



# SYNERGY

Official Newsletter of the Governance Commission

Vol. 2 No .1

January 2015



## Inside This Edition



**GC holds two high level Roundtables on Constitutional Issues**  
**Decentralization Implementation gains momentum in Rural Liberia**  
**Minister Morris Dukuly speaks on Status of Decentralization Implementation in Liberia**  
**Land Commission Chair wants Constitution strengthened to support Land Reform**  
**Comm. Yarsuo Weh-Dorliae notes Benefits of Decentralization Implementation**

## GC holds two high level Roundtables on Constitutional Issues

The Governance Commission recently organized two High-Level Policy Roundtables to look more closely into two major contentious Constitutional related issues. The two issues closely examined in the two roundtables were “Decentralization Policy Implementation and Local Governance, and Land rights and the Constitution. The Roundtable on Decentralization was chaired by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and that on Land Rights was graced by Deputy House Speaker Hans Barchue. Both Roundtables were held in collaboration with relevant partners and attended by an array of government officials including members of the National Legislature, national and international partners, and local stakeholders. Several other contending Constitutional issues will be closely discussed in other Roundtables to take place in February and March, before the convening of the National Constitution Review Conference scheduled for late March or early April 2015.

There have been numerous calls for Constitutional reforms to address contending issues such as dual citizenship, land rights and ownership, property rights, women rights, tenure of the president and senators, dual currency in Liberia, State of Emergency among others. Last year, critics accused President Sirleaf of manipulating presidential powers as enshrined in the Constitution (the State of Emergency) and enforced during the peak of the Ebola crisis. President Sirleaf denied the allegation.

It is also noteworthy that while these Roundtables are important in bringing stakeholders together, stimulating discussions and soliciting suggestions and possible solutions to resolving acute national problems, Constitutional amendments to these contentious issues can only be achieved through national referendum.

Meanwhile, the Governance Commission in collaboration with relevant partners will organize three other Roundtables in February and March to address other contentious Constitutional issues including a) dual currency, b) dual citizenship in terms of national elections, ownership of property and religion, and c) State of Emergency. The three Roundtables will feature experts in the respective professional areas to serve as lead discussants.

President Sirleaf has on numerous occasions noted the need for reforms including Constitutional reforms to address citizen’s empowerment and rights protection, peace and reconciliation, archaic laws and present day realities in Liberia. In furtherance of these, the Governance Commission, Law Reform Commission, Independent National Human Rights Commission and others were created and working diligently to enhance good governance through the formulation and implementation of relevant policies that assure of the government’s reform agenda.



**Members of the Executive Branch in photo at the High-level roundtable on Decentralization**

Also addressing contending Constitutional issues is the Constitution Review Committee, CRC. After months of vigorous work, the Constitution Review Committee, CRC, has completed its nationwide consultations with Liberian stakeholders and is in the process of formulating draft constitution amendments propositions. Coming out of the national consultations are several constitution-related issues that require in-depth expert interrogation against the backdrop of current policies.

Having access to land related issues featured paramount in numerous consultations between and among Liberian stakeholders and the CRC. Liberians are very concern about having access to land and its ownership as stated in the Liberian Constitution. The Governance Commission, GC, is ex-officio member of CRC and Counselor Gloria Musu Scott chairs CRC. Chairing the December 2014 Roundtable on Land Rights and the Constitution organized by the Governance Commission in collaboration with the CRC, Cllr. Scott disclosed that Liberians have now tied the issue of land to citizenship and want this injected in the Liberian constitution. They also tied land to the privilege to vote and be voted for. However, Article 22 A of the Liberian Constitution already states that only citizens can own land in Liberia.

*“Every person shall have the right to own property alone as well as in association with others; provided that only Liberian citizens shall have the right to own real-estate property within the Republic.”*

Cllr. Scott said Liberians want the Constitution amended to allow land owners benefit from minerals found beneath their property as a means of economically empowering such land owners. However, it is interesting to note that the Liberian Constitution puts limitation on private property rights, noting that whatever mineral found beneath the surface of any land in the republic belongs to government. Article 22 B of the Constitution states that:

*“Private property rights, however, shall not extend to any mineral resources nor beneath any land or to any lands under the seas and waterways of the Republic. All mineral resources in and under the seas and other waterways shall belong to the Republic and be used by and for the entire Republic”.*

The CRC fact finding report also reflects that Liberians want those running for public office to own landed property. The traditional leaders, chiefs, civil society organizations, and political parties all propose that those running for public office should own landed property in order to qualify to be voted for.

*“if you want to be president, you should own property worth not less than 100,000.00 USD. They say if you want to be senator or representative, they were specific that you own a farm and specific to the issue of land, traditional leaders were clear to say that the land of this republic belongs to the tribal people and want this place in the constitution. In fact the consultation result document registered thirteen counts on the issues of land as proposed by the tribal people. Political parties came out with qualifications to run for offices and one of the qualifications is that one must own property. Civil society organizations also pressed on that interested candidates for elected offices should be owners of property”.*

The issues surrounding land in Liberia are numerous, need to be prioritized and speedily addressed to prevent a national conflict as is being predicted. In this light the Land Commission has worked tirelessly to initiate a comprehensive framework to address complex land problems in post conflict Liberia.

During consultations, the Land Commission sent copies of the Land Rights Policy and a propose Land Act to the CRC to help the latter better understand the concerns of the Liberian populace on Liberia’s complex land issues. The proposed land Act defines the various lands in Liberia including tribal, community, individual, public and government land. It also addresses taxes to be paid for land and land related properties.

The CRC visited the 73 electoral districts of Liberia to consult with diverse Liberian stakeholders on the numerous contending Constitutional issues and is expected to publish its report soon.

Earlier in welcome remarks at the high level Roundtable on Land Rights and Constitution Review, Governance Commission Chairman, Amos Sawyer noted that land rights regimes have been unstable and elusive here in Liberia for many years but strongly believes that the situation is about to change for the better. The Land Commission and its proposed Act have considered most of the challenges that have brought inequality, injustice, insecurity and other challenges that have stifled productivities over the years in Liberia.

Dr. Sawyer welcomed and thanked local, national and international partners that have and continue to support Liberia’s transformation including USAID, UNDP, SIDA, World Bank, UN-Habitat and all others who have contributed to the support of the CRC, The LCC and the GC as they strive to ground land issues with constitutional foundations.

Dr. Sawyer was the President of Liberia's first transitional government, the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU), during the war. He served for nearly four years without a Vice but managed to lead Liberia, with the help of ECOWAS and its peace-keeping force - ECOMOG.

The Roundtable on Land Rights and the Constitution was graced by House Speaker Alex Tyler (who, like thousands of Liberians, was exploited in the sale of a piece of land he purchased from a private property owner), twelve other members of the national legislature, other representatives from government functionaries, non-governmental organizations, national and international partners and civil society organizations.

## Decentralization Implementation gains momentum in Rural Liberia



For nearly two centuries Liberia had practiced a centralized system of governance which undermined national infrastructural and human development in rural areas. In its agenda for transformation which emphasizes national development and participatory governance, the Liberian government initiated its decentralization policy and local governance program meant to assure of an empowering system of local governance, and greater participation of the Liberian people in decision making process.

The decentralization policy and local governance is a direct result of efforts to transform Liberia, giving more power to the people through participatory local governance, deconcentration and delivery of basic services, and improved human and infrastructural

development at county and district levels. The Governance Commission, government's lead agency in policy formulation, is the chief driver of the decentralization policy implementation in Liberia. GC has been holding a number of consultative meetings with Liberian stakeholders in efforts to assuring development and people's participation in governance in the new Liberia.

In December 2014, GC held two Roundtables, one of which was on Decentralization Implementation. The high level Roundtable on Decentralization chaired by President Sirleaf was graced by heads of government ministries, agencies, and commissions, the United Nations agencies, and national and international partners/stakeholders. It underscored the importance of building strong and functioning local governments as well as strengthening decisions to accelerate deconcentration. Constitution review process finds its thrust on decentralization, a process even more reinforced at highest policy making level of government.

Phase 1 of the 2012 National Decentralization Policy on Local Governance is "the deconcentration implementation strategy" formulated in 2013 by the Governance Commission and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, working together with various service delivery agencies, to accelerate the establishment of various service delivery agencies of government, at both County and district levels.

While some believe that phase 1 of the decentralization policy (the deconcentration implementation strategy) has gained momentum, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf says more still needs to be achieved. In remarks at the Decentralization Implementation Roundtable, the Liberian leader noted that even with the gains made thus far, government still needs to coordinate, consolidate and sustain them, not only through financial support but by weaving the outputs until a single coordinated system of local governance that is cost effective and participatory is realized.

Twelve government ministries and two agencies have already expressed commitment to the implementation of the deconcentration strategy with considerable efforts made toward establishing or strengthening their county base offices and operations. President Sirleaf acknowledged these efforts but emphasized the need for greater coordination, cooperation and collaboration among these government functionaries that assure of a more economically effective and efficient system of service delivery in rural Liberia.

Heads of twelve Ministries and two agencies involved in the deconcentration program made presentations as to their current status in its implementation. Notably among them are the Ministries of Education, Agriculture, Health and Justice. Comments of Internal Affairs Minister are contained in the story caption "MIA Minister speaks on Status of Liberia's Decentralization Plan".

- The Ministry of Education noted the expansion of Government County and community based colleges and polytechnics in Liberia, some located in rural areas. The Ministry is also striving to strengthen local school boards and education offices throughout the country. Although the County Development Fund, CDF, is yet to achieve the anticipated results, the government is confident that the establishment of the CDF will accelerate local development participation if better coordinated.
- The Public Works Ministry, though with limited funding, has divided Liberia into three regions (five counties each) and is currently making use of its rural engineers in the construction, rehabilitation and interconnection of feeder roads and highways to enhance travels in rural Liberia.
- The Health Ministry, for its part reported that it has been collaborating with local, national and international partners to strengthen Liberia's health system. More clinics have been constructed (though some are make-shift structures) and health practitioners deployed to rural areas to tackle complex health issues including Ebola and other communicable diseases. Deputy Minister Yah Zolia represented the Ministry.

*“We have learned from Ebola for instance, that while the disease was happening at the communities and districts we were responding from the central level. So if these people down there are strengthened they will be the first responders in case of any future outbreak and this is our desire. We actually want to even move the operational level of service delivery from the county to the district level so that counties can serve as technical arm of implementation”.*

- The Justice Ministry, for its part, noted the increased deployment of Police officers to rural Liberia including the women and children unit attached to each zone to handle issues related to domestic violence and other disputes within the families, improved relations with rural communities, an increase in the numbers of Circuit and other courts to maintain peace and security, and assure protection of basic rights and properties as enshrined in Liberia's laws.
- The Agriculture Ministry is heavily involved with training of thousands of youths in agriculture. More than 4,000 youths have been trained in rural Liberia and benefitting from scholarships to study agriculture at colleges and universities in the country or short-term programs abroad. Seventy one of the Ministry's staff have either received or are in training for education at the Master's degree level in all fields. The Central Agriculture Research Institute (CARI) is rebuilt and staffed 100% with Liberian scientists. The Agriculture Ministry is also involved with raising the necessary support for Liberian colleges and universities that provide agriculture training programs such as the College of Agriculture, University of Liberia and the Tubman University.

- The Finance and Development Planning Ministry stressed the need for government functionaries to cut down on operational costs, collaborate and share available resources, and when possible, even their staff as they implement the decentralization policy. The Ministry frowned on government functionaries that continue to demand for individual office equipment, vehicles and motorbikes when these can also be shared with proper coordination, collaboration and cooperation.

*“The country does not have enough resources to finance everybody. So it makes sense for the mining agent in the county, for the agricultural officer in the county to share their vehicles their motorbikes with their people on the days where they are less busy. It makes more sense for the immigration and the police to do joint patrol along the borders”.*

The Ministry noted that government needs to make hard decisions and introduce a fundamental shift in the way it delivers for the people, if it is to achieve the necessary changes anticipated with the decentralization program implementation. The Ministry pledged its commitment to working for the advancement of decentralization in Liberia but cautioned that decentralization takes power away from a smaller group to a larger group which could give rise to some level of resistance, adding that “ that will be government’s challenge in the coming days.”

- The Ministry of Transport, the Civil Service Agency and other government functionaries also pledged their support to the national decentralization plan noting their status thus far to its implementation.

At the close of comments from the Ministries and Agencies, the tough talking President maintained that government’s approach to decentralization must remain practical, participatory and empowering. Madam Sirleaf recalled the recent health crisis with the outbreak of Ebola which, she emphasized, has taught us the need to strengthen both governance and service delivery institutions at the local levels. She observed that Interactions and cooperation among line Ministries, as well as cooperation and coordination at the level of county governance in delivery of services need to be further strengthened. She wants Superintendents to be given more support to coordinate local service delivery. Madam Sirleaf also commended Liberia’s partners for supporting the decentralization program thus far, and anticipates an even stronger partnership with them in strengthening the coordination of delivery of services at county and sub-county levels of government.

In a related development President Sirleaf has clarified that County Development fund is meant to support Decentralization activities, and urged county officials to revert to this initial purpose of said initiative.

Liberia popularly known as the oldest country in Africa is also listed as one of the poorest in the world. The Liberian government has been making frantic effort to reverse this situation and improve the country's economic profile and development through the establishment of the County Development Fund, CDF. The establishment of the CDF in 2006 was to support County Development Agenda and help jumpstart deconcentration, the first phase of Liberia's decentralization plan. President Sirleaf noted that the plan started off well but like many things in Liberia, has been sidetracked.

The President's observation was part of her closing remarks at the high level Roundtable on Decentralization held in December, 2014 at the Monrovia City Hall. There have been a number of news reports accusing government officials of either mismanaging the funds or engaging in corrupt practices in the disbursement of the County Development funds. No government official has been prosecuted for such allegation.

The President also mandated County Superintendents to provide comprehensive quarterly reports that will include input from all the sector entities so that when government makes resources available it will take into account what everyone is doing and proposes to do. The Governance Commission plans to host a number of consultations and Roundtables on several controversial Constitutional issues this year to help formulate policies that address present day realities.

## Minister Morris Dukuly speaks on Status of Decentralization Implementation in Liberia



**Minister of Internal Affairs, Hon. Morris Dukuly making a presentation on the Overview of Decentralization in Liberia**

Internal Affairs Minister Morris Dukuly says challenges in the inflow of funds to Liberia's decentralization program negatively impacted its implementation as promised. Nevertheless, as a lead agency of government for the implementation of decentralization, he and his Ministry have continued to work with their colleagues and development partners to overcome these challenges and ensure that the program remains on track. The National Policy on Decentralization and Local Governance is to be implemented in three phases: Phase 1 is Deconcentration; Phase 2 is Delegation of functions; Phase 3 is Devolution of certain powers.

The National Decentralization Policy and Local Governance was launched on January 5, 2012, in Salala Bong County, signaling government's determination to forge a closer partnership with the citizenry and make governance more inclusive and participatory. A deconcentration implementation strategy was then developed by twelve Ministries and two Agencies through consultations involving and led by the Governance (GC) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Under this policy, deconcentration of functions and services from central government Ministries, Agencies, and Commissions to absorb national jurisdictions was scheduled to

achieve a significant result in three years. The Ministries of Health, Education, Justice, and Agriculture continue to lead the deconcentration initiative while other agencies have also been working to follow their example. However, significant challenges remain in the areas of decentralization, coordination and information sharing to enhance and speed up deconcentration in rural Liberia.

At the high level Roundtable on Decentralization chaired by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in December 2014, Minister Dukuly urged his colleagues to speed up the process of sharing information, for improved coordination. The Ministry of Internal Affairs is tasked to coordinate the decentralization of line-ministries' work in rural Liberia.

*“Early this week we took an important step in this regard. We started a conversation at the MIA to more aggressively map out services and develop timelines for the commencement of decentralization of services for the twelve ministries and two agencies throughout our fifteen counties. The lessons of Ebola tell us that we must act fast and act now. And we are doing so. The twelve ministries and two agencies have been identified to become the lead in decentralization and will be repositioned and ready to implement a plan of action to advance deconcentration in a more synchronized and coordinated manner beginning in January 2015.*

As Minister of Internal Affairs, Minister Dukuly is tasked to accomplish two critical pillars of the Sirleaf led government – decentralization implementation and peace-building. A revised \$27 million dollars budget was agreed upon to cover a five year period of the national decentralization implementation plan. Other commitments include: Government of Liberia - US\$5 million, UNDP committed \$2.5 million; (money already spent); SIDA has declared and contributed \$10 million. Others such as the European Union and United Nations Liberia offices have provided technical support to Liberia's agenda for transformation of which decentralization implementation is a part of.

Minister Dukuly recalled that in 2013, the implementation of the decentralization implementation program was stalled due to internal approval, challenges and channels of disbursements. In order to quick start the implementation of this program UNDP provided seed capital of US\$500,000.00 which was used up to June 2014. Subsequently, July 2014, the European Union approved a financing envelope of 4.5 million Euros, thus injecting new impetus and new capital into the program's implementation process. At the same time USAID, the World Bank and SIDA have continued to show considerable interests in financing sectorial decentralization and deconcentration activities particularly at the county and sub-county levels.

*“In spite of funding challenges, I would like to note that already several ministries and agencies have established and strengthened their county based operations. Noteworthy among these agencies are the ministry of agriculture, the ministry of education, the ministry of Health, the ministry of finance, civil service agency, the ministry of justice not just under the new justice hub program but because of what it*

*has done to have police presence in all of the county capitals, even where justice hubs jurisdiction have ended. In the area of fiscal decentralization, government has established county and social development funds that have contributed significantly to enhancing participatory planning, budgeting and decision making and thereby enhancing the program of people centered development projects.”*

Minister Dukuly promised that beginning 2015, the decentralization process will be practical, participatory, and empowering at county, district and clan levels, and implementation quickened. He also promised the strengthening of local economies by creating jobs, new markets and attracting new investments.

Deconcentration is necessary for Liberia’s transformation because it reduces costs of government’s operations, promotes economy of skills, saves time and makes services available and accessible at county levels. If properly implemented, in intermediate term it will cost little additional investments in infrastructure, and a true rationalization of staff so that everybody does not have to have individual staff. In short, decentralization and deconcentration are a smart development policy that rests on its belief in their citizens and in democracy.

## Land Commission Chair wants Constitution strengthened to support Land Reform



**Chairman of Land Commission, Dr. Othello Brandy discussing outcome from the national research on land use and civic engagements that accounts’ for citizen’s participation in the draft Land Right Act.**

The Governance Commission, in December 2014, held a Roundtable on Land Rights and Constitution Review to bring to the core numerous concerns related to “land” in Liberia. The issue of land has always reigned high among complex concerns in Liberia but the country lacked a holistic approach and laws to adequately address this problem. The Land Commission has taken up the challenge and developed a comprehensive Land Rights Policy to address Liberia’s complex problems surrounding the issue of “land”. The Land Commission Chairman, Othello Brandy explained that problems related to land had plagued Liberia overtime because the country had never had a clearly, articulated set of land policy or document that define land or property rights. Dr. Brandy, an expert on the issue of land reform himself, emphasized that for the first time in Liberia’s history, the country now has a fully develop Land Policy that took two years of national broad based consultations.

Dr. Brandy addressed the well-attended Roundtable held in December 2014 and organized by the Governance Commission in collaboration with the Land Commission and the Constitution Review Committee. All three government institutions have also been holding consultations with other Liberian and non-Liberian stakeholders to develop a comprehensive framework that will address Liberia’s myriad land issues as part of the country’s reform and transformation agenda.

The issue of landownership has always been and continues to be a source of conflict in Liberia. It is now a general belief in Liberia that the next major conflict in this country will be a fight over land. The Constitution Review Committee, CRC, has been holding a number of consultations with traditional leaders; Liberians from all works of life including political parties, women and youth groups and the issue of land ownership continues to hold center stage.

Article 22 of the Liberian Constitution stipulates Liberians right to own land in their country. Dr. Brandy supports this constitutional provision and noted that recognizing, and stating those rights must also be supported by a legal document such as the proposed Land Rights bill currently before the National Legislature awaiting passage into law that also explains other complexities associated with land disputes and ownership.

The Land Rights Policy developed by the Land Commission, LC, among other things articulates and explains four distinct land rights categories. These include Private Land, Government Land, Public Land and Customary Land. Definition of these various categories of land have been confusing and unclear, to say the least, and have led to many disputes, feuds, and court actions.

*“The three categories of land as we just mentioned are private Land, public land, government Land and the last category being “customary land or what we say, community land”. This is a new right category,*

*so to speak and is indeed in recognition of the issues that were raised by our communities during the consultations. In many of these traditional communities' individuals within those communities still own private lands. ....The fourth category is customary land. Now, this land category of customary land is because for the first time it recognizes the vast majority and it affects the vast majority of our people. This right is different from what was before. In the past government did recognize, in some kind of a passive way, the rights of these communities but it acknowledge ownership rights, user rights, which is different. It was clearly stated in some instances where tribal reserve were granted or were aborigine deeds were granted but with limitation that prevented you from selling, you could use but could not sell".*

### Complex issues surrounding land ownership in Liberia

There are numerous contributing factors or causes for land disputes in Liberia today. Key among them are:

- a) Organized fraud perpetrated in land sector – land owners or their representatives selling a spot of land to numerous persons/buyers;
- b) Courts corrupt and lack capacity to handle numerous cases which then encourages bribery and justice for those who can afford and most often injustice for the poor;
- c) Illegal occupation as a result of the civil war and/or death/relocation of legal owner of said property;
- d) Documentation of landed property in disarray, missing or burnt due to civil war, probate court officers/managers of archives, and/or government surveyors lacking proper record keeping (as researched by Dr. Amos Sawyer);
- e) Breakdown of other land dispute resolution mechanisms and institutions;

In the face of all these, the Government has made land reform a top priority in its transformation agenda. President Sirleaf mandated the Governance Commission to lead in designing the approach to land reform, and organize process to address land challenges for long term. GC was also mandated to recommend solutions to immediate/urgent problems related to public land sales for her approval.

During its research, the Commission identified major land challenges predating and postdating the Liberian civil war including:

- Lack of harmonization of pluralist land law:
  - civil law (statutory & Judicial),customary law
- Need for modernization of backward, antiquated and inequitable land laws
  - Public land law, hinterland regulations and “settler advantage”, ambiguous laws on forest rights, and issues of inequity (gender, ethnic communities, “strangers”),
- Need for comprehensive land law based on clear policies
- Land administration
  - a). Deed registration system:
    - Dominant system in use; contaminated with fraud; to be reorganized conserved and digitalized.
  - b). Land registration system

- initiated in mid-1970s but not completed; need for piloting and later, phasing in system
- c). Need to rationalize & capacitate land administration agencies
  - Ministries of Lands, Mines & Energy; Internal Affairs (Local Government); Public Works; Agriculture; Forestry Dev. Authority; Office of the President; Probate Court); and other agencies – all have land administration responsibilities.
- Community land rights and agricultural and forestry concessions: Unproductive urban land; Land for small holder agriculture & sustainable livelihoods; Zoning challenges, especially in urban and peri-urban areas; Land taxation issues, especially to discourage large undeveloped landholdings.

#### Organizing for Land Reform: developing a roadmap

In keeping with its mandate, the Land Commission (in collaboration with the Governance Commission) is expected to lead in deepening understanding of land challenges through research and consultations (collaborate with UL in land challenges research)

- Recommend policies and legislation to government on land challenges
- Collaborate with Law Commission on harmonization of land laws
- Recommend mechanisms/institutions for land dispute resolution including the use of ADR
- Collaborate with various agencies (local, national international) to develop coordination strategies for implementation of land laws and policies.

It is the general understanding that with all things being equal, the Land Commission in collaboration with relevant partners at both national and international levels can help minimize, if not eradicate, the numerous challenges relating to land tenure and insecurity during this period of transformation in Liberia.

#### The way forward

The Land Commission has completed the drafting of the Land Rights Act and is working with relevant partners in drafting the Land Authority Act which lays the foundation for reforming Land Rights for the first time in this country. The Land Commission has also drafted the Land Rights Criminal Conveyance Act which criminalizes the fraudulent conveyance of land in Liberia. Deputy House Speaker Hans Barchue was Special Guest at the Roundtable on Land Rights and Constitution Review. He and ten other Legislators, cabinet Ministers, lawyers, national and international partners and Civil Society representatives all attended the Roundtable.

## Comm. Yarsuo Weh-Dorliae notes Benefits of Decentralization Implementation



Decentralization implementation will: Defeat and prevent a recurrence of Ebola in Liberia;

- It will enhance our capacity for an emergency response governance;
- Provide a sustainable gender sensitive, participatory, accountable and transparent system of local governance in our country;
- Sustain our peace; rebuild the state by redistribution of certain of our political powers at the rationale level to the local level;
- Redistribute certain of our fiscal resources in ways that will ensure that there is an integrated socio-economic development in Liberia.

Commissioner Dorliae emphasized that “throughout the country our people have spoken. All we want is clean drinking water, good schools, paved roads, and clinics throughout Liberia. All we want is to have access to the same resources enjoyed in Monrovia. We don’t think it is too much to ask. The rationale for implementing decentralization in Liberia is grounded in our recent history and historical experience. It is now a matter of legacy that is at the front and center of our national history and our quest for state building, peace building and national reconstruction”.

**Commissioner Dorliae heads the Political and Legal Reform/Decentralization Mandate Area of the Governance Commission.**