



## MARYLAND COUNTY DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

Harper, Maryland County



Theme:

***“Maryland Rising:” A Vision for Reconstruction, Reconciliation,  
Sustainable Development and Economic Growth***

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

City Hall, Harper  
Maryland County, Liberia  
West Africa  
April 23-24, 2012

William V.S. Tubman University and the Government Officials of Maryland County held a 2-day County Development Conference with the theme, ***“Maryland Rising: A Vision for Reconstruction, Reconciliation and Sustainable Development and Economic Growth”***. This was held at the City Hall of Harper, Maryland County, Liberia, on April 23-24, 2012. The Conference aimed at (1) assessing the needs and the condition of the different sectors in Maryland County, and (2) setting priorities and drawing plans of action that will be carried out in the next 5 years to foster agricultural and industrial development as well as to bring about technological modernization in the county.



There were 305 individuals from the 7 districts, townships, national and international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), community organizations, and other institutions that actively participated in the conference during the first day. As Radio Pleebo covered the conference live on air, more people became interested to participate and were enjoined to



come. There were around 465 people who participated in the workshop on the second day of the conference.



*The participants on Day One of the County Development Conference  
at the City Hall, Harper City, Maryland County*



*The participants on Day Two of the County Development Conference  
at the City Hall, Harper City, Maryland County*

Several months prior to the Conference, a steering committee composed of County Officials and University personnel, conducted an assessment of the districts within the county. The Maryland Development Agenda and the Poverty Reduction Strategy were used as benchmarks for the assessment. Among the pressing issues found out were the following: (1) lack of infrastructures, technology, instructional materials, and most importantly qualified teachers in the primary and secondary education; (2) lack of personnel and equipment to ensure the security of the people in the county; (3) need for economic revitalization and growth; (5) road rehabilitation and reconstruction; (6) healthcare improvement and safe and clean environment; and (7) need for reconciliation programs such as unity, trauma healing, mental health, and peace education.

After presenting the pressing issues and needs, the people of Maryland were called to unite as there is the need for a single vision in order to accomplish the tasks necessary to address all the issues.

Other topics discussed during the conference were the following: (1) “Agricultural and Industrial Development in Maryland County: Impact on Sustainable Livelihoods,” was presented by Ms. Beatrice Bowman, County Director of the Ministry of Agriculture in Maryland County. She highlighted the need for agricultural and industrial development and mainstreaming food security in the county; (2) “Peace Building, Reconciliation and Security in Maryland County,” was discussed by Monsignor Gaye of the Diocese of Cape Palmas. He cited a number of problematic issues: (a) collective violence, (b) ritual conflicts, (c) violent crimes which include sexual and gender-based violence, (d) land conflicts, and others such as a culture of mistrust, stigmatization, and trauma; (4) “Women’s Organizations: their Contribution to the Visions of Maryland County.” This was discussed by Ms. Betchay Worloh of the Maryland Rural Women. She passionately called for individuals and communities to move away from tribalism and petty jealousy and instead get united on the

following: (a) creation of district farms to provide job opportunities, (b) sponsorship of children finishing High School with A or B GPAs to attend WVSTU, (c) provision of Micro-Finance for men and women and the villages; (d) development of Adult Literacy Programs in all four districts of Maryland; (5) “NGO’s and International Organization as Development Partners,” was elucidated by Mr. Anthony (Tony) Riggio of Marylanders for Progress (MFP) and Mr. Phil Merriam of NAMCAL who stressed self-help first... “once a person begins the process of bending down to start picking up the water, help will come;” (6) “The Role of the Business Sector in Sustainable Development and Economic Growth,” was discussed by Mr. Richelieu Archie Williams of the Liberian Civil Aviation Authority. He encouraged the county to actively participate in entrepreneurial endeavors to increase the economy of the county; and (7) “William V.S. Tubman University: Its Development Initiatives as Catalyst of Change for Worthy Service,” was the last topic where four (4) initiatives were presented by the University: (a) Early Childhood Development – an initiative that mainstream the development of the children from 0-to 6 years of age. It aims to establish an Early Child Development Center that serves as a demonstration and learning resource center for children, and strong program for a baccalaureate degree in early childhood as well as certificate and diploma courses for the parents and other groups and teachers interested on early childhood development. This was discussed by Dr. Elizabeth Davis-Russell, President of the University; (b) Auxiliary Entrepreneurial System – an initiative to generate funds for the University. Among the projects presented were: (i) Filling Station with Minimart, (ii) Campus Cafeteria, (iii) Fish Pond, (iv) Internet Provider, (v) Bookstore and other Products, (vi) Radio Station, (vii) Conference Center, (viii) Center in Monrovia, and (ix) University Farm. This initiative was presented by Dr. Joseph T. Isaac, Vice-President for Administration; (c) Rubber Science and Technology Institute – a joint project with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the University with the UNIDO to spearhead

industrialization in the country. The Institute is envisioned to build the capacity of the country to manufacture rubber latex into finish products; and (d) Grand Cavalla Integrated Village Development- a program that envisions Grand Cavalla to become a model agro-industrial village. It is a holistic people-centered development that aims to empower the village to undertake initiatives and address social, economic, political, cultural, and environmental problems and build the village toward a common goal- societal transformation. The last two initiatives were discussed by Dr. Elizabeth Q. Enanoria-Carbajosa, Vice-President for Academic Affairs.

There were four workgroups that focused on the following: (1) Reconstruction Programs such as water, electricity, road, and communications; (2) Reconciliation Programs focusing on security, human rights, gender sensitivity, and cultural re-entry; (3) Sustainable Development Programs on education, health, agriculture, processing plants, marketing supports, and (4) Economic Growth focusing on job creation, economic gardening, entrepreneurship, and banking.

On Day Two of the Conference, the plenary body endorsed the following:

- *On Reconstruction:*
  - To ensure availability of clean water, Maryland County should repair damaged pumps, construct more pumps and repair the water tower.
  - To ensure availability of electricity, pursue a plan of getting electricity from the Ivory Coast (long term); installation of solar panels (short term).
  - To improve poor road conditions, government must conduct overall and regular inspection of all bridges in the County and complete unfinished bridges.

- To improve communication access, government must build community radio stations, rehabilitate the post office, and encourage cell phone companies to expand service areas.
- *On Reconciliation*
  - To strengthen peace building and reconciliation knowledge and skills in order to ensure human security;
  - To have more conferences where citizens come together and focus on different issues;
  - To find resolution of the serious issues on land disputes;
  - To strengthen the justice and peace sector – Access to Justice (inviting all partners that play an important role in that field – JPC, Carter Center, LNP, Courts, Chiefs – local and international NGOs) and raising awareness on the areas rule of law, justice, court procedures and more;
  - To continue the Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Program (started by the Catholic Diocese of Cape Palmas and JPC and in Collaboration with the Tubman University) – in schools, communities, and making it available for all students at William V. S. Tubman University.
  - To develop individual's skills in listening, encouragement, empowerment, social justice and being aware of traumatic events and their impact in a person's life; and
  - To teach the constitution to all of our citizens.

- *On Sustainable Development*
  - To improve Health
    - Communities should have ownership of sanitation projects.
    - Communities should get involved in health, hygiene training and education.
    - Advocate for Environmental Health and Hygiene Education at all levels of education and within all communities.
    - Establish post graduate programs in Health
  - To improve Agriculture, the government should:
    - Issue land titles and certificate to the people;
    - Strengthen collaboration between the Ministry of Agriculture and the NGOs for better sustenance and impact of agricultural programs;
    - Ensure environmental impact assessment and total farmers empowerment in concessional agreements with international and big national companies;
    - Provide trainings for the farmers to have better knowledge, skills, and work attitudes.
    - Provide milling and harvesting equipment and machinery in every part of the county;
    - Provide agricultural extension services;
    - Introduce exotic breeding and improvement of local breeds such as: poultry, pig, cattle, fish, sheep, and goat; and
    - Establish Processing Plants



- To improve education, the government should:
  - Construct at least one high school in every district;
  - Recruit and train qualified teachers in the early childhood, elementary and high school levels;
  - Provide guidance counselors in each school;
  - Provide principal for every school and supervisors for every district; and
  - Provide Teachers Training Programs
  
- *On Economic Growth, the government should:*
  - Rehabilitate the port and the airport;
  - train the community to engage in small scale industries;
  - Encourage foreign investors;
  - Extend loans for business incubators;

The County Development Conference ended with a vote of thanks by Rev. Rita Townsend, Vice-President for Institutional Advancement, WVSTU.

### **MEMBERS OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE**

Chair	Dr. Elizabeth Davis-Russell
Co-Chair	Hon. J. Gbleh-bo Brown
Members:	Dr. Elizabeth Q. Enanoria-Carbajosa Mr. Isaac George Hon Regina Sampson Hon. Anthony Harmon Rev. Ambassador Gerald Coleman Dr. Lucky Ehigiator Ms. Iona Thomas-Connors Mr. Sunday Dawodu Mr. Lobia Davis Mr. Sylvester Kwarbo Mr. Aloysius Hne Mr. Alfred Thompson Mr. Solomon Smith Mr. Daniel Williams Mr. Numene Reeves