

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA



COVERING THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1st TO DECEMBER 31st, 2009

Hon. Miata Beysolow

MINISTER

MONROVIA, LIBERIA

DECEMBER 31,st 2009



REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY
MONROVIA



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MCI/MB/M-/578/'09

December 31, 2009

The Honorable Members
National Legislature
Capitol Hill
Monrovia, Liberia

Dear Honorables:

In compliance with our obligation of presenting an annual report, we have the honor and are pleased to most respectfully submit the annual report of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) for the period January 1 – December 31, 2009 to The National Legislature.

This report covers the activities, achievements made in fulfilling the mandate of the Ministry and in support of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, as well as challenges for the reporting period. Significant progress was made in the implementation of administrative reforms in respect of creating an enabling environment for the private sector to contribute meaningfully to the development of the country. We hope that you will find the report informative and that our recommendations for continued progress on these and other important issues will meet your honorable body's consideration.

Honorable Members of the National Legislature, the entire staff of the MOCI joins me in expressing gratitude for the support and guidance received from you. We pray that the Almighty Father will continue to shower His blessings upon us, as we face these challenges to contribute towards the growth and development of our country.

With assurances of our highest esteem and loyalty, we remain.

Sincerely Yours,

Miata Beysolow
MINISTER

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Domestic Market

The beginning of 2009 saw instability in the prices and supply of essential commodities such as rice, cement and building materials, especially cement, on the domestic market. This led to shortages, resulting in high prices and unwholesome practices on the part of some distributors. During the course of the year, prices began to decline following aggressive measures put in place by the Ministry to encourage competition especially among importers of rice and cement and the decline in commodity prices, especially freight, as the impact of the global financial crisis hit the country. These measures resulted in the Ministry's approval of 3 new importers of rice and 4 new importers of cement vastly increasing the supply of rice and cement respectively on the domestic market and thus reducing their prices.

Additional, help also came as a result of Her Excellency President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's intervention that led to a bilateral agreement with the Government of Japan in 2008 which resulted in Liberia receiving a first consignment of 8,612mt of ODA rice in 2009. Consequently, price of rice has decreased from \$35.00 to \$30.00 and now sells between \$22.00 and \$25.00; while cement prices dropped from \$16.00 now sells about \$7.00 to \$8.00. Consumers always benefit when there is a vibrant and competitive market. The challenge for the Ministry is to continue to encourage and promote competition in the market so as to ensure adequate supply of essential commodities at affordable prices.

The Ministry is shifting from price control to monitoring, focusing on the supply-side of the economy, to ensure availability and affordability of essential commodities on the local market.

Staffing

The year in review saw major changes in the top management of the Ministry brought about by the appointment by Her Excellency, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, of Hon. Lavela B. Kortimai, Sr. replacing Hon. Andrew S. Allakamenin as Deputy Minister for Administration; Hon. Sei W. Gahn, Assistant Minister for Industry replacing Hon. Moses P. Roberts; and Hon. Wilmot Paye, Assistant Minister for Commerce & Trade replacing Hon. Aletha Browne.



Senior Staff of the Ministry

The workforce of the Ministry currently stands at 292 employees as compared to 305 employees in 2008. The reduction in the workforce is attributed to dismissals, retirements and resignations of staff.

Capacity Building

In accordance with the government's reform agenda, and realizing the need for capacity building in the wake of the PRS, the Ministry in March 2009, undertook assessment of its staff with the view to identifying challenges associated with performance and the need to develop strategic response to existing as well as new challenges from preparing for accession to WTO, accession to the Madrid Protocol under WIPO, implementation of the Integrated Framework to name a few. Assistance was also received from USAID through a consultant who completed this work in early November. Recommendations from the assessment are being implemented.

In support of government's Capacity Building initiatives, several employees of the Ministry attended workshops, conferences, seminars, and symposiums that were undertaken regionally and internationally. A large part of the training was sponsored by The People's Republic of China. The government of India also provided five scholarships in various disciplines to five employees of the Ministry including a two (2) year Master degree program in Human Resource Management.

Relationship with the Private Sector

Together with order line ministries, the MOCI contributed towards creating an enabling environment for the private sector to make its contribution to economic growth and development of the country in accordance with Government's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). Significant progress was made under the reform agenda resulting in Liberia scoring an encouraging mark on "Doing and Starting Business" both regionally and internationally. Accordingly, Liberia in the "Ease of Doing Business" category ranked 149 in 2009/10 as compared to 170 in 2008. In the category of Business Start Up, headed by MOCI, Liberia ranked 57 in 2009/10 against 88 in 2007/08. As a result of this improvement, Liberia has been included among the top ten reformers in the world. It is expected that with the full implementation of the reforms, more will be achieved.

The Ministry held meetings with a number of private sector organizations including the Liberia Business Association, Liberia Chamber of Commerce, Wholesalers Association, Rice, Cement and Petroleum Importer and Distributors; in order to improve lines of communications and get a better understanding of the challenges faced by the business

community and see how these can be minimized if not removed without compromising the interest of the consumers.



*Government Delegation On Business Registry Visits
The Norway Register Development In Oslo, Norway*

During the period under review, Phases II and III of the Modern Business Registry Project geared towards facilitating comprehensive and reliable services for business registration began. The Norway Registry Development (NRD), consultants to the project, designed specifications for the Joint Steering Committee (JSC) on June 26, 2009. Implementation is

on schedule and is expected to be completed by June 2010.

The period under review saw a modest increase in business registration. Only, **7,060** businesses were registered in 2009 as compared to **7,056** in 2008. Of the total businesses registered, Liberian own entities accounted for **6,137** or **87** percent, while foreign own businesses experienced growth in the amount of **2,897** as compared to **2,421** in 2008 or 16 percent increase. During the same period, **3,059** new businesses were registered as against **2,642** in 2008; indicating a growth of **417** new businesses or **14** percent, but a decline in registration of existing businesses.

The revenue generated from business registration amounted to **L\$15,217,200** as compared to **L\$16,914,150** in 2008 for Liberian owned businesses, reflecting a decline of **L\$1,696,950**; while revenue generated from non Liberian owned businesses amounted **US\$739,300** as compared to **US\$786,425** in 2008, a marginal decrease of **US\$47,125**. These amounts are directly deposited by business entities into the Government's Account at the Central Bank of Liberia.

Small & Medium Enterprises

Realizing the significance of SMEs/SMLs to Liberia's Economic Recovery Program, the Ministry developed a brochure on microfinance institutions, entitled "Money and Business 2009". The brochure is a directory of institutions that provide credit for SME's and give their credit terms so that entrepreneurs can match their needs with the institution and terms that best meet their needs and they can prepare the requirements before going to make their request.

Furthermore, to boost the SMEs/SMIs sub-sector, the Ministry in collaboration with the Amazing Grace Inc. provided training for 10 women carefully selected from various communities in Montserrado County, in Beads/Necklace production. In the same vein, the Ministry collaborated with CHF in implementing the Goldman Sachs 10,000 women training program which aims at training 200 Liberian Business Women. The first 25 trained at Cuttington University, graduated in 2009.



Market Women in a Trade –At-Hand Workshop

In furtherance of the Liberia Entrepreneurial Development/Economic Empowerment Initiative (LED-EEI) Program for which the Ministry of Commerce & Industry serves as the Lead Ministry, the Harper Growth Center was opened to train youth in rubber wood processing. This project was supported by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), UNDP and FAO through the Centre Songhai Program.

In 2009, the Ministry in partnership with the University of Liberia completed phase III of the Grooming Liberia Future Entrepreneurs with 20 students benefiting. However, few of the participants have taken advantage of the “Seed Capital” for starting their own businesses. The funds are managed by Eco-Bank Liberia Limited under the Bank Matching Grant Scheme.

Import and Export Trade Gap

During the period 2009, the value of import dropped to US\$619.11M in 2009, as compared to US\$856.81M in 2008, representing 27.74 percent decline. The reduction in import is a result of the decline in commodity prices following the global economic melt down.



Construction materials

The decline in commodity prices, however, negatively impacted the export sub sector resulting in total exports of US\$113.99M in 2009 as against US\$181.05M in 2008, a decline of 37 %. The balance of trade position in 2009 was <US\$505.12M> as compared to <US\$675.76M> in 2008, indicating an improvement of **25.25 percent**.

In an effort to further facilitate the active and equitable participation of Liberia into the Regional and Global Trading Systems, a trade policy draft document has been developed with support from ECOWAS and stakeholders. The document is expected to be presented to stakeholders for validation in early 2010.

With the support of the International Trade Center (ITC), the Ministry opened the Trade Information Center to the public on November 18th. The Center will facilitate growth and promotion of export from Liberia by providing much needed information on the global market such as legal, technical, procedural requirements as well as trade practices.

Funding has also been provided by the Integrated Framework for Trade Development to support the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Public, Private stakeholders towards the development and implementation of a comprehensive Trade Agenda.

The Ministry is also pleased to report that more progress has been made toward accession to the WTO. A Steering Committee

was established to prepare the Memorandum of the Foreign Trade Regime (MFTR), a sensitization workshop was conducted by a high level delegation from WTO and Trade.Com has provided technical support including three consultants to assist with the preparation of

Liberia's MFTR. Additionally, a staff from the Ministry recently returned after completing a 10 month training program in WTO negotiations.



World Trade Organization (WTO) Delegation in Discussions with Government Officials On Ascension Strategy

Commercial Laws Reform

The Ministry has embarked on a Commercial Law Reform Program which seeks to provide an enhanced legal framework and promote an enabling environment for the conduct of commercial and industrial activities. The Ministry in collaboration with Washington and Lee University, UNCITRAL, American Bar Association and the United States Federal Trade Commission succeeded in hosting a four day symposium. This initiative



Pres. Sirleaf and Others at the Commercial Laws Reform Workshop

resulted in the establishment of a framework to guide the review of existing Commercial Laws. Accordingly, there have been some successes in consolidating the coordination of all Commercial Law Reform efforts which would yield a maximized use of resources and improve fund sourcing efforts.

Intellectual Property Systems

Under the stewardship of the MOCI the Intellectual Property Systems of Liberia (IPSL) has received the endorsement of its Intellectual Property Development Plan (IPDP) by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), and is fully engaged in the implementation of the plan.

Having fulfilled the pre-conditions set by WIPO for the endorsement of the Intellectual Property Development Plan (IPDP), Liberia became eligible, and has now deposited with WIPO the Instrument of Accession to the Madrid Protocol for the International Registration of Trade Marks and also the Africa Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) protocol which offers protection and promotion of Intellectual Property within the African Region. Arising there from, the formation of the Collective Society; which is intended for the protection and advancement of Artists Economic Rights is being undertaken by the Copyright office.



Awareness Program On Intellectual Property

Furthermore, capacity building in the area of the drafting of patents documentation is currently being implemented by the training of two persons in Zimbabwe sponsored by ARIPO. An Intellectual Property Trade sensitization program has also commenced with the hosting of the first workshop at the Ministry of Commerce, followed by a three-day workshop in Liberia sponsored by WIPO.



Minister Beysolow and Cllr. Jallah, Dean of the Law School, University of Liberia

Industrial Programs

As part of the strategy to encourage Industrial enterprises to increase economic benefit to the country, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry initiated the preparation of an Industrial Directory. The purpose of the directory is to develop a database of all industries and promote "Made in Liberia" products thereby improving foreign exchange earnings.

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has funded the renovation of a building on the grounds of the Ministry of Public Works to be used as a National Standards Laboratory, and has purchased most of the equipment. The European Union (EU) supported West Africa Quality Programme (WAQP) has provided International

Experts to assess our current standards, funding for the purchase of some of the laboratory instruments, training of our Microbiology Laboratory Manager, and assistance with the installation of laboratory instruments. Standard Organization of Nigeria has trained five Standard Officers from three Ministries in all areas of inspection and writing of standards. The National Standard Laboratory is scheduled to be formally open during the first quarter of 2010. The Microbiology Manager for the National Standards Laboratory was recruited and hired through the



Group Photo of Participants At The Commercial Laws Reform Workshop

USAID Senior Executive Service Programme. The WAQP funded by EU and implemented by UNIDO has offered to provide training for the staff of the National Standards Laboratory in order for it to be certified as the competent authority for other laboratories in the country.

In furtherance of the Ministry's efforts to develop and encourage industrial growth, the draft of the industrial policy document was reviewed by the consultants and the UNMIL Civil Affairs Officer. However, the draft is being strengthened by a consultant provided by UNDP, prior to validation by stakeholders.

Additionally, the Ministry is developing a National Export Strategy for Liberia through the support of the ITC. Besides, the Ministry has also been participating in the formulation of common Industrial Policy Program for the ECOWAS Region. Currently, the ECOWAS Commission on Industry and related areas have appointed the Assistant Minister for Industry as a National Expert and Focal Point for Liberia. To conduct industrial survey of the country, the Ministry has requested ECOWAS Commission to send experts who will undertake the project. Finally, a request was made to the Government of India for a consultant to assess the Sugar Cane Industry in Liberia.

DEPARTMENT OF CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

Introduction



Minister along with her Deputies

The Department of Administration is responsible to manage an effective and successful commercial, trade and industrial development program for Liberia. It supports the entire Ministry's Program with policy guidelines and resources. Also, handles all financial matters, Training, Procurement, Maintenance, Personnel and other administrative issues. The Department ensures

policy guidance, resource mobilization and management to enhance the commercial and trade sectors in line with the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

The Department of Central Administration is headed by a Deputy Minister and assisted by an Assistant Minister who coordinates the Bureau overall activities.

It consists of five (5) Divisions and two (2) auxiliary Units namely:

1. Division of Finance
2. Division of Planning and Research
3. Division of Personnel
4. Division of Information
5. Division of Electronic Data Processing
 - Procurement Unit
 - Maintenance Unit

Financial Management

The Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Finance has embarked on financial reform. The primary objectives of this reform is to improve efficiency and effectiveness of Public Financial Management processes, with the aim of enhancing the quality of public service delivery in Government, and to strengthen the financial management processes and systems in order to provide timely, transparent and accurate financial and accounting services in Government. Accordingly, several reform measures have been undertaken despite the constraints and challenges which had been major hindrances in the sustained and timely implementation of the Government's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS).

During the period under review, the Department established an Internal Audit Office to foster financial transparency and accountability. Also, the Office is to develop a credible and effective internal control mechanism, as well as ensuring a check and balance and remove wastefulness in the system.



Senior Staff In Regular weekly Meeting

The Ministry effectively managed and executed the 2009/2010 budgetary appropriation approved by the Department of the Budget of the Ministry of Finance in the amount of **US\$1.9 million** representing less than 1% of the total Government Budget.

The effective financial management system of the Ministry during the period, impacted positively in the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) Scheme of Government. As a result, the Ministry met several priority programs indicating deliverables and achievements covering the Department of Trade Services, Department of Industrial Services and the Department of Administration and Management.

Capacity Building

a. Local Training

The Department in keeping with its staff development program in 2009, undertook in-house training activities. With sponsorship from MOCI, these training cover the following divisions;

- Inspectorate 65 persons
- Price Analysis and Marketing 13 persons
- Standards 25 persons

Additionally, some training programs in various themes were also held outside of the Ministry, including General Managerial Skills by the Liberia Institution of Public Administration one persons from the Division of Personnel (s), Ministry of Information, one person from the Division of Information in Media Crisis Management and Urban Business Planning, Commodity Market Development and Management.

b. Foreign Training

In fostering government's need for institutional capacity building, the Ministry initiated an assessment of training needs in critical areas, and

subsequently submitted a training proposal to International Partners for support. As a result, forty (40) personnel of the Ministry benefited from several international training programs. (See Appendix I)

Major Accomplishments

During the reporting period, the Department of Administration made the following significant achievements.

- In 2009, the Ministry initiated 14 counties tour to assess capacity building needs of rural staff, share knowledge of issues relative to registration and business operation, review and evaluate existing business registration process, and identify challenges facing rural staff in line with the implementation of the PRS.

The tour also targeted popular commercial centers, and border entry points. In this vein, capitals of the counties, border posts such as Ganta in Nimba, Toe Town in Grand Gedeh, Manikoma and Yeala in Lofa respectively and Bo Waterside in



The Ministry's Kickball Team

Grand Cape Mount County were visited during the tour. Discussions held with rural staff at these locations were centered on effective commercial management, improvement of cross border trade, as well as agency collaborative efforts to discourage smuggling and other business malpractices.

- Executed the 2008/2009 approved budget of the Ministry in the amount of US\$1,509,800 in line with the Ministry of Finance, Financial Rules and the PPCC Act in ensuring the provision of cost of personnel, goods, services and capital items for the proper functioning of the Ministry.
- Completed Phase III of the Grooming Liberia Future Entrepreneurial Program in collaboration with the University of Liberia and the Liberia Business Association. A total of 40 University students participated in the program.



Football Team Of The Ministry

- Conducted research on the Pre-Shipment and Destination Inspections Scheme of BIVAC highlighted many issues including the following:

- a. Re-evaluation of imports by BIVAC continues to pose serious problems for the consuming public. The extra fees imposed by BIVAC on imported goods are normally spread by importers over the cost of such goods, thereby hiking prices on the market.
 - b. That the Government of Liberia requires as a matter of policy that all goods imported into the country undergo pre-shipment inspection; only in exceptional cases should Designation Inspection be allowed. Moreover, Designation Inspection at the land ports of entry did not prove satisfactory as in many cases BIVAC staff are not present and when present lack the infrastructures and basic inspection equipment.
- As a means of finding support for the development of the First Draft of the National Trade Policy, the Bureau received sponsorship from the UNDP, and the ECOWAS Trade Negotiation Capacity Building Project (TNCPB) and benefited from some equipment supply and funding respectively. Consequently, the Liberia National Coordinating Committee on Trade (LNCCT) developed a draft Trade Policy which is being discussed by Stakeholders.



ECOWAS sponsored stakeholder workshop on Trade Policy

- During the reporting period, the Department coordinated with LISGIS in developing the various sectors of the Ministry to meaningfully contribute to the National Statistics Systems (NSS) of Liberia. As a result, several workshops and seminars were held.
- Conducted investigative research on the sales of Copy Books on the Liberian Market. Findings indicated that the 40% reduction yields no impact on the consuming public as importers are at the same time serving as retailers.
- The Department conducted a survey of Liberian owned businesses on Camp Johnson Road to identify constraints and how the Ministry could help businesses.

- Surveyed the condition at the slaughter house that led to its closure for some improvements.
- The Department vigorously maintained and managed a staff of 292 during the reporting period and provided annual leave, ensures hospital benefits and maintained records of staff.
- The Department installed new computers in some offices, upgraded exiting equipment, launched the Ministry's Website (www.moci.gov.lr) and issued new email account to all Senior Staff.
- Assisted in the establishment of the Trade Information Center in the Foreign Trade Division.
- Prepared an asset registry for the Ministry along with the GSA.



Group Photo Of Participant At The Liberia National Coordinating Committee On

- Up graded the entire computer and other equipment in the Ministry.
- The Department prepared the 2008/2009 Procurement Plan in line with the approved budget of the Ministry and procured assorted stationeries and supplies, furniture, etc. for the smooth operations of the Ministry.

- Awarded printing, office furniture and furnishing equipment and construction contracts to various entities through the National Competitive bidding process.
- Successfully carried out painting, repaired building and replaced furniture of some offices in the Ministry.
- Collaborated with the Washington and LEE University, UNCITRAL, American Bar Association and the United States Federal Trade Commission and the Law Reform Commission and conducted a commercial law reform symposium, to enhance a legal framework for addressing commercial issues.

- Arbitrated cases ranging from commercial matters, bribery to personnel issues within the Commerce of Liberia.

Challenges

During the period under review, the Bureau experienced several challenges. Some of these include:

- Limited personnel capacity
- Budget Shortfall
- Limited Logistics
- Office Building (limited office space)

Way Forward

In order to address the challenges faced by the Ministry during the period under review, we are pleased to recommend the following:

- Budgetary increment to the Ministry in order to cover all of its programs and staff assigned in critical areas, (i.e., Inspectorate and Standards)
- Short, medium and long term training programs
- Prioritizing funding for the re-location of the Ministry

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY

Introduction

Sethi Brothers, Inc.



Zinc Factory

The Department of Industrial Services conducts research relevant to the development of manufacturing sector and agro industries, controls the importation of products which are similar to products manufactured locally, ensures strict adherence and compliance to the Ministry's regulations through regular working tours to industrial establishments, promotes

Liberia's investment climate aimed at attracting both potential local and foreign investors, collects and compiles quarterly industrial statistics on existing industrial establishments, and promotes the informal sector through support to the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME). This Bureau has four divisions which are Industrial Administration & Supervision, Industrial Development, Standard, and Small Medium Enterprises.

To fund the work program for the period under consideration, the Department prepared a total budget of United States Four Hundred Twelve Thousand, Three Hundred Forty Four Dollars (\$412,344). Of this amount, the personnel cost accounted for \$171,636 or 42%, goods and services amounted to \$183,504 or 44%, while capital equipment amounted to \$107,000 or 26%.



Paint Factory

To augment the staff level and provide expertise within the Department, two persons were recruited to work under the Senior Executive Service Program of government policy on knowledge transfer. The two are termed Industrial Policy Advisor and Metrology Expert.

During the period under review, the President of Liberia changed the head of the Department, Prof. Moses P. Roberts and replaced him with Mr. Sei Wonkemie Gahn. All these measures were targeted at realizing the measurable outputs of the Bureau. Consequently, the Department made the following achievements for the period under review.

Major Accomplishments

For the reporting period, the Department achievements include:

- Developed a Comprehensive Annual Work Plan for the Department of Industry in response to the need for a document that would serve as a blue print or reference guide for staff and employees;
- Developed Industrial Directory for Liberia as a Strategy to Promote Industrial Entities for Increased Economic Activities. Data was collected analyzed for the industrial directory project. The data was collected from around the country, specifically from five (5) counties which have more concentration on industrial activities, namely; Montserrado, Bomi, Margibi, Bong and Grand Bassa Counties. Data analysis was completed and the directory has been computerized and now awaits final approval for funding and subsequent submission for printing.



- Designed questionnaires for Industrial Business Conditions Survey to conduct industrial Business conditions survey with the intention to do an in-depth study on the constraints including levels of costs of raw materials, prices, etc as they affect commodity prices on an aggregate in the Liberian economy.

- Developed draft Industrial Policy document for Liberia. The Minister, Deputy Minister and professional peers to include the International Trade Centre (ITC) Consultant, the UNMIL Civil Affairs Officer among others reviewed the document. It requires validation by stakeholders, and funding is needed for two separate workshops.
- Conducted capacity Assessment of State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) in line with the Poverty Reduction Strategy's Economic Revitalization Activities; with the objective to ascertain which SOEs are productive, morbid or relevant.
- Undertook staff assessment exercise to scout performance for productivity.
- Formed part of Sub-committee on Multilateral Trade and Enhancing Industrial Production capacity for Domestic and export market.
- A major accomplishment of the Department was the investigation of the use of Potassium Bromate as a maturing agent for certain types of flour in making bread. The investigation involved testing by EPA leading to the recommendation for the complete ban on all products containing Potassium Bromate because scientific experiment on both animal and human concluded that the chemical is carcinogenic and toxic;
- The Department participated in a coordinated exercise together with the ministries of Health and Social Welfare, Labor and Public Works to inspect companies producing alcoholic beverages in the country. The purpose of the inspection was to ensure that those companies were in compliance with safety, health, labor, building and general industrial practices. Most of the companies were not in compliance resulting in closure and or fines being imposed. A list of violations was given each company involved with the understanding that their premises would remain closed until remedy was in place. During the inspection, it was discovered that most of the companies were producing a liquor called "Drip" that was sold to minors under the age of 18. As a result Drip was banned from being produced for sale to minors, and a liquor policy and regulation are being finalized for Cabinet consideration;

- Mandated Monrovia Brewery Incorporated to relabeled package to include alcohol content;
- Made significant gains in the development of a Quality Control Manual for local industries;
- Undertook several monthly monitoring activities to discourage improprieties in quality control;
- Addressed cases of 350 Sub-standard zinc, 21 and 19 cases of poor quality issues involving importers of zinc, used clothing and expired goods, etc.
- Issued 150 Rice Dealership Certificates;
- Conducted recalibrations of filling stations, commercial seals and storage tanks;
- Monitored pharmacies, drug/medicine store and conducted testing of locally produced mineral water of several entities to ensure health and safety;
- Formed part of the Technical Committee responsible to dump unwholesome products and a Technical Committee for the setting of Standards for all water industries.

Other Accomplishments

- Reviewed and participated in the completion of the Aid-for-Trade Questionnaires of the World Trade Organization (WTO);
- Developed Proposal for Capacity Building of Staff of the Department of Industry;
- Reviewed and provided comments on the Harvard Center for International Development (CID) Proposal for Implementing Growth and Development program in Liberia;
- Drafted a document: "Conceptual View of Monrovia as an Industrial Hub". The document outlines and describes some infrastructure requirements in the industrialization process; transportation, hotels, electricity, adequate and safe drinking water, environmentally friendly communities, industrial parks, special economic zones (SEZs), and investment incentives, etc;

- Reviewed Implementation Framework Document, GOL 2Million Dollars Support Fund for Liberian Businesses which was developed by the Economic Management Team (EMT).

Division Of Industrial Administration And Supervision

The Division of Industrial Administration and Supervision promulgates, monitors, coordinates, and supervises activities of local manufacturing industries. The Division liaises with relevant line-ministries and agencies of government and the business community to coordinate these activities in the various sectors. The Division also critically analyzes the growth rate of the industrial sectors and further forms an integral part of the Inter-Ministerial Technical Committee of the National Investment Commission (NIC) to scrutinize project proposals submitted to government for investment incentives. Additionally, it collaborates with other divisions to coordinate and promote Liberia's effective participation in trade fairs and exhibitions of locally made commodities.

During the period under review, the Division, in keeping with its statutory responsibilities in support of the overall mandate of the Department partially carried out a number of activities, which are highlighted under the major accomplishments of the Department. These include collection, compilation and analysis of Industrial Output Data, issuance of sixty (60) Distributorship Certificates for locally manufactured product (Cement), adjustment made in the price of locally manufactured product (Cement), among others.

Division Of Industrial Development

The Division of Industrial Development assesses, evaluates, promotes, develops, regulates and designs strategies for the expansion of domestic industries. It spearheads the formulation and implementation of Industrial Policy, seeks to improve the agro-industries to stimulate industrial growth and productivity through the transfer of technology to enhance employment opportunities and increase contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The achievements of the Division are included in the general accomplishments of the Department.

Division Of Standards

The work of the Division is to ensure standardization and quality control of goods in Liberia. It continues to perform its duties and responsibilities credibly despite the lack of functional standard facility. It also promulgates policy framework for standards, liaises with International Standards Organizations to develop National Standards in the country.

In response to the Ministry's request for the establishment and development of Liberia's National Standard laboratory, an additional amount of US\$134,803.00 was made available by UNIDO to complete the civil works, fence, administrative office, water tower and generator house. This amount has resuscitated the budget shortfall and the lab will be operational in the first quarter of 2010. The microbiology Laboratory Manager was recruited and hired through the Senior Executive Service Program of the Civil Service Agency.

Two Laboratory Technicians participated in the West Africa Quality Program Regional Training Development workshop in Accra, Ghana which was funded by EU and implemented by Ghana Standard Board and UNIDO. To ensure the establishment of National Standard Body for Liberia, the National Technical Coordinator for UNIDO prepared a strategic outline.

Division Of Small & Medium Enterprises

The Small Medium Enterprises Division is responsible to initiate and encourage growth of small and Medium Size Enterprises in the economy. The Division sprung from a study by the World Bank on the inability of Liberians to actively participate in the commercial life of the country. As



Market Women in Trade –At-Hand

a result, Liberian entrepreneur were faced with managerial, financial and technical capacity problems, and, this was the mitigating factor creating the non-involvement of Liberian business people in the economic life of the country.

Furthermore, UNIDO provided support in the amount of US\$288,000 for the Harper Growth Center training facility for a three years period. The project initiated by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in concert with the Ministry of Agriculture and development partner organizations (UNIDO, UNDP, FAO, etc) is to promote industrialization in Maryland County and train the youth for decent, productive and sustainable employment with the cardinal objective of contributing to the poverty reduction strategy adopted by government. The focus of the project is in three distinct training programs, namely, rubber science, rubber wood, and NIRICA Rice Technology respectively. It is an outreach of centre songhai Liberia initiative (CSLI).

Accordingly, in May 2009, twelve participants completed training in rubber science and received diploma in Polymer Science. The training was facilitated by Dr. Umaru S. Ishaiku, Consultant/Expert in Polymer Science. Efforts are being exerted to have the participants integrated in terms of practicalizing the knowledge acquired. The Ministry with funding from the International Trade Center (ITC), during the period under review launched the Trade at Hand Initiative as a way of providing access to product information between farmers and market women. The ITC purchased 100 mobile phone, and provided training opportunities to 100 market women and farmers on the usage of the mobile trade-at-hand technology. Lone Star Communication Corporation has given consent to integrate the Trade-at-Hand initiative with their regular services to provide a wider coverage for the program.

Meetings

The Department head attended several meetings to discuss issues of national concern. These include series of PRS workshop, VPA multi stakeholder workshop to discuss legality Assurance System, the Public Sector reform Strategy Stakeholders' Consultative Forum, held at the SKD Sport complex from December 2-3, 2009, Cassava Sector Stakeholders meeting held at the Corina's Hotel, among others.

Challenges

- Lack of trained manpower;
- Difficulty in collecting industrial information from local industries;
- Difficulty in gathering data due to logistical problem.
- Unable to sufficiently empower staff and employees due to budget constraints to perform their statutory mandates

Way Forward

- That Administration provides adequate and comfortable office facilities for the employees of the Bureau;
- To make every effort to provide adequate budgetary appropriation and support for the Bureau to enable it implement work programs in the next budget period;
- To make sure that Administration provides utility vehicle for the Bureau;

- Under its short term work program, to put into place, effective procedures for collecting industrial information from local industries;
- To seek logistical supports from donors such as UNDP, UNIDO, ITC, WTO etc. to facilitate the implementation of its work programs;
- To undertake appropriate programs that will prioritize industrialization by national Government;
- To continuously engage international institutions and organization to provide training support to the Bureau to facilitate the development of human resource capacity building efforts.
- To support efforts of the Bureau to establish a National Industrial Development & Financing Organization (NIDFO) to provide financing opportunities for the development of local industries.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Introduction

The Department of Commerce is responsible to formulate policies, regulations and programs to govern the conduct of trade in Liberia. The Department thus undertakes to promote the growth and development of trade by setting guidelines for the expansion of trade. Over the years these approaches were geared towards the attainment of sustainable economic growth and development. But today the Department's role has become even more critical as Liberia strives to overcome the vestiges and challenges of a post-conflict environment to the normal course of socio-economic growth and development.

The Department of Commerce and Trade is comprised of four (4) Divisions, each supervised by a Director. The Deputy Minister for Commerce and Industry heads the Department and supervises its activities, with the Assistant Minister for Commerce and Trade supporting by coordinating all activities and reporting same to the Deputy Minister. The Department of Commerce and Trade is thus comprised as follows:



The Ministry's Local Office In Grand Cape Mount County

- Office of Deputy Minister for Commerce and Industry;
- Office of Assistant Minister for Commerce and Trade;
- Division of Domestic Trade;
- Division of Foreign Trade;
- Division of Price Analysis and Marketing;
- Division of National Inspectorate; and
- Consumer Protection and Education Unit

Buoyed by the Government's goal of achieving full economic recovery within the context of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Department of Commerce and Trade has been working collaboratively with other organs of the Ministry of Commerce and Trade to embark upon a rapid process that will encourage growth and expansion of Trade. Although it has been difficult to capture most, if not all, of the activities undertaken by the Department during the past period due to the acute problem of recording and analyzing data manually.



Liberia Delegation visits Tax Bureau Of The Kingdom of Morocco

Activities

In 2009 the Department of Commerce and Trade planned and executed more than a dozen activities. These activities were coordinated by the various Divisions under the supervision of the Assistant and Deputy Ministers for Commerce and Industry, and included but were not limited to the following activities:

- Continuation of the Liberia Business Registry Project;
- Execution of the Revised Business Registration Procedures;
- Streamlining of all administrative processes, including the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Permit;
- Collaboration with the International Trade Center (ITC);
- Updating of the 1988 Mark-Ups;
- Identification of essential commodities;
- Compilation of commercial statistics;
- Removal of monopoly and monopolistic tendencies;
- Strengthening and/or streamlining of inspection processes; and
- Initiation of an Inspectorate harmonization process

Major Accomplishments

The Department of Commerce and Trade is pleased to report the following outcomes from the implementation of the key activities during the period under review:

- Completed bidding process for rehabilitation of site for the Liberia Business Registry project;

- Substantially reduced the Steps and Procedures involved in Business Registration, which can now be accomplished within less than forty-eight (48) hours once the required fees are paid;



One-Stop-Shop Business

- Reduced the number of signatories on the Business Registration Certificate from four (4) to two (2), which has also reduced the processing time to at most twenty-four (24) hours once the required fees are paid;
- Improved Liberia's ranking on the Ease of Doing Business Report which climbed from 170 in 2008 to 149 in 2009, while its ranking for the Business Start-Up Report move from 88 in 2007/2008 to 57 in 2008/2009;
- Liberia was ranked among the World's Top Ten Reformers for 2008/2009, ranking second to Rwanda in Sub Sahara Africa;
- The needs assessment exercise that was undertaken in the preparation of LEDP revealed the lack of trade support services in Liberia. Provision of trade intelligence information constitutes one of the key support services demanded by the private sector. Under LEDP the Trade Information Centre of the Ministry was equipped with 6 internet enabled computers. The Centre will

serve as the Ministry's window to the outside world. It will fill a much needed void in the country's efforts to access global markets through enabling Liberian businesses and policy makers obtain information on overseas markets, their requirements, policies, procedures and regulations. Women entrepreneurs have been identified as the major users of this Centre;

- Streamlined and reduced the number of signatories on the IPD and EPD from four (4) to two (2) in furtherance of the ongoing reform process;
- Initiated drafting process for a National Trade Policy;
- Updated and revised the 1988 Commercial Mark-Up;
- Initiated a process for identifying essential commodities for the purpose of preparing appropriate interventions;
- Commenced compilation of commercial statistics;
- Successfully removed age-old *de jure monopolies* on rice and cement which has improved competition and contributed immensely to quality and reduction in the prices of these commodities;
- Commenced a process for streamlining the inspection of businesses.

Summary and conclusion

We would like to acknowledge the support and encouragement received from the President Her Excellency Madam Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and because of her, the goodwill that this Ministry enjoys from our international partners the result of which our accomplishments have been made possible.

Accomplishments

Despite the many challenges faced during the year under review, chief of which was budgetary constraints and capacity constraints, the Ministry made great strides in fulfilling its statutory mandate which is the promotion, development, regulation; control operation and expansion of commercial, industrial enterprises and activities in the Republic. The Act creating the Ministry also gives it the mandate to protect the public interest through the establishment and enforcement of standards for commodities and for trade.

Among the accomplishments highlighted in the report includes MOCI's participation in the Business Reform Committee whose work resulted in great progress in the ease of doing business in Liberia. Dialogue with the private sector increased creating an atmosphere of trust and a harmonious working relation that is necessary for this sector to play its role as the engine of growth.

Policies initiatives in the areas of trade, industry, export, the production, distribution and sale of alcohol, and a review of the commercial laws of this country were all begun during the year. Completion of these policy initiatives is expected by the end of the first quarter of 2010 except the commercial law reform which we believe will span a number of years. When completed they will be presented to stakeholders for validation and the cabinet for approval.

A major accomplishment for the year was the opening up of the market for cement and rice resulting in healthy competition that cause the prices these commodities to drop substantially and now compare favorably with prices of those commodities in neighboring countries. In the area of protecting the public interest, after research, testing and consultations, the Ministry banned the use of potassium bromide from the market because of its carcinogenic and toxic effects.

Cooperation with regional and multilateral trading partners was strengthened which we hope will lead to the creation of new employment opportunities in the trade and export sectors

Challenges

The challenge ahead will be to maintain stable commodity markets especially for essential goods. The Ministry will continue to work to improve the environment that fosters competition and to diversify the sources of supply for essential commodities.

The Consumer Protection Unit provided support to the Bureau of Commerce and Industry in its attempt to curb the sale of sub-standard goods on the Liberian market. Although the task seems to be enormous, the Ministry intends to make it a major initiative in 2010.

As stated in the PRS, the exceptionally large informal sector currently generates as much as four times more employment than the formal sector. The challenge we share is to implement programs and policies that will to improve productivity and working conditions in this sector.

Finally, when the policy documents began in 2009 are completed and approved, the difficult task of implementation will begin. A major challenge will be the capacity of staff to do this work; with the assistance of our development partners however, we expect that this challenge will be met.

Appendix I

Foreign Workshops Attended 2009

No.	Name of attendant	Title	Duration	Venue	Sponsor
1.	Matthew O. Williams	Implementation of Codex Strategy	February 23-27	Senegal	ECOWAS
2.	Prof. Moses P. Roberts	Implementation of Codex Strategy	February 24-27	Accra, Ghana	CODEX Trust Fund
3.	Vincent Yelegar	Rice \$&Agriculture	March 23-27	Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso	FAO
4.	Miata Beysolow	Ministerial Workshop on Coordinated Development Urban & Rural Area	September 3-13	China	MOFCOM Institute of International Business
5.	Sei Gahn	Ministerial Workshop on Coordinated Development Urban & Rural Area	September 3-13	China	MOFCOM Institute of International Business

Foreign Conferences Attended 2009

No.	Name of Attendant	Title	Duration	venue	Sponsor
1.	Miata Beysolow	47 th Series of the Assemblies of member States, WIPO	September 22-23	Geneva	WIPO
2.	Frederick B, Norkeh		March 19-21	Taj Palace, India	Indian Government
3.	Miata Beysolow	Preparation for the Joint EU ACP-EC Ministerial Trade Committee	May 4-7	Belgium	EU-ACP Secretariat
4.	Robert Mezzeh	47 th Series of the Assemblies of member States	September 22	Geneva	WIPO
5.	James Draper	47 th Series of the Assemblies of member States	September 22	Geneva	WIPO
8.	Miata Beysolow	Thirty-Fifth Session, UNIDO	December 7-11	Vienna, Austria	UNIDO
9.	George Dunor	19 th Session of Standing Committee on Copyright & Related Rights (SSCR)	December 14-18	Geneva	WIPO

Foreign Training Attended 2009

No.	Name of Attendant	Title	Duration	Venue	Sponsor
1.	Fred V. Johnson	Participating in WTO Assertion	April 14-December 18	Geneva, Switzerland	WTO
2.	Harrison Toe	Food Safety Inspection Technology	April 1- June 23	China	Government of China
3.	Ophelia Walker	Food Safety Inspection Technology	April 1-June 23	China	Government of China
4.	Rachell Russell	Small Business, Planning & Promotion	October 3-December 3	Noida, India	Indian Government
5.	Jenkins Dortu	Data Base Administration & Commerce	October 28-December 26	New Delhi, India	Government of India
6.	Henry Yardolo	Trainers Training on Entrepreneurship and Promotion of Income Generation Activities	December 1, 2009-January 22, 2010	Noida, India	Government of India

Foreign Seminar Attended 2009

No.	Name of Attendant	Title	Duration	Venue	Sponsor
1.	Philip Gongloe	Intellectual Property & Patent Right Law	October 14-November 3	Qinqdao, China	Government of China
2.	Momo Sandimanie	Chamber of Commerce & Industry	October 14-November 3	Beijing, China	Government of China
3.	Mambu Golafale	Chamber of Commerce & Industry	October 14-November 3	Beijing, China	Government of China
4.	Steve Flahn Paye	Urban Business Planning & Community Marketing Development	October 12-November 9	Beijing, China	Government of China
5.	George Dunor	Integrating Intellectual	September 22-23	Harare, Zimbabwe	WIPO
6.	Prof. Lavela B. Kortimai, Sr.	Integrated Intellectual and development	September 22-23	Harare, Zimbabwe	WIPO
7.	Umaru Sanagaray	Anti-International Trade barrier	November 12-december 1	China	Government of China
8.	Zogbo Better	Intellectual Property Right & Implementation of SME's	November 13 – January 6, 2010	Hyderabad, India	Government of India

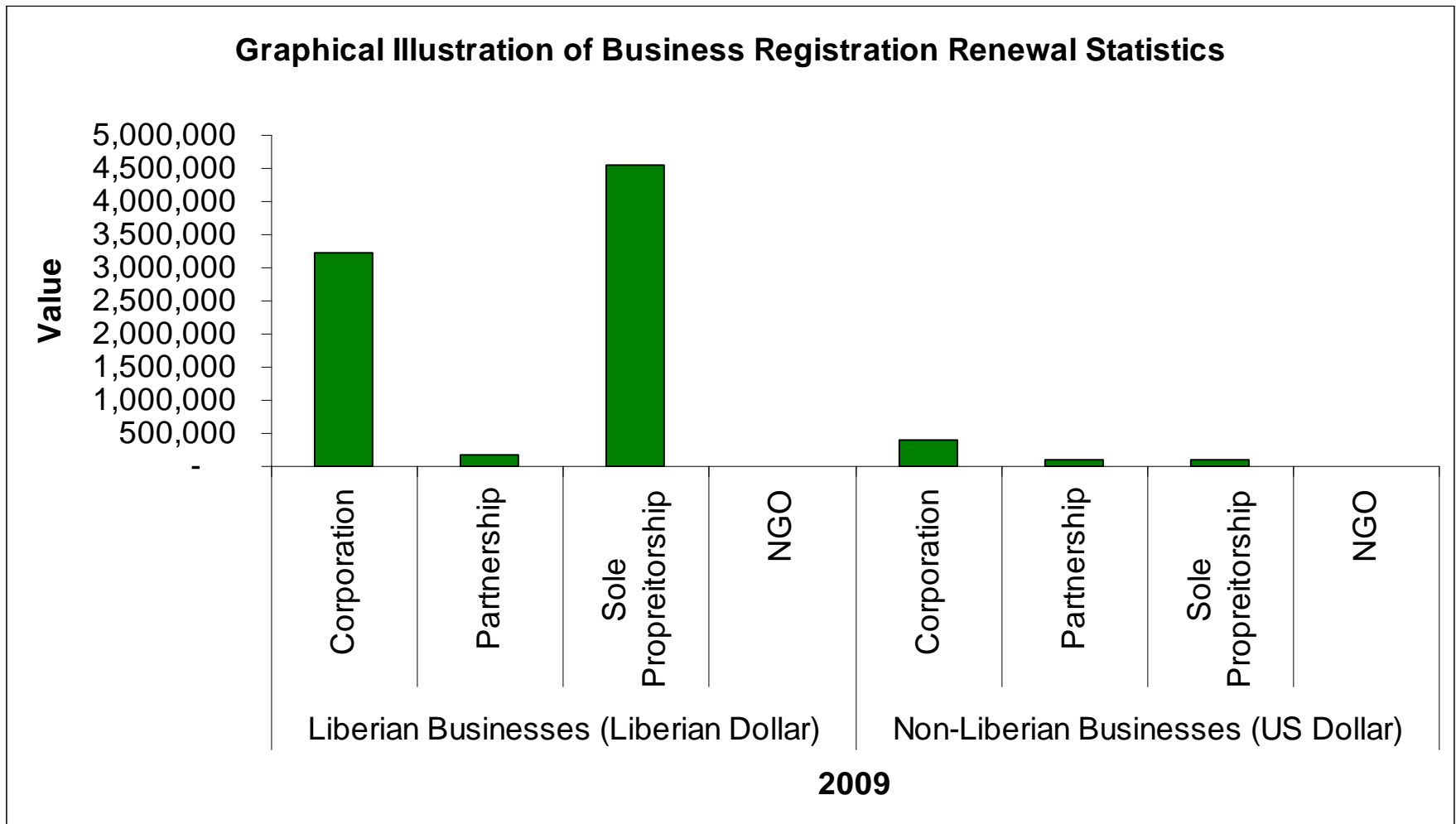
Foreign Meetings Attended 2009

No.	Name of Attendant	Title	Duration	Venue	Sponsor
1.	Samuel Liberty	ECOWAS-TNCB Project Steering Committee Meeting	November 5-6	Abuja, Nigeria	ECOWAS
2.	Sei Gahn	Finalization of Outcome of Ivory Coast CODEX Meeting	November 16-20	Abuja, Nigeria	ECOWAS
3.	Sei Gahn	Ministerial Meeting on Trade, Industry & Transport	October 26-29	Yamoussoukro, Ivory Coast	MRU
4.	Wilmot Paye	ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme Meeting	November 24-27	Abuja, Nigeria	ECOWAS

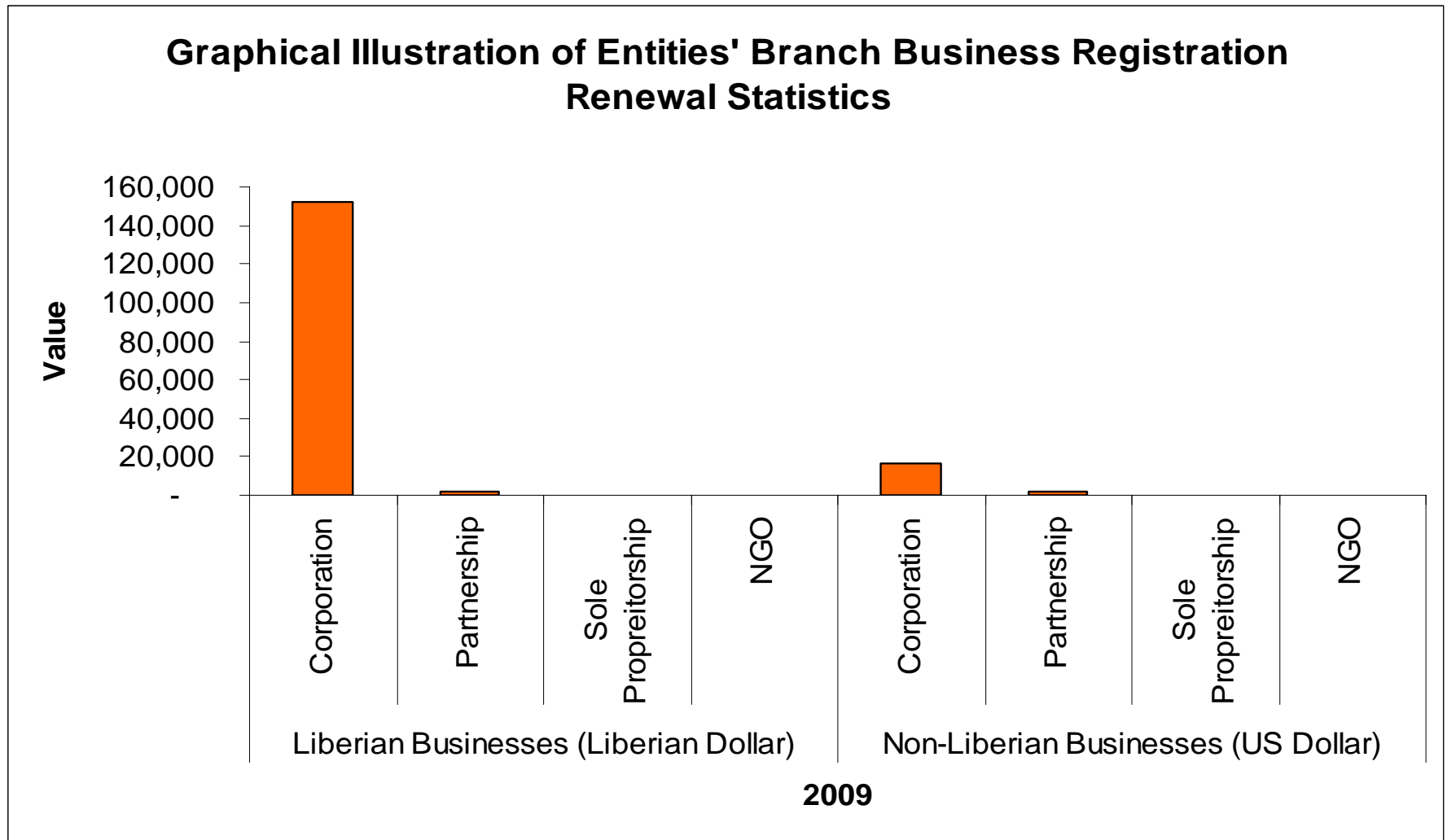
Appendix II: Business Registration Renewal Statistics

LIBERIAN BUSINESSES					NON-LIBERIAN BUSINESSES				
NO.	CAT.	QTY	UNIT COST (LD\$)	TOTAL COST (LD\$)	NO.	CAT.	QTY	UNIT COST (US\$)	TOTAL COST (US\$)
1.	Corp.	807	4,000.00	3,228,000.00	1.	Corp.	437	900.00	393,300.00
	Branch	76	2,000.00	152,000.00		Branch	37	450.00	16,650.00
2.	Part.	59	3,000.00	177,000.00	2.	Part.	120	800.00	96,000.00
	Branch	<1>	1,500.00	1,500.00		Branch	5	400.00	2,000.00
3.	SP	2,272	2,000.00	4,544,000.00	3.	SP	159	700.00	111,300.00
4.	NGO's	27	200.00	5,400.00	4.	NGO's	3	50.00	150.00
		3,240					761		
GRAND TOTAL REVENUE COLLECTED				8,106,400.00	GRAND TOTAL REVENUE COLLECTED				619,400.00

Appendix III



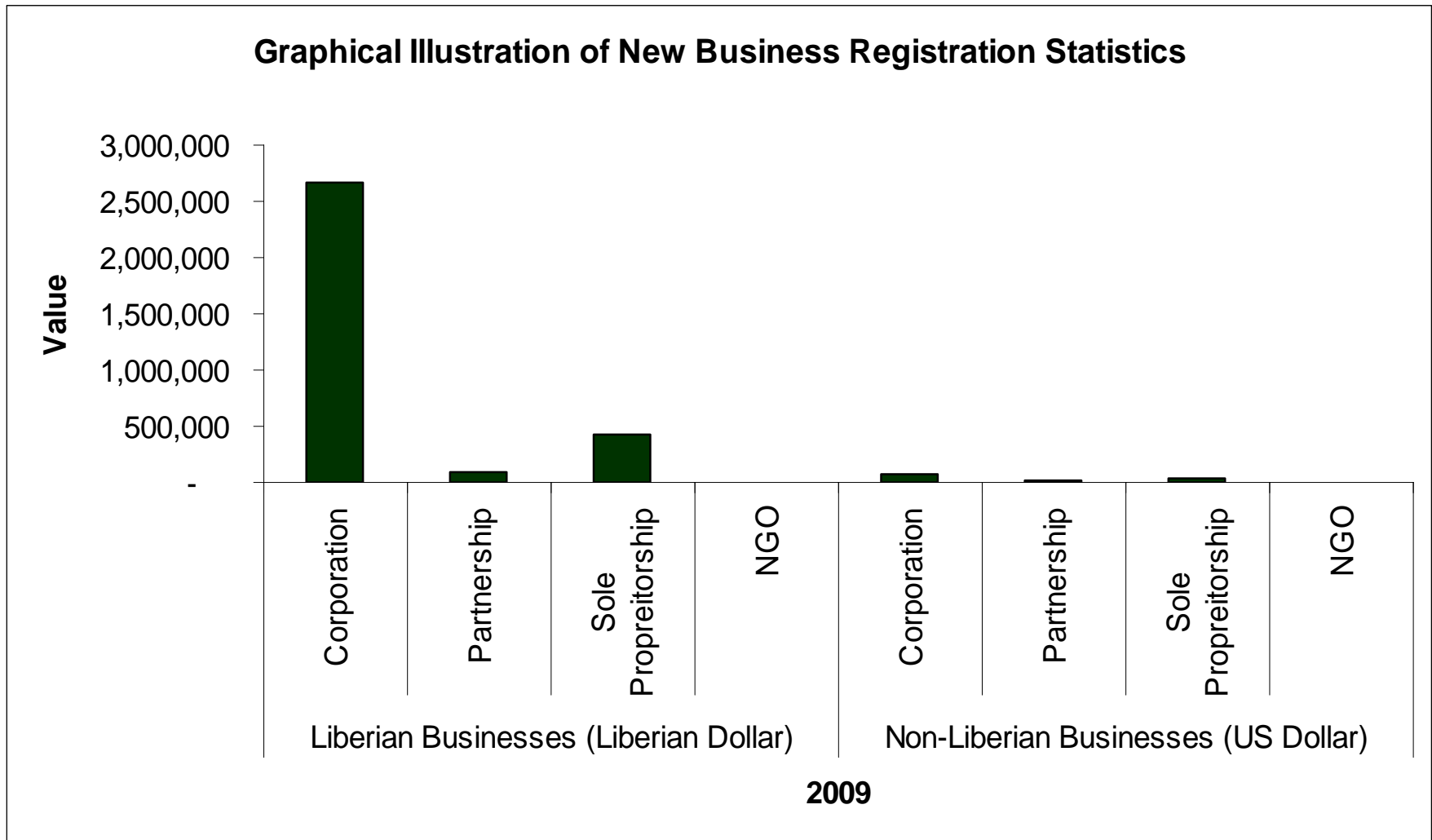
Appendix IV



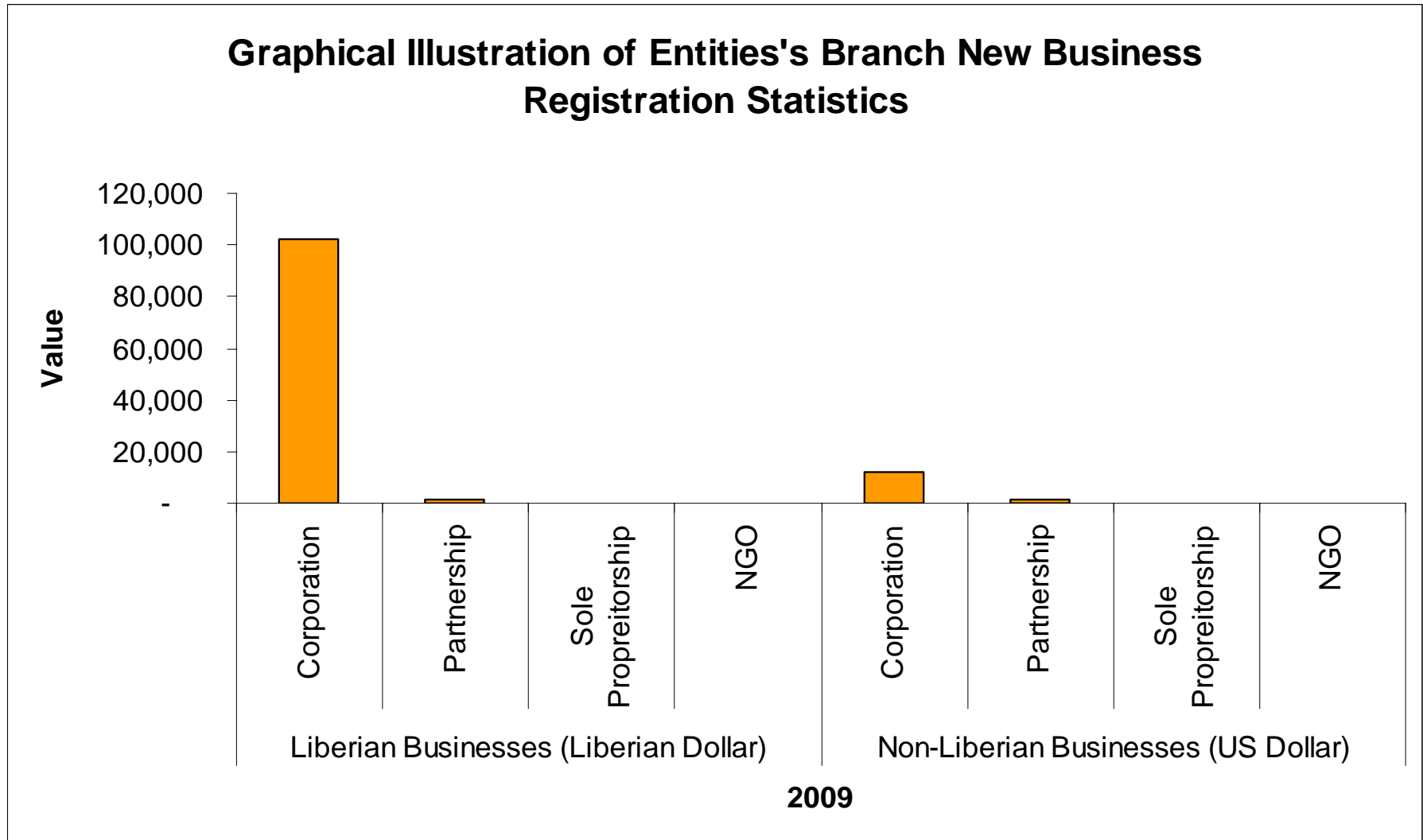
Appendix V: New Business Registration Statistics

LIBERIAN BUSINESSES					NON-LIBERIAN BUSINESSES				
NO.	CAT.	QTY	UNIT (LD\$)	TOTAL (LD\$)	NO.	CAT.	QTY	UNIT (US\$)	TOTAL (US\$)
1.	Corp.	665	4,000.00	2,660,000.00	1.	Corp.	74	900.00	66,600.00
	Branch	51	2,000.00	102,000.00		Branch	27	450.00	12,150.00
2.	Part.	33	3,000.00	99,000.00	2.	Part.	13	800.00	10,400.00
	Branch	3	1,500.00	1,500.00		Branch	3	400.00	1,200.00
3.	SP	2,121	2,000.00	4,242,000.00	3.	SP	42	700.00	29,400.00
4.	NGO's	24	200.00	4,800.00	4.	NGO's	3	50.00	150.00
5.	Total	2,897			5.	Total	162		
GRAND TOTAL				7,109,300.00	GRAND TOTAL REVENUE COLLECTED				119,900.00

Appendix VI:



Appendix IX



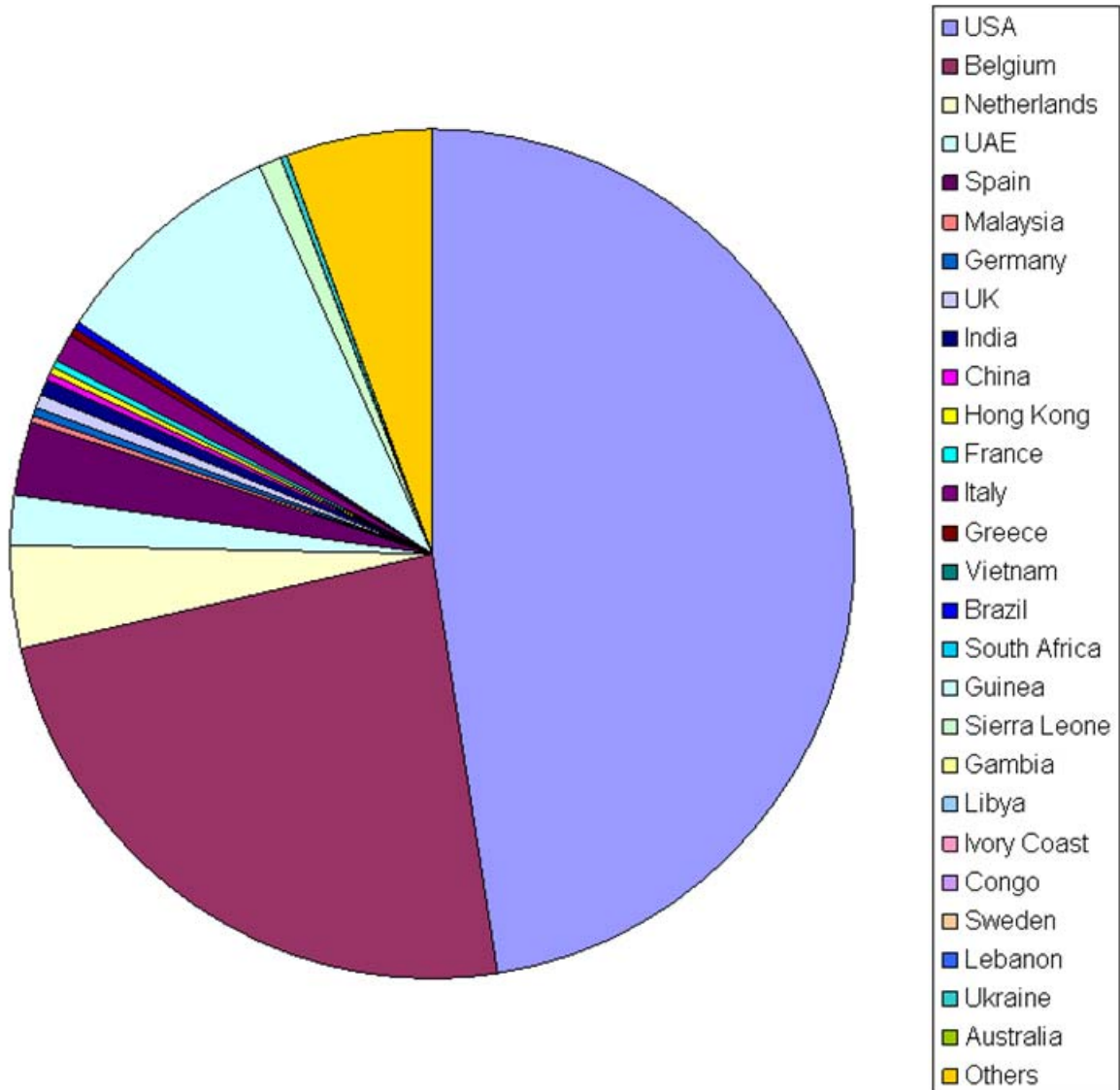
Appendix X

Appendix Major Export Trading Partners & Percentages 2009

Commodity	Value (USD)	% Share
Total Export	113,991,263.73	100.00
USA	54,079,633.88	47.44
Belgium	27,178,798.66	23.84
Netherlands	4,641,387.66	4.07
UAE	2,251,800.00	1.98
Spain	2,940,500.00	2.58
Malaysia	458,640.00	0.40
Germany	373,066.67	0.33
UK	509,479.58	0.45
India	678,588.42	0.60
China	323,749.33	0.28
Hong Kong	182,655.97	0.16
France	392,204.42	0.34
Italy	1,411,307.84	1.24
Greece	239,956.92	0.21
Vietnam	72,000.00	0.06
Brazil	327,890.78	0.29
South Africa	12,344.77	0.01
Guinea	10,447,183.05	9.16
Sierra Leone	675,309.85	0.59
Gambia	21,653.07	0.02
Libya	28,374.17	0.02
Ivory Coast	45,487.58	0.04
Congo	16,000.00	0.01
Sweden	15,655.00	0.01
Lebanon	12,000.00	0.01
Ukraine	339,922.46	0.30
Australia	6,580.00	0.01
Others	6,309,093.65	5.53

Appendix XI

Graphical Illustration of Major Export Trading Partners 2009



Annex

Press Release on Potassium Bromate

March 19, 2009

Growing out of concern and apprehension as to the use of Potassium Bromate (chemical named Benchmate Brand **PAR-BRO60**) in Liberia primarily as a:

- Maturing agent for certain flour
- Dough conditioner in bread making process
- Food additive

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry through its Division of standards conducted research on this product and here are the findings:

1. The Joint Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN/World Health Organization Experts Committee on food additive hold the view that the use of Potassium Bromate in flour treatment is inappropriate.
2. Upon examination of the sample Benchmate Brand PAR-BRO 60 by The Environmental Protection Agency, Monrovia, Liberia writes,
 - "It is an establish fact that the sample product Benchmate Brand PAR-BRO 60 packed in a can containing 250 tablets is clearly and distinctly labeled and analyzed by producer to contain Potassium Bromate (KBrO3).
 - "It is also established by reputable research organizations that Potassium Bromate is recognized to be a Carcinogen and a hazardous chemical.
 - "The Material Safety Data Sheet for Potassium Bromate cites several harmful health effects including: irritation of gastrointestinal tract, nausea, vomiting, reduced urinary output and death may occur in some cases due to renal failure."

The EPA concludes “on the basis of these facts and findings by reputable authorities on chemicals, **we are therefore recommending a complete ban on all products containing Potassium Bromate in any form or concentration of the substance meant for human consumption.**”

3. Scientific experiments on both animal and human have concluded that the chemical is indeed carcinogenic and toxic causing:
 - Cancer
 - Kidney and nervous system disorders
 - Oxidative damage to mammalian DNA
 - Large deletions in DNA

Conclusion

Based on these compelling research and facts; taking into consideration the views of major bakeries in and around Monrovia; and more importantly, taking into consideration the health of our consuming public, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry wishes to announce the immediate band on:

1. the importation of potassium bromide tablets, and
2. the importation of flour that requires the addition of the Potassium Bromate

Value of Exports by month January-December 2009
FOB in US Million Dollars

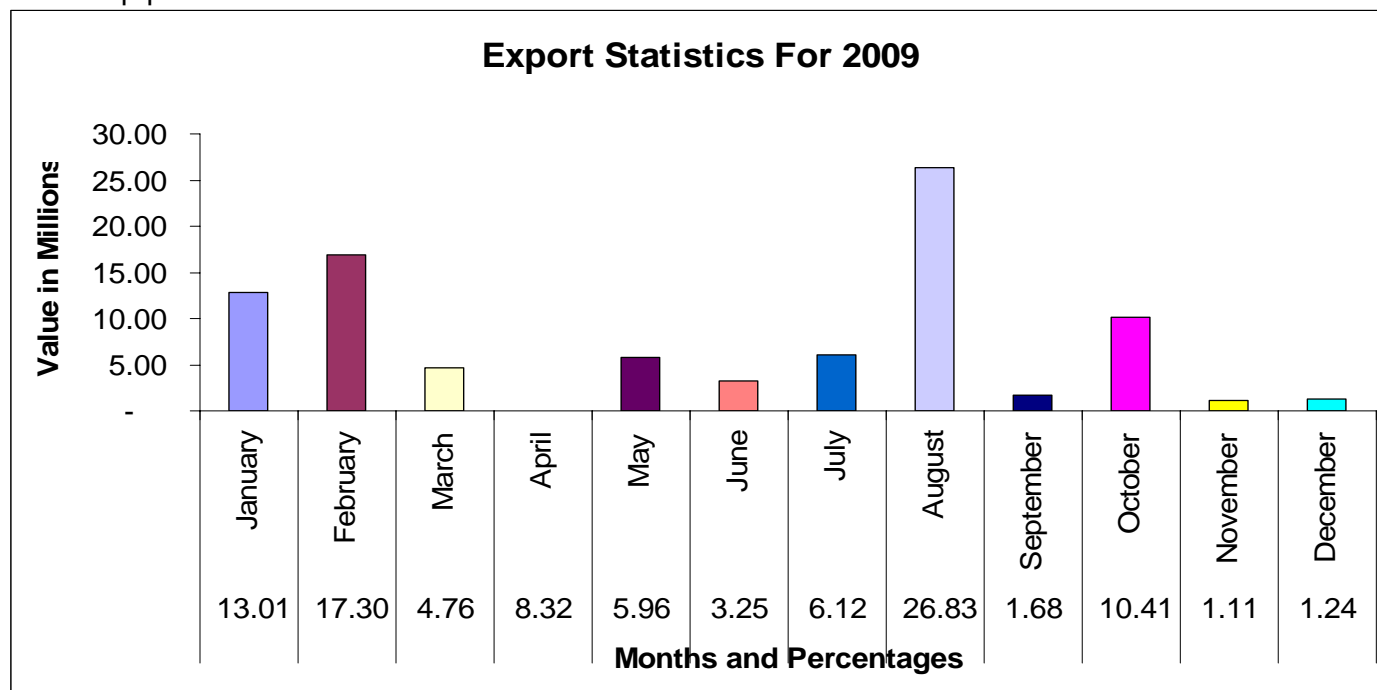
Appendix XI

MONTHS	VALUE IN MILLIONS	PERCENTAGE SHARES
January	12.75	13.02
February	16.95	17.30
March	4.66	4.76
April	8.15	8.32
May	5.84	5.96
June	3.18	3.25
July	5.99	6.12
August	26.28	26.83
September	1.65	1.68
October	10.20	10.41
November	1.09	1.11
December	1.21	1.24
GRAND TOTAL	97.95	100%

Source: Division of Foreign Trade

A graphical analysis in the trend of Exports by month January-
December 2009
FOB in US Million Dollars

Appendix XII



Value of Imports by month January-December 2009
CIF in US Million Dollars

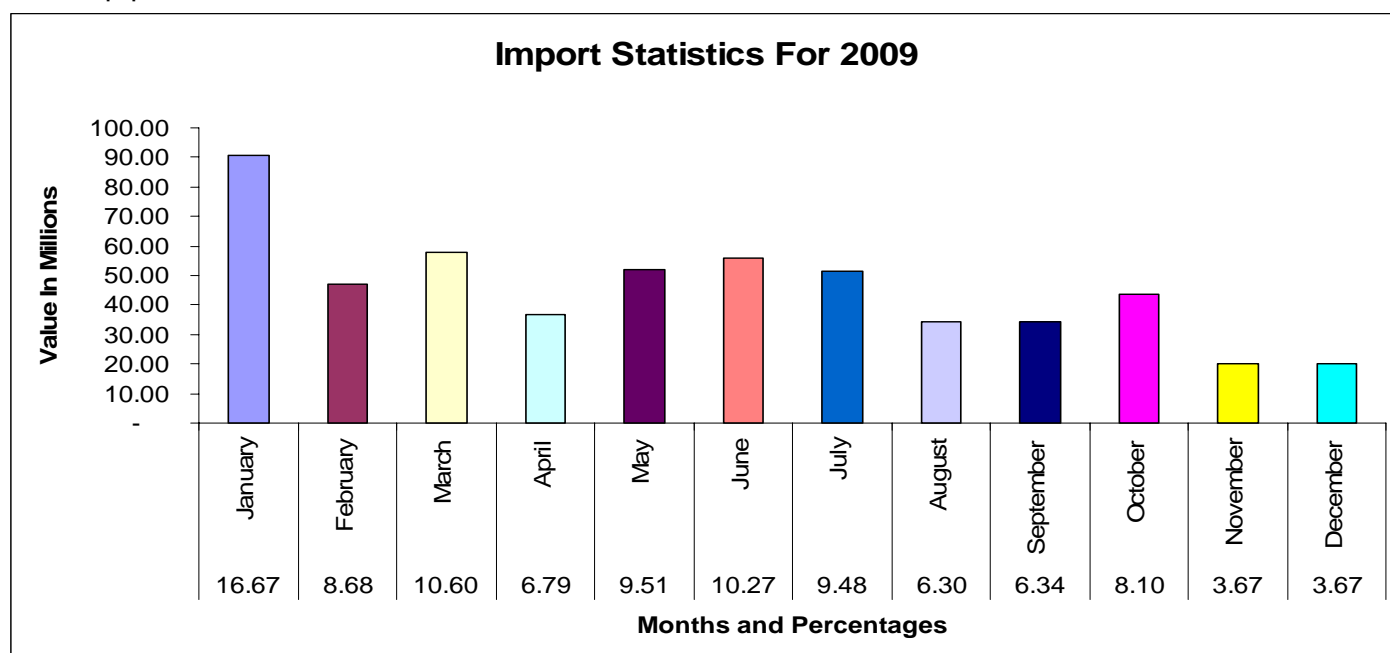
Appendix XIII

MONTHS	VALUE IN MILLIONS	PERCENTAGE SHARES
January	90.71	16.67
February	47.25	8.68
March	57.68	10.60
April	36.94	6.79
May	51.74	9.51
June	55.89	10.27
July	51.58	9.48
August	34.26	6.30
September	34.50	6.34
October	43.60	8.01
November	19.95	3.67
December	19.96	3.67
GRAND TOTAL	544.06	100%

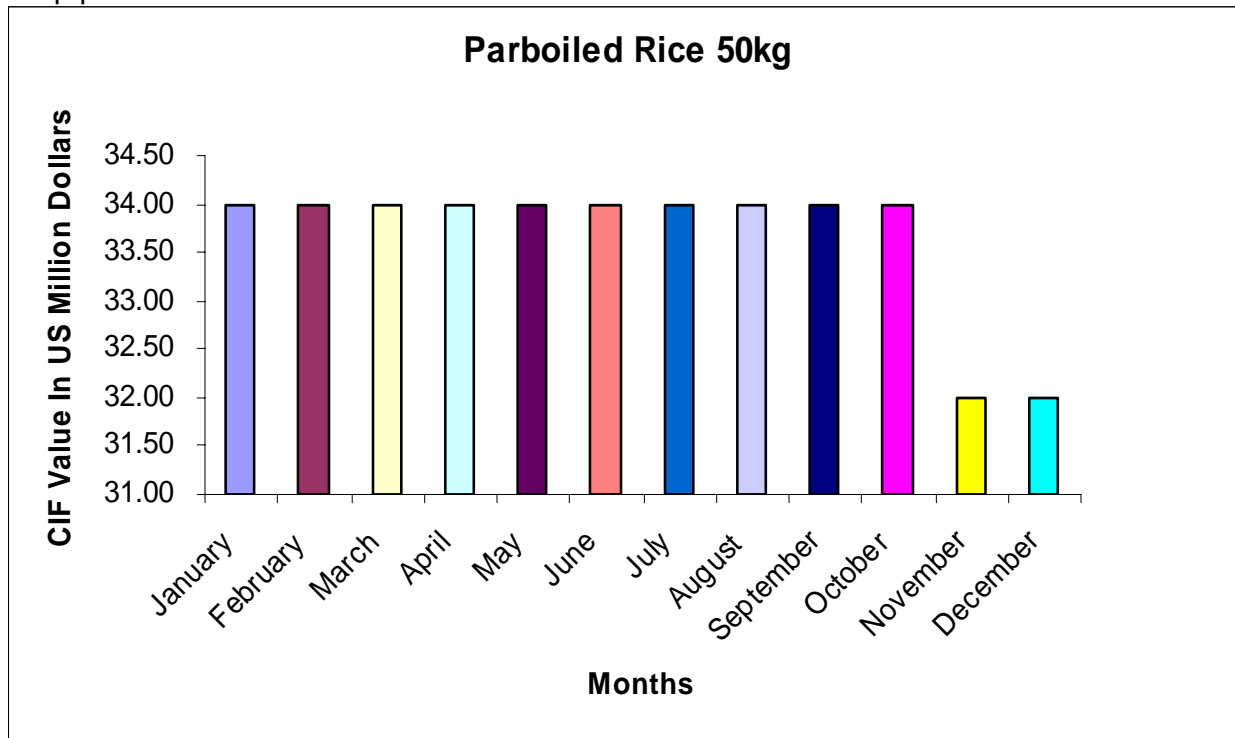
Source: Division of Foreign Trade

A graphical analysis in the trend of Imports by month January-
December 2009
CIF in US Million Dollars

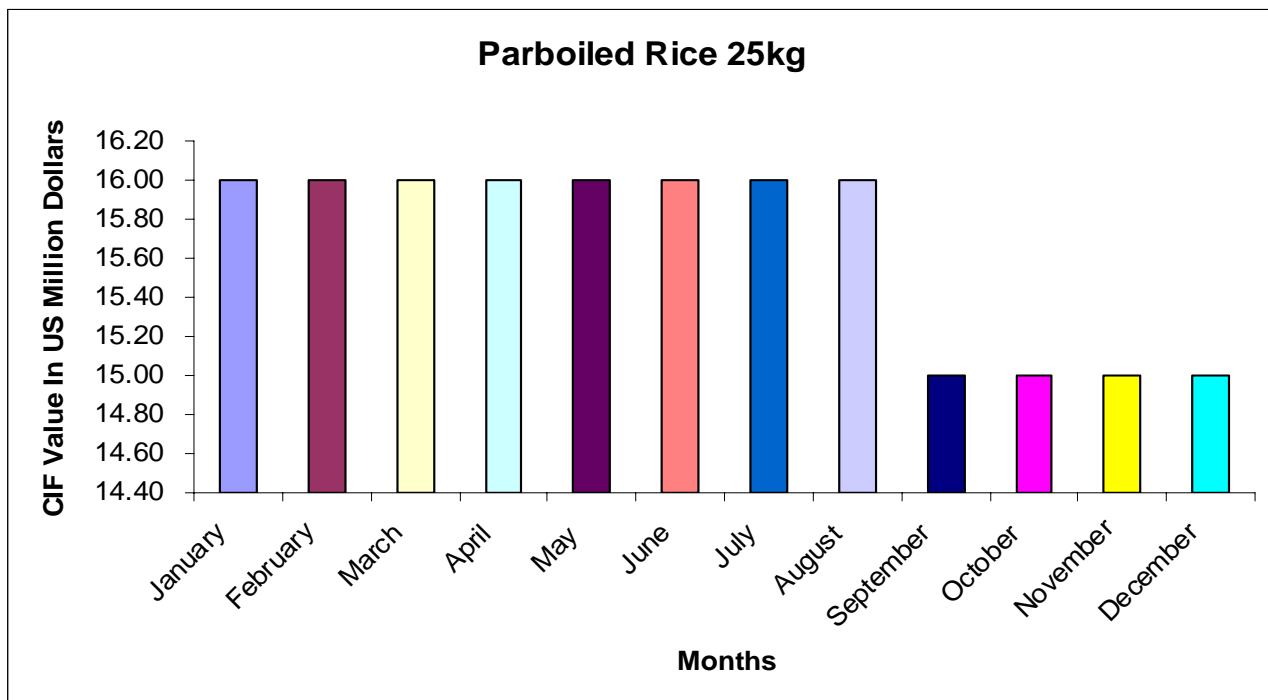
Appendix XIV



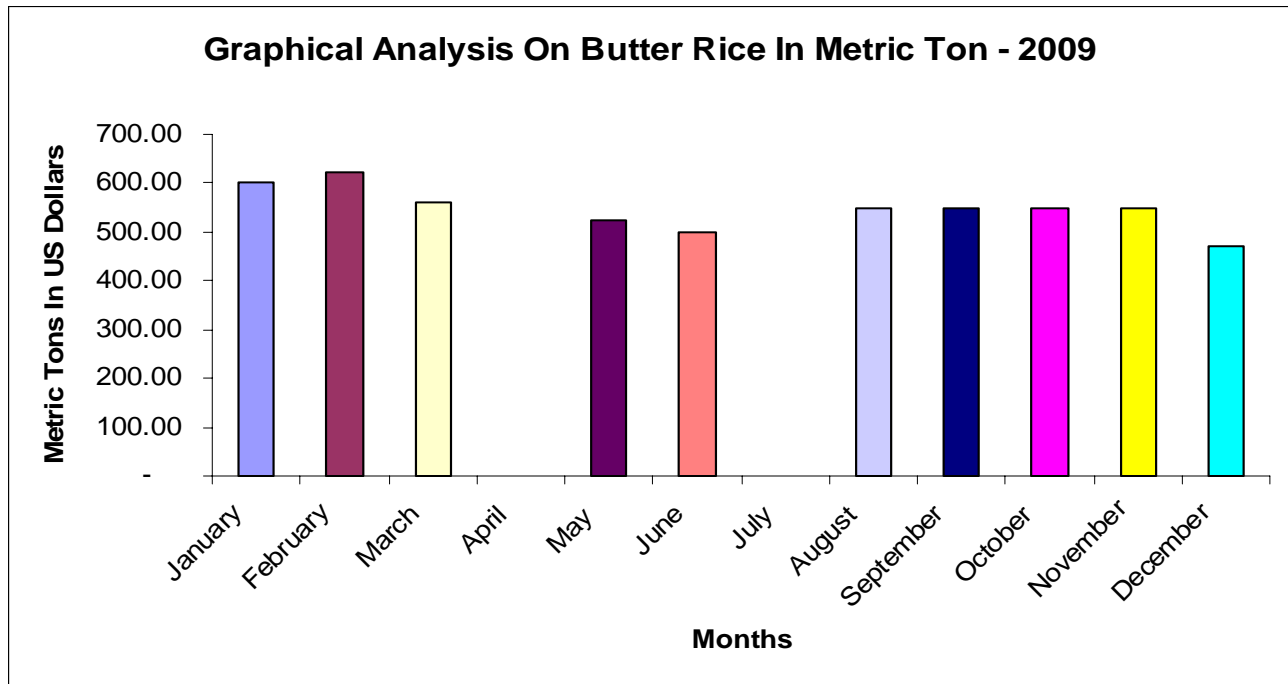
Graphical analysis of wholesale price of Parboiled rice
Appendix XV



Appendix XVI



A graphical analysis in the trend on rice price in 2009
Appendix XVII



Appendix XVIII

