



RECOVERY OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY FOR LIBERIA INFORMAL
SECTOR EMPLOYMENT (REALISE) PROJECT
Capitol Bye Pass, Old Maternity Center, 1st Floor
Monrovia-Liberia



National Social Protection Steering Committee Meeting

Thu, Nov 28, 2024

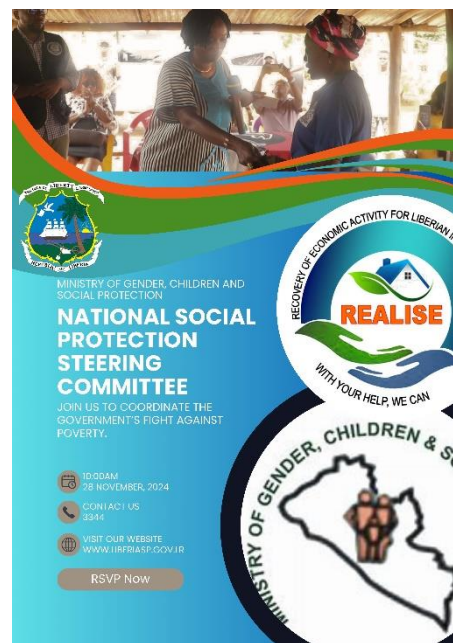
Summary:

The National Social Protection Steering Committee meeting focused on enhancing social protection services in Liberia, with Minister Gbeme Horace-Kollie, Chair of the Steering Committee, emphasizing the importance of collaboration among government institutions, development partners, and civil society organizations. The meeting included introductions from various stakeholders, such as Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the National Social Security and Welfare Corporation (NASSCORP) Population Services International and a host of civil society actors, amongst others.

Mr. Aurelius Butler, National Coordinator for Social Protection, presented a pilot initiative for establishing social protection structures in Grand Bassa County, with plans for expansion to Nimba, Lofa, and Bong by 2025. He highlighted the need for coordinated efforts to address poverty and deliver services effectively and efficiently across the country, while also discussing the formation of a technical working subcommittee to support the national social protection strategy.

The meeting addressed the current status of the National Social Protection Policy, which has not been updated since its expiration in 2019. The Ministry of Gender, Children, and Protection is leading the re-initiation process with support from the REALISE Project, aiming to complete the policy by early to mid-2025. He stressed the importance of aligning new initiatives with existing frameworks and ensuring effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms at the county level to facilitate communication and equitable resource distribution.

Topics:



National Social Protection Steering Committee Meeting Opening Remarks

Hon. Minister Gbeme Horace-Kollie welcomed attendees to the National Social Protection Steering Committee meeting, expressing hope for a productive session focused on social protection as a critical element of national development. She acknowledged the presence of various stakeholders, including government officials and representatives from the World Bank, and emphasized the need for collective efforts to support vulnerable populations in Liberia.

- Inauguration of the National Social Protection Steering Committee.

Participant Introductions

Participants introduced themselves, highlighting their roles and affiliations. Duraman Fahnbulleh represented the USAID sanitation project, while Simon Kava was from the Research and Actuarial Departments of NASSCORP and Mr. Mack Mulbah from the World Bank.

Other notable introductions included Madam Binta Stephens Tchicaya Country Director, FAO Country Director, Joanna Markbreiter, Deputy Head of Mission, British Embassy, Monrovia and Josiah Domiah, the Director for Social Protection at the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection.

See attached.

Social Protection County Structure Pilot

Mr. Aurelius Butler outlined plans for a pilot program to establish social protection structures in Grand Bassa County, with intentions to expand to additional counties in 2025. He emphasized the need for effective coordination among various government ministries and partners to address poverty and ensure that social services are accessible to those in need. Effectively, a technical working subcommittee at the county level will be formed to provide guidance on the national social protection strategy and implementation.

Mr. Jimmy Shilue raised questions about the pilot infrastructure in Grand Bassa, seeking to understand whether it operates within the revised policy or as a separate initiative. It was explained that Grand Bassa was chosen as a pilot county because of operation efficiencies owing to the fact that the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and the Recovery for Economic Activity for Liberian Informal Sector Employment (REALISE) project is operating a social cash transfer program there. As for the subsequent counties, Mr. Butler further explained that the project is targeting expansion based on population and rate of absolute poverty. The discussion highlighted the importance of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms at the county level to ensure effective resource distribution and avoid duplication of efforts.

Mr. Shilue expressed concerns regarding the selection of counties for intervention, highlighting the normalization of aggression in areas with high sexual gender-based violence. He suggested that violent tendencies should be considered as indicators in the selection process. Mr. Butler acknowledged the concern and stated that they would reconsider their approach, while also emphasizing the need to separate discussions around gender-based violence from broader issues of poverty and vulnerability.

Mr. Butler acknowledged concerns raised about the selection criteria for targeted counties, particularly regarding areas affected by sexual gender-based violence, and indicated that these factors would be considered in future planning.

- Overview of the pilot county structures for social protection.
- Coordination among government ministries and agencies for effective social protection delivery.

Update on National Social Protection Policy

Mr. Butler discussed the status of the National Social Protection Policy, highlighting that efforts are underway to update the policy, which has been inactive since its expiration in 2019. The Ministry of Gender, Children, and Protection is leading this initiative with support from the REALISE Project, and a consultant will be hired to facilitate consultations with stakeholders. Capacity-building workshops are also being conducted to ensure all relevant ministries understand their roles in the social protection infrastructure.

Mr. Butler explained that the upcoming policy will leverage existing structures, including the social registry and county development structures, to improve resilience and social interventions.

Formation of Technical Working Groups

It was proposed that technical working groups be formed for the Social Registry and the focus on the issue of Street Children in Liberia, respectively. Mr. Gabriel Fernandez commented that this [Street Children] is one of many vulnerable groups and technical working groups should perhaps have a issue specific scope that cuts across vulnerable groups. Minister Horace-Kollie then explained that a structure already exists to address the grave concern that the government has for street children and she endeavors to consolidate efforts and collapse structures where possible. There will be one Steering Committee and technical working groups under it.

Mr. Mulbah of the World Bank recommended a working group for the drafting of the national policy.

Action Items:

- Mr. Butler will facilitate capacity-building workshops for committee members to understand their roles in social protection.
- Henry Sumo, Jr. will ensure the National Identification Registry is included in future discussions and planning for social protection.
- The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection will conduct a technical review of the social protection policy to align it with national and SDG agendas.
- The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection will hire a consultant to assist in updating the National Social Protection Policy and Strategy.

Full list of Participants:

Online

- Alfreda M. Garswah
- Jimmy Shilue, P4DP
- Jackson Speare
- Fallah Tamba, Social Protection Specialist
- Gabriel Fernandez, FAO
- Joanna Markbreiter, British Embassy
- Kaijatu Allen-Yennego
- OCHANDA Fabian O-LR
- Madam Binta StephenTchicaya, FAO

In-person



REALISE Mid-Term Review
Attendance
November 28 2024

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