

LIBERIA HUMANITARIAN SITUATION REPORT

No. 181



Humanitarian Coordinator's Support Office (HCSO) / UNMIL

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Liberia extols ECOWAS for Humanitarian Aid
- Liberia Government takes lead in Disaster Management
- Humanitarian Coordinator Meets ICRC Official

• ECOWAS Donates to Liberia Post Flood Victims

On 16 November the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) presented a cheque worth US\$291,000/- to the Government of Liberia for post flood victims. High level government officials including the Acting minister of Planning & Economic Affairs; Lands, Mines & Energy; Foreign Affairs; and Internal Affairs attended the function and took part in the official signing ceremony which was held at the Monrovia City Hall. The ECOWAS Commission representative, Dr. Adrienne Diop who is the Commissioner for Gender & Development, said she was delighted to present to Liberia the amount following severe flood disaster in the country. She further indicated that ECOWAS is moving from “ECOWAS of State” to “ECOWAS of People” – by providing assistance which goes directly to touch the lives of the affected population in crises. The Commission is developing durable strategies and solutions to respond to catastrophes in member states thereby moving from ad hoc response to more coordinated approaches that will guarantee effective response to victims of disasters in member states. She also stated that ECOWAS member states are to establish and identify national platforms and focus institutions on emergency management and response in and strengthen existing ones. She encouraged government agencies in charge of emergency management and response to synergize with similar agencies in the region in building capacities of staff to engender more coordinated approaches to disaster management response. Receiving the cheque, the Acting Minister of Internal Affairs, expressed gratitude and applauded ECOWAS for the donation which he said will help reduce the impact of disasters in Liberia. The Acting Minister of Planning & Economic Affairs likewise thanked ECOWAS for the gesture but quickly pointed out that there is a need for ECOWAS to assist Liberia in re-establishing its early warning system which had been destroyed.

- **Government of Liberia launches Coastal Defence Project**

The Government of Liberia in collaboration with UNDP launched a four-year project titled “Enhancing Resilience of Vulnerable Coastal Areas to Climate Change Risks in Liberia” as part of efforts to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change. The project, valued at US\$3.3 million was launched on 17 November 2010 in Monrovia. It aims at reducing the vulnerability and build resilience of local communities and socio-economic sectors to the threats of climate change in the three coastal counties of Montserrado, Grand Bassa and Grand Cape Mount where sea erosion is causing destruction. The intervention will specifically strengthen the national capacity to plan and respond to climate change in coastal areas; consolidate the capacity in the three coastal counties to plan and respond to climate change; demonstrate sustainable and affordable measures to protect coastal areas against climate change impacts; and disseminate lessons learned and best practices to relevant stakeholders and development partners. UNDP will be fully responsible for the project implementation, while the ministries of Public Works; Lands, Mines and Energy (MLME); and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be the collaborating government institutions. The project is one of three priority projects identified for implementation under Liberia’s National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA) in conformity to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). According to the EPA, it is projected that a one meter sea level rise would lead to permanent inundation of about 95 km² of land in the coastal zones of Liberia. Densely populated parts of the capital city of Monrovia and its environs, as well as Buchanan and Robertsport, would be submerged. These are currently the housing areas for tens of thousands of people.

- **Liberia Humanitarian Coordinator confers with ICRC**

On 17 November, the Humanitarian Coordinator for Liberia and DSRSG (Recovery and Governance) briefed the ICRC Deputy Director for Western and Central Africa on developments in Liberia. The meeting was called upon the request of the ICRC, who wanted to gain insights into current and future events, and help them in the preparation of their contingency plans for the period preceding the elections and shortly thereafter. While noting the possible difficulties linked to the forthcoming elections and the role of the youth, it was nevertheless acknowledged that regional conflicts, especially in Ivory Coast and Guinea, may most likely impact on Liberia’s humanitarian scenario.