



UNEP Post-Conflict Capacity Building Programme in Liberia

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**United Nations Environment Programme
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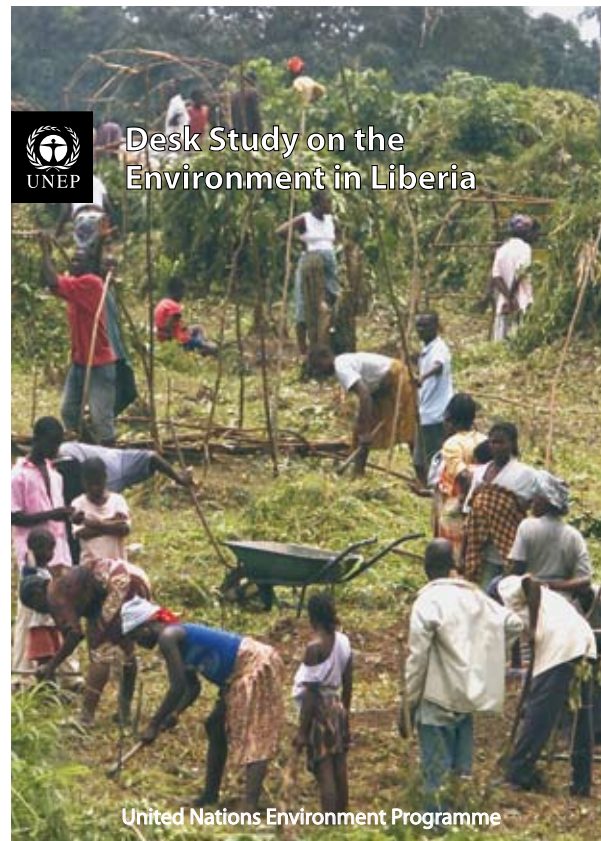
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1 Background

UNEP commenced its post conflict work in Liberia in November 2003 by assuming the lead for the cross-cutting theme of “environment” in the UN/WB Needs Assessment. This responsibility involved integrating environmental issues and priorities in the needs assessment report, reviewing information from other sectors, holding consultations with stakeholders and fielding missions in 2003/ 2004.

As supplementary information to the Needs Assessment, UNEP produced the “Desk Study on the Environment in Liberia”, which was presented at the International Reconstruction Donors Conference in New York on 5-6 February 2004. The report aimed at providing a rapid and strategic overview of the environmental problems faced by the country, and identified the immediate needs to be addressed during the reconstruction and development process. Overall, the study found that the misuse of natural resources has not only been a source of conflict in Liberia and the wider region, but has also sustained it. Furthermore, the massive movement of refugees and internally displaced people have had very serious impacts on the environment.

Based on these findings and in consultation with the national authorities, it was agreed that an important contribution towards increasing national and regional stability would be to provide the Liberian Government with the capacity and proficiency to manage its natural resources and



economic development in an environmentally sustainable and equitable manner. To this end, UNEP’s efforts over the past two and half years have focused on strengthening the enabling policy and legislative frameworks and the technical capacity of the country’s nascent environmental administration. In April 2005 UNEP established a Project Office in Monrovia, led by an international UNEP staff member.



Participants of the Environmental Considerations of Displacement in Liberia training and UNEP staff



EPA's newly established environmental laboratory

2 Environmental Capacity Building Programme

In 2006, UNEP was requested by the newly appointed Executive Director of the Liberian Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to assist with capacity building support. UNEP responded by conducting a series of fact finding/assessment missions on environmental institutions and administration, legislative, policy and financial frameworks, environmental monitoring, environmental impact assessment and solid waste management. Based on these assessments and drawing from its experience in other post conflict countries, UNEP developed a targeted package of environmental assistance in consultation with the EPA and other stakeholders. This comprised of undertaking the following key activities:

2.1 Operational support

(a) **Office Equipment:** To facilitate the operation of the newly established EPA, information technology equipment (computers, printers, display screen, etc.) was supplied in 2006. UNEP also transferred its 4-WD vehicle to the

EPA on completion of the project in December 2007.

(b) **Environmental Resource Centre:** UNEP provided office equipment (furniture/bookshelves/computers) and a comprehensive collection of environmental literature (approx. 800 books) to establish an environmental information resource centre in the EPA. UNEP also undertook extensive refurbishing of designated EPA premises for this purpose.

(c) **Environmental laboratory:** State of the art laboratory equipment was provided to the EPA in October 2007 enabling detailed analysis of water quality (biological/chemical). UNEP also supported the adaptation and equipping of designated EPA premises to host a small laboratory facility. GPSs and protective clothing have also been supplied to EPA environmental inspectors including in the counties.

Equipment to measure turbidity was also provided to the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy to assist in monitoring mining activities. The facilities of the Ministry's Hydrological Laboratory Services were upgraded by connecting it to the main water and electricity lines.



Environmental awareness parade in Bong County

2.2 Environmental awareness events at county level

During the course of 2005-2006, UNEP with assistance from UNMIL Civil Affairs sections in all counties, NGOs and government officials, organised four environmental awareness raising events targeting twelve of Liberia's fifteen counties. The events were attended by approximately 1000 persons representing government, civil society and NGOs from the targeted counties. The events included a parade through the host town, environmental presentations, distribution of the UNEP *Desk Study on the Environment in Liberia*, environmental dramas and an environmental quiz for school children. In collaboration with UNDP, two regional environmental awareness events are planned to be held in Lofa and Maryland counties in January 2008, which were not covered in the 2005-2006 programme.

2.3 Environmental assessment missions

- (a) **Institutional capacity for environmental management:** At the request of the EPA, UNEP carried out an assessment mission in September 2006 to provide objective advice on the institutional, policy and legal frameworks, including international obligations connected to the most critical environmental problems facing Liberia. The assessment made specific recommendations on strategic priorities (in terms of institutions, policy & legislation) for sustainable environmental management.
- (b) **Environmental monitoring capacity:** In August 2006, UNEP conducted a detailed assessment of existing environmental monitoring capacity within the Liberian Government with a view to establishing training and equipment requirements.

(c) **Capacity assessment for administrative procedures for environmental impact assessment:** In October/November 2006, UNEP assessed the EPA's capacity for implementing environmental impact assessment (EIA) procedures. This was followed by a one week training workshop for staff of the EPA and relevant line ministries on the administrative procedures for EIA. The conclusion of the mission was that the knowledge and skills for application of EIA procedures is very weak. Consequently, UNEP drafted interim guidelines for EIA which have been subsequently revised and officially endorsed by the EPA in 2007.

(d) **Solid waste management:** A review of the state of solid waste management was conducted in June 2007 drawing on field visits mainly in Monrovia but also to Paynesville, Buchanan and Kakata. Extensive consultations were held including a one day workshop that brought together government agencies, the private sector, CSOs and international/donor organizations to encourage national debate, discuss problems and identify components for long-term, sustainable improvements in the sector. The mission's key recommendations

were that the EPA should: (i) establish a national task force on solid waste management engaging both public and private stakeholders and (ii) launch a public education programme on waste management. Addressing hazardous health care waste was also identified as an issue requiring priority action. Subsequently, the EPA created a National Solid Waste Management Task Force with the immediate objective of developing a national solid waste management strategy.

(e) **Environmental law and policy:** In August 2007, a UNEP mission conducted a legal review of Liberia's framework environmental law, with a special focus on the development of priority subordinate legislation to help ensure its implementation. Discussions were held with key Government, international community and civil society stakeholders to gain an understanding of the legislative development process and identify sectoral priority areas requiring regulations. The two priority recommendations emphasised the need to conduct a comprehensive review of the existing policy and legal frameworks with a view to developing a legislative action plan and a detailed review of the draft EIA regulations.



UNEP staff on a solid waste management assessment mission

2.4 Technical Assistance

(a) **Restructuring the Liberian Environmental Protection Agency:** Following on the above assessment mission (2.3.a), UNEP provided systematic guidance in early 2007 on the restructuring process of the Environmental Protection Agency. This assistance focused on a thorough review of the EPA Act, and the Environmental Management Act, and assessing the mandate and functions of the EPA. This assistance resulted in a revised organizational chart, function profiles and job descriptions, which was subsequently submitted and approved by the EPA Board of Directors (with minor amendments).

(b) **Environmental Site Assessment:** A five-day workshop on contaminated site assessment techniques based on hands-on field visits was held in May 2007. Participants included 20 environmental inspectors from the Environment Protection Agency, many of whom were

subsequently deployed to the counties, as well as staff from relevant line ministries.

(c) **Water quality testing:** An eight day training course on water quality testing methods and procedures was provided for 20 laboratory technicians in October 2007. The participants were mainly from the EPA and the Hydrological Laboratory Services of the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy (MLME) as well as other line ministries and academic institutions.

(d) **Establishment of an Environmental Resource Centre:** A two week training course on environmental information management was provided for six EPA staff (including a librarian from the National University of Liberia) at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi in November 2007. Additional training on internet and website design has also been provided to EPA staff. Furthermore, UNEP developed a draft website for the EPA (www.epa.gov.lr) which should be launched by the EPA in early 2008.



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