



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

*An initiative of
the National Academy of Public Administration,
and the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs
and the Bobst Center for Peace and Justice,
Princeton University*

Oral History Program

Series: Civil Service
Interview no.: Y3

Interviewee: Alfred Drosaye
Interviewer: Jonathan (Yoni) Friedman
Date of Interview: 2 December 2010
Location: Civil Service Agency
Monrovia
Liberia

Innovations for Successful Societies, Bobst Center for Peace and Justice
Princeton University, 83 Prospect Avenue, Princeton, New Jersey, 08544, USA
www.princeton.edu/successfulsocieties

FRIEDMAN: Welcome Mr. Alfred Drosaye. The interviewer is Yoni Friedman. I'd like to thank you again for agreeing to the interview. How are you doing today?

DROSAYE: *I am doing fine. I also want to thank you very much for taking the time.*

FRIEDMAN: Thank you. First I'd like to ask you to describe your position here, your title, and to tell us a little bit about your background, your previous jobs and where you're from.

DROSAYE: *Thank you very much. Here at the Civil Service Agency, I serve as principal administrative officer in the Liberian Civil Service. My ascendancy to this position was done through a merit-based appointment. Then, for a little bit about myself, I hold a master's degree in Economics from Cuttington University School in Liberia. I also hold a master's degree in Public Sector Management from the Ghana Institute of Public Administration and I hold a bachelor's degree in Economics from the University of Liberia.*

I also serve as an instructor at Cuttington University. I teach management and public personnel administration at the university. I have vast experience in the public and the private sector. So not to say too much about myself, as the interview goes on, you will get more from me.

FRIEDMAN: Have you worked before in government?

DROSAYE: *My first entry in government was in 1997 when I joined the Liberian Civil Service as an analytical secretary. I rose through the rank and file from analytical secretary to staff analyst. Every promotion in the civil service is done through an examination. I was promoted from staff analyst to senior staff analyst then from senior staff analyst, I became assistant director serving in Classification Selection Standards and then as director. I was promoted as director principally for the review of public employment that has oversight over all government workers. Upon my return from earning my master's degree at the Cuttington University School, I was appointed to the position of principal director, a position that I held until my most recent appointment as principal administrative officer.*

FRIEDMAN: When did you start to work with the civil service and when did you take your current position?

DROSAYE: *I joined the civil service in 1997 and my current position as principal administrative officer began last year on 16 February 2009.*

FRIEDMAN: What was the position that you held immediately before?

DROSAYE: *I was like an assistant minister before. Now I'm deputy director-general for Human Resource Management technically, but in the civil service reform, it is what we call a principal administrative officer. It is like the memory of the institution. It's a non-presidential appointee. It is more technical.*

FRIEDMAN: So what is your role here?

DROSAYE: *Currently I have direct supervision under the civil service organizational structure of three major directories: the management services directory, the employment services directory and the career and training directory. I also serve as the project director for Biometrics because Biometrics is a project within the human*

resource management of the civil service. This is a project that is funded in terms of 80% by the World Bank and 20% by the government of Liberia.

The primary objective is to clean the government bureau and build employees' personnel registry in terms of their dossier or their profile.

FRIEDMAN: So going back to 2005, is that a good place to start as far as reforming the civil service?

DROSAYE: Oh, 2006.

FRIEDMAN: So 2006, after the new administration?

DROSAYE: Yes.

FRIEDMAN: Could you describe the state of the civil service in 2006?

DROSAYE: *Before 2006, the Liberian Civil Service was not on a par with international standards and best practices. What do I mean? The prolonged civil crisis hampered the public administration system in Liberia in terms of recruitment, in terms of selection, in terms of placement, promotion and composition. All were ignored because warlords took on the administrative role in all these processes and because they ignored the processes, they were able to use their positions to overcrowd the payroll. That caused huge personnel bills to the government that we had to pay. Then there were huge challenges.*

Salaries were not on time or were never paid. So the civil servants or the public servants pretended to work and at the time, even the government pretended to pay. Capacity was low and because capacity was low, service delivery was very, very poor. In fact, the structure was poor. Living conditions were appallingly poor. Equipment was not provided. Supplies were not provided. Transportation was being hampered. People who didn't have the right skills, competences or character to do the job were being placed in positions.

Ministries and agencies were being overcrowded. You had ten men doing a two-man job. Because of that, in terms of job functions and mandates not purely adhered to, they were all put aside. So you can see that from a public administration standpoint the challenges were huge, especially because of the crisis of the civil war. Because they were huge, we needed to have an administrator who could actually transform the Liberian Civil Service in terms of international standards and best practices. That dream came to pass in 2005 when we had an election. The president (Ellen Johnson Sirleaf) was inaugurated. Even in her speech, her inaugural speech, she indicated that she was going to build the civil service in terms of a small number of well-structured, well paid, well trained people so that services could be delivered to the citizens of Liberia.

So in 2006, from the civil service personnel, she was able to appoint someone who was clued in to the civil service, the director-general, C. William Allen, who worked in the civil service as an analyst and went for a scholarship at the expense of the Liberian government. So because he had served the institution, the president, thinking it would be fitting to appoint someone who was already au courant with the system in terms of its mandates, in terms of its functions, in terms of its values, appointed him again. Because of that, we were able to come up with a civil service reform strategy document. The document we have says that we need competence in terms of restructuring and right sizing, pay, pension,

reform, leadership, development, gender equity, mainstreaming and human resource development.

So the agency, in print, stated plainly the issues that needed to be addressed by the civil service such as pay and pension reform. So because of that, we can tell you that even though we are not 100%, some level of capacity in government now has been built. Competent people have been recruited. Liberians have been recruited from the United States, the diaspora, the southern region in Liberia, Annapolis, and have been given the right tools and the right resources in order for them to perform.

So it is because of that, today we are able to move Liberia to the merit-based appointment system. We are schooled in areas of government and areas of public sector reform in order to move Liberia from one stage of public administration to one based on international standards and best practices.

It is because of that, that we look at the period as a period of key reform, pay and pension reform. Because of that the government of Liberia made a key concern that we look at the employees. We should look at best strategies to see what we can emulate in terms of getting to know the legitimate employees of government. And so because of that, under the leadership of the civil service, the top management team thought it wise to bring in consultants.

We consulted the World Bank. The World Bank we went to for our technical services and found in the government of Liberia, a half million dollars initially for the project, securing the infrastructure, like the subway, hiring experts to come in to provide technical services.

FRIEDMAN: You're talking specifically about the biometrics?

DROSAYE: *The biometrics. And so because of that, we were able to hire Shadi Baki and Alexander Bassie and the SES, Senior Executive Services' professionals, to come help us design our Human Resource Management system in terms of moving from just an ordinary way of doing things to making the government more e-governance by, for example, making sure that we digitized our systems in order to do government business on line in order to make it more effective, more efficient. So because of that, biometrics came in. I can assure you that the bank manager made significant gains in the area of having to clean, to vet, the payrolls in terms of reduction in numbers.*

FRIEDMAN: If I can take a step back to before the Biometric ID Program.

DROSAYE: Yes.

FRIEDMAN: In the civil service reform strategy paper from 2008, you mentioned there were six sections. Each of those sections can be broken down into many goals or areas of need. How did you prioritize or how did you rank the needs?

DROSAYE: *The needs were ranked based on our timelines. It's an action plan based on what the area administrator wants—based on the activities, based on the resources, based on the responsibilities, based on the starting time, the finish time, what we hope to achieve. So based on that, everything that we do in civil service reform is captured within the Pension Reduction Strategy. It has been purely monitored and supervised by the Ministry of Planning.*

Now the civil service has a mandate in terms of the pay and pension reform that has a deliverable date based on when the process started and when it needs to be completed. So like the biometrics, we have our deadline. By December of this year, we should be able to come up with a clear list of all government servants and public servants that are on the government payroll. As I speak to you right now, we have the teams in the leeward countries. Within the next ten to eleven days they should be returning to Monrovia in order to consolidate the data, to print the many ID cards for other ministries and agencies they have not yet received. We are building a personnel registry, in terms of capturing the personnel information, the educational information and other information as well, so that in the future, we will be able to plan, to know that within the next ten, fifteen years, X number of employees will be phasing out of the civil service. So, therefore, we need to strengthen the training and planning division. To be able to do successive planning, we need to make sure that we bring in the right people with the right skills so that we can plan in terms of budget and costs.

FRIEDMAN: So when did the Biometric ID Card Program begin?

DROSAYE: *The biometric concept began about two years ago.*

FRIEDMAN: Who came up with the idea?

DROSAYE: *The government of Liberia under the leadership of the Director General C. William Allen.*

FRIEDMAN: Dr. Allen.

DROSAYE: *Yes. In forming the executive branch, the person at the head of the executive branch, needs to look at the payroll. So because of that, analysts were sent to look at other systems around Africa and to see what are some of the modules, those lessons that can be learned, that Liberia can emulate in terms of building our structures and our system.*

FRIEDMAN: Who was charged with the responsibility to look at other countries?

DROSAYE: *C. William Allen was charged with the responsibility to look at other countries. He was able to send directors and analysts into other countries like Rwanda, Zimbabwe and Ghana to look at their systems to see what lessons Liberia can learn to improve our system since we are undergoing civil service reform.*

FRIEDMAN: So those countries have some form of a biometric ID card?

DROSAYE: *Yes, those countries have lessons that we can learn. For example in pay pension reform we were able to learn lessons. We were able to look at the biometric system, look at IFMS, Integrated Financial Management System. Yes, we started to look at the system. Because of that, we see fiber cables linking CSA (Civil Service Administration) with the Ministry of Finance and that will be rolling by 1 July next year here.*

So they sent personnel from the civil service to go out and learn and come, and study and see.

FRIEDMAN: Was 1 July 2010 selected because of the PRS (Pay Reduction Strategy)?

- DROSAYE: July 1 was selected to begin the integrated system. That's the time it stipulated the PRS is to be rolled out. It is the rollout date.*
- FRIEDMAN: And the biometric ID card?
- DROSAYE: The biometric ID cards will be prepared.*
- FRIEDMAN: Will be prepared by then?
- DROSAYE: Yes, because we are going to do the transfer of clean data into the Ministry of Finance because the civil service is the personnel arm of government that controls the payroll. So the Ministry of Finance does the printing of checks. Central Bank, connected to the system, does the encashment. The General Auditing Commission (GAC) does the origin of the payroll. So that will be done electronically on a weekly basis. On a monthly basis, it will be done in terms of the number of personnel on the payroll, in terms of asset management. The General services Agency (GSA) controls the assets of government, so they will be able to track the assets on line.*
- PPC will be able to integrate into the system so there will be complete checks and balances of the system.*
- FRIEDMAN: Okay, so by December 2010, by the end of this month, you are supposed to have all the information?
- DROSAYE: All the information in terms of the number of employees on the government payroll.*
- FRIEDMAN: Then by what point do you hope to actually issue the ID cards?
- DROSAYE: Now. We have already started issuing the biometric ID cards. We started issuing the ID cards to ministries and agencies. For example, the Civil Service Agency has received the biometric ID cards.*
- FRIEDMAN: So everyone in this building has an ID card?
- DROSAYE: Everyone in the building. Everyone in the civil service has a biometric ID card now. Also we issued biometric ID cards to other ministries and agencies. There are some ministries and agencies where we have not issued the biometric ID card because they have a huge number of personnel in the leeward counties. Because they are in the leeward counties, they have to come from the field to consolidate the data. Then we will be able to issue them the biometric ID card. We were able to issue biometric ID cards to the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of State for Presidential Affairs, the Liberian Institute of Public Administration, agencies who control the data house. We were able to send the ID cards to eleven different government ministries and agencies. Later on I can reveal the names to you of the ministries and agencies.*
- FRIEDMAN: So that's roughly half of the ministries?
- DROSAYE: Yes. Now the Ministry of Finance, the ministry I have, the Ministry of Education, are vast ministries that constitute a huge percentage of the payroll. They have huge personnel in the counties. So when the teams return from the counties, as a result of consolidating our data, our data will tell us whether a person is a duplicate or he is an original. So once the data has been captured, and if there is*

any other picture in the consolidated data, the photos will appear as a duplicate. So the system is able to detect the ghosts from the legitimate employees.

FRIEDMAN: When you collect the fingerprints and the pictures and you compare them to find duplicates, are there people who just look at the pictures and compare them, or do you have a software program?

DROSAYE: *We have software that is actually able to point out the duplicates. So they come with all the information on the duplicates. In the future, we are going to do a magazine. We have not actually decided on the exact name, but something like The Liberian Civil Service at a Glance. In that magazine, we will have a comment on the biometrics and under the Human Resource Management, you will see the number of duplicates with the photos that we have.*

For example, on the payroll, now we have regular payroll and we have pension payroll. We have already started the pension payroll in terms of building the files. Because we are building the files on the pension payroll, we have people who are on the pension payroll and on the regular payroll. So the system will detect that. Under the civil service standing order, it says that for one to be reemployed he has to forfeit one position. So we already had a one-month holiday when people came forth. But there are people who would like to test the system. So if someone wants to test the system, the system will be able to have him arrested. Once a person is caught, he is deleted.

Now within the pension law, we have three categories of pension: age and tenure and ill health. Now, if one is pensioned, he is pensioned for life. If he or she dies under our law, it states that the beneficiary or the widow is entitled to 50% of that monthly pension allowance. It is what the government of Liberia will pay. But over the years that has not been the case. Because of the biometric—

FRIEDMAN: What had happened?

DROSAYE: *In Liberia, like any other African country, policy implementation is a problem if there isn't the political will. If the political will is there, all reforms will be driven. If the political will is lacking and the resources are lacking, it will not be driven. This government believes in making sure that the right people are compensated. So now for the first time in the history of Liberia, we are implementing the full pension laws of Liberia.*

FRIEDMAN: So previously if someone were to pass away, was his widow continuing to collect the full amount, is that what happened?

DROSAYE: *The full amount. And that had been the case even if the person had died and the widow had remarried, if all the beneficiaries were over 18. Under our law, the pension ceases to exist, if there is no widow and the beneficiary is over 18 and since Liberia was founded, that has been the case. So the payroll had huge waste built in it. We had 16,000 on the pension payroll, 55% from December of last year, but because of the biometric process, we have reduced the roll to 15,125.*

FRIEDMAN: This is the number on the pension?

DROSAYE: *We just raised the number on the pension payroll by 225 this month.*

FRIEDMAN: So this is all found out by biometrics? How much progress have you made in enumerating the pensioners? Do you still have many more?

DROSAYE: *We still have many more because it is ongoing. We have people in the counties, we have people here. We have up to December 31 for the pension. We are now on the pilot for the pension. In February, the General Auditing Commission, the GAC, and the civil service are going to look at the entire pension payroll in terms of the security sector because we have the military, the paramilitary. For now, we are only looking at the retired civil servants. But from February, we will be able to secure grants from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). SIDA provided \$271,000. So we are going to look at it in terms of the EFL, the military, the security sector as well. In other countries they have a welfare system for the pensioners. These are programs we want to do. The government cannot do most of these programs because the waste is so huge. So we have to get the right pensioner, know who the beneficiary is, who are the prospects in order to make the right plans and give a good decision. We have good plans in the government.*

FRIEDMAN: So if I can get it in your words, how would you describe the aim of the biometric ID card program?

DROSAYE: *The aim of the biometric ID card is to clean the payroll. It is to be able to identify legitimate employees of government so that taxpayers' money would be used most appropriately for the right people who are doing the right job.*

FRIEDMAN: This program started two years ago.

DROSAYE: Yes.

FRIEDMAN: If I'm correct, there were other programs or other attempts, before 2008, to try to identify and eliminate ghost workers. The Ministry of Finance eliminated several thousand by going over the payroll and other agencies also tried to do that, is that correct?

DROSAYE: *Yes. The time that the government had been trying to clean the payroll was a crisis period. There were all the events of war. Because of the crisis period, they were not done based on standards, policies and well-planned strategies. The Ministry of Finance had been the one all along controlling the payroll in terms of the data entry. Because of that we had a spy system wherein you had a rebel leader appointing a minister of finance, appointing a controller-general, appointing a chief officer. So you can just imagine that. The entire system was broken down.*

The personnel registry was not properly managed. Audits did not yield any results. They were not achievable because the payroll continued to pile and pile on them like that.

FRIEDMAN: So if you can estimate, maybe the numbers aren't exact, in 2005, 2006, about how many people were on the payroll?

DROSAYE: *Okay, when the government took over in 2006, the civil servants on the payroll were 34,480.*

FRIEDMAN: I've heard larger numbers.

-
- DROSAYE: *Other sectors, the security sectors and revenue, were 12,011, so the total number of people on the payroll as of 31 May 2006 was 46,429.*
- FRIEDMAN: That's including the security services.
- DROSAYE: *That's including the security sector. This was the total number of people on the wage bill.*
- FRIEDMAN: How many are on the payroll now?
- DROSAYE: *Today, as I speak to you, from July to the present, in July to October, we had 33,125.*
- FRIEDMAN: So you eliminated 13,000?
- DROSAYE: *Yes, 33,125. Now it has increased because in these few months we have been allowing employment.*
- FRIEDMAN: So there was no employment from 2006, no new employment?
- DROSAYE: *There was employment, there was retrenchment. As you retrench, you employ because there should be continuity in government. So I'm speaking about government ministries and agencies excluding the security sector. Now the wage bill is high but not as high as it used to be. So when we have completed the exercise in terms of the biometric, and when we have completed doing the security sector then we'll have the actual statistic for both civil and public servants and the military and the paramilitary. But now I'm speaking in terms of the civil servants that are on the payroll.*
- The Ministry of Education constitutes 30% of the wage bill. Education.*
- FRIEDMAN: How many ghost workers has the biometric ID card program identified?
- DROSAYE: *Well, there have been several hundred ghost workers.*
- FRIEDMAN: Several hundred?
- DROSAYE: *Yes, ghost workers that the system has detected.*
- FRIEDMAN: So the other 12,000 or so that have been reduced in the last four years, how have they been identified?
- DROSAYE: *Redundancy has come in—I mean, in this agency, as part of our reform, the first orientation is restructuring and right-sizing, or even looking at the structures of the various ministries in terms of the size. Do you need to have, for example, in the assistant minister's office seven persons when actually you need three persons? So retrenchment had to take place. People had to be redeployed based on their skills. So the number was able to be reduced in terms of restructuring and right-sizing.*
- FRIEDMAN: Of the total group that accounts for the reduction from 46,000 to 33,000, what percentage or what share were ghost workers and what percentage were retrenched?
- DROSAYE: *Well, in terms of actual ghost workers, it is only now that the civil service is beginning to keep track of that because of the biometrics building the file of every*

employee, taking fingerprints and matching them against all the ministries and agencies. Then you get to know the ghost workers. So that is why I said, at the end of the exercise we will come up with a magazine, to be able to tell the Liberian people and the agencies about the biometrics. These are the genes of the biometrics in terms of how much we have saved in dollar value, in terms of the personnel that have been reduced.

FRIEDMAN: Okay. As you mentioned, there are other ministries and agencies trying to identify and eliminate ghost workers through the Ministry of Finance. So do you know how many of the 13,000 number, from 46,000 to 33,000, were those from retrenchment or those from ghost workers?

DROSAYE: *Those from retrenchment are a huge number. We have ghost workers, but it is only now that we are actually able to catch the ghost workers. So I am speaking from a statistical point of view. For example, before we formed the Liberian Institute of Public Administration (LIPA) initially they had 47% of the personnel, almost half. Today we have 45%. We had 2 persons who actually resigned their post, for example. Because they resigned their post they had to be taken off the payroll. In that way they were able to be captured because of the biometrics.*

FRIEDMAN: So without the biometrics, were they still going to be receiving their paycheck?

DROSAYE: *Yes. Now the government of Liberia, the Ministry of Finance, instituted what we called the Direct Deposit. The Direct Deposit is where civil servants go to the bank to receive their checks. Now at the end of the biometric exercise, pensioners, all the ministries and agencies are now receiving their checks at the bank. At the bank, we have a bar code reader where you have to insert your finger for the teller to know that John Brown is who he says he is to get pay. Because as you know, it is the unlisted people who are trying to defraud the system.*

FRIEDMAN: You say they would need to identify themselves in order to receive their paychecks?

DROSAYE: *To receive the paycheck, yes.*

FRIEDMAN: And this is for all civil servants?

DROSAYE: *This would be for all civil servants. We have put that in and the World Bank has assured us that the exercises will provide the money.*

FRIEDMAN: So the government of Liberia will work with local banks?

DROSAYE: *Yes, with local banks, commercial banks. We have, we have a draft for a direct deposit at each of the local banks.*

FRIEDMAN: And have the banks been cooperative?

DROSAYE: *The banks, so far, are very cooperative.*

FRIEDMAN: When was this program started or this idea?

DROSAYE: *The Direct Deposit is already going on. It is already on board. On completion of the biometrics, we have the bar code reader in the bank where before when you go to receive a check you have to log your fingerprints.*

-
- FRIEDMAN: Okay. So right now you have to log a fingerprint?
- DROSAYE: *Right now we haven't moved to that stage. Right now we are trying to clean the payroll, clean the data.*
- FRIEDMAN: So right now, how is a civil servant paid, how does he receive his paycheck?
- DROSAYE: *Right now, every month we do a reconciliation of the payroll. So civil servants receive their pay through the bank.*
- FRIEDMAN: Even today?
- DROSAYE: *Even today. They receive their pay, their U.S. allowances and their Liberian dollars, through the bank, yes, civil servants, all ministries and agencies on the regular payroll. We will move all of the pensioners to the bank upon completion of the exercise.*
- FRIEDMAN: How does a pensioner receive his or her check?
- DROSAYE: *The pensioner receives the pay from a paymaster or mistress. We have paymasters who move to various sites and do the payment.*
- FRIEDMAN: Can you repeat that?
- DROSAYE: *We have paymasters, we have various venues where payments are made.*
- FRIEDMAN: Are these banks?
- DROSAYE: *They go to public buildings to receive their pay. For example, we pay at the ATS (Antoinette Tubman Stadium), the sports stadium. We pay at the government school. We have various venues where payments are made. ,*
- FRIEDMAN: This is around the country?
- DROSAYE: *Yes, around the country. They take the checks. They have various paymasters around the country where they take the checks and they are paid.*
- FRIEDMAN: Is this how it has been done for years?
- DROSAYE: *It is how it has been done for years. But because of the biometrics, upon completion of the exercise all of them will move into direct deposits through the banks.*
- FRIEDMAN: I understand there are many banks in Monrovia, but when you get out to the counties, in the rural areas, are there enough banks to partner with?
- DROSAYE: *We have banks in the counties, but before we send the pensioners to the banks in the counties, we have to be able to have records on them. So when the biometric exercise is completed, we will authorize the Ministry of Finance to pay them through the bank since these people are legitimate. Then we will move into the various commercial banks.*
- FRIEDMAN: If a pensioner is elderly or sick and it is difficult for him or her to go to the center and collect his or her check is there a way for—?

DROSAYE: Yes, this is one we accommodate. We have a proxy. The pensioner has to give a person the power of attorney. John Brown is giving you the authority to go and receive his check. Your photo is there. When you come, it is signed by the Civil Service and stamped by the Ministry of Finance. As part of the biometric exercise, we now take the fingerprint of the proxy and have information about the proxy to be able to track him in our system, because most of the problems we encounter with paymasters and pensioners are with the proxies. You have two or three persons with the same power of attorney trying to defraud the system.

FRIEDMAN: So right now you have two or three proxies for a person—.

DROSAYE: Yes, sometimes, in some instances, if my father has a pension and I have the power of attorney, my younger brother might steal the power of attorney to go and claim the check. So we are trying to correct all of this. This is why the pensioners must attach a photo and the documents to the proxy so that the proxy will be in our system, then, we won't have these problems.

FRIEDMAN: How expensive is this project? It sounds very, very expensive.

DROSAYE: The project is very expensive. Initially we started the biometric project document with 450,000 US dollars. The Bank contributed, the government of Liberia contributed, but we still needed more support in the areas of capacity building. We needed more equipment as we were trying to expand our services. We needed more trained manpower.

Now we are now opening our branches in the leeward counties, in order to decentralize the civil service. So because of that we have our outreach stations in Banga, for example, in Nimba, in Bong, in Lofa. We need to establish another outreach station in Bomi, Tubmanburg. We need one to be established in Zwedru now. We need personnel, to control, to manage, to be able to provide services to the people in the leeward countries. So we need to be mobile, we need to be trained, we need to be paid. So there are a lot of challenges. So we need to continue to engage the World Bank and other donors for more support so we will be able to enhance service to the people more effectively and more efficiently.

FRIEDMAN: Have you received enough resources from the World Bank thus far to—?

DROSAYE: 85% of our resources come from the World Bank. It is because of the World Bank that the people in the leeward countries are where they are today. With less support from the government, the World Bank is able to provide both natural resources and both our technical resources.

FRIEDMAN: What information is actually on the ID card? It is the picture—?

DROSAYE: On the ID card, we have the employee's name, the ministry, the section, his date of birth, his payroll number and his employee number. We also have the issuing date and the expiring date on the ID cards. All of the information on the personnel record form is what is on the ID card. So if you insert the ID card in the bank, all of the information on the employee or the person comes on the screen.

FRIEDMAN: Can we take a step back. You mentioned that you are sending people out into the counties to actually conduct the enumeration exercise. You mentioned so far you have collected the information from eleven ministries or you issued the ID cards.

DROSAYE: *We did, we issued ID cards to eleven ministries. We have done Monrovia and its environment.*

FRIEDMAN: So when you conduct these exercises are you going ministry by ministry or county by county?

DROSAYE: *County by county. We have already dealt with ministries and agencies in Monrovia.*

FRIEDMAN: So, for example, the Ministry of State is all within Monrovia?

DROSAYE: *All within Monrovia. Now, if the Ministry of State has personnel in the leeward counties, they would be covered because we have the listing of personnel for every ministry and agency in the counties. We know the total number of persons in Nimba, in Lofa, in Gbarpolu, in Sinoe. We have it. It is because of that that we already have there most of Montserrado. People in Monrovia and its environment who have not gone through the process are going to the biometric center to have their ID information vetted because the teams are now in the counties. When the team returns from the counties, it is about consolidating and printing the data.*

FRIEDMAN: How did you determine which counties—how do you determine the order of the counties to go into? So first Monrovia and then—?

DROSAYE: *What we did was we divided the counties into three teams. Already in our pilot, we dealt with Bomi and Cape Mount counties to know what the challenges might be when we moved into bigger counties.*

FRIEDMAN: So you started with smaller counties.

DROSAYE: *We started with the smaller counties.*

FRIEDMAN: Okay.

DROSAYE: *Now we have a team, Team A. The alpha team is in Nimba. It controls Nimba, Lofa, Bong and Gbarpolu. We have Team B. Team B controls Margibi, Bassa, River Cess and Sinoe. We have Team C. Team C controls River Gee, Maryland, Grand Gedeh and Grand Kru. So as I speak to you right now, Team A is winding up in Nimba county, they have completed Lofa county, they will be heading to Bong county over the weekend. Team B has completed Montserrado, has completed River Cess. They are in Sinoe to be completed over the weekend to move to Margibi, the last point. Team C has completed Grand Gedeh, has completed River Gee. They are now in Maryland and they are now crossing over by tomorrow into Grand Kru, which will be the last point.*

FRIEDMAN: Who makes up these teams?

DROSAYE: *On these teams we have personnel from the civil service. We have project managers from the project. We have contractors who are being paid by the World Bank. So on each team we have twelve persons. It is a mix of civil servants and contractors.*

FRIEDMAN: Do you know about how many are civil servants and how many are contractors?

DROSAYE: *On each of the teams we have five civil service people and seven contractors.*

FRIEDMAN: Do these civil servants receive special training to conduct these exercises?

DROSAYE: *Yes. When we began the process, we had to build the capacity first to be able to handle the equipment, to learn how to interact with the public by treating them as the customer in delivering services. Our people are well trained, even the contractors. They are experienced and they have an interest in the civil service. As I speak to you, five of them are now being enrolled in the civil service.*

FRIEDMAN: Who trained the civil servants on the three teams?

DROSAYE: *We have human resource management specialists. We have Shadi Baki. We also send our people to the Liberian Institute of Public Administration. We also identify our major computer institutions to provide training. Now under our HRMIS, the bank also provides money for training. Part of our training strategy is to send some of our trainees to Ghana and the U.S. to expose them to other systems in order to be more effective and efficient.*

FRIEDMAN: How long are these exercises in the counties?

DROSAYE: *They are in the counties for forty-five days.*

FRIEDMAN: Each county takes forty-five days?

DROSAYE: *Each county is forty-five days.*

FRIEDMAN: Do the larger counties take longer?

DROSAYE: *No, For example, Nimba is large, so Nimba takes two weeks. Depending on the number of personnel in the counties, the number of days are allocated. That is planned from the beginning and executed outside because we have an awareness, whether it is a superintendent or a local authority, all are aware about what they can do to complete mobilization. So far we have nice support from the local people.*

FRIEDMAN: When they actually arrive what do they do? What is the first thing that they do?

DROSAYE: *The center knows what the exercise is all about. They have chains of command. When an employee arrives, he has to show the ID card or show a check stub to receive the form. We have people in the civil service and the contractors who will fill in the form to show him what he needs to know. They educate him on the form. Then he fills it in. They vet the form to ensure indeed that the information is true and the photos are there and after they are vetted, then they do the biometrics. So we have processes that you pass through.*

FRIEDMAN: And this is done for every employee?

DROSAYE: *Every employee.*

FRIEDMAN: So if you have a county with, let's say, a thousand civil servants, these twelve individuals are going to—

DROSAYE: *The system is solely with the process. This is why at the beginning level there is all the education about filling in the form. At the next level, it takes two to three minutes with the person to capture the fingerprints and the particulars.*

FRIEDMAN: When it comes to the Ministry of Education, for example, and you have to count the number of teachers, the teachers could be at different schools in different villages.

DROSAYE: *Yes. Now in the counties what we did was, we identified key areas. We worked with the local authorities in the counties. For example, in Nimba, I think Nimba has seven districts. The superintendent, along with the development superintendents, was able to do a mapping of the area to show us in which districts we could mobilize the people who were enrolling.*

FRIEDMAN: The superintendent is the head of the district?

DROSAYE: *The superintendent is the head of the counties. The superintendent worked with the district superintendents to do the mobilization and coordination.*

FRIEDMAN: So for the mobilization, they will inform the civil servants in their districts—.

DROSAYE: *Yes, that you can now proceed at this time to do the exercise.*

FRIEDMAN: In your opinion has the coordination worked?

DROSAYE: *Yes, perfect coordination. The superintendents are waiting, the district commissioners, the town chiefs. Yes.*

FRIEDMAN: Have you had many delays?

DROSAYE: *The challenge they encounter in the counties is the road network. It is a huge challenge especially in the southeast. Roads are a major challenge.*

FRIEDMAN: So how have you dealt with that?

DROSAYE: *We were able to work with the local authorities in the counties, the superintendents, the team personnel, the local NGOs (nongovernment organizations). For example, we had our team go into Harper, Maryland County. The car could not enter Harper because there were no roads. The members of the team had to pay from their per diem, about 20 US dollars, to a local business for a truck that could move the equipment into Harper. We had to be able to put a rescue package together to see how best we could replace the money that is spent so we worked with the local authorities to see if they could provide some transportation assistance. We would provide the fuel.*

It is only the last county in the Grand Kru that is difficult. So I just spoke to the team leader from Maryland who tells me that tomorrow they will have to use the pem-pem (motor bike) to go to Grand Kru. But each team will have two generators to keep our system moving so that means they have to pay people to tote the generators.

FRIEDMAN: So how do you—you can't put a generator on a pem-pem can you?

DROSAYE: *No. I mean they have to put it in a wheelbarrow.*

FRIEDMAN: In a wheelbarrow?

DROSAYE: *Yes, because the generator is big, it's 3.5 kva. So these are some of the challenges that we have in the southeast.*

FRIEDMAN: I see. So in the southeast and other parts of the country—.

DROSAYE: *The southeast, in Lofa for example, in other parts of the country, we have the same roads, even in Monrovia we have some roads without a surface.*

FRIEDMAN: Do you have your own vehicles?

DROSAYE: *No, we rent vehicles paid for by the World Bank for forty-five days. We provide the fuel. The Bank also provides the fuel. The Bank also provides our scratch card, communication card, so we can communicate the statistics on a daily basis. We send e-mail so every day so we have the total number of personnel who may enter the database. It keeps all of the people in the database because this controls the technical part of that.*

FRIEDMAN: So when one of your teams shows up in a district how much notice do the civil servants in the district usually get?

DROSAYE: *We do an awareness campaign three weeks before the team arrives in the area. Before moving into the counties, we work with the superintendents. We make the media aware so that the newspaper will carry the news about us, then we talk with the local people, inform and educate them to let them know what the benefits are so that people will not see us as being on a witch hunt. We embrace all of them because they are all stakeholders to the process.*

FRIEDMAN: Do you do this over the telephone?

DROSAYE: *No, we use local community radio stations in the counties that have them. Now they all may, since Liberia has community-based radio stations in the counties. Most of the time we pass information through UNMIL (United Nations Mission in Liberia). UNMIL relays to all the community radios. We go on the air on Mondays and Fridays covering all parts of the country.*

FRIEDMAN: So actually who goes on the radio?

DROSAYE: *Shadi Baki and myself along with the reform director.*

FRIEDMAN: Your team meets at the district center where all the civil servants in the district are intended to come. What happens if they can't come? What happens if they just miss the message, they didn't hear about it?

DROSAYE: *We have to inform them again to let them know that the exercise is important that they go through the process. We talk to the district superintendent. We call him regularly to know whether they are able to capture all of the people in that area. For example, the superintendent of Nimba County called C. William Allen a few days after the team had already left Sanniquellie in Nimba for Tappita to say that they have a few persons who were not able to show up and she needed at least a day more for the team. Allen informed me. I spoke to the team leader in Tappita who said they would be passing through Sanniquellie going to Kakata. They would make a stop for five hours to enroll all of the people. The superintendent immediately went on air and informed the local people that the team would be there for the people who have not gone through the process to be sure everyone would be there.*

FRIEDMAN: And what happens if they don't come?

DROSAYE: *If someone doesn't show up, we have a timeline. If you're not in the database by the timeline, we will automatically put a hold on the check. That means you will not receive a check until you show up yourself so that we can capture you, we can query the data so we know we can put your data in the database and then we can get you on. But we advise everyone to support the process on their own initiative, because the government needs the statistics to take future decisions, decisions that would benefit us, Liberians.*

FRIEDMAN: So how much time do they have before there is a hold placed on their check?

DROSAYE: *With the exercise on going, we didn't have time to say that. We advise them strongly to show up, "that if you don't show up and the exercise is completed, no biometric ID card, no pay". C. William Allen addressed the media, at the forum of personnel directors. They will issue it, the biometric ID card.*

FRIEDMAN: I saw that on the CSA website today. And this is by July?

DROSAYE: *Yes. So they have, by December 31st, this year, to be in the database. If you are not there, and we consolidate the data, we will put a hold on your check until you go through the process. Meaning that if you are not in support of the process, we have full backing from the capital, from the legislature and from the general public.*

FRIEDMAN: So when you go to a district, do you have to coordinate with the ministries? Because, seemingly these people have to leave work for the day.

DROSAYE: *In the districts we already have the list of personnel in the county. For example, the Ministry of Finance tells us the number of persons that are in Lofa County. In Voinjama, in Fotombu, we already know the total number of personnel. So awareness will go out. The team is now in Voinjama. All government employees are now asked to immediately report at the centers to have themselves registered. The various ministries and agencies have already informed the personnel in the counties that the civil service team will be coming. The additional information that is provided to the superintendent of the district, the commissioner, the DOS, the COS and the civil service personnel gives them enough information to show up.*

FRIEDMAN: Okay, so they're allowed to leave work.

DROSAYE: *Yes, they are asked to go and be processed and that's fine. That's why, as we're moving around the counties, we have about four different teams spread out in each county to facilitate the work.*

FRIEDMAN: I see. Have you had any resistance from the ministries themselves?

DROSAYE: *We had one from the CEO in Nimba County. The county education officer said that the civil service should have written him personally and not the superintendent. The superintendent is his superior. If the civil service writes the superintendent of the county, the superintendent then informs people. The county education officer works directly with the Minister of Education. On the biometric project, the steering committee is comprised of the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Education and chaired by the civil service agency.*

When the CEO authorized the teachers in Nimba country, in the Sanniquellie district, to not show up because they did not write to him, the civil service team in

the county immediately informed C. William Allen through their personal deputies who informed the honorable Minister of Education who then told this individual that he should go on the air and retract his story and if he failed to do so then action would be taken against him. That delayed our work for two days in the counties particularly since Nimba County has more teachers than any of the other counties in Liberia. The individual went on air and retracted the story. Because of that, an independent investigation is to be against him. That was the only key challenge that we faced in terms of starting the process.

FRIEDMAN: If you go into a county and let's say the county, before you go in, has 1000 people on the payroll. Then you identify 100 ghost workers. So now their payroll is reduced to 900. So seemingly they would then receive less money. Do they have any reason to try and inflate the number on the payroll to keep the payroll high?

DROSAYE: *No, no, we build the personnel registry from the Ministry of Finance data, the payroll data. Now every civil service agency is having from one to eighteen persons on their EDB payroll. It is this data that we are investigating to know whether these people actually exist and where they are assigned.*

FRIEDMAN: So you're not taking personnel away from the ministries.

DROSAYE: *We are not taking personnel away.*

FRIEDMAN: Are you taking money away from the ministries?

DROSAYE: *We are taking the position that the people do not exist to fill in. If civil service has to take one or eighteen persons and the actual people that are available at the work site is no more than ten meaning that there were three positions are ghost positions, they need to be eliminated from the payroll.*

FRIEDMAN: And this whole process in the counties takes only 45 days?

DROSAYE: *Yes, 45 days in the county including the mop up.*

FRIEDMAN: So they left about a month ago?

DROSAYE: *Yes.*

FRIEDMAN: Wow, and how much training did they receive?

DROSAYE: *All of these people that are there have been out for more than a year.*

FRIEDMAN: They've been here?

DROSAYE: *They've been at the biometric center for more than a year. We know we have engineered the system. We did pilots. They've been out for a year.*

FRIEDMAN: So when were the pilots done?

DROSAYE: *We did the pilots last year in 2009.*

FRIEDMAN: So you did the pilot and then Monrovia was next?

DROSAYE: *Yes, the pilot and then Monrovia and we did the outstation as well.*

FRIEDMAN: I wanted to ask you one more question about the ministries that are being enumerated. You mentioned that eleven have already been accounted for because they're centered pretty much within Monrovia. You're two weeks from completing the exercise in the counties. Are your three teams in the counties enumerating the number of civil servants for all ministries including health and education and the larger ones? So this will complete the entire process?

DROSAYE: *The entire process.*

FRIEDMAN: So even every teacher in Liberia will have a card. I understand that the enumeration exercise for the Ministry of Education was somehow separate?

DROSAYE: *Initially, last year, USAID (United States Agency for International Development) provided over half a million dollars to cover the enumeration of the Ministry of Education personnel. The Civil Service Agency also played a part in the exercise. That exercise was being spearheaded by the CSA and GAC (General Auditing Commission) in terms of enumeration of the district's teachers. So it is those teachers, the civil service biometric team is now going to enroll in the Biometric ID program.*

FRIEDMAN: So is the enumeration process for the Ministry of Education a separate process from what you're doing with Mr. Baki?

DROSAYE: *It is a continuation of the process that GAC started. GAC only wanted to know the headcount of teachers in the classroom, but we are more interested in the personnel registry in terms of building the files by capturing the fingerprints.*

FRIEDMAN: So why did USAID step in?

DROSAYE: *USAID stepped in because they have the LTTP (Liberia Teacher Training Program) that USAID founded. The LTTP saw a need to give assistance to the Ministry of Education. We were part of the meetings that were held. C. William Allen signed the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding). We had a working relationship, so we said that since USAID is providing this money and we are talking about building the personnel registry for the Ministry of Education personnel, it would be fitting that the civil service biometric team also form part of that project.*

USAID said that the funds they made available could not cover the costs of the biometrics. So then it was agreed that to do the enumeration, the Civil Service would do the vetting. So we did. We had the GSA (General Services Agency) design the form and what we have is the same form. Only the second form is different. So we are now in the field capturing the teachers' information. We are adding on to the form that GSA did for the first audit. We have a copy so we just put our name on, put in the files.

DROSAYE: *There is cooperation between the General Auditing Commission, the Civil Service and USAID at the highest levels.*

FRIEDMAN: Have they made this process easier for you or has it been more difficult because you had to coordinate with another group?

DROSAYE: Well, not difficult per se. They made it easier because at least we have the basic information that we can tap into, to begin from, since they had to map our schools, we know the total number of schools in the counties.

FRIEDMAN: That's a lot of information about the biometric ID. Thank you very much. Could we discuss another area you worked on? Creating a program for retrenched workers.

DROSAYE: Yes, okay.

FRIEDMAN: What was your goal? What was the issue you were trying to deal with?

DROSAYE: The goal of the Civil Service is to ensure that better service is delivered to the people. From the outset, the Civil Service as part of the policies of the Pay and Pension Reform, looked at how much benefit in terms of pension allowance has been received by the pensioner. Before 2006, the monthly pension allowance for the pensioners was peanuts. People were getting one dollar, three dollars, four dollars, five dollars, six dollars, seven dollars. Small money.

The Director General of the Civil Service Agency, C. William Allen, sat with the president and told him that there was a need to do something for the pensioners, because these are senior citizens who have rendered services, duty and time to the country and there is a need to motivate them. So they were able to come up with a pay strategy. Since we are now increasing the salary for civil servants from 850 Liberian dollars by 15 dollars to 30 dollars, there is a need that we do something for the pensioners. Once for their entire life, the pensioners were able to receive 1000 Liberian dollars across the board. So the man who was getting 200 Liberian dollars before, something like four dollars US at the time, was now getting 22 or 24 dollars US, 1000 Liberian. So they were being raised up to 1200 Liberian dollars.

FRIEDMAN: This is per month?

DROSAYE: No, a one time payment. Under the pension law, if John Brown served below 35 years, below 25 years of service, but reached the age of 65, he is entitled to 33-1/3 % of the last salary earned. It means that if he was making 4550 dollars, we divide this by three and he gets 1355 plus the 1000 Liberian dollars that the president added. 2355 Liberian dollars is what he takes home on a monthly basis as his monthly pension allowance. Besides that, the government approved a presidential gesture that below 25 years of service, you get 350 US dollars in a one time payment, for 25 to 29 years you get 500 US dollars, 30 to 39 years you get 700 US dollars, forty plus you get 1000 US dollars on a one-time basis.

FRIEDMAN: Was this only for people who have retired in the last year or two or also for people who were already retired?

DROSAYE: People who retired from 2006 to the present receive these amounts that I'm telling about. People who retired before 2006, only get the 1000 Liberian dollars across the board.

FRIEDMAN: I see.

DROSAYE: So these are initiatives taken by this government to ensure that pay and pension reform is brought at least on board. Remember in Liberia, it is only the government that is contributing to the pension scheme and not the civil servant. So we are now under a pay and pension reform for which we hired a consultant

who is upstairs. Now we were able to look at the process to see if there is a need to make our pension scheme contributory wherein people will now contribute to the scheme instead of having the Liberian government as the sole contributor. So the government also is looking at that.

At the retirement ceremony, they receive these dollars in checks presented to them as a thank you for those years serving the people. "This is a small contribution of 350 dollars or 500, 700, 1000, to begin your sojourn in addition to your monthly pension allowance". So the government is also looking at what we call a welfare program, wherein we buy more skills and give more training to the pensioners so they can move into other ventures in terms of unions, corporations, and other groups. Once they are incorporated, we can outsource some services to them for example, janitorial services or catering services or transportation. So that there are plans underway and we are seeking funding to see how we can best empower our retirees.

FRIEDMAN: Have there also been changes to the monthly payments? Have those gone up at all since 2006?

DROSAYE: *Yes, since 2006 the monthly payment has gone up. The pensioners' salary is becoming more attractive. Now you find people on the pension payroll making 46,000 Liberian dollars, 39,000, 26,000, 8,000, 10,000, 15,000, 4,000, 3,000.*

FRIEDMAN: So it is a lot larger than before.

DROSAYE: *It is better than before. Before it was 200 Liberian dollars, 300, 150, 75, and 50 dollars.*

FRIEDMAN: Is it enough now?

DROSAYE: *No, it is not yet still enough because of the high inflation but remember, Liberia is run on a cash-based budget and our largest donor to our budget is the European Union. This is why we are looking at the payroll critically with the biometrics to identify the actual employees, to identify the actual pensioners. The government is thinking about making future decisions, seeking funding, but to make a decision, we have to have the actual clean list of people. There are still ghosts on the payroll.*

FRIEDMAN: Overall, salaries have gone up since 2006 and pensions have gone up but the number of civil servants has gone down from 46,000 to 32,000?

DROSAYE: *Yes, it has gone down.*

FRIEDMAN: Has the overall dollar amount that the government has to pay gone up since 2006 or is it smaller than 2006?

DROSAYE: *It is smaller than 2006. As we speak, some institutions depending on their mandates and functions, in terms of your organizational charts, you have more personnel. In the civil service, we used to have 85 persons, today we have 113 because of our new organizational chart. We ought to bring in three new directors to initiate our policy. The civil service is policy-driven. One key area that needs to be formulated is based on our culture, our systems and how we process them.*

So Dr. Bernard was able to look at the civil service and see that we don't really have a sexual harassment policy. He was able to do a sexual harassment policy

that is before the cabinet for endorsement. We are looking at an addendum to the standing orders. Because of the new directors we have to bring in new personnel that are well skilled and schooled because we're trying to institute a performance management system across government. We have what the directors call a Management Services Directory. The Directory, even though it's handled by Graham Bedell, but it falls directly under my office. It started yesterday as a civil service pilot project to let people know why performance management is important, what the benefits are, what you need to do, how you need to carry on your job in terms of your job function, your responsibilities. That is the target. It is an agreement between the subordinate and his supervisor, his boss. It lets the subordinate know it is about pay rise, it is about training, it is about conferences and symposiums and promotion. We have to let them know what the benefits are so that people will be looking at the values of the organization.

FRIEDMAN: Can I ask you again about the pension reform that you spearheaded. When did you work on this, was this 2008?

DROSAYE: Yes, 2008.

FRIEDMAN: How many people were working on this?

DROSAYE: *We had a pension consultant. We had a foreman for Social Security, we had a managing director from the United States, myself. We had our civil service reform coordinator, and we had a professor so we had a group of people managing it.*

FRIEDMAN: Okay. And how were these numbers agreed upon? I mean were there different voices, other opinions who wanted to reform it in a different way?

DROSAYE: *Well, as you know, the director general of the Civil Service always told the working session or the team that we needed to look at the best move for Liberia that would suit our course and our practices. In every group you have disagreements, an opposing view, but at the end you look at the logical view to see what is most needed in terms of the standards we need. So people would look at what is done in America. People would look at what is done in Britain even though we, in Liberia, are more America oriented than British we learn from the British sector, lessons from the British sector. But we were all able to work perfectly and come to the best understanding.*

FRIEDMAN: So was this model of the one-time payment based on someone's experience in another country? Was this based on the American model or the British model or something like that?

DROSAYE: *Secretary General Allen told the president that there was a need because these are senior citizens and giving them 1000 dollars may not be enough. In other countries pensioners do receive a huge honorarium because their pension scheme is contributory. But in Liberia it is nothing. Now coming from where we were coming from, from the civil crisis, the monthly pension allowance was not enough for the man to begin with. But if you give a man 1000 US dollars or 700 US dollars or 500 US dollars or 250 US dollars he can begin something from there. In Liberia, 350 dollars can begin an entrepreneurial business, for example. Five hundred, 700, 1000 can begin something.*

So the government found it fitting and because of that were able to come up with a memo from the president indicating the categories for the people to receive

benefits so because of that, people welcomed the idea. The process is ongoing and people see it as rewarding, in the best interests of the Liberian people.

FRIEDMAN: Who suggested the numbers?

DROSAYE: *These are numbers decided by the cabinet. The director general came up with the idea and the president, with the team, came up with these numbers.*

FRIEDMAN: So what did your team do in this process?

DROSAYE: *My team was able to do more awareness for the pensioners.*

FRIEDMAN: You consulted with pensioners?

DROSAYE: *Yes, my team was able to provide more information to the public about the government reforms, to let them know that the Human Resource management lifecycle is about recruitment, is about termination, is about pension, so that people would not see the process as a witchhunt, but rather as a Human Resource management lifecycle. And people embraced the idea about this amount.*

FRIEDMAN: So how did you get out the message? Was this over the radio also?

DROSAYE: *Yes, we used the print and electronic media. We had stakeholder workshops to inform the people.*

FRIEDMAN: Did you also hold workshops to get ideas about what the pensioners want?

DROSAYE: *The pensioners have a monthly meeting that we do attend and in the meetings the challenge is, "Look, inflation is high. The government needs to be thinking about us, to act". So we always tell them, in line with the civil service reform, that government is concerned about them, but we need the support of the biometric exercise so we will be able to take future decisions that will bring more benefits. So we attend the monthly meetings and we have a cordial working relationship with the pensioners.*

FRIEDMAN: You have monthly meetings with them at MOPA (Pensioners Association)?

DROSAYE: *No they have it at the school. Usually we go there on Saturdays where we sit with the pensioners to listen to their complaints in order to understand some of the constraints, the challenges and the needs. We want to know what the civil service can do to address some of these challenges? MOPA has a new, they have an active leadership so if the pensioners need information they can provide that.*

FRIEDMAN: Has there been cooperation?

DROSAYE: *Yes, there is cooperation between the CSA and them.*

FRIEDMAN: Has there been any frustration from people who want larger payments?

DROSAYE: *No, the only problem there with the association is that they had acting leaders who from every civil servant were courting 20 Liberian dollars membership dues. But the fellow who was chairing the leadership was retrenched from the Ministry of National Defense and because he was retrenched and no longer a civil servant, he shouldn't have been in the leadership draft. So they had an acting*

leadership. Because of that, the accounts of the association were frozen by the government, through the Ministry of Finance, until they could have a legitimate leadership elected. The government of Liberia will now release the freeze on the account.

Now there is an understanding between the acting leadership and the civil service. There is no conflict.

FRIEDMAN: You mentioned the extra support that you gave to the pensioners. You also mentioned there have been a lot of retrenched workers.

DROSAYE: Yes.

FRIEDMAN: Is there a program in place to support or retrain people who have been retrenched since 2006?

DROSAYE: *Yes, there are programs. We call it the Employee Welfare Program. The biometric exercise has to end to know the actual number of retrenched workers in the program. In our database, we would have the number. We can now inform all those on paper, because we have a paper number. When the retrenched workers actually come up with suggestions and ideas about what some of the things are that they want to do, even though we have ideas that we want to do, we have programs for them.*

FRIEDMAN: Is there an office in the civil service agency that is preparing these programs?

DROSAYE: *Yes, in the civil service.*

FRIEDMAN: Which office in the civil service agency is working on these programs?

DROSAYE: *We have a consultant and then there is me.*

FRIEDMAN: So what sorts of things are you thinking about?

DROSAYE: *We're thinking of providing training for them, building their capacity and then providing some microfunding loans, because you see, when we get them on the direct deposit biometric ID list, the banks will begin to engage us in terms of infrastructure, housing. Three days ago I had someone from the bank who came in to know the number of the regular employees by ministry, because they will be giving a micro funding loan someday to design some programs in terms of giving out loans for housing or for business start-ups, key areas for the pensioners. I told him that we are also doing this exercise and when the exercise is completed, then we will submit to him a full list of all pensioners covered by the government of Liberia. We will be moving them to the Direct Deposit and then the bank can have workshops and let the pensioners know about some of the things they can do.*

So we also told the retrenched workers that when they can group themselves into groups, into unions or associations and become registered to go buy janitorial services, or open a pastry shop, or run transportation, we would look to see where we could find resources to provide them.

FRIEDMAN: So you're going to hope that these groups, these retrenched workers, form groups and then provide you with ideas, with input and you'll respond.

- DROSAYE: Yes, because this is done in other countries. This is why government continues to provide more support to the private sector.*
- FRIEDMAN: So if you are going to try and work with the private sector, let's say that the group says they're looking for jobs in the janitorial sector, can the government provide them with jobs?
- DROSAYE: If the group says that they have ten or fifteen persons and have registered and have a certificate, they can write to the civil service or come to have a dialog, we can outsource and have them on a contract basis in three to six months. We can raise enough money, too. We can begin to scan our environment to provide services and they can be paid on a contract basis.*
- FRIEDMAN: Okay, just to confirm. For people who have been retrenched over the last four years, there's no program in place for them yet.
- DROSAYE: There's no program in place yet, because of the ongoing pension reform. So once we have the completion of the biometric exercise, then we'll know the actual number of pensioners.*
- FRIEDMAN: So for people—let's say someone has been working in the civil service just for five years and then they get retrenched. Do they receive a pension also?
- DROSAYE: They also receive a pension.*
- FRIEDMAN: Okay, just the lower scale.
- DROSAYE: Yes. They receive a pension. Because they receive a pension by age and, you know, they'd destroy the public personnel system. This is why now there is no new employee at the age of 60 because the pension begins at 65. So now we tell all of our human resources directors not to employ someone who is 60 because in five years time he reaches retirement age and becomes a burden on the government. So there is more awareness. Even next week we are planning a workshop for all the personnel directors.*
- FRIEDMAN: Are you anticipating that some of the more elderly citizens are going to be upset with that policy?
- DROSAYE: Yes, for example, we know that presidential appointees position for the age assistant. We are talking about civil service position getting on the payroll. We are trying to avoid the waste of resources.*
- FRIEDMAN: Do you have anything else to add about pension reform or programs for retrenched workers?
- DROSAYE: Not much, but the government of Liberia is trying to strategize to make sure that the needs of pensioners are met because as you work, you have to have a system. So the policies should be in place so that the future generations will not be affected.*
- FRIEDMAN: You provided a lot of information. If I can ask just one more question, you covered enumeration exercises, ID cards, payroll reform, pension reform, really you've covered almost the entire civil service reform efforts. So looking back on the last four plus years of reform and all the programs that you've worked on, do you have any advice for someone in your position in another country who is

going to work on any of the programs that you worked on? Any advice or any lessons?

DROSAYE: Well, there are a lot of lessons. The only thing is that in order to carry out reforms or programs or activities, first you need political support. You need the resources, you need a network, you need to team up with other systems in other countries to see what lessons can be learned. You need to have the right leader to drive the change, because people can be affected by change and because they are affected, they can oppose it. So you need to be focused. You need to be a leader who possesses leadership in the three C's: competency, character and care. You need to accept changes as they come for the betterment of the society.

The challenges are huge. Overall you need to look within the environment, in a similar environment to see what are those that really suit your culture or your systems that you need to emulate. Because every country has their own culture. If I input a module, a payroll module from Ghana Institute in a Liberian setting, you have to look at the system, you have to look at the culture and see what are those things that you need to do.

One major challenge is to find the right people to drive the reforms, because if capacity is not there, the resources could be misdirected and wasted. You need people who will be honest and sincere in the reform.

FRIEDMAN: Who would you say is the one driving the reform in Liberia?

DROSAYE: In Liberia, the Governance Commission led by Amos Sawyer drives the public sector reform. Other leaders drive the civil service reform, the security sector reform and the land sector reform.

FRIEDMAN: Mr. Drosaye, thank you so much for your time.