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The Millennium Development Goals:
Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger Through Universal Education

Presented by **Rev. James BESTMAN**

April 20, 2013

Submitted by the Liberian Cultural Association – Global Initiatives, Inc.
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ABSTRACT

Eradicating extreme poverty continues to be one of the main challenges of our time as especially Africa, and is a major concern of the international community. Ending this scourge will require the combined efforts of all, governments, civil society organizations and the private sector, in the context of a stronger and more effective global partnership for development. The Millennium Development Goals set time bound targets, by which progress in reducing income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter and exclusion — while promoting gender equality, health, education and environmental sustainability — can be measured. They also embody basic human rights — the rights of each person on the planet to health, education, shelter and security. The Goals are ambitious but feasible and, together with the comprehensive United Nations development agenda, set the course for the world's efforts to alleviate extreme poverty by 2015. "

The government of Liberia is at a crossroads. After almost 15 years of civil conflict, local and international non-governmental organizations have surveyed the social economic and educational landscape opportunities to assist in sustainable development projects in Liberia.

It is an established standard that no government has all the resources of ideals and finances to meet the needs of its citizens. We need the collaboration of global partners of strong vibrant force to reach out to us and to help our government, through the Liberian Cultural Association- Global Initiatives Inc, a non-governmental organization to utilize our manpower energies in the most efficient way.

Economic stability and the revitalization of Liberian's infrastructure must go hand in hand with our education and food reforms which to a large extent forms the basis of our hope and expectation upon which our children of this generation and the destitute and underprivileged and jobless will find a glimmer of light. As we deliberate during this conference, it is our hope that strategies will be developed for a long-term sustainable goal in our country, Liberia.

PRESENTATION

The objective of this paper draws our attention to the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger by the year 2015.

Over the years attempts have been made with similar agendas. While the intentions of the sponsors were good, little has been achieved (some are in progress, e.g: MDGs, 3, 4, & 6, by the Liberia's Ministry of Health & Social Welfare [MOH&SW]) due to the fact that follow-up mechanisms were never established or implemented. Once outcomes had been identified, commitments were not honored, actions not taken and results not monitored.

Ending the Violence of Extreme Poverty

17 October marks the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, focusing on the theme: "Ending the Violence of Extreme Poverty: Promoting Empowerment and Building Peace". "On this International Day, let us make an investment in our common future by helping to lift people out of poverty so that they, in turn, can help to transform our world," said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. An official commemoration for the Day takes place in NY. The public is also encouraged to join a social media action to raise awareness of progress made in the fight against poverty and the need to accelerate action to achieve the MDGs using #end poverty.
http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43307&Cr=poverty&Cr1=#.UT46yzeROG9

In view of this context, the report that follows must be viewed as a call to action, recommitting ourselves to take positive advantage of potential energies with maximum impact.

Section 1: Eradicate Poverty and Hunger, by 2015 in Liberia.
Today the minimal food resources have reached an alarming level in Liberia. The Liberian economy is dominated by agriculture. More than three quarters of the population is engaged in subsistence or commercial agriculture. With the high rainfall, there is abundant water for most agrarian activities. Other geographic endowments such as dense vegetation, including virgin forests in some areas portray a promising future for food security in the country. What locking is appropriate policies and well tested implementation strategies for harnessing the vast potential of the agricultural sector.

Liberia's food production level, especially the staple food, rice, is not sufficient to feel the people. Consequently, considerable portion of foreign exchange goes to importing rice and order needed items. The war added to reduction of production. After the civil Crisis of 14 years in our country, the population distribution has shifted from rural to urban. Pre war Monrovia had the population of about 100,000 while post war Monrovia have a population of about 1,000,000 inhabitants (LISGIS) With the total population of 2.5 million and 3.4 million inhabitants respectively. The acreage, resultantly, has declined from 588,000 in 1997 to an estimate 100,000, with very little increment in production.

Other contributory factors that have adverse effects on the poverty-stricken economy, especially through food production are:
• The scarcity o appropriate technology, e.g. development of improved seed varieties planting materials production of local tools and establishment of storage, preservation, and processing facilities,

- Inadequate assistance to build capacity of local organizations for efficient service delivery;
- Lack of effective coordination, monitoring and evaluation system;
- Inadequate farm to make roads;
- Inadequate credit and micro-finance opportunities;
- Inadequate market, storage, preservation and processing facilities;
- Poor extension delivery program.

Despite setback caused by the economic downturn and the effects of the food and energy crisis there are some positive trends in terms of the fall of the overall poverty rates from 46 per cent in 1990 to 27 percent in 2005 in developing regions. A note of caution, however, is sounded by adjustment by the World Bank, that even if these positive trends continue, in 2015 roughly 920 million people would still be living under the international poverty line of $1.25 a day. In other words the number of people who will suffer chronic hunger is 925 million, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN.

Little progress has been made in reducing extreme poverty in sub-Saharan Africa, where the poverty rate has declined only slightly from 58 to 51 percent between 1990 and 2005. Sub-Saharan Africa, Western Asia and parts of Eastern Europe and Central Asia are the few regions not expected to achieve the Millennium Development Goal, poverty reduction target. The World Bank estimates that the effects of the economic crisis will push an additional 64 million people into extreme poverty in 2010, and that poverty rates will be slightly higher in 2015, mostly in Sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern and South – Eastern Asia.

Because of the poverty in rural Liberia and the lack of an alternative life style and young woman are traditionally encouraged to enter into unproductive relationships to lessen the family burden. This increases the poverty and perpetuates the abuse of girls and young woman. This form of GBV existed before the civil crisis and is more subtle and pervasive than the GBV that was cultivated during the conflict.

On 8 March, the United Nations and people all over the world celebrate International Women's Day (IWD). This year's theme is, "A promise is a promise: Time for action to end violence against women." In his message for IWD, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, "We declare that we will prosecute crimes against women –and never allow women to be subjected to punishments for the abuses they have suffered." Link: http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/

To the 34th Session of the General Assembly – Official Document – 19 December 1979 http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/landmark/pdf/a34pv107e.pdf
Agenda Item 75, Mr. Komissaroy, representing the report of the third committee, on agenda item 75, entitled: "Draft Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against women" (A/34:830)

- 2000 MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT DECLARATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2010 Summit on the Millennium Development Goals

The 2010 MDG Summit concluded with the adoption of a global action plan -- Keeping the Promise: United to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals -- and the announcement of a number of initiatives against poverty, hunger and disease. In a major push to accelerate progress on women's and children's health, a number of Heads of State and Government from developed and developing countries, along with the private sector, foundations, international organizations, civil society and research organizations, pledged over $40 billion in resources over the next five years.

2008 High-level Event on the MDGs

Governments, foundations, businesses and civil society groups rallied around the call to action to slash poverty, hunger and disease by 2015, by announcing new commitments to meet the Millennium Development Goals, at a high-level event at UN Headquarters on 25 September 2008. The gathering "exceeded our most optimistic expectations," UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, noting that it generated an estimated $16 billion, including some $1.6 billion to bolster food security, more than $4.5 billion for education and $3 billion to combat malaria.

2005 World Summit

The 2005 World Summit, held from 14 to 16 September at United Nations Headquarters in New York, brought together more than 170 Heads of State and Government. It was a once-in-a-generation opportunity to take bold decisions in the areas of development, security, human rights and reform of the United Nations. The agenda was based on an achievable set of proposals outlined in March 2005 by Secretary- General Kofi Annan in his report "In Larger Freedom".

Millennium Summit

In September 2000, building upon a decade of major United Nations conferences and summits, world leaders came together at United Nations Headquarters in New York to adopt the United Nations Millennium Declaration, committing their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty and setting out a series of time-bound targets - with a deadline of 2015 - that have become known as the Millennium Development Goals.

UN Millennium Project

The Millennium Project was commissioned by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2002 to develop a concrete action plan for the world to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and to reverse the grinding poverty, hunger and disease affecting billions of people. In 2005, the independent advisory body headed by Professor Jeffrey Sachs, presented its final recommendations to the Secretary-General in a synthesis volume "Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals."

UN Millennium Campaign

The United Nations Millennium Campaign, started in 2002, supports and inspires people from around the world to take action in support of the Millennium Development Goals. Watch the videos by the Millennium Campaign on poverty, education, women's empowerment, maternal health and the environment and discover how the lives of ten ordinary people around the world are impacted in profound ways by the level of progress their countries have made towards achieving the Goals.

Visit the below reference link to read about some accomplishments;

- Living Proof: Real stories of progress by some of the world's poorest people
- Examples of country progress
- Watch the MDGs at Work

Living proof: http://www.one.org/livingproof/en/stories/all/

"Ref.: http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml"

Sector 2: Recommended Considerations

Liberian Cultural Association – Global Initiatives, Inc. makes the following advancements, Challenges & Opportunities:

(I)   **Subsidies**: Agricultural programs should be subsidized especially for fertilizers and seeds which would help to boost the Liberian agricultural productivity, eventually turning our country into a net food exporter;

(II)   **By Products:** create use for agricultural products;

(III)   **Workforce:** Improving application of available workforce and marketing systems to meet the needs of farmers;

(IV)   **Roads:** Constructing and rehabilitation farm to market roads;

(V)   **Skills:** Increase sharing of available knowledge and skills;

(VI)   Replacing shifting cultivation with improved agricultural practices e.g. mechanized exercise

(VII)   **Investment**: The need for investment in agriculture research and development as a means to help cut the prevalence of hunger by more than half.

(VIII) **Innovation:** Create a national innovation Program for food security doubling the agricultural yields and farmers' incomes;

(IX)   **Employment:** Employing to our country's rapid poverty reduction; also encourage the full and active employment of women so as to promote their role in agriculture production.

(X)   **International Assistance:** We would welcome assistance from the world food programme (food assistance) including cash and voucher transfers to the hungry; the UNDP, the UNICEF (for inclusive universal and efficient public policies for children and adolescents);

Sector 3: Primary Education Intertwine with Poverty /Liberia as a case in point:

In accordance with the Fundamental Principles of National Education of 1973, general aims of education in Turkey are:

- to instill in all individuals of the Turkish nation a consciousness of their duty to their country, and to foster in them the spirit of Atatürk's nationalism, implicit in his principles, values, and reforms;

- to encourage creativity, constructiveness, individuality, entrepreneurship and productivity in all individuals; to help them develop a wide perspective of the world, a respect for human rights, a sense of social responsibility, a sound and balanced character, and a capacity to reason independently and rationally;

- To prepare citizens for life through the development of their interests, abilities and capabilities, and to ensure that they gain knowledge and skills necessary for a profession, which would contribute both to their own welfare and to the welfare of society.

In order to achieve these aims, the following basic principles should be respected
- Equality in education: educational institutions are open to all regardless of race, sex, or religion;
    - meeting individual and social needs;
    - Orientation (individuals are oriented toward educational programmes on the basis of their interests, talents, and abilities);
    - Continuity (the state takes measures to ensure adults continuing education);
    - Atatürk's reforms (Atatürk's reforms and principles are the basis of the curriculum at all educational levels);
    - Secularism and scientific norms in education;
    - Co-education;
    - Planning (national education is planned on the basis of economic, social, and cultural development);
    - Co-operation between school and family;
    - Widespread education
    - widespread education.

Current Educational Priorities and Concerns (World Data on Education. 6th edition, 2006/07)

Educational targets are defined in National Development Plans and Programmes, and take into consideration the needs of the individuals, the requirements of the industry, and the outcomes of the National Census. According to the results of the

1990 Census, only 5.2% of the labour force had a higher education degree, 9.7% had a high-school diploma, and 7% had a junior high-school diploma. The remaining 78.1% consisted of primary school graduates or individuals with lower levels of education.

In recent years, financial resources allocated to education from the general budget have increased, and private education institutions have expanded due to liberal policies. The purpose of Law No. 4306 of 1997, issued within the framework of the Seventh Five-year Development Plan (VII FYDP, 1996-2000), was to increase existing resources and to create additional ones. The VII FYDP set the goal that by the year 2000, the pre-school enrolment ratio would reach 16%; the enrolment ratio for primary education would reach 100%; the secondary school enrolment ratio would reach 75%; and higher education enrolment would reach 31%, 19% of which would represent formal education.

 In 1996/97, schooling ratios reached 8.9% for pre-school education (age group 4-6 years old); 99.8% in primary schools; 69.6% in junior high schools (which constitute the last three years of compulsory primary education since 1997/98); 54.7% in secondary education, including general and vocational technical high schools; and 22.4% in higher education. In 2000/01, the primary school gross enrolment ratio reached 100.57%, but in 1999/2000 the secondary school gross enrolment ratio fell short o the goal at 57.73%.

In order to rebuild the education system in conformity with the social, scientific and technological developments of the twenty-first century, the National Council of Education has focused its work on the following five issues: primary education and its orientation; the reconstruction of the secondary education system; the transition to higher education; meeting the educational needs of the society; and improving the financing of education.

In line with the recommendations of the Council and the goals of the VII FYDP concerning the transition from five-year to eight-year compulsory education, the Law No. 4306 was issued on 16 August 1997. This law stipulates that primary education should last eight years and be compulsory for all children between the ages 6-14. The implementation of the project "Globalization in Education 2000" has been an important step in line with Law No. 4306.

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- to eliminate double shifts currently applied in some parts of large cities;
- to gradually decrease the number of students per class to 30 by the year 2000;
- to provide free transportation to central schools for those students living in small settlements in order to ensure their access to quality education;
- to gradually remove integrated classrooms by expanding Regional Basic Education Boarding Schools (YIBO) or Basic Education Schools (PIO) along with the bussing system;
- to provide uniforms, school bags, textbooks and notebooks to children in need;
- to support formal education through distance education;
- to install computer laboratories in basic education institutions and provide access for all students to computer aided instruction;
- to start the teaching of at least one foreign language at the basic education level;
- to equip schools with modern technologies;
- to fulfill the most important principle of a learning society by educating "individuals to question and learn the methods of learning," applying scientific and rationalist approaches;
- to ensure the physical development of children, along with their mental development, through the provision of appropriate infrastructure;
- To provide opportunities for five-year primary education graduates who are beyond the age limit of compulsory education, to complete their eight-year basic education through open education.
- Planned and on-going activities implemented by the Ministry of National Education (MONE) aim at achieving these objectives regarding quality and progressive expansion of eight-year compulsory basic education.

In order to improve the quality of education, additional resources have been allocated for the construction of school buildings and sports facilities, for the installation of computer laboratories in all primary schools that have at least 1,000 students (and the development of the relevant software), for the establishment of a network which will include all basic education schools, and for the establishment of new school libraries.

Ref: - UNESCO - Turkey, Profile of Education (World Data on Education
. 6th edition, 2006/07): http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/worldwide/unesco-regions/asia-and-the-pacific/turkey/profile-of-education.html

The formal education system in Liberia is modeled on the American system, with primary and secondary levels divided into grades kindergarten to 12. Historically, Liberia has produced sufficient numbers of schools, but many of them lack the minimum skills required sector for entry of jobs. After the Liberian conflict, which destroyed many physical facilities and massive brain drain, schools have gradually resumed operations considerably below the pre-war. During the conflict, the number of school-going children declined dramatically due to the lack of facilities, and trained teachers. Even in those areas where facilities are now available, the cost of school fees (even at the primary level, in Liberia) the cost of purchasing uniforms and books are beyond the reach of most families, hence, the surge of illiteracy rate. Additionally, many teachers (untrained to some extent are simply dumped into classrooms and are teaching without pay or salary/incentives. Furthermore, they work with minimal or no resources.

Primary education is made up of a variety of interlocking and coordinated factors working in harmony with each other. An enabling policy environment and good administration are essential. Curriculum that reflects the society's values and aspirations for learning, as well as the reality of the children's environment, is also of importance. Community support for education and parent involvement in the activities of the children are another crucial factor. According to achieving quality education is the excellence of teachers that commit-themselves to the task. This means a combination of factors such as parents' awareness of the importance of educating their children, recruitment of teachers with a good grasp of subject-matter, a range of appropriate teaching approaches, sensitivity to students' needs, a high degree of professionalism, energy and morale, working in a supportive environment.

Without a prevalence of these characteristics, there is little hope of meeting the goals of the millennium. Although the determinants of primary education impasse on a myriad of interwoven factors, the focus is the school-aged children realizing that they hardly have bread fast before going to school. The emphasis should shift from more simplistic focus on the one-to-one relationship between input and output at the primary level, requiring standardized books and other reading materials, teaching aids, teacher certification, etc. The notion of cognitive learning in primary education has broadened to emphasize, for example, critical analysis of students'

social, economic and education needs, ability to freely communicate and participate in class discussions and student-to-student interaction. Teachers who are able to develop sound academic achievement with their students tend to share many of the following characteristics, know the basics of the subject matter, use pedagogy appropriate for the content, create and sustain an effective learning environment between teachers and their students, know and positively respond to the needs and interests of their students and even a cordial report with the parents of the children.

The attainment of a successful primary education requires a solid foundation, taking-into account students' responses and the willingness to make changes to the learning environment where necessary. A strong positive school and classroom climate is a factor that encourages good teacher and student performance. These are necessary tenets for the achieving and building a formidable primary education. To meet the goal of poverty reduction, we need to ensure that there are enough qualified teachers and classrooms facilities to meet the demand of global standard. Between now and 2015 the number of new teachers needed to double the present rate. Progress was made in southern Asia and Northern Africa, where enrolment increased by 11 and 8 percent points, respectively, over the last decade.

We acknowledge that the biggest obstacle to education, whether at primary or secondary level, is POVERTY. Data from a number of countries, including Liberia, show that rural children are twice as likely to be out of school as children living in urban areas, with a wider gap for girls than for boys. These children remain out of school for other reasons including cost of schooling requirement by the school authorities, social and cultural barriers to education.   Unfortunately in many countries girls and children with disabilities face limited opportunities of acquiring formal education, even at primary level. Some sectors settle for the association that educating girls is of less value than educating boys, forgetting to known that educating a girl is educating a nation. This marginalization is perceived in countries at all levels of development, Liberia is no exception. Even in some countries that are closer to achieving the goal of poverty reduction, children with disabilities represent the majority of those who are excluded.

Example, Liberia Fact Sheet on Peace building and Education 2012 state the following:

Under Five, Approximately:
This is the age where parents play a critical role and parenting skills are crucial in the areas of health, nutrition, protection, and the development of positive future values linked to non-violence and respect. It is a time when children are expecting love and attention as they are learning from us. Under-five education should help children to build their self-confidence and expression skills, their ability to relate to others, and learn our cultural values. The provision of Early Care and Child Development should involve the community and parents; should be located in an accessible, safe and secure area and be managed by com-munities. It needs to be a

place where caregivers-teachers have basic skills and ability to build positive discipline in children and manage a safe and clean environment.

These under five kids lives everyday life with no educational hope as facilities are nowhere to be found (Kpaquoita, Gborpolu County)

Under Six to Nine year, approximately:
This is the stage of strengthening childhood, where children's needs should be at the centre of the teaching method. Educational visual aids, critical thinking not recitation; and positive communication are essential. This is an age when children begin civic education that addresses issues of identity, respect for diversity, inclusiveness, and the value of social cohesion.
Teachers should be trained on skills that include teaching self-esteem, self-confidence and respect for diversity. Classrooms should respect international standards; each child should have their own textbooks and a chair to sit in. Schools should have play facilities and extra-curricular programmes. Students should have a place to do their homework with appropriate support and schools should have a basic health care system and school meals provision, with qualified teachers. There should be an accelerated learning program for children and youth that are older than their peers

Ten to Fourteen year approximately:
This is the stage when children are finishing basic education and where extra attention is needed to ensure they transition to secondary education and/or develop basic vocational and practical skills, inter-personal skills and moral values that will lay the foundation for leadership training and understanding of the wider world – including cultural and civic education. This is also the stage of puberty when children become adolescents and are at an age of starting life reproduction. At this stage, sexual and reproductive health education is important and marriage practices should be delayed until we become adults and are ready to assume the responsibilities of a family. Discipline should be utilized with the use of praise and national values. At this age we strengthen our respect for the rule of law and for cultural identity, tradition and custom, including inclusion at community meetings

and family decision-making without discrimination. Children should be protected from being used as family breadwinners.

Fifteen + years, approximately:
Adolescents and youth play a crucial role in the current development, reconciliation, and nation building processes of Liberia. At this age, young people should be encouraged to develop a sense of belongingness, develop potential talents, and strengthen social cohesion in the communities they live in. The Transformative Education agenda for the 15+ should focus on strengthening the capacity of students and institutions in the secondary school system, alternative basic education, and skills and relationship building. Adolescents and youth should be involved appropriately in national policy development and work together with elders to ensure inter-generational exchange of ideas. Civic education should be reinforced through a national curriculum with adequate textbooks available in all schools. Provision should be made for technical equipment and trained teachers for all subjects, ICT, and vocational education in all Junior and Senior High Schools. An emphasis should be placed on critical thinking with problem-solving skills and the use of group/ team work, along with creative learning activities such as drama, arts, and sporting. The agenda for 15+ should be extended into developing a program of internships and job placements that provide skills training. Education and vocational skills training for young adults should focus on marketable skills.

However, these rules are yet to be met. Nevertheless, some major advances have been made. One primary ego, for example in Liberia, is the compulsory free primary education system introduced under the present leadership, which is essences calls for the abolition of primary school fees; though much more needs to be addressed if the 2015 Goal is to realized. Children who are motivated, one way or the other, to get into school, must continue to attend class if they should receive the full benefit of their education.

2012 Ministry of Education in collaboration with UNICEF Survey shows that out of the 3.8 million population of Liberia, 1.8 million are children, and out of said population 550,308 are in school. Additionally, the total number of schools is 11,929 out of the total schools, 4918 are pre-primary, primary 4934, Junior High 1586, and Senior High 491. Out of the total children population 62% in school and 38% out of school for pre-primary, Primary – 44% in school and 56% out of school, Junior High - 9% in school and 91% out of school, finally, Senior High – 7% in school and 93% out of school.

Exhibit II
A teenage girl selling water, instead of being in class room
Additionally, more than 35% of students drop out of school before reaching the final grade. Some fall victims to early (teenage) pregnancy, others do not feel or see the attractiveness in the classroom as compared to the street hawking exercise wherein they caused earn their livelihood since, indeed, some of them are self-supporting.

However, the Liberian government, through its ministry of education takes credit in its appreciation for education including:
- The existence of national curriculum in all schools;
- An existing structure for decentralization of Liberia's education system;
- Committed, skeletal, educational work force;
- Increase in percentage of primary school students under the free compulsory program;
- Currently utilizing the resources and personnel (through meager) services of local and international educational oriented NGOs.

Sector 4 – Constraints
Liberia, as a country, equally is enthusiastic in forging ahead to meet the 2015 Millennium Development Goal of achieving universal primary education. To fall in line, we see the following constraints to be addressed:
- Lack of adequate basic educational materials and supplies;
- Inadequate capacity building programs for educational institutions;
- Lack of trained teachers and administrators;
- Inadequate reliable data for educational planning;
- Inadequate funds to rehabilitate educational facilities;
- Inadequate incentives to attract qualified teachers (including low salaries);
- Insufficient funds to provide subsidies to private and parochial schools;
- Proliferation of sub-standard schools;
- Lack of system for coordination, monitoring and evaluation at all levels of the national educational system.

This presentation was delivered by James Bestman during the
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Kids in this part of Liberia walks distances from their village tone of the few schools in their district

Sector 5 – Recommended Remedies
To successfully mitigate the constraints above, these remedies are pivotal for consideration:

- Total abolition of primary school fees;
- Willingness of children to attend school;
- Increased access to educational opportunities in the rural areas;
- Provide enough qualified teachers and classrooms;
- Willingness of NGOs and donor communities to contribute to the educational sector;
- Willingness of the World Food Program (WFP) to institute the Feeding Program in schools;
- Growing awareness of need for gender equality;
- Funds available for construction and renovation of schools/educational facilities;
- Availability of primary school text books and library facilities;
- Effectively decentralized the educational system throughout Liberia;
- Provide incentives for teachers and other educational workers;
- Instill programs that insure increased enrollment of girls in school;
- Develop policies to address the proliferation of sub-standard school;
- Implement programs to address the needs of the disabled children.

Attaining poverty reduction by 2015 is feasible, but until a strong positive school and classroom climate and parent-teacher relationship is established that should encourage good teacher and student performance, the vision is elusive. Good school, student and parent climate is direct outgrowth of teachers' sense of competence, professionalism and high morale, combined with dedication and

commitment. Parent's involvement has a high impact on the learning process. Education is the responsibility of parents, teachers, students and community. Teaching materials and facilities make an appreciable difference and even important indicators of achievement. The overriding problems of overcrowded classrooms, little or no furniture, few, if any, text books or teaching materials are setbacks to the millennium goal.

The importance Liberia attaches to poverty reduction in the educational sector cannot be over emphasized. Liberia's educational philosophy is enshrined in its constitution. It is also implicitly declared in our National Anthem, and Declarations of education of the United Nation's System, as well as ECOWAS, AU to which Liberia is signatory and a member. Cardinal assumptions of this educational philosophy state that "Deep with the democratic heritage of the Liberian nation is embedded our commitment to education and the necessity of making our school the chief and most effective instrument of our political and social institution".

Sector 6 – Comparative Analysis
We wish to draw some comparisons of few other African countries whose systems could lend some motivation.

(I)   Basic Education in Guatemala and Nicaragua:
        The model schools approach in Nicaragua, as in the NEU in Guatemala is the exchange of teaching ideas and material with each other and teachers teach teachers. The World Bank, U.N agencies, USAID and university researchers have spotlighted these methods positively. The method has proven both effective and cost effective.

(II)   Basic Education in Uganda:
        Uganda's education system forges collaborative relationships at all levels; schools, district offices, inspectorates and teacher training colleges. Teachers went to the colleges for occasional workshops.

(III)   Basic Education in Ghana:
        In Ghana they design the USAID-Funded Improving Learning through partnership (ILP) project, a part of the larger QUIPS (Quality Improvements in Primary Schools) project that was initiated in 1997. QUIPS/ILP works with partnerships of teachers, principals, community members, supervisors and local government officials to provide education support and make decisions about what happens in the primary classroom. By collaborating as partners in pursuit of common educational goals, and by participating in exercises that strengthen certain education-related skills, parents, teachers are proving that they can have positive impact on their primary education.

(IV)   Basic Education in Namibia:
        In Namibia the distinguishing features of using "Circuit" support teams that bring professional development to students and teachers in groups of

schools. This Learner-Centered education, hall-mark of BES is contributing to a favorable classroom climate for students.

(V)   Basic education in Ethiopia

Ethiopia adopts the "cascade" or "multiplier" workshops along with a massive input of budget is solving the problem and producing good programs for teachers which they could use for the benefit of the students.

Section 7: Conclusion:

In view of the above assessments , arguments and reasoning analysis, weakness, strengths, challenges, opportunities, comparative analysis and priorities , capacities and performances of some institutions around the globe, the following priority areas have been identified as crucial to achieving the Millennium Goal (2015):

- Capacity Building Goals
- Institutional Viability
- Networking, collaboration and information sharing
- Resource Mobilization
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Financing strategic plans

Sector 8 – **Recommendations**

We recommend through the Liberian Cultural Association-Global Initiatives, Inc the following:

- Financial support from external Donors; (through NGOs)
- Primary school text-books, including English, Mathematics, Science, Social studies, dictionaries, etc.
- Monitoring and evaluation of donor funding to implementing agencies/government
- Collaboration and coordination with our organization and the international community

On behalf of Liberian Cultural Association-Global Initiatives, Inc, from the West Africa Coast of Liberia extend thanks to the organizers of this Millennium Development Goals and to all other contributors to this conference.

We command these distinguished custodians, knowledgeable of the tireless and immeasurable support of the international community to our rebuilding process, I feel a ray of hope for our democratization and economic sustainable efforts.

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We sincerely urge our international partners to closely work together with us to substantively address Liberia's sustainable needs, as we count on representative groups of conference participants to help implement the strategic plans.

Thanks.

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