



City Government of Buchanan

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

Buchanan City Corporation

Fair Ground, Grand Bassa County

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Narrative Report on the Two-Day Buchanan City Government Retreat

Theme: *"Fostering Collaborative Governance for Sustainable Development by Empowering Communities"*

Funded By



Local Empowerment for Accountability and Decentralization (LEAD) Activity

Local Partners



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Introduction

The two-day retreat, organized by the City Government, served as a platform for local city leaders, government representatives, community stakeholders, and development partners to engage in meaningful discussions on improving city governance across Buchanan, Grand Basa County. With the theme, *"Fostering Collaborative Governance for Sustainable Development by Empowering Communities,"* the retreat was designed to promote collaborative approaches to governance, enhance the role of communities in decision-making processes, and create a sustainable framework for city development. By bringing together diverse participants, including government officials, community leaders, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private sector representatives, the retreat sought to empower communities, and encourage effective partnerships, in identifying practical solutions to urban governance challenges. This report provides insights into activities that characterized the two-day event.

Background

The retreat was initiated in response to the growing need for more inclusive, transparent, and effective governance at the local level. As city continue to grow and face complex challenges, such as waste management, resource mobilization, and regulatory compliances, it has become increasingly important to foster cooperation among citizens, government, and the private sector. The retreat was aimed at strengthening community engagement and facilitating dialogue among various stakeholders, so as to ensure that local governance practices align with sustainable development goals and empower residents to contribute meaningfully to greater city urbanization and growth. The retreat was attended by local government officials, eminent citizens, and private sector actors; community leaders, religious groups, and youth groups' as well as civil society organizations local and international NGOs.

Day 1: Setting the Stage for City Government Development

The first day of the retreat began with arrival and registration of participants as well as distribution of retreat materials. This was followed by Welcome **Remark** from the Mayor, Hon. George B. Gaybueh of Buchannan City, who emphasized the importance of collaboration and community empowerment in addressing the challenges facing the city. The Mayor's remarks set the tone for the discussions that would follow, while stressing the need for collective action to drive sustainable urban development.

Following the opening address, the City Government provided background of the retreat, including objectives of the two-day event and the significance of fostering collaborative governance. This was followed, subsequently by the Keynote Address which was delivered by Mr. Osum Tall on the topic: *"Fostering Collaborative Governance for Sustainable Development by Empowering Communities."* The Keynote Speaker provided insights into the role of collaborative governance in achieving sustainable urban development, and emphasized how empowering communities and fostering partnerships can lead to more inclusive and resilient cities.

Also, Special Remarks were given by a range of influential figures, including representatives from Concern Worldwide, CHO, and various community groups including the Fula Community, People Living with Disability (PWDs), the local County Police Detachment and the Liberian Land Authority among others. These remarks underscored the importance of multi-stakeholders' involvement and the need for all sectors of society to work together for the common good of the city.

Thus, the afternoon Sessions of the retreat was focused on two key topics: Understanding Citizens' Rights and Responsibilities and Compliance with City Ordinances and Regulations, and was led by the Stipendiary Magistrate of Buchannan, His Honor Judge Vasco Browne. The session was followed by an interactive discussions and Questions and Answers. The session was aimed at equipping citizens with the necessary knowledge in understanding their rights and obligations in the governance process of the city. Participants were seen actively engaging in the discussions, as they raised pertinent questions about the role of citizens in shaping the future of the city.

The second session focused on key city ordinances and regulations, and strategies for enhancing compliance and enforcement. It also provided opportunity for participants to understand the regulatory environment of the city and advanced how local governance could be strengthened through improved adherence to laws and regulations. The day concluded with summary of the key takeaways that set the stage for the following day's discussions.

Day 2: Empowering Communities for Sustainable Development

The second day of the retreat kicked off with registration of participants and a breakfast, and provided participants the opportunity to network with each other, while preparing for the day's sessions.

Session 3: Improving Waste Management Practices: Was one of the key highlights of day two, which was facilitated by Jeremiah Matthew Swinteh Sr., who presented on best practices in waste management and success stories from city such as Kigali. Thereafter, participants were engaged in group discussions to identify specific waste management challenges faced by their communities and to brainstorm potential solutions. This session was aimed at raising awareness of the importance of sustainable waste management practices and encouraging participants to adopt innovative approaches to tackle waste management issues in their respective areas.

Session 4: Resource Mobilization and Project Implementation: Was another key session that provided valuable insights into the techniques and strategies for mobilizing resources for urban development projects. This session similarly presented key lessons in project planning, implementation, and monitoring. Participants gained practical skills in resource mobilization and project planning that would help them in identifying funding for their small scale community-based projects, and managing them effectively.

Session 5: Public-Private Partnerships for Sustainable Development. This session highlighted the role of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in fostering sustainable development. The session was followed by an interactive discussion among participants which emphasized how leveraging PPPs can contribute to sustainable city development, while citing the different kinds of

PPPs available out there. Thus, participants then expressed exploring potential PPPs in their respective communities.

The retreat concluded with **Closing Remarks and Way Forward**. The closing session summarized the key outcomes and action points from the two-day retreat. Organizers and key stakeholders agreed on the importance of continued collaboration between the government, citizens, the private sector and partners, to ensure sustainable development of the city. The Mayor gave final remarks, in which he reinforced the commitment to fostering collaborative governance and empowering local communities.

Way Forward Action Points

UNDERSTANDING CITIZENS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Mayor is the head of the city
- The City Manager is the liaison between the City Mayor and the citizens and partners; and he conducts meetings with communities and reports to the Mayor.
- 1880-1891 act gave birth to Buchanan city
- The city ordinance needs to be reviewed, revised, amended or reconstructed to meet current realities
- Citizens give opinion in the governance of the city
- Citizens obey the law
- The city can sue and be sued
- Citizens pay taxes
- Protecting the environment
- Support the city through donations
- Citizens can sue the city government when paid for services are not delivered
- BCC should work with the justice ministry to enforce the law

WASTE MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES

- Get citizens involved in waste management
- Draft waste management plans and strategies

- Conduct waste management forum with businesses, community dwellers, students, market women, etc.
- Create waste withholding sites in Buchanan
- Craft a city waste management law
- Set up a committee to work with land authority to identify a parcel of land and procure so as to develop a land fill sites
- Create partnership with private businesses and CBOs
- Create awareness
- Setup community task force to monitor waste in various communities
- Conduct environmental impact assessment
- Privatize waste management
- Work with water factories to manage plastic waste

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP (PPP)

- Review of the city ordinance and incorporate public partnership
- Encourage Citizens to participate in PPP
- Grand Bassa Marketing Association do Business with Buchanan City Corporation BCC
- Motorcyclists and Drivers' Union do business with BCC
- BCC identify and do business with potential private partners
- There should be a revenue sharing agreement with NPA and BCC
- Trucks carrying heavy steel plates through Buchanan should be made to pay toll to the city government
- Work with partner to ensure that all 56 streets in Buchanan are reconditioned
- Construct Toll and Weigh Stations at St. John's Bridge

PROJECT PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

- Work with community leaders to identify potential projects
- Make use of available resources

- BCC work with institution(s) to develop a five-year strategic development plan to lend credibility to the process

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND PROJECT

- Map all businesses in Buchanan
- All businesses should pay waste management fees
- Invest in Bassa businesses
- Significant amount should be given to BCC from the CDF/SDF
- Effective collection of municipal taxes
- Citizens pay real estate tax
- Fine violators of the Ordinance
- Involving citizens participation in decision making
- BCC can do business
- Draft billboard ordinance
- Mayor as an advocate for the people, as such; he or she should be elected so as to properly advocate without fear of losing his or her job
- As the outlook of things, the mayor was advised to be careful as to how to advocate
- That the budgetary allotment should be increased to commensurate with projects and programs
- That the city should follow up with Ministry of Mine and Energy on maintenance fees for Sea Erosion Project
- That city government will help to monitor activities at the hospital

Conclusion

The retreat was a successful and productive gathering of city leaders, stakeholders, and citizens who are committed to improving local governance and promoting sustainable development. Through various sessions, participants gained valuable knowledge on citizen engagement, waste management, and compliance with regulations, resource mobilization, and the potential of public-private partnerships. The event served as a stepping stone toward stronger, more inclusive governance practices that empower communities to take an active role in shaping the future of

the city. Hence, this comprehensive report, based on the discussions and outcomes of the retreat, has been developed to guide the implementation of the strategies discussed and ensure follow-up actions to be taken to address the city's development goals.

Appendix

Group Photo of the City Retreat



City Council Member making a remark



Panelist and City Council Members



Grassroots Agency for Social services (GRASS) – National Program Coordinator

Mr. Barley Togbah serving as Master of the Ceremony (MC)



Participant making remark

Keynote Speaker – Mr. Osuma Tall



Participant from Banking Community



Police marking Remark



Former Superintendent marking Remark

Madam Julia Duncan Cassell



Fula Community marking Remark



Participants and the Buchanan City Major



Participants

