

## **UN Women Management Response and Tracking**

### **Evaluation Title: Evaluation of Liberia Country Programme**

**Evaluation Completion Date: 03/10/2011**

#### **Overall comments:**

The Liberia Country Programme was selected for evaluation given its high potential for lesson-drawing to improve UN Women's future global interventions in governance and peace building in post-conflict situations. With this evaluation, WARO sought to contribute to UN Women's learning and knowledge on women's empowerment and gender equality, internal and external accountability, and to informing decision-making on policies, developmental and organizational effectiveness and efficiency as well as programme design.

Overall, the Liberia Country Office appears to have expanded its interventions a great deal since 2004 when UNIFEM set up in the country. The Country Office counts with a very interesting and varied portfolio of programmes/projects covering a wide range of geographical areas, issues and sectors.

Many of the interventions of the Liberia Country Office are in the form of small projects instead of overarching programmes. However, the tendency is to shift to a more programmatic approach as Liberia has moved very quickly from post-conflict recovery to development. Small projects often make more sense and are easier to fund in the period immediately after a conflict. However, all efforts are currently towards a more planned and strategic programmatic intervention as attested by UN Women Liberia's Strategic Note 2012-2013 and Annual Workplan 2012 as well as by Liberia's Country Strategy.

The move to a more programmatic approach is also in line with the Paris Declaration directives to shift to national execution via national governmental and non-governmental partners. This shift will make it easier for UN Women to support Civil Society Organizations as they will be in a better position to demand support from their own national governmental institutions.

The positive momentum that Liberia is currently living in terms of a conducive institutional and political environment to work on gender equality and women's empowerment should be sustained by continuing supporting the gender institutions and women's leaderships. In particular, the political governance dimension of programmes and projects should be reinforced so that gains made to date are sustained into the future.

Given the short time allocated for the evaluation and the density of the task, this evaluation should be considered a review exercise of the Liberia Country Programme rather than a proper evaluation. The evaluator was not able to systematically assess all programmes/projects as desired. Part of the difficulty was the time allocated but also, the fact that every programme/project is at a different stage of implementation made it difficult to develop a methodology that would allow a systematic assessment of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of every programme/project. In any case, the evaluation exercise provides a good overview of the Liberia Country Programme which can serve to feed into strategic planning decisions.

**Evaluation recommendation 1.** UN Women Liberia together with all the projects, implementing partners as well as other collaborating partners should consider and implement the recommendations given on individual projects/programmes. The projects should be supported to produce realistic, measurable, achievable and time bound action plans that prioritize the recommendations given in the body of the report. The M&E Department of UN Women Liberia should monitor the respective projects for the implementation of recommendations action plans.

**Management Response:** UN Women Liberia takes note of the recommendations for the individual projects and will work closely with partners to best implement the specific and applicable recommendations for ongoing and future implementation. Unfortunately, UN Women Liberia does not have a dedicated M&E Department; however, Programme staff will be tasked with monitoring the implementation of the applicable recommendations.

Key Action (s)	Timeframe	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
1.1. Collate individual recommendations from the Evaluation and include the most pertinent and applicable recommendations in the 2012 work plan.	End of 2011	UN Women Liberia Programme Staff		
1.2. SRO, with its role in providing technical backstopping and oversight, will monitor and support to ensure that applicable recommendations are addressed.	During 2012	SRO		
1.3. Appointment of a dedicated M&E staff in Liberia	By end of 2012	Liberia Country Office and SRO		
1.4. SRO to provide backstopping to Liberia Country Office on M&E issues	ongoing	SRO & Liberia Country Office		

**Evaluation recommendation 2.** Building on, and sustaining the success of the many small projects implemented is essential. For UN Women to build on its successes, it needs to move from project based activity implementation to programme approach in order to assist in securing core funding that would enable UN Women plan better, implement programmes that are not mostly pilots, one cycle projects, resulting in greater impact; and making it easier for assessing impact on targeted areas and beneficiary communities.

**Management Response:** Many of the interventions of the Liberia Country Office have been in the form of small projects instead of overarching programmes. However, the tendency is to shift to a more programmatic approach as Liberia has moved very quickly from post-conflict recovery to development. Small projects often make more sense and are easier to fund in the period immediately after a conflict. However, all efforts are already moving towards a more planned and strategic programmatic intervention. The Liberia Country Strategy shows that this shift is already happening and should continue to be supported. In addition, Liberia has clearly reflected a programmatic approach in its Strategic Note 2012-2013 and Annual Workplan 2012 which is currently being approved, which concentrates on three thematic areas.

Key Action (s)	Timeframe	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
2.1 Approval and implementation of Strategic Note and Annual Workplan concentrating on three thematic areas of interventions	By end of 2011	Liberia Country Office	In progress	
2.2 Recruitment of key staff of implementation of 2012 work plan	By end of 2011	Liberia Country Office and SRO	In Progress	

**Evaluation recommendation 3.** The issue of late disbursement of funds for projects which most projects assessed experienced to be tackled as delays in releasing funds to the projects always have a negative knock-on effect on implementation that may adversely affect outputs and outcomes.

**Management Response:** Liberia is to be financially decentralized by 2012. This will give the Country Office more financial independence and help address the issues of late disbursements of funds. The SRO will continually assist Liberia’s Country Office in the process.

Key Action (s)	Timeframe	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
3.1 Financial decentralization to be completed (including internal audit, access and training on ATLAS, Internal Control Frameworks)	To be completed by end of 2012	SRO and Liberia Country Office	In progress	SRO MRF 4.1 & 3.3 Liberia CO MRF 3.3

**Evaluation recommendation 4.** In the views of other UN Agencies as well as government partners consulted; the move to Joint Programming (JPs) is a positive one. Efforts should be made to harmonize the various funding cycles, reporting frameworks and address the coordinating challenges. UN Women should take the lead in ensuring that the JPs have strong gender components with robust economic empowerment activities that create more opportunities for women to learn skills, micro finance, and opportunities for undertaking income generating activities (IGAs).

In an era of scarce resources and constant competition for funds from donors, UN Women should not spread itself too thin on the ground in implementing projects other agencies are better placed to do. The current trend of Joint Programs in which various UN Agencies take the lead roles in projects they have expertise should be encouraged. It can be innovative in areas it has a comparative advantage. In its unique position as the lead gender agency should use its strength in playing a strategic role where it has expertise and comparative advantage; such as leading in strategic policy development and dissemination; developing gender frameworks such as Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework with gender specific indicators for various sectors that the government, NGOs, UN Agencies and other development partners can use in Liberia.

**Management Response:** UN Women Liberia currently leads one joint program (JP GEWEE), and participates in three (JP SGBV, Adolescent Girls and FSN). As the country moves towards Delivering As One, the emphasis on joint programming is increasing and UN Women will continue to play a central role in ensuring gender is mainstreamed in the new Joint Programmes.

UN Women is also working closely with the UN Country Team and the Inter Agency Programme Team to ensure that gender is mainstreamed throughout the new UNDAF and in its M&E framework.

UN Women Liberia chairs the Gender Theme Group, advising the UN Country Team on gender mainstreaming and the implementation of UN commitments to gender. Within the Gender Theme Group, UN Women is a recognized expert on gender-friendly security sector reform, women's economic empowerment (particularly rural women), community-based models, protecting women from violence, GRB, and gender and HIV.

Key Action (s)	Timeframe	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
4.1.- Implementation of joint programmes including developing and/or contributing to quarterly work plans, quarterly reports, technical committee meetings and bi-annual joint monitoring missions.	During 2012	Liberia Country Office	In progress	Liberia Country Office MRF 1.1

4.2.- Continue to lead JP GEWEE on the following activities: evaluation of Phase I JP GEWEE; documentation of JP GEWEE and resource mobilization materials; development of Phase II JP GEWEE; resource mobilization within the donor community; support JP GEWEE Manager	During 2012	Liberia Country Office	In progress	Liberia Country Office MRF 1.1
4.3.- Provide technical and financial support to mainstream gender across UNDAF	End 2011 and Beginning of 2012	Liberia Country Office	In progress	Liberia Country Office MRF 1.1
4.4. – Continue chairing the GTG	Ongoing	Liberia Country Office	In progress	