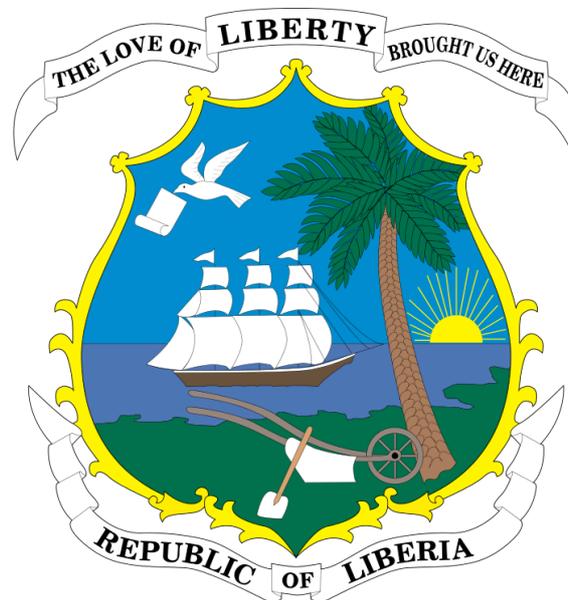

**LIBERIA-NETHERLANDS
ECONOMIC MISSION HEADED**

BY

H.E. LILIANNE PLOUMEN

**MINISTER FOR FOREIGN TRADE AND
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION**



***Towards Stability, Recovery and Transformation
for Inclusive Growth***

PRESS STATEMENT

H.E. Axel M. Addy
Minister

Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Republic of Liberia

MONROVIA, LIBERIA

JULY 6, 2015



1. Good Morning (Afternoon) Ladies and Gentlemen, members of the Press
2. Let me join my colleagues in thanking all of you for being here today. I am honoured to have as our special guest, H.E. Lilianne Ploumen, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation from the Kingdom of the Netherlands who is here on an Economic Mission to Liberia with an investment delegation of over 30 Dutch companies.

From Amsterdam to Monrovia

3. Let me also use this opportunity to extend my thanks and appreciation from the people of Liberia to the people of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for the level of support in the global response to our health crisis. Last year we saw the arrival of the Dutch Navy support ship the HNLMS Karel Doorman onto our shores bearing much needed food and essential supplies to support our response effort. Additionally, your government also supported the response effort with 48 million Euros to the three countries to various international organizations participating in the response. Thank you.
4. Madam Minister, last year when we met in Amsterdam in November at the Sparks Ignite Conference and you informed me that you would be making the first mission to our three affected countries, I was quite excited given that so many others were doing their best to avoid our part of the world.
5. The subsequent meeting at your Ministry at the Hague organized by your team provided me an opportunity to meet Dutch Civil Society and members of the private sector left me quite inspired by your steadfast commitment to not only to lend your support in the in the global response to our health crisis, but also to our economic recovery by bringing the first large investment delegation to our three countries to tell the world that if our three affected countries are to recover, not only are we going to



need aid, but most importantly, we are going to need investment and trade; if we are to experience sustainable social and economic development that is inclusive.

6. Ladies and gentlemen, she kept her promise, and I am proud to welcome you and your delegation to Liberia.

The Mission

7. Fellow Liberians, colleagues and friends. The Minister and her team arrived this morning at 9am, and since their arrival we have been engaged in a numbers of meetings to discuss our cooperation and explore investment and trading opportunities.
8. While the Netherlands remains one of our largest trading partners in the EU, with over \$40 million dollars in trade, this occasion provides the opportunity to do more in unlocking partnership opportunities among our private sector in a way that is mutually beneficial to our countries.
9. The delegation participated in a round table discussion this morning with heads of various agencies to highlight key areas of cooperation and investments opportunities for various sector. The Minister, who is a champion for promotion of SMEs, particularly women owned SMEs, met with a group of Liberian women in business where discussion were held around investment opportunities for SMEs and capacity development for access to EU markets among other things.
10. We will continue the rest of the visit with two site visits including talking to entrepreneurs and business-to-business event where our two private sectors will exchange ideas on fostering partnerships for mutually beneficial investment opportunities.



Opportunities for Impact

11. My fellow Liberians, through these interactions we envision further talks to include some new initiatives such as:

- a. The cleaning and dredging of the Montserrado Bay and in-land waterway study that will facilitate investment in in-land water transport to decongest traffic coming into Central Monrovia. In essence, our citizen coming from Caldwell Bridge to Vai Town Bridge and those from Matadi to Vai Town Bridge may be able to take water taxis to town.
- b. The dredging of the Port of Monrovia to accommodate larger vessels into the port of Monrovia.
- c. The supply of navigational aides at the Port of Monrovia for 24-hour service to vessels coming into our port.
- d. Financing facilities for SMEs in the agro-processing for expansion and growth, including for export to EU markets.
- e. Training opportunities in marine sciences for Liberians interested in that field of study.



Aligning Aid and Trade

Madam Minister, let me conclude now by personally thanking you for your energy and commitment to drive the aid and trade agenda at all levels. As the world converges to look at the new sustainable development goals, the link between aid and trade is critical if we are to free our people from the shackles of poverty. With over 10 million young Africans coming into the job market each year, with little or no jobs to get, promoting entrepreneurs and SMEs represent the greatest opportunities to drive new innovations for inclusive growth in our country.

As you know, Liberia is making every effort to join the World Trade Organization at MC10 in Nairobi this year. This process, which calls for reforms, particularly in trade facilitation, once implemented, would enhance our competitiveness making us a competitive destination for investments while enhancing our entrepreneurs access to global value chains for inclusive economic growth.

I am honored to have someone like you who is championing this case to the world, that to achieve true economic transformation; we must link aid and trade. Our private sectors do have a role to play in poverty alleviation, particularly SMEs, if we are to achieve inclusive growth. Your government's leadership and innovations on this front provide ample lessons to be learned by countries like ours.

Thank you for that commitment and energy and thank you for fulfilling your commitment to show the world, that despite the many challenges, there is still business to be done in Liberia.

Thank you.