REPORT ON THE STATUS OF THE WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION SECTOR CONTROLLED BY THE LIBERIA WATER AND SEWER CORPORATION

Submitted To:

The Plenary of the Liberian Senate

By:

The Senate Committees on Lands, Mines, Energy, Natural Resources and Environment AND Public Corporations

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I. SUMMARY

In the discharge of their oversight responsibilities, the Senate Committees on Lands, Mines, Energy, Natural Resources & Environment AND Public Corporations held a meeting with the Management of the Liberia Water & Sewer Corporation (LWSC) at the Capitol on May 9, 2016.

The purpose of the meeting was to assess the performance of the LWSC in the implementation of its statutory mandate to supply water and sanitation services to all parts of Liberia. In so doing, the Committees would appreciate the status of water and sanitation supply services to Monrovia and its environs and to the various counties, understand the constraints facing the corporation, be informed of the short to medium term plans and strategies to fully revive the sector, gain an insight into the financial health of the entity and finally exchange ideas on the reforms necessary to bring efficiency and profitability to the LWSC.

II. Principal Findings

1. The LWSC is only capable of supplying about 4 million gallons of water per day to Monrovia and its surroundings which have current demand of approximately 16 million gallons (that is, only 25% of the demand).

2. Most of the LWSC’s production, transmission and sewage facilities still remain in a state of disrepair. The 36 inch-pipe through Johnsonville, which supplies water to a significant portion of Monrovia and its environs is highly corroded and is "sitting on a time bomb". The 16-inch transmission main has also outlived its usefulness.

3. Rehabilitation work, funded mainly through donor grants, is going on at White Plains and at other LWSC facilities. However, more funds are needed to meet the water demand of Monrovia and immediate surroundings, repair transmission pipes, construct booster stations, rehabilitate the sewage plat in Fiamah and rehabilitate the water systems in Harper, Gbarnnga and Greenville. Estimated cost for these projects to be implemented between 2016 and 2020 is Sixty-five million US Dollars (US$65 million).

4. Prior to 1990, the LWSC was supplied nine (10) counties with pipe-borne water. Except Buchanan, rehabilitation work has not begun in the other county capitals. There are plans for the USAID to fund the supply of water to three county capitals.

5. For the newer counties, namely: Gbapolu, Rivergee, Grand Kru and Rivercess, there are no short to medium term plans for the LWSC to extend water supply and sanitation services to these areas.

6. The LWSC is able to deliver only about forty percent (40%) of monthly bills to customers as it says it is unable to locate most of its customers, lest to collect the outstanding debts.
III. Conclusion

The Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation has been run inefficiently for many years and is in a bad financial state. It is unable to deliver about 60% of the bills to customers it claims to serve. Full collection of debt from bills is far-fetched.

The LWSC has been operating mainly on bilateral and multilateral grants and even at that, it has been able to meet only 25% of the water demand of the Monrovia Area, lest to talk about the other Counties.

The LWSC spoke of plans for the Government of Liberia to obtain a loan of US$10m to support the work of the LWSC. With an inefficiently-run corporation, this loan and future loans and grants may be wasted efforts.

IV. Principal Recommendations

There is a need to reform the water supply and sanitation services sector controlled by the Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation.

An enabling environment should be created, through inter alia, making of policies and enactment of legislation to attract private investment to the sector.

In the interim, the Senate Committees on Lands, Mines, Energy, Natural Resources and Environment AND Public Corporations would recommend to Plenary to request the President of Liberia for consideration of fast track privatization of key operational areas, such as commercial of the Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation.