

CONGRESS FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE (CDC)
PLATFORM



CONGRESS FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE (CDC)

PLATFORM

“ONE NATION, ONE PEOPLE, ONE DESTINY”

PREAMBLE

The absence of grassroots political parties or movements with people-centered national agendas compels the emergence of new ideologies, movements and/or parties that seek to address the fundamental political challenges that have confronted the Liberian nation-state since its founding. Scanning Liberia’s history, political parties have usually existed to protect sectional or class interests. Many of these parties have lacked genuine grassroots connections. Results from the 1997 general elections confirm this view. Several political parties should have fared considerably better had they deepened their connections with the Liberian people. The truth is many such parties are highly individualized and do not derive their inspiration and motivation from the mass suffering of Liberians; these parties are beholden to the whims and shenanigans of powerful individuals who believe that the presidency of Liberia is their birthright. Also, political actors over the years have usually tended to use the degrading and demoralizing economic condition of Liberians as a basis for projecting themselves to political prominence via political party machinery, abandoning the real issues and interests of the people once power is attained. The upshot is a political culture that panders to the greed and ambition of a well-placed and connected few who have turned the levels of governmental power and influence against the majority of Liberians, pushing them to the margins of society where they experience excruciating poverty, and depriving them of a just and equitable share in the nation’s economic pie. These have been the causes of the massive divisions and tragedies that have engulfed Liberia over the past 30 years.

The end of Liberia’s destructive civil conflict furnishes a basis for departing from the political excesses occasioned by Liberia’s previous generation of political leaders and actors. The economic plight of the Liberian people, which has been relegated to the political backburner for decades, must now become the driving force for social and economic change in Liberia. A new people’s revolution is quickening to give both form and substance to a new political dispensation in Liberia.

It is in this spirit that grassroots Liberians, acting in productive concert, and reeling from the brunt of the economic misery they have carried over the years, have coalesced into a mass-based political movement named and styled the Congress for Democratic Change, CDC. The CDC hopes to marshal new ideas and forces and liberate the people of Liberia from their prolonged economic suffering. Peopled by many patriotic new generation Liberian leaders, the CDC looks to undermine the fundamental negativity that has haunted Liberia’s political landscape and ensure a new political direction.

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OUR HISTORY

The Congress for Democratic Change was founded in 2004. Two separate groups of young and energetic Liberians met in Minnesota, USA and Monrovia, Liberia, respectively to express their frustration about the failure of leadership in Liberia and to find a way forward after the cessation of the 14-year long civil war. They agreed that the nation had been misled and plunged into chaos by a generation of leaders who placed their individual interests above those of the country and its people. They also agreed that the failure of leadership and the resulting civil war have greatly impacted the young generation of Liberians. They came to the realization that it is the youth who must break out of their accustomed complacency and provide a new sense of direction for Liberia.

By coincidence, these two separate groups of young men and women believed that George Manneh Weah embodies the hopes and aspirations of the masses. They also believe that he has the ability and influence to mobilize Liberians into an institution that would spare the nation from civil war, destruction and underdevelopment it has known for so long.

The two groups organize a political party to be named and styled the Liberian National Congress (LNC). Members of the LNC petitioned Ambassador Weah to contest the presidency in the October 11, 2005 general elections. He accepted the petition on November 24 2005 amidst an outpour of support from people of all spectrum of the Liberian society. The LNC changed its name to CDC in 2005 after it was informed by the National Election Commission (NEC) that another political party was registered under that same name. The CDC remains open to all well-meaning Liberians who see government and institutions not as instruments of self-enrichment, but means to find real solutions to the problems faced by the nation and the people.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

MISSION

We will revive our nation; and bring about changes that will refurbish our societal, social, economic and political systems. We will work together to re-establish trust in our government to ensure that government officials will be dedicated to moral and ethical behavior, fiscal discipline, and accountability.

PRINCIPLES

The Party shall maintain and defend the beliefs that:

Elected officials should serve the interests of their electorates

The Party shall guarantee good governance.

The Party shall ensure that elected or appointed officials from the Party who become corrupt and compromise moral and ethical behavior shall be expelled from the Party in accordance with the Party's by-laws and constitution. A report shall be submitted to the government for necessary action under the law.

The Party shall bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of Liberia, as well as, local and traditional laws. The Party shall encourage and ensure full participation by all Liberians, including women and youth in the Party affairs.

The Party shall foster and maintain healthy relations with other Liberian political parties and groups; and international political institutions and groups.

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VISION

We strongly believe that to revive our nation and restore the great Liberian pride is to restore just, equitable and constitutional governance. In so doing, we will:

- Ensure equal rights before the law and the protection of our constitution
- Preserve and protect our people and our nation
- Clean up our corrupt societal, economic and political systems
- Create an environment where our people can live in peace and harmony with each other; and where our people can maximize their potential and achieve their goals
- Promote economic development, growth and independence
- Restore our credibility in the International Community
- Promote technological development and advancement
- Encourage our traditional culture and values
- Build political institutions that will surpass all individuals

10 CORE VALUES

1. GRASSROOTS DEMOCRACY

We believe democracy functions best when it is able to enhance the lives, actions and participation of peoples at grassroots levels. Building consensus for governance at such levels, gauging the level of participation of local peoples and evolving community-based democratic frameworks that localize access to resources and information are vital components of grassroots democracy. Strengthening such local democratic efforts is a legacy the Congress for Democratic Change hopes to implant in Liberia's political culture. The CDC is guided by the belief that expanding the reach and impact of governance to those straddling the lowest levels of society results in a more informed citizenry and generates a greater commitment to country. We believe that an emphasis on grassroots democracy places important political tools and resources in the hands of our people and heightens the awareness that the people have the right to democratically alter the form of their government, where necessary, to produce alternatives that respond to their concerns and interests and that the abridgement or violation of such inalienable right must meet with the stiffest resistance and punishment under the law. The CDC believes that people's power will forever remain invaluable to the democratic experience and that it is such power exercised in its most democratic form that holds the key for any functional democracy.

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2. SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

The belief that all persons are equal under the law and that the law must forever remain blind to a people's socio-economic standing, educational attainment or family status remains an incontestable definition of social justice. This definition takes on new birth in the emergence of the CDC and in the conception and implementation of its policies, programs and actions. We recognize the nagging socio-economic inequities and cleavages that characterize the Liberian society and derive philosophical inspiration in proposing to bridge those cleavages and bring the majority of our people closer to the promise of equality, fairness and justice. All Liberians have the inalienable right to benefit equally from the natural resources afforded by the bounty of Liberian nature and environment and from opportunities provided by society and government. We must consciously confront in ourselves, our organizations, and society at large, and government barriers such as ethnicity and class oppression, nepotism, and partisanship, which act to deny fair treatment and equal justice under the law.

3. ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

We believe whenever governments function on the basis of openness, transparency and accountability, the interests of democracy and the people governed by it are greatly served. Because governments are run from public resources to which every citizen is equally entitled, information regarding how such resources are administered and what benefits are being derived from their administration must at all times be made readily accessible to the public without hindrance or duplicity. Those administering public office are obliged to enforce mechanisms of accountability and transparency and must themselves be accountable in all actions and be willing to submit to systematic auditing. The CDC believes that a sure way to deter corruption and enhance accountable government in the Liberian society is to have public officials declare their assets before entering the service of government and do so after leaving. Enforcing such regimes of accountability and transparency will forever remain a central thrust to the CDC's progressive revolution in transforming the Liberian society.

4. NON-VIOLENCE

The CDC eternally upholds the tenet of non-violence in all its ramifications. Recognizing the role violence has played in destroying the Liberian society, we abhor any attempt to use violence as a means to political solution or understanding. We believe violence only breeds violence and further destroys nations and peoples. Those who seek violence as a solution to problems are wrong and deserve no place in our society. We hold dear that political tension, differences and disagreements are best resolved or minimized through conduits of consensus-building, concession-making and dialoging which draw critical strengths from the democratic tradition. The CDC will forever oppose all individuals, movements and parties that are intent on depicting Liberia as a nation ruled by violence. We believe pursuing non-violent approaches to our political problems provides the basis for more genuine and sustainable solutions and enables all Liberians to live in peace.

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5. RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

The truth that birth, ethnicity or tribal origin and nationality are far beyond the control of any individual inspires and compels a respect for diversity. When diverse peoples, ethnicities, cultures or spiritualities work together to build a society which each group values equally, harmony and greater productivity are bound to result. The CDC believes in building a Liberian society that has deep respect and value for the cultural, ethnic and religious identities of its constituent components. Ethnic, cultural, racial, sexual, religious and spiritual diversity is the way of the future and developing respectful relationships and patterning ideas across those lines foster the building of sustainable peace and democracy.

We believe that the many diverse elements of society should be reflected in our organizations and decision-making bodies, and we support the leadership of people who have been traditionally excluded from leadership roles. We acknowledge and encourage respect for other life forms than our own and the preservation of biodiversity`

6. GENDER EQUALITY

Marginalizing women is now a relic of the past as many modern and industrial societies have surged ahead in thrusting women at the forefront of social, economic and political agendas. Some societies are greatly ahead of others in empowering women, others are struggling to keep pace while still others are yet to make any meaningful progress; the truth is that the empowerment revolution is an on-going battle with new territories and frontiers being acquired every step of the way.

Empowering Liberian women, reversing years of exclusion and inattention and equalizing opportunities for women while giving them greater access to resources and opportunities are fundamental to the existence of the CDC. The CDC believes that to advance the Women Empowerment Agenda requires situating more qualified women in strategic governmental positions from where they can continue to expand the reach of women's societal influence.

7. RIGHTS OF THE CHILD & ADOLESCENCE

Liberia has been a woeful story of the abuse of the child as far as our recent history is concerned. Many innocent children have been abused and given arms and drugged to fight for dangerous causes they did not understand. Today many such war-affected children are growing up amid the scars of such fighting and the Liberian society is still grappling with what to do with these children.

As a point of departure, the CDC acknowledges the total right of the child as contained in the UN Convention on the Right of the Child as a policy imperative. Strongly enforcing and protecting children's rights is one sure way of saying Never Again to using children as combatants and fighters in Liberia.

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8. ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Environment is recognized as that last habitat to which humanity retreats when governments, laws and systems collapse and governments have to do a better job of safeguarding it. The pursuit of business and economic policies that fail to reckon environmental costs can be considered irresponsible and reckless endangerment of the lives of a people and of posterity.

We value the tenet of environmental responsibility in governmental actions, policies and negotiations and the CDC will strive to engender an environment-sensitive policy environment. For generations, Liberians of all political beliefs have understood that the protection of environment and the stewardship of our land are vital to the strength of our nation.. God blessed Liberia with extraordinary natural resources; it is our responsibility to protect them. The health of our families, the strength of our economy, and the well-being of our world all depend upon a clean environment. CDC believes in a stronger, safer, healthier Liberia.

9. GLOBALIZATION

Today the world is vastly interconnected more than ever before. Information, resources, goods and services are transacting across international borders and their counterparts in cyberspace at an accelerated pace. More and more governments acting under the banner of the United Nations or other international arrangements are increasing the pace of international cooperation and accelerating that of global development, though tremendous room still remains for improvement in closing steep divides between rich and poor nations.

CDC believes that Liberia can play a more enlarged role in Africa and the wider international community by garnering greater international respectability derived from its adherence to the rule of law, the tenets of democracy and its ability to enhance the lives of the Liberian people.

We see Liberia as closely knitted with countries in the West African sub-region, the larger Africa and the Western world.

10. FOCUS ON THE FUTURE AND SUSTAINABILITY

We inherit a world which we must pass on to others who will come after us and believe that the actions of governments and organizations must be motivated by long-term goals. We must seek to protect valuable natural resources, safely disposing of all “waste” we create, while developing a sustainable economy that will outlast our existence. We must counterbalance the drive for short-term gains and repudiate a narrow focus on today by assuring that economic development, new technologies, and fiscal policies are responsible to future generations who will inherit the results of our actions.

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A CALL TO ACTION

The Platform of the CDC presents a real grass root analysis of the socio-political and socio-economic of vision for our country. Unlike other political parties that use political scientists and scholars to draft their platform, the CDC uses a non-traditional, grassroots approach that invites the ordinary people from every walk of life to identify the real problems that face our society and propose means to address.

After several months of introducing the CDC to the local communities in Liberia and other parts of the world where Liberians are displaced, we are now equipped with real understanding of the nation's plight and propose concrete solutions to the many challenges that confront us as a nation.

The CDC Platform is a document that will continue to evolve, it is a perpetual work-in-process that signifies our commitment to create a prudent and sustainable change in the way of life of our and country.

We believe that leadership is a matter of service and that those who propose to champion the causes of the down trodden should base their commitment in values and transform our politics in a positive direction.

The Ten Values that CDC holds dear will be used to guide us as we challenge and undermine the culture of corrupt and failed leadership and supplant it with a system that penalizes corruption while equalizing opportunities for all our people and localizing governance and access to public resources.

OUR PLATFORM PILLARS

EQUAL RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Vision: We will ensure equal rights before the law and the protection of our constitution

Individual Liberty:

We believe that all Liberians and all Nationals within the territorial confines of Liberia are entitled to their individual liberties. We endeavor to uphold and protect the fundamental rights of all Liberians. Because of our recent experience with the tampering of rights, we propose the establishment of governmental supervisory bodies that serve to oversee and report on progress being made in safeguarding the rights of all Liberians

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Punishing Crime:

We believe in the punishment of all crime, provided that the criminally accused have full access to legal representation and enjoy the presumption of innocence until proven guilty. We adhere to Habeas Corpus contained in our constitution which guarantees that no Liberian or Foreign national within our borders shall be arrested and detained for not more than 48 hours with out being charged.

Freedom of Communication:

We believe everyone including media institutions and organizations have the right to freely express and communicate personal thoughts without fear and intimidation. All access to information by the public shall not be suppressed.

Religious Freedom:

We believe that every individual shall have the right to worship, assemble and practice their religious beliefs without any form of harassment and or more molestation. We greatly encourage religious diversity in the service of government and will oppose all forms of discrimination based on religion.

Women Rights:

We will continue to implement the women rights in every area. We will support increasing both the number and quality of women who serve in governmental positions.

Children & Adolescence Rights:

We believe that every child and adolescence have the right to education, healthcare and safe environment. We oppose all forms of child labor and child abuse and shall monitor violations of child rights. We support strengthening the appropriate governmental agency dealing with children and adolescence issues.

Violence and Coup d'etat:

We oppose all forms of violence and will oppose any government that comes to power by coup d'etat. We believe violent overthrow of government abridges the rights of the Liberian people and subjects them to the will of those who plan and execute military coups. The CDC will advocate that any such government not be recognized by the international community as a legitimate government of Liberia.

Right to Privacy:

We believe that all Liberians and foreign nationals within our borders have the right to privacy.

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Union Rights:

We shall encourage union and protect their rights.

NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENSE

Vision: We will preserve and protect our people and our nation

Sovereignty:

The Constitution nulls and voids any treaty, alliance, agreement and understanding that surrenders our national sovereignty. We will maintain the sovereignty of Liberia under all circumstances.

Armed Forces of Liberia:

We believe that the purpose of the military is to protect our citizens, properties and border integrity. Our military has degenerated and lost its image over the years and can no longer uphold its purpose. We will therefore adopt the following measures in order to restore the image of our military to acceptable international standard and the adequate performance of its purpose:

- Enter into agreements with the United Nations, other organizations and friendly nations for reorganizing, training and equipping of the Armed Forces of Liberia.
- Work to improve all military bases, housing facilities and living conditions of our men and women in arms.
- Reduce the size of the military to an acceptable level
- Promote the Armed Forces as career institutions where enlisted men and women will see it as a career and not just a job to earn a livelihood, an escape route or for “drop outs”.
- Encourage the idea of high school diploma as one of the minimum qualifications for enlistment into the Armed Forces.

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National Police Force:

CDC will draw attention to a model of policing, called “community policing”, which is being promoted around the world. Community policing explicitly acknowledges the fact that it is not the police alone who combat and prevent crime. Members of the community can play a large role in preventing crime by providing information about potential criminals and on the networks of people involved in receiving and disposing of stolen goods. They can be partners with the police in their investigation and prosecution of crimes. Without such community cooperation, no police service can discharge its duties effectively and within the framework of the rule of law. Community policing has many elements, but they are all interlinked. First, it is possible only in a largely democratic society where the rule of law prevails and where the laws (which the police are called upon to enforce) are just and serve the interests of the entire community and not just those of some individuals. Second, the community must have an influence over policing priorities and practices. Third, policing must be visible, and the police must be in touch with their community, patrolling both on foot, on bicycles, motorcycles, and in cars, and cultivating friendly relationships with community members.

Aviation/Coast Guard:

CDC believes that a nation with strong air and sea defense unit is crucial to maintaining stability through the length and breath of that nation. Therefore, CDC will strengthen the nation’s military by improving its air and sea defense system with the requisite training and equipment requires defending the country.

Immigration and Border Patrol:

We cherish and honor our immigrant history and population. However, we noticed that illegal immigration became commonplace and affected almost every facet of our economy and citizens. Therefore, we will adopt the following measures:

- We will strengthen the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization to effectively and efficiently man our airports and borders to prevent the entry of illegal aliens.
- We will enter into effective agreements and negotiations with our neighboring and other countries to repatriate its illegal alien nationals and prevent aliens from illegally entering Liberia through its airports and borders.
- We will eliminate easy access to jobs that attract illegal aliens by requiring the verifiable proof that the prospective employee is a Liberian citizen or a properly documented alien.
- We will take all other necessary steps to raid Liberia off illegal immigration and aliens.

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Passports:

We have a plan to reform our passport issuance policy by recalling all the passports Liberians have all around the world.

Terrorism:

- We will cooperate with all peace loving nations of the world in the preventing and eliminating terrorism.
- We will build strategic relationships and enter into security pacts and agreements with our neighboring and other countries to prevent the movement of terrorists and suspected terrorists from entering and operating in our region.

Intelligence:

CDC believes the Intelligence of Liberia is important to the security of the Nation. CDC will strengthen the intelligence network and utilize the expertise of intelligent officers into neighboring country for the purpose of gathering information to maintain stability within the borders.

Communication:

CDC believes that communication should be centralize between the law enforcement agencies for the purpose of sharing information as require to protect the nation from both internal and external threats.

Interpol:

CDC will seek to reestablish Liberia's membership with the International Police Association (INTERPOL) to ensure that individual committing crimes within member countries are arrested and extradited to face charges as require by the laws of that country.

Border Patrol and Customs:

CDC believes that the borders of Liberia are crucial to the stability of the nation; Therefore, CDC will strengthen the Joint Security Commission and ensure that a Border Patrol Unit is establish within the commission for the purpose of protecting Liberia's borders. This unit will include customs officers' train and equipped to crack down narcotics as well as individuals infiltrating the borders.

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Emergency Response:

We believe that an initial response is important to saving lives during crisis. Therefore, CDC will seek for the establishment of a Crisis Response Team comprising of Military, Para-Military and Medical individuals to initiate response during disaster and other emergency situations

CORRUPTION AND ABUSE OF PUBLIC OFFICE

Vision: We will clean up our corrupt societal, economic and political systems

Corruption and abuse of public office have affected the social, economic and political fabric of the Liberian society and has reached endemic proportions. The government of the Congress for Democratic Change will implement the following in its fight against corruption and abuse of public office:

Governance:

- Demonstrate leadership and political will to combat corruption in all sectors of government by improving governance and economic management.
- Demonstrate moral and ethical behavior in performing our duties as leaders and public servants.
- Promote a climate of transparency, accountability and integrity in public and private undertakings in order to restore national and international confidence and trust in the Liberian government and society.
- Encourage full disclosure of assets, liabilities, interests and dealings of individuals before being appointed to positions of public trust and required annual disclosure of same.
- Eliminate government regulations that negatively affect economic activity and establish simple and readily available ones that have clearly set criteria and reporting requirements.

Business and Corporation:

- Promote standards for business and corporate governance in order to protect the interest of their stakeholders and the general public.

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Budgeting and Accounting:

Propose legislation to augment the function of the Budget Bureau to Government Accounting Office, similar to the Government Auditing Office: This new arm of government will be responsible for all government budgeting, accounting and payroll preparation.

The Government Accounting Office shall be headed by the Controller General and will report to the President.

Auditing:

Strengthen the General Auditing Office to carry out its functions effectively and efficiently.

Procurement and Contract:

- Promote transparency in policies and procedures for public procurement and the sale or licensing of economic rights and interests by eliminating enormous bureaucracy, insisting on open and competitive bidding for government contracts, prohibiting of bribery, and adopting procedures for resolving challenges to the award of contracts or the sale or licensing of economic rights.

Revenue Collection, Deposit and Accounting:

- Adopt revenue collection systems that will eliminate opportunities for tax evasion
- Reform regulatory processes that facilitate customs duties evasion
- Enhance revenue collection processes on international business transactions

Government Payroll:

- Restore the merit-based recruitment and promotion system in the civil service.
- Reinstate the minimum wage policy and provide reasonable remuneration including benefits and pension schemes.
- Decentralize civil service payroll system.
- Establishing a direct deposit system whereby civil servants are required to open bank accounts and their wages and salaries paid directly to their accounts. This will eliminate the process of long lines and the enormous work load placed on staff at the Central Bank of Liberia.

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Laws, Penalties and Punishment:

- Ensure and expedite legal proceedings against individuals, public servants, leaders and businesses accused of involvement or aiding and abetting in corruption, corrupt practice and abuse of public office.
- Enact and enforce criminal and civil laws that impose severe penalties against individuals, public servants, leaders and businesses convicted of involvement and aiding and abetting in corruption, corrupt practices or abuse of public office. These would include fines and imprisonment; and recovery or confiscation of assets and properties acquired through corruption.

DOMESTIC POLICY

Vision: We will create an environment where our people can live in peace and harmony with each other; and where our people can maximize their potential and achieve their goals

Reconciliation and Unification:

We believe unification and reconciliation are the foundation for national development and post-war reconstruction. The CDC will initiate and implement policy that enhances truth and reconciliation for all Liberians.

Education:

The Congress for Democratic Change believes that no nation can compete in the 21st century without a skilled and educated workforce, especially with the advancement in technology, medicine, agriculture, etc. Given the current financial crisis in Liberia, we support a free education public school system with minimum financial contribution from students. We also believe that access to quality education should be a guarantee to every Liberians. In an effort to decentralize the nation, the CDC encourages strategically placing institutions of higher learning – Universities, Colleges, Technical, and Vocational schools – throughout the nation.

Agriculture:

We believe that agriculture must play an important role in post-war recovery and national development. Most Liberian farmers are subsistent farmers. The CDC will design plans and training strategies that will help to transform farming from traditional slash and burn method to innovative initiatives that produces more yields and self-sufficiency. Small Liberian businesses should be encourage and subsidized to explore commercial farming. Finally, new environmental laws must be instituted to safeguard against abuse and pollution of the ecosystem.

We support Communal Farming and a move to Mechanized Farming.

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Transportation:

The CDC believes that a vibrant and efficient transportation system serves to enhance business and commercial activities. Liberians have seen the speed and efficiency at which mass commerce is undertaken in the global markets. We envision similar rails, airlines, and inter-counties highways systems to meet our society needs. We support financial incentives to encourage domestic and foreign investors in this effort.

Housing:

The Congress for Democratic Change supports developing a national housing policy that is geared towards moving people away from slum dwelling to affordable low income housing. We note that the current housing plan as implemented by the National Housing and Saving Authority needs restructuring to improve the living conditions in urban and rural Liberia.

Tourism:

We propose instituting programs that will revitalize our cultural and tourism industry. We hope to invite the world to share in our passion for life.

Social Security:

We believe that social security policies must be structured to meet the needs of our aging workforce. We support making social security policies that is benefit focused. A system of identification should be introduced and benefit available for all retiring Liberians.

Rural Development:

CDC believes that rural Liberia cannot be ignored anymore if urban migration must be successfully curtailed. Infrastructure, economic, health, and many development projects to be undertaken in Monrovia must have rural components in place.

War Affected Rehabilitation:

We acknowledge a comprehensive rehabilitation of former combatants and victims as significant components of Liberia's post-war reconstruction. We propose the establishment of a National Rehabilitation Program (NRP) to oversee the provision of academic and vocational skills, as a means of healing the wounds of those that suffered fourteen years of civil unrest.

Postal & Telecommunication:

We propose the creation of an orderly residential and commercial address system that will enable a nationwide mail delivery system. We believe the future development of our telecommunication system depends on the cooperation of government and private industries.

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Healthcare & Welfare:

The CDC supports a healthcare system that encourages both public and private owned health facilities. We propose creating more hospitals and clinics run by government agencies with minimum financial contributions from the public.

ECONOMIC AND TRADE POLICY

Vision: We will promote economic development, growth and independence

Economic Policy

Revenue:

We believe in centralizing the nation's revenue collection system to ensure greater transparency and accountability. We believe that maintaining one central revenue account as opposed to multiple accounts overseen by different administrative agencies certainly undercuts corruption and bureaucratic mismanagement.

We believe the Ministry of Finance the nation's fiscal policy instrument, has been ineffective in administering and overseeing revenue collection; we proceed to overhaul its administration to reflect efficiencies in revenue collection and allocation.

Expenditure:

We note that mismanagement and waste have characterized the expenditure side of Liberia's financial equation and believe in fiscal austerity to rein in excessive and wasteful spending.

We support greater coordination between revenue collection and expenditure and propose to plug loopholes in the financial system that avoids phony accounting

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We support a stronger role for the Central Bank of Liberia as the monetary policy arm of government. We **propose to institute the following changes:**

- That the National Legislature shall exercise oversight over the Central Bank of Liberia;
- That an Advisory Panel consisting of Heads of all Commercial Banks in the country shall serve on this panel. the Central Bank Governor;
- That the National Legislature shall review some portions of the 1999 Act, which created Central Bank of Liberia
- That the National Legislature shall consider to enact into law a Bank Service Act, which will make a crime for money laundry, counterfeiting and fraudulent online transfer(s)
- That the Central Bank and the Commercial Banks as well the Justice Ministry shall enforce this act.

We propose empowering the CBL to promptly seek redress in the case of collapsed banking institutions as a means of generating public faith in the Liberian Banking Sector

Budgeting:

We believe the Bureau of the Budgets and auditing must play a greater role in minimizing reckless expenditure and waste. We propose to run a government based on frugal budgets that allocate resources to real needs and priorities affecting the lives of real people. We require regular and periodic auditing of government books to ensure compliance with standards of accountability and transparency.

We propose and demand that the Budget Bureau be given greater autonomy and placed under the direct supervision of the National Legislature.

Taxation:

We support progressive taxation in principle, believing that those who benefit more from the economic system have a responsibility to pay more than their fair share of return.

We support establishing a Financial Sector Reform Commission to review performance of the nation's tax and revenue system over the past 100 years as a way of informing the reform of our tax system.

Economic Liberalization:

We support economic liberalization and privatization of some public corporations.

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Commerce:

We endeavor to strengthen our commercial environment to encourage greater diversity and generate greater flows of commercial activity. We emphasize a small-business approach to commerce and support the provision of numerous incentives that enable the small business private sector to drive the creation of jobs.

We support the strengthening of the Liberian Chamber of Commerce (LCC) and other local business associations as a means to reinvigorating small to medium-sized businesses that have previously struggled in the Liberian economy.

We propose and support legislation seeking to establish a Small Business Administration (SBA), which shall function autonomously and which will oversee the administration of government sponsored micro-finance loans for small to medium-sized businesses.

We support the provision of tax breaks or similar tax incentives to corporations or companies in specific industries, whose workforce is at least 80% Liberian.

Trade Policy

We adhere to and support the free enterprise economic system. We believe that trade should be to the mutual benefit of the Liberian people and their trading partners. We propose a review of our current bilateral and multilateral trade policies and support current ECOWAS trading policies that seek to lower barriers to trade between countries of the West African Region and Africa at large.

We support the provision of incentives to the Export Sector with the aim to add value to exported goods.

We propose and support legislation that seeks to establish a managerial body for all marketable products. This body will serve as a cost controlling agent across the board, in researching new avenues for businesses and, in allocating resources.

Investment:

- We support an overhauling of the National Investment Commission.
- We support tax incentives to lure International investors/Foreign Investment.
- We support investment that prioritizes the development of the local manufacturing capacity.
- We support a review of the current Industrial Free-zone policy.
- We encourage and support investment in non-traditional goods.
- We encourage and support and will provide tax incentive for investors who want to provide farm to market roads in the rural counties

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Monopoly:

We discourage monopolies that tend to deprive Liberians of economic or business opportunities. We believe in opening up economic opportunities to Liberians with business know-how or capabilities.

Liberianization:

We believe that the current Liberianization policy has not been fully implemented and we call for a speedy overhaul or a review; we propose establishing a national commission to review the entire policy and make recommendation consistent with:

- Making necessary changes to the policy
- Empowering and encouraging Liberians to take ownership in businesses
- Ensure strict implementation of the policy by the Government

Minimum Livable Wage:

We affirm the importance of access to a livable income. We believe that innovative training and employment programs which bring together the private and public sectors must become priority of government; people who are unable to find decent work in the private sector should have options through publicly funded opportunities.

We support that a clear living wage standard serve as a foundation for the trade between nations, and a “floor” of wage protections and worker’s rights should be negotiated and set in place in future trade agreement.

Government debt:

For many years the Government of Liberia borrowed hundreds millions of dollars and either squandered such resources on mismanaged projects or outright cannot account for burrowed money. Money that should have been going into a better “safety net” for the poor, new business and jobs, research and development, roads and bridges, schools and the technologies of tomorrow, has been lost in the acquisition of the national debt (currently over 3 billion U.S. dollars). Addressing this problem is very critical because such liability tends to stifle economic growth, thereby creating high unemployment; this has the potential of producing political unrest and domestic instability.

We support moving toward a speedy debt reduction and repayment plan.

We believe in a comprehensive approach that forms a basis for a DEBT REDUCTION PLAN would include debt payback, increased revenues, and decreased expenditures in some areas.

FOREIGN POLICY

Vision: We will restore our credibility in the International Community

We will adopt the following foreign policies to the lawful best interest of Liberia and its citizens:

CONGRESS FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE (CDC)

PLATFORM

International Treaties, Alliances, Agreements and Understanding:

We understand that the Constitution of Liberia empowers and limits the government. Therefore, we will ensure that all treaties, alliances, agreements and understanding are subordinate to the Constitution and to the lawful best interest of our country and citizens.

Diplomatic Relations:

We will promote and uphold normal diplomatic relationships with all democratic and peace-loving nations of the world.

China vs. Taiwan Relationship:

Adopt a "One China Policy" (PRC) geared towards market-based economic development associated with the formation of a middle class.

International Organizations:

We will restore and remain committed to our membership in the United Nations (UN), African Union (AU), Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Mano River Union (MRU) and all others.

Multinational and Bi-lateral Organizations:

We will restore and maintain normal working relationship with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, European Union (EU), and United States Aid for International Development (USAID) and all others.

TECHNOLOGY

Vision: We will promote technological development and advancement

TRADITIONS

Vision: We will encourage our traditional culture and values

THE CONGRESS FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE

Vision: We will build a formidable political institution that will surpass all individual and generations