

LIBERIAN NGO WOMEN

**PARALLEL REPORT FOR BEIJING +25 PLATFORM FOR
ACTION**

Report prepared by: Women NGO Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL)

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NAMES OF CONTRIBUTING ORGANIZATIONS:

Community Healthcare Initiative (CHI)	Children development Alliance for Women
Paramount Young Women Initiative (PAYOWI)	Community Sustainable Development Organization
Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia (AFELL)	West Point Women for Health & Dev. Org. (WPHDO)
Organization for Women and Children (ORWOCH/NOPSWECO)	Sister "4" Sister international
Foundation for Community Initiatives (FCI)	
Women Advocacy on WASH Initiative (WOAWIN)	
Coalition of Women Against Gender Based Violence in Liberia (COWAIL)	
Yapugeanma women Inc.	
Formidable Initiative for Women and Girls (FIWAG)	
Liberia Women National Political Forum (LWNPFF)	
Pan African Christian Women Alliance (PACWA)	
Women and Children Initiatives Inc. (WCI)	
Foundation for Human Rights Democracy (FCHRD)	
Sharpe Home care Service Inc. (SHDCAS)	
Women Education and Dev. Organization-Liberia (WEDOL)	
Fidelity Micro Loan LCC	
Women & Youth Wings ECOWAS Citizen Union of Liberia	
Women Initiative for Sustainable Agriculture	
Liberia Initiative for Empowerment	

ACRONYMS:

AGE	Accelerated Quality Education
B-CAP	'Be a Change Agent Adolescent Development Project'
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
BRAC	Building Resources Across Communities
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FeJAL	Female Journalist Association
GDO	Gender Desk Officers
GFP	Gender Focus Person
HV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
NDMA	National Disaster Management Agency
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPO	National Institute for Public Opinion
NDI	National Democratic Institution
ORWOCH	Organization of Women and Children
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Aid
WONGOSOL	Women NGO Secretariat of Liberia

YCOEL Youth Coalition Education of Liberia
MDA Ministries Departments, Agencies
VGGT Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The present report is a combination of efforts by Government and NGOs over the last five (5) years. The Liberian NGO women have attempted to assess the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and its outcomes in Liberia. The report provides appreciable progress, areas of least progress, difficulties, obstacles & challenges to the implementation of priorities and recommendations.

Liberia Women NGOs in particular and civil society in general have continued to make strategic efforts at the community and national levels to influence policy and legal reforms to ensure that the BPfA informs the political, social and economic development processes in Liberia.

The report provides a matrix outlining the implementation of the priorities areas of BPfA at the national and local levels for over five (2014-2019) years period. The compilation of this report was based on data collection from primary and secondary sources in addition to interviews and focus group discussions on the progress of the critical areas of concern. It reflects experiences of key actors within civil society and addresses the under listed areas of concern:

- Women and poverty
- Education and training of women
- Women and health
- Violence against women
- Women and the economy
- Women in power and decision-making
- Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women
- Human rights of women
- Women and the media
- Women and the environment
- The Girl-Child

Critical Areas of Concern	Areas of Appreciable Progress	Areas of Least Progress	Difficulties, Obstacles & Challenges to Implementation of Priorities	Recommendations for the Future
<p>Women and Poverty</p> <p>Employment?</p> <p>Burden of care/unpaid work?</p>	<p>Steps by Liberian Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained women in business management skills, literacy and numeracy in six counties • Trained over 750 rural women farmers in agriculture and entrepreneurship. <p>UNDP, UN Agencies and development partners support national governments to develop gender-responsive economic plans, policies and social protection systems for women inclusion (which includes measures to reduce women's unpaid work, initiatives to ensure women's equal access to decent employment opportunities, resources and finance, and helping to develop and implement gender-sensitive budget processes).</p>	<p>Access to finance and land for agriculture; Obtaining collateral for loans from banks is still an issue.</p> <p>Understanding of women's land rights issues and reducing gender stereotypes regarding access, use and land ownership which would have strengthen their economic power.</p>	<p>k of gender-responsive budgeting</p> <p>Low women's representation in public and private senior executive positions (including at Ministries, Agencies, Commissions, and in the legislature)</p> <p>Low number of women participating in formal governance positions, particularly at the higher levels</p> <p>Nb policy for job creation that allows women to become economically empowered</p> <p>Nb Legal Frame Work that provides alternative and affirmative action to women empowerment</p>	<p>To modify the ambiguity and complexity of the laws/policy governing banking institutions in their enforcement which create barriers that adversely affect women in the attainment of micro finance loan.</p> <p>Amend gender discriminatory laws and adopt laws that redress gender inequality in access, use, and control of women economic empowerment</p> <p>Government should encourage the establishment of cooperatives</p> <p>Public and private institutions should pass and adhere to temporary special measures</p> <p>To strengthen policy, legal and regulatory frameworks for women inclusion in governance;</p>
<p>Education and Training of Women</p>	<p>UN Women and Barefoot College in India support national governments to train 26 women 16 villages in Liberia to participate in six months of training on building, installing and maintaining solar lamps and panels</p> <p>Alfalit International- Liberia Literacy Program trained over 3000 women</p>	<p>Establishing Technical and vocational training for women</p>	<p>Inadequate schools and instructors to teach women.</p> <p>Lack significant investment and of institutions for training.</p> <p>Lack of initial funding after training for women to continue using skills acquired</p>	<p>Establish special institutions and support adult education for women.</p> <p>Government provide subsidy to private institutions providing public services</p>

<p>Women and Health</p>	<p>Carter Center supported national government to trained 342 mental health clinicians Establishment of a Human Resources Unit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A job classification for trained and credentialed mid-level, primary care providers to serve as mental health clinicians • Training midwives <p>Establishment of maternal waiting homes</p> <p>BRAC supported national government to increase Maternal Neo-Natal Child Health Services</p> <p>USAID/Liberia's health program supports national government to improve Liberians health status</p>	<p>Maternal and infant deaths is still a serious problem (Maternal death- 1,072, newborns, within the first 28 days of life-37 for every 1,000 live births).</p> <p>Accessibility of health services including affordable and available drugs</p> <p>Rural Health Delivery not adequately addressed</p> <p>No national formula existed for determining the level of resource allocation to counties based on population, utilization, and access criteria.</p> <p>Inadequate support for maternal waiting homes</p> <p>Inadequate sensitization for women on health issues – eg family planning, HIV/AIDS</p> <p>Challenging myths and misconceptions about family planning.</p> <p>Information content on Family Planning is not concise and disseminated</p> <p>Inadequate application of the standardize health package of services to diverse spectrum of facilities.</p>	<p>National Health Policy's <i>'one size fits all'</i> approach met aggregate planning targets but resulted in significant gaps and inefficiencies throughout the system</p> <p>Women's access to health particularly obstetrician and gynecology is limited</p> <p>Every year 11,000 children under 5 die.</p> <p>Rural-urban disparities remained a particular challenge</p> <p>The acute shortage of skilled health workers. For example in 2016 there were 298 doctors listed, 203 are Liberians while 95 are foreign. Out of the entire sum, only 72 are female.</p> <p>Inadequate mental health facility and care.</p> <p>Inadequate emergency obstetric care</p> <p>Lack of monitoring mechanism to track teenagers using contraceptive</p> <p>Inefficient and limited referral systems</p> <p>Poor nutritional status of pregnant women</p>	<p>Introduction of a robust cadre of community health workers integrated into the primary health care system</p> <p>Adequate information systems and data management are needed at all levels of the health system</p> <p>Effective strategies for HIV/AIDS care in other settings should be validated in Liberia</p> <p>Increase human resource capacity in all areas of the health sector and improve incentives for health workers</p> <p>Better equip health facilities to improve efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery.</p>
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Violence Against Women	<p>Gender Based Violence Crimes Unit</p> <p>One-Stop-Centers for SGBV Cases</p> <p>Women and Children Protection Section in almost every police station.</p> <p>Enactment of National Laws to deal specifically with VAW</p> <p>Domestic Violence Act (2019) specifically criminalizes domestic violence</p> <p>National Human Trafficking Task Force Government has DNA machine and personnel have been trained.</p>	<p>Violence Against Women and girls remains an alarming issue in Liberia, (2018 GBV statistical report 2,105 cases, 81% sexual violence, 71% were female survivors less than 18 years</p> <p>Lack of skills and knowledge of police officers to identify trafficking victims and how to deal with them</p> <p>The issue of impunity remains a problem</p> <p>Complicity and corruption inhibited anti-trafficking law enforcement action.</p> <p>Lack of adequate resources and understanding of trafficking to effectively investigate and prosecute trafficking crimes.</p>	<p>Access to justice for survivors of violence</p> <p>Low level of cases prosecuted and adjudicated i.e. 3% of 1685 reported cases</p> <p>Criminalization of FGM and other harmful practices, including trial by ordeal (sassywood) which is disproportionately meted out on women accused of infidelity and witchcraft.</p> <p>State inability to use the DNA machine to confirm a single case of sexual violence despite the arrest of perpetrators.</p> <p>Removal of Female Genital Mutilation from the Domestic Violence Act.</p> <p>Inadequate efforts to protect (does not directly provide shelter or other services to victims) trafficking victims. Government does not encourage victims, all of whom are children, to assist in trafficking investigations or prosecutions.</p>	<p>The need for necessary electronic gadgets and expertise to conduct scientific and forensic investigation of sexual violence.</p> <p>Police continue to lack basic investigatory tools</p> <p>Increase public awareness of trafficking.</p> <p>Provide support to service providers of sexual violence.</p> <p>Strengthen and replicate criminal court 'E' in the other counties. (Judges should sit simultaneously to reduce the overcrowding of dockets and pre-trial detention for sex offenses)</p>

		Lack of Government safe homes for survivors of sexual and others forms of violence	<p>Overcrowding of the court's dockets. Sometimes, alleged perpetrators are released under chapter 18.2 of the criminal procedure law because the state fails to procedure accordingly.</p> <p>Inadequate maintenance of the ONE STOP CENTERS</p> <p>Inadequate efforts by Liberian government to combat human trafficking</p> <p>Lack of support to non-governmental safe homes since government refer cases to safe homes manage by CSOs or INGOs.</p>	
Women and the Economy	<p>Liberia Decent Work Act</p> <p>USAID agriculture programs help farmers in Liberia access technologies that improve their yields and incomes</p> <p>BRAC supported national government to increase Micro finance</p>	<p>Burden of women's unpaid labor/care work</p> <p>Access to land and credit</p> <p>No actions to tract Proportion of the National budget that is invested in the Promotion of Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, in addition the budget is not gender responsive.</p>	<p>Lack of decent wage for women</p> <p>Lack measures to reduce women's unpaid work, initiatives to ensure women's equal access to decent employment opportunities, resources and finance,</p>	<p>Amend gender discriminatory laws and adopt laws that redress gender inequality in access, use, and control of women economic empowerment</p> <p>Government should establish a unit for Women in Agriculture and Development to focus on women farmer.</p>
Women in Power and Decision-making	<p>Affirmative Action law (although note they've just passed)</p> <p>Opportunities for mentorship, training in leadership, decision-making, public</p>	<p>Women's representation in the legislative and executive branch of government is extremely Low.</p>	<p>Lack of measures to prevent, investigate, prosecute and punish violence against women in politics</p>	<p>Strengthen the provisions of the New Elections Law Sections 4.5 b, & c, to be enforceable and provide</p>

	<p>speaking, self-assertion, political campaigning Provided by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ND/USAID Conducted its “Getting Ready to Lead” program with over 150 participants with subsequent advanced level training. • From 2016 – 2019, Oxfam in collaboration with five (5) local partners, ORWOCH FCI, NPO, and YOCEL has conducted 32 trainings on leadership in the past four years under its Funding Leadership Opportunities for Women Program • American Department of States through WONGOSOL Conducted leadership training for 175 women leaders and aspirants • UNWOMEN supported WONGOSOL in trained 80 women in preparation for 2017 election. • Paramount Young Women trained 200 first-time voters in 2017. • Liberian Women Manifesto developed by CSO women 2017) 	<p>Little progress on temporary special measures for women. For example, elections Law 4.5 b & c which require parties to include not less than 30% of either gender on their candidate listings and in party leadership is widely ignored. In the 2017 general elections only 1 of 24 registered political parties met the threshold. The provision is unenforceable because of the terminology ‘endeavor to ensure’ and carries no sanctions or punitive measures.</p> <p>Limited number of women government. For example: two (2) women out of seventeen (17) cabinet ministers, one (1) woman to twenty-nine (29) men at the House of Senate. House of Representative nine (9) women out of 73 seats. Judiciary: Supreme Court, two (2) seats out of 5 seats is occupied by women. Circuit court level: 1 woman of 6 seats at the circuit court level. Where women access justice the most, 6 of the magistrates out of 90 are women.</p> <p>Inadequate temporary special measures to promote women’s participation in public life and decision making Example: Affirmative Action for Equitable Participation Bill</p>	<p>Example in the District 13 by elections a female candidate campaign parade was attacked many persons were wounded. Another female was attacked and demeaned publically</p> <p>There is no policy or law that requires equal representation for government delegations, educational opportunities, or representation in the foreign service or at the international level.</p>	<p>punitive measures/sanctions for violators</p> <p>Enact a policy to provide equality at all levels of government both nationally and internationally</p> <p>A policy must be enacted that requires the President to appoint equal number of women in government.</p>
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Institutional Mechanism for the Advancement of Women	<p>Gender Desk Officers GDOs/GFPs) in Ministries Departments, Agencies (MDAs) and Gender Coordinators at the county level</p> <p>Collaboration between state institutions responsible for women's rights and NGOs</p> <p>Civil society organizations have been engaged in the promotion and protection of women's rights. This has been done through delivery of services, education, training and advocacy.</p> <p>Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development</p>	<p>Little progress on enforceable temporary special measures to improve the participation of women in decision making</p> <p>Very limited access to information about government decision making process</p>	<p>Low capacity and not well resourced</p> <p>Low capacity on gender issues or analysis</p> <p>Very limited efforts by government to make public disclosure or grant information when requested by women. Example, 120 request filed by women to public institutions 44 responded to over 5 years period, the inability of the Independent Information Commission to compel disclosure of information is increasing.</p>	<p>Resource allocation should be budgeted</p> <p>Government needs to ensure that ministries, agencies, legal functionaries, etc. are engender by providing periodic training in gender and adequately allocate resources for sustain operations.</p> <p>Strong commitment and political will of government to enforce appropriate laws such as the FOI Law. Etc.</p> <p>Publicize the Freedom Of Information Law</p>
Human Rights of Women	<p>Civil Society organizations, NGO & Government have made efforts to provide training on women human rights (legal international and national instrument on women's rights) for authorities at local and national levels</p> <p>Civil Society organizations, NGO, legal institutions & Government have simplified national and international instruments such as CEDAW, Inheritance Law, etc.</p>	<p>Lack of domestication of some international instruments</p> <p>Inadequate political will to protect and promote women rights.</p>	<p>Access to justice is inhibited by delays in the justice system</p> <p>Lack of gender sensitive judiciary officers' couple with limited knowledge on human rights protocols or instruments.</p> <p>Media negative publicity about women is still a problem</p> <p>Lack of access to justice for women</p>	<p>FGMBill must be passed into law.</p> <p>Government needs to demonstrate strong commitment and political will to enforce the laws and make budgetary allotment while at the same time concentrate on building human capacity to promote women's human rights.</p> <p>There is a need to review and address contradictions relating to women human rights such as the</p>

	Adoption of Protocol to the African Chapter on Human's Rights, and Rights of persons with Disabilities (2019)	Very limited support for the implementation of Women and girls with disabilities		rape law and that of the customary law, i.e. Liberian Rape Law states that the age of marriage is 18 years and the Customary Law is 16 years. Government needs to fully support the National Commission on Disabilities
Women and the Media	The Government has appointed a few women in positions of media decision making at the state-owned broadcaster.	Limited efforts to provide TVET for women in the media. Lack of government programs that promote women access to media training especially ICT. No specific law for equal pay and retention, career advancement for women in the media and ICT. Limited collaboration between Women media networks and governments. Ownership of media still male-dominated.	No measure to enhance affordability and use of ICT for women and girls. Lack of <i>W-Fi hubs</i> community technology center to encourage the use of internet by women. No collaborations with media employers to improve internal policies and hiring practices on voluntary basis. Gender issues are regarded as insignificant and not lucrative. Lack of women's increase participation in media processes	Support women in the Media in national, CSOs and private institutions such as Female Journalist (FeJAL) Association, Press Union of Liberia Development of a national gender policy for media institution. Conduct national gender audit on the media
Women and the Environment	The country has signed and ratified the Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, Biodiversity, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Tropical Timber 83, Tropical Timber 94, and Wetlands Environmental Modification- and Marine Life Protection Agreements signed not ratified.	Ongoing mini discussions and programs by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Liberia Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Limited support mechanisms and consideration for the Human rights of women and the environment as well as the girl child.	Open oversight in annual processes including limited consultations, or engagement of women and girls in uplifting and continuing the existing environmental programs. Limited funding to support SDGs institutionalization in Liberia Very limited discussions or political will around the inclusion of gender and the empowerment of all women into environmental policies	Increase awareness on environmental issues among women at the local and national levels. Mainstream gender in environmental issues and plans

	<p>Established National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) (2017)</p> <p>National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) 2017</p> <p>National Policy & Response Strategy on Climate Change</p> <p>FAO provided training to CSOs on the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT).</p> <p>Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development</p>	<p>Open oversight in annual processes including limited consultations, or engagement of women and girls in uplifting and continuing existing programs.</p>	<p>Limited political support for any potential governmental funding for the National Policy & Response Strategy on Climate Change.</p> <p>Failed to specifically focus on women and the environment and its accompanying consideration for women.</p>	
<p>The Girl Child</p>	<p>UNICEF supported 500 girls under the 'Be a Change Agent Adolescent Development Project' (B-CAP)</p> <p>USAID's supported national government by establishing the Girls Education Program and the Accelerated Quality Education (AQE) program for students aged 8-15 to address the problem of over-age, out-of-school children.</p> <p>The Development partners supported the government note measures taken to combat negative social norms;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girls Advisory Panel • Adolescent Girls Division Established <p>Oxfam and COS Partners launched "The Enough Campaign" Strengthened Girls Access to Quality Education</p>	<p>Inadequate programmes to cater to out of school girls</p> <p>Inadequate programmes and policies to combat violence against girls in schools</p> <p>Tackled disadvantages in health outcomes due to malnutrition, early child bearing (e.g. anaemia) exposure HIV /AIDS and other related disease</p>	<p>Policies are not known/implemented at the grassroots level.</p>	<p>There is a need for awareness and sensitization to enable these policies to reach the grassroots level.</p> <p>Intersectional approach needed.</p> <p>Government must prioritize forensic training as part of its commitment to fight violence against girls</p> <p>Disaggregated data on the number of violence cases reported and the ones prosecuted are important</p>

	<p>Girls Education Policy of 2009</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Girls Manifesto 2016• ECOWAS Gender Center (45 scholarship for 45 girls) <p>Access to education for all government schools</p>			
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