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Private sector donations portal (LIPSEC) launched to support Government of Liberia COVID-19 response

MONROVIA, Liberia: A consortium of the Liberia private sector, the Liberia Private Sector Executive Committee (LIPSEC), launched a [virtual web portal](#) that will help the Government of Liberia account for private sector donations in support of the country's COVID-19 response. The portal collects information about private sector contributions no matter the size or the source of the donations, or whether they are in-cash, in-kind or in-hours. This effort will allow these donations to be potentially available for international donor matching funds to support the most vulnerable in Liberian society.

LIPSEC brings together the work of the Private Sector Executive Committee (PSEC), under the direction of Incident Management System (IMS), along with the efforts of the West Africa Coronavirus Platform Liberia (WAPSCON19), directed by Scott Lowe, the CEO of ArcelorMittal Liberia. WAPSCON19 builds upon the private sector efforts that supported the Ebola outbreak of 2014-16 through the Ebola Private Sector Mobilization Group.

Said Lowe, "ArcelorMittal believes that the success of our business is intrinsically linked to the socio-economic development of the country. The lessons learned from the Ebola crisis, as a stakeholder and leader of the Ebola Private Sector Mobilization Group (EPSMG), provided a strong foundation for WAPSCON19."

The collection of private sector contributions, which grew from a challenge from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), has taken on a life of its own, mirroring the partnerships across the private sector during the fight against Ebola, including Liberia's anchor investors, small and medium-size businesses across all sector and Liberia's Diaspora.

"The Liberian private sector, at home and abroad, was a core part of eradicating the Ebola virus and sustaining the Liberian economy. I had no doubt that the Liberian private sector and our partners would once again join with the Government of Liberia to contribute towards stopping the spread of the Coronavirus," stated Hon. Mary Broh, Liberia National Response Coordinator of the Executive Committee on Coronavirus. Broh was an early supporter of the partnership, believing it would bolster Government's on-going efforts to achieve full transparency.

THE LIPSEC PORTAL

The LIPSEC portal allows any business or individual to log onto a secure site and document the contributions that have been made to support the country in its efforts against coronavirus from the onset of the disease arriving in Africa in February.

The portal walks the user through a step-by-step process to confirm their identity, cite their donation, and then attach any validation of the donation (e.g. receipt, purchase order, or photo of



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good received). On the back end, it permits the government to map what has come into the country and how these donations have been deployed. The portal further complements other donor-mapping initiatives to ensure transparency and accountability with donor funding and other institutional assistance.

PWC

The work on the platform is being done pro-bono by PricewaterhouseCoopers—Liberia (PwC) in response to their societal purpose of building trust in society and solving important problems. PwC's work, as well as the efforts of other volunteers, will be captured in this database, providing the government visibility on the current response efforts to assist Liberian communities and to continue support to the vulnerable populations still affected by the effects of Ebola. Further, if a donor or other philanthropic organization requires a private sector leverage 'match' to their funds, this transparent recording of all technical support expended provides a system for that organization to determine which donations may qualify.

According to PwC, "the web-based platform will serve as a tool to provide transparency and accountability and real time information to the Government of Liberia, USAID, the private sector, Liberians in the diaspora and other stakeholders."

USAID

The funding that kickstarted the whole endeavor to record potential donations from the private sector to match a leverage requirement comes from funds that USAID wished to expend to continue the social recovery support of vulnerable cohorts still suffering from the effects of Ebola.

USAID has identified up to U.S.\$4.6 million, a significant portion of which requires private sector matching funds, to implement development programs in Liberia. In support of communities deeply affected by Ebola, the private sector contributions will now be accounted for and validated by LIPSEC.

"Support for social protection systems that help the poor and vulnerable is a cornerstone of USAID development assistance to Liberia. We are therefore extremely proud to be a part of this effort to mobilize and properly account for resources that help Liberia's most vulnerable populations," said USAID Liberia Mission Director Sara Walter.

PSEC

Ms. Vera Mussah, the Director of Performance-based Financing of the Ministry of Health, on behalf of the PSEC, said "it was the 'perfect storm' of collaboration and innovation coming at a time when we needed to maximize every dollar and ensure coordination of efforts. We are grateful to our partners at WAPSCON19 and USAID for this initiative."

She continued, "we believe that our relationships will not only be limited to COVID-19 response but will continue in our quest to improve the health status and socio-economic wellbeing of Liberians." It should be noted that this portal is just one of many contributions that the PSEC has initiated in



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Liberia. PSEC was also instrumental in creating (1) a virtual training on IPC for health workers, (2) the development of Standard Operating Procedures for Clinical Management of COVID-19, (3) resources for construction of fourteen military hospital treatment units, (4) the collection of medicines medical supplies, PPEs and communications equipment for front-line healthcare workers, and (5) the establishment of a COVID-19 response dashboard.

Those leading this public-private partnership include Dr. Wilhelmina Jallah, the IMS Chair, with support from Madam Norwu Howard, Deputy Minister for Administration at MoH, and Madam Tarloh Quiwonkpa, Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer for the Republic of Liberia, Jackie McCay and Dr. Mosoka Fallah, from NPHIL, Stephanie Salamartu Duncan, Secretary General for Liberia Chambers of Commerce, Dr. Nicole Cooper, Chair, for Healthcare Federation of Liberia, Theresa Davies, the Secretary General of Liberia Business Association, Karl R. Smith, Chief Technologist of Mwentana Technology, Neima Amara Candy, Technical Assistant of NPHIL, and Vera G Mussah, PSEC Lead.

Liberia's Ambassador to the United States, George SW Patten, who helped drive the partnership from the onset and secured the participation of the Diaspora in the United States and Canada, stated, "let me express my gratitude on behalf of the Government and people of Liberia to the LIPSEC team for creating this platform to assist in the national response to fight coronavirus. I welcome this public private partnership and thank the American people for their support to USAID's mission in Liberia."

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