



Second National MSME Conference & Trade Fair

Report

April 29-30, 2014

MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA



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H. E. ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF
PRESIDENT
REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

INTRODUCTORY MESSAGE *from the* PRESIDENT

“I am proud to present Liberia’s first
National Policy on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.”

The Liberian economy is expected to grow rapidly over the coming years, with over USD16 billion of investments in our natural resources sector alone in the last 5 years.

With less than 4 million people, the majority under the age of 25, we can, and we must create a prosperous society that grants equal opportunity to all if we are to achieve peace and security and build a better future for the next generation.

Wherever you look in Liberia, commerce and small businesses are at the heart of our country’s private sector. They make a significant, but often unaccounted for contribution to our economy: Local traders ensure that daily essentials are available, even in the most remote part of River Gee; local welding shops create jobs and provide training; market women generate economic opportunities for themselves, their families, and their local communities.

I believe that small businesses can be the vehicle to ensure that jobs, income and development are spread throughout the country, but they must be supported and strengthened, and support to them must be co-ordinated.

This is at the core of the MSME Policy, and with support from our local and international partners, I believe this can be realised.

Introductory Message

From the

Minister of Commerce



Honorable Axel M. Addy
MINISTER
Ministry of Commerce and Industry

“This is a unique opportunity to share our experiences and ideas and to showcase the best in Liberian products”

The Second National Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) Conference & Trade Fair 2014, is proudly brought to you by The Ministry of Commerce & Industry, with the support of the Government of Japan, the International Finance Corporation, the International Trade Center, USAID and other partners. The conference brings together over 500 participants, from Liberia's MSMEs, banks, microfinance institutions, and multinational corporations, for two days to promote enterprise development, drive inclusive economic growth and empowerment of Liberia's MSMEs, by implementing the four pillars of Liberia's MSME Policy: Legal & Regulatory Reforms, Access to Markets, Access to Finance, and Building Skills & Knowledge.

The Conference highlights state of the art reforms and policies and provides an opportunity for participants to explore ways to breakdown national and international barriers to inclusive economic growth and empowerment of Liberian businesspeople. This year's spotlight is on The Agribusiness Experience in Liberia – cotton to clothes; rice: from swamp to market; and cassava: from root to multiple products. The Trade Fair showcases a diverse selection of goods produced by Liberia's top MSMEs.

Please enjoy the conference and trade fair and please share your thoughts with me and my staff at the Ministry.

Honorable Axel M. Addy
MINISTER
Ministry of Commerce and Industry

List of Sponsors for the 2014 National MSME Conference and Trade Fair

1. Government of Japan
2. USAID Liberia
3. Access Bank Liberia
4. Aqua Life
5. Fouta Corporation
6. International Trade Center (ITC)
7. Supplying West Africa Trader Incorporated (SWAT)
8. United Commodities Incorporated (UCI)
9. World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

Partners of the Second National MSME Conference-2014

1. BSC Monrovia
2. Building Markets
3. Global Communities
4. IBEX Liberia
5. International Financial Corporation (IFC)
6. National Investment Commission (NIC)
7. The Market Place
8. USAID Food and Enterprise Development (USAID FED)

Acknowledgements

This 2014 National MSME Conference and Trade Fair were possible and successful because of the hard work of some special institutions and people who invested their money, time and talents. We would like to use this medium to thank them. First, to all organizers and participants of the conference and trade fair 2014 for the time in making the event a memorable one.

We wish to thank the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Hon. Axel M. Addy and the Senior Management Team (SMT) at the Ministry for their patience, support and excellent working relationship in ensuring that this year's Conference and Trade Fair got the attention that it received nationally and internationally. In this same regard, we would like to recognize Mr. Roland Morris and Mr. Steve Flahn-Paye for their support in soliciting funding for this program.

Special thanks to the MSME staffs at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry for the unwavering commitment to the process and the patient when things were not working out as it should have. They were always ready to put in the extra time amidst challenging deadlines from other Ministry's activities and the process of planning the conference and trade fair.

We also wish to thank Mr. Tyrence Moore, a Liberian graphic designer, and Ms. Morgan Ashenfelter of Building Markets, for all the beautiful graphic works, designs and the many nights they had to stay with the planning team. Their work added color and life to the two days event. Mr. Jesse Dann, a consultant assigned to the MSME Division, for his tireless effort and continued motivation during the planning and implementation of the conference and trade fair. Mr. Dann was active in all subcommittees and coordinated most of the conference and trade fair planning activities. His work habit was a special add to the team and we certainly like to recognize and acknowledge his effort. We are glad you were on the team! Ms. Lauramae Gibbidon of Monrovia City Hall, for her willingness to assist the planning team at all times. The National Investment Commission special team to MoCI and the West African Venture Fund for letting us use their training facilities for two weeks to conduct training for the fifty MSME exhibitors.

To all who have contributed in a particular manner but are not mentioned here, we appreciate your support to this event and look forward to working with all of you in the future.

Thank you all!

Pewee S. Reed

Director

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Division

Ministry of Commerce and Industry

Liberia

Summary

The Second National Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) Conference & Trade Fair 2014 was organized and hosted by The Ministry of Commerce & Industry on April 29th and 30th, 2014 at the Monrovia City Hall with the support of the Government of Japan, the International Finance Corporation, the International Trade Center, USAID FED and other partners. The Conference brought together over six hundred participants from all sectors of the economy as well as targeted financial institutions, concessionaires and practitioners from the region under the theme: ***“From Vision to Implementation: Buying Liberian, Building Liberia,”***

This year’s Conference highlighted up-to-date reforms and policies and provided opportunities for participants to explore ways to breakdown national and international barriers to inclusive economic growth and empowerment of locally owned Liberian Small Businesses. This year’s spotlighted the Agribusiness Experience in Liberia – ***Cotton to Clothes; Rice: from Swamp to Market; and Cassava: from Root to Multiple Products. The two-day Conference was held simultaneously with a trade fair*** showcasing the best of made-in Liberia products and high quality professional services of Liberian owned businesses from across the country. The Trade Fair showcased a diverse selection of 50 top MSMEs that are successfully meeting the Liberian market demands, despite the many barriers they are presently facing in building profitable and sustainable businesses. The exhibitions at the Trade Fair were enormous and encouraging to the public.

High quality keynote presentations and technical questions and answers sessions were also essential part of this year’s Conference with topics covering Agriculture, Public Procurement, Intellectual Property Rights for SMEs, Market Intelligence, Solutions to common SME challenges in Liberia, Standards, Opportunities and Linkages, Value Chain Financing, Impact Investing, Loans for SMEs and Clustering. These topics were discussed in a series of breakout sessions during the two-day Conference.

The Conference brought together attendees including partners, speakers, moderators, proprietors/proprietresses and representatives of small businesses. Partners of the conference came from various national and international establishments as well as public and private institutions, including the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, National Investment Commission (NIC), International Trade Centre (ITC), World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), International Finance Corporation (IFC), Building Markets, BSC Monrovia, USAID Food and Enterprise Development (USAID FED), Investing for Business Expansion (IBEX), Global Communities, other institutions and small businesses from across the country. The second day of the conference and Trade Fair ended with a dinner and awards were presented to deserving Liberian SMEs for Best Customer Service, Most Growth Potential, Best Exhibit and the Most Innovative MSME.

Official Opening

The first day of the Conference and Trade Fair commenced with an official opening ceremony that colorfully highlighted the Liberian culture and art. A cultural performance welcomed participants, dignitaries, and visiting guests to the Monrovia City Hall where the ceremony was held.

Hon. Axel M. Addy, Minister of Commerce and Industry, started the two-day event with an overview of the Conference, its objectives and agenda. The Minister then disclosed that the Ministry has embarked on a journey to transform Liberian Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) from Micro to Small, Small to Medium and from Medium to Large businesses. He stressed the importance of the programs that are being developed at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to achieve these goals: **ENTREPRENEUR PLUS (E-PLUS)**-which strives to foster entrepreneurship amongst the youth through business plan competitions that foster innovative solutions to community challenges; **RURAL INDUSTRIAL PROMOTION PROGRAM FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT (RIPE)** – will promote small scales processing and values additions in partnership with the private sector; The elevation of the MSME Division at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to the Bureau of Small Businesses through an act of Legislation called **SMALL BUSINESS EMPOWERMENT ACT** will also set aside 25% of all public procurement opportunities to Liberian businesses with 5% of this to women owned businesses. Minister Addy also acknowledged the contribution of the Government of Japan for responding to call for the development of Liberian SMEs and mentioned the establishment of Liberia's *First Trade Store*¹ for showcasing **MADE-IN-LIBERIA** products.

Ms. Arancha Gonzalez, Executive Director of the International Trade Centre (ITC) pointed out that MSMEs are the heart of any country's economy and Liberia is no exception. She said that ITC is poised to support Liberia in its quest to private sector development through reforms and the accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO). The ITC Executive also stressed the importance of unlocking the potential of Liberian SMEs so that they become the engines for job creation and prosperity. She mentioned that Liberia is the only West African country not yet a member of the WTO and that ITC in collaboration with the Government and its partners will ensure that Liberia becomes a member of this august organization.

Mr. Frank Ajilore, Resident Representative, International Finance Corporations (IFC), highlighted the critical role of Corporate Governance in creating shareholder value. The importance for Risk Management of Liberia's MSMEs in today's uncertain world was emphasized. Mr. Ajilore called on the Government of Liberia and International Partners to provide more funding and support capacity building programs for MSMEs.

Amb. Deborah Malac, United States' Ambassador to Liberia, expressed the U.S. interest in helping Liberian farmers become entrepreneurs. The Ambassador informed the audience that through the help of the American people, farmers have achieved 44% increase on the sales of rice and more than 1000% increase on the sales of cassava through President Obama's *Feed the Future Initiative*. She highlighted that the Government of the United States of America goals are aligned with that of

¹ The name of this Trade Store is **The Liberian Market Place**.

Liberia in fighting poverty through **PRIVATE SECTOR DRIVEN ECONOMIC GROWTH** by partnering with organizations like Building Markets under the “Buy Liberia, Buy Local” which has secured over 200 government contracts for small Liberian owned businesses worth over 21 million United States dollars.

During the opening ceremony, **H. E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf**, President, Republic of Liberia stressed the need for successful Micro, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises as they are fundamental to the future of our Liberian economy. She also pointed out that across Africa, MSMEs have always been the main drivers of *innovation*, *job creation*, and *growth* and that Nigeria’s SMEs account for 95 percent of formal manufacturing activities while in Senegal, they contribute some 20 percent of national value-addition; and in South Africa, the SMEs sector is reported to provide more than 55 percent of employment. The president encouraged Liberians towards the agriculture sector and the benefits from producing and manufacturing agricultural goods for local consumption as well as for export.

The President announced several new policies to support locally owned MSMEs through programs that encourage private sector development and job creation, especially for women and young people. She launched the **LIBERIA NATIONAL TRADE POLICY 2014-2019** and the **LIBERIA NATIONAL EXPORT STRATEGY 2014-2019**. These two documents outline government’s strategy for creating inclusive growth through trade competitiveness. Also announced by the President was the proposal for the **NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS EMPOWERMENT ACT** and the transformation of the Division of MSMEs at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to a **BUREAU OF SMALL BUSINESS**. This new Act will legally ensure implementation of the commitment made in her January Annual Message that small Liberian-owned, including Liberian women-owned businesses are granted 25 percent of the government’s public procurement opportunities, and that the Ministry of Commerce and Industry is equipped with a service center to help businesses to qualify and have access to these markets.

The official ceremony concluded with the President, visiting guests, dignitaries and the conference’s participants taking a tour of the Trade Fair which was officially opened by Her Excellency Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

Day One: Conference and Trade Fair-2014

Access to Market

The first day of the conference began with a panel discussion on the topic “**Strategy for Boosting SME Access to Markets**”. The day’s entire event that follows was geared towards how local SMEs can access market opportunities and the role of national government in providing these opportunities. This panel discussion was moderated by **Mr. Ambrose Nmah**, Director for the Liberia Broadcasting System. The panelists included:

Hon. Axel M. Addy,	Minister of Commerce and Industry
Hon. Florence Chenoweth,	Minister of Agriculture
Hon. Josephine Francis,	Member of Legislature and Farmer
Mr. Joe Hirsch,	Director of the Office of Economic Growth, USAID Liberia
Ms. Arancha Gonzalez,	Executive Director, International Trade Centre

Key strategies discussed for Boosting Access to Market for local Liberian SMEs were:

- ❖ Good Management Skills-Capable of delivering goods and services in time
- ❖ Credit Risk Management- Lack sound Internal and Financial Control Strategy
- ❖ Growth- The need to diversified portfolio, Competitive niche, Financial Strength & Profitability- Access to Sustainable Local Funding and Conducive Business Environment.

Breakout Session One:

After the discussion of the panel, participants were broken out into three sections, the City Hall Small Ballroom, the Theatre, and the Mayor’s conference room upstairs. The various topics discussed are as follow:

✓ **The Other Side of Agriculture: Opportunities for Business**

This session was held in the small ball room with **Mr. Matthew Ndote**, Livelihood Development Coordinator, Advancing youth Program as the moderator. Sitting on the platform for this topic discussion were **Mr. Junior Toe**, Executive Director of Community Youth Network Program Inc., (CYNP), and **Mr. Nelson Kanneh**, Youth and Community Officer, USAID FED.

The session focused on youth and entrepreneurship opportunities in agribusiness and the benefits youth can expect from engaging in these activities.

Nelson Kanneh presented the major constraints facing the development of the food crop sector in Liberia and the rationale behind engaging youth, and presented options for youth to engage in entrepreneurship such as youth extension workers, equipment operators, and community animal health workers. In addition, Junior Toe also presented his organization’s successful school garden program and self-sustaining young farmers’ resource center.

Feedback from the discussion focused on the importance of vocational training and capacity development for youth and the need for government to do more to engage youth, such as awareness campaigns and programs. It was also suggested that agriculture become a permanent part of Liberia National Curriculum, as it is in other West African Countries in order to prepare young people for the sector starting at an earlier age.

Key Points:

- ❖ Engaging youth in agriculture is paramount due to:
- ❖ A need to address domestic food supply in the face of increasing population and consumption;
- ❖ An aging farmer population. Youth ages 18 to 35 make up 65% of population. Youth unemployment rate is 85%. Their employment can add tremendous productivity to the agriculture sector;
- ❖ Literacy rate among youth in Liberia is 76%, among the highest in West Africa, youth are more educated, have skills, open to new ideas;
- ❖ Agriculture has a poor image, young people can be the catalyst to changing that image and add skills and needed innovation;
- ❖ Employed youth reduces crime and social instability.
- ❖ Youth will engage in agriculture activities if they are profitable;
- ❖ Some non-farming activities are extension services, equipment operation and rental, community animal health workers, transportation, postharvest handling and packaging, and aggregation and processing;
- ❖ There is a need to create more awareness of the opportunities available to youth, there needs to be vocational training and capacity development that is practical and relevant to each type of opportunity
- ❖ Small start-up capital is needed for youth engaging in these opportunities.

25% procurement rule, private sector development, & Linkages

This session was held in the theatre with **Mr. Dusty Wolokolie**, Deputy Commissioner, Governance Commission as the moderator. The discussants were **Hon. Axel M. Addy**, Minister of Commerce and Industry, **Ms. Peggy Meres**, Executive Director, Public Procurement & Concessions Commission, **Hon. Michael Wotorson**, Chairman, National Investment Commission and **Mr. Rodrigue Djahlin**, Senior Operations Officer, (Linkages) IFC.

This session focused on the link between public procurement and the growth of local SMEs within the country. Issues concerning the 25% set-aside legislation for public procurement across key government budget line to foster business development and to create stable demand for small businesses were discussed.

Key Points:

- ❖ Twenty-five percent (25%) of national budget set aside to procure from Liberian owned businesses
- ❖ Lack capacity to pre-finance and procure in high quantity
- ❖ Special investment incentives to protect SMEs in carrying out their business operations (tax waiver)
- ❖ Packaging that attracts buyers
- ❖ For good market environment there must be a well-defined institution, market intelligence and competitiveness

✓ **Intellectual Property Rights for SMEs: Impact of IP on Creating Wealth for SMEs**

This session was held in the Mayor's conference room with **Mr. Roland Morris**, Intellectual Property Advisor, Ministry of Commerce and Industry moderating. **Ms. Lien Verbauwhede Koglin**, Legal Advisor, WIPO was the only panelist.

The discussion was focused on the problems faced by local artists, writers, musicians, and Agriculture and Food Sector and the level of pirated goods on the Liberian market. The discussion highlighted the importance of IP in creating wealth for our local SMEs-artist and musicians.

Key Points:

- ❖ **Definition of IP**-Innovation, creativity, and the rights given to persons over such creation
- ❖ **Relevant of Intellectual Property in the Agriculture and Food Sector**-different types of IPRs exist each form has different requirements and grants different rights.
- ❖ **Patent**: A patent is an exclusive right granted for an invention for a limited period of time, with the right to decide how - or whether - the invention can be used by others. In exchange for this right, the patent owner makes technical information about the invention publicly available in the published patent document.
- ❖ **Trademark**: is a distinctive sign that identifies certain goods or services provided by an individual or a company. Example: seeds, meat and rice
- ❖ **Geographical indications and appellations of origin** are signs used on goods that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities, a reputation or characteristics that are essentially attributable to that place of origin.
- ❖ **Industrial design** constitutes the ornamental or aesthetic aspect of an article. A design may consist of features such as the shape, patterns, lines or color.
- ❖ **Copyright** is a legal term used to describe the rights that creators have over their literary and artistic works.
- ❖ **Plant variety protection** provides protection to new plant varieties that have not been previously commercialized, that are distinct from existing varieties that are uniform in their main characteristics and stable over the years for those characteristics. Unlike patented material, protected varieties can be used for the development of new varieties without the authorization of the rights holder.
- ❖ **Trade secret** can be any confidential business information which provides an enterprise a competitive edge.

✓ **SMEs Export Strategy: Considering basic IP Issues**

1. First, IP plays an important role in various aspects of company's export plan. A few examples are provided to illustrate the issue:
 - ❖ The **pricing** of the product will partly depend on the extent to which the brand or trademark is recognized and valued by consumers in the export market and the extent to which the product will face competition from similar or identical products.

- ❖ In **raising funds**, holding patents over the innovative aspects of your product is often useful for convincing investors, venture capitalists or banks of the commercial opportunities available to your product.
 - ❖ The **adaptation of the product**, its design, its brand or its packaging for the export market(s) will require creative or inventive work that may be protected through IPRs thus guaranteeing a degree of exclusivity over the adaptations.
 - ❖ The **negotiation of agreements with partners** will have to take into account issues relating to the ownership of IPRs, particularly if the product will be manufactured abroad or will be modified, packaged or distributed by foreign partners.
 - ❖ The **marketing** of your product will rely strongly on your company's brand image, embodied primarily in its trademark, which, if unprotected, would be significantly more difficult to enforce in case of copying or imitation by competitors.
 - ❖ The **timing of your participation in fairs and exhibitions** may depend on whether you have already applied for protection for your inventions or designs, as early disclosure of your innovative work may result in loss of novelty and preclude you from applying for protection at a later stage (unless a "grace period" is available in certain specified circumstances in the country concerned).
2. A second important reason for taking IP issues into account is that it enables an enterprise to **strengthen its position in export markets** and **stop other companies from imitating or copying** a work protected by copyright, the functional features of a product, its trademark or its design.
 3. A third reason is that IP protection enables an enterprise to **access new markets** through **licensing, franchising**, the establishment of **joint ventures** or other contractual agreements with other companies. IP rights enable companies to negotiate agreements with other firms for the production, marketing, distribution or delivery of goods and services in foreign markets. It may also provide your company with greater bargaining power when seeking to license technology from other firms that may be interested in your proprietary technologies, copyright works, designs, and trademarks.
 4. Failure to consider IP issues may result in large losses or litigation if your products are considered to be **infringing upon the IP rights of others** in the export market concerned. Even if an invention, design or trademark is not protected in your own country, this does not mean that someone else has not protected them in an export market. So, your product may have features that are not protected in Liberia but are protected as IP rights by others in an export market. This may also be true for trademarks.

✓ **Most Common Mistakes Made by Exporters**

The WIPO Representative reminded the audience of the importance for exporters to protect their IP. Some of the most common mistakes made by exporters include the following:

- ❖ **Believing that IP protection is universal.** Many exporters believe that by applying for trademark, patent or industrial design protection in Liberia they are automatically protected worldwide. However, IPRs are granted by the national governments, and the protection is valid only in the country in which they are issued. Thus, to obtain protection in export markets, IP rights must be applied for and granted in each relevant country. On the other hand, copyright and trade secrets are not country specific.
- ❖ **Assuming that laws and procedures for the protection of IP rights are the same worldwide.** While there has been significant harmonization of laws and procedures for the protection of IPRs worldwide, there remain many areas in which there are significant differences between countries. One example relates to the protection of the design of a product. While copyright protection may suffice to protect your design in your home country, industrial design protection may be a must in the export market.
- ❖ **Not checking whether a trademark is already registered or is being used** by competitors in the export market. Using a trademark in a foreign country that is identical or similar to one that is registered or is already being used by a different company could be considered to be an infringement on the other firm's trademark rights. Your firm may be asked to cease using such a trademark or asked to pay damages for infringement, which may be a huge blow to the entire marketing and export strategy of your firm. Doing a trademark search in the relevant export market would be crucial prior to initiating your export operations, and preferably prior to selecting the trademark.
- ❖ **Not using the regional or international protection systems.** Applying for IP protection in a number of national IP offices worldwide may be expensive. Regional and international protection systems, if available, are an effective way of applying for IP protection in various countries.
- ❖ An example of a regional system is the African Regional Industrial Property Office (ARIPO), to which Liberia is a member. The systems of international protection include the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) for Patents, the Madrid System for the international registration of marks and the Hague System for the international deposit of industrial designs. The **PCT System** (www.wipo.int/pct/) enables applicants to apply for patent protection through a single application in currently 148 countries (including Liberia) and delay the payment of national fees for a period of up to 30 months, thus significantly reducing the initial expenses for filing for patent protection in many countries. The **Madrid System** for the international protection of trademarks (www.wipo.int/madrid/) and the **Hague System** for the international deposit of industrial designs (www.wipo.int/hague/) enable applicants to have their marks or designs protected in several countries by simply filing one application with a single Office, in one language, with only one set of fees, saving significant time and money. Liberia is currently a member of the Madrid System, but not of the Hague System.
- ❖ **Applying too late for IP protection abroad.** For some IPRs, such as patents and industrial design rights, institution or individual must apply for protection in export countries within a specified period of time from the date of application in the domestic market. The period is generally referred to as the "priority period", which is one year for patents and six months for industrial designs. Failure to apply during the priority period would generally result in the impossibility to obtain protection in such countries, thus leaving room for other companies to copy your invention or design freely.
- ❖ **Disclosing information too early or without a confidentiality or non-disclosure agreement.** Disclosing information on your latest product innovation or new design to potential trade partners,

export agents, distributors or anybody else prior to applying for protection or without a written contract requiring confidentiality, could result in you losing the rights over your invention or design. Your innovative product may, in fact, no longer be considered new and, therefore, patentable, or somebody else may apply for patent protection thus excluding you from the use of your own invention. And similarly for industrial designs.

- ❖ **Infringing the IP rights of others.** Exporting your products without checking whether the product is infringing on the IP rights of others in the relevant foreign markets may prove a costly affair. For example, if you have licensed-in technology from other companies, you must make sure that you have a right to export the product bearing such technology in order to avoid infringing on the rights of the right-holder. If your products are thought to be infringing on the rights of others, they may be withheld at the border and their distribution impeded or stopped altogether, which may prove to be very costly or fatal to your business.
- ❖ **Not defining issues of ownership of IPRs when outsourcing manufacturing.** Many companies outsource the creation, manufacturing or design of products to other firms, often in foreign countries. But businesses often forget to protect their IPRs in such countries or to specify issues of ownership of designs, inventions, and software in the contracts with the foreign manufacturing companies. The main danger is that misunderstandings about ownership of the IPRs may arise between the company outsourcing the work and the firm contracted to do the work. There are great variations amongst national laws on the issue of ownership of right over contracted work and different rules generally apply to different IP rights.
- ❖ The WIPO Representative concluded and emphasized that there are ample reasons for SMEs to make sure that IP issues are duly taken into consideration while developing their export plan and that they need to take sufficient measures to ensure that a) they are not caught off-guard infringing on the IPRs of others; and b) limit the opportunities for competitors to free-ride on their firm's inventiveness and creativity.

Breakout Session Two:

Participants were broken out into three groups for the second breakout session. The various topics discussed are as follow:

✓ Market Intelligence

This session examined Market Intelligence and within that framework, the function and probable success of Market Information System (MIS) in Liberia. Present at this section was **Ms. Melanie Bittle**, Enterprise Development Specialist, USAID FED and **Mr. Hilary David**, GROW. The section was moderated by **Mr. Robert Nyambaka**, Agri-Business Specialist, USAID FED. Melanie Bittle introduced the constraints in the market systems, while Hilary David, presented the definition of market intelligence and market information systems and discussed the successes and failures of previous attempts to initiate advanced systems in Liberia.

Major constraints facing commercialization of agriculture:

- ❖ Information constraints – lack information on prices, consumer demand, information on road conditions;
- ❖ Infrastructure constraints - poor roads, lack of adequate storage, poor access to energy, poor to no access to cell coverage / internet in rural areas, poor to no access to print media in rural areas means dependency on radio;
- ❖ Skills and knowledge constraints - poor planning among stakeholders, lack of knowledge concerning post harvest handling best practices, lack of unified measurement;
- ❖ Market constraints - multiple layers of intermediaries means increased charges and lack of transparency, poor understanding of demand and lack of organization of supply means huge swings in surplus and scarcity, porous borders means product dumping from other countries, lack of trust between market players.

A Market Information System (MIS) aims to:

- ❖ Redress the information asymmetry between market players to help poor farmers;
- ❖ Facilitate trade decisions for buying, selling and investing;
- ❖ Improve the negotiating capacity of small-scale farmers;
- ❖ Improve market transparency, competition and trade-offs;
- ❖ Improve strategic guidelines given by public and private institutions;

Constraints faced by MIS systems in Liberia

- ❖ Lack of long term institutional anchoring;
- ❖ Absence of standard measurement units for some agricultural commodities;
- ❖ Issues related to quality and timeliness of data;
- ❖ Low private sector participation;
- ❖ Low adoption rates of related technologies.

Key Points:

- ❖ The private sector in Liberia needs information, especially on prices, and they would be willing to pay for it;
- ❖ Systems developed should be owned by the private sector;
- ❖ Any MIS system in Liberia at this point should be very simple and based on infrastructure already in place. Solutions should focus on using media such as radio and pricing boards at markets. The audience suggested a pilot program to determine effectiveness and sustainability.

✓ Solutions to common SME challenges in Liberia

Various solutions were discussed with respect to the many challenges that SMEs are facing in Liberia. Key among these solutions were: regulatory reforms by government to provide easy and flexible business interaction and formalization, building the capacity of local MSMEs to meet market demands, creating linkages to larger buyers for local businesses and providing solutions to the increasing interest rate and collateral management. The session was moderated by **Mr. Alphajour A. Bah III**, Deputy Minister of Industry and present at the discussion were **Mr. Tim Melvin**, SMI (L) Country Director, Building Markets, **Mrs. Oona Burke Johnson**, General Manager, Marketplace, **Mrs. Mai Bright-Urey**, CEO

and Founder, Wulki Farms, Inc., **Mr. Mahmud Johnson**, CEO, J-Palm and **Mr. Milton Weeks**, Vice President, Liberia Bankers Association.

✓ **Export Market: Standards, Opportunities and Linkages**

This session focused on export market opportunities and how accessible it can be to Liberian businesses if they learn to properly put in place quality assurance standards, Liberian assertion to the WTO, branding, trade regulations, and corporate linkages. Moderated by **Hon. Stephen Marvie**, Assistant Minister of Commerce at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, discussing on the panel were **Mr. Amin Modad**, CEO of Bella Casa, **Mr. Eduardo Garcia**, Managing Director of Firestone, a representative of the International Trade Centre, and **Mr. Roland Carey** of SGS.

Key Points:

- ❖ Lack of knowledge about opportunities in the global market
- ❖ Lack of knowledge and contracts to SMEs to take advantage of existing opportunities
- ❖ Potential SMEs have limited knowledge of what the region has to offer

Day Two: Conference and Trade Fair-2014

Access to Finance

Hon. Axel M. Addy gave the opening remark and highlighted his goal of rebranding the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. His goal was on what the 'Market' was thinking about the Ministry of Commerce and Industry amidst all the development efforts that the government has embarked on across the country.

Panel Discussion:

The panel discussion on the second day was focused on 'breaking barriers for SMEs to access finance. The discussion was targeted at the business environment for small businesses in Liberia. Talks were directed at the prevailing policies in place, the challenges that businesses are facing and the opportunities that are presently within the market for Liberian small businesses.

In response to what the banking sector is doing to help small businesses in Liberia, the panelists pointed out challenges in identifying businesses that truly need financing and small businesses are not repaying loans adequately to stimulate the performance of the sector. Some other challenges mentioned during the discussion include adequate Business Management, Financial Record Keeping and communication between banking institutions and MSMEs that would lead to a better and sellable Business Plan for these small businesses. They mentioned that banks are facing hazards and that the Central Bank of Liberia has to intervene to mitigate the problem and to help provide adequate banking services to the Liberian struggling small businesses.

The Panelists also pointed out the many policies that central government is adopting to create a suitable environment for small business to succeed. The National Export Strategy and the Trade Policy were highlighted to be policies that the government is putting in place to assist small businesses in increasing

their revenue. They mentioned the Collateral Registry, the LIFE Fund, etc... are good start stimulus initiatives that will help improve the sector and the overall operation of small businesses in Liberia.

The session was moderated by **Mr. Michael Nicholson**, Deputy Director of Economic Growth, USAID and present at the discussion were **Mrs. Watchen Harris Bruce**, Chief of Party, Investing for Business Expansion, USAID Liberia, **Mr. Kobina Daniel**, Advisory Services Coordinator, (CASA), IFC, **Mr. Francis Dennis**, President of Liberia Chamber of Commerce, **Mr. John Davies, III**, CEO LBDI / President of Liberia Bankers Association, **Mr. Derk Bienen**, International Consultant, (Trade Policy), ITC.

Breakout Session One:

After the panel discussion, participants were broken out into three sections, the Small Ballroom of the City Hall, the Theatre and the Mayor's mini conference room upstairs. The various topics discussed are as follow:

✓ Value Chain Financing: Embedded Financing Solutions for SMEs

This session focused on embedded financing schemes that enable formal financing to reach marginalized farmers that involve more bankable downstream value chain stakeholders, such as agro-input suppliers, aggregators, and buyers. The session was moderated by **Javier Betancourt** from **Building Markets**. **Melanie Bittle** from **USAID FED** introduced and defined the concept of value chain financing. IFC consultant, **Robert Hommans**, presented the benefits of equipment leasing in agriculture. **Samuel Oduro-Asare** from **Wienco Liberia** presented the company's business model that provides credit to client farmers in the form of inputs and extension services while guaranteeing them a market for their produce. The company's model is an example of how value chain actors can provide embedded services and financing to each other while maintaining equitable profit distribution. The presenters then answered audience questions about cold storage, improved use of agro-chemicals, and the possibility of using warehouse receipts as a financing tool for farmers. Wienco also provided information about future partnerships with farmers and agribusinesses.

Key Points:

- ❖ Leasing or renting large farm equipment is a more effective use of limited capital than purchasing. Making small payments to use equipment allows for more positive cash flow while the farmer improves productivity. Ultimately profitability is improved when production is and quality of production is higher.
- ❖ Value chain financing works best when it is based on the inter-dependent relationships between the value chain actors who each have a stake (profit) in the process. Wienco provides a perfect example whereby they have a vested interest in providing extension services and quality inputs on credit to their farmers - their existence as a profitable entity relies heavily on the success and profitability of their farmers. Warehouse receipt financing is not a current option for improving farmer's access to capital in Liberia because 1) There exists no reliable and consistent source of market information necessary for transactions to take place, 2) there is no current mechanism to ensure the warehouse owner meets minimum warehouse standards and is insured, 3) Banks would need to develop a

program and policy for this type of financing with a guarantee system, 4) There needs to be substantial volume of not-too perishable commodities in order for it to work, 5) There needs to be system in place to resolve disputes in the court system. Bob noted that he has actually never encountered a warehouse receipt program in a developing country that successfully supplied farmers with loans, except for one program in Ukraine.

✓ **Impact Investing: How SMEs can attract and benefit from investors**

This session focused on techniques and methods that small businesses can use to attract and benefit from financial opportunities within their environment. Proper management, good record keeping and a sellable business plan are among the many things that small businesses can use to attract and benefit from potential investors. Moderated by **Mr. Evariste Nduwayo**, Operations Officer, IFC, discussing on the panel were a representative from West Africa Venture Fund (WAVF) and **Mr. Javier Betancourt**, 3FP Country Director, Building Markets.

Key Points:

- ❖ Impact investing – the Triple Bottom-Line (profits, people and planet) – discussed why this is important to achieving sustainability in the long-run;
- ❖ SMEs participants asked how to access funding from WAVF and the country manager invited them to visit WAVF offices (for further details).

✓ **Loans for SMEs: LIFE and contract pre-financing structures for SMEs**

This panelist discussed available loan and contract pre-financing structures for Liberian SMEs, including the Liberia Innovation Fund for Entrepreneurs (LIFE). This panel comprised of loan officers and loanees who exchanged best practices and feedback on the loan processes within the financial market. The use of movable loans as collateral was also discussed. Discussing on this panel was **Mrs. Watchen Harris Bruce**, Chief of Party, Investing for Business Expansion, USAID Liberia, **Mr. Henry Saamoi**, International Bank (Liberia), **Mr. Oliver Hesch**, Managing Director, Access Bank Liberia, **Mr. John Davies**, CEO, LBDI, President of Liberia Bankers Association, **Mr. H. Momo Fortune**, President of Association of Insurers in Liberia (AIL), representatives from **EcoBank Representative, Central Bank of Liberia and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.

Breakout Session Two:

Participants were broken out into three sections for the second breakout within the rooms. The various topics discussed are as follow:

✓ **Policy Dialogue Platform: High-level discussion of strategic incentives for agribusiness**

This panel hosted high-level representatives from public and private sector stakeholders. This was a close door discussion that was to be focused on short and long term strategic incentives for all businesses along the food crop sector value chains in order to support an increase in domestic food production to replace imports. In order to better address these incentives, Ministry of Commerce and Industry and USAID FED created and launched the Liberian Agriculture Business Enabling Environment Inter-Agency Policy Group (LABEE IPG) consisting of key decision makers from each line Ministry, donor organization, key

private sector entities, and champions from the Legislature to facilitate moving forward with these initiatives. The LABEE IPG will assign key technical personnel from their institutions and organizations to be a part of a smaller technical working group (TWG) that will then carry out the mandate of the LABEE IPG.

Present in this closed door discussion were the Minister of Agriculture, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the National Investment Commission, the Governance Commission, USAID Liberia, the World Food Program, the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation, private sector processors, agro-input suppliers, and farmers, and USAID FED.

Key Points:

- ❖ USAID FED, MoCI and MoF will work together to validate the information on revenue lost through waivers;
- ❖ All parties agreed that prices (e.g. paddy rice), should be established by the market. The TWG will work on a strategy for announcing to the farming community that the GoL does not set these prices;
- ❖ The private sector requested that while the blanket waiver is necessary to help them become more competitive with cheap imports, a more deliberate effort should be made by GoL to establish long-term policies in support of the agriculture sector;
- ❖ MoCI suggested that, in addition to working through the government agencies, the private sector must work to lobby the national legislature;
- ❖ Partners suggested the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Governance Commission will be included in the TWG, however on an as-needed basis.

✓ **Clustering: How to cluster and why SMEs are stronger together**

This session focused on small agri-businesses coming together to lower their costs, increase their profitability and produce for the market adequately. Series of benefits that can be derived from clustering were pointed out for the audience: Accessing Government contract, synergy of production, reachable by the market and easy access to skills and experience from group members. The session emphasized the need for building team for better result. Panelists at this session were **Ms. Kula Thompson Williams**, Training Manager, Building Markets, USAID FED-Liberia, **Mr. Ekutu Bonzemba**, Senior Trade Promotion Officer, ITC and **Mr. Bedell W. Sandi**, CEO, Efficient Logistics Service. The session was moderated by **Mr. Robert Nyambaka**, Agri-Business Specialist, USAID FED-Liberia.

Key Points:

- ❖ Innovation and creativity
- ❖ Government Contract
- ❖ Value Chain clustering

Awards Dinner

Day 2, the last day of the conference, was climaxed with an MSME's Awards Ceremony and Dinner held in the ball room of the Monrovia City Hall in Sinkor. Four MSMEs were awarded cash prizes of US\$2,500.00 each from the Liberian Government to them grow their businesses.

The MSMEs that received awards were as follows:

- ▷ **Shirley Beauty Plus-** Best Customer Service (most responsive to the needs of customers)
- ▷ **Environmental Services Inc.,-** has the most Growth Potential
- ▷ **Liberia Business Incubator -** Best Exhibit
- ▷ **Jola House -** most Innovative Posture

Constraints:

1. Having multiple break-out sessions in different rooms seemed to be confusing for most people and also resulted in smaller crowds for each session.
2. The Trade Fair room was slightly too small for all the MSMEs consider fewer exhibitors depending on space.

Recommendations

1. Conference be held once every other year (next conference will be 2016) to allow enough time for monitoring and evaluation of SMEs.
2. Remove break-out sessions and have one panel discussion or event happening at one time (Turn-out at break-out sessions was very low especially on day two).
3. Ensure that the exhibition center is spacious enough to accommodate The Trade Fair huge crowd that turned out for the conference and exhibition. (Maybe we should have ten fewer or so businesses depending on the venue).
4. Include all dignitary speeches all at once in the morning each day in order to ensure exhibitors, guests, and customers have more time to sell products and network.
5. Work with the President's office from the beginning to plan her movements (and therefore the entire guest's movements) better.
6. There needs to be much more organization around sign-in and registration. There was no way to easily add people at the last minute.
7. Begin planning much earlier. Seek more outside sponsorship for funding.
8. Consider charging for booths for vendors and make training a part of the conference and not just for participants/exhibitors in the trade fair.
9. There needs to be clear procurement deadlines for donors who are providing in-kind and cash procurement.

10. Give at least one month notice to US Embassy and USAID employees who are expected to speak or contribute to panel discussions at the conference. Invitations should include agendas, topics, speakers, and times of arrival for all participants-send both hard copy and via email

Successes:

Overall, the MSME Conference was a success for the following results:

The President launched the following policies the:

1. **LIBERIA NATIONAL TRADE POLICY 2014-2019**
2. **LIBERIA NATIONAL EXPORT STRATEGY 2014-2019**. These two documents outline government's strategy for creating inclusive growth through trade competitiveness.
3. The President proposed the need to transform the Division of MSMEs at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to the **BUREAU OF SMALL BUSINESSES**
4. The 25% local procurement regulation (Small Business Empowerment Act) is expected to be ratified as law by July. The law will require the GoL to procure at least 25% of their goods and services from locally registered businesses.
5. One year moratorium on Tax Clearance for the fifty(50) selected 2014 MSMEs that exhibited during the Trade Fair- will have to pay their taxes later.
6. LIFE Fund- First Project is the construction of the **Lofa Women Weaving Center**
7. Establishment of the Made in Liberia Trade store called **The Liberia Market Place**.
8. MoCI to establish The Liberia Market Place Website.
9. The President of Liberia signed Executive Order #64, suspending import tariffs on "essential equipment, agricultural seeds, live animals for breeding, and other goods directly related to agricultural development" on April 25, 2014. USAID FED began to lobby for this in November 2013 and put together the list of agro-inputs and corresponding HS codes for MoCI to use to lobby for the measure. The LABEE TWG plans to discuss the possibility of the legislature passing this initiative as medium-term incentive.
10. MOCI agreed to champion the effort and recruit members for the TWG for LABEE. POC Deputy Minister Bah in partnership with USAID/FED. The next meeting will be held in early May to establish a terms of reference.

Lessons Learned

- Need for setting up clear roadmap and milestones from the start;
- Monitor progress against the overall roadmap and milestones;
- Flag areas where there is significant delays; so that solutions or plan B can be found in time;
- Ensure there is visibility of the event coordinator at all times so that different teams have a contact point for any challenges they may be facing along the project.

Going forward

- The MoCI team has done a great job and should continue to take the lead role in the organization of the event.
- Provide continued support to MSME exhibitors for 2013 and 2014 MSME Conference to ensure that majority of these businesses grow and create more jobs;
- Next MSME conference should be able to build upon the current format to accelerate the organization of the event. “No need to reinvent the wheel” – when there is already one;

Conference and Trade Fair Photo:



**Cultural Dance Troupe Outside of Conference Hall-
Welcoming Participants and guests**



**Partial View of the Monrovia City Hall: venue
of the MSME 2014 Conference and Trade Fair**



Participant and Guests queue to receive ID for entry into conference hall



L-R: Labor Minister Juah Lawson, Agriculture Minister Dr. Florence Chenoweth, Internal Affairs Minister Morris Dukuly, Commerce Minister Axel Addy, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, ITC Executive Dir. Arancha Gonzalez, US Ambassador Deborah Malac, IFC Country Director Frank Ajilore



R-L View of participants seated with MOCI Assit. Minister Gahn, Deputy Minister Bah, Assit Minister Dean in Front row.





Cotton to clothes-Exhibitor spinning thread to make Lofa Clothes





Trade Fair Sale of country cloth at the conference



The Food and Enterprise Development (FED) Displays vegetables at the Trade Fair



Martha Henries explains to President Sirleaf about her cassava products & other goods on display as Arancha Gonzalez , Deborah Malac and others look on

Budget:

Based on the data from the 2013 National MSME Conference budget of US\$**475,010.68** there was no provision for indirect contributions from the partnering institutions. Contrastingly, the 2014 National MSME Conference's budget was projected at **US\$ 387,626.00** with provision for indirect and direct budget line item contributions from the partnering institutions. At the end of the 2014 National Conference and Trade Fair, our spending in kind (Indirect) as reported by our partners on the 2014 MSME Conference and Trade Fair amounted to **US\$242,245.00** making up 61% of our projected budget, while direct actual spending on the Conference and Trade Fair main activities budgeted line items was **US\$159,054.00** which is 41%. See chart below for details.

Contribution to MSME Conference in Kind and Actual:

	Direct budget line items	Indirect Contributions	Total
FED	\$37,369.00	\$ 92,020.00	\$ 129,389.00
IBEX	\$ 450.00		\$ 450.00
BM	\$ 8,160.00	\$ 73,300.00	\$ 81,460.00
USAID Total	45979.00	\$ 165,320.00	\$ 211,299.00
GC	\$ 1,070.00	\$ 9,025.00	\$ 10,095.00
MP	\$ 500.00		\$ 500.00
BSC	\$ 500.00		\$ 500.00
MoCI	\$35,220.00		\$ 35,220.00
IFC	\$22,400.00		\$ 22,400.00
ITC	\$34,585.00	\$ 61,900.00	\$ 96,485.00
RGH	\$ 2,100.00		\$ 2,100.00
UCI	\$ 2,000.00		\$ 2,000.00
WIPO	\$ 5,000.00		\$ 5,000.00
Fouta Corporation	\$ 800.00		\$ 800.00
AquaLife	\$ 1,400.00		\$ 1,400.00
SWAT	\$ 2,500.00		\$ 2,500.00
BEL Firm		\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00
Access Bank	\$ 5,000.00		\$ 5,000.00
Grand Total	\$159,054.00	\$ 242,245.00	\$ 401,299.00

Appendix One: List of

	Company Name	Sector	Contact #	Email
1	AGE Food Center	Catering	0886536393	age4all@gmail.com
2	Agro Inc.	Agriculture	0886812439	info@agroinc.com
3	AJ Export and Import Expert Group Inc.	Service	0886980651	eballahajexportimport@gmail.com
4	Alarm Response Security Guard Services	Service	0886543403	gmgwiom@yahoo.com
5	Alive Liberia Missions	Woodworking	0886437604	mombaydoe@yahoo.com
6	Amalb Systems	Construction	0777945045	ekarnley@yahoo.com
7	Bosh Bosh Inc.	Textiles	0886294232	theboshboshproject@gmail.com
8	Bravo Sister Enterprise	Agriculture	0886990100	bravosisterenterprise@yahoo.com
9	Cathy Printing Press	Service	0886532197	ckollie2008@yahoo.com
10	Covenant Venture	Construction	0886814818	covenantventurerentalservice@gmail.com
11	Data Link Computer College	Education	0886525500	datalinkcomputercollege@yahoo.com
12	Divine Fingers	Catering	0886520914	cdivinefingers@gmail.com
13	Eden Park Cafeteria and Catering Services	Catering	0886499138	edenpcafeteria@yahoo.com
14	Elohim Group of Companies	Services/Construction	0886593199	sfgardiner@yahoo.com
15	Environmental Service Enterprise	Sanitation	0886872730	esmonrovia@gmail.com
16	Executive Consultants Proactive Security Inc.	Services	0886888496	Rspeights@excopscurity.com
17	Exotic Travel Tours	Services	0886515406	exotic06@yahoo.com
18	Ezekiel Business Center	Textiles	0777550008	kamaraezeziel.ek@gmail.com
19	J. Palm Liberia	Agriculture	0886510297	jpalmiberia@gmail.com
20	Kamara's Construction Company	Construction		kamaraconstruction@gmail.com
21	Liberty Aviation Group	Transportation	0886511320	liberty_airlines@yahoo.com
22	LIBRA Sanitation Inc.	Sanitation	0886511921	jadees1014@yahoo.com
23	Mayaa Group of Companies Inc.	Construction	0886734406	mayaagroupofcompaniesinc@yahoo.com
24	Menekemu Design and Packaging	Services	0886687474	menekemuinc@gmail.com
25	Pasama Agricultural Trading Corporation	Agriculture	0886581980	patcok2010@yahoo.com
26	Pepper Byrd Tours	Services	0777455555	pepperbyrdoures@gmail.com
27	Rich Fulfillment Fashion House	Textiles	0880387629	-
28	Rockstorm Group of Companies (Event Media Consult Liberia)	Event & Media	0880046303	emconsultlib@gmail.com
29	Safety Plus	Service/Sanitation	0886538316	khelem@yahoo.com
30	Scott's Industrial Construction Inc.	Construction	0886582487	scottcine@yahoo.com
31	Security Expert Guard Agency of Liberia (SEGAL)	Service	0880802700	segal_2006@yahoo.com
32	Seklaa Enterprise	Services	0886554383	theodwah@yahoo.com
33	Shirley Beauty Plus Salon	Services	0880-702-702	shirleysbeautyplus@hotmail.com
34	Standard Metal Work Garage Ink	Construction	0886-459-837	
35	Solution Liberia	Energy	0886-618-321	slinc8319@gmail.com
36	Universal Painters and Technical Services	Construction	0777-271-548	universalpainters944@gmail.com
37	Vainga Agriculture Development and Management Consultancies	Agriculture	0886-594-698	vademcolib@gmail.com
38	Variety of Services Inc.	Construction	0777-510-701	
39	Williette Construction	Construction	0886-433-339	fatislrs12@gmail.com
40	LNTTGAWU ² /Kolahun Women Weavers Association	Textiles	0886-538-239	tategaw@yahoo.com
41	Foya Women Weaver Association	Textiles	0886-987-972	
42	Esther Dorbor weaving Center	Textiles	0886-859-608	
43	Zoequoi Farms	Agriculture	0880-709-360	zoequoliberia@gmail.com

² Liberia National Tailors Textile Garment & Allied Workers Union

44	Asey Foods	Agriculture	0886-956-974	aseyfoods.lib@gmail.com
45	Eva's Traditional Arts	Arts & Crafts	0886-430-448	evapaye2013@gmail.com
46	Falama Inc.	Agriculture	0777-512-940	falamainc.bus3@gmail.com
47	Approved Wear Fashion House	Textiles	0886-778-273	approvedwear@ymail.com
48	Liberia Business Incubator	Agriculture	0886-525-169	musabrown2007@yahoo.com
49	Shark's Entertainment Inc.	Catering	0886-614-459	ebrightjardomg@yahoo.com
50	Jola House Inc.	Textiles	0886-467-342	elfredam@yahoo.com
51	National Water Transport Technocrats	Transportation		

Media Houses covering the event:

1. The Independent Newspaper- covered the Conference
2. The Inquirer Newspaper- covered the Conference
3. Heritage Newspaper- covered the Conference
4. Democrat Newspaper- covered the Conference
5. LBS Radio & TV-covered the conference and Radio talk show hosted Director Reed MOCI/MSME, Mrs. Watchen Bruce Harris-(IBEX), and Melanie Bittle-USAIDFED
6. FABRIC Radio-covered the Conference
7. Liberian Women Democracy Radio- Radio talk show hosted Director Reed-MOCI/MSME
8. Truth FM Radio & TV
9. UNMIL Radio- Radio talk show hosted Director Reed, Evon Harding Sharks(Sharks Inc, Oona Burke Johnson(Market Place),
10. Teach FM Radio-Stella Marie Campus talk show hosted Director Reed-MOCI/MSME
11. FM 89.9 – located in Firestone Radio talk show hosted Director Reed-MOCI/MSME