DRAFT Diaspora Engagement Policy

Republic of Liberia
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Foreword

Liberia’s history is replete with the engagement of various Diasporas in its founding and growth as a nation. Initially, the direction of movement was largely from north to the south; and then from south to north as conditions changed at home. Increasingly, and as a result of years of conflict, movement has been in the sub region as large numbers of Liberians found refuge and protection from the civil war in neighboring countries. Regardless of the direction, the Diaspora remained engaged in the political, social, and economic transformation of Liberia. The government now accepts that at least one out of every ten Liberians will continue to live abroad or transnationally for generations to come.

The government sees its population living abroad as partners in the national development process. Mobility patterns and the new environment created by the newly ratified ECOWAS protocols will lead to a more itinerant and dynamic population in search of opportunities in the sub region and around the globe. Some disruption is anticipated in the form of brain drain, accelerated rural-urban migration, human trafficking, the spread of infectious and communicable diseases across borders, among others. But migration will also open new opportunities. This policy is predicated upon maximizing those opportunities for the benefit of Liberians at home and abroad.

To examine this trend and draw the views of Liberians living abroad, a Diaspora Affairs Unit was created in the Office of the Ministry of State. Consultative events were held with Diaspora communities and organizations, with other African governments and the AU, and with a wide range of stakeholders in and outside of Liberia. This policy document is the end product of this process.

The government acknowledges that the policies included herein do not provide a panacea for all the identified challenges nor an easily accomplished set of objectives. But the government is confident that they are doable because they are designed to be broadly inclusive, to avoid creating new special entitlement groups that have been the bane of Liberia’s development, and to offer ‘win-win’ opportunities for Liberians living at home and abroad. Finally, the policies bring greater coherence to a innumerable laws, regulations, and directives--some of which are contradictory, were created out of fear, and are therefore self-defeating.

I would like to commend the Diaspora Affairs Unit of the Ministry of State for the steadfastness to see this through. I would also like to commend all those who participated in the formulation exercise in Liberia, United States, Ghana, Ethiopia, and Europe. Finally, let me thank the World Bank and express appreciation and consideration of highest esteem on behalf of my government for supporting the Liberia Will Rise Again Diaspora Engagement Program through which we were able to achieve this much.

Going forward, I call on all Liberians whether at home or abroad to embrace this new approach and use it to thrive. It is my hope that this is the start of a new beginning as we translate the commitments herein from paper to practice to a way of life.

Sylvester Grigsby
Minister of State
Acknowledgements

The Ministry of State (MOS) would like to register profound gratitude and appreciation to Her Excellency President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf for the insight and guidance provided throughout the development process of this policy document. Under her leadership, the Ministry of State was mandated to incubate the Diaspora Affairs Unit and to spearhead the process; but the endorsement and support of the entire cabinet has made this policy possible.

MOS would also like to acknowledge the contributions of Mr. Ashmed El Basheer, Mr. Eiman Kehir, and Mr. Jaleel Chelba of the African Union Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO). In Ghana, the Diaspora Affairs Bureau of Ghana’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration graciously shared their experiences with policy formulation along with the Ghana Investment Promotion Center (GIPC).

In Ethiopia, Mr. Gulu Geta and his team at the Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC), Mr. Teferi Melesse at the Diaspora Affairs Unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Dr Zenebe Beyene at the Addis Ababa University provided useful insights on their management of Diaspora Affairs. We acknowledge their contributions.

The MOS acknowledges with gratitude the esteemed contributions of all Liberians in the Diaspora especially the participants of the Monrovia consultations held on January 15, 2016; and the consultative dialogues held in Oakland, California and Washington DC; USA from November 18 to 30, 2015.

Finally, the MOS acknowledges the expertise brought to this process by Mr. Melvin Crawford, Managing Partner-Development Management Associates who served as the lead consultant for the development of this policy.
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<tr>
<th>ACRONYMS</th>
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<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>BIN</td>
<td>Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization</td>
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<td>CARICOM</td>
<td>Caribbean Community</td>
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<td>DED</td>
<td>Delayed Enforced Departure</td>
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<td>ECE</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
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<td>ECOWAS</td>
<td>Economic Community of West African States</td>
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<td>Ethiopian Investment Commission</td>
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<td>EVD</td>
<td>Ebola Virus Disease</td>
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<td>FGM</td>
<td>Female Genital Mutilation</td>
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<td>GC</td>
<td>Governance Commission</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GIPC</td>
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<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
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<td>IFC</td>
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<td>LEAD</td>
<td>Linkage with Experts and Academic in the Diaspora</td>
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<td>LISGIS</td>
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<td>M&amp;E</td>
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<td>MOE</td>
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<td>Non-Resident Indian</td>
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<td>NRK</td>
<td>Non-resident Kenyans</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>PIO</td>
<td>Persons of Indian Origin</td>
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<td>PKO</td>
<td>People of Kenya Origin</td>
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<td>PPCA</td>
<td>Public Procurement and Concessions Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPCC</td>
<td>Public Procurement and Concessions Commission</td>
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<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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<td>TiE</td>
<td>The Indus Entrepreneurs</td>
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<td>TVET</td>
<td>Technical Vocational Education and Training</td>
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<td>ULAA</td>
<td>Union of Liberian Associations in the Americas</td>
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<td>US</td>
<td>United States</td>
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Executive Summary

This document provides a comprehensive policy framework and a roadmap for the engagement of the Liberian Diaspora. Nearly thirty-six years (more than one generation) has passed since the first wave of out-migration. Therefore, the notion of a large Diaspora population predisposed to resettling to Liberia en masse has become increasingly murky. Liberians in the Diaspora, however, have been actively engaged in the recovery process. In addition to sending personal remittances, contributing much needed food and medical commodities, many returned home to work as community service volunteers during emergencies. Nevertheless, their role in the future of Liberia and in the realization of the goals of the Vision 2030—to become “a united people and a progressive nation meeting the core expectations of stability, equity, and democracy by 2030, remains largely unclear.

Taking the foregoing into perspective, this policy document draws together various directives, regulations, laws, and practices related to the Diaspora. Ultimately, the thrust of the policy is to ensure full and active participation of the Diaspora in the future of Liberia in a way that benefits all sides while creating new windows of opportunity for the Diaspora to make meaningful contributions to the future development of the country.

The 1976 Constitution of Liberia provides that: “All persons who, on the coming into force of this Constitution were lawfully citizens of Liberia shall continue to be Liberian citizens. In order to preserve, foster and maintain the positive Liberian culture, values and character, only persons who are Negroes or of Negro descent shall qualify by birth or by naturalization to be citizens of Liberia. The Legislature shall, adhering to the above standard, prescribe such other qualification criteria for and the procedures by which naturalization may be obtained.”

“All persons who, on the coming into force of this Constitution were lawfully citizens of Liberia shall continue to be Liberian citizens. In order to preserve, foster and maintain the positive Liberian culture, values and character, only persons who are Negroes or of Negro descent shall qualify by birth or by naturalization to be citizens of Liberia. The Legislature shall, adhering to the above standard, prescribe such other qualification criteria for and the procedures by which naturalization may be obtained.”

“Any person, at least one of whose parents was citizen of Liberia at the time of the person's birth, shall be a citizen of Liberia; provided that any such person shall upon reaching maturity renounce any other citizenship acquired by virtue of one parent being a citizen of another country. No citizen of the Republic shall be deprived of citizenship or nationality except as provided by law; and no person shall be denied the right to change citizenship or nationality.”

By this definition, an estimated 500,000 Liberians (about 10 percent of the total global Liberian population) are believed to be in the Diaspora. This includes communities in Asia, Europe, United States, and in neighboring African countries. An estimated 43 percent are in the North America, 36 percent in the West Africa sub region, 16 percent in Europe, and 5 percent elsewhere. The largest concentration of the Liberian Diaspora in any one country, however, can be found in the United States (US). The US community is also likely to be the best organized and most highly engaged in political, economic, and social development opportunities in Liberia offering the best chance for listening exercises to understand what the Diaspora has to offer, what it is willing to offer, and what are the expectations from the government. Therefore, their demographic, social, and economic characteristics inform this policy design.
Immigration Pathways

According to the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS), there were 213,204 Liberians in the US as at December 2014. Only 14 percent of people born in Liberia currently in the Diaspora and living in the United States have naturalized. An additional 54 percent are lawful residents in one category or another—Permanent residents, Temporary Protected Status, Delayed Enforced Departure (DED), asylee/refugee, etc.

Educational Attainment

Among the Liberian Diaspora population in the US who are 25 years and over, 31 percent have a bachelor’s degree or higher. An additional 11 percent have an associate degree, and 24 percent have some college education but no degree. More than half have some form of college education. In total 87 percent of this population group comprise high school graduates or higher.

Selected Economic Characteristics

The median family income is US$41,796 per year. Among the population 16 years and older, two-thirds (67.5 percent) are employed in the civilian labor force. Of those employed, 82 percent are private wage and salary workers, 15 percent work for government, and 3 percent are self-employed. Almost half (46.3 percent) of the Diaspora work in the educational, health, and social services industries and in professional services. Another 10% work in retail trade and slightly less than 10% in manufacturing. Most are in professional, sales, or support services occupations in office or retail environments. Only 3% are self-employed business owners—regardless of industry.

Contributions to Liberia

The Government of Liberia recognizes the sacrifice the Liberian Diaspora has made, and continues to make, to sustain family and relations back home. Many Liberians have opted to return home to establish business ventures, nonprofit organizations and charities, and/or provide volunteer services in education, health, and social services that create jobs and expand our social safety net. Others make significant sacrifices to send remittances. Personal remittances inflow from the Diaspora reached 24.4 percent of GDP by 2014.

Summary of Best Practices and Lessons Learned

Countries adopting a Diaspora engagement policy adopt a highly participatory and consultative approach early in the process. This involves some form of mapping of the Diaspora followed by dialogue on policy options to build trust and open lines of communication on the way forward. It also involves some form of recognition of Diaspora associations and support for the formation of similar groups.

Successful countries tackled the issue of citizenship, citizenship rights, political rights, property ownership rights, and rights of inheritance comprehensively. Successful countries

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1 US Department of Homeland Security;  
2 IBID
also include social events and programs in their strategies to boost national pride and educate descendants in host countries about their unique and common history and cultural.

Linking Diaspora engagement to a broader national development plan seems to yield the best results. Countries that identified specific entry points and/or defined the expectations from Diaspora engagement within the context of their national development plan were more likely to produce the best results and put into place the systems for measuring progress.

Engagement with local home communities and eliciting their support early in the process on the new thinking regarding the Diaspora is critical. Evidence shows that granting preferential treatment to Diaspora can lead to local resentment.

Whether in partnership with their governments or not, Diaspora communities will self-organize and remain engaged and connected through voluntary associations, town and tribal associations, religious affiliations, and other civil society organizations. These relationships are deep and multifaceted but, in their current form, largely support social welfare activities and/or provide volunteer services to communities of origin as and when the need arises.

**Challenges and Opportunities for the Liberian Diaspora engagement**

The Government of Liberia recognizes that most Liberians in the Diaspora have not reached the levels of wealth that will enable them to make significant capital investments at home. Those who made investments found the risk vs reward ratio unattractive given the vagaries of the domestic market and the large infrastructure deficit. Lack of support for those willing to risk social and business ventures also limited the range of potential areas for entrepreneurs.

Limited understanding of the provisions of the law and administrative regulations concerning entitlement to and issuance of identity documents, entry and exit requirements, residency, importation of personal and capital items among front line administrators and the public can create a seemingly hostile environment for returnees or visiting Diaspora. Absence of correct information at our foreign missions on existing policies and regulations related to returning, residing, and establishing a business in Liberia is also a constraint. High minimum capital requirements for accessing investment incentives has also been identified as a key constraint. Uncertainties over where to seek guidance militate against effective engagement.

The opportunities for a robust Diaspora engagement strategy lie in the fact that many in the Diaspora have acquired skills and access to technology that will be beneficial to any new growth and development paradigm for Liberia. The Government of Liberia also sees the continuing high level of interest in the welfare of their communities of return as a historic opportunity for a win-win partnership.

**Rationale, Goals, and Objectives of the Policy**

This policy, therefore, is forward-looking with the intent of establishing enduring partnerships between domestic institutions and Diaspora organizations and connecting Liberian communities across national borders. It draws together laws and regulations and identifies the institutional framework that will be set into place to take advantage of existing and
emerging opportunities while reducing barriers to full participation of the Diaspora in the
development of Liberia.

Within the framework of the Vision 2030 and the Agenda for Transformation national
development plans, the AU Agenda 2063 and the recently-ratified ECOWAS protocols, the
policy seeks to improve Diaspora engagement with the goal of preserving the rights and
interests of Liberians living abroad, expanding access to opportunities for business and social
enterprise at home and in the sub region, increasing skills and technology transfers, and
reducing barriers to more robust participation in the future political and social development
of Liberia. The objectives of this policy are:

1. To build trust between Liberians at home and abroad over the next five years and
open space for their active and equal participation in the realization of the goal of
Vision 2030-to become a united people and a progressive nation meeting core
expectations of stability, equity, and democracy.
2. To draw the Diaspora more substantively into the effort to develop our national
assets and to attain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Guiding Principles

This policy is inspired by the following principles:

1. Preservation of a uniquely Liberian cultural heritage.
2. Improving dialogue between the government and people.
3. Increasing participation and ownership of the future.
4. Reconciliation of conflicting parties at home and abroad.
5. Engagement of the next generation.

Policy and Program Areas

The policy and program areas and the pillars of the Agenda for Transformation to which
they relate are as follows:

1. Reducing Barriers to Engagement – political rights, property rights, inheritance
rights, rights of residence, free entry and movement (Pillar I: Peace, Security, and
Rule of Law)
2. Increasing investments and remittances flow——capital markets and tourism (Pillar II:
Economic Transformation)
3. Transfer of Human Capital and Technology—in education, health, agriculture, small
business, entrepreneurship (Pillar III: Human Development)
4. Increasing Philanthropy—social enterprise, volunteer service, celebration of our
common cultural heritage (Pillar V: Crosscutting Issues)
5. Building the institutional framework—mapping of institutions and defining roles
and responsibility, capacity building and training of frontline administrators,
regulations, administrative guidelines, Diaspora organizations and expanding
consular services, monitoring and evaluation (Pillar IV: Governance and Public
Institutions)
Chapter One: Introduction and Background

Introduction
This document provides a comprehensive policy framework and a roadmap for the engagement of the Liberian Diaspora. Since 1980, Liberia has experienced periods of instability which negatively impacted socioeconomic progress, destroyed infrastructure, and interfered with regional development in the Mano River sub-region. At the high points of the civil war, nearly 700,000 Liberians\(^3\) took refuge abroad. Most fled to neighboring countries in the West Africa sub region, but significant numbers resettled into other parts of Africa, in the United States, Europe, and as far away as Southeast Asia and Australia. Most have spontaneously returned as conditions improved in Liberia or as a result of rising conflict in their host countries. Large numbers still remain outside the country.

For those remaining abroad, nearly thirty-six years (more than one generation) has passed since the first wave of out-migration. Therefore, the notion of a large Diaspora population predisposed to resettling to Liberia *en masse* has become increasingly murky. Liberians in the Diaspora, however, have been actively engaged in the national recovery process. In addition to sending personal remittances, contributing much needed food and medical commodities, many returned home to work as community service volunteers during the emergencies.

Nevertheless, their role in the future of Liberia and in the realization of the goals of the Vision 2030--to become “a united people and a progressive nation meeting the core expectations of stability, equity, and democracy by 2030, remains largely unclear. Over the last ten years, progress has been made towards the consolidation of peace by Liberians with the generous support of the international community. Economic growth has been steady, with measured improvements in socioeconomic development, but the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak of 2014 undermined much of Liberia’s gains and its long term effects are yet unknown.

Taking the foregoing into perspective, this policy document is prepared in response to the need to review and draw together various directives, regulations, laws, and practices related to the Diaspora. Ultimately, the thrust of the policy is to ensure full and active participation of the Diaspora in the future of Liberia in a way that draws benefits from engagement and broadens their contributions to the future development of the country.

The policy document is in five parts. Chapter one sets the policy into perspective by defining and describing the Liberian Diaspora, summarizing the global migration outlook and the changing relationship between emigrants and their home countries, and by drawing on lessons learned and best practices from other countries. Chapter two provides the rationale, policy objectives, guiding principles, and strategies. Also, in chapter two the institutional framework for this policy is described; while in chapter three the monitoring and evaluation framework is presented taking cognizance of the Sustainable Development Goals and Vision 2063 precepts.

\(^3\) UNHCR, 155,560 Liberian refugees were assisted to return from neighboring countries between 2004 and 2013; UNHCR estimates that about 80 percent of Liberian refugees had returned home voluntarily by 2003.
Defining the “Liberian Diaspora”
The 1976 Constitution of Liberia\(^4\) provides that:

“All persons who, on the coming into force of this Constitution were lawfully citizens of Liberia shall continue to be Liberian citizens. In order to preserve, foster and maintain the positive Liberian culture, values and character, only persons who are Negroes or of Negro descent shall qualify by birth or by naturalization to be citizens of Liberia. The Legislature shall, adhering to the above standard, prescribe such other qualification criteria for and the procedures by which naturalization may be obtained.”

“Any person, at least one of whose parents was citizen of Liberia at the time of the person’s birth, shall be a citizen of Liberia; provided that any such person shall upon reaching maturity renounce any other citizenship acquired by virtue of one parent being a citizen of another country. No citizen of the Republic shall be deprived of citizenship or nationality except as provided by law; and no person shall be denied the right to change citizenship or nationality.”

For the purposes of this policy, the Liberian Diaspora is defined as:

I. Any and all person(s) holding Liberian citizenship in accordance with the above constitutional provisions and is currently living abroad in another country whether that person intends to return to Liberia to visit or take up residence or not.

II. Any foreign national of Liberian origin (born in Liberia; whether of negro descent or not) currently residing outside of Liberia, forming a part of the Liberian Diaspora if s/he voluntarily chooses to affiliate with recognized Liberian interest groups, civic and community organizations, and/or form a part of a business partnership or corporation with others who are of the Liberian Diaspora with the intent of doing business primarily in Liberia.

III. A person born outside of Liberia to citizens of Liberia by virtue of the constitutional provision above forms a part of the Liberian Diaspora whether s/he chooses to return to Liberia to take up residence before the age of 23 or not.

IV. Descendants of naturalized Liberian citizens whether born a citizen of Liberia or not becomes a part of the Liberian Diaspora through the naturalization of the parent if such child is under the age of 21 years old when the parent is naturalized.

V. Spouses of all who hold Liberian citizenship in accordance with the above constitutional provisions and children of those spouses are, for the purposes of this policy, considered a part of the Liberian Diaspora if they live abroad.

VI. All passport holders of the Republic of Liberia; whether those persons currently reside in Liberia or have never resided in Liberia at any time.

VII. Any person holding a non-Liberian passport or a legal travel document or a Laissez Passer of another country which clearly identifies him/her as a person born in Liberia.\(^5\)

\(^4\) Approved Revised Constitution of the Republic of Liberia Chapter IV, Articles 27 and 28.

\(^5\) Title 4 of the Liberian Codes of Laws Revised is known as the New Aliens and Nationality Law (pages 103 to 109). Chapter 22 sections 1 to 4 makes provision for loss of citizenship from performance of acts of the citizen.
Demographic Profiles, Characteristics, and Locations

An estimated 500,000 Liberians (about 10 percent of the total global Liberian population) are believed to be in the Diaspora. This includes the communities in Asia, Europe, United States, and in neighboring African countries. Data on Liberian emigration to Asia are unavailable but believed to be minute. Nevertheless, total recorded inflows of Liberians to 35 OECD countries from 2000 to 2014 can be seen in Figure 1-1. The total amounts to **81,852** Liberians over the 14-year period. In Europe, the OECD data show sizable populations of 2,187 Liberians in Italy in 2010 and 953 in Germany in 2011.⁶

Globally, data on education levels and sectors of employment of the Diaspora are scanty. But OECD data indicate a very high rate of brain drain due to emigration of professionals, especially in the health sector. Estimates put the emigration rate of medical doctors at 54.2 percent and nurses at 67% percent.⁷

Figure 1-1: Total Recorded Inflow of Liberians to 35 OECD countries 2000 to 2014

![Graph showing total inflow of Liberians to 35 OECD countries from 2000 to 2014.](image)

Figure 1-2 shows the total estimated Diaspora population by location for this policy purposes. The population is fairly evenly divided between North America and the West Africa sub region. Nearly 16 percent are in Europe and the remainder are dispersed throughout the world with significant concentrations in Australia.

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Whether Title 4 conforms to the spirit of the Liberian constitution or not has not be fully tested before the courts and, for the purposes of this policy, is not enforced.

⁶ OECD International Immigration Database; the UK immigration is not recorded in the OECD database

⁷ IOM; A Survey on Migration Policies in West Africa
The largest concentration of the Liberian Diaspora in any one country can be found in the United States (US). The US community is also likely to be the best organized and most highly engaged in political, economic, and social development opportunities in Liberia offering the best chance for listening exercises to understand what the Diaspora has to offer, what it is willing to offer, and what are the expectations from the government. It is also believed that this group will also have the highest levels of educational attainment and better incomes. Therefore, their demographic, social, and economic characteristics inform this policy design.

**Immigration Pathways**

According to the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS), only 14 percent of people born in Liberia currently in the Diaspora and living in the United States have naturalized. An additional 54 percent are lawful residents in one category or another—Permanent residents, Temporary Protected Status, Delayed Enforced Departure (DED), asylee/refugee, etc. Slightly more than one out of every four is on a visa status that does not allow permanent stay in the United States. About 2 percent are currently deportable.

This indicates that a large proportion still maintain significant affinity to Liberia to consider returning at some point; or changing perspectives on immigration in the United States may negatively influence their ability to remain. Table 1-1 shows the immigration status of the 213,204 Liberians in the US as at December 2014.

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8 US Department of Homeland Security;
Table 1-1: Liberian Admissions in the United States by Immigration Status-2014

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<th>STATUS</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LAWFUL RESIDENT</td>
<td>114,235</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NONIMMIGRANT ADMISSIONS (I-94 ONLY)</td>
<td>55,398</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATURALIZED</td>
<td>29,225</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFUGEE ARRIVALS</td>
<td>10,177</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIBERIANS APPREHENDED</td>
<td>2,269</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDIVIDUALS GRANTED ASYLUM</td>
<td>824</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DETERMINED INADMISSIBLE</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WITH PRIOR CRIMINAL CONVICTION</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>213,204.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Department of Homeland Security (some degree of double counting suspected)

Figure 1-3 shows that of the 210,000 Liberians having some level of immigration security in the United States in 2014, slightly more than 26% (a quarter) are on short term non-immigrant visas and are likely to return to their country of origin.

Figure 1-3: Immigration Status of Liberians in the US—2014

Sex, Age, and Household Composition

More than half (53 percent) of the Diaspora living in the US are female. The population is still fairly youthful and in their most productive years. The median age for all is 36 years—but is highly skewed towards the 20 to 44 years. More than three out of every four fall between the ages of 20 and 64 years old. Those at the retirement ages of 62 and above make up less than 6 percent.

Nearly 74 percent of the Diaspora live in family households and 51 percent with their own children under 18 living in the household. About 40 percent of grandparents living in the household are responsible for care-giving for grandchildren. Female-headed households (no husband present) make up 24 percent of all households. Among the population 15 years and over, one-half (50 percent) are married and nearly nine out of every ten of those who are
married live with their spouse. One-third of the total Diaspora population have never married. And the remainder are divorcees, widows/widowers, or separated. Table 1-2 shows the distribution by marital status.

Table 1-2: Marital Status of the Diaspora 15 years and over

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARITAL STATUS</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never Married</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now Married, excluding separated</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Bureau of Census

Therefore, the Diaspora population is comprised of fairly well established family units with both parents likely to be living in the household. The proportion who may be married to other Liberians in the Diaspora, however, is unknown. Single parent households will most likely be comprised of those who have never married.

Educational Attainment

Among the Diaspora population 25 years and over, 31 percent have a bachelor’s degree or higher. An additional 11 percent have an associate degree, and 24 percent have some college education but no degree. More than half have some form of college education. In total 87 percent of this population group comprise high school graduates or higher as can be seen in Figure 1-4. This compares favorably to the US population as a whole where 88 percent have attained at least a high school diploma and 32 percent of the total population age 25 and over have at least a bachelor’s degree.²⁹

Figure 1-4: Educational Attainment of Diaspora Population in U.S. who are 25 years and older (in percent)

Source: US Bureau of Census

²⁹ US Bureau of Census; Educational Attainment in the United States 2014
Selected Economic Characteristics
The median family income is US$41,796\textsuperscript{10} per year. The median monthly costs of those holding mortgages is US$1,186 (or US$14,232 per year). Among the population 16 years and older, two-thirds (67.5 percent) are employed in the civilian labor force. Of those employed, 82 percent are private wage and salary workers, 15 percent work for government, and 3 percent are self-employed. Table 1-3 shows the occupation of those who are employed while Table 1-4 lists the industries in which they work.

Table 1-3: Occupations of the Diaspora in the US civilian labor force

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPATION</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management, professional, and related occupations</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service occupations</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and office occupations</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production, transportation, and material moving occupations</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost half (46.3 percent) of the Diaspora work in the educational, health, and social services industries and in professional services (including waste management) as can be seen in Figure 1-5. Another 10% work in retail trade and slightly less than 10% in manufacturing. Most are in professional, sales, or support services occupations in office or retail environments. Only 3% are self-employed business owners—regardless of industry.

Table 1-4: Industry of the Diaspora in the US civilian labor force

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational, health, and social services</td>
<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific, management, waste management</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation, warehousing, and utilities</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{10} IBID
Economic and Development Contributions to Liberia

The Government of Liberia recognizes the sacrifice the Liberian Diaspora has made, and continues to make, to sustain family and relations back home. Many Liberians have opted to return home to establish business ventures, nonprofit organizations and charities, and/or provide volunteer services in education, health, and social services that create jobs and expand our social safety net.

The Government of Liberia also acknowledges significant inflows of resources from the Diaspora in the form of remittances to the tune of 24.4 percent of GDP by 2014.\textsuperscript{11} Total inflows of remittances as percent of GDP can be seen in Figure 1-6. From 6 percent of GDP in 2009, the share rose to 19 percent in 2013, and to 24 percent in 2014. Among African countries, Liberia has become the largest recipient of remittances as a percent of GDP—indicating an increasing reliance on our citizens abroad and on the good will of their host countries to help families and relations cope with economic challenges, health emergencies, and pervasive poverty.

\textsuperscript{11} The Central Bank of Liberia reports net inward personal remittances of US$368.4 million in 2015 compared to US$173.8 million in 2014
Liberian Diaspora Organizations
The Liberia Diaspora has established a large number of groups located throughout the United States and Europe. In most instances their structures and institutional arrangements are weak. Programs are poorly and intermittently funded. Management is predominantly comprised of unpaid elected and appointed officers, committee heads, and volunteers. Most undertake short duration philanthropic projects and raise funds through member dues, fundraising events, and source grants from corporate entities. Nearly all can organize commemorative events and celebrate national holidays, festivals, and reunions.

Virtually all of these organizations are nonprofit charities; but very few have the ability to develop substantive project or business proposals and/or have the capacity to manage those projects to success and report correctly on donated resources. The leadership of many organizations have been captured by their elites. Frequent internal strife and divisions lead to frequent leadership changes and loss of interest of those who have the business and professional acumen and experience to move the organization forward.

The best-managed and most democratic of these organizations tend to be affiliated with their high schools. Most others are political in nature, seek to replicate the political structures of Liberia in their countries of residence; and to influence policy making and election outcomes at the national level and in their counties of origin. In view of the foregoing, there are limited opportunities to engage them in high level policy making. However, they do provide a strategic window for dialogue with the broader population of Liberians living abroad.

Global Migration Outlook and lessons learnt from best practices of other countries
This section of the policy document draws into consideration information on migration and mobility across the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the
implication for any effective and broadly applicable Diaspora policy. It also looks at the movement of peoples (especially Liberians) outside ECOWAS to receiving countries in North America and Europe (South-North migration), and relevant lessons learned from a few countries in Africa and Asia that have adapted robust engagement strategies with their own Diaspora are drawn into the framework.

Migration has moved to the top of the policy agenda in both sending (emigration) and receiving (immigration) countries for migrants around the globe. Whether driven by unfavorable economic situation at home and the determination to seek employment abroad or by conflicts that undermine life and put personal safety at risk, populations are on the move around the globe.

An estimated 30 million Africans are currently living outside of their home country and more are moving north as economic growth slows. Anecdotal information suggests that between 250,000 and 500,000 Liberians live in the United States alone.

Liberia recognizes that while most of the attention has been placed on south-north movement of its citizens, the dominant form of migration flows over the past two decades has been across the ECOWAS region—Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Ghana, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone are the most popular destinations. These flows fall within the purview and are governed by the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Establishment, along with the supplementary protocols of ECOWAS. Under the Protocol the 90-day limit to visa free residences was eliminated in 2014 and a common-form regional biometric identification system will be introduced in 2017. Therefore, unless specifically mentioned, residences established in the sub-region for cross-border business and or family visit purposes are deemed to be temporary and are not covered by this policy.

The government recognizes, however, that many Liberians remain in exile in the sub-region. While they are no longer on emergency and humanitarian relief, their stay in host countries

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African Union Agenda 2063: Aspirations for the Africa we want

1. A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development
2. An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism, and the vision of Africa’s Renaissance
3. An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice, and the rule of law
4. A peaceful and secure Africa
5. An Africa with strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values, and ethics
6. An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children
7. Africa as a strong, united, and influential global player and partner

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12 International Organization for Migration
remain tenuous due to the ‘ceased circumstances’ for refugee protection. Many remain as *de facto* refugees and local integration is not a viable option in part because dual nationality is prohibited; but kinship relationships, marriages, and support from relatives and friends in the north through remittances have sustained them over the extended period of stay and afforded opportunities to engage in wage labor or trade and other businesses. Their descendants, however, are at risk of statelessness if the host countries’ policies do not allow automatic rights to nationality based on birth in their territory.

**Experience and Lessons Learned from African Countries**

The African Union formed the Diaspora Division as part of the Department of Citizens and Diaspora Organizations to promote and “encourage the full participation of the African Diaspora, as an important part of our continent, in the building of the African Union. In that context, the African Diaspora is defined as “…people of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and who are willing to contribute to the development of the continent…” On May 25, 2012 the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, the Caribbean and South America finalized the Declaration of the Global African Diaspora Summit committing to a broad program of action covering political, economic, and social cooperation.

In the area of political cooperation, the declaration calls for greater intergovernmental cooperation between the AU and CARICOM; and bilaterally between member states on Diaspora-related issues. It also calls for efforts to mobilize support for development from the civil society and the Diaspora. Increased economic partnership with the Diaspora, efforts to mobilize capital for investment, business partnerships, science and technology, knowledge transfer, infrastructural development support, information gathering and dissemination, and efforts on climate change are the highlight on economic cooperation.

More relevant to the individual African in the Diaspora are the aspirations under social cooperation which call for education, research, and linkages between knowledge centers on the Diaspora, Arts and cultural exchanges and commemorative events, and joint efforts to engage developed countries on creating environments more welcoming to immigration. Generally, the framework is broad and strong on intent, but most of the prescribed interactions are at the intergovernmental level with limited practical utility at the level of each country’s relations with its Diaspora. Nevertheless, several African countries have adopted their own Diaspora policy frameworks:

**The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**

The government of Ethiopia developed, and launched in 2013, a policy framework with eight major goals covering rights and benefits of the Diaspora, business engagement, transfer of knowledge and technology, and currency flows. Other goals deal with cultural values and image, philanthropy, and participation in governance. The size of the Diaspora is estimated at 2 million Ethiopian nationals and peoples of Ethiopian origin.

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13 Ethiopia Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Diaspora Policy 2013
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the locus for policy execution; but other structures such as a National Diaspora Council, an advisory council, regional Diaspora offices, and other possible mechanisms are prescribed for the policy execution. Moreover, government entities such as the Ethiopian Investment Commission, Addis Ababa University, Ministry of Education, Embassies and Consulates, etc. have specific and relatively well-defined roles to play as it relates to their mandates and functions.

A key strategy proposed is the expansion of information services with the Diaspora and home communities. Both print and broadcast media events are also proposed as well as conferences, symposiums and exhibits. Commemorative events such as a Diaspora Day, celebration on national holidays abroad, and volunteering opportunities form part of the strategies to build relationship with and engage the Diaspora. Support for organized participation of the Diaspora in national events at home and abroad is a key strategy for building trust and keeping communication flows opened.

Within this framework, Ethiopians by birth doing business in Ethiopia are considered domestic investors regardless of their current nationality status. Descendants of Ethiopians who are foreign passport holders are issued national identity cards as “people of Ethiopian origin”. Returning nationals are allowed a USD 10,000 duty free lifetime limit on capital goods; and non-resident nationals may open foreign currency accounts. The result of these initiatives, among others, is a rapid rise in Diaspora investments in Ethiopia. Projects valued at approximately USD 1 billion have been registered over the decade; nearly USD2 billion in remittances are transferred annually. It has also led to an influx of experts into higher education institutions.

The government of Ethiopia has been proactive in creating a welcoming environment for the Diaspora. In addition to ensuring political will at the highest levels of government, regional and local government authorities, and foreign missions are encouraged to identify and engage the Diaspora from their parts of the country and abroad. The policy formulation process was lengthy, broadly participatory, and consultative. A robust monitoring and evaluation arrangement will inform further iterations of the policy; in addition to the development and rollout of policy implementation guidelines in the form of proclamations.

**Republic of Kenya**

The government of Kenya linked Diaspora engagement to the realization of the goals of the national development plan--Vision 2030; with the intent of mainstreaming the Kenyan Diaspora into national development processes. The Diaspora is defined as people of Kenya origin (PKO) and non-resident Kenyans (NRK). The constitution of Kenya recognizes the right to dual nationality and the right of the Diaspora to vote. The broad objective of the 2014 Diaspora policy therefore is “to empower Kenyans abroad to effectively make greater contribution to the development of the country”.

The number of PKO’s and NRK’s living abroad was estimated at 3 million and continuously rising. The policy responds to the need for “a comprehensive framework to fully integrate

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14 Liberia Diaspora Engagement Program; Study Tour Report Nov 2015
them into national development” and has five objectives\textsuperscript{15}—i) engagement, empowerment, and mainstreaming of the Diaspora into national development, ii) mobilization, engagement, and representation through Diaspora associations, iii) protection for Kenyans abroad, iv) dialogue and partnership, v) institutional mechanism for coordination and administration.

Key strategies for execution of the policy include continuous dialogue to build trust, enhanced capacity for consular services, reducing the cost of remittances, incentives and tailor-made investment packages, protection, information gathering, and ICT for PKO’s. Reintegration assistance for returnees and pre-departure training for emigrants are unique features of the policy. Linkage to the children of Diaspora is another key strategy.

Like Ethiopia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the locus with coordination and oversight responsibility (with an Advisory Council). Eleven other government institutions have execution responsibilities; along with local administration

Other African Countries

While the government of \textit{Ghana} is in the process of formulating a national policy to bring greater coherence to its engagement with the Diaspora, several measures have been taken to adapt most of the principles prescribed by the AU. These include a broader definition of the Ghanaian Diaspora, dual nationality and preservation of rights of Ghanaians living abroad, access to business opportunities reserved for nationals, continuous dialogue with Diaspora organizations and individuals, etc. The policy will eventually draw together all the individual components related to Diaspora engagement and management.

The government, however, has launched a migration policy which fills existing policy gaps and serve as a guide to frontline administrators in migration management.\textsuperscript{16} Some of the key migration issues addressed by this policy are dual citizenship, remittances, return of Ghanaian nationals, reintegration, and labor migration. Moreover, the 2001 Citizenship Regulations provide for Dual Citizenship. The government is exploring the concept of “transnationalism” and its impact on development with the aim of “minimizing the consequences and promoting the positive outcomes presented by dual citizenship...”

In \textit{Nigeria}, the \textit{Nigerians in Diaspora Organization} (NIDO) was provided support to connect with Nigerians living abroad and participate in national development and business conferences at home. The government also launched the \textit{Linkage with Experts and Academic in the Diaspora} (LEAD) program to attract Nigerian professionals abroad to short-term academic appointments in the university system. Government housing and land was made available for the purchase by the Diaspora.

Like Liberia, \textit{South Africa} experienced significant emigration of health workers. By 2006, nearly 21 percent of medical doctors produced by the country were practicing abroad. In response to the brain drain, it launched an initiative to identify and draw the skilled Diaspora workforce to play a role in the social and economic development of their country of origin.

\textsuperscript{15} Government of Kenya, Diaspora Policy 2014
\textsuperscript{16} Ghana Ministry of Interior; National Migration Policy, April 2016
Non-African Countries

Four out of every five overseas Chinese live in Southeast Asia and control significant assets and business interest in Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia.\(^\text{17}\) Attitudes towards the Diaspora has changed since the cultural revolution. The government of the Peoples Republic of China now consider emigrants as ‘sojourners’ elsewhere forming part of the global community of Chinese people ‘able to mobilize financial, political, and diplomatic forces’ under the aegis of Beijing. To harness their potential for development, the Department for Overseas Chinese Affairs was created to develop relationships, and to formulate and coordinate the execution of policies and strategies for engagement. Other institutions have been organized to promote Chinese culture, social welfare, education and scholarship, and communications with the Diaspora.

As a result, about 70 percent of foreign direct investments in mainland China over the past decade came through Overseas Chinese. Preferential terms are offered to overseas Chinese investors—tax breaks, access to land, employment of local labor, guaranteed property (including inheritance) rights, and the right to receive remittances. Other incentives include rent-free office space in science and technology parks for small businesses, low interest loans, and a ‘transnational’ status that allows Chinese holding other nationalities to reside in China while recognizing their right of return to live abroad.

India may have the largest Diaspora in the world but it does not have a formal Diaspora policy at the federal government level. The Government of India does, however, have a Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs. Much of the interactions are at the state government level especially in those regions receiving significant investments from or through their Diasporas—Ahmedabad, Chennai, Mumbai.

The Indian Diaspora is defined as Non-Resident Indian (NRI) who hold citizenship and passports but live abroad and Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) who are of Indian ancestry but hold other nationalities. Spouses of PIO’s can also claim similar status. India does not formally recognize dual citizenship, but has a de facto system that grants rights similar to those of the citizens to the Diaspora—other than the right to vote or other political rights.

In absolute terms, the Indian Diaspora provide the world’s largest flow of remittances to any home country. By 2012 remittances totaled US$67 billion; with Indian emigrants in the United States and the United Arab Emirates as the most common source. Relative to the size of the economy, however, remittances amounted to only 3.7 percent of GDP.\(^\text{18}\)

Perhaps the most significant contribution to India’s economic and social development is made by any one group comes out of The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE)\(^\text{19}\). Founded in California in 1992, TiE is a civil society organization comprise of over 12,000 entrepreneurs and professionals committed to promoting entrepreneurship through education, mentoring, and networking.

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\(^{17}\) World Bank; Concept Note on Mobilizing the African Diaspora for Development

\(^{18}\) Migration Policy Institute; The Indian Diaspora in the United States, Jul 2014

\(^{19}\) [www.tie.org](http://www.tie.org)
TiE also connects angel investors to provide early stage investment support to “top-tier” emerging companies; and incubates startup ventures.

**Summary of Best Practices and Lessons Learned**

Countries adopting a Diaspora engagement strategy took a highly participatory and consultative approach early in the process. This involved some form of mapping of the Diaspora followed by dialogue on policy options to build trust and open lines of communication on the way forward. It also involved some form of recognition of Diaspora associations and support for the formation of similar groups.

Successful countries tackled the issue of citizenship, citizenship rights, political rights, property ownership rights, and rights of inheritance comprehensively. Common options are full or limited dual citizenship or, more broadly, ‘sojourners’ designations that treat any and all individuals with ethnic linkage of the home country as Diaspora. Other options are a tiered system (quasi citizenship) that recognizes passport holders and people (spouses and descendants included) with clearly defined ancestral linkages to the home country; and treat them differently but inclusively.

Successful countries include social events and programs in their strategies to boost national pride and educate descendants in host countries about their unique and common history and cultural. Celebration of national events and holidays (such as independence or traditional festivals) to draw attention to the common heritage and destiny of their people regardless of where they currently reside is a key strategy.

Linking Diaspora engagement to a broader national development plan seem to yield the best results. Countries that identified specific entry points and/or defined the expectations from Diaspora engagement within the context of their national development plan were more likely to produce the best results and put into place the systems for measuring progress.

Engagement with local home communities and eliciting their support early in the process on the new thinking regarding the Diaspora is critical. Some countries, such as India, devolved execution responsibility for policies and the administrative authority for granting of incentives to subnational level government entities. Diaspora organizations are thereby connected directly to their regions or origin enabling a ‘competition’ with other regions for development.

Nevertheless, the impact of policies that grant preferential treatment to Diaspora on domestic relations has not been fully examined. Some countries, such as China, offer an elaborate menu of incentives but possible negative responses to this special treatment from the local population has not been examined.

Information gathering and monitoring of various components of the Diaspora programs through a planning office is a hallmark of successful countries. This facilitates smooth operations and early identification of gaps in coverage. While comprehensive evaluation of the Diaspora engagement program impact is important, few countries have been able to do so. Countries cite costs and the limited added value and a lack of evaluation culture for policies and programs in general as the main reason these assessments are not a priority.
Whether in partnership with their governments or not, Diaspora communities will self-organize and remain engaged and connected through voluntary associations, town and tribal associations, religious affiliations, and other civil society organizations. These relationships are deep and multifaceted but, in their current form, largely support social welfare activities and/or provide volunteer services to communities of origin as and when the need arises.

**Challenges and Opportunities for Liberian Diaspora engagement**

The Government of Liberia recognizes that most Liberians in the Diaspora have not reached the levels of wealth that will enable them to make significant capital investments at home. Those who do made investments found the risk vs reward ratio unattractive given the vagaries of the domestic market and the large infrastructure deficit. Lack of support for those willing to risk social and business ventures also limits the range of potential areas for entrepreneurs.

Limited understanding of the provisions of the law and administrative regulations concerning entitlement to and issuance of identity documents, entry and exit requirements, residency, importation of personal and capital items among front line administrators and the public can create a seemingly hostile environment for returnees or visiting Diaspora. Absence of correct information at our foreign missions on existing policies and regulations related to returning, residing, and establishing a business in Liberia is also a constraint. High minimum capital requirements for accessing investment incentives has also been identified as a key constraint. Uncertainties over where and to whom to seek guidance militate against effective engagement.

Moreover, negative perception about the intent of the Diaspora in respect to resettlement is pervasive. In many circumstances, the return of Diaspora individuals may have exacerbated conflicting claims over land ownership and inheritance rights. High levels of mistrust on all sides undermine the character and quality of the relationship between Liberians at home and in the Diaspora. Furthermore, the uncertainties created by the lack of clarity on rights and privileges of Diaspora vs citizenship constrains any effort to effectively engage.

But the opportunities for a robust Diaspora engagement strategy lie in the fact that many in the Diaspora have acquired skills and access to technology that will be beneficial to any new growth and development paradigm for Liberia. Moreover, the continuing inflows of remittances is a clear indication that the Diasporas retain high level of interest in the future directions of the country and a sense of obligation to support the development of the country.

Diaspora organizations have demonstrated their willingness to advocate for their country of origin in their countries of residence—effectively becoming an extension of Liberia’s foreign policy. They also have the capacity and the passion to raise significant philanthropic contributions for social programs implemented in their places of origin.

Monetary policy and the regulatory environment for financial institutions remain favorably disposed to US dollar bank accounts, free movement of capital, and the protection of financial assets. Moreover, banking laws are facilitative and establish a fiduciary relationship between the account holder and the financial institution that are supported by the courts.
New ways to doing business continue to emerge. Mobile money and other cellphone-based technology continues to expand and is now available in all 15 counties—giving millions of Liberians immediate access to financial services. But the formal banking sector has also expanded aggressively. Eleven of the 15 counties now have at least one commercial bank branch—seven have rural financial institutions. By October 2015 ending, total assets stood at L$80 billion and increase of nine percent over 2014. Total loans and advances increased by 22 percent over the same period.

Non-banking institutions continue to perform favorably. Net income of the insurance sector increased by 338 percent from 2014 to 2015. The first microfinance Deposit-taking institution was licensed in 2014. The Liberian Enterprise Development Finance Company and the West African Venture Fund are new entities offering new approaches to early stage investment support.

The ease of establishment and doing business in Liberia also provides an opportunity. Most newly registered business entities can commence operations within four business days. And finally, corporate laws allow for non-resident corporations. This enables a Diaspora individual to establish a venture overseas that does business in Liberia without taking up residence. Other and ongoing improvements in the regulatory environment, much of which the Diaspora remain unaware, continue to enhance the environment for engagement.

The reduction in the overall infrastructure deficit is also ongoing. Access to basic utilities and affordability continues to improve. More all-weather road connections are being built connecting markets and communities locally and with the ECOWAS sub-region. By the end of 2017, 741 kilometers of roads along economic ‘growth corridors’ will be improved. Access to reliable and high speed information and communication technology (ICT) has placed literally hundreds of thousands of Liberians in proximity to their families, relatives, friends, and business associates.

Finally, Liberia has ratified all the ECOWAS conventions. Over the next few years, intensive efforts will be made to domesticate all the provisions. This effectively expands the definition of “home” for the Liberian Diaspora to the entire West Africa sub region. Liberia imports from the sub region amounted to US$18.1 million in 2015 (15 percent of all imports). Exports totaled US$7.8 million.20

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20 Central Bank of Liberia, Annual Report 2015
CHAPTER TWO – POLICY OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Rationale for the Policy
The Government of Liberia recognizes the contribution the Diaspora is making in sending remittances, expanding and sustaining the social safety net, providing volunteer professional services, and returning to establish new business and social enterprises that create jobs. Enduring contributions have been made with the “return of talent” of medical professionals, university lecturers, and other practitioners returning to perform services to fill critical knowledge and skills gaps.

This policy, therefore, is forward-looking with the intent of establishing enduring partnerships between domestic institutions and Diaspora organizations and connecting Liberian communities across national borders. It draws together laws, regulations, and identifies the institutional framework that will be set into place to take advantage of existing and emerging opportunities while reducing barriers to full participation of the Diaspora in the development of Liberia.

Policy Goals and Objectives
Within the framework of the Vision 2030 and the Agenda for Transformation national development plans, the AU Agenda 2063 and the recently-ratified ECOWAS protocols, the policy seeks to improve Diaspora engagement with the goal of preserving the rights and interests of Liberians living abroad, expanding access to opportunities for business and social enterprise at home and in the sub region, increasing skills and technology transfers, and reducing barriers to more robust participation in the future political and social development of Liberia.

Vision 2030: Aspirations for the Liberia we want
A united people and progressive nation meeting core expectations of stability, equity, and democracy

The objectives of this policy are:

3. To build trust between Liberians at home and abroad over the next five years and open space for their active and equal participation in the realization of the goal of Vision 2030-to become a united people and a progressive nation meeting core expectations of stability, equity, and democracy.

4. To draw the Diaspora more substantively into the effort to develop our national assets and to attain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
Guiding Principles
This policy is inspired by the following principles:

6. **Preservation of a uniquely Liberian cultural heritage.** Chapter IV, Article 27 of the 1886 Constitution of Liberia acknowledges the need to preserve, foster, and maintain the positive Liberian culture, values, and character. Our common heritage, history, and culture sustains and enables us to embrace and yet find identity in a rapidly globalizing world. It enables us to define a new story of the rising Africa consistent with the guiding principles of the African Union and the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Establishment, along with the supplementary protocols of ECOWAS.

7. **Improving dialogue between the government and people.** Free and unrestrained communication inside and outside of Liberia on the future of the country will lead to consensus on the way forward on many policy issues.

8. **Increasing participation and ownership of the future.** All stakeholders in Liberia’s future at home and abroad need to be involved in the process of finding solutions to the challenges that directly affect them. The seven aspirations of the AU Agenda 2063 and the vision for greater integration across the ECOWAS region provide historical ‘windows of opportunity’ for creating an environment that fast tracks the development of Africa. And the African Diaspora has a critical role to play. Moreover, transfers of desperately needed human capital from the Diaspora to communities of origin can only occur in an atmosphere of transparency and trust.

9. **Reconciliation of conflicting parties at home and abroad.** The civil conflict running from 1980 to 2005 tore Liberians apart. Left unattended, the inflicted wounds will remain. Reconciliation starts with the recognition of a common destiny as one people, appreciation of the positive contributions from all ethnic and cultural groups to our uniquely Liberian identity, and a deliberate effort on the part of all sides to come together and heal the nation.

10. **Engagement of the next generation.** Developing skills and knowledge on the languages, history, and culture of Liberia will help youths in the Diaspora develop strong attachments to their areas of origin. It is a critical part of the process of increasing national pride and building a strong sense of identity and shared values. Moreover, recognition of a shared future among Liberians at home and abroad and with other countries and cultures in our sub region will be critical to ensuring Liberia adheres and contributes to achieving the goals of Vision 2063 which has a 50-year planning horizon.
Strategies—Short, Medium, and Long Term

Strategies for realization of the policy will include short, medium, and long term measures. The measures will cover the following areas which are relatable to the five pillars of the Agenda for Transformation.

1. Reducing Barriers to Diaspora Engagement (Pillar I: Peace, Security, and Rule of Law)

   a. **Enhancing the capacity to offer consular services.** The Government of Liberia will enhance the capacity of our missions abroad through re-profiling, re-training, and staff additions (where necessary) to create a more service-oriented and knowledgeable cadre of professionals who can interact more effectively with Diaspora organizations and individuals. Three substantive areas will be emphasized over the short term—travel and tourism promotion to home areas, access to information on emerging business (partnerships and venture capital) opportunities in the ECOWAS region, and job openings and volunteer opportunities requiring highly skilled individuals in engineering, higher education, the medical fields, and agriculture.

   b. **Visa free entry through our ports and borders.** The Government of Liberia, through administrative regulation, will waive entry visa requirements for all foreign passport holders who have Liberia as the country of birth in their passports immediately upon coming into force of this policy. Furthermore, over the medium term and through the national identification system, the government will offer ECOWAS identification cards to all persons born in Liberia (regardless of race) to enable them to travel across the sub region and to return to Liberia. The ECOWAS ID cards will also be deemed to convey the rights of residency consistent with the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Establishment, along with the supplementary protocols.

   c. **Expand the use of Town Hall and Consultative Meetings and Cultural Events.** The Government of Liberia will, immediately on the coming into force of this policy, require all substantive cabinet-level officials of Ministries falling under Pillar I and II who are traveling on other official business to countries with large concentrations of Liberian Diaspora to include in their annual work plan at least one meeting with the Diaspora each year during those travels. At the meeting, the official will inform on ongoing priorities and activities of the government, emerging business opportunities, and draw specific recommendations to report to cabinet on how the Diaspora can be included.

The government will also require Embassies in countries where more than 50,000 Liberians (informed by a Diaspora Registry database) are known to reside to offer training in Liberian culture and traditions in partnership with Diaspora organizations over the medium term. The training program(s) will be
designed by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs, and Tourism.

d. **Harmonization of Laws, Policies, and Regulations.** Over the long-term, the Government of Liberia will establish an inter-ministerial committee; supported by a technical working group that includes representatives from the Diaspora, to incrementally review the milieu of laws, policies, and regulations impacting the Diaspora. The terms of reference will encompass political, property, and inheritance rights; banking laws and regulations related to the free movement of capital; tax laws and fee structures related to the import and exports of personal and capital items and inward remittances; the domestic regulatory environment for business; and will also encompass the challenge of recognition of dual nationality. The locus and secretariat for the harmonization process with be the Ministry of State in the Office of the President of Liberia.

**Issues for the deliberations of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Harmonization of Laws, Policies, and Regulations**

- Transnational citizenship—Dual or multiple citizenship and more flexible residency requirements in the framework of the ECOWAS Protocols
- Political rights—voting, holding public office
- Property rights—purchase, long-term lease options, inheritance rights
- Tax Exemptions and investment incentives
- Capital and personal asset transfers and credit monitoring services

2. **Increasing Investments and Remittances Flow (Pillar II: Economic Transformation)**

a. **Sustaining a stable regulatory environment for business startups and reducing the cost and risks associated with doing business.** Over the past 5 years Liberia has reduced the length of time to start and operate a business to four days. This ranks among the best in Africa and will be sustained. The government will also review the tax and fee structure for import and export, intensify its efforts to expand access and reduce cost of utilities, and improve the quality of land administration and contract enforcement.

Furthermore, in collaboration with the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL), the government will expand access to credit and other forms of business financing over the medium term. A credit information service/registry with possible cross-referencing to well established foreign credit bureaus and rating agencies will be set up over the medium term.
The government will also work with the CBL to maintain stability in lending, personal loans, and mortgage rates while reducing the spread between lending and savings rates. Creation of a domestic mortgage market in partnership with CBL and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), especially for the introduction of mortgage banking as an expansion to the existing mortgage credit stimulus schemes, will be a priority over the medium term. The new mortgage financing products will be targeted to Diaspora and locally-based individuals interested in purchasing homes or commercial property valued at US$50,000 and above.

b. **Leveraging remittances for more productive investment.** The government will work with the CBL, utility companies, and sending/disbursing networks to reduce the cost of inward remittances and domestic money transfers by five percent over the medium term. And over the long term, will position domestic US dollar time deposit products (certificates of deposit) held in Liberian banks as alternative savings vehicles to the traditional 401k and 403b and similar products preferred by the Diaspora. Furthermore, the government will offer remittances-linked mortgages to expand the financing options of Diaspora home-buyers and remittance receivers who tend to build in stages. This will enable financial institutions to offer products that allow senders to pay off mortgages while collateralizing a house built in Liberia.

The government will also review tax policy with the goal of reducing the effective corporate tax rate from the effective rate of 47.8 (2015) to the former rate of 33.3 (2014) percent for corporations owned by the Diaspora and bringing into the country at least US$50,000 in capital equipment.

Finally, the Diaspora will be encouraged to choose Liberia as a vacation, business, and tourism destination. Information on possible destinations will be compiled, placed at Liberia’s foreign missions, and circulated through Diaspora organizations.

c. **Set asides and Preferential Access to Public Procurement Opportunities.** Immediately upon coming into force of this policy, the government will expand its policy on the 25 percent of public procurement designated for Liberian-owned businesses to include businesses owned by the Diaspora—with the proviso that all vendors and service providers will establish a physical location in the geographic space of Liberia. All procurement actions must conform to the existing Public Procurement and Concessions Act (PPCA). Going forward, all public procuring entities will be required to report (in their semi-annual and annual reports) on the proportion in value and number of their total procurement going to Liberian and Diaspora owned individuals and businesses.
3. Transfer of Human Capital and Technology (Pillar III: Human Development)

   a. **Enhancing data collection.** Immediately upon coming into force of this policy the Government of Liberia will enhance its data collection by setting up and inviting interested Liberians in the Diaspora to voluntarily enroll in a database that will allow fast access to information on emerging work, business, and volunteer opportunities. The registry will emphasize skills and expertise and de-emphasize demographic and personal identity information—especially for those in the medical, agriculture, and business areas.

   b. **ICT and positive social media.** Using the contact information provided, the government will use ICT and positive social media to inform on relevant opportunities for work, business, or to volunteer. The government will also encourage cooperating partners to use these channels for broadcasting information on upcoming opportunities for short and long term work.

4. Increasing Philanthropy (Pillar V: Cross-cutting Issues)

   a. **Raising philanthropic resources from overseas.** While acknowledging the considerable inflows of personal remittances and philanthropy in-kind and in-cash, the Government of Liberia will encourage the Diaspora to form charities and nonprofit entities through its foreign missions. These charities will be provided access to available information on their communities of origin, especially in the context of the disaggregated data on the Sustainable Development Goals, to enable them to plan and solicit assistance for charitable interventions. Over the medium term, the government will review tax and duty exemptions for imports made by charities for free distribution to poor communities in Liberia.

   The government will also encourage the Diaspora to form social enterprises that can work with the large number of informal sector operators in organizing and managing their businesses, funding business incubators, providing access to microfinance, and opening access to sub regional/cross border markets. The government will also encourage Diaspora ventures in the form of social enterprises in the health insurance industry to motivate large numbers of small, medium, and microenterprise operators to pool risks to be able to fund health care, burial, and other potentially catastrophic costs.

   b. **Celebration of our uniquely Liberian cultural heritage.** Liberians have always been a welcoming people—embracing diversity, encouraging marriage across tribal and racial lines, welcoming strangers, and embracing new cultures. Different views on a wide range of issues such as women rights and empowerment, female genital mutilation (FGM), communal property rights, sexual and gender based violence, rape, marriage, religion, etc. will emerge...
with the increasing engagement with the Diaspora. These different points of view and beliefs have the potential to incite animosity and violence. Consistent with our laws, the Government of Liberia will continue to foster a welcoming environment for ‘strangers’ coming from the Diaspora who may have accepted different social and cultural norms.

5. Building the institutional framework

Successful execution of the Diaspora Engagement Policy requires effective coordination among government entities, collaboration with Diaspora organizations and host countries’ government, and support from international partners. This approach is especially applicable in the face of continuing fiscal constraints. Therefore, the implementation approach will be consultative and participatory with the Ministry of State in the Office of the President serving as the locus for a secretariat to a National Diaspora Advisory Council.

The secretariat will monitor various aspects of the policy implementation, inform key institutions and partners on progress, solicit assistance, and draft implementation guidelines for approval. In close consultation with the Liberia Institution of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS), the secretariat will operationalize and manage the monitoring, evaluation, and reporting framework.

a. National Diaspora Advisory Council (NDAC) comprised of officials of government and representatives of Diaspora organizations will be established. The NDAC will have an advisory role to the government and will organize meetings at least once a fiscal year to review progress on implementation of the Diaspora policy and report to the President of Liberia. The NDAC will also organize other national events surrounding its annual conference to publicize progress and invite experts to participate in the deliberations on areas relevant to the policy.

The convener of the NDAC will be the Minister of Foreign Affairs and comprise up to seven informed individuals appointed by the President of Liberia. Three of these individuals will be from a shortlist of individuals representing recognized groups such as the Union of Liberian Associations in the Americas (ULAA) based in the United States, Europe, and Asia. Members will not receive remuneration for service but costs associated with meetings, travel, and other events will be supported from the budget of the secretariat and through fundraising. At its first meeting, the NDAC will adapt rules for its own procedures and operations. Notwithstanding, decisions made by the NDAC will be reviewable only by the President of Liberia; and the annual business meetings and events will not exceed three calendar days.
b. Rationalizing the role of Central Ministries, Agencies, and Commissions (MACs). The Government of Liberia anticipates that the implementation capacity of several MACs will have to be built to play roles in keeping with their mandates and functions.

i. **Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA):** - As the key point of connection with the Diaspora through the network of foreign missions, MFA will be responsible for maintaining regular contact and sharing information with Diaspora organizations and individuals. It will expand the database on Liberian Diaspora organizations and businesses and will set up and manage the registry of skilled individuals and experts in priority areas. It will engage with the Diaspora to determine effective ways to play roles in existing and future national development plans, teach and promote the Liberian culture, and monitor implementation of protocols related to migration in the sub region. The Minister of Foreign Affairs will convene a National Diaspora Advisory Council.

ii. **Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP):** - In keeping with the Act creating the MFDP, the MFDP will raise revenue, allocate, and control spending for interventions in this policy through the national budget process. It will guide the appropriate government entity on the inclusion of Diaspora issues into the national development plan and the Vision 2030. As the lead entity on fiscal and tax policies, the MFDP will coordinate with the CBL and the Liberia Revenue Authority on the execution of the related policy directives and on possible amendments to relevant administrative regulations and laws with the intent to create an enabling environment for Diaspora engagement and to reduce barriers to their effective participation in the economic and social development of Liberia and business in the ECOWAS sub region.

iii. **Ministry of Local Government (MLG):** - The MLG will include in its strategic plan and relevant policy framework efforts to integrate and connect the Diaspora to local government authorities in county of origin. It will also advise on priority needs at the county level that could be relevant to Diaspora organizations.

iv. **Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI):** - MOCI will ensure the regulatory environment remains favorable for startup and operations of Diaspora businesses.

v. **National Investment Commission (NIC):** - The NIC will compile and publicize the business and tourism opportunities available to Diaspora
businesses and individuals. It will also circulate and advise on emerging opportunities in the banking and financial services as they emerge.

vi. **Ministry of Education (MOE):** - MOE will engage and partner with the Diaspora in the education sector overseas on opportunities to establish private (for profit and nonprofit) education ventures in Liberia from early childhood (ECE) up to the secondary level. It will also circulate employment, supply, consulting, and volunteer opportunities in education and recruit Diaspora individuals and businesses. Working with the Ministry of Information and Cultural Affairs, the MOE will develop cross-culturally appropriate curricula on Liberian history, heritage, and culture for short-term learning events to be implemented by Diaspora organizations.

vii. **The National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE):** - The NCHE will involve and partner with the Diaspora in higher education sector and technical vocational education, and training (TVET) overseas on opportunities to establish private (for profit and nonprofit) education ventures in Liberia. It will also circulate employment, supply, consulting, and volunteer opportunities in higher education and TVET to recruit Diaspora individuals and businesses.

viii. **Ministry of Health (MOH):** - The MOH will involve and partner with the Diaspora engaged in the health sector overseas on opportunities to establish private (for profit and nonprofit) facilities in Liberia. It will also circulate employment, supply, consulting, and volunteer opportunities in health to recruit Diaspora individuals and businesses.

ix. **Governance Commission (GC):** - The GC will designate a commissioner to co-convene the NDAC. The GC will also review mandates and functions of MACs ensuring that they remain aligned with and exemplify the key strategies of this policy.

x. **Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs, and Tourism (MICAT):** - Working with the MOE, MICAT will support the development of cross-culturally appropriate curricula on Liberian history, heritage, and culture for short-term learning events to be implemented by Diaspora organizations.

xi. **Ministry of Justice (MOJ):** - MOJ includes the Liberia National Police (LNP), Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization (BIN). Together, they will enforce the policy on visa free entry into Liberia.
xii. **National Identification Registry (NIR):** - The National Identification Registry ensures the issuance of appropriate ECOWAS identity cards to the Diaspora who qualify under this policy.

xiii. **Ministry of State (MOS):** - The MOS will have the responsibility to track and report on the execution of the Diaspora Engagement Policy. It will contract needed experts to develop guidance note based on best practices, as and when necessary, to enable responsible MACs to understand and inculcate Diaspora affairs into their planning and operations. It will also support other MACs to identify, designate, and train Diaspora focal points and will regularly communicate with those focal points to provide relevant updates. The MOS will host the secretariat of the NDAC.

xiv. **Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services.** LISGIS will serve as the central database for relevant statistics on the Diaspora.

c. **Support for Private for profit and nonprofit services providers.** The government will seek out and encourage private actors to actively engage in and/or fund programs directed at the Diaspora. These programs will seek funding from other sources and will fall into two general categories:

i. **Partners that establish and sustain Diaspora networks.** At the core of the network will be the vast array of Liberian Diaspora networks across the globe. But other nongovernment actors (NGOs) who work with immigrant populations and on migration issues, faith-based organizations interested in social enterprises and community livelihood projects, or organizations implementing business and entrepreneurship training programs will be engaged as well. The government will also seek and encourage international organizations providing support to help Africans create wealth overseas and in their countries of origin.

ii. **Partners that link higher education, research, and vocational training institutions.** The government will seek and build relationships around facilitating temporary movement of highly skilled Diaspora for volunteer opportunities in Liberia especially in the medical, education, and agricultural fields. These opportunities will involve specific projects hosted by Liberian institutions but undertaken by another institution in the country of residence; and projects funded and implemented by the international community (return of talent projects). With the expansion of local ICT infrastructure, these projects will also embrace “virtual” return through hosted web portals where expertise can be shared between colleagues at home and abroad.
**GOAL:** The policy seeks to improve Diaspora engagement with the goal of preserving the rights and interests of Liberians living abroad, expanding access to opportunities for business and social enterprise at home and in the sub region, increasing skills and technology transfers, and reducing barriers to more robust participation in the future political and social development of Liberia.

**Objective:** To build trust between Liberians at home and abroad over the next five years and open space for their active and equal participation in the realization of the goal of Vision 2030

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<th>Indicative Strategy</th>
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<th>Measures</th>
<th>Implementation Period</th>
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<td>Leveraging remittances for more productive investments</td>
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<td>Celebration of our uniquely Liberian cultural heritage</td>
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CHAPTER THREE: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The government recognizes the important influence of accurate and timely data management and analysis, or the lack thereof, on the success of this policy. Significant weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation capacity among the key institutions with execution responsibilities will militate against attaining the best results. Therefore, much of the monitoring and evaluation activities will be “outsourced” within the government and to private providers.

Working Definitions
For purposes of this policy the terms ‘monitoring’, ‘evaluation’, and ‘impact evaluation’ are defined as follows:

**Monitoring is a continuous process.** It involves the recording, review, and tracking of indicators related to the various components of this policy to measure progress against targets and periodically inform policy execution.

**Evaluation is a periodic undertaking.** It is an assessment of planned vs actual achievements and the quantity and quality of results produced; and the likelihood of achievement of the objectives of the policy. It also examines the policy design and other technical aspects of the policy that are unique to the Liberia context. It allows for informed adaptation of the policy.

**Impact evaluation is a post-implementation set of activities.** It is an in-depth assessment of cause and effects and the changes that can be directly attributed to the policy execution. It draws out lessons learned and informs adjustments to the policy or the development of successor frameworks.

National Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework
The monitoring and evaluation framework for the Diaspora policy will draw from and be added to the national framework developed for the AfT and its successor agenda. It will reinforce the emerging culture of managing for results, deepen the integration of the policy into other national development priorities, and enhance accountability to internal and external stakeholders. In that respect a unique set of indicators will be developed and incorporated into the modified version of the current set of 52 national key indicators (NKI’s) when that process is completed.

Levels of the M&E framework

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<th>Level 1-Strategies</th>
<th>Level 2-Objectives</th>
<th>Level 3-Goal</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Activities of the implementing agencies</strong> -- i.e number of meetings held and attendance, number of enquiries made, number of visits, number of ID cards issued, number of Diaspora organizations engaged, project financing, laws and regulations amended, website visits, etc.</td>
<td><strong>Results</strong> -- i.e number of Diaspora movements, number of new business ventures and social enterprises established, number of homes bought through Diaspora, contributions to county and local development initiatives, etc.</td>
<td><strong>Impact</strong> - i.e. remittances flow as a share of GDP, GDP growth, outputs of new research projects, social enterprises, expansion in trade in the sub region</td>
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Outsourcing

Gathering data on level 1 indicators will be done by the MAC with lead responsibility for the strategy—through its Diaspora focal point(s). The secretariat will consolidate the data and report to the NDAC and the MOS. Collections and reporting on level 2 indicators will be outsourced to LISGIS and will form a part of the set of NKI’s. Level 3 indicators will be outsourced to educational institutions, private consultants, or to international organizations based on the source of funding to undertake the sets of activities. The findings will be shared widely to inform other processes and to form a learning community within and outside Liberia.