

Framework for Civic Education and Public Consultation

Public Participation Messages and Talking Points

Thematic Areas	Key Messages	Talking Points/Key Questions
PREAMBLE	The Preamble is a beginning statement that introduces a constitution. A preamble carries the major historical legacies, challenges and hopes of a nation including its values and ambitions. It is a statement of vision.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What should be our vision statement? 2. What values and principles should our Preamble have? 3. Should we focus on any specific challenge we experienced over the last 20 years?
LANGUAGE	This would include official and recognized languages of business and communication.	What language(s) should the constitution recognize?
CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES	These are principles that are foundational to the Constitution.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Constitutional Supremacy – This is a principle that ensures that the constitution is the supreme and fundamental law of Liberia. Therefore, any law, act or construction found to be inconsistent with it will be unconstitutional. 2. Should it be possible to suspend the constitution? 3. Other constitutional principles are freedom, equality, and good governance. 4. Should we maintain the current form of republican government?
GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF NATIONAL POLICY	The General Principles of National Policy form the basis of future national policy. All future national policy shall be guided by these principles. These principles are therefore long-term in nature. They relate also to what the national objectives of our policies should be.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What principles should guide our national policy in the future? 2. What should the key objectives of our national policy be? These could relate to national unity and integration in addition to health, housing, education, agriculture, infrastructure, foreign policy, the environment, etc. 3. How should proceeds from all natural resources,

		<p>including oil exploration, be managed and distributed to fulfill our developmental goals?</p> <p>4. How can the constitution ensure that portion of proceeds from resources extracted from counties or districts by concessionaires is given to and used by the communities for development?</p>
<p>FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS</p>	<p>Fundamental rights are a declaration in the constitution that recognizes the rights and equal protection of the individual under the law irrespective of ethnic background, education, economic status, sex or religion.</p> <p>While a constitution sets out the rules by which governments are able to govern, Fundamental Rights sets out the rights of the individual which the state must respect.</p>	<p>1. If Fundamental Rights are the rights of individual, what are those individual rights that must be respected? Usually, these rights relate to life, liberty and basic freedoms which also include health, housing, education, social welfare and services, religion, freedom of association, political freedoms, labor, business, language, etc.</p> <p>2. What about the principle of equality and the equal access to opportunities and resources?</p> <p>3. Not all rights are absolute and can be limited. What limitation should be placed on these rights?</p>
	<p>Women’s rights advocates often speak of the marginalization of women in the Liberian society, more so when it comes to their participation in politics.</p>	<p>1. Should men and women be treated equally?</p> <p>2. Should the constitution contain provisions that guarantee women rights and also those that are physically challenged?</p> <p>3. Should certain percentage of positions be set aside for women’s participation in politics and national affairs?</p> <p>4. What should be the age of marriage?</p>
	<p>With regard to land rights, the current constitution limits the ownership of land to Liberian citizens and individual spouses.</p>	<p>1. Who should own land in Liberia?</p> <p>2. Should the constitution guarantee land rights to tribal people?</p> <p>3. Should non-blacks be allowed to own land in Liberia?</p> <p>4. How should marginalized groups be empowered</p>

		<p>with respect to land issues?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Should ownership of land include the benefits of resources on or beneath the land? How should Liberians address the matter of waterways?
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What specific rights of the youth should be guarantee in the constitution?
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> How can the constitution guarantee the rights and full participation of the disabled in all socio-economic development?
CITIZENSHIP	<p>Currently, citizenship is attained by a person born of Liberian parents. If one parent is a Liberian, the person has a choice to declare citizenship at the age of 21.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> How should citizenship be acquired? Under what conditions should citizenship be lost or revoked? Should non-negroes be citizens?
THE LEGISLATURE	<p>The Legislature is a Branch of government that makes laws. Citizens are elected to be members of the House of Representatives or the Senate where they represent the interests of the people who elected them.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What should qualify a person for election to the House of Representatives and the Senate; When elected, how long should they stay in office? How should vacancies be filled? How should bye-elections be addressed?
THE EXECUTIVE	<p>The President of Liberia and Vice President are elected on the same ticket for six years. The president in addition to the powers which the constitution gives him/her, is supposed to approve all bills or resolutions before they become laws.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What should the term of office of the President and Vice President be? What should qualify a person for election as President of Liberia? What should the powers and functions of the President be? Under what circumstances should a president leave office?

JUDICIARY	The Judiciary is responsible for the interpretation of laws and the administration of justice. It is a co-equal branch of government. It has the power to declare statutes and laws unconstitutional.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How should judicial officers be appointed? 2. How do you guarantee the independence of the judiciary? 3. How should our courts be structured? 4. What should the role and status of traditional and customary law be? 5. Should the constitution recognize the existence and rulings of traditional courts? 6. Should the powers of the Supreme Court also be decentralized?
POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTIONS	Political parties institutionalize or express the right of expression and freedom of association. Political parties are integral to a constitutional democracy as they represent the political interests of sectors or members of society. Political parties are also vehicles for the democratic change of power.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What should be the requirements for the registration of political parties? 2. How should the Board of Commissioners of the NEC be constituted? 3. Who should investigate electoral complaints? 4. Under what conditions should a candidate be barred from standing in an election? 5. Who qualifies to register as a voter and to vote at elections? 6. Should voter registration be mandatory for each election including bye-elections?
EMERGENCY POWERS	These are powers granted to the President to address situations and events that require extraordinary responses to protect the security of the state against clear and present dangers.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Under what conditions should a state of emergency be called? 2. What should the powers and function of government be in the event of a state of emergency? 3. What should the power of the legislature be in the event of a state of emergency?
INDEPENDENT COMMISSIONS	These are independent bodies intended to support a constitutional democracy.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What independent commissions should be established for purposes of supporting a constitutional democracy?

		2. How should these commissions be established and regulated?
MISCELLANEOUS	Miscellaneous matters	What should the Conflict of Interest or activities against public policies and the penalties for violations of these policies be
AMENDMENTS	These are the permissible basis of effecting changes to the constitution.	What should the basis and process of effecting amendments of the constitution be?
LANGUAGE	This would include official and recognized languages of business and communication.	What local language(s) should the constitution recognize?
REGIONAL DISPENSATION	This relates to the division of powers and functions between the central, region and or local government levels.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What functions, powers, and resources should be distributed between the different levels of government? 2. How should the regional and local government leaders be appointed or elected? 3. How should traditional leadership and structure be recognized?