

Strategy for Sweden's development
cooperation with

Liberia

2016–2020



REGERINGSKANSLIET

**Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Sweden**

103 39 Stockholm
Telephone: +46 8 405 10 00, Web site: www.ud.se
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**Government Offices
of Sweden**

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1. Direction

Within the framework of this strategy, Swedish development cooperation with Liberia will contribute to peacebuilding and statebuilding. The aim is to help strengthen Liberia's public services and create the conditions for peaceful, inclusive and sustainable development. Activities are also to contribute to increased gender equality as well as an improved environment and reduced climate impact. The strategy will apply for the period 2016–2020 and comprises a total of SEK 1 350 million, of which SEK 1 320 million is intended for activities implemented by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and SEK 30 million is intended for activities implemented by the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA).¹

Within the framework of the strategy, Sida is expected to contribute to:

Strengthened democracy and gender equality, and greater respect for human rights

- Strengthened capacity in public administration
- Strengthened rule of law
- Increased capacity of civil society to promote accountability and respect for human rights
- A more inclusive society, with focus on increased participation of women in political processes
- Increased respect for and access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

¹ Contributions within the framework of this strategy are financed in accordance with the terms for appropriation items in appropriation directions for the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) for each financial year.

Better opportunities and tools to enable poor people to improve their living conditions

- Improved conditions for inclusive and sustainable economic development, with focus on small-scale and sustainable farming
- Increased production of and improved access to renewable energy
- Improved conditions, especially for women and young people, for productive employment with decent working conditions
- Strengthened conditions for free and fair trade

Safeguarding human security and freedom from violence

- Strengthened capacity to prevent and manage the consequences of sexual and gender-based violence
- Strengthened conflict resolution and reconciliation initiatives at local and national level

Within the framework of the strategy, the FBA is expected to contribute to:

- Strengthened capacity among women, men and institutions to promote security and human rights

2. Country context

Liberia is one of the world's poorest countries and it is estimated that five out of six Liberians live on less than the equivalent of USD 1.25 per day. Unemployment is widespread and a large proportion of the population earn their living in the informal economy. Liberia's economy is highly dependent on natural resources, with ensuing strains on ecosystems. Lack of capacity in natural resource administration increases vulnerability and the risk of conflicts. It is considered that climate change will have a major impact on Liberia's coastal areas. The many challenges facing Liberia in the area of environment and climate, including biodiversity, will have an impact on the country's potential for sustainable development. Respect for women's and girls' enjoyment of their human rights is particularly weak. The opportunities for girls and boys, women and men to exercise

their sexual and reproductive rights are limited. Since the peace agreement was signed in 2003, Liberia has taken significant steps in its democratic development and in rebuilding the country after the civil war. At the same time, many of the fundamental causes of the conflict remain, such as a heavy concentration of political and economic power to a small elite, weak democratic institutions and unclear land and land user rights.

Liberia was declared free of Ebola for the second time on 3 September 2015. At that point, 10 672 Liberians had been infected and 4 806 had died of the disease. Cases of Ebola had been reported in all fifteen of the country's counties. In addition to the toll the epidemic took on human life, the growth rate fell from 5.9 per cent to just under 1 per cent in 2014. Trade and food security were affected by the state of emergency and quarantine zones. When the already weak health and medical care system collapsed, the population was also hit harder by other diseases such as malaria, polio, measles and whooping cough. In its wake, the epidemic left a large number of orphaned children and widespread stigmatisation of survivors. Over one million children lost almost an entire school year.

The Ebola epidemic exposed major shortcomings in Liberian society, such as a weak social contract, weak institutions and inadequate capacity among public institutions. A lack of confidence in public authorities, which in part is based on a large gap between the elite and the rest of the population, the spread of the epidemic to slum areas in the capital and a strong centralised state apparatus with substantial capacity shortcomings in several sectors were some of the factors that contributed to the rapid development of the crisis.

Accordingly, the need for reconciliation initiatives, a more even distribution of resources, in particular to rural areas, an accelerated pace of reform and better opportunities for people to earn a living remains high. Human security needs to be strengthened. In particular, security and access to justice must be provided for women and girls, since sexual and gender-based violence is widespread and the perpetrators are seldom prosecuted. In addition, access to and the capacity of the police service and the rest of the judicial system are generally very limited and impunity is widespread, particularly outside Monrovia. This challenge is expected

to increase as the UN peacekeeping mission UNMIL scales down its presence ahead of its withdrawal at the end of June 2016. Confidence in the judicial system is low, and as a result the customary law system is used instead. Corruption is widespread and permeates all areas of society. The related problem of patron-client relationships prevents transparency and access to justice. The capacity of key agencies and commissions is low. Liberia remains heavily dependent on aid.

In April, the Liberian government presented its Economic Stabilisation and Recovery Plan (ESRP), which is based on and complements the country's poverty reduction strategy, the Agenda for Transformation, from 2012. The main focus of the ESRP is on economic recovery, infrastructure projects, increased trade and private sector development.

Sweden's relations with Liberia are good and were founded in the 1960s and 1970s through trade cooperation. The partnership between Sweden and Liberia has been strengthened through development cooperation and the related political dialogue. Sweden contributed troops to UNMIL between 2004 and 2006. Following that, Sweden has been involved in Liberia's peacebuilding and statebuilding, not least within the framework of the New Deal process and the UN Peacebuilding Commission. Sweden is also involved in Liberia's accession process to the WTO and, during the strategy period, will support Liberia's efforts on national fishery issues through the EU Fisheries Partnership Agreement. With its historical ties, broad commitment and relatively large presence, Sweden has good possibilities to be a positive force in and partner to Liberia. Another component of Swedish added value in development cooperation is the fact that Sweden has traditionally been one of few donors that has contributed to key sectors in statebuilding.

3. Activities

Sweden's development cooperation with Liberia is to be based on and characterised by a rights perspective and the perspective of poor people on development. The rights perspective means that human rights and democracy are regarded as fundamental to development. This approach means that individuals and groups that are discriminated against,

excluded and marginalised are made visible prior to each contribution. This is so that all people will be able to enjoy their rights, regardless of gender, age, disability, ethnicity, religion or other belief, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. The perspective of poor people on development involve poor women's, men's and children's situations, needs, circumstances and priorities being used as the basis for poverty reduction and the promotion of equitable and sustainable development.

Swedish development cooperation is to integrate environmental sustainability, gender equality, and peaceful and democratic development. A comprehensive view of the challenges, needs and conditions of poor people and society is the foundation of development cooperation. The guiding principle is that economic, social and environmental conditions and processes are to be interpreted and managed in an integrated context. Violence and armed conflict are among the greatest barriers to economic and social development, and development cooperation is an important aspect of conflict prevention. An environmental and climate perspective, a gender equality perspective and a conflict perspective must therefore be systematically integrated into Sweden's development cooperation with Liberia.

Sweden's activities in Liberia are to help achieve the five peacebuilding and statebuilding goals in the New Deal² and the principles in the New Deal on cooperation and ownership. Liberian ownership and donor coordination are to be cornerstones of the cooperation. The UN Peacebuilding Commission is another important forum for peacebuilding and statebuilding issues in Liberia. In it, Sweden and Liberia collaborate to mobilise support in the UN for the security and development policy challenges facing Liberia.

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- 2 ● Inclusive policies - foster inclusive political settlements and conflict resolution.
- Security - establish and strengthen people's security.
 - Justice - address injustices and increase people's access to justice.
 - Economic foundations - generate employment and improve people's living conditions.
 - Revenues and services - increase and manage public revenues and build capacity for a fair and accountable distribution of public support to citizens.

The focus of activities and the specific context govern the choice of partners and forms of cooperation. The point of departure is that the partners and forms of cooperation that contribute most effectively to achieving long-term sustainable results are to be used. Sweden is to help to develop efficient public institutions, systems and processes. The Government of Sweden assesses that general budget support is not an option at present. A balance must be sought when choosing partner organisations, for instance by supplementing cooperation with the State with cooperation to strengthen civil society. Sida is to identify agents for change that can contribute to positive development. Women's organisations and the private sector may be important actors. Civil society has an important role to play in promoting accountability and democratic change. Development cooperation is to be designed so as to help prevent and combat corruption.

Cooperation should be designed to contribute to strengthened capacity and long-term sustainable results. Sweden's support to capacity development is to be needs and demand-driven, and designed so that it contributes to transparency and long-term sustainable capacity, and also strengthens local ownership and facilitates accountability. Programme-based support may be combined with strategic and catalytic contributions, including new, innovative forms of cooperation and financing. Sweden will promote taking account of environmental, social and economic aspects in aid-financed procurements. Sweden will promote coherent and effective aid coordination in Liberia, especially through active participation in EU aid coordination and joint programming. In implementing this strategy, Sweden will encourage Liberia to increase domestic resource mobilisation and stimulate cooperation that in the long term can continue without funding from development cooperation. Activities will be conducted in a way that ensures sustainable results. Synergies between the different areas of the strategy, as well as with other relevant strategies, are to be harnessed as far as possible. Development activities should be coordinated with humanitarian measures in the country so that Sweden contributes to a transition from temporary humanitarian assistance to sustainable development cooperation.

Sweden's development cooperation is to contribute to strengthened capacity and transparency in public administration, increased public participation and greater enjoyment of human rights, with particular focus on women and girls. Inclusive policies are vital. Activities are to focus on strengthening reform processes in public administration, with focus on decentralisation and natural resource management, including fisheries management. Strengthened rule of law and access to justice are neglected areas. As decentralisation reforms are implemented, the opportunities for people to influence local public administration plans and civil society's capacity to demand accountability must increase. Special attention should be given to the capacity of environmental organisations to demand accountability. In particular, opportunities for people, especially women, living in rural areas to exert influence must be strengthened. The opportunities for girls and boys, and women and men, to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights is a neglected issue. Long-term cooperation in public administration and committed involvement in peacebuilding and statebuilding give Sweden added value in this area.

Swedish development cooperation is to contribute to an inclusive economic development that is environmentally and socially sustainable and that benefits people living in poverty. Activities are to focus on improving the conditions for productive employment with decent working conditions, which in itself is a prerequisite to successfully fight poverty. An efficient transport network, secure access to land and renewable energy, and enhanced knowledge and skills contribute to an inclusive and sustainable economic development. Particular importance must be placed on better production conditions in agriculture. Small-scale agriculture is of strategic importance for poor people to improve their living conditions. Resilience and adaptation to climate change affect the prospects for sustainable fisheries and agriculture. Special attention is to be given to the elimination of the legal and social structures and standards that prevent women and children from lifting themselves out of poverty and achieving economic empowerment, for example women's right to lifelong learning, particularly as regards opportunities for employment or self-employment. Sida should investigate the possibilities of contributing to a transition to renewable energy and sustainably produced electricity, particularly at local level.

Increased integration in the formal economy contributes to increased productivity, increased rule of law and to being able to manage the causes of conflict. A larger proportion of the national economy must come from taxes, investments and increased trade. Strengthened institutional and productive capacity is of great importance to increase the opportunities to participate in local, regional and global value chains that enable better livelihood opportunities with rights for poor people. Acceding to the WTO will facilitate Liberia's global trade opportunities. Swedish development cooperation should help facilitate Liberia's integration with the international market. A long tradition of cooperation in these areas makes Sweden well-suited for the area.

Sweden's development cooperation is to contribute to freedom from violence and to enhance human security. The effects of the civil war, which ended in 2003, are still manifest. Activities are to focus on strengthening conflict resolution and reconciliation initiatives and thereby contribute to strengthening the conditions for continued peaceful development. Development cooperation is to strengthen the involvement of women and girls in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding, including civil society organisations and human rights defenders. Account must be taken of the relation between urban and rural areas, the tensions between the governing elite and the rest of the population, potential risk groups such as former combatants, access to natural resources as a cause of conflict, and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. It is essential to prevent the sexual and gender-based violence and provide redress to individuals who have been subjected to such acts. Particular attention must be given to the vulnerability of children to sexual and gender-based violence.

The FBA should help improve capacity for an inclusive Liberian reconciliation process. Action taken by the FBA should also contribute to increased application of democratic principles and human rights in the security sector. To achieve this, the FBA is to work to increase civilian and parliamentary control of the security sector, based on the principles of the rule of law. In addition, priority is given to strengthened opportunities for a legally secure and transparent exercise of public authority, and to

accountability. Action by the FBA may include training, secondments, advice, methods development or policy support. Account must be taken of national priorities, human rights, gender equality and the principles of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security and subsequent resolutions. Sweden has a strong comparative advantage through its long involvement, the presence of posted staff from several Swedish public institutions and the work conducted at policy level in the New Deal and the UN Peacebuilding Commission.

The forms of follow-up are described in the Government's guidelines for strategies. Evaluation is to be seen as an integral part of continued follow-up and is to be conducted when necessary. Various methods for results monitoring are to be applied, using both qualitative and quantitative results information. A balance should be sought between short-term and long-term results in the contribution portfolio to ensure that aid contributes to fair and sustainable development.