

Evaluation of the Liberian Peacebuilding Office (PBO)

DRAFT EVALUATION REPORT

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ACCORD	African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery
BCR	Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation
BIN	Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization
CD	Capacity Development
CDA	Collaborative Learning Projects
CPC	County Peace Committee
CRC	Constitutional Review Committee
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DOCO	UN Development Operations Coordination Office
EWER	Early Warning and Early Response
EWVG	Early Warning and Early Response Working Group
GoL	Government of Liberia
IJR	South African Institute for Justice and Reconciliation
INCHR	Independent National Commission on Human Rights
HRPS	UNMIL's Human Rights Protection Section
JSC	Joint Steering Committee
JSJP	Justice and Security Joint Programme
JSTAG	Justice and Security Technical Advisory Group
LCCs	Land Coordination Center
LDA	Liberia Development Alliance
LERN	Liberia Early Warning and Response Network
LPI	Liberia Peace Initiative
LISGIS	Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services
LNP	Liberia National Police
LNP/PSU	Liberia National Police/Police Support Unit
LPP	Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan
LRC	Law Reform Commission
MARWOPNET	Mano River Women's Peace Network
MDTFO	Multi Donor Trust Fund Office
MoGD	Ministry of Gender and Development
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoGD	Ministry of Gender and Development
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoPEA	Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs
MoYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
MPTFO	Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NIP	National Implementing Partner
PBC	Peacebuilding Commission
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PBSO	Peacebuilding Support Office

PPP	Peacebuilding Priority Plan
RBM	Results Based Management
RUNO	Recipient United Nations Organization
SGBV	Sex and Gender Based Violence
SMC	Statement of Mutual Commitment
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNMIL's HRPS	UNMIL's Human Rights Protection Section (HRPS)
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
USIP	United States Institute of Peace

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

1. The object of this evaluation is the Liberian Peacebuilding Office. The PBO, based at the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Liberia, was established in January 2009 as the Peacebuilding Fund Secretariat in Liberia and the Government's main office to coordinate key peacebuilding initiatives. The evaluation's objective is to examine, as systematically and objectively as possible, the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, appropriateness and sustainability of the PBO's support on peacebuilding. Its main purpose is to help the PBO and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) define the best structure and range of support activities to undertake during the implementation of the current tranche of Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) support.

2. The evaluation assessed to what extent the PBO's work promotes equity through mainstreaming gender and human rights in the implementation of its support activities as well as in the implementation of activities corresponding to the substantive areas of work in which the PBO is engaged.

3. The evaluation was conducted following a mixed method¹, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques, which is the option that best fits the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the assignment. The evaluator promoted a learning process essentially participatory and inclusive, giving voice to different stakeholders involved in the project.

4. The main users of the evaluation are: **Government of Liberia:** Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Gender and Development. Management of the PBF at the national level: PBF Joint Steering Committee and Liberian Peacebuilding Office. **United Nations System:** Peacebuilding Support Office, Peacebuilding Commission, UNDP's Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office; United Nations Mission in Liberia, United Nations Development Programme, UN Women, UN-Habitat, United Nations Children's Fund. **Additional national implementing partners** of PBF-supported projects: Independent National Commission on Human Rights, Constitutional Review Committee, Law Reform Commission and Land Commission. **Civil Society Organizations:** National Civil Society Council of Liberia, Right and Rice, NGOs Consortium on Natural Resources Management, TRUST AFRICA, Mano River Women's Peace Network and Liberia NGO Network. **Other Liberian programs, institutions and committees** involved in peacekeeping:

¹ A complete description of the evaluation framework and methodology can be found in Annex 5.

Justice and Security Joint Program (Ministry of Justice), Liberia Development Alliance (Ministry of Finance, Governance Commission, Kofi Annan Institute for Conflict Transformation of the University of Liberia. Other international partners involved in peacebuilding: European Commission, Embassy of Nigeria, Economic Community Of West African States, Embassy of Sweden, U.S. Embassy, Mission of the African Union, World Bank and European Union Delegation to Liberia.

Current PBO's accountabilities

5. **Accountabilities of the PBO as PBF Joint Steering Committee (JSC) Secretariat** are facilitating JSC functioning and oversight; coordinating and supporting Recipient United Nations Organizations (RUNOs) and National Implementing Partners (NIPs) in the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of PBF-supported projects; and monitoring achievement of results of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016.

6. **Accountabilities of the PBO as Government of Liberia (GoL) Peacebuilding Office** are maintaining the liaison with Government counterparts emphasizing extensive consultation on reconciliation issues; implementing a Communication and Outreach Strategy on the Reconciliation Roadmap; training GoL policymakers and technical staff and Civil Society Organization (CSOs); implementing peacebuilding projects; implementing some components of the Early Warning Mechanism; acting as Programme Management Unit for the Reconciliation Programme; contributing to strategic GoL policymaking on peacebuilding; managing GoL partnership with the PBC; and supporting the GoL in national and international activities on peacebuilding.

Summary of main achievements of the Liberia Peacebuilding Office (PBO) since its inception

7. The PBO has been a key player in peacebuilding in Liberia since 2008, thus it is worth presenting a brief summary of its main achievements from 2008 to the present:

8. **Contribution to the consolidation of the Peacebuilding Fund support to Liberia:** once the UN Secretary-General declared Liberia eligible to receive funding from the Peacebuilding Fund in December 2007, the initial Peacebuilding office was able to develop the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan (2008-2011) in collaboration with other peacebuilding stakeholders in Liberia, which facilitated the first Peacebuilding Fund allocation to Liberia in early 2008. Since then, the Peacebuilding Fund has made two more Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility allocations, in 2011 and 2013.

9. Contribution to develop the capabilities on Conflict Sensitivity and conflict prevention and management of policymakers, Government of Liberia officials and technical staff and Civil Society Organizations: the PBO, because of its high technical expertise on peacebuilding issues, has been an excellent resource to develop the capabilities of policymakers and Government officials on Conflict Sensitivity and conflict prevention and management, which is especially valuable in a context of not yet completely developed capabilities to work on peacebuilding.

10. Contribution to policymaking on peacebuilding: the PBO played a relevant role as adviser to the GoL in the preparation of several relevant policymaking documents such as the Lift Liberia Poverty Reduction Strategy (2008-2011), the Agenda for Transformation (2012-2017) and the National Visioning Exercise “LIBERIA RISING”. In addition, the PBO led the preparation of the “Strategic Roadmap for National Healing, Peacebuilding, and Reconciliation” (Reconciliation Roadmap) (2013-2030), a milestone in the path to national reconciliation.

Main conclusions

11. The PBO works in a very complex scenario characterized by the existence of multiple and sometimes conflicting priorities where the environment plays a major role in its performance. The workload on most PBO staff members is quite heavy because of the large number of PBO’s accountabilities and associated task. In addition, the PBO interacts with numerous peacebuilding stakeholders with common interests relating to peacebuilding in Liberia, but with different priorities that the PBO needs to manage. The PBO has various reporting lines and satisfying all of them was a challenge in some particular occasions, which led the PBO to situations of conflict of interest that should be avoided

12. Conflict of interest situations analyzed by the evaluation were managed by the PBO following the same pattern. The PBO did not share information exchanged with the PBSO in a complete and transparent manner with relevant stakeholders including RUNOs, NIPs and JSC members when a priority of the MIA did not match PBSO’s funding priorities to get things done according to MIA’s priorities. This shows that the MIA reporting line prevailed over the PBSO and JSC co-Chairs reporting lines, which hindered PBF’s ability to act accountably on its investments and JSC’s ability to make adequate decisions on the implementation of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 on some particular occasions.

13. The PBO's functioning has been affected by four sources of inefficiency, namely: the weakness of PBO's Programme Management and communication functions, too centralized decision-making processes, and poorly conceived administrative Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

14. The weakness of the Programme Management function is essentially caused by the absence of a Senior Programme Manager at the PBO. A Reconciliation Officer was recruited in August 2013 while it had been planned to recruit a Program Manager; however the MIA prioritized having a Reconciliation Officer within the PBO on strengthening the Programme Management function. The main consequence of this decision is that different PBF-supported projects are not conceived by the PBO as part of the Reconciliation Programme but as individual interventions, which prevents synergies and avoiding overlaps among different projects.

15. The large number and high complexity of the tasks the Executive Director and the Head of the Programme Unit/Senior Technical Adviser perform as advisers to the GoL on peacebuilding issues generate an excessive workload of the Executive Director and the Head of the Programme Unit. In this scenario the executive Director and the Head of the Programme Unit/Senior Technical Adviser have been forced to prioritize some tasks over others. This prioritization has been done according to the strength of the various PBO's reporting lines, where the MIA reporting line has the highest priority. The main effect of this situation is the untimely support to JSC meetings, which has been hindering JSC's ability to make adequate decisions on the implementation of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016.

16. The predominance of the MIA reporting line over other reporting lines such as the PBSO or the JSC co-Chairs is chiefly explained by two reasons, namely: the majority of PBO staff members, including management staff, have temporary contracts with the MIA, thus they are not Civil Servants; and the PBO is physically located within the MIA compound.

17. Poorly conceived administrative SOPs have been affecting almost every activity of the PBO with special emphasis on fieldwork. This is an internal and external source of inefficiency since both the Administration Unit of the PBO and UNDP's Administration Department are responsible for it. The PBO has not been always able to prepare procurement documentation with the required quality, and response from UNDP's Administration Department has often lacked consistency and timeliness.

18. Effectiveness of the PBO in "coordinating and supporting M&E and reporting responsibilities of RUNOs and NIPs" has been excellent. This support has been conducted with

an emphasis on capabilities development, which has contributed to improve the quality and timelines of JSC reports. The good performance of the PBO when it comes to provide M&E and reporting support and training has to do with the ability of the M&E Team to proactively manage the main sources of inefficiency that affect the majority of PBO's accountabilities through planning its activities in advance and organizing its communication activities with the supervision of the management staff.

19. Effectiveness of the PBO in “training GoL policymakers, technical staff and CSOs” on Conflict Sensitive approaches and conflict mediation and management has been good; and it is worth mentioning that the fulfillment of this accountability, which has been assumed by the PBO since its inception in 2008, is especially valuable in a context of not fully developed capabilities to work on peacebuilding.

20. PBO's effectiveness and efficiency in “contributing to strategic policymaking on peacebuilding” and in “supporting or representing the GoL on peacebuilding issues, both nationally and internationally” have been excellent. The contribution of the PBO to policymaking is especially valuable in a context of not fully developed capabilities on peacebuilding.

21. PBO's ability to systematically address gender and human rights in the implementation of its tasks is limited. This is a consequence of the weak technical capabilities of PBO staff in regards to gender mainstreaming and human rights-based approach to programming (HRBA).

Main recommendations

22. It is recommended to reallocate to another institution three tasks associated to PBO's accountability “facilitating JSC functioning and oversight” pertaining to PBO's function as JSC Secretariat to prevent conflict of interests in PBO's functioning without hindering national ownership and national capabilities to work on peacebuilding. The three tasks that should be reallocated are “preparing, convening and facilitating JSC meetings”, “following up on decisions taken by the JSC”, and “acting as the key focal point for communication with the PBSO on the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016”. The evaluation, during its mission to Monrovia conducted a participatory assessment on the most suitable institution to assume the responsibility of performing these tasks. According to this assessment it is recommended to reallocate these tasks to UNMIL's SRSG's Front Office chiefly because the SRSG is co-Chair of the JSC, which would reinforce PBO's accountability to the JSC; and

because UNMIL has the strategic responsibility for coordinating peacebuilding activities in Liberia.

23. It is recommended to recruit a Senior Programme Manager for the PBO. At the same time it is recommended to separate programme-related activities and tasks associated to the accountabilities of the PBO as adviser to the GoL on peacebuilding, namely: “contributing to strategic policymaking on peacebuilding”, and “supporting the GoL in national and international activities on peacebuilding”. This means that the TOR of the Senior Programme Manager should not include any activity related to these two accountabilities.

24. It is recommended to prepare an administrative SOPs manual with the participation of PBO’s Administration Unit and UNDP’s Administration Department to clarify all the steps and documentation required to adequately fulfill UNDP’s administrative procedures and those corresponding to the National Implementation Modality (NIM). In addition it is recommended to include in this manual a maximum lag time between submission of procurement documentation to UNDP’s Administration Department and response from this department to the PBO’s Administration Unit.

25. The information and communications technology (ICT) tool used by the PBO is its Website², which main utility is for submitting and mapping reports on conflicts. PBO’s Website is a very basic tool that needs to be improved to be more user-friendly and useful through the utilization of Web 2.0 resources to promoting interaction between different peacebuilding stakeholders through chats, work groups on relevant issues, etc. In addition, it is recommended to make all the information concerning the work of the PBO available at the PBO’s Website: every relevant document on peacebuilding; JSC MOMs; PBO’s annual work plan; PBF-supported projects documentation such as project documents, budgets, and progress reports; Public Perception Surveys reports; PBO’s Procedures Manual, etc.

26. It is recommended to develop the capabilities of the PBO staff members on gender mainstreaming and on human rights-based approach to programming (HRBA) through a systematic collaboration between the PBO and UN Women and UNMIL’s Human Rights Protection Section (HRPS) with a focus on PBO’s capabilities development.

² <http://www.liberiapbo.ushahidi.com>

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. ABOUT THE PEACEBUILDING FUND, THE PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION AND THE PEACEBUILDING OFFICE IN LIBERIA

27. The Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) was established in 2005 through United Nations (UN) General Assembly resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645. The PBF is a global multi-donor fund to support post-conflict peacebuilding interventions in countries emerging from crisis; the PBF is currently operational in roughly 24 countries. The PBF is managed by the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) on behalf of the UN Secretary-General.

28. The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in August 2003 brought an end to 14 years of civil war in Liberia. In December 2007, the UN Secretary-General declared Liberia eligible to receive funding from the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). In September 2010, Liberia was also placed on the agenda of the UN's Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in response to the Government's request of May 2010. In October of 2010, the PBC and the Government of Liberia (GoL) adopted a Statement of Mutual Commitment (SMC), which outlined Security, Rule of Law, and Reconciliation as the priority areas for PBC engagement.

29. Liberia has been receiving funding from the PBF since 2007. An initial allocation of \$15 million was granted in early 2008, based on a first Peacebuilding Priority Plan. Since then, the PBF has made two more Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility (PRF) allocations, in 2011 and 2013, totaling an additional \$35 million. This latest tranche is aligned with the Agenda for Transformation (AfT) and supports the implementation of the National Reconciliation Roadmap, in recognition of the importance of national leadership and ownership over peace transitions.

30. As in most other PBF-recipient countries, at the country level, the management of the PBF is delegated to a Joint Steering Committee (JSC) that provides strategic guidance and oversight and decides on the allocation of PBF funding at the country level. Typically, JSCs are supported by Secretariats, which are funded by the PBF and dedicated to coordinating and overseeing implementation of the Priority Plans on behalf of the JSC. In Liberia, at the outset of PBF support, PBSO agreed with the government to establish the Peacebuilding Office (PBO) to perform the tasks of the Secretariat from within a government office. In addition to these accountabilities, the PBO was also designed to act as the Government of Liberia (GoL) Peacebuilding Office through which it coordinates the government's work on peacebuilding,

including its engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), and directly implements a number of projects. As the PBSO begins implementation of its third allocation, this evaluation has been commissioned to examine the PBO's complex accountability structures, performance, staffing structure and roles in order to make recommendations on the best arrangement moving forward.

1.2. ABOUT THE EVALUATION

1.2.1. Objective and scope of the evaluation

31. This **evaluation's objective** is to examine, as systematically and objectively as possible, the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, appropriateness and sustainability of the PBO's activities. The evaluation's **main purpose** is to help the PBO and PBSO define the most appropriate roles and range of activities and responsibilities to ensure maximum impact of PBF support to Liberia. In addition, the evaluator was asked to consider whether the functions of the JSC/PBF Secretariat could be more effectively performed through a different institutional arrangement.

32. **The object of study** for this evaluation is the Liberian Peacebuilding Office (PBO) and the evaluation's main area of investigation is the PBO's performance under the current array of functions, accountabilities and tasks. A historical review of the evolution of the PBO since its first incarnation as early as 2008 was conducted in order to better understand how the PBO has come to its current formulation.³

33. To undertake this examination, the evaluation set out to address a number of questions, initially laid out in the evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR) and refined by the Inception Report. Specifically, the Inception Report noted the omission of questions within the ToR probing the extent to which projects implemented by the PBO have mainstreamed gender and have taken human rights based approach.

1.2.2. Evaluation framework⁴

34. For the examination of PBO's organizational performance and effectiveness as the JSC Secretariat, the evaluation employed Organizational Analysis Theory, which allows systematic analysis of how an organization operates and can best be managed. The specific Organizational Theory applied in this case is a mixture between the Open Organizational Theory (OOT) and

³ A complete review of the country context and the history of the PBO can be found in Annex 4.

⁴ A complete description of the evaluation framework and methodology can be found in Annex 5.

the Natural Organizational Theory (NOT)⁵ since the PBO is a single organization with multiple actors and divisions (NOT), with multiple and sometimes conflicting goals (NOT), and the environment plays a major role in the structure (OOT).

35. For the study of the various peacebuilding projects implemented by the PBO related to reconciliation, conflict prevention and resolution, and justice and security, the evaluation was conducted as an Equity Focused Evaluation (EFE). Much like other evaluation frameworks, an EFE considers the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of policies, programmes and projects concerned with achieving development results. However, an EFE includes approaches to analyze how marginalized segments of the intervention's target population have benefited or taken into consideration by the initiative under evaluation. The most common approaches required to conduct an EFE are the gender approach and the human rights approach, which have been incorporated to this evaluation through a gender and human rights sensitive design of the evaluation matrix and the data-gathering tools, and an inclusive selection of sources of information.

1.2.3. Methodological approach

36. The evaluation was carried out following a mixed method approach that combines quantitative and qualitative research tools in an integrated design to ensure that the wide range of evaluation questions were provided with the most appropriate type of data for analysis.

37. The evaluator used the classic techniques of social research in two phases: a desk review of relevant documentation prior to an on-site visit to the PBO in Monrovia⁶, and a two-week field mission to gather additional first-hand data through a range of qualitative and quantitative techniques. Specifically, during field work the evaluator undertook the following:

- 50 key informants from the GoL, PBO, UN Agencies, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), Civil Society, donors and PBSO were interviewed using a mix of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.⁷ Interview guides were adapted to the five typologies of stakeholders identified during the preparation of the Inception Report (Annex 1): GoL, UN System, PBO, Civil Society and PBSO.⁸
- Design and deployment of a self-administered survey to 68 respondents from the GoL,

⁵ Organizational Analysis, Daniel A. MacFarland and Charles J. Gómez, September 2013, page 10.

⁶ A full list of consulted documents is included in Annex 10.

⁷ A full list of persons interviewed is included in Annex 8. Because of accessibility challenges, two interviews were conducted via telephone.

⁸ Interview guides can be found in Annex 6.

UN Agencies, UNMIL, Civil Society, donors and PBSO.⁹ Of the 68 surveys sent out 5 emails were bounced back and 22 persons responded the questionnaire, giving a response rate of 35%, quite high for an electronic self-administered survey.¹⁰

- Direct observation of PBO's activities: the evaluator interviewed every PBO staff member except the drivers and the Administrative Assistant. All these interviews were conducted at the PBO, which allowed the evaluator observing daily activities of the PBO staff, interactions between staff and work and communication dynamics over a considerable number of hours.

38. The two formal data gathering phases were augmented by follow up consultations once the evaluator had returned to his home country to address information gaps that remained after the field trip (third data-gathering phase).

39. **Evaluation principles:** according to the Terms of Reference (ToR) for this assignment, the evaluator has promoted an evaluation guided by the principle of credibility¹¹. Additionally the evaluator has strictly adhered to the Standards for Evaluation in the UN System (United Nations Evaluation Group-UNEG, 23 February 2012), and to the Norms for Evaluation in the UN System (UNEG, 23 February 2013).

40. **Evaluation constraints:** the main evaluation constraint relates to difficulties in the organization of the evaluation agenda during the evaluation mission to Monrovia. Meetings were cancelled and rescheduled constantly. The evaluator addressed this constraint by devoting extra time and effort to get most the required data from different sources to conduct. Despite these efforts the third data-gathering phase, which is normally used to fill very specific information gaps, was too time consuming.

2. PBO BACKGROUND

2.1. INTRODUCTION

41. To help support the implementation of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan and subsequent Plans, as well as to provide secretarial support to the JSC, the Liberian

⁹ A list of all survey recipients is included as Annex 7

¹⁰ The results of the self-administered survey can be found in Annex 14.

¹¹ The principle of credibility was implemented through: (1) consultation with and participation by key stakeholders to ensure that the evaluation remains relevant to the PBO's work, and that the evidence and analysis are sound and accurate; (2) methodological rigor to ensure that the most appropriate sources of evidence for answering the evaluation questions detailed in the ToR are used in a technically appropriate manner; and (3) independence to ensure that the analysis stands solely on an impartial and objective analysis of the evidence, without undue influence by any key stakeholder group.

Peacebuilding Office (PBO) was established in early 2009. Based within the Liberian Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), the Liberian PBO, as its name suggests, signaled the first time PBF experimented with placement of its JSC Secretariat within a government ministry instead of within a UN office. The aim in doing so was to support the Liberian government to build capacity to lead peacebuilding work. From its establishment, the PBO has been assigned two main functions: JSC Secretariat, GoL's Peacebuilding Office.

42. While the two main functions of the PBO have remained constant, its organizational structure and set of responsibilities and tasks have changed over time. Given the focus on assessing the recent performance of the PBO for the purposes of informing the best array of accountabilities and concrete tasks moving forward, this section will consider the PBO during the PBF third tranche. This section, therefore, will describe the PBO's accountabilities with associated reporting lines, concrete tasks to fulfill these accountabilities, and PBO's staffing.

2.2. PBO FUNCTION AS JSC SECRETARIAT FROM JANUARY 2014 TO THE PRESENT

2.2.1. Accountabilities

43. Accountabilities of the PBO from January 2014 to the present are “facilitating JSC functioning and oversight”; “coordinating and supporting RUNOs and NIPs in the design, implementation, M&E and reporting”; and “monitoring achievement of results of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016.”

2.2.2. Tasks¹²

44. **Facilitating JSC functioning and oversight:** the PBO has been providing secretarial support to the JSC through convening the periodic meetings of the JSC, sending invitations to the various JSC members, sharing relevant documentation with JSC members for decision-making, taking minutes of meetings, and following-up on the decisions made by the JSC. The PBO has also been facilitating JSC oversight on the implementation of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 through the preparation of quarterly progress reports. Finally, The PBO has been supporting the JSC in its reporting responsibilities toward the PBSO through collecting and preparing its annual reports on the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 progress and challenges and in maintaining communication with the PBSO. Finally, the PBO has been providing secretarial support to the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on

¹² PBO's tasks are organized by each of the accountabilities identified.

Justice and Security and to the TAG on Reconciliation.¹³

45. Coordinating and supporting RUNOs and NIPs in the design, implementation, M&E and reporting of PBF-supported projects: the PBO supported the design of PBF-supported projects according to PBF Guidelines before approval by the JSC, and guided RUNOs and NIPs in the development of M&E plans. The PBO has been developing M&E capacities of RUNOs and NIPs and supporting RUNOs and NIPs in the preparation of half year and annual reports on projects.

46. Monitoring achievement of results of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016: the PBO set up a functional M&E system for quality reporting of performance and results of the implementation of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016, and has been providing advice to the JSC on achievement of its objectives. Additionally, the PBO has been organizing joint monitoring visits to the field. In addition, the PBO was tasked to design and conduct a “National Reconciliation Barometer survey” to measure impact of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 and the Reconciliation Programme.

2.2.3. Reporting lines

47. The various reporting lines are organized by accountability as follows: facilitating JSC functioning and oversight: **JSC co-chairs and PBSO**. Coordinating and supporting RUNOs and NIPs in the design, implementation and M&E and reporting of PBF-supported projects: **JSC co-chairs, MPTF-O and PBSO**. Monitoring achievement of results of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016: **JSC co-chairs and PBSO**.

2.3. PBO FUNCTION AS GoL’s PEACEBUILDING OFFICE

2.3.1. Accountabilities

48. Accountabilities of the PBO as GoL’s Peacebuilding Office from January 2014 to the present are “maintaining the liaison with Government counterparts emphasizing extensive consultation on reconciliation issues”; “implementing a Communication and Outreach Strategy on the Reconciliation Roadmap”; “training GoL policymakers and technical staff and CSOs”; “implementing peacebuilding projects”; “implementing some components of the Early Warning Mechanism”; “acting as Programme Management Unit for the Reconciliation Programme”; “contributing to strategic GoL policymaking on peacebuilding”; “managing GoL partnership

¹³ The Reconciliation TAG functions as Technical Working Group that meets according to the needs of the implementation of Reconciliation Roadmap (4 times in 2013). The Justice and Security TAG meets on an *ad hoc* basis to analyze specific issues since the Programme Management Unit (PMU) of the Justice and Security Joint Programme (JSJP) started operations.

with the PBC”); and “supporting the GoL in national and international activities on peacebuilding”.

2.3.2. Tasks

49. **Maintaining the liaison with Government counterparts emphasizing extensive consultation on reconciliation issues:** the PBO planned to conduct a baseline survey to measure how RUNOs and other non-UN stakeholders perceive timeliness of PBO communication and coordination. However, the evaluation did not find any information on this baseline and on any systematic activities associated to this accountability.

50. **Implementing a Communication and Outreach Strategy on the Reconciliation Roadmap:** the main task associated with this accountability is the implementation of the “Fostering National Consensus and Ownership of the National Reconciliation Roadmap through Civic Engagement and Outreach” project. Two additional tasks are organising public events to communicate results of the Liberia Priority Plan 2013-2016 and elaborating and disseminating factsheets on PBF-supported projects.

51. **Training GoL policymakers, technical staff and CSOs:** the PBO has been implementing capacity development activities to strengthen the capacity of specific target groups in conflict management and mediation using a rights-based and gender-sensitive approach.

Implementing peacebuilding projects

52. The PBO provided M&E support to the Justice and Security Joint Programme (JSJP) to measure how services provided by the regional hubs are utilized by the population through the development of an M&E tracking sheet, and has been contributing to develop the capabilities of regional hub managers on conflict mediation and management through training activities. Finally, the PBO has been conducting Perception Surveys on Justice and Security.

53. The PBO has been supporting step-by-step implementation of the Palava Hut Programme, which seeks to promote community based healing and reconciliation through the utilization of a traditional justice and accountability mechanism, the Palava Hut.

54. The PBO plans to resume the implementation of the “National Internship Programme”¹⁴ as soon as some funds are available. From 2009 the PBO had been receiving requests from

¹⁴ The PBO implemented the “National Internship Programme” in the 2011-2013 period.

international students to work as interns at the PBO as a requirement before graduation. Later on the PBO decided it would be interesting to have national interns as well to help strengthen local capacity for peace, thus the PBO has been including in its projects proposals a small amount just for stipend for national interns who are not sponsored since 2011.

Implementing some components of an Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) Mechanism

55. **Brief description of the EWER Mechanism:** the objective of this mechanism is to prevent community-related conflicts from escalating into violence. It has two components: the **“Strengthening Local/Traditional Mechanisms for Peace at County and District level”** project, and the **"Social Cohesion Initiative"**. The PBO, acting on behalf of the MIA has been leading the National Early Warning and Early Response Working Group (EWWG), which deploy the EWER Mechanism in the field. The EWWG is composed of national and international organizations and institutions including UNMIL, the Liberia National Police (LNP), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)¹⁵ and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs).¹⁶ EWWG focal points collect, collate and send reports on incidents to the Liberia’s Early-Warning and Response Network (LERN) Website¹⁷ through SMS. The LERN website is managed and periodically updated by the PBO.

The “Strengthening Local/Traditional Mechanisms for Peace Project”

56. The EWER project was conceived and designed between 2008 and 2011 with the involvement of the PBO in the conduct of research and diagnostic activities; and was implemented in Liberia between 2012 and mid-2014 through the NGO TrustAfrica with funding from the NGO Humanity United.¹⁸ It focused on training and organizing conflict early warning focal points in five prone counties. It also helped communities undertake actions through mediation and to prepare and send monthly early warning incident reports to be uploaded to the LERN website.

57. The PBO has been implementing the “Strengthening Local/Traditional Mechanisms for Peace Project” as NIP on behalf of the MIA. This project is basically an expansion of the

¹⁵ CSOs are defined as organized civil society and can come in many forms, some informal and some as formal entities such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil-based organizations (CBOs), faith-based organizations (FBOs), among many others.

¹⁶ More than 80% of the EWWG members are CSOs and NGOs.

¹⁷ The LERN Website has been functioning since 2011.

¹⁸ Humanity United is currently only funding the EWER Consultant position and the National Early Warning and Early Response Working Group (EWWG).

EWER Project. It has three chief objectives: reactivating, strengthening and decentralizing CPCs in 15 counties, establishing EWER centers in three Justice and Security Regional Hubs, and supporting CSOs and CBOs through the “Small Grants Initiative” to address community based conflicts.

58. **The “Social Cohesion Initiative”:** the PBO plans to resume the implementation of this project¹⁹ as soon as some funds are available with the objective of developing local capacities for peace through supporting CSOs with small-scale peace and reconciliation projects at the community level to intervene in conflicts and facilitate dialogues in collaboration with CPCs.

59. **Acting as PMU for the Reconciliation Programme:** the PBO has been acting as Programme Management Unit (PMU) for the Reconciliation Programme.

60. **Contributing to strategic policymaking on peacebuilding:** PBO’s involvement in the preparation of key policy documents has not been as intense in this phase as in past periods because the AfT, the National Visioning Exercise “LIBERIA RISING” and the Reconciliation Roadmap were finalized during earlier phases with the participation of the PBO. The PBO is currently responsible for preparing reports on the peacebuilding component of the AfT for Liberia Development Alliance (LDA) and quarterly reports on the progress of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Report.

61. **Managing GoL partnership with the PBC:** the PBO has been preparing SMC reports every nine months for the PBC, and acting as focal point for communication with the PBC.

62. **Supporting the GoL in national and international activities on peacebuilding:** the PBO has been preparing talking points, speeches and briefing notes for key international meetings, writing articles and research papers for international events on peacebuilding, receiving international missions, and acting as GoL focal point for external experts on peacebuilding.

2.3.3. Reporting lines

63. The various reporting lines are organized by accountability as follows: maintaining the liaison with Government counterparts emphasizing extensive consultation on reconciliation

¹⁹ The PBO had been implementing the MIA’s project “Social Cohesion Initiative” with funds from UNICEF during 2011, 2012 and until March 2013.

issues: **MIA**; implementing a Communication and Outreach Strategy: **MIA**; training GoL policymakers and technical staff and CSOs: **MIA**; implementing peacebuilding projects: **MIA and JSJP Programme Manager**; implementing some components of the EWER Mechanism: **MIA and Humanity United**; acting as PMU for the Reconciliation Programme: **MIA**; contributing to strategic policymaking on peacebuilding: **MIA and the Liberia Development Alliance**; managing GoL partnership with PBC: **MIA**; supporting or representing GoL on peacebuilding issues, both nationally and internationally: **MIA**.

2.4. PBO STAFFING

64. The PBO is managed by an Executive Director and has two units. The Programme Unit, which is composed of a Head of the Programme Unit, an M&E Specialist and an M&E Officer (M&E Team), a Reconciliation Officer, a Training Officer and an EWER Consultant; and the Administration Unit, which is composed of a Finance Officer, a Procurement Officer, an Administrative Officer and an Administrative Assistant. Additionally, the PBO has three drivers.

3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

3.1. RELEVANCE TO THE COUNTRY CONTEXT

3.1.1. Introduction

65. The purpose of this section is to analyze to what extent the range of accountabilities in which the PBO is engaged are relevant to the current Liberian context. Relevance to the context is about the connection of these accountabilities to the Liberian reality and how challenges relating to such accountabilities contribute to persisting instability. The relevance assessment is restricted to the majority of accountabilities of the PBO as GoL's Peacebuilding Office.

66. Accountabilities as JSC Secretariat are not connected to the country context but are part of the Standard Operating Procedures of the PBF; and the same applies to the "managing GoL partnership with the PBC" accountability corresponding to the function of the PBO as GoL's Peacebuilding Office. These accountabilities are obviously necessary for the correct deployment and management of different PBF fund allocations in Liberia; and for facilitating PBF's ability to act accountably on its investments, JSC's ability to make adequate decisions on the implementation of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 and PBC's ability to make strategic decisions on the progress of the SMC.

3.1.2. Relevance to the country context of different PBO's accountabilities as GoL's Peacebuilding Office

67. Accountabilities of the PBO as GoL's Peacebuilding Office can be split into two categories of analysis for the purpose of this section: accountabilities related to the implementation of peacebuilding activities; and accountabilities related developing capabilities of national peacebuilding stakeholders, contributing to strategic GoL policymaking on peacebuilding and supporting the GoL in national and international activities on peacebuilding.

3.1.2.1. Accountabilities related to the coordination and implementation of peacebuilding activities

68. **Finding 1.** All the accountabilities of the PBO related to the implementation of peacebuilding projects are relevant to the current country context.

69. Accountabilities in this category are associated with three work areas, namely: reconciliation, justice and security, and conflict prevention and resolution. The relevance of these three work areas to the country context is analyzed below.

70. The Agenda for Transformation (AFT) includes "Peace, Security and Rule of Law" as one of its pillars, which has four Sector Goals: security, peace and reconciliation, Justice and Rule of Law, and judicial reform. The importance given to justice and reconciliation in the AFT, together with the launching in September 2013 of the Reconciliation Roadmap illustrate how relevant reconciliation and justice are to the current national context.

71. The Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 incorporates in the risk analysis that the progressive transition process of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) may create security challenges if national security institutions are not adequately equipped and deployed. The UNMIL Transition Planning Working Group points to considerable gaps in the Liberian security sector, especially around issues such as infrastructure, logistics, communications and mobility. The Liberia National Police (LNP) and the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization (BIN) will be particularly vulnerable as many of the activities currently undertaken by UNMIL will fall to these two security agencies.

72. In addition, reconciliation has never been addressed in the country so it needs attention as

one of the main pillars for the construction of a fully inclusive society historically characterized by the socioeconomic divide between Americo-Liberians and natives; which was the main cause of war in Liberia and continues to be a threat to peace. At the same time decentralization of the justice system is paramount to maintain stability because of the inaccessibility of the majority of the population from the counties to justice services since most Liberians cannot afford traveling to Monrovia and Alternative Dispute Resolution²⁰ (ADR) systems can only deal with lesser crimes.

73. Finally, the results of the self-administered survey match the qualitative analysis of relevance to the context of the three work areas: 60% of respondents believe that justice and security are very relevant to the context, 85% believe that reconciliation is very relevant to the context, and 70% believe that conflict prevention and resolution are very relevant to the context.²¹

3.1.2.2. Accountabilities related to developing capabilities of national peacebuilding stakeholders, contributing to strategic GoL policymaking on peacebuilding and supporting the GoL in national and international activities on peacebuilding

74. **Finding 2.** All the accountabilities of the PBO related to developing capabilities of national peacebuilding stakeholders, contributing to strategic GoL policymaking on peacebuilding and supporting the GoL in national and international activities on peacebuilding are relevant to the current country context.

75. The AfT, in its “Implementation Strategy” section, acknowledges that the low capacity of public and private institutions was identified as a constraint to the effective and timely implementation of the Lift Liberia Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). The issue of weak national capabilities in all development sectors is also abundantly addressed by the AfT. Capacity development on reconciliation and conflict prevention and resolution at the national and local levels is identified by the Reconciliation Roadmap as one of its core operating strategies to change attitudes and promote reconciliation throughout Liberia. Finally, the implementation approach of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 focuses on strengthening the capacities of democratic national and local institutions, Civil Society and communities to address and resolve any potential conflicts.

²⁰ ADR refers to a variety of processes that help parties resolve disputes without a trial such as the Palava Hut.

²¹ PBO evaluation self-administered survey: question number 1.

3.2. EFFECTIVENESS

3.2.1. Introduction

76. The purpose of this section is to assess PBO's performance in the implementation of different tasks²² associated with the various accountabilities of the PBO presented in section 2 (PBO BACKGROUND: 2011-2013, 2013-2014). The assessment is based on both qualitative data, including the review of Progress Reports of PBF-supported projects between January and June 2014, and quantitative data gathered by the evaluation. However, qualitative information is much more detailed thus it is the chief component for the assessment. The effectiveness assessment basically covers the period comprised between the approval of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 by the JSC (6 August 2013) until the evaluation mission to Monrovia in June-July 2014.

3.2.2. Assessment of effectiveness in the fulfillment of different accountabilities of the PBO as JSC Secretariat

3.2.2.1. Facilitating JSC functioning and oversight tasks

77. **Finding 3.** Information to be shared with JSC meetings attendants is not submitted with sufficient anticipation. The handling of minutes of JSC meetings (MOMs) is not conducted in a systematic and timely manner and does not meet the required quality.

78. **Finding 4.** The PBO has substantially improved the support provided to the JSC in preparing JSC annual reports since 2013 in terms of quality and timeliness. However, 2012 and 2013 JSC reports did not address HHRR issues. It has to be mentioned that the reporting templates did not address HHRR and gender issues.

79. **Finding 5.** The PBO responds PBO's information requests with complete information in a timely manner. However, information exchanges between the PBO and the PBO are not always reliably shared with other peacebuilding stakeholders in Liberia.

Different tasks corresponding to this accountability, and the evidence for these findings are assessed below.

²² Annex 3 includes all relevant information regarding each task: to which function and accountability the task pertains, measurable indicators and targets when available, task status according to the 2013 PBO Annual Report, information collected by the evaluation, and a color-coded qualitative assessment of the performance of each task including quality and timeliness.

Secretarial support to JSC meetings

80. Invitation to JSC meetings and the documentation that the members of the JSC need to prepare for the meetings not sent with sufficient anticipation. Typical lag time between submission of invitations to JSC meetings together with the information for JSC members and JSC meetings is 2.5 days.²³ This situation has a negative effect on the management of the PBF at the country level. JSC members have to consult documents and ask for clarifications during the meetings instead of devoting all time and efforts to substantial discussions on the strategic guidance of peacebuilding activities and make well-informed decisions on peacebuilding processes. For example, the email to convene JSC members to the JSC meeting scheduled for 19 July 2013 was sent three days in advance. The agenda for this meeting included the approval of the revised Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 and of the *criteria* for selection of PBF projects.

81. The evaluation detected several issues in regards to the handling of JSC minutes of meetings (MOMs): MOMs are not always complete and reliable and do not always include comments made during the review process; MOMs are not shared with JSC members for comments, review and subsequent endorsement immediately after each meeting²⁴ but sent as part of the documentation for the next JSC meeting, though this did not happen in 50% of the cases analyzed²⁵, so JSC members had to ask the PBO to submit previous MOMs; MOMs do not always include a list of attendants²⁶; there is no standard template for the MOMs, and there is no proper procedure to officially endorse MOMs.

82. Follow-up on decisions made by the JSC is not conducted in a systematic manner. Since it is the JSC that has the ability to enforce decisions made, the poor preparation of JSC meetings and MOMs negatively affects the application of recommendations and decisions made by the JSC: only approximately 50% of decisions made by the JSC are reviewed in subsequent JSC meetings.²⁷

Communication with PBSO on the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 implementation

²³ The evaluation has analyzed invitations convening 12 JSC meetings held in 2011, 2012 and 2014: 19 January 2011, 5 May 2011, 13 July 2011, 4 August 2011, 30 August 2011, 1 November 2011, 29 March 2012, 17 May 2012, 31 July 2012, 31 July 2012, 14 March 2014, and 21 May 2014.

²⁴ MOM of the JSC held on 21 May 21, 2014 had not yet been delivered when the evaluation mission to Monrovia finished on 7 July 2014.

²⁵ The evaluation analyzed documentation annexed to invitation emails convening 12 JSC meetings held in 2011, 2012 and 2014: 19 January 2011, 5 May 2011, 13 July 2011, 4 August 2011, 30 August 2011, 1 November 2011, 29 March 2012, 17 May 2012, 31 July 2012, 31 July 2012, 14 March 2014, and 21 May 2014.

²⁶ MOMs of JSC meetings held on 25 January 2013, 14 March 2013; 4 October 2013 and 14 March 2014.

²⁷ *Idem.*

83. The PBO usually responds every PBSO request for information with quality and in a timely manner. However, information exchanges between the PBO and the PBSO were not shared with other peacebuilding stakeholders in a reliable manner on some particular occasions. For example, the former Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) for Peacebuilding Support agreed with the former Minister of Internal Affairs in February 2013 to support the dissemination of the Reconciliation Roadmap through the printing and distribution of materials with \$50,000. Later in 2013 the new Minister of Internal Affairs issued a request for the reallocation of \$300,000 USD to finance a Communication Strategy on the Reconciliation Programme. In a draft letter prepared by the PBO that the JSC was going to send to the PBSO, it was detected an inconsistency on the amount agreed since the reallocation of \$300,000 USD was referred to as already agreed while it was not.

Preparation of JSC annual reports²⁸

84. The 2012 JSC annual report was submitted with a delay of two months and required major modifications after been reviewed by the PBSO. It missed examples of effects on the ground and about catalytic effects. HHRR and gender issues were not systematically addressed.²⁹ It has to be mentioned that Liberia and Guinea were the first PBF-supported countries that were asked to prepare JSC annual reports in 2012, so this was a new task for the PBO. In addition, the reporting template did not specifically address HHRR and gender issues.

85. The 2013 JSC annual report was submitted on time and included detailed information from the Perception Surveys and on the Alternative Land Disputes mechanism. The report addressed some gender issues though did not include any HHRR-related references. Again, it has to be mentioned that the reporting template did not specifically address HHRR and gender issues.

86. The PBO has a proactive approach in preparing these reports contacting the MPTF-O seeking clarifications on reporting templates and deadlines.

87. [Secretarial support to the Reconciliation and Justice and Security TAGs](#): the support of the PBO was key to creating the Reconciliation TAG and facilitating its work supporting four meetings in 2013 and two in 2014. On the other hand, the PBO has provided very limited

²⁸ This task has been assessed according to progress toward the targets of 3 IOAs included in the PBO Project 2014-2016 results framework as reported in the January-June Progress Report of the project: “number of JSC Annual Reports submitted within 7 days of the deadline”; “number of JSC Annual Reports of which the quality is rated as acceptable by PBSO review team”; and “percentage of JSC members who provide feedback on JSC reports.

²⁹ An assessment on how documentation prepared by the PBO addresses HHRR and gender issues can be found in Annex 12.

support to the TAG on J&S although has attended meetings. It was the PMU of the JSJP the one to convene, organize and facilitate meetings.

3.2.2.2. Coordinating and supporting RUNOs and NIPs in project design, implementation, M&E and reporting

88. **Finding 6.** The PBO did not lead with adequate timing the preparation of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 and PBF-supported projects. Since there was not a call for proposals the selection of projects ideas to be included in Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 was not open to all peacebuilding stakeholders, thus it was not inclusive and transparent. PBO's contribution to promote complementarities and prevent potential overlaps among projects during the design phase was insufficient. Gender and HHRR mainstreaming in project proposals could have benefitted from some collaboration among RUNOs and NIPs. The PBO assisted with good quality NIPs and RUNOs in improving projects' results frameworks, however none of the frameworks include any HHRR-related indicators of achievement (IOAs).³⁰

89. **Finding 7.** PBF-supported projects have been implemented independently so far. The PBO has not actually been coordinating implementation of PBF-supported projects with other peacebuilding initiatives under its supervision such as the EWER Project.

90. **Finding 8.** The PBO has been providing good and timely support in M&E and reporting to NIPs and RUNOs. All the half-year (January-June 2014) progress reports included monitoring data collected according to the M&E plans of PBF-supported projects.

91. **Finding 9.** Technical support provided by the PBO to project managers is positively assessed. This support has been especially intense and since the last Ebola outbreak.

Providing effective coordination of the projects that support the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016

i) Review of project proposals included in the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 as project ideas

³⁰ HHRR was a *criterion* only applicable to projects related to national security forces, thus it did not apply to current PBF-supported projects

92. The revised and approved Liberia Priority Plan 2013-2016 already identified key project areas, projects ideas, RUNOs and NIPs. There was not a truly competitive selection process of proposals but project ideas were negotiated and some national institutions and UN agencies managed to put their proposals forward. In this context, the review process consisted of assessing the quality of proposals to improve them.

93. During September 2013 the PBO facilitated the review of project proposals based on a “Technical Verification Process”³¹ to make sure projects fulfilled the *criteria* stipulated in the PBF Guidelines. A technical Advisory Panel (TAP) was set up on 12 September, when a review session was conducted, and then had five working days to review the proposals and make recommendations to RUNOs and NIPs to improve them. NIPs and RUNOs had three working days to improve the proposals and submit them along with the TAP’s recommendations to the JSC on 25 September 2013 for final review. On 4 October project proposals were approved by the JSC. The only reason to explain why the process was conducted so fast identified by the evaluation is that the official launch of the Palava Huts Talks by the President had been planned for October 2013. As a consequence of poor planning, the review of proposals was left to the last minute.

94. It has to be mentioned that not all the recommendations of the TAP were applied by RUNOs and NIPs basically because of the short time given, and that four out of five RUNOs believe that when projects were approved some of them did not have the required quality. For example, the results frameworks of some proposals had to be improved after projects were approved by the JSC.

95. No joint working sessions were organized to promote information exchanges and complementarities between different proposals until the TAP was formed. Once the TAP was formed, the process was too fast to allow project proposals benefitting from the interaction between RUNOs and NIPS. Gender mainstreaming and human rights based approach in project proposals is weak in general terms³² while it could have benefitted from some collaborations: UN Women, the MoGD and UNMIL’s Gender Section could have contributed to improving gender mainstreaming in all proposals; in addition UNMIL’s Human Rights Protection Section (HRPS) could have been an interesting resource to improve human rights sensitivity of

³¹ The “Technical Verification Process” is described in a document named “ToR Technical Advisory Panel” and contains a basic description of the proposals review process, the composition of the TAP, the *criteria* to assess proposals and the project transmittal template.

³² The assessment on how gender and HHRR issues are addressed by different documents produced or coordinated by the PBO conducted by the evaluation that can be found in Annex 12 shows that three project documents address gender issues systematically while the remaining project documents include only isolated references to gender issues; and none of the PBF-supported projects address HHRR issues.

proposals.³³

96. The review of PBF-supported projects reveals that only two out of eight results frameworks include some interactions with other PBF-supported projects. At the same time, six out of eight projects include ADR activities in similar target areas³⁴ and target population groups such as youth, women, elders and traditional leaders coincide in many cases. In this situation there is a risk of overlaps and of involving similar target population groups in ADR activities following different approaches and methodologies such as the Palava Hut methodology, community-based conflict management from a gender perspective and land disputes prevention and resolution system. This issue was raised by several RUNOs and NIPs such as the MoGD, the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS), UN Women and UNICEF during the TAP review, but according to the assessment of the projects half-year progress reports presented in the next section, interaction among projects has been minimum.

97. Finally, during the review of project proposals the PBO conducted an exhaustive review of different results frameworks and provided comments and suggestions to all the project proposals to better organize outcomes and outputs according to the standard template, to ensure linkages to the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 results framework, to improve the formulation of assumptions, to include some TAP comments, etc. However, suggestions on how to improve gender and HHRR sensitiveness of results frameworks were insufficient. In addition, given the tight deadlines to finalize the project documents, the PBO met with some of the NIPs and RUNOs separately in late 2013 to fine-tune their results frameworks where necessary. The quality of this support was good, although none of the PBF-supported projects results frameworks include HHRR-related IOAs.

ii) Coordination of implementation of projects that support the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016

98. The review of project half-year progress update reports covering from January to June 2014 shows that interaction among different PBF-funded projects is almost non-existent. Despite the different project reports include descriptions of main activities implemented, none of these

³³ The MoGD and UN Women were represented in the TAP and attended the review session on 12 September 2013, providing comments and suggestions on how to improve gender mainstreaming in the proposals. UNMIL's Human Rights Protection Section (HRPS) participation in the review of proposals was very limited. Actually UNMIL's HRPS was not formally part of the TAP, which was supposed to be a small team so only two members of UNMIL from the Rule of Law and the Consolidation of Democratic Governance pillars were in the TAP. It has to be mentioned that the human rights *criterion* related to human rights in the PBF Guidelines is applicable only to project proposals that involving national security forces.

³⁴ The six projects supported by the PBF at the evaluation mission to Monrovia have Bomi, Gbarpolu, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Bassa, Grand Gedeh as target counties.

reports mention interactions with other PBF-funded projects or with other projects supervised by the PBO. For example, the “Community Based Conflict Management-Women as Peace Makers and Nation Builders” project conducted an assessment in January 2014 to select communities for the construction of five Peace Huts. One of the conflict drivers identified in these communities was land disputes. However, the half-year reports do not mention any coordination between this project the “Community-based Truth Telling and Atonement Project” and the “Support to the Establishment of a Land Disputes Prevention and Resolution System in Liberia - Phase 2.” Furthermore, none of the progress reports mention any coordination with the EWER Project and the “Strengthening Local and Traditional Mechanisms for Peace”, which has nationwide coverage.

99. It has to be added that the initial implementation stages should have focused on those potential synergies not identified during the review of proposals while preliminary work is done before the bulk of implementation starts.

100. [Technical advice to RUNOs and NIPS in preparing their PBF half-year and annual report:](#) the PBO regularly supports RUNOs and NIPS in the utilization of templates and in the review of reports making comments to clarify specific issues as part of the quality assurance process before uploading reports to the MPTF-O Gateway. The PBO organized three trainings on reporting templates between June 2013 and June 2014 with excellent results since the timeliness and quality of JSC reports has improved since 2013.

101. [Development of M&E plans of PBF-supported projects:](#) at the end of 2013 and early 2014 the PBO supported NIPs and RUNOs in fine-tuning their M&E plans based on the new format provided by PBSO and according to the review of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 results framework. The M&E plans were elaborated at the level of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 and for each PBF-supported project and determine how indicators will be tracked for the measuring of results, and when and by whom monitoring activities have to be undertaken. All the half-year (January-June 2014) progress reports included monitoring data according to the M&E plans.

102. [Development of national M&E capabilities](#)³⁵: during 2013 the PBO facilitated one M&E training for GoL institutions such as the Inter-Agency Steering Committee (IASC) of the Gbarnga Regional J&S Hub, the Judiciary, the LNP, the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization (BIN) and the Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation (BCR). The PBO also

³⁵ This task has been assessed according to progress toward the target of an IOA included in the PBO Project 2014-2016 results framework as reported in the January-June Progress Report of the project: number of M&E trainings conducted by the PBO; target: 3 trainings in 2013 and 2 in 2014.

facilitated a 3-day training in Monrovia in October 2013 to further enhance capacity in planning, monitoring, reporting and evaluation for the implementing partners that was quite successful since implementing partners were able to collect data for their half-year progress reports despite almost none of the NIPs and RUNOs have specific M&E staff.

103. *Support to project managers*: the PBO has been providing project managers with regular updates on implementation plans and reporting responsibilities and supporting them in the elaboration of Annual Work Plans, the identification of training needs, elaboration of TORs for recruitment processes, etc. The PBO organized in July 2014 a mid-year review and training retreat in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County, that is assessed by project managers as very helpful in providing guidance on assessing the projects, developing actions plans for future activities and result-based report writing, which had a positive effect on the timely upload of half-year progress reports to the MPTF-O Gateway. The PBO has been very active in providing additional support to projects since escalation of the Ebola outbreak in June 2014 by discussing with RUNOs and NIPs challenges relating to the projects and how these challenges can be addressed. Some ideas such as reviewing work plans and recasting projects budgets to address the specific peacebuilding difficulties created by the Ebola crisis have been provided by the PBO.

3.2.2.3. Monitoring achievement of results of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016

104. **Finding 10.** The PBO substantially improved the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 results framework in September 2013 from the officially approved version. The reviewed results framework includes detailed and SMART³⁶ IOA and some impact indicators to be updated through surveys, baseline data, specific targets to be reached, etc.

105. **Finding 11.** The implementation of the Barometer Survey National Reconciliation has not yet started because the PBO is collaborating with a similar initiative funded by the United States Institute of Peace that plans to conduct an exploratory study that has not yet been carried out.

106. *Monitoring progress of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 to update the JSC*: there were several attempts to conduct joint monitoring between late 2013 and June 2014, but most of them were cancelled because of successive Ebola outbreaks. It has to be mentioned that PBO does not necessarily collect monitoring data during joint monitoring visits, which primary aim is to cross-check the situation on the ground including results achieved and

³⁶ An indicator should be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**vailable/achievable in a cost effective way, **R**elevant for the programme, and available in a **T**imely manner (SMART).

possible bottlenecks. Monitoring data collection is basically done by the implementing partners previously trained by the PBO; consequently difficulties to conduct monitoring visits have not been an obstacle to data collection.

107. [Improvement of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 results framework](#): in September 2013 a detailed results/M&E framework was developed for the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016. The revised results framework was presented to and agreed by the Justice and Security Board and the JSC. The PBO managed to substantially improve the results framework from the original version, which was incomplete. It only included a set of ideas for IOA and lacked specific targets to be achieved. The reviewed results framework includes detailed and SMART IOA and impact indicators to be measured through the application of surveys such as the “Reconciliation Barometer” or surveys to be applied to representative population samples, baseline data, specific targets to be reached and easy to collect means of verification. Even in the current Ebola situation RUNOs and NIPs have been able to collect data to feed the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 results framework through implementing partners with permanent presence in the field such as the five Land Coordination Centers (LCCs)³⁷, local CSOs and NGOs³⁸, or human right monitors.³⁹

108. [Design and conduct of a National Reconciliation Barometer Survey](#)⁴⁰: since a similar initiative developed independently of the PBO was approved for funding by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) in 2013, the PBO reoriented the initial idea of an independent survey to align with this initiative, which was the right decision. However, there has not been much progress so far because the exploratory study funded by USIP has not yet been carried out.⁴¹

³⁷ “Support to the Establishment of a Land Disputes Prevention and Resolution System-phase 2” project. UN-Habitat and Land Commission.

³⁸ The two projects led by UN Women and the MoGD: “Community-based Conflict management-Women as Peace Makers and Nation Builders” and “Women’s Economic Empowerment”

³⁹ “Community-based Truth Telling and Atonement Project”. UNDP and INCHR.

⁴⁰ This task has been assessed according to progress toward an IOA included in the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 Results Framework: Percentage of citizens in pilot locations who are positive about the national reconciliation process disaggregated by men/women (target for September 2014: at least 50% (to be confirmed after conducting baseline survey).

⁴¹ The PBO included some questions about peace and reconciliation in the June 2014 Survey of Public Perception of justice and security to at least get some information about the opinions of people in the counties of Bong, Lofa and Nimba on such issues.

3.2.3. Assessment of effectiveness in the fulfillment of different accountabilities of the PBO as GoL's Peacebuilding Office

3.2.3.1. *Maintaining the liaison with Government counterparts emphasizing extensive consultation on reconciliation issues*

109. **Finding 12.** The PBO is not actually conducting extensive consultations on reconciliation issues.

110. *Consultation on reconciliation issues with key peacebuilding stakeholders:* when the PBO led the preparation of important strategic documents such as the Reconciliation Roadmap or the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016, it convened technical sessions to work on the documents with different Liberian specialists. However, consultation with peacebuilding stakeholders included as sources of information for this evaluation has been weak: 60% of respondents to the self-administered survey answered that the PBO consults their institutions on reconciliation issues only occasionally or never.⁴² In addition, the evaluation did not find any information on systematic activities associated to this accountability.

3.2.3.2. *Implementing a Communication and Outreach Strategy on the Reconciliation Roadmap*

111. **Finding 13.** The design and implementation of the “Communication and Outreach Project” are delayed and no outreach activities have been carried out since July 2013 due to lack of funding.

112. *Implementing the "Communication and Outreach Project"*⁴³: the PBO has developed a Draft Communication and Outreach Project that seeks to promote information dissemination on the Reconciliation Roadmap to foster national consensus and ownership of the Reconciliation Roadmap through civic engagement and outreach. The full design of the “Communication and Outreach Project” is delayed and there are not funds to develop it yet, although the GoL has committed \$350,000 for the 2014-2015 fiscal budget.

113. *Organizing public events to promote Reconciliation Roadmap and disseminate results of*

⁴² Source: PBO evaluation self-administered survey, question number 11.

⁴³ This task has been assessed according to progress toward the targets of three IOAs included in the PBO Project 2014-2016 results framework as reported in the January to June Progress report of the project: PBO Communication Plan developed and operationalized (target for December 2016: PBO Communication Plan effectively operationalized); number of factsheets on PBF projects produced and disseminated (target for 2014: 3 factsheets); number of public events highlighting results of the Peacebuilding Priority Plan (target for 2014: 3 public events).

the Liberia Priority Plan 2013-2016: following the Reconciliation Roadmap launch, the PBO was requested to support the MIA and the LPI in organizing a series of follow-up activities, starting with a public outreach event in Gbarnga, Bong County, on 29-31 July 2013. No more public events have been organized due to lack of funding.

114. *Elaborating and disseminating factsheets on PBF-supported projects:* the PBO prepared one factsheet with basic information on the PBC, the PBF, the PBO and the currently PBF-supported projects; 200 copies have been distributed in Monrovia so far.

3.2.3.3. Training GoL policymakers, technical staff and CSOs on Conflict Sensitivity and conflict management and prevention

115. **Finding 14.** This task is has been implemented with quality and according to planned targets though its direct effects on, for example, the improvement of the administration of justice, will take some time since the aim of trainings is changing mind-sets on how to approach conflict triggers, which can be a long process.

Capacity development of specific target groups in conflict management and mediation⁴⁴

116. Under the current PBO Project, the PBO has trained and supported MIA's staff, CPCs and other peacebuilding actors such as the Police Support Unit (PSU) of the LNP, the Border Patrol Unit of the BIN and the BCR basically in Gbarnga County on Conflict Sensitiveness and conflict management and mediation. These activities have been conducted according to the planned targets.

117. One of the issues regarding accessing justice in rural Liberia, and which is a conflict trigger, is the long overstay of pre-trial detention in the prison. The trainings on Conflict Sensitivity and on conflict management and mediation helped increase awareness of criminal justice actors of their contribution to the limitation of this conflict trigger. It is hoped that this will contribute in the mid and long-term to modify work habits of criminal justice actors and to give more importance to bottlenecks in the administration of justice, which will eventually prevent jailbreaks and violence.

⁴⁴ This task has been assessed according to progress toward two IOAs included in the PBO Project 2014-2016 results framework as reported in the January-June Progress Report of the project: number of conflict management and mediation trainings conducted by PBO (target: 3 trainings in 2014); number of national institutions and ministries assisted in mainstreaming conflict-sensitivity into policy formulation and programme design (target: 17 in 2016).

3.2.3.4. Implementing peacebuilding projects

118. **Finding 15.** The PBO has been providing good support to step-by-step implementation of the Palava Hut Programme, although the PBO has not always shared important information with the NIP.⁴⁵ M&E systems for JSJP have been timely implemented with good quality and are regularly used by the staff at the J&S hubs and by the JSJP. The PBO has continued to conduct J&S Perception Surveys with good quality and in a timely manner, though they would have benefitted from a more systematic inclusion of gender and HHRR issues.

119. *Support to step-by-step implementation of the Palava Hut Programme:* this support is similar to the support provided to all projects but more intense due to the need this programme has for a more constant involvement of the PBO in day-to-day implementation. The PBO has been involved in direct implementation of some activities such as the establishment of the Programme Management Unit (PMU), the preparation of the programme Annual Working Plan (AWP), the drafting of ToR for the Ethnographic Study, the organization of meetings in communities to facilitate the construction of memorials, etc. However the PBO has not always shared important information with the INCHR. For example, the PBO did not involve the INCHR in the finalization of the budgetary component of the project submitted to the PBF.

120. *Implementation of the “National Internship Programme”:* this is initiative started in 2011 with the objective of developing national capacities. The PBO has supported 16 national interns so far with small amounts for stipends during their internship. Half of them got an employment while they were doing their internship, which is a successful rate taking into account unemployment in Liberia among the youth.⁴⁶

Development of M&E systems for JSJP⁴⁷

121. The PBO in collaboration with the JSJP PMU supported the Gbarnga, Zwedru and Harper J&S Hubs in the development of a monitoring log to measure how services provided are utilized. The staff at the hubs is using the monitoring log after some modifications to suit the practical reality of the work. Information from these logs was useful in the development of the GoL's budget planning period as data collected were used to ascertain what the approximate

⁴⁵ Independent National Commission of Human Rights (INCHR).

⁴⁶ Liberia GDP grew by 8.1% in 2013, only marginally lower than the 8.3% recorded for 2012. However, in spite of the robust growth, unemployment, particularly among the youth, remains a major challenge as the domestic private sector remains weak, constrained by inadequate infrastructure (particularly electricity) and credit: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/liberia/overview>

⁴⁷ Part of this task has been assessed according progress toward one IOA included in the PBO Project 2014-2016 results framework as reported in the 2014 January to June Progress Report of the Project: Number of Public Perception Surveys on Justice and Security conducted by PBO. Target: 3 surveys in total: 2012, 2013 and 2014.

cost would be for operating the SGBV Crimes Unit based on the number of cases serviced in the year. The JSJP could set reasonable estimated targets of achievements for 2014-2015 using information collected, especially in projecting how many cases could be processed through the court system. This information was also used to engage donors to provide additional funding to enhance the services provided. For example, some funding from the European Union based its support to the JSJP on the SGBV Crimes Unit indicators for Hub 1 in Gbarnga.

122. The PBO also developed a set of monitoring logs which are now used to regularly collect data and report on the various services provided at the Regional Gbarnga J&S Hub by the Sexual and Gender Based Violence Crimes Unit, Public Services Office, LNP, BIN and the Judiciary. These monitoring logs are used by the prosecution and public defenders to provide information on how many cases are being indicted, prosecuted/defended, type of case, how many won or lost or if any case was deferred or used alternative to prison, such as plea bargaining to reduce charge and sentence or sent to community corrections on probation. Also, based on number of crimes responded to in a given year and the distance from the hub, the JSJP PMU was able to project the estimated fuel cost for GoL's budget 2014-2015.

123. Finally, the PBO has continued to conduct Public Perception Surveys on Justice and Security. This task has been implemented with good quality and in a timely manner, though concept notes, questionnaires and reports of the perception surveys are moderately gender sensitive and HHRR sensitivity is weak (Annex 12). The results of the Public Perception Surveys have been utilized to improve services provided at the hubs in various ways. The results helped service providers reform their service to the needs expressed in the surveys. For example, the recent mid term survey conducted in Hub 1 showed that more work has to be done in terms of public outreach as dwellers of the counties covered by the hub are still not informed of the services being provided. Therefore, the JSJP has developed a radio drama on services provided by Hub 1 in all three languages spoken in the counties and an English version using the UNMIL radio station.

3.2.3.5. Implementing some components of the EWER Mechanism

124. **Finding 16.** The Liberia's Early-Warning and Response Network (LERN) Website⁴⁸ is a good tool to make decisions to prevent conflicts at the community level that has already been used to support policy-making. The "Strengthening Local/Traditional Mechanisms Project" is progressing with delay. The "Social Cohesion Initiative" is delayed due to lack of funding.

⁴⁸ <http://www.lern.ushahidi.com>

Updating the Liberia's Early-Warning and Response Network (LERN) Website

125. The PBO updates the LERN Website with data collected and submitted by the Early Response Working Group (EWWG) focal persons, who are trained and supported by the EWER Project. The LERN Website, together with the annual hot-spot assessments, which are reports that compile and analyze all the data collected through the EWER Mechanism are excellent tools for decision making on management of conflicts at the local level. For example, based on incident reports relating to concessions and natural resource management conflicts the EWWG commissioned an investigation. Based on this investigation, the EWWG prepared in June 2012 the report "Agricultural Land Concessions and Conflict in Liberia Policy Analysis Brief"⁴⁹, which led to the setting up of the National Bureau of Concession by the GoL in 2012 to monitor and evaluate compliance with concession agreements in collaboration with concession entities and agencies of the GoL involved in this type of processes.

126. Implementation of the "Strengthening Local/Traditional Mechanisms Project"⁵⁰ : the project activities commenced late due lengthy institutional arrangements between the MIA, UNDP and the PBO on which institution should lead the project and which institution should manage the funds. Implementation at the field level is progressing slowly basically because of unavailability of vehicles; the project has assessed peace structures (CPCs) in 12 counties so far.

127. Implementation of the "Social Cohesion Initiative": this project is not currently implemented because of lack of funding. The GoL has committed \$500,000 in the 2014-2015 fiscal budget for its implementation.

3.2.3.6. Acting as Programme Management Unit for the Reconciliation Programme

128. **Finding 17.** The PBO does not have a proper Programme Management function in place. Communication, and coordination among PBO staff members have been conducted in an informal way and information sharing among PBO members has been incomplete. This situation has prevented coherent integration of different tasks performed by the PBO and the promotion of complementarities among different PBO staff members' capabilities. PBO's Annual Working Plans (AWPs) are not actually planning tools but are basically used to define

⁴⁹ <http://lern.ushahidi.com/media/uploads/page/3/EWERPolicyBriefLiberia>

⁵⁰ This task has been assessed according to the Progress Report June-July 2014 of the project (MPTF-O Gateway).

the procurement plan. AWP's are not reviewed or updated according to changes in the context or arising needs. Tasks related to "contributing to strategic policymaking on peacebuilding" and "supporting the GoL in national and international activities on peacebuilding" accountabilities cannot be planned because they can arise any moment, which complicates even more the already poor planning.

129. The evaluation identified several situations related to virtual absence of a Programme Management function that are described below.

Communication, coordination and information sharing within the PBO

130. Despite the fact that the PBO has various tools to regularly communicate and coordinate activities such as weekly, monthly and half-year meetings, these are not systematically held, thus coordination, communication and information sharing within the PBO are too often conducted in an informal way. Actually, in 2013 the PBO held only three retreat meetings in January, July and December; and in 2014 the PBO held a retreat meeting in October and various *ad hoc* programme meetings. So it may take several months between PBO meetings. Reports of these meetings are not systematically prepared and disseminated and follow-up on agreed actions is not conducted in a systematic manner, so some issues are recurrently discussed.

131. Communication and coordination among PBO staff members is more related to individual initiatives rather than to a standard way of working, which prevents sharing knowledge and practical experiences and integrating different PBO's activities. Limited coordination and information sharing among PBO staff members and inadequate knowledge of some staff about the PBO's programme are included among general PBO's challenges in the 2013 PBO Annual Retreat Report. PBO staff members' are not well informed on undergoing activities of other colleagues in the office. Some PBO staff members report not having timely access to documents and information relevant to their daily work or not having enough information on some decisions made that affect their responsibilities. For example, some PBO's Administration Unit staff members do not have information on why the PBO is currently only allowed to directly manage funds for fuel, salaries and scratch cards so believe this was a UNDP's arbitrary decision; though this situation is the result of an assessment of MIA's financial procedures conducted by UNDP in 2012 that has been affecting the PBO since the MIA became signatory of PBO's account in the second quarter of 2014.

Planning of PBO's tasks

132. The already mentioned inadequate timing of the review of project proposals or the inadequate timing of the support to JSC meetings indicate that the PBO does not adequately plan its work to fulfill all its accountabilities and implement associated tasks.

133. The evaluation analyzed the PBO's 2012, 2013 and 2014 Annual Working Plans (AWPs), which are basically a rough planning of when different activities detailed in successive PBO Projects RFs are to be conducted. These plans are not reviewed or adapted to any changes in implementation conditions or context since they are basically used to define the procurement plan. For example, the 2014 AWP has not been reviewed to adapt to the new situation created by the Ebola emergency, which is affecting every activity in Liberia. For example, most if not all of the PBF-supported projects are since July-August 2014 on hold or have refocused to the extent possible some of their activities to do outreach on Ebola.

134. The AWPs do not include any activity related to "contributing to strategic policymaking on peacebuilding" and "supporting the GoL in national and international activities on peacebuilding" because these tasks may appear any moment, which is an additional difficulty to the already poor planning. The decisions to assign work related to the PBO's accountabilities as advisor to the GoL on peacebuilding issues in most cases are made during informal meetings or discussions between the MIA and other ministers of the GoL on how to perform certain tasks in time. The MIA may suggest that the PBO can do the work because it has the technical capabilities that other institutions do not have. As a result, the task is assigned to the PBO.

135. As a result of the lack of common planning and communication noted above PBO's activities are usually implemented in a compartmentalized manner. For example, some Conflict Sensitivity and conflict prevention and management have taken place when not many people in the office, except those conducting the training, knew about these trainings; two PBO field missions were conducted independently in 2013 within a few days time difference because none of the parts knew about each other plans though the Administration Unit provided support to both missions; two PBO staff members visited independently the same person from a RUNO on the same day when neither of them knew about each other visit and one of them was not expected by the RUNO.

3.2.3.7. Contributing to strategic policymaking on peacebuilding

136. **Finding 18.** The preparation of the Reconciliation Roadmap to strategically organize interventions on reconciliation has to be assessed as a great achievement of the PBO. The preparation of reports on the peacebuilding component of the AFT for Liberia Development Alliance (LDA) is conducted by the PBO with excellent quality and timeliness. In general terms, opinions from high GoL officials on the fulfillment of this accountability are excellent.

137. *Conducting research and analysis work to prepare documentation to support GoL policymaking:* in mid-2013 the PBO finished the preparation of the Reconciliation Roadmap, which can be assessed as a major contribution to systematically organize reconciliation activities in Liberia. Before the Reconciliation Roadmap, there were several institutions working on reconciliation in an independent manner. The PBO managed to coordinate all efforts to produce this strategic framework. The PBO's Executive Director served as lead national facilitator, with the technical support of the Head of the Programme Unit, of a 24 people team that developed the document.

138. *Preparation of reports on progress of different peacebuilding policymaking documents and other reference documents:* the PBO is responsible for the preparation of reports on the peacebuilding component of the AFT for Liberia Development Alliance (LDA). According to opinions of high GoL officials, this type of activities is conducted in a timely manner, with optimal quality even in cases when they are presented with very tight deadlines. This opinion also applies to other contributions of the PBO to policy-making documents developed in the previous period such as the AFT. The PBO was recently tasked to prepare follow-up reports on the TRC Report recommendations. This used to be a responsibility of the INCHR, but the task was reassigned because of the high technical capabilities of the PBO. It entails coordinating with several GoL institutions to find what is being achieved regarding the 207 TRC Report specific recommendations and gathering information to write the report. The PBO has just prepared its first TRC so it is too early to assess performance, although the task was implemented in a timely manner.

3.2.3.8. Managing GoL partnership with PBC

139. **Finding 19.** This accountability could be better fulfilled. The 2013 SMC half-year report was not submitted and the 2013 SMC annual report was submitted with significant delay. The PBO provides the PBC with good and complete information whenever the PBC has any information need, though communication has not been always timely.

140. *Preparation of SMC Annual Reports*⁵¹: starting in 2013, the PBO established two reports per year, a mid-year and annual report, on progress in implementing the SMC. The PBO was tasked to produce both reports, though failed to submit any mid-year report in 2013. The SMC annual report in 2013, moreover, was submitted with delay due to confusion within the PBO about who should be assigned this task. The draft report was finally sent to the PBO Liberia Configuration for approval in mid-March 2014 after endorsement by the JSC, two months after the deadline. The draft text could have been organized better and drafted in a more comprehensible manner for the readers.

141. *Communication with the PBC*: communication with the PBC is usually related to PBC's information requests to the PBO. The PBO provides detailed answers and collects data from different partners when necessary to provide the PBC with consolidated information. In terms of timeliness, however, the PBO has been unresponsive in some particular occasions. In early 2013 the PBC wanted to start discussions on the SMC review so sent several emails and made phone calls to the PBO, however, there was no response for some weeks, which delayed the review.

3.2.3.9. Supporting or representing GoL on peacebuilding issues, both nationally and internationally

142. **Finding 20.** The PBO provides excellent and timely support to the GoL in analysing and preparing documentation required for international events and initiatives on peacebuilding according to the needs of different GoL high officials, including the President.

143. *Preparation of documentation for international meetings and events on peacebuilding*: the PBO prepares briefing notes, talking points, speeches and presentations for GoL ministries attending key international meetings on peacebuilding and prepares articles and research documents for international events and activities related to peacebuilding. High GoL officials interviewed universally highlighted the excellent quality and timeliness of the performance of the PBO in the preparation of this type of documentation. For example, in October 2013, the PBO developed the concept note "South-South Cooperation: Assistance by and Learning from the Rwanda, Mozambique and other experiences in Reconciliation" in response to a Presidential initiative to mobilize support, ideas and inspiration from peacebuilding processes in other countries, namely Rwanda and Mozambique. The document analyses the Rwandan and Sierra

⁵¹ This task has been assessed according to progress toward targets of 2 IOAs included in the PBO Project 2014-2016 results framework as reported in the January-June Progress Report of the project: Number of SMC Annual Review Reports produced. Baseline: 2 SMC Review reports: 2011 and 2012; Target (Dec 2016): 5 reports in total: 2011-2015 (report for 2016 to be produced in 2017).

Leone experiences, identifies potential areas of collaboration with Rwanda, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and other countries, and proposes specific activities to be carried out, institutional arrangements required, etc.

3.3. EFFICIENCY

3.3.1. Introduction

144. The purpose of this section is to analyze to what extent PBO's inputs such as funds, time, information, logistics and human resources have contributed to the fulfillment of its different accountabilities as JSC Secretariat and GoL's Peacebuilding Office. It's worth highlighting that the efficiency analysis, as the rest of the evaluation, is not on individuals' performance but on processes; thus it analyses the PBO as a system or set of processes that transforms inputs into outputs.

145. As in most evaluations, the lack of benchmarks complicates the analysis of efficiency. The evaluation sought to identify situations where the use of the aforementioned inputs has been clearly either efficient or inefficient through the analysis of information from semi-structured interviews, the results of the self-administered survey and the analysis of quality and timeliness in the performance of different tasks that can be found in Annex 3.

3.3.2. Sources of inefficiency

146. **Finding 21.** The evaluation identified four sources of inefficiency in PBO's functioning, namely: a weak Programme Management function, PBO's poor communication function, decision-making processes, poorly conceived administrative Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). The weakness of the PBO's Programme Management function entails poor coordination, communication and information sharing within the PBO; poor planning; and unavailability of vehicles. The weak PBO's Programme Management and communication functions are internal sources of inefficiency; while poorly conceived administrative SOPs is both internal and external since both the Administration Unit of the PBO and UNDP's Administration Department are responsible for it.

3.3.2.1. Programme Management function

147. **Poor communication, coordination and information sharing** within the PBO have negative repercussions for PBO's efficiency, as it demands PBO staff members to dedicate extra time and effort to get the necessary information to implement their activities. In some cases it is only the Executive Director who has access to key information. This also leads to an overly individualistic way of functioning, where members of the office do not benefit from teamwork, including knowledge sharing among PBO staff. This compartmentalized way of operating sometimes requires extra financial resources to conduct activities, as in the commented case of PBO's independent visits to the field within a few days time difference that could have shared vehicle renting and fuel coupons if a joint visit would have been organized.

148. **Poor planning** leads poor utilization of time and human resources because leads to implementing some tasks in the last minute and is conducive to poor assignment of tasks once they become urgent or hinder important participatory processes that require adequate timing. For example the review of project proposals was conducted too fast because of poor planning as already commented in the effectiveness section. In addition, it was the M&E Tem that chiefly facilitated the process though it was a programme management task. Good planning would have given more time to the TAP, RUNOs and NIPs to discuss and review project proposals in detail, which would have had a positive impact in the quality of approved projects including the possibility of benefiting from complementarities. At the same time, greater involvement of the Executive Director and Head of the Programme Unit, who jointly perform the Programme Management function, would have improved the review process based on their knowledge on the AfT, the Reconciliation Roadmap, the SMC and the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016.

149. **Poor management of logistics:** the unavailability of vehicles is a constant difficulty despite the PBO has three vehicles and two drivers. Two of these vehicles are parked due to the usage of years and high level of maintenance and repairs thus will be decommissioned. The third one was provided by UNDP to support the M&E activities of the M&E Specialist, who holds a contract with UNDP. Under the current PBF tranche three vehicles were budgeted, one for the PBO to substitute one of the vehicles that is to be decommissioned, and two additional vehicles to support the "Strengthening Local/Traditional Mechanism Project". These three vehicles were already procured by UNDP, but have been assigned to the MIA to support the fight against Ebola and will be at PBO's disposal as soon as possible. Vehicles are essential for some PBO's activities, especially those that entail field missions, so they need to be very carefully managed. The PBO should have planned in advance the renewal of vehicles before

they went unavailable due to too expensive maintenance. Additionally, PBO's official vehicles should be always available for field missions to avoid to the extent possible using hired vehicles for this purpose since they are not always reliable, which can jeopardize safety of PBO staff.

150. Finally, in August 2013 the PBO recruited a Reconciliation Officer while it had been planned to recruit a Programme Manager. The LPP 2011-2013 mentions in its managerial arrangements section that the MIA would recruit a Programme Manager for the Reconciliation component to be financed by the PBF⁵² and the "PBF Liberia mid-term review" conducted in March 2010 recommended to recruit a Senior Programme Manager to lead the Programme Unit⁵³.

3.3.2.2. PBO's communication function

151. Communication with RUNOs, NIPs and other peacebuilding actors can be assessed as disorganized, which causes delays, misunderstandings and hampers processes. Some usual issues that affect communication identified by the evaluation are: PBO's distribution list with errors; emails are sent to wrong persons; it took sometimes several weeks to add a new emails to PBO's distribution list, so some individuals missed documents and meetings and were unintentionally excluded from specific processes; some documents are not shared with every relevant actor; documentation requests go unanswered, and the documents that are sent sometimes are not the right ones; etc.

152. The PBO's communication function is too centralized. It is primarily the Executive Director, who is usually over busy, who responds to most information requests, though some other personnel of the PBO could do this if information was systematically shared within the PBO. As a consequence, whenever the executive is not available because of his professional commitments other PBO staff members, RUNOs and NIPs have to wait until he is available to get documents or specific information. As a consequence, sometimes processes are delayed as in the case of the already mentioned delay in the review of the 2013 SMC report. This centralization of information is not efficient in terms of utilization of PBO's human resources since the intervention of the Executive Director is required to respond the majority of information requests including day-to-day operational issues while technical or administrative should be able to do it and could do it faster.

⁵² LPP 2011-2013 page 13.

⁵³ PBF Mid-term Review March 2010, Richard Snellen, Oscar Bloh and Julius Togba, Monrovia, pages 9 and 22.

153. The PBO does not always manage information in a completely transparent manner. Some PBO staff members could not share some documents with the evaluator without permission of the Executive Director. Despite the evaluator requested the PBO several times budgets of some of the PBF-supported projects, this request went unanswered.

154. The results of the self-administered survey show that 36% of respondents believe that PBO's communication and coordination with their institution is poor or very poor⁵⁴, which is not satisfactory given the paramount importance of these activities to maintain a fluid liaison with peacebuilding actors.

155. The weak PBO's communication function requires resending emails and documentation, constant review of email lists, additional explanations to persons affected by the mistakes, etc. For example, it can be mentioned that the organization of the evaluation mission to Liberia was too time consuming both for the PBO and the evaluator. Some meetings were not confirmed with enough anticipation thus had to be rescheduled, or the evaluator had to visit some interviewees several times because they had not been informed about the evaluation interview: approximately 50% of the meetings were rescheduled in the last minute.

3.3.2.3. Decision-making processes

156. Virtually every decision is made by the Executive Director with the advice of the Head of the Programme Unit. Consultation with PBO staff members involved in the matters on which the decision will be made is usual. The Executive Director is essentially responsible for the tasks related to strategically leading the implementation of the approved SMC and Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 according to decisions made by the JSC, and for overall management of the PBO, according to his 2014 ToR, thus his participation in micro-management has to be assessed as a non-efficient utilization of human resources. Moreover, sometimes processes are delayed when decisions have to be made or an important issue needs attention and the Executive Director is not available because of his professional commitments as in the case of the already mentioned delay in the review of the 2013 SMC report.

157. In addition, too centralized decision-making processes together with the above-mentioned too centralized communication function are not conducive to empower PBO staff members, which main effect is that the potentialities of the staff are underutilized. This is a common feature of too centralized organizations.

⁵⁴ Source: PBO evaluation self-administered survey, question number 9.

3.3.2.4. Administrative SOPs

158. In 2012 UNDP conducted an assessment of the MIA's systems to manage donor funding, which were rated as poor. Since then, the MIA, when managing funding administered by UNDP, is only allowed to make essential payments for day-to day work. As a consequence, since the MIA became signatory to the PBO's account in the second quarter of 2014, the PBO is only allowed to directly manage funds for fuel, salaries and scratch cards though the payment of these inputs requires the signature of the MIA, which has often led to long delays. In reference to other types of payments such as payments to vendors, the PBO has to follow two different Administrative SOPs, those of UNDP and those of the MoF under the new National Implementation Modality (NIM).

159. Administrative SOPs are a constant source of inefficiency for the PBO: salaries are paid with delay⁵⁵, which is a major concern for PBO staff members and, thus not conducive to promote a productive environment in the office, Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) for PBO staff members who travel to project locations are usually delayed so missions have to be rescheduled at the last minute or PBO staff members have to pay expenses in advance and later on do the corresponding paperwork for reimbursements.

160. Both the Administration Unit of the PBO and UNDP's Administration Department are responsible for this inefficiency. The PBO does not always prepare correctly the required documentation and the feedback from UNDP's Administration Department lacks quality and timeliness. Once procurement documentation is submitted to UNDP, feedback on mistakes can take weeks and is sometimes inconsistent, which is confusing for the PBO.

161. The mid-year review of the Reconciliation Program held in Buchanan in July 2014 included an intensive training on NIM to improve the fulfillment procurement processes. However, the final report of this mid-year review does not include any recommendation addressed to UNDP on how to improve the quality and timeliness of its response.

3.3.3. How sources of inefficiency affect PBO's accountabilities as JSC Secretariat

162. **Finding 22.** PBO's efficiency in "facilitating JSC functioning and oversight" and "coordinating and supporting RUNOs and NIPs in project design and implementation" is

⁵⁵ This does not have to do with UNDP but with MIA since salaries payment only need to be approved by the MIA's Assistant Minister for Administration.

affected by the weakness of the Programme Management (poor planning) and communication functions of the PBO.

163. The “facilitating JSC functioning and oversight” accountability has been affected by the weak PBO’s Programme Management (poor planning) and communication functions. Some tasks, such as submission of documentation to JSC members before JSC meetings and submission of MOMs for endorsement have not been adequately planned. In addition, the PBO has not always shared accurate information with the JSC as in the case of the funding of memorials or the budget reallocation for the Communication Strategy. These two inefficiencies have obstructed JSC’s ability to make well-informed decisions on some important issues. For example, the JSC had only six working days to review all project proposals to implement the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 before approving them. The proposals were approved without any comments or recommendations from the JSC.

164. “Coordinating and supporting RUNOs and NIPs in project design” has been affected by the weak Programme Management (poor planning) and communication functions of the PBO. The review of project proposals was conducted too fast because of poor planning, and RUNOs and NIPs went through the process with very limited information on what it entailed. As a consequence, some projects did not meet the required quality when they were approved by the JSC and complementarities and potential overlaps were not actually addressed.

165. “Coordinating RUNOs and NIPs in project implementation” has been affected by the weak Programme Management function (poor planning and poor communication, coordination and information sharing within the PBO). The PBO has been providing good support to projects individually, through, for example, providing technical guidance to project managers in developing Annual Work Plans (AWPs), the identification of training needs, the elaboration of TORs for recruitment processes, etc. However, different PBF-supported projects are not conceived by the PBO as part of a programme. The 2014 PBO’s Annual working Plan does not include any activity related to coordinating different RUNOs and NIPs in project implementation. As a consequence, interaction among different PBF-supported projects in the February-June 2014 period has been minimum as shown by the analysis of the half-year progress reports included in the effectiveness section. Additionally, this accountability has been affected by weak communication. Some examples on the effects of the weak PBO’s communication function, such as the unintentional exclusion of relevant actors from specific processes are provided in the “sources of inefficiency” section.

166. Finally, the qualitative assessment of the efficiency of the PBO in the fulfillment of the "coordinating and supporting RUNOs and NIPs in project design and implementation" accountability coincide with the perception of respondents to the self-administered survey: 59% of respondents believe that the PBO is not efficient or not efficient at all coordinating peacebuilding actors.⁵⁶

3.3.4. How sources of inefficiency affect PBO's accountabilities as GoL's Peacebuilding Office

167. **Finding 23.** PBO's efficiency in "Maintaining the liaison with GoL counterparts emphasizing extensive consultation on reconciliation issues" is affected by the weakness of the Programme Management (poor planning) and communication functions of the PBO. Poorly conceived administrative SOPs and the unavailability of vehicles have been affecting "training GoL policymakers, technical staff and CSOs". Implementation of "Strengthening Local / Traditional Mechanisms" has been affected by the weakness of the Programme Management function (poor planning) and unavailability of vehicles. "Acting as PMU for the Reconciliation Programme" has been affected by the weakness of the Programme Management function (poor planning; and poor coordination, communication and information sharing within the PBO).

168. "Maintaining the liaison with GoL counterparts emphasizing extensive consultation on reconciliation issues" is affected by the weak Programme Management (poor planning) and communication functions of the PBO. The 2014 PBO's AWP does not include any specific activities or tasks to implement this accountability. Besides, the basis for fulfilling this accountability is good communication, which is disorganized as already analyzed. As a consequence, the PBO is currently not conducting extensive consultations on reconciliation issues in a systematic manner.

169. Poorly conceived administrative SOPs and the unavailability of vehicles have been affecting "training GoL policymakers, technical staff and CSOs" since this accountability entails fieldwork.

170. Some tasks associated with the "implementing peacebuilding projects" have been affected by the weak PBO's communication, such as supporting step-by-step implementation of the Palava Hut Programme. The PBO did not involve the INCHR in the finalization of the budgetary component of the project submitted to the PBF, which resulted in the underestimation

⁵⁶ Source: PBO evaluation self-administered survey, question number 6 (Annex 6).

of funds for some of the project activities and staff. The main consequence of this action is that the programme does not have sufficient staff, which is contributing to a slow progress.

171. The implementation of the “Strengthening Local / Traditional Mechanisms” project, one of the tasks associated with the “coordinating and implementing some components of the EWER Mechanism” accountability has been affected by the weak Programme Management Function (poor planning). Institutional arrangements between the PBO, MIA and UNDP to implement the project, which delayed the start of this project should have been clarified during the design of the proposal before approval by the JSC, which, as already analyzed, was conducted with poor timing. Unavailability of vehicles is obstructing implementation; especially at the field level, which is essential in this particular case since the operation of EWER systems relies on the capabilities of local structures such as County Peace Committees (CPCs) and Early Warning and Early Response Working Group (EWWG) focal points. For example, some field trips had to be cancelled on the day of a travel because DSAs for staff were not ready. The main effect of these inefficiencies is the very slow progress in the implementation of this project.

172. The “acting as PMU for the Reconciliation Programme” accountability has been obviously affected by all the elements associated with the weak Programme Management function of the PBO, namely: poor coordination, communication and information sharing within the PBO; poor planning. The main effect of these inefficiencies as already commented in the previous section is that different components of the Reconciliation Programme, which are basically the PBF-supported projects until the Reconciliation Programme gets additional funding from other sources, are not conceived by the PBO as part of a programme but as independently developed initiatives, which is not conducive to promote synergies among different components.

173. Finally, untimely communication affected the “managing GoL partnership with PBC” accountability on some particular occasions as shown by the effectiveness assessment

3.3.5. Accountabilities and tasks efficiently implemented by the PBO as JSC Secretariat

174. **Finding 24.** The PBO is efficient in “coordinating and supporting RUNOs and NIPs in M&E and reporting” and in “monitoring achievement of results of LPP 2013-2016.”

175. The M&E team works in a very systematic manner, plans its activities in advance to manage delays related to administrative SOPs and manages its own communication activities though formal invitations to trainings are channeled through the Executive Director. The M&E team is proactive addressing sources of inefficiency. For example, the implementation of the

Perception Survey in June 2013 was delayed by administrative SOPs and miscommunication between PBO and UNDP on the financial reports; the M&E team learnt from this experience the need to plan activities more in advance.

176. The qualitative analysis coincides with the results of the self-administered survey on M&E support: 64% of respondents believe that the PBO is efficient or very efficient providing M&E support.⁵⁷ On the other hand, the qualitative analysis does not coincide with the results of the self-administered survey on reporting support: 45% of respondents believe that the PBO is not efficient or not efficient at all providing reporting support and 32% believe that the PBO is efficient or very efficient providing reporting support. This situation can be explained by the fact that the reporting support provided by the PBO has been improved in 2014 according to the assessment of timeliness and quality of JSC and SMC reports prepared in 2013 and 2014 (Annex 3).

3.3.6. Accountabilities and tasks efficiently implemented by the PBO as GoL's Peacebuilding Office

177. **Finding 25.** The PBO is very efficient in fulfilling its accountabilities as adviser to the GoL on peacebuilding issues, namely: “contributing to strategic policymaking on peacebuilding” and “supporting the GoL in national and international activities on peacebuilding.” The PBO is also efficient in implementing M&E-related tasks pertaining to the “implementing peacebuilding projects” accountability.

178. “Contributing to strategic policymaking on peacebuilding” and “supporting the GoL in national and international activities on peacebuilding”. Despite these two accountabilities cannot be planned since they may arise any time, the PBO implements associated tasks with high quality and in a timely manner. For example, the PBO has been recently requested by the President to prepare a report for the GoL highlighting achievements and challenges on peacebuilding and reconciliation and in addressing the root causes and potential areas of conflict since 2006 until the present with a very tight deadline.

179. Tasks associated with these two accountabilities are basically conducted by the Executive Director and the Head of the Programme Unit alone; consequently, some identified sources of inefficiency, such as weak Programme Management and communication functions do not have

⁵⁷ Source: PBO evaluation self-administered survey, question number 6 (Annex 6).

a great influence on the conduction of associated tasks.

180. M&E-related tasks associated with “implementing peacebuilding projects”, “supporting different structures of the JSJP including the regional hub managers regarding M&E” and “conducting perception surveys on justice and security”, have been efficiently implemented. The reasons that explain this situation have to do with the already commented ability of the M&E team to plan in advance and manage its communication activities.

3.4. SUSTAINABILITY

181. The only information the evaluation mission to Liberia managed to collect concerning the sustainability of the PBO in the short term is that this office completely depends on external support. The Reconciliation Roadmap calls for the setting up of the Peace and Reconciliation Council (the TRC Recommends a Commission), after the first three years of the implementation of the Reconciliation Roadmap. This Council or Commission will have a functioning Secretariat in charge of most of the work the PBO is doing presently and will be funded by the GoL. The MIA has already developed and will shortly roll out the Resource Mobilization Strategy through the National Peacebuilding and Reconciliation Steering Committee (NPRSC).

3.5. APPROPRIATENESS

3.5.1. Introduction

182. Appropriateness of the involvement of the PBO in the various accountabilities as JSC Secretariat and as GoL’s Peacebuilding Office has to do with the suitability of the PBO to conduct the work involved. The evaluation used three elements or *criteria* to assess appropriateness, namely: mandate of the PBO, positioning of the PBO to fulfill its accountabilities and perform associated tasks, and the risk of conflict of interests. The second *criterion* relates to the question: is the PBO the best-positioned institution to fulfill PBO’s various accountabilities and perform associated tasks? The third *criterion* was included because the PBO is currently performing a large number of tasks that range from supporting the design and M&E of PBF-supported and acting as NIP, to supporting the JSC decision-making. This wide range of tasks needs to be analyzed in detail to prevent any risk of conflict of interests that may be affecting any of PBO’s reporting lines.

3.5.2. Appropriateness of the involvement of the PBO in accountabilities as JSC Secretariat

183. **Finding 26.** The evaluation identified two conflict of interest situations associated with allocating within the same institution “preparing, convening and facilitating JSC meetings”, “following up on decisions taken by the JSC”, “acting as the key focal point for communication with the PBSO”⁵⁸, and “coordinating and supporting RUNOs and NIPs in project design and implementation”⁵⁹. It has to be emphasized that a conflict of interest can exist even if no unethical or improper act results from it. This finding refers only to improper act but not to unethical act.

184. **Finding 27.** The way the PBO has managed conflict of interest situations identified by the evaluation indicates that the MIA reporting line prevails over the PBSO and JSC co-Chairs reporting lines.

185. **Mandate:** all the current accountabilities and tasks of the PBO as JSC Secretariat are in line with the mandate of the PBO as JSC Secretariat⁶⁰ as defined in the “United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) Guidelines on application and use of funds (April 2014)” document.⁶¹

186. **Positioning:** the evaluation identified one clear situation in which there is another institution better positioned to perform one of the PBO’s tasks, the support to the Justice and Security Technical Advisory Group (TAG). None of the members of the PBO have a strong background on justice and security and the PBO was not involved in the recent restructuring of the MoJ and the Judiciary. The Justice and Security Joint Programme (JSJP) Programme Management Unit (PMU) is better positioned than the PBO to implement this support. Actually, the PBO attended J&S TAG meetings but it was the JSJP PMU that supported the work of the J&S TAG. Furthermore, the PBO has not been included as a support body to any of the levels of the new structure of the MoJ and Judiciary due to the fact that the PBO is far out of the sector.

⁵⁸ These three tasks are associated to the “Facilitating JSC functioning and oversight” accountability of the PBO as JSC Secretariat.

⁵⁹ This accountability pertains to the PBO’s function as JSC Secretariat.

⁶⁰ Mandate of the PBF Secretariat: to facilitate its work, the JSC and technical committees are supported by a PBF Secretariat that is funded by PBF through the Priority Plan (the early establishment of a Secretariat can also be funded through initial ‘surge support’ by PBSO, if requested – see section 6.1). A strong Secretariat is essential for enabling the JSC to play its managerial oversight functions effectively. It serves as the interface between the strategic decision-making level bodies (JSC, technical committee) and RUNOs. It provides the coordination and secretarial support to the JSC and technical committee, and between these bodies and the RUNOs. It also undertakes/ facilitates monitoring of and reporting against the Priority Plan.

⁶¹ <http://www.unpbf.org/wp-content/uploads/PBF-Guidelines-Final-April-20141.pdf>

Risk of conflict of interests

187. The evaluation identified some situations that indicate that there is a conflict of interests associated with vesting within the same institution some tasks associated to the accountabilities of the PBO pertaining to its function as JSC Secretariat.

188. “Preparing, convening and facilitating JSC meetings”; “following up on decisions taken by the JSC; and “acting as the key focal point for communication with the PBSO on the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016”, which are tasks associated with the “facilitating JSC functioning and oversight” accountability, should not be allocated in the same institution responsible for the “coordinating and supporting RUNOs and NIPs in project design and implementation”. The reporting lines corresponding to the mentioned accountabilities are basically the JSC co-chairs and PBSO.⁶² Two examples on how conflict of interests has been recently managed by the PBO are presented below.

189. **Inclusion of memorials in the budget of the Palava Hut Programme:** the Palava Hut Programme, which design was supported by the PBO, plans to build two memorials for \$150,000 despite the PBSO was clear about not wanting to fund any memorials. The PBO did not share this information with the Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) that reviewed project proposals before approval by the JSC and with the JSC. As a consequence, the budget for the memorials, which are a priority for the MIA, was approved by JSC without the consent of the PBSO, and their construction is about to start.

189. **Reallocation of funds to support the GoL Communication Strategy on the Reconciliation Roadmap:** this situation was already described in the “effectiveness” section. The former Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) for Peacebuilding Support agreed with the former Minister of Internal Affairs in February 2013 to support the dissemination of the Reconciliation Roadmap through the printing and distribution of materials with \$50,000. Later in 2013 the new Minister of Internal Affairs issued a request for the reallocation of \$300,000 USD from one of the PBF-supported projects to finance a Communication Strategy on the Reconciliation Programme, which is a priority of the MIA. In a draft letter prepared by the PBO that the JSC was going to send to the PBSO it was detected an inconsistency on the amount agreed since the reallocation of \$300,000 USD was referred to as already agreed while it was not.

⁶² Although MPTF-O is also a reporting line of the accountability “coordinating and supporting RUNOs and NIPs in the design, implementation and M&E and reporting of PBF-supported projects”, this reporting line is not as relevant as the other two ones in this particular analysis.

3.5.3. Appropriateness of the involvement of the PBO in the different accountabilities identified as PBF Secretariat and GoL's Peacebuilding Office.

190. **Finding 28.** The involvement of the PBO in all the accountabilities associated with the function of the PBO as GoL's Peacebuilding Office can be assessed as appropriate.

191. **Mandate:** the mandate of the PBO as GoL's Peacebuilding Office is undefined, which means that there are no officially approved limits to the accountabilities and tasks the PBO can assume as part of this function.

Positioning

192. The involvement of the PBO in the various accountabilities as GoL's Peacebuilding Office is chiefly justified by the high concentration of technical capabilities on reconciliation, conflict prevention and resolution and M&E in the PBO in a country context of not completely developed capabilities to strategically organize and implement peacebuilding activities. PBO staff members have been attending trainings in Liberia and abroad since the approval of the first PBO project (2008-2011).⁶³ Staff changes have occurred, but the PBO has been able to constantly update its skills on peacebuilding because of accessibility to funds for this purpose⁶⁴ and also because of its ability to develop a networking approach in its work⁶⁵ and benefitting from it.

193. This justification also applies to the involvement of the PBO in direct implementation and coordination of peacebuilding projects. Projects teams recruited to implement PBF-supported projects have little or no peacebuilding background due to scarce human resources with this capabilities in Liberia, which requires a direct involvement of the PBO in day-to-day implementation; some NIPs largely rely on the support provided by the PBO to implement activities with quality.

⁶³ The first PBO Project included a strong component dedicated to build the capabilities of the PBO on Conflict Sensitiveness and peacebuilding.

⁶⁴ Peacebuilding Fund Liberia. Mid-term Review Report, pages 16 and 17.

⁶⁵ The PBO has managed to forge partnership and collaboration with various institutions and networks specializing on peacebuilding issues: (1) the CDA Collaborative Learning Projects based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA; (2) the Summer Peacebuilding Programme at the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University, in Harrisonburg, Virginia, USA; (3) the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), based in Durban, South Africa, has been a close partner of the PBO since 2009; (4) the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, based in Geneva, Switzerland; (5) the University of Uppsala, Sweden; (6) the Institute for Conflict and Coexistence at Brandeis University, Boston, Massachusetts, USA; (7) the West Africa Network for Peace (WANEP) and the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) based in Accra, Ghana; (8) Channel Research, based on Brussels, Belgium; (9) the International Peace Institute, New York, USA; (10) the Department of Human Rights and Justice of the University of Berkeley, California, USA, etc.

194. No other institution in Liberia is better positioned than the PBO to implement the tasks associated with these accountabilities, not only because of its technical capabilities and relationship with international partners, donors and universities, but also because of its accessibility to different GoL ministries.

3.6. PBO STAFFING

3.6.1. Introduction

195. The purpose of this section is to briefly analyze the suitability of PBO staffing to implement the numerous PBO tasks required to fulfill its different accountabilities through the review of technical strengths and weaknesses, workload and type of contract of each position. The current PBO staff members are: **Management staff:** Executive Director and Head of the Programme Unit/Senior Technical Advisor. **Programme Unit:** M&E Specialist, M&E Officer, Training Officer, Reconciliation Officer⁶⁶, and Early Warning Consultant. **Administration Unit:** Administrative Officer, Finance Officer, Procurement Officer, Administrative Assistant, and three drivers.

196. The analysis of the technical capabilities of the PBO to fulfil its accountabilities and the workload of each position was basically conducted through the review of the 2014 ToR for each position and the effectiveness analysis. Information obtained through semi-structured interviews with PBO staff and direct observation of PBO's activities allowed identifying tasks added to those described in different ToR and assessing the real workload of each position.

3.6.2. Suitability of PBO's technical capabilities to fulfill its various accountabilities

197. **Finding 29.** The PBO presently has excellent capabilities on reconciliation and conflict prevention and resolution and on M&E as shown by the effectiveness analysis of PBO's fulfillment of accountabilities and tasks related to acting as adviser to the GoL on peacebuilding issues, training NIPs and staff working at the J&S Regional Hub in Gbarnga in Conflict Sensitivity and conflict management and prevention, and supporting and training RUNOs and NIPs in M&E. It needs to be added that once the contract of the M&E Specialist expires by the end of 2014 PBO's M&E capacity will be reduced and that may negatively impact the PBO's ability to continue to deliver quality M&E and reporting support. On the other hand, the PBO has not the required knowledge to support the J&S TAG

⁶⁶ During the preparation of this evaluation report the Reconciliation Officer was appointed as the Deputy Minister of Operations, MIA.

198. **Finding 30.** The Executive Director and the Head of the Programme Unit, who perform the PBO's Programme Management function jointly, have proven track in coordinating large work teams; however this capability has not been translated into an effective performance of the Programme Management function of the PBO. Although the recruitment of a Programme Manager was planned in the Liberia Peacebuilding Programme 2011-2013 this position has not been recruited so far.

199. **Finding 31.** PBO's capabilities to mainstream gender and to work under HHRR based approach in the implementation of its tasks and the fulfillment of its various accountabilities are very limited as shown by the weak and non-systematic inclusion of both approaches in its work.

Strength: capabilities on reconciliation, on conflict prevention and resolution, and on M&E

200. Six out of seven PBO technical or management staff members have substantive experience and/or education on reconciliation and conflict prevention and resolution; and four staff members have strong instruction and work experience in reconciliation and/or conflict prevention and resolution. This has been translated into the excellent performance of the PBO as adviser to the GoL on peacebuilding issues accountabilities, and in the contribution to improve daily work of Conflict Sensitivity and conflict management and prevention trainees at the J&S Regional Hub in Gbarnga as shown by the effectiveness analysis.

201. The PBO M&E Team has extensive knowledge and experience in Results-Based Management (RBM), RBM training, M&E training, evaluation management, Conflict Analysis and M&E, Peacebuilding M&E, etc. This strength has been translated into the excellent results of the M&E support the PBO has been providing to NIPs, RUNOs and the JSJP as shown by the effectiveness analysis.

Weakness: capabilities to mainstream gender and to work under human rights based approach

202. Only two PBO staff members have some training on gender mainstreaming. Because of this technical inexperience, the PBO asks for help on specific occasions to the UNMIL's gender Section, to UN Women or to the MoGD. However, these collaborations have not had a sufficient impact on overall PBO's performance on ensuring a systematic gender sensitive approach to programming. The evaluation assessed to what extent documents produced or reviewed by the PBO address gender issues (Annex 12)⁶⁷: 15 out 33 (45%) do not include any

⁶⁷ Complete list of documents assessed: Training in Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation for implementing partners of PBF-supported projects programme (29-31 October 2013). Training in Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation for implementing partners of PBF-supported projects programme (29-31 October 2013), monitoring report. Liberia PBO

reference to gender issues; and only 6 address gender issues systematically (18%). Finally, the PBO has managed to introduce some gender-sensitive elements in its M&E work, as is the case of the Public Perception Surveys on J&S, although this is not systematically done.

203. Nobody in the PBO has specific education on human rights. Consequently, the ability of the PBO to systematically address HHRR issues in its work is very limited. The evaluation assessed to what extent documents produced or reviewed by the PBO address HHRR issues (Annex 12): 22 out of 33 (67%) documents do not include any reference to human rights issues; and only 2 address HHRR issues systematically (6%).

204. For example, the PBO recommended RUNOs and NIPS the inclusion of sex-disaggregated indicators of achievement (IOAs) in the projects' results frameworks, but this is not sufficient. Gender sensitive indicators require the collection of data disaggregated by sex as well as by age, socio-economic groups and ethnic groups as well as addressing the gender gaps and inequalities. In addition qualitative indicators are essential. For example, it is not enough to know that women or members of an ethnic group are participating in an activity; the quality of their participation and experience, whether in community level meetings or trainings or as users of public services, is all-important.

Weakness: lack of Senior Programme Manager

205. Despite the PBF Mid-term Review conducted in March 2010 recommended that it would be required to establish a Programme Management Unit managed by a Senior Programme Manager⁶⁸ within the PBO; and that the recruitment of a Programme Manager was planned according to the Liberia Peacebuilding Programme 2011-2013, this position has not been recruited so far. Actually, the weakness of the PBO's Programme Management function is one of the main sources of inefficiency in overall PBO's performance.

206. The Programme Management function is performed by the Head of the Programme Unit/Senior Technical Adviser with the support of the Executive Director, who were able to

M&E Plan 2014-2016. Public Perception Survey on Justice and Security. Bong, Lofa and Nimba counties, Liberia, 16 April 2014, Concept note. Questionnaire 2014 Justice & Security Survey Bong, Lofa, Nimba. Public Perception Survey on Justice and Security in Southeast Liberia, August 2013, final report. PBO Liberia Project Document 2011-2014. PBO report 1st Quarter 2012. PBO report 2nd Quarter 2012. PBO report 1st half 2013. PBO annual report 2013. PBO Liberia Project Document 2014-2016. Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016. Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 Results Framework. JSC Annual Report 2012. JSC Annual Report 2013. SMC first review 9 May 2012. SMC second review 20 March 2013. SMC third review 16 April 2014. Reconciliation Roadmap. Results frameworks of PBF-supported projects. Communication and Outreach Project Draft. Mediation Training for the Liberia National Police. Three day training module: community based EWER and mediation. Conflict Sensitivity Training Guidebook. Conflict analysis: Simulation Exercise Manual. PBF-supported projects (project documents and Results Frameworks).

⁶⁸ PBF Mid-term Review, March 2010, Richard Snellen, Oscar Bloh and Julius Togba, Monrovia, pages 9 and 22.

coordinate a 24 people team to develop the Reconciliation Roadmap. This task can be assessed as much more complex than acting as Programme Management Unit for the Reconciliation Programme since before the Reconciliation Roadmap was finished there was a good number of institutions engaged in reconciliation activities that had been working in an independent manner, and reconciliation is a very sensitive issue in Liberia that has virtually as many interpretations as peacebuilding stakeholders. However, these capabilities have not been turned into a proper performance of the PBO's Programme Management function. The reasons for this situation are analyzed in the next section.

3.6.3. Workload of different PBO positions

Management staff: the Executive Director and the Head of the Programme Unit

207. **Finding 32.** The workload of the management staff (Executive Director and Head of the Programme Unit) is excessive, especially due to the high complexity of tasks carried out as advisers to the GoL on peacebuilding issues since it is the management staff that assumes almost all work related to “contributing to strategic policymaking on peacebuilding”, and “supporting the GoL in national and international activities on peacebuilding” accountabilities.

208. **Finding 33.** The effectiveness analysis indicates that the management staff members are prioritizing some accountabilities and tasks on others, which is a clear proof of their overload. This situation affects two accountabilities pertaining to the function of the PBO as JSC Secretariat, namely: “facilitating JSC functioning and oversight”, and “coordinating and supporting RUNOs and NIPs in project design.” And also affects one accountability pertaining to the PBO function as GoL's Peacebuilding Office: “acting as Programme Management Unit”. Finally, accountabilities related to acting as adviser to the GoL on peacebuilding issues are implemented in a timely manner with high quality despite they cannot be planned, which indicates they have high priority.

209. **Finding 34.** The way the Executive Director and the Head of the Programme Unit/Senior Technical Adviser have been prioritizing tasks indicates that the MIA reporting line prevails over the JSC co-chairs and PBSO reporting lines.

210. **Executive Director:** the main tasks to be carried out of this position according to its 2014 ToR are ⁶⁹ : **JSC Secretariat:** providing overall management of PBO supervising staff performance, procurement and general financial issues; organizing meetings of the JSC; coordinating with the PBSO; ensuring timely submission of JSC reports; ensuring linkages of PBF Liberia to national processes, in particular to the AFT; and serving as focal point for managing overall functions of the PBO acting as focal point for RUNOs. **GOL Peacebuilding Office:** developing the three-year strategic work plan for the PBO to ensure the full implementation of the SMC, coordinating with the Country Configuration in New York to guide the strategic plan for the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016, and ensuring timely submission of SMC reports. Additional responsibilities not included in the TOR related to acting as **adviser to the GOL on peacebuilding issues** are leading tasks associated to “contributing to strategic policymaking on peacebuilding”, and “supporting the GoL in national and international activities on peacebuilding”.

211. Finally, the Executive Director supports the Head of the Programme Unit in his role as role as Programme Manager through coordinating all project teams in peacebuilding. At the moment of this evaluation there were seven projects under the supervision of the PBO, the seven PBF-supported projects. When funds are available, this figure will be expanded to include the “Social Cohesion Initiative”, the “Communication and Outreach Project” and the “National Internship Programme”.

212. The list of tasks to be implemented by the Executive Director and the high complexity of some of them⁷⁰, especially of those tasks related to acting as adviser to the GoL at the strategic level, and coordinating all project teams in peacebuilding, suggest that his workload is excessive. Direct observation of PBO’s activities allowed witnessing how the Executive Director is permanently interrupted with phone calls, emails and persons trying to get a meeting looking for advice or funding.

Head of the Programme Unit

213. The main tasks to be carried out of this position according to its 2014 ToR are basically related to act as Programme Manager for the Reconciliation Programme with the support of the Executive Director, namely: ensuring the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 is implemented in line with the elements approved by the JSC; supporting information sharing;

⁶⁹ The list of responsibilities of each position is not intended to be exhaustive, thus only those especially relevant responsibilities were included. A complete description of each position’s responsibilities and an analysis of the complexity of responsibilities can be found in Annex 11.

⁷⁰ Especially complex tasks are highlighted in light brown in Annex 11.

coordinating and supervising project managers; maintaining up-to-date, comprehensive conflict mapping assessments of the country; leading reports on SMC; and following-up on JSC decisions and updating JSC members.

214. In addition, the Head of the Programme Unit is responsible for the technical aspects of the implementation of the tasks pertaining to the following accountabilities of the PBO as GoL's Peacebuilding Office: for the implementation of technical aspects contributing to strategic policymaking on peacebuilding and supporting the GoL in national and international activities on peacebuilding.

215. The list of tasks to be implemented by the Head of the Programme Unit and the high complexity of some of them⁷¹, especially of those tasks related to acting as adviser to the GoL at the technical level, suggest that his workload is excessive. Direct observation of PBO's activities also allowed witnessing how the Head of the Programme Unit is also constantly interrupted with phone calls and emails and persons waiting to meet him at the PBO.

Tasks prioritization by the management staff

216. The evaluation identified some situations that clearly indicate that the Executive Director and the Head of the Programme Unit/Senior Technical Adviser have been prioritizing some tasks over others. Some examples on this situation are provided below.

217. The secretarial support to JSC meetings cannot be assessed as a complex task, but requires planning and working in a systematic manner to follow up on decisions made. However, this support has not been timely and systematically provided as shown by the effectiveness analysis. The reporting lines for these tasks are the JSC co-chairs and PBSO.

218. The review of project proposals by the TAP was a key task under direct responsibility of the Executive Director and the Head of the Programme Unit that did not get sufficient involvement from them. The process was essentially facilitated by the M&E Team, which volunteered in August 2013 to help move the process even though it was not directly M&E related but top priority for the development of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016. The reporting lines for this task are the JSC co-chairs and PBSO.

219. The fact that the weakness of the PBO's Programme Management function is one of the sources of inefficiency in the overall performance of the PBO shows that the "acting as PMU for the Reconciliation Programme" is not a priority for the Executive Director and the Head of the Programme Unit/Senior Technical Adviser. The reporting line for this accountability is the MIA, but this is special case. A Reconciliation Officer was recruited in August 2013 while it

⁷¹ Especially complex tasks are highlighted in light green in Annex 11.

was planned to recruit a Program Manager. The MIA prioritized having Reconciliation Officer within the PBO on strengthening the Programme Management function.

220. Highly complex tasks directly implemented by the Executive Director and the Head of the Programme Unit associated with “contributing to strategic policymaking on peacebuilding” and “supporting the GoL in national and international activities on peacebuilding” accountabilities of the PBO as GoL’s Peacebuilding Office are implemented with high quality and in a timely manner despite they cannot be planned in advance. The reporting lines for this task are MIA and the Liberia Development Alliance.

M&E Team

M&E specialist

221. The main tasks to be carried out of this position according to its 2014 ToR are: supporting the JSC in its reporting obligations; elaborating an M&E plan with assigned roles and responsibilities, methods of data collection and cost allocation for the tracking of outcome indicators and critical assumptions outlined in the results framework of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016; providing technical support in the strengthening of M&E capacities of RUNOs and NIPs including training in RBM, etc.

222. Some additional tasks have been assigned to the M&E Specialist, namely: providing M&E support to the J&S Regional Hubs, coordinating the production of annual JSC reports, supporting PBO management with any upcoming tasks, collecting and consolidating the updates from the different national and international partners for the SMC Annual Reports, supporting the design and conduction of a 'National Reconciliation Barometer survey'.

223. The list of tasks to be implemented by the M&E Specialist and the high complexity of some of them indicate that his workload is quite heavy.

224. **M&E Officer:** the main tasks to be carried out of this position according to its 2014 ToR are documenting and ensuring follow-up on the JSC’s decisions with those submitting reports on the projects; providing quality assurance and consolidating draft reports submitted by project teams; identifying problems that may arise in relation to project delivery and management. The list of tasks of the M&E Officer indicates that his workload is reasonable.

225. **Distribution of tasks within the M&E Team:** the two members of the M&E Team collaborate in the conduct of most M&E and reporting support activities although it is the M&E

Specialist who usually leads some of the main tasks such as preparing JSC reports, analyzing data from Public Perception Surveys on Justice and Security and writing the reports, or designing contents of trainings. As a consequence, the distribution of work within the M&E Team is unequal to some extent.

Other technical staff

226. **Reconciliation Officer:** according to her 2014 ToR, she is responsible for: maintaining communication link to MIA on reconciliation matters; supporting project managers or focal persons for each thematic area of the Reconciliation Roadmap to ensure its full implementation; supervising performance tracking and management of implementing partners to ensure quality assurance and delivery of outputs on time. The list of tasks of the Reconciliation Officer suggests that her workload is reasonable.

227. **Training Officer:** according to his 2014 ToR, he is responsible for developing training manuals on Conflict Sensitivity, conflict analysis and transformation, and conflict early warning for PBO workshops, seminars and related programmes; facilitating executive consultations with policymakers on Conflict Sensitivity and follow-up to ensure its practical application; conducting analyses of the implementation of national processes and documents within the context of Conflict Sensitivity; facilitating building and strengthening Conflict Sensitivity capabilities of the GoL. The list of responsibilities and tasks of the M&E Training Officer and the high complexity of some of them indicate that his workload is quite heavy.

228. **EWER Consultant** is responsible for coordinating the “Strengthening Local/Traditional Mechanisms Project”; developing and providing leadership for a consortium of CSOs, UN organizations and GoL actors involved with conflict early warning and prevention in Liberia; leading the EWER Working Groups; assisting the PBO with policy advice and in developing strategic frameworks in conflict transformation, governance and reconciliation, etc. The high complexity of tasks of the M&E Training Officer indicates that his workload is quite heavy.

229. **Administrative Unit:** workload of different members of the Administrative Unit is reasonable (Procurement Officer, Administrative Officer and Administrative Assistant) with the exception of the Finance Officer, whose list of tasks according to the 2014 ToR for the position is quite long and has been expanded to provide support to all GoL ministries in ensuring that administrative rules of different international donors are complied by proposals’ budgets before submitting them to donors.

3.6.4. Type of contract of each PBO position

230. **Finding 35.** The majority of PBO staff members including the PBO management staff have temporary contracts with the MIA, which, together with the physical location of the PBO, explains disparities on how different reporting lines are conceived by the PBO, being the MIA the main reporting line.

231. **Finding 36.** Once the M&E Specialist's contract expires at the end of 2014, the M&E Officer alone will not be able to undertake all the tasks assigned to the M&E Team until completion of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016.

232. The majority of PBO staff members have temporary contracts with the MIA as individual contractors; none of them are Civil Servants. The M&E Specialist has a temporary contract with UNDP and the EWER Consultant has a temporary contract with Humanity United. The contract of the M&E Specialist expires at the end of 2014, which means that the M&E Officer alone will have to assume all current M&E tasks of the PBO. This is not realistic since the workload of the M&E Specialist, which is quite heavy, will be added to the current workload of the M&E Officer.

233. This influence of MIA on the PBO is mainly due to the contractual status of most members of the PBO and also has to do with some other factors such as the physical location of the PBO within the MIA compound, PBO staff members' salaries with the exception of the M&E Specialist and the EWER Consultant are paid upon approval by the MIA of individual monthly performance reports, and the MIA has to approve every PBO's expenditure to carry out activities as signatory of PBO's account. The effects of this influence can be seen in how the PBO managed the abovementioned conflict of interests situations and in how the Executive Director and the Head of the Programme Unit/Senior Programme Manager prioritize tasks. Ultimately, this influence reinforces the reporting line to MIA in front of the reporting lines to the JSC co-Chairs and PBSO, which basically means that the PBO is strongly accountable to the MIA while accountability to the PBSO and to JSC co-Chairs is not so strong.

4. CONCLUSIONS

234. **Conclusion 1.** All PBO's accountabilities are relevant to the country context or necessary for the proper deployment and management of different PBF funds allocations to Liberia.

235. **Conclusion 2.** The PBO works in a very complex scenario characterized by the existence of multiple and sometimes conflicting priorities where the environment plays a major role in its

performance. The workload on most PBO staff members is quite heavy because of the large number of PBO's accountabilities and associated task. In addition, the PBO interacts with numerous peacebuilding stakeholders with common interests relating to peacebuilding in Liberia, but with different priorities that the PBO needs to manage. The PBO has various reporting lines and satisfying equally all of them was a challenge in some particular occasions that put the PBO in conflict of interest situations that should be prevented.

236. **Conclusion 3.** The evaluation identified two clear conflict of interest situations involving two accountabilities of the PBO as JSC Secretariat, namely: "facilitating JSC functioning and oversight", and "coordinating and supporting RUNOs and NIPs in project design, implementation, M&E and reporting", which reporting lines are PBSO, the JSC co-Chairs and the MPTF-O. These situations were managed by the PBO following the same pattern: the PBO did not share information exchanged with the PBSO in a complete and transparent manner with relevant stakeholders including RUNOs, NIPs and JSC members when a priority of the MIA did not match PBSO's funding priorities with the objective of getting things done according to MIA's priorities. This shows that the MIA reporting line prevailed over the PBSO, JSC co-Chairs and MPTF-O reporting lines, which hindered PBF's ability to act accountably on its investments and JSC's ability to make adequate decisions on the implementation of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016.

237. **Conclusion 4.** The PBO's functioning has been affected by four sources of inefficiency, namely: the weakness of PBO's Programme Management and communication functions, decision-making processes, and poorly conceived administrative Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

238. **Conclusion 5.** The weakness of the Programme Management function is essentially caused by the absence of a Senior Programme Manager at the PBO. A Reconciliation Officer was recruited in August 2013 while it had been planned to recruit a Program Manager; however the MIA prioritized having a Reconciliation Officer within the PBO on strengthening the Programme Management function. As a consequence, this function is jointly performed by the Executive Director and the Head of the Programme Unit, but it has not sufficient attention from them: basic programme management tasks such as systematically organizing internal coordination meetings or preparing and periodically updating detailed work plans have not been performed. This weakness basically entails poor coordination, communication and information sharing within the PBO; poor planning of PBO's activities; and poor management of logistics, which chiefly entails unavailability of vehicles for PBO's day-to-day functioning. Poor coordination, communication and information sharing within the PBO lead to a

compartmentalized manner of supporting PBF-supported projects and other initiatives under the supervision of the PBO. As a consequence different PBF-supported projects are not conceived by the PBO as part of the Reconciliation Programme but as individual interventions, which prevents synergies and avoiding overlaps among different projects.

239. **Conclusion 6.** The PBO has a hierarchical organizational model where most important information is managed by the Executive Director, who does not systematically and reliably share relevant information within the PBO and with other peacebuilding stakeholders in every case. The Executive Director personally responds every information request and carries out almost every communication activity of the PBO. Additionally decision-making processes are equally centralized. It is the Executive Director in consultation with the Head of the Programme Unit who makes all decisions from the strategic level to micromanagement, which is not efficient in terms of the utilization of the time of the management staff. This organizational model contributes to some extent to overload the Executive Director and the Head of the Programme Unit /Senior Technical Adviser, and delayed processes when an information request had to be answered or a decision had to be made and the Executive Director was not available because of his professional obligations. In addition too hierarquical organizational structures are not conducive to empower staff, thus tend to underutilize available human resources, which in the case of the PBO are excellent in technical terms.

240. **Conclusion 7.** The large number and high complexity of the tasks the Executive Director and the Head of the Programme Unit/Senior Technical Adviser perform as advisers to the GoL on peacebuilding issues generate an excessive workload of the Executive Director and the Head of the Programme Unit, which is increased by the abovementioned organizational model of the PBO. Despite they try to perform all the tasks to fulfill the accountabilities they are responsible for as shown by the effectiveness analysis, some tasks do not get sufficient attention from them, thus they have been conducted with inadequate quality and timeliness or without their full involvement. In this scenario of overload the executive Director and the Head of the Programme Unit/Senior Technical Adviser have been put too often in the situation of having to prioritize some tasks over others. Tasks prioritization by the management staff has been done according to the strength of the various PBO's reporting lines, where the MIA reporting line has the highest priority.

241. **Conclusion 8.** The predominance of the MIA reporting line over other reporting lines such as the PBSO or the JSC co-Chairs is chiefly explained by two reasons, namely: the majority of PBO staff members, including management staff, have temporary contracts with the MIA, thus they are not Civil Servants; and the PBO is physically located within the MIA compound.

242. **Conclusion 9.** Poorly conceived administrative SOPs have been affecting almost every activity of the PBO with special emphasis on fieldwork. This is an internal and external source of inefficiency since both the Administration Unit of the PBO and UNDP's Administration Department are responsible for it. The PBO has not been always able to prepare procurement documentation with the required quality and responses from UNDP's Administration Department have usually lacked consistency and timeliness.

243. **Conclusion 10.** Effectiveness of the PBO in "supporting JSC functioning and oversight" has been poor when it comes to the implementation the various tasks associated with facilitating JSC meetings, which have not been adequately planned thus conducted in a non systematic and untimely manner, which has been hindering JSC's ability to make adequate decisions on the implementation of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016; and has been obstructing the application of decisions made by the JSC due to a non-systematic handling of minutes of JSC meetings and to a non- systematic follow-up on decisions made by the JSC.

244. **Conclusion 11.** Effectiveness of the PBO in "coordinating and supporting RUNOs and NIPs in project design" was affected by poor planning, which led to a too fast review of project proposals that did not give sufficient time to RUNOs and NIPs to properly improve them, and prevented the identification of synergies and the management of overlaps among proposals; which in turn was the origin of an independent implementation of PBF-supported projects that has not been managed by the PBO because of the weakness of its Programme Management function.

245. **Conclusion 12.** Effectiveness of the PBO in "coordinating and supporting M&E and reporting responsibilities of RUNOs and NIPs" has been excellent. This support has been conducted with an emphasis on capabilities development, which has contributed to improve the quality and timelines of JSC reports. The good performance of the PBO when it comes to provide M&E and reporting support and training has to do with the ability of the M&E Team to proactively manage the main sources of inefficiency that affect the majority of PBO's accountabilities through planning its activities in advance and organizing its communication activities with the supervision of the management staff. However, once the M&E Specialist's contract expires at the end of 2014, the M&E Officer alone will not be able to undertake all the tasks assigned to the M&E Team until completion of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 with the same quality and timeliness. The M&E Officer will be overloaded since he will continue to implement his current tasks and will have to assume the tasks currently implemented by the M&E Specialist, whose workload is quite heavy.

246. **Conclusion 13.** Effectiveness of the PBO in “training GoL policymakers, technical staff and CSOs” on Conflict Sensitive approaches and conflict mediation and management has been good although affected by poorly conceived administrative SOPs and unavailability of vehicles since the fulfillment of this accountability involves frequent field missions, which obviously require timely availability of vehicles and DSAs. Additionally, it is worth mentioning that the fulfillment of this accountability, which has been assumed by the PBO since its inception in 2008, is especially valuable in a context of not fully developed capabilities to work on peacebuilding.

247. **Conclusion 14.** Effectiveness of the PBO in “implementing peacebuilding projects” and “implementing some components of the EWER Mechanism” has been variable. The PBO has been very effective and efficient in supporting the development of M&E tools for the regional J&S hubs and in conducting Public Perception Surveys on J&S in collaboration with the LISGIS and the JSJP. The reasons that explain the efficient performance of the PBO when providing M&E support have been already presented in conclusion 12. The PBO’s involvement in the step-by-step implementation of the Palava Hut Programme has been affected by the weak communication function of the PBO, especially during the design and review of the programme proposal. Finally, the PBO has been neither effective nor efficient in the implementation of the “Strengthening Local/Traditional Mechanisms Project” so far because of poor planning of the review of project proposals: the project has been delayed because of lengthy institutional arrangements among implementing partners that should have been clarified before approval by the JSC.

248. **Conclusion 15.** PBO’s effectiveness and efficiency in “contributing to strategic policymaking on peacebuilding” and in “supporting or representing the GoL on peacebuilding issues, both nationally and internationally” have been excellent. Associated tasks are essentially performed by the Executive Director and the Head of the Programme Unit, who have excellent capabilities to provide this support to the GoL, and have not been not affected by the identified sources of inefficiency because of the nature of the activities involved. In this regard, the role played by the PBO in facilitating the preparation of the Reconciliation Roadmap has to be highlighted as a great contribution to strategically organize reconciliation efforts in Liberia. Finally, the contribution of the PBO to policymaking is especially valuable in a context of not fully developed capabilities on peacebuilding.

249. **Conclusion 16.** PBO’s ability to systematically address gender and human rights in the implementation of its tasks is limited. Only some M&E support activities have addressed some gender issues sporadically. This is a consequence of the weak technical capabilities of PBO

staff in regards to gender mainstreaming and human rights-based approach to programming (HRBA). This weakness hinders PBO's ability to fulfill its accountabilities in line with the United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/53/120 (Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action)⁷²; the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325⁷³; and the International Bill of Human Rights, constituted by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the 1966 Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the 1966 Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which recognizes human rights as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1. PBSO.

250. It is recommended to reallocate to another institution three tasks associated to PBO's accountability "facilitating JSC functioning and oversight" pertaining to PBO's function as JSC Secretariat to prevent conflict of interests in PBO's functioning without hindering national ownership and national capabilities to work on peacebuilding. The three tasks that should be reallocated are "preparing, convening and facilitating JSC meetings", "following up on decisions taken by the JSC", and "acting as the key focal point for communication with the PBSO on the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016". The evaluation, during its mission to Monrovia conducted a participatory assessment on the most suitable institution to assume the responsibility of performing these tasks. The complete assessment can be found in Annex 13. According to this assessment it is recommended to reallocate these tasks to UNMIL's SRSG's Front Office chiefly because the SRSG is co-Chair of the JSC, which would reinforce PBO's accountability to the JSC; and because UNMIL has the strategic responsibility for coordinating peacebuilding activities in Liberia.

⁷² Extracts from A/RES/53/120: the UN General Assembly: (1) "*Calls once again upon States, the United Nations system and all other actors to implement the Platform for Action, in particular by promoting an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective at all levels, including in the design, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes to ensure effective implementation of all critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action*". (2) "*Directs all its committees and bodies, and draws the attention of other bodies of the United Nations system to the need to mainstream a gender perspective systematically into all areas of their work, in particular in such areas as macroeconomic questions, operational activities for development, poverty eradication, human rights, humanitarian assistance, budgeting, disarmament, peace and security and legal and political matters.*"

⁷³ Extracts from Resolution 1325: the UN Security Council: (1) "Recognizing the urgent need to mainstream a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and in this regard noting the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations (S/2000/693)." (2) "Expresses its willingness to incorporate a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and urges the Secretary-General to ensure that, where appropriate, field operations include a gender component."

251. **Recommendation 2. PBSO.** The JSC support staff at UNMIL’s SRSG’s Front Office responsible for the reallocated tasks (“preparing, convening and facilitating JSC meetings”, “following up on decisions taken by the JSC”, and “acting as the key focal point for communication with the PBSO on the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016”) should maintain a permanent communication with the PBO M&E Team and participate in every joint monitoring visit with the aim of participating in the identification of any challenges and bottlenecks in the implementation of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016. Additionally, this staff should get involved in final quality assurance of JSC reports and in following-up decisions made by the JSC members.

252. **Recommendation 3. PBSO.** It is recommended to follow a standard procedure to adequately support JSC meetings. The proposed procedure is described below.

Preparation of JSC meetings:

- Information to be shared with JSC members before JSC meetings should be submitted five weeks before the scheduled date of the JSC meetings and should include updated monitoring data and analysis of these data so that the JSC can perform its oversight function of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016.
- JSC members then will have one week to ask for clarifications on the documentation submitted and the JSC support staff at UNMIL’s SRSG’s Front Office will have one week to answer questions and prepare and share a proposed agenda and for the meeting.
- JSC then will have one week to propose modifications to the agenda.
- JSC support staff at UNMIL’s SRSG’s Front Office will have one week to finalize the agenda and submit it one week before the JSC meeting date.

Handling of minutes (MOMs) of JSC meetings:

- Notes taking needs to be complete accurate.
- A draft version of the MOMs has to be shared with JSC meetings attendants within three days after the meeting for comments during one week.
- MOMs have to be modified according to comments and shared again with JSC meetings attendants maximum three days after the comments deadline.
- Finally, once JSC meetings attendants endorse the MOMs, the have to be sent to the JSC co-Chairs for signature.
- MOM needs to be prepared in a standard template. At least the following sections need to be included: meeting agenda, follow-up on decisions made in previous JSC meetings,

HHRR and gender challenges and progresses, discussions, decisions made, business arising, and list of attendants.

Recommendation 4. PBSO.

253. It is recommended to recruit a Senior Programme Manager for the PBO. The TOR for this position should include at least the following responsibilities: making decisions at the operational level; ensuring systematic coordination, communication and information sharing among PBO staff members through the organization of weekly, half year and annual meetings and ensuring follow-up on decisions made during these meetings; promoting complementarities and collaboration among PBO staff members; managing PBF-supported projects as part of the Reconciliation Programme through promoting information exchanges, collaborations and complementarities among the various projects; maintaining permanent communication with the staff at UNMIL's SRSG's Front Office responsible for the performance of the three reallocated tasks to ensure every relevant information on the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 progress and challenges is timely communicated to the PBSO and to the JSC for adequate decision-making; managing logistics in advance to ensure resources such as vehicles and DSAs are ready when required for fieldwork according to the approved; preparing detailed PBO annual working plans including every PBO's task and reviewing them periodically to adapt them to any challenges or context changes; and reporting to the Executive Director and the JSC support staff at UNMIL's SRSG's Front Office on any difficulties in the performance of his duties so the JSC can take adequate action.

254. **Recommendation 5. PBSO.** It is recommended to separate programme-related activities and tasks associated to the accountabilities of the PBO as adviser to the GoL on peacebuilding, namely: "contributing to strategic policymaking on peacebuilding", and "supporting the GoL in national and international activities on peacebuilding". This means that the TOR of the Senior Programme Manager should not include any activity related to these two accountabilities.

255. **Recommendation 6. PBSO.** It is recommended to review the TOR of the executive Director and the Senior Technical Adviser to avoid overlaps with the TOR of the Senior Programme Manager and to include all the tasks they conduct as advisers to the GoL. Additionally, the review of the TOR of the executive Director should include a more detailed of his responsibilities as administrator and supervisor of the PBO and as coordinator of all teams on peacebuilding; and the TOR of the Senior Technical Adviser should also include a more detailed description of his responsibilities as Senior Technical Adviser.

256. **Recommendation 7. PBO's Administration Unit and UNDP's Administration Department.** It is recommended to prepare an administrative SOPs manual with the participation of PBO's Administration Unit and UNDP's Administration Department to clarify all the steps and documentation required to adequately fulfill UNDP's administrative procedures and those corresponding to the National Implementation Modality (NIM). In addition it is recommended to include in this manual a maximum lag time between submission of procurement documentation to UNDP's Administration Department and response from this department, and to keep a record on response time. In case administrative SOPs continued to be a source of delay for PBO's activities the Senior Programme Manager should report the situation to the PBO's Executive Director and to the JSC support staff at UNMIL's SRSG's Front Office to raise the issue to the JSC.

257. **Recommendation 8. PBO.** The PBO's Website⁷⁴ is a very basic tool that needs to be improved to be more user-friendly and useful through the utilization of Web 2.0 resources to promoting interaction between different peacebuilding stakeholders through chats and work groups on relevant issues. It is also recommended to update PBO's Website with information on staff such as position, areas of expertise, services provided and contact details so RUNOs, NIPS and any other peacebuilding stakeholder would be able to directly contact the right person instead of always contacting the Executive Director. It is also recommended to make all the information concerning the work of the PBO accessible at the Website: every relevant document on peacebuilding; JSC MOMs; PBO's annual work plan; PBF-supported projects documentation such as project documents, budgets, and progress reports; Public Perception Surveys reports; PBO's Procedures Manual, etc.

258. **Recommendation 9. PBO's M&E Team.** It is recommended to organize joint monitoring visits involving RUNOs and NIPs from different PBF-supported projects to promote exchanges of information and experiences and foster collaboration and synergies among different PBF-supported projects.

259. **Recommendation 10. PBSO and UNDP.** It's recommended to extend the contract of the M&E Specialist to ensure that all the M&E tasks planned until the finalization of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013-2016 are performed with quality and in a timely manner. At the same time it is recommended to review the TOR of the M&E Specialist and the M&E Officer to include all the tasks they are currently performing and to balance the distribution of workload within the M&E Team.

⁷⁴ <http://www.liberiapbo.ushahidi.com>

260. **Recommendation 11. PBF.** It is recommended to modify JSC reports template to specifically address HHRR and gender issues.

261. **Recommendation 12. PBO.** It is recommended to develop the capabilities of the PBO staff members on gender mainstreaming and on human rights-based approach to programming. A systematic collaboration with Un Women and UNMIL's Human Rights Protection Section (HRPS) with a focus on PBO's capabilities development is recommended. Some self-study resources that can facilitate this process are provided below.

- UN Practitioners' Portal on Human Rights-Based Approaches to Programming: <http://hrbaportal.org>
- E-Learning course organized by the Human Rights Education Association on gender and human rights: http://www.hrea.org/index.php?doc_id=2274
- Human rights-based approach. UNFPA: <http://www.unfpa.org/rights/approaches.htm>
- The human rights of women. UNFPA: <http://www.unfpa.org/rights/women.htm>
- E-Learning course on Equity-Focused and Gender-Responsive Evaluations. UNICEF, Claremont Graduate University and IOCE, UN Women: http://mymande.org/human_rights_front?q=gender_equality_and_human_rights_responsive_evaluation
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Frequently asked questions on a human rights-based approach to development cooperation: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FAQen.pdf>
- United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/53/120. Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.
- United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.
- The International Bill of Human Rights: <http://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/compilation1.1en.pdf>