

**Visit of H.E. Staffan Tillander, Chair of the PBC Liberia Country Configuration
to Liberia
15-20 September 2013**

Mission Report

H.E. Ambassador Staffan Tillander, Chair of the PBC Liberia Country Configuration, visited Liberia from 15 to 20 September 2013 to continue to identify ways to accelerate the peace building process in the context of UNMIL transition and participate in the Security Sector Reform Workshop organized by the Government of Liberia, the Swedish Embassy, and UNMIL. During his visit, the Chair also discussed the status of implementation of the Roadmap for National Healing and Reconciliation, with a focus on land related conflicts, the Palava Hut Process, and the gender aspects of the overall process, among other relevant issues. The Chair wishes to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary General in Liberia, Ms. Karin Landgren and UNMIL for the support provided to his visit. The Chair was accompanied by Bautista Logioco, Programme Officer at the UN's Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO).

Meetings were held with H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of Liberia, H.E. Amara Konneh, Minister of Finance, H.E. Cllr. Christiana Tah, Minister of Justice, H.E. Morris Dukuly, Minister for Internal Affairs, H.E. Julia Duncan Cassell, Minister of Gender and Development, officials from the Land Commission, among other authorities. The Chair also met with civil society organizations, bilateral partners, international financial institutions, and the UN System, in particular UNMIL and UNDP leadership in the country.

Ten years after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, Liberia finds itself in a challenging position. Many aspects of the peacebuilding process in the country have moved forward. Some others though, have not advanced at the pace required by a complex post conflict context. It is now time to consolidate and build on the results achieved so far and accelerate the peacebuilding process, particularly concerning efforts in the justice and security sector as well as in the reconciliation process, including conflict sensitive management of land and natural resources.

At a meeting with H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the President of Liberia confirmed Government's commitment to accelerate the peace building process in the country. The President also confirmed the determination to speedily implement all aspects of National Reconciliation, including the Palava Hut process, and to resolutely deal with corruption and ensure a sound management of land and natural resources. The President, as well as the Minister of Finance, assured that this coming fiscal year, efforts would be made to ensure sufficient allocation of resources for justice and security. The Minister of Finance reference to the introduction of a supplemental budget for this purpose should be closely followed and assessed.

I. Justice and Security

The SSR Retreat demonstrated that

83%, which should be higher at this stage. Importantly, the services being provided by the Hub are increasingly reaching beneficiaries in the region. Services range from those provided by security agencies such as the Liberia National Police/Police Support Unit (PSU) and the Bureau for Immigration and Naturalization/Border Patrol Unit (BPU) to services provided through the County Attorney's and Public Defense Offices in Bong, Lofa and Nimba. In this context, for instance, the Sexual and Gender Based Violence Crime Unit at the Hub, prosecuted seven sexual violence cases during the February and May terms of Courts in their respective circuit courts (Lofa (2 cases), Bong (4 cases) and Nimba (1 case)). In Lofa and Bong counties, all offenders were convicted of their crimes and received sentences between two years and lifetime, depending on the severity of the crime. The case in Nimba county was lost due to lack of sufficient evidence.

At the same time, efforts from different stakeholders, particularly UNOPS, should ensure that the finalization of the Courthouse building does not experience any further delays so it can become operational before the end of 2013. While this is a considerable additional delay, and not in line with repeated assurances from UNOPS and others, it should be noted that services have continued to be provided throughout from the existing court house in Gbarnga town.

It is encouraging to see that lessons learned from the Gbarnga hub, led those working on the set up of hubs 2 and 3 to focus their planning on the actual provision of services. As a result, a phased approach, of which phase one will focus in the provision of justice and security services to the areas covered by the hubs is ready to start implementation. All actors involved in the implementation of phase I, including UNDP, must ensure that there are no unnecessary delays in the provision of these services. In different exchanges during the visit, it was conveyed to the Chair that a range of services, directly or indirectly linked to the Hubs, including those provided by the land coordination centers (LCCs) on land disputes, human rights monitoring and those related to sexual and gender based violence, were already being provided (as in the case of the LCC) or were ready to be deployed immediately (such as the human rights monitors).

Phase II of hubs 2 and 3 development will move into the infrastructure requirements, and explore the potential rehabilitation of existing buildings and establish new ones. The African Development Bank's (AfDB) new country strategy supports the development of electrical networks, sustainable energy, ICT, roads and water systems in Harper and Zwedru, where hubs 2 and 3 will be located. This is an example of how complimentary efforts of different actors converge in strengthening and expanding access to justice and security throughout the country. The importance of close collaboration with the IFIs is illustrated by AfDB's interest in exploring the potential provision of sustainable energy, such as solar panels, to hubs 2 and 3.

II. Reconciliation

There is a need to increase the pace of the reconciliation proc

III. Conflict-sensitive land and resources management

The need for conflict sensitive management of land and natural resources together with the need to continue fighting corruption remain some of the main challenges to build sustainable peace in Liberia.

The Land Commission has made considerable progress in addressing land disputes through alternative dispute resolution (ADR) as well as through the set up of Land

effectively and efficiently. For the sustainability of the justice and security sector,

PBC will continue to support efforts to extend justice and security services around the country, for example through the effective implementation of the Hub concept. Further delays in the finalization of the Gbarnga hub should be avoided and the focus on the provision of services for hubs 2 and 3 maintained. Rapid implementation of services should be encouraged, which should be informed by the lessons learned retreat on the Gbarnga Hub which is scheduled to take place in October. Further, synergies with actors such as the African Development Bank, among others, should be identified.

Accelerate the pace of implementation of the reconciliation process. Recognizing the importance of planning and preparation for the implementation of the Palava Hut by the INCHR, which should translate into a sound project document, there is a need to ensure there are no further delays in the process and that civil society is actively engaged.

Coordination of the multiple efforts to support the conflict sensitive management of land and natural resources is key and efforts to continue strengthening it will be welcome. Close collaboration of the relevant actors in this area, including the Government of Liberia, the UN System, IFIs, bilateral partners, and civil society will be key to strengthen the sector. Partners are encouraged to continue exploring areas of concrete collaboration in this area, including the World Bank PBF effort, to avoid duplication and, more importantly, maximize impact.

A Government of Liberia led resource mobilization strategy, including allocation and release of sufficient resources, would serve as a necessary basis for partners' consideration of enhanced support, as well as for possible supportive efforts of the PBC. The Chair is prepared to continue his support in marshaling resources in close coordination with the Government of