



## CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION TRANSMITTAL SHEET

We wish to inform you of the plan to negotiate and sign a threshold program agreement with the Government of Liberia. In addition to the enclosed notification, we have included a summary description of Liberia's threshold program.

The attached notification is being sent to the Congress on May 28, 2010. Members of MCC's staff are available to meet with you to discuss the planned program. If you or your staff would like to arrange a meeting, please contact Ellona Fritschie or Erin Kolodjeski at (202) 521-3850.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T. Charles Cooper". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

T. Charles Cooper  
Vice President  
Congressional and Public Affairs

Enclosure:

As stated

**MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION  
CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION**

May 28, 2010

<b>PROGRAM:</b>	Threshold
<b>APPROPRIATIONS CATEGORY:</b>	FY 2005 and 2009 Program Funds
<b>OBLIGATION AMOUNT:</b>	\$3,377,370 (FY 2005) \$11,695,680 (FY 2009)

In accordance with section 7057(c) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2009 (Pub. L. 111-8), this is to advise that the United States Agency for International Development, using up to \$15,073,050 in funds allocated by the Millennium Challenge Corporation, intends to negotiate and sign an agreement with the Government of Liberia for a program authorized under section 616 of the Millennium Challenge Act of 2003, as amended (the "Threshold Program"). Threshold Program assistance will be given to help Liberia to improve its performance in the policy areas measured by MCC's *Girls Primary Education Completion, Land Rights and Access, and Trade Policy* eligibility indicators.

Supplemental information regarding Liberia's threshold program follows.

## SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

### Threshold Program Summary

<b><u>Country:</u></b>	Liberia
<b><u>Budget:</u></b>	\$15,073,050
<b><u>Fiscal Year Funding:</u></b>	2005 and 2009
<b><u>Estimated Program Duration:</u></b>	3 years
<b><u>Indicator Focus:</u></b>	<b><u>Investing In People:</u></b> <i>Girls Primary Education Completion;</i> <b><u>Economic Freedom:</u></b> <i>Land Rights and Access and Trade Policy</i>

#### **Principal Objectives:**

The principal objective of the Liberia threshold program is to improve performance in the policy areas measured by MCC's *Land Rights and Access*, *Girls Primary Education Completion*, and *Trade Policy* indicators.

Component 1 aims to create a knowledge foundation for reforms in the land sector that will promote equitable access to land and increased land security through improved understanding of property rights issues, the rebuilding of land administration and surveying capacity, and increased efficiency in land registration and transfers.

Component 2 aims to increase girls' primary education enrollment and retention by creating a scholarship program for girls, providing grants to communities to improve the school environment, and coupling these efforts with mentoring programs and awareness campaigns.

Component 3 aims to improve Liberia's efforts to improve its trade policy and practices, specifically in tariff harmonization, engagement with regional and global bodies including Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the World Trade Organization, and strengthening its regulatory environment.

A summary of the activities under each of the three components is included below.

**Background:** Liberia is recovering from a fourteen-year civil war that ended in 2003. Following a two-year interim government, presidential and parliamentary elections were held in 2005, and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected president. Since President Johnson Sirleaf's election, Liberia has enjoyed a period of stability, supported by United Nations peacekeepers, and has focused on rebuilding its infrastructure, human capacity, and presence in international arenas. Liberia is focused on attracting investment, job creation, and providing education and other essential services. President Sirleaf has taken a strong public stance against corruption and has dismissed several government officials. The three policy areas proposed in the threshold program are linked to the Government of Liberia's development strategy and respond to the government's key constraints and priorities.

## **Program Components – Objectives and Proposed Activities:**

### ***Component 1: Strengthen Land Rights and Access***

#### **A. Increase Understanding of Property Rights Issues**

Objective: Increase clarity and public understanding of property rights issues in order to allow the National Land Commission to develop a comprehensive reform strategy for land policy and law.

#### Proposed Activities:

1. Conduct ten action-research studies on land use and decision making patterns in several rural communities to better understand the rules and institutions of customary land tenure, emerging patterns of land use, changes in allocation of land, the role of traditional hierarchies, and interactions between communities and local governments.
2. Pilot methodologies for conducting community land planning exercises and identifying community land rights for possible future use in the formal legal framework.
3. Conduct research into women's access to land in customary settings and within the statutory land tenure regime to ensure that gender issues receive adequate attention during policy and law reform discussions.
4. Assess the formal legal framework for land issues and develop strategies and recommendations for the National Land Commission, including recognition of and harmonization with customary land tenure systems.
5. Organize exchanges with key land officials to countries with successful land reform models and bring key land reform experts from those countries to Liberia to increase knowledge sharing and national dialogues on these issues.
6. Support the National Land Commission in designing and implementing short-term research initiatives, disseminating information, and in convening national seminars and workshops to further promote their role as the lead agency in land issues.

#### **B. Rebuild Land Administration**

Objective: Rebuild and restore public confidence in the system of land administration through reforms of management, improved procedures, and rebuilding of public and private surveying capacity.

#### Proposed Activities:

1. Work with the Ministry of Lands, Mines, and Energy to improve management, develop operating procedures for programs involving land surveying and land management, and formulate recommendations to improve the current fragmented organization of Liberia's land administration functions.
2. In conjunction with the development of new facilities for the Department of Lands, Surveys and Cartography (DLSC), rebuild the surveying capacity and efficiency of the DLSC through revamped office policies and procedures, informed reorganization of staff and functions, trainings, and equipment purchases.
3. Explore the feasibility of establishing a modern land information system that would integrate information with the mineral cadastre and other land databases including the deed and map registries to increase the availability and consistency of land data.

4. Acquire satellite imagery of Liberia and equipment, where needed, in order to update and expand current base maps and town plans and distribute this information to relevant counties and ministries.
5. Support the Surveyors' Licensing and Registration Board to improve the quality of local surveyors through annual qualifying examinations, a code of ethics, and training opportunities.
6. Support university level training including masters' level training outside of Liberia and support the development of a land surveying and appraisal component in a university level civil engineering degree.
7. Establish a professional surveyors' association and provide "retraining" programs to both state and private sector surveyors to increase the professionalism and quality of surveyors.

### **C. Improve Efficiency of Deed Registry**

Objective: Improve management of land records and increase efficiency in registration of land transfers and land market operations by the National Center for Documentation and Records/Archives, restoring confidence in the deed registry system.

#### Proposed Activities:

1. Improve operations and procedures within the deed registry to strengthen records management practices, increase efficiency and quality in land transactions, and improve the public's access to this information.
2. Strengthen deed registry offices in four counties through data inventories, reorganization of records, training, and increased access to technical assistance.
3. Launch a multi-media outreach program to inform the public on the importance of registering deeds.
4. Support the compilation, digitization, and copying of land deed records held at the central and country level to improve records management.
5. Develop and pilot cadastral mapping and registry reforms that can ultimately be adopted at county level.

## ***Component 2: Improve Girls' Access to Primary Education***

### **A. Girls' Scholarship Program**

Objective: Provide an incentive program that will increase girls' enrollment and attendance in school.

#### Proposed Activities:

1. Provide scholarships to 2,350 girls each year in three counties—Bong, Grand Bassa, and Lofa—with the largest number of out-of-school girls. Each scholarship will cover the basic costs of education including uniforms, books, cost of transportation, and other similar items.

### **B. Social Interventions and Media Campaign**

Objective: Create an environment conducive to and supportive of girls' education to increase retention.

Proposed Activities:

1. Provide counseling and mentoring programs for scholarship recipients that will focus on issues that have proven detrimental to girls' primary school completion, including health issues such as HIV/AIDS, teen pregnancy, and malaria, and other issues such as self-confidence and academic performance.
2. Through the counseling and mentoring programs, provide inexpensive health interventions and basic information on identification of illnesses and disease prevention.
3. Launch a sensitization campaign targeted at teachers, school administrators, parents, and the community to communicate expected standards for retaining girls in school.
4. Launch a media campaign at the country and district levels to increase the demand for and reduce opposition to girls schooling.

**C. Community-Based Grant Program**

Objective: Improve the school environment to nurture and retain girls in school.

Proposed Activities:

1. Provide performance-based grants to 30 targeted schools over three years to improve the school environment, including renovations of roofs/classrooms, construction of latrines, water pumps, provision of classroom furnishings, and other items identified through a needs assessment and community consultations. Grant funds awarded in the second and third years of the program's implementation will be conditioned on the school's performance in girls' enrollment and retention in the preceding year to create community accountability and a results-focused approach.

MCC is also exploring opportunities to increase the sustainability of this investment through linkages to private sector partners. The implementer of these activities will be required to accommodate possible private-public partnership interventions, where appropriate.

***Component 3: Improving Trade Freedom***

**A. Tariff Harmonization and Implementation**

Objective: Raise awareness of tariff harmonization to ensure greater impact of Government of Liberia's trade reforms.

Proposed Activities:

1. Provide training to customs officials on ECOWAS tariff structure and the World Customs Organization's Harmonized Schedule to increase awareness of tariff harmonization and its implications for implementation.
2. Launch a multi-media campaign to raise awareness among businesses and consumers of the simplified tariff structures to increase public demand and accountability.
3. Develop methods, such as train-the-trainer programs, to continue and sustain these education efforts after the program.

## **B. Trade Policy Development**

Objective: Strengthen Liberia's trade policy by increasing conformity to international standards.

### Proposed Activities:

1. Provide technical expertise to assist in the development and revision of key trade policies, including assistance in Government of Liberia's efforts towards accession to the World Trade Organization, review of current policies to streamline inspections and raise health and safety standards to internationally accepted levels, and to respond to gaps identified in the Government of Liberia's implementation of ECOWAS protocols.
2. Support legal research and drafting of legislation to conform to ECOWAS protocols and World Trade Organization agreements, as necessary.

## **C. Modernizing Customs Practices**

Objective: Modernize Liberia's customs practices to increase transparency and quality and improve compliance with existing legislation.

### Proposed Activities:

1. Provide legal advice and assistance in adapting or creating legislation to adhere to the standards and guidelines of the new customs code.
2. Provide comprehensive training to customs officials, brokers, and other key stakeholders on new customs valuation processes and other customs modernization practices.
3. Launch a multi-media campaign to raise awareness among businesses and the public of new customs practices and reforms to increase acceptance and demand for these reforms. Methods to increase sustainability of these reforms will also be developed, including a train-the-trainer program and promotional materials.

## **D. Protecting Intellectual Property Rights**

Objective: Strengthen efforts to protect intellectual property rights.

### Proposed Activities:

1. Implement key recommendations from the recent World Intellectual Property Organization's assessment, including legislative drafting.
2. Launch a robust training program to customs officials, judges, small businesses, relevant government ministries, and the public on intellectual property rights protection to improve the enforcement of intellectual property rights laws and increase the identification of counterfeit items.

### **Implementing Partner:**

The United States Agency for International Development will be the lead U.S. government agency administering the Liberia threshold program.