

If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner.  
*Nelson Mandela*

We wish all MIA staff a Merry Christmas & Prosperous New Year

# MIA Renaissance



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23RD DECEMBER, 2013

## The Rugged Road to Decentralization

Photos & Story: By Joe K. Roberts



Dep. Min. Tweh



GC Comm. Weh-Dorliae



NEC's GIS Specialist Delaine



Dep. Min. Nagbe

The long, and some say, rugged march to the country's decentralization process took another step last week in Buchanan City, Grand Bassa County. There, in the city's fairground, representatives from the across the country, including political parties, legislators and civil society organizations, gathered to continue brainstorming the tough questions surrounding the exercise of putting Liberia on the path to being a truly civilize nation.

At the core of this all important national discussion, is the task of decentralizing, restructuring and harmonizing national political boundaries. A key question to this future restructuring exercise is: 'What is a city?'

What are those rudimentary requirements that makes, say, a 'city' like Cestos, in River Cess County, a city? Does it have the basic amenities that provide basic services to its citizens? For example, is there a bank or a hospital or electricity or pave roads or safe pipe borne drinking water? If the answer to these questions are no, than that 'city is not a 'city'.

Combined, the presenters, including MIA's Deputy Minister for Urban Affairs, Amos Tweh, Deputy Minister for Research & Development Planning, J. TiahNagbe, YarsuoWeh-Dorliae, Commissioner for Political & Legal

**Continue on pages 4 & 5**



Stakeholders at the consultation in Buchanan



# County Profile



## GRAND KRU COUNTY



Supt. Elizabeth Dempster, Sen. Peter Coleman, Sen. Cletus S. Wotorson, Rep. George W. Blamoh, and Rep. Namene T.H. Bartekwa

Grand Kru County is a county in the southeastern portion of the West African nation of Liberia. One of 15 counties that comprise the first-level of administrative division in the nation, it has eighteen districts. Created in 1984, Barclayville serves as the capital with the area of the county measuring 3,895 square kilometers (1,504 sq mi). As of the 2008 Census, it had a population of 57,106, making it the least populous county in Liberia.

### Lower Kru Coast.

#### Economy

The area has few roads which partially explain the relatively low population density. In June 2005 the UN Integrated Regional Information Network reported that the roads in Grand Kru had decayed and become overgrown by dense bush, rendering them impassable, except on foot, and that the bridge across the Nu River at Barclayville had been



Grand Kru's County Superintendent is Rosalind Sneh. The county is bordered by River Gee County to the northeast, Sinoe County to the northwest, and Maryland County to the southeast. The southern part of Grand Kru borders the Atlantic Ocean.

#### History

Grand Kru was created in 1984/1985 by the merger of Sass town Territory and Kru Coast Territory. Kru Coast territory, which had previously been part of Maryland County, and Sass town territory, previously part of Sinoe County. As of the 1984 Census, the county had a population of 62,791. A UN Mission in Liberia report issued in April 2005 estimated that the population was 71,000.

#### Demographics

The primary language is Kru which is spoken in several significantly different dialects around the county with some areas identifying their language as Buah and kplio. Liberian English is the language of school instruction.

#### Districts

The county is divided into four districts:

- Sasstown
- Buah
- Upper Kru Coast

destroyed.

The primary industry is subsistence, largely slash and burn, farming. The most important crops are upland rice, cassava, palm nuts, and along the coast, fishing. Feed corn is grown at higher elevations farther inland. Sugar cane and several varieties of bananas grow in the wetland areas. Cash crops include coffee, cocoa and kola. Locally grown bamboo and piassava palm are widely used for construction, mats and baskets. Many tropical fruits, domestic and wild, grow in the region including oranges, limes, mangos, soursop, breadfruit and coconut.

Poultry, cattle, sheep and goats are found in and around most villages. Most animals are of pygmy variety as larger varieties die quickly due to the heat and humidity. Prior to the civil war the region's extensive rainforests contained a wide variety of wildlife including wild pigs, bongo, dik-dik, pangolin, civet, pygmy hippo, African buffalo and colobus monkey all of which are hunted for food and hides. Also found are snakes, and very small populations of forest elephants and leopards.



# Focus

## UNOPS in Liberia

The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) in Liberia was established in 2004 following the civil conflict that destroyed much of the country's core infrastructure.

As the United Nations lead entity for physical infrastructure in peace building settings, UNOPS can initiate projects swiftly and effectively. UNOPS constructs and rehabilitates key physical infrastructure across the country, supporting the Government's development efforts in a variety of sectors:

In 2008 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) undertook to free the Ministry of Internal Affairs from substantial rental obligations by building new Ministry offices in Monrovia. To ensure rapid and successful project implementation, UNDP hired UNOPS to manage the project. Following successful and timely project implementation in only 120 days, the United Nations Country Support Team requested UNOPS to rehabilitate a second building for the Ministry.

With United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funding and logistical support from the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), UNOPS constructed a 60 metre, pre-fabricated steel bridge over the Nuch River. This provides road access to five of the seven districts in Liberia's most remote county, Grand Kru, which had not seen traffic since the early 1970s. The Project utilized labor-intensive methods to provide work to 250 people from vulnerable groups, including women and former combatants.

In 2005 UNOPS worked with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to rehabilitate high priority schools in areas receiving displaced persons along the borders of Lofa and Nimba counties. The project restored 13 schools; improved and increased local primary education by 20 per cent, particularly for girls and children associated with fighting forces; established effective community- and school-based monitoring and supervision mechanisms; and trained and equipped Ministry of Education staff to ensure long-term sustainability and management.

UNOPS has established and renovated offices to accommodate personnel



*Pres. Sirleaf & UN Sec. Gen. Ban ki Moon*

from the International Monetary Fund, the Liberian Forestry Initiative, UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank. Services include upgrading security in compliance with United Nations Security Standards, installing computing networks, satellite and ISDN Internet and telephone connections. UNOPS also provides United Nations compound management services.

Having suffered acutely during years of conflict, Maryland and Lofa counties lack the resources to accommodate large numbers of displaced people. To help cater to the vulnerable thousands, UNICEF decided to rehabilitate destroyed clinics and create water and sanitation facilities. UNOPS provided essential structural needs assessments and evaluations of completed work.

In 2005–2006 on behalf of UNICEF, UNOPS managed the rehabilitation of three police stations in Monrovia to host new protection centers. The new facilities provide for improved police handling, management and investigation of sexual and gender-based violence, exploitation and abuse.

The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) is dedicated to implementing projects for the United Nations System, international financial institutions, governments and other partners in the aid world. The organization's global headquarters is located in Copenhagen, Denmark and it has five regional offices and more than 20 country offices around the world.

UNOPS implements more than \$1 billion worth of projects for its partners every year, operating in more than 80 countries, providing management services that range from managing the construction of schools in Afghanistan, to building shelters in Haiti, and procuring educational computers in Argentina.

UNOPS employs close to 6,000 personnel annually and on behalf of its partners creates thousands more work opportunities in local communities.

UNOPS works particularly closely with UNDP, DPKO and The World Bank. It is a member of the United Nations Development Group.

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## NDRC ENDS LONG WAIT

heads of both towns respectively in the presence of their Town Chiefs and other local leaders, NDRC Disaster Relief Coordinator, Mr. Moses F. Samukai said, although the consignment could not replace all that they had lost in the disasters, the gesture was Governments effort to identify with them in their distress.

Mr. Samukai then expressed hope that in addition to assistance made by humanitarian organizations earlier, the zinc and nails will help them recover from the bitter experience and get on with their lives.

The happy recipients expressed appreciation to Minister Dukuly and the Government for remembering their ordeal and coming to their aid. They then gave praise to Almighty Allah for the blessing.



# The Rugged Road to Decentralization



**Asst. Min/Urban Affairs Robert Bestman (in coat suit)**



**NEC's GIS Specialist Delaine**



**Asst. Min/Research Peter Roberts & Carter Center's Deputy Chief Pewee Flomoku**



**Urban Affairs Technical Assistant Peter Doe-Somah**



**Female participant asks question**



**Some stakeholders**



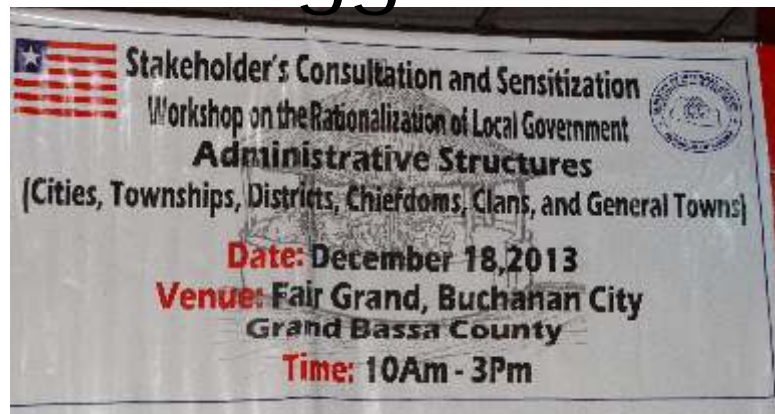
**The Secretariat**



**Dep. Min. Nagbe & Asst. Min Roberts**



# The Rugged Road to Decentralization



**Situation Analysis on Current Sub-National Structures**

**SUMMARY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE (LGS):**

| COUNTY              | POPULATION       | CITY       | TOWNSHIP   | DISTRICT   | CHIEFDOM   | CLAN       | GENERAL TOWN |
|---------------------|------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Bomi                | 82,036           | 1          | 2          | 4          | 5          | 18         | 50           |
| Bong                | 328,919          | 20         | 3          | 10         | 13         | 42         | 209          |
| Gbarpolu            | 83,758           | 1          | 2          | 6          | 11         | 22         | 49           |
| Grand Bassa         | 224,839          | 3          | 10         | 9          | 18         | 44         | 56           |
| Grand Cape Mount    | 129,055          | 1          | 6          | 5          | 5          | 21         | 32           |
| Grand Gedeh         | 126,146          | 4          | 17         | 8          | 16         | 32         | 67           |
| Grand Kru           | 57,106           | 31         | 29         | 17         | 27         | 61         | 61           |
| Lofa                | 270,114          | 4          | 1          | 7          | 8          | 29         | 96           |
| Margibi             | 199,689          | 2          | 6          | 2          | 4          | 15         | 44           |
| Maryland            | 136,404          | 2          | 54         | 7          | 18         | 33         | 65           |
| Montserrado         | 1,144,806        | 8          | 20         | 1          | 2          | 7          | 18           |
| Nimba               | 468,088          | 7          | 19         | 18         | 32         | 73         | 213          |
| Rivercess           | 65,862           | 4          | 3          | 8          | 15         | 34         | 58           |
| Rivergee            | 67,318           | 8          | 34         | 10         | 23         | 47         | 56           |
| Sinoe               | 104,932          | 45         | 38         | 17         | 43         | 102        | 124          |
| <b>TOTAL (LGS):</b> | <b>3,489,072</b> | <b>141</b> | <b>244</b> | <b>129</b> | <b>240</b> | <b>580</b> | <b>1198</b>  |



**Grand Gedeh Rep. Hon Alex Grant makes remarks**

Reforms at the Governance Commissioner and Archie Delaine, GIS Specialist at the National Elections Commission, presented to the audience a not so pleasant but nevertheless, realistic picture of the local governance administrative structure of cities, townships, districts, clans and general townships of Liberia.

Animated and entertaining at times, presenters laid bare a rather grim visual and graphic illustrative analysis of what Liberia looks likes. County boundaries are over lapsing over one another. Segments of counties and districts that legally belong in a certain locale stretched into other districts and counties.

According to the one of the graphs shown, Fish Town City in River Gee has a population of 3,328 and has no social or public services that qualifies it as a city, Cestos, in River Cess, has a population of 2,578. Bensonville or Bentol City in Montserrado



**Some stakeholders chatting**

County has 4,089; Barclayville in Grand Kru County has 2,733

If a city must have a population of at least 25,000 and a vibrant economy including all of the amenities mentioned, as proffered by one of the presenters, then only Gbarnga (34,046), Buchanan (34,270) Lofa (26,594), Kakata (33,945) and Voinjama (26,594) qualifies as cities.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) and the Governance Commission (GC) including other national and international stakeholders are in the forefront of this process and it is expected that the exercise will be held around the country to sensitize citizens before a final blue print is presented for implementation



**Refreshment time**



**Note taker in action**



# Merry Christmas



INTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER, HON. MORRIS M. DUKULY, SR.; DEPUTY AND ASSISTANT MINISTERS; DIRECTORS; COUNTY AUTHORITIES; THE GENERAL STAFF AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE MIA FAMILY, EXTEND WARMEST FILICITATIONS TO HER EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF AND HER CABINET; HIS EXCELLENCY, VICE PRESIDENT JOSEPH NYUMAH BOIKAI; THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL LEGISLATURE, THE CHIEF JUSTICE AND MEMBERS OF THE SUPREME COURT BENCH; PRELATES; MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS, AND THE PEACE-LOVING PEOPLE AND FRIENDS OF LIBERIA, MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A JOYOUS AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR. MAY THE ALMIGHTY FATHER CONTINUE TO BLESS US ALL AND PROSPER THE NATION IN THE YEARS TO AHEAD



**Chalotte M. Contoe**  
**Office Assistant-Dispatch**  
I send season's greetings to my friends, my supervisor Dorothy Keyean, my daughter Devine Clinton and all my loving friends at MIA, my sister Angela B. Johnson of NEC, also to Cecelia M. Contoe of the USA. I wish them a prosperous New Year 2014.



**Sackie Cooper**  
**Security**  
**Office of the Minister**  
I extend Merry Christmas to everybody. I wish them success in the New Year and long life for all.



**Bede-Tieda George**  
**Administrative Assistant**  
**Department of Administration**  
Season's greetings to my boss and beloved mom, to my sweet heart and my family as a whole. To my friends and workmates here at the Ministry of Internal Affairs. I

wish them a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.



**Samo Peters**  
**Agriculture Technician**  
**Department of Urban Affairs**  
My season's greetings to my mother Louise Smith of Careysburg and all of my sisters. Moreover, to my wife and children; and all of my workmates and friends. I wish all of them Merry Christmas

and Happy and Prosperous New Year.



**Stephen Wilson**  
**Generator Operator**  
**Department of Operations**  
My Season's greetings to Minister Dukuly, all Deputy Ministers, Assistant Ministers and the general staff. All friends and my family. May God bless them as we enter the New Year 2014.



**Ms Diana G. Kamara**  
**Secretary**  
**Department of Operations**  
I want to send this season's to my beloved mother MadamIrynyNyema of MIA and Old Matadi Estate. Not forgetting my daughter Queeneta D. Johnson of New Georgia Oldfield along with her sister of the same address and my beloved husband-to-be Edwin V. Hoff Jr. of Oldest Congo Town and the rest of my family far and near. As the old year passes by and as we enter the New Year, I want to urge all Liberians to put God first in all that we do.

# Feature

## Battling Paper Cities: Harmonizing Local Boundaries in Liberia

In the middle of Liberia's northern region, a town hall is packed with a crowd unusually concerned with the future of their county, and the country at large. Some of Liberia's most eminent movers and shakers are present and engaged in heated debates and discussions, sometimes in Liberian English. They are focusing on local boundaries within the county of Nimba which proudly claims to be the birthplace of the Organization of African Unity (now the African Union). Today, the county can also claim to be the birthplace of a more inclusive political process of ordinary citizens, their leaders and stakeholders.

This is part of a process that began shortly after the historic elections of 2005 and inauguration of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as the first female elected Head of State in Africa; thereby bringing an end to the dark days of a civil war that ravaged Liberia for fourteen years. When the dust settled from the national elections, various leaders started calling for local and municipal elections to be held in order to complete the government.

When the NEC and IFES sponsored a series of stakeholders' conferences to discuss constitutional provisions to avoid run-off elections in the country, it was quickly discovered there are other issues equally important to address before holding local elections. One such issue is the quagmire of overlapping municipal boundaries and dozens of "paper cities." The majority of these cities were created during the years of crisis as acts of patronage, a clever way of getting cronies and supporters of the president on government payroll, a direct violation of the constitution. A majority of these cities consisted of only a few houses and were hardly deserving of a standard municipal bureaucracy including an elected mayor and city council.

This proliferation of "paper cities" not only strained the national government's meager budget, but the hodgepodge of local boundaries made it impossible to run local elections. How would voters in overlapping constituencies be registered? How would they vote? And why would the government pay for elections of city mayors where there were no legal cities? One thing was clear: in the new democratic Liberia, citizens should not pay for the patronage of former regimes or settle for unelected local government officials.

Liberia Parliamentarians were throughout the process; for many local officials, the town-hall meetings were a first opportunity to interact with their national lawmakers.

To address the problem, a group of committed stakeholders from political parties, government and civil society have been working tirelessly to ensure the solution comes not from Monrovia, but from the people themselves. Teams of government ministers, commissioners, legislators and technocrats have been crisscrossing the country in an unprecedented effort to empower local leaders and citizens to make the difficult but informed decisions themselves. In all counties in the country, local leaders and citizens are informed about the problem, given the necessary tools including high-tech GIS mapping systems and asked to locally propose solutions. Those involved in the process, are quick to point out IFES' and UNDP's crucial support to the success of the process.



The meeting in a Nimba County school house is the last consultative meeting before recommendations from citizens and local leaders are made to parliament; for possible legislation to be introduced to harmonize boundaries and be enacted into law. The results from consultative meetings and decisions have been outstanding. Nationally, the number of "cities" in the country is expected to be reduced substantially, not to mention other municipal divisions which will be removed from the maps. For example, Grand Kru County which is the least populated with an estimated 56,000 inhabitants has 31 cities and 132 clans, townships and chiefdoms. The recommendation coming from the citizens is a reduction to one city and 24 other traditional boundaries and communities.

Public support for the process has been overwhelming. "This is the first time, since Liberia's founding in 1832, that legislation will come from the people," exclaimed one clan chief from Nimba County, "we hope that more processes will look like this in the future."

Once reform recommendations become law, a tremendous weight will be lifted from the national budget; allowing money to be spent on poverty reduction goals.

Someday soon, Liberia's citizens will be queuing up to vote again, at schools like this one, but this time instead of voting for a president and parliamentarians, they will mark ballots for leaders of government which matters most: local government.

*AlmamiCyllah is Country Director for IFES in Liberia; Skye Christensen is Program Coordinator and Electoral Cycle Specialist for IFES' Africa Programs*



# Commitment to Decentralization of Power Reinforced by Pres. Sirleaf



**P**resident Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has reiterated her administration's commitment to support government's decentralization of power, as well as ongoing initiatives for the reform of public institutions.

Collaborating in the implementation of these reforms is: the Governance Commission, the Civil Service Agency, the Liberia

Institute of Public Administration, the Liberia Revenue Authority, and the Ministries of Finance and Education.

According to an Executive Mansion release, President Sirleaf made the commitment when she put in a brief appearance at a local hotel on Thursday, December 19, where the second of a series of educational forums for media practitioners and intellectual centers was held. The President called for depoliticizing the civil service by allowing the Civil Service Agency to do the vetting for the recruitment of professionals for service.

She said she has thus waived her right to appoint, as President, and mandated the CSA to do the vetting of political appointees before they are presented to her for appointment, as a demonstration of her commitment to the process to depoliticize the civil service. She said that merit-based appointments will continue to be a matter that will not be compromised.

The President believes that the civil service is challenged with inefficiencies that hamper government's operation, and that steps should be taken to address the situation. She said she liked to be more radical by calling for a re-vetting of all civil servants to ensure their qualifications. Such a process would uncover people who are not qualified, she said, and she hoped the forum would advance recommendations on how to address this. Such recommendations should also include a social factor on how to retrain, train and redeploy those found to be unqualified, as leaving them out completely would not promote social inclusion.

## NDRC ENDS LONG WAIT OF LOFA STORM VICTIMS

*By: Charles D. F. Jrateh*



**T**he National Disaster Relief Commission, NDRC, distributed Zinc and Zinc-nails to several storm victims in the towns Barkedu and Kuluka, Lofa Couty, on Friday, December 15, and Saturday, December 16, respectively.

The distribution was done in response to appeal made to Internal Affairs Minister, Hon. Morris M. Dukuly, by the victims during his recent visit to the County in November.

The citizens told Minister Dukuly that even though the NDRC had already carried out a major distribution of relief items in the County, Barkedu and Kuluka were not served due to documentation error during the assessment exercise following the disasters. They therefore asked him to give them whatever assistance he could.

Presenting the items to a combined number of nearly thirty family-

**Continue on page 3**



Does Cestos City have a bank? A hospital? Electricity? Pave roads? A university? If your answer to these question is 'no', then we say sorry Cestos, you don't qualify to be a city.