The Future of Work

for Young People in Fragile States

The Development Alchemists

From fragility
to resilience
through decent work

International Labour Organization

ITC
International **Training** Centre

Foreword

The "Future of Work" is part of the ILO's Centenary Initiative launched to prepare the organisation and its member states for the eventualities of an ever changing workplace. The Initiative is an affirmation of the ILO's collective resolve to staying ahead of the challenges and opportunities brought about by the evolution of work as we know it today. This initiative is about the ILO taking pragmatic steps towards equipping itself with the necessary knowledge and tools needed to effectively and efficiently deliver on its mandate to its member states in a futuristic and changed work environment.

To kick start the initiative, all ILO members States were invited in 2016, to undertake national "Future of work" dialogues which were to be structured around four "centenary conversations":

• Work and society

• Decent jobs for all

• The organization of work and production

• The governance of work

With the implementation of these dialogues in some member states, there was acknowledgement that these dialogues might not be able to adequately cater for discussions peculiar and unique to categories of countries that were in a state of "fragility". This prompted the commencement of discussions between ILO Country Office Abuja (responsible for two fragile states Liberia and Sierra Leone), with the International Training Centre of the ILO (ITCILO) to explore possibilities of convening a workshop designed to facilitate a dialogue on the "Future of Work for Fragile States". The Workshop took place in Freetown, Sierra Leone in September 2016, with participants drawn from Liberia, Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Afghanistan. The workshop provided an appropriate forum for the identification of challenges, solutions and opportunities on the "Future of work" that were unique to fragile

states. The participation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Afghanistan further enriched the discussions as they provided experiences and perspectives from Central Africa and Asia.

This report which is an output of the workshop endeavours to contribute to the pool of knowledge on the "Future of Work" by providing a perspective on this subject from Fragile Countries. The report also highlights deliberations and recommendations proposed by the participants on how fragile states could overcome their unique challenges and take advantage of prevailing opportunities to prepare adequately for the "Future of Work".

Evidently the findings and recommendations in this report are not exhaustive. However we believe that the information contained herein provides a spring board from which further discussions can be launched and conclusions reached on this important subject. The successful holding of the workshop and the preparation of the report could not have happened with the contribution of many partners. In this regard, the ILO Country Office Abuja wishes to thank ITCILO and the Development Alchemists for their invaluable support towards the facilitation of the workshop and preparation of this report. Gratitude also goes to the ILO's tripartite partners in Liberia and Sierra Leone as well as the participants from the DRC and Afghanistan for their contributions to the success of the workshop. Finally, we wish to thank the Regional Director for Africa, Mr Aeneas Chapinga Chuma, for his unwavering support and encouragement towards the holding of the Workshop.

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Acknowledgements

1. Introduction

The particular context under review in this report is the promotion of work in fragile settings, in particular those of Sierra Leone and Liberia. Job creation in FCAS (Fragile and Conflict Affected Settings) has become a strategic priority for UN agencies and International NGOs working at the intersection between humanitarian and development activities. This requires the transformation of short-term livelihoods programming into sustained labour market opportunities for vulnerable and conflict-affected groups. Understanding the nexus between decent work deficits and fragility and thus building resilient societies through inclusive employment policies and social protection systems is paramount if these States are to emerge from fragility.[1]

As well as outlining the future of work initiatives, this report will examine the nature of the decent work deficits in Sierra Leone and Liberia. It will focus on the main characteristics of fragility in both countries and in particular its impact on youth employment. The causes of this fragility will be explored via the Fragility Compass and possible ways forward identified, which will take into account the experiences of people in Sierra Leone and Liberia shared in a two-day workshop which took place on 28-29 September 2016. These views echo and amplify the voices of the Sierra Leoneans and Liberians already engaged in developing the future of work in their respective countries. Final conclusions will focus on how the future of work in these specific fragile settings is envisaged and how the workshop participants are seeking to define how they may act to secure decent work and sustained livelihoods in these challenging settings.

1.1 The Future of Work Initiative

The Declaration of Philadelphia states the original aims and purposes of the International Labour Organization as:

"Believing that experience has fully demonstrated the truth of the statement in the Constitution of the International Labour Organizatin that lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice."

In 2019 the International Labour Organization (ILO) will mark its 100-year mandate in addressing global inequalities and the challenges of achieving social justice in the world of work. A global review of the Future of Work and what it will mean for working women and men and their families on different continents is currently under way, and will inform the mandate and undertakings for the next century. This review on the Future of Work will include different contexts and economic realities and how to ensure that no-one is left behind, the dialogues and research not only being about developing academic research and analysis, but also contributing to articulating what we believe in and the values that will underpin our future goals and actions.

The Future of Work initiative considers the following: Work and Society, Decent Jobs for All, Organization of Work and Governance at Work.

Work and Society: Highlighted by the Director-General and embedded in the ILO's mandate is the idea that work should be an act of self-realization imbued with the notion of personal and collective purpose. Work must not only meet material needs but must also respond to an individual's quest for personal development and the instinctive desire to contribute to something wider than one's own family welfare.

Decent Jobs for All: Decent work is the converging focus of all four of the ILO's strategic objectives: promotion of rights at work, employment, social protection and social dialogue.

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1 https://fragilestates.itcilo.org

Organization of Work: While the government sets the regulatory framework, it is primarily in the private sector that most jobs will be created and where the real impact and impetus for the reorganization of work and production lies. Therefore it is at the level of the enterprise where the catalyst of change may be found and, while there is little question that the enterprise will continue to be an essential unit of work and production, very fundamental questions are posed on what it will look like in the future and how it will operate. For the growth of small businesses it is not only an enabling environment but also a culture that supports entrepreneurship as a positive choice and not simply a second-best alternative to wage employment.

Governance at Work: Labour market governance covers the range of policies, norms, laws, regulations, institutions and processes that influence the demand for and supply of labour. Strengthening the capacity of and improving relations between those who demand labour (employers) and those who supply it (workers) is an integral part of labour market governance.

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2. Fragility in Sierra Leone and Liberia

Sierra Leone

Ranking 180th out of 187 countries in the Human Development Index in 2011, Sierra Leone remains one of the world's poorest countries. The country has undergone many challenges including a civil war from 1991 to 2002 and an Ebola epidemic in 2014, and these events and extreme poverty contribute to Sierra Leone being considered a fragile State.

Nearly half of the working age population is engaged in subsistence farming activities. Poverty remains widespread, with more than 60% of the population living on less than US$ 1.25 a day and unemployment and illiteracy levels remain high, particularly among youth. Youth aged 15-35 comprise one-third of the population of Sierra Leone and youth unemployment was a contributory factor to the outbreak of civil conflict in Sierra Leone. Approximately 70% of youth are underemployed or unemployed and today an estimated 800,000 youth are actively searching for employment. Furthermore, illiteracy remains a persistent challenge and youth that lack skills and education find it extremely difficult to compete for the limited jobs available.

A very small proportion of the available jobs (about 1.2%) are in the manufacturing sector, with very little participation by women, which implies that most workers are employed in relatively low-productivity jobs in farm and non-farm self-employment; fewer than 10 per cent are in waged employment. Agriculture is the main employment activity nationally (55% of the total). Of that 55%, rural women account for 31 per cent, compared to men at 24 per cent, while skilled agricultural workers receive the lowest monthly earnings compared with other skilled occupations. The service sector is the second-largest employer on a national scale (33 per cent), although there is significant regional variation.

There are major challenges for gender equality and women's empowerment in Sierra Leone. While the formal sector in Sierra Leone has seen women's employment making significant strides overall, with the proportion of women employees more than doubling from 5.7% in 2007 to 13.3% in 2012, Public Administration, the major employer overall employing over 75% of total employees, as a sector still has one of the lowest women's employment ratios in the country, averaging between 3.6% (2007) and 8.7% (2012) of total employees. In contrast, the Health, Trade, Communications, Hotel & Restaurants, Insurance and Manufacturing sectors have however achieved more than the minimum 30% women's employment target.

The Global Entrepreneurship and Development Institute (GEDI)[2] ranks Sierra Leone as 135th in the world ranking of entrepreneurial economies. When mapped on the 14 pillars of entrepreneurship Sierra Leone fares well in identifying opportunities and networking, but less so when it comes to start-up and product innovation. Small businesses are potentially the key to increased employment and it is clear that in Sierra Leone there is a prospect of improving entrepreneurial skills and encouraging the growth of new businesses.

Achievement of the SDGs requires that the concept of decent work (Sustainable Development Goal 8) is addressed and that, where necessary, governments develop a national action plan to work toward its achievement. In fragile States this will require strong governance and leadership, good fiscal policies and improving national productivity. These are daunting challenges, yet it would be erroneous to conclude that fragile States are not capable of growth as, according to the World Bank,[3] Sierra Leone's economy proved resilient in the face of two major exogenous shocks: the Ebola epidemic and the collapse of iron ore prices and associated loss of production in 2014-2015. Since the final quarter of 2015 economic growth has resumed and remains on an upward trend, supported by new investments in mining, agriculture and fisheries. In recent

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2 https://thegedi.org/countries/Sierra_Leone
3 http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/sierraleone/overview

years economic growth has been driven by mining, in particular iron ore. The country's principal exports are iron ore, diamonds, and rutile (titanium dioxide), and the economy is vulnerable to fluctuations in international prices. While mineral mining has increased, its contribution to job creation remains low at around 1.4%.

The recovery currently underway, according to International Monetary Fund projections, is expected to remain sustainable over the medium term. Real Gross Domestic Growth (GDP) is projected to recover from -21.1% in 2015 to 4.3% in 2016. The medium-term outlook is expected to improve, given that the twin shocks have now largely dissipated. Under the baseline scenario the IMF forecasts medium-term growth to gradually pick up to around 6.5% by 2020 from 4.3% in 2016. Inflation is projected to decline to 7.5% by 2020 from its 2016 level.

Liberia

Liberia also remains one of the poorest countries in the world, ranked among the bottom five countries (176th out of 179) on the 2008 UNDP Human Development Index. *Per capita* GDP was US$132 in 2008 (IMF), and 64 per cent of Liberia's 3.5 million people live below the poverty line. Liberia is, however, richly endowed with water, mineral resources, forests, and a climate favorable to agriculture. Its principal exports are iron ore, rubber, gold and timber and the government has attempted to revive raw timber extraction and is encouraging oil exploration.

Despite the end of the war in Liberia thirteen years ago, its negative impact continues to be felt on the lives and livelihoods of the group that will ultimately determine the country's future and its ability to emerge from its history of armed conflict: its youth. Fourteen years of war prevented far too many young people from attaining basic education. A majority of Liberian youth between the ages of 15 and 35 also lack access to adequate health care and reproductive health services, and have neither the requisite education nor the technical and entrepreneurial skills to obtain gainful employment in either the private or public sectors. As a result employers cannot find qualified youth in the country's

active labour force. This acts as an impediment to investment and encourages the use of migrant labour for skilled work. In addition, the prevalent perception of youth as a threat to peace discourages many employers from hiring and training them.

During the war children and young people constituted the largest group of recruited fighters; they are part of an entire generation that, until now, has never experienced peace in their lifetime. A significant number of young people, including many ex-combatants, are vulnerable to exploitation. They are susceptible to being drawn back into the only command structure they know, especially if viable employment options are not made available. Furthermore, young women in Liberia continue to be disadvantaged compared to young men. This arises because young women's social and reproductive roles entail more responsibilities and other social constraints that render them more vulnerable. This results in unequal access to education and vocational training, higher drop-out and illiteracy rates, limited participation in decision-making, and unequal power relationships at home and in institutions.

In its four-year Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) beginning in 2008 the Government of Liberia prioritised employment generation as a means of reducing poverty. Employment is also firmly placed at the centre of both public and private sector growth and the LEAP (Liberian Employment Action Programme) formulated in 2006 set out in one of its key initiatives its intention to reform technical vocational education and training (TVET) as a way of improving the prospects of youth empowerment. This training reform is key to promoting youth entrepreneurship in Liberia and is seen as a powerful tool of economic growth. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Index (GEDI[4]), Liberia ranks 121st in the world rankings, with strengths in networking, high growth and opportunity perception, but demonstrable weaknesses in risk acceptance, internationalization and process and product innovation. While there is generally cultural support for entrepreneurship, this is not generally turning into new start-up businesses.

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4   https://thegedi.org/countries/Liberia

The PRS aims to expand peace and security, revitalize the economy, strengthen governance and the rule of law, rehabilitate infrastructure and deliver basic social services, and the government and international partners are investing tremendous efforts and resources in achieving these aims. The report was followed up with a Country Strategy paper for 2012-2017 guided by two strategic pillars; *Promoting inclusive economic growth through transformative infrastructure investments*, and *Enhancing governance and the efficient management of resources.*

Unfortunately these government initiatives suffered setbacks after Liberia was hit by a twofold crisis: the Ebola epidemic in 2014 and the global decline in commodity prices, which led to business closures including mine closures, consequent job losses and reduced fiscal revenues. Liberia's economy deteriorated further in 2015, with GDP growth of 0.3%, further down from 0.7% in 2014. The country is struggling to recover from these twin shocks and substantial downside risks remain, which challenge the government's recovery efforts and plans to diversify the economy to mitigate the impact of any such future shocks. This post-Ebola economic recovery is being challenged by continued terms-of-trade shocks and the reversal of private investment inflows. The mining sector, which was one of the key drivers of economic growth, declined by 17%, followed by a 1.1% decline in the agriculture sector. Furthermore, fiscal revenues are projected to decline by 12%, based on the original forecast of US$474million.

The economy was somewhat salvaged by a relatively resilient service sector, which grew by 5%, attributable mainly to the recovery in construction, hotels and trading services. The service industry in fact comprised the largest component of GDP in 2011, an estimated 44%, led by trade and hotels, Government services, real estate, transport and communication, and construction. The sector employs an estimated 45% of the labour force and is supported by a large donor presence.

GDP growth is projected to recover to about 3.9% by the end of 2016. The recovery is presumed to be driven by a new gold-mining concession, and improvements in services as rural and urban markets re-open. However, the slowing of China's economic growth and its potential adverse impact on the global economy are likely to keep already low commodity prices depressed. This remains a major risk for Liberia, given its dependence on exports of rubber, iron ore and palm oil for growth, employment and fiscal revenues. Prudent fiscal and monetary policies are critical for helping mitigate these risks but a restart of both public and private investment will be important for helping spur economic diversification and growth over the medium term.

2.1 Young People

Young people are at the core of the future of work issue. If we are talking about the future of work as situated in 2030, to coincide with the next milestone in the Sustainable Development Goals, those young people have already been born. In sub-Saharan Africa they are a part of the "youth bulge[5]" and in some fragile States almost three-quarters of the population is under 30.

The United Nations, for statistical purposes, defines 'youth' as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States. In Liberia, "youth" is defined by the Government as those between the ages of 15 and 35. The government's rationale behind such a broad definition of youth is that 14 years of warfare have left "over-age youth" ill-equipped to cope in a post-war society. Therefore the government has decided to focus resources on this age range. Likewise, The National Youth Policy and the National Youth Commission Act 2010 defines youth as between 15 and 35 years of age.

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5   http://blogs.worldbank.org/developmenttalk/youth-bulge-a-demographic-dividend-or-a-demographic-bomb-in-developing-countries

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2.2   What is a Fragile State?

In defining what we understand by the term "Fragile State", we embark on a journey through recent history that exposes a number of changes in how the issue of 'fragility' has been perceived. For many stakeholders such as UN agencies, the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the European Union, a spectrum is used to describe the degree of fragility, which often comprises the labels "weak", "failing", "failed" and "collapsed" States. These groupings are placed on a scale, with weakness and failing defined by the degree to which the State in question is capable of fulfilling its essential functions of providing for people on its territory. It is also acknowledged that the concept of fragility may refer to a part of a State rather than the whole State itself, while the OECD-DAC international network on conflict and fragility proposes that the definition should include "fragile States and situations," to capture this point. The OECD's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC), offers the following definition: *"fragile states suffer from "deficits in governance" and lack the "capacity or willingness" as well as the legitimacy to execute basic and inclusive service provision functions."*

The Fund for Peace developed twelve social, economic and political indicators that form the basis of the Fragile States Index[6]. These indicators are used to assess the degree of fragility in 178 states and territories. They are divided into the following sub-sectors: very high alert, high alert, alert, high warning, elevated warning, warning, stable, more stable, very stable, sustainable and very sustainable. The indicators are broken down into three sub-sectors: Economic indicators, Political and Military indicators, and Social Indicators such as demographic pressures, which can include the outbreak of diseases or natural disasters which make it difficult for a government to protect the population within its borders. It also includes 'human flight' and 'brain drain', which describes the phenomenon of many skilled and talented citizens migrating from a country to work and live elsewhere.

2.3   Fragility in Sierra Leone

Most analysts agree that fragility often goes with substantial socio-economic and political deficits. While countries in fragile situations

6   http://fsi.fundforpeace.org

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differ in many respects, they also have several similarities, such as significant political instability, citizen insecurity, and governance deficits which prevent corrective action from being carried out.

These factors exacerbate poverty, and according to the Decent Work Country Programme for Sierra Leone[7] the war generated more vulnerable people, compounding the numbers already in existence and therefore expanding the need for social protection. Most people earn money in the informal economy and are thus exposed to more risk, existing by trading or working informally, with none of the protection formality provides. It is increasingly obvious that people are finding it difficult to fulfil their kinship obligations: for example, informal sector workers in towns and cities are largely unable to send money back to their parents in rural villages. There are deplorable working conditions in the mines which are hazardous to health, and this has become a challenge in a major sector of the country's economy. Other workplaces are often hazardous, with Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) in a dire state; the MoELSS OSH unit is considered non-functional and has no information, and throughout Sierra Leone in general there is little evidence on the ground of the existence of, or compliance with, a preventative safety and health culture. Apart from this, child labour is also a problem in Sierra Leone. Many are engaged in street trading and noneconomic housekeeping activities, half of them not attending school. Many children work long and hazardous hours, often in harsh and exploitative conditions. While precise and reliable data are lacking, large numbers of children are presumed to be engaged in the worst forms of labour and exploitative domestic work.

The State of Food Insecurity in Sierra Leone report[8] in December last year by the Government of Sierra Leone, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) shows that more than half of the population – over 3.5 million people – are food-insecure, without access to sufficient safe and nutritious food.

Of those, about 600,000 are severely food-insecure, eating significantly less food or less varied and nutritious food, and unable to cope with new shocks such as drought, floods and fluctuating food prices. The number of severely food-insecure people has increased by 60 percent since 2010. Levels of food insecurity at least doubled from the 2010 CFSVA in the districts of Bombali, Bonthe, Kailahun and Kenema, and out of 149 chiefdoms and 18 urban wards surveyed, 110 chiefdoms had food insecurity levels above the national average of 50 percent. Food insecurity in these zones is a chronic problem, caused by structural factors that affect the food production system and limit the ability of households to produce or buy enough food. To sell or buy food, households in rural areas have to travel almost eight miles, or one and a half hours, to reach the nearest market.

2.4 Fragility in Liberia

Liberia is struggling to withstand the twin shocks of the Ebola outbreak in 2014 and the global decline in commodity prices that has had a serious impact on its export trade figures. As with Sierra Leone, it is a net importer of rice, despite having the agricultural resources to be self-sufficient. The rural migration from country to urban centres such as Monrovia is further compromising weakened infrastructure and, as with Sierra Leone – depending on whom you ask – the country's food situation ranges from uncomfortable to dire. Though Liberia is not now considered to be experiencing a famine, the technical definition of which involves a death rate of one person per 10,000 a day, 630,000 Liberians do not have enough to eat, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization which offers the most conservative estimate. The World Food Programme suggests that more than half the country's population is borderline food-insecure or worse. There are also anxieties regarding a possible new flare-up of Ebola, as 30-40 per cent of Liberians lack access to health care today, the same level as before the epidemic. Now that aid budgets are moving on to the subsequent international emergency, Zika, only one Ebola treatment center remains operational.

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7   http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/program/dwcp/download/sierraleone.pdf

8   http://www.wfp.org/countries/sierra-leone

3. Root Causes and Challenges

The purpose of identifying the root causes of fragility and the challenges they pose is to help programming and intervention by governments and donors target the root cause and thus ameliorate the situation.

3.1 The Fragility Compass

The development of the fragility compass came about through a collaboration led by the ILO's Fragile States and Disaster Response (FSDR) Group and the Graduate Institute's Centre on Conflict, Development and Peace-building (CCDP), and involved practitioner communities of the ILO and the wider United Nations system as well as other stakeholders from the world of work. The fragility compass examines eight different aspects:

- External/Internal Armed Groups,

- Weak democratic governance,

- Socio-political Crisis,

- Social-Economic Inequalities and marginalization,

- Migratory flows and population movements,

- Global trade/financial crisis,

- Health Epidemics, and

- Catastrophic Events.

The existence of these aspects in a fragile State and the State's inability to address them is related to a complex series of underlying causes. Often the symptoms of these underlying causes are so prevalent and demanding that the focus of energy and resources remains at the level of the symptom, rather than on addressing the root cause. The compass makes a distinction between these causes of fragility and the symptoms of such fragility. An example of this is malnutrition and hunger for which, not surprisingly, major efforts are

During the workshop, the participants reflected on the dimensions of the fragility that had led them to the point of fragility. Weak government, poverty, lack of jobs, armed groups and the health epidemic were the more obvious sources of fragility for both Sierra Leone and Liberia, but also other exogenous contributing factors such as the fall in the global price of iron ore had a devastating effect on an already suffering economy. Sierra Leone was also affected by the influx of refugees from neighbouring Liberia.

put into establishing measures to address the symptoms, such as food distribution. However, the root cause could be armed conflict preventing food arriving, or a catastrophic event that has seriously affected infrastructure such as local markets or long-term droughts that have caused crop failures. By addressing the symptom rather than the root cause, the problem is not eradicated but may only be temporarily diminished. Sustainable solutions are not brought about by addressing only the symptoms of a problem or crisis, the challenge being to recognize the unique combination of circumstances that bring about fragility and embark on "joined up thinking" that examines the complex relationships and root causes of a whole range of symptoms.

The "fragility compass" is designed to complement a variety of existing, data-driven indexes and models by investigating the concept of fragility and how it might be applied in interventions regarding employment and decent work. The compass facilitates an examination of the factors and triggers that drive fragility in specific programming contexts as well as focusing on the possible range of employment and decent work interventions and collaborative responses they might require. It provides analytical orientation as a quick and pragmatic aid to ideas generation in the areas of employment and decent work in fragile settings.

3.2 The Fragility Compass: Sierra Leone

Looking at the Fragility Compass measurements for Sierra Leone, it is evident that one of the root causes of fragility, the presence of **external and internal armed groups**, scores very highly in this State. This in turn creates security threats to businesses as unemployed youth join these armed groups instead of farming the land, which in turn impacts on food prices and halts or slows long-term development strategies. The inefficiency of labour market regulation and information-sharing, which in turn creates weak institutions with rampant wage discriminationn, gender inequality and hazardous working conditions, is due to the root cause, namely **weak democratic governance**, which likewise scores highly on the compass. High levels of unemployment and under employment, which particularly impact on youth and the ensuing poor social dialogue opportunities, where young people often feel they are not being listened to or are offered temporary sticking-plaster solutions (i.e. showered with certificates rather than real work opportunities) could be traced to the high level of **socio-political crisis**, which is in turn a cause of the socio-**economic inequalities and marginalization** which give rise to the lack of adequate social protection for the most vulnerable, including examples of the worst forms of child labour.

Figure 1: The Fragility Compass as Defined by Participants for Sierra Leone
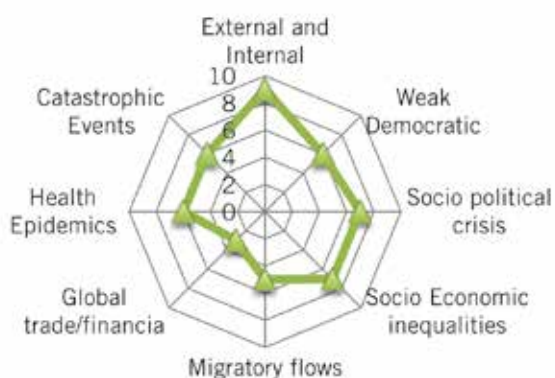
Although Sierra Leone is still currently experience growth of about 4%, the **global trade and financial crisis** had a knock–on effect

on foreign investment and exports, with Sierra Leone still having a negative trade balance, importing more than it exports (petrol, rice, trucks, medicine and cars being its chief imports). **Health epidemics**, chiefly the Ebola epidemic, had a negative impact on growth and of course on the advances in social protection and safety nets for the populace; it was seen as a **catastrophic event** by the people, who had to handle the sudden loss of productive assets and market opportunities and are still experiencing, as mentioned in the introduction to this section, food insecurity.

3.3 The Fragility Compass: Liberia

The highest scoring category for fragility on the compass for Liberia is the **global trade/financial crisis**, reflected in the reduction of foreign direct investment by almost 50% in 2014 (post-Ebola) which has not picked up since. The global decline in commodity prices, particularly for iron ore and rubber, has led to a reduction in trade opportunities, with exports reduced and imports increased, leading to a larger trade imbalance. This leaves the government in a position where they do not have enough funds to address all the competing demands; low incomes generate low tax flows, and unemployment rises. Many Liberians have left the country or moved internally from rural to urban settings, resulting in the high fragility score for **migratory flows/population movements;** the population is dependent on remittances from the diaspora and there was a migration of 20,000 Liberians unwilling to repatriate from Sierra Leone after the war. As in Sierra Leone, **health epidemics**, chiefly the Ebola epidemic, have had a negative impact on growth, and of course on the advances made in social protection and safety nets for the populace; it was seen as a **catastrophic event** by the people, who had to handle the sudden loss of productive assets and market opportunities and are still grappling with food insecurity, as seen in the introduction to this section. There is a lack of confidence in the health service and fears that the epidemic may return. **Socio-economic inequalities and marginalization** have led to the high rates of unemployment and underemployment among Liberian youth, with child labour in evidence and youth allegiances to **external and internal**

armed groups[9] a root cause of insecurity and threats to business; this insecurity blocks long-term development strategies. Businesses are also prevented from growing and becoming sustainable by the ineffective labour market regulation and information-sharing, and by weak institutions which do not enforce labour standards, resulting in wage discrimination, gender inequality, hazardous working conditions and informality, resulting in less tax income for the government. The root cause of this inefficiency is of course **weak democratic governance;** without strong governance efforts to enforce regulation are hindered and are seen as symptoms of **socio-political crisis**.

Figure 2: The Fragility Compass as Defined by Participants for Liberia

3.4 Perceptions of Fragility in Liberia and Sierra Leone, as Identified by the Participants in the Workshop

During the workshop participants reflected that one of the key characteristics of their societies was vulnerability, in that many people are living on the margins, without any form of protection or safety net. The very low standard of living, particularly in rural areas, is resulting in youth migration for work away from rural to urban settings, where the infrastructure is inadequate for such an influx. With very high unemployment there is a sense of hopelessness among young people and there is an urgency in the need to

create a large quantity of jobs for unemployed youth. They envisaged a revitalization of the rural areas, creating hubs and learning opportunities that would stem the flow of young people to the cities and larger population centres.

While in Liberia there is a new labour law, participants from Sierra Leone reflected that there are no policies on decent work and non-existent health and safety regulations. It is perceived that Government policies on job creation are poor and difficulties are compounded by a fragile economic situation and political climate. It was asserted that labour laws need reformation and sectoral strategies would be advantageous.

A key issue of concern in both countries is the prevalence of low skills and skills mismatches. Participants reflected on the need to establish or strengthen technical vocational training institutions for underprivileged youth and to incorporate entrepreneurship learning into the secondary school curriculum. Liberian participants discussed how their education service was widely perceived as not currently meeting these needs, the perception that this service is inadequate exacerbating State fragility. These perceptions are supported by the Liberia Youth Fragility Assessment[10], which assesses as of high relevance to fragility in education the inability of the State to fund either capital or operational education expenditure and the large numbers of war-affected youth, demobilized soldiers and young people who have not had access to or have not completed basic education. In addition to the high relevance of serious under-funding of skills training for youth, there is also the neglect of investment in secondary and tertiary education.

The provision of quality education could contribute to mitigating fragility, as it would prepare young people for jobs and enterprise development, enhance social cohesion and, in turn, reduce the risk of civil unrest and violent conflict. Education systems can be a prime site of corruption and are open to political manipulation; as such a drive for transparency would have a positive effect on students'

9   http://www.lr.undp.org/content/liberia/en/home/library/poverty/conflict-and-fragility-liberia-report.html

10 http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADQ258.pdf

attitudes. Low ICT Skills are also a particular concern, with participants recognising the inadequate use of technologies in the market and a lack of global and local connectivity with fibre-optic cable. There are many global job and training opportunities in the areas of mobile phone operators, cyber security and internet connectivity that young people could compete for if they had adequate skills and access to ICT Infrastructure, but to date there has not been any form of ICT training needs analysis, and there is a lack of hardware and a need to invest in ICT and its infrastructure.

In both Sierra Leone and Liberia the extractive industries raise many issues, the first being the relationship with exogenous private companies and the rights to license and contribute to the creation of local jobs and local economic development, which currently is low. There are also many issues around "artisanal and small-scale mining" such as security of land and tenure rights, environmental issues, occupational safety and health, child labour and the exploitation of young women and men.

Most artisanal mining activity is informal and consequently poor environmental and social practices are common. This sector would benefit from concerted efforts to address informality and its associated hazards to Occupational Safety and Health. In this sector, in common with many others, women are significantly disadvantaged.

The participants believe it is essential to establish programmes to encourage gender equality in the workplace, and the data in both countries regarding this gender inequality illustrates a significant gap in employment and wage earning-opportunities for women. This could be encouraged if social partners were strengthened and gender equality in both society and the workplace were prioritized, but at present social partners at institutional level need to be reinforced so that they are in a better position to increase their member base and more effectively represent the aspirations of their members. This would include advocating for the rights of equality of treatment for women workers and women business owners.

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4. The Way Forward – Voices from the Participants

The result of this analysis is the conclusion that one size does not fit all. Sustainable solutions involve new actors and stakeholders and the voices of the most marginalized should not only be heard but also acted upon. Proper consultation, discussion and debate is essential, but should not be mistaken for the solution. Often action plans rightly demand social dialogue, but the question is … "To what end?" Social dialogue is not a result but a means to a result. The results are positive and measurable impacts on people's lives. The following is a summary of the workshop reflections on the three elements of the Future of Work initiative, namely i) work and society, ii) decent jobs for all, and iii) governance at work, in the light of the causes and the challenges they incur as identified in the previous chapter.

4.1 Work and Society

In both Liberia and Sierra Leone most private sector activity operates within the informal economy, where either economic units such as micro, small- and medium-scale businesses are not registered and do not pay taxes or provide social protection for their staff, or else people eke out an existence trading or working informally, with no cover, protection or rights. Participants commented on this state of vulnerability, of which they had all had direct experience. The transition to a more formalized economy will require many strands of activity that place the emphasis not on the stick, but on the carrot, creating incentives for small businesses to register and contribute to society by paying taxes and providing fair wages and social protection. As such these businesses then gain access to services that help them grow and become more productive and profitable. Only a win-win solution will ensure that businesses see the benefits in registering. There is no "one size fits all" formula for transiting to a more formalized economy, but governments need to provide leadership in offering simplified registration processes with links to social protection, which was discussed at length.

The four actions that participants thus identified under the future of work agenda for work and society are as follows. 1) Engage in dialogue with stakeholders, in particular in Sierra Leone with the Sierra Leone Employers Federation, and with relevant government bodies and the ILO in order to 2) set up these simplified registration processes and links to social protection. 3) A baseline on the levels of production should be conducted and, most importantly, 4) there should be collaboration with vocational and technical institutions to provide much-needed skills and address gaps and mismatches, particularly in ICT.

4.2 Decent Jobs for all

In many poor countries the debate on decent work for all is often tied to the notion that there is a choice between the quantity and quality of jobs. The debate during the September

workshop about "Decent Work for All – or any work" was passionate and energetic, but it revealed a flaw, in presuming that decent work only comes at the cost of jobs.

In fragile states and countries facing very high unemployment and poverty issues, it is not surprising to find the discussion on decent work focusing on the issues of quantity rather than quality of work. This concept was not completely clear to the participants, who made assumptions that decent work is something only available to well-developed economies. There was a recognition that currently in both Sierra Leone and Liberia there is limited decent work, problems with occupational safety and health, child labour, rights to association and protection, and rights at work. Also discussed was the commitment to the concepts of Decent Work for All and the latest labour law in Liberia passed on 25 June 2015, which captures the concept in its title: The Decent Work Bill. Reiterated also in the discussion was the fact that to work towards this goal there needs to be a more accurate understanding of decent work deficits and more work towards the transition to formalisation. Simple actions at macro level can help towards this: strengthening social partners, social protection, encouraging dialogue, and membership of appropriate representational bodies.

4.3 Governance at Work

Participants discussed how governance at work would be strengthened by a review of labour laws and that there should be a consultative committee for the review of obsolete laws with a view to their being removed. In turn useful and appropriate laws can be enforced. This would create clearer policies, securities and conditions for those working in the mining and agricultural industries. It was felt though that once the policies were put into action they would have to be protected.

It was felt there should be lobbying with the legislature to press for implementation of youth development policies and plans, which would enhance the inclusion of young people in decision-making, which in turn this would

provide an enabling environment for developing and nurturing their skills. In this regard the creation and support of strong professional training institutions would strengthen existing institutes and infrastructures, raising awareness about acquiring decent work skills. This would help develop training and pilot youth programmes in agriculture, forestry, husbandry, fisheries and wool technology. Youth education would be decentralized to cover learning in the regions, raising support for youth in agriculture, formulation of co-operatives and creation of links to financial institutions. Lastly this would further support and help develop connections with markets, public and private partnerships and creation of improved value chain processes.

4.4 Organization of Work and Production

This conversation in the workshop was lengthy and provided a number of interesting perspectives and key inputs. To create a clearer and more robust organization of work the participants suggested that there ought to be a move to support vigorous engagement of young people in civic responsibilities and an attempt to raise expectations of engaging in productive work. A range of services would support this: career guidance, counselling, apprenticeships, mentoring and internship programmes. These initiatives would involve regular dialogue with schools, universities, parents and students to ensure increased awareness and sustainability.

A possible benefit from this development would be a positive impact on promoting youth into agri-business. The agricultural sector is adversely affected by rural migration of youth, who see farm work as unprofitable, old-fashioned and without a future, and consequently flock to urban centres, the infrastructure of which can hardly cope with this influx. Active support from the government regarding careers and entrepreneurship in agri-business would strengthen the sector and provide more focus on the capacity-building of cooperatives and partnerships, for example MAFFs and FAO.

From these ideas the participants generated the list of appropriate measures which could be put into effect:

1. Increased support to improve literacy in schools and colleges and in homes.

2. Encourage young people to form cooperatives.

3. Activate ICT hubs for increased computer literacy.

4. Encourage and build the capacity of young people in the agricultural sector, increase the awareness of the benefits of agri-business, supported by SLLC. Further to this the use of job advertisements could enhance and widely drive home the messages.

5. Increase awareness of business and the benefits of a formal economy (Convention 204). Raising adequate financial resources and access to loans and financial discipline to reduce economic exploitation (multiple taxation) could strengthen this. Education in business studies to improve skills in accountancy, budgeting and record keeping would also help.

6. Create greater focus and access to TVET. This could be launched at three levels: university, secondary education and commercial institutes. Having its own policy created and supported by the government would strengthen TVET. There would be the raising of public awareness on measures to address and expose corruption, subsequently producing guidelines and stronger business regulations.

A part of the UN Vision for Sierra Leone is a national plan that will address both the supply and demand sides of youth employment: from labour-based public works and employment-intensive agriculture schemes to the provision of market-based vocational skills. This involves:

1. working closely with the Ministry of Public Works and Agriculture,

2. fostering small contractors in rural areas,

3. building institutions for skills training in rural areas focusing on entrepreneurship development, value chain upgrading and agro-processing, *and*

4. providing microfinance schemes.

5. Conclusions

The creation of new jobs is a high priority and this is not something that the public sector alone can address. It requires the engagement of the private sector, and in many instances external investment, although this needs to be safeguarded to ensure that investment does actually provide local sustainable employment. Alongside strategies for creating new jobs there also needs to be an environment in which new local businesses can grow and develop. This requires good, clear and simple policies for the establishment and registration of new businesses and the development of an entrepreneurial culture. This chapter will comment on how the strategy for the future of work for young people in fragile states is being developed and how the participants at the workshop envisage their future within the framework of the ILO Future of Work Centenary Conversation.

5.1 The Future of Work for Young People in Fragile States

On 25 June 2015 Liberia passed a new law, the Decent Work Bill, which is the country's first labour law since the 1950s. Liberia has adopted one of the first labour laws in the world that refers to the ILO's Decent Work Agenda directly in its title, yet its commitment to this agenda goes well beyond that. The law aims to promote economic development and growth, including reducing obstacles to efficient business competition.

In Liberia the government's employment strategy (LEEP/LEAP)[11] is headed by the Ministry of Labour, with a Steering Committee including all the relevant ministries, some UN agencies, donors and NGOs. The challenge is to shape the revival of the growth process in a way that promotes, to the fullest extent possible, the creation of productive and remunerative employment and decent work. This requires both immediate short-term measures that help stabilize and ease the

employment situation as well as creating an enabling economic environment over the medium term that generates both sustainable and productive employment. Both types of measure are part of an integrated employment strategy and draw on the ILO's Global Employment Agenda.

Key Initiative 1 of the LEEP strategy is to focus in the short term on increasing the employment intensity of the reconstruction effort. Economic growth in employment-intensive sectors of the economy will be the mainstay for job creation, as will be the restoration of the agriculture sector.zSupport measures will be introduced to stimulate demand for products and services provided by SMEs and the informal economy, as described in Key Initiative 3. Employment programmes will be based on local or community-based development and empowering of local communities, based on local development strategies. There will also be a need for targeted labour market programmes to absorb productively the large number of unemployed young men and women, through LMI, job counselling and career guidance and short term training, described in Key Initiatives 4 and 2 respectively.

Child labour and HIV-Aids are challenges that seriously affect the labour market, and have to be overcome by integrating them in programmes and interventions, and in Sierra Leone the government is also turning its attention to the question of child labour. Sierra Leone has ratified six of the eight core ILO Conventions on governance at work, but the two yet to be ratified are C.138 (Convention concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment) and C.182 (on the Worst Forms of Child Labour). Despite the ratification of some of the Conventions, many challenges remain on the application of the rights and obligations enshrined in the Conventions. National policies have yet to reflect international labour standards. In particular there is a low awareness of the rights and standards throughout society, including the legislature. In addition Sierra Leone has not been able to fulfil its constitutional (reporting) obligations for many

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years and needs assistance. Since 1976 (62nd Session of the ILC) Sierra Leone has not been able to fulfil another constitutional obligation, the submission of recently-adopted International Labour Standards to its legislative authorities for information.

ILO constituents in Sierra Leone are the MoELSS and its Social Partners, the Sierra Leone Employers' Federation, and the Sierra Leone Labour Congress. These constituents are suffering from structural weaknesses and setbacks attributable to the war, while a very understaffed and under-equipped Ministry of Employment, Labour and Social Security (MoELSS) is having difficulty rising to the challenges on the national agenda. The core structures of the Ministry of Employment, Labour and Social Security – including employment services, occupational health and safety, industrial relations and LMI, are too weak in terms of human resources, possession of relevant skills, equipment and other logistics to be able to carry out their roles effectively. It is regularly sidelined by key government actors when it comes to

addressing investment and policy issues that have a bearing on decent work, employment and social protection. The Social Partners, the Sierra Leone Employers' Federation and the Sierra Leone Labour Congress have a good social dialogue relationship, but both have been weakened by the war, have lost membership, and need to extend into new sectors and promote greater participation of women. Both have as priorities employment generation, their own strengthening, and the reinforcement of the MoELSS.

The new National Tripartite Council brings together representatives of employers, workers and the government to advise the Minister of Labour on labour market issues and implementation of the new labour law. The National Tripartite Council will help institutionalize and promote social dialogue between civil society and the government. The new law also includes a framework to establish strong and independent employer and worker organizations, allowing them to engage in effective collective bargaining on conditions of employment and work.

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5.2 Envisioning the future – 2026 and 2031

In examining the future of work for fragile states, a starting question is 'what will the future be?' And further, 'how far into the future are we imagining?'. Undoubtedly in Africa, unlike in Europe and the USA, there will be a large group of young people seeking employment. Will they leave to find work in the parts of the world where there is a demand for working-age people, and what might be the effects on the domestic economy of both a 'brain drain' and remittances sent home?

The workshop participants were asked to envision how they saw the future, both in 2026 (in ten years' time) and in 2031. The visions concentrated on three major areas: youth employment, government policy and citizenship. At the end of the decade they see implementation of the policies outlined in Chapter 4, with political stability and democratic governance. Most see structures as needing to be decentralized, with less government dominance but also a more prevalent formalized economy, with protection paramount - including social protection and relevant labour laws (particularly in extractive industries) - and promotion of the concepts of youth employment and entrepreneurship. More young people will need to have become entrepreneurs by 2026; the development of ICT infrastructure is seen as a route to this, with ICT included in the education curriculum and youth linked to national and international ICT institutions.

As well as youth entrepreneurs, enabled by startup grants for their businesses and more flexibility in land ownership and leasing, they also envisage youth leaders, along with the development of a leadership academy to train them. Apprenticeships will be widespread, particularly in critical technical jobs. Market linkages help facilitate business. Young people will be being advised at the newly established Careers Centres, and more education and training institutions established. The training will be of higher quality, more specialized and linked to the job market.

One group concentrated on the extractive sector, and sees its expansion as providing youth employment opportunities along with the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of mining policies, initiatives and programmes. Technological improvement may lead to job losses, robotisation and automation evident in some sectors being highlighted. The workshop participants also see an improvement in civic and social awareness, with young people becoming more conscious of their roles, duties and obligations.

The vision of 2031 outlined below, following the sustainable development goal milestone in 2030, is an extension of the ideas projected above, with education in vocational skills integrated from primary to tertiary levels, more girls educated (particularly in the sciences), business activities regulated and an ICT-connected generation which inspires and influences world technology. Health and education, commerce, and services will all have improved *via* inclusion of ICT.

Also envisaged are fiscal policies creating jobs for youth in all sectors which are subject to social protection, and young people are developing the culture of saving and investing. Appropriate policy formulation to increase productivity and regulation is present in the mining and agricultural sectors, with added value as the manufacturing of raw materials in the extractive industries also extends into finished products, creating more decent jobs.

Further, both countries will be able to compete globally as local goods are of a higher standard and youth are globally orientated. These favourable working conditions are reducing the brain drain, with gender inequalities in the workplace reduced, with equal pay for equal work. There is an emphasis on increased well-being, with youth increasingly happier and healthier, with increased productivity, reduced working hours and more job satisfaction. Standards of living have improved with greater food self-sufficiency. There will be an informed society actively engaged in green solutions (energy, reduced deforestation) with a well-trained workforce; this all means a stable and peaceful economy and society, with no conflict, economic growth, strong institutions and a transparent governing structure, in line with the ILO's vision of social justice delivered through decent jobs.

5.3 Final Thoughts – the Development of Human Capital in Liberia and Sierra Leone

The above projections may indeed be rosily optimistic but there are grounds for hope. While it is clear that within the next 50 years low-skilled jobs will largely become automated, with an increasing number of tasks carried out both digitally and by robots (already being piloted in Japan, Germany, the USA and China, where robots are not only engaged in production line and assembly activity but are also actually providing care to older people) this is still far in the future for young people in Africa. More relevant in terms of technology for Africa is that ICT continues to offer opportunities for the outsourcing of work and global partnerships. It also offers potentially new types of employment, in which employees or freelancers never meet their manager who is based in a different country. The structure of work and employment will change, more people will work for themselves and from home and employment legislation will need to adapt to the new types of contractual arrangement. If young people are to find jobs they will need to be ICT-savvy and in many instances organize themselves as entrepreneurs. In addition, beyond training young people in ICT so that they can participate in the labour market, good ICT coverage, wi-fi and internet connections may encourage inward investment and create an improved environment for new businesses to develop and grow.

Universities, schools and TVET need to ensure that personal organization and entrepreneurial skills are developed to equip and empower young people with the new patterns of work and working relationships. Public and private partnerships can be encouraged to deliver job training programmes but above all entrepreneurship programmes, in which the training matches the actual needs of the job market. Here the importance of social dialogue and assessment cannot be over-estimated; a capacity assessment into what is provided and what is needed should be ongoing. This entrepreneurship training can begin in school and be added to TVET programmes. SIYB (Start and Improve Your Business) training can be provided directly to young people and focus on specific sectors such as agriculture, ICT and

extractive industries, and in so doing ameliorate several challenges at the same time.

A key issue for fragile states is the degree of dependency on exogenous providers, be they donors offering development programmes, sources of food imports, or multinationals seeking licences to mine and take advantage of the natural resources available. To reduce these vulnerabilities it is vital to address food security by ensuring that the agricultural sector is well developed and organized. This requires investment and organization, but if prioritized could also be a key part of a strategy to stem migration from rural to urban centres and the multiple problems associated with relatively small cities unable to provide the necessary basic services that ensure efficient civic provision. Investing in agri-businesses has to be an essential part of any strategy to reduce dependency and change the balance away from imports towards export of basic food products.

The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, agreed at the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, South Korea in 2011, sets out a new approach to aid in fragile and conflict-affected states. Highlighting five Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs) as priority areas for fragile states to make progress towards so as to become increasingly resilient, namely (i) Legitimate Politics: foster inclusive political settlements and conflict resolution, (ii) Security: establish and strengthen people's security, (iii) Justice: address injustices and increase people's access to justice, (iv) Economic Foundations: generate employment and improve livelihoods, and (v) Revenue and Services: manage revenue and build capacity for accountable and fair service delivery.[12] This range of measures enables countries to evolve from a stage of crisis, through rebuilding and reform, transition, transformation and finally to resilience. Sierra Leone is currently assessed at being at the transition stage, and Liberia at the rebuilding and reform stage.

Both Sierra Leone and Liberia recognize the extent of the fragility of their States and are making steady progress in addressing some of the challenges they face, in both reducing

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12 http://www.g7plus.org

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their vulnerabilities and strengthening their resilience. Many of the dimensions of fragility are in their very nature exogenous and outside the control of a government, but by becoming more resilient to shocks and challenges a government can develop the potential to recovery more quickly from whatever fate throws in their path. In terms of the endogenous dimensions of fragility, working toward a fair and just society, providing for the most vulnerable, and building social cohesion, all begin with good social dialogue and national leadership.

For any fragile state the future, including the future of work, is based on the ability to respond in an agile manner to the need to address both short-term and long-term goals and on collecting high-quality information on the needs of a future workforce and population. Young people are the future of work and the future; investment in them and the infrastructure that surrounds and provides for them is in itself an investment in the future.

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Annex 1 - EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY FOR DECENT WORK IN LIBERIA Government of Liberia Liberia Emergency Employment Programme (LEEP) Liberia Employment Action Programme (LEAP) http://www.fao-ilo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fao_ilo/pdf/Liberia-Strategy-Document.pdf

The Key Initiatives:

Key Initiative 1: Boosting Employment in Public Works Investments

Key Initiative 2: Skills Training

Key Initiative 3: Facilitating the Graduation of the Informal Economy and Boosting the Small and Medium Enterprise Sector

Key Initiative 4: Labour Statistics and Labour Market Information and Analysis

Key Initiative 5: Social Dialogue and Labour Administration

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