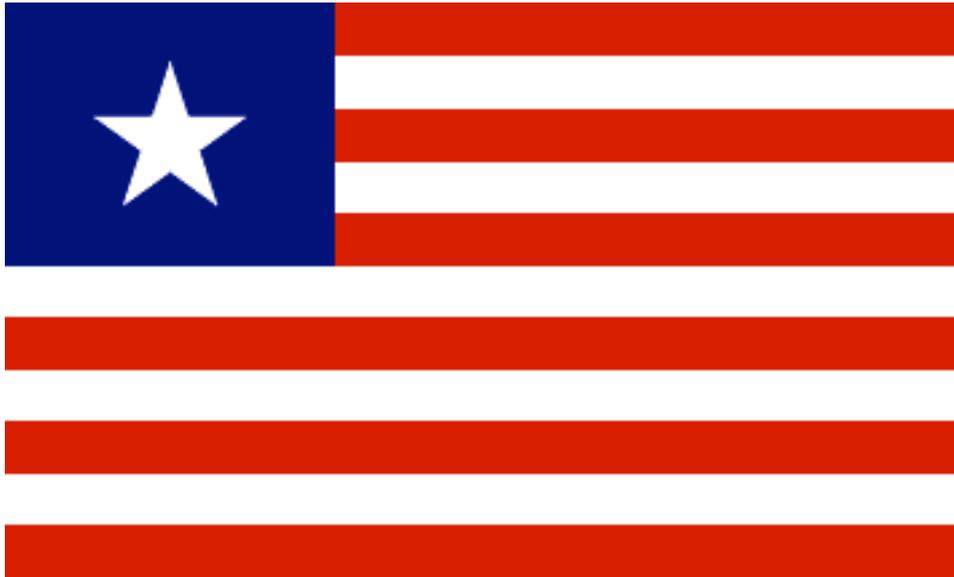


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# ROAD TO ACCESSION

*Accession of Liberia to the World Trade Organization*



*Liberia's Road to Nairobi (MC10)*

**Delivered at**

**General Council Meeting of the World Trade Organization**

**H.E. Axel M. Addy**

*Minister*

**Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Republic of Liberia**

**Geneva, Switzerland**

**27 July 2015**

**15:00 – 16:00**

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### **Salutations**

1. Mr. President and Members of your delegation;
2. Mr. Director General,
3. Mr. Chair and members of the General Council,
4. Excellencies, Colleagues and Friends of Liberia,
5. Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen
6. On behalf of my delegation, I am yet again honoured and humbled by this unique opportunity to once again address this esteemed body on the state of play on Liberia's accession since my last update on July 24, 2014.

### **The Opening Recognition**

7. Mr. Chair, on behalf of Her Excellency, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia and the people of Liberia, my delegation congratulates Mr. President, his Chief Negotiator, technical team and the people of Kazakhstan on reaching this historic conclusion of their 19 years journey to join the multilateral trading system.

This is truly a remarkable achievement and a true testament of the value this organization in shaping our world through trade. And I must say, despite the challenges of concluding various negotiations, this organization and the domestic reforms it demands from all of us is a bitter pill that is good for the health of our world, our country, our people; they transform lives. We are still knocking at your doors to join because we believe trade can be the catalyst for economic transformation and being at the table in this organization will help us achieve that.

8. Mr. President on behalf of my President, my delegation would also like to use this opportunity to congratulate you on your efforts to increase international cooperation between your nation and nations of Africa. I look forward to exploring such cooperation in my country, particularly in agriculture, mining and oil and gas. My delegation also wishes to thank you for your contribution to the global response to the EBOLA outbreak in my country, Sierra Leone and Guinea. We are grateful.
9. Mr. Chairman, my delegation also congratulates the delegation of Kenya and the leadership of the Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Her Excellency, and Amina Mohamed in hosting MC10 this year. We are looking forward to the Kenyan experience.



### Update on the Negotiations

10. Mr. Chairman, excellencies, colleagues, friends, a year ago, I addressed this body, making an appeal to this body to exercise flexibility in supporting Liberia's desire to join this body at MC10 in Nairobi. Today Mr. Chairman, my delegation is grateful to all of you.

Thanks to the leadership of Director General Roberto Azevedo, our Working Party Chair, Ambassador Joakim Reiter, the Director of Accession Division, Mr. Cheidu Osakwe and the secretariat, Mr. Alejandro Jara and the King and Spalding team, the Government of Sweden and the Swedish National Board of Trade, Ms. Arancha Gonzales and the ITC team, Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi and the UNCTAD team, members of our working party, the ambassadors and their technical teams of the members we engage in bilateral negotiations, Japan, Canada, EU, US, Thailand, and Chinese Taipei; today Mr. Chairman, the road to Nairobi is clear.

11. My delegation is pleased to inform this body that we have concluded all bilateral negotiations. Tomorrow, we will chair the technical verification meeting, which we hope will provide the momentum for the emergence of the accession package. We then plan to return early October for what we hope will be a final meeting.
12. It is our desire, that in December, like today, our President, H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf will come to Nairobi to sign the protocol on Liberia's accession.

### Conclusion

13. Mr Chairman, Excellencies, colleagues and friends, this process is a difficult one because implementing domestic reforms is a complex and difficult undertaking and is particularly more difficult for a least developed country, let alone an LDC emerging from multiple challenges of crises that crippled its infrastructure, its economy, its people.

However, we remain a resilient people and despite the odds, no matter how many times we have been knocked down, we continue to get up. We are hopeful and confident that this process will pave the way for a new awakening that will change the way we trade, the way we trade with the world, in a way that will spark a new renaissance of economic transformation that is balanced and inclusive.

14. Excellencies, colleagues and friends, we remain committed to the process because we believe in the multilateral trading system and the power of trade to break the shackles of poverty in our country. This is why this organization's role in shaping the post-2015 development agenda is pivotal, particularly in the alignment of aid with trade. As we all converge on NY in September, we must collectively advocate for the alignment of aid and trade. Africa's transformation can only be realized when its



people are not only consumers of global goods and services, but also producers of quality global goods and services. To liberate our people from that shackles of poverty, trade matters, and this organization must help us rewrite history to achieve sustainable, equitable and inclusive growth in Africa.

15. Excellencies, colleagues, friends, today the average Liberian is under 25 years of age; the average Liberian is a youth with the desire, dreams and wishes like any other youth in the world. Many of our youth, sad to say today, live in abject poverty. Their only crime is the timing and place of their birth. It is estimated that 10 million of these youth will come into the job market in Africa with the audacity of hope to live in self dignity with the human rights to equal opportunities and to live a fulfilled life. We all have a role to play for our failure to do so, will pave the way for an exodus from Africa, and extremist tendencies and that will render us slaves of fear.
16. Excellencies, colleagues, friends, we value the multilateral trading system because of the principles and rules it stands for and we believe that at the table, we can all contribute to ensure that Africa is a better and equal trading partner with the rest of world. The world will be a better place when Africa is a better, equal and respected trading partner. The WTO will be a better organization when Africa is a better trading partner. The WTO will take one more step in that direction when Liberia joins at MC10 in December in Nairobi.
17. Thank you Mr. Chairman.