

Dear All

Please find attached the official first draft (draft 1.0) of Liberia's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) for further review and input.

We want to thank everyone for their contributions to this draft. Following technical inputs and extensive consultations, the draft reflects the combined efforts of the Government, the private sector, civil society, donor organizations, and citizens from each and every county. It represents a substantial amount of time, effort, and energy by a large number of people. We are very grateful indeed for all of these contributions.

The purpose of this draft is to give all interested persons an opportunity to consider and provide feedback on, or further input to, the proposed national development plan for Liberia for the next three years (from April 2008 through June 2011).

We intend to complete the final PRS by the end of March, 2008, after Cabinet review. To do so, we require that **any feedback or further inputs are provided by no later than MONDAY, FEBRUARY 18th**.

Feedback and further inputs should be sent to Mark Richards at richards.mark.a@gmail.com, and copied to Steve Radelet at sradelet@cgdev.org, Dabah Varpilah at dabahv@yahoo.com and Dan Honig at djhonig@gmail.com. Alternatively, hard copies of feedback and inputs can be sent to Mark Richards at the Ministry of Finance, Monrovia. Pillar and Working Group Heads should also be forwarded comments relevant to their respective Pillar or Working Group. Pillar and Working Group Heads will have final responsibility for their own chapters in the final document.

We expect one consolidated set of feedback and inputs from each organization. For example, all feedback and inputs from individuals and agencies of the United Nations, or from the World Bank, should be consolidated into a single document.

Where possible, further inputs should also be provided in a "track changes" format to assist with the amendment of the document and to best incorporate inputs as intended.

Please distribute this draft PRS to all interested persons. We are circulating this draft to the Cabinet, members of the Core Team (including the Pillar Heads and Cross-Cutting Group Chairs), Heads of Working Groups, the Legislature, private sector representatives, donor organizations and civil society. However, we hope to receive feedback and further inputs from as broad a group of stakeholders as possible.

In reading the chapters and making comments, please keep in mind the following:

1. *Previous contributions.* Please check that the editing process has not inadvertently changed the meaning of previous contributions or left out critical information.

2. *Incomplete sections.* Chapter 11 on the costing of the PRS will be inserted after finalizing the different sectoral strategies and actions. In addition, priority action matrices will be included in the document which will set out in more detail the actual actions expected to be undertaken during the PRS period. Finally, it is anticipated that a second volume of the PRS will be produced which will consist of 10-page strategy briefs drafted by Pillar and Cross-Cutting Working Groups that submit revised 10-page strategy briefs (harmonized with the draft PRS) by February 29th. No 10-page strategy briefs will be accepted after that date. The second volume will enable Pillars and Working Groups to provide further detail on their policies and actions for the PRS period.
3. *Specificity.* The draft PRS still lacks the requisite specificity with respect to the actions that will be taken in each area during the PRS period. Many sections still require a small number of very specific high priority actions/policy changes/reform proposals that will be undertaken/carried out during the PRS period. In too many sections, the actions are not very specific (they call for “improvement” or “strengthening” or are written as general objectives). Specific indicators for the monitoring and evaluation of actions, changes and reforms will also need to be finalized by Pillars and Working Groups.
4. *Length.* We need to be very careful to not add much to the length of the document. As you can see, it is already getting to be long, with the costing chapter and priority action matrices still to be added. Thus we cannot add long sections on any one topic. We understand that everyone feels that their particular issue deserves several more paragraphs and pages, but we need to work very hard at avoiding a long and tedious document. Therefore please keep any suggested additions very short and to the point. Also, if there are sentences or paragraphs that are not really necessary, please suggest taking them out. In general, if you wish to add material, we would like you to suggest other places where we can shorten your section.
5. *Consistency.* As Pillars and Working Groups are considering the draft, please bear in mind that the priority action matrices and 10-page strategy briefs will need to be revised to be consistent with the draft.

Again, we need to receive all feedback and further inputs by MONDAY, FEBRUARY 18th. We also need Pillars and Working Groups to submit monitoring and evaluation indicators by February 18th and revised 10-page strategy briefs by February 29th. Any strategy briefs not received by February 29th will risk not being included in Volume II of the PRS.

Following the receipt and consideration of all feedback and inputs, we will produce a final draft that will be presented to the Stakeholders’ Consultative Committee at a National Validation Workshop in mid-March. The validated draft will then be circulated to the LRDC for review, discussion, and approval. The final step in the process is the consideration and approval of the PRS at a special Cabinet working session.

Once again, we would like to thank everyone for all their efforts in helping to produce the PRS. We still have some ways to go and need to keep pushing hard to produce a high-quality strategy by the end of March!

We look forward to receiving further feedback and inputs.

With our best wishes,

Antoinette M. Sayeh, for the PRS Technical Support/Drafting Team