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**Поощрение и защита всех прав человека,
гражданских, политических, экономических,
социальных и культурных прав,
включая право на развитие**

Посещение Либерии

**Доклад Специального докладчика по вопросу о торговле людьми,
особенно женщинами и детьми, Шивон Маллалли***

Резюме

Специальный докладчик по вопросу о торговле людьми, особенно женщинами и детьми, Шивон Маллалли посетила Либрию с 9 по 18 декабря 2024 года. В настоящем докладе Специальный докладчик рассматривает все формы торговли людьми и рекомендует меры по укреплению деятельности в области предотвращения, защиты, переходного правосудия и привлечения к ответственности.

* Резюме настоящего доклада распространяется на всех официальных языках. Сам доклад, содержащийся в приложении к резюме, распространяется только на том языке, на котором он был представлен.



Приложение

Доклад Специального докладчика по вопросу о торговле людьми, особенно женщинами и детьми, Шивон Маллалли о посещении Либерии

I. Introduction

1. The Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Siobhán Mullally, conducted a country visit to Liberia from 9 to 18 December 2024. The Special Rapporteur is grateful to the Government of Liberia for its engagement throughout and after the visit, and particularly thanks the Chairs of the National Anti-Trafficking Task Force for the constructive dialogue. She also wishes to thank the United Nations country team, especially the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Liberia, for its assistance and expert support.

2. During her visit, the Special Rapporteur met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, deputy ministers and representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She also met with the Minister and Deputy Minister of Labour, representatives of the Ministry of Labour and labour commissioners and inspectors. In addition, she met with the Minister of Justice, the Gender Director at the Ministry of Justice and members of the judiciary, including a civil court judge, the Executive Director of the Office of the War and Economic Crimes Court and the Bong County Court Judge. She also met with the Deputy Minister of Children and Social Protection and representatives of and project leads at the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, the Minister of Education, the Chairperson of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights and human rights monitors in Ganta and Bong Counties. She met with the Liberia National Police, including the focal points of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit and the Women and Children Protection Section, and visited Monrovia Central Prison. In addition, she met with the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commissioner, the Executive Director of the Liberian National Bar Association, representatives of the Association of Female Lawyers in Liberia and the Director of the National Bureau of Concessions.

3. The Special Rapporteur visited areas bordering Guinea and Sierra Leone, including Ganta in Nimba County and Bo Waterside in Grand Cape Mount County, where she convened meetings with the joint security teams, composed of immigration and police officers, drug enforcement agents, health service providers and national security personnel, including representatives of the Liberia Immigration Service and the Anti-Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Unit. She visited government-run safe homes for victims of trafficking and gender-based violence in Margibi and Bomi Counties, as well as a safe home run for children in Paynesville, where she met with service providers.

4. The Special Rapporteur met with human rights defenders, disability rights activists, senior management of mining companies, women informal cross-border traders, sex workers and civil society representatives, including the National Civil Society Council of Liberia and the Transitional Justice Working Group. The Special Rapporteur is particularly grateful to the victims of trafficking who met with her and whose insights and testimonies informed the analysis and recommendations contained in the present report.

II. Legal, policy and institutional frameworks

A. International and regional legal framework

5. Liberia is a State Party to key international human rights treaties and International Labour Organization conventions related to trafficking in persons. Liberia has also acceded to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Liberia has yet to ratify

core human rights instruments related to child protection and migrant rights, such as the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and on the involvement of children in armed conflict. Liberia is not a party to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure and has not accepted individual complaint procedures under any United Nations treaty bodies. It has accepted the inquiry procedure under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The Special Rapporteur wishes to recall the commitments that Liberia made under the third cycle of the universal periodic review to accelerate the ratification of pending treaties to further strengthen its human rights framework.¹

6. Liberia is a State member of the African Union and a signatory to its regional human rights treaties, such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, the Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. Liberia has not yet ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Establishment of an African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights and therefore has not deposited a declaration under article 34 (6) thereof, which would allow Liberian citizens and non-governmental organizations direct access to the Court. It is noteworthy that high-level officials have made public commitments on ratifying the Protocol and depositing the declaration.

7. As a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Liberia takes an active part in regional strategies and platforms aimed at combating trafficking in persons. The Special Rapporteur notes that comprehensive regional strategies such as the ECOWAS Plan of Action on Trafficking in Persons for the period 2018–2028 and the Freetown Roadmap on Enhancing the Combat of Trafficking in Persons in the ECOWAS Region could facilitate regional cooperation and strengthen prevention strategies, victim assistance, protection and accountability through more effective investigations and enhanced legal frameworks and practice. Similarly, the ECOWAS Strategic Framework for Strengthening Child Protection Systems and its Strategic Action Plan (2019–2030) should be fully implemented to reduce the exploitation of and trafficking in children through systemic improvements in child protection services in the region. The Special Rapporteur welcomes collaborative initiatives such as the Regional Network of National Focal Institutions Against Trafficking in Persons Plus, which provides a platform for cross-border coordination. Regional training sessions for stakeholders and the West Africa Police Information System of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) have also proved effective in facilitating intelligence-sharing and operational collaboration among law enforcement agencies across the region. Four internal and international trafficking cases have been prosecuted through partnership between the Liberia National Police and INTERPOL. Sufficient resources should be given to the ECOWAS Fund for Support to Victims of Trafficking in Persons to ensure the provision of direct assistance and rehabilitation and reintegration services to victims of trafficking across West Africa.

B. Domestic legal framework

8. Liberia adopted the 2021 Revised Act to Ban Trafficking in Persons, amending the 2005 Act to Ban Trafficking in Persons, which marks a positive step towards aligning the domestic legal framework with international human rights standards. The revised Act criminalizes all forms of trafficking in persons, and importantly removes the requirement of “means” from the definition of trafficking in relation to children. The Act introduces a minimum sentence of 20 years' imprisonment and sets out sentencing guidelines. It enables

¹ See [A/HRC/46/6/Add.1](#).

courts to impose monetary fines in addition to the custodial sentence and to require convicted defendants to pay restitution to victims. The Special Rapporteur did not receive any information in relation to the payment of restitution to victims of trafficking, or the levels of restitution awarded. There was limited awareness of how the restitution provisions could be enforced.

9. Despite ongoing training programmes, the Special Rapporteur observed a lack of awareness among law enforcement authorities of the provisions of the revised Act and relevant human rights principles on trafficking in persons, in particular the principle of non-punishment. A provision on “victim immunity” is included in the Act and is of particular relevance in the context of forced criminality and irregular migration. The Special Rapporteur observed that additional training on the non-punishment (victim immunity) provision is essential to ensure its application in practice.

10. While welcoming the progress made in the legislative framework, particularly in relation to trafficking in children, concerns were raised with the Special Rapporteur at the minimum sentence of 20 years, which, it was reported, led to prosecutors and judges preferring other charges, with lower sentences. The Special Rapporteur stresses the importance of effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions and of ensuring the right to a fair trial.

11. The Act is complemented by legislation that address forced labour, sexual exploitation and related offences. The Penal Law of 1976 criminalizes sexual offences, including rape, sexual assault and spousal rape, and a dedicated criminal court was established under chapter 25 of the Judicial Law to adjudicate sexual offences, including trafficking in persons involving sexual exploitation. The Decent Work Act of 2015 prohibits forced or compulsory labour. A victim of trafficking for the purpose of forced labour who is classified as an employee under the Act may submit claims to the Ministry of Labour for minimum wage payments and the fulfilment of other statutory entitlements. The Act includes specific provisions absolutely prohibiting the worst forms of child labour and sets out the statutory framework for the employment of children and the regulation of light work for children under the age of 15. The 2015 Decent Work Act explicitly prohibits all forms of slavery or slavery-like practices, such as sale of and trafficking in children, debt bondage and sexual exploitation, and is applicable to both the formal and the informal economies. In practice, however, implementation in the informal economy, including in domestic households, is very weak. Where children are living in domestic households and engaged in domestic work through informal kinship care arrangements there is an absence of inspection or monitoring of child protection obligations and a lack of awareness of the applicability of legislation on decent work and trafficking.

12. The Children’s Law of 2011 incorporates key provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other pertinent human rights instruments. The Law prohibits trafficking in or abduction of children and stipulates the right of children to be protected from hazardous employment and sexual exploitation, while mandating free and compulsory primary education. As yet, the register of perpetrators of crimes against children mentioned in the Law has not been established and technical discussions between ministries are ongoing. The Amendment and Restatement of the Public Procurement and Concessions Act of 2005 disbars persons from bidding for public procurement if they have been convicted of a crime related to business or professional activities. However, there are no specific provisions that require bidders to certify that their business does not use trafficked workers or goods produced by forced labour or does not otherwise violate the legislative prohibitions of trafficking in persons or forced labour.

C. Policy and institutional framework

13. Liberia has completed the second National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons (2019–2024), which outlines the Government’s strategic initiatives aimed at strengthening its response to trafficking in persons through comprehensive prevention, protection, prosecution and partnership. The Liberian National Referral Pathway was established in 2019 as part of that Action Plan and in an effort to harmonize standard

operating procedures and provide a coordination framework for identifying victims of trafficking. The referral mechanism was also set up to facilitate screening and information-gathering by standardizing case history and joint screening and referral forms. The Special Rapporteur underscores that the next phase of the Action Plan should be developed and implemented in close consultation with civil society and affected communities, particularly in remote and hard-to-reach areas, and with a strengthened referral mechanism to respond to the protection and assistance needs of victims of trafficking. She stresses that the forthcoming third Action Plan should build on the findings of the evaluation of the previous Action Plan and embed human rights principles.

14. The National Action Plan on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour is aimed at strengthening action to prevent trafficking in children, contains an emphasis on the importance of raising public awareness about the causes and consequences of the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking in children, and calls for strengthened legal and institutional frameworks and social service provision for children from vulnerable households. The second National Action Plan for Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities covers the period 2023–2027 and includes nine domains, which are also relevant to mitigating trafficking risks, such as livelihood access, economic empowerment, education, health, agriculture, governance, accessibility, access to justice and social protection. Liberia also has an active National Commission on Disabilities established under an Act of Parliament. While the adoption of action plans and legislative developments are welcome, implementation in practice remains weak, with limited impact in rural and hard-to-reach areas.

15. In an encouraging development, Liberia launched its first-ever National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (2024–2028) in August 2024. The Action Plan incorporates findings from consultations that brought attention to the lack of effective, transparent and sustainable grievance mechanisms for communities. In the Action Plan, businesses are called upon to conduct human rights due diligence from the onset and report on their human rights compliance. The Action Plan also highlights the need to mainstream gender equality and disability inclusion into business and to put in place community relations guidelines as part of corporate social responsibility. The Special Rapporteur notes that measures ensuring just and fair conditions of work and the rights of all workers, including migrant workers, are essential to the effective implementation of the Action Plan and compliance with the 2015 Decent Work Act, which includes specific provisions protecting the rights of foreign national workers. Monitoring and effective enforcement of labour laws and the prevention of forced labour and child labour in supply chains, in particular in mining, fisheries and agriculture, are critical to the prevention of trafficking. The prevalence of trafficking in children for purposes of sexual exploitation in concession areas and other mining areas must be urgently addressed by businesses, and accountability must be ensured through effective criminal investigations.

16. The National Anti-Trafficking Task Force is the main government machinery and coordination mechanism on trafficking and is co-chaired by the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Justice. It is responsible for ensuring the integration of anti-trafficking measures into policy and planning across the Government and into the wider national development agenda. However, inter-agency coordination remains limited and neither anti-trafficking legislation nor the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons are fully operationalized in practice, particularly in rural areas. The Special Rapporteur commends the Government's engagement with civil society through the work of the Task Force. However, she notes with concern that the reduction in budget allocation to anti-trafficking action will severely curtail the implementation of the National Action Plan and the work of the Task Force.

III. Assistance for and protection of trafficked persons

17. Liberia is a source, transit and destination country for victims of trafficking in persons for purposes of sexual exploitation, forced labour and domestic servitude. Trafficking within the country, particularly from rural to urban areas, is more prevalent than transnational trafficking. However, internal trafficking remains underreported and there is a lack of data on the prevalence of and patterns in trafficking, particularly for purposes of sexual

exploitation. Despite credible information on the prevalence of trafficking for sexual exploitation in mining and rubber plantation concession areas, particularly affecting young women and girls, there appears to be a widespread tolerance and generalized passivity on the part of police and judiciary with regard to this serious human rights violation. The Special Rapporteur highlights that identifying victims and persons at risk of trafficking is a positive obligation of the State and should not be dependent on reporting or complaints by victims.

18. The Independent National Commission on Human Rights and its monitors are important partners in combating all forms of trafficking, particularly internal trafficking in rural and hard-to-reach areas. In this regard, it is noteworthy that the Commission was accredited A status by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions in 2017 and again in 2023. The Special Rapporteur welcomes the Commission's plans to consider monitoring the situation of migrant workers in order to document and track potential victims of trafficking for forced labour and to promote the rights of migrant workers, as protected under the Decent Work Act. She also observes that human rights monitors potentially play an important role in referring victims of trafficking and persons at risk for assistance and protection. However, limited resources and capacity hinder the effectiveness of their work. Continued and expanded support is needed to sustain the work of human rights monitors. The Commission does not periodically engage with the National Anti-Trafficking Task Force or businesses and does not have enforcement power to intervene in trafficking cases.

19. Assistance and protection measures are not widely available and are non-existent in remote, rural areas and at border crossings. Government-run safe homes, hotlines and short-term emergency shelter accommodation were not fully operational at the time of the visit. The provision of medical and psychosocial assistance, legal aid and reintegration education and training programmes are short term and ad hoc only. Assistance services, including safe accommodation for victims of internal trafficking, are extremely limited. Long-term assistance measures are also limited, particularly in remote and hard-to-reach areas. As a result, victims are returned to families and communities without follow-up due to lack of staffing, resources and capacity, particularly in hard-to-reach rural areas. Such lack of assistance and protection services increases the risks of re-trafficking, particularly given the lack of accountability and of impunity for perpetrators. The capacity of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights monitors, border agents and labour commissions to identify and refer cases of exploitation needs to be strengthened, particularly for at-risk sectors such as agriculture, mining, fisheries and domestic work.

20. Assistance to and protection of returning victims of trafficking are inadequate, with short-term assistance provided by international partners. Gaps remain in the provision of longer-term assistance and protection measures. Access to remedies, including compensation, is weak. Trafficking victims are provided with access to government-run safe homes regardless of their nationality, and assistance is provided. However, no shelters or short-term accommodation are available at border crossings and resources to support access to medical assistance, psychosocial assistance or longer-term protection are severely constrained. As a result, Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit personnel frequently cover the cost of transport for victims to safe homes or for medical care. Identified victims of trafficking, including children, are returned to countries of origin without substantial assessment of risks of re-trafficking on return, in violation of the State's obligations of non-refoulement.

21. Healthcare workers at border crossings have not received training on identification of victims or referral pathways, and facilities to provide assistance or for confidential interviewing are non-existent. The existing makeshift facilities at borders were built for the emergency response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and are not suitable for current health screening needs or for confidential interviewing. Such facilities could be adapted to provide for confidential screening and interviewing of trafficked persons and persons at risk, including children. Training for healthcare workers providing services at border crossings, to strengthen identification of trafficking victims and risks of trafficking, is urgently needed.

A. Forced labour in high-risk sectors

22. Risks of forced labour and sexual exploitation are prevalent, especially in high-risk sectors such as mining, fisheries, domestic work and agriculture, and pose challenges for women and children. It is noted in the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights that the business sector is largely unregulated, leaving workers vulnerable to human rights abuses, including exploitation and other forms of risks. Labour exploitation of women on palm oil and rubber plantations is frequent.² Effective measures to prevent and report trafficking for purposes of forced labour and child labour are urgently required, in particular in rubber plantations where reliance on small-scale subcontractors and marginal oversight of labour conditions remain a concern. Labour commissioners and inspectors reported that capacity constraints hindered their ability to undertake unannounced inspections and to enforce standard compliance, and even more to reach migrant workers. The lack of interpreters to assist in engaging with migrant workers was a serious concern, leading frequently to labour inspectors relying on staff in management roles to communicate with workers indirectly. The National Bureau of Concessions also reported limited capacity to monitor labour conditions and verify allegations of sexual abuse or trafficking in persons in remote concession areas such as Grand Bassa County.

23. The Special Rapporteur notes with concern that there are very few women working as labour inspectors or commissioners. Officials from the previous administration were not retained and there was no proper handover on inspection reports. There was minimal understanding of and expertise on the modalities of conducting inspections for domestic workers, and no inspections are carried out in private households.

24. The commitment of inspectors and commissioners to undertaking often difficult and challenging work is commendable, particularly given the serious lack of resources and transport in rural areas. The Special Rapporteur notes that labour inspectors also reported risks of intimidation or harassment in some concession areas. The capacity of labour commissions poses a serious concern in the context of illicit mining, given the challenge of ensuring effective oversight and regulation of mining in remote areas. Internal trafficking for sexual exploitation may be prevalent in areas where illicit mining activities occur and where law enforcement is weak and access to justice is limited. Women in these regions may be at heightened risk of sexual exploitation under threat of use of force or by deception. The Government, in its National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, highlighted the need for improved regulation and law enforcement in the mining sector and for the protection of workers. However, effective implementation remains a hurdle due to deficient resources and infrastructure. Limited labour inspections and joint monitoring visits by relevant government institutions – including the National Bureau of Concessions – are not effective, as noted in the Action Plan. Addressing forced labour in the illicit mining sector requires comprehensive strategies, including enhancing the resources, capacity and independence of labour inspectors and law enforcement bodies, and access to justice for victims. The Special Rapporteur highlights the obligations arising under international human rights law, international labour law, and regional human rights law, including, in particular, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, to combat trafficking in persons, to ensure effective protection against exploitation, to create conditions to promote and support the occupations and economic activities of women, in particular, within the informal sector and to ensure the right to effective remedies.

25. Domestic work is a high-risk sector in which trafficking for purposes of forced labour and child labour is prevalent and there is a wide gap between statutory law and law in practice. Children, mostly girls, are trafficked through informal networks, often involving family members, from rural to urban areas. Promises of education opportunities are given, but children remain out of school and are instead exploited in domestic households, where risks of sexual exploitation are high. There are insufficient inspections and monitoring of the working conditions of domestic workers and access to remedies for victims.

26. Liberia also faces enforcement gaps in regulating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, which contributes to risks of trafficking for purposes of forced labour and child

² See [A/HRC/53/24/Add.1](#).

labour in the fisheries sector. Concerns remain in relation to the capacity of the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority to combat illegal fishing through monitoring and surveillance and with regard to the consequent inaction to prevent trafficking in persons. Moreover, patrol vessels and real-time tracking systems are inefficient, which hinder both effective governance of marine resources and efforts to curb trafficking. The Special Rapporteur notes continuing concerns in relation to the implementation of International Labour Organization standards on the minimum working age in fisheries and weak capacity for inspections and enforcement.

B. Sexual exploitation

27. Sex work in Liberia is most prevalent in urban centres with high economic activity, such as Monrovia, and in border areas. The Special Rapporteur heard reports of high levels of commercial or transactional sex work in areas around major transportation hubs and entertainment districts. She was informed that sex workers were vulnerable to health risks, exploitation and discrimination and were frequently excluded from social services and healthcare programmes, including those with earmarked funding for HIV/AIDS treatment. Without sustained support from the Government or development partners, sex workers often rely on ad hoc projects for health and other services. Against a background of discrimination and stigma, effective action to prevent trafficking for sexual exploitation and to identify and assist victims and persons at risk is extremely limited.

28. The Government has revamped efforts to combat sexual and gender-based violence, particularly that affecting women and girls, including through measures to strengthen access to justice for victims, protection services and accountability. The Special Rapporteur welcomes the initiative of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection to set up a child protection information management system in 2025 and to launch awareness-raising campaigns through disseminating booklets and broadcasting radio programmes in local languages, especially targeted at mining concession areas. The Special Rapporteur highlights that measures to combat trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation should be integrated into those programmes and that the participation and leadership of survivors in the design, planning and implementation of such programmes should be ensured. It is essential to ensure that men and boys are engaged in measures to combat trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. It is critical to ensure that the national budget allocated to sexual and gender-based violence services is sustained and increased, in order to reduce reliance on external funding, which may be susceptible to donor priorities and economic fluctuations.

C. Gaps in child protection and rights of the child

29. Trafficking in children for sexual exploitation is a serious concern and particularly affects girls in rural areas, who are at high risk of trafficking to urban areas for purposes of domestic servitude, exploitation in street vending, and sexual exploitation. The general passivity on the part of law enforcement bodies and tolerance of sexual exploitation of children, particularly girls, is alarming and is an urgent human rights concern that is persisting with impunity. Discrimination against girls, particularly girls living in poverty and street situations, and a tolerance of sexual and gender-based violence contribute to a failure to prevent and protect them and to prosecute and hold accountable the perpetrators of trafficking in children for purposes of sexual exploitation. The prevalence of such trafficking is well known and acknowledged; however, it persists, with limited response from law enforcement or government bodies.

30. The Special Rapporteur reiterates the concerns expressed by the Committee on the Rights of the Child at the widespread practice of relocating children from rural areas to live in Monrovia for a variety of purposes, including street vending, begging and domestic servitude.³ Informal kinship-based and foster care arrangements that involve moving children from rural to urban areas may lead to trafficking in children for domestic servitude,

³ [CRC/C/LBR/CO/2-4](#), para. 81.

particularly when the children remain out of school. Liberia was among the countries with the highest prevalence of child labour in the world during the period 2014–2022.⁴ While greater attention is now being paid by the Government to eradicating child labour in both agriculture and mining, the limited capacity of law enforcement bodies and of labour inspectorates to monitor illicit mining and the activities of subcontractors in the agriculture sector allows child labour and trafficking in children to persist with impunity.

31. The Special Rapporteur is concerned that high risks of trafficking in children are exacerbated by weak child protection systems, poverty and gender inequality. Weak child protection systems and limited access to quality education contribute to high risks of trafficking, including in domestic households, which can be disguised as familial support and caregiving. Engagement with communities to prevent trafficking in children, particularly for purposes of sexual exploitation and domestic servitude, must be strengthened. The risks of exploitation may be higher for children with disabilities and due to inadequate resources and capacity to provide long-term assistance and protection.

32. Measures to ensure access to justice for children and child-friendly justice procedures are limited in scope and reach, particularly in rural areas. The Special Rapporteur highlights the importance of child-friendly justice measures for children who are victims of trafficking and welcomes the attention given to access to justice for children and the prioritization of children's rights in development programming. Targeted assistance should be given to children who are victims of trafficking, including children with disabilities. Live-in caregivers at government-run safe home for children, including children who are victims of trafficking, facilitate family tracing and reunification. However, the resources and staffing are not consistently available to undertake a best interests determination and to consider alternative protection arrangements in situations where family reunification may pose a threat to a child's rights and best interests. Due to lack of resources and transport facilities, children are frequently transferred to shelters using public transportation, if available, with law enforcement staff covering the costs personally. The lack of child protection services and safe accommodation for children at border areas is a serious concern.

33. The prioritization of the prevention of trafficking in children at border check points is welcome. Children leaving Liberia are issued exit clearance certificates as a preventive measure against such trafficking. However, concerns were raised that the prevalence of corruption could undermine the effectiveness of such prevention and protection measures.

34. Insufficient training on standard victim identification and national referral mechanisms among border agents, health and social workers increases the risk that trafficked children will not be detected.

35. In 2022, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection identified 366,585 children in street situations and 153,982 out-of-school children across Liberia. The Special Rapporteur is concerned about reports that sexual harassment in schools in the form of "sex for grades" and "sex for school fees" is common. The Ministry of Education also profiled over 6,000 volunteer teachers and found that 19.2 per cent did not have the requisite credentials to teach children. The Special Rapporteur commends the Ministry for rolling out a "back to my classroom" campaign in partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to reach out-of-school children. Expanded support by international partners for child protection and social protection services, including long-term assistance, accessible safe homes, foster care placements and follow-up measures, are urgently required to meet the State's obligations towards children who are victims of trafficking, and to strengthen prevention. The Special Rapporteur welcomes the prioritization of the prevention of trafficking in women and children, particularly for purposes of sexual exploitation, by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection. The Ministry's flagship programme, entitled "Support a Child, Save the Future", could be used as a potential entry point to reach out-of-school children and those at risk of trafficking. The focus on protection of children in street situations and the launch of new hotlines and awareness-raising materials, including through radio programmes and cooperation with schools, are very welcome.

⁴ *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2024* (United Nations publication, 2024), p. 70.

36. Birth registration and school feeding programmes are important child protection measures, and critical to prevention of trafficking in children, in line with target 16.9 of the Sustainable Development Goal. Progress has been achieved in increasing registration rates, notably through the initiative led by the Ministry of Health to decentralize and digitize interoperable birth registration systems with support from UNICEF. As a result, birth registration rates of children aged under 5 increased from 4 per cent in 2007 to 66 per cent in 2019.⁵ It is essential that such progress is maintained and strengthened, with dedicated budgetary support. The need for birth registration programmes has increased in particular in Nimba and Bong Counties due to the priority of identifying children crossing country lines and ensuring effective child protection. A comprehensive and interoperable civil registration and vital statistics system is required across healthcare, education and social protection sectors, and relevant programmes should be leveraged to promote timely birth registration as a measure to prevent trafficking in children for purposes of labour or sexual exploitation.

D. Trafficking in the context of migration

37. The Special Rapporteur is concerned about the limited access to safe and regular migration pathways in line with the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Risks of trafficking arise on migration routes to the Gulf region and Europe. Young people are targeted through social media networks and recruitment intermediaries with promises of employment and education opportunities abroad and are at serious risk of trafficking for forced labour, domestic servitude and sexual exploitation. The Special Rapporteur was informed of investigations into allegations of trafficking in persons, involving recruitment schemes through multi-level marketing in Liberia and neighbouring countries, offering education and work opportunities in Europe. However, investigations have not led to accountability, and the recruitment schemes are continuing, despite credible evidence of trafficking in persons occurring. Limited attention is paid to the rights of victims, including in terms of access to justice and effective remedies.

38. The Special Rapporteur met with survivors of trafficking who highlighted the risks arising in the context of labour migration and the need for urgent action to strengthen prevention and protection measures and accountability. The Special Rapporteur highlights the vulnerability to exploitation, including trafficking for forced labour, of migrant workers in Liberia. Migrant workers work in mining areas, including in illicit mining. Data on the number of migrant workers in concession areas are incomplete, particularly in illicit mining, and the capacity and role of trade unions in engaging with migrant workers is constrained, in particular due to lack of interpretation capacity. The lack of access to interpreters hinders the effectiveness of labour inspections. Despite the application of labour laws to migrant workers, including those in irregular situations, capacity for implementation in practice is weak and hindered by corruption.

39. The Constitution guarantees fundamental rights regardless of origin, and the 2015 Decent Work Act enforces migrant workers' right to equal treatment. Employed and self-employed migrants registered with the National Social Security and Welfare Corporation may benefit from social protection. The Government engages with and supports its diaspora through a diaspora engagement policy and migrants coming to Liberia benefit from work-related visa categories and free work permits for charitable or skilled roles, such as teachers, doctors and nurses.⁶ However, migration governance lacks coherence, and interministerial coordination mechanisms such as the National Migration Policy Task Force are not yet fully operational. Migration-specific data are largely absent, including in the last labour force survey, conducted in 2010.

⁵ Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services and others, *Liberia Demographic and Health Survey 2007* (Monrovia, 2008), p. 20; and Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services and others, *Liberia Demographic and Health Survey 2019-20* (Monrovia and Rockville, Maryland, United States of America, 2021), p. 17.

⁶ International Organization for Migration, "Migration governance indicators: Republic of Liberia – profile 2021" (Geneva, 2022).

40. The Special Rapporteur received information on trafficking in children and young women for purposes of sexual exploitation and forced labour from neighbouring countries into Liberia. While cooperation with embassy officials is good and cross-border cooperation to facilitate the repatriation of victims is in place, there is low capacity to undertake comprehensive pre-removal risk assessments prior to returns, or best interests determinations for children, leading to ongoing refoulement. Information management at border control remains a challenge, with the majority of immigration data handwritten and stored in poor conditions. In this regard, the initiative launched by the Liberia National Police Crimes Statistics Division to operationalize a digitized case management system on trafficking, including at border areas, is a timely development.

E. Effective investigations and accountability

41. Significant efforts have been made to strengthen effective investigations, including through specialized training and capacity-building of anti-trafficking teams within the Liberia National Police and joint border security entities. The Women and Children Protection Section of the Liberia National Police oversees trafficking and gender-based violence cases, and more than 200 officers received training on the revised Act on Trafficking and the constitutive elements of trafficking. However, facilities remain inadequate and there are no dedicated spaces for confidential or child-sensitive investigations. Logistical challenges also persist, with only one vehicle made available to the Liberia National Police to respond to suspected trafficking cases. Such constraints impede a timely response to trafficking, especially when victims are identified in Nimba or Bong Counties and other hard-to-reach areas.

42. The Special Rapporteur welcomes the training and capacity-building measures of the labour commissions to combat trafficking for purposes of forced labour and child labour, but notes the limited numbers of women labour inspectors and the lack of awareness of processes for gender-sensitive identification, referral and assistance measures.

43. It is essential to ensure that more women are represented in joint security teams and that training is provided to all joint security teams on gender-sensitive investigations and victim assistance and support in order to deliver a gender-sensitive response to victims. Such constraints should be addressed in the ongoing initiative as part of the broader security sector reform and under the Gender Policy and Strategic Action Plan for Inclusivity of the Ministry of Justice to establish a task force composed of personnel gender and national security sectors.

44. The 2021 Cybercrime Act includes provision for international cooperation, search, seizure and arrest, and specific provisions on “child pornography and related offences”, which are of relevance to measures to combat technology-facilitated trafficking. However, the skills and capacity to address technology-facilitated trafficking, particularly in the context of migration and transnational trafficking in persons, are very limited. Further training and capacity-building on the use of digital evidence are essential to strengthen investigations. As yet, there is no capacity to undertake effective financial investigations, a critical tool to strengthen anti-trafficking investigations.

45. The Special Rapporteur notes the submission of a complaint by four non-governmental organizations representing 22 communities from the Margibi and Bong Counties to the Office of the Compliance Advisor Ombudsman of the International Finance Corporation regarding the Corporation’s investment in Salala Rubber Corporation. The complaint contained information relating to, inter alia, allegations of sexual and gender-based violence, labour rights violations and threats of reprisals and intimidation, and has been referred to the Corporation’s compliance function.⁷

⁷ See <https://www.cao-ombudsman.org/sites/default/files/downloads/CAOComplaint-Liberia-SRC01.pdf>.

F. Administration of justice and rule of law

46. Corruption in the administration of justice continues to undermine effective action to combat trafficking in persons and to ensure accountability and access to justice for victims. The prevalence of corruption undermines efforts to prevent cross-border trafficking in children or to ensure effective investigations into trafficking in high-risk sectors such as mining and rubber plantations. The Special Rapporteur welcomes the political commitment to combating corruption in the administration of justice and to strengthening the independence of the judiciary. However, widespread reports of interference in criminal investigations, in labour inspections and in judicial proceedings persist. The Special Rapporteur notes the work of the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission and its critical role in strengthening the rule of law, administration of justice and accountability. However, its resources and capacity to effectively combat corruption, particularly in remote areas and border regions, are limited.

47. The Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission is a key integrity institution charged with ensuring transparency and accountability. The Commission has autonomy and investigative and prosecutorial authority independent from executive or legislative interference, which was guaranteed through a Supreme Court ruling. It is also guaranteed financial independence through the Act to Establish the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission; however, its budget is rarely disbursed in time. In adherence to constitutional safeguards, the right to a fair trial for all persons accused of corruption is protected. The Commission currently has a backlog of over 300 corruption cases. The Commission does not currently engage with the National Anti-Trafficking Task Force, despite the importance of its mandate to prevention of trafficking in persons and ensuring accountability.

G. Access to justice

48. Access to justice is essential to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and specifically target 16.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on promoting the rule of law and ensuring equal access to justice for all. The legal aid bill, first introduced in 2021 and then reintroduced in 2024, is potentially a significant instrument to enhance access to justice. However, delays in enactment and implementation and limited resources continue to severely undermine its objectives. The Special Rapporteur welcomes measures by the National Bar Association to expand access to justice, such as through the joint programme entitled “Promoting access to justice through pro bono legal aid representation”. The dual system of justice in Liberia combines a functioning traditional justice system, drawing on customary sources of law, with the formal justice system. Both systems function in parallel. The Special Rapporteur notes important initiatives of the National Traditional Council of Liberia and civil society to strengthen access to justice at the grass-roots level, ensuring gender equality and the rights of children. However, serious crimes, such as trafficking in persons, remain outside of its scope. Traditional leaders may nonetheless play an important role in promoting accountability and access to justice through referrals and support to the formal justice system. However, as the information received during the country visit highlights, access to justice for victims of trafficking is largely illusory, particularly for children. Victims of trafficking are mostly from the most marginalized sectors of society, in situations of extreme poverty and without the resources necessary to pursue effective remedies, including compensation, or to challenge the continuing failures to combat impunity. As such, they are left behind and abandoned by current failings in the rule of law and administration of justice in Liberia.

49. The Special Rapporteur stresses the importance of the right to a fair trial, protection against arbitrary arrest and detention, and access to legal aid for persons accused of the serious crime of trafficking in persons. Currently in Liberia, the rule of law is undermined by high pretrial detention rates and lengthy periods of pretrial detention, which may amount to several years. Limited access to lawyers and interpreters for accused persons, including those in pretrial detention, undermines the right to fair trial. Prison facilities are antiquated, including in Monrovia Central Prison, which was built over 70 years ago and still serves as the country’s largest corrections facility, hosting about half of the total persons imprisoned in Liberia. Concerns were raised with the Special Rapporteur in relation to the lack of due

process, fair trial and inadequate rehabilitation programmes for the prisoners, including foreign nationals. The Special Rapporteur was encouraged at information received concerning psychosocial support and healthcare services provided, but noted the overcrowding and inhumane conditions in prisons. Despite some improvements in medical staffing and facility renovations, prison conditions remain harsh. The Special Rapporteur met with foreign nationals held in pretrial detention for extended periods who had not met with consular officials and had not been provided with access to lawyers or interpreters. While the work of some embassies and consular officials in providing support to prisoners is significant, the provision of consular assistance is neither consistent nor sufficient.

50. The Special Rapporteur stresses that actions to combat trafficking in persons and promote effective investigations and accountability must ensure that the rule of law and the right to a fair trial are fully respected, without discrimination. The Special Rapporteur was particularly concerned about the limited awareness of the principle of non-punishment (referred to as “victim immunity” in the Anti-Trafficking Act) among justice sector actors, including police, judges, lawyers and prison officers. As such, there is a serious risk of victims being wrongfully prosecuted, undermining the effectiveness of investigations and of accountability.

H. Transitional justice, accountability and peacebuilding

51. Liberia is still grappling with the effects of the two civil wars that occurred between 1989 and 2003. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was created in 2005 to investigate crimes committed during the conflicts and to recommend measures for achieving justice, accountability and national reconciliation. In its final report, published in 2009, the Commission recommended establishing a reparation programme to provide restitution and aid and an extraordinary criminal court to prosecute individuals responsible for gross human rights violations. It also identified alleged perpetrators meriting further investigation, recommended amnesty for children associated with armed groups and armed forces and emphasized the need for comprehensive institutional and legal reforms to prevent future atrocities. Despite clear recommendations, establishing a functional war crimes court has remain fraught with challenges, particularly in terms of securing sufficient financial and human resources to support effective investigations. As a result, none of the alleged perpetrators identified in the Commission’s report have been prosecuted to date and some have held official and executive positions in the Government, contributing to a climate of impunity for crimes that occurred, including for crimes of conflict-related trafficking for purposes of sexual slavery, recruitment and use of children, child and forced marriage, forced labour and domestic servitude.

52. Against this backdrop, the establishment of the Office of the War and Economic Crimes Court marks an important step towards justice and accountability, strengthening the rule of law, administration of justice and accountability for conflict-related trafficking. The Special Rapporteur notes the leadership of the newly appointed Executive Director of the Office and the Government’s commitment to establishing a reparation trust fund for victims of conflict. Recalling Security Council resolutions 2331 (2016) and 2388 (2017), the Special Rapporteur highlights the importance of ensuring accountability and effective access to reparation for all forms of conflict-related trafficking in persons. As recognized by the Security Council in its resolution 2467 (2019), a survivor-centred approach to preventing and responding to sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations, including trafficking for sexual exploitation and all forms of trafficking in children, must be ensured. Ensuring comprehensive reparation for conflict-related trafficking will be critical to continued inclusive peacebuilding, accountability and access to justice for victims. Under Executive Order No. 131, establishing the Office of the War and Economic Crimes Court, the Office is tasked with drafting legislation for a national anti-corruption court to address all forms of corruption, concerning both cases connected to the civil wars and ongoing allegations of corruption in the governance of Liberia. The Special Rapporteur welcomes this development and stresses the urgency of effective action to combat corruption and strengthen the rule of law.

53. The Special Rapporteur is impressed that national transitional justice measures are complemented by community-led reconciliation initiatives, such as the Palava Hut system and women's Peace Huts. She reiterates the importance of women in peacebuilding efforts, as evidenced in their leadership in spearheading a non-violent movement that contributed to the end of the civil war and continued community-driven justice mechanisms. The Special Rapporteur highlights the role of the Palava Huts not only in conflict prevention and resolution, but also in promoting women's empowerment and gender equality, in all aspects of peacebuilding and in responding to gender-based violence, and their potential role in anti-trafficking actions. Noting the Local Government Act of 2018, which guarantees women's representation on county councils and their participation in county and district development plans, the Special Rapporteur emphasizes that gender equality initiatives should be mainstreamed in policymaking spaces and should be fully resourced to strengthen the implementation of the Women and Peace and Security agenda.

54. The Special Rapporteur welcomes the Government's National Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security and a related initiative to develop its first national action plan on youth, peace and security in close consultation with youth leaders, particularly given that the majority of young people from the current generation were raised during armed conflicts. Robust partnerships with civil society and the inclusion of women and youth leaders are paramount in achieving transitional justice. Sustained financial support and capacity-building should be provided towards the initiative, including through the Peacebuilding Fund

I. Other protection concerns

Rights of person with disabilities

55. The Liberia Population and Housing Census of 2022 was conducted using the Washington Group short set of questions on functioning to measure disability across multiple domains of functioning and examined indicators at disaggregated levels, including age, sex, place and county of residence, level of education, marital status and nature of employment.

56. The 2021 Act to Ban Trafficking includes specific provisions on victims with disabilities. Under the Act, where the victim is a person with a disability or a "mentally incompetent person", it is not necessary to prove the element of "means": the act and purpose of exploitation are sufficient. The consent of the victim or their guardian is also irrelevant. The status of a victim as a person with disability or a "mentally incompetent person" is to be considered an aggravating factor for the purposes of sentencing. The Special Rapporteur welcomes the attention to disability in the 2021 Act. However, the presumption of a lack of capacity to consent for all adults with disabilities is based on harmful and discriminatory stereotypes and is not compliant with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, specifically article 12, on equal recognition before the law.

57. Despite specific attention to persons with disabilities in the 2021 Act, current anti-trafficking measures are not disability-inclusive. Information on assistance and protection services or on prevention of trafficking are not provided in accessible formats for persons with disabilities. Organizations led by persons with disabilities are not part of the civil society consortium on trafficking in persons, which comprises more than 70 organizations.

58. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has noted that the legacy of protracted civil wars includes war-induced disabilities, physical and psychosocial injuries and trauma-related drug dependency. Despite these findings, action to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities and disability inclusion in post-conflict peace building has been limited. An evaluation of the National Action Plan for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities for the period 2018–2022 found that persons with disabilities had enjoyed the least progress in the justice sector in the previous five years, namely due to the lack of reasonable accommodation to ensure meaningful access to justice and participation in court proceedings. The Special Rapporteur notes that children with disabilities may be at increased risk of exploitation in begging or sexual exploitation, with limited child protection services available. Urgent action is needed to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls, and to ensure effective implementation of the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons and persons of diverse gender identities

59. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons and persons of diverse gender identities face heightened risks of discrimination, criminalization and exploitation, including trafficking in persons. Urgent action is needed to decriminalize consensual same-sex sexual acts and to prevent exploitation among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities. The Special Rapporteur notes with concern that discriminatory legislation has been considered, including an anti-homosexuality law that was submitted to the joint committees on gender, health and the judiciary for review in July 2024 and a draft bill that seeks to amend the Penal Code to change the classification of same-sex sexual acts from misdemeanour to felony, with up to 10 years' imprisonment, and prescribe life imprisonment for "aggravated homosexuality". Such discrimination and criminalization limit access to decent work, safe migration opportunities and effective access to justice where trafficking or risks of trafficking in persons arise.

Climate change and displacement

60. In addition to the protection gaps faced by specific groups, many people in Liberia are vulnerable to climate change due to climate-sensitive rain-fed agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy and mining, which are the main sources of livelihood. Those living in coastal areas reside in poorly built homes and face displacement risks without protection from sea and storm surges. Displacement and loss of livelihoods due to climate change, environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity increase risks of trafficking, particularly of children who are out of school. Such risks are exacerbated by weak child protection systems and gender discrimination in control over natural resources, land and property. In the National Disaster Management Policy, the challenges of displacement due to disasters are acknowledged, but migration and displacement linked to environmental degradation or climate change are not addressed directly. The draft multi-hazard contingency plan includes measures for population movements during crises but lacks adequate funding for implementation. To mitigate such risks, the Government entered into a financial agreement with the World Bank under the First Resilient and Inclusive Growth Development Policy Financing with a Catastrophe Deferred Drawdown Option, which allows for the provision of immediate liquidity in the event of a declared natural disaster or health emergency. The Special Rapporteur highlights the importance of mainstreaming disability rights and ensuring a gender equality and children's rights focus in climate adaptation and mitigation strategies as essential to the prevention of trafficking in persons.

61. The Special Rapporteur highlights that the risks of trafficking for forced labour and child labour are particularly high in those sectors that are contributing negatively to climate change and environmental degradation, such as mining, intensive agriculture and illicit fishing.

Role of civil society and trade unions

62. Civil society, human rights defenders and trade unions play a critical role in combating all forms of trafficking in persons. An enabling environment for civil society, particularly in rural and hard-to-reach areas, is essential, including through the provision of sustainable funding. The Special Rapporteur was impressed by the engagement of civil society on issues of business and human rights, gender equality and rights of workers. However, limited funding and capacity to engage effectively throughout the country hinder their impact. Further measures are essential to strengthen the independence of trade unions as key partners to prevent trafficking for forced labour and to ensure the rights of affected communities in mining and other concession areas.

IV. Conclusion and recommendations

63. Liberia has made progress in laying the foundation for anti-trafficking responses, including through establishing the National Action Plan and Task Force on Trafficking and revising the Act to Ban Trafficking in Persons in compliance with international human rights

law and standards. However, the prevalence of trafficking in children, particularly for sexual exploitation, is alarming, and mostly affects girls in situations of extreme poverty. Ongoing work is needed to strengthen the implementation of anti-trafficking laws and action plans and to narrow capacity gaps in law enforcement and to ensure the provision of victim support services and strengthened child protection systems. Comprehensive action to strengthen the independence of the judiciary and to combat corruption, which undermines the rule of law and access to justice, is urgently needed. Addressing these challenges requires increased resource allocation, continuous training and comprehensive victim support. To strengthen anti-trafficking efforts, the Special Rapporteur makes the recommendations below, in addition to those set out in previous sections of the present report.

64. Regarding anti-trafficking policies and initiatives, the Special Rapporteur recommends that the Government of Liberia and its partners:

(a) **Integrate anti-trafficking measures into 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and national programming, including in the design and implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons, the National Development Plan 2025–2029 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework;**

(b) **Strengthen inter- and intra-agency coordination among relevant entities and ensure budget allocation and disbursement to support the National Anti-Trafficking Task Force;**

(c) **Provide regular training for stakeholders and strengthen capacity to investigate patterns and technologies used in trafficking, particularly across borders and online;**

(d) **Enhance the capacity of labour commissions and inspections and government oversight and enforcement with additional resources and staffing;**

(e) **Establish a centralized database to collect, monitor and share trafficking cases in a timely and consistent manner;**

(f) **Assess awareness gaps in terms of service delivery and availability and widen access to anti-trafficking measures through community outreach, including by using radio and social media channels;**

(g) **Design community-led anti-trafficking initiatives and commensurate policy responses in close consultation with affected groups, including persons with disabilities and trafficking victims, where possible and appropriate, to examine local and structural drivers of trafficking and to inform intervention design, targeting and delivery;**

(h) **Provide information on risks of trafficking in Indigenous languages, with child-friendly materials in easy-to-read and accessible formats.**

65. Regarding protection for victims of trafficking, the Special Rapporteur recommends that the Government of Liberia and its partners:

(a) **Train healthcare workers and joint security team personnel to identify victims of trafficking at border crossings and establish referral pathways to protection services;**

(b) **Identify protection gaps in high-risk sectors, such as domestic work, agriculture, illicit mining and fisheries, including in supply chains, and prioritize the provision of tailored assistance and protection services for victims in rural areas and at border crossings with a view to addressing barriers;**

(c) **Ensure the provision of safe accommodation and services for victims of trafficking at border areas and in remote and hard-to-reach areas;**

(d) **Embed assistance and protection services for victims of trafficking into sexual and gender-based violence responses and programmes, with additional budget allocations and resources;**

(e) Ensure access to basic services at the community level for out-of-school children and integrate information on children's rights, gender equality and risks of sexual exploitation into school curricula, complementing plans to combat sexual violence against children in schools;

(f) Conduct trafficking risk assessments and response as part of social and child protection schemes and educate healthcare professionals, teachers and other service providers on birth registration as a prevention tool against trafficking in children;

(g) Operate the national hotline for trafficking victims 24/7 and commit sufficient technical and financial resources to victim-centred services, such as for government-run safe homes and emergency shelters;

(h) Ensure that all anti-trafficking measures, including assistance and protection services, protect the rights of persons with disabilities, including, in particular, children with disabilities, and are accessible;

(i) Strengthen capacity to assist and support migrant workers through the provision of interpretation services, effective inspections of working conditions and strengthened independent labour inspectorate and law enforcement bodies.

66. Regarding effective investigations and accountability, the Special Rapporteur recommends that the Government of Liberia and its partners:

(a) Prioritize the investigation and prosecution of all forms of trafficking in children, particularly for sexual exploitation across the country, with a dedicated law enforcement task force;

(b) Strengthen the independence and capacity of labour commissions and ensure the greater representation of women in leadership roles;

(c) Take effective action to investigate and prosecute trafficking in young women and girls for sexual exploitation in concession areas, ensuring the rights of victims to unconditional long-term assistance and protection measures and to remedies;

(d) Take action to ensure corporate accountability for trafficking in persons in supply chains, including in illicit mining and among subcontractors in the agriculture sector, particularly in rubber plantations;

(e) Establish a process of accountability that ensures victims' access to justice, due process, fair trial guarantees and victim and witness protection;

(f) Guarantee the judicial independence of accountability and transparency entities across sectors, especially for the national anti-corruption court;

(g) Strengthen the capacity of relevant accountability mechanisms, including the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission;

(h) Increase financial and human resources for agencies that provide legal aid to victims and survivors and strengthen access to justice for trafficking victims in rural areas, including expanded witness and victim protection;

(i) Implement measures to ensure trauma-informed, gender-, child- and disability-sensitive criminal justice proceedings and access to justice;

(j) Strengthen the capacity for victim and witness protection to support effective investigations;

(k) Combat discriminatory and harmful stereotypes in law enforcement bodies that normalize trafficking in children for sexual exploitation in concession areas and urban centres and child labour, in particular in domestic households.

67. Regarding the independence of the judiciary, rule of law and access to justice, the Special Rapporteur recommends that the Government of Liberia and its partners:

(a) Take effective action to combat corruption, which undermines the independence of justices and lawyers;

(b) Effectively implement the legal aid bill and expand the provision of legal aid in remote and rural areas and in concession areas, ensuring effective access to justice;

(c) Combat corruption, which is undermining effective investigations, accountability and rule of law in Liberia and undermining action to combat trafficking in persons.

68. Regarding transitional justice and peacebuilding, the Special Rapporteur recommends that the Government of Liberia and its partners:

(a) Ensure that the Office of the War and Economic Crimes Court build and act on the findings and recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and integrate effective responses to conflict-related trafficking in persons;

(b) Integrate the prevention of all forms of trafficking in persons, and safe and regular migration into the youth, peace and security agenda;

(c) Ensure that effective action to combat trafficking in persons, especially women and girls, is integrated into the women and peace and security agenda and reparation programmes.
