Reviewer’s report

Title: Rebuilding Human Resources for Health: A Case Study From Liberia

Version: 2 Date: 14 November 2010

Reviewer: Fiona Margaret Campbell

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the report entitled "rebuilding human resources for health" a case study from Liberia.

This is a very timely and valuable report for a number of reasons:

- the continuing discussion on the need to establish a better evidence base on which to support the health sector recovery process in post-conflict contexts and the central role of HR for health in this
- the central role played by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in Liberia’s own recovery efforts and their authorship of this paper
- the current acknowledgement that there is a critical need to make progress in countries like Liberia if the MDGs are to be reached, and the positive and encouraging example that the Liberia situation provides

My comments are confined to discretionary revisions. My main feedback is to improve the readability of the of the paper and thus its uptake. This relates to the length of the paper and certain sections and how the sections have been arranged.

1. The introduction section is rather long and I believe could be shortened significantly but still retain the critical background points. For instance I am not convinced that it is necessary to provide such detail on services as far back as 1960. In addition I am aware of other statistics on health personnel in Liberia e.g. the 2005 Inter-agency evaluation report and I would ask the authors to check these figures against those provided in the current report. If they differ then some explanation for this would be useful, especially for those who may be familiar with the 2005 report.

2. It would be helpful if the case description was organised against a framework of key challenges/shortfalls and actions to address. Currently the narrative follows a descriptive path from “establishing leadership” to “moving forward” with the latter section being particularly detailed. This is useful but the main points are rather lost in the narrative. It would help to focus the actions/achievements if these were more clearly linked to the challenges in an overall framework.

3. I recognize that the manuscript has been divided into case description and then discussion and evaluation. However I think it would be useful if the results of the actions such as the deficit reduction and the national stock of health workers by cadre, were included in the case description section and then the discussion and evaluation section devoted to an analysis and discussion of this change.
This would cover all the sub-sections of the discussion and evaluation section.

4. The conclusion section could then follow as currently.

5. There is no discussion of the current annex inclusions and their usefulness is thus limited at present.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests