

## PRESS RELEASE

# The Government of France Supports Birth Registration in Liberia

**MONROVIA, 14 December 2020** – At least 5,000 children under the age of 5 years will get registered and receive their birth certificates through the support of the Government of France to establish two birth registration centres.

“An effective and functional civil registration systems are the main vehicles through which a child’s legal identity can be achieved,” said Laila O. Gad, UNICEF Representative in Liberia. “We have come a long way through working with partners and with the support of our donors, but still many children are slipping through the cracks without a proof of identity and deprived from their basic rights.”

The support for the birth registration centres includes the training of health workers, birth registration clerks, vaccinators and equipping them with the required supplies. Additionally, over 15,000 community members will be sensitized on birth registration and the importance of obtaining the birth certificate, which provides children with proof of legal identity.

“Birth registration is fundamental to provide children with legal identity. Not only does it help to uphold their access to fundamental rights, including education and health care, but it also protects them from abuse, such as child marriage or child labour. Supporting birth registration centres can contribute to scaling-up birth registration and strengthen Liberia’s national system so that each child is counted,” Mr. Philippe LACOSTE, Sustainable Development Director of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, France.

Since 2019, UNICEF has accelerated its support to birth registration through an integrated service delivery model within health facilities and at county level. Promoting the decentralization of birth registration services to health facilities in communities and at the districts level has proven to be effective in terms of bringing services closer to the people and reducing long distances and waiting times.

In 2018, only 15 birth registration centres existed in the counties at the County Service Centres, however, by mid-2020, 32 birth registration centres were established at hospital/health facility level. This has contributed to 97.9 per cent of districts being covered with birth registration centres.

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### Notes to Editors

- Liberia has one of the lowest birth registration rates in the whole of West Africa with only 25 per cent of children under 5 registered at birth.
- In Liberia, birth registration falls under the mandate of the Ministry of Health, with birth registration services being provided in and through health facilities.
- Birth registration is the official recording of the occurrence and characteristics of a birth by the civil registrar within the civil registry, in accordance with the legal requirements of a country.
- A birth certificate is a vital record, issued by the civil registrar, that documents the birth of a child. Because it is a certified extract from the birth registration record, it proves that registration has occurred making this document the first, and often only, proof of legal identity, particularly for children.

### About UNICEF

UNICEF has been working in Liberia for close to 30 years, turning our vision for children into practical action. With our child-focused mandate, country presence and operational capacity, we support the Government of Liberia and other partners to help every child reach their full potential.

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