

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA



January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2012

SUBMITTED TO THE

53RD NATIONAL LEGISLATURE

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MINISTER’S LETTER TO THE LEGISLATURE

The Honorable
Members of the National Legislature
Republic of Liberia
Capitol Building
Monrovia, Liberia

RE: Submission of 2012 Annual Report

We present our compliments and have the honor to transmit to the Honorable Body, the 2012 Annual Report of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. This report represents significant progress made in the commerce and industrial sectors of the economy as a result of government support and assistance from our international partners and institutions.

Honorable Legislature, the report contains the achievements, challenges and way forward for the Ministry during the period under review. It also focuses on the collaboration and cooperation with line ministries/agencies for tracking specific interventions, which strengthen our trade and industrial agenda, in line with our Agenda for Transformation.

Your Excellencies, we are grateful for the opportunity afforded us by Her Excellency President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to serve our great nation and people in ensuring that Liberia will have a vibrant and competitive private sector which spurs sustainable job creation and equitable economic growth and development.

Please accept the assurance of my highest regard.

Sincerely Yours,

Miata Beysolow
MINISTER

LEGAL MANDATE

**AN ACT
TO AMEND THE EXECUTIVE LAW WITH
RESPECT TO THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE,
INDUSTRY AND TRANSPORTATION**

Published by Authority
Government Printing Office
Department of State
Monrovia, Liberia
January 19, 1972

**AN ACT TO AMEND THE EXECUTIVE LAW WITH
RESPECT TO THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE,
INDUSTRY AND TRANSPORTATION**

It is enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Republic of Liberia, in Legislature Assembled:

Section 1. The new Chapter 21, of the Executive Law entitled: Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Transportation, is amended to be read as follows:

Chapter 21. MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

S 650. MINISTRY CREATED - There is hereby created and established in the Executive Branch of the Government in Ministry of Commerce and Industry to be headed by a Minister who shall be appointed by the president with the advice and consent of the Senate. The President shall appoint, with the advice and consent of the Senate a Deputy Minister who shall be the principal Assistant to the Minister of Commerce and Industry and who shall act in the absence of the Minister. The President may also appoint, with the advice and consent of the Senate, such Assistant Ministers as would required for the effective operation of the Ministry.

S 651. FUNCTION OF THE MINISTRY - The Functions of the Ministry shall include the promotion, development, regulation; control, operation and expansion of commercial, industrial enterprises and activities in the Republic. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry shall exercise broad powers with respect to protection of the public interest and the achievement of national goals through the establishment and enforcement of standards for commodities and for trade. Such services as are required by the public and government agencies in pursuit of these objectives shall be administered by or under the purview of the Ministry.

In further execution of its functions it shall also:

- (a) Establish and regulate commodity and trade standards;
- (b) Collect, evaluate, and publish data pertaining to commerce, industry and transportation;
- (c) Establish and enforce standards of business practice;
- (d) Promote sound and development of foreign and domestic commerce;
- (e) Develop plans for the movements of goods and people within and without the Republic;
- (f) Perform such other function as may be assigned from time to time by the President.

S 652. ORGANIZATION - The Ministry of Commerce and Industry shall be organized in such manner and with such personnel as shall be determined by the Minister, subject to the approval of the President.

Section 2. This act shall take effect immediately upon publication in handbills. Any law to the contrary notwithstanding

Approved August 25, 1987

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
MONROVIA, LIBERIA

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT

Mission Statement

To provide the Strategic Policy Framework and Direction for sustained and equitable economic growth that will lead to increase income and improvements in the quality of life of the Liberian people.

Vision Statement

That Liberia will have a vibrant and competitive private sector that will spur sustainable job creation and equitable economic growth and development.

IN PROFILE: HIGHLIGHTING MSME'S – HARVEST TECHNOLOGIES INC.

During the first year of implementation of the MSME Policy, Several training and capacity building interventions were held to provide the requisite orientation, skills and knowledge to entrepreneurs in order to take their respective businesses to the next level. The MSME Division assisted in securing a grant of \$200,000.00 for African Women's Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP) from Chevron to help train 750 women in the 15 political sub-divisions of Liberia with major focus on cassava processing. Several other MSMEs have moved from one level to the next through the intervention of the Ministry and its partners. One of such Entrepreneur is profiled below.

Since its inception in 2010, Harvest Technologies Inc a subsidiary of Gregoire Wornou Inc a 100 % Liberian owned company has been gradually growing in the Soap Industry to serve local market bring a smile on every face. Harvest Technologies Inc. manufactures a range specially formulated Herbal and Medicated soap to unclog pores and remove excess oil from oily skin. "Produce Liberia and Consume Liberia" has a mission to add exuberance to life by aptly promoting sanitary and a healthy environment to businesses like restaurants, hotels, clinics, hospitals, schools, day care facilities and homes for personal care and hygiene with superb quality products. Since its inception, the company has come a long way to begin to acquire the prominence it hopes to enjoy someday. Under the management of visionary leaders (Mr. & Mrs. Victor Hughes), they have moved from doggedness to strength on the Liberian market with employment strength of five (5).

The MSME Division has worked with the enterprise in developing its products "Improving Health and Preventing Skin Diseases" of many. Its customer base has increased to include both Liberians and expatriates living in Liberia. The ingredients in its products are 100% natural, medicinal and good locally handmade. They have been aided in retailing their products on the market by the Ministry of Commerce & Industry MSME Division with support from Building Markets to increase their market share. Through the Division and its partners (IBEX and Building Markets) Harvest Technologies participated in a United States Embassy Holiday Art & Craft Fair and has been invited to display and sell its products regularly at the Monrovia City Corporation whenever events are hosted there. As their market share increases they have now hired others to increase production to meet the growing demand for their products.

The market for Harvest Technologies products is growing reflecting its high quality, packaging and the fact that herbal products do not have major competitors locally; its revenue base is gradually increasing.

Ingredients in the products include: Guava Anti-Septic, Ginger Analgesic, Maringa Anti Bacterial, Anti Fungal and Aging, Cornmeal and Sesame seed and cassava.

The Division has also been working with the enterprise to access financial and non-financial services such as: business management, financial, legal, logistics, better packaging, distribution and business partners and export opportunities. There is an ongoing process to

brand this product with the intellectual property office.

Challenges: Cutting, packaging, market access and networking with producers of similar product are among the challenges faced by Harvest Technologies Inc. We believe that our investment in research to improve the technology in its production will put the company in a leading position in the sub-region as the biggest producer of herbal soap. With our support and that of our partners the company's competitiveness will be improved as well as its ability to create jobs over the next five years.

Pictures of Un- Packed and Packed Products:

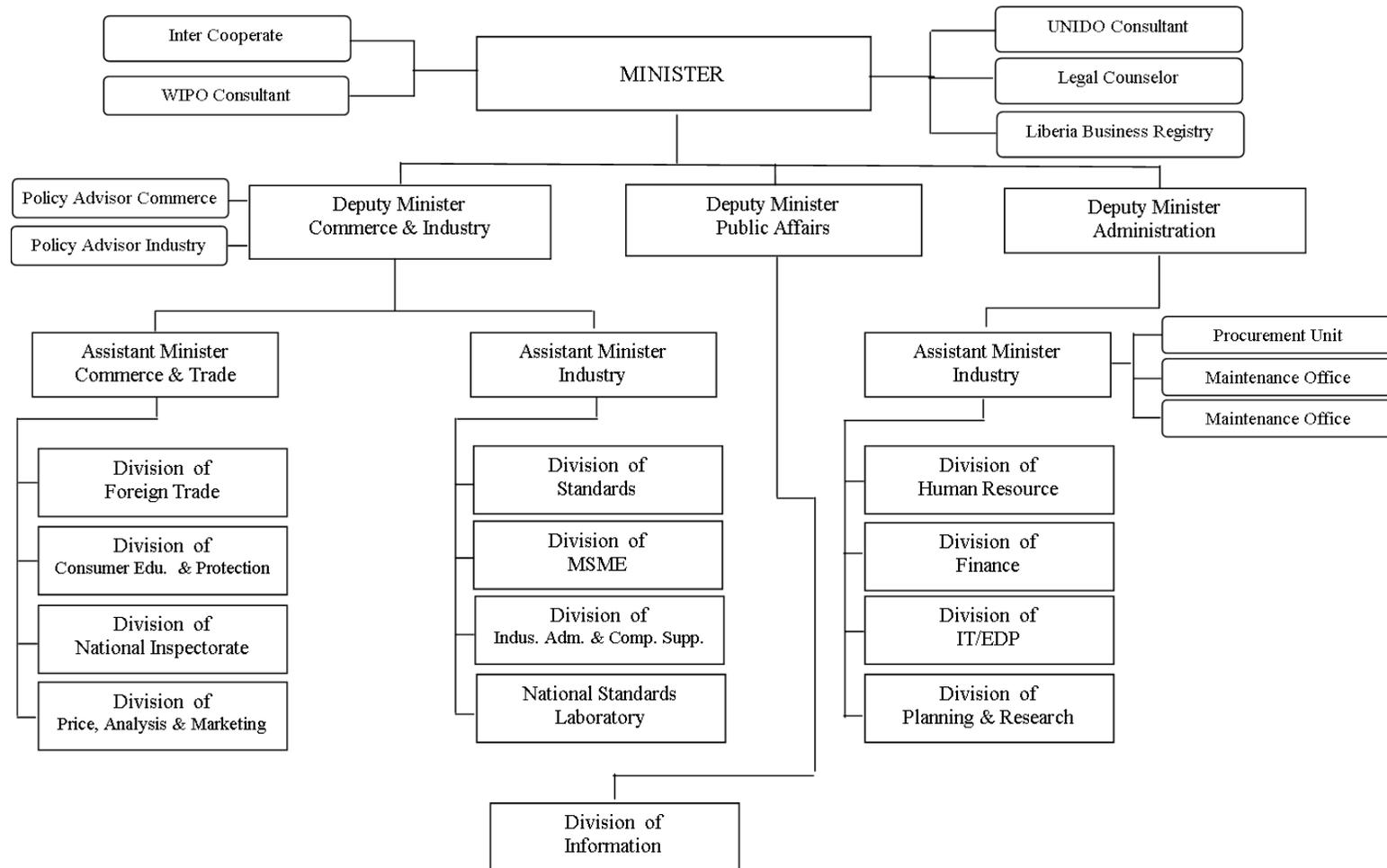


Harvest Technologies Inc.
Fish Market, Sinkor, Tubman Boulevard
Phone: +231(0) 880-559-786
+231(0) 777-008-078
E-mail: harvestechno@gmail.com
www.harvestherbalsoap.webs.com
Monrovia, Liberia
West Africa

ACRONYMS

AGOA	Africa Growth & Opportunity Act
ARIPO	African Regional Intellectual Property Organization
ASYCUDA	Automated System of Custom Data
AWEP	African Women's Entrepreneurship Program
BRDO	Better Regulation Delivery Office (UK)
COLINBO	Concern Liberia International Business Organization
DTIS	Diagnostic Trade Integration Study
EPD	Export Permit Declaration
GOL	Government of Liberia
ICFA	Investment Climate Facilitates for Africa
ICT	Information Communication Technology
ICTA	Investment Climate facilitates Team for Africa
IIC	Inter-Institutional Committee
IP	Intellectual Property
ISO	International Standard Organization
ITC	International Trade Center
LSBA	Liberia Small Business Association
MCC	Millennium Challenge Cooperation
MFTR	Memorandum of Foreign Trade Regime
MSME	Micro Small Medium Enterprises
NIU/IF	National Implementation Unit/Integrated Framework
NRD	Norwegian Registrar Development
NSL	National Standard Laboratory
SOP	Standard Operation Procedure
TCFP	Third Country Fabric Provision
TIS	Trade Information Service
TPO	Trade Promotion Office
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
USAID	United State Aid for International Development
WAMI	West Africa Monetary Institute
WAQP	West African Quality Program
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

Organizational Chart Ministry of Commerce & Industry



1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview of 2012

The global economy faced a difficult year given financial instability due to the crisis in the Euro-zone and the resulting global slowdown. The world also faced a high degree of volatility in the prices of essential commodities. Efforts of the Government notwithstanding, Liberia remains import dependent and therefore essential commodities such as rice and fuel continue to be subject to external shocks. The global instability and volatility highlight the need for Liberia to diversify away from the export of primary products to create a successful, private-sector driven, industrialized, economy.

It is against this backdrop that the Ministry of Commerce and Industry executed its mandate of promoting a competitive private sector to diversify our domestic production sector and move up the value-chain, monitoring of global economic conditions, reacting with timely and transparent interventions; and regulating trade to ensure that consumers are protected and that businesses remain competitive.

Despite rising food and fuel prices on the international markets, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry ensured that there was sufficient quantity of essential commodities, especially rice, on the market at affordable prices.

The Ministry has initiated several important programs during 2012 including conducting Liberia's first working party meeting at the WTO and reducing the time and cost it takes to open a business. The Ministry also built on the implementation of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) and Industrial policies approved and launched in 2011 resulting in trainings for entrepreneurs, new vocational skills training courses and rubber science and rubber wood technical and degree programs with Grand Bassa Community College, Booker Washington Institute and Tubman University respectively. These programs will help provide the skills needed for Liberia to create a successful market driven economy.

Major Achievements

During the period January – December 2012, the Ministry has had several major achievements across various subject areas.

Promoting an enabling environment for private sector development

The Government has highlighted private sector development as a key area for achieving middle-income status by 2030. As a result of efforts made by trade related ministries and agencies to improve the business environment, Liberia jumped five places from 154 to 149 under the World Bank's "doing-business" index. The role played by the Ministry in creating an enabling environment for private sector development can be summarized through several key achievements:

- The procedures for registering a business were streamlined to reduce the time taken to register from six to a maximum of just two days. Another improvement was the removal of L\$ 4,200.00 levy for business registration. These measures contributed to a 29% growth in the number of formally registered businesses, who now benefit from being a part of the database used by business services providers. Liberia now ranks 38 out of 185 countries surveyed by the World Bank in the category, "ease of starting a business.
- The Ministry has professionalized the inspectorate to ensure businesses are adhering to the countries laws and regulations, while not causing excessive regulations and controls. The Ministry has approved and published two regulations, which, in effect, reduce the number of inspections from daily to quarterly. Inspectors are now provided with a toolkit of checklists, inspection order, and inspection notices.
- The Ministry has completed a draft Competition Law and, when passed into Law by the Legislature, is expected to be implemented in 2013. The law will guarantee fair and competitive trade among businesses in Liberia. The Ministry is also in the process of reviewing a draft Foreign Trade Law, a critical piece in the strengthening of Liberia's trade regime.
- In collaboration with the National Consumers Council of Liberia, the Ministry launched a Consumer Rights Booklet. Consumer awareness is being pronounced with the introduction of monthly consumer program on UNMIL Radio and the resolution of hundreds of consumers' cases around generators, mobile phones and electronics - and even in services.
- The National Standards Laboratory is now fully equipped with machinery and highly trained staff. The new laboratory will increase Liberia's capacity to export international standard products and monitor and curtail the importation of sub-standard products.

- The Ministry successfully managed the monetization of USAID Food Aid and the Japanese Food Aid and Non Project grant to Liberia.

Trade Reform and Multilateral Trade Negotiations

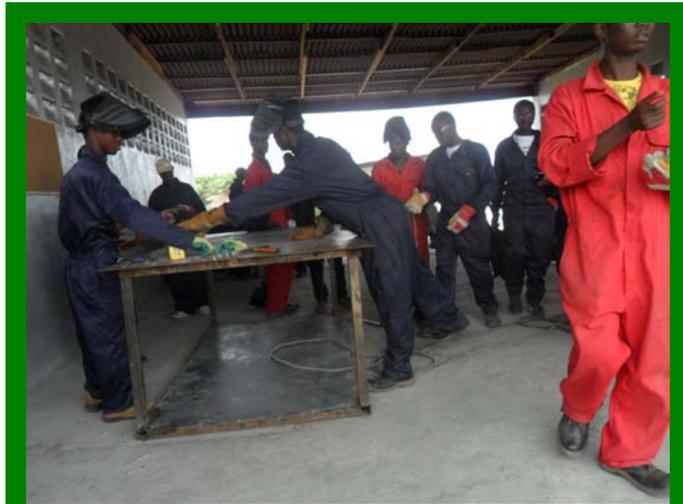
The Ministry has undertaken a major trade reform agenda in order to facilitate the establishment of an export-driven economy. The Ministry is playing a strong role in coordinating the necessary changes to establish a regional customs union in ECOWAS and is leading current efforts to ratify the protocols on ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) and Rules of Origin. The Ministry is leading Liberia's accession to the WTO in a relatively short period of time. Steps to accomplish these goals have been achieved through several projects:

- The Ministry organized Liberia's First Working Party meeting in Geneva; thus paving the way for Liberia to present its first goods and services offer to the WTO next year and responses to the questions submitted by members of the WTO.
- The Ministry has been an active participant in the process of signing onto the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). Through the process of ensuring that Liberia's EPA Development Plan is funded, the Ministry has worked closely with regional players to ensure Liberia's unique position, as a post-conflict LDC, is taken into consideration in the formulation of programs for the African, Caribbean and the Pacific Group (ACP).
- The Ministry reduced the administrative burden on companies by reducing import licenses from 81 categories to 27, and export licenses from all products to just 4 essential and sensitive commodities.
- The Ministry created the Trade Facilitation Forum to bring together key ministries in organizing efforts in trade promotion and regulation.
- The Ministry has taken the lead in harmonizing the inspection function in the country by hosting the first Inspection Symposium bringing together 15 ministries and agencies with inspection function. The Symposium aimed at learning from best practices in rationalizing inspection in Liberia.

Industrial Policy Implementation

The Ministry began the implementation process for Liberia's first ever Industrial Policy. Among the achievements from its first year are:

- The WELD Liberia project has begun training 170-300 students in technical training in the area of heavy-duty vehicle/tractor maintenance, welding and entrepreneurship. The program funded by the Japanese Government and run in collaboration with UNIDO, Buchanan Community College and BWI aims to equip a new generation with the technical skills to enter the job market.



WELD LIBERIA: Students undergo training in heavy-duty equipment maintenance, welding and entrepreneurship development in Grand Bassa County. 300 Students to be trained. Sponsored by MOCI/UNIDO with Japanese Funding

- The Tubman University Rubber Science Technology Institute will be unveiled next year. The new institute will provide bachelor degrees as well as a certificate course in rubber science and technology. This programme will equip students with the skills necessary to increase rubber related industrial activities in Liberia, including furniture made from rubber wood.
- With support from UNDP, a Consultant began review of the Industrial Policy work program developed by the Ministry to facilitate full-scale implementation of the policy.
- To address the substandard commodity issues, the Ministry has published 50 additional standards from SON and 450 from FAO mainly for food commodities.

MSME Development

The MSME Division has begun implementation of the MSME policy. The Division's main achievements to date are:

- Conducted training in computer and business skills
- Holding a six-week media promotion of business knowledge and entrepreneurship in Liberia
- Created a forum where business service providers meet to map out what services are available, how entrepreneurs can access those services, and knowledge sharing
- Published a financial guide to help Liberian entrepreneurs.

2.0 BUREAU OF ADMINISTRATION

Overview

The Bureau of Administration manages and coordinates the financial, material and human resources of the Ministry. It develops, defends and executes the approved fiscal budget as well as mobilizes resources (technical & financial) as may be required for the efficient and successful implementation of all of the Ministry's projects and programs.

Objectives

- Formulate and ensure the approval of a Fiscal Budget to support the implementation of the Ministry's mandate and goals.
- Efficiently and expeditiously execute the Ministry's budget to achieve measurable targets.
- Planned and executed staff training and development
- Provide support for all Units of the Ministry to enhance overall performance and improve service delivery.
- Coordinate and direct overall efforts in the execution of MoCI's goals and objectives
- Promote the efficient use, and records thereof, of all financial and material resources of the Ministry.
- Mobilize technical and financial support for the successful implementation of the Institution's goals and objectives.
- Participated in the development of the strategic plans to enhance the Ministry's capacity to meet present and future challenges.
- Ensure clean and secured office environment.
- Completed the construction of four (4) buildings (2 offices and 2 cassava processing plants in 3 counties.

2.1 DIVISION OF FINANCE

Achievements

- Successfully executed the 2nd Semester of the FY2011-2012 Budget with an annual appropriation of USD3.8 million.
- Managed cash flow and ensured available funds met the day to day payments.
- Facilitated the acquisition of one (1) housing unit for office use from the National Housing Authority.

- Facilitated the lifting of over USD600, 000 from Contingency to address crucial logistics needs.
- Received FY2012/2013 approved Core Budget of USD2.3M (Bare Bone Budget of USD2.1 million and a USD0.3M Annual Appropriation for LBR with a contingent appropriation of USD0.1M).
- Executed the 1st Semester of the FY2012-2013 Budget (Midyear Review: 44% allotment as % of App.; 39% exp. as % of App.; and 89% exp. as % of allotment).
- Ensured the mainstream of LBR into to Core Budget from Supplemental Budget.
- Received FY2012/2013 approved PSIP Budget of USD369, 775 (National Standards Laboratory USD219,775 and Intellectual Property Systems(IPS) Reforms Agenda USD150,000).
- Budget was executed consistent with the Public Financial Management Act of 2009, GoL Accounting Standards, and IPSAS as adopted by GoL and the Public Procurement and Concession Commission Act and its Regulations.
- Three(3) staff of the Finance Division participated in a service delivery workshop on Finance, Procurement and Human Resources, organized by the Ministry of Finance on the implementation of the Public Financial Management Act of 2009 and its Regulations.
- Three(3) technicians including the Financial Comptroller along with the Chief Internal Auditor participated in the Regional Course on Computer Application in Accounting, Auditing and Financial Management in the Public Sector held in Lagos, Nigeria from September 17-21,2012 organized by the West African Institute for Financial and Economic Management(WAIFEM).

Challenges

- The automation of the Finance Division consistent with International best practice and standards.
- Provision of adequate local and international trainings for staff of the Division.
- Increase in the floats for the efficient execution of the Ministry's imprest funds (Operational Fund expenditure)
- The inclusion of the National Standards Laboratory and the Intellectual Property Systems into the mainstream of the National Budget with adequate funding.
- Delayed receipt of allotment for Projects execution.
- The inclusion of the Bureau of Public Affairs in the National Budget.

Way Forward

- Full automation of the Finance Division to generate high quality and timely reports
- Trainings for staff of the Finance Division in new Accounting Software (Quick Books, Sage 50, etc.)

- Administration should work toward the inclusion of the NSL and the IPS into the mainstream of the National Budget with adequate funding

2.2 DIVISION OF PLANNING & RESEARCH

Achievements

- Coordinated the development of a National Export Strategy document in collaboration with the International Trade Center (ITC) presently awaiting validation
- Successfully coordinated the Engendering of the Draft Trade Policy now undergoing a technical review, and supported by U.N.Women
- Research and Planning Director trained in monitoring & evaluation methodology by the World Bank Institute, in support of MoCI's projects under the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF)
- Coordinated MoCI's statistical Program in collaboration with LISGIS
- Provided investigative research support to other MoCI units including the Division of Trade, Consumer Education and Protection, and the Industrial Compliance Division

Challenges

- Need to upgrade staff computer and research skills
- Training of staff of all data generating units in statistics and statistical data analysis is required

Way Forward

- We herein recommend that one (1) member of staff from each data generating units participate in the statistical program and attend training with assistance from LISGIS
- A more effective information dissemination mechanism to keep the Division abreast of issues arising

2.3 DIVISION OF PERSONNEL

Achievements

- Spearheaded training for thirty one (31) employees of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry in Public Sector Management at the Liberia Institute of Public Administration (LIPA) from October to December 2012
- Facilitated the participation of Ms. Anna Phillips, former Special Assistant to the Minister and Mr. Alhaji E.A. Sherif, Assistant Human Resource Director, at the Training of Trainers (ToT) course in Ethical Leadership & Quality Productivity

Improvement held in Accra, Ghana under the auspices of the Civil Services Agency and Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

- Successfully deleted from the Ministry's payroll sixteen (16) names of deceased, job-abandoned and dismissed employees in collaboration with the Internal Audit Unit
- Facilitated the signing of a new Personnel Insurance Agreement with Securisk Insurance Company in order to abort the payment of insurance premium from employees disposable income
- Underwent a substantial assessment on the organization's capabilities in Human Resources with consultants from Deloitte under the auspices of USAID. The assessment of the HR Division has nine (9) components which include: 1. HR Strategy, Planning, Policies and Communication 2. Organizational Development 3. Recruiting 4. Staffing & Succession Planning 5. Training & Orientation 6. Appraisal, Development & Career Planning 7. Compensation 8. Payroll & Benefits Administration 9. Employee Record Keeping & HRMIS (Human Resource Information System).
- MOCI staff utilized Eighty-nine (89) short, medium and long terms training courses offered in thirteen (13) countries.
- Provided training for one mid- level manager in Contemporary Diplomacy and International Relations at the Foreign Service Institute, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Liberia, Deputy Comptroller training in China, and several other training for Directors and other members of staff at the Liberia Institute for Public Administration.
- Foreign Training - During this reporting period, twenty-five staff travelled to eleven countries for training in various disciplines.
- Local Training - Sixty-Four of our employees from various departments benefited from local training. Of the sixty-four employees, thirty-one participated in training at the Liberian Institute of Public Administration during the reporting period. Some of the courses offered were Business Planning & Management, Human Resources Management, Effective Communication Skills and Public Procurement.

Challenges

- Lack of adequate equipment for the effectiveness of the Human Resource activities (Laptops, Desktops, Photocopiers, Printers and extended hard drive for documents backups among others)
- The need for a Vehicle for the efficient running of the Human Resource internal and external activities.

Way Forward

- The need for regular monitoring and evaluation of outstation employees of the Ministry
- More trainings be carryout for staff of the Ministry
- Allowance increment for staff to engender motivation

2.4 DIVISION OF ELECTRONIC DATA PROCESSING**Achievements**

- Upgraded the Ministry's web-site (in collaboration with its web provider)
- Ensured the installation of a broad band Internet service by an upgrade from 512mbs to 1 Meg. (in collaboration with West Africa Telecommunications Inc.)
- Re-network the Ministry to have all offices connected to the wireless and broad band services.
- Upgraded the Operating Systems (OS) of more than 50 computers, installed Anti-virus and various application software
- Fully set up new computers (Desktops & Laptops), printers and other equipment in the various bureaus.
- Training of fourteen (14) staff from the Bureau of Commerce in Microsoft Office application in preparation for the ASYCUDA program.
- Facilitated the acquisition "One Nation Freedom Plan" (wireless gadgets service) from LIBTELCO to enhance inter- office communication

Challenges

- Lack of genuine software to prevent ICT piracy
- Highly understaffed with only two (2) Technicians

Way Forward

- A more effective and regular approach towards the maintenance of computer systems to enhance maximum productivity and to prevent ICT risks.

- Technical training (short & long terms programs) in hardware, website design networking, programming, database administration and server administration be provided to staff of the division as a means of enhancing their capacity.
- Users operation workshops conducted to develop the capacity of users of the Ministry's computer system to improve productivity.
- Recruitment of additional two (2) technicians to augment the strength of the division to meet growing challenges

2.5 **PROCUREMENT UNIT**

Achievements

- Developed the Ministry's Procurement Plan for the FY2012-2013, and the Procurement Plans for projects (National Standards Laboratory and Intellectual Property System) which were approved by PPCC and being executed in line with the approved budget of the Ministry and the PPCC Act and its Regulations.
- Provided additional logistics and relief for employees through the acquisition of two (2) thirty seater buses and the procurement of one (1) double cabin Pick-up for use by the Industrial Development Division, two (2) motorbikes for the Inspectorate Division, one (1) four-wheel drive vehicle which is now assigned to the Minister's Special Assistant and five (5) Hyundai SUVs for use by the Deputy and Assistant Ministers
- Coordinated the bidding Process leading to the renovation of the Ministry's future home on Capitol Hill for which works are nearing completion.
- Procured services for the provision of a bore hole which now supplies the Liberia Business Registry (LBR) with safe treated water.
- Established a mechanism for the regular update of the Ministry's Assets Registry in order to keep a monthly track of inventory.
- Received one (1) Procurement Specialist from the GoL-World Bank funded Financial Management Training Program (FMTP) to enhance the overall performance and efficiency of the Unit.

Challenges

- Delays in procurement of goods, services and works arising from the inability of some vendors/ business houses to acquire current business registrations and tax clearances thus hindering the output of the Unit.
- Lack of adequate manpower to carry out its duties and functions.
- Procurement of machinery and equipment, office furniture, ICT infrastructure, networks and facilities among others for relocation to the future home being renovated.

Way Forward

- That Interns assigned with the Unit be considered employment as they are already familiar with the task and function of the Unit.
- That the Inspectorate Division of the Ministry ensures the timely compliance of businesses with the registration process.
- A more rigorous and extensive negotiation with GoL for additional budget support to facilitate the seamless relocation of the head office.
- Need for an all- inclusive support to the Unit from staff to comply with the procurement requirements, PPCC Act and its Regulations.

2.6 MAINTENANCE UNIT

Achievements

- Facilitated the timely repairs and servicing of the Ministry's vehicles
- Worked with Procurement Unit for the purchasing of new vehicles
- Facilitated the Coding of the Ministry's New Vehicles and Motor Bikes done by General Services Agency (GSA)
- Ensured a conducive working environment

Challenges

- Lack of adequate manpower
- Lack of adequate logistical support for the Security Unit.
- Lack of training for the unit's staff

Way Forward

- Adequate logistical support and In-house trainings for the unit's staff

3.0 BUREAU OF COMMERCE

OVERVIEW

The Bureau of Commerce and Trade is responsible for trade management system and procedures, issuance of permits, collection, evaluation and publication of trade data, promotion of fair pricing, consumer education, protection, and enforcement.

OBJECTIVES:

- Collect, evaluate, and publish data pertaining to Commerce;
- Promote sound development of foreign and domestic trade;
- Issue import and export permits for essential commodities;
- Implement efficient and effective trade management system including pre-shipment inspection of imports and exports;
- Promote education and protection of consumers;
- Regulate pricing regime and monitor markets related to sensitive commodities;
- Promote the enforcement of regulations and policies, as deemed necessary.

3.1 DIVISION OF TRADE

Achievements

- Streamlined the licensing regime (Import and Export Permits) with the issuance of a regulation to reduce the categories of restricted items to 27 essential ones only. Initially 81 categories were restricted, later 33 and currently only 27 categories including 4 for export, are currently being processed within the Bureau of Commerce and Trade;
- Began a process of automating the licenses to improve trade and boost Liberia's trade policy indicator under the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC);

- Liberia submitted its responses to the over 90 questions transmitted by members of the World Trade Organization (WTO);
- Ambassador Joachim Reiter was announced in early May as Liberia's Chairman for its Working Party Meeting at the WTO;
- Successfully mobilized support from the Swiss Government to prepare Liberia for its First Working Party Meeting in Geneva. iDEAS Centre sent a team to Liberia for the mission. This was at no cost to the GoL;
- Liberia successfully had its First Working Party Meeting at the WTO on 11 July 2012. Liberia was represented by a high-level delegation of trade related ministries and agencies led by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry;
- In an effort to intensify the internal dialogue on Liberia's accession to the WTO, two missions were organized: the Swedish National Board of Trade (NBT) and the International Trade Center (ITC). Both missions were at no cost to the GoL. Unlike the NBT Mission, the ITC Mission focused on the participation of both public and private stakeholders in the accession process;
- As the sole non-ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) implementing West African nation, Liberia successfully participated in the West Africa Monetary Institute (WAMI) technical meeting and ministerial meeting in Accra, Ghana in October 2012 to assure its regional partners of its commitment to regional integration through trade. Though not a member of the WTO, ensure the active participations in other trade meetings like the European Union-African Caribbean Pacific (ACP) Group and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) were also very important during 2012 to continue our engagement with the multilateral trading system and to ensure the sensitivities of post-conflict least developed countries (LDCs) are highlighted in those discussions;
- Participated in the 2012 AGOA technical and proactively advocated for the extension of the Third Country Fabric Provision. Today, Liberia continues to benefit from the AGOA and its Third Country Fabric (TCF) Provision;
- Along with the Ministry of Finance, signed a pre-shipment inspection contract with BIVAC to ensure uninterrupted international trade between Liberia and the rest of the world. And the Ministry ensured the inclusion of provisions that speak to the upholding of quality inspection, technical capacity building and clear and prompt reporting;

- Drafted the Liberia National Export Strategy and distributed the various sectors specific documents (oil palm, cassava, rice, spices, coffee and cocoa, etc) to the relevant stakeholders for comments and transmitted those comments back to the ITC for consideration before validation in early 2013;
- Drafted a trade policy document and completed a process of engendering the policy document with support from the UN Women. The engendering took in to consideration the role of women in cross border trade;
- Advocated for and currently chairs the Liberia’s Trade Facilitation Forum. The forum has identified the non-tariff barriers to trade and is working towards reducing or eliminating them;
- Drafted a competition and a foreign trade law and distributed for comments internally and to experience legal minds. .

Challenges

- Lack of economists with comparative knowledge in the multilateral trading system or regional trading policy options (CET & ETLs);
- Lack of statisticians and policy analysts;
- Competitive computer literacy in spreadsheet;
- Limited capacity in IT infrastructure and software crucial to support data collection;
- Low incentives for staff.

Way Forward

- Increase budgetary support to provide motivation for staff and boost productivity.
- Targeted training and study tour.

3.2 PRICE ANALYSIS AND MARKETING

Achievements

- Successfully monitored and coordinated the monetization of JICS commodities (petroleum and rice) on the Liberian market. Proceeds from the monetization of



JAPANESE FOOD AID: STEERING COMMITTEE
RECEIVES JAPANESE RICE

these commodities have contributed immensely to the social economic development of Liberia: Establishment of the MSME Division and the Paddy Rice Project being implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture;

- Worked with ACDI/VOCA to ensure thorough monitoring and transparency in the USAID monetization procedures which involved the participation of local economic players;
- Issued suggested prices report to draw comparative analysis between trade information and what is prevailing on market (supply and demand);
- Ensured the stability in the prices of rice, petroleum products and cement on the Liberian market;
- Worked with Ministry of Agriculture and donor agencies to analyze world food and fuel situation impact on the local market and proposed mitigating measures;
- Provided regular reports on stock level for rice.

Challenges

- Lack of economists and statisticians to draw thorough analysis and produce reports on the prevailing situation in the economy;
- Lack of equipment (computers, printers, photocopiers);
- Low or no capacity in analysis to aid simulation of data;
- Low compensation

Way Forward

- Increase budgetary support to provide equipment;
- Training and recruitment of personnel earmarked for specific deliverables

3.3 INSPECTORATE DIVISION

Achievements

- Reduction in the number of inspections from daily to quarterly;
- Introduction of a ministerial panel review mechanism to grant businesses the opportunity to seek redress in matters arising from inspection actions, etc.;
- With the assistance of the IFC, introduced inspection orders/notices to announce inspections;



MOCI/IFC/BRDO INSPECTION SYMPOSIUM

- Organized Liberia’s Inspection Symposium and intensified the process of harmonizing inspection across ministries and agencies with inspection mandates;
- Conducted inspections on a quarterly basis and saw an improvement in the conduct of inspections through the provision of reports and the delivery of better education to the business community;
- While we work to educate the business community, fines paid by violators were more than US\$5,000.00 for sparks of offences committed.

Challenges

- Too many Inspectors;
- Categorization of inspectors challenge by sector-induced issues (limited knowledge about some sectors, need to specialize, limited inspection and more targeted results to promote efficiency).

3.4 CONSUMER EDUCATION & PROTECTION

Achievements

- From a single staff for more than three (3) years, the unit was finally strengthened with additional three persons;
- Worked with the National Consumer Council of Liberia (NCCL) and UNIDO to take consumerism to the public by participating in a regular talk show on UNMIL Radio (1st and 3rd Monday of every month);
- Due to increased staff strength and more publicity, number of cases resolved averaged over 15 monthly; thereby saving consumers thousands of valuable dollars;
- With support from UNIDO and in partnership with the NCCL, launched the consumer brochures to educate consumers within the commerce of Liberia;
- Identified opportunities for fact-finding mission to Botswana. The fact-finding mission is crucial for the drafting of a consumer law for the protection of consumers;
- Drafted a competition law and seeking comments from top legal minds;
- Sent a staff to Abidjan to contribute in the regional consumer education and protection program for ECOWAS states.

Challenges

- Funding for consumerism is limited;
- Training and study tour for staff;
- Logistical support

Way Forward

- Increased funding for awareness (both rural and urban);
- Logistical support;
- Training of staff and networking with other consumer organizations regionally

3.5 LIBERIA BUSINESS REGISTRY

Overview

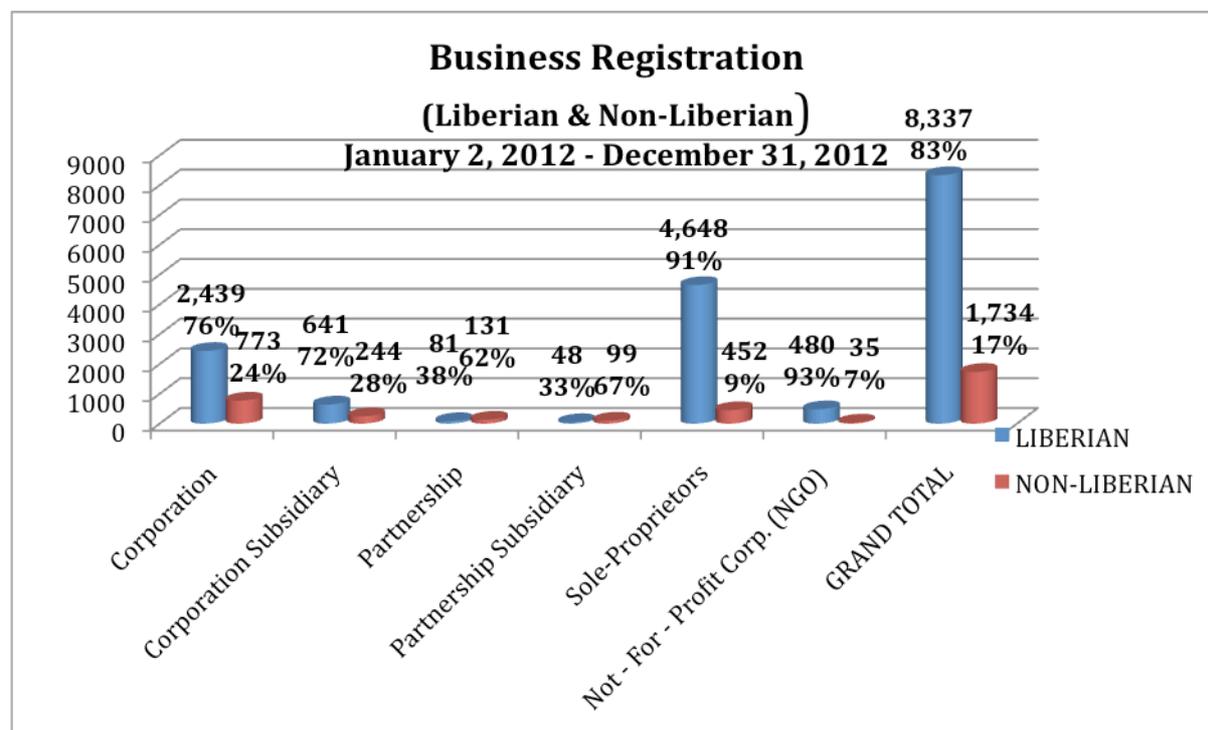
The Liberia Business Registry (LBR) is a One-Stop-Shop that has been jointly established by Government of Liberia Ministries - Ministries of Commerce & Industry, Foreign Affairs, Finance; and Agencies Central Bank of Liberia and the National Social Security & Welfare Corporation (NASSCORP) - that had responsibility for enterprise formalization.

These Ministries and Agencies delegated their functions as relates to the formalization of enterprises to the LBR thereby making the LBR responsible for the coordination and implementation of the processes of enterprise formalization in Liberia under the direct administrative supervision of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

LBR performs the authorization, incorporation and registration of every domestic corporation, reregistered corporation or re-domiciled corporation and every foreign corporation seeking authority for a place of business within the Republic of Liberia.

Achievements

During the period under review, Ten Thousand and Seventy One (10,071) business establishments were registered in the category of both profit and not-for-profit making as shown in the graph below.



A Summary of registered businesses with from January 2, 2012 – December 31, 2012 showing the numbers and percentages of Liberians and Non-Liberians businesses in the various categories

Achievements

- During the period under review - 2012, 10,071 businesses were registered compared to 9,010 businesses in 2011 representing a growth of 11% in 2012 over 2011.
- Newly established businesses totaled 6,266 as compared to 5,004 in 2011. Meanwhile, 5,492 in 2012 as compared to 2,617 in 2011 are Liberian owned businesses, while 774 in 2012 as compared to 73 in 2011 are Non-Liberian owned businesses. These statistics shows a growth of 20% in new business registration over 2011.
- On the basis of ownership by gender in 2012 shows that 8,413 males and 2,855 females are owners of registered businesses, as compared to 2011 which shows 3,831 males and 1,104 females. Representing a growth of 54% for males and 61% for females respectively.
- The revenue generated from Business Registration, Penalties for Late Registration, Change in Particular (s), and Business Trade level amounted to Forty Seven Million Eight Hundred and Ninety Three Thousand, Six Hundred and Fifty Six Liberian Dollars (**L\$ 47,893,656.00**) from the registration of Liberian owned businesses. The amount generated in 2012 showed a decrease of 18% down 2011 due to the cancellation of the L\$ 4,200.00 which was charged for Business License fees.
- Revenue generated from Non-Liberian business also for Business Registration, Penalties for Late Registration, Change in Particular (s), and Filing of Articles of Incorporation (Both Liberian/Non-Liberian) amounted to One Million Three Hundred and Eighty Nine Thousand, Eight Hundred and Forty Three United States Dollars (**US\$ 1,389,843.00**). The amount generated in US\$ in 2012 showed an increase of 28% over 2011.
- Businesses continued to be registered at the LBR within a minimum time space of at most 48 hours when all requirements are met and there are no technological glitches with the system. This is primarily due to the commitment of staff designated from the various Ministries and Agency.
- In order to stimulate enterprise formation especially those in the informal sector, the Ministry of Commerce & Industry in consultation and collaboration with the Ministry of Finance cancelled the Business License fees of L\$ 4,200.00 for all businesses – a reduction that highly benefited Liberian owned businesses by over 50% cost of the registration fee.
- In order to further streamline the registration process and improve Liberia's ranking in the Doing Business Survey of the World Bank Group, the number of steps and procedures in registering a business were reduced from 6 to 2.

Challenges

LBR is designed and created in accordance with international best practices with a 3-phase electricity server of 90 amperes that runs on a 24/7 hours basis with a goal of making Liberia a better place to do business.

The followings are challenges faced by the LBR:

- Inadequate budgetary funding;
- As stated in the Inter-Ministerial Regulations developed and agreed to by Ministries and Agencies involved in enterprise formalization, The LBR should function as a one-stop-shop; however, one partner continued violate the agreement by processing and registration of Articles of Incorporation for corporate entities outside of LBR on grounds that the statutory laws that gave them the right are yet to be repealed. An act that we strongly believe to have brought Liberia backward by 2 steps in the Doing Business Survey Ranking of the World Bank Group in the 2013 report.

Way Forward

In view of the abovementioned challenges, we are therefore pleased to recommend the followings:

- That the needed funds for the day-to-day and smooth running of the LBR is approved;
- That those statutory laws that gave any of the GoL Ministries and/or Agencies the right to formalize businesses are repealed and all functions be delegated to the LBR through an act of Legislation.

4.0 BUREAU OF INDUSTRY

Overview

The Bureau of Industry is the arm of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry that monitors, regulates, promotes, and also facilitates the growth, development and expansion of the industrial sector of Liberia. It is also responsible for coordinating programs with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) while at the same time serving in the Capacity of the Focal Point for CODEX related activities in Liberia. The Bureau as mandated, develops standards and regulates standard activities in the commerce or Liberia by conducting through the national standard Laboratory of Liberia test of various kinds for products.

As part of its mandate to facilitate the development of the industrial sector of Liberia, the Bureau of Industry ensures good manufacturing practices (GMP) and those industrial establishments meet standards operating procedures. It also undertakes programs to collect and compile industrial statistics on existing and functional industries operating in the commerce of Liberia and supports the Micro Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) sector which is also known as the informal sector, especially of the economy by its support to the MSME Division at the Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

The Bureau of Industry is comprised of three Divisions and a laboratory: Division of MSME, Division of Industrial Development and Compliance Support, the Division of Standards and the newly established National Standards Laboratory (NSL), all of which are working toward the achievement of a vibrant industrial sector of Liberia by the programs and activities they are undertaking.

4.1 DIVISION OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMPLIANCE SUPPORT

Overview

During the period under review, the Ministry merged two divisions of the bureau into a single division. The name of the new division is “Division of Industrial Development and Compliance Support” under the Bureau of Industry to perform activities previously undertaken by the two divisions. The Division is headed by a Director who is assisted by an Assistant Director and three sectional heads.



World Industrialization Day Celebration: Minister Beysolow Inspects Locally Manufactured Products – Sponsored by MoCI/UNIDO

The newly established division consists of three key sections, namely:

- Industrial Information Section
- Industrial Support and Compliance Section
- Industrial Promotion Section

Achievements

- Began implementation of the National Industrial Policy endorsed by the cabinet for implementation in 2011. Implementation work programs were developed.
- Constituted and completed the formation of the Industrial Coordinating Committee, letters have been sent to line ministries/agencies to nominate focal persons. As result, nomination of focal persons to the ICC were received from MOJ, MOGD, MOF & MOPEA,
- A consultant hired by the UNDP completed the review of the implementation programs developed under the policy.
- Under the supervision of the Assistant Minister for Industry, staffs of the Division visited a number of industries in Monrovia and its environs to create awareness on the newly launched Industrial Policy of Liberia, ensure compliance of the Good Manufacture Practices (GMPs) and facilitate exchanges between local industries and the Bureau of Industry;
- A team from the Division accompanied the UNIDO Consultant on WELD LIBERIA WORK DEVELOPMENT FORCE PROGRAM to the Booker Washington Institute in Kakata and identified training needs of the institution in the auto-mechanic and welding departments;
- Over 160 students have started classes at the GBCC in Grand Bassa County and BWI in Margibi County respectively;
- A team from the Division held a consultative meeting with Authorities of Venture Capital Inc to determine the roles and functions of this institution; and number of industrial establishments that have benefited from their program;
- Developed a concept note for the revised project budget document for the Bureau of Industry which was submitted to senior management of MOCI; The Head of the Industrial Promotion Section Participated in an Intellectual Property Rights Seminar for English Speaking Countries in the People Republic of China from 3rd June 25th 2012 drafted the Capacity Building Project Bid documents that were passed by the Ministry of Planning and Economics;
- Drafted another capacity building project and submitted to the Policy Advisor for submission to UNOP for the success of the Industrial Policy.

Challenges

The provision of long-term training program for staff, especially at the Master level (Industrial Economics, Development, Statistics) is very paramount in achieving the deliverable of the PRS pillar II. An industrial assessment which was relaxed by administration during this period was very relevant to the Bureau, preparation of a professional Industrial Directory that will fully give an industrial outlook of Liberia to potential investors and the global communities as a whole.

- The delay in timely provisions of logistical and other supports is one of the challenges impeding the progress of the division;
- The required trained manpower to build the capacity of the division is inadequate to move the division in the right direction to achieve its objectives; and
- Lack of sufficient training for the employees is impeding the progress of the division.

Way Forward

- That the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Liberia enters into an MOU partnership with their counterpart, the Chinese Ministry of Commerce on staff exchange and development programs especially the Industrial and Trade sector. This will help both countries to know the impact of the global technology transformation;
- That the Ministry through Administration empower the Division of Industry to host a one day stakeholder's workshop to acquaint the employees details about the industrial policy of Liberia;
- That the Ministry's Resource Centre be revamped and equipped with materials from international seminars for the purpose of research.

4.2 DIVISION OF STANDARDS

Achievements

During the period under review, the Division of Standards carried out the following activities: including calibration and verification of petroleum stations in and around

Monrovia and regular inspections of business entity along with the Division of Inspectorate in addition to the routine functions:

- Provided 500 standards for essential food products to the pre-shipment inspection company (BIVAC) and the business community;
- Quarterly standard audit;
- Settlement of trade disputes;
- Calibration (verification) of filling stations;
- Conduct of rice analysis;
- Collection of samples of an alleged substandard flour for testing purpose;
- Monitoring and supervision of re-bagging of rice; and
- Disposal of unwholesome products.

Additional achievements include the following:

- Industry Inspection;
- Dumping of decomposed fish from Sierra Fishing;
- Foreign Travel to Brazil, China, and India;
- Resolution of zinc cases;
- Resolved a product case involving the Liberia Coca-Cola Bottling Company (LCCBC) and a consumer;

Challenges

- To enable the Division of Standards to fully meet up with or perform its assigned tasks there are impediments and they include:
- The absence of Standard Technicians in the leeward counties and the Freeport of Monrovia to monitor the flow of commercial goods and services;
- Data base product registration system;
- Lack of on-the-spot product analysis equipment;
- Limited trained manpower in metrology and quality control;
- Making price structure to reflect the quality of goods and services; and
- Lack of transportation;
- Lack of metrological equipment (seraphim tank, commercial scale, hanging scale etc).

Way Forward

- Quarterly Leeward Standard Audit;
- Public Awareness of Standard and Quality to promote quality consciousness among consumers;
- A bi-yearly capacity building workshop for all standard technicians;

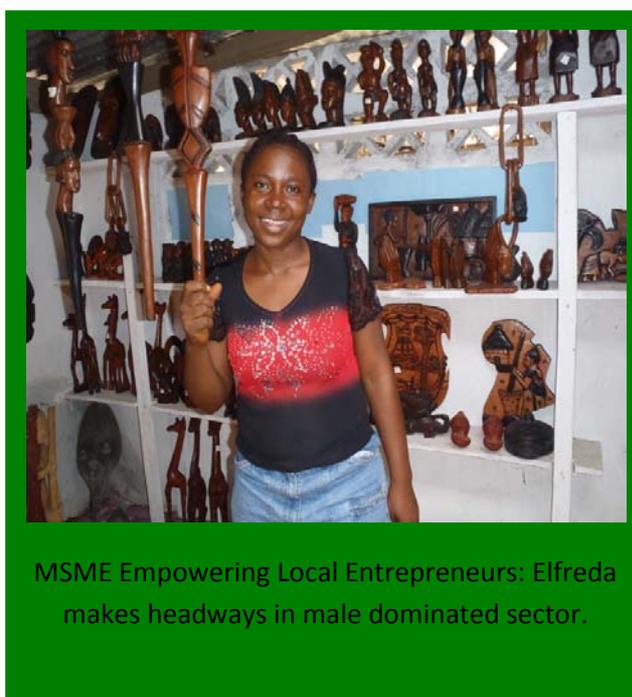
- A continual market surveillance on locally produced and imported commodities; and
- Deployment of at least two (2) Standard Technicians at the Freeport of Monrovia.

4.3 DIVISION OF MSME

Overview

The Micro Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) Policy was developed in recognition of the Government's inherent conviction that small enterprises can make significant contributions towards poverty alleviation and subsequently, facilitate the creation of a middle income society within the next twenty (20) years in line with Vision 2030 and the Agenda for Transformation. Its objectives are as follows:

- To increase the flow of capital to MSMEs;
- To enhance the skills of small business owner/managers;
- To build the productivity of MSMEs;
- To increase underserved groups' access to economic opportunities; and
- To broaden underserved groups' access to resources needed to respond to economic opportunities.



MSME Empowering Local Entrepreneurs: Elfreda makes headways in male dominated sector.

Achievements

Below are the achievements of the Division of MSME.

- The airing of the Radio Show on the MSME policy facilitated the wider dissemination of the policy and created public awareness regarding government's efforts to develop the MSME sector;
- Targeted training and capacity building interventions were conducted to provide required orientations, knowledge and skills to entrepreneurs design to take their businesses to the next level;
- The publication of the Finance Guide to help MSMEs understand and make a decision as to which lending institution best fits their needs;

- A simplified FAQ sheet on tax payment and procedure as well as tax laws was printed and distributed;
- The simplification of the Business Registration Process;
- The M&E database on MSME activities has been completed;
- Provided an Office space for African Women Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP-Liberia) as launched by MoCI where it is housed;
- AWEP with support from the MSME Division of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry invited the President of Liberia to launch the Liberian Chapter on March 8, 2012 in Tubman-burg, Bomi County, Liberia;
- Assisted in securing a grant of \$200,000.00 for AWEP from Chevron to help train 750 women in the 15 political sub-divisions of Liberia with major focus on cassava processing;
- Technical support was provided to KaSaWa Fashion, Amazing Grace, Movies Union of Liberia for the completion of the respective project proposals for onward submission to funding institutions;
- Concluded discussion with Norwegian investors (Alliance Microfinance) beginning banking operations targeting small business only (operations to begin 2013);
- Facilitated the establishment of an organization for local women involved with weaving of the traditional country cloth;
- Facilitated collaboration between various business associations;
- Linked entrepreneurs with IBEX and BM to acquire the appropriate guidance and orientation to access loans;
- Assisted MSMEs with simple legal issues such as Mitigation between SMEs shipping goods from China and the Free Port of Monrovia as well as settling property lease issues;
- Facilitated the formalization of fifty one (51) Liberian businesses at the Liberia Business Registry;
- Collaborated with the copyright committee on Anti-Piracy to enhance the enforcement and regulation of copy right activities in Liberia;
- Secured training slot for an Entrepreneur in the Agro Business in the USA at the Penn State University on the Borlaugh Fellowship Program;

- Worked with 18 entrepreneurs to ensure the transition of their businesses from micro to small level by facilitating access to loans and providing other basic business advisory services.

Challenges

- Several Government ministries and agencies are involved in the implementation of MSME activities without any collaboration with the MSME Division at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry thus leading to fragmentation;
- The delays in processing the required financial and administrative documentations in support of earmarked activities with subsequent postponement of planned activities;
- Limited opportunities to develop and improve entrepreneurial skills and knowledge due to lack of resources;
- Lack of access to finance and financial services decreases the likelihood for business expansion;
- Lack of storage facilities, especially cold storage, leads to the un-necessary wastage of vegetables;
- The absence of transportation by most commerce inspectors puts an increased demand on the MSMEs through request for processing fees;

Way Forward

A coordination mechanism should be put in place to ensure there is collaboration between the MSME Division of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and all other Government ministries and agencies implementing MSME activities:

- Staff of the MSME Division of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry should have access to training opportunities in order to augment their knowledge and skills and empower them to better contribute to business development in the country;
- The appropriate steps should be taken to ensure that the required financial and administrative documentations in support of planned activities are concluded within the specified time frame
- Encourage the establishment of Storage Facilities.
- There is a need for Government to establish a pool fund for MSME development at low interest rate and flexible payment tenure as well as the establishment of Seed fund for 'would be entrepreneurs'.

4.4 NATIONAL STANDARD LABORATORY

Overview

The National Standards Laboratory (NSL) is a major component of Liberia's national quality infrastructure. Its main objective is to provide testing and calibration services that will curtail, if not prevent the importation of sub-standard products that may threaten consumer, plant and animal health while at the same time assuring food and agricultural exports from Liberia meet international standards. These services are significant to current national Agenda for Transformation and Vision 2030.

The NSL is comprised of three labs, the Microbiology Lab, the Chemical Lab and the Metrology Lab. Listed below are the unique functions of each lab.



- The Microbiology Lab conducts testing to detect spoilage and disease causing microorganisms in food, water and non-food materials including drugs.
- The Chemical Lab conducts testing for quality and safety of food, water and non-food material.
- The Metrology Lab provides testing and calibration of devices used for weights, volume, dimension, temperature according to international standards.

Achievements

- A gap analysis was conducted on the quality management system and a project document was produced with attached budget on main items required to improve the

QMS at the lab (see the project document: Enhancing the sustainability of the laboratory).

- All balances that were out of calibration dates were re-calibrated by the Ghana Standards Authority, which was funded by the UNIDO-WAQP.
- Bidding and selection of supplier for the National Standards Laboratory for the supply of laboratory-Biomedical Links.
- The Metrology Lab received its basic equipments under the WAQP. The equipments were installed and analysts were trained. The services of the Metrology Lab are now available.
- NSL management initiated networking with regulatory bodies. Only the MOHSW has been engaged and an established MOU has been initiated. NSL is now the head of quality assurance committee in the National Fortification Alliance.
- Several strategic documents were formulated for enhancing NSL's participation in developing standards regime, supporting the food regulatory policy.
 - a. Verification of High Risk Goods
 - b. Verification of pre-package goods
 - c. Verifications of fuel dispensers
 - d. Technical support services to food industries and establishment
 - e. Food Inspection training module
 - f. Price regime of NSL's services
 - g. The development of customer base questionnaires
 - h. Three scientific staff were assigned at the lab by the Civil Service through MoCI
 - i. Training of metrologists in Brazil, London-UK, and PTB meeting in Accra, Ghana

Challenges

There are several challenges, which include the following:

- Lack of basic chemicals, reference materials, standards etc.
- Lack of budget allocation for NSL hampered the operation of quality management system on a daily basis-transportation, maintenance and repairs, power, utilities etc
- Lack of the required transportation to affect adequate sample collections exercise
- Lack of operating funds to conduct assessment and survey exercises

Way Forward

- Ensure that budget is approved for NSL
- Supplier be engaged to supply NSL with the requisite supplies bided for
- Top management should give support to activities to enhance its sustainability plan

5.0 BUREAU OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Overview

The Bureau of Public Affairs was created by the President of Liberia, Her Excellency Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in April 2012 with the intent to make the commerce of Liberia more participatory. It is envisioned that the Ministry executes several awareness programs that would highlight major commercial and industrial opportunities.

Thus the Bureau is clothed with the administrative responsibility to provide basic information to the public on the achievements and challenges of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. It also designs and undertakes major consumer education across the country. Additionally, the Bureau is headed by a Deputy Minister and currently assisted by a Director of Information.

The structural make-up of the Bureau comprise of only the Division of Information Services.

Division of Information Services

During the year under review, the Division of Information Services under the scrupulous guidance of the Bureau of Public Affairs made several significant contributions to the activities of the Ministry. This annual report is a chronological explanation of various activities carried out by the bureau.

Achievements

During the reporting period, the Division accomplished the following:

- Provided a full coverage on the second Japanese donated rice to Liberia.
- Publicized the launch of the nation's first National Policy program.
- Participated and publicize the Industrial tour along with Hon Sei W. Gahn, Assistant Minister for Industry.

- Publicized Seminar on Intellectual Property Rights
- Provided media coverage on the re-Launched of the Ministry's **OFFICIAL HOTLINE.**
- Published the new price ceiling for Petroleum and Gas Products.
- Commerce clarified Media Reports on an alleged Black Bag Changing Hands Publications
- Held a joint Press Conference on fines imposed on five {5} businesses for commercial malpractices.
- Published Administrative Regulation on the reduction in Site Inspections.
- Issued Press Release on the cancellation of LD\$4,200 License Fees through the Liberia Business Registry {LBR}.
- Issued Press Release on the arrival of Trans-Coaster Transport Services in Liberia.
- Facilitated Minister Beysolow's appearance at the Ministry of Information Regular Press Briefing.
- Issued Press Release warning Directors and Senior Staffs of various Division/ Departments that are engaged in the signing of documents emanating from the Ministry.
- Publicized the dumping of rotten rice from SWAT Warehouses.
- Published New Price ceiling for Petroleum Product.
- Held a major Press Conference to announced the suspension of taxes on rice and cement products.
- Reacted to National Chronicle and InProfile Newspapers on Article on rice and petroleum products.
- Publicized the holding of African Industrialization Day and World Standard Day Program.
- Created awareness on the reduction of tariff on Rice and Cement through consultation with importers of said commodity.
- Participated in vetting Newspapers Vendors at the Information Ministry, resulting to saving the Ministry of Commerce & Industry over thirty thousand United States dollars expenses for publicity.

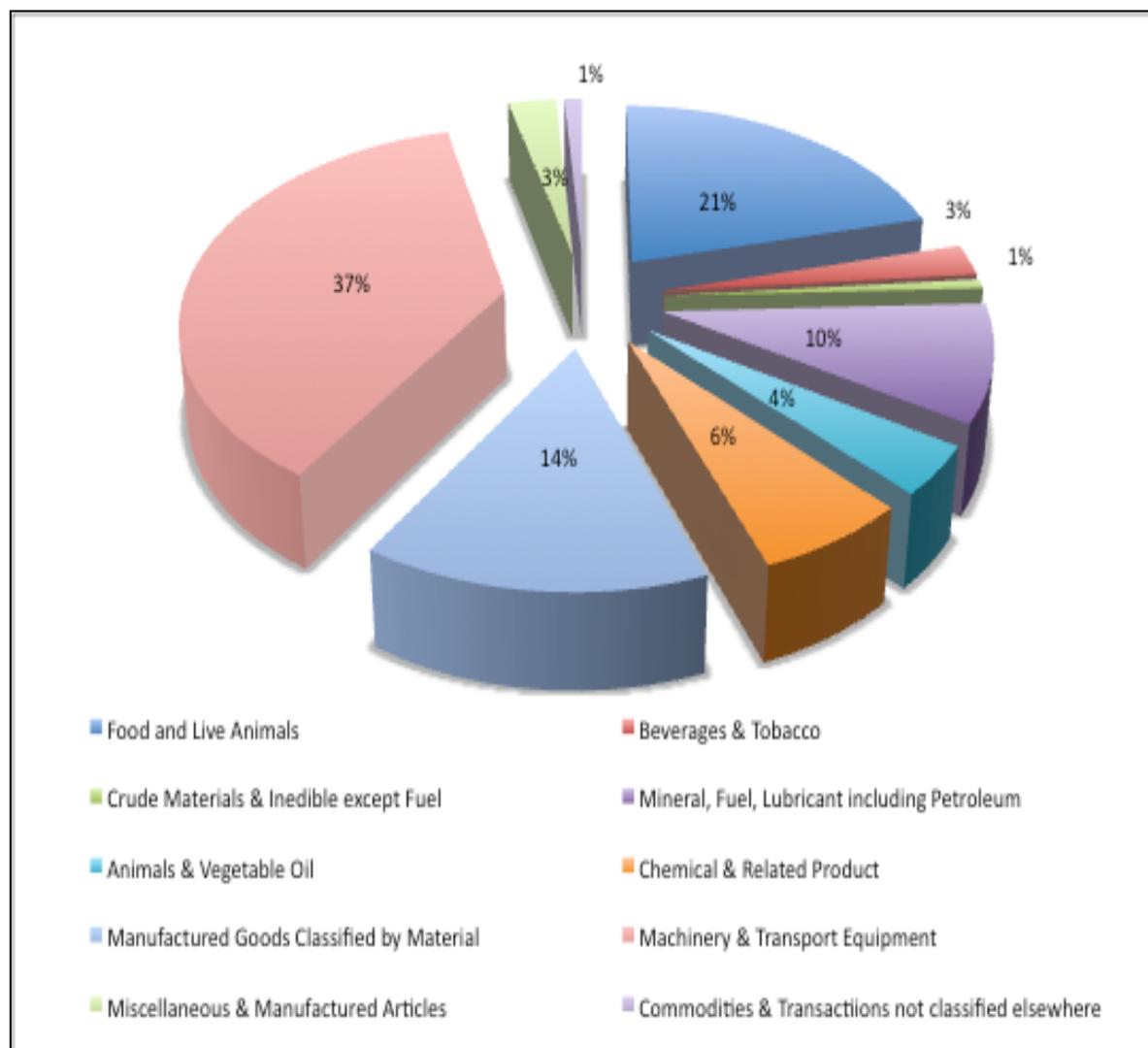
Challenges

- The Bureau of Public Affairs was established at the end of the budget preparation period. This resulted in the lack of adequate financial support to the operations of the Bureau despite efforts by the minister and the senior management team. Without the much needed budgetary support, it was very difficult to undertake the programs that would create awareness and promotion for the commerce of Liberia. We could not cover the country because of the serious financial constraints.
- The second impediment to the smooth operation of the Bureau of Public Affairs is the lack of direct control over the Consumer Education and Protection Unit. Our mandate to educate and inform the Liberian people and the general public cannot be executed without a direct oversight of this division of the ministry. The Bureau will function in a more viable way if the divisions of information and consumer education form an integral part of its activities.

Way Forward

- Budgetary support is needed for the Bureau of Public Affairs. The gains of the government of Liberia in the commercial and industrial sector of the economy can only be realized if the programs of the Bureau are financially supported.
- The Bureau of Public Affairs will be more viable if some administrative decisions are made to better structure the offices to include the Consumer Education Unit as an integral part. If this administrative decision is taken to move the Consumer Education and Protection Unit to Public Affairs, it is envisaged that the Ministry will make more gains in its activities in educating and sensitizing the public on government's commercial and industrial policies.

6.0 APPENDIX I: LIBERIA IMPORT STATISTICS - 2012



Tables 1: Import Statistics by Category for 2012

CODE	DESCRIPTION	VALUE (USD)	VALUE (USD)
0	Food and Live Animals	174,921,695.32	20.98%
1	Beverages & Tobacco	21,636,883.96	2.59%
2	Crude Materials & Inedible except Fuel	6,446,456.59	0.77%
3	Mineral, Fuel, Lubricant including Petroleum	80,160,272.90	9.61%
4	Animals & Vegetable Oil	33,397,621.59	4.01%
5	Chemical & Related Product	54,237,682.10	6.50%
6	Manufactured Goods Classified by Material	119,932,678.65	14.38%
7	Machinery & Transport Equipment	310,784,057.21	37.27%
8	Miscellaneous & Manufactured Articles	23,732,935.18	2.85%
9	Commodities & Transactions not classified elsewhere	8,595,215.40	1.03%
TOTAL		833,845,498.90	100.00%

Source: Division of Trade

7.0 APPENDIX II: LIBERIA EXPORT STATISTICS - 2012

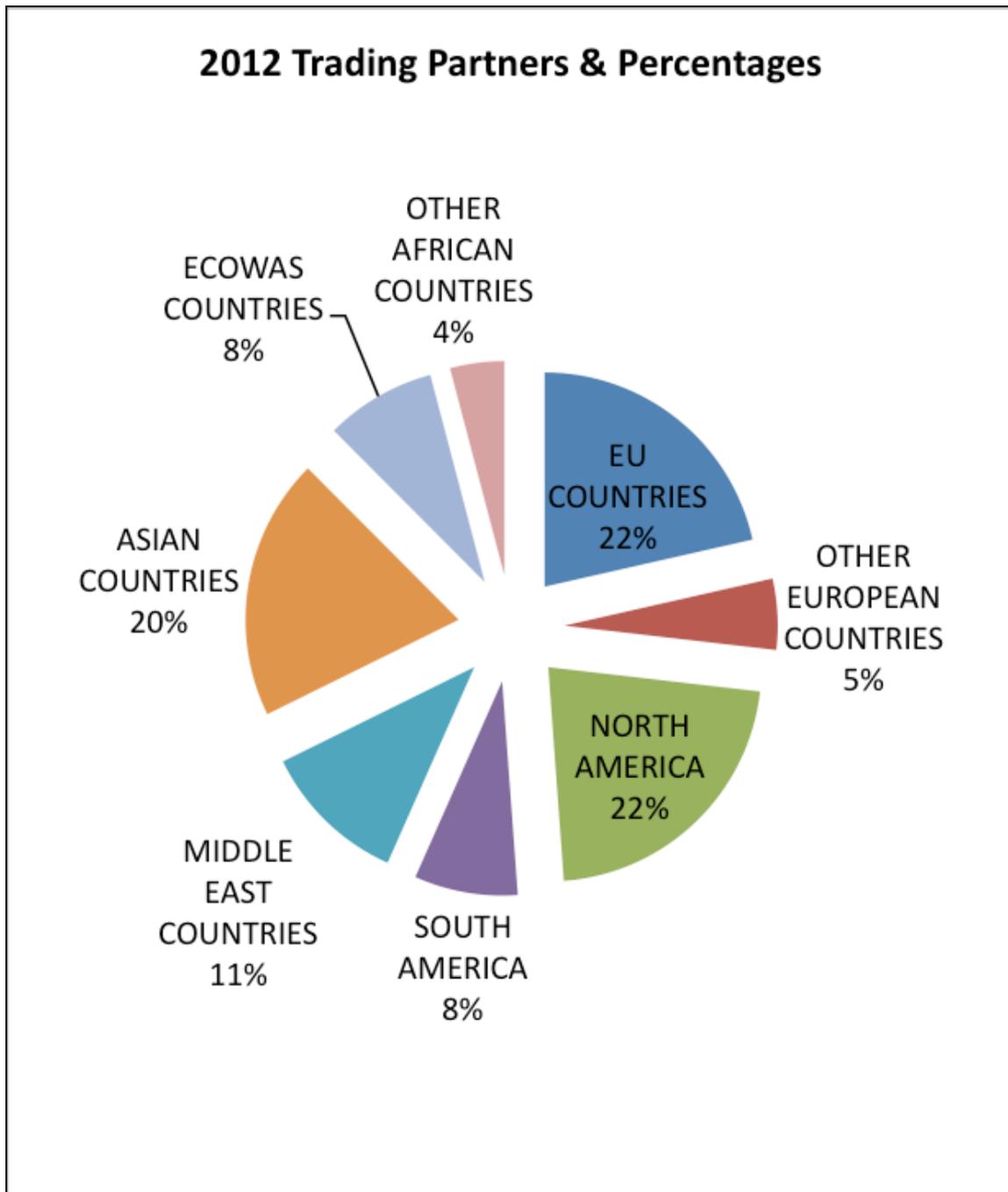
Tables 2: Export Statistics by Category -2012

Commodity	Unit of Measurement	Quantity	Value (USD)	Value (%)
Rubber	Metric Tons	44,185.320	114,500,864.00	30.53%
Logs	M3	343,595.219	48,210,053.17	12.85%
Iron Ore	Metric Tons	2,312.850	117,000,497.00	31.19%
Cocoa Beans	Metric Tons	792,422.000	6,553,770.00	1.75%
Coffee Beans	Metric Tons	250.000	82,500.00	0.02%
Rubber Wood Chips	M3	102,686.428	5,734,067.54	1.53%
Sawn Timber	M3	1,342.567	648,029.98	0.17%
Heavy Scrap Metal	Metric Tons	34,145.000	2,560,875.00	0.68%
Palm Oil	Metric Tons	1,485.800	1,223,203.50	0.33%
Cam Wood	M3	526.702	237,007.95	0.06%
Cotton Base Tote Bags	Pcs	20,160.000	77,212.80	0.02%
Used Helicopters	No	5.000	17,395,032.00	4.64%
Multilated Notes	Ctns	10.000	3,006,459.00	0.80%
Mining Equipments	-	9.000	108,203.00	0.03%
Rice	Bags	71,300.000	1,214,475.00	0.32%
Soft Drinks	Crates	2,500.000	8,450.00	0.00%
Equipment (Chevron Lib)	-	-	33,700,713.41	8.98%
Personal Effects	-	-	264,775.00	0.07%
Others	-	-	22,577,675.78	6.02%
TOTAL EXPORT			375,103,864.13	100.00%

NOTE: Mineral Figure Not Available

Source: Division of Trade

8.0 APPENDIX III: LIBERIA TRADING PARTNERS BY REGION -2012



Tables 3: Liberia Trading Partners -2012

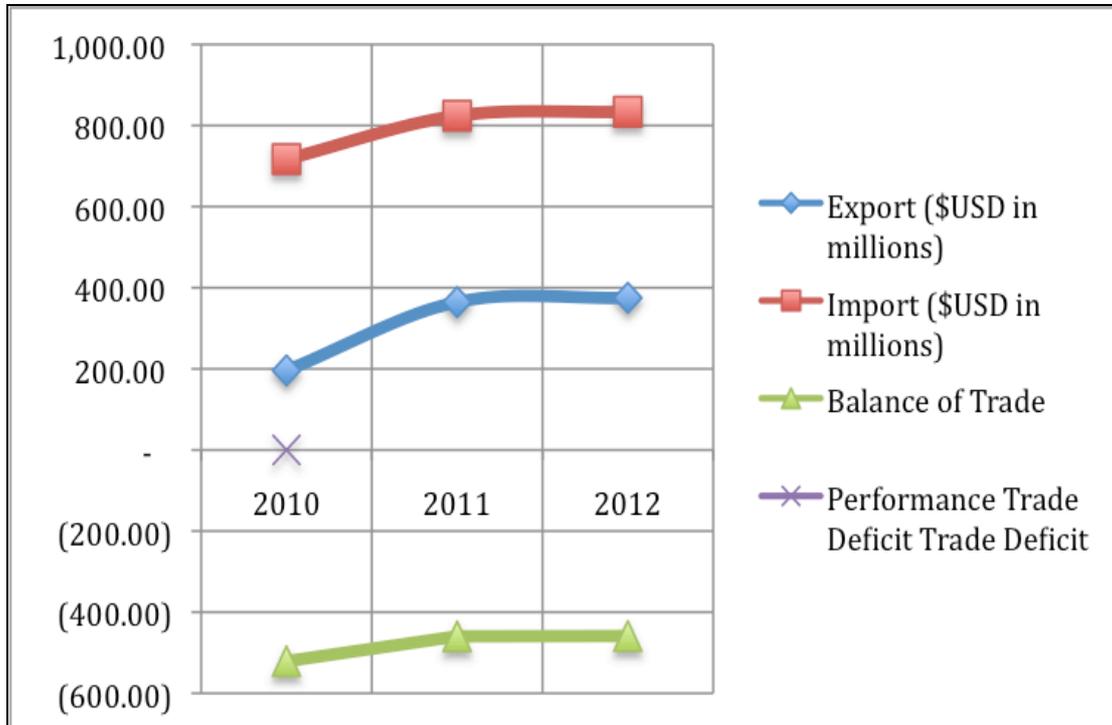
Countries	CIF Value USD\$	Percentage %
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EU COUNTRIES	171,800,856.80	20.60
Netherlands	43,349,454.75	
Belgium	14,901,930.79	
UK	24,503,237.29	
Germany	15,461,345.15	
France	17,426,949.83	
Denmark	7,555,931.99	
Spain	19,286,002.36	
Italy	8,844,225.99	
Norway	1,322,399.11	
Sweden	1,952,433.11	
Ireland	2,455,626.33	
Albania	711,421.33	
Montenegro	56,444.00	
Portugal	1,525,167.35	
Australia	3,177,177.92	
Bulgaria	63,956.55	
Poland	3,752,001.17	
Ukraine	2,215,110.90	
Finland	2,741,612.64	
Romania	482,228.24	
Lithunia	16,200.00	
OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES	51,808,406.27	6.21
Turkey	34,313,273.97	
Switzerland	14,677,862.88	
Malta	950,790.99	
Bahrain	21,001.00	
Croatia	222,540.43	
Czech Republic	259,338.01	
Russia	1,363,598.99	
NORTH AMERICA	136,309,936.81	16.35
USA	124,705,663.01	
Canada	9,023,334.30	
Panama	1,872,492.00	
Mexico	708,447.50	
SOUTH AMERICA	58,728,021.34	7.04
Brazil	38,362,862.77	
Argentina	11,129,934.01	
Peru	1,696,016.56	
Chile	6,579,091.27	
Uruguay	347,209.00	
Paraguay	58,762.33	
Columbia	554,145.40	
MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES	99,744,287.64	11.96
UAE	51,340,032.02	
Lebanon	23,830,685.46	

Bangladesh	3,165,981.68	
Saudi Arabia	7,489,701.60	
Oman	1,753,025.69	
Yemen	505,717.86	
Cambodia	1,140,489.12	
Iran	273,262.13	
Syria	74,331.44	
Pakistan	7,684,276.19	
Jordan	955,996.54	
Philippines	17,072.06	
Sri Lanka	1,069,379.88	
Israel	444,335.97	
ASIAN COUNTRIES	236,831,894.15	28.40
Japan	20,410,061.70	
Singapore	17,443,868.73	
India	29,255,707.58	
Malaysia	22,836,488.53	
China	113,621,218.69	
Korea	4,450,321.59	
Taiwan	549,412.00	
Vietnam	205,209.82	
Indonesia	10,594,141.49	
South Korea	14,155.25	
Thailand	17,316,553.59	
Cyprus	134,755.18	
ECOWAS COUNTRIES	53,872,988.14	6.46
Nigeria	14,802,688.22	
Ghana	7,638,680.55	
Ivory Coast	18,471,923.40	
Sierra Leone	1,758,654.33	
Senegal	4,830,494.10	
Togo	1,013,831.76	
Gambia	150,958.75	
Benin	62,012.82	
Guinea	5,143,744.21	
OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES	24,749,107.75	2.97
Morocco	3,257,622.25	
Tunisia	909,041.35	
South Africa	8,630,268.94	
Egypt	3,944,199.48	
Maritius	77,674.97	
Algeria	782,578.47	
Mauritania	6,466,364.34	
Kenya	497,075.00	
DR Congo	184,282.95	
GRAND TOTAL	833,845,498.90	100%

Source: Division of Trade

9.0 APPENDIX IV: BALANCE OF TRADE – 3 YEARS



Tables 4: Balance of Trade – 3 Years

Measure	2010	2011	2012
Export (\$USD in millions)	196.00	364.46	375.10
Import (\$USD in millions)	717.00	824.02	833.85
Balance of Trade	(521.00)	(459.56)	(458.75)
Performance	Trade Deficit	Trade Deficit	Trade Deficit

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For More Information Contact:

Ministry of Commerce and Industry
Public Affairs
3rd Floor, Ashmun Street
Monrovia, Liberia

or visit our website at:

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