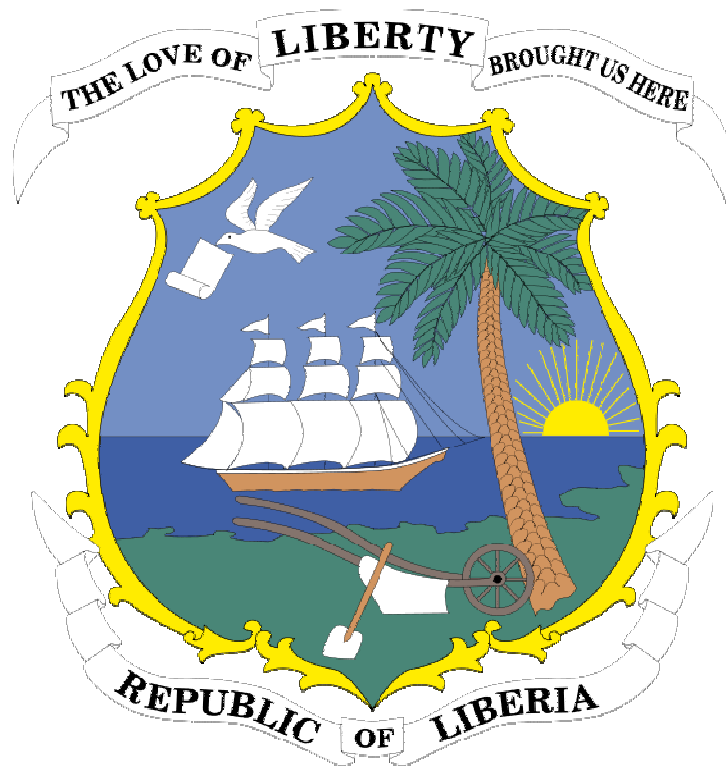# NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS & ICT POLICY

Ministry of Posts & Telecommunications

2010 - 2015

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

Liberia's Vision and Policy to Utilize Information and Communications Technology for Economic Development

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MAP OF LIBERIA

HER EXCELLENCY ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

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MESSAGE FROM HONORABLE FREDERICK B. NORKEH, MINISTER,

MINISTRY OF POSTS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The ICT and Telecommunication sector in Liberia was scarcely developed prior to the outbreak of the civil war in 1989. Then the war worsened the situation and left Infrastructures, already obsolete, destroyed or vandalized. The challenge to provide access to the public required solutions as the state-owned Liberia Telecommunications Corporation with exclusive monopoly right had become dysfunctional. So without a clear national vision, four mobile phone operators were allowed entry into the sector, one after the other. Unfortunately, with no independent regulatory regime in place, the decision to liberalize the market failed to prioritize the fair value of the usage of spectrum. Additionally, the absence of broad band access compels ISPs to provide limited and poor quality VOIP services via satellite link, worsened the situation.

Now the sector is undergoing reform. Standardizing the lopsided licensing regime and inducing the construction of IT infrastructures to support the growth and development of the ICT and Telecommunication sector to promote ICT4Development are major priorities. The Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications has formulated this policy framework as a take-off point to provide the country with a vision and strategy of becoming a fully integrated member of the information society. The ultimate goal is to support the government's poverty reduction strategy and promote a productive and efficient society. It also supports regional harmonization programs to foster the promotion of universal access that encourages rapid transition to open markets, removal of entry barriers to new comers, encouraging interoperability of services as well as putting in place an effective mechanism to fight cybercrime.

We however face enormous challenges in implementing this policy. Limited financial resources, inadequate telecommunications infrastructure and low levels of ICT penetration and literacy are part of those challenges. While looking up to our development partners to help, all ministries and agencies have crucial roles in implementing this policy. Institutions concerned must ensure that their respective entities fund their quota of the ICT programs through budgetary support.

I call upon the service providers, operators, consumers and other stakeholders to help us achieve this goal for ourselves and nation as the policy provides the roadmap to transform our nation into an information society, a haven of accountability and a nation of transparency.

**MESSAGE FROM HONORABLE AMARA KONNEH, MINISTER,
MINSTRY OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**

Liberia can no longer afford to let market forces be driven by objectives that are different from the demands made by the people of the Government that they have elected. No longer can the Government of Liberia (GoL) deliver the goods without using information and communications technology for development (ICT4D) in achieving the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). Similarly, no longer can science and technology be used in isolation to pursue national objectives without harmonizing them with the needs of the market and the people.[1]

We are at a stage where technology need not be a constraint. Although every "solution" is not a technological panacea, it would be wise to leave the market and the private sector to provide solutions for which technology is available.

Leading economies of the world have recognized the importance of ICT in catalyzing economic activity, improving governance and the quality of life of citizens. The ICT revolution that we are witnessing today has the power to unleash unimaginable opportunities to provide a better quality of life for the citizens of Liberia. Governments all over the world are embracing ICT as an effective tool in catalyzing economic activity and providing effective governance so that citizens receive high standards of "customer care" from their Governments. Our major priorities are to bring broadband to Liberia, build capacity of the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (MoPT) by supporting a strategic framework for e-Governance to streamline government operations; develop a strategy to ensure affordable Internet access to all levels of Liberian society; enhance computer education in Liberian universities by developing Ministry of Education e-Learning network; establish ICT Centers of Excellence to meet industry demands; and increase ICT access to areas such as e-Services, e-Learning, e-Health.

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[1] This notion is attributed to Hon. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, ex-Prime Minister of India, on his expose on e-Governance.

Finally, the emergence of ICT4D on the national agenda of Liberia, the establishment of a high-level ICT4D Steering Committee, passage of the National ICT Policy, the very real possibility of getting broadband connectivity for Liberia;

and the convergence of core technologies for "carriage and content" opens up tremendous opportunities to deliver a big basket to Liberian citizens (as users), empowering them to choose multi-media information (e.g. voice, data and video) delivered through a common medium. In Liberia, our strategy and hope for the ICT4D sector is for the GoL to be the catalyst for radical transformation from monopoly to vigorous competition with fast-track liberalization of services and infrastructure as enshrined in the National ICT Policy document.