



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE –RL



WORLD FOOD DAY

NOVEMBER 14, 2015

SPECIAL EDITION



T H E M E

**“SOCIAL PROTECTION AND AGRICULTURE:
BREAKING THE CYCLE OF RURAL POVERTY”**



PREFACE

Member countries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations observe October 16th annually as World Food Day. The day is set aside by the FAO to highlight the importance of agricultural production as a driving force for economic development, poverty reduction, food and nutrition security and to demonstrate a global commitment to eradicate hunger from the face of the earth.

Liberia has been a part of this annual global commitment, working in partnership with a cross section of stakeholders in the agricultural sector. Along with the euphoria that accompanies the observance of World Food Day, smallholder farmers have the opportunity to erect booths and proudly display various agricultural commodities showing the potential and richness of the soil.

The 2015 observance of World Food Day is significant because it also coincides with the tenth anniversary since the Liberia Agricultural Sector Investment Program (LASIP) was initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture.

LASIP is a flagship agriculture investment strategy of the Ministry of Agriculture and it addresses all the basic components for the revitalization and growth of the agricultural sector.

The implementation of LASIP is ongoing in the fifteen counties of Liberia. Smallholder farmers are being empowered through the acquisition of new farming skills and technologies. The physical presence of extension staff and subject matter specialists in the field serves as a motivating factor and farmers are taking advantage of this presence to commit to increase farming activities.

As the ministry joins member countries in observance of World Food Day, we present a retrospective insight on the successes that have been made in the last few years in the sector and the prospect for improvements. Subsequent pages of this newsletter will provide an indebt overview of the projects and programs under LASIP and the impact these projects are making in support of the Agenda for Transformation as Liberia continues the forward march to food sufficiency and food and nutrition security.

SIGNIFICANCE OF WORLD FOOD DAY

World Food Day is a day of action against hunger. On October 16, people around the world come together to declare their commitment to eradicate hunger in our lifetime. Because when it comes to hunger, the only acceptable number in the world is zero.

World Food Day celebrates the creation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on October 16, 1945 in Quebec, Canada. First established in 1979, World Food Day has since then been observed in almost every country by millions of people.

In North America, grassroots events and public awareness campaigns engage diverse audiences in action against hunger. From hunger walks and World Food Day dinners to meal packaging events and food drives, there are many ways for people to be a part of solutions to hunger. Each year, advocates come together to raise awareness and engage Americans and Canadians in

the movement to end hunger. Led by the FAO Liaison Office for North America, the World Food Day USA & Canada Network includes over 60 organizations, universities and companies that are working to achieve a zero hunger world.

Why care about hunger?

Because the right to food is a basic human right. In a world of plenty, 805 million people, one in nine worldwide, live with chronic hunger. The costs of hunger and malnutrition fall heavily on the most vulnerable.

60% of the hungry in the world are women. Almost 5 million children under the age of 5 die of malnutrition-related causes every year. 4 in 10 children in poor countries are malnourished damaging their bodies and brains.

Agriculture, The Foundation For Economic Growth

Agriculture is a major contributor to economic growth and a source of livelihood and employment for about 70% of the population. Almost everyone depends on agriculture and agricultural products for their daily sustenance.

The Government of Liberia is very cognizant of this demand and has accordingly demonstrated the political commitment to rehabilitate and transform the agriculture sector which was badly hampered by 14 years of neglect and lopsided management.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy sets out the basis for the government's action to address the loopholes in the sector. It emphasizes the strategic importance of agriculture in creating food and nutrition security, eradicating endemic hunger, creating shared growth and providing opportunities for improved value chain addition, where smallholder farmers can benefit from their production and eventually transform themselves into profitable entrepreneurs.

Rehabilitating the Agriculture Sector

The Agriculture Sector Rehabilitation Project (ASRP) is one of several projects which grew out of the LASIP. The project is primarily focus on providing support to farmers in the rehabilitation of community infrastructure and Water Management. Most of the agriculture support infrastructures including roads, storage facilities and farming implements and new technologies were nonexistent in most, if not all parts of the country during the period of the civil crisis. The activities of the ASRP is centred in four

counties in South-eastern Liberia including Grand Gedeh, River Gee, Maryland and Grand Kru. In the four counties, most construction and rehabilitation work on infrastructure including feeders roads and concrete culverts have either been completed or are in their advance stages. The rehabilitation of the different infrastructures is intended to create an all season road resistance to allow farmers to access available markets where possible.

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27 Km Zwedru—Ziah Town Road, Grand Gedeh County



Dam under construction in Philadelphia, Maryland County

PARTIAL VIEW OF

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE OF LIBERIA





SIGNIFICANCE OF WORLD FOOD DAY

Every human being has a fundamental right to be free from hunger and the right to adequate food. The right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman and child has the physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement.

Because we can end hunger in our lifetime. It's possible. The world produces enough food to feed every person on the planet. In September 2000, world leaders signed a commitment to achieve eight Millennium Development Goals by 2015. MDG #1 is eradicate extreme poverty and hunger and includes three targets. Since then: Forty countries have already achieved the first target, to halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by 2015.

In addition, over the past 20 years, the likelihood of a child dying before age five has been nearly cut in half, which means about 17,000 children are saved every day.

Extreme poverty rates have also been cut in half since 1990. The challenge is significant, but these results show us that when we focus our attention, we can make big strides.

Because the cost of neglect is too high. No one in the world should have to experience hunger. In addition to the cost of human suffering, the world as a whole loses when people do not have enough to eat. Hungry people have learning difficulties, are less productive at work, are sick more often and live shorter lives. The cost to the global economy because of malnutrition is the equivalent of US\$3.5 trillion a year.⁹ Hunger leads to increased levels of global insecurity and environmental degradation. Ending hunger is not just a moral imperative, but also a good investment for society.

Because it can happen to anyone. Even in the U.S., one of the richest countries in the world, one in seven Americans - 14.3 percent - does not have enough to eat.¹⁰ Nutritious food can be expensive, making a balanced diet a luxury for many. Loss of a job, a family tragedy, poor health, or an accident can make anyone, anywhere, go hungry in a moment. Globally, extreme climate events, war, or even financial crisis can dramatically affect a person's ability to feed themselves and their families. Without social safety nets, resiliency measures and good policy in place, these small and large events can set off a cycle of hunger and poverty.





USAID | LIBERIA
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUCCESS STORY

Liberian farmers produce surplus rice for the market

The USAID Food and Enterprise Development Program targets organized farmers and provides resources and knowledge to improve production and profitability.



“We have been assured that Liberian rice is going to be on the market in bulk so we are encouraged to produce more.

“In the past we produced rice, but there were no buyers, thus causing us to lose interest in commercial rice farming, so we only produced for home consumption. Today, we are extremely happy that through the interventions of our partners (USAID FED and Fabrar), we now have the opportunity to market our rice for commercial sales”, said Harriet Quenisear, in Bong County, Central Liberia. In order to boost rice production, the USAID Food and Enterprise Development program (USAID FED) partnered with rice producers in Bong County, such as Harriet.

Harriet, a member of the Green field farming group, has packaged approximately 600 50 kg bags of paddy rice in their warehouse for sale to Fabrar rice processor. They expect to earn at least US\$11,100 from this sale.

With great excitement she went on

to say, “this is the first time that we have ever gotten such a harvest. We have been assured that Liberian rice is going to be on the local market in bulk, so we are encouraged to produce more of it.” Due to low scale of rice production in Liberia, the Liberian government heavily depends on the importation of rice to ensure food security for its citizens. However, with the intervention of government and partners in the rice sub sector, it is expected that rice production will scale up to reduce the dependence on rice importation.

In 2014, Green field farming group and 50 other farmers entered into partnership with the USAID FED to develop seven hectares of swamp land located in Bellemu, Panta District, Bong County. Through the 2014 farming season the farmers received training in improved skills of swamp rice cultivation, tools and fertilizer from USAID FED.

Before USAID FED’s intervention, the Bellemu’s farmers were engaged in upland rice production realizing very little harvest from their upland rice field. According to Harriet, with the support of USAID FED, their lowland rice field produced more and helped feed some hungry people in the community during the peak of the Ebola crisis in Liberia.

The first year of the partnership (USAID FED provided training and agricultural inputs to improve efficiency and yields) the rice crop grew very well giving the opportunity to some widows and women in the community to harvest rice during the Ebola situation. The rice field continued to produce more and more around August and September as the community people went out to the field each day to gather harvest.

To improve market opportunity for Liberian rice farmers, USAID FED has partnered with Fabrar Inc., a local rice processing company based in Kakata, Margibi County. They have a large warehouse and improved processing facility. As part of the support to the Green Field farming group, USAID FED will construct an improved irrigation system in 2015 on their seven hectares to enable them to grow two crops of rice in one year.

Regional Integration Through Agriculture Productivity

With the adoption of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme by member states of the African Union and the regional compact among ECOWAS countries, the West Africa Agriculture Productivity Project (WAAPP) is a classic demonstration of regional commitment to attain food and nutrition security throughout the West African region, with Liberia being no exception.

The WAAPP project seeks to improve the productivity of rice and cassava in Liberia along their value chain in order to enhance Liberia's food production capacity towards self sufficiency and regional competitiveness. The project is being implemented in eight of Liberia's fifteen counties (Bong, Margibi, Bomi, Gbarpolu, Grand Gedeh, River Gee, Maryland and Sinoe) and the project targets 150,000 beneficiaries including farmers, researchers, universities, MOA, Central Agriculture Research Institute, Community Based Organizations & Farmer Based Organizations.

In order to reach out to the beneficiaries, the project is also establishing the enabling conditions and environment for regional cooperation and market integration and the primary focus of this project component is to prepare and assess the ECOWAS Regulations which will be published in a National Gazette and to review three ECOWAS regulations on Seeds, Fertilizers and Pesticides as well as establish an Independent Seed Board to regulate the Seed Sector.

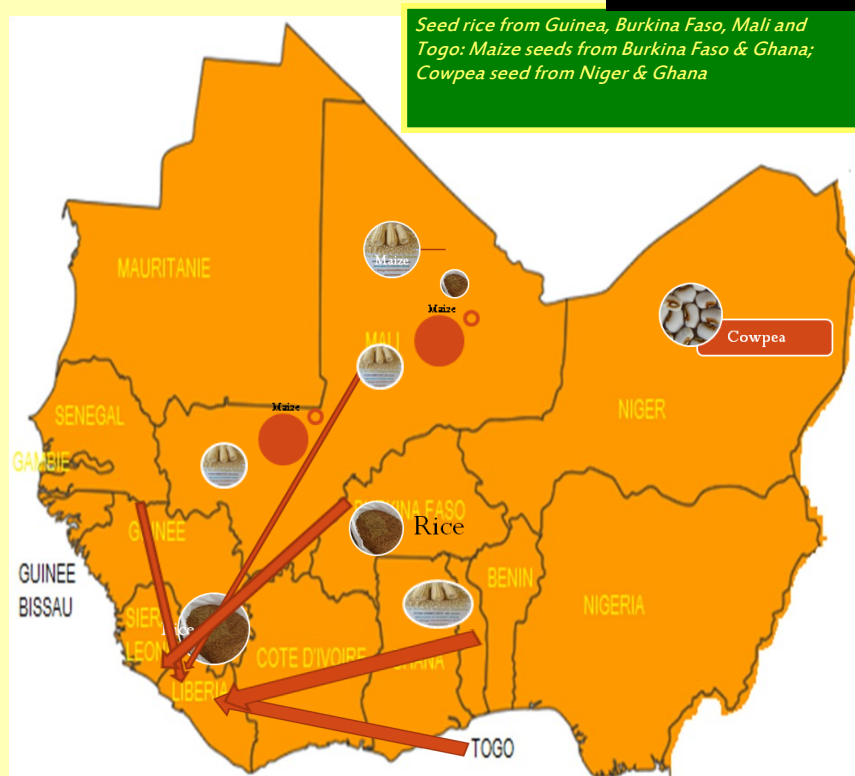
In keeping with this regulation, the project is working in collaboration with an international consultant to complete a 'implementation guidelines' workshop and several individuals have also been identified to be named as

members of the Independent Seed Board as outlined in the National Seed Policy.

On the issue of project integrity and effectiveness, centres of specialization are being built along the Value Chain as a value added incentive for smallholder farmers who constitute a significant majority in the agricultural sector. The aim is to develop the requisite technical roadmap to enhance agricultural development in Liberia.

The CARI Master Plan which entails a clear infrastructural vision has been developed by the project management team and is presently under review by a technical firm recruited to develop the plan. The project is providing capacity enhancement support to 37 students, 32 of whom are pursuing Masters degree studies and 5 doctoral candidates conducting research at Makerere University in Uganda, Sokoine University in Tanzania, University of Cape Coast in Ghana and Nairobi University in Kenya.

Continued on next page



Regional Integration...

Continued from previous page

On the issue of funding of demand-driven technology generation and dissemination adaptation, about 24 Innovative Platforms have been established in Sinoe, Bomi, Gbarpolu, Grand Gedeh and River Gee counties. The innovative Platforms serves as a hub for technology generation and dissemination to nearby communities. Through a sub-regional arrangement, seeds from Guinea, Togo, Burkina Faso, Niger and Ghana are being distributed to smallholder farmers. Out of the 440 MT of assorted seeds, the GoL procured 250 MT of rice seeds, 34 MT of foundation Seeds and 10 MT of Cowpea.

Farmers in Margibi, Gbarpolu, Bong and Bomi have adapted improved technologies as yield is 100% higher than local variety due to new planting methods introduced by the subject matter specialists. The International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) regional nurseries have been harvested and replanted.

A total of 20 new rice varieties have been identified, demonstrated and presented to over 25 smallholder farmer heads in Bong County by Africa Rice. The multiplication of 18.5 ha of NERICA 8 rice foundation seeds have commenced in Kpatawee through CARI and Africa Rice as well as through USAID-FED and BRAC.

In line with the project coordination, management, monitoring and evaluation, a preliminary data on seeds distribution in the country has been collected and verification is presently ongoing. The joint WAAPP, AIDP and STCRSP periodic field visits to project sites in Montserrado, Bomi and Bong Counties is intended to create synergies for activities in the field.



L-R: WAAPP Liberia Coordinator J. Cyrus Saygbe, Sr., MRU Coordinator Kenyeh Barley, World Bank Regional TTL Dr. Abdoulaye Toure, World Bank Co TTL Dr. Abimbola A. Adubi, CORAF Consultant Dr. Lucas Okapa and World Bank Consultant Lovetta Gleekia-Kelulah



USAID FED Helps Transform Subsistence Rice Farmers to Commercial Rice to Commercial Rice Producers

The USAID Food and Enterprise Development Program targets organized farmers and provides resources and knowledge to improve production and profitability.



Nathaniel Kpaka and Freddie Taylor of the Rice and Food Crops explaining the impact of USAID FED interventions on their rice project

Rice is one of the main staple foods for Liberians, however, for decades the GoL has had to import subsidized rice to support the local market, even though there has been significant potential for growth in this sector. To this avail, in order to boost rice production, the USAID Food and Enterprise Development program (USAID FED) partnered with rice producers in Lofa County to help them transition from subsistence to commercial production. Lofa is the bread basket of Liberia, and the USAID FED program supports approximately 80 rice producing organizations in that County.

In 2013, Nathaniel Kpaka (pictured on left in red) and thirty farmers established the Rice and Food Crops Farmers Union, which partnered with USAID FED to improve rice production in their 3.7 hectares of swamp land. Both organizations worked together in preparing the land and constructing irrigation structures. Through this partnership, the farmers received training in rice cultivation, improved rice seed varieties, and

the provision of power tillers to assist with their expansion.

Mr. Kpaka the Secretary of the Rice and Food Crops Farmers Union in Foyah District, Lofa County stated, "In the past, we cultivated our lowland rice fields using mostly local seeds and traditional methods. Our rice swamps were not properly laid out and often lack water [during] most parts of the growing season, causing low yields (less than 1 metric ton per hectare). Our annual rice harvests from our 3.7 hectare of rice swamp hardly exceed 2 metric tons (40 bags)." Through the work with USAID FED, "Our rice yield has doubled due to improved technologies, new skills in rice cultivation, on our 3.7 ha of land. This enabled us to produce approximately 296 50 kg bags during the first harvest in 2014, and [we are] intending to increase within the next farming season,"

Through assistance from USAID FED, the Rice and Food Crops Farmers Union more than tripled their rice yields from 0.54 metric tons per hectare to 4 metric tons per hectare in 2014. The USAID FED Program has also been working with the Rice and Food Crop Organizations to help identify market opportunities for their rice over the next year.

Mr. Kpaka explained that USAID FED has gone as far as establishing a rice business hub for them that is supplied with various processing equipment such as a rice mill, thresher, solar dryer and parboiling equipment. This rice hub is benefiting several communities in Foya.

"We are glad that residents of Foya will no longer continue to pound rice in the mortar. They can now bring their rice for processing at the center for reasonable prices. We are going to properly manage the facility to generate more income for the organization."

With the continuous support provided by USAID FED toward the Rice and Food Crops farmers, they are hopeful that their farming activities will not only generate income, but will also become a conduit for the improvement of food security in Liberia.

ADDRESSING REGIONAL FISHERIES IN WEST AFRICA

Several communities along the coastal region of Liberia depends on fishing activities for their daily livelihood. With the introduction of the West Africa Regional Fisheries Project (WARFP), the Ministry of Agriculture intends to put in place a governance structure which clearly articulates how small fishing families and communities can begin to benefit from fishing activities.

The implementation of the WAREP project is based on the key areas of Good Governance & Sustainable Management; Strengthening of Policy and Regulatory Framework for use of the fish resources; Reduction of Illegal Fishing and Increasing the Contribution of the Marine Fish Resources to the Local Economies.

In the area of Good Governance & Sustainable Management, the project supports the strengthening of policy and

regulatory framework for use of fish resources. This project supports the creation of the legal framework for the sustainable use of Aquaculture and fishing resources. A draft fisheries and Aquaculture law has been prepared and is being reviewed for stakeholders validation.

The project is also seeking to establish a data collection system for artisanal fisheries in Liberia. To date, 174 bundles of multifilament nets have been given out to 26 fishermen. An additional 353 fishermen have registered and have been validated in 15 communities.

On the issue of the reduction of Illegal fishing and monitoring, control and surveillance, a fisheries monitoring centre has now been established and is now fully operational with two VHF radio communications system acquired and now being installed.

A total of 20 sea patrols have been conducted. The technical drawings for the fish landing cluster in Robertsport has been prepared and construction work has already commenced. This includes the Harper coaster station construction which is to date, 90% completed and the drafting of the fisheries act and the monitoring, control and surveillance operational manual and strategy.

It is also important to note that increasing the contribution of the Marine Fish Resources to the Local Economies with the introduction of the Fish Landing Site Cluster will also enable fishermen to develop the necessary infrastructure along the value chain. It includes the rehabilitation of the Mesurado fishing pier, and the construction of off-loading jetty and rehabilitation of access roads.



Fishing Community drying fish for marketing

Rehabilitating the Agriculture Sector

The capacity building component of the project engages farmers through training and coaching thus empowering them by demonstrating agriculture best practices which are essential in transforming the culture of farming in the country.

The ASRP is making great impact in south-eastern Liberia since the commencement of the project. Through a sub-component of the project referred to as the Agriculture Production and Marketing Infrastructure Rehabilitation, over 100 coverts have been completed and this represents 86.2% completion rate from planned activities of the program.

The 27 Km road linking the provincial capital of Zwedru to Ziah Town, a major economic and agriculture corridor which also has common borderlines with neighbouring Ivory Coast has been completed.

Under phase one of the project implementation, 1620 hectare (ha) of lowland has been designed for rehabilitation. An additional 7,000 ha of lowland has also been identified with feasibility studies in the advance stages.

A second sub-component of this project deals with Land Development and Small Scale Irrigation. The core objective of this program component is to provide expert support to smallholder farmers in land development and small scale irrigation. The emphasis is on

the utilization of lowland for rice production with a manageable irrigation system.

The project also supports the Rehabilitation and Construction of Feeder Roads as well as Community Infrastructures and to date, a total of 93.3% of concrete culverts have been constructed and completed in the four counties making it easy for farmers to move their goods to nearby markets.

Additionally, the Ministry of Agriculture is also supporting the enhancement and use of improved technologies during post harvest and marketing which will eventually improve domestic rice production. The Agriculture Production & Productivity Enhancement project targets 3,400 farmers who are today benefiting from new and high yielding varieties of seed rice. Farmers are obtaining an average yield ranging from 2.3

to 2.5 Metric tons per hectare (MT /ha) of NERICA L-19 and Suakoko-8 from 2.9 to 3.3 Mt/ha and WITTA-4. About 1,553 farmers which represents 47% of the target beneficiaries have been served.

Also in line with the current decentralization policy of the MOA and the goals of the ASRP, the Project Management Unit has adopted a two pronged approach as pilot in four additional counties including Bomi, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Bassa and Montserrado. The first approach is building the capacity of the Farmers Union Network of Liberia to work directly with farmers to provide extension services and supporting County Agriculture Coordinators and District Agriculture Officers to enhance their capacity in extension service.

Transplanting Lowland Rice, Dougboden, Maryland County





Social protection and agriculture

breaking the cycle of rural poverty

- World Food Day

Why social protection holds the key to fighting hunger?

The theme for this Year's World Food Day is "Social protection & agriculture: breaking the cycle of rural poverty. Here are five impacts of social protection measures:



Social protection boosts family income and food security – by providing income (cash) or consumption (food) transfers. These programmes allow households to purchase or receive more diverse food, of higher quality, directly. For example, in 7 countries among which Zambia, Lesotho and Ghana, cash transfer programmes functioned not only as a safety net, but also increased investment in household economic activities, upped social capital and allowed beneficiaries to reduce debt levels and increase debit worthiness.

Social protection helps children stay in school – by ensuring basic family incomes so children don't need to work to fill the gap. For example, while improving the availability of schools and quality of education will help get more children to enroll and stay in school, the children of poor families who cannot afford school supplies or who depend on income from child labour are still likely to not enrol, attend less, and drop-out early. In these cases, social protection instruments allow families to buy clothes and school supplies and send their children to school.

Social protection slows the spread of HIV/ AIDS – social protection can help reduce the risk of HIV infection by

providing incentives against risky sexual behavior by teenagers. In terms of agriculture, households that are affected by HIV/AIDS face decreasing labour availability and asset status over time and become less able to produce enough, either for subsistence or for income generation. Money that would otherwise be spent on fertilizers and other inputs is allocated towards paying for medicines. FAO's social protection activities include voucher systems for improving access to farm inputs and promoting labour-saving technologies.

Social protections narrows the poverty gap – by enabling disadvantaged people to protect themselves and their goods against shocks and disasters, by increasing access to public services and investing in human capital, in particular health and education, by supporting the participation of disadvantaged groups in labour markets. For example, in South Africa workers in households receiving social transfers are able to better search for work than those in comparable households not receiving these grants – and they are more successful in finding employment as a result.

Social protection is affordable - flagship programmes have shown not only that the impact of social protection on poverty can be dramatic but also that even large social protection programmes often cost less than 0.5 percent of GDP. For example, in African countries, an average of US\$10 per month per household go a long way in empowering families and as a consequence, the entire community.





SUCCESS STORY

USAID FED Kick's Off 2015 Goat Marketing Event in Bong County

The USAID Food and Enterprise Development Program targets organized farmers and provides resources and knowledge to improve production and profitability.



Farmers and traders participating in the goat marketing event in Bong County.



Farmers selling their goats at the goat marketing event in Bong County.



On May 22, 2015 in Melekie, Bong County, USAID FED launched its 2015 goat marketing season. The purpose of this goat marketing event was to link goat traders with goat farmers to ensure that goats will be sold to Monrovia based traders, as well as implement guidelines regarding pricing standardization based on weight, girth, etc.

Twenty-four farmers from goat-producing clusters in Bong County and six goat traders, mostly from Monrovia, participated in the event. At the event, 47 goats were sold

for USD \$3,550 (40 Bucks, 5 Does and 2 Male Kids). Last year USAID FED had its first goat marketing event in Nimba County where 13 goat farmers sold 20 goats for USD \$965, which is a USD \$48 average per goat. At this recent event, the mature goats were sold for an average price of USD \$80 per goat. The Bong County goat marketing event shows a vast increase in the average price per goat. This is due to the fact that the farmers brought bigger and healthier goats for the event. USAID FED also worked with traders to use product standard specifications like girth, sex, and other attributes to determine the price. Following agreement on product standards, USAID FED trained the farmers on how to better select and prepare animals to be sold.

USAID FED is promoting a business strategy that will help farmers to increase their production and sales by maintaining optimal buck to doe ratio, retaining all functional does and selling the excess bucks. Before this event, locations were identified based on excess buck inventory. In addition, the USAID FED Trader Consultant worked with the goat farmers on preparing the goats to be sold based on observed market product specifications. Local and urban traders were provided with information on the number of animals available for sale and invited to participate to the event.

Charles Rennie the lead farmer from Darfuwah Development Project in Bong County stated that, "This is the first time I have been able to participate in such a marketing event. This has allowed me to develop a partnership with Monrovia-based goat traders for future sales. I am grateful to USAID FED for allowing this marketing event to happen, and I hope more of these types of events will occur in the future."

Varney Sorsor from the National Livestock Union of Liberia was so amazed with the goat marketing event, he went on to say, "Never before have I been able to participate in a goat marketing event. Historically, I would go to Guinea to buy my goats because they were cheaper and I could buy in bulk. Now that I have a partnership with the Bong County goat clusters, I can call them and be able to order 50-100 goats when I need them. This will cut down my transportation costs, since I will not have to go to Guinea to get goats for sale in Monrovia."

Over the next few months USAID FED will be hosting additional goat marketing events with the view to get these marketing activity institutionalized, and product and pricing standards established to govern the transactions to mutually benefit farmers and buyers.



Addressing food insecurity is much more than just distributing food. ACF combines emergency reliefs with programs that help develop people's dependable sources of income to enable them regain self-sufficiency for long term. We provide communities with the tools, the seeds and the knowledge they need to feed themselves in the future.

Support to Agricultural Production and Food Availability



Support to Income Access Through Cash Transfer Programs



IMPROVE NUTRITIONAL STATUS



In partnership with the Ministry of Health & UNICEF, ACF supports the identification of malnourished children. ACF also supports the prevention of malnutrition by building the capacity of community volunteers in order for them to raise awareness of health and nutrition related messages to families. The organization supports the treatment of malnourished children in Montserrado, Bomi & Grand Cape Mount.

Special thanks to our donors.



SUPPORT TO TREE CROP REHABILITATION IN LIBERIA

Tree crops, such as oil palm, cocoa and coffee, constitutes some of the basic export commodities in Liberia and accounts for most of the incomes of smallholder farmers in rural Liberia. The specific objective of the Smallholder Tree Crop Revitalization Support Project (STCRSP) is to increase the quality and quantity of tree crops by building the productive capacity of 15,000 smallholder farmers and the rehabilitation of plantations around the country.

The project seeks to improve access to market through the rehabilitation of 315 km of rural road networks and strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture at the county level, private extension services as well as supporting 7 co-operative society organizations, namely: Foya Maliandoe, Sebehil, Guma Mende, Voinjama District, Quardu Gboni, Quapatamai & Zorzor District in Lofa County.

The total cost of the project is US\$24.9M including US\$16.8M loan from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and this amount takes into consideration civil works,

vehicles, equipment, technical assistance and consultancy.

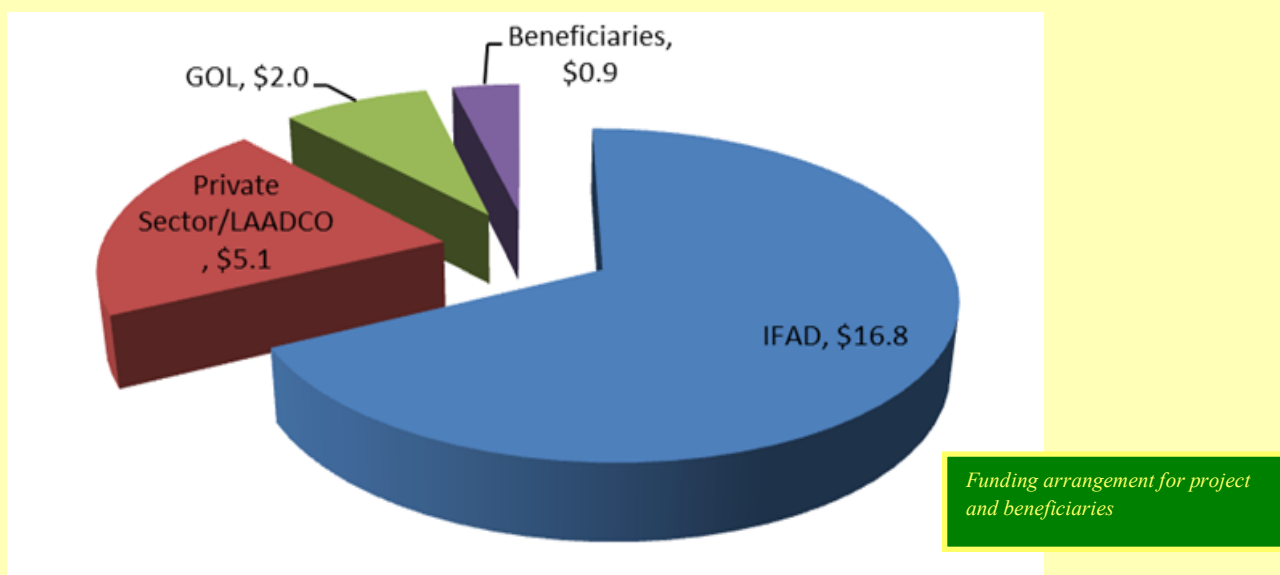
On the Revitalization of Cocoa and Coffee Plantations covering 15,000 ha, the project aims to provide support to smallholder farmers toward the rehabilitation of cocoa and coffee plantations. Since the commencement of the project implementation, seven cooperative societies have sold 91.468 MT of cocoa to private partners and the registration of farmers in the operational areas has been completed.

The difficulty of accessing markets due to deplorable road conditions is a major factor affecting farmers especially those residing in the rural parts of the country. A joint inspection team from the Programme Management Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Public Works have completed a field inspection visit to Lofa County and as part of the support package to farmers, 60.2 km of Farm to Market Roads is being rebuild while the gravel section of the road will be rehabilitated.

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STCRSP Batch II Roads (83km) - FY2014-15

No	Road Name	District	Length (Km)	Proposed Road Width (m)
1	Memolahun - Seema	Vahun	8.3	6
2	Kolahun/Foya Highway - Joseph Kollieta	Kolahun	9.2	6
3	Sivellahun – Dow-Dow	Kolahun	7.2	4.5
4	Kporlornin - Yengbema	Foya	4.9	6
5	Worsonga - Sadu Bendu	Foya	6.9	4.5
6	Voinjama/Kolahun Highway - Kpangbala	Voinjama	13.9	6
7	Kpademai/LISCO Camp Road	Voinjama	6.7	4.5
8	Konia - Ziggida	Zorzor	11.8	6
9	Konia - Ziggida	Zorzor		
10	Passama Junction – Passama & Telemi - Yarpuah	Zorzor	7.5	4.5
11	Gorlue/Bosheleta - Guinea Border	Salayea	6.6	4.5
	TOTAL		83	



Farmer Cooperative Societies are a classic example of smallholder farmers coming together and working in unison to increase their economic potential and take hold of market shares for the good of their members. This component of the project supports seven cooperatives in various aspects including methods and procedures for regular reviews of financial documents to ensure accountability of resources. Six warehouses are to be constructed of which two are nearing completion in Lofa county.

District Agriculture Officers and County Agriculture Coordinators will benefit from additional training in extension services to serve as agents of new technology transfer in the counties and districts.

Oil Palm is a leading agriculture export commodity in Liberia after rubber but the sector is dominated by private sector investment companies. To involve Liberian participation, the project is providing support to Liberian farmers to obtain legitimate ownership of land deeds to allow them to operate within the confines of the laws. The title deed for a 600 ha of land operated by the Dube Oil Palm Plantation in Konobo, Grand Gedeh County is being process by the Land Commission while another 600 ha of land in Grand Bassa County under the Oil Palm Out-growers Scheme has been assessed. A geo-reference has been carried out on 54 farmers' field and rehabilitation of 126 ha of land will be carried out soon. The 54 farmers have been assessed for credit worthiness by Afriland First Bank Liberia, a leading microfinance banking institution.

Many privately owned rubber farms were abandoned by the rightful owners during the crisis period resulting into over grown trees and vegetation, and in some instances illegal occupancy by intruders. The rubber rehabilitation component of the STCRSP is intended to provide legal farm ownership to farmers and to increase their participation in the sector. A 2,600 ha of farm land has been assessed and 1,300 farmers including male, female and youths will benefit in Montserrado while another 500 farmers will benefit from 800 ha of land in Margibi county.

The management of the STCRSP, as in the case of other projects, requires proper planning and coordination, ensuring that project resources are utilize effectively with greater accountability and transparency. Regular field level monitoring of project sites are taking place and arrangement has been concluded for routine audits of the financial documents of cooperative societies. In addition, the project is also providing support to the conduct of a feasibility study which will transform the Liberia Produce Marketing Company (LPMC) into the Liberia Agriculture Commodity Regulatory Authority (LACRA). With the passage of this bill into law, the erstwhile produce marketing company will have diverse responsibilities to ensure that commodities from Liberia are exported to international markets and that the nations' agriculture competitiveness will be showcase amongst the comity of nations.



World Food Programme Building a world with zero hunger

WFP marked World Food Day by calling on the global community to take action and help ensure the world achieves zero hunger by 2030.

World Food Day is about Zero Hunger—a Global Goal for the world to achieve together. We have 15 years to end hunger for every child, women and man around the world. Reaching it will save countless lives and build brighter futures for us all. Help us ensure the world does not forget the promise it has made by sharing [#ZeroHunger](#) in your community.

8 Reasons Why Zero Hunger Changes the World

- 1) Zero hunger could save the lives of **3.1 million children a year** ¹
- 2) Well-nourished mothers have **healthier babies** with stronger immune systems
- 3) Ending child undernutrition could increase a developing country's **GDP by 16.5 percent** ²
- 4) A dollar invested in hunger prevention could return **between \$15 and \$139 in benefits** ³
- 5) Proper nutrition early in life could mean **46 percent more in lifetime earnings** ⁴
- 6) Eliminating iron deficiency in a population could **boost workplace productivity by 20 percent** ⁵
- 7) Ending nutrition-related child mortality could **increase a workforce by 9.4 percent** ⁶
- 8) Zero hunger can help build a **safer, more prosperous world** for everyone



ENHANCING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY AND COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR SMALLHOLDER FARMERS



The overarching goal of the national agricultural program and policy has always been reducing poverty and hunger and empowering smallholder farmers to take the lead in production and marketing. The Smallholder Agriculture Productivity Enhancement Project is intended to reduce rural poverty and household food insecurity and to increase the income of smallholder farmers and rural entrepreneurs particularly women, youth and the physically challenged. The project also aims to improve technology adoption at farm levels and building the capacity of the agricultural sector.

Implementation of the project is ongoing in 12 of Liberia's 15 counties (Grand Kru, Grand Gedeh, Maryland, River Gee, Sinoe, Rivercess, Grand Bassa, Margibi, Montserrado, Bomi, Gbarpolu and Grand Cape Mount). About 25,000 smallholder farmers are benefitting from the program and funding for the project

comes from the World Bank, AfDF loan and the Government of Liberia in-kind contribution.

One of the components of this particular project which deals with the Sustainable Crop Production Intensification, focuses on two areas of implementation; Agricultural Land Rehabilitation and Development and the dissemination of improved technologies.

About 915 ha of irrigable lowland has been identified, assessed and designed with technical specifications and the rehabilitation of 85 ha of lowland with durable water control structures rehabilitated and fully developed. The concept is gear toward increasing more participation of farmers in lowland farming for higher yield. In addition, a agricultural credit scheme will be launched to empower farmers to easily access credit to invest in agricultural related activities.

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JAPAN-LIBERIA FOOD AID PARTNERSHIP

The Japan-Liberia Food Aid Partnership is intended to enhance local rice production and reduce Liberia's dependency on imported rice into the country. It is also intended to provide livelihood for rural farmers in five rice producing zones of the country. The project is intended to benefit 100,000 local farmers in the 15 counties and their dependents as well as 20,000 additional students through the GoL/WFP school feeding program.

The demand for imported rice continues to increase in spite of the many innovative strategies employed by the Ministry of Agriculture to reduce the dependency on imported rice. It is estimated that the importation of rice constitutes about 79% of consumable products including other basic food commodities and this is costing the entire country about 200 million

dollars annually. This amount is highly significant because it takes away the needed foreign exchange from the country which could otherwise be useful in undertaking other national projects throughout the country.

Another component of the Japan-Liberia Food Aid partnership also supports the construction of warehouses in Lofa, Nimba, Bong and Grand Gedeh counties to provide storage facilities for farmers as an added incentive to prevent post harvest destruct of crops, particularly rice. This aspect of the project is in line with the goal of strengthening the value chain system by providing adequate storage facilities where small-holder farmers can increase production and be assured that existing storage facilities is available to prevent post harvest destruction of commodities.

Warehouse Construction inspection by the extension staff headed by the Deputy Minister for Extension Hon. Thomas Gbokie in Voinjama. From (L-R) John Dovee, CAC Theo Bass, Hon Thomas Gbokie and Hon. Paul Jallah Assistant Minister for Extension



Voinjama construction



Sanoyea construction



Voinjama water tower and generator house





October 16th is celebrated globally as World Food Day – a day when people around the world speak out on their commitment to eradicate hunger in our lifetime. This year’s commemoration marks the 70th Anniversary since the founding of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The global theme, **“Social Protection and Agriculture: breaking the cycle of rural poverty”** recognizes the key role that agriculture, farming and food security initiatives played and continue to do in improving the livelihoods of the vulnerable population in Liberia and other parts of the world.

Social Protection on the other hand consists of programs designed to support the poor and vulnerable population, which is at the core of Action Contre la Faim’s work in Liberia and globally. ACF stands for a world where all children and adults have sufficient food and water, equitable access to the resources that sustain life, and are able to attain these with dignity. The organization plays significant role in eradicating hunger and poverty in 47 countries around the world including Liberia with support from donor partners such as the European Union (EU), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the German Government (GIZ), European Union Humanitarian Aids and Civil Protection (ECHO) and others.

ACF runs Cash base intervention programmes (Conditional and Unconditional cash transfers, Village Savings and Loans Association, etc) and support agricultural production through the provision of agricultural inputs, equipment and knowledge to farmer on how to grow health crops. Supporting malnourished children, lactating and pregnant women is a role ACF has front-line for the past 25years in Liberia.

As a result of the Ebola negative marks on affected families and communities, several households became vulnerable and food insecure. ACF and her partner, WHH has over the past 4 months been improving the purchasing power of EVD affected families through unconditional cash transfers and income generating activities (IGA) in Montserrado, Bomi and Grand Cape Mount Counties.



Nobody should go hungry because solutions do exist. It is unacceptable that a child goes hungry



“In a World Of plenty, no one, not a single person Should go hungry: Ben Ki-Moon”

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To date, six buildings have been identified at CARL and will be use as technology transfer centres to allow for research activities. Seed rice, vegetable seeds and cassava sticks have already been procured along with farming tools and agro-chemicals. The project will work alongside NGOs and private sector firms to engage in community mobilization and registration of farmers who are to benefit from the technology transfer.

The difficulties in moving produce to markets as a result of poorly maintained and abandoned road conditions is a hindrance in the value chain addition and usually results to farmers scaling down production. To address this concerned, about 135 km of feeder roads and farm to market roads is being constructed and in other areas where the condition of roads are deplorable, rehabilitation work will be carried out. Already, a road condition survey has been completed and a report submitted for review and approval by the project management team.

The project is also providing capacity building support to students at various institutions of higher learning. Forty students are presently enrolled in undergraduate studies at the University of Liberia and Cuttington University while twenty supported students are pursuing graduate studies at various African Universities.



Compassion Fund International—Liberia Boost Agriculture Activities in Three Counties

Compassion Fund International-Liberia(CoFUL) , as a humanitarian development entity, works in partnership with the Liberian government, local groups, indigents, and the International Community towards enhancing the reconstruction process.

It seeks to help people with special needs especially women, youth and children in an effort to make a viable society and empowers poverty stricken communities without favour for any one sector of society along ethnic, regional or religious lines.

Compassion Fund International-Liberia, has accomplished its mission by transforming the lives of beneficiaries from vulnerability through a happy journey of self-reliance, creating awareness, promoting advocacy, and responding to protective and economic needs of women, youths, elderly folks, and children through programs and projects in Liberia.

CoFUL programs are currently directed towards Protection with main focus on the rule of law, Justice and Human rights, General Agriculture, Education and Health.

The organization recently entered into several partnerships with community based protections and development agencies.

CoFUL Agriculture programs are currently focus in Margibi, Bomi, and River Gee Counties. In partnership with the Marsh Funds for Small Organizations, the organization acquired about Four Hundred acres of Farmland in Richard Ta' and surrounding villages in Margibi County and has been able to cultivate over fifty acres of said land in Cassava production and additional fifty acres in rice production. CoFUL is working with over 200 farmers to acquire land for cultivation in Bomi County. Compassion Fund International-Liberia is also working with over seventy-five beneficiaries from River Gee County to cultivate 15 hectares in low land rice production in three project districts. This project is being funded by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) under its Human Food Security Project.

National Cassava Strategy

The National Cassava Sector Strategy was formulated by stakeholders in 2010 as the approach for the development of the cassava sector in Liberia and was validated by the Liberian Government in 2011.

A coordinating committee to drive the strategy which is headed by a National Coordinator, Mr. Joseph S. Morris and the following achievements have been made to date:



- * Established office space in Monrovia with a team of professional staff
- * Held national stake holders retreat in 2013 in Kakata, Margibi County
- * Conducted desk review exercise of available information on cassava value chain development in Liberia, for informed decision
- * Launched a Nationwide data collection for cassava value chain development in Liberia
- * Established a board of directors of the sector headed by Hon. Joseph Frances
- * Organized coordination points in 13 of the 15 counties in Liberia
- * Established data base for cassava value chain actors across the country
- * Initiate cassava market promotion exercise with support from the EU through ZOA/ADRA
- Received support from EU for a nationwide cassava data collection exercise

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AGRICULTURE PROJECT

Liberia has had its own share of the emerging effects of climate change and this has adversely affected the regular farming seasons. Fortunately, Liberia has not suffered some of the devastating climatic conditions as witnessed in other parts of the world but the sometimes longer raining seasons and shorter dry season has adversely resulted in seasonal shift in farming activities which most time affects agricultural production.

To address this condition and provide the necessary support to farmers and farmer organizations, the Climate Change Adaptation Agriculture Project primary focus is to increase resilience of poor, agricultural-dependent communities and decrease vulnerability of the agricultural sector to climate change. The project is sponsored jointly by Global Environment Facility, United Nations Development Programme

and the Government of Liberia. Innovative pilot testing is ongoing at four sites in Panta District in Bong County and two sites in Gbarzon District in Grand Gedeh County under a sub component referred to as Strengthening Institutional and individual capacity to plan for and manage climate change in the agricultural sector.

The innovative testing encompasses integrated soil fertility management and integrated pest management. The project is utilizing the services of community radios to reach out to a broad spectrum of farmers through innovative messages and jingles. Beneficiaries of the project include 200 farmers, 60 technical staff and 30 field staff, 100 university students, CBOs and local NGOs.

PROGRAMME DELIVERY UPDATE COMPONENT ONE: CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Planned Activity	Expected Output	Current Delivery Status
Conduct assessment in Panta and Gbarzon to determine the level adoption and application of the CC adaptive measures by farming communities	Extent of adoption of CC innovations by farmers in pilot and non pilot towns determined, documented and status of achievement of results updated	90% completed; assessment conducted involving 16 university students from 3 universities; data analyzed;
Facilitate the running of 6-month pilot radio programmes with 4 local community radio stations	CCA messages and lessons disseminated to a targeted 16 farming communities covering at least 2,000 farmers	Ongoing: Material gathering ongoing Airing commenced
Set up two Resource centers in Bong and Grand Gedeh	CRM and adaptation capacity in the agriculture sector developed	Ongoing: a. 3-compartment building provided by GGCCC b. Review of bids ongoing c. MOU with Bong signed d. MOU with GG being reviewed
Support the conduct of one relevant (on-site) CCM research by TU	Same as above	a. TOR shared with TU administration; b. Assurances given by VPA for submission of proposal by, latest, 18 Sept 2015
Conduct CCAAP midterm evaluation	Project lessons documented and shared with inform policy	a. 50% complete; b. Inception report submitted c. Field mission and presentation of initial findings completed
Component Two: Innovation Testing at Pilot sites		
Test 4 adaptation innovations at 8 demonstration sites in Bong and Grand Gedeh Counties	Local community based adaptation strategies and plans implemented. At least four	Two (2) innovations tested at 2 sites in Grand Gedeh and 4 sites in Bong as follows: 1. Integrated soil fertility management and 2. Integrated pest management

KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

As most of the projects envisaged under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program and the Liberia Agriculture Sector Investment Program nears its implementation and conclusion period, it is essential to note that the GoL remains determined as ever before to produce tangible results in meeting the global expectation of food and nutrition security and reducing hunger under the MDGs, the PRS and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Recovering from a decade of conflict which paralyzed the agricultural sector, Liberia's determination to reduce the pre 1990 poverty level by 33% by 2025 remains a fundamental target for addressing the food poverty situation in the country. The government has demonstrated the political will through the adoption of several intervening policies such as the Agenda for Transformation and Vision 2030. These policies are intended to promote economic growth and create a middle income economy by 2030.

Amidst the progress made between 2005 to 2015 in adherence to the Maputo Declaration and the ECOWAP Regional Agriculture Investment Program, more external support will be required to address the key challenging issues which have the potential to reverse the gains that have been made over the last ten years of the implementation of the LASIP, Liberia's flagship agriculture sector investment

strategy.

The LASIP implementation, going forward, will require more donor funding to continue the smooth implementation of all ongoing projects. The projects under LASIP are spread across the 15 political subdivision of Liberia and significant progress is being made in transforming the lives of farmers and yields of crops have increased steadily. The MOA would like a continuation of this progress considering the remarkable achievements thus far.

Another key challenge for the development of the agriculture sector beyond 2015 is the issue of capacity amongst farmers. Smallholder farmers who are dominant in the sector are accustomed to the primordial form of subsistence farming and this farming method has not adequately addressed the food and nutrition security situation.

Another challenging issue is the lack of infrastructure that adds value to agriculture production. The deplorable road condition during the raining season and the absence of pliable farm to market roads in major production corridors is contributing to low production by farmers for fear of crops and vegetable destruction. In the absence of value chain addition, storage, processing and marketing opportunities remains limited and that also adversely affects production.

Limited technology investment in the agriculture sector is also

a key challenge that needs to be addressed if Liberia's dependence on imported food is to be reduced. Farmers have shown the willingness to migrate to newer forms of farming but the lack of monetary capacity to invest in technology as individual farmers or working together in cooperative societies is a major hindrance.

Another key challenge is the delay in obtaining land rights entitlement for large scale farming by private investors. This is a factor that scares away potential investors because of the issue of land rights and security.

An integrated regional trade and marketing policy to allow smallholders to market crops and produce across their respective borders is in place but the challenge is that there is no regulatory mechanism that guides the cross border trade and governments in the region are not benefiting from Value Added Tax which on the other hand could be used to reinvest in other areas of the sector.



