Liberia faces after prolonged civil wars, the insufficient capacity that is widespread among governmental bodies is expected to be a persistent problem in the near and medium future. Resolving these issues requires coordination between institutions (including international development partners) to identify and mobilise scarce resources and addressing mutual urban development tasks.

Under the mandate of the Action Framework for Implementation of the New Urban Agenda,¹⁸ a NUP sets out the roles and responsibilities for all spheres of government and for public participation as applied to urbanisation and urban management. In this spirit, the Chapter reviews the institutional framework and the mainstreamed policies in a collective manner to unite key actors and align seemingly distant sectoral policies towards tackling shared urban challenges. It also discusses how inclusive urban governance can be achieved through participation, collaboration and decentralisation.

6.1 Aligning Sectoral Policies

For ministries, their sectoral policies serve as tools in advocating for advancements in respective areas that overlap urban affairs. Adopting the reverse thinking method (Figure 14), thematic urban foci were used to link and align relevant policies in exploring confluence of actions and activities. This exemplifies how summarised urban foci of sectoral policies could link relevant policies and institutions which perform similar urban roles to identify partnerships for collaboration in achieving shared objectives. Developing a mechanism to consolidate

sectoral policies is expected to promote institutional collaboration and policy coherence as set out in the Liberia National Vision 2030.

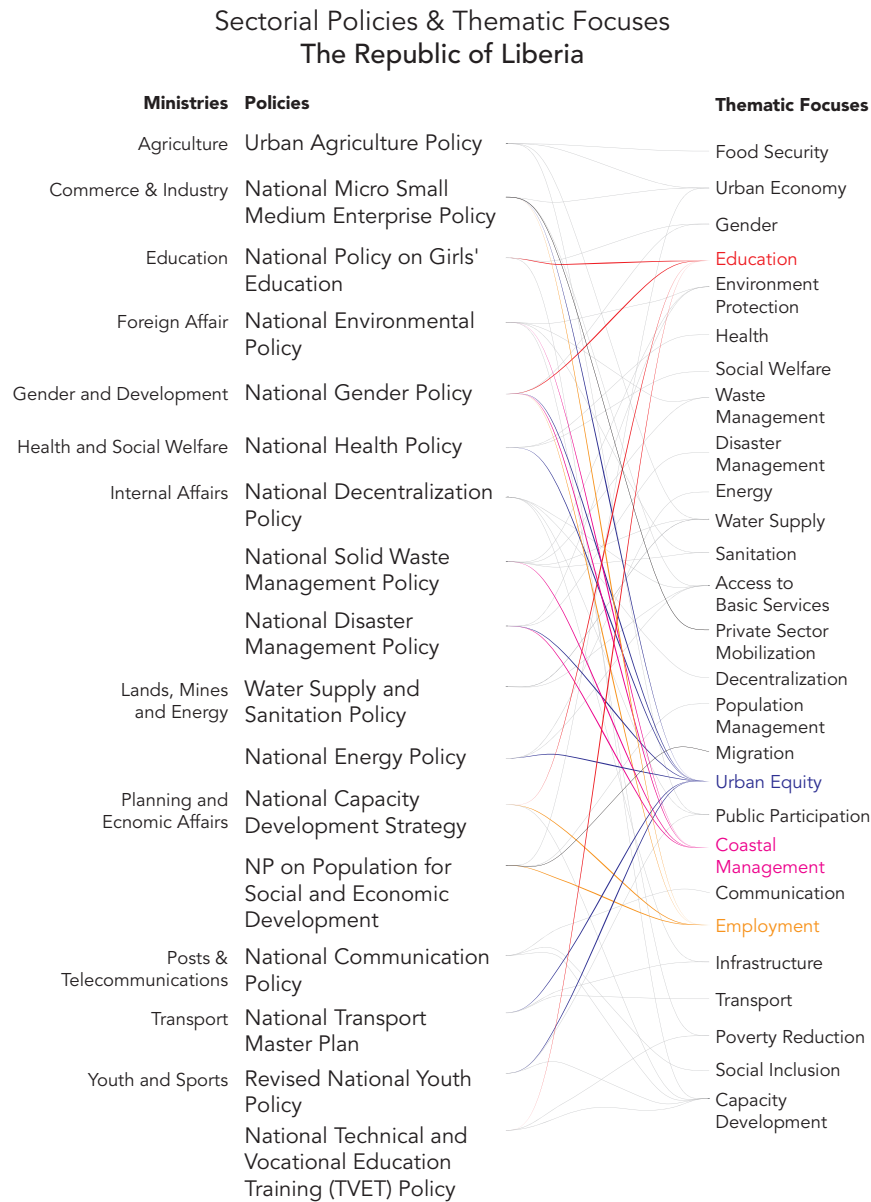
6.2 Urban Governance and Collaboration

Urban governance and the policy development process in Liberia has been controversial for inadequate public participation, insufficient transparency, and lack of gender sensitivity. Conventionally, citizens have been considered mere recipients of policies and strategies rather the owners and participants. Such exclusion has contributed to low acceptance and recognition of policies, making their implementation difficult. Separated from shaping policy, people tend to perceive government schemes as distant and irrelevant, which severely lowers the credibility of strategies.

The importance of an inclusive governance system is stressed in the African Agenda 2063 Framework, which functions as a strategic framework for socio-economic transformation of the continent over 50 years. Two of the seven "African Aspirations" in the agenda focus on building democratic governance and people-driven development, in details:²¹

- An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law
- An Africa whose development is people driven, relying on the potential offered by people, especially its women and youth and caring for children

FIGURE 14
Liberia’s Sectoral Policies and Thematic Focuses



Apart from active citizenry consultation inclusive governance also means close partnerships with international organisations which have accumulated rich experience in assisting countries’ development. Liberia faces development challenges similar to those of other nations.⁵⁵ Learning from international experience could mean the difference between wasting scarce resources on uninformed experiments and specifically addressing key issues using tested methodologies.⁵⁶

The Government of Liberia has been keen and active in partnering with development partners from all around the globe in responding to its emerging urbanisation issues. To facilitate the respective strengths of international partners, Cities Alliance Liberia Country Programme has rallied a wide range of international organisations with a focus on various capacities to work collaboratively in securing Liberia’s sustainable growth. Such a development network has embedded the multilateral organisation UN-Habitat and NGOs

⁵⁵ Cobbett, William. (2017, February). *Opening remarks: Toward a city development strategy*. Presented at the Greater Monrovia City Forum, Monrovia, Liberia.

⁵⁶ UN-Habitat. (2014). *The Evolution of National Urban Policies: A Global Overview*. Nairobi. Foreword.

such as Housing for Humanity (HFHI), National Petty Trader Union of Liberia (NAPETUL), Slum Dwellers International (SDI), United Cities and Local Governments - Africa (UCLGA), and Women in Informal Employment: Globalising and Organising (WIEGO) to jointly address issues such as human settlements, housing, slums, governance and gender. This coincides with the principle of the NUP for Liberia, which is to promote an active working partnership supported by long-term global and institutional commitments.

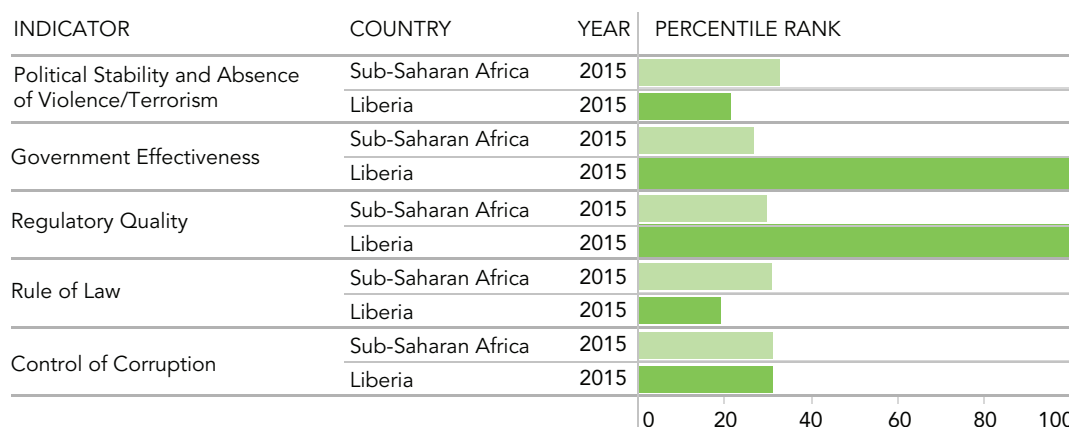
6.2 Devolution of Governance

Empowering municipalities to enable efficient, effective local governance has been at the centre of legislative reform in Liberia. Decentralised governance has many merits, including effective

control and supervision, quick and locally-applicable decision making and actions, and reducing burden of the top executive level. While reshaping the legislative framework to permit the transfer of responsibility and authorities from central to local government institutions allows for more administrative autonomy, the capacity of municipalities will also need to be strengthened and enhanced to ensure they are able to deliver the envisioned results.⁵⁷

The need for continuous improvement of other governing areas of Liberia also remains urgent. Figure 15 highlights the views of numerous enterprise, citizen and expert survey respondents, which indicate that Liberia lags behind the Sub-Saharan Africa average standard in political and social stability, regulatory quality, and rule of law. Moreover, it is observed that the control of corruption must be underpinned along with rapid economic growth.

FIGURE 15
Governance Indicator of Liberia Compared to Sub-Saharan Africa Overall



Source: Kaufmann D., A. Kraay, and M. Mastruzzi (2010), *The Worldwide Governance Indicators: Methodology and Analytical Issues*

⁵⁷ Patsika, Charles. (2017, February). *Strengthening local government association: UCLGA*. Presented at the Greater Monrovia City Forum, Monrovia, Liberia.

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Liberia has recently witnessed its first peaceful transfer of power since 1944, marked by president George Weah's historic inauguration on 22 January 2018 following a successful election. President Weah stressed in his inauguration speech, the pivotal importance of United Nations and international development partners in facilitating investments in agriculture, infrastructure, human capital and technology was underlined.

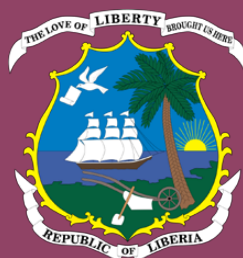
If Liberia is to achieve inclusive economic growth and sustainable urban development, it urgently needs an enabling framework to provide coordination among different sectors and ministries, address urban challenges, and maximise the opportunities offered by urbanisation, while mitigating potential adverse externalities. A National Urban Policy (NUP) is such a framework and mechanism for coordination.

Different from the encompassing Discussion Paper, the updated, simplified and restructured Policy Note targets at executives to brief on major urban challenges and preliminary policy recommendations for informed decision-making. It also aims to stimulate political support for further diagnostic, policy formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the NUP for Liberia. To better realize the country's commitment to implement the New Urban Agenda, the Policy Note has been structured in close alignment with the Action Framework for Implementation of the New Urban Agenda (AFINUA), with six main dimensions of NUP on demography, land, governance, sectoral policies, territorial development and jurisdictional coordination.

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