



Policy Seminar | 17th of October 2012 | P.A.'s Ribhouse
Monrovia, Liberia

Youth Development and Job Creation

Toward the Fulfillment of a Robust Youth Development Process in Liberia

REPORT



Introduction

This report summarizes presentations and discussions during NDI-Liberia’s policy seminar on Youth Development and Job Creation, held on October 17, 2012 in Monrovia.

The purpose of the seminar was to increase the level of knowledge among members of the Liberian Legislature on youth policy development, so that members become more aware and effective in their roles of lawmaking, representation and oversight. The seminar was also designed to stimulate discussion between members of the Legislature, the Executive and civil society organizations.

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November 2012 | NDI – Liberia

Contents

All contributions in this report are, with their permission, copies or excerpts of the delivered texts of the presenters. Unfortunately we didn’t receive the presentation of Representative Lester Paye, Chair of the House Committee Youth and Sports. The summary of the discussion has been edited by NDI.

<i>Aubrey McCutcheon, Resident Senior Director National Democratic Institute (NDI-Liberia)</i> The nation’s very future is at stake	page 3
<i>His Excellency Joseph N. Boakai, Sr., Vice President of the Republic of Liberia</i> Failure is not an option	page 5
<i>Dr. Charles Brempong-Yeboah, Former M.P. and Deputy Minister of Manpower, Youth & Development – Republic of Ghana</i> The African Experience on Youth Development and Job Creation in a Post Conflict Situation	page 8
<i>Tornorlah Varpilah, Minister of Youth & Sports</i> Young people are our greatest assets for the change and transformation of our society	page 18
<i>Bill Yaseah, Singer/Songwriter</i> ‘Empower The Youth Now’ (lyrics)	page 23
<i>Isatu Ville, 2nd Vice-President, Federation of Liberian Youth (FLY)</i> Will we ever reach the future?	Page 24
<i>Christian Chea, Chairman House Committee on Labor</i> Legislators will hold executive fiducially responsible for unsuccessful programs	page 27
Summary of the Discussion	page 31
Program of the policy seminar	page 33
List of participants	page 34

The nation's very future is at stake

***Aubrey McCutcheon, Resident Senior Director
National Democratic Institute (NDI-Liberia)***



(excerpts...)

I welcome all of you this morning to this fourth NDI Legislative Policy Seminar. All of these seminars are supported by USAID and bring experts before legislators – they are designed with the Legislature's committees to assist legislators in their policymaking, lawmaking and oversight agenda during the 53rd Legislature.

But why are we here today, specifically on the topic of Youth Development & Job Creation?

First, because of the essential role of the legislative branch of government – and the Legislature's own Modernization Plan that calls for legislative reflection and study that will facilitate sound legislative action.

Secondly, because of the social and economic realities faced by Liberia's youth -- Liberia's future

Liberia's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) in 2008 recognized that such efforts must have children at their core.

But the PRS also recognized that even more general infrastructure projects, which help increase household income, lessen the incidence of families resorting to child labor and lead potentially to higher primary school enrollments by children.

So why put children and youth at the core of poverty reduction strategies? Here are some hard truths that explain why. They are found in Liberia's PRS, which is available on the Executive Mansion website.

- Children & youth are 55-60% of the Liberia's population
- And the PRS noted that almost 40% of them are growth-stunted because of poor nutrition
- The majority of girls have their first child before the age of 18 – because of forced early marriages or rape.
- The majority of Liberia's youth have spent more time engaged in war than in school
- Textbooks in schools are scarce – the PRS four years ago put that figure at one textbook for every 27 students
- Children and youth have limited access to justice and limited enforcement of their rights in the legal system

So this is why Liberia and its government have committed to making special efforts – the nation's very future is at stake – and the 53rd Legislature has an essential role to play.

What has Liberia set out to do in the area of Youth Development?

One finds the broadest cross-sectoral discussion in the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS).

- PRS Pillar on National Security –
 - youth, especially girls, must receive protection from physical, psychological and sexual abuse
- PRS Pillar on Economic Revitalization –
 - youth must have increased access to education, skills and capital needed to take advantage of employment opportunities
- PRS Pillar on Governance and Rule of Law –
 - youth will be involved in governance and development planning through youth centered bodies such as the child parliament, child councils and youth centers
 - the legal and justice system will be enabled to respond to the special needs of youth.
- PRS Pillar on Infrastructure and Basic Services –
 - strengthen traditional and alternative modes of literacy and numeracy training
 - take special steps in the health sector
 - development of a National Social Welfare Policy and Plan
 - create opportunities to train and employ unemployed youth.

In January 2006, just after Madam President Sirleaf's first inauguration, youth and children were mentioned five times in her annual address to the Legislature.

In January 2012, just after the President's second inauguration, youth and children were mentioned 13 times in her annual address.

I welcome you all again to this joint event of NDI and two House committees. NDI will continue organizing legislative policy seminars in the near future.

These seminars help the Legislature determine its next steps on important matters of national interest.

Thank you for joining us and for letting your voice be heard.

Failure is not an option

***His Excellency Joseph N. Boakai, Sr.
Vice President of the Republic of Liberia***



I consider it an honor to be with you today, and particularly to be addressing you on this all-important matter centered on our youth. This is an area that has remained of enormous interest to me—a point I have not restrained myself in making on countless numbers of occasions. Throughout our private and official engagements, including during our travels within and outside of this Country, we have not minced words about the huge significance of the situation of the youth of this Country. This subject is as pertinent as it is relevant and I am glad that we are taking appropriate steps to tackle it.

(...)

The Ministry of Youth and Sports, for its part, finds itself in the driver's seat for the purposes of the implementation of the National Youth Policy. Our work here therefore can be viewed as lending a nudging hand to you in advance.

The primary objective of this seminar—to *increase expertise of Members of the National Legislature to support their lawmaking and policymaking in the areas of youth development and job creation*—could not have been better crafted and so appropriately timed.

An enterprise of this focus makes for more than a welcome development to us. It stands right in tandem with our own preoccupation with this national concern. Evidently, two stark realizations undergird this concern on our part—the concern that our youth question is tackled and tackled adequately and timely. First, census has shown that our population is largely burgeoned by the youth. Secondly, and even more critical, is the fact that the affairs of this nation will eventually be bequeathed unto the shoulders of those that now fall in this youth category. It has been well established that the social and moral decay for any community originates from the lack of access to education, high unemployment and small opportunities for young people.

As a matter of fact, a report from an African Youth Forum meeting organized by the African Union Commission from April 1-6 2011 in Addis Ababa, identified two important items related to creating opportunities for new generation leadership and development in Africa as well as mainstreaming youth in programs and priorities for development under which the issue of youth employment falls. On youth employment, the report notes: 'Youth employment issues which include aspects of job creation, unemployment, skill building, formal and informal sectors, access to capital for young people, leadership and entrepreneur skills, rural-urban migration are the key factors when defining the welfare of youth in Africa nowadays.'

As policy makers, we must tackle youth unemployment as a matter of urgency and failure is not an option. That is why capacity building for every community, and the surrounding rural areas, should be implemented by developing the infrastructure and to create sustainable job opportunities, by initiating community based projects or income generating projects.

The Ministries of Labor and of Youth and Sports, with the assistance of our international partners, have done a lot of work in the past, conducting Area Needs Assessment among the youth to ascertain the viability to initiate a structured Job Creation Project. By making concrete gains in addressing their situation, we will be spreading the fruits of our new era of stability and progress to the greater percentage of our country's population. And even on the flip side of it, we will be carving for our nation a more confident and assured future. What we are assembled to do here today falls squarely within the framework of the 5-year National Youth Policy and Action Plan, developed at the 3rd Annual National Youth Summit--now before the Cabinet for review and endorsement. Today's Seminar evinces work on the letter and spirit of the National Youth Policy, particularly with reference to-- Priority Action # 2 which focuses on Employment & Empowerment.

It goes without saying however that no degree of focus on Employment and Empowerment can result into any positive dividends if not tied in with an equal focus on Education & Training—the area captured under Priority Action # 1. We therefore cannot escape the comforting conclusion that this Seminar will serve a dual purpose of probing both Priority Actions 1 and 2--for the two are interwoven and hardly separable. The strategic objective spelt out under the First Priority Action is to promote and ensure equal access to quality Education and skills training at all levels for Liberian Youth.

Whilst the Second Priority Action holds the strategic objective of providing youth with a wide range of vocational, adaptable employment opportunities, decent working conditions, and life skills--to enable youths in Liberia to find and retain gainful employment and sustainable livelihood without any form of discrimination.

We owe it to ourselves and the legacy we want to leave behind to demonstrate our appreciation of the affirmation made by our youth as embodied in the Kakata Declaration. Let us all give this effort all the support we can garner to ensure that the aspirations set forth by our youth in their Policy are not dashed. We must plot out the roadmap to ensure that those goals that are achievable and the objectives to achieve them do not elude us.

It is the pursuit of these very objectives that has invigorated us to maintain an aggressive campaign in the interest of our young population. Let us today take maximum advantage of the opportunity afforded by this Seminar to reap the utmost results that will inform our overall policy push in this sphere of national priority. Key areas that we must pin our probing eyes on, as encapsulated in the Seminar objectives, center on:

1. how policies and laws can be put in place to create more jobs for young people in Liberia;
2. how the Legislature can enhance youth participation in policymaking;
3. how government can motivate private companies to take up their corporate social responsibilities to create more opportunities for youth; and
4. how laws and policies can reach the most vulnerable youth.

I have no doubt that if our lawmakers, our participating youth, our Cabinet members, and other stakeholders can sit with our foreign partners to soberly probe these areas—with the dexterity and tact it demands--our common purpose in this area will be rendered lighter.

Only then can we be more reasonably optimistic about our quest to formulate that efficacious legislation germane to our effort at addressing this national subject matter. Let me therefore call on you all to put forth your best of inputs in the exercise. We must look far into the future as we engage each other in these deliberations, bearing in mind that the subject population is all we have to pass this nation onto. Looking into the future in that way is the surest way we can succeed in assuring ourselves that, indeed, the future is something we can look up to.

The African Experience On Youth Development and Job Creation in a Post Conflict Situation¹

*Dr. Charles Brempong-Yeboah
Former M.P. and Deputy Minister of ‘Manpower,
Youth & Development’ – Republic of Ghana*



I would first wish to start by thanking the organizers of this Seminar, the National Democratic Institute, for inviting me to participate in and also make this presentation. I am also grateful to the MC for the kind words said about me in the introduction

Next, I cannot move forward without placing on record my recognition of what I wish to call for now the significant change in the outlook of Liberia not only with regards to the views and impressions from the outside, but also on the views and impressions from within.

Mr. Chairman, this may not be very obvious to yourselves in Liberia, but as you have been told, I have not only been in Labor, but I was also the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs for my country for a while and I did travel a bit in the sub-region on official business. I believe it is sufficient to say that Liberia is definitely on the right path of development. The changes over the last few years have been observable, significant and tremendous, especially to the occasional visitor, such as myself, and I would wish to urge the Government and People of Liberia to Keep up the Momentum.

What is also observable and needs commenting upon is also the persistent presence of pockets of especially young men and women who again, the occasional observer notices in street corners, endlessly arguing about politics, policies and I believe sports sometimes, without actually dirtying their hands or doing anything really constructive or Job related.

I believe that is why we are here today; to tackle the Unemployment conundrum we all are faced with, with special reference and emphases to the Post War Situation in Liberia.

The Approach

I shall approach the topic by looking at:

¹ In preparing the document for delivery, the author spoke to and obtained information and material from various sources including the Ghana Youth Employment Programme; Dr. Ohene Sarfo and Jimmy Shilue of the Geotech Systems Ltd., Liberia. Dr. Brempong-Yeboah was one of the architects of the Ghana National Youth Employment Programme.

1. Some brief recent/ historical antecedents in Youth Unemployment and some consequences there have been; with references to the French Riots of 2005; the UK Youth Riots of 2009; the Tunisian /Egyptian/Libyan Uprisings, etc., of 2011;
2. The Problem of Youth Development and Unemployment in the SubRegion;
3. A Closer Look at the Liberian Post-Conflict Situation;
4. The Ghana, Kenyan, South African, and Other African Examples in Tackling the Problem;
5. The Liberian Ministry of Youth and Sports Documented Approach to Addressing the Problem;
6. The Way Forward: A Suggested Approach to Addressing the Problem;
7. Conclusion.

I am also thankful to a whole host of persons including the Minister of Youth and Sports, to whom a similar presentation was made by the author a few months ago; the GeoTech Systems Ltd. Of Liberia and Ghana, to which I am affiliated, the Ghana National Youth Employment Program (now the National Youth Authority which provided some of the latest information); the various sources of reading material from the internet (which have been duly acknowledged in the write up), the NDI-Liberia and their staff, and all who have made this possible.

It is my hope that at the end of the Seminar, we shall have achieved a large measure if not the totality of the ideals of the organizers and all of us participants including:

- a) Increased knowledge awareness on Youth Development and Job Creation opportunities available under our circumstances (especially here in Liberia), and
- b) To try to stimulate some dialogue leading to collaboration amongst and between ourselves with the hope that as has been shown in other examples, the private individuals and the organized private sector would be able to come in more boldly to assist Government address the multifaceted and multiplicity of issues in the sector.

Some brief recent/ historical antecedents in Youth Unemployment

It is general understanding that every (national) system, no matter how perfect, will or must have a certain level of acceptable unemployment (usually around 4% or less) or underemployment. However, when the level of unemployment goes above a certain unspecified threshold, the system begins to react from within.

In 2005, we were all witnesses to the almost nightly Nov.-Dec. Youth Riots of France; resulting in the burning and destruction of property worth millions of dollars² and the imposition of a State of Emergencies in those parts of France, and also the fact that this cost some Ministers their Jobs. These as we all know now, were the result of the agitations of largely the Youth, who suddenly found they needed to have jobs, and a more visible and plannable future.

It is said that one of the immediate predisposing factors was the system that existed at the time, was that the existing system seemed not only to tolerate but also foster sky-high unemployment. It was noted later that in France at that time, as many as 21.7% of the energetic and employable youth aged between 15-24 were out of job in September 2005, compared to 11% and 12% respectively in the US and UK for the same period.³

² Peter Sahlius (2006). Civil Unrest in French Suburbs. <http://riotfrance.ssrc.org/>

³ Micheal Mendel. *The Economics Fueling the French Riots*. Businessweek. Nov.2005

In 2009 and later 2011 also we all saw on our screens the destruction and rioting in the UK, which (according to an Article in the International Business Times of August 09, 2011), resulted largely from an increase in the jobless rate of 16-24 year category by about 40% between the 1st Qtr of 2008 and the same period of 2011, when it jumped from 14% to 20% - resulting in a feeling of marginalization and a lack of opportunities amongst the youth.⁴

While we cannot ignore the employment, unemployment, and/or underemployment related issues underlying the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, and most of what has come to be known as the ‘Arab Spring’, resulting in Youth Uprisings and the toppling of Governments, we have more recently also seen and read about the problems of Greece, Spain, Portugal and Ireland where the Youth unemployment rates are said to hover around 30% or more.⁵

In fact Mendel (2005) has been stressed that “.. *no society can survive for long if close to 20% or more of its youth, with lots of energy are unemployed.*”⁶ Similarly, it has been stated elsewhere that “*no society can survive 25% youth unemployment rate for long, without inflicting serious long term damage.*”

The Problem of Youth Development and Unemployment in the SubRegion

The latest (2008) Liberian National Population and Housing Census report puts “Youth” in Liberia as persons between ages 15- 35 years and that this accounts for some 75% of the population of Liberia⁷ – which currently stands at about 3.5 million. Unemployment or underemployment in this section of the population is also said to be in the region of 35%-88% depending on the source⁸ (see also for example Fallah, 2005; Youth Action International – Liberia website). From experiences elsewhere, spontaneous civil disorder, ‘negative employment’ (such as armed robbery, prostitution amongst the ladies, etc.) in this category of the population, especially having just come out of a war situation, are just a few of the potential dangers of ignoring Youth Unemployment, especially in a post-conflict situation such as we have in Liberia. This, is a Risk - no government (and certainly not the Government of Liberia) - can afford to ignore. Thus, prioritizing Youth Employment programs, is not only a question of fulfilling young people’s aspirations for a better life, but a necessity if the well-being of the entire society is to be maximized.⁹

Governments’ role therefore has been to try to ensure stability by providing jobs and other means of short term engagements such as i) The Don Bosco Group Effort; ii) the Tumutu Agricultural Project; iii) Small Scale Mining Programs in Partnership with the Private sector operators; etc.

Following the Peace Accord that brought an end to hostilities in the conflict in 2003, the UN –assisted Interim Administration working with ECOWAS, also set up the DDRR Process¹⁰. It was later (in 2006) discovered however, that the DDRR process itself had not been as

⁴ Fiona Bowden. The Guardian, March 2012. <http://m.guardian.co.uk/uk/2012/mar/28/verdict-u>

⁵ Derek Thompson. Europe’s Most Tragic Graph. Greek Youth Unemployment hits 55%. Also available at <http://m.theatlantic.com>. March 2012.

⁶ Micheal Mendel (ibid.).

⁷ In Memo from Jimmy Shilue. Geotech Systems Ltd., Liberia. (Oct., 2012) p.1.

⁸ Jimmy Shilue. (ibid.) p 1-2.

⁹ The Youth Employment Crises. Highlights of the 2012 ILC Report. http://ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/reports/reports-submitted/WCMS_17542/lang-en/index.htm.

¹⁰ **DDRR** stands for Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration. (UNDP, 2003 Activity Report on Post Conflict Interventions in Liberia)

effective as was expected, and that factors leading to the internal strife and war, including high youth unemployment, were still present.

A Closer Look at the Liberian Post-Conflict Situation

As has been the case in most post conflict situations, it has also been identified that most of the Youth, currently lacked the appropriate levels of education and skills as a result of the years of conflict (often described as the Lost generation; or Lost Years), during which any forms of formal education and training especially in the hinterlands was simply not possible – because pupils were either hiding in the deep forests or had moved to neighboring countries to evade the war situation back home.¹¹ Additionally, many of the physical infrastructures had been destroyed during the long war years¹²; and the existing school curriculum has also been out of date and inapplicable especially under contemporary technology led generation.¹³

In most cases therefore many of the graduates from our institutions simply lacked the requisite job market skills – to be employed by anybody without additional On the Job Training (OJTs). Besides this deficiency, many graduates also lacked the Entrepreneurship and/or the ‘Can Do Spirit’ and Self Confidence to venture into Self Employment. This is *Entrepreneurship Awareness* and may require some support, contacts/network, training and assistance and most of the time financial assistance to implement the identified programs, especially for this cohort of youth. The success of this may be all that is required for successful employment of self and others.

The Ghana, Kenyan, South African, and Other African Examples in Tackling the Problem

In implementing the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) Program of Post Apartheid South Africa therefore, Government set up the Skills Development and Employment Creation (UMSOBOMVU) Fund which sought to provide targeted direct financial and other assistance to emerging Small and Medium Enterprises (SMMEs) through the Banking system. The Khula Enterprises Ltd., was also set up to channel investment funds from the National Budgetary allocations.¹⁴

In another example, the World Bank (in 2011) working with the Kenya Youth Empowerment Program (KYEP), provided assistance to the tune of US\$60 million for the Provision of :

- a) Short term Labour Intensive Works and Social services (US\$43m)
- b) Training and Internships for graduates willing to go into self-employment in collaboration with the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KESPA), (US \$15.5 m) and
- c) Capacity Building and Policy Development, implemented by the MOYAS, Kenya (US\$1.5m).

¹¹ Francis Chigunta (2006). *The Creation of Job/Work Opportunities and Income Generating Activities for the Youth in Post Conflict Countries*. Paper Presented at Expert Group Meeting on Youth in Africa on the Theme: The Participation of the Youth as Partners in Peace and Development in Post-Conflict Countries. 14-16 November, 2006. Windhoek, Namibia

¹² *Liberia Youth Employment and Economic Empowerment Strategy 2012-2017*. Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs; Republic of Liberia, January 2012.

¹³ Memo from Jimmy Shilue. GeoTech Systems Ltd. Liberia. (2012) Pg 1.

¹⁴ E. Harsch (2005): *Re-Integration of Ex-Combatants*. Africa Renewal. Vol. 19: No 3. [as quoted in Chigunta, 2006. Pg 23].

This program is on-going and most of the first batch of participants who graduated recently, have not only been absorbed by their host organizations, but have also been encouraged to:

“change their mindset from seeking white collar formal employment to cultivating an entrepreneurial attitude, that will see them start their own businesses... become productive in their own right ... rather than wait for Governments or anybody else to employ them.”¹⁵

It is my belief of the author that with the requisite guidance, training and encouragement from Policy makers and Legislators, the same can be said of the Liberian Youth. In Ghana, one of the Training Modules of the National Youth Employment Program (NYEP) is called the *Paid Internships and Vacation Employment Module*. This Module is similar to the KESPA/KYEP Program, whereby graduates are requested for by Public and Private Sector Organizations such as the VAT Service, IRS, Private International Schools, Offices, etc., for internships and attachments for periods ranging for between 12-24 months. Where the performance of the trainee over the period is acceptable, they eventually get absorbed by the organization.

The Liberian Ministry of Youth and Sports Documented Approach to Addressing the Problem

In assembling material for this presentation, it came to my attention that quite a lot of preparation has been made by the Liberian Ministry of Youth & Sports (MOYS) working jointly with the other sector Ministries, especially the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs (MPEA), to tackle the Post Conflict Youth Unemployment Situation here in Liberia. There is for example *the Liberia Youth Employment and Economic Empowerment Strategy 2012-2017* document; apparently prepared about this time last year, 2011.

The document, to me, comprehensively captures most or all of what is needed to address the Post Conflict situation here in Liberia. The question therefore remains as to why there has been little or no implementation of the strategy document. My information (and this has been confirmed by previous speakers here today) is that funds are available to implement a Youth Employment Program as designed in the above document.

I shall in the course of this presentation try to make suggestions based on other African experiences and suggest some implementation strategies to achieve the required results.

The Way Forward

Youth Development

On the issue of Youth Development, it is my considered view that given the large population and heterogeneity of the sometimes skill-less, and/or semi-skilled youth, some of who are orphans, single mothers, disabled, never been to schools, out of school dropouts, refugees, drug addicts, and also – at the same time, serious persons of the requisite age group who are also graduates of our universities – all belonging to the “Youth” categorization, and all of who are also struggling for job openings in the same market, a certain categorization of the youth cohorts may be necessary.

For effective synergies, it is my view that it is important that appropriate educational schemes are put in place to raise the levels of awareness and the need for the youth categories themselves to understand their respective circumstances – what they are capable or incapable of achieving, giving their circumstances - as well as those of their immediate

¹⁵ Paul Otouma, Kenyan Minister for Youth and Sports (October, 2012)

surroundings and communities and how to work with everybody to raise or improve themselves and the communities in which they live.

It is also my belief that to achieve the best results here, a consistent and continuous education on a certain high level of patriotism.... to positively promote themselves and the country Liberia over and above all others is of paramount importance. In other words, a holistic understanding of their own circumstances by all and knowing how to cooperate with others to positively achieve what is best for themselves and their immediate society and country is of primary importance.

By ‘holistic’ development, redevelopment or re-orientation of the individual, I am here referring to the possibility of some kind of total (but not necessarily formal) education, ensuring moral uprightness, self respect and discipline, the need to be our brother’s keeper, dedication to duty, time consciousness, etc.

This kind of total Human Resource (HR) development and/or redevelopment should be organized as separate curricula alongside the regulated and certificated Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Programs, with support from Government and donor organizations where possible – as in the currently on-going Kenya Government/WB three pronged program mentioned above.

It is my view that such a re-oriented and/or retrained individual with the appropriate Vocational skills in say Plumbing, Carpentry, Masonry, Electricals (e.g., house wiring), tailoring, etc., would be more readily absorbed by any local or international company. Alternately, groups of such trained individuals could be encouraged to come together as Limited Liability Companies to vie for jobs both at the national and or county level.

Job Creation

Job Creation in a Post conflict situation such as we have in Liberia, has been said to be a “basic building block of the peace process and continues to be important as the country makes the transition from a crisis to a normal situation.”¹⁶ This is especially important as large numbers of unemployed youth could lead to destabilization and to the renewal of conflict¹⁷, if not appropriately managed.

As we know too well, employment is vital to the short-term stability, re-integration, economic growth and sustainable peace,¹⁸ while simultaneously; sustainable peace often requires linkages to programs generating long term livelihood programs.

In the creating additional and more permanent jobs in Liberia, the Ministries of Planning & Economic Affairs and Youth & Sports (MPEA/MOYS) could with the services of dedicated personnel with knowledge in the area, work to implement the Strategic document¹⁹ which also seeks to among other thrusts to:

- a) Improve the food security situation of the country
- b) Intensify TVET programs across the country

¹⁶ Kenneth W. Beasley (2006). *Job Creation in Post Conflict Societies*. USAID Issues Paper No. 9. (PN-ADE-194). Also available at www.dec.org

¹⁷ Beasley (2006). Ibid (page 3)

¹⁸ *UN Policy Document for Post Conflict Employment Creation, Income Generation and Re-Integration* (page 9).

¹⁹ The *Liberia Youth Employment and Economic Empowerment Strategy 2012-2017*. Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs. Republic of Liberia (January, 2012)

- c) Develop new syllabuses and curriculum for schools to make products of training relevant
- d) Encourage SME development through the encouragement of “Buy Liberia”, etc.
- e) Establishment of the Young Entrepreneur Development Fund
- f) Young Farmers Credit Support System.

In my observation, the document seems to capture most of the ingredients required for Youth Development and Job Creation in Liberia and I would wish to encourage the Hon. Minister to engage a dedicated Specialist to assist in the implementation of the Strategic Document – if need be with slight improvements and modification to address contemporary issues. I believe half of the work has been done already, and there would be no need ‘re-inventing the wheel’.

What Can We Do - (as Legislature/Government of Liberia)

As mentioned above, a lot seems to have been done already by the appropriate authorities here in Liberia. Seed Capital seems to have been set aside already, A strategic document is in place, the desire of Government is rife and the youth – whose numbers or population is relatively manageable - are already agitating for some form of engagement and employment.²⁰

What is required I believe, is to initiate the program and also to create the appropriate ‘enabling environment’ that should bring on board the private sector for a continued and sustained long-term employment support relationship. The Legislature here must assist in enacting legislation that would entice and encourage private sector and Civil Society organizations such as the banks, the mining companies, IT companies, etc., to set aside small proportions of their annual profits (say 2 percent), as their contributions in supporting the central employment generation fund.

Additionally legislation will have to be put in place as soon as possible to provide legal backing to a Liberian Youth Empowerment and Employment Program; as well as the mechanisms for such a body to access HIPC or other potential sources of specific Funding to support and sustain the Program. These will over time, wean Central Government from the funding while private sector and other stakeholders get more involved.

Government will also have to show maximum level of interest and open support for the program while it takes measures to identify the first few modules that may be started countrywide and later in the counties (as per their specific local requirements); ensure that the appropriate appointments are made and that the requisite brochures and operational guidelines are designed, approved, printed and circulated for training of frontline staff nationally and locally, etc.

Members of the Legislature and Government acting as ‘role models’ are also encouraged to be actively and physically involved in the psychological re-orientation of the youth (especially those from their respective constituencies through continued direct interactions) - from the ‘violence and war-mentality’ to a peaceful, as well as a self and community development oriented mentality. This is especially important since, as noted elsewhere, the probability of renewed conflict falls with time as with gainful and sustained youth employment, potential recruits for mayhem become unavailable as a result of being occupied by employment and training programs.²¹

²⁰ The Liberia Inter-Peace Consultation Report. 2010.

²¹ Maria E. Davalos and Daryl McLeod (2008). Post Conflict Employment Creation for Stabilization and Poverty

Conclusions

In concluding, Mr. Chairman, I will at this juncture wish to introduce briefly aspects of the Ghana National Youth Employment Program (NYEP), which I have been involved with as a Case study. I am especially pleased doing so because I observe that the MPEA/MOYS document spoken of earlier, has many similarities with, and improvements upon the Ghana Program.

For example, the Liberian Ministry of Public Works (MPW, Roads Sector) Job creation Program is very similar to the Road Rehabilitation Module of the NYEP Program. The difference being that while the Ghana Program started with the Ministry running the program with the (Ghana) NYEP, the Liberian Program seeks to outsource directly to private contractors with guidance and supervision from the MPW. The Ghana Program is currently in the process of privatizing or seeking private partners to implement the module.

The Mobile Phone Repairs/ICT Module of the Ghana NYEP Program for example is totally Private Sector run. The interesting story being the CEO of the Company teamed up with the NYEP soon after its launch in 2006 to assist in the implementation of the Module for a fee. The Company now has a totally private line of computer assembly with assistance support from the Program. The Company employs well over 300 persons running shifts in assembly and distribution of products countrywide. Rlg Ghana supplies locally assembled laptops to all the second cycle schools at the request of the Ghana ICT for Accelerated Development (ICT4AD) Program.

Similarly, the Zoomlion Gh Ltd., a totally Private Sector Entity, implements the Sanitation Module for and on behalf of the NYEP throughout the country – in all districts for a fee. It is hoped that similar arrangements if not already in place can be encouraged as more and more private sector organizations, some of who may be represented here today, are encouraged to team up with the Government of Liberia in similar and appropriate Public-Private-Partnership programs.

It is important to note that the Ghana NYEP enjoyed support from the highest office of the land (Office of the President), as well as the Office National Security Coordinator and all important Sector ministries such as Education, Health, Interior, Agriculture, Local Government, etc., although the Central Coordination , based at the Ministry of Manpower Youth and Employment, was run by an almost independent National Coordinator (who reported almost daily to the Hon. Minister) to reduce internal bureaucracy.



The Zoomlion managed Youth in Sanitation Brigade

with their Locally Assembled Motorcycles for Conveying Garbage.

There were initially about twelve (12) Modules²² that were initiated across the country including:

- a) The Community Protection Module,
- b) Youth in Sanitation Module,
- c) Youth in Rural Teaching Assistantship Module
- d) Youth in ICT Module
- e) Youth in Healthcare Assistantship Module
- f) Youth in AgriBusiness, etc.



A Group of the Youth in Community Protection at a Passing Out Parade



Left: Taking a Good View of the Maize Farm of the Youth in Agriculture Programme (2010). Right: a Couple of Young Boys and Girls in the Youth in Vocational Training Module Class (Dressmaking).



Ladies in the Youth in Vocational (Trades) Module [Hairdressing Class]

²² The Ghana Youth Employment Programme: Youth Employment Implementation Guidelines. March 2006. The pictures are also taken from this programme.



A Couple of Youth in the ICT training Module -Software (Left) and hardware (Right).

The Ghana NYEP Program has been generally successful. At the end of the first four years, more than 300,000 persons had been employed directly and over 900,000 indirectly; over 50,000 persons empowered with various self employment skills, while more than 108,000 had successfully exited the system.²³ Additionally, over 2,000 rural schools have been revived while the health delivery system has been improved significantly countrywide. Further, newer modules – capturing more employment related and innovative ideas have been designed and added to the program – which seems to have captured the interest of the local and international community alike.

It is my hope that this success can be replicated here for the benefit of the good people of Liberia, especially since Youth Development and Empowerment Programs have almost become a necessity, contributing to Peace, Empowerment and Sustainable development of any country.

²³ Achievements of the NYEP. A 2012 Monograph from the NYEP Secretariat. Castle Road. Accra.

Young people are our greatest assets for the change and transformation of our society

Tornorlah Varpilah
Minister of Youth & Sports



My contribution to this dialogue will highlight the following important points.

- Principles upon which the national youth policy was drafted.
- Process of revising the national youth policy and action plan.
- Vision and mission of the policy.
- Definition and classification of youth.
- Strategic Program Interventions.
- 2012 Performance Indicators.
- Youth Empowerment and job Creation Achievements.

Principles national youth policy

The process of revising the National Youth Policy and Action Plan was carried out based on three cardinal principles:

- Young people are our greatest assets for the change and transformation of the Liberian society;
- National policy must be solidly informed by empirical evidences;
- Ownership and sustainability of National Policies and Plans are products of active participation and involvement of broad spectrum of the population.

Process of revising the national youth policy and action plan

The revision of the policy was youth driven and with the Ministry of Youth & Sport performing a facilitating role.

- FLY led the process in collaboration with LINSU and MRYP supported by three consultants (two Liberian youth and an international Nigerian youth expert).
- Four Regional consultations were held in Greenville, Sinoe County.
- Harper, Maryland County, Ganta, Nimba County and Monrovia, Montserrado County with youth representatives, and stakeholders to validate the draft policy and actions plan.
- National Youth Conference to endorse the Draft Revised National.
- Youth Policy and Action Plan in Gbarnga, Bong County.
- National Stakeholders Validation Consultation was held in Monrovia, Montserrado County.
- Cabinet presentation and discussion of the National Youth Policy and Plan.

- Governance Commission Policy Dialogue: A one-day Policy Dialogue was held on the National Youth Policy and Action Plan at the Governance Commission for broad participation of policy experts and other stakeholders.

Vision and mission of the policy

A Liberia where young people live in safety and security with equal opportunities to realize their dreams and aspirations, and be success focused and morally upright to exploit their maximum potential economically, culturally, politically, socially and religiously.

Definition and classification of youth

In the context of the Liberian culture and for purposes of this youth policy, a youth is defined as a male or female who falls within the age range of 15 to 35 years. This definition reflects the great obstacles that young people face when transitioning into adulthood in a complex environment characterized by fragility underdevelopment, and the legacies of a 14-year Civil War. This age group, under 35 years, represents 75% of Liberia's population of 3.47 million, and constitutes the highest source of human resource capacity (source: National Housing and Population Census Report 2008).

The national youth policy classifies youth into 12 groups:

1. Out of school Youth;
2. Young girls involved with drug and prostitution;
3. In school adolescents and youth;
4. Unemployed and under employed Youth;
5. Youth with disabilities;
6. Youth engaged in crime and delinquency-drug;
7. Female Youth (young women and girls);
8. Rural youth;
9. Youth affected by HIV/AIDS;
10. Youth affected by armed conflict situations;
11. Illiterate Youth;
12. Vulnerable employed Youth involved in commercial activities (i.e, motorcycling, wheelbarrow, car washing etc.).

Strategic Program Interventions

- Education and Training;
- Employment and Empowerment;
- Sexual and Reproductive Health;
- Justice and Governance;
- Youth and Agriculture;
- Youth in Peace building;
- Youth and Environment;
- Youth, Drug and Alcohol Abuse;
- Sports for Development, Recreation and Peace;
- Young Women and Girl;
- Information Communication Technologies and Globalization;
- Youth and HIV/AIDS;
- Youth, Culture and Family Life.

2012 Performance Indicators

Youth Employment and Empowerment Program for 2012: By June 30, 2013 empower 5000 Liberian Youth through Job Creation, Agriculture and Vocational Training.

First Priorities

- *Job Creation & entrepreneurial indicators:* 380-college graduate employed with the National Youth Volunteers Service Program; 250 college students enrolled in the National Cadet Program; facilitate the employment of 3000 graduates from the YES Program.
- *Agricultural and vocational training indicators:* graduate and resettle 2000 youth; reopen Panama Vocational Training with 300 enrolled; Rattan and Bamboo Furniture Factory established for 25 graduates.
- *Research, Policy and Institution Strengthening indicators:* Vocational Training Institutional Needs Assessment completed, TVET Policy and Bill Produced; Institutional Development Capacity Building Program produced and Labor Demand and From School to Work Studies completed.

Secondary Priorities

- Create a National Task force to conduct program to address the problem of street youth in urban cities, beginning with Monrovia.
- Upscale the agriculture and vocational training to cover additional two thousand five hundred youth
- Conduct (1) capacity assessment and elaboration national capacity building program of three national youth organizations: FLY, LINSU and MYPL; and (2) organize the national youth camp.
- Elaboration of the national TVET Policy and proposed bill.

Youth Empowerment and Job Creation Achievements

Official launch of Klay Center: On Monday, June 25, 2012, the President officially dedicated the Klay Agriculture & Vocational Training Center (KAVTCJ) facilities comprising an Administration building, Training Halls, and a multi-purpose building and five (5) duplexes for staff quarters which UNDP rebuild. Over 150 youths from Bomi, Gbarpolu and Cape Mount Counties are currently undergoing training in agriculture.

Tuition Assistance: Under the Government of Liberia 150 Day Action Plan, tuition Assistance was provided to 1,650 youth enrolled in the following 15 vocational training institutions across the country:

- Salvation Army Vocational Training College, Montserrado County;
- Dujar Technical College, Montserrado County;
- Greenville Vocational Training Center, Sinoe County;
- FAWE Vocational Training Center, Rivercess County;
- Tohnlon Women Vocational Training Center, Bong County;
- Monrovia Vocational Training Center, Montserrado County;
- Business and Domestic Occupational Training Center, Montserrado County;
- COSEO, Montserrado County and Margibi County;
- Productive Women Skills Training Center, Montserrado County;
- Women of Hope Vocational Training Center, Rural Montserrado County;
- Humanity First Vocational Training College, Montserrado County;
- Hair Image, Gbarnga, Bong County;
- WOCDAL, Margibi, Bong County and Nimba County;

- Christian Life Vocational Training Center, Rural Montserrado County;
- ADWANGA, Tappita, Nimba County.

MVTC-Chevron Agreement: Pursuance to its Social Responsibility Policy, Chevron on 11 July 2012 signed a partnership memorandum with the MYS for the former to provide US\$59,495 to rehabilitate and equip of selected training workshops and the administrative offices of MVTC.

Bamboo and Weaving Cooperative: The Government of the People's Republic of China in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports through the Government of Liberia fielded a team of experts to train vulnerable youth in Bamboo and Rattan Weaving. Most young people who complete the one-year program are unable to apply their skills due to the lack of start up capital to create their own jobs. Determined to address this problem MYS provided start up capital for equipment and raw materials to twenty-five graduates to established Bamboo and Rattan Cooperative.

Partnership Forum: Collaborated with the World Bank to conduct the Partnership Forum with Concession Companies to build partnership for youth employment opportunities.

Technical Assistance: Negotiations were successfully concluded in Accra, Ghana, with the CEO of Zoom Lion and Minister of Youth and Sports of Ghana for both institutions to assist develop Liberia's Youth Empowerment and Employment Guidelines, Curriculum and Training Modules. A team of experts from the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ghana will arrive on 22 October 2012 to provide technical assistance at no cost to the Government of Liberia.

Expansion of National Youth Volunteer Service Program: Funding of US\$800,000 secured through UNICEF to expand the National Youth Volunteer Service Program. 150 young university graduates were recruited, trained and deployed in six counties (Maryland, Sinoe, Grand Gedeh, Bong Lofa, Bassa) to provide one year national voluntary service in agriculture, education, health and peace building. Two volunteers were also assigned to manage each Youth Resource & Recreation Centers in Cape Mount, Bomi, Montserrado, Bong, Bassa and Nimba.

National Employment Plan: Collaborative efforts with the Ministry of Labor and government agencies resulted to revision of the draft of the National Employment Plan, which also highlights critical strategies for youth.

Policy Research: From School to Work and Labor Demand Studies: Youth employment is a potential peace and security threat in Liberia. It is reported that an estimated fifty five thousand youth who become work ready annually do not have any form of employment. Though vocational and technical training evidently has the potential of ameliorating youth unemployment crisis, Liberia is contrary. According to the Education Status Report only 19% of graduates from vocation training programs get some sort of employment while the majority (81%) linger without employment. Concession companies with employment opportunities continue to argue that knowledge and skills of many job seekers do not match the available jobs. The From School to Work and Labor Demand Studies are initiatives of the Ministries of Education, Labor and Youth and Sports with LISGIS, ILO and UNESCO to determine category of jobs available and skills required. The study will also generate information for creating an appropriate job creation scheme for Liberia.

Vocational Training Institutional Assessment: The Education Sector Status

Report sees the strengthening of vocational and technical training institution as key priority reform intervention. Collaborative efforts with the Ministry of Education resulted to commitment of UNESCO to Ministry of Youth and Sports US\$650,000 to support institutional capacity development initiative for vocational training institutions. The funds will be used to (a) conduct the national assessment of vocational training institutions, (b) finalize the national vocational education policy, and (c) elaborate the national capacity building plan for vocational training institutes.

(...)

‘Empower The Youth Now’

Words and Music: Bill Yaseah



OUTRO

We are ready we are ready we are ready....
 We are ready we are ready.
 We are ready we are ready we are ready....
 We're ready.
 "All the youths raise up your hands".
 We are ready we are ready we are ready....
 We are ready we are ready we are ready....
 We are ready we are ready we are ready....
 We're ready.

VERSE 1

He was down in the ghetto he was doing drugs.....
 He was hanging out with his friends.
 Taught he was bad, every day he was drinking...
 Didn't know he was wasting his life.
 Now I'm here you can see how I'm changed...
 I want the same for all the youths everywhere.
 Now I'm here you can see me how I fly...
 I want the same for all the youths everywhere.
 Don't want to go back to AKs and bushes...
 We don't want to go back to war.
 Don't want to sit down here doing nothing...
 We just want to get us involved.
 "Youth Policy" is just what we're asking...
 We don't want nothing more.
 When you start building schools and molding minds
 Together we will push our country forward.

CHORUS

Create new jobs empower the youths now...
 Give us happiness.
 Create new jobs empower the youths now...
 Give us happiness.
 Create new jobs empower the youths now...
 Give us happiness.
 Create new jobs empower the youths now...
 Give us happiness.
 Create new jobs empower the youths now...
 Come and give us happiness.

OUTRO

VERSE 2

Criminal rate is high, so we've got to drop it...
 Empowerment is meant for the youths.
 We've got to see more reasons; we've got to sort it out...
 You got to put the children to school.
 So we call on the government, call the NGOs.
 Call on the people we know.
 We got to move the world and help it go round...
 we got to reach out to the poor.
 Heal the boy that is lost to the ghetto...
 Find the girl that has got no home.
 "To my brothers out there still in the hustle..."
 I want you to know that we can make it.
 You can still see yourself through.

CHORUS

OUTRO

CHORUS

*Performed by Bill Yaseah at NDI's Policy Seminar
 on 'Youth Development and Job Creation' 17th of October 2012*

Will we ever reach the future?

Isatu Ville
2nd Vice-President, Federation of Liberian Youth
(FLY)



(...)

Let me firstly thank the National Democratic Institute for spotlighting this very important issue- important because if the significant portion of our population which happens to be youth are stuck in a situation where they have little or no say in what eventually becomes theirs to inherit and propel, am afraid Liberia is headed to danger.

I want to also thank other institutions who continue to work with youths believing in the fact that any nation that does not invest in the empowerment of their youth, which includes formal and informal education, or what may be referred to as vocational educational training and other forms of capacity building opportunities is like a ship improperly maintained and susceptible to wreckage.

To be very succinct on what I was asked to speak on ‘How can youth voices be heard’, with specific focus on youth being a part of the decision making process of the country, engaging in the process of addressing the priorities of the youth for their development and rehabilitation and the challenges of reaching vulnerable youths, I would say, they (youth) firstly need to identify specific concerns. To that point, the issues are many, but for the sake of time will categorize them, with suggestion that the approach by government and other stake holders are not and cannot be the same.

- Educated and skilled, but unemployed Youth - this category needs employment, point blank.
- Unskilled Youth- this encompasses youth with no skill or training whatsoever to earn them a living- Training and capacity building or vocational education programs need to be developed
- Never been to school youth - as a matter of fact and importance, this segment actually needs a well defined and impactful intervention ranging from mentoring/counseling to training and self empowerment

From the global perspective, youth are defined as people between the ages of 18-35 year old. This bracket is regardless of status in society, affiliations of whatever degree and persuasions of whatever nature.

In Liberia, the issues surrounding youth inclusion and participation are very cardinal to the forward march of the nation, especially when young people constitute more that 59% of the population according to LISGIS census carried out.

As a result of the war which lasted almost two decades, every fabric or facet of our nation was either broken down completely or impaired, with the young people seen as the segment

that was grossly victimized. These young people grew up in a hostile environment, where the acts and practice of war was the order of the time.

The young people grew up being deprived of those virtues that are responsible for the preparation of a person, if he or she must be a positive and integral part of the body polity of the nation. Youths, as a result of this quagmire that they found themselves been subjected to, were mostly deprived from those basics that serve as a catalyst for the forming of a responsible and resourceful young person.

The country with all its repository of natural resources, as a result of bad governance could not ensure the proper allocations where youth were to benefit.

On the question of how youth can form part of the decision making process of the country; there is a statement that has become a cliché which states that ‘The youth are the future of the Nation’, but we think that the future is something like the word tomorrow, which will never reach. Sometimes this seems like a plot or scheme to keep youth out of the decision making process of the Nation. This statement has been backed by the actions of the elders or the older folks, which we see as counter-productive to the state’s growth and development. This idea of exclusion is dangerous because, the issue of succession in every nation is inevitable, as no one, no matter how influential, affluent or popular has the ability to work efficiently beyond the point of retirement.

The process of addressing the priorities of youth for their Development and Rehabilitation can be attributed to the aspect of acquiring quality education and other forms of capacity building for empowerment.

When these issues are prioritized by central government and her partners, youth will be able to adequately rise from their current state. The development of the minds of the youth is very significant to their rehabilitation. The education acquired, will enable youth to set proper goals, engage into constructive ventures and equip them as a way of being rehabilitated.

Youth need to be involved into substantive initiatives-initiatives which are developmental in scope and nature. Programs like national debates around issues of concern to the youth, in the rural areas, joint agricultural ventures, etc are examples. The government needs to be more pragmatic about her profession of supporting youth developmental initiatives. It is sad to note that our country cannot boast of more than ten formally trained persons in the area of Youth Development, which is paradoxical to the enhancement of the aspect of our Nation’s growth. The government needs to train more people in this area, as we are concern now about training engineers, doctors, etc. The development of youth in Liberia as a nation is very important, judging from the proportion between the youth age to the adults.

The technical part of ensuring that there are trained people to handle youth matters is a catalyst for the enhancement and achievement of a sound and productive youth bracket. There should be robust approaches toward achieving this aspect as it relates to the challenges of reaching vulnerable youth.

The Federation of Liberian Youth (FLY) as the umbrella body continues to be faced with lack of logistical and adequate financial support. The issue of funding continues to serve as an impediment to the running and operation of youth works and activities. Most of this majority group is languishing either in slum communities or rural areas. With the issues of logistics and funding being the core of the many challenges of the statutory youth group

(FLY), we entreat central government to step up their support towards the running of youth activities and sustaining the engagements.

Lastly, for the concerns for youth to be heard, there has to be platform. By this document, we are calling on the Legislature and executive to set aside a time during plenary and meetings for the discussion of the youth agenda.

This nation will develop if and when all parties in this effort (youth development) are sincere, strategic, willing and passionate about of this.

Legislators will hold executive fiducially responsible for unsuccessful programs

Christian Chea
Chairman, House Committee on Labor



Allow me to express to you my great pleasure in participating in the deliberations of this seminar, an important forum for the formulation and adoption policies for youth development and job creation in our country.

(...)

For too long Liberia has not been able to develop sustainable youth programs; as a result the development of youth is going through a snail pace. This makes youth unable to fulfil their potential to contribute to Liberia's prosperity and benefit from its development programs. Young people are the cornerstone of the society and when they are ill-prepared or neglected, that society is doomed to fail or perish. Therefore, this image has to change and this seminar forms part of our collective effort to ensure the process of youth development and face the challenge of job creation not only for the youth, but every citizen of Liberia.

We must ensure strategic planning now to improve the quality of life for all Liberians, develop and empower our youth, and create jobs and opportunities to spread sustainable development to all .We cannot achieve our goals alone that is why we at the legislature, especially the Labor Committee, attach value to the linkage and partnership with the National Democratic Institute. This Seminar I believe will highlight the eight elements of youth development associated with the H4 to bring about youth development and job- rich opportunities in Liberia.

(...)

This Seminar comes at the time when the country is gradually transforming to a more robust and carefully planned National Vision 2030 which is intended to divulge quantitative target connected with international best practices for sustainable national growth and youth development.

While it is true that this national initiative has been crisscrossing the country for national input, we at the level of the National Legislature, will ensure the establishment of participation with the National Steering Committee for the successful implementation of this National Program thereby generating our full participation.

Realizing that the National Legislature has three major core functions lawmaking, representation and oversight, the Legislature, in fostering its social/political contract with the

people, have over the years framed out programs in coordination with the Executive Branch which are to engender youth participation in national development.

This is made relevant by numerous legislations enacted and encompassed with line budgetary allocations over the years from 2006 to present, intended to improve and impact the wellbeing of the country youthful population.

Youth activities are covered by programs of these Sectorial Ministries –Ministry of Labor, Youth and Sports, Gender and Development, Education, Health; and by extension LINSU and FLY. As a result, budgetary programs of these ministries relative to youth development, from youth employment, youth vocational services, youth job training, youth agriculture programs, youth scholarships, social welfare services etc. are been well funded in the recent passed national Budget 2012/2013. In collaboration and coordination with the executive we have managed to approve in the budget several millions of dollars for youth empowerment through the relevant ministries (Labor, Youth and Sports etc.)

Various colleges, notably the college in Margibi County, the elevation of the D. Tweh Memorial High School to a college and increment in budgetary allocation on high schools such as Gbeapo Central High School in River Gee County are testimonies of the commitment to young people to have access to education and skill training which are key in providing youth with knowledge, skills and competencies needed to access employment and participate effectively in the labor market, more generally, society.

By and large, by committing itself to these audacious programs within the frame work of the fiscal budget of these Sector Ministries and Agencies, the National Legislature has greatly enhanced the work of these agencies of the executive aimed at improving and realizing the objectives of youth development.

Let us not forget, that as these programs and policies are divulged at youth participation and are considered for budgetary allocation the onus is always on the agencies of the Executive to implement these programs which are to have a far reaching positive effect on our young people. However, as Legislators, and as a function of our oversights, we will hold the sector ministries fiducially responsible if these programs considered in the framework of National Budget are not successful effectuated.

Currently, at the Ministry of Labor where your humble servant Committee provides oversight, that Ministry has in her current budget direct programs for our youth job creation. The Ministry of Labor has over the last three years provided job opportunities to thousands of school going young people during the vacation period. As a committee we still feel that there are challenges in implementing these initiatives and its extension to rural counties. We are working with the ministry aim at ensuring that these programs are smoothly implemented and also extended to the rest of the country.

Over the years our society has not recognized and realized the role being played by members of the Legislature in youth employment and development. Let me use this medium to have you informed that presently at the legislature, as you can see from a more concerted job allocation, from office to office at the Capitol Building, the bulwark of legislative staffs and/or workers are young people who considered working at the legislature as a means of gaining college degree (education).

These young legislative staffs are vividly seen during committee work in offices and at legislative functionaries, performing clerical functions, which are very cardinal to the working of the legislators.

All legislators have realized that without the inputs of our staffs, work at the national legislature will be around-zero; that is why over the years we have endeavoured to improve the working environment at the workplace and providing good incentives to our staffs which is manifested by the recent passed budget where the legislature did not increase its pay but that of its staffs.

At the National level, the Legislature has over the years consulted national youth stakeholders on its key activities. These partnerships with youth and women institutions are geared toward enhancing the work of the Legislature and encouraging the participation of the young people, who are considered future leaders, in the working of the Legislature.

Closing on this, let me address myself to the three questions I am requested to answer.

Question 1

Youth in budgeting as a strategy which programs did the Legislature examine in allocating US\$ 20million in the National Budget?

Answer

The question did not identify which US\$ 20 million it is specifically referring to. However, it is worth mentioning that the budget has changed several times from the time of the initial drafting time to present. The budget as was improved by the Legislature may not contain the amount referred to herein. However, there are some allocations for some programs as outlined below. What was the wisdom behind these allocations, I decline to say as I don't have the details.

1. National Reconciliation US\$ 2 million core budget.
2. National capacity development US\$ 1 million in core budget.
3. National capacity development US\$ 5 million to be borrowed.
4. National capacity development US\$ 1 million in contingency.
5. National Reconciliation US\$ 30 million in contingency.

The details of these programs are not specified in the budget. It is therefore difficult to state how the strategies to be employed will be implemented and by whom.

Question 2

Did the Legislature appropriately allocate resources in the budget in support of youth activities?

Answer

I don't know about 'appropriate' as that is for the politicians to decide. However, please find below some amounts allocated in the budget geared towards youth activities.

1. There is US\$ 150,000 allocated in the office of the president specifically for youth (p.20).
2. The Ministry of State also has US\$ 100,108 for scholarship which the youth can access (p. 30).
3. Constructions of several medium stadiums by the Ministry of Youth and Sports put at US\$ 450,000. The youth will gain from temporary employment when the

construction of these stadiums begins. In addition, there is a total transfer/grant of US\$ 1.36 million to several sporting programs such as Basket Ball Federation, National Olympic Committee etc. (p.184-187).

4. There are other amounts such as the Ministry of Finance, which has various training packages and scholarships equally targeted at the youth. These total over US\$ 5 million.

Question 3

In what ways could the legislature itself enhance participation of the youth in its affairs?

Answer

The Legislature's role is principally one of lawmaking, representation and oversight. The legislature exercises these functions mainly through plenary and the use of its various committees. In that regard, one thing the legislature could do is to involve youth participation by inviting some potential youth leaders to witness deliberations in plenary. They could even be allowed to attend some committee meetings so as to give them some indications of just how laws are made and the process leading up to it. I am sure there could be other strategies.

Where possible, potential youth leaders could form part of legislative delegations travelling abroad, to give these youths some insight to the workings of international organizations and institutions.

Once again, let me praise the conveners of this conference for job well done and re-assure you that we will at all-time be present once needed since we will together improve the link between education and training and the world of work through dialogue on skills-mismatch and standardization of qualifications as relate to youth development and job creation.

Youth Development and Job Creation: Summary of the Discussion



Governance

- How does government ensure youth development is prioritized in the way it deserves? A best practice is the Ghanaian model: the President of Ghana coordinates the implementation of youth programs on behalf of all executive branch agencies and ministries. A national coordinator directly reports to the President, this way the President can address ministers if programs or activities are not running well.
- The Legislature has oversight responsibility and this includes monitoring, so the executive should share monitoring information with the Legislature.

Development of Youth Policy





- A representative of a youth organization criticized the national youth policy: “since 2006 nothing has happened”. Another expressed fear that the government would not act on its policy paper on youth.
- The Minister underlined that the document was debated in the Cabinet at a special meeting, which was solely dedicated to the youth policy. Now the policy paper will be reviewed, implemented and decentralized, with youth organizations in the driver’s seat.
- Effective implementation of youth policy is contingent on a partnership between the youth, youth organizations and the executive. This is because a partnership would foster ownership of youth development programs. Ownership is an important condition for sustainability.
- Financial sustainability for youth development programs is also key. It was argued, however, that this is guaranteed during the term of this administration, because the executive is committed to youth development.
- Equally important is ensuring that individuals responsible for implementing youth programs have the requisite experience and capacity. At the moment, the government has not spent \$15 million because of a lack of experienced individuals.
- The executive needs to develop sound and effective systems to allocate the budget, set clear guidelines and coach line ministries, so the implementation is efficient and effective.
- Coordination between line ministries and agencies needs to be improved. There is an urgent need to build a curriculum to enhance the capacity building of ministerial staff, so implementation of the youth development policy can improve.
- A holistic approach to job creation is needed. As such, practical development programs need to be implemented.

Situation of youth

- We have to re-orientate our minds. Youth need to receive education that responds to the labor market. There is a big need for technicians, while the quality of education in technical subjects is weak.
- The aspirations of youth are to have equal opportunities. There is a growing spirit amongst Liberian youth to be more successful youth and to become active in a cultural, economic and political sense.
- Many youngsters are creative but need support to develop themselves. There are no facilities -- they are neglected.
- Legislation doesn't take into consideration the needs of youth and children. The youth are a very diverse group: rural, disabled, illiterate, university students, etc. For every group of youth different programs have to be developed to build the right bridge between need, skills, capability and aspiration.

Criminal youth

- One participant advocated a strong and zero-tolerance approach towards criminal youth.
- The international expert thought that this segment of youth should be re-educated and re-integrated back into society in a constructive way, as a means of illustrating that the path of criminality should not be taken. A more anti-criminal approach should be included in the school curriculum.
- The street youth are a major challenge. Largely because they fall in various categories, including drug-addicted youth among others. Liberia doesn't have the specialists to help youth address some of these types of challenges. Drug rehabilitation facilities need to be improved. There is only one such clinic. There are no shelters or adequate rehabilitation programs. They have to be taken off the street to educate, to work, and to go to church or mosque.
- We need programs to reintegrate formerly criminal youth back into society. Do not forget that many of them have children themselves.

	<p style="text-align: center;">Program Policy Seminar on Youth Development and Job Creation Wednesday, 17th of October 2012</p>		
Location: P. A.'s Rib House Conference Room, Larkpazee, Airfield			
Time	Activity	Presenter/Facilitator	
9:00am – 9:45am	Registration	Participants	
Moderator: Joseph Jimmy Sankaituah			
9:45am – 10:00am	Introduction of the Seminar	Aubrey McCutcheon Resident Director of NDI	
10:00am – 10:15am	Keynote Speech	His Excellency Joseph N. Boakai Vice President of Liberia	
African Experience and Suggestions for Liberia			
10:15am – 10:45am	African Experience on Youth Development and Job Creation in a Post-conflict Situation	Dr. Charles Brempong-Yeboah Consultant, Former Deputy Minister of 'Manpower, Youth & Development' – Republic of Ghana	
Targeting Youth and Identifying Main Priorities			
10:45am – 11:15am	Government of Liberia's Plans for Youth Development and Job Creation	Minister Tornorlah Varpilah Ministry of Youth & Sports	
11.15am-11.30am	Reflection on both presentations	Hon. Lester Paye Chair, House Committee Youth and Sports	
11:30am – 12:00pm	Question/Answer and Discussion For both presentations	Participants	
Engaging Youth and Defining the Role of the Legislature			
12:05pm – 12.25pm	How can Youth Concerns be heard?	Isatu Ville 2 nd Vice-President Federation of Liberian Youth (FLY)	
12.25pm – 12:45pm	The Role of the Legislature in Realizing a National Program for Youth Development	Hon. Christian Chea Chair, House Committee on Labor	
12:45pm – 1:30pm	Question/Answer and Discussion	Participants	
	1:30pm – 2:30pm - Closing and Lunch		

List of participants

House of Representatives

Hon. Morias T. Waylee
 Hon. Fofi Baimba
 Hon. Lester Paye
 Hon. Munah Pelham
 Hon. R. Matenokay Tingban
 Hon. Ben Fofana
 Hon. Gayah Karmo
 Hon. Christian Chea
 Hon. Worlea Dunah
 Hon. Solomon George
 Hon. Acarous Gray
 Hon. Johnson Toe Chea

Legislator's Staff

Larmie J. Bartuah
 Moses Yamedh
 James B. Turay
 Kwadea Johnson
 Kla N. Moore
 Samuel Tinnater
 John S. Smith
 Musa B. Korlleh
 Jimmie K. Geizue
 Otis Wallace
 Musa Sillah
 Joshua Badio
 Gabriel Briamah
 Varney Sherif
 Wendell Thomas
 Ralph N. Harris

Executive Branch

H.E. Joseph N. Boakai, Vice President
 J. Dweh Doeyan (NEC)
 Tanneh Brunson (MoF)
 Reginald M. Wade (Civil Service)
 Julius Sele (MCC)
 Julius Thompson (MOF/DOB)
 Adolphus B. Parker (MOCI)
 Alice Williams (MoF)
 Morris Z. Duo (NHA)
 Evenlyn Reeves (MICAT)

Civil Society Organisations

James Tellewonyan (DEN-L)
 Abendingo N. Borlay (Prison Fellowship)

Civil Society Organisations (continued)

P. Darlinton Davies (VDF)
 Sharlyn K. Idriss (LGGA)
 Henry D. Johnson (MRUYP-LC)
 Joseph G. Mehdeh (BUCCOBAC)
 Linda Togbah (PAYWOI)
 Vera F. Karngar (BHWOP)
 Jenneh U. M. Paye (AGENDA)
 Mai D. Karway (PAYWOI)
 Laffia Waba (MRYP)
 Sahr Yillia (National Commission of Disability)
 Lydia S. Gbelee (YWCA)
 Amelia Cooper (ADWANGA)
 Morris Mulbah (FAPI)
 Lawrence Tokpah (ALICOR)
 Daintown D. Pay-Bayee (FLY)
 Tennen B. Dalieh (CEMESP)
 Michael G. Monfonwon (Uni. Student Initiative)
 Francis J. Nagbe (WANEP)
 W. E. Saydee – Tarr (GPFA)
 Emmara Gbortoe (GPFA)
 Saylor Wahtorson (CPD)
 Samuel S. Tamba (FODCE)
 Finda Bundoo (FODCE)
 Charles F. Johnson (FODCE)
 Lawrence Fahnbulleh (YMCA)
 Rose B. Norris (Bowie Peace Foundation)
 Alfred H. Wreh (CEMESP)
 Christina W. Cummings (Women of Logan Town)

Political Parties

S. Ciaphea Gbollie (NDC)
 Nathaniel McGill (CDC)
 Barsee karr Barley (CDC)
 Nelsco Wuo (NUDP)
 Martin M. Tumoe (NUDP)
 Habakkuk Wonmei (CDC)
 Cyrus K. Kamara (NPP)
 K. Edward Tromei (LP)
 Abel T. Tarpeh
 Foday A. Jallah (NDPL)
 P. Tehneseo Brohdoya (NDPL)

<p>International Organizations Joseph Jimmy Sankaituah (SFCG/TDS) Daniel Dasic (USAID) Louise Fahnbulleh (USAID) Kristin Joplin (USAID) Solomon Paye (USAID) Alex Lane (USAID) Mardea Nyumah (USAID) Lisa Hartenberger Toby (USAID) Julius Kanubah (EU) Peter Mokwe (UNMIL) Eric Perry (UNMIL) Gilbert Ngesu (UNMIL) Freida M’cormack (UNMIL) Chiyuki Kozuka (UNMIL) Sam Udoko (UNMIL) Nelson Jackson (Sime Darby) David B. Kolleh (Sime Darby) Amos T. Kofa (ADB) Zaira Alons (RHBS) Dayugar Johnson (RTPL) Ekkehard Kurschner (GAA/SLE) James Shilue (PADP/Interpeace) Bernde Schwnk (WHH) Al Sambolah (LTP/APPYE) Barward Johnson (L-MEP) Charles K. Asgo-Asji (ILO) A.B. Pobuwolo Towaye (ActionAid) Lyn Gray (IREX)</p>	<p>Media Victor C. Hanson (Inquirer) Emmanuel Weedee (Heritage Newspaper) Sally Gaye (New Dawn Newspaper) T. Michael Johnny (News Newspaper) Murphy Digs (Liberty Radio)</p> <p>Others Armah B. Kaidii (District 1) J. Richard Holder (District 1) Somah B. Dolo Eaustina Arthrur (UL) Samuel Samuel F. Argbason UL) Manita Aryal Dusty Wolokolie (TWC/Inc) Harold Monger (LIPA) Dr. Raymond Youngblood Bill Yaseah</p> <p>NDI Aubrey McCutcheon Thomas Du Leo Platvoet Nannoh Seekey Mardia Bloh Melvin Doe Varney Karneh Roland Bias</p>
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This report summarizes presentations and discussions during NDI-Liberia’s policy seminar on Youth Development and Job Creation, held on October 17, 2012 in Monrovia.

The purpose of the seminar was to increase the level of knowledge among members of the Liberian Legislature on youth policy development, so that members become more aware and effective in their roles of lawmaking, representation and oversight.

The seminar was also designed to stimulate discussion between members of the Legislature, the Executive and civil society organizations.

		
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