



REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA



MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

***LAUNCH OF THE SIDA COOPERATION AGREEMENT
FOR TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND
INDUSTRY ON LIBERIA'S ACCESSION TO THE WORLD TRADE
ORGANIZATION***

**REMARKS
H.E. AXEL M. ADDY
MINISTER**

April 24, 2013

Excellencies and Members of the Swedish Delegation
Members of Government present,
Members of the private sector,
Members of the Fourth estate,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

We are delighted to welcome here today our guests from Sweden, including the Swedish National Board of Trade (NBT), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), and the Swedish Embassy in Monrovia.

We are also pleased to have in attendance members of Liberia's WTO Steering Committee and WTO Technical Working Group, as well as representatives from the Liberian private sector, represented by the Liberia Chamber of Commerce and the Liberia Business Association. Last, but certainly not least, we are glad to welcome the Chairman of the House Committee on Commerce and Industry as well as the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Industry.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincerest gratitude, on behalf of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Government of Liberia, and the entire WTO Accession Team, to the Government of Sweden for its very generous support to Liberia's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO). We are grateful for the financial assistance provided by Sida and the technical assistance provided by NBT as part of the Project entitled "*Swedish National Board of Trade Support to Liberia's WTO Accession.*"

We are very pleased to be here this morning, at the official launch of this Project. Our WTO Accession Team has been working closely with the Swedish National Board of Trade (NBT) over the past year and a half to design the Project according to Liberia's needs and to secure funding from Sida. We want to wholeheartedly thank the NBT Team, as well as our own Liberian WTO Accession Team, for all the tireless efforts they have made to help us finalize and secure funding for this Project.

To give you some brief background on this Project, it is both long-term (5 years) and substantial (US \$7.3 million) and it will be indispensable in enabling Liberia to achieve its goal of acceding to the WTO. Its activities are comprehensive and far reaching and include:

- Technical assistance to help Liberia prepare the documentation affiliated with the accession process, including the Legislative Action Plan, the Goods Offer, and the Services Offer.
- Support to the Government of Liberia's multilateral and bilateral accession negotiations.

- Activities to enhance individual and institutional capacity within the Government of Liberia.
- Activities to increase stakeholder engagement and build awareness among Liberia's private sector, civil society, and Legislature.

With Liberia benefiting from the financial support of Sida, alongside the technical support of the NBT trade advisers, we are well positioned to make big strides toward WTO membership in the years ahead.

Following today's project launch, I would also like to invite you to a reception this evening at the Royal Hotel, from 6:30 to 8:30pm, generously hosted by the Swedish Embassy. I would like to take this opportunity to once again very warmly welcome our Swedish counterparts to Liberia and to extend our sincerest thanks and appreciation to both Sida and NBT for their ongoing assistance in Liberia's access WTO accession process.

I will now turn the floor over to Lena Johansson, Director General of the Swedish NBT.