



## **Human Rights Council**

### **Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Liberia 50<sup>th</sup> Session (2025)**

#### **Joint Stakeholders' Submission on:**

#### **Human Rights in Liberia**

**Submitted by:**

**Marist International Solidarity Foundation (FMSI)**  
*(NGO in Consultative Status with ECOSOC)*

and

**Solidaridad, Educación y Desarrollo (SED)**

Geneva, April 2025

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. This stakeholders' report is a joint submission of the above-mentioned organizations. The report highlights key concerns related to **children's rights** in Liberia, particularly **education, health care, job opportunities, security and general welfare**. Each section conveys recommendations to the Liberia Government.
2. The data and information obtained for this submission came from various sources and includes information from youth, teachers, educators, and other civil society actors living and working in Liberia. All information concerned the period from November 2020 to March 2025.
3. **Marist International Solidarity Foundation (FMSI)** is an international organization promoted by the Marist Brothers, present in 80 countries. FMSI has more than 15 years of experience working in the field of international solidarity, advocating for children's rights especially in the field of education. It works at the international level, participating in the UN human rights mechanisms in collaboration with other organizations with similar interests. It has been accredited by ECOSOC since 2011.
4. **Solidaridad, Educación y Desarrollo (SED)** is a non-profit, state-wide, non-governmental development organization (NGO). It works mainly to promote the right to education in Africa and Latin America, as well as in some countries in Asia and Europe. SED's three objectives are: development cooperation, education for development and the promotion and training of volunteers. Its headquarters are in Madrid. It has four regional delegations in Barcelona, Valladolid, Pamplona and Seville. In Spain it works in the field of Development Education and Social Advocacy.

## II. GENERAL REMARKS AND COOPERATION WITH THE UPR MECHANISM

5. Liberia was reviewed on November 2020 at the 36th Session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review. This NGO coalition welcomes the constructive participation of Liberia in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). On this occasion, Liberia received 218 recommendations and supported 166 recommendations while noting 52 recommendations. The present joint submission represents the follow-up to the UPR recommendations accepted by the State in 2020.
6. The implementation of recommendations is critical in order to ensure a true advancement of human rights in the State under review. Therefore, Liberia must pay particular attention to effectively follow-up those recommendations in consultation with Civil Society.
7. We thank the government of Liberia for the opportunity to submit this report, as well as for its adherence to the measures proposed by the United Nations for the participation of civil society. We welcome the recommendations adopted on the last UPR, as well as the country's efforts to implement these measures. At the same time, we are also aware of the need to further elaborate

on the previous recommendations, as well as to address new ones that may arise at the next session.

8. As a coalition, we would like to thank the Liberian government for its efforts to take measures to safeguard human rights, as can be seen in the adoption of multiple recommendations<sup>1</sup>. It is important to provide the necessary funding for institutions and measures that ensure the fulfilment and improvement of rights across the population, particularly among the most vulnerable.

9. We also welcome the adoption of many recommendations that are connected to the Sustainable Development Goals (1: No poverty; 2: Zero hunger; 3: Good health and well-being; 4: Quality Education; 5: Gender Equality; 8: Decent work and economic growth; 10: Reduced inequalities; 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions).

### **III. METHODOLOGY FOR DATA COLLECTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE TOPIC**

#### **Methodology:**

10. An important part of this report has been carried out by listening to the direct voices of children, adolescents and young people, as well as adults directly involved in the lives of children and young people involving several groups of students, aged between 12 and 17, from educational establishments. The total number of students involved was 30. In many of the themes, we highlight the coincidence in the opinions expressed by the children and the adults who accompanied them in the consultation and listening process. The main issues highlighted in this fieldwork are reflected in this report, although there were other concerns beyond those mentioned here.

#### **Overview:**

11. **Education.** The aim is to strengthen the country's education system, asking the State to take measures to this end. It is considered necessary for all young people in Liberia to have access to the education system, as well as appropriate methodologies and materials. Improving teacher training also appears to be a relevant aspect.

12. **Health care.** Health is considered essential for the development of a dignified life, and this is pointed out in the voices of "the next generation". The need to strengthen the country's health system is raised, including the construction of more health centers, as well as improving the provision of health facilities. It is also important to make access to treatment and medicines more affordable.

13. **Job opportunities.** The possibility of having access to a quality job offers greater opportunities for the development of individuals and their families. Therefore, our coalition believes that it is essential to continue working and implementing measures to improve working conditions (wages, working hours, etc.). We consider it important to establish a system of access

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<sup>1</sup> 103.29, 103.30, 103.31...

to the world of work for young people that allows the full development of the person, and that is appropriate to the previous training of each person.

14. **Security.** Efforts by the government to improve security in people's lives are acknowledged. Nevertheless, we believe that it is important to continue to insist on this aspect, which is essential for the improvement of the lives of the people of the country, especially in less populated areas and even around schools.

15. **General welfare.** Our coalition also proposes several other important aspects for the development of the country and for safeguarding the rights of people, especially children, young people and the most vulnerable. These include promoting the talents and skills of each person, improving road infrastructure and prompt payment of salaries.

16. In addition, children and young people are increasingly concerned about other issues that directly affect them and their families. Many aspects of human rights are interconnected so that when one fails, other rights are also threatened. Therefore, other concerns can be heard in the voices of children and young people that are less developed in this report: internet access, means of transport, concern for the future...

17. Liberia protects with laws and public policies the human rights. We are aware that some of the challenges facing the government are not easy to work on, so we appreciate the efforts to improve them, now and in the future.

#### IV. EDUCATION

18. Our coalition wants to join the efforts of the State of Liberia in the field of education. The adoption of several recommendations from the last UPR clearly shows the country's commitment to this point<sup>2</sup>. On the last UPR, the government accepted some measures on this issue. After actively listening to a group of adolescents and young people, we join their voices in recognizing the elements that have been improving in recent years, and we also invite the State to continue implementing policies that will improve the country's education system, and all that goes with it.

19. We highlight the need, which still exists, to strengthen the quality education system, and with them to respond to the Right to Education, particularly among the most vulnerable people<sup>3</sup> (because of their economic situation or because they live in rural areas or further away from the cities). "The government have to ensure that every child, regardless of their background, should have access to primary and secondary education."

20. There are several specific points that the voices of the next generation make. These aspects will be reflected later in the recommendations. The importance of investing in appropriate

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<sup>2</sup> Examples: 103.173, 103.74, 103.77...

<sup>3</sup> 103.183 Continue its efforts towards achieving equal access to quality education, including for children from low-income families (India).

materials (textbooks and reading books, computers, pens, uniforms, etc.) is highlighted (“The government could provide free uniforms, copy books, pens and reading books”)<sup>4</sup>.

21. The need to continue to invest in teacher training to provide teachers with new skills and methodologies is also highlighted (“and hire qualified teachers to educate the young minds”). This point is related to the recommendation made by the Eswatini<sup>5</sup> government in the previous cycle.

22. School fees are a repeated element of concern for many students, proposing that the government should either cover these costs or help to reduce them (“I want the government to provide free school, free uniform and free book, pen and food.”).

23. There is also a call for the further development of increasingly individualized education<sup>6</sup>, in a way that favours the personal abilities and interests of each student (“It should be a part of the learning in the school where students are taught on how to improve their gifts/talents”).

**24. In order to improve the educational situation in the country, our coalition suggests the following recommendations:**

- a. “To ensure that every child, regardless of their background, should have access to primary and secondary education.”<sup>7</sup>**
- b. To develop study plans that combine theory with more active and practical methodologies, as well as spaces for individualized education.**
- c. To establish a training pathway for teachers that includes diverse methodologies, technological knowledge and pedagogical practices.**
- d. To increase the system of grants for access to all stages of education, including higher education.**

## **V. HEALTH CARE**

25. In presenting the issue of health for all Liberians, we would like to thank the Liberian government for adopting several recommendations made during the last UPR cycle. We welcome the adoption of recommendations such as 103.158<sup>8</sup> and 103.160<sup>9</sup>, which aim to increase and

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<sup>4</sup> 103.180 Continue taking measures to ensure quality education for all, including through the implementation of policies and programmes related to the right to education (Malaysia).

<sup>5</sup> 103.177 Continue its efforts to improve education (Eswatini).

<sup>6</sup> 103.182 Take steps to ensure high-quality education for all, especially free and compulsory basic education (Pakistan).

<sup>7</sup> 103.179 Continue the ongoing efforts aimed at reforming and developing the education sector and at including and serving all segments of society, including those with disabilities, throughout Liberia (Libya).

<sup>8</sup> 103.158 Continue expanding health-care services and making them available to all Liberians (Oman).

<sup>9</sup> 103.160 Continue to strengthen its national health policies in favour of the most vulnerable (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela).

strengthen the health system. We also understand that it is still necessary to increase investment in health services<sup>10</sup> that will have a direct impact on the well-being of the country's inhabitants.

26. The testimonies collected show that this is a major concern for children and young people, for themselves, for their families and for the rest of the country's population. They consider health as an essential element for the integral development of their lives.

27. One of the concerns most expressed by the next generation, when talking about the health system<sup>11</sup>, is the training of medical professionals, both doctors and nurses. Comprehensive training, with practice, and access to good study materials, would help to improve health care. Some comments along these lines speak of "...employe good and trustful nurses" and "We need more doctors that are well trained."

28. Connected to the previous topic, the children and young people also expressed the convenience of having more medical equipment in the schools themselves. School is highlighted as the place where students spend many hours of their lives, which is why we as a coalition also see the need for schools to have more and more medical resources for those occasions when students have health needs of their own. Children demand "equipped medical facilities in our schools."

29. Concern about drug abuse in the population, especially among younger people, is also highlighted. Drug use and consumption is raised as a problem, and the young people themselves suggest the creation of rehabilitation centers, together with a more consistent policy in the fight against drug trafficking in the country ("We need more rehabilitation centers for youth that are addicted to drugs").

**30. To improve the health status of people in Liberia, our coalition makes the following recommendations:**

- a. To improve health education, as well as health equipment and care for the environment.**
- b. To increase financial support for the purchase of medicines, either through direct aid or price reductions.**
- c. Build more medical clinics and/or hospitals, particularly in the more remote areas of the cities.**
- d. Establish a training plan for health professionals that will increase their skills and the techniques used.**
- e. Improve medical equipment in schools.**
- f. Establish rehabilitation centers for people with drug addiction, especially young people.**

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<sup>10</sup> 103.161 Further increase investment in health services to better protect the right to health of its people (China).

<sup>11</sup> 103.163 Continue to improve the health sector in order to provide quality health care to all citizens (Egypt).

## VI. JOB OPPORTUNITIES

31. As a coalition, having listened to the voices and concerns of the next generation in Liberia, we want to stress the importance of an active labour market, which presents adequate opportunities to the population, especially to young school leavers.

31. We are aware of the difficulty of improving the world of work due to the different challenges facing the country, but we are also aware of the positive steps the government has been taking in recent years to improve the situation. A clear and consistent policy that favours individual business initiatives, as well as the settlement of industry in different parts of the country, could help to improve the situation.

33. We also stress the importance of establishing a consolidated plan for access to the labour market, especially among the younger generations. A plan that starts with the strengthening of academic training and continues with spaces where young people can learn and train from practice.

34. The last aspect concerns the payment of wages. The need for payments to be made on time, and not months late, is a recurring theme (“than two months they haven’t received their pay”). Listening to the next generation’s voices, they express perfectly well the difficulties and consequences of late payment of salaries (difficulty in paying school fees, for example).

35. In the previous UPR cycle, the Liberian government accepted recommendation 103.150<sup>12</sup>, with a commitment to improve infrastructure and economic growth. We welcome this effort by the government. This aspect also connects with the recommendation we will make later. This effort to improve the conditions for economic growth will undoubtedly have a direct impact on decent work. In the same vein, recommendation 103.157<sup>13</sup> could be considered.

**36. To address better job opportunities, we recommend the Government of Liberia to:**

- a. Strengthen the labour market in all areas, which facilitates the creation of more and better job opportunities for parents.**
- b. “To create internships, apprenticeships, or youth employment scheme that help people gain job experience and improve their employability”.**
- c. Ensure prompt payment of wages.**

## VII. SECURITY

37. Citizen security, both in public and private spaces, is essential and necessary for every person to be able to live in full freedom. This is why our coalition calls on the Liberian government to redouble its efforts in this regard. We are aware of the progress that the government has made in

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<sup>12</sup> 103.150 Strengthen cooperation between the Government and development partners to accelerate economic growth by focusing on infrastructure development, through a multisectoral approach (Indonesia).

<sup>13</sup> 103.157 Mobilize its resources to realize its national vision of becoming a middle-income country by 2030 (Ethiopia).

this area, but we believe that it is still not enough. This is also an issue where the population has to take sides, with more education in values. The international community can also help by offering resources and expertise to improve security.

38. Earlier our coalition mentioned the concern of the next generations about drug abuse. This is not only a health problem, but also has an impact on the security of citizens, especially among the younger population. We all know about the security problems caused by drug trafficking, as well as drug use, due to the increase in robberies and assaults to get money to buy drugs. For this reason, we join the voices of children and young people who are calling for a greater fight against this reality.

39. It is striking that we did not find any reference to drug abuse, and the problems it represents, in the recommendations of the previous cycle, nor in other documents of the previous cycle (as in the “Report of the Working Group” -46th session-).

40. We also highlight the demands of children and young people for schools to be safe spaces. Safety both inside schools and in the surrounding streets is raised. “It is very much important for creating a conducive learning environment where students and staff felt safe and protected”.

41. For the improvement of safety, we found two positive suggestions that would help to increase this aspect of people's daily lives. On the one hand, having a larger number of professionals who can serve larger areas in both urban and rural settings. On the other hand, providing security forces with more training in all areas.

**42. To further improve people's security, we would like to make some recommendations to the Liberian government:**

- a. Improve the implementation of plans to combat drug trafficking and drug abuse.**
- b. Provision of surveillance and security systems in school environments.**
- c. Strengthen the training of police officers, as well as increase their numbers.**

## **VIII. GENERAL WELFARE**

43. In this last section of our report, we would like to highlight three main ideas that will help to improve the daily lives of Liberians. These are themes that come up repeatedly when listening to children and young people, as well as adults.

44. Earlier we referred to the promotion of a more individualized education. The issue is even broader, as children and young people themselves are asking for more space to promote their dreams and talents. They express that their talents and abilities are a wealth for the country, since with the necessary opportunities these abilities can be turned into greater wealth for the country itself and its inhabitants.

45. A third aspect that we note, before concluding, refers to the improvement and expansion of the road network. The children are aware of the benefits of the construction and improvement of roads in the country, and they are also aware of the efforts being made by the Liberian government



to improve them. An improvement that not only has a positive impact on travel times, but also prevents accidents, the consequences of which are so painful for those who suffer them and their families. (“The government can make good roads so accidents cannot be made”).

46. Care for the environment is also a concern for children and young people, because of the consequences that this change can have, and is already having, for the lives of many people in the country. Our coalition is aware of the difficulty of implementing measures to help reduce climate change and prevent potential natural disasters. Nevertheless, we invite the government to continue to take measures in this direction<sup>14</sup>.

**47. In order to improve the general welfare of the country, we would like to recommend the following points to the Liberian government:**

- d. Provide opportunities for personal skills development, both in schools and in other areas of social life.**
- e. Continue, and improve, the plan to maintain and improve the country's roads<sup>15</sup>.**
- f. Continue to implement concrete measures to combat climate change and to prevent natural disasters.**

## **IX. DIRECT VOICES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

48. We would like to bring to this report, albeit briefly, some direct voices of children and young people when talking about the situation of rights in Liberia. These voices reaffirm the theoretical work that has been carried out by the organizations presenting the report, the result of interaction and listening to children, adolescents and young people, as well as groups of adults directly related to the lives of minors.

49. Some of the contributions have already appeared during the report, but we think it is interesting to specify the richness of the direct voices of the next generations of Liberia. We understand that they are the future of the country, and we know that they will be responsible for their own future. 50. For this reason, with the consultation work, we also wanted to work on the participation and protagonism of children and young people, giving them a direct voice in the drafting of the report. From this desire, the "between quotes" of the report, and the contributions explained below, arise.

**51. Education:**

- “To ensure that every child, regardless of their background, should have access to primary and secondary education.”

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<sup>14</sup> 103.35 Intensify efforts to develop and strengthen the necessary legislative frameworks that address cross-sectoral environmental challenges, including climate change and disaster risk reduction frameworks (Fiji).

<sup>15</sup> 103.150 Strengthen cooperation between the Government and development partners to accelerate economic growth by focusing on infrastructure development, through a multisectoral approach (Indonesia).

- “We need more practical than theory, in doing this lab apparatus should be available like beaker...”
- “There should be some means of earning money to go to the university especially those who are self providing of their schooling.”
- “Some students in the school are God gifted with many talents but there is no means of promoting their talents in the school”
- “We as kids need quality education because we need to be well inclined to help our country and the world at large”.

#### **52. Health care:**

- “Many of our families have lost their lives just from a common disease that can be treated and cured”.
- “I want the government to build a health center where parents who can’t pay...”
- “We need our doctors to travel abroad and learn more in the medical field”

#### **53. Job opportunities:**

- “To create job opportunities for our parents”.
- “Support and incentives in businesses and industries to create internships, apprenticeships, or youth employment scheme that help people gain job experience and improve their employability”.
- “It should provide jobs opportunity for young people, which means financial support to help reach our goals.”

#### **54. Security:**

- “The government needs to stop certain drugs from entering the country”.
- “We need securities in our environment to protect our properties”.
- “We need police to protect our home and the life of people.”
- “It is very much important for creating a conducive learning environment where students and staff felt safe and protected”.

#### **55. General welfare:**

- “The government being able to pay civil servants on time”.
- “We need to be given a chance to show our talent to the world”.
- “The government can make good roads so accidents cannot be made”
- “A healthy environment and a very safe one because for sure we don’t compromise safety at any cost.”

## **X. CONCLUSION**

56. As members of Civil Society, we would like to thank the Government of Liberia for accepting many of the recommendation that were done in the last cycle. We highlight some of them:

Recommendation 103.152<sup>16</sup> to reduce poverty and increase access to education; Recommendation 103.152<sup>17</sup> to improve living standards.

57. We sincerely appreciate the efforts made by the government to improve the standard of living of people in the country through the adoption of human rights mechanisms and instruments<sup>18</sup>. This appreciation is particularly evident in the areas of education and health. Despite this, we continue to encourage further development in both areas by allocating a larger budget line<sup>19</sup>, and creating and supporting especial programmes<sup>20</sup>.

58. In the National Report presented in August 2020, on the occasion of the previous UPR cycle, the Liberian government presented a series of measures, especially in education, health and improving the standard of living, which we consider very positive from our coalition. We are also aware of the challenges the country has faced in recent years, and of the effort to implement the "supported" recommendations of the previous cycle. Along with this recognition, we would like to encourage the government to continue to deepen the measures and programmes necessary for education, health and the economy to continue to improve in the coming years.

59. Our coalition thank the government of Liberia for its efforts to continue to listen to the voices of civil society, especially children and young people, and encourage it to continue to make its best efforts to improve the situation of rights in the country in all areas.

60. Our coalition joins the reflection that was shown in the report of the "Working Group" of the previous cycle, where in number 22 it was pointed out: "It also noted the progress made in the field of education and in upholding children's Rights."

61. We are also grateful for the opportunity offered by the United Nations to participate through the UPR mechanism. Special thanks for allowing us to raise the direct voices of the children and young people with whom we have worked, reflected on and drafted the report we conclude here.

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<sup>16</sup> 103.152 Step up its efforts to fight poverty and hunger and to ensure the provision of education for all (Sudan).

<sup>17</sup> 103.153 Continue to promote sustainable economic and social development, strengthen poverty reduction efforts and improve the standard of living of its people (China).

<sup>18</sup> 103.17 Continue efforts to ratify international human rights instruments and to cooperate with human rights mechanisms (Morocco). 103.19 Pursue collaborative efforts with human rights mechanisms (Niger).

<sup>19</sup> 103.169 Ensure that the health and education sector of the Government has the necessary financial, human and technical resources to carry out its mandates effectively to provide high-quality services for all (Maldives).

<sup>20</sup> 103.155 Continue consolidating its social programmes in order to improve the quality of life of its people, especially those most in need, with the international assistance and cooperation that the country requires (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela).