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CAPITOL SCOOP

Postwar Governance Reform in Liberia: Progress and Challenges

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“Focus On Children’s

Social Protection, Patricia Brown-Togba, is urging all educational institutions and

teachers to provide an enabling and suitable learning environment for children suffering from Down syndrome.

She said it is important for both parents and teachers to focus on the talents those children who have Down syndrome and other form of disabilities, rather than on their physical appearances.

Speaking as proxy for Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection, Victoria Sherman, Mrs. Togba lamented that Down syndrome is a form of disorder in the chromosome that leads to some recognizable features on people who suffer from it. She said, at times, some people face difficulties in doing certain things as compared to other children.

The MGCSP official said it is important that children with Down syndrome be treated not separately from normal children, adding, it would help them to learn faster from their friends.

She stated that it has been noticed in some schools that teachers do not have the required patience to accord these children time and attention they need to learn.

Mrs. Togba added that it is important that learning institutions and teachers be given special training in dealing with this kind of situation so as to minimize the discrimination against people suffering from the disease.

She noted that children with disabilities can achieve their potentials once they are given the chance in life by educational institutions and their parents.

Mrs. Togba disclosed to the audience that the Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection (MGCSP) has approved subsidies for the Down Syndrome Children, under “MY HEART’S APPEAL” organization.

She lamented that some parents are sometimes ashamed of their children born with disabilities and they prefer to keep them in door in order to avoid being ridiculed by others.

She said some of the children with these disabilities will end up dropping out of school because of the mockery and shunning from other children.

For her part, “MY HEART’S APPEAL INC.” founder and Executive Director, Lovetie Major said it is important for Liberia and the world to know that there exists people with Down Syndrome in Liberia as it is in other countries and they do need attention and care.

Ms. Major said she became motivated to establish this organization when she had a sister who has Down syndrome, and because of her condition, she was not accepted to attend school. And as sister, according to her, she would not see her sibling being shunned in such manner. She established “MY HEART’S APPEAL INC” in 1996 to seek the welfare of such children who fell in the category of her sister.

Currently, Major said there are 16 children under the auspices of her organization and they are undergoing some programs that could help enhance their

future.

She noted that the program being offered by her organization is self-supported and she intends to go to all parts of Liberia. Ms. Major said this vision will be realized gradually.

Liberia celebrated this year’s World Down Syndrome Day under the theme: “My Friends, My Community, The Benefits of Inclusive Environment for Today’s Children and Tomorrow’s Adults.”

Japan Boosts Border

gration and Naturalization (BIN).

The items worth over US\$628,000 dollars include 160 motorbikes, 2,000 rain gears, eighty public address system and 200 pieces of infrared thermometers. The latest gesture follows a recent donation of 18 Land Cruiser jeeps and eight tents to the two security entities by the government and people of Japan to be used in border counties.

At the official hand over of the materials and logistics, the Ambassador of Japan to Liberia Kaore Yoshinura said his government is looking forward to working with the Government of Liberia to enhance security in the country.

Ambassador Yoshinura recalled the collaboration and relationship between the two countries and pledged Japan’s commitment to supporting Liberia in the areas of agriculture, infrastructure and security.

He praised UNDP for the excellent partnership under the Emergency Support to the Enhanced Border Surveillance Project.

The Japanese Ambassador also committed his government to building the human resource capacity of Liberian police officers through the Kofi Annan Training Center in Accra Ghana.

“Our government will provide funding for police officers to take advantage of various training courses being offered at the Kofi Annan Training Institute,” the Japanese Ambassador intimated.

Speaking earlier while jointly turning over the items with the Japanese Ambassador to the Justice Minister, UNDP Country Director, Dr. Kamil Kamaluddeen, described the latest donation as another milestone for development in Liberia in the midst of an UNMIL transition.

Dr. Kamaluddeen stressed that the assets are to be used by security personnel in the eight border counties as part of efforts aimed at making the work of officers easier, effective and efficient. The eight border counties are Maryland, Gbapolu, Lofa, Bong, Cape Mount, Grand Gedeh, Rivergee, and Nimba Counties.

He applauded the Japanese government for the exemplary partnership and urged the Liberian government to use the assets to benefit Liberians in enhancing border surveillance, maintaining peace and security which will lead to improved economic growth.

In his response, the Min-