

The Republic of Liberia

Positions for the Commission on Science and Technology for Development

I. Smart Cities for Urban Sustainability

With rapid urbanization underway, the Republic of Liberia (Liberia) actively seeks to adapt to the needs of its citizens and to the ever-changing demands of a globalizing economy. Liberia strives to develop institutions through the use of technology that provide opportunities to its citizens to engage in local governance and the economy. **Internationally**, under the administration of President Johnson-Sirleaf, Liberia has pursued goal 11 of the Millennium Development Goals to “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.” This goal has been manifested in nine UN-HABITAT programs hosted by Liberia which have greatly benefitted the country’s urban planning and development. Liberia’s need for similar programs persists, nonetheless, and Liberia recognizes the positive impact of foreign assistance in the establishment of such programs. **Regionally**, Liberia remains a loyal partner to the African Union (AU) and participated in the creation of the “Agenda 2063,” reflecting its desire to increase coordination among member states to develop urban sustainability. Additionally, Liberia is an active participant in the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD). In 2005, Liberia adopted resolution EX.CL/Dec.200(VII), urging partners to support developing countries when responding to the demands of rapid urbanization, particularly by cooperating with AMCHUD and employing mechanisms to increase the use of technology in developing African infrastructure. **Nationally**, though adamantly desiring to improve urban sustainability through the use of technology, much of Liberia’s infrastructure was destroyed by two recent civil wars. In recent years, Liberia has focused on solidifying and enforcing democratic practices as well as addressing the immediate needs of citizens suffering from the Ebola crisis. The country has, as a result, found it challenging to meet the demands caused by changes in the population. With 50 percent of the population recently moving to urban centers, and with one-third of the population concentrated in the capital of Monrovia, Liberia recognizes the need to rapidly rebuild its infrastructure to meet the demands of this influx. Among others, the destruction of the power grid during the most recent civil war has posed a significant threat to economic and social growth in urban areas. Liberia is working to provide more efficient and accessible energy to households and firms and recognizes the need for increased urban planning among global partners. To this end, Liberia proposes the following three measures to be taken by willing Member States in order to promote urban development. First, Liberia urges Member States to create uniform urban planning in the form of Joint Programs. Under this structure, developed states of the UN will collaborate with developing nations to find better solutions to the key challenges of urbanization. Second, Liberia encourages the UN to facilitate partnerships between local governments and non-governmental organizations that will be valuable actors in developing urban solutions specific to each country’s needs. Third, Liberia calls upon Member States to increase the sharing of technology, as this will be essential to the improvement of urban infrastructure in developing Member States.

II. Improving Cyber Security Through Global Partnerships

With two devastating civil wars marking its recent history, Liberia is adamantly pursuing the rebuilding of infrastructure and the strengthening of global partnerships to aid in this process. Liberia recognizes the increasing threat posed to national security by cyber warfare and strives to improve coordination at the international, regional and national level to enhance cyber security.

Internationally, Liberia participates in increasingly globalized partnerships structured to combat threats to cyber security. Liberia affirms the actions of the EU and the ITU to manifest the Harmonization of the ICT Policies in Sub-Saharan Africa (HIPSSA). Under the premises established in HIPSSA, Liberia and other partners work to develop uniform policy intended to prevent cyber warfare and prosecute Cyber Criminals. Liberia recognizes the need for similar programs that will produce region-wide legislation criminalizing cyber warfare and interdicting its use. **Regionally**, Liberia ratified the African Union's (AU) Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection EX.CL/846(XXV), calling for increased international cooperation in the prevention of cyber attacks and the prosecution of cyber criminals. As a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Liberia partners with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to facilitate global partnerships. The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding in 2015 has led to increased awareness among member states to cyber security threats and uniformity of legislation prosecuting Cyber Criminals.

Nationally, Liberia has recently fallen prey to cyber attacks when in October of 2016 cyber criminals interfered with internet connection nationwide. Consequently, Liberia recognizes its responsibility to its citizens to prevent this from happening again. In full support of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the government is preparing to assume full security responsibilities when UNMIL transitions out of the country in 2017. Several national agencies have been established to ensure a successful transition, including the National Security Council (NSC) and the Liberian National Police (LNP) and the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL). As reflected in the Agenda for Transformation (AFT), Liberia seeks greater communication between national agencies in the implementation of rule of law and state security. Further, Liberia is working with private agencies to provide training and technology to the LNP and AFL. Finally, The Government of Liberia CIO Program promotes the use of sector-specific research and development, but measures taken to improve R&D within the country are still currently in the beginning stages and would require greater outside aid to reach their full potential. In light of current inhibiting factors, Liberia urges Member States to act upon the following four areas to improve the security of data and information. First, Liberia and other developing countries are the most vulnerable to cyber attacks; however, a lack of information-sharing and funding from developed Member States prevents them from making substantive advances in cyber security. Liberia thus urges Member States to collaborate and aid one another to develop R&D agencies that will improve cyber security. Second, Liberia recognizes the need for uniform cyber security legislation and development within regions. Geographically similar and neighboring countries will likely find solutions to cyber threats that honor respective cultural practices when working under institutions similar to ECOWAS. Third, Liberia calls upon the UN to provide technological and informational support to private organizations within states to better prepare for cyber threats. Fourth, Liberia encourages Member States to condemn the use of cyber warfare and commit to its elimination on a global, regional and national level. Only then will nations be able to make sufficient advancements in cyber security.